

Chapter 2: The Vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan, San Diego

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The community known as Barrio Logan or Logan Heights, located in southeast San Diego, began its transformation into a primarily Mexican-American neighborhood in the early 20th century. By the 1940s and 50s, Barrio Logan became California's second largest Mexican-American community and, particularly because of its struggle in



¹ Hipólito Valdez, a fellow UCSD student, participated in the initial observations and co-wrote an earlier version of this chapter.

the 1970s to protect Chicano Park, it is recognized as the preeminent Mexican enclave in San Diego. Mexican flags abound in the neighborhood, and its colors—red, white, green—decorate many benches and tables, along with illustrations of Mexican historical figures and indigenous Aztec symbols. Central to the community's identity is the Spanish language, which is the lingua franca. But the vitality of the Spanish language in Barrio Logan may not prove strong enough to sustain its linguistic survival beyond the gloomy forecast of traditional assimilation theories. Two of the most important conditions necessary for Spanish to be maintained in the second and third generations are beyond the control of community members: 1) The rate of influx of Spanish dominant and Spanish monolingual speakers and 2) the support of formal and informal institutions. These, in turn, help determine the one variable that members of the next generations can control, i.e., whether children are raised speaking Spanish. Despite the omnipresence of Spanish today, bilingualism is the norm, and the obstacles that threaten the vitality of Spanish are formidable, including the educational, political, and linguistic policies that stigmatize Spanish and Spanish speakers, and the gentrification of downtown San Diego that is displacing the traditional residents of Barrio Logan.

Barrio Logan/Logan Heights, the pre-eminent Mexican enclave of San Diego, is located in southeast San Diego. Mexican culture, identity, and the Spanish language have long historical roots in Logan Heights; the presence of a Mexican community can be traced to the late nineteenth century. Barrio Logan was predominantly populated by Anglos at that point, but Mexicans, Chicanos, African-Americans, and Orientals were also part of the community, albeit in less significant numbers (Norris 1983). In the early decades of the 20th century, Logan Heights began to expand as more families moved into the area, businesses were established, and new industries opened in the community. The steel industry and tuna canneries, as well as the San Diego Marine Construction Company, drew in labor from other areas of San Diego and from south of the border. As African-Americans, Mexicans, and Mexican-Americans immigrated into the neighborhood attracted by jobs, older Anglo groups emigrated to more affluent communities of San Diego.

Logan Heights became a popular and appropriate setting for hosting new Mexican immigrants and strengthening the existing Mexican-American population. The Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920 caused political and economic instability in Mexico, stimulating emigrant outflows. During the same time frame, Barrio Logan's industrial base continued to grow, offering employment opportunities for low skilled laborers. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were drawn to the available jobs, and by 1940 Barrio Logan housed 15% of San Diego's Spanish speaking population; by the 1950s, Barrio Logan had become California's second largest Mexican-American community (Norris 1983). Bilingualism flourished in this setting, given the central location of Barrio Logan, plus its proximity to the bay, which made it an ideal candidate for becoming the center of San Diego's industrial base. Re-zoning laws transformed Barrio Logan from a residential community

to an industrial/residential neighborhood. The zoning changes lead to the establishment of junkyards throughout the community; consequently, the living costs and property values in the area decreased, making housing affordable for families and minority groups with limited financial resources, such as Mexican-Americans. The industrial changes in Logan Heights, the creation of jobs that resulted, and the affordability of shelter due to depreciating housing values, continued to draw Mexican-Americans to el Barrio and preserve the Mexican-American community already living there. The long historical ties Mexican-Americans have to Barrio Logan have tightly woven Mexican culture, language, and heritage into the community, which is continuously reproduced and manifested in various forms and settings across the dense and multiple networks of multi-generational families.

Presently, Mexican-ness is a fundamental characteristic of el Barrio; it is perceived and sensed in the local streets, businesses, and public spaces. As one walks through Logan Ave, Mexican flags decorate the community, and the colors red, white, and green are painted on rocks, benches, and tables. Illustrations of Mexican historical figures and of the Aztec indigenous civilization are prominent throughout the neighborhood, depicting strong ties to Mexican culture and identity. As you make your way through the main intersection you not only *see* evidence of the strong Mexican identity, you can also *smell* foods representative of the culture, because *taquerías* (taco shops) and *panaderías* (bakeries) saturate the air with the aroma of *carne asada* and sweet freshly baked breads. Visitors might assume that the high proportion of first generation immigrants and their children, coupled with Mexican businesses, provide a setting that preserves the Spanish language. López and Salazar maintain that the Mexicanization of neighborhoods encourages the adoption of a Mexican identity, and Mexican identity is closely linked to the Spanish language, thus, Spanish maintenance is fostered in such neighborhoods (López and Salazar; 2001: 67). In Barrio Logan, Spanish is commonly used for different aspects of everyday life in public and private spaces and seems to be alive throughout the neighborhood. However, as other scholars point out, the process of acculturation in many immigrant communities in the U.S. leads to the eventual loss of the ethnic language as immigrants and their children learn the language and lifestyles of the new host society (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 53–54).

Most immigrant groups arriving in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries experienced a pattern of “straight line assimilation”, i.e., European immigrants assimilated to the dominant white American identity and achieved socio-economic mobility as they left behind their native customs and origins. According to the straight line assimilation theory, economic mobility, linguistic assimilation, and acquisition of the host society norms and traditions occur by the third generation. Thus, the grandchildren of immigrants are fully absorbed into the host society’s cultural practices, economic strata, and linguistic preference, i.e., English dominance. As noted in the introduction to this volume, the “language cemetery” that results from the loss of heritage languages has affected every group, and even Mexican-origin communities in the southwest are not exempt (Rumbaut et al 2006). In this chapter we ask, is it possible that Barrio

Logan is challenging traditional patterns of ethnic language loss by fostering Spanish language maintenance due to its social, economic, and demographic particularities?

Determining Ethnolinguistic Vitality

The principal question addressed by this chapter is whether the vitality of the Spanish language in Barrio Logan is strong enough to sustain its linguistic survival. Due to its historical significance and its continued importance as a center of Mexican and Mexican American activity, Logan Heights is a significant setting for the study of ethnolinguistic vitality. For our analysis, we turn to the framework provided by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977), who identify three main variables that determine the "ethnolinguistic vitality" of a language and consequently, the viability of its survival—Status, Demographics, and Institutional Support. These three variables encompass the socio-political, historical, economic, and linguistic realities of the ethnic group (Giles 1977: 308). The stronger the variables are for a specific group, the greater the likelihood the ethnic community's language will survive the assimilative forces working against it. We apply this analytical model to assess the vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan by considering socioeconomic factors, demographics of the community, and the use and availability of Spanish in public and private settings; we also consider distinct age and generational groups and their linguistic preferences. Our investigation concentrates on Logan's Chicano Park due to the historic community struggle that created it, and because it is a space shared by all community members, including the first generation immigrant population, second and third generation Mexican Americans, and native born Americans.

Chicano Park

As Barrio Logan changed from a residential area to an industrial zone that included shipyards and junkyards located near homes and schools in the mid 20th century, residents became dissatisfied and infuriated; they had not been considered or represented in the decision making process. The neighborhood was fragmented and many residents displaced when the Interstate 5 and the Coronado Bridge were constructed directly through their community in 1963. Chicano leaders became actively involved in their neighborhood, urging Logan residents to demand representation and accountability from political leaders. As a result, community members demanded the city build a park in available terrain under Interstate 5 and the Coronado Bridge, which had cut Barrio Logan in half, physically and numerically. In 1969, San Diego officials announced they had designated the available land for recreational use, and on April 22, 1970, bulldozers arrived at the site. Residents believed they were for the construction of the new park, but they were for the construction of a new Highway Patrol station on the site of the park. Furious residents felt officials had deceived them and had once again disregarded their interests and wellbeing.

Mexican-American community leaders, inspired by the Civil Rights movement and the unionization of farm workers led by César Chávez, began raising social and political

awareness among el Barrio's residents. Chicano leaders attracted first generation Mexican immigrants as well as second and third generation Mexican-Americans in mobilization efforts which resulted in demonstrations; community residents formed human chains around the land to impede the construction of the patrol station. As a result of intense civic engagement and many protests conducted in Spanish and English, a new location was found for the Highway Patrol station, and the city and state reached an agreement designating the disputed land for the park. To make it official, a bill approving Chicano Park was passed by the State legislature on May 23, 1971. The mass mobilization of Barrio Logan was essentially an outcry against many decades of alienation and disregard. The rezoning and development of an industrial base within their community, the deterioration of their neighborhood, and the fragmentation of the area produced anger and resentment among el Barrio's residents. The park symbolized el Barrio's unity and would serve to hold together the fragments of the community that had resulted from the many changes Logan Heights had experienced.

Today, Chicano Park is not only a place where children and adults go for recreation; it is a safe haven where residents feel the power of community, and where language usage reflects its vibrant bilingualism. The park contains a typical playground and basketball courts, but what sets it apart from other parks is its historical significance to the local community and to the Mexican American population in Southern California. Chicano Park is alive with vivid 15-foot-tall murals painted on pillars that hold up the Interstate 5 and Coronado Bridge; they contain images of Mexican revolutionary heroes and Mexican American icons such as Emiliano Zapata and César Chávez. The murals, each of which delivers a message about the community's history and struggle, were painted throughout the 1970s by various Chicano artists and groups, including Los Toltecas en Aztlán, The Royal Chicano Air Force, and El Congreso de Artistas Chicanos en Aztlán. For example, one of the murals, with the statement: "Barrio Sí. Yonkes No!" which translates into "Neighborhood Yes. Junkyards No!", has images of community members protesting and holding up picket signs outside a junkyard. Sadly, this mural was the subject of Anglo protest when English monolinguals mistook "Yonkes No" for "Yanquis No"; the *San Diego Union Tribune* reported, "Some English speakers who spot the mural interpret yonkes as 'Yankees' and assume the mural makes a racist, anti-Anglo statement" (Berestein 2007).

In the face of industrialization, poverty, broken pledges, and misunderstandings, Chicano Park communicates the unity of Barrio Logan's residents and pride in their victory at being able to achieve this great place and call it their own. It is a space that reinforces the importance of history and culture to those who may be ambivalent about their identity. The language on many murals is Spanish, which reflects the use of the ethnic tongue to facilitate community unification and mobilization. In order to determine the role of Spanish in the lives of those who gather at Chicano Park, we visited it on various occasions during February–May 2006, for a total of approximately fifty hours. The Spanish speech patterns and bilingual preferences of diverse age groups, genders, and generations were of special interest, as well as the cultural and social dynamics of their interactions. Activities at Chicano Park, particularly at the basketball and handball courts, the playground, the field, and the parking lot are an indicator of the sometimes

complementary and sometimes overlapping distribution of Spanish and English in Barrio Logan.

Inter-Generational Code Switching at the Courts

Two games were occurring simultaneously at the handball courts. In Court 1, there was Spanish and English language alteration and mixing, or code switching, by four players with tattoos, high socks, and long shorts—outfits often considered a “gangster” or “cholo” look, but popular among many non-gang related youth. Most players seemed to be members of the 2nd generation and approximately in their mid-twenties. When the ball was going into play, one player would yell in Spanish, “*Sale bola*” (“Ball in play”). However, during the game the teammates would communicate in English, telling each other, “Mine” or, “I got it.” If the play ended badly, you heard “*chingada madre*” (“mother fucker”) or “*mi culpa*” (“my bad/my fault”). In contrast to the younger players in court 1, the two men playing handball in court 2 were dressed more conservatively and only spoke Spanish; they appeared to be 1st generation immigrants. They never communicated in English even though they heard the players in Court 1 speaking in English. When their ball rolled onto Court 1, one of them requested, “*Bola por favor*” (“Ball please”). When they received the ball they responded with a “*Gracias*” (“Thank you”) and were answered with “*De nada*” (“You’re welcome”). The language switching on the courts obscures the fact that Spanish functions as a *lingua franca* among these players. The second generation must be proficient in both languages in order to transition from English to Spanish easily among themselves, and for the benefit of Spanish monolinguals in the community.

A similar generational compartmentalization was observed at the basketball courts, where some male teenagers were playing the preferred game of the second generation, while others played soccer, the preferred game of the first generation. The basketball players switched between English and Spanish constantly, while the soccer players communicated in Spanish only. At one point, the soccer players approached those playing basketball to ask if they wanted to switch courts, in Spanish. A basketball player replied in the same language, although he had been speaking more English than Spanish previously, reflecting an often observed community custom of honoring Spanish-dominant speakers by replying in Spanish. Gumperz and Chávez (1975), early researchers on Mexican American code switching, note that this way of speaking indicates a personal connection between speakers, and the willingness to switch requires an environment where speakers feel comfortable and are aware of their audience’s ability to understand both languages. Contrary to popular views of switching as a linguistic hodge-podge indicative of semilingualism, the ability to successfully transition from one language to another is a skill; the switcher must speak two languages well, understand how to link them grammatically, and know how, when, and where to smoothly switch between them (Zentella 1997). As the observations at the courts in Chicano Park revealed, Spanish in Barrio Logan is alive, in part, because as long as there is a population that requires a code switch into Spanish and others who will honor that need, second generation bilingualism will flourish.

Bilingual Displays

One Saturday afternoon, as we approached a group of Latino men in their thirties who were sitting in the bleachers at the handball courts, one of them said, "*Qué muchacha más bonita*," ("What a pretty girl"). Hipólito and I said "*Buenas tardes*" ("Good afternoon"), and they responded with "*Buenas tardes*" as well. The men continued conversing among themselves, smoking, and not disturbed by our presence. They used informal and taboo words such as "*huey*" ("jackass/fool") and "*cabrón*" ("fucker"). Their vocabulary, their accent, and the compliment suggested that they were from Mexico, most likely members of the first generation because they chose Spanish when they spoke among themselves. They were approached by a male who was on a low-rider bike, dressed in long baggy shorts, white socks pulled up high, a wife beater t-shirt, and his head was shaved bald. His appearance suggested he was a member of the second, or possibly third, generation. He spoke to the group of men in African American English, or Ebonics. They understood him completely because they responded in English, and had no trouble in the ensuing conversation. Clearly, impressions based on clothes, physical markers, and preferred language are unreliable; many first generation members of the community who prefer Spanish among themselves can also get along in English, and members of the U.S. born generations can function in Spanish.

How do community members who do not know each other decide which language to speak to a stranger? One afternoon I experienced this personally when a male who was in his fifties approached me and asked, "Excuse me, do you have any matches?" He introduced himself and shook my hand and then asked me a few other things in English. For his next question, he switched to Spanish, "*¿Tú eres mexicana?*" ("Are you Mexican"). When I responded in Spanish, "*No, soy salvadoreña*." ("No, I am Salvadoran"), he replied, "*Yo soy mexicano*" ("I am Mexican"). He continued in Spanish, asking "*¿Tú naciste allá?*" ("Were you born there?"). When I said, "*No, mi mamá nació allá y yo nací en Los Angeles*" ("No, my mom was born there and I was born in Los Angeles"), he switched to English, "Oh, so you are from L.A., so what are you doing here?" and then said "We are all the same thing anyway, but it's good you don't forget where you come from." This conversation proved he could easily maneuver between English and Spanish when he realized that I too was bilingual, although he never asked that directly, probing instead with an easy Spanish question that was prompted by my Latina complexion and features, "*¿Tú eres mexicana?*" His comments, unlike those of the younger handball, basketball, and soccer players, were characterized by full sentence switches, not short phrases or single word inserts. Because of his ability to speak both English and Spanish in native-sounding ways, I assumed he was born in the U.S., although he claimed a Mexican identity ("*Yo soy mexicano*"). On the other hand, I too had identified with a Latin American nation ("*No, soy salvadoreña*"). although I was born in Los Angeles. He wondered about this—perhaps because of my Spanish and English?—asking me if I had been born in El Salvador. Bilingual displays and negotiations of this type are frequent in Barrio Logan and wherever several generations of Spanish speakers reside in the U.S.

Same Age Group, Different Linguistic Preference

Children are important barometers of the future of a community language's future, so I observed three boys and one girl, ages 5 to 8, who were playing on the slide; they spoke in English only. One of the boys said "Hi" to me and waved before he continued playing with the group. I could hear them saying, "My turn" and "Don't be a cheater!" I noticed the children were being supervised by two elders, one male and one female, in their late sixties; they did not appear related. The little girl approached the woman and spoke to her in English, and the elderly lady responded in English as well. When one of the boys joined them, he spoke English too. The children appeared to be of Latino descent, most likely Mexican, as did the elders. Nevertheless, they spoke exclusively in English, either because the children are monolingual speakers or because they preferred English and the elders could honor their preference.

On a different occasion, another group of children at the playground behaved very different linguistically. Three girls and one boy, approximately 5-7 years old, were accompanied by their parents, in their thirties. The children spoke only in Spanish, amongst themselves and to their parents. As the girls played, one of them suggested "*Vamos a los columpios*" ("Let's go to the swings"), and another replied, "*Yo quiero ir en el resbaladero*" ("I want to go on the slide"). Moments later the boy and one of the other girls approached their father, referring to him as "*Papi*," ("Daddy"), and he spoke to them in Spanish. The two other girls also spoke to their parents in Spanish, and one of them was warned by her mom, "*Te vas a caer para atrás!*" ("You're going to fall backwards"). As the girls played together I heard, "*¿Te da miedo?*" ("Are you scared"), "*Así, mira ...*" ("Look, like this"), "*Para que se te haga más fácil no te hagas así*" ("So it's easier for you, don't go like this"), and "*Juguemos a los bomberos*" ("Let's pretend to be firemen"). All of them displayed a strong command of Spanish, using vocabulary and grammar that is not usual for elementary speakers.

Also present were a young woman with a boy about 3 years old who played with the girls for a little while. The woman asked the boy, "*¿Ya te quieres ir?*" ("Do you want to leave?"), and they walked to the parking lot, joining two men and a woman who were in a vehicle. The two women appeared to be members of the first generation, and I thought the men must be also, but one of them played mainstream hip hop music on the car radio very loudly, with extremely low bass, making me doubt my classification. Thus, in one afternoon I observed four groups, two of children and two of adult caretakers, with contrasting language behavior; one group of children and one group of adults used the language expected of their group (English and Spanish, respectively), but another group of children spoke Spanish and another group of first generation adults played music preferred by dominant English speakers. Given these variations, children who grow up in Barrio Logan are socialized to be ready to speak in English or Spanish, English and Spanish.

Where Is the Spanish in Mexican-American Identity?

The 36th annual celebration of resistance and liberation in Chicano Park, organized by the Chicano Park Steering Committee, was celebrated on May 22, 2006. The Park was overflowing with vendors, performers, and guests who embraced Mexican culture, food, music, poetry, and art. Vendors offered indigenous jewelry and art and household decorations with Mexican motifs. Many products, including T-shirts, hand bags, and posters, were stamped with phrases or symbols that identified with Mexico, although all the phrases were in English. Some shirts had inscriptions that read: "Made in Michoacan," "Made in Mexico," "Made in Jalisco"; these items were very popular. Pieces of art depicted the Aztec calendar, the Mexican flag colors, and traditional Mexican icons such as Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa. Food was also a major component of the celebration; people were savoring many examples of traditional Mexican cuisine, e.g. *tacos*, *tortas*, and *burritos*, and refreshing themselves with drinks of *tamarindo* and *horchata*. Based on their style of dress, the topics they were discussing, and their mannerisms, it was apparent that most of the people at the celebration were members of the 2nd and 3rd generation, not first generation immigrants, and listening closely to their conversations, I noticed that English was the primary language being spoken.

I had assumed that the community speakers and performances of music and poetry would be in Spanish. But most of it was in English; Spanish was used minimally. One speaker who was chanting and pumping up the crowd by expressing pride in his Mexican culture and indigenous origins, his Spanish language, and his belonging to "la raza," made all these claims in English. Only one person on the stage spoke Spanish; she was a member of Danza Azteca who thanked the crowd at the end of their performance. The limited use of Spanish language in an event that celebrates Mexican culture and Chicano Park's legacy of resistance was a surprise. But Chicano Park celebrations attract many people who are not Barrio Logan residents, and the organizers' choice of language reflected the fact that Mexican Americans do not find it necessary to speak Spanish in order to identify proudly with their Mexican heritage; this view is usually characteristic of a community on its way to losing its language. Are the residents of Barrio Logan following a different path?

Portes and Rumbaut conducted a longitudinal study of over 1,500 children of immigrants in San Diego, and found that an individual's national origin, gender, exposure to foreign language at home, and co-ethnic friends and community are predictors that determine the preservation of the native tongue among future generations. Many of those features are present in Barrio Logan. For example, they concluded that possessing a Latino background is the strongest predictor in determining bilingualism, i.e., Latinos have a greater probability of retaining the parental ethnic tongue than any other ethnic group. Having foreign-born parents is strongly correlated to language preservation, as parents tend to use their mother tongue for communication within the private domain:

... the significance of family composition is again evident in the difference between children whose parents are both foreign born and those with one American-born parent. The lesser prevalence of bilingualism in the latter is

partially attributed to the lower likelihood of a foreign language being spoken at home. (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 135–136)

Furthermore, attending a school that has a strong Latino demographic composition creates an environment conducive for bilingualism "... a heavier proportion of Latin-origin students significantly increases the chances of fluent bilingualism and decreases those of monolingualism ..." (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 137). And finally, establishing co-ethnic friendships and having access to bilingual education promotes bilingualism by enabling students to refresh their ethnic culture and exchange and strengthen the foreign language. Given these findings, and in order to determine if Spanish retention may persist in Barrio Logan beyond the third generation into the fourth and perhaps even the fifth generation, we analyze three major variables that help determine a community's ethnolinguistic vitality.

Status and Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Barrio Logan is a poor community, and its low status can create the social conditions that foster Spanish language preservation because poor monolingual immigrants are attracted by jobs and affordable housing. Portes and Rumbaut note that new immigrants follow the paths of previous arrivals into the labor market (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 48). The newcomers rely on pre-established networks of friends and relatives living in the host society for links to employment opportunities. The economic dimensions of Barrio Logan illustrate Portes' and Rumbaut's argument that immigration inflows are directed towards the sectors of the labor market dominated by low-skilled workers. Logan Heights' residents are predominantly employed in maintenance, 42%, and services, 33%. The median income level for residents in 1999, according to the Census Bureau, was \$23,841 in contrast to the nation's \$41,994; this translates into \$8,620 per capita income in Logan Heights and \$21,587 per capita for the nation. The poverty rate of families in el Barrio was 31.8% (27.3% for married couples with children, and 41% for single female led households).¹ In addition, Barrio Logan's home ownership rates were significantly lower than those of the county in 1999; 70% of the residents are renters, in contrast to 52% renters in San Diego County. Educational attainment in el Barrio was also low, i.e., only 41% of its population had a high school education or higher and only 4% possessed a Bachelor's degree or higher. The economic and education dynamics of el Barrio resulted in the formation of a niche that embraces the Latino immigrant population, particularly of Mexican origin, where Mexican identity and culture is continually promoted and refreshed on the job and in the community. As Sánchez notes in her analysis of southwest Spanish:

... the racialization of low wage occupations has also contributed to the maintenance of Spanish within these particular employment domains, just as low

¹ No data more recent than 1999 are available but local economic conditions do not seem much improved in almost 10 years.

income and high poverty levels maintain Latinos within barrios, for often it is only in these inner city communities that low income housing is available.

(Sánchez 1998: 113)

Thus, Spanish language is supported and maintained in el Barrio as a result of the current socioeconomic conditions of Logan Heights.

In addition, López and Salazar argue that second generation Mexican Americans undergo a unique acculturation experience because their parents do not possess or have access to the resources that parents from other immigrant groups may have. Concretely, the human capital brought and generated by parents, such as educational level and skills, determines the segment of the labor market the first generation will operate in and the labor market for the future generations. Therefore, according to López and Salazar's argument, the second generation of Barrio Logan will end up with limited education, low skills, and lower incomes relative to the mainstream society, interrupting the traditional straight line assimilation model. As a result, the interrupted path to assimilation also suggests linguistic assimilation will be disrupted and delayed. Given this scenario, Spanish retention within Barrio Logan may persist, at a high cost, beyond the third generation.

Demographic Support for Spanish in Barrio Logan

Several aspects of the demographic composition of Barrio Logan also offer hope that the community may stave off language loss in the third generation. Barrio Logan has a total population of 47,417, almost three-fourths of whom are Latino (74%); the Mexican origin population far exceeds that of all other Latino nationalities, at 90% (Census 2000, see Table I).

Table I. Ethnic Classification in Barrio Logan (Census 2000)

Hispanic or Latino	35,436	74.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	11,981	25.3%
Mexican	32,124	90.7%

Barrio Logan's families are larger than the national average: family size for el Barrio was 4.27 persons versus 3.14 for the U.S., and many members were born in Mexico. As Table II indicates, most of Barrio Logan's population was born in the U.S. (58.9%), but 38% were born in Latin America (Table II).

Table II. Foreign Born in Barrio Logan (Census 2000)

Total Population	47,416	100%
Foreign Born	19,502	41.1%
Foreign Born from Latin America	18,300	38.5%

Not surprisingly, given the number of foreign born, 72.3% of Barrio Logan's residents speak a foreign language at home. The population is primarily young, i.e., in 2000, the average age in Logan Heights was 24.5 years, 10.5 % of the population was less than 5 years old, and 6.5% was older than 65. The majority of the population is older than 18, representing 60.9% of the residents. Another important aspect of the population that must be taken into account, when determining the future of the heritage language, is the extent to which the community is made up of recent arrivals or long term residents.

As previously noted, 38.5% of the Barrio's population emigrated from Latin America, primarily from Mexico. As Table III indicates, more than one fourth of those immigrants have been in the U.S. for almost 30 years or more, i.e., 27.6% (5,046) arrived before 1980.

Table III. Year of Entry into U.S. of Latin American Foreign Born in Barrio Logan

1990–March 2000	6,735	36.8%
1980–1989	6,519	35.6%
Before 1980	5,046	27.6%

Another one third of the community's 1st generation residents have been in the U.S. for almost twenty years, i.e., 35.6% (6,519) arrived prior to 1990. The remaining 6,735 members of the 1st generation, which is equivalent to 14% of Barrio Logan's population of 47,416, arrived in the U.S. between 1990 and 2000. Thus, less than one sixth of el Barrio's population is composed of newcomers who are most likely to re-invigorate the community's customs and language. Because the influx of first generation Mexican members is relatively low, it may not sufficiently infuse the community with the native language

necessary to provide the youth and long term residents with enough exposure to sustain and promote Spanish in Barrio Logan.

The data on the language spoken at home, although encouraging at first blush, also weakens the position that Barrio Logan will maintain Spanish beyond the second generation, once the patterns of distinct age groups are analyzed. As previously noted, 72.3% of el Barrio's population speaks a language other than English at home, and for 94% of that group, that language is Spanish (see Table IV). This reflects the current vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan homes. But the majority of those who speak Spanish at home (65%) are adults over the age of 18, and a minority (34%) are children between 5 and 17 years old. In every community, the language preferences of children are essential to an accurate analysis of the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language because they represent the survival potential of the ethnic tongue. Since only one third of Barrio Logan's youth speak Spanish at home now, where it is often required for communication with immigrant family members, it is unlikely that they will speak Spanish to their children in the future. The lifespan of Spanish in Barrio Logan lies in the hands of three out of ten of its children, because the majority has already shifted to English at home.

Table IV. Foreign Language Spoken at Home in Barrio Logan

Speak a Language Other than English at Home	30,777	72.3%
Spanish at Home Total	28,995	94%
Spanish at Home Ages 18 +	19,059	65%
Spanish at Home Ages 5-17	9,936	34%

(Census 2000, mla.org)

(Population 5 years and older: 42,421)

Downtown Revitalization and El Barrio's Linguistic Vitality

Another important variable that must be considered in relation to Status and Demographics is the impact of housing and urban development policies on community residents. In the mid 1970s, the City of San Diego pursued a redevelopment program in downtown San Diego that was designed to revitalize a deteriorating downtown and surrounding areas, as well as to increase employment opportunities, business activities, and tax revenues. In addition to creating new commercial and office spaces, the downtown revitalization project was also a catalyst for the development of a new ballpark, PETCO Park, which spurred

demand for living near downtown and the stadium. Consequently, Logan Heights has been targeted because of its proximity to key sites in downtown, such as the Convention Center, Centre City, East Village, and the ballpark. Developers claim their efforts will benefit the neighborhood by halting the deterioration of the community, encouraging private sector investment, attracting new businesses and developing its real estate. But the revitalization plan may prove more costly than beneficial because it has already increased rents by increasing the property values. The new housing units, including condominiums and apartments, are not designed to meet the needs and financial resources of community members who are being driven out by wealthier buyers and renters. And the very high end grocery stores, shops, and dining facilities force small locally owned and operated businesses to shut down, resulting in job losses for local residents, an increase in the unemployment rate, and greater financial hardship. Other negative repercussions include the deterioration of residents' health as they are exposed daily to the air and chemical pollution, noise, and increased traffic congestion caused by the redevelopment projects. The revitalization of downtown is leading to gentrification in Barrio Logan, causing many residents to leave their home as the city caters to a more affluent class, and causing the displacement of Spanish in the area as residents relocate.

Institutional Support for Spanish in Barrio Logan

Institutional support pertains to the extent to which Spanish enjoys informal and formal representation in community institutions. Informal support encompasses community based organizations that celebrate and foster culture and language, as well as religious institutions that represent and promote the community's language(s), values, and customs. Formal support includes the existence of media in the ethnic tongue and the availability of educational instruction in the native language. Both formal and informal institutions support Spanish in Barrio Logan, except for the public schools. Spanish monolinguals in the area can conduct typical everyday activities in Spanish because local businesses, public service agencies, and religious institutions offer information and services in Spanish. The abundant availability of Spanish in the community is obvious in various settings, in commercial, religious, or government venues. Visitors who appear to be Latino will most likely be greeted with a "*Buenas, en qué le puedo servir*" ("Good afternoon, how may I help you"). But Barrio Logan also displays its bilingual capabilities in its public and private spaces, as written information is available in Spanish and English, and oral communication can be conducted in either language.

La Prensa San Diego and Barrio Station are some of the formal institutions that enhance the vitality of Spanish, while fostering bilingualism. *La Prensa San Diego* is a bilingual newspaper that circulates in San Diego County, providing a Latino perspective on local news and events, and expressing Mexican American views and opinions. *La Prensa* not only embraces and understands Mexican American culture and language; it also plays a pivotal role in promoting bilingualism by reaching out to the Mexican American community in Spanish and English. Barrio Station is also a pillar in Logan Heights, it provides a variety of educational and social services including programs and

support networks for the at-risk disadvantaged youth of the Barrio. In addition, Barrio Station organizes and promotes community mobilization efforts on behalf of the welfare of el Barrio's residents and the preservation of a stable living environment. Barrio Station provides all of its services in Spanish and English in an effort to connect with all segments of the community.

The Chicano Federation of San Diego County, Inc. and Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church provide informal institutional support for Spanish. The Chicano Federation of San Diego, Inc. sponsors the Barrio Child Development Center in Logan Heights and caters to the necessities of the Latino children in el Barrio; it also promotes cultural and linguistic awareness and civic participation. The center provides child care services and pre-school care and education in both Spanish and English. The Catholic parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, located in the heart of the Barrio, is a symbol of Mexican identity and a strong Spanish presence. The church utilizes Spanish as its primary language and English as a secondary means of communication. This policy is illustrated by the automated telephone system which first presents information in Spanish and then in English. In addition, parish representatives demonstrate the language approach of the ministry by initially greeting visitors and callers in Spanish. Our Lady of Guadalupe offers seven masses on Sundays, six of which are conducted in Spanish and one in English; of the three masses on Saturdays, two are in Spanish and one in English. The predominance of Spanish masses reflects the current linguistic needs of the parishioners, and the vitality of Spanish in the community.

A vast array of institutions, including governmental, commercial, religious, and nonprofit agencies and organizations, promote as well as reinforce Mexican culture and language in Barrio Logan. Nonetheless, all of them are bilingual, providing their services in both Spanish and English, and allowing the members they serve to determine the language they prefer for services. But the local schools have denied children bilingual education since California passed Prop 227 in 1998, which I found shocking. There are six elementary schools and one junior high school in the area, with no bilingual education. The elementary students are immersed in English only, and the junior high provides an English-as-a-second language program for Spanish dominant speakers. Neither of these approaches will enable the children of Barrio Logan to learn how to read and write Spanish and, given the research that proves that a strong basis in the home language serves as the best platform for learning a second language well (Krashen 1996, Crawford 2000), the English proficiency of these students is also jeopardized.

In order to arrive at a more complete and conclusive understanding of the linguistic vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan, it would be helpful to know which specific groups and generations prefer which language, and for which services. At this point, it seems that first generation immigrants are the primary cohort utilizing services in Spanish, especially for its religious needs, while younger generations seek out services in English, and are immersed in English in the public schools; this pattern does not promote Spanish language maintenance over time. The key to understanding the lifespan of Spanish in Barrio Logan is remembering that second and third generation members will communicate in private and public settings in the language that is more comfortable and natural to them. Given

that most of the Barrio's minors prefer to speak English at home because they are immersed in English at school, English will also become the language of choice in the public realm. The linguistic services presently available in the community are representative of today's reality and needs, but not those of the next generation. As the linguistic behavior observed on Chicano Park Day indicated, it is possible to embrace and proclaim Mexican heritage and identity without incorporating the ethnic tongue. Younger generations in Barrio Logan appear to be redefining what it means to be Mexican American and what elements of the ethnic culture need to be embraced and reproduced to claim a Mexican identity. In fact, a smattering of Spanish may prove enough of a cultural touchstone within their cohort, but it will separate them from 1st generation grandparents at home and from their relatives throughout Mexico.

Assessing Ethnolinguistic Vitality in Barrio Logan

We conclude that Spanish is presently alive in Barrio Logan but may not be strong enough to survive eventual displacement by English. Spanish has the potential for continuing to flourish as a means of communication beyond the forecast provided by traditional assimilation theories as long as first generation monolinguals remain a significant part of the community. But in the face of weak institutional support for Spanish literacy and the possible dismantling of the community and the dislocation of its members, the future is not promising. What follows is a final assessment of the variables that determine Barrio Logan's ethnolinguistic vitality and the future of Spanish. An analysis of the Status and Demographic variables reveal the power of disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions to militate against the international status that Spanish enjoys as a major world language. Barrio Logan's high concentration of Spanish speakers with low socioeconomic and educational status is a double edged sword. On the one hand, these factors reproduce social conditions that foster the preservation of Spanish, including ethnic enclaves which continue to incorporate newcomers into its multiple generations who seek affordable housing and work in jobs with concentrations of low wage workers. But by the same token, these conditions also ensure the low status of Spanish speakers in the eyes of the powerful and well-to-do, and in the eyes of the youth who want to be part of that more prosperous community and who have already switched to English as their home language. Today, in order to function in their community they must be at least passively receptive to Spanish, i.e., they can understand what is said.

At present, all members of the community come into contact with formal and informal institutions that support Spanish. Practically every location, business, public agency, religious institution, and non profit organization offers services and information in Spanish. The primary language in these venues is Spanish, as we were greeted and addressed in Spanish upon our arrival. But all of the places we visited also offered the same services in English, communicating a clear commitment to bilingualism, except in public school classrooms. Institutional support is closely related to the demographic composition of the community; the current group of first generation Mexicans requires services and information in Spanish, and the second generation is being immersed in English. In

addition, the eventual demographic changes that redevelopment and gentrification will bring about will change the extent to which the neighborhood's institutions will support Spanish and make it available to future generations.

In sum, there is no question Barrio Logan is presently a bilingual community with very strong ties to Mexican culture and heritage. Traditionally, it has been argued that a group's native language is a major component of its identity because of its role as a symbol of ethnic origins, and because it is the shared medium that members use to "transmit cultural heritage, values, and norms, and as a method of asserting group membership and unity" (Giles 1977: 307). Hence, an environment tightly connected to an ethnic culture will also support the preservation and promotion of the ethnic language. The Mexican niche that is Logan Heights seems to be conducive to the encouragement of Mexican culture and the Spanish language. However, our observations indicate that the overall vitality of Spanish in the community is not HIGH but LOW-MEDIUM, when the conflicting aspects of the Status, Demographic and Institutional Support variables are taken into account (see Table V):

Table V. *The Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan*

Status	Demographics	Institutional Support	Overall Vitality
LOW-MEDIUM	LOW-MEDIUM	LOW-MEDIUM	LOW-MEDIUM

As a result of the lack of high support for the ethnolinguistic vitality of Spanish, the Spanish language seems to be taking on a more symbolic value for the second and third generations of Mexican-Americans, rather than remaining an active and necessary component of the Mexican part of their dual Mexican American identity. Even if in the future these generations remain in an insulated environment that provides continued exposure to Mexican culture, it is possible that they will continue re-defining Mexican heritage as bilingual in theory, but monolingual in English in practice. Sadly, the lack of bilingual education in schools and the growing insistence on English only in the region and the nation shapes the linguistic preference of minors to speak English at home. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the area and the gentrification that will result will help shorten the lifespan of Spanish in Barrio Logan. Chicano Park's murals seem destined to become inscriptions in a language cemetery. While some San Diegans may mistakenly welcome the shift to English as a sign of progress and patriotism, many individuals, communities, and the entire nation will pay a high social, economic, and political price for discouraging fluent bilingualism and encouraging a limited view of what it means to be an American.