Transcript for SEC Spanish at SECOL 89 (2022)

Self-reported language use, proficiency and attitudes toward Spanish and English in the U.S. South: Case studies of Spanish in northern Mississippi and eastern North Carolina

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(Stephen Fafulas:) Kind of following up on everything we've been discussing, the work I've been doing with my colleague Matt Van Hoose, we're basically trying to document how the Spanish varieties or the Spanish speaking communities or Latinx communities, how they differ even within the U.S. South, right? I think that this does, you know, really speak to what the previous presenters highlighted, which is, you know, once we start to even focus in on the U.S. South and Latinx communities, and Spanish here, hold on. We're going to uncover that there's tons of diversity and differences here. So that's kind of, you know, what at least, I guess the main thrust of what I want to argue. I can't promise that I'm actually going to show it today with the data. Maybe a little bit, but that's kind of what the hope was here. So again, I'm not going to spend a lot of time here. I think most of us know. And actually, the one thing I want to point out here is that Latinx or Hispanic identity isn't a one to one correspondence with Spanish speaker and being a Spanish speaker isn't a one to one correspondence with identifying as Latinx or Hispanic, right? However, sometimes it's presented this way, but by just putting that issue aside, no matter how we kind of define this or, you know, conceptualize this, no matter how you slice it, the U.S. is home to one of the largest Spanish speaking populations in the world. Absolutely one of the top five. And this alone motivates us studying this constituency. And as we know that the predictions are that the Spanish speaking population, people who identify as Latinx, Hispanic, et cetera, will continue to grow now over time. And I'm using these terms interchangeably. Aris or some of our colleagues might object to that or, you know, might have a clear definition for when we use each one. But, you know, please grant me that grace for this time where I'm kind of using all of these terms interchangeably and just summarizing the findings and what we do know. Again, this is of no real surprise to anybody in this talk. But the U.S. South has experienced some of the most robust growth in Spanish speaking populations over the last two decades, and Lipski points out that this is what will be a great fertilization contact zone to study these dialects.

Dennis [Preston] already mentioned the English varieties that might be emerging here. I'm looking more at the Spanish varieties, and we do. As Dennis already mentioned, we do have work by many of the colleagues in North Carolina basically that that have been looking at some of these issues. But obviously we're far from understanding how the Spanish speaking communities in the U.S. South have compared to what we know about some of the other, more longstanding, even historical, let's say, city centers. So that brings us to the current project. Now I'm comparing northern Mississippi with eastern North Carolina. There are some reference points, like Memphis being more of a city center, and then in North Carolina, Raleigh, but in and of themselves, they're somewhat rural areas. I don't know, again, if that's exactly the proper definition here, but you know, they're not huge, robust, you know, metro city centers. So this in and of itself, you know, warrants some kind of investigation. And as Chad and I have discussed before the SEC Spanish consortium and the SEC schools, they're mostly located outside of city center hubs. And so again, this also aligns with some of these interesting findings.

So if we look at the Mississippi totals here, we see that consistent with the census reporting the Hispanic Latino population, and that's the way that it's referred to, I believe, in some of the census reports, it has continually grown over the last two decades. And what's interesting about this is even when the overall population in Mississippi has remained stagnant and the numbers are admittedly small for Mississippi, that the overall percentage. But even when the numbers have remained stagnant overall in Mississippi, the Hispanic Latino population has continued to grow. And here are just some points on the map where some of our speakers with whom we conducted sociolinguistic interviews were located. And we can come back to this now moving on to eastern North Carolina. Here we see the same kind of rapid growth in North Carolina overall. However, we see that the actual percent of the total population is much larger than it was in Mississippi. So again, Mississippi in 2020 was at four percent total Hispanic population, whereas in North Carolina it's 11 percent total Hispanic population. So this led us to some hypotheses in that while some certain contact features or the community aspects or ideologies might play out differently in North Carolina, or it might represent one stage in the process a little bit more advanced in North Carolina than it would for Mississippi. Again, I don't know if it's the right way to kind of phrase that hypothesis, but that was kind of our general feeling here. Now, same thing. Some points, you know, you'll notice Raleigh as well. But most of the other points where some of the speakers were from are really outside of city centers. So again, I've already really spoke through this, and, you know, this obviously needs to be worked out more and more anyway, but I think I've given you a good idea of the goals, the questions and some of the hypotheses that that we might be looking at here.

If we look at the northern Mississippi corpus, we see, we do have two clear generations and generation one has spent about a decade in the U.S. South. Not entirely in northern Mississippi. So this is something else that that is going to be true really, of these new destination communities in the U.S. South, right? Those ones that didn't have the previous robust numbers of Latinxes or Spanish speakers. We're going to see a lot of speakers coming from other regions of the U.S. South or in North Carolina. We had a good amount of speakers who came from New York and in Mississippi, those who came from Houston. So we're going to kind of, you know, the more and more that we can trace these migratory patterns, we might see some dialectical features coming in or ideological features. Again, if we look at the reasons in the south where they've been, we're trying to get a hold of that. And not surprisingly, maybe in northern Mississippi at least, the speakers reported being mostly from Mexico, from Mexico, of Mexican origin, and same thing for the second generation. Their parents were from Mexico. In eastern North Carolina, similarly, generation one has spent about a decade in the region generation two, mostly from birth. We have a couple who we put in there, who maybe came at three years old, that kind of thing, because to do the 1.5, we'd only have two participants. So it also kind of keep that in mind. Regions in the South. Same thing. I believe that that's a fascinating aspect. We haven't been able to really show that yet in our research. But I just wanted to make that clear that I think that's something important to keep in mind for researchers working on this. And the origin is slightly different than in Mississippi, as we might expect as well in North Carolina, a little bit more representation of the other Central American countries, et cetera, as is kind of common knowledge at this point. You know, for what's happening in North Carolina versus Mississippi. So I collected this convenient sample in a way when I was working at East Carolina University and now working at University of Mississippi. I've trained students, so I'm not going to talk much about that today, but it was mostly student led data collection, so there's a lot of positives to talk about in that. Some methodological issues as well to talk about. So we can talk about that as well, too. We obviously consented participants that the students are all city IRB trained. And you know, they consented. All participants consented. They underwent a sociolinguistic interview. They

narrated the "Frog, Where are you?" picture book. And then we also have bilingual language profiles, which is what I'm going to turn to now with each participant. Go ahead, Dennis.

OK, here we go. So we have the bilingual language profiles and the sociolinguistics interviews. That's what we're going to look at today. And the bilingual language profile which was created at UT Austin. It's a self-report questionnaire asked a lot of the questions that we would normally ask anyway in the sociolinguistic interview. So things like when did you start learning, in our case, Spanish and English? And I'll just note that they have this on their website for free. They already have the BLP for Russian and English and a lot of English. I'm sorry a lot of other language pairs, but in our case, it's Spanish and English. So when did you start learning Spanish? When did you start learning English? How many years have you received schooling in each one? When do you use them throughout the week? Spanish and English with family, with friends, et cetera. You know, what's your self-reported proficiency and attitudes? And we're going to look at that data. In the end, it produces a language dominance score, right? So if we wanted to look at are they balance bilinguals, are they more dominant in Spanish or English? This is kind of a way to do that. You couple all of the different components and you have a composite score, et cetera. I'm not going to focus too much on that. What I'm going to look at today are the four different components of the bilingual language profile, which gives you that composite score. So here again, we see language history. When did you start acquiring English and Spanish? When did you start feeling comfortable using these languages? How many years of formal education do you have, etc.? The next component is the language use. Now, interestingly, this will be important to keep in mind, this turns to weekly use. So we went from their history to now. What are you doing each week? What percentage of the time do you use English with friends? What percentage of the time you Spanish with friends? What percentage of the time do you use Spanish or English with family at work, at school, et cetera? With the language proficiency, it's self-reported, so hopefully as soon Dennis can help interpret some of our findings here today too. But you know, it's what they've reported, and this will actually be maybe not surprising, but somewhat interesting as well. You know what they think their skills are in English and Spanish? And then finally, their language attitude. So it asks them, I feel like myself, you know, I want to pass this on, you know, to future generations. I identify with the English speaking culture, Spanish speaking culture, et cetera.I want people to think I'm an English native speaker. I want people to think I'm a Spanish native speaker, that kind of thing.

OK, so what did we find with these results? So to the left side, you have the generation ones. So Northern Mississippi generation one, eastern North Carolina generation 1, and then the right most part of the screen, the generation 2s, northern Mississippi Generation 2, eastern North Carolina Generation 2. Note that the max possible score is about 55. So these are the mean scores per group. And if we look, so first of all, just as like a first observation, here we see there doesn't seem to be any robust at least for the history portion of the BLP. There's no robust geography. Geographical differences, right? The North Carolina and Mississippi generation 1s look pretty much identical. Same thing for the generation 2s. And not so surprisingly, either. The Generation 1s report much greater history with Spanish than with English, and the generations 2s more English history than Spanish. However, it's certainly worth noting that, although this I wouldn't say this is the best metric, it seems that Spanish is being passed on to the next generation, right in in in these regions because Generation 2 does report having history with Spanish, maybe it's mostly with the family. Fair enough. And now how about language use? So again, not so surprisingly, we see that Generation 1 reports using Spanish more in the community, while Generation 2 in both regions report using English more weekly again. Remember, this is weekly

language use, so now they're situated in their local communities in Mississippi and North Carolina. Interestingly, there is at this point a slight geographical difference for the Generation 2, whereby North Carolina Generation 2 does report using Spanish more weekly than the Mississippi Generation 2. And this is in line with our hypothesis. Now moving on to proficiency, now this is self-reported proficiency.

So if we take it for what it is, the good news is it seemed that from the first history there, being Spanish is being transmitted generationally. They have some, let's say, contexts to use this in throughout the week. Although admittedly not as robust, probably as in other zones as we might expect. You know, in the U.S., however, they still seem to maintain at least good, I don't know, good self-reported scores, so we haven't followed this up with any kind of analysis in the sociolinguistics interviews, which we could do, or with our Frog story as well, which we could do, right, to check on their fluency. But self reportedly, they do seem to be maintaining Spanish in Generation 2 pretty well. And in terms of their language attitudes. Again, what we see is for the Generation 2 Spanish and English are almost equal, right? So they maintain pretty positive attitudes toward Spanish and English in the generation 2 in both regions. Now, I would say, if nothing else, this is some kind of evidence for the complementarity principle, whereby each language is used somewhat differently or acquired somewhat differently in different contexts by the speaker. So I think that the BLP does capture that aspect. Now by way of closing, I just want to show a few examples of where we're kind of going with this project, where we're starting to look at maybe some of the ideological factors, code switching, discourse markers, that kind of thing.

So here we have a speaker. Second generation born in Los Angeles, parents are from Nicaragua and El Salvador. And here we hear him. "Sale se santemblando todo. So era mi primer earthquake. So eso estaba chido. Yo y mi hermano no salemos..." The use of "chido", might be more strongly associated with Mexican Spanish, and the speaker was born in L.A. so it's not surprising. But his parents are not from Mexico and this is being brought into Mississippi. And you know, he, you know, we have the discourse marker, we have the code switch, all that good stuff, which we'll continue to analyze. Now here we have again, you know, it's I don't know if it's a robust code switch. You know, we have the use of public setting. I'll let speaker say it because they say it better. "Básicamentecuando estoy en mi casa es español, cuando estoy en un Public setting es inglés." For me, the most fascinating thing is this this switch? She switches, in my opinion, to an English pronunciation, more of an English mode takes this long pause and kind of switches over. And this is not that surprising. You know, even I would say at this point, we don't have robust numbers of code switching, as you might expect in our corpus. Of course, we have these lexical items where it's kind of necessary. Another Mississippi participant now. Some vocabulary here. "¿aparte de mamá veinticuatro horas del día? [laughs] Estoy estudiando para preparador de taxes." And to me again, juxtaposed by the last example, here we hear more of kind of a fluency with the Spanish pattern as more of a Spanish pronunciation, whereas the last speaker took that that good pause and really switched over to English again. So some of the background characteristics and just some of the other forms. You know, again, not so surprising, really, these kind of lexical switches for, you know, what we know of code switching, you know, lexical switches based on previous studies. There is this form which only the Mississippians might be able to identify. We haven't been able to clearly speak to it yet, but somebody said, Hotty Toddy, we really don't know what that is yet. We're trying to uncover it. So again, moving a little bit more to the ideology and practice.

Here we have another speaker. Again, "Toda mi familia hablaba español y toda la sociedad donde yo vivía hablaban puro inglés, entonces me crecí como americano, hablando inglés." So here the speaker

kind of identifies, you know, speaking English, growing up, speaking English as, you know, making him American. We hear that, you know, these kinds of references in our talk. And then just two more real quick. "Variamos mucho y somos muy diferentes a todos los demás porque tenemos de todo incluido, estamos mixteados de todo lo demás del mundo." And this was in reference to a question about, you know, identity and background. And you know, the speaker responded with, you know, where "estamos mixteados de todo." And finally, this is the last example I have for you today. "En un sistema donde se mueve a base del inglés, vos no entendés porque siempre sos como el patito feo, siempre sos como el extraño, no? El único que no encaja." So obviously a lot to unpack here, but the thing I'm pointing out is just the the transfer of the vos, the voseo again in this North Carolina context. And note that the speaker has been living in eastern North Carolina for 10 years and still maintains a pretty strong pattern of voseo here. So that's also something that we're going to highlight. So I want to just conclude again by thanking first, by thanking my colleague and coauthor Matt Van Hoose from Howard Community College, who could not be here today, but he sends his Hey y'alls to everybody, and it's been wonderful working with him. The students who help with the data collection, the participants, start up funds at both universities, and thank you all. If there's any time, please contacts or questions. Thank you.

(Chad Howe:) Steven, I hate for you to have to field your own questions, so I will take the floor and say, are there any questions for Steven? OK. Aris.

(Aris Moreno Clemons:) Hi, thank you so much for that presentation, I'm super fascinated and there's a lovely conversation going on about Hotty Toddys in the chat. If you get around to it, it's okay. I had to two things: one. One of your East North Carolina students is one of my forever coauthors, Anna Lawrence. And so I thank her for her ability to collect that kind of data coming into our graduate program. But the second thing is, I was wondering if there were like any plans to make this data kind of publicly available in ways that, like these examples are absolutely wonderful for the kind of classroom context that I'm talking about and teaching students how to be full speakers, right? Especially thinking about the ways that code switching happens naturally. And then it becomes part of those language practices and thinking about disrupting that kind of like monolingual ideology that we have going on in the United States. I was just wondering if there are any plans of that.

(SF:) I think, you know, in a more general sense, certainly we'd love to have your, you know, your collaboration and input on it, you know, basically part of the big talks we had it we wanted to have today, were surrounding that, you know, if we can figure out a way to collect data locally, you know, in our different regions, at different SEC schools and kind of create this database. Of course, my coauthor and I would, I'm sure, be glad to share these examples with you if it's, you know, specifically for those purposes of pedagogy. Absolutely. So that that's not that's not a problem either. You could certainly contact us. And of course, we hope to publish the data and make it available and we're working towards that end. But yeah, at this point. Go ahead. Sorry.

(AMC:) I'm going to throw in the chat, a grant that might be of interest to this group and thinking about creating a resource like this. It's not. It won't be until like next the spring that you can do it, but it may give time to kind of plan and create something. And then in the meantime, so I'll throw that in the chat in just a second. Also, the chat saves because we recorded this.

(CH:) Any additional questions? It's good too if we have a recipe for Hotty Toddy, you might put it in there. That way will be public.

(SF:) I see a couple, I see a couple of recipes.

(CH:) And any other questions for Stephen? OK. If there are no questions, we can definitely move on. Thank you, Stephen again.

(SF:) Thank you. Thank you.

(CH:) Let me see if I can. So thank you, Steven and Matt, is Matt? yeah, for a wonderful presentation.