Toward a More Adequate Characterization of the Chicano Language Setting

Santa Ana A. Otto

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/shri_publications

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/shri_publications/3

This Working Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SHRI Publications by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.
Working Paper #122 Spring 1993

TOWARD A MORE ADEQUATE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CHICANO LANGUAGE SETTING

By

Otto Santa Anna A.
The University of New Mexico
Working Paper #122        Spring 1993

TOWARD A MORE ADEQUATE
CHARACTERIZATION OF THE
CHICANO LANGUAGE SETTING

By

Otto Santa Ana A.
The University of New Mexico

WORKING PAPER SERIES

Southwest Hispanic Research Institute
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM  87131-1036

(505)277-2965

Acknowledgments: This research was supported by a grant from the
Center for Regional Studies at the University of New Mexico.

Published and disseminated by the Southwest Hispanic Research
Institute as part of an ongoing project to stimulate research
focused on Southwest Hispanic Studies. Copies of this working
paper or any other titles in the publication series may be ordered
at cost by writing to the address indicated above.
Toward a more adequate Characterization of the Chicano Language Setting

Otto Santa Ana A.

Department of Anthropology
University of New Mexico

1992
ABSTRACT

Although several typologies of the linguistic varieties of language varieties heard in the speech of Chicanos have been proposed, many disagreements about the assumptions underlying such typologies remain, in particular, concerning the nature of Chicano English. These disagreements have a direct, detrimental effect on the assessment and education of Chicano children, and by extension, all language minority children. Critical commentary on certain of these disagreements is presented in this paper. A unitary model of the language varieties used by Chicanos which goes beyond recent typologies is proposed, made on the basis of explicit assumptions about the sociolinguistic nature of language setting of Chicanos. Four examples of this Chicano language setting model are presented, utilizing recent nationwide and three statewide demographic figures. On the basis of these assumptions, Chicano English is characterized as the autonomous vernacular dialect of native English speaking Chicanos.
Toward a Typology of the Chicano Language Setting

0. INTRODUCTION

The teachers of Chicano children often deal with issues of assessment and pedagogy that are complicated by the rich heterogeneity of these children's language setting. All educators of minority children must grapple with cultural differences as well as class-based issues. But those who face classrooms filled with Chicanos additionally find that their children range widely in terms of skill, of use, and of dialect in Spanish and English.

"The Chicano population is linguistically heterogeneous, spanning the spectrum to include monolingual Spanish speakers, monolingual English speakers, and varying levels of bilinguals. Some claim Spanish as their first and stronger language while others claim to be native speakers of English; still others claim to have spoken both from the early years, often with a resultant minimal proficiency in each language. For public school teachers charged with educating these children, attempting to meet the needs of this diverse group can lead to confusion and frustration" (González, 1988:72).1

---

* This work was prepared with the support of the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute at the University of New Mexico. I wish to thank Drs. Keith Basso, Phil Bock, and Thelma Esther Meléndez for their valuable comments on the preparation of this paper.

1. It is an error to suggest that low test results are due to bilingualism. Likewise it perpetuates a misrepresentation to attribute 'minimal linguistic proficiency' to children who are native speakers of a nonstandard dialect, particularly when proficiency is an administrative determination made on the basis of a diagnostic instrument. See for example Edelsky et al. (1983).
This extended heterogeneity can be bewildering for the teacher, yet it exists in all settings where languages come into contact, hence for all linguistic minority children.

Certain kinds of questions about the linguistic heterogeneity of Chicano and Mexican children fall on the head of the classroom teacher. The responsibility to describe and explain the language setting lies not with the frontline educator, but with researchers of Chicano language. These researchers, however, have not yet settled on a description of the Chicano language setting. At times some of these scholars have maintained what I think are distorted views. In this paper I propose to describe this linguistic complexity. By language setting I refer to the full range of English and Spanish dialects, in terms of type and proportion, that the Chicano community utilizes, and hence to which the Chicano child brings into the classroom. Language setting is contrasted with speech community, which is of a smaller, metropolitan population, say the whites of Philadelphia (Labov, 1987) or the Chicanos of Austin (Galindo, 1987). The criterion for determining speech community is shared norms for interpreting and using language. My thesis is that the Chicano language setting can be described with a unitary model that characterizes the nature of the various kinds of language varieties, each of which is heard in the speech of Chicano and Mexican children.

The distortions of the language and dialect setting that some scholars have promulgated are the subject of critical comments that make up Sections 1 and 2 of this paper. In Section 3 I compare the Chicano language setting with the African American language setting. Then after discussing a recently proposed model of the Chicano language setting in Section 4, I propose my own cross-regional unitary description of the language setting of Chicanos in Section 5. Throughout this paper, I will focus attention on the English of Chicanos, rather than including much discussion on Chicano Spanish, in spite of the inclusion of Chicano Spanish varieties in the model. In fact, the callipers which will be used to gauged the adequacy of the various language setting models, explicit or tacit, is their characterization of Chicano English. I ultimately propose a definition for Chicano English and characterize its relation to other components of the total
range. One goal is to unite otherwise disparate research findings and thus to provide a more coherent characterization of the nature of the Chicano ethnic dialect. I think that this model might profitably be extended to other ethnic dialects settings of the United States.

1. UNDESERVED PROMINENCE GIVEN CERTAIN VARIETIES OF THE LANGUAGE SETTING

The absence of a settled view of the nature of the Chicano language setting has led to several standing controversies among scholars, which in turn has added confusion to the assessment of Chicano children by their educators, who are dependent on researchers and scholars of Chicano language for their conceptual frameworks. One of the most persistent controversies concerns the nature of Chicano English. Ten years ago Peñalosa characterized this (1981:8) as the major controversy of Chicano language research:

"The main theoretical dispute here appears to be whether Chicano English, the fluent kind spoken by many as their first language, is simply English with Spanish interference, or whether it is a social variety which represents not imperfect learning of Standard English, but rather competent learning of a variety of English current and standard in the community."

In spite of Peñalosa's tilt toward autonomy, not everyone has accepted Chicano English as an ethnic dialect. Recently Gustavo González concluded (1988:72) that "the meager research evidence will support either interpretation." Underlying the definitional issue, whether or not Chicano English is an autonomous dialect, is another question which will be address in this paper: What is to be included under the term Chicano English? I submit that the definitional controversy, as well as certain other Chicano language setting controversies, are distortions created by two orientations. For one, undue privilege has been granted to certain components of the Chicano language setting, for example Mexican interlanguage English, bilingualism, regional
varieties, Chicano Spanish, standard English, at the expense of other components in the full language setting. The second distorting orientation assumes that the heterogeneity of the Chicano language setting is exceptional and unmanageable. I will deal in turn with each.

Granting privileged status to Mexican interlanguage English

Many years ago Sawyer argued in several papers that there is no autonomous Chicano English dialect. Instead, she claimed that Chicanos are second language learners of English or that they utilize (1975:77) an "unnatural, regionless, formal style of the classroom."

"Stewart includes a brief reference to a so-called 'Mexican-American dialect' of English found in the Southwest among native speakers of Spanish. The term dialect is curious in this context, for in order to merit the term, a particular variety of language should be fairly stable in its structure so that it can be learned by succeeding generations in the speech community. Nothing could be called a Mexican-American dialect of English was found in San Antonio, Texas. The English spoken by the bilingual informants was simply an imperfect state in the mastery of English. A set of language habits does not become a dialect even if a particular speaker uses this system until he dies. What does have significance is the fact that the relatively unskilled bilinguals...did not pass on their imperfect English to their children. The children of the least able speakers learned English in school and spoke it with their peers. ...In the community under study for this report, there was no Mexican-American English dialect" (1970, reprinted in Hernández-Chávez et al. 1975:79. Italics in the original.).

Sawyer was correct to state that for a language variety to be considered a dialect that it must exhibit stable structure, that is to say rule-governed patterns of language. The characteristics that Sawyer described, imperfect mastery and frozen language habits not passed on to children, indicate something other than a
dialect. In today's terminology, she was describing an interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). An interlanguage refers to any one of a series of versions of the target language that is learned, not acquired, by the adult or older child second language learner. Both untutored and classroom-instructed second language learners can be said to speak a version of interlanguage. Even the best second language learners never quite arrive at complete mastery of the target language, while most reach an intermediate level of skill that becomes more or less fixed as long as they are in the speech setting of use of the second language (Appel & Muysken, 1987:83–92). Most importantly there is a qualitative difference between the knowledge that a speaker of interlanguage English utilizes and the competence that a native speaker of English, whether monolingual or bilingual, commands.

The term interlanguage was coined after Sawyer wrote her articles, but the native–non-native speaker distinction was well-established. In the article cited in the Sawyer quote above, Stewart specifically distinguishes non-native speakers from native speakers, and attributes the term 'dialect' only to the speech of native English speakers. What is striking about Sawyer is her disregard for the distinction which she directly quoted. Sawyer excluded native English-speaking Chicanos from her study, assuming that bilingualism is the crucial criterion for the Mexican-American speech community of San Antonio, and asserting (p. 77) that:

"the bilinguals in the community...were by the way, generally Spanish speakers learning English as a second language, since none of the native

---

2. "The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language" (Bloomfield, 1933:43).

3. "Here I do not refer to the kind of English which a monolingual Spanish speaker in Mexico might end up with after having taken English in school. Rather, I refer to a special dialect of American English spoken in the Southwest by a considerable number of Americans of Mexican descent, who are usually bilingual in it and some variety of Mexican or Southwestern English." (W. Stewart 1964 cited in footnote 4 of Sawyer 1970, reprinted in Hernández-Chávez et al. 1975:97)
English speakers found it necessary to learn Spanish well in San Antonio.”

A careful reading of the quote leads one to recognize that for Sawyer, the term ‘bilingual’ was not a linguistic characterization. It was a euphemism for the Mexican immigrant.

It is difficult to imagine that Sawyer seriously investigated the speech of native English-speaking Chicanos, even admitting the then-current dialectological methodology. At the time it was estimated (Grebler, Moore & Guzmán, 1970:424) that 55% of San Antonio Chicanos/Mexicans were “able to get along in either language,” that is to say they were bilingual; while of the 91% of a sample who were comfortable in Spanish, 59% were also conversant in English. Rather than include native speakers in her sample, Sawyer chose not to admit the existence of a native-speaker Chicano dialect. For example, she begs the question (p. 78) in her comparison of speakers: “We shall refer to the informants who were native speakers of English as Anglos, and to those who were native speakers of Spanish as Latins.”

It is from these biased beginnings that the Chicano English definitional controversy began. Sawyer granted privileged status to the interlanguage of non-native English speakers, consequently discounting the existence of an ethnic Chicano English spoken by native speakers. She emphasized the criterion of bilingualism as crucial to the characterization of Mexican-Americans. And she

4. Sawyer inadvertantly acknowledged the existence of Chicano native speakers: “Even the efforts of second- and third-generation bilinguals to master English were partially self-defeating, since they learned the unnatural, regionless, formal style of the classroom.” (p. 77) For Sawyer, if the Chicanos did not speak with an Anglo Texan dialect, they spoke an unnatural style. It is easy to imagine the interview techniques she adopted with these Chicanos, which led to the use of the classroom style. Later she refers to native speakers again: “Young people who adopted American cultural ways and master the English language, such as the two Latin college students who served as informants for this study, are often called agringados, that is, ‘gringo-like,’ a derogatory term” (p. 80). Although she is quick to brand the use of derogatory language by Chicanos, she did not acknowledge her own casual use of the epithet, wetback (p. 79). Characteristically, the language features of the two college students mentioned were not included in her discussion.
saw that those native English speaking Chicanos she grudgingly acknowledged spoke in an "unnatural" style of English.

While there have been critics of Sawyer's dubious assumptions and conclusions, the interlanguage view became dominate one for Chicano English. One reason is that there are similarities in the English interlanguage features of non-native speakers and the ethnic dialect features of native speakers. This is because both language varieties have a shared substrate provenance. It is clear, however, that there are formal differences. Wald, who has argued vigorously for independent dialect status of Chicano English in a series of articles, cites several features distinguishing interlanguage English from native speaker Chicano English. For example (1984:21), the Spanish native speaker who is an adult learner of English tends to insert a prothetic (epenthetic) vowel before initial position consonant clusters being with s-, for example school pronounced [eskul]. This is not a feature of Chicano English.

Another reason that sustains the interlanguage view is that for isolated individuals, ethnic dialect features may level, that is to say become lost, with physical and emotional separation from the barrio and assimilation into the matrix Anglo society. This is not the case for large urban Chicano populations living in ethnic communities.

The most important promoters of the interlanguage view have been educators, who have taken non-native English speaking children to be their primary responsibility. The children of migrants and immigrants who come to school speaking minimal English or only Spanish deserve special attention (e.g. Cornejo, 1973; Cohen, 1976). However, this pedagogically-based tendency does not give the dialect of native English-speaking Chicano children its due linguistic consideration.

Certainly not all researchers utilized the interlanguage analysis, including those scholars with a professional concern for Chicano schoolchildren who come to school not speaking English. Rather than recite numerous references, we can

5. For example, Lance (1972); Metcalf (1974, 1979); Bills (1977); F. Sánchez (1984), among others.
refer to Teschner et al. (1975) and Bills et al. (1977), who among others compiled Chicano language bibliographies with linguistic sophistication. Instead I will illustrate with two recent articles of different stripes: one an introductory article about Chicano English and the second a dissertation, both of which demonstrate clear influence from Sawyer.6

To his credit Ricardo L. García, in an introductory volume of readings on language and linguistics (1985:540), forcefully argues against educators taking non-standard language features of Chicanos to be “serious defects in English.” 7 Unfortunately García accepts the assumption that Chicano English just is the interlanguage of Mexican second language learners of English, by associating interference patterns of non-native speakers of English to native English-speaking Chicanos:

“When the Chicano [defined as a Mexican-American, a Spanish-American, or a Hispano] is producing speech in one of his languages, Spanish or English, phonemes and morphemes from the second language may intrude on the speech of the first, a natural mixing of linguistic components that occurs when languages come into contact with each other” (p. 539, bracketed text in the original).

6. Throughout this paper I have been referring to the speech of Chicanos. The same controversies discussed in this paper permeate written composition research. In fact, in one anthology on Chicano English, two such positions are presented. Both studies are based on Chicano university students from south Texas. Herrick (1984) finds Spanish phonological interference in their writing, and adduces that they “hear and pronounce English in terms of Spanish phonology.” Conversely Amastae (1984) finds that errors were not due to interference but due to ignorance of English orthographic conventions, whether the students are bilingual or monolingual.

7. Furthermore, García mislabels Chicano English: “While speaking his caló, or dialect of English, the Chicano thinks little of borrowing and mixing of Spanish and English phonic [sic], lexical, and grammatical elements” (p. 540). Caló is a Spanish-based street argot, not an English-based one. It is clear from the text that García is neither talking about caló or about the English of native speakers, but interlanguage English of native Spanish speakers.
There is nothing seriously amiss in this quote. However, it becomes clear that García attributes non-native interference features to the Chicano.

“Essentially, phonic [sic] interferences are aural/oral discrimination difficulties which occur during the filtering process. They are quite easy to understand when one considers that there are only five Spanish vocalic phonemes, for example, as opposed to eleven [sic] English vocalic phonemes. The Chicano must learn the distinctions /i/, /eँ/, /u/, /a/, and /o/ on the basis of the five Spanish vocalic phonemes /i/, /e/, /a/, /u/, and /o/. Unless he is trained to hear and make the English distinctions, he will tend to substitute the Spanish phonemes” (p. 541).

It must be stated, contrary to García, that interference, when it occurs in near-native speakers, is an articulatory phenomenon, and not a perceptual one. In the last quote we are led to believe that Chicano native speakers of English cannot distinguish the English tense-lax vowel distinction. Furthermore García declares that Chicanos must be trained, presumably by language pathologists, to make phonemic distinctions. This is a gross overstatement. In my own sociolinguistic fieldwork in Los Angeles, I interviewed Mexicans whose English exhibited negative transfer features from their native Spanish. In contrast, I did not find a native-born Chicano who had fewer phonemic distinctions than the matrix contact dialect, that is, to say southern California Anglo English. Thus García does not refer to Chicano English, but rather to interlanguage phenomena. He conflates the linguistic behavior of native speakers and non-native speakers, which leads to misunderstandings about the English of Chicanos.

Utilizing a sociolinguistic methodology, Celia Dale Merrill (1987) has recently taken up Peñalosa’s query, asking whether or not the English features of Chicanos are transitory effects or elements of a permanent dialect. Merrill finds Chicano English to be transitory. She explicitly maintains the native–non-native speaker distinction. However, Merrill considers the character of Chicano English to be bound inextricably to interlanguage features, so that when she tests whether
Chicano English is an autonomous dialect or an ephemeral effect, she measures phonological features that “stereotypically are found to be a part of Spanish-accented English” which “represent incomplete mastery of the second language.” Thus she does not investigate native-speaker features that might be sociolinguistic variables, but rather focuses on interlanguage features and assumes these are Chicano English features. It is not surprising that she finds interlanguage features to be absent in the speech of native English-speaking Chicanos. Merrill points out that these features are not elements of a stable dialect since they do not show style shifting, age or sex differentiation. This is to be expected. Had she investigated (-ing), /t,d/ deletion, or some other sociolinguistic variable, then extralinguistically-governed variation would likely have been discernable. Interlanguage features are not variables imbued with social value by a speech community of native speakers. For this reason they are not necessarily governed stylistically, nor do they necessarily pattern in a systematic manner among second language learners, as do sociolinguistic variables among native speakers of a speech community. On the basis of post hoc evidence, she concludes that Chicano English is transitory. However, she chose to investigate interlanguage features, rather than sociolinguistic variables, and hence has not proven her position. Thus the legacy of Sawyer’s biases remains deep-seated in research on the Chicano language setting.

8. The notion of “Spanish-accented English” has been unfortunately used in two distinct ways in the literature. I take it to be used by Merrill in reference to an interlanguage. In this sense it is a code without native-speakers or dialect status. Likewise Peñalosa (in the quote cited above) contrasts Spanish-accented English to the linguistic competence of a dialect spoken by native English speakers. On the other hand this phrase, Spanish-accented English, can readily be interpreted to a dialect of native speakers of English which bears structural features of a Spanish substrate. This distinction should not be conflated. The proper study of an ethnic dialect is of the speech of native-speakers. Otherwise to study the speech of second language learners is to study an interlanguage.

Granting privileged status to bilingualism

It must also be noted that bilingualism as a distinguishing criterion of Mexican-American speech communities also begins with Sawyer. Since in each barrio there are monolingual English speakers, this criterion may be excessively limiting. An interesting sociolinguistic question that has arisen in this context is whether the barrio\(^{10}\) is a single speech community or an aggregate of entities. The unity of the Chicano English speech community has been questioned by different researchers. Shannon (1987:4) provides both positions in the space of a single paragraph:

"The notion of barrio, a segregated neighborhood in which residents share certain sociocultural and socioeconomic characteristics, among them Spanish language use, seems to coincide with the notion of a single speech community. ...With two languages available in the linguistic repertoire, a barrio is potentially a multiple speech community."

This point of contention is an empirical question that can be addressed with directed research in each locality. For the Los Angeles Chicano community, for example, in the continued absence of subjective reaction tests (Labov, 1972; Rickford, 1985), or a very detailed linguistic study of a single linguistic variable (Labov, 1987), either of which provide the crucial evidence needed to determine speech community status,\(^{11}\) I will point to aspects of the barrio population for

---

10. Barrios are geographical entities, akin to lower working-class neighborhoods in East Coast cities, but they are also "networks of local social relations based primarily on family ties that transcend geographical place." (Keefe & Padilla 1987:8). Contrary to Shannon, as quoted above, in my fieldwork in Los Angeles I did not find all participating barrio residents to be Spanish speakers.

11. The central criterion for determining speech community is shared norms for interpretation and use of language. Note that this criterion, which is shared by empirical sociolinguists, anthropologists and language sociologists does not have a 'one language equals one speech community' qualification. See Santa Ana (1991:13–16) and references provided there.
evidence of unitary speech community status. It is clear that just like native-born Chicanos, permanent resident immigrants believe themselves to be members of the barrio, whether they are second language learners of English or remain essentially monolingual Spanish speakers. For example, in the Boyle Heights barrio of East Los Angeles, over 90% of the residents are of Mexican-origin. Of the 90%, immigrants comprise 50%, yet there is little indication that the second language learning immigrants and the native speakers have distinct reference to their barrio (Santa Ana, 1991:28). Continuing this direction of thinking, we might question whether or not monolinguals comprise a separate speech community from bilinguals. Again, the distinction is not reasonable one to follow in the practice, particularly when the second language learners of English, namely the adult immigrant population, live in the same households as their native English-speaking children. As such, it is problematic to assign individuals to one of two speech communities on the criterion of different social identity, which for example Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia (1985) suggest. In counterdistinction to the aggregate-of-entities view, Wald describes the Chicano barrio as a unique sociolinguistic phenomenon (1988:16), since he sees it to be a single speech community with both monolingual and bilingual speakers. That the barrio is a unique situation is questionable since we can imagine similar language settings in other linguistic minority communities in the United States. Nevertheless, the primary point is that the question of attributing speech community status to Los Angeles or any other Chicano community is a matter of empirical inquiry, and not a matter of definition.

Granting privileged status to Spanish

To the question whether we may speak about the language setting of Chicanos in a unitary manner, Rosaura Sánchez states (1983) that "it is impossible to talk about Chicanos of the Southwest as if they were a homogeneous entity." This is not a controversial view since there are few researchers who would presume that any ethnic group is homogeneous. However, Sánchez takes a more extreme position when she states (p. 60) with respect to
language use that "the relation between language, class and ideology is...complex and creates conditions rife with contradictions." 12 Her views on language and class are based on a perspective that is not subject to question, but that may be besides the point: "Southwest Spanish is an informal, oral language which predominates in areas of strong Chicano concentration," particularly in rural and small town barrios, where she states that Chicano ethnicity is tied to the use of Spanish. While she appropriately holds to one side bordertown Chicanos who participate in a stable bilingual environment, she describes the bond of culture to language as weakened in urban areas (1983:59-60):

"To the degree then that Chicanos have been isolated or set apart, economically and socially, they have maintained ample use of their Spanish-language varieties. To the degree that they have been incorporated into English-dominant employment categories and moved up the income scale, they have been acculturated, probably moved out of the barrio and into integrated communities and lost significant use of the Spanish language, with almost exclusive use of the English language."

Thus Sánchez gives a privileged position to Southwestern Spanish in the maintenance of Chicano culture, at the expense of the English of Chicanos. While it is true, as Sánchez notes, that Chicanos of the second and third generations tend to become monolingual English speakers, it is also clear that they do not automatically become members of the matrix American culture without any ethnic identification, as a result of monolingualism. Rather their English dialect remains distinctive and it may be seen to replace Spanish as the linguistic vehicle of cultural transmission. The language shift of the Chicanos from a predominantly Spanish-speaking to a predominantly English-speaking community since 1945 may have well been accompanied by a shift of the cultural value of their English dialect. In this view it could be argued that the markers of

12. Her linguistic research runs counter to her pronouncement, since she has most often discussed the language of Chicanos as a unitary group, e.g. Sánchez (1972).
ethnicity and acculturation would be found in Chicano English, rather than in the maintenance of Southwest Spanish. Indeed, there is solid evidence that Chicano culture is maintained in spite of the loss of Spanish use among younger Chicanos.13

In addition to her cultural argument that language use of Chicanos is rife with contradictions, Sánchez argues that economic structure determines the often contradictory linguistic situations. Time and again she refers to the economic forces affecting Chicanos:

"An increase in urbanization and industrialization in the Southwest after 1940 was paralleled by a drastic decline in agricultural jobs as a result of mechanization. Since then, employment increases have come in distribution, government, business consumer and professional services. The Southwest however, has not developed uniformly, for it is characterized by economic variations between and within the states themselves" (p. 7).

"Even a consideration of the language situation in the Southwest, as if it were some sort of unit, forces us to consider the varied economic development of the Southwestern states with varying rates of urbanization and industrialization” (p. 60).

13. "We found acculturation and assimilation occurring in our study, but the processes do not conform to the [ethnicity] model typically used in assimilationist studies. Acculturation certainly takes place, but it is neither as rapid nor as thorough as implied by most interpretations of the model. Even the fourth-generation Mexican Americans in our study retain aspects of Mexican culture—significantly, their value of and involvement in large and local extended families. ...[While] certain Mexican traits such as knowledge of Mexican history and the Spanish language decline significantly from one generation to the next, other traits such as Catholicism tend to be maintained; in some instances, such as extended familism, Mexican traits are strengthened over time in the U.S. ...The acculturation model tends to envision only two cultures: the immigrant and the traditional culture and the host culture. Our study, on the other hand, provides convincing evidence that the culture of Chicanos who have lived for generations in the U.S. is distinctive and, moreover, a third way of life possessing many unique features, rather than simply an amalgamation of Mexican and American traits" (Keefe & Padilla, 1987:6-7).
Instead of distinctive economic factors operating in different regions of the U.S., Sánchez cites differences in industrialization and urbanization as a matter of degree. This does not support her contention. It is not necessary for all Chicanos to be at the same point of economic development in order to be considered as an entity for linguistic purposes. Rather, since Chicanos are in fact responding to the same economic forces throughout the Midwest and Southwest, there is further reason to consider their linguistic behavior in a unitary manner. With the exception of borderland Chicanos who live in a stable bilingual setting, Sánchez provides no argument to suggest that different regions and speech communities are being affected by distinct economic forces, or that sizable portions of the total population of Chicanos do not participate in the late 20th century American economy.

Granting privileged status to standard English

A prominent educator who has written a series of articles on the nature of Chicano English, Gustavo González provides (1988:34) a line of criticism against any unitary approach to Chicano English.

"Whether the deviations from Standard American English are due to interference, from Spanish, to interalingual [sic] interference, or to developmental considerations, it is clear that the deviations examined above must somehow be accounted for in a description of Chicano English."

Contrary to González, the only ethnic dialect features that are distinct from those kinds of features present in monolingual matrix dialect speech communities are those that have their source in languages-in-contact interference, as described by R. García above. Developmental and other considerations are part of the heterogeneous nature of the speech community of any dialect, whether ethnic or regional, bilingual or monolingual. These features of the natural heterogeneity of language are not problematic for empirical linguistic research of speech communities. There are two issues inherent in González' criticism, the issue of
heterogeneity and the issue of the status of standard English. In this section we
deal with the latter. As an educator, González is concerned with deviations of
Chicano English from standard English. He assumes that standard code is
coherent and codified, hence easy to characterize, while the Chicano vernacular
is excessively heterogeneous. Although it seems to educators and the general
public that the codified, conventionalized standard dialect, standard English, is
apparently more structured, organized and consistent than the vernacular speech
of untutored speakers, this is far from the case.14

We refer to Stubbs (1986:82-97) on the nature of standard languages.
Stubbs discusses the structural and functional features of, the educational myths
surrounding, and the educational implications derived from study of standard
English: “Standard English is neither merely a dialect of English, nor a style: it is
an intersection of dialectal and functional variation, and this makes it
particularly difficult to define.” Standard English is not a regional dialect but a
“social one: that dialect which is used by all educated speakers, at least for some
purposes, and some people have it as their native language.” In his exposition
Stubbs discusses the very complex functional and contextual uses of standard
English; its non-systematic relationship to text, as opposed to dialects which are
based uniformly on speech; its sliding scale of systematicity from rigid spelling

14. I wish to emphasize that there are good reasons for exposing children who speak non-standard
dialects to the standard code as part of the educational process. One central and oft-stated goal
of American education is to provide all children with the language arts and skills that are
accepted in society as central to advanced learning, social mobility and economic
advancement. However, a common fallacy that educators and the public maintain is that since
standard English is the major medium of instruction in schools, (1) that it is the sole
appropriate vehicle through which learning can take place, and (2) that non-standard dialects
are inferior, inconsistent, broken codes. The first assumption is psychologically unfounded. As
for the second, there is a strong case for saying that non-standard dialects are more
linguistically consistent than standard codes, which are the repository of relic forms and
irregularities in language. More importantly, however, to devalue the non-standard dialect of a
child is to devalue of the child’s linguistic competence in his/her dialect, and this is naturally
interpreted by the child as a denigration of his/her knowledge and deductive capacity, which
all normal people have who acquire a language natively. This view is one of the most insidious
fallacies that permeates American education today.
norms to the relative absence of shared norms for pronunciation; and the non-

systematic conventionalization procedures which lead to the stated norms (versus

behavior) of the day. These and other factors make the linguistic framework of

thinking about standard languages quite complicated. Thus standard languages

pose different and greater problems to the linguist than vernacular dialect

characterization. Standard English is fundamentally a text-driven code; Chicano

English, as are all vernaculars, is a spoken dialect of English. González is thus

mistaken to assume that standard English is inherently the most useful code to

compare to Chicano English.

González's purpose in his 1988 article is to answer the crucial questions

that educators pose about Chicano English. Indeed, (p. 80) he states:

"The ESL/bilingual classroom teacher whose class contains Chicano

pupils needs to be aware of the wide heterogeneity of ability in English

represented by her/his students. This awareness will enable her/him to

approach the assessment of English language abilities cautiously and on an

individual basis."

In this article he indicates (p. 71) that the Chicano English range includes: "an

interlanguage, a transitory state in the Chicano's voyage toward standard

English," as well as the dialect of "pupils...from families where English is the

primary—and sometimes the only—language spoken..." In my opinion, these

distinctions should be maintained and utilized by educators to recognize and best

address differing needs of individual students. However, González contradicts his

own counsel that the teacher should assess each student's language(s) with

caution, since he states (p. 72) that "...it is best to consider Chicano English as

encompassing both extremes." Thus rather than preserving distinctions that are

valuable in both linguistic and pedagogical terms, he recommends that teachers

assess individuals pupils with an undifferentiated notion of Chicano English.

Another, even more problematic view that González seems to maintain

follows from a close reading of his article. As quoted above, he states that

Chicano English is spoken by families which have English as their only language.
However, elsewhere in this article (p. 79) he states that Chicano English is not spoken by native speakers:

"The concept of Chicano English encompasses a range of linguistic abilities, from the most limited and heavily Spanish influenced to the most advanced and near native."

This apparent inconsistency might suggest that standard English is apportioned even greater status than the appropriate medium of instruction. This passage might suggest that non-standard vernaculars, however close to standard English, are not on a par with standard English. In this view Chicano English can have a range from the interlanguage of immigrants to the speech of monolingual non-standard English speakers, and yet remain only "near native." This view, of course, is not shared by linguists of any stripe, and recalls the characterization maintained by certain linguistically-naïve educational psychologists in the 1960's, that since lower class African Americans do not speak standard English, they consequently have no language at all. To the position that these Chicanos are at best near-native speakers of English, we can refer to Labov's classic rebuttal (1969b). In the interest of Chicano pupils, it is essential to assume that the speech of native speakers of English, whether standard or non-standard, have identical linguistic status as rule-governed dialects of English. Secondly, in the interest of educators of Chicano children, we should maintain the distinctions of just those English varieties described by González, rather than conflating the terminology.

2. HETEROGENEITY

The second major orientation that distorts thinking about the Chicano language setting also grows out of the Peñalosa query. González states (1984:39–40) that "a simple, compact definition of Chicano English is not possible at present." His initial reason for maintaining skepticism is an absence of appropriate studies of the dialect. This is fair-minded, but he demonstrates resistance to the idea that a unitary characterization is at all possible:
"While this tendency to provide generic labels has made it easier to refer to the varieties of English spoken by the different ethnic groups, it has also helped obscure the diversity of varieties spoken by each of them. The terms imply that the speech referred to is characteristic of all speakers who are Indian, or Puerto Rican, or Chicano. Forgotten is the fact that studies from which the characteristics for each variety were derived were carried out with informants from different age levels and sociocultural backgrounds, by investigators utilizing different approaches (e.g. sociolinguistic, ethnographic). The only commonalities shared by the studies are that the informants came from the ethnic group being examined and that all spoke a variety of English different in some respect from Standard American English" (p. 33).

This skepticism, that too much diversity exists in ethnic vernaculars to make generalizations about the nature of an ethnic dialect, is maintained by language professionals who are unconvinced of efficacy of empirical linguistic research. This kind of criticism has been cited in the case of Chicanos, whose regional differences extend from southern Texas and rural northern New Mexico to urban California.15 For over twenty years, the "orderly heterogeneity" of the speech community (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog, 1968) has been accepted as a principle of empirical linguistics, with concomitant development of the method to systematically measure, and theory to permit interpretation of, the natural complex of variation of the speech community. Ironically, in the passage above González invokes the major impetus for a unitary characterization of the Chicano language setting, namely the commonality of the ethnic group. It is axiomatic that the commonality of self-designating groups will be reflected at some level in speech. It is precisely this linguistic commonality which is the target of empirical linguistic research of the ethnic dialect. As for the multiple methodologies

15. Skepticism toward analysis of natural linguistic heterogeneity, which resists generalizations, is distinct from a typological perspective. The latter has deep scholarly roots, for example Galarza (1972), who distinguished seven regional groups, and in anthropology, Spicer (1972), who came up with four ethnic subtypes. See Rosaldo (1985) for a review.
criticism mentioned in the same quote, methodological variety should be considered an advantage rather than a liability in social science inquiry.

Such skepticism toward natural linguistic heterogeneity is best countered with a model of the richly heterogeneous Chicano language setting. Several have been proposed. In Section 4, I will critique one recently proposed typology, Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia (1985), by way of introduction, in Section 5, to my own model of the Chicano language setting.

Cross-regional heterogeneity

González is not alone in registering doubt about the possibilities of defining Chicano English on account of extensive heterogeneity. Maryellen Garcia also exhibits skepticism (1984:85) about defining Chicano English:

"In the view of the social, geographical, and linguistic heterogeneity of such a group [as the Chicanos], it is unlikely that a single definition or characterization of Chicano English can emerge."

García’s reason is that given the regional differences, different communities of Chicanos, say from Texas, Illinois and California, are unlikely to share the norms of conduct and interpretation of speech necessarily to define a single cross-regional vernacular Chicano English dialect. Although her thesis may be found to be correct, the evidence marshalled is unconvincing. García cites a series of linguistic features prevalent in the barrios of East Los Angeles (from Benji Wald’s fieldwork). García undercuts her thesis (p. 91) when she concludes:

“This discussion of the linguistic parameters of East Los Angeles English is not enough to support the claim that the speech community is distinct from that of El Paso, or Albuquerque, or Denver.”

The second kind of evidence provided are observed differences in language choice norms across the different regional settings. In East Los Angeles García notes (p. 92) that “people who look Mexican should be addressed in English first then in Spanish if necessary,” and that English is the preferred
language, for even bilinguals in casual settings. Meanwhile in other Chicano communities Spanish or intrasentential codeswitching is preferred in informal contexts. These language choice norm differences across the country suggest to García that a single definition of Chicano English is not forthcoming. From my perspective however, these variations are not pertinent to the question whether or not a cross-regional Chicano English might exist. To support her contention García would have to claim that there is a Chicano community that does not utilizes Chicano English in some context. In fact, the use of English within Chicano culture now predominates to such a degree that it might well be claimed that all Chicano communities utilize Chicano English in casual contexts and informal styles.

With regard to her skepticism, García is not entirely consistent. As cited in her first quote, she thinks that a single definition is “unlikely.” On the other hand, she summarizes (p. 94) that it is “premature to delimit what Chicano English is…” Possibly it is assumed that unless identical linguistic features are found across all regions and all communities, and if there are no unshared features across the whole Chicano population, that a single definition of Chicano English cannot be formulated. This would be an unwarranted assumption about the nature of ethnic dialects. It is undoubtedly true that distinctive regional differences among different Chicano communities. These differences do not necessarily exclude the possibility that ultimately a cross-regional set of features might be found which all or most Chicanos use and interpret in parallel manners. It is important to recall that not all linguistic features would have to be shared. To give an example from the wider English-speaking world, the presence or absence of the /s – o/ distinction in American English, that is to say whether or not cot and caught are homonyms, is only a regional feature. This distinction does not serve as a primary differentiating feature for American English versus other Englishes of the world. Likewise, while it is certainly clear that it is premature to characterize the specific set of features of a cross-regional Chicano English, the existence of such a set is not theoretically impossible. In fact we can cite Black English Vernacular as an ethnic dialect that is strikingly homogeneous, in spite of its disparate regional origins. I will have cause to discuss Black English in Section
3 of this paper. Ultimately, García's criticisms are not compelling. Whether a cross-regional vernacular Chicano English set of features is found to exist is a matter of empirical inquiry.

Notwithstanding my differences with García's point of view, it must be emphasized that García's assumptions about language and society are much more valid than those of other researchers. García presumes that the target of Chicano English inquiry is the speech patterns of native English speakers. Additionally she assumes the natural complex linguistic heterogeneity of the barrio is not random confusion but reflects societal hierarchy, groupings and other structure. These assumptions are held by all empirical sociolinguists.

Summary

A set of controversies exists in the study of the languages of Chicanos, and of Chicano English in particular. The basic issue is whether or not regional characterizations are the broadest characterization that can be expected. Another one-or-many disagreement revolves around whether the Chicano speech community is a single entity or an aggregate of entities. M. García and González argue a set of entities perspective, whereas Wald favors a unified approach. The pivotal controversy concerns the nature of Chicano English: whether it is an epiphenomenon of language learning, following Sawyer and Merrill; or an autonomous dialect, as Peñalosa and Wald would have it. Additionally there is the suggestion that the notion of Chicano English should refer to both the interlanguage and the 'near-native' dialect. I suggest that we can look to the research of a more fully-studied ethnic dialect for perspective on these Chicano English controversies.

3. COMPARING BLACK ENGLISH RESEARCH

Twenty years ago Chicano English was recommended as a role-model for the fledgling Black English studies, suggesting that much could be learned about Black English in comparison to a common sense view of Chicano English:
"...If the creole-origin hypothesis for Negro English is confirmed and if the Negro, like the Chicano, really does have a genuine linguistic heritage rather than a substandard deviant dialect of English...then the Negro will be sociolinguistically comparable to the Chicano, who is also approaching the general Anglo-American linguistic and cultural norms but who has long been aware that his 'other heritage' includes a respectable language and culture, Spanish" (Decamp 1971:33).

One major Black English controversy of the early 1970's revolved on whether present-day Black English was part of a Creole Continuum, that is to say that it is a dialect continuing to undergo decreolization processes, or whether it was a post-creole phenomenon. The steady research that followed the framing of the Black English origin controversy has resolved the question: Black English is most appropriately considered a dialect in a post-creole setting\(^\text{16}\) that makes little reference to non-Black Englishes with respect to language change (Labov, 1969a; Fasold, 1976; Bailey & Maynor, 1987). Additionally it is now known that BEV, Black English Vernacular, is remarkably homogeneous across the whole United States, due to recent historical developments.\(^\text{17}\) Lastly, BEV is not a substandard deviant, contrary to Decamp's polemical description, but a distinct English dialect (Labov, 1969b).

While an extended comparison of the sociological and sociolinguistic setting of Chicano English and Black English speakers would be an interesting

\(^\text{16}\) This stands in contrast to a decreolization setting, as is the case in Jamaican English, (Patrick, to appear), in which the 'lower' dialects make reference to Jamaican acrolect English. For American Black English there is only indirect evidence of this effect, and this evidence has been contested.

\(^\text{17}\) The massive migration of African-Americans from all parts of the South to Northeast urban centers in the 20th century, with concomitant segregation of African-Americans from non-African-American northern cities populations, led to dialect leveling due to social mixing and physical concentration of speakers of different southern dialects. More recently there has been significant in-migration of African-Americans from one African-American inner-city area to another.
undertaking, it is more to the point to comment that Black English studies have outstripped those of Chicano English in the last twenty years. While former controversies about Black English have been worked into broad generalizations, no consensus has been reached on those concerning Chicano English. Consequently, we should use the experience of Black English studies to frame our thinking on the Chicano language setting as a research topic.

The Black English language setting

Agreement on the basic character of Black English has allowed both researchers and language professionals to develop a shared perspective on the Black English research enterprise. Another consequence is that a model for the dialect contact setting could be set up to characterize BEV and Black English in the context of a larger English-speaking community, beginning with Baugh (1983). Baugh defined the dialect setting of African Americans, in sociological terms, on a dialect contact continuum of a single parameter: the extent to which African Americans have contact with Black street culture to the exclusion of American white culture. See Figure 1.

The dialect contact model is diagrammed as a triangle representing all African Americans fitting within an enclosing rectangle of white American speakers. The widest part of the triangle represents Baugh's sociolinguistic definition of BEV. BEV has been the object of much sociolinguistic research. BEV is defined as the dialect of African Americans who have minimum social contact with non-African American people. Conversely the narrowest point of the triangle represents African Americans who are in constant contact with non-African Americans, and who consequently speak some non-standard white variety or Standard English.

18. There is no Library of Congress subject heading 'Chicano English' or 'Mexican-American English' parallel to the Black English subject heading. In the University of New Mexico's main library there are 21 Black English titles while only three volumes are devoted to Chicano English.
As it is presented here, one aspect of this model might be misleading, since places standard English on the right pole of the gradient. Following Stubbs, standard English is not a single entity. The right side of the contact gradient may more accurately be characterized as a regional standard, rather than monolithic standard American English.

There are several strengths in Baugh's model. It represents the defining criterion of the ethnic dialect vernacular within its schema, that is to say the nature of contact with whites. Thus the technical definition of BEV, as the dialect of speakers who rarely come into contact with whites, is clearly expressed and is a point of reference for other researchers, for example Labov & Harris (1986:4). The model also describes the diversity of the Black English speakers, from very street talking to relatively white. Each African-American can find a place in this typology. Lastly, since it is an explicit model, it is relatively open to criticism, reformulation or rejection.

Before presenting my own model of the much more complex Chicano language setting, which incorporates features of Baugh's model, I will comment critically on a very recent model of the Chicano language setting.

4. Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia's Typology of the Chicano Language Setting

Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia (P&O) present a typology of language varieties that I will take to be a language setting model, in their recent monograph on Chicano English (1985). This typology is described to be a
"idealized classification." It is a linked set of boxes that are drawn on a single line "continuum" from Standard English to the northern Mexican version of Standard Spanish. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Chicano language typology (Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia 1985)

I will begin a brief description of P&O's language varieties with Northern Mexican Standard Spanish. The authors ascribe the source of Northern Mexican Standard Spanish to a non-standard variety of 16th century settlers that has a lot of substrate vocabulary. Distinct from Northern Mexican Standard Spanish is the northern New Mexican/southern Colorado Spanish dialect which is a relic dialect, long being isolated and is comparably unchanged from its source among these 16–17th century Spanish conquistadors. P&O group this relic variety with general Southwest Spanish in their schema. Southwest Spanish is a "fully bilingual dialect" (p. 9), by which is meant Haugen's notion.19 Following

19. "Our study of the confusion of tongues in the [Norwegian] immigrant community has led us to the conclusion that it is not identical with a confusion of communication. The language used may seem barbarous and baffling to the outside observer, but those who joint the social group soon discover that they have to follow the customary norm if they wish to be understood. ...Stories are current about the excesses of 'mixing,' and the speakers show a certain self-consciousness about it when they know that potential critics are listening. But most of them show relative uniform behavior with respect to the usual loanwords, which means that the adoption of words leaves the main structure of their Norwegian untouched. They think they are speaking Norwegian, even though they admit it may be a 'Minnesota Norwegian,' and in these contentions they are right. American Norwegian is indeed Norwegian, though we may
Haugen, P&O characterize Southwest Spanish as having norms and forms that reflect English contact, for example rephonemization, codeswitching and semantic shift of Spanish terms to English meanings. The next variety of Spanish, as we move toward the English pole of the continuum, is caló, a street argot. The next section deals with codeswitching, which has language variety status in this schema. Lastly, Chicano English is characterized as a distinct ethnic dialect.

Codeswitching

The fifth variety in P&O's of the Chicano language setting is intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching. P&O acknowledge that many linguists do not consider codeswitching to be a language variety, but P&O argue that codeswitching is a "communicative style" which is more than bilingualism since native bilinguals do not necessarily have the ability or need to codeswitch. "Those bilinguals who did not use both languages indiscriminately side-by-side in childhood often find it totally unnatural and even impossible to code-switch in conversation" (p. 14). They argue, on firmer linguistic grounds, that there are distinctive social functions associated with codeswitching, citing Gumperz & Hernández-Chávez (1972) and Elías-Olivares (1976). Most surprisingly, P&O ascribed the origin of Chicano English to codeswitching:

“Our data indicates that a good deal of Chicano English is introduced in conversations by code-switching behavior which leads into total conversations in Chicano English. Chicano English, also, seems to be the most typical variety of English used in code-switching as opposed to Standard English. This is most easily verified through the examination of prosodic patterns where similarities are common between the English used in code-switching and Chicano English used in non-code-switching context (Penfield, [1988]). It seems reasonable
to infer that Chicano English originates with code-switchers who eventually pass one dimension of their code on to English speaking settings where language mixing and code-switching are traditionally viewed as unacceptable. ...We will, for now, assume that Chicano English among bilinguals is derived historically from code-switching speech" (p. 14–15).

There are two problems with this point of view. For one, if we accept this perspective we cannot exclude the possibility that codeswitching is the source of the Southwest Spanish 'bilingual dialect' as well. Secondly, this Chicano English origin theory is harder to maintain if codeswitching is a viewed as process that occurs in bilingual contexts, rather than a separate dialect. Linguistic research since Poplack (1980) has tended in the direction of non-language-particular constraints on codeswitching. The concensus is that codeswitching is not a language variety created in a unique contact setting but a process that can be described in terms of syntactic and phonological rule interaction, regardless of the particular languages in contact (Bentahila & Davies, 1983; Joshi, 1985; Di Sciullo, Muysken & Singh, 1986; Myers-Scotton, forthcoming). A well-established alternative is the substrate theory of language change, which has often been cited as the origin of Chicano English (e.g. MacDonald, 1989). The substrate theory predicts that some interlanguage features of a L1 (Spanish-speaking) community in contact with an L2 (English-language) may be transmitted to the native-speaking bilinguals of both L1 and L2. Both substantial overlap of Chicano English and interlanguage English features and their distinctions can be seen to be consequences of languages in contact, without resorting to codeswitching as the source of the Chicano English language variety.20

20. In another article Penfield ascribes the source of Chicano English to contact, and does not mention codeswitching in her own typology of the Chicano language setting. Figure A, which distinguishes standard dialects (circles) from non-standard dialects (squares). Penfield affirms some of the premises of P&O, i.e. stable bilingualism and SW Spanish described as a 'bilingual dialect.' The genetic relationships implied are curious. For example, two dialects, northern
Stable bilingualism

P&O describe the Chicano English contact setting as region of "recognized stable bilingualism" with maintenance of Spanish across generations of Chicanos (p. 7). The stability has been ascribed to a division of language use domains: Spanish usage in informal domains; English usage for formal domains (Ornstein, 1974:100-1). Chicano stable bilingualism, which is described as unique among large-scale language contact settings in the U.S., unquestionably exists for a subgroup of the Chicano population living along the political border. However, P&O extend stable bilingualism to Chicanos throughout the Southwest on the basis of three factors: ancestral ties to Mexican culture and language; in-migration of Chicanos throughout the Southwest (p. 7); and, migration of both large numbers of non-standard Spanish-speaking migrants as well as a small number of standard Spanish speakers from Mexico. I lend differential import to these factors, particularly for present-day Chicano communities. With respect to the first factor, just as ancestral ties to Italy did not preserve Italian among Italian-Americans of the eastern seaboard cities, it is questionable whether most Chicanos maintain effective ties, such as frequent visits, telephone calls and the like, to relatives in Mexico. In fact, the absence of
such ties has been documented (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). Two, the absence of emigration of predominantly rural Chicanos to cities might have promoted stable bilingualism during the long pre-1945 period of Chicano history, and seems to have been effective in maintaining Spanish-dominant speech communities. However in-migration of Chicanos to urban areas, particularly to Los Angeles, which began with the Great Depression, has contributed to the decline of stable bilingualism (Thompson, 1974; Ortiz, 1975; López, 1978, 1982; R. Sánchez, New Mexico Spanish and southern Colorado Spanish, are distinguished where one dialect is commonly accepted and these are placed closer to Standard Mexican Spanish yet off the "continuum" line.

Figure A: Penfield's Chicano language typology (1984:72)

21. Immigrants are uprooted souls. But they begin to remake the highly-valued Mexican trait of extended familism. As later generations began to raise their own families, they want to remain close to home. This can be attributed to persistent ethnic self-identification and the high value given to extended familialism (Keefe & Padilla). Using Los Angeles as an example, the Chicano settlement pattern, which was established early and is maintained today, is governed by the need to find affordable housing outside of East Los Angeles, but not so far away that "the kids can't be with their abuelita," 'grandmother', as it was put to me while conducting fieldwork. As for the numbers, Keefe & Padilla found that California Euro-American families average 2.5 siblings, but they do not visit them on a weekly basis. On the other hand, California Chicanos average five siblings who see each other daily or weekly. Moreover Chicanos have more secondary kin than Euro-Americans with whom they visit and exchange on a daily or weekly basis. There is no decline of familialism with acculturation (p. 138). In contrast, Chicanos are very apt to involve local kin in their daily lives, ever more so in later generations. This orientation is limited however to only local kin. They maintain very few ties to Mexico or even with family outside of southern California. In contrast, Euro-Americans maintain kin relationships over long distances, i.e. they do in fact 'reach out to touch someone.' Euro-Americans are mobile, with fewer local kin, and are not apt to involve kin in their daily lives.
Spanish continues to be used by Chicanos, but as urbanization process advances and previously isolated areas are opened up, there is evidence that language shift (to monolingual English) progresses among Chicanos, especially among the younger speakers.\(^{22}\)

In the present-day Chicano language setting, only the third factor, uninterrupted replenishment of Spanish monolingualism in the form of Mexican immigrants assures bilingualism (Cornelius et al., 1982:62), but not necessarily stable bilingualism, in large Chicano populations.\(^{23}\) Again, the exception to language shift to a predominantly English-speaking population is the Mexico–U.S. border area, where adjacency to the monolingual Spanish-speaking nation supports dual language use in all linguistic domains among a portion of the Chicano population.

**Defining Chicano English**

In a section entitled "Towards a Definition of Chicano English," no definition is provided.\(^{24}\) However, P&O explicitly distinguish (p. 16) between the ethnic dialect labeled Chicano English and:

---

22. Early researchers advocated bilingual education for Chicano children in terms of planned language maintenance for children as well as rights to education in the mother tongue: "The pressures of migration of non-English-speaking ethnic groups to urban centers from rural areas...has increased their preoccupation with cultural and linguistic survival" (John & Horner, 1970:142.)

23. "...Mexican-Americans in Texas and the Southwest, do indeed have higher rates of ethnic mother tongue maintenance than do European immigrant stocks earlier in this century or the Asians who constitute the other major immigrant stock today. But maintaining Spanish beyond the second generation is a question of a significant minority, not a majority, pattern among Hispanics" (López, 1982:4, emphasis in the original). "...Comparisons of the 1979 [Current Population Survey] results with those obtained in 1975 and 1976 show that only 45–50% of adult Hispanics usually speak Spanish, not the 80–90% that the 1979 and 1980 data imply. ...The correlates of maintaining Spanish generally indicate that continuing to use Spanish is associated with lower socioeconomic status" (p. ii).

24. In a separate article Penfield calls Chicano English a "contact vernacular," and states: "Chicano English may be defined as a variety of English which has originated from contact
"the English used by new learners which...falls within the parameters of 'interference.' ...'Interference English' is the interlanguage of adult monolingual speakers of any variety of Spanish who are in the process of learning and using English. ...Interference English shares certain features with Chicano English and does not share others."

While following P&O in their distinction, I prefer to call the non-native code an interlanguage English. P&O do not provide an inventory of the features that distinguish interlanguage English from Chicano English. Instead, P&O claim (p. 17):

"The most significant difference between Chicano English and interference English is a social one. Interference speakers of English do not share a social identity and speech community as do Chicano English speakers—at least as far as English is concerned."

Thus P&O favor a view that the Chicano speech community is an aggregate of entities. While accepting the interlanguage versus Chicano English distinction, I believe that separate speech community designations for the Chicano speech communities has its drawbacks, as argued in Section 1. The reason for their aggregate view, it seems, may be that P&O wanted to implement a functional or social criterion to distinguish the interlanguage from Chicano English. Rather than divide the barrio into different speech communities, we alternatively may define Chicano English in contrast to interlanguage English by a formal criterion that P&O fail to mention: native speaker linguistic competence in English.

---

with Spanish along with other social and regional dialects of English, including southern English and Black English. ...It is a nonstandard variety of English which displays norms of its own linguistically, most of which have developed through contact with other varieties of English. Quite naturally some of these norms reflect predictable interference between Spanish and English which has developed diachronically into a community norm. However, other norms reflect just the opposite, perhaps an attempt to hypercorrect or display non-interference" (1984:72).
Criterion for determining language varieties

There are other problems with P&O's typology. There is no discussion of the relationship of non-standard (regional) Spanish, Black English, and non-standard (regional) English, to the single line continuum of Chicano English. More importantly, P&O state (p. 15) that the language varieties that they have been describing are not necessarily distinct in descriptive linguistic terms, but are most clearly distinct in perception: "only in the sense that Chicano and Anglo members label them distinctly." Perception is thus used as the criterion to distinguish language varieties. However, P&O do not implement this criterion consistently. They combine the relic dialect with general Southwest Spanish when the distinctiveness of the northern New Mexico/southern Colorado dialect is commonly recognized. Another example is the dubious assignment of language variety status to caló. As Webb states:

"Caló is not a code, for it, even at its deepest level, retains most of the syntax, morphology, and phonology of the Spanish surrounding it" (1974:149).

"Caló, within Southwest Spanish, can only be defined by the user, for it often involves only slight deviation from the standard pattern of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics" (p. 152).

If this is the case, then caló should not be considered equivalent to dialects such as Southwest Spanish. Lastly, as stated before, P&O describe Southwest Spanish as a bilingual dialect, including features such as codeswitching, yet codeswitching is given language variety status elsewhere in the model.

The absence of a defining criterion for language varieties, with its consequent ambiguity about Chicano English, whether it is formal, socially or functionally defined, leaves this typology of the Chicano language contact setting unsettled. Although M. García (1984) argued that providing a definition of Chicano English is a vain project, nevertheless, the scientific enterprise presupposes at least a working definition of the object of study. The absence of an
explicit definition of Chicano English has generated much confusion due to contradictory research findings, which in turn leaves teachers in doubt about the assessment of Chicano students' language.

5. A MODEL OF THE CHICANO LANGUAGE SETTING

Having commented on a selection of the issues surrounding the Chicano language setting, and laid out both Baugh's Black English setting as well as P&O's typology for Chicano language setting, I am now in a position to present the premises underlying my own model. Many of the premises will be obvious from my commentary. The following represents an effort to base a Chicano language model on explicit assumptions.

• The language and dialect contact setting of Chicanos is unitary phenomenon, since it is based on the commonality of ethnicity, irrespective of the regional variation inherent in an ethnic group of millions of people.

• There are two points of reference that tie ethnic groups together across broadly-scattered communities. One is their shared historical and cultural provenance. Second, the minority ethnic group contrasts itself to the matrix culture, the larger non-Chicano society. The latter is reflected linguistically in vernacular ethnic speech patterns distinct from those of the matrix non-ethnic vernacular. Thus the English of Chicanos is characterizable in terms of relative contact with the speakers of matrix Anglo vernacular. Likewise, the Spanish of Chicanos is characterizable in terms of contact with norteno Mexican Spanish speakers.

• During each individual's language acquisition period, the social network, that is to say the circle of people with whom one personally identifies through face-to-face daily contact, is the effective socialization unit. Shared patterns of use of linguistic variables, and of interpretation of
those variables, are the reflexes of this socialization process. The collective result of this localized socialization process is the speech community, which is defined by shared patterns of use and interpretation of linguistic variables.

- Languages and dialects are formally distinguished, that is to say those distinct in terms of a phonological and/or syntactic rule-governed basis. This premise, which is meant to maintain the utility of a model of the language setting, excludes varieties defined in functional terms.

- Multilingualism of the community is not a defining feature of the language contact setting, but rather a consequence. Thus codeswitching and language mixing are processes that occur when languages are brought together, and do not define the languages-in-contact setting.

- Chicano English is the speech of native speakers. Non-native speakers of English, whether they consider themselves Chicano or Mexican, are second language learners. The latter are speakers of an interlanguage English that is formally distinct from the English of native speakers.

- Vernacular Chicano English (VCE) is defined as the dialect of Chicano speakers of English who have minimum contact with non-Chicanos in their daily communicative life.

Discussion

Differences in regional dialects are discerned by dialectologists as an essential part of their descriptive agenda. The existence of these unique regional features is not in dispute. For example the presence of /ɛ–ʃ/ variable, for example the choose–shoes variable neutralization in the speech of Texas Chicanos (Ornstein, 1974) has not been found in California (Wald, 1981; Santa Ana, 1991). On the other hand, unitary reference to the Chicano dialects has been
assumed by a number of researchers, namely Chicano Spanish in Sánchez (1972, 1983); and Chicano English in Peñalosa (1980). In fact, since language reflects social structure, a unitary language contact setting of Chicanos is presumed across regions and speech communities whenever the notion of a Chicano ethnic group is evoked.25

The reference point shared across regions and speech communities is the contact of Chicanos with the non-Chicanos of the matrix dialect community in which Chicanos find themselves, namely the matrix English-speaking community of Anglos, and the norteño Spanish-speaking community of Mexicans on the U.S.–Mexico border or in urban immigrant enclaves. The criterion of Black English dialect setting, having been defined in terms of relative contact with non-African-Americans, can thus be extended. In fact, relative contact is a concept that may be appropriate for all ethnic dialect and language settings in this country, since all groups who have normal contact with the non-ethnic majority may be said to be distinguishable in terms of a sliding scale of contact with the non-ethnic dialect of the region, with those populations that have less contact with non-ethnics consequently exhibiting more distinctively ethnic dialect features. As P&O, Baugh and others have noted, the contact setting for Chicanos has two reference points: norteño Spanish and the non-ethnic regional English. This is an important feature of the Chicano language contact setting, but it is not essential, as evidenced by monolingual English speakers who cannot order a *taco* in Spanish to save their lives, but for all cultural purposes are Chicanos.

While contact with the matrix non-Chicano dialect places the ethnic dialect squarely within its language setting, it does not follow that the only kind of research must be contrastive linguistics, that is to say comparing the Chicanos' vernacular to non-Chicano vernacular use of English. To give but one example, the distinguishing criterion of a speech community, say of Los Angeles Chicanos, is shared norms of language usage and interpretation of sociolinguistic variation.

25. The burden of proof rests with the researcher who would argue that Chicanos do not comprise a single ethnic group.
Sociolinguistic variables have social meaning associated with their differential pronunciation. The determination of these variables and the extent of agreement as to the interpretation of the meaning of the variation across a complex urban population is an empirical enterprise. Certain sociolinguistic variables, for example (-ing), the talking-talkin’ alternation, are shared by the ethnic and matrix communities, although the internal and social constraints may differ significantly (Hartford, 1985; Santa Ana, 1991:75–85), with ethnic speech communities having consistent and distinctive patterns of constraint and interpretation. Other sociolinguistic variables are unique to the ethnic speech community, for example the lowering and backing of /e/ in stressed syllables followed by /l/, namely an [æ] pronunciation as in cat for the first syllable of elevator, by East Los Angeles Chicanos (M. García, 1984:87) with no parallel in the matrix community.

The language and dialect contact setting of the Chicanos is limited to dialects which are formally distinct in terms of a rule-governed basis. I do not wish to denigrate discussion of functional and social varieties of a single dialect. In fact, much of the best research on the languages of Chicanos is on functional and social varieties, for example Barker (1947). Maintaining a formal versus functional distinction, however, prevents the inconsistent assignment of language variety status. Furthermore, formal distinctions allows us to resolve the definitional controversy.

All reference to the English of Chicanos is made to the speech of native speakers. This basic linguistic premise has to be reiterated.26 Returning to Stewart’s (1964) original distinction which separates speakers of Chicano English from speakers of interlanguage English, I wish to insist that non-native speakers of English, whether they considered Chicano or Mexican, are second language

26. At times the premise has been overlook due to an ideological perspective that views Chicanos and Mexicans as one nation, La Raza. At other times another ideology has presumed the automatic operation of the Melting Pot theory of American immigrant assimilation.
learners. Interlanguage English is formally distinct from the English of Chicanos who acquired their language as (one of) their first language(s).27

VCE is the spoken dialect of Chicano speakers of English who have minimum contact with non-Chicanos in their daily communicative life. Again, I take a cue from Baugh, who also defines BEV in terms of a sliding scale of contact with the non-African American speech community. There is no lack of second and third generation Chicanos who live their lives in major U.S. cities without significant contact with non-Chicanos. The rural isolation of turn of the century Texano, New Mexican Hispano and Califormo communities has been replaced by urban segregation in barrios which are overwhelmingly Chicano. Taking one example, Los Angeles public schools that serve Chicanos have five percent non-Chicano students (Woo, 1987; Mathews, 1988; Santa Ana, 1991:28, 38).

The proposed definition of VCE is cross-regional, relatively non-technical and concise. As a working definition for researchers, it targets the core group of speakers to sample in each Chicano community. The absence of a list of shared linguistic features to characterize a cross-regional VCE is not ruled out as impossible or even improbable, but a matter of further empirical inquiry.

Description of the model

We are now in a position to lay out a schematic of the language and dialect contact setting of Chicanos. Following Baugh (1984) I initially distribute the ethnic population in terms of a single parameter: the amount of contact they have with non-ethnic group members, from minimal contact with non-Chicanos to maximal contact with non-Chicanos. VCE is the dialect of native speakers of English whose daily sustained communicative contact is with other Chicanos. Thus we have replicated the dialect contact setting that Baugh set out for Black English, a Chicano English triangle enclosed in a matrix dialect (Anglo) English rectangle. As for Chicano Spanish, a mirror image of this schema is potentially

27. I would like to acknowledge that William Stewart also was the first linguist to point out that the dialect of African-Americans should be studied as a coherent system. (Labov 1966:33).
useful with a similar gradient of contact with monolingual Mexican Spanish speakers. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: The Chicano language-contact setting

There are clear limitations to Figure 3, as well as Baugh's schema, as reproduced in Figure 1. These schemas only represent the graduated range of contact that ethnic dialect speakers have with matrix dialect speakers on their vertical dimension. They may be misread. The interior triangles should not be seen to suggest that the greatest proportion of ethnic population are BEV or VCE speakers, with a minimum proportion of these populations who are speakers of a near-standard variety of English.

A more representative schema, fashioned on the premises previously stated, would incorporate the actual proportions of the whole population, in terms of formally-distinguished dialects. A regional dialect, such as that of southern Colorado--northern New Mexico, would not be distinguished. Likewise codeswitching, whether considered a style or process, would not be included. Cal6, the functionally-determined underworld argot would not be recognized, since it is a set of replaceable words and phrases that piggy-backs on a vernacular dialect.

There are other interesting features of the Chicano language setting. I have suggested that bilingualism should not be used as a defining criterion of this languages-in-contact setting. In Figure 3 the interior triangles, the English-
speaking population of Chicanos English and the Spanish-speaking population of Chicanos, do not represent bilingual individuals. The bilingual versus monolingual populations is, nonetheless, a useful feature to indicate, as another proportional representation of the total Chicano population. See Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Chicano language setting, by dominant dialect and indicating bilinguals

In Figure 4, the gradient scale of communicative contact with matrix dialect speaking non-ethnics (the lower pair of boxes), is combined with a proportional representation of the total Chicano population (the upper part of the graph with a population curve). I have indicated in the boxes representing the gradient contact with non-ethnic speakers, that Chicanos have greater contact with the standard English speakers than with standard Spanish speakers.
As for the population curve of Figure 4, it represents proportions of the total population when each individual Chicano is assigned a single 'dominant' dialect. Bilingualism is represented as the shaded sub-portion of the total proportion of the speakers of the dialect.28 To emphasize the formal determination of this model, a dominate-language determination is utilized for each Chicano. Thus in Figure 4, a heavy line distinguishes English-dominant or Spanish-dominant Chicanos. Balanced bilinguals are not distinguished in this determination, but the decision was left to the individual, as reported in the 1980 census.

Rather than use a bar-graph in this model, to highlight the continuum that H&O and others have emphasized in describing the Chicano language setting, the population numbers have been drawn on a curve. The curve is created by interpolating the 1980 census figures, such as Chicanos speaking Spanish at home versus those speaking English at home.

Determining the proportions is not without problems. For one, with respect to ethnic minorities populations, the census numbers are prone to undercounts (Santa Ana, 1991:24).29 Further difficulties arise in determining the linguistically-relevant subgroupings of speakers from these data. One question that arises within this model is: How many Chicanos speak a regional standard dialect? There is no direct demographic answer. In my fieldwork in Los Angeles my impression was that there are more standard English speakers than standard

28. Among the features that I have not included are the proportion of interlanguage English speakers in the Chicano language setting. Baugh (1984:7) indicated Chicano interlanguage in his model of the Chicano English setting. This model represented the interlanguage of native Spanish speakers (recent immigrants from Mexico) and interlanguage Spanish of native English speakers (Chicanos, a far less numerous group). Baugh did not attempt to represent proportions of the population, rather representing interlanguage as a process. His model is also interesting in that it represents a continuum of balanced bilingual speakers, both those speaking standard and nonstandard dialects.

29. Using Federal census data in these figures is meant only as a starting point. Other demographic sources are available. For California schoolchildren, for example, the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), which provides significant information on the home language and ethnicity of every child K−12 who attends either public or private school.
Spanish speakers among Chicanos/Mexicans. But an impression is insufficient; a measure is needed. Following a sociolinguistic correlation of class and dialect, that middle and upper-middle class speakers use higher frequencies of standard features than do working class speakers, as an initial measure, I divided the Chicano population by an economic factor of class. For the purposes of creating a proportional representation of Figure 4, those Chicanos who are living in households with greater than the median income, whether with large families, or with multiple bread-winners, make up the standard dialect speakers; those below the median income level are Chicano dialect speakers. The lines that distinguish standard and nonstandard dialects are dotted in Figure 4, to indicate that they are less formal approximations, in contrast to the Spanish-dominant and English-dominant distinction. At this point we overreach the available demographic data on language use, but I hope that this schema, with its premises and definitions, presents the relatively complex language setting in a comprehensible fashion.

6. CHICANO LANGUAGE SETTINGS OF THREE STATES

The model can readily be used to indicate the nature of the language setting in regional or speech community areas, and for these the demographic data are often more comprehensive. This section provides the language setting models of three states: New Mexico, Figure 5; Texas, Figure 6; and California, Figure 7. Several decisions had to be taken with regards to the census data. As stated above, the dominant dialect, standard versus nonstandard, was determined by the gross measure of whether the speakers earned more that the median income (standard dialect speakers) or earned less than the median income

30. The division by income level is a tentative measure, in order to begin to represent the major linguistically-relevant distinctions of the model. Many demographic refinements are conceivable. The income metric for determining standard dialect users can, for example be rejected in favor of a metric that utilizes an index incorporating employment and education as well as income. Such refinements would better characterize the dialect proportions of the Chicano language setting.
Table 1: Population totals for four Chicano language settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIALECT</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>TEXAS</th>
<th>NEW MEXICO</th>
<th>CALIFORNIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MONOLINGUAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard Spanish</td>
<td>101,453</td>
<td>10,230</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td>38,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano Spanish</td>
<td>745,042</td>
<td>156,136</td>
<td>22,837</td>
<td>278,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano English</td>
<td>1,390,950</td>
<td>164,872</td>
<td>307,432</td>
<td>334,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard English</td>
<td>845,711</td>
<td>75,364</td>
<td>130,505</td>
<td>189,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILINGUAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard Spanish</td>
<td>321,251</td>
<td>30,465</td>
<td>2,503</td>
<td>62,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano Spanish</td>
<td>1,131,555</td>
<td>241,743</td>
<td>18,927</td>
<td>371,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano English</td>
<td>4,277,227</td>
<td>1,082,783</td>
<td>180,373</td>
<td>1,052,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard English</td>
<td>2,185,751</td>
<td>358,049</td>
<td>76,345</td>
<td>618,721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Detailed population characteristics, 1980 U.S. census, Table 199: 'Selected social and economic characteristics of persons in households by language spoken at home and ability to speak English'. Texas p. 45-35, New Mexico p. 33-20, California p. 6-51, and 61% of U.S. summary p. 1-19. 61% is the 'Mexican-origin' proportion of 'total Hispanic-origin' (Garcia & Montgomery 1991:12). Census designations employed: Standard dialect speaker: Earns more than median income. Chicano dialect speaker: Earns less than median income. English monolingual: Adult who speaks only English, who has at least one household member who speaks Spanish. English bilingual: Adult who speaks Spanish at home and is able to speak English "very well" or "well." Spanish bilingual: Adult who speaks Spanish at home and is able to speak English "not well." Spanish monolingual: Adult who speaks Spanish at home and is able to speak English "not at all."

Furthermore it must be noted that children under 15 years of age are not included. The numbers from Table 1 have been interpolated with a curved line to provide a measure of the continuity in the language setting.

---

The figures are all drawn with the same dimensions for ease of comparison. Consequently this makes the increment of the vertical scales different. Likewise, detail is lost in the figures of the language settings that have low numbers.

Figure 5: New Mexico Chicano language setting

Figure 6: Texas Chicano language setting
There are important generalizations to be stated from these figures. The greatest difference across these states is on the Spanish-dominant side of each figure; the English pictures are relatively similar. Most importantly for these states, the largest proportion of the whole population are native Chicano English speakers, that is to say working class English-dominant Chicanos who speak English “well” or “very well.” Secondly, bilingualism is not lost with the advent of standard English (that is to say upper income levels). Moreover, the states register more Chicano bilinguals than monolinguals. García (1984) has cited Macias, who states that 23% of Chicanos are monolingual English speakers. The caveats, it must be said, are piling up: these are self-reports and bilingualism is a loaded notion even on the street; and, there is a real decline in the numbers of bilinguals as income increases for the states.

As for the Chicano language setting for particular states: Texas has the lowest proportion of English monolinguals, while perhaps surprisingly California has the largest proportional and absolute number of Spanish monolinguals. New Mexico has the lowest proportion of Spanish speakers, with a lopsided English dominant figure. On these last points distinguishing California and New Mexico,
the differences might have their source in differential Mexican immigration rates. California has maintained the largest immigrant influx during this century (Massey et al., 1987), even more than Texas, while until recently New Mexico has not attracted much immigrant flow. It should be noted as well, given these figures, that New Mexico realizes the most retention of bilingualism as income increases.

7. SUMMARY

These figures, of course, are subject to much correction and refinement. However they present a model of the Chicano language setting that may be more representative than previous typologies. In this paper I have criticized various tacit and explicit treatments of the Chicano language setting, especially with regards to Chicano English, and propose a set of premises and definitions that can lead to a more informative and linguistically-valid representation. Researchers of Chicano language have a responsibility to articulate better models of the kinds of language that teachers of Chicanos face in their classrooms. This paper is an attempt to generate further discussion and to promote a more accurate view of the speech of Chicano children.
REFERENCES


