An integrated multi-generational model for language maintenance and shift
The case of Spanish in the Southwest*

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Many researchers investigating the maintenance and loss of non-English languages in the U.S. base their work on fairly homogeneous language groups, those who have immigrated here during a relatively restricted period of time. The European-origin migrations during the early decades of the twentieth century represent these types of language communities. However, Spanish is not strictly an immigrant language when compared to other non-English, non-indigenous languages. It shares in common with indigenous languages the fact that it was spoken in what is now the U.S. before the arrival of English speakers. However, it is unlike indigenous languages in that it continues to be reinforced by the arrival of Spanish-speaking immigrants. Given the complexities of this bilingual population, the purpose of the present article is to examine the variables that set apart the Spanish-speaking populations of the U.S., and particularly of the Southwest, in order to provide a revised model for language maintenance and shift that goes beyond the limitations of classic intergenerational models.

Keywords: language loss and maintenance models, contact generation, linguistic generation, U.S. Southwest

1. Introduction

The research agenda on language maintenance and shift advanced by Joshua Fishman (1964, 1965, 1966) establishes a solid foundation for studying the dynamics of language contact, particularly in situations in which two (or more) languages coexist in unequal relationships. In his seminal article “Language maintenance and language shift as a field of inquiry”, Fishman (1964) sets forth fundamental parameters for research dedicated to better understanding the maintenance or shift of minority languages in regions throughout the world in general, and in the United States in particular. Researchers such as Grosjean 1982 and Romaine 1995
(to name only two) have developed and refined the means of analyzing such dynamics, commonly employed by those who study the shift to English among minority language groups in the U.S. Grosjean (1982), for example, describes a three generation progression of shift from a mother tongue to English. He notes that unless the first, or immigrant, generation lives in isolated linguistic areas where contact with the dominant language is limited, its members soon realize the need to utilize the dominant language for basic social and economic necessities. This motivation leads to bilingualism in the second generation (assuming the mother tongue is spoken in the home), and a third generation that grows up monolingual in the dominant language.

However, the groups on which these researchers based their theories of language shift are fairly homogeneous in nature in the sense that they represent an immigrant generation that arrived during a restricted period of time, such as the European-origin migrations during the early decades of the twentieth century. Fishman (1964), for example, describes the language choice patterns of Yiddish/English bilinguals who migrated to the U.S. before World War I. Those generations tended toward endogamy, so that subsequent generations were also fairly homogeneous with regards to their ethnic origin and language use patterns. The homogeneity of such groups lends itself to a clear pattern of intergenerational language loss over a three- to four- generation period (Fishman 1964, 1966; Grosjean 1982; Romaine 1995). At the same time, shift may sometimes take place more rapidly in the first and second generations due to intense societal pressures (Haugen 1969; Grosjean 1982).

Certain scholars researching the shift from Spanish to English among Hispanic populations in the United States find such variability in shift patterns; Bills, Hudson and Hernández Chávez, for example, state, “...this [three generation shift model] is an oversimplified account of the actual state of affairs and in many respects underestimates the rapidity with which linguistic absorption into the dominant society is actually taking place” (2000: 15). However, other researchers such as Anderson-Mejías (2005) find Spanish being maintained into the 5th generation, and Mora, Villa and Dávila (2005, 2006) encounter high rates of mother tongue transmission from Spanish-speaking immigrants to their children. Additionally, efforts at reversing language shift (Fishman 2001) may impact the unidirectional-ity of the Spanish to English shift process. The variability of maintenance and loss patterns of Spanish in this nation, and particularly in what is now its Southwest region, presents certain realities that call for rethinking a classic three-generation model of language shift.
2. Spanish as a non-immigrant language in the U.S. Southwest

To begin, the notion of ‘immigrant language’ must be re-examined. Spanish is not strictly an immigrant language in the Southwest when compared to other non-English, non-indigenous languages. It shares in common with indigenous languages the fact that it was spoken in these regions before the arrival of English speakers. A continuous Spanish-speaking presence has existed along the Río Grande corridor that dates back to the arrival of settlers from Zacatecas, Mexico in 1598 at San Juan Pueblo in northern New Mexico, now called by its original name, Ohkay Owingue. Due to the continued northward movement of Spanish-speaking communities during the 17th and 18th centuries, Spanish became the lingua franca of what is now the Southwest until the middle of the 19th century.

Then, in 1846 Mexico and the United States went to war; the hostilities ended in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which formalized the end of the war, was ratified that year by the two countries, transferring some 525,000 square miles of Mexico’s territory to the United States, that is, approximately 55% of Mexico’s pre-war area. Five years later the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, an acquisition of approximately 29,670 square miles, transferred additional Mexican territory to the U.S., areas which now form parts of southern Arizona and New Mexico. That territorial acquisition finalized what is now the current border between Mexico and the U.S. As a result of those events, constant ‘immigrations’ have existed between the two countries, given that what was internal migration in Mexico became international migration with the southward relocation of the U.S./Mexican political border. Historic events such as the Mexican Revolution, World War II and the subsequent Bracero Program led to continued migration patterns from Mexico to the United States in general and the Southwest in particular. More recently, economic disparities between the two nations have led to an influx of Spanish speakers that continues to this very moment, sparking national and international debates on many levels concerning migration and English-language policies.

As a result of these historic events, the Spanish-speaking population in the Southwest is highly heterogenous. The families of some Spanish speakers have been here since before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, while others have just arrived from their country of origin. Census data (www.census.gov) indicate that in the Southwest the majority of this population is of Mexican origin, but that pockets of speakers from Central and South America and the Caribbean exist as well. As a result, it becomes difficult to analyze patterns of maintenance and shift using the classic intergenerational model, due to factors such as migration patterns and a tendency toward ethnic exogamy.

Regarding the latter, Lee and Edmonston report that “as the number of Hispanic couples has surged, the percentage that include a non-Hispanic spouse has
been fairly stable at between 23 percent and 25 percent” (2005:24). In addition to exogamy based on ethnic group, the possibility of out-group marriage runs along linguistic dimensions as well. The loss of Spanish among those of Spanish-speaking heritage is well-established in the literature (see e.g. Bills et al. 2000; Lope Blanch 1990; Silva-Corvalán 1994, to name only a few). This results in the reality that while individuals may marry within their ethnic group, they may choose a partner who is a monolingual English speaker. Thus, the concept of ‘exogamy’ can also feature linguistic dimensions, separate from an ethnic one.

Finally, Spanish as a global language has achieved a status such that there are those who have no Spanish-speaking ancestors and learn it as a second language. That is, there are those who enter the minority language from the majority linguistic group, offsetting to some degree or another language loss. An integrated model such as proposed here must allow for such bilinguals and their descendants as they form a segment of the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. Thus, given the complexities of this bilingual population, the purpose of the present article is to examine the variables that set apart the Spanish-speaking populations of the U.S., and particularly of the Southwest, in order to provide a revised model for language maintenance and shift that goes beyond the limitations of the classic intergenerational model.

The preceding discussion seeks to underscore the fact that Spanish speakers in the Southwest have different histories, contact patterns and social realities than communities of Central and South Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans or other Spanish-speaking origin groups in various areas of the U.S. These latter groups may not be as affected by what we will refer to as the ‘heartland factor’ (see Villa 2003; Mora et al. 2005). The ‘heartland’ can be defined as a region in which those of Spanish-speaking origin have a historic presence, form a demographic majority in many areas and move back and forth across national and international political borders, thus creating a bilingual dynamic in which Spanish is lost or maintained in relation to its affective and instrumental values. As has been noted by researchers such as Bills, Hernández-Chávez and Hudson (1995) and Mora et al. (2005), geographic distance from the border may have an influence in the maintenance of Spanish. However, McCullough and Jenkins (2005) have shown a correlation between Spanish loyalty and retention in larger communities that are not immediately situated on the border and as a result are impacted differently by immigration patterns. At the same time, Rivera-Mills (2000a, 2000b, Mills 2005) has shown that isolation from large populations of Spanish speakers may contribute to a rapid language shift that can be measured as early as the second generation, and in the case of an ethnically mixed California community, as early as the first generation.

Regarding the heartland factor, Rivera-Mills’ recent research into fourth-generation heritage speakers has shown efforts by individuals to revive their heritage
language or learn the heritage language as a second language. This represents an effort to recapture and re-establish what she refers to as an ‘identity link’ that is associated with the heritage language, thus making them part of a Spanish speech community (Rivera-Mills 2007). This identity link to the heritage language includes complex sociolinguistic factors that have implications for the classic intergenerational model. It is the need to connect with a particular speech community that requires a change in the traditional unidirectional, linear pattern of change to a more circular one, in which at any given point and with any generation there is the opportunity to recapture the heritage language, thereby promoting a more stable bilingualism. A similar notion has been previously identified by Silva-Corvalán (2001) who refers to cyclical bilingualism as a phenomenon in which a person of Hispanic heritage may experience language loss and re-acquire Spanish at a later point in life. In addition, García, Morín and Rivera (2001) introduced the term vaivén into the literature, a ‘coming and going’ between Spanish and English in the Puerto Rican communities of New York. These researchers write, “the New York Puerto Rican community is often comfortable with its linguistic vaivén, showing bilingual ability over other monolingual Spanish speakers, but also over Anglo monolinguals” (García, Morín & Rivera 2001: 71). García et al. recognize that language shift is indeed occurring in that community, but that due to sociocultural dynamics the shift is not necessarily a one-way street, hence the vaivén, which does not describe a one-way process. Thus, given the unidirectional dimension of the traditional shift model, shift reversal and vaivén indicate the need for a model that can account for the possibility of the re-acquisition of Spanish and fine-tune the notion of generation in order to capture the tremendous variability in patterns of loss/maintenance noted above.

3. Rethinking the classic three-generation model

Since current research has found Spanish maintenance into the fourth or subsequent generations (Anderson Mejías 2005; Rivera-Mills 2007), the possibility exists that an individual or speech community will be motivated to maintain or recapture and revive the heritage language. This reality minimally requires two things of researchers: (1) to look at the process of language maintenance and shift beyond the third generation, and (2) to pay particularly close attention to variables of acculturation and/or identity as part of the framework for measuring language maintenance, shift, loss and/or reacquisition. The need for the latter is demonstrated by the emergence of studies which show the importance of affective attitudes on what had previously been considered a unidirectional shift from Spanish to English. In other words, researchers may wish to consider the possibility that
language maintenance and shift might be circular in nature (see Carreira 2002 for her discussion of the 'Catherine Wheel' effect).

The concept of a circular process of language maintenance and shift is particularly appropriate for Spanish speakers of the Southwest. As previously mentioned, the constant influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants into the area, its proximity to Mexico, and its unique historical and cultural position with respect to Spanish/English language contact, may make it a more fertile region for the maintenance and/or revitalization of the Spanish language across generations. This conclusion is buttressed by recent work by various scholars. For example, Anderson-Mejías (2005), finding Spanish language use into the fifth generation in Texas, rethinks the unidirectional finality of a three-generation model. Instead, she provides a five-generation model that does not necessarily end in the complete loss of Spanish. Mora et al. (2005, 2006), using the innovative concept of the synthetic cohort, detect a high rate of transmission between immigrant Spanish speakers and their children in the states bordering Mexico and in the U.S. in general, and find that Spanish speakers demonstrate a much higher rate of maintenance than other non-English language groups. Briefly, a synthetic cohort is a certain age group tracked across Census periods, in this case in order to analyze language use patterns. Thus, a group of 5 to 7 year olds can be identified synthetically a decade later with a group of 15 to 17 year olds with similar demographic characteristics in order to analyze how the relative dynamics of their mother tongue/English bilingualism have changed or remained the same (see Mora et al. 2005 for a detailed description of the synthetic cohort). Mills (2005) encounters an unexpected reversal of intergenerational Spanish language shift in a Northern Arizona community among fourth-generation speakers. The following, then, takes into account these recent findings, and presents a modified analytical model for current and future research into the dynamics of Spanish/English maintenance and loss in the Southwest, as well as in other areas of the U.S.

4. An integrated maintenance/loss model

4.1 Defining ‘generation’

Anderson-Mejías’ (2005) work presents a modified version of a traditional loss model. In particular, she rethinks the homogeneous nature of a generation, recognizing that migration patterns and marriage across generations can have an impact on the structure of any particular generation. For example, a recent immigrant may marry an individual whose family has been in the U.S. for hundreds of years. The language usage pattern will quite possibly be different in the home domain
for children of that union than for those born to parents who are both recent immigrants. Anderson-Mejías (2005: 2) thus defines generation in the following manner:

1st generation: consultant was born outside the U.S.
2nd generation: consultant was born in the U.S. with either one parent or both parents born outside the U.S.
3rd generation: consultant and both parents were born in the U.S. while all grandparents were born outside the U.S.
4th generation: consultant and both parents were born in the U.S. while at least one grandparent was born outside the U.S. and at least one was born in the U.S.
5th generation: consultant, parents, and all grandparents were born in the U.S.

This article proposes a modification to this and other models by abandoning the notion of an 'immigrant' generation as based on place of birth. We focus on the linguistic realities of Southwest Spanish speakers, as opposed to nativity, for reasons mentioned in Section 2. In doing so we avoid the need to posit a '1.5' generation, such as Rumbaut (2004) proposes. He recognizes the fact that a generation may not be homogeneous, and that the language environment in the home domain may vary accordingly. However, generations are biologically whole; genetically speaking, individuals have a father and mother, and belong completely to that generation of offspring. 'Splitting' them for analytical purposes does not follow from that biological reality.

4.2 Defining a 'linguistic generation'

First, given the history of our region, we introduce the notion of a 'contact generation.' This consists of a generation monolingual in Spanish that comes into contact with English speakers after the critical period (Krashen 1973), either through its own migration or the arrival of English speakers into its territories. Examples of this generation are the immigrants who arrive as adults, are monolingual speakers of Spanish and acquire English through ESL classes. It also includes Spanish speakers who were born in the U.S. and grew up in closely knit Spanish-speaking communities, who also learned English as adults, either through ESL classes or through joining the English-speaking workforce. Such individuals were typically found, for example, in rural communities throughout the state of New Mexico. Additionally, the contact generation includes those who are monolingual in English and come into contact with Spanish after the critical period. Examples of members of this group are those who have spent significant amounts of time in a Spanish-speaking country as missionaries, expatriate workers, Peace Corps volunteers, embassy
employees, or who grew up in the previously mentioned close-knit U.S. Spanish-speaking communities, to name a few possibilities. In short, this is a group consisting of individuals who learn English or Spanish as a second language, but which tends to remain dominant in its mother tongue. ‘Generation’, then, is calculated by the distance from contact generation ancestors, regardless of place of birth. Consequently, it is noted that with this concept a distinction is made between a biological notion of ‘generation’ and a linguistic reading of that term.

We note at this point that we have selected the age of 15 to represent the end of the critical period, after which an individual must acquire a language. There can be no doubt that the critical period is a controversial hypothesis (see e.g. the collection edited by Birdsong 1999). Indeed, if such a period exists, it most certainly varies from individual to individual. The cut-off age we employ is in part arbitrary, but is relevant to the population we are examining here since, as Veltman writes, “…the abandonment of Spanish is a negligible phenomenon among immigrants who arrived in the United States when they were at least 15 years old” (2000:71). Thus, Veltman’s findings make this particular age an appropriate, albeit approximate, upper limit on the critical period, which we use to determine membership in the contact generation. In addition, the reader may wonder why we substitute ‘contact generation’ for ‘first generation’. This is due in part to the history of Spanish in these regions, as discussed in Section 2. Furthermore, the inclusion in our model of U.S.-born English speakers who have no heritage ties to Spanish renders the term ‘first generation’ awkward. This is due to the fact that traditional shift models usually apply that term to those who have arrived in this country after its political boundaries were established. Thus the term ‘contact generation’ avoids the necessity of conceiving native-born U.S. citizens as immigrants.

The re-evaluation of the notion of ‘generation’ suggested here is necessary due to the linguistic environment previously described and to the processes of endogamy and exogamy. As noted in the introduction, there exists a notable percentage, some 25%, of individuals of Spanish-speaking origin who marry outside their ethnic group. However, as with the concept of ‘generation’, we wish to modify notions of ‘endogamy’ and ‘exogamy’, which are commonly defined along ethnic lines (see e.g. Lee and Edmonston (2005:24), who refer to exogamy in talking about ‘a non-Hispanic spouse’). We wish to distinguish in- and out-group marriage along linguistic lines. The linguistic reality of Spanish speakers in the U.S. is such that it is entirely possible that a monolingual or bilingual Spanish speaker may marry a monolingual English speaker of Spanish-speaking origin. In such an instance, the subsequent biological generation will be farther removed from a Spanish-speaking environment in the home due to one parent’s English monolingualism, regardless of ethnic origin. This then gives rise to the possibility of a linguistic generation, as opposed to a biological generation as discussed above.
For example, an individual born into a household with two contact generation parents will have a greater chance of contact with Spanish than one whose parents are both second generation bilinguals. An individual born to a second generation parent and a monolingual English-speaking parent would have less overall contact with Spanish than one whose parents are both second generation bilinguals. A person whose grandparents are all contact generation will have a greater chance of, and likely a greater degree of, exposure to Spanish than one who has two contact generation grandparents and two monolingual English-speaking grandparents.

In our model we also use the concept of a ‘maintenance bilingual’, which we broadly define as an individual capable of producing speech with a high level of control in both languages. Those bilinguals who have undergone some degree of shift or loss and possess a receptive knowledge of Spanish but do not speak it we place in a separate category commonly referred to as ‘receptive bilinguals’ (see Beaudrie, this volume). Receptive bilinguals may play a role in reversing language shift (Fishman 1991) by relearning their heritage language and thus transitioning to maintenance bilingualism. This process may occur in any generation. That is, a receptive bilingual whose parents are contact generation may reacquire her parents’ native language, as may one whose parents are monolingual in English but whose great-grandparents are the contact generation. Since (re)acquisition may take place in any generation, we propose another category in the revised model, that of a ‘reacquisition generation’. This concept recognizes that individuals who had limited, dwindling or no abilities in Spanish may re-acquire it, to then pass it on to their children (or not). Defining the terms ‘bilingual’ and ‘bilingualism’, and how those relate to the concept of generation, is a complex and highly-debated topic (see e.g. Fishman 1964); however, space limitations oblige us to recur to the rather simplistic classifications presented here.

4.3 A revised maintenance/loss model

We offer a revised model for maintenance and loss based on (a) the proposed notion of linguistic generation we suggest, (b) the possibility of endogamous or exogamous linguistic intermarriage, and (c) the entry of re-acquisition and out-group members into the U.S. and Southwest Spanish-speaking communities. The details of who is included in each re-defined generation follow.

Contact generation: Monolingual Spanish speakers whose contact with English occurred after age 15, or monolingual English speakers whose contact with Spanish occurred after age 15. These individuals are commonly referred to as ‘second language learners’.
2nd generation maintenance

**Endogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, both parents from the contact generation; bilinguals who learned both languages before 15, parents are monolingual Spanish or English speakers.

**Exogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, one parent monolingual in English and the other from the contact generation.

2nd generation shift/loss

**Endogamous:** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, both parents are from the Spanish-speaking contact generation (also called accelerated shift, Mora et al. 2006).

**Exogamous:** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, one parent monolingual in English and the other from the contact generation.

3rd generation maintenance

**Endogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, all grandparents from the contact generation.

**Exogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, three grandparents from the contact generation.

3rd generation shift/loss

**Endogamous:** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolingual, all grandparents from the contact generation. (The traditional three-generation loss model is based on this type of individuals.)

**Exogamous:** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, three grandparents from the contact generation.

4th generation maintenance

**Endogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, all great-grandparents from the contact generation.

**Exogamous:** Spanish/English bilinguals, one or two grandparents from the contact generation.

4th generation shift/loss

**Endogamous** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, all great-grandparents from the contact generation.

**Exogamous** Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, one or two grandparents from the contact generation.

5th generation maintenance

**Endogamous** Spanish/English bilinguals, all great-great-grandparents from the contact generation.
Exogamous: Spanish/English bilinguals, five or more great-grandparents from the contact generation.

5th generation shift/loss
Endogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, all great-great-grandparents from the contact generation.
Exogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, five or more great-grandparents from the contact generation.

6th generation maintenance
Endogamous: Spanish/English bilinguals, all great-great-grandparents from the contact generation
Exogamous: Spanish/English bilinguals, four or less great-grandparents from the contact generation

6th generation shift/loss
Endogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, all great-great-grandparents from the contact generation.
Exogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, four or less great-grandparents from the contact generation.

7th + generation maintenance
Endogamous: Ancestral Spanish/English bilingualism, distant relationship with the contact generation.
Exogamous: Ancestral Spanish/English bilingualism, distant relationship with the contact generation.

7th + generation shift/loss
Endogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, distant relationship with the contact generation.
Exogamous: Receptive Spanish/English bilinguals or English monolinguals, distant relationship with the contact generation.

Reacquisition generation
Spanish/English bilinguals who possess a heritage link with the language and a past, present or potential link with the heritage language speech community. They have relearned the heritage language. The heritage background and relationship with the heritage language speech communities set these speakers apart from those who learn Spanish strictly as a second, ‘foreign’ language. Members of this generation represent a reversal of language shift. These speakers may belong to any of the loss or shift generations (Fishman 2001), that we describe below.

A summary of this integrated generational model is presented in Table 1.
### Table 1. Integrated Multi-Generational Model for Language Maintenance and Shift, Linguistic Endogamous and Exogamous Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Generation</th>
<th>Endogamous Pattern ~ Maintenance ~</th>
<th>Endogamous Pattern ~ Loss ~</th>
<th>Exogamous Pattern ~ Maintenance ~</th>
<th>Exogamous Pattern ~ Loss ~</th>
<th>Language Shift/Loss Reversed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd generation</td>
<td>Both parents contact generation</td>
<td>Both parents contact generation (accelerated loss)</td>
<td>One parent contact generation and the other monolingual in English</td>
<td>One parent contact generation and the other monolingual in English (accelerated loss)</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents monolingual in Spanish or English, speaker learned both languages before age 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; all grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; all grandparents contact generation (traditional model)</td>
<td>Maintenance; three grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; three grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; all great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; all great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; one or two grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; one or two grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; all great-great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; all great-great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; five or more great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; five or more great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; all great-great-great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; all great-great-great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; four or less great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; four or less great-grandparents contact generation</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th + generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; ancestral bilingualism, distant relationship w/ contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; ancestral bilingualism, distant relationship w/ contact generation</td>
<td>Maintenance; ancestral bilingualism, some ancestor contact generation</td>
<td>Shift/Loss; ancestral bilingualism, some ancestor contact generation</td>
<td>Reacquisition Generation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Application of the model

In order to test the robustness of the proposed model and refine it where necessary, we interviewed several individuals. In one case, the consultant is the Spanish/English bilingual son of a bilingual Spanish/English father and a monolingual English-speaking mother; two of his grandparents were monolingual English speakers, and two were monolingual Spanish speakers. Thus, he is a fourth generation Spanish/English bilingual. He married a monolingual English speaker, and has two Spanish/English bilingual sons. Given the sons’ distance from their contact generation, great-grandparents, and the fact that only two of eight were of that generation, the sons are sixth generation bilinguals. This is an example of exogamic intergenerational maintenance; the sons’ linguistic repertoire includes Spanish, in spite of the fact that English monolingualism represents a significant portion of their linguistic heritage.

In another case, the consultant is a Spanish/English bilingual, and could not identify contact generation ancestors; he suspects that his family may have lived in Texas at the time it separated from Mexico. All of the ancestors he can readily identify are or were Spanish/English bilinguals. Given the fact that he cannot identify the contact generation, but that we estimate his family’s presence in Texas in the mid 19th century, he represents a sixth generation bilingual. He married a second generation Spanish/English bilingual, and has two daughters, the oldest of which is bilingual (the other was only six months old at the time of interview). The daughter then is a fourth generation endogamic bilingual. This case illustrates the impact of historic migration in this region, and the fact that individuals may pertain to a ‘younger’ linguistic generation than one of their parents, again underscoring the circular nature of maintenance/loss.

Reviewers of this article questioned the need for a model including seven generations. We feel that a multidimensional model is necessary to capture the complexity of the linguistic environment we strive to understand. Traditional shift models cannot account for the fact that, as noted in Section 2, the Spanish language has existed without interruption in the Rio Grande corridor and surrounding environs for over four hundred years now. In fact, we require the ability to look at language transmission over longer periods of time. By recurring to a deeper generational perspective, new light may be shed on phenomena which simply cannot be understood in terms of three or four generations. The expanded model permits a better understanding of our multi-dimensional linguistic landscape, as well as the current and historic demographic, economic, cultural and social dynamics, among others, that contribute to the maintenance and loss of Spanish in the Southwest.
5. Testing the revised model

Once a robust version of our model was obtained, it was tested in a pilot study at New Mexico State University in 2007. A convenience sample consisting of a total of 484 Spanish/English bilinguals and English monolinguals of Spanish-speaking descent in southern New Mexico and in West Texas responded to a brief survey that elicited demographic information and the history of their bilingualism or monolingualism. The main goal of this pilot was to determine the strength and sensitivity of the model with regard to a single factor, that of linguistic generation. More detailed results, such as the percentages of individuals in a particular generation and percentages of maintenance, shift or loss within a generation, will be presented in future publications.

Using the data obtained we were able to populate almost the entire model. For instance, we found Spanish/English maintenance into the 7+ generation. We identified members of the re-acquisition generations, as well as the learned acquisition generations. At the same time, shift from Spanish to English or loss of Spanish was encountered. There was, however, one exception: one category found no representatives among our consultants. That is, although we found monolingual English-speaking individuals of Spanish-speaking origin at every other generational level, we did not find any second generation consultants who were not bilingual. This may well result from the fact that proximity to Mexico is often linked to the tendency of the contact generation to transmit Spanish to the second generation (see Mora et al. 2005). Yet, despite this tendency, Mora et al. (2005: 135) did find shift in the second generation. Their data sample, though, was much larger than ours. So, our inability to populate this part of the model may be due to the small size of the convenience sample. The only other exception of note was that we found no loss in the contact generation, which can sometimes occur when an individual is separated from other members of the mother tongue community. Once more, the factors we mention above may have contributed to this finding. In sum, while future findings may necessitate the modification of our model, we feel that, in its current form, it serves as a solid point of departure for further research.

The above represents an initial implementation of the revised model to better understand the Spanish maintenance/shift/loss in a given region of the U.S. Further research and analyses will work toward revealing at what rate shift and loss occur and in which generations they tend to occur, what impact region has on this process, and which demographic variables correlate with maintenance and loss. What we do wish to assert is that initial studies of the revised model indicate that it is a robust version. Modifications and/or adjustments to the model are expected as more data become available, but it represents a solid starting point for further research into the generational aspects of Spanish maintenance and shift in the
U.S. In sum, our finding of 7+ intergenerational maintenance of Spanish does not indicate an emergent stable bilingualism, but it offers a model that can account for some degree of an intergenerational persistence of Spanish in this country not commonly found in other non-English, non-indigenous language groups (see Mora et al. 2006).

6. Conclusion

In this article, we propose a model with a multi-generational perspective, and refer to it as the ‘Integrated Multi-Generational Model for Language Maintenance and Shift’. This model helps account for the various realities of language transmission in complex ethno-linguistic societies, such as the Spanish-speaking population in the Southwest United States. It could even be applied to communities whose members speak indigenous languages.

The model reflects five important adjustments to Fishman’s traditional model. First, the model allows for maintenance as well as shift. The count-down, so to speak, is not measured by when the individual first had contact with English, but rather by when the individual last had contact with a monolingual Spanish environment. Second, we move away from a notion of a monolingual immigrant generation toward the idea of contact generation. This allows the model to serve for other non-English languages that predate English in this country. Third, we specify that the contact age for monolingualism be 15. As previously stated, this cut-off age was chosen due to findings regarding critical age for language learning, and studies such as those of Veltman (2000) which point to this age as the approximate time after which attaining native or near-native language proficiency in a new language becomes difficult. Fourth, the model provides for the possibility of the reversal of language shift. That is, we propose that the identity link with the heritage language be considered as part of the model as a variable that promotes a sense of speech community and bilingualism. And fifth, we propose the endogamous versus exogamous dimension from a linguistic perspective, which allows the inclusion of the diverse linguistic relationships found in the home domain.

Again, we assert that initial studies of the revised model indicate that it is a robust version. Modifications and/or adjustments to the model are expected as more data become available, but it represents a solid starting point for further research into the generational aspects of Spanish maintenance and shift in the U.S. Further research and analyses will work toward revealing at what rate shift and loss occur, and in which generations they tend to occur, what impact region has on this process, and which demographic variables correlate with maintenance and loss.
Note

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