

Linguistic Attitudes and Use of Mother Tongue among Spanish Speakers in Japan¹

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The study of the linguistic attitudes and choices of Spanish speakers in Japan points to the importance of minority language transmission to the next generation. Since Spanish is a minority language in this context, its native speakers either value and use it for communication in the family or shift to Japanese use in the broader community, which generally promotes monolingualism. This article conducts an investigation into how Spanish speakers in Japan play a crucial role in the maintenance of Spanish-language use with their children. The study reports on a questionnaire that was conducted among 125 Spanish speakers between 2009 and 2010. The results show that Spanish native speakers vary their linguistic attitude and language use according to the mother tongue of their spouse.

日本におけるスペイン語圏出身者の母語に対する言語態度および言語選択に関する研究は、次世代へマイノリティ言語の継承の重要性を示している。日本においてはスペイン語はマイノリティ言語であるわけだが、スペイン語圏出身者の中にはスペイン語に価値を置き、家庭の中で用いる人もいれば、日本社会の中で日本語話者へと移行するする人もいる。後者は結果として単一言語使用を促進することになる。本稿は、子どものスペイン語使用維持において、日本におけるスペイン語話者が果たす役割に関する実態調査をまとめたものである。調査は、2009年末から2010年前半にかけて、125人のスペイン語話者を対象に行われ、調査結果より、スペイン語母語話者の言語態度および言語使用は、配偶者の母語によって規定されることが明らかになった。

Introduction

The transmission of the parents' mother tongue is considered a fact of life for most families—something that is naturally given. However, when one or both parents are immigrants and their mother tongue is not that of the social environment in which they find themselves, that minority language acquisition might not always happen. This is often the case among Spanish-speaking immigrants living in Japan. From the 1990's, the number of workers from South America has been increasing year after year as many immigrants are attracted by Japan's economic prosperity. Being one of the newest ethnic minorities in Japan, Peruvians are the fifth largest foreign group and the largest Spanish-speaking group, followed by Bolivians and Argentines.² Many of these people come to Japan because they are second and third generation Japanese descendants, even though

most do not speak Japanese very well (Tsuda, 2006). However, to date there has been little research into the extent to which these immigrants pass their Spanish on to the next generation in a largely monolingual society such as Japan's.

Language maintenance and shift among linguistic minorities has been extensively studied and a variety of factors have been shown to either help maintain or shift it. Baker (2001) sets up three categories that seem to influence maintenance and shift of a minority language: (1) political, social and demographic factors, (2) cultural factors and (3) linguistic factors. There is always a combination of these factors at work, interacting in a complicated equation, and consequently it is difficult to predict what will happen when people move to a new linguistic environment. Socio-cultural factors such as the social prestige of the minority language play an important role in its acquisition and maintenance (Lyon, 1996). In the case of immigrant families, their future plans might lead them to encourage their children to acquire the mainstream language or on the other hand, reinforce the value of their heritage language and culture (Suarez, 2002). Studies on minority languages in Japan, in particular those on English, demonstrate that it is highly valued and used among Japanese/English-speaking families (Billings 1990; Noguchi & Fotos, 2001; Yamamoto 2001a, 2002, 2005, 2008), although this may not always be true of other languages (Bussinguer & Tanaka, 2010; Kanno, 2008).

Does the Spanish-speaking community living in Japan pass down its mother tongue to the next generation or choose to teach their children Japanese as L1, since it is a language which is more highly valued and a tool for accessing education, secure employment and popular culture? Is there any difference when both adults are Spanish speakers or when each adult has a different native language (i.e. when one adult is the native Spanish speaker and the other speaks the majority language of the community, Japanese)?

The present research investigates variation in linguistic attitudes and language use by Spanish speakers in relation to maintaining and shifting languages with their children. After describing the methodology and the sample, this study analyzes an extra-familial factor, the perceived feeling of acceptance of their L1 by Japanese society, and intra-familial factors such as the Spanish speakers' attitudes towards their mother tongue, and its use with their partners, children and in the family, particularly with regard to the native language(s) of the adults in the family.

Methodology

The study is based on a questionnaire delivered to 125 respondents contacted between the end of 2009 and the first few months of 2010. The questionnaire was intended for Spanish-speaking people meeting all of the following four criteria:

- (1) they lived in Japan at the time of the survey,
- (2) they had at least one child of three years of age or older living with the family,
- (3) that child attended or was attending a Japanese school, and
- (4) the partner was either an L1 native speaker of Spanish or Japanese.

The respondents were recruited through a snowball sampling, with the first respondents helping to make contact with future participants from among their acquaintances.³ The

questionnaire was designed and prepared in Spanish to be self-administrated and was posted to the respondents with a return envelope. However, in addition to those who completed the questionnaire and send it back by post or email, the majority of the questionnaires (80%) was eventually conducted by telephone, as this proved to be the most convenient way for most of the respondents to answer it.⁴

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) worked as the basis for research, however, the extra information received from participants in the telephone conversations provided valuable detail that would not have been available through a written survey instrument alone. Additionally, once rapport had been established, participants were more likely to refer the researcher to other potential participants, which facilitated and expedited the data collection process.⁵

A number of restrictions limit the reliability of this study. First, the respondents were not a random sample of Spanish speakers, but rather people who were interested in being interviewed. Second, with respect to attitude measurement, some respondents appeared to give socially desirable answers to appear more prestigious and this may have had some influence on the results. Readers are reminded that any survey findings, by their very nature, can only reflect professed attitudes rather than impartial truth. Third, the respondents may have been affected by the researcher and their perceived purpose of the study (Baker, 1988). Although assessments of proficiency were not carried out in this study, parental evaluations of children and themselves related to attitude and use of languages are not exempt from such biases (Billings, 1990; Noguchi, 2001).

Although the above limitations must be acknowledged, in this exploratory study a significant number of responses indicated certain characteristics of the Spanish speakers living in Japan in relation to L1 transmission to the next generation. It is anticipated this preliminary study might guide new hypotheses for future research.

Participants

Half of the Spanish speaking respondents were in their forties, and most were women (70%). The respondents were mainly from Peru (47%), Argentina (11%), Colombia (10%) and Mexico (9%), a ratio that coincides with the main groups of Spanish-speaking foreigners living in Japan. The nuclear family was the most common type (94%), with 44% of families having two children and 38% with one child. The 125 families had in total 232 children living with them, with 76.3% percent of these children born in Japan (70.4% of the older children and 85.8% of the younger children). These figures show that most of the children were raised in Japanese society. Moreover, most of the respondents (91%) intended to pursue their life in that country, with a linguistic environment dominated by the Japanese language. For further details about the participants' backgrounds, refer to the tables in Appendix 2.

For the purposes of the analysis, couples were divided into two groups according to the partner's mother tongue. One group was called "monolingual couples," where both adults spoke Spanish as a native language (41.6% n=52 cases) and the other group was called "bilingual couples", where each adult had a different native language, namely one Spanish and the other Japanese (58.4% n= 73 cases). In the monolingual couples,

most of the partners were born in Peru (75%) followed by Colombia (10%), and their native language was Spanish. Among the bilingual couples, 27% were from Peru, 13.7% were from Mexico, 13.7% were from Spain, and 12.3% were from Argentina. The non-Spanish-speaking partners were all born in Japan and were Japanese native speakers. The division between the two groups highlights potential differences with regard to linguistic attitude and language use in the family, since the language input and the emotional context will differ depending on whether the adults speak the same or different mother tongues at home. In this sample, most of the Spanish couples spoke in Spanish (96%), however the results were different among the bilingual couples. As outlined in Table 1, fully half of the bilingual couples used Japanese (52%), followed by Spanish (23%), a use of mix of languages (18%) and English (6%), while one couple chose dual-linguality in Spanish and Japanese, meaning that each partner only spoke his or her own language to the other; they understand each other's language but do not speak it except in circumstances where absolutely necessary (Grimes, 1985:391). In this case the father was a linguist and speaking dual-lingually was a planned choice in order to raise the children bilingually.

Table 1. Language of communication between monolingual and bilingual couples (percent)

	Japanese	Spanish	Mix of languages	English	Dual linguality
Monolingual couple	2	96	2	-	-
Bilingual couple	52	23	18	6	1

Therefore, among couples where both partners were native speakers of Spanish, that language was naturally of the one they adopted for communication. However, in the case of Spanish speakers in intermarried couples, only a quarter of them maintained their communication in the minority language, while half shifted to Japanese, the spouse's language and that of the social environment. Approximately one in five such couples communicated in a mix of languages. In much linguistic research a frequent assumption is that linguistic intermarriage is detrimental to minority language maintenance, however as Piller (2002) notes, marriage might not be the only factor that accounts for the shift towards the majority language. Other considerations, including the gender of the minority parent, a desire for a better life, the symbolic value of the languages involved, the country of residence, might impact on language choice. In the present study, Spanish speakers reported that they used Japanese with their partners for a variety of reasons. Some said they used Japanese because they mastered it for educational or work-related reasons, or that their Japanese partners were not adequately proficient in Spanish. More than a few learned the majority language, in order to support their children in the Japanese monolingual environment of schools and hospitals.

Issues such as societal perceptions of the mother tongue, parental language attitudes and mother tongue usage between parents and children are probably more

pertinent determiners of language maintenance.

Analysis

Social perception of the native language

The social status of a language is one of the key factors in either encouraging or discouraging its use (Lyon, 1996). When a certain language is associated with power, wealth and prestige, individuals usually choose that language for economic and social mobility (Baker 2001). Due to this unequal distribution of social value, an asymmetric bilingualism may develop, which over time can result in a linguistically subordinate group shifting towards the language of the monolingual dominant group (Thomason, 2001).

In spite of the fact that Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, in the Japanese context it does not have a particularly high status. Moreover, even though Japan is a multilingual and multicultural country with both established and newly arrived ethnic minorities, Japanese culture is still often presented as monolingual and monocultural (Noguchi & Fotos, 2001), with English tending to be regarded as the primary international language in Japan. Japanese people have a positive image of bilinguals who are natives of Japanese and learners of English (Yamamoto, 2001b) and while English-speaking people living in Japan recognize the positive image of their language, languages from Asia, Africa and South America are often perceived as inferior (Yamamoto, 2001a: 71-74).

In the current study, respondents were asked, “While talking to your children in Spanish in front of Japanese people who do not know you, how do strangers react when they hear you using Spanish?” Two-thirds of respondents in monolingual couples answered that Japanese have neither a positive nor a negative image towards their language (68%), while 18% of the respondents felt that Japanese reacted positively and only 14% said they reacted negatively. Among the bilingual couples, around two out of five people thought that Spanish had a neutral value (41%), followed by those who felt Spanish had a positive value (37%), while the rest perceived it as negatively valued (16%).

Table 2. Perceived Japanese reaction to the Spanish language (percent)

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Monolingual couples n=50	18	68	14
Bilingual couples n=54	37	41	22

Spanish speakers in monolingual couples felt that their language did not have any special acceptance from Japanese people, whether negatively or positively; Spanish was simply ignored. However, the responses among the Spanish-Japanese couples show that they had more diverse perceptions about Japanese reactions. While some felt no particular reaction from Japanese strangers, others received a more positive social approval of their language, followed by nearly a quarter who felt negative reactions. Chi-square procedures were used to compare the differences in monolingual and bilingual couples according to social approval to foreign languages. The difference were found to be significant ($=7.917$ $p<0.019$).

Linguistic attitude

In the field of sociology of language, some argue that identity is close to the mother tongue (Fishman, 1991). However, immigrants might use the dominant language for different reasons, including economic, educational, cultural or job-related purposes, and the desire for a better future for their children and for themselves (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). In the current study, the attitudes that Spanish speakers possess about their language and the importance of passing it down to their children were seen as another fundamental determiner to account for shift toward Japanese. As indicated in Table 3, almost all of the respondents among the monolingual couples recognized the importance of Spanish for their children (94%) while the bilingual couples agreed to a less extent (74%). However, these results show that depending on their partner's native language, the reasons for passing the minority language on to their children were judged differently.

Table 3. Motivations or reasons for transmitting Spanish to their children (percent)

	Spanish speaker in a monolingual couple	Spanish speaker with a Japanese native speaker
Communication and expression of emotions and sentiments	90	76
Communication with relatives in the country of origin	80	91
For the child's future	70	67
Future job opportunities	72	81

In comparing the monolingual couples with the bilingual couples, it can be seen that the number who felt Spanish was worth teaching to their children for communicating and expressing emotions was higher in the former group (90%) than the latter (76%). When communicating with extended family in their country of origin, there is a strong desire for maintaining ties with their countries among all of the Spanish speakers who responded. Nevertheless, there were more respondents among the bilingual couples than the monolingual couples (91% against 80%) who felt that minority language maintenance was important in fostering family ties to the homeland. Finally, in relation to Spanish as for a means of improving their lives, both groups were less confident about considering Spanish as an advantage for their children's future (70% for monolingual couples against 67% of bilingual couples). More Spanish speakers with a Japanese partner believed that having Spanish language ability offered greater future job opportunities (81%) compared to monolingual Spanish-speaking couples (72%).

With regard to Spanish speakers' attitudes towards their native language and its transmission to their children, Table 4 shows that while most of the monolingual pairs valued their native language positively, this was reduced to two thirds among bilingual couples, apart from Mexicans and Spaniards, who valued their L1 highly (although the current analysis is limited to countries with the largest number of respondents).⁶

Undoubtedly more research is needed here in order to examine which other factors influence these linguistic attitudes.

Table 4. Participants' responses to the question, "Is it important to pass on Spanish to your child(ren)?" by native countries (percent)

	Spanish speakers with L1 Spanish-speaking partners		Spanish speakers with L1 Japanese-speaking partners	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total respondents (n=125)	94	6	74	26
Peru (n=59)	95	5	55	45
Argentina (n=14)	80	20	67	33
Mexico (n=10)	100	0	90	10
Spain (n=10)	0	0	100	0

Linguistic use of the mother tongue

Intergenerational transmission plays a significant role in the maintenance of the minority language. When the transference happens at home there are more opportunities for its survival in the long run (Fishman 2000). However, identification with the mother tongue and a positive attitude toward the language alone are not a guarantee of its maintenance (Romaine, 1995 p. 43). In the current study respondents were asked about their use of a minority language: which language the adult chose to use with her or his child, and which language the child used with his or her parents and what languages were used when the family was together.

Shift to Japanese

Among the 125 respondents, 21 (17%) chose to use Japanese with their children.⁷ In monolingual couples only 4% of the sample chose not to use Spanish, while in bilingual couples the Japanese-only environment represented around a quarter of the sample. One question that remains unresolved is whether this phenomenon was related to this particular linguistic minority in a social environment which encourages linguistic homogenization, or whether this was only one factor among others. The participants reported that speaking in Spanish to their children sometimes had negative repercussions, in terms of language deficiency, conflicting identities and social discrimination and stigma. Two interviewees believed that using Spanish would affect their children's Japanese speaking and writing. Another two felt that dealing with dual linguistic systems would cause confusion and anxiety in their children. When children started to mix their languages in the early stages of speech acquisition, one family believed that it was a sign that learning two languages negatively affects children's development. One interviewee explained that if her children were going to live and grow up in Japan, they might have an identity problem dealing with another language. Another factor was the Japanese social environment. Four interviewees stressed that their Japanese in-laws and even their husbands were the major obstacles to using Spanish. They did not understand Spanish or even like it, and they made it understood that it was rude to speak in a language other

than Japanese. One mother added that her neighbors would feel uncomfortable if the family spoke in a language other than Japanese. Two families who lived in a very small town and spoke in Spanish were perceived as being socially inappropriate. Undoubtedly cultural and linguistic distance between the two languages led these Spanish speakers to adopt the Japanese language in order to blend into the dominant society.

Japanese school teachers and doctors also reportedly influenced these Spanish speakers' linguistic choices. One family was advised to maintain Japanese to avoid any developmental disorder. The same advice was given to many other interviewees, although they chose to maintain their native language (Spanish) as a language for intra-familial communication. The ideology behind promoting the shift to Japanese is the belief that bilingualism is a temporary and negative phase, which will follow the path or way to monolingualism. This belief centers around what Skutnabb-Kangas called the myths of monolingual reductionism (2000, pp. 238-248). These myths about bilingualism and the lack of social approval with regard to the use of their native language resulted in a decrease in Spanish communication with their children.

Parents' language use with children

Among monolingual families where both parents spoke Spanish to each other, both parents usually also talked in Spanish with their children, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Monolingual couple's language use (percent)

		Language used with the oldest child at home				Language used with the youngest child at home			
		J	S	M	E	J	S	M	E
Monolingual couples who communicated with each other in Japanese 2% (n=1)	Mother	0	100	0	0	0	0	100	0
	Father	0	100	0	0	0	100	0	0
Monolingual couples who communicated with each other in Spanish 96% (n=50)	Mother	8	70	20	2	3	76	21	0
	Father	0	75	25	0	6	70	24	0
Monolingual couples who mixed Japanese and Spanish 2% (n=1)	Mother	0	0	100	0	0	0	100	0
	Father	0	0	100	0	0	0	100	0

J: Japanese S: Spanish M: Mix of languages E: English

Although Spanish was the dominant language of the parents in 96% of the cases, when communicating with their children this was reduced to around three quarters. Conceivably the influence of the children's Japanese education and social life, and the lack of similar input in Spanish would explain this difference. On the other hand, among bilingual couples, Spanish speaking parents (n=47) showed a more diverse distribution of language use at home, as outlined in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Language used by each parent with the oldest child living at home (percent)

		Language used with the oldest child (n=125)			
Couple's language		J	S	M	E
Japanese (n=38)	SSP	53	32	15	0
	JSP	100	0	0	0
Spanish (n=17)	SSP	0	88	6	6
	JSP	59	18	23	0
Mix of languages (n=13)	SSP	31	46	23	0
	JSP	77	8	15	0
English (n=4)	SSP	0	50	25	25
	JSP	50	0	50	0
Dual-linguality (n=1)	SSP	0	100	0	0
	JSP	100	0	0	0

SSP: Native Spanish-speaking parent JSP: Native Japanese-speaking parent

Table 7. Language used by each parent with the youngest child living at home (percent)

		Language used with youngest child (n=78)			
Couple's language		J	S	M	E
Japanese (n=38)	SSP	65	22	13	0
	JSP	100	0	0	0
Spanish (n=17)	SSP	0	100	0	0
	JSP	62	25	12	0
Mix of languages (n=13)	SSP	33	67	0	0
	JSP	75	0	25	0
English (n=4)	SSP	0	50	50	0
	JSP	50	0	50	0
Dual-linguality (n=1)	SSP	0	100	0	0
	JSP	100	0	0	0

SSP: Native Spanish-speaking parent JSP: Native Japanese-speaking parent

The Spanish-speaking parents generally maintained the same language they used with their spouse when speaking with the children, whether it was Spanish or Japanese, and shifted to Spanish when mixing languages at home. On the other hand, Japanese-speaking parents inevitably used Japanese to their children, even when Spanish was the language of the couple.

Children's language use with parents

Respondents were also asked about which language children spoke at home. According to the results of the questionnaire, the most frequently used language by the older child was Japanese (in 67% of the cases) rather than Spanish (33%). Of those old enough to speak, the younger children from 66 families tended to choose Japanese (71%) over Spanish (29%). Among families where both parents were non-native speakers of

Japanese, the older children tended to use Spanish (56%) rather than Japanese (44%). Meanwhile the younger children used Japanese primarily and Spanish secondly (53% and 47% respectively). Both older and younger children in families where one parent was a native-speaker of Japanese used Japanese in the majority of cases (84% and 86% respectively).

Language use between siblings

Although the survey did not measure the extent to which children were exposed to Spanish, the respondents were asked about what languages were used among siblings. Among all the families with two or more children living at home ($n=78$), 85% spoke Japanese to each other, rather than Spanish (6%). Surprisingly, among families where both parents were native-speakers of Spanish, the siblings overwhelmingly communicated with each other in Japanese (77%) rather than Spanish (9%) or a mix of languages (14%). In families where one parent was a native speaker of Japanese, 91% of the children chose to speak in Japanese with each other, rather than in Spanish (5%) or a mix of the two languages (5%).

These results show that even when the home environment consists of two Spanish speaking parents, the probability of siblings using Spanish between each other is reduced, and this Spanish use is even less common among families with one native Japanese-speaking parent. In addition, older children tend to use Spanish more than the younger ones. Spanish was not used significantly between any of the sibling groups, although it was a little higher among families with two native Spanish-speaking parents. One suggestion for parents who want to foster bilingual language use in their children would be to encourage them to speak more among themselves in the minority language, since childhood play is a crucial venue for language development.

Family language use

When all the family members were together, the most commonly used language was Spanish in 40% of the cases, followed by Japanese in nearly the same proportion (38%). In comparing these two types of families, the monolingual group communicated in Spanish in 75% of the cases. Only 17% used a mix of languages and Japanese (8%) when the parents were together with the children. Bilingual families talked in Japanese in more than half of the cases (60%), followed by a mix of languages (22%) and Spanish alone (15%).

Table 8. *Family language use (percent)*

	Japanese	Spanish	Mix of languages	Dual linguality
Monolingual couples	8	75	17	0
Bilingual couples	60	15	22	3

These findings show that among monolingual families, Spanish was less used when parents were in the presence of their children, possibly because of the influence of majority Japanese environment. Similarly, among bilingual families Spanish was less used when the children were present.

Conclusion

The present study examined the linguistic practices of Spanish speakers residing in Japan and how the use of their native language affected its transmission to the next generation. Three factors were analyzed in particular; perceived societal attitudes toward Spanish in Japan, the reported importance placed on Spanish, and the family's use of Spanish in the home.

First, the study looked at the use of foreign languages such as Spanish outside the family and their perceived social acceptance in the Japanese community. The results showed that couples that were both native Spanish speakers (around half of the respondents) did not perceive a significant reaction from Japanese in the community when they used Spanish in public. While they generally agreed that Spanish received a positive reaction from Japanese people, linguistically mixed couples felt that Japanese people's attitude towards the use of Spanish in public was less favorable.

The second factor was the importance that the parents placed on Spanish in relation to their children. Most of the families chose to value their own language positively, regardless of the value and/or social recognition they believed was placed on that language by Japanese society more broadly. The value placed on the minority language was higher among couples where both partners spoke it as a first language. All the native speakers of Spanish reported that their language was important to maintaining communication with their children, as well as their ties with relatives in their home countries and for the child's employment prospects in the future.

The final factor investigated was the use of Spanish within the family. The study confirmed that the languages used between parents determine the level of minority language use by the children. The probability of Spanish use among children was higher among the couples who routinely talked to each other in Spanish, since they naturally maintained the same language when talking with their children and when the family was all together. On the other hand, in bilingual families, only a quarter used Spanish as a couples-only language; this corresponds to the number of adults who talk to their firstborn child in Spanish. The number gets even smaller when the whole family is together. Consequently, when one of the adults is a native speaker of the majority language (Japanese), it can be seen that Spanish was employed much less between the couples, and between parents and children.

Finally, this study has shown that the linguistic environment can have a significant influence on children in the Japanese context, both in monolingual and bilingual families. Even if Spanish speakers show a high interest in their language, this does not guarantee a positive result for the next generation. Future studies should examine more closely which elements work to positively or negatively affect the successful acquisition of minority languages in the family environment.

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Endnotes

¹ This paper is a revised and extended version of a paper presented at the XXII Conference of the Confederación Académica Nipona, Española y Latinoamericana, held in May 2010 in Tokyo.

² According to 2008 demographic statistics, non-Japanese foreigners represent 1.74% of the whole Japanese population. The South American group is the second largest behind Asia. By nationality, Peruvians represent 2.7% of the total foreign population (n=59,723), followed by Bolivians (6,526), Argentineans (3,777), Colombians (2,803) and Paraguayans (2,542). A group from Spain is in the sixth place at 1,814 (Japan Immigration Association, 2009).

³ One source of contacts was acquaintances from two Spanish teaching associations who in turn introduced us to other people. However, the biggest source of information was from blue-collar workers and, to a lesser degree, housewives of Japanese- and Spanish-speaking partners. For example, there were 20 respondents who were introduced to the researchers by a law firm assisting Spanish-speaking foreigners. A sociolinguistic researcher and volunteer at a Spanish weekend school for children and Japanese for adults also helped to increase the number of respondents. Considering that the majority of migrants from Latin America are the “Nikkei”, many of whom came in groups with temporary work agencies or have a social network of support in Japan, it was relatively easy to get referrals to co-workers, friends and relatives for the survey. In addition, there were more than a dozen potential respondents who did not fit the criteria, including (a) Japanese native speakers with a relatively high level of Spanish; (b) Spanish speakers with Portuguese-speaking partners or with an L1 other than Japanese; (c) couples with children attending international schools, and so on. However, often these people were willing to introduce us to other respondents who were willing to take part in the survey. Because most of the questionnaires were done by telephone, any cases which did not fit the survey criteria were automatically eliminated.

⁴ The rest were carried out by e-mail (10%), post (8%) and in person (2%), although these 20% were contacted personally first for the questionnaire. Doing the questionnaire by telephone and considering the willingness of the respondents, many times it helped the researcher to gather and confirm additional information, such as when the respondents' child answered the telephone in either fluent or broken Spanish. In other cases, for example, the researcher was able to ask further details about the family members' job opportunities and plans for the future. Therefore, taking notes in addition to the questionnaire became a valuable sub-process of the fieldwork stage.

⁵ Doing the questionnaire by telephone helped the researcher to ascertain whether or not the respondents were planning to stay for a short period of time or whether they were planning to return to their countries or go elsewhere in the future. The respondents can be grouped roughly as follows: (1) people residing in Japan due to their marriage to a Japanese partner –and were socio-economically speaking middle class; (2) language instructors, with a relatively high educational level; and (3) blue-collar workers, descendants of Japanese, who earned much more in Japan than in their home countries. They would mention an impossible dream of someday going back to their countries but in reality, in many cases there is nothing left for them there. Some transnational parents had chosen to leave their children in their native countries and were sending money back for the children's living and education. In essence, such parents are trapped in Japan. More surprisingly for me (perhaps because I am not a Japanese descendant), many Spanish-speaking Japanese residents have their entire family here in Japan or in other countries around the

world—unexpected evidence of an emerging Peruvian diaspora. There is no place in Peru for them to return to; they do not have houses, close relatives, or any other social connections to their home country. To refer to those respondents as *dekasegi*, or transitional or seasonal workers, is a misnomer. I believe that that term does not really help to understand their lives here in Japan, with a family here and the narrow set of options that they possess. In reviewing the background of the respondents, it was interesting to note that most are long-term residents, three quarters (or 97 out of 125) of them have lived in Japan more than ten years.

⁶ If we examine those bilingual couples who evaluated their native language highly, we find that 100% of Spaniards and 90% of Mexicans affirmed that they were not Japanese descendants, while among the other nationalities the distribution was quite different. Of the 20 Peruvians with Japanese partners, 17 of them were not Japanese descendants, and of the nine Argentineans, five of them were not Japanese descendants. In other words, Japanese/Spanish-speaking bicultural couples where the non-Japanese partner had no Japanese ancestry may be more likely to transmit their Spanish to their children. However, the number of such cases is insufficient to examine by country and therefore cannot be analyzed in detail here.

⁷ One respondent was living in Japan up to 10 years, 12 between 21 and 30 years and eight respondents between 31 and 40 years. However, the length of stay does not prove that the longer the stay the greater the possibility of shifting to Japanese.

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Couple and other adults' background

	Father	Mother	Other adults living in your household	Other adults living in your household
Sex (M: male F: female)	M	F	M/F	M/F
Age				
Country of birth				
Nationality				
Mother language				
Years of residency in Japan, in total				
Couple's language				
Japanese descendant	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no

Language use among family members

Which language does the mother use with the children? (Spanish? Japanese? Other:.....)

	First child	Last child
The mother speaks to		

Which language does the father use with the children? (Spanish? Japanese? Other:.....)

	First child	Last child
The father speaks to		

If there is another adult in the house, which language does he or she use with the children?

(Spanish? Japanese? Other:.....)

Adults	First child	Last child
Adult 1		
Adult 2		

Children's background

	First child	Last child
Sex (M: male F: female)	M/F	M/F
Age		
Country of birth		
Nationality		

Years of residency in Japan		
Most used language at home		
Second most used language at home		
Language used to talk to other adults in the house.		

If there are two or more children in the house, which language do they use to communicate to each other?
 Spanish Japanese Other, specify:.....

When the family is together, which language is most frequently used?
 Spanish Japanese Other, specify:.....

Opinions

In general, how do Japanese react when they hear that you are speaking in Spanish to your children? Please choose only one.

Very positively --- somewhat positively --- neutral --- somewhat negatively --- very negatively

Do you think that it is important that your child speak Spanish? Please choose only one.

Yes-----no -----I do not know

Please write here the reasons of any of your choices. For the ones who respond that they use Spanish with the child, check the appropriate answer for each statement. Please check only one for each item.

I think that it is important for my children to speak Spanish for:

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
Our communication at home	1	2	3	4
Expressing my feelings and emotions	1	2	3	4
Ties or bonds in our home country/with family	1	2	3	4
Better or more job opportunities	1	2	3	4
Higher standard of living	1	2	3	4

Are you planning to stay in Japan in the near future? Please choose only one.

Yes-----No -----I do not know

If you have any other comments to add about this subject, please write them here.

Appendix 2

Participants' backgrounds (Total sample = 125)

Gender

Female	87
Male	38

Age

Under 20 years old	0
21-30	37
31-40	5
41-50	65
51-60	17
61 years old and more	1

Country of birth

Peru	59
Argentina	14
Colombia	12
Mexico	11
Spain	10
Ecuador	7
Paraguay	5
Chile	2
Other	5

Japanese descendant

Yes	41
No	84

Years in Japan

10 years and under	28
11-20	78
21-30	18
30 years or more	1

Couple's language origin

Both Spanish native speakers ("Monolingual couple")	52
One Spanish and the other Japanese native speaker ("Bilingual couple")	73

Partner who responded to the questionnaire

	Female partner	Male partner
Both Spanish native speakers ("Monolingual couple")	40	12
One Spanish and the other Japanese native speaker ("Bilingual couple")	47	26

Type of family

Nuclear family	118
Extended family	7

Number of children (n=232)

One child	47
Two children	55
Three children	18
Four children	4
Five children	1

Country of birth of the older/oldest child (n=125)

Japan n	88
Peru	22
Argentina	4
Spain	3
Colombia	2
Mexico	2
Dominican Republic	2
Other	2

Birth country of the younger/youngest child n=78

Japan	67
Peru	5
Argentina	3
Other	3