

## **FROM PACHUCAN ONOMASTICS TO TEXAS GRAVEMARKERS: Geolinguistic Growth and Territorial Evidence**

In previous chapters, I have established that in Texas' ethnic language cemeteries, three types of language codes appear on the gravemarkers: (1) monolingual English language; (2) monolingual ethnic languages; (3) and mixed-code and/or bilingual markers—always mixed with English. After more than two decades of research, involving 200 or more students in fifty or more cemeteries with access to tens of thousands of markers, we have yet to find either a bilingual or a mixed code marker with Spanish linked with a non-English language.

The majority of the monolingual ethnic language markers reveal the same predictable universal discourse of grief as do the English markers: Name, Death date, Birth Date, Kinship terminology, and Personalized Epitaph.

Obviously to linguists interested in the study of languages in contact, the bilingual and mixed-code markers reveal much. The diachronic information on bilingual and mixed-code markers, in and of itself, bears witness to the slow, careful, movement of ethnic communities from their native language dependency to their final acceptance of English. Moreover, in regard to the basic five semantic elements, the movement into English follows the universal discourse of grief.

### **Verifiable Evidence of a Strong Bilingual Present**

While these ethnic language markers, both monolingual and bilingual, present an overwhelming display of an unconscious, yet universal, language of grief—with name, death date, birth date, kinship, and epitaph forming a predictable continuum of importance (with occupation, death place and birth place have unpredictable

importance), the ethnic languages prove to have a special lesson to teach about the relationship of Spanish with Texas ( with the United States).

One of the contrasts with the other ethnic languages and Spanish lies within the gradual demise of non-Spanish and non-English markers. The most recent Czech marker we have found carries a death date of 1982; the latest German monolingual marker has a death date in the 1960s. In other words, the only monolingual markers still being erected in South Texas, with perhaps a few isolated exceptions that we have not discovered, are written either in English or in Spanish. Moreover, the monolingual Spanish markers are appearing further north and further east in the state through time; their geolinguistic sphere is growing, not disappearing (Baird 1989).

As with the other languages discussed, the monolingual Spanish markers follow the predictable pattern of semantic importance. If one item appears on a marker, that item will be the deceased's name (Figure 1, De La Peña); if two items appear, the name and death date; if three, the name, death date, and birth date (Figure 2, Marroquin); if four name, death date, birth date, and kinship terminology (Figure 3, Cavazos); and if five, all of the above plus an epitaph (Figure 4, Baldarrama).

DE LA PEÑA

**Figure 1, De La Peña**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio**

EUGENIO MARROQUIN  
10.5.1899  
12.19.95

**Figure 2, Marroquin**  
**Catholic Cemetery, Floresville, Texas**

CONCEPCION C. RAMOS  
1852 HIJA 1959

MODESTO S. CAVAZOS  
1897 HIJO 1971

JOSEFA S. CAVAZOS  
1861 MADRE 1918

GERMAN M. CAVAZOS  
1854 PADRE 1913

**Figure 3, Cavazos  
San Fernando Cemetery #1, San Antonio, Texas**

MADRE  
ANTONIA B. BALDARRAMA  
NACIO 1807  
FALLECIO 1912  
DESCANSE EN PAZ

**Figure 4, Baldarrama  
San Fernando Cemetery #1, San Antonio, Texas**

Given, then that San Antonio, at least—if not all of Texas—has become a bilingual community (Figure 5, Water-Aqua), mixed code and/or bilingual Spanish/English markers abound in its cemeteries (Figure 6, Ramos). Since we know from all of these data with all of these languages the repeated importance of

DO NOT  
DRINK  
WATER  
NO TOME  
ESTA  
AGUA

**Figure 5, Water-Aqua  
Sign in Lock Hill Selma Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas**

RAMOS

MADRE	HIJO	DAD	MOTHER
DOLORES V.	CAESAR	SOLOMON V.	MARY C.
1896 – 1984	1922 -	AUG. 30, 1920	SEPT. 1, 1923
	AUG. 15, 1992	OCT. 7, 1986	

PRAY FOR US THAT WE MAY BE TOGETHER FOREVER

**Figure 6 Ramos**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

name, then death date, then birth date, then kinship terminology, then epitaph, we can ascertain that on mixed-code markers with English and Spanish, English dominates the Spanish. Note, for example, the English language influence on the name Cantu, spelled without an accent mark (Figure 7, Cantu). Note also the father's portion of the marker written all in English, the remainder of the marker written in Spanish (Figure 8, Canales). While the Spanish language has increased its geographical base, in other words, the dominance of English still prevails in what would appear otherwise to be a growing bilingual community.

ESMEREJILDA  
 CANTU  
 NACIO EN BROWNSVILLE TEX  
 ABRIL 13, 1872  
 FALLECIO  
 DIC. 13, 1935  
 EDAD 63 AÑOS 8 MESES  
 RECUARDO DE SU HIJO  
 GUADALUPE

**Figure 7, Cantu**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

CANALES

FATHER ANTONIO O. JAN. 20, 1916 SEPT. 14, 1980	MADRE ADELA P. SEPT. 30, 1921 ABRIL 28, 1986
RECUERDO DE SU ESPOSA E HIJOS	RECUERDO DE SU HIJA E HIJOS

**Figure 8, Canales  
San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

**Possible Emergence of a New, Mixed-Code Language, Known Variously as  
Pachuco, Pocho, Calo and/or Spanglish.**

The gravemarker proof that English dominates Spanish in the borderland that separates Texas from Mexico, while interesting and relevant, most likely surprises no one.

A substantial number of mixed-code, Spanish/English gravemarkers in various South Texas cemeteries, however, deviate from the established pattern. Less frequent in appearance than the predictable name, death date, birth date, kinship, and epitaph hierarchy, numerous markers retain Spanish diacritics on the names—even though some or all of the other semantic items do appear in English.

Four different gravemarkers, each with the surname PENA, illustrate well the presence of these new data: note the predictable patterns in the monolingual Spanish (Figure 9, Peña), the mixed-code English/Spanish (Figure 10, Pena); the monolingual English (Figure 11, Pena);--and then the unpredictable aberration (Figure 12, Peña).

PEÑA  
ESTEBAN                      MAURICIA T.  
ENE. 29, 1937      SEPT. 21, 1881  
EDAD 50 AÑOS      SEPT. 13, 1965  
RECUERDO DE SUS HIJOS

**Figure 9, PEÑA  
San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

CRUZ PENA

1852-1940  
RECUERDO DE SUS HIJOS

**Figure 10, PENA**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

PENA  
HERMENEGILDO DAVID F.      MARY P.  
1912 -                                      1912 -

**Figure 11, PENA**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

SUSIE PEÑA  
SEPT. 13, 1911  
SEPT. 6, 1966  
OUR BELOVED MOTHER

**Figure 12, PEÑA**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

Through the years our collection of these new patternless, mixed-code Spanish/English markers has grown considerably (Figure 13, Patiño), (Figure 21, Saldaña).

PATIÑO  
MIGUEL      FELICITAS O.  
1833 -1895      1839 - 1914

McCLENAN                                      PATIÑO  
MINERVA      CHARLIE      CAROLINE      JOSEFINA      ALEJANDRO  
JAN. 2, 1911                                      NOV. 19, 1911      1926      ELVIRA  
APR. 6, 1911      NOV. 19, 1911      GRANDCHILDREN

**Figure 13, Patiño**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #1, San Antonio, Texas**

JESUS SALDAÑA  
APR. 14, 1894  
JUNE 20, 1951

**Figure 14, Saldaña**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #1, San Antonio, Texas**

Initially, we dismissed the use of diacritics as a demonstration of ethnic pride; we had found similar expressions on an occasional Czech gravemarker (Figure 15, Cernik), (Figure 16, Sevcik) (Eckert 1993, 109).

CERNIK  
 TOMAS                      ROZINA  
 DEC. 1, 1840              MAR. 26, 1856  
 AUG. 10, 1902            MAR. 8, 1942  
 BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD. REV. XIV, 13

**Figure 15, Cernik  
 Holstyn, Texas, Cemetery**

SEVCIK  
 ANTON                      CECILIA  
 JAN. 2, 1895              NOV. 13, 1896  
 DEC. 2, 1956              JULY 11, 1956  
 FATHER                      MOTHER  
 REST IN PEACE

**Figure 16, Sevcik  
 Holstyn, Texas, Cemetery**

Yet the consistent appearance of the broken-pattern markers plus co-occurring research by Chicano culture scholars such as Gloria Anzaldua (Anzaldua 1987), Juan Bruce-Novoa (1980), Gabriela De Ferrari (1995), Arturo Madrid (Madrid 1995, 1986, 1982, 1977; Moyers 1989), and Suzanne Oboler (1992) led us back to the research of other linguists. That deeper look has proven most rewarding—and for the sake of discussion, if nothing else, I have chosen to isolate the phenomenon under the rubric “Pachucan Onomastics.”

Fellow scholars, working with the mixed-code spoken language—not the written gravemarker expression of that language—have variously called mixed-code

Spanish/English speech *Pachuco*, *Calo*, *Tirili*, *Pochismos*, *Spanish-English*, *Pocho*, *Tex-Mex*, and *Spanglish*.

In 1958, Bert Kruger Smith edited a small monograph in which he compiled the stories of a Catholic Priest, Father Harold J. Rahm, and a social worker, John Robert Weber, both of whom worked at Our Lady's Youth Center in south El Paso, Texas. Early in his narrative, Mr. Weber describes the people they worked with as Chicanos. "The Chicano culture," he says, "develops its own language which is as equally unintelligible to the English speaking as to the Spanish speaking" (Smith 1958, 12).

In 1960, Anthropologist Haldeen Braddy published a list of drug addict vocabulary word attributed to the "Pachucos," whom she described as Latin American juvenile delinquents from the Texas-Mexico borderland—especially in south El Paso. (Braddy 1960, 255). The Pachucos, in other words, referred to teenage gang members drawn from the Chicano culture described by Weber. In an excellent discussion of the Pachucos, Braddy describes how they eventually left El Paso and moved to California—especially to Los Angeles (Braddy 1960, 255-64). She makes the interesting remark: "Today the Pachucos in El Paso have virtually disappeared as an organized group, but they have bequeathed to society several gangs of imitators" (Braddy 1960, 260).

In 1965, Lurline Coltharp, a linguist working in the same south El Paso community as did Rahm, Weber, and Braddy, isolated the Chicano language for detailed description. She decided to call this third language Calo—"a term that is not offensive to them." Braddy also refers to this term Calo, which simply means "dialect" (Braddy 1960, 262; Coltharp 1965, 74). Two terms, Tirili and Pachuco, did offend



some of her informants. Tirili, they said, referred to “hoodlums” and, interesting in light of Braddy’s findings, Pachuco referred to people from California (Coltharp 1965, 74).

In spite of her concerns about offending her informants, Coltharp published her research in a book entitled *The Tongue of the Tirilones* with the subtitle *A linguistic study of a criminal argot*. Moreover she mistakenly cites Weber as saying the language he and Rahm worked with was a criminal language. “The language has been generally credited, however, to the criminal element” (Coltharp 1965, 31 (with footnote reference to Rahm , not Smith, 1958, 11-12)). Weber did say that the Chicano culture had gangs, but he never mentioned the gangs as having a special language.

Nonetheless, Ian Hancock, in his 1971 survey of pidgins and creoles of the world, lists “Pachuco or Pochismos (a Spanish-English contact language in waning use between Spanish and English speaking Americans, and used as an argot by some users of Mexican ancestry in Arizona and parts of Southern California.” (Romaine 1988, 315).

About thirty years ago, the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. published an anthology in which nineteen scholars shared their concerns about this merging language mixture of Spanish and English (Hernandez-Chavez, et al 1975). I quote from their introduction:

Today, there are upwards of six million Spanish speakers in the southwestern states along with millions more attracted to the agricultural and industrial center of the Midwest and East. Depending upon the region in which they live, the history of their settlement in the United States, local custom and

other factors, they call themselves variously *hispanos*, *mexicanos*, *latinos*, *Mexican-Americans*, or *chicanos* (v).

Among other things, equality means for Chicanos the right to keep their language, to develop it, and to use it freely for all forms of communication (vi).

Perhaps the most important factor that distinguishes Southwest from Spanish speaking regions outside the United States and Puerto Rico is the influence of English, especially on the lexicon (viii).

Eighteen years after Hancock published his survey of pidgins and creoles throughout the world, John Holm, in his 1989 survey also refers to Pachuco. Instead of suggesting its demise, as did Hancock, Holm, citing both Coltharp and Hancock, defined Pachuco as “a Spanish-English hybrid spoken by bilingual Chicano (Mexican-American) youths in the southwestern part of the United States that once belonged to Mexico (309). . . . A similar mixture of Spanish and English has been developing among the predominantly Puerto Rican Hispanics of New York City (Zentella 1981) and Cubans of Miami (Fernandez 1983)” (Holm 1989, 310).

Hernandez-Chavez, Cohen, and Beltramo, in the Center for Applied Linguistics anthology, worried that few people took the Chicano culture, including its language, seriously (Hernandez-Chavez , et. al. 1975, vi & xvii). That lack of interest dissipated during the past several decades. In her 1987 collection of Mexican-American border region essays and poetry, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaluda writes:

"The *Pocho* is an anglicized Mexican or American of Mexican origin who speaks Spanish with an accent characteristic of North Americans and who

distorts and reconstructs the language according to the influence of English (fn3). Tex-Mex, or Spanglish, comes most naturally to me. I may switch back and forth from English to Spanish in the same sentence or in the same word. With my sister and my Brother Nune and with Chicano *tejano* contemporaries I speak in Tex-Mex.

"From kids and people my own age I picked up *Pachuco*. *Pachuco* (the language of the zoot suiters) is a language of rebellion, both against Standard Spanish and Standard English. It is a secret language. Adults of the culture and outsiders cannot understand it. It is made up of slang words from both English and Spanish. . . . Through lack of practice and not having others who can speak it, I've lost most of the *Pachuco* tongue" (Anzaldua *Borderlands*, 56).

"Some of the languages we speak are: . . . 6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California have regional variations) 7. Tex-Mex 8. *Pachuco* (called *Calo*)" (Anzaldua *Borderlands*, 56).

## **Conclusion**

Within this context of the linguistic analyses of a spoken hybrid of English and Spanish, which in itself lies within a much larger context of Chicano studies, one can apply new insights into the consistently patternless language code mixing on a significant number of English/Spanish gravemarkers.

Take for example, the surname Patiño. To the consistent and predictable Spanish language (Figure 17, Patiño), and English language (Figure 18, Patino), exists the Pachuco language (Figure 19, Patiño);

MANUEL

JUNIO 12, 1938  
EDAD 40 AÑOS  
Su esposa e hijos dedican  
este recuerdo a su memoria  
PATIÑO

**Figure 17, Patiño (Spanish)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

EDWARD A. PATINO  
MAY 24, 1956 DEC. 28, 1989  
GOD'S GREATEST GIFT  
RETURN TO GOD MY SON

**Figure 18, Patino (English)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

PATIÑO  
FATHER MOTHER  
GILBERT A. OLGA  
1920 – 1992 1921 -

**Figure 19, Patiño (Pachuco)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

The Treviño surname illustrates the same three-language existence: Spanish language (Figure 20, Treviño), English language (Figure 21, Trevino), and Pachuco language (Figure 22, Treviño).

PADRE  
LIBRADO G.  
TREVIÑO  
NACIO  
AGOSTO 17, 1869  
FALLECIO  
JULIO 17, 1937  
RECUERDO DE SU  
HIJA Y NIETOS

**Figure 20, Treviño (Spanish)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

TREVINO

JUAN G.	IN LOVING	FRANCISCA A.
1919-1979	MEMORY	1919 –

**Figure 21, Trevino (English)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

FRED R. TREVIÑO  
 MAR. 2, 1923  
 APRIL 30, 1944

**Figure 22, Treviño (Pachuco)**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

Evidence of the Pachuco influence exists even when both Spanish and English exist on the same marker. Note for example, in Figure 30, that both the name and the kinship terms appear in Spanish; the death and birth dates, however, appear in English. This disrupts the predictable pattern established by other monolingual and mixed-code markers (Figure 23, Muñiz).

MUÑIZ	
PADRE	MADRE
MANUEL SR.	ROMANA M.
MAR. 6, 1902	JULY 25, 1913.
SEPT. 20, 1997	FEB. 24, 1985

**Figure 23, Muñiz**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

Most frequently, however, the Pachucan onomastics appear only with English (Figure 24, Piña). In essence, the co-existence of Pachuco with the Spanish markers seems totally natural, as with two Ybañez family markers; the Pachuco marker, with incomplete death dates (Figure 25a Ybañez), sitting in front of the older, Spanish monolingual marker—the patriarch with his three wives (Figure 25b, Ybañez).

PIÑA	
BROTHER	SISTER

JOHN M.      ZOILA C.  
1914 – 1978    1908 – 1975  
IN LOVING MEMORY

**Figure 24, Piña**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

YBAÑEZ  
FATHER                  MOTHER  
MANUEL H.              HERMINIA T.  
1906 – 1966              1913 –  
IN REMEMBRANCE FROM HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN

**Figure 25a, Ybañez**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

YBAÑEZ  
PADRE                  MADRE  
JOSE MARIA              CORINA H.  
1887 – 1967              1888 – 1945  
  
MADRE                  MADRE  
JOSEPHINE P.              JUANITA T. SUAREZ  
1919 – 1987              1867 – 1949  
RECUERDO DE SU ESPOSO E HIJOS

**Figure 25b, Ybañez**  
**San Fernando Cemetery #2, San Antonio, Texas**

In the following chapter, statistical evidence will bolster the linguistic arguments that suggest the existence of Pachuco as a language code.

**Postscript.**

After the original research for this paper had been completed, the gist of the findings formed the essence of a public talk given to the San Antonio chapter of the Trinity University Alumni, in January of 1997. The Public Relations department felt the term Pachuco would not attract folks as well as would the term Spanglish. The

Associated Press carried the local newspaper's account of the talk (Gold 1997) and various news media, both in the United States and in Europe, spread the story rapidly and supportively. In its March 25, 1997, issue, the New York Times carried an unrelated front page article "It's the Talk of Nueva York: The Hybrid Called Spanglish" (Guerrero 1997).

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