Mexico Host Family Reactions to a Bilingual Chicana Teacher in Mexico: A Case Study of Language and Culture Clash

Florencia Riegelhaupt and Roberto Luis Carrasco
Northern Arizona University

Abstract

This study describes the attitudes of a middle-class Mexican family toward the Spanish of a Chicano bilingual teacher from Yuma, Arizona. She was among 10 U.S. first- and second-generation Chicano native Spanish-speaking bilingual teachers from Arizona who had participated in a five-week Mexico immersion program and who lived with Mexican families. During the first-week interviews with the investigators, she complained about "harsh reactions" toward her and her Spanish. This study demonstrates how the use of just a few stigmatized characteristics of Spanish are generalized by standard Spanish speakers to judge the speaker as uneducated and of low social status.

Introduction

Heritage language learners often speak informal dialects and/or registers of their respective languages. While these varieties may be perfectly adequate to interact with family and community members, they may not be acceptable to educated speakers of standard varieties of these languages. Goals of heritage language programs often include expansion and elaboration of home and community dialects, acquisition of reading and writing skills, and the development of metalinguistic awareness. In the case of Spanish, as well as that of many other languages, the question of which dialect(s) and registers to teach may be a dilemma. For example, one student may wish to develop the ability to communicate with his/her own family and community, while another may wish to develop academic and professional competence. In this paper, we demonstrate that one dialect of Spanish, especially one that is characterized by certain non-standard forms, may not be acceptable in another social and regional context. Heritage language learners need to become aware of the

uses and, perhaps, limitations of their home dialects when used in more formal and/or new contexts. This important metalinguistic awareness provides heritage language learners with a strong understanding of the sociolinguistic issues involved in language use, and it also allows them the opportunity to make their own decisions as to the necessity or desirability of acquiring new dialects and registers.

This study describes the attitudes of a middle-class Mexican family toward the Spanish of a Chicana bilingual teacher from Yuma, Arizona. She was among 10 U.S. first- and second-generation Chicano native Spanish-speaking bilingual teachers from Arizona who had participated in a five-week immersion program in Mexico and who lived with Mexican families. During the first-week interviews with the investigators, she complained about "harsh reactions" toward her and her Spanish.

As part of the immersion experience, the instructors interviewed and audio-recorded each participant immediately after the first week of immersion. Each student was required to converse with members of their Mexican host families and to audio-record these conversations that were later transcribed. They also kept a daily journal documenting their acquisition of language and culture, and their psychological reactions to their new immersion experience.

Interview and journal data alerted us to the fact that some of the host families were not treating the Chicano teachers the same way they were treating non-Chicano teachers. An identity crisis on the part of the Chicano teachers emerged. As one Chicano told us in an interview: "Aren't we Mexicans, too? Why are these Mexican families treating us as if we don't exist? As if we were servants!" A paradigm on Mexican host expectations of Chicano teachers evolved from these data, and it served to explain the differential treatment these Chicano students experienced. The paradigm is presented in the next section.

This case study is the first to document the attitudes of middle-class individuals from Guanajuato, GTO, Mexico, toward Chicano Spanish. It describes how corrections that are perceived to be "harsh" reactions are enacted *in situ*. We provide journal entries, examples of interviews with the instructors, and interaction segments from audio-recorded conversations between a Chicano teacher, Lidia, and her host family members. They demonstrate that her host family perceived her as "uneducated" and further categorized her as "lower class" because of her Spanish. "*Habla como si fuera de rancho*" ["She speaks as if she were from the farm!"], her family commented in our interviews with them.

We begin by presenting the Mexican host paradigm, followed by a review of the literature. We continue with presenting examples of Lidia's concerns as expressed in interviews with us during her first week in immersion, and then we illustrate how and in which linguistic areas Lidia was being corrected by her Mexican host family.

Mexican Host Family Expectations

As part of our research, we developed a paradigm, culled from teacher and Mexican host interview data, regarding the Mexican host family expectations for Mexican/U.S. Chicano and U.S. Euro-American guests (Carrasco & Riegelhaupt, 1992; Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, 1991). Figure 1 shows how these Mexican families used a Mexican "filter" or schema to evaluate, judge, and categorize Chicano professionals. After all, the Mexican families saw a brown face, a person who seemed to speak Spanish without an American accent, whose last name was Hispanic, who was able to communicate in Spanish, who was doing graduate work at the university, and who was a professional teacher. They expected that this person would speak an "educated" Spanish.

Figure 1. Mexican host family expectations for Mexican and American guests.

A. If you are a "European-American" university student or a professional:
   1. The type of Spanish or levels of proficiency are not important.
   2. Mexican social and cultural knowledge is not expected from you.
   3. Social class differences through language are not detected in either English or Spanish.

B. If you are university student or a professional born and raised in Mexico:
   1. Your Spanish language should reflect that of an educated person (i.e., standard Spanish expected).
   2. Social and cultural knowledge (etiquette, knowing how to behave appropriately in social settings, etc.) is also expected.

C. If you are a "Mexican American, Chicano, Latino, Hispano" university student or professional born or raised the United States:
   1. Your Spanish language should reflect that of an educated person (i.e., Standard-like Spanish is expected).
   2. Social and cultural knowledge (etiquette, knowing how to behave appropriately in social settings, etc.) is also expected.

Clearly, language and culture relativity plays a role here. These Guanajuato, GTO, Mexico host families are often exposed to uneducated oral Spanish in the streets, the street markets and in the outlying *ranchos* [farm villages]. Like most people, they use this knowledge to detect social class and cultural differences. They expected the U.S. Chicano bilingual to utilize a standard, formal variety of Spanish. Instead, some of the Chicano teachers used such non-standard forms as *mirar* [to look, to look at] for *ver* [to see], pronounced *mucho* [a lot, much, many] as *muncho*, and used *no más* instead of *nada más* [only, no more, nothing more/else]. These forms, and others, represent the speech of uneducated, lower class individuals in and around the city of

Guanajuato, and in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. While appropriate when interacting with friends, families and members of their own linguistic communities, certain dialects and/or registers may be stigmatized in other interactive settings. Mexican host expectations about language use, and social and cultural knowledge, were at the center of language and culture clash between these two parties.

In our initial interview, Lidia, as did some of the other bilingual Chicano teachers, reported that she believed that she was not treated as well as her non-native roommate. The interview revealed the seriousness of the problem; she broke down and cried and said she wanted to return to her hometown, Yuma, Arizona. A few days later, when we interviewed her family members, they revealed their dismay about her Spanish. They indicated that they could not understand how an educated individual, especially a teacher, could talk like this. We followed up on these comments in our interview and it was revealed that the family felt that a "Mexican" person (whether from Mexico or from the United States) who spoke Spanish in such a manner was not really welcome in their home. Yet, the Euro-American guest in the same home, although she committed far more errors, was accepted and welcomed with open-arms. We recall the documented comment by one member of Lidia's family: *"¡Ay Dr. Carrasco! Mándenos la próxima vez una rubia, con ojos azules"* ["Oh, Dr. Carrasco! Next time send us a blonde with blue eyes."]

Literature Review

Studies of attitudes toward Chicano Spanish in the United States and in Mexico have indicated that it is highly stigmatized and represents an informal variety considered unacceptable in professional and academic contexts (Galindo, 1995, 1996; Hidalgo, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1993; Mejías & Anderson, 1988; Peñalosa, 1980). Hidalgo (1986) documented the attitudes of individuals from Juárez, Sonora, Mexico, toward U.S. border Spanish. Galindo (1996), in her study of attitudes toward border women's Spanish, also found that standard Spanish is generally considered correct and prestigious while border Spanish is judged to be unpleasant, in part a result of the use of codeswitching and *caló* (Chicano Spanish-English slang). She further notes that "The Chicano-Mexican situation that currently exists in East Austin and Montopolis strongly suggests a high correlation between language attitudes and social behavior; one either mistreats people or not on the basis of how one evaluates their speech" (Galindo, 1993, p. 92). Furthermore, Galindo (1995) recognizes how negative attitudes toward Spanish inadvertently affect its maintenance. The fate of the Spanish language will continue to decline, as conveyed by people's attitudes toward and reactions to the language and its speakers.

Sánchez (1993) encourages Spanish speakers to understand the political repercussions of speaking their language varieties and emphasizes the importance of social status: “As long as we are not the dominant group, others can put us down and dismiss us for social, racial, ethnic and even linguistic reasons. Let us not give anyone that pleasure” (p. 80).

Lidia and Her Mexican Host Family: Perceptions and Linguistic Characteristics

The following section includes correction data during conversations with the host family, comments made in Lidia’s journal, interviews with the instructors, and conversations recorded with her Guanajuato family members. These conversations corroborate her reports that she was being treated differently than the other bilingual teacher living in her house, a Euro-American bilingual teacher. Lidia recorded conversations that demonstrated exactly what in her speech prompted criticism or corrections from her family in Guanajuato. These conversations demonstrate that the use of just a few stigmatized characteristics of Spanish can be generalized by standard Spanish speakers so as to create the impression of lack of education and low social status.

Below we provide examples of Lidia’s claims and how such differential treatment was demonstrated in actual conversations.

General Comments About Differential Treatment From Interviews

In this section, we report on Lidia’s comments about corrections. Figure 2 demonstrates (a) Lidia’s awareness about differential treatment, and (b) the reason such differential treatment occurs. Lidia notes that her Mexican host *señora* is harder on her because she thinks she’s a fluent speaker. Lidia is a very fluent Spanish speaker, and her family knows it.

Figure 2. Interview with program instructors/directors.

I: Do you think that she is hard on you?

S: Uh, I know that she is being harder on me than on Abby,
but it is because she thinks I am a real fluent speaker.

In Figure 3, Lidia describes how her lack of knowledge of the differences between the word *libro* [book] and *cuaderno* [notebook] created the need for correction. Lidia describes her feelings of insecurity and fear of correction here.

Stigmatized Linguistic Areas

In this section, we provide examples of stigmatized linguistic phenomena that trigger corrections and therefore, language and culture clash. These include the use of *mirar* instead of *ver*, *venir pa' tras* instead of *volver* or *regresar* [to come back, to return], and *haiga* instead of *haya* [there is or there are in subjunctive form that there be].

Figure 3. Interview with program instructors/directors.

S: One word that she told me I told her, *el libro, voy a escribir en el libro, y me dijo, no, no es el libro, es el* . . . [the book, I'm going to write in the book, and she told me, no, it's not the book, it's the . . .] and I can't think of the word . . .

I: *¿Cuaderno?* [Notebook?]

S: *Cuaderno, y primero le dije, ¿y no es libreta? Y me dice no, no, ésa es otra* . . . [Notebook, and first I said to her, isn't it "libreta," so it's like she is, she is correcting, you know exactly . . .]

I: Are you happy about that? Do you like that?

S: Well, I feel kind of conscious about it because, I am sort of, like well, she is gonna correct me every single time that especially when I make the same mistake, I feel like, "Oh, you dummy?" (laugh) because I work on that, and then I think of that and I go "Oh, gosh! No, I did it again," and then she corrects me, and I go . . . "Whoops! *Como el bebé* [like a baby], I am so used to saying it that way."

Mirar vs. ver

In this section we document examples of Lidia's use of *mirar* and *ver.* Examples of this occur in her interactive journal, interviews with the instructors, and conversations with her hosts. This area seems to be the one that creates the most controversy. Semantically, the distinction between the two is different in the Yuma, Arizona, and the Guanajuato, Mexico dialects. Learning a new way to categorize words Lidia already knows and uses in a certain way, presents her with a challenge.

In Figure 4, we again note that Lidia is especially concerned with the fact that she is being corrected for what the *señora* in her family considers an important lexical distinction between *mirar* and *ver*. Lidia attempts to explain the difference as it had been explained to her. The program directors point out that this is clearly a dialect difference and that it is not actually an "error." They also point out that Lidia may continue to use *ver* and *mirar* as she always did since it works when interacting in her own Yuma linguistic community. However, they also note that learning the difference, which

represents the standard use of these two words, would be useful as she acquires this new dialect and the more formal register of Spanish.

Figure 4. Interview with program instructors/directors.

S: *A mí se me hace que hablo* [It seems to me that I speak] pretty fluent. OK. *No más que se me hace que tengo el problema de que uso palabras que no son correctas* [It just that it seems to me that I have the problem that I use words that aren't correct].

I: *¿Cómo qué?* [Like what?]

S: *Como, me están, me, se la llevan diciéndome que no debo dicir* (sic) *mira, que debe ser ve, porque mira es por un telescopio* . . . [Like they're, they go on telling me that I shouldn't say "look" that it should be "see" because "look" is through a telescope . . .]

I: *¿En qué sentido? Dame un ejemplo de un* . . . [In what sense? Give me an example of a . . .]

S: *Como mira, él mira, miras aquella ventana. No es mira aquella ventana, sino ve aquella ventana, porque* (eh) *mira el, y me dijeron que era por un telescopio, y lo busqué en el diccionario, y sí me dice que es ve, y que debo decir* . . . [Like "look," "he looks," you look at that window. It isn't "look at that window" but rather "see that window," because "look" and they told me that it was through a telescope and I looked it up in the dictionary and yes it tells me that it is "see" and that I should say . . .]

I: *Te voy, te voy a decir una cosa. En Sonora y también en Yuma, Arizona, se usan mirar y ver como los usas tú, pero en Guanajuato* [I'm, I'm going to tell you something. In Sonora and also in Yuma, Arizona, they use "to look" and "to see" like you use them, but in Guanajuato].

In Figure 5, the participant demonstrates certain priorities in her acquisition of this new dialect. She notes that certain characteristics in her speech may create more of a "choque" (shock) than others, for example *mirar/ver.* She also observes that small morphological distinctions such as the need to eliminate the *s* at the end of *hablastes* (sic) [you spoke (informal tú form for singular "you")] are even more difficult to notice and perhaps even to acquire. She reports that she is not accustomed to paying attention to her speech and she acknowledges the importance of developing her metalinguistic awareness, especially if she wants to substitute standard forms for stigmatized characteristics in her speech.

Figure 5. Interview with program instructors/directors.

S: I think not the words that are, that are, that are so small, that is like the same word there is not, you know, if you really pay attention to the word it seems like the same thing, but you just put the "s," the ending, so you might really not even pay attention to it, you might not even recognize it, but when you say the word is like me, I was saying *mira* and *ve*, those words are so apparent. There's, you know, it's like two totally different words, so it's those that you really can't account, but I don't know, eh, unless, you know, you really start paying attention to it.

I: Now, you don't pay attent . . .

S: No.

In Figure 6, we document how Lidia, in a highly emotional state, tries to explain to the *señora* why she felt uncomfortable about speaking Spanish. The *señora*, in trying to understand her feelings, corrects her for her use of *mirar* instead of *ver*, right in the middle of Lidia's discussion of her feelings about being corrected. Lidia tries to proceed in her explanation about her feelings, but her explanation becomes fragmented due to the correction the *señora* inserts. Corrections during an emotional moment such as this one are not welcomed.

Figure 6. Conversation with host family.

Señora: *Vas a sentirte mal. Como no te entiendo.* [You're going to feel bad. Like I don't understand you].

Lidia: *Como si yo . . . y con que usted alguna vez me mire* [As if I . . . and that you look at me some time].

Señora: *te vea* [see you]

Lidia: *vea* [see]

Señora: *triste* [sad]

Lidia: *triste* [sad]

In Figure 7, we are privy to another example of the clash between Lidia's use of *mirar* and *ver* and that of the *señora*. Even when the *señora* just finishes using *ver*, Lidia responds with *mirar*. This is what begins to irritate the *señora* and makes Lidia feel even worse.

Figure 7. Conversation with host family.

> Lidia: *Y porque cuando pasamos por allí* [And because when we went by there]
>
> Señora: *No nos vieron.*[They didn't see us.]
>
> Lidia: *No los miramos.* [You didn't look at them.]
>
> Señora: *Allí estábamos sentadas platicando. Luego allí se fue a sentarse Rafael el Prieto. Se fue por allá con unas muchachas.* [There we were sitting down chatting. Later Rafael, "the dark one," went over to sit down. He went over there with some girls].

In Figure 8 we again witness Lidia's reaction to her being corrected for her non-standard use of *mirar* and *ver*. Here Lidia explains in writing the explanation that she was given by her family and which she mentioned to us during our interview with her (see Figure 4).

Figure 8. Lidia's Journal

> *Usas ve, ver no mira, mira es solo con un* "telescope" *telescopio.* [You use "see," "to see" not "look," "look" is only through a telescope].

In Figure 9, we note Lidia's increasing metalinguistic awareness about *ver* and *mirar*. She is anxious and uncomfortable about using either word now, since she knows what to expect if she substitutes one for the other. She cringes at being corrected about something that she has been told about numerous times.

Figure 9. Interview with program instructors/directors.

> S: *A mí se me hace muy extraño porque lo digo, y mir* (sic), *digo, digo mira él, y al momento que lo digo, digo, digo, digo ve,* [To me, it seems strange to me because I say it, and loo (sic) . . . I say, I say, he looks, and the moment I say it, I say, I say, I say, "see"] you know, oh.

In Figure 10, taken from Lidia's transcribed version of her first tape-recorded conversation with her host family, she again demonstrates her lack of understanding of the differences between *mirar* and *ver* in these two dialects. So, when she transcribes her conversation she vacillates between the two and "miscues." In other words, she fills in the *señora's* use of *ver* with *mirar,* the form she uses in her own dialect. Here Lidia hears *ven* in the first sentence and writes *miran*. But in the second sentence she hears *ven* and transcribes it *ven*. This leads us to consider the possibility of Lidia's confusion about the distinctions between these two words in the standard Guanajuato dialect.

Figure 10. Conversation with host family.

Señora: *Así que no me miran* (the *señora* says *ven*, Lidia writes *miran*) *como una mamá. A mí me ven como si fuera una amiga más.* [So they don't see me as a mother. Me, they see me as if I were one more friend.]

Venir pa' tras

In her first interview with the program directors, Lidia also mentions another stigmatized form she has been using. She realizes the problem and begins to use the alternative standard words *volver* and *regresar. Venir pa'tras* represents a direct translation of the English "to come back," where *venir* is translated to come and *pa'* (from *para* [for, in order to]) with *atrás* [back]. Her family also told her that *pa'* should be pronounced *para*, and not shortened as she had done. In Figure 11, Lidia reiterates her discomfort about being corrected.

Figure 11. Interview with program instructors/directors.

I: *Oh, oh. Está bien, bueno así vas a aprender lo que es la forma correcta aquí en Guanajuato. ¿Otra cosa que dices que siempre corrigen?* [It's OK, good, in that way you are going to learn what the correct form is here in Guanajuato. Another thing that you say that they always correct?]

I: *A ver, que si hay otra cosa que . . .* [Let's see if there is another thing that . . .]

S: *que me corrigen, es* (uh) *cuando digo que vienes pa'trás, que dicen que no es pa'trás y no es pa' . . . es cuando regresas, o cuando vuelves, y, y si pienso en la palabra, no más que, naturalmente pienso cuando vienes detrás, cuando vienes pa'trás.* [that they correct, it's when I say "vienes pa'tras" you come back that they say that it isn't "pa'tras" and it isn't "pa" . . . it's when you return or come back, and, and if I think about the word, it's just that I naturally think when "vienes detrás," when "you come back."]

I: Do you think that you will be able to . . . switch that, I mean or you want to . . .

S: Well, I really try it, because they tell me, they, *cada vez que lo digo, que digo algún error, me dice la señora y a mí me, me siento mal porque como que, como que de, como que piensas, piensas. "Ella debía de saber. Habla español ya, y todo eso . . ."* [every time that I say it, that I say some error, the señora, and to me, I feel bad because, as if, as if, as if you think, you think "she should know. She speaks Spanish already and all that . . . "]

I: *Ay, no, no, no importa preocuparte . . .* [Oh, no, no, it's not important to worry about . . .]

S: *Y entonces yo digo, Oh . . . mejor no trato.* [And then I say, oh . . . better not try.]

In Figure 12, Lidia uses *venir pa'tras* during her interview with the program directors. She corrects herself indicating an awareness of the Guanajuato norm.

Figure 12. Interview with program instructors/directors.

S: *Estoy pensando yo de cuando pa'trás, uh, cuando regrese al la, a los Estados Unidos y que esté con mi cuñado este semestre* (?) *yo sé que nos va a decir, "A ver qué tanto pueden durar hablando español"* [I'm thinking of when "pa'trás," uh, when I return to the United States and I'm with my brother-in-law this semester I know that he's going to tell us, "Let's see how long you'll be able to last speaking Spanish."]

Muncho vs. mucho

In this section, we discuss Lidia's use of *muncho* for *mucho* [much, a lot]. This is another highly stigmatized form in the Guanajuato standard dialect of Spanish. Figure 13, taken from Lidia's transcription of a conversation with her host family during the first week of immersion, illustrates that Lidia vacillates in her use of *mucho/muncho*. She says *muncho* but writes *mucho*. *Muncho* represents an archaic form of *mucho* and is found in historical documents and in dialects of Spanish today throughout the Spanish speaking world. The fact that Lidia recognizes that (a) a difference exists between her dialect and the Guanajuato standard in their use of *muncho/mucho*, and (b) writing perhaps requires more standardization than speaking, demonstrates that she already is beginning to acquire some forms used by her Mexican host family. However, at this early point of immersion, she still alternates between the newly acquired forms and the ones she is most familiar with.

Figure 13. Conversation with host family.

Lidia: *Es que, como me dice mucho mi novio, me dice que, que pienso muncho* (wrote mucho), *que siento las cosas mucho.* [It's like my boyfriend tells me a lot, he tells me that I think too much, that I feel things a lot]. (Here she said and wrote mucho)

Haiga vs. haya

Another example of a highly stigmatized form used by Lidia is *haiga* instead of *haya*. Again, as in the case of *muncho, haiga,* the present subjunctive of the verb *haber,* is also an archaism still found in many dialects of Spanish. In Figure 14, we are actually able to witness Lidia's doubts about whether to use *haya* or *haiga*. She appears to be requesting correction by the way she inserts *haiga*, using a questioning intonation. The *señora* immediately provides her with the correct form and Lidia continues inserting the correct standard form *haya*.

Figure 14. Conversation with host family.

Lidia: *Yo vivo lejos. Todos viven con su familia hasta que tienen que moverse* (sic.) *a encontrar trabajo o tienen que ir a la escuela y nos vamos a la escuela. Es como a los 18, 19 años porque ya van a la universidad aún pero y viven en donde ¿haiga? una universidad.* [I live far. Everyone lives with their family until they have to move to find work or they have to go to school and we go to school. Its like at 18, 19 years old because they already go to the university still, but, and they live wherever there is a university.]

Señora: *Haya una universidad.* [There is a university.]

Lidia: *En donde haya una universidad. Entonces se quedan allí.* [Wherever there is a university. Then they stay there.]

Other Characteristics of Lidia's Spanish

The following words, while not corrected or mentioned by either Lidia or her family were misspelled in her transcriptions of conversations with family members and in her journal. While most of her misspellings simply reflect her lack of knowledge of standard Spanish orthography, the words listed below demonstrate her nonstandard pronunciation.

Oyir

Lidia's pronunciation of *oír* [to hear] as *oyir* represents another characteristic of Yuma, Arizona Spanish. The insertion of the /y/ has been discussed in research on the Spanish of the Southwest (Barkin, 1980).

Enterrumpir for interrumpir

In this case, Lidia pronounces the /i/ of *interrumpir* [to interrupt] as an /e/. This is another common Southwest Spanish characteristic (Barkin, 1980).

Elimination of the preposition "a" following "ir" before an infinitive

Iba venir for iba a venir [he, she was going to come], *vas aser for vas a hacer* [you are going to do], *vas sentirte for vas a sentirte* [you are going to feel], *iva sentir for iba a sentir* [I, he, she, you was/were going to feel]. Lidia left out the preposition a when she transcribed conversational data. This *a* combines with the *a* of *iba* and therefore is not really heard.

In the above listed cases, Lidia drops the *a* from the combination *ir + a* both in her speech and in her writing. This is another documented case of the Spanish of the Southwest (Barkin, 1980).

Another vowel change, in this case *e* to *i* occurs in Lidia's use of *siguiste* and *quiríamos* for *seguiste* [you followed] and *queríamos* [we wanted]. In the case of *siguiste*, Lidia may be attempting to regularize the irregular preterite forms of the verb *seguir* [to follow] which in the third person single and plural forms have an *i* rather than an *e*, for example, *yo seguí, tú seguiste, él, ella, usted siguió, nosotros seguimos and ellos, ellas ustedes siguieron* [I followed, you (informal singular) followed, he, she, you (singular formal) followed, we followed and they (masculine or feminine), you (plural) followed].

In the case of *quiríamos* for *queríamos* [we wanted], there clearly is a substitution of *i* for *e*, another common Southwest Spanish phenomenon.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the use of just a few stigmatized characteristics of Spanish can be generalized by standard Spanish speakers so as to create the impression of lack of education, and low social status. It seems that the Mexican hosts were socially reacting to their Chicano guests through their "expected" social, cultural, and linguistic lens. The teachers sensed, perceived, and interpreted their Mexican families' behaviors to be highly critical of them and their dialect. Corrections seemed harsh, and like Lidia, most of the other Chicano teachers felt they were being treated differentially when compared to their Euro-American peers in the same Mexican homes.

In the first week of immersion, Lidia was perceived as lower class and uneducated because of her Spanish. Her Mexico host family demonstrated these perceptions during conversations with her. The most significant examples are found in the area of corrections. While they did not correct Lidia more than they did the other non-Hispanic teacher, they persisted in correcting her for the same errors, causing Lidia to feel uncomfortable and inadequate. It was not only the fact that they corrected Lidia's Spanish but also the manner in which corrections were made. Corrections were perceived by Lidia as particularly harsh and therefore they served to undermine Lidia's confidence and linguistic performance, and her further acquisition.

This mutual misunderstanding was resolved after the first week of immersion when we invited the host families to a formal "*Bienvenida* [Welcome] Party." We pointed out that their teacher guests: (a) were teaching mostly Spanish-speaking children from Mexico, (b) that some (the Chicano teachers) already spoke the native Spanish dialect of their communities in Arizona, (c) that the teachers all spoke an educated English, and (d) that they came to Mexico to learn a more educated model of Spanish for their students. Through a show of hands, we asked if they had relatives with children living in the United States. Everyone had some relatives in the States.

This allowed us the opportunity to mention that the individuals presently living in their homes may be their children's, grandchildren's, nieces' and nephews' teachers. Mexican host family's attitudes changed upon becoming informed about the history and origins of many of the language characteristics of Chicano students. They became sensitized to Chicano Spanish and issues related to Chicanos in the United States, and they developed awareness about issues related to second language acquisition and the further or continued acquisition of Spanish by bilingual speakers of Chicano Spanish.

These insights and explanations led to immediate positive social and cultural behavior and perceptual changes by both parties as revealed by subsequent interviews and journal entry data in the remaining four weeks of immersion.

In a separate article (Carrasco & Riegelhaupt, in-press), we show Lidia's progress across the five weeks of immersion. For example, Lidia's speech demonstrated significant changes in the most stigmatized areas, as pointed out to her by her Guanajuato, Mexico host family. These included *haya/haiga, mucho/muncho, pa'* and most dramatically *mirar/ver.* Her metalinguistic awareness became more acute, allowing her to focus on specific areas of difficulty and especially on particularly stigmatized areas. She began to slow down her speech and articulate more clearly in response to her developing metalinguistic awareness as well as to others' reactions to her previous use of what were considered by these Guanajuato families to be non-standard forms.

We recommend that Spanish heritage language learners in the United States become aware of sociolinguistic features in their dialect that trigger social and cultural perceptions on the part of educated Mexicans who speak the standard variety. This can be done by making linguistic features explicit for both parties in contact, for example, through Spanish for native speakers programs, thereby allowing bilinguals in the United States like Lidia, to become metalinguistically aware of these features so that they can predict others' reactions to them. Such metalinguistic awareness, coupled with knowledge of host family language and social norms, can either prevent potential language and culture conflict, or to help resolve it once it becomes apparent.

Implications

A number of important implications can be derived from the present study. These include:

1. If students have acquired Spanish in an informal setting such as the home, they need to be aware that issues related to dialect differences may require that a new dialect be learned for use in new settings, if they so desire. At the same time, they need to understand that their dialect is a perfectly

viable one with a history of its own. Such awareness leads to pride in their own variety of Spanish and perhaps an increased willingness to accept the fact that people speak in different ways in different regions, and that within those regions there are also social class differences.

2. If a family hosts bilingual Mexican American students, then they need to be made aware of the sociocultural and linguistic reality of Mexicans brought up in the United States.
3. If bilingual teachers and communities are concerned with maintaining their own students' present Spanish, be it a standard or non-standard dialect, and/or with providing access to a variety of Spanish that allows them and their students access to an Hispanic global "standard," then teachers also need to expand their own awareness of register and dialect ranges.
4. Immersion programs that include Chicanos, regardless of whether they are teachers or not, could help to either avoid or lessen problems related to linguistic differences and culture clashes by making explicit to host families and their Chicano guests the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical circumstances related to the Spanish and Spanish speakers in the United States.
5. Many of the problems that occurred during immersion in Mexico also occur in many Spanish language classrooms in the United States. Knowledge about the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical circumstances of the Chicano in the United States is important for all teachers of Spanish and Spanish-English bilingual teachers.
6. Extensive experience in Spanish in all modes and registers, and in a variety of dialects, especially those which bilingual teachers have the most contact with, is essential. University and high school programs need to recognize that the task of developing literacy and increasing dialect recognition and knowledge and register use requires far more than one or two courses (Barkin, 1981). Indeed, according to Avila (as quoted by Hidalgo, 1989) approximately 600 hours of literacy training are necessary to develop literacy skills in Spanish by monolinguals in Mexico.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our praise to Chicanos, who, in spite of being reluctant to go to Mexico because of their linguistic insecurities and lack of Mexican sociocultural knowledge, do so and persist under somewhat threatening and difficult circumstances. Their persistence and success is potentially reflected in their own and their bilingual students' maintenance and expansion of Spanish language registers, as well as their increased academic achievement.

Today Lidia is a primary grade bilingual teacher in Phoenix, Arizona. She uses Spanish daily with her students for all purposes. She has informed us that the variety of Spanish she became aware of in Guanajuato is of particular significance in her interactions with her pupils' parents, many of whom speak

dialects of Spanish similar to her own, but who expect their children's teacher to speak a "better" Spanish than they do.

This is often the case in Mexico. Even when teachers come from the same community and are brought up speaking that same dialect, they must acquire another dialect and more extensive register variation in the course of their education. Literacy skills and a formal register used in the right circumstances, as well as knowledge of the local dialect of Spanish, are expected of teachers in Mexico. Lidia's knowledge of a local Yuma, Arizona variety of Spanish, as well as her awareness and sensitivity to another more formal/standard variety from Guanajuato, enables her to provide her own bilingual students with the linguistic input necessary for them to succeed both linguistically and academically.

It is essential for heritage language learners to be aware that: (a) a variety of dialects and registers exist in their respective languages, and (b) acquisition of the features of these new dialects and registers may require special attention if the heritage language learner desires to use his/her heritage language in a variety of linguistic communities and sociocultural contexts. Such knowledge, awareness, and attention can lead to increased confidence and also can open up opportunities for language use heretofore unavailable to these heritage language learners. The case of Lidia clearly illustrates her willingness to further acquire her native dialect, as well as her success at acquiring new registers and a previously unfamiliar dialect of Spanish. Due to her efforts, her communication with both her own family and community improved, and her ability to interact with Mexican speakers of a formal, academic variety of Spanish increased. Perhaps even more significant were her increased confidence in using Spanish and her bilingual students' linguistic and academic success. Her further acquisition of Spanish directly impacted upon her effectiveness as a Spanish-English bilingual teacher.

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