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LANGUAGE AND CAPITAL: SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND FEMALE MIGRANTS' SPANISH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE AND ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT. The use of Spanish and English and the attitudes held toward both languages in migrant communities provide insight into the tension between the new arrivals' desire to retain cultural and linguistic ties to their homeland and their desire to assimilate to the language and culture of their new home. The immigration stream from Mexico, the origin of the largest number of US migrants, has diversified socioeconomically over the last few decades, however, the sociolinguistic research has not reflected this change. The present study examines the similarities and differences in the language use and attitudes of female migrants from Mexico that belong to two distinct socioeconomic backgrounds.

1. INTRODUCTION. Migrants arriving from Mexico have greatly contributed to the linguistic and cultural landscape of the United States for more than a century. For several decades Mexican migrants were the engine behind the growth and size of the US Latino population which fostered the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Spanish language in the US (Durand et al. 2001; Funk & Lopez 2022; Giles et al. 1977). Of Latinos living in the U.S. 61.5% were either born in Mexico or are of Mexican heritage, constituting the largest proportion of the Latino population in the U.S. Nonetheless, the volume of migrants arriving from Mexico has fluctuated in recent years, at times reaching a net zero effect at one point (Passel et al. 2012, 2013). However, since 2010 the composition of the migrant population has changed; Asia displaced Mexico as origin of the largest proportion of migrants to the US while simultaneously Spanish-speaking newcomers from other areas of Latin America such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, and El Salvador have been arriving in increasing numbers (Esterline & Batalova 2022).

The nature of the migrant stream has also diversified somewhat with respect to gender and education. Since 2010, 52% of all newcomers are female and since 2014, 48% of the adults arriving to the US came with a bachelor's degree in hand with Mexico having contributed 17% of college-educated newcomers (Esterline & Batalova 2022; Israel & Batalova 2020).

Traditionally female migrants from Mexico arrived as companions with less robust educational levels and socioeconomic status, however, a small percentage (nearly 8%) of females are beginning to migrate from Mexico to the US having completed minimally a bachelor's degree (American Immigration Council 2020).

Given the impact that characteristics of the migrant stream have on the maintenance of the Spanish language in the US (Autor 2010; BBVA Research 2011), the increase of female migrants as well as the higher socioeconomic status or potential warrant scholarly attention as to the impact that such characteristics could have on family home life (Dominguez Villalobos et al. 2019). In order to explore the potential linguistic impact of a greater range of migrants from Mexico from a point of view of social capital, the present study examines the language use and language attitudes of female migrants of two distinct ends of the socioeconomic spectrum.

The group of migrants from Mexico known as *profesionistas,* signaling that their professional qualifications are attributed to a university education, is increasing, accounting for one out of every nine migrants arriving from Mexico (Zúñiga & Molina 2008; BBVA Research 2011). Attracted both by the social and political stability of the US as well as the increased employment opportunities and wage differentials, *profesionistas* are well-situated to undertake an international relocation than others with less preparation or economic resources (Zúñiga & Molina 2008; Arceo-Gómez 2012). Research suggests that migrants from Mexico are drawn from the middle of the distribution of skills and the skill level of migrants will continue to increase as the networks that facilitate migration grow and mature (Clemens 2014).

Domínguez Villalobos and her colleagues (2019) note that between 1990 and 2014 the annual average migration of female *profesionistas* (8.2%) outstripped that of their male counterparts (5.9%). Nonetheless, the researchers noted that this increased presence does not directly translate into participation in the labor force and highlight the fact that inequalities persist in terms of access to positions that match Mexican female migrants' educational qualifications. To wit,

> It should be noted that to a greater extent than men, skilled female migrants also face the problems of disqualification and underutilization, wherein the work experience gained in the country of origin is wasted because they must take jobs that are not in line with their educational training (Ramírez-García & Gandini 2016) or because despite having academic credentials, women must remain outside the labor force for significant periods (Gottfried, 2013) (Domínguez Villalobos et al. 2019:5).

Therefore, although many female migrants may possess academic and professional qualifications, they will frequently continue to depend on their spouses for financial support and entrée into institutions of society. Thus, regardless of their personal educational and professional status, it is often the male spouse's the level of education, profession, and skills that influence female migrants' social standing and mobility as well as access to goods and services.

In considering the impact that socioeconomic standing can have on individuals and groups, Block (2013:31) notes that '[t]he material conditions and interests shape the consciousness of people, the social relations emergent in the practices of individuals and collectives and, ultimately, the conflicts around class interests which arise when interests, consciousness, practices and social formations come together,' indicating that social class should be taken into consideration as part of the social forces that affect individuals and groups such as families. Failing to take social class into consideration, Block suggests, can lead researchers to erroneously presume a certain homogeneity of group members which entails a presumption that the same linguistic standards are applied and expected equally across all groups without consideration of social standing.

Although studies examining the linguistic practices and attitudes of informants beyond the working-class level are beginning to emerge (e.g. Velázquez 2009; Ramos 2015), differences in the social standing of informants needs to be examined more broadly in sociolinguistic research. This need is particularly urgent in studies that examine the linguistic and cultural dynamics in families who speak languages other than English (Cavanaugh 2006; King & De Fina 2010; Lomeu Gomes 2019; McClain 2010; Schecter & Bailey 1997, 1998; Schwartz 2010; Velázquez 2009, 2014). When the impact that social standing has on linguistic practices is taken in conjunction with the critical role women traditionally play in guiding the linguistic and cultural socialization of younger family members and lays the foundation for their development of literacy skills, both the lived linguistic experiences women have as well as their economic standing will shape their ideologies toward language and influence how their children are raised. The present study initiates the exploration into whether or not differences in the socioeconomic standing and cultural capital espoused by female migrants will influence what and how they transmit information and values of the language and culture of their place of origin to their children.

2. Review of the Literature.

The relationship between socioeconomic status, language use and language attitudes among Spanish speaking communities along the US-Mexico border has not been consistently examined. In previous research spanning over four decades, most emphasis has been placed on individuals who were economically or educationally marginalized. In these studies Spanish was the language associated with personal fulfillment and satisfaction (Adorno 1973; Hannum 1978) and connecting with one's heritage or connecting with a larger group (Ayer 1969; Ramírez 1974; Carranza & Ryan 1975; LaTouche 1976; Elías-Olivares 1976a, 1976b, Solé 1976; Ryan & Carranza 1977; Weller 1983; Galindo 1991, 1995).

Contrastively English has generally been viewed as the language through which one achieves social or economic advancement (e.g. Grebler et al. 1970; Elías-Olivares 1976a; Hidalgo 1986; Galindo 1995; Valdés 1996, 2000). This

interpretation was supported by Hudson et al.'s (1995) and Bills et al.'s (1999) examinations of census data that revealed a strong correlation between the shift to English and higher educational levels, however census data may not reveal the whole story. Amastae (1982) observed home Spanish use shifting to English use in more public arenas with the purpose of enhancing socioeconomic status, but noted that a second trend, a shift back to Spanish occurred once the individual had achieved their desired socioeconomic level.

Continuing research of language use and attitudes in communities along the US-Mexico border suggest a shift in favor of increasing the status of Spanish. Mejías et al. (2002) conducted a follow up on the data they had collected in the 1980s (Mejías & Anderson 1988). In this more recent iteration of their study they found that attitudes were not only positive toward the maintenance of Spanish in the Río Grade Lower Valley, but that informants had increased in their positive dispositions toward Spanish from 20 years prior.

Other research conducted in the Southwest has demonstrated that communities hold a high regard for both languages with respect to several attitudinal orientations (MacGregor-Mendoza 1998). Using census data, Jenkins (2009) followed up on Bills et al. (1995) and Hudson et al.'s (1995) research. Although confirming some of the same trends as in the past, he noted that there was no correlation between Spanish retention and education and poverty, suggesting that there was no longer a social price to pay for retaining Spanish speaking abilities.

Using interviews as part of a longitudinal study regarding language attitudes on the U.S.-Mexico border in southwest Texas, Achugar found increasingly that Spanish had become seen increasingly by middle-class individuals as a source of capital from which to reap benefits, suggesting that either sentiments toward the language are changing overall, or that informants of different social status may express different views (Achugar 2008; Achugar & Pessoa 2009). Rangel et al.'s (2015) matched guise study revealed that participants rated Spanish and English indistinguishably on scales measuring solidarity, status & personal appeal. While sociolinguistic research has traditionally focused its attention on the language use and attitudes of individuals at the lower socioeconomic scale, changes in the migrant stream from Mexico as well as recent indications of a shift in attitudes toward Spanish warrant an examination of language attitudes from a broader spectrum of the migrant stream (Wei & Milroy 2003).

In response to the border's changing sociodemographic profile, research has begun to explore the sociolinguistic characteristics of Spanish speaking communities that are more economically stable. Velázquez (2009) examined the attitudes and linguistic practices of intergenerational transmission of Spanish in middle-class families in El Paso. Despite previous research (e.g. Tse 2001) suggesting a connection between songs, comic books and religious texts promoting

literacy and sustaining overall linguistic skills, Velázquez found that while parents favored the maintenance of Spanish, they were not always following through with enough opportunities to make that dream a reality. Mothers that more actively promoted a bilingual/bicultural identity and encouraged the development of Spanish at home had greater prospects for their children's bilingual development. Similar sentiments for fostering bilingual/bicultural identities were confirmed by MacGregor-Mendoza (2015) who found that the wives of highly educated Mexican migrants, who themselves were well-educated, held highly positive attitudes toward Spanish, indicated a commitment to their children's retaining their use of Spanish while simultaneously developing skills in English, and actively and regularly sought the company of Spanish speaking families of similar background and status.

Both Velázquez's (2009) and MacGregor-Mendoza's (2015) studies purposely focused on the linguistic practices and attitudes of females. Since women continue to be primarily responsible for the social, cultural, moral and linguistic upbringing of the children in most homes, their linguistic abilities, attitudes, and practices not only inform the rules with which they govern their household, but also serve as models of behavior for their offspring. This situation is particularly true in the case of new arrivals to the United States where household roles are often divided along traditional lines placing women as the principal makers and enforcers of rules and protocols. After arriving in a new country, women often continue in their role as traditional caretakers, and as such set the tone for the transmission of linguistic and cultural traditions that form the foundation of the family's set of values and beliefs with regard to language and culture (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986; Cavanaugh 2006; King & De Fina 2010; McClain 2010; Schwartz 2010). As succinctly expressed by Ellis & Sims, "parents' experiences of languages will colour and influence both their aims for their children's plurilingualism, and the practices that they bring to bear to that end" (2022: 1). Thus, examining the linguistic background, beliefs and experiences of female migrants is critical to understanding the linguistic environment and principles guiding the socialization of children in homes where a language other than English is present.

In order to respond to the lack of examination of migrants from different ends of the socioeconomic continuum, the present paper examines the language use and attitudes of women who have immigrated from Mexico from two distinct social groups: female migrants from Mexico who emigrated with Mexican spouses who are employed in highly skilled occupations (doctors, engineers, etc.) and female migrants from Mexico who emigrated either solely or with spouses who are employed in low to no skill occupations. To that end this study explores whether or not the patterns of Spanish and English language use and attitudes of the female migrants from these two distinct groups mirror each other or are distinct. In particular, the study centers on the attitudes women in each of these two groups

hold toward Spanish and English and their use of Spanish with family and friends at home and elsewhere. What is under examination in the present study is whether or not this positive attitude and expressed commitment toward the maintenance of Spanish is a result of the higher educational and social status of a particular group of informants or whether or not these same sentiments and pledges to retain Spanish can be found across a broader segment of the female migrant population.

3. METHODOLOGY. In order to explore the relationship between language attitudes, language use and social class, this current paper seeks to compare the Spanish and English language use and language attitudes of female migrants from Mexico who live in Southern New Mexico but who represent individuals of different socioeconomic stature. The question guiding this study is, *do the linguistic beliefs and practices reported by economically advantaged Mexican migrant females living in the Southwest match those of Mexican migrant females of lesser economic standing?*

Participants of the economically advantaged group were those who participated in a previous study (MacGregor-Mendoza 2015). These 15 informants, eight of whom were already acquaintances of the author, and the remainder were individuals suggested as participants by those acquaintances, were selected given they were married to men who were part of Mexico's *profesionista* class. *Profesionistas* is a term that refers to professionals that had earned university degrees, often post graduate degrees in Mexico, and had emigrated from Mexico to work in the US as doctors, engineers, computer analysts, pilots, etc. The informants in this *profesionista* group had accompanied their spouses in this move and often formed bonds through their spouses who frequently interacted with each other professionally as well as socially.

A separate group of informants from the opposite end of the socioeconomic scale was interviewed in order to gain a greater understanding of the language use and attitude patterns of a broad swath of Mexican migrant females living in Southern New Mexico. There were also 15 women in this group, however, these informants were not married to *profesionistas* and were recruited as having emigrated from Mexico voluntarily as adults. Five individuals in this group were acquaintances of the author, the remainder were drawn from individuals suggested by the author's acquaintances from either the *profesionista* or non-*profesionista* participants, as well as recruited from a local high school in a rural setting that serves predominantly Spanish-speaking communities whose economic base is more blue-collar. While it's acknowledged that this category cuts a much broader swath of the female migrant population from Mexico than the previous category, it has the advantage of potentially capturing a more diverse set of backgrounds, uses and opinions.

In examining the summary of sociolinguistic information regarding the two groups of informants in Table 1, it can be seen that the women in the *profesionista*

group are slightly younger, on average than the non-*profesionista* group, and are more likely to have lived in the US longer. All women from the *profesionista* group minimally possess a high school diploma as compared to less than half of the non-*profesionista* group. Also, as expected, occupations reported to be held by the *profesionista* spouses were representative of skilled labor, while those held by the non-*profesionista* spouses were not. The majority of women in both groups strongly identify with the term Mexicana/o to describe themselves and their spouses, and women in each group were equally as likely to work as not, although the professions of those who did work varied in skill level similar to the divisions observed in the spouses' occupations.

All informants filled out two written questionnaires that requested short answer responses, selection of multiple-choice options and reactions to statements on a Likert scale. Informants also participated in a brief oral interview in Spanish after completing the questionnaires. All activities were completed in one session lasting no more than 90 minutes.

Informant Age

	P	NP
25-35	7	2
35-45	7	5
45-55	1	5
65+	0	2

Arrived in USA

	P	NP
0-1 Yrs ago	2	2
2-4 Yrs ago	5	2
5-7 Yrs ago	1	1
8-10 Yrs ago	4	2
11+ Yrs ago	3	7

Spouse's Employment

	P	NP
MD/DDS/DVM:	7	0
Engineer	5	0
Pilot	1	0
Supervisor	2	3
Dairyman/Baker	0	3
Carpenter	0	1
Retailer	0	1
Mechanic/Welder	0	2
Foundry worker	0	1
Truck driver	0	1
Unknown	0	2

Informant's Current Employment

	P	NP
None	8	7
Lawyer/Professor	2	0
HR Mgr	1	0
Tchr/Couns	2	1
Bus. Owner	1	1
Student	2	2
Maid	0	2
Hairdresser	0	1

Highest Degree Completed to Date

	P	NP
0-6	0	2
7-11	0	6
HS Diploma	2	1
Some college	2	3
Bachelor's	7	1
Master's	2	1
Professional Degree	2	0

Ethnic Identity

	Prof		Non-*Prof*	
	Self	Spouse	Self	Spouse
Mexicana/o	12	10	9	11
Hispana/o	4	3	4	2
Latina/o		1	1	0
Otro		2		1

TABLE 1. SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESIONISTA (P) AND NON-PROFESIONISTA (NP) INFORMANTS

The first of the two questionnaires solicited basic sociodemographic information, informants' Spanish and English abilities, their use of both languages with close family members and when attempting to accomplish specific communicative tasks. Also surveyed were informants' *affective* attitudes (sense of personal fulfillment), *integrative* attitudes (sense of belonging to a group), *instrumental* attitudes (sense of progress or advancement) and *language loyalty* (sense of allegiance to a language) toward both Spanish and English. The items on the questionnaire followed the lines of previous work on language use and attitudes (e.g. MacGregor-Mendoza 1998, 1999; Mejías & Anderson 1988).

Additional items in the first questionnaire elicited details regarding the communicative ties that informants maintain with family and friends in Mexico and in the US, their level of desire to continue to foster connections with Spanish speakers in Mexico and/or the US. Information was also sought on the manners and languages used in the informants' interaction with their children in their role as caretakers. Participants were also asked to categorize the linguistic and cultural expectations they held for their children now and in the future and how they worked to fulfill them. Finally, informants were asked to reflect on how faithfully they have sustained Mexican traditions post-immigration and to express whether they would like to return to Mexico or remain in the US to live.

A second questionnaire examined the informants' network of social ties. Informants identified family and friends with whom they interacted most frequently. Informants then provided details regarding each of their contacts including age, gender, occupation, frequency of interaction, and language of interaction. Informants also indicated the different contexts in which they interacted with each of their contacts.

These two questionnaires were supplemented with an oral interview, lasting an average of 30 minutes. During the interview, informants were asked about friendships they had established, asked to recall events where they had been discriminated against for using either English or Spanish, invited to state what their parents had taught them about language, asked to express what they wanted their children to know about Spanish and English, and finally, asked to share what their own expectations and fears were for their children's linguistic development.

The data from both questionnaires were coded and introduced into SPSS for non-parametric analyses, notably, chi-squared tests, to identify patterns of similar or contrasting responses. Crucially, non-parametric measures do not assume that the data are derived from a normal distribution, do not rely on a mean or standard deviation or other predictive variables. Non-parametric measures, such as the chi-squared test, are useful in describing initial trends in exploratory studies with small sample sizes.

Data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed from the standpoint of thematic analysis, identifying repeating themes expressed by informants. Successive rounds of review and coding of the transcripts within and across groups revealed similarities and contrasts in beliefs, experiences, and practices. While all of the data collected cannot be explored here for the purposes of the present study, attention is given to the informants' abilities in Spanish and English, their use of Spanish with family and friends, their use of language to perform specific tasks, their attitudes toward Spanish and English, and the beliefs and experiences that exemplify their attitudes toward language that they wish to pass on to their children.

4. RESULTS. In examining the distribution of responses to the questionnaires a noticeable trend emerged characterizing the two groups of informants. First, the

responses of the *profesionista* participants were tightly aligned with one another and often clustered at one end of the series of options or the other. Responses from non-*profesionista* informants were more diverse, spreading out among the categories of responses. Given that each group of informants only numbered 15, both the low informant count, as well as the patterning of responses impacted the strength of the statistical outcomes and the interpretations that can be drawn from them. Overall, the chi-squared analyses of the variables examined here generated few results that were calculated as significant, due to the low informant count and the different patterns of distribution of responses.

A few comparisons of the variables did generate a statistically significant result, however, for such outcomes to be considered reliable, they must also fulfill the underlying criteria of having expected cell counts greater than one and the proportion of cells with a count less than five being less than 20%. Those few comparisons noted in the tables that did render significant results failed to meet these underlying criteria and as such, are not considered reliable Thus while the data in the tables do illustrate contrasts between the conformity of the responses of the *profesionista* informants and the greater diversity of responses of the non-*profesionista* informants, the researcher makes no claims as to the reliability of the reported significant outcomes of these statistical measures and thus has labeled any significant results as tentative.

4.1. INFORMANTS' LINGUISTIC PROFILE. Informants were requested to provide a self-assessment of their abilities in both English and Spanish to examine what skills they might possess in both languages to ground their attitudes toward both languages and pass on to their children. In all cases except for one individual in each group, Spanish was the informants' first language. One of the *profesionista* informants reported that she was raised in Mexico with both Spanish and English present in her home, while one of the non-*profesionista* informant's native language was Mixe, an indigenous language native to Oaxaca.

Nonetheless, despite their similar exposure to Spanish as the primary language of their upbringing, the informants in both groups, as noted in Table 2 displayed different levels of confidence in their Spanish abilities. *Profesionista* informants classified their Spanish abilities in all areas almost exclusively as Excellent, while non-*profesionista* informants were more reserved in their self-evaluations, dividing themselves largely between the Excellent and Well categories. Informants were overall less confident in their English abilities, with non-*profesionista* informants being the least confident of all, with only a few venturing beyond the Fair category for the different skills. These patterns of responses suggest that *profesionista* informants express more confidence in their Spanish and English abilities overall than do non-*profesionista* informants.

	Excellent		Well		Fair		Poor		Not at all	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
Ability to Speak										
Spanish	**15**	**8**	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0**
English	1	0	**6**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**3**	0	1	**8***
Ability to Understand										
Spanish	**15**	**9**	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0*
English	**6**	**0**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**4***
Ability to Read										
Spanish	**15**	**9**	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0*
English	**5**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**3**	0	0	**7****
Ability to Write										
Spanish	**14**	**9**	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1
English	1	0	**6**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**4**	1	1	**7**

TABLE 2. SELF-REPORTED LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF PROFESIONISTAS (P) AND NON-PROFESIONISTAS (NP)

*p≤.05 (tentative) **p≤.01 (tentative) all other comparisons not significant

4.2. SPANISH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CHOICES. In addition to surveying informants' abilities in Spanish and English, items on the questionnaires also sought to identify with whom informants regularly interacted in their homes and in what language they did so. Other items also asked informants to identify how often they engaged in a series of information and literacy-based activities in Spanish that sustained their personal base of knowledge as well as provided the foundation of literacy in Spanish for their children.

As indicated in Table 3, conversations with family members in both groups of informants were conducted almost exclusively in Spanish. Both *profesionistas* and non-*profesionistas* used Spanish as their primary language of communication at home with members of their family.

	Only Spanish		**Mostly Spanish**		**Either**		**Mostly English**		**Only English**	
	P	NP	**P**	NP	**P**	NP	P	NP	**P**	NP
Spouse	**11**	**13**	3	1	1	0			1	0
1st Child	**8**	**11**	4	1	2	2				
2nd Child	**6**	**11**	4	1	1	1				
3rd Child	**4**	**8**	1	0	0	1				
Mother	**12**	**13**								
Father	**11**	**13**	1	0						
Brothers	**9**	**14**	1	0	1	0				
Sisters	**10**	**14**			1	0				

TABLE 3. LANGUAGE REPORTED TO BE USED AT HOME WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OF *PROFESIONISTAS* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTAS* (NP).
No comparisons were significant.

This frequent use of Spanish at home in conversations by both informant groups is further reinforced by the kinds of informational and literacy activities in which they engage, seen in Table 4. Both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants reported keeping themselves informed and entertained by listening to the news, television programs, music and the radio in Spanish on a daily basis. Both groups were also similar in not relying on newspapers, magazines, books or writing letters in Spanish as part of their regular routines, indicating that traditional print-based activities may be giving way to a preference for more digital formats.

Both groups did report interact with their children in Spanish when giving advice and attending church services in Spanish. Spanish was also often used when interacting with children over meals, when helping children with their homework and when working on arts and crafts activities. However, it should be noted that these latter events were more frequently seen practiced among the *profesionista* group than the non-*profesionista* group.

	Rarely or never		1-2 times x week		3-4 times x week		5-6 times x week		Every day	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
How often in Spanish do you…										
...watch the news?	1	1	6	1	2	1	1	0	**6**	**11**
...watch other tv programs?	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	**9**	**11**
...listen to the radio or music?	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	0	**12**	**9**
...read the newspaper?	**10**	**11**	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	1
...read magazines?	**7**	**8**	**3**	**6**	3	0	1	0	1	0
...read books for enjoyment?	**2**	**5**	**6**	**4**	3	2	2	1	1	2
...write formal (business) letters?	**12**	**13**	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
...write informal (personal) letters?	**11**	**12**	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
…read books to your children?	**3**	**6**	**3**	**4**	2	2	3	1	4	1
…sing children's songs to your children?	**6**	**8**	2	2	1	2	1	0	5	1
…tell stories to your children?	**4**	**6**	**5**	**3**	0	2	1	2	5	1
…speak to children while eating a meal?	1	2	0	3	1	2	2	2	**11**	**5**
…speak to children while doing crafts?	2	4	3	3	0	2	1	1	**9**	3
…help children with homework?	3	**5**	0	2	1	3	0	0	**10**	**6**
…go to church as a family?	4	4	**11**	**8**	0	0	0	0	1	2
…give advice to your children?	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	**10**	**9**

TABLE 4. FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED IN SPANISH BY *PROFESIONISTA* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTA* (NP) INFORMANTS.
No comparisons were significant.

Moreover, while as noted Spanish played a regular part of both groups' media choices, Spanish as a literary form was not seen to have a strong presence in either *profesionista's* homes or non-*profesionista's* homes. Few members in either group reported regularly engaging in activities in Spanish that specifically directly promoted literacy such as reading books, singing songs or telling stories. These results support the findings of Velázquez (2009) and MacGregor-Mendoza (2015) where few families reported engaging in literacy-based activities in Spanish at home and may be a further sign of the changing nature of literacy since the literacy practices in which parents engaged in while growing up may not be applicable to their children's context (e.g. Ortega 2020; Stewart 2014).

Additional items in the questionnaires asked about how often informants engaged in traditional celebrations in Spanish as a means of fostering a sense of cultural and linguistic identity in their families. As noted in Table 5, both groups of informants reported keeping several Mexican traditions alive in celebrating religious and cultural events despite the length of time since their arrival, although the *profesionista* informants appeared to be more regularly engaged in doing so. Nonetheless, a few informants in the non-*profesionista* group commented that the reason why they didn't keep certain Mexican traditions in the US was because they didn't particularly celebrate them at home prior to their migration. It is clear,

however, that for most informants in both groups, celebrating certain religious and cultural events reminiscent of their country of origin is an important means of developing and maintaining their families' cultural and linguistic identity.

	Rarely or never		**occasionally**		**50% of the time**		**more than 50% of time**		**Always**	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
Virgin of Guadalupe	**6**	**4**	2	3	0	0	0	1	**8**	**5**
Three Kings Day	1	4	3	**4**	0	0	1	0	**11**	**5**
Christmas	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	**15**	**11**
Mexican Independence Day	2	2	**5**	**3**	0	1	2	0	**6**	**7**
Mexican Revolution Day	3	2	**6**	**3**	1	1	2	0	3	7
family birthdays	**0**	**5**	**0**	**5**	0	0	0	0	**16**	**3**
your favorite Saint's days	**8**	**2**	0	0	**4**	0	1	0	**3**	**12**

TABLE 5. FREQUENCY OF PRACTICING MEXICAN TRADITIONS ON GIVEN HOLIDAYS BY *PROFESIONISTA* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTA* (NP) INFORMANTS. NO COMPARISONS WERE SIGNIFICANT.

Outside of specific celebrations, informants in both groups reported making an effort to maintain ties with other Spanish speakers both in and outside of their immediate family. As seen in Table 6, informants in the *profesionista* group reported interacting in an average week with a with nearly double the number of individuals reported by the non-*profesionista* informants. *Profesionista* informants also indicated that they interacted with their contacts in more diverse contexts than did non-*profesionista* informants and that approximately 60% of their interactions were with individuals of Mexican background and were conducted in Spanish. By contrast, non-*profesionista* informants interacted with fewer individuals in an average week and engaged with them primarily at home and in informal parties. Over three-quarters of the interlocutors with which non-*profesionista* informants engaged were of Mexican descent and conversations with these individuals were conducted almost exclusively in Spanish.

Overall, the data in these tables point to activities that informants engage in to sustain their and their children's language abilities. Informants from both groups are similar in the choices they make with respect to their preference for Spanish for media, news, and interacting with family. Both groups of informants are also similar in the lack of traditional literacy development activities with their children. Informants differ, however, in the opportunities each group has to engage in conversations with diverse interlocutors in Spanish and English as well as the

diverse contexts in which these conversations take place. These differences in their experiences may influence the attitudes they have toward Spanish and English.

	P	NP		P	NP
Contacts Reported:			Where Contacts are seen		
Total	147	84	Home	102	68
Female	114	6	Informal Parties	64	17
Male	33	23	Formal Parties	30	1
Mexican	89	64	School	29	6
Spanish Only	87	83	Church	22	5
			Other	22	10
Average	9.8	6.0			
Female	7.6	4.4			
Male	2.9	1.7			
Mexican	5.9	4.6			
Spanish Only	6.7	5.9			

TABLE 6. SELECT CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTACTS WITHIN INFORMANTS' SOCIAL NETWORK BY *PROFESIONISTA* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTA* (NP) INFORMANTS.

4.3. ATTITUDES TOWARD SPANISH AND ENGLISH. An individual's feelings toward a language can both influence and be influenced by their actions and experiences. Given that informants in both groups were aligned with one another in some of their linguistic activities and differed from one another in others, we wished to identify what attitudes informants from both groups held toward Spanish and English as well as explore the linguistic expectations and aspirations informants had for their children. Overall, the responses reflected attitudes that had been seen in previous studies, but also offered insights into changing positions toward both languages.

Likert-style questionnaire items surveyed the informants' language loyalty and affective, integrative, and instrumental attitudes toward Spanish and English. The responses regarding Spanish are compiled in Table 7.

	Strongly Agree		Mostly Agree		Neutral		Mostly Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
Affective										
You prefer to speak Spanish more than English	**11**	**9**	1	2	3	3	0	0	0	0
You feel proud that you speak Spanish	**14**	**12**	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
You feel lucky that you speak Spanish	**14**	**14**	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
You feel free at any time/ in any place to speak Spanish	**11**	**13**	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Instrumental										
It is important to you to speak Spanish	**14**	**12**	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
One can have more job opportunities if they know Spanish	**11**	**8**	0	1	3	4	0	0	0	1
You can communicate with more people by speaking Spanish	**11**	**10**	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
Spanish is a useful language to know	**13**	**13**	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Integrative										
Knowing Spanish helps you seem more educated to others	**7**	**6**	**4**	**3**	3	2	0	3	0	0
You feel more comfortable around people who speak Spanish.	**11**	**12**	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Spanish helps you make friends	**12**	**9**	0	3	2	2	1	0	0	0
Speaking Spanish makes you feel like you belong to a group	**11**	**10**	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0
Language Loyalty										
Latinos should know Spanish	**9**	**12**	**4**	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Spanish is an important part of Latino culture	**13**	**13**	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spanish helps our community progress	**12**	**10**	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Latino parents in the US should ensure that their children know Spanish	**13**	**12**	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
My child should still retain Spanish while s/he is learning English	**14**	**14**	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE 7. AGREEMENT REGARDING AFFECTIVE, INTEGRATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL ATTITUDES AND LANGUAGE LOYALTY EXPRESSED TOWARD SPANISH BY *PROFESIONISTAS* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTAS* (NP). NO COMPARISONS WERE SIGNIFICANT.

Previous studies found Spanish to primarily be associated with attitudes of an affective, integrative or language loyalty nature and not associated with instrumental values, (e.g. Ayer 1969; Adorno 1973; Ramírez 1974; Carranza & Ryan 1975; Hannum 1978). The present study revealed that Spanish is also valued

for instrumental purposes, among both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants. That is to say that informants from both groups agreed that Spanish was a language they felt proud to speak, were comfortable speaking and thought that it was an important part of Latino culture, as had been found in the past, however, these informants also strongly agreed that Spanish represented a language that presented more job opportunities. In fact, both groups of informants registered a high level of agreement positively associating Spanish on the various attitude statements, reflecting the high esteem informants consistently held for the language. Given the diverse socioeconomic standing of the informants in this study, this finding adds support to Jenkins' (2009) conclusion that the notion of a social or financial penalty formerly associated with the retention of Spanish is disappearing.

Responses to a parallel set of questionnaire items regarding English are seen in Table 8. The pattern of responses reflected a similarly high esteem for English as well as new attitudinal values that had not traditionally been associated with the language.

While in previous studies English was primarily associated with instrumental attributes, but not accorded values of language loyalty, affective or integrative attitudes (e.g. Grebler et al. 1970; Elías-Olivares 1976a; Hidalgo 1986; Galindo 1995; Valdés 1996, 2000), informants in the present study also rated English highly on other attitude measures as well. In addition to instrumental values, English in the present study was seen to also be associated with affective, integrative and language loyalty dimensions. Informants in both groups registered a high level of agreement with statements regarding feeling proud to speak English, feeing English helped them make friends, and feeling that the language helped their community progress, although they were somewhat divided on the notion that English makes you feel like part of a group.

Informants from both groups also registered strong disagreement on a few key statements. Both groups of informants disagreed that their preference to speak English was greater than their preference to speak Spanish, which is consistent with the types of interactions they reported on previously. Informants from both groups also disagreed with the idea that English represented a threat to Latino culture. Both groups were also nearly unanimous in their dissent with the notion that it was acceptable for their children to lose their Spanish in order to learn English. Although the patterns of agreement with the statements toward Spanish are more uniform than are the patterns of agreement with the statements toward English, they collectively represent the high and parallel esteem that both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants hold for both languages.

Additional items, summarized in Table 9, queried what linguistic and cultural expectations informants held for their family's future. These items reflected the informants' anticipated trajectory for their family's residency, desires regarding

connections to friends and families here and abroad, as well as the linguistic and cultural expectations they held and/or enforced in their children.

	Strongly Agree		Mostly Agree		Neutral		Mostly Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
Affective										
You prefer to speak English more than Spanish	1	0	2	1	5	3	0	**4**	**7**	**6**
You feel proud that you speak English	**9**	**4**	**4**	**3**	2	1	0	2	0	3
You feel lucky that you speak English	**8**	**5**	**4**	**3**	3	1	0	2	0	2
You feel free at any time/ in any place to speak English	**7**	**5**	**4**	**1**	3	3	0	2	1	2
Instrumental										
It is important to you to speak English	**14**	**10**	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
One can have more job opportunities if they know English	**13**	**10**	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
You can communicate with more people by speaking English	**13**	**11**	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
English is a useful language to know	**14**	**12**	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Integrative										
Knowing English helps you seem more educated to others	**8**	**0**	**5**	**1**	1	**4**	0	0	0	0
You feel more comfortable around people who speak English.	3	2	1	0	**7**	**4**	2	3	2	4
English helps you make friends	**11**	**7**	0	0	**4**	3	0	1	0	2
Speaking English makes you feel like you belong to a group	**7**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**3**
Language Loyalty										
Latinos should know English	**10**	**10**	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
English is a threat to Latino culture	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	**11**	**9**
English helps our community progress	**14**	**9**	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Latino parents in the US should ensure that that their children know English	**13**	**11**	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
I accept that my child may lose his/her Spanish in order to learn English	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	**13**	**10**

TABLE 8. AGREEMENT REGARDING AFFECTIVE, INTEGRATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL ATTITUDES AND LANGUAGE LOYALTY EXPRESSED TOWARD ENGLISH BY *PROFESIONISTAS* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTAS* (NP). NO COMPARISONS WERE SIGNIFICANT.

Informants in both groups generally seemed more disposed to remaining in the US permanently rather than returning to Mexico or were neutral to the option of returning. reinforces the equanimity with which both languages are viewed.

Informants. Regardless, *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants demonstrated a desire to maintain connections both in the US and Mexico with Spanish speakers.

	Strongly Agree		Mostly Agree		Neutral		Mostly Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
I wish…	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP	P	NP
to return to Mexico to live	1	2	1	2	**5**	**1**	3	2	**4**	**7**
to stay in touch with family in Mexico	**14**	**13**	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
to have Spanish speaking friends in the US	**13**	**13**	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
to have Mexican friends in the US	**13**	**13**	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
to have friends who only speak English	1	2	0	0	**7**	**4**	1	4	**5**	**4**
for my children to have Spanish speaking friends	**8**	**11**	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
for my children to speak good Spanish	**12**	**12**	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
for my children to speak some Spanish even if it isn't completely correct	**1**	**6**	0	3	0	1	1	1	**9**	**3***
for my children to speak good English	**12**	**11**	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
for my children to speak some English even if it isn't completely correct	**1**	**5**	0	2	0	1	1	2	**11**	**4**
for my children to speak Spanish like me	**12**	**11**	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
for my children to speak English like me	3	2	1	0	1	2	0	2	**6**	**7**
for my children to read and write well in Spanish	**12**	**12**	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
for my children to read and write well in English	**13**	**13**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
for my children to consider themselves Mexican	**11**	**13**	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
for my children to consider themselves American	**7**	**6**	0	0	3	1	0	2	3	**4**
for my children to keep Mexican traditions	**13**	**13**	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
for my children to adopt American traditions	**8**	**9**	2	5	2	0	1	0	0	0

TABLE 9. AGREEMENT REGARDING TIES TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, SOCIAL CONTACTS, CULTURE, AND LANGUAGE FOR INFORMANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN BY *PROFESIONISTAS* (P) AND NON-*PROFESIONISTAS* (NP).
*P≤ .05 (TENTATIVE); ALL OTHER COMPARISONS WERE NOT SIGNIFICANT

Regarding their expectations for their children's linguistic and cultural development, informants in both groups indicated a strong desire to have their children grow up speaking, reading and writing both Spanish and English. Their disagreement to the statement that it would be ok for their children to "speak some Spanish, even if it isn't correct", and their strong agreement to the statement that they wanted their children to "speak Spanish like me," signaled their expectations

that their children's Spanish should reflect the norms of their own variety of the language.

Informants also wanted their children to develop relationships with individuals who spoke Spanish and were neutral or disagreed to them developing friendships with individuals who spoke only English. Similar to the findings in Velázquez (2009), informants in both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* groups favored their children's maintenance of a bilingual/bicultural identity and felt that it was important that their children respect the traditions of both Mexico and the US. Overall, the results from the surveys indicate that for both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* female migrant informants, Spanish is used regularly and frequently in family interactions and with social contacts. As informants in both groups reported desiring and promoting the development of bilingual/bicultural identity in their children and not wanting their children's Spanish abilities to be sacrificed in exchange for learning English, the high use of the Spanish language goes a long way in providing support for these goals. By providing a home environment that includes a rich and varied set of interlocutors with whom Spanish is used and by interacting with individuals in a range of different contexts, informants reinforce the presence, acceptance and broad communicative reach of the language and demonstrate that the Spanish language's communicative power is on par with that of English.

4.4. EXPRESSING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL VALUES AT HOME AND IN PUBLIC. The activities in which participants engage and their reactions to situations that challenge their linguistic and cultural identity illustrate how their values are expressed at home and in public spaces. Despite the high regard both groups have for both Spanish, *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants contrast in their strategies of imparting these values to their children. They also revealed markedly different approaches to perceiving and responding to attempts to publicly slight, disparage, or intimidate them as members of a Spanish-speaking community.

In addition to the language use and attitudes reported on the questionnaires, participants in both groups provided greater insight on the practices in which they engage at home to transmit their language and culture to their children. Informants in the *profesionista* group, perhaps in reflection of their overall higher educational background, reported making purposeful efforts to overtly establish teachable moments with their children in Spanish to reinforce cultural and linguistic values. One example of these efforts was provided by Chiara, a *profesionista* informant, who noted that "*Del español, pues, mi cultura, les enseño día con día palabras, tradiciones, dichos, leyendas, historias, todo lo que está a mi alcance, todo se los enseño.[Well, with regard to Spanish, my culture, every day I teach them words, traditions, colloquialisms, legends, histories, everything that's within my power I*

teach it all to them]" In addition to these informal pedagogical practices *profesionista* informants also reported that they make more frequent trips to Mexico and have family visit them from Mexico more often that do informants from the non-*profesionista* group. These trips not only signal the efforts being made to maintain the linguistic and cultural ties across international boundaries, but also point to the greater disposable income of the *profesionista* informants, and that of their extended families, that supports such ventures. *Profesionista* informants' activities not only promote the language, but also reinforce the cultural capital that maintaining a high degree of fluency can have in dealing with members of upper-class society that cross back and forth from Mexico (see Ramos 2015).

Informants from the non-*profesionista* group, reported providing less structured educational support to their children did not make trips back and forth to Mexico, or have family members do so, with the same frequency as the profesionista informants. In order to support the linguistic and cultural growth of their children, non-*profesionista* informants established a strictly Spanish-only zone in their homes. As stated by several informants, this home-based policy was often conveyed as *"De aquí a la puerta, hablamos español."* By establishing and enforcing a strict policy of linguistic separation regarding conversations within the home and beyond, non-*profesionista* informants exercised an effective strategy to promote and value their linguistic and cultural heritage that did not require a wealth of financial and academic resources.

Non-*profesionistas* also drew upon their resourcefulness in public arenas as they are frequently the targets of microaggressions on the part of both Anglos and Latinos (Gutiérrez 1995; Noe-Bustamante 2022; Sue et al. 2007). Microaggressions are intentional or unintentional slights expressed verbally or nonverbally to minoritized groups as part of everyday, informal interactions. Regardless of intent or form of delivery, microaggressions communicate derision, hostility, and negative sentiments about the minoritized groups (Sue et al. 2007). While both groups reported experiencing such encounters, the frequency of their occurrence and the nature of the participants' responses differed dramatically.

About half of the non-*profesionista* informants reported experiencing encounters of discrimination that reflected microaggressions, more often than not, at the hands of other Latinos. Most frequently non-*profesionista* informants cited incidences where they were refused service in Spanish or pushed off onto someone else when they posed routine inquiries with the clerks claiming they did not speak Spanish. Informants noted that these events occurred despite the clerks' Latino appearance, sporting a nametag with a recognizable name in Spanish and even a sticker or pin that proclaimed "*Hablo español*", and in light of confirmation by the clerk's coworkers that the first clerk did know how to speak Spanish. In these cases, non-*profesionista* informants reported silently bearing the snubs and going on to seek assistance from someone else who was willing to interact with them in

Spanish, assuming that the reluctance on the part of the clerks was "*para no batallar*" ["to not to have to make an effort"]., rather, they. A more overt example of the antagonism experienced by non-*profesionista* informants was that of Sonia, who reported that a group of young Latinas cut in front of her while waiting in line at the bank. Drawing their attention to the back of the line, one of the girls replied haughtily in Spanish *"¿por qué no te regresas a tu país?* [why don't you go back to your country?]" Humiliated, Sonia allowed them to remain in their place in front of her. In general, non-*profesionista* informants reported they did not challenge or directly pursue a remedy with the offenders themselves.

In contrast, *profesionista* informants experienced fewer incidences and responded differently when they did. When queried about incidences where they had been discriminated against, *profesionista* informants stated generally *"no hago caso* [I ignore them]" indicating their (in)voluntary lack of attention to such events. Only three of the *profesionista* informants recalled explicit instances of discrimination, each of which were at the hands of a monolingual English-speaking individual reacting to superficial features that to them signaled the "foreignness" of the informants.

One case involved a *profesionista* informant and her family speaking Spanish while at the mall being trailed by a security guard repeatedly insisting on knowing which door they were going to use to exit. Another was an incident involved a bank teller who, upon hearing an informant's accented English, treated her rudely throughout the transaction. The last was a case of road rage over a parking space. After parking, an individual approached the *profesionista* informant's minivan, which bore Ciudad Juárez license plates, waving a vague "credential" at a distance insisting he held some authority on her right to be in the US. In each case, the *profesionista* informants responded to their aggressors, overtly dismissing them as abnormal or directly challenging them until the aggressor either backed down or apologized for their behavior (MacGregor-Mendoza 2015).

In the case of *profesionista* informants then, it appears that their education and social status prior to immigration generate a strong sense of Mexican identity and self-confidence associated with language and culture which is not diminished after immigration. This self-assurance both provides the impetus for female *profesionista* migrants to directly and conscientiously pass on their linguistic and cultural values to their children as well as insulates them from receiving or at least perceiving discriminatory behaviors on the part of others. As such, *profesionista* informants in this study appeared to be less susceptible to political/social forces that would seek to diminish their cultural and linguistic ties to Mexico and more willing and able to give direct push-back when they do occur.

Non-*profesionista* informants also demonstrated a sense of pride and connection to Mexico although their reinforcement of their values with their children was less overt. For non-*profesionistas*, the maintenance of Spanish was

encouraged through a "blanket policy" that defined the spaces where English was not allowed. While less direct, the effectiveness of such policies is evident in an anecdote that a non-*profesionista* informant, Petra, related about her daughter at swim team practice. While conversing in Spanish with diverse bilingual members of her swim team, an English-dominant Latina team member (whose parents are Spanish-dominant) approached the group and began to chastise Petra's daughter for speaking in Spanish. Without missing a beat, Petra's daughter retorted, "*¿Tú crees que por hablar inglés y no español, que eso te hace más gringa? Eso no te hace más gringa. TE HACE MÁS TONTA, pero no te hace más gringa. [You think that by speaking English and not Spanish, that that makes you more white? That doesn't make you more white. IT MAKES YOU MORE STUPID, but it doesn't make you more white.]*"

The incident underscores the notion that despite the confidence in their linguistic and cultural identity, non-*profesionista* informants, and perhaps their children, are more exposed and vulnerable to direct challenges and threats to that identity. Moreover, the incident provides an example of non-*profesionista* informants' ability to transmit their linguistic and cultural values to their children even in the face of such susceptibility. It should be further noted that even the passive resistance to microaggressions on the part of non-*profesionistas,* such as in Sonia's case, points to the strength of their convictions and in their persistence in the retention of their linguistic and cultural values. From the microaggressions reported in this study, *profesionista* informants chose either to not acknowledge their occurrence or to dismiss or directly challenge their aggressor. In contrast, non-*profesionista* migrants, who acknowledged they were more frequent targets of these attacks, battled with these incidents largely in silence, avoiding direct confrontation. Nonetheless, non-*profesionista* informants' silence did not imply a submission to or acceptance of their aggressor's snub and did not deter non-*profesionista* informants from achieving their goal; they simply moved on.

5. CONCLUSION. The lack of research regarding the language use and language attitudes of female migrants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds motivated the present study. Given that the pre-migration social standing can influence post-migration access to goods and services we sought insight on how the values associated with Spanish and English are perceived and are sustained in families by individuals across socioeconomic boundaries.

In the responses to the many questionnaire items, we found that although the *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* participants in this study contrasted in their economic and educational profiles, they were similar in the esteem they held for both Spanish and English and their desire for their children to maintain their ties to the Spanish language and Mexican culture. While participants from both groups approached these goals applying different strategies and noticed and reacted

differently to public hostile encounters, both groups demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity.

Moreover, informants from both ends of the socioeconomic continuum are grounded in their sense of identity as Mexican and seek ways to continue to impart and promote their linguistic and cultural skills and values to their children through the continual use of Spanish at home and through frequent contact with individuals who speak Spanish. Additionally, informants in both groups overwhelmingly rejected the notion that living in the US means that their children will begin to speak the English language exclusively. For informants in both groups, then, the Spanish language is a constant and consistent part of their daily lives and activities and proudly reinforces their individual character as well as their link to the Spanish speaking community in which they are active.

Beyond promoting their children's bilingual skills, the findings of the present study also revealed that both groups deem optimal the development of a bicultural identity for their children. Given that middle-class females have already demonstrated a preference for the retention of Spanish (e.g. Velázquez 2009), the consistency of this attitude with the *profesionista* informants here is not surprising. What was unexpected was to discover that non-*profesionistas* shared these same sentiments nearly to the same degree as the *profesionistas*. Thus, in spite of their differences in social standing and cultural capital, both *profesionista* and non-*profesionista* informants viewed the maintenance of cultural beliefs and practices from Mexico as well as the adoption of American habits and values as positive.

The significance of these findings cannot be understated. They demonstrate that both the cultural values and the esteem informants have for both Spanish and English transcend socioeconomic boundaries and are held very much in spite of subtle or overt threats to their linguistic and cultural identity. Moreover, the findings in the present study detected an increase in attitudinal attributes associated with both Spanish and English contrasting with those of studies from decades past. If this present harmony in values is transmitted to the children of the informants in this study, it follows that the children across socioeconomic groups will continue view each language and culture as having a unique character while also regarding both as compatible and integrative rather than divergent and conflictive. Given the growth of the Latino population in the United States, the increasing educational level amongst all migrants and the rise in *profesionistas* coming to settle in the US, such a perspective, if adopted broadly by Spanish speaking communities in the US, may aid in building a wall of resistance to language-based discrimination and may thus transform the current view of a monolingual/monocultural US identity.

While there were values that informants from both socioeconomic groups shared, their different statuses also revealed dissimilarities that reflected their respective socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The differences were observed in the practices they employed to promote the maintenance of Spanish,

the frequency with which they experienced discrimination, and the strategies they used to deal with discriminatory incidents. In support of the promotion of the Spanish language, *profesionista* informants had access to a more diverse group of interlocutors from both sides of the border while non-*profesionista* informants interacted with fewer people and were less likely to travel or receive visitors from Mexico. To promote the Spanish language in their homes, *profesionista* informants reported engaging in didactic activities that provided cultural and linguistic models for their children while non-*profesionistas* chose to establish a Spanish-only refuge as their primary means of promoting the maintenance of the Spanish language. The increased contact that *profesionistas* report having with family in Mexico and the efforts they make to highlight the Spanish language may help keep their children's linguistic norms aligned with those of Mexico and discourage an exclusive shift to English (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994). While non-*profesionista's* efforts to provide boundaries for the usage of Spanish and English may also be an effective strategy to retain Spanish and avoid a shift to English, it is one that largely depends on the resilience of the parents to maintain and enforce such a rule (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994). Thus, the increased cultural capital of *profesionista* informants allows them to share the responsibility of the linguistic socialization of their children; non-*profesionista* informants, due to their lesser social standing, are required to be more self-reliant.

The two groups of informants' experiences with incidents of discrimination were also diverse according to their socioeconomic status. Non-*profesionista* informants were more vulnerable to incidences of discrimination, and frequently, these microaggressions were originated from other Latinos. Contrastively, *profesionista* informants largely could not recall any incidences of discrimination and when they did, they were at the hands of non-Latinos. Moreover, *profesionista* informants were likely to meet such acts head on, either by openly challenging or by willingly rejecting the authority of the individual confronting them. Non-*profesionista* informants, on the other hand, largely did not openly challenge their aggressors, rather they quietly endured the affronts and then persisted in their endeavors. Thus the higher social status of *profesionista* informants may have insulated them to some degree from overt expressions of discrimination and provided confidence and defiance to shield them from such events when they did occur; non-*profesionista* informants, possessing fewer educational and economic resources, were only able to draw upon their own willpower and determination in their defense.

6. Discussion.

The findings of the present study mirror the trends found in other recent studies. First, the persistence in the maintenance of the Spanish language and the positive attitudes expressed toward Spanish in tandem with those toward English parallel the findings of Mejías et al. (2002), who found that the Spanish language is highly valued and maintained across socioeconomic strata in

the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The present study's informants at both extremes of the socioeconomic continuum sought to keep the Spanish language as an active part of their daily lives. This finding provides support for the decrease of a penalty associated with Spanish maintenance revealed by Jenkins (2009) in his examination of census data. Finally, informants in the present study valued a bilingual/bicultural identity similar to Velázquez's (2009) informants in the West Texas area and Rangel et al.'s (2015) informants' parallel rankings of English and Spanish.

Further research is needed to determine whether these patterns of use and behaviors observed are unique to the samples of individuals in the present study or whether they are representative of greater numbers of female migrants in Southern New Mexico or even more broadly characteristic of individuals residing along the US-Mexico border. Additional research is also needed to determine whether these patterns of use and attitudes toward English and Spanish reflect practices and behaviors in cities distant from the border such as Chicago, New York, and Miami, where large numbers of migrants are drawn. Lastly, migrant use of and attitudes toward Spanish and English need to be examined in states in the South such as Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina, where the recent arrival and growing presence of migrants is more likely to be viewed as intrusive by mainstream residents and may thus provoke more overt patterns of aggression and discrimination towards migrants. A heightened pattern of aggression may in turn affect the relationship between those migrants to Spanish and may engender their desire to assimilate to English.

Attention not only needs to be paid to the geographical contexts in which migrants settle, but also to the recent trends in the diversification of the migrant stream arriving from Mexico. As noted earlier, the demands for labor at the low and high skilled extremes of the workforce and the increasingly restrictive US immigration policies have polarized the migrant flow from Mexico. It is thus incumbent upon researchers to extend their sights to include members of diverse social standing in order to accurately document the broad spectrum of migrant experiences and the internal and external forces that affect their linguistic attitudes and behaviors.

Further research needs to be conducted regarding the practices that Spanish-speaking migrant families engage in to promote the development of literacy skills in their children. As was noted here and in Velázquez (2009), informants express a strong desire for their children to develop and maintain strong skills in reading and writing but are not making a consistent effort to promote such skills. Given the changing nature of literacy (e.g. Stewart 2014) more needs to be done to examine whether families are engaging in literacy practices that are digitally- rather than print-based.

Lastly, it cannot go unnoticed that despite the ubiquitous presence of Latinos and the Spanish language in the area of the Southwest, acts of language-based

discrimination continue to be present. Disturbingly, most of these microaggressions were dispensed by other members of the Spanish speaking community who, either through the denial of their own linguistic and cultural ties or through more overt acts of aggression, attempted to malign and belittle migrants. While such occurrences are not new (cf. Gutiérrez 1995), they continue to be troubling and if persistently encountered, could be internalized and thus have the potential of negatively affecting the self-worth, self-esteem, and linguistic and cultural identity of young Latinos (Noe-Bustamante 2022; Sue et al. 2007). Moreover, Latino-initiated microaggressions promote division over solidarity and detract from the increasing social and political capital Latinos as a whole possess in the US. While as educators and linguists we strive for the appreciation of all languages and cultures in our classroom and through our research, these efforts need to be extended to the community at large to encourage commonality and discourage members of Spanish-speaking communities from assuming the role of enforcers of oppressive ideologies.

At present, the findings of this study point optimistically in favor of the maintenance of Spanish in Southern New Mexico. Female migrants at different levels of social standing are consonant in their desires for their children to retain their Spanish abilities as well as develop English abilities. Their beliefs are equally balanced when it comes to the adoption of cultural values associated with both their Mexican heritage as with their new home. Informants reaffirm these bilingual/bicultural values through their actions; however their principles and practices could be challenged by both exposure to and rejection from mainstream American culture and values as well as by being rebuffed by other members of US Spanish speaking communities. Only time and future research will reveal how the efforts and values of these diverse groups of migrants are realized and sustained.

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