Chapter 7

Traditional New Mexican Spanish: The Past, Present, and Future

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Abstract

The Traditional New Mexican Spanish (TNMS) dialect is on the verge of extinction, primarily due to the sociocultural changes that have taken place in New Mexico in the last century. As its time of usefulness begins to fade, there is an increased need to showcase the value of language contact, language change, and language documentation in the development of this unique variety. The richness of its history and the unparalleled features portrayed in TNMS could be lost forever if not for the work of several researchers who have invested in studying its characteristics. In this chapter, we argue that increased urgency and dedication to the task of documenting these features is necessary in order to preserve data regarding not only this dialect, but also to all varieties of Spanish that find themselves in the same situation. As older generations begin to die and younger ones eschew the dialect in favor of others, the ability to document the features will decrease and leave this history incomplete. Understanding the historical development of a given dialect and sociological factors revolving around it will give researchers deeper understanding into how isolated dialects develop and disintegrate. The decline in the use of TNMS is inevitable. The motivation to document it while speakers still exist is both pressing and urgent, as it happens with other varieties of the language. Without resources dedicated to preservation of its sounds and features, this rich, linguistic treasure of the American Southwest will fade into history, and speakers of all

dialects who might have benefited from its study will lose valuable tools for evaluating the future of their own dialects.

Language study begins with a tacit acknowledgment that language facilitates the exchange of ideas and information. Likewise, the Traditional New Mexican Spanish (TNMS) dialect developed to facilitate communication among Spanish speakers who settled in New Mexico and southern Colorado. Isolation forced its speakers to formulate a creative lexicon for objects that were unique to their new surroundings. Infrequent contact with other Spanish speakers limited the ability of TNMS speakers to maintain linguistic similarities with others. Nonetheless, necessity brought change to the dialect itself. In time, the primary contact point became northern Mexico, bringing "modern" Mexican influence on the dialect. Increased migration from other parts of the United States and statehood augmented the population, creating more contact with both English and the Spanish spoken in modern-day Mexico, leading to a reduction of unique qualities of the dialect. Nonetheless, some features remain. Due to changes in population and sociological implications of speaking TNMS, extinction is increasingly likely. Studying and documenting the unique nature of this dialect prior to its possible extinction will both expose the progression of people meeting their communication needs and demonstrate the influence of migration and education on the dialect.

Even though the Spanish language gained a permanent foothold in the US territory of New Mexico in circa 1598 (Pfaff, 1979), no detailed studies explore how this variety of Spanish emerged initially, how it has evolved, and how it compares to other varieties of the language. In this chapter, we explore a comprehensive review of the literature on the history of this variety, its actual use in the community, and how it is expected to survive in the future, concluding with the importance of documenting such varieties of the language before they become completely extinct. Much of the work to this point has been written by Garland Bills and Neddy Vigil. Their extensive research provides a clear foundation for our work, which we summarize and complement with research by other scholars (Bills & Vigil, 2008).

While this chapter provides a detailed account of the current situation of TNMS, it also serves the secondary purpose of providing a real-life example of the importance of creating sociolinguistic corpora and documenting the existing varieties of the language before the last speakers of these varieties die, considering that TNMS is not the only dialect that shows some specific linguistic features not found in other varieties of the language. Creating such corpora would help preserve threatened

languages (and varieties) for future generations, facilitate the reutilization of primary materials (e.g., recordings and field notes), foster the development of both oral and written literature for endangered languages, and make known what documentation there is for which languages (Johnson, 2004).

New Mexican Spanish: A Brief Historic Overview

Traditional approaches to the study of New Mexican Spanish, consisting mostly of research published in the 20th century, claim that this variety bears a close resemblance to the language of the colonial settlers. While this assumption remains among nonlinguists, within the linguistic scholarly community current research seems to indicate that other factors may be as important to understanding the peculiarities of this variety as is its linguistic history. For example, some recent publications have described New Mexican Spanish as "a dialect that has changed alongside the social processes affecting the community of speakers" (Sanz, 2009). Thus, to understand the current status of the language, it is important to understand its origins and the changes that the New Mexican Spanish-speaking community and the language itself have experienced.

The history of the New Mexican Spanish variety began in 1598 when Juan de Oñate led a group of people to establish San Juan, the first Spanish colony in the region (Bills & Vigil, 2008). Approximately 750 miles away from the nearest Spanish-speaking town, San Juan was one of the most isolated villages in the Spanish Empire (Bills & Vigil, 1999), allowing for the original language to change differently from the ways in which Spanish changed in less isolated regions.

The people who migrated with Oñate were diverse: Spaniards from various regions of Spain; *criollos*, who were people of Spanish descent born in the Americas; *mestizos*, who were of mixed descent; and other people of indigenous descent, who probably learned Spanish as a second language (Sanz & Villa, 2011). Oñate himself was born in the Americas. The original settlers included men, women, and children, although it was common in that time for groups of only men to establish settlements. These settlers did not speak a variety of Spanish from Spain, but rather spoke a mixed dialect that arose in Mexico prior to the expedition (Bills & Vigil, 1999).

Unfortunately, some Spanish speakers abused indigenous people, resulting in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680—also known as Popé's Rebellion. The Pueblo Revolt killed 400 Spanish speakers and drove the remaining 2,000 settlers out of the province to hide in present-day Juárez. There, they

stayed for 12 years (Bills & Vigil, 1999), with some of the settlers assimilating to the new region while others returned to New Mexico with the accompanying changes in TNMS (Sanz & Villa, 2011).

In 1693, Diego de Vargas directed a group of 67 families plus several of the former colonists in an expedition to reestablish the New Mexico settlement. Most of the colonists were Mexican, although some were from other parts of the New World and others from Spain (Bills & Vigil, 1999; Sanz & Villa, 2011). This began the colonial period, which was followed by the territorial and modern periods (Travis & Villa, 2011), thus beginning the process of shaping the emerging properties of the New Mexican Spanish variety.

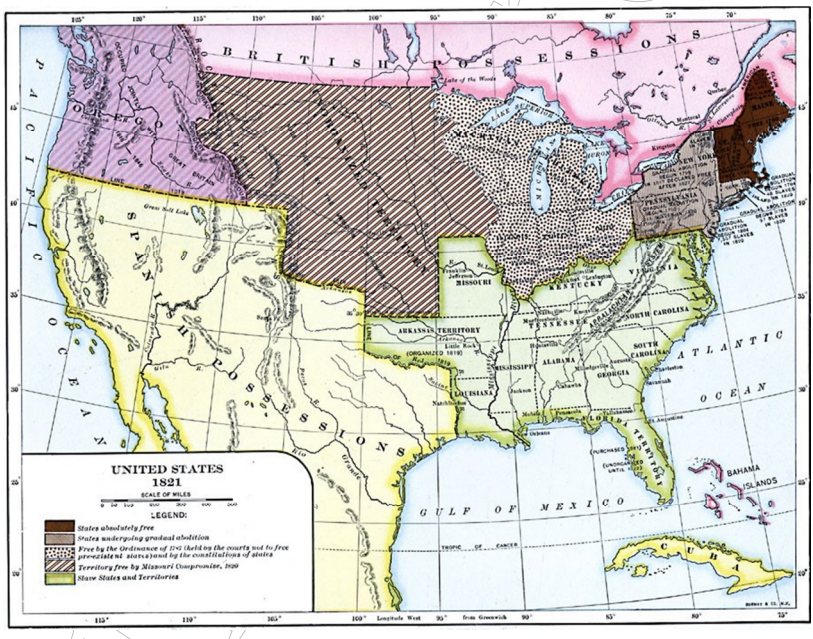
During the colonization period, Spanish was established as the principal language of conquest and the empire (Travis & Villa, 2011). The colonial population was concentrated due to water scarcity, the need for protection against indigenous people, and the need to maintain trade with Chihuahua, the closest trade center in Mexico. Since the Spanish Kingdom did not allow trade with other places, settlements had to remain close to sources of provisions (Bills & Vigil, 1999). Receiving provisions was not easy since the southernmost colony was accessible only "through a vast expanse of hostile desert known as la Jornada del Muerto" (Vergara Wilson, 2015, p. 4) For that reason, the supply expeditions, which should have arrived every three years, sometimes took much longer. The people of the settlement were therefore quite isolated from civilization in the Spanish Empire and also from the changes that occurred in the Spanish language in other parts of the world through migration and language contact.

By the end of the 17th century, a permanent colony had been established with many Spanish-speaking people, and in the 18th century, supply trains began to arrive more frequently (Sanz & Villa, 2011). The new possibility of communication between communities drove a population increase, and more settlements were established near rivers and streams. Even with more contact with Mexico, the colonies maintained their dialect. Those who arrived were assimilated and had no significant impact on the Spanish spoken there. That changed in the 20th century, when many immigrants from Mexico arrived, especially along the border. However, during the centuries of limited contact, the Spanish from other parts of the world did not have much influence on the New Mexican Spanish variety (Bills & Vigil, 2008).

Two important events during the colonial period influenced the contact the people in these settlements had with other groups: the Mexican War of Independence and the opening of the Santa Fe Trail. The Mexican War of Independence marked Mexico's separation from Spain in 1821, including

the northernmost region of the new Mexican nation. Thereafter, they were not dependent solely on Chihuahua supply trains and could negotiate with people from other places. Meanwhile, during that same period, the Santa Fe Trail was established as a trade route between Santa Fe and Independence, Missouri. This route exerted a significant impact on the economy of this region of New Mexico, attracting a growing number of Anglo-American traders, most of whom decided to settle there (Weber, 1982; Roberts & Roberts, 2006). These new traders established businesses, fostering commerce with new regions of the United States and opening contact with the English language, thus allowing its influence on Spanish (Travis & Villa, 2011).

Figure 7.1. **Map of the United States in 1821 showing the states and territories that either accepted or abolished slavery after the Missouri Compromise of 1820**



When contact with English began, the process of language change for the New Mexican Spanish variety also began. New trading opportunities and contact with Anglo-American traders marked the end of the isolation of the previous 80 years. This isolation, represented in Figure 7.1 (Fox, 1920) by a map of the region from 1821, prevented the influence of other languages and varieties of Spanish on New Mexican Spanish, due to its location as the northernmost province of Mexico. The Mexican War of Independence and the opening of the Santa Fe Trail marked the beginning

of the *koinéization* process, involving the creation of a new linguistic variety based on language contact (Siegel, 1985; Trudgill, 1986).[1]

Furthermore, after the war between the United States and Mexico, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, ceding a significant territory to the United States, including New Mexico and Colorado. Thereafter, many changes in social life, culture, politics, and language began in New Mexico. New trading routes opened with English speakers, some of whom began to settle in this territory (Bills & Vigil, 1999). There are no official data to determine an accurate picture of the immigration of English speakers because during that time the US census did not distinguish between Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations, both being considered "white." However, there are data to claim that overall demographic growth continued to be strong, with the New Mexican population climbing to 93,516 inhabitants by 1860 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1860). The bilingual nature of the New Mexican society led many Anglos to learn Spanish (Getz, 1997) as a second language, marking the moment in which a dialect leveling began to occur through language contact. The dominant language of this bilingual society gravitated toward English due to the continued arrival of English speakers, the growing political and economic power of Anglos in New Mexico, and the pressure to enforce the use of English in public schools across the territory (Getz, 1997). These factors caused an increasing number of New Mexicans to shift to English, using English more for their everyday interactions.

However, another major event in the early years of the 20th century affected the New Mexican Spanish variety. The Mexican Revolution c. 1910–1920 drastically changed the Mexican culture and government. During the revolutionary years and again during World War II, New Mexico became a magnet for agricultural workers (mostly refugees), who settled primarily in the southern region of the state (Roberts & Roberts, 2006). The demographic and linguistic influence of Mexican Spanish is, therefore, especially felt in the cities and in the agricultural areas of the south and east of New Mexico (Bills, 1997; Bills & Vigil, 1999, 2008). Consequently, two dialects of Spanish emerged in New Mexico and Southern Colorado. The southern third of New Mexico speaks a Spanish that is more like that of Mexico than that of the north. People in the rest of New Mexico and southern Colorado continue to speak a dialect that is now often identified among linguists as TNMS.

[1] This process has also been described as dialect leveling (e.g., Sanz & Villa, 2011).

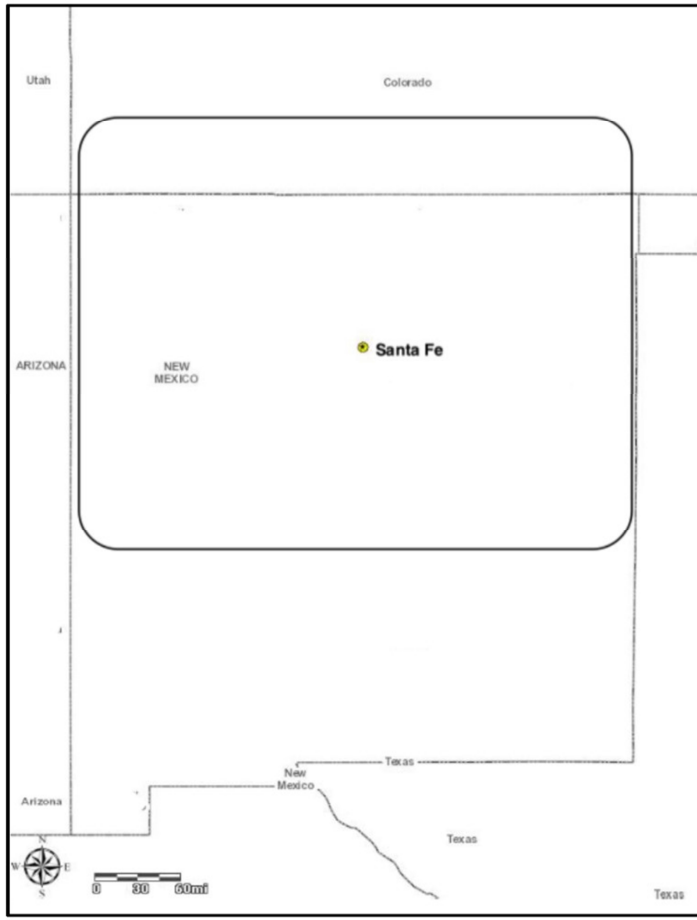
Customary belief was that the isolation experienced by the speakers of TNMS led the language to remain unchanged. In fact, Hills (1906) claimed that "their speech has not changed greatly since it came from Spain," adding that "[p]robably greater changes have occurred in the popular speech of central Spain than in that of New Mexico during the last century" (Hills, 1906, p. 708). However, through his own investigations, Trujillo concluded that most of the original settlers in San Juan were not Spaniards but mestizos who joined the group when they were on the road from Mexico City (2009), an indication that the previous claims should be considered nothing more than unsupported claims. Trujillo's conclusions are in line with Ornstein's claims that language "is never static and unchanging and despite its archaisms, the Spanish of New Mexico must be viewed in the light of a constant evolution" (1951, p. 139). Many of the early colonists were born in Mexico, not Spain, with no direct connections with Spain. Since colonization, continuous immigration of people from Mexico has supported the development of Mexican Spanish in this region (Bills & Vigil, 1999). According to Cobos (2003, p. ix), influences on today's TNMS from the northern regions of the area come from sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Spanish; vocabulary of Mexican indigenous languages (especially Nahuatl); Rio Grande Mexican Spanish; *mexicanismos*, which are words and idiomatic expressions directly tied to Mexican Spanish; words with local origins in New Mexico and southern Colorado; and words borrowed and adapted from English.

In 1912, New Mexico became a state of the United States after decades as a territory (Travis & Villa, 2011). A state constitution was adopted the same year. By 1914, only one-third of the "Spanish population" of the state was "entirely ignorant of the English language" (Espinosa, 1914, p. 245), marking a clear decline from the proportion of Spanish monolinguals reported in the same region in the late 19th century. It is reasonable to support the idea that New Mexico was turning into a diglossic region, in which Spanish was becoming more of a language of local, familial, or domestic interaction, while English became a language of business, institutional life, and socioeconomic advancement.

Despite the diglossic nature of the region, authorities have tried to protect Spanish speakers in the state by establishing some rights in the constitution itself. Among other rights, this group has the right to use a translator during court proceedings (Travis & Villa, 2011). The constitution also grants training in Spanish for public school teachers, not for them to teach it in schools but for them to be able to communicate with Spanish-speaking students (Bills & Vigil, 1999). In addition, each law that was adopted in the first 20 years after the constitution was adopted had to be

published in both English and Spanish, and even though this protection does not continue, legislators continue this practice (Bills & Vigil, 1999). Neither the protections of the constitution nor the historical presence of the language seems to help maintain the traditional variety of Spanish spoken in the northern regions of New Mexico.

Figure 7.2. **Approximate geographical area where TNMS is spoken (map extracted from U.S. Geographical Survey, 2017, and annotated by the authors following the map found in Vergara Wilson, 2015).**



In short, it seems that current support for Spanish comes more by way of immigration from Mexico starting after the Mexican Revolution and continuing until the present, although two main dialects can be observed, each following different patterns of language change. The current

situation of New Mexican Spanish will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter. Figure 7.2 shows the approximate geographical area where TNMS is spoken, as annotated by Vergara Wilson (2015), indicating how these two dialects co-exist.

Finally, it is important to realize that English and Spanish had coexisted with several Native American languages (Navajo, Apache, Tewa, Tiwa, Keres, and others), most of which had been spoken in this area well before the arrival of the Spanish-speaking colonizers. To understand the language as it is today, it is important to consider the complex relationship between the original Spanish spoken by the first settlers and the influence of other varieties of Spanish, of English, and of the native languages originally spoken in the region.

TNMS: Specific Linguistic Features

As the previous section tries to emphasize, TNMS cannot be understood as an isolated variety, but as a mixture of Spanish from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Mexican Indian languages such as Nahuatl; Rio Grande Mexican Spanish; Mexican Spanish; local New Mexico and Colorado vocabulary, and English (Cobos, 2003, p. ix). Considering that history seems to indicate that two main dialects exist in the region and that different processes of language change influenced each one of them, in this section the focus is on TNMS because of the unique traits that this variety of Spanish shows and its apparently imminent disappearance.

A central problem that researchers face when studying TNMS is the lack of documentation produced by native New Mexicans during the period before the Pueblo Revolt, when most of the original documents were destroyed (Sanz & Villa, 2011). Apart from the fact that very little survived, only official or legal correspondence written by individuals who were seldom natives of New Mexico has been preserved in archival repositories (see, e.g., Coll, 1999). Even the preserved documents from after the revolt were written by administrative officials not native to New Mexico or by individuals familiar with the written conventions, who were able to filter many of the dialectal forms from their documents (Craddock, 1992; de Weinberg, 1996). In spite of this problem, some information regarding this dialect spoken in New Mexico has been found and is reported in this chapter.

Phonetics and Phonology

/s/-aspiration is probably one of the most widely attested phonological phenomena throughout the Spanish-speaking world. In this phenomenon,

/s/ is realized as [h] in syllable coda before [-voice] and [-sonorant] consonants (Zamora Munné & Guitart, 1982). TNMS is a unique dialect in this respect because it forms part of a small subset of /s/-aspirating dialects in which the aspiration is attested in word-initial postvocalic /s/, as in "la semana" [la.he.'ma.na] [the week] (Brown, 2005; Brown, & Cacoullos, 2003). This phenomenon is also found in the vernacular speech of El Salvador and much of Honduras (Lipski, 1984, 1999) and in the variety of Spanish spoken in Washington (Villa, Shin, & Nagata, 2014). Although it has also been documented in other Spanish varieties, such as in the Dominican Republic (Jiménez Sabater, 1975), in Chile (Oroz, 1966), on the Caribbean coast of Colombia (Becerra, 1980) and in northeastern Argentina (Vidal de Battini, 1949); in all these dialects, this phenomenon is regarded as a rustic vernacular pronunciation to be avoided in careful speech.

Another peculiarity of TNMS is the historic phonological retention of old features of the language. One example is the case of the pronunciation of the word-initial "h" (Vergara Wilson, 2015). Presently, the letter "h" is silent in normative modern Spanish. However, the presence of this letter in standardized spelling is a reminder that in Medieval Spanish this grapheme was pronounced similarly to the aspirated sound represented in modern Spanish spelling by the letter "j" (that is, as the voiceless velar fricative /x/). TNMS continues articulating this sound. It is not uncommon to hear native speakers of TNMS producing forms such as "jediondo" [stinky], "jallar" [to find], and "jumo" [smoke] instead of the normative forms "hediondo," "hallar," and "humo." Demonstrating a real example of this feature, Example 1 provides a transcription and translation (by Enrique Lamadrid with its translation, p. 17) from a recording of the song "El Cañutero" [The Reed Game Player] by Abade Martínez (1992), in which the word "hallar" is spelled incorrectly to emphasize "h" retention, the way in which the singer produces this form:

Example 1. **Example of the phonetic retention of "h" in "hallar" [to find] in this excerpt of *El Cañutero*.**

Original	**Translation**
"Allí vienen los cañuteros"	[There come the reed game players,]
"Los que vienen por el mío,"	[That come for what's mine,]
"Pero de aquí llevarán"	[But from there they'll take]
"Rasguidos en el fondillo."	[Scratches on their behind]
"Jállalo, **jállalo**,"	[Find it, find it,]
…	…

In Spanish, the alveolar trill [r] and the alveolar flap [ɾ] are in phonemic contrast only word-internally between vowels (as in "perro" [dog] versus "pero" [but]). In all other phonemic contexts, these two sounds are found in complementary distribution. The flap ([ɾ]) is normally found before or after a consonant ("broma" [joke] or "parte" [part]) or in word-final position ("mar" [sea]). On the other hand, the trill ([r]) appears after a consonant, but only when it is the onset of the next distinct syllable ("honra" [honor]) and in word-initial position ("roca" [rock]) (Harris, 1969). However, TNMS presents a third "r" sound, also known as a retroflex "r," which shows acoustic similarities with the English "r" (Vergara Wilson, 2015). As Vergara Wilson noted, this retroflex [ɾ] occurs before the consonants /l/, /n/, and /s/ and is articulated between the alveolar ridge and the hard palate, but the tongue shows a flat, concave, or even curled shape and, as such, the tongue does not tap the roof of the mouth in the same way as the canonical Spanish flap between vowels (2015). It a common phonetic realization of the /r/ sounds in words such as "carcel" [jail], "carne" [meat], and "perla" [pearl] (Bills & Vigil, 2008). This feature was argued to have emerged due to the influence of English on the Spanish of New Mexico. However, this same feature has been also discovered in noncontact varieties of Spanish (e.g., on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, as noted by Lipski [2008]), which seems to diminish the claims of influence from English, indicating then that this may be a feature that has emerged through internal development (Vergara Wilson, 2015).

One of the most unique phonological properties of TNMS is the formation of syllabic consonants through the absorption of an adjacent vowel (e.g., [bo.ˈni.t̪o] is normally realized as [bo.ˈn̪.t̪o] [beautiful]). By means of this process, a syllable normally headed by a vowel is now headed by a consonant. TNMS is the only known Spanish variety to show this property, demonstrating the effect in the consonants [m̩], [n̩], [l̩], and [r̩] (Espinosa, 1925; Piñeros, 2005). It could be argued that this phenomenon emerged due to borrowing from English, which uses syllabic consonants as the peak of reduced syllables (e.g., [cycle] may be produced as either [ˈsaɪk.əl] or [ˈsaɪk.l̩]; Knight, 2012). However, this seems to be an unlikely source of the phenomenon because in TNMS the nuclear vowels that are replaced by consonants are high vowels bearing primary or secondary stress, primarily when they belong to affixes or function words (Piñeros, 2005), while in English the phenomenon appears in unstressed syllables (Knight, 2012). This property has been reported in the literature only in the case of TNMS, but not in the variety spoken in the southern part of New Mexico (Espinosa, 1925).

Additionally, among the most unique phonological features of TNMS, we can observe the presence of an epenthetic vowel in word-final position (a phenomenon also known as paragogic vowel, or, in the case of TNMS, paragogic /-e/ or /-i/). This variable phenomenon is frequently observed in words whose last syllable is stressed and ends in a consonant (Vergara Wilson, 2015), and it has been attested as the insertion of either an /-e/ or an /-i/ in free variation.[2] The paragogic /-i/ can be observed in the title of the book *Yo seigo de Taosi* (which in normalized Spanish would be "Yo soy de Taos" [I am from Taos]), a collection of essays by Larry Torres and Guillermina Núñez published in 1992. An example of the paragogic /-e/ is observed in Example 2, which presents excerpts of the transcription of Lourdes, a weaver from Española, who was born in 1897 and was 96 years old at the time of the interview.[3] This phonological process has been documented only in an indigenous community in Costa Rica (Quesada Pacheco, 2008) and in the Spanish spoken in Washington (Villa et al., 2014), making this point a distinguishing feature from the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, including the New Mexican Spanish spoken in the southern part of the state.

Example 2. **Example of paragogic /e/ in the words "male" (mal) [bad, wrong] and "dare" (dar) [to give], from Lourdes, interview 219-1B1 (Torres & Núñez, 1992).**

"En la corte, que había hecho **male**. Ya no era más de la última corte a la que le íbanos[4] a **dare**."	[In court, he had done [something] bad. It was nothing more than the last court case that we were going to give him.]

This subsection provides a general overview of some of the specific phonetic and phonological properties of currently spoken TNMS, so it can be compared with Southern New Mexican Spanish. While this chapter focuses only on certain aspects of the language, other properties have been discussed in the literature with regards to this variety of the language but are not found here due to length limitations and lack of research on their current status (e.g., "yeísmo," or the lack of phonetic distinction between the graphemes "y" and "ll" in Sanz-Sánchez, 2013; Vergara Wilson, 2015).

[2] There is no evidence so far indicating the contexts in which each one of the two vowels is inserted. We assume they may appear in free variation, but this is a point that deserves further research.

[3] These interviews consist of sociolinguistic interviews that recorded the speech of New Mexican Spanish speakers from 1991 to 1995, extracted from the New Mexico–Colorado Spanish Survey (NMCOSS) (Bills & Vigil, 1999).

[4] This feature will be discussed in later sections of this paper.

Morphosyntax

In addition to phonetic or phonological features unique to this variety of Spanish, some of its morphological features are also worth discussing. One of the most frequent morphosyntactic features of TNMS is the alternation between *–nos* and *–mos* as the first person plural suffix ("nosotros" [we]), exemplified in Table 7.1, extracted from Vergara Wilson (2015). This phenomenon is not unique to TNMS, as it has been attested in other varieties of the Spanish language, such as in certain areas of México, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Perú, and Spain (Meier, 1951). However, this phenomenon is particularly productive in TNMS (although not unique to this variety), as compared with all the other cases reported in the Spanish-speaking world (Bills & Vigil, 2008). As can be seen in Table 7.1, this phenomenon has extended to all first person plural forms having antepenultimate stress, including present subjunctive forms that have experienced a shift in stress from the penultimate to the antepenultimate syllable, as seen in "háblenos" [that we talk]. To provide evidence showing that this is a feature reported in all verb conjugations (with verbs ending in *–ar*, *-er*, and *-ir*), Table 7.1 also shows an example with the verb "comer" [to eat].

Table 7.1 ***First Person Plural ("Nosotros" [We]) Forms with Antepenultimate Stress in TNMS***

Traditional New Mexican Spanish	Normative	Verb Tense	English Translation
"hablábanos"	"hablábamos"	Imperfect Indicative	[we used to talk]
"hablaríanos"	"hablaríamos"	Conditional Indicative	[we would talk]
"háblenos"	"hablemos"	Pres. Subjunctive	[that we talk]
"habláranos"	"habláramos"	Past Subjunctive	[that we talked]

(Data extracted from Vergara Wilson, 2015)

In 1909, Espinosa proposed that this alternation emerged from an analogical change from verbal forms such as "vámonos" [let's go]. In line with this argument, Janda (1995) claimed that the ending *–nos* surfaced as a reanalysis of the form of the object clitic *nos*, as a result of which *nos* became merely a marker of first person plural rather than encoding case distinctively. In order to understand Janda's claims, it is important to realize that the first person plural form is one syllable longer than other forms (e.g., "cantaba" [I was singing], the first person singular form). In that case, the last syllable of the plural form could have been processed as an extra element, instead of part of the conjugation paradigm. After that, the use of *–nos* as a morpheme that alternates with *–mos* may have undergone a process of regularization (Espinosa, 1909; Janda, 1995; Bullock & Toribio, 2006). Recent

studies have shown a preference towards using the suffix *–nos* whenever the pronoun "nos" or "nosotros" is present in the discourse, which seems to indicate that this alternation follows certain rules that need to be further explored (Arthur & Díaz-Campos, 2012). In Example 2, the suffix *–nos* (referring to the first person plural) can be observed in the word "íbanos" ([we were going]).

One of the most recent changes attested in the language is the regularization of the first person singular and plural of the auxiliary verb "haber" (Bills & Vigil, 2008; Vergara Wilson, 2015). This is a variable phenomenon in the speech community, with the innovative variants, "ha" and "hamos," being used more frequently by the younger speakers interviewed in Bills and Vigil's corpus (Bills & Vigil, 1999),[5] while the older speakers prefer keeping the normative form. Both forms (the normative and the newly regularized form) can be found in Table 7.2, which clearly indicates that the regularized forms have been created by using the same vowel as that in the root, also found in the other persons of the paradigm. Example 3 provides real examples of this neutralization phenomenon extracted from the Bills and Vigil's New Mexico-Colorado Spanish Survey (NMCOSS) corpus (1999).

Table 7.2 ***Normative and Regularized Forms of the Verb Auxiliary Verb "Haber"***

Traditional New Mexican Spanish	Normative	English Translation
"Yo **ha** comido"	"Yo he comido"	[I have eaten]
"Él ha comido"	"Él ha comido"	[He has eaten]
"Nosotros **hamos** comido"	"Nosotros hemos comido"	[We have eaten]

(Data extracted from Bills & Vigil, 1999)

Example 3. **First person singular (1s) and plural (1p) "haber" in the present perfect, extracted from the New Mexico-Colorado Spanish Survey (NMCOSS) (Bills & Vigil, 1999).**

a. "yo me **ha** tenido . . . yo **ha** tenido que trabajar."
[I have had to . . . I have had to work.] (Interview 190-3B2)

b. "**Hamos** ido a unos parties y lo conozco bien."
[We have gone to some parties and I know him well.] (Interview 88-1A3)

[5] These speakers have also had little education in Spanish (Bills & Vigil, 2008).

Perhaps one of the most unique features of TNMS relies on the classification of verbs in the different conjugations. Normalized Spanish verbal inflection consists of 17 possible combinations of mood and tense (Real Academia Española, 2009), which differs depending on the three main conjugation classes, distinguished by the thematic vowel (*–a*, first, *–e*, second, and *–i*, third conjugation) in the infinitival form of the verb (e.g., "hablar" [to talk], "comer" [to eat], "mentir" [to lie]). In TNMS, however, the *–e* and *–i* verb conjugations have almost coalesced (Bowen, 1974). This morphosyntactic phenomenon can easily be observed in the conjugation of the first person plural in the present tense indicative of the verbs of those verbs traditionally belonging to the third conjugation (ending in *–ir*), which change the *–i–* to an *–e–*. Then, the verbs "abrir" [to open] and "vivir" [to live] are conjugated as "abremos" [we open] and "vivemos" [we live], apparently in free variation (Bowen, 1974).

Constructions in which pronominal clitics are used with intransitive motion verbs (e.g., "Después de muy poco tiempo, me regresé a la casa" [After a very short time, I [me] returned home] or "Se salió de la casa de su mamá cuando tenía catorce años" [She [se] left her mom's house when she was fourteen])[6] have received relatively little attention in the field, and it is not clear what they try to convey. Even some specialists have described them as being "exceptions, deviations, or simply aberrations of Hispanic speech" (Maldonado, 1999, p. 398). This is a quite common feature in modern-day TNMS, and scholars have proposed that these constructions seem to focus on the action of the verb. Speakers of the language use them to either emphasize a change of state by the subject, or to show it to be against the normal expectations or desires of the speaker (Maldonado, 1999), although parallel processing and pragmatic expression may be discursive factors also influencing the use of these structures (Aaron, 2003). Example 4 provides real examples of pronominal clitics used with intransitive motion verbs, extracted from the Barelas corpus (2001)[7] and Aaron (2003).

[6] Examples taken from Aaron (2003).

[7] The Barelas corpus consists of a total of 11 one-hour long sociolinguistic interviews collected by students at the University of New Mexico in 2001, in the predominantly Hispanic community of Barelas in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Aaron, 2004).

Example 4. **Example of a sentence with a pronominal clitic used with an intransitive motion verb ("salir" [to go out]) extracted from the Barelas corpus (2001) and taken from Aaron (2003).**

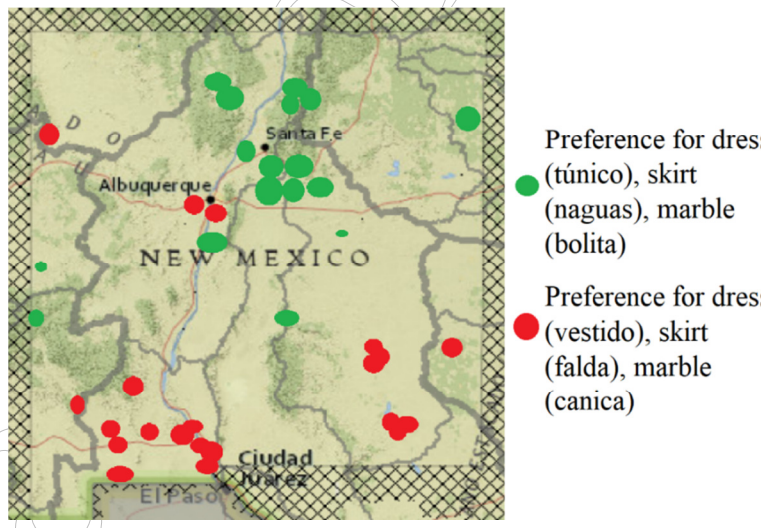
"Nada más me tenían en tratamiento y no. Pero yo no, yo **me** salí, yo **me** salí a caminar."	[They just had me in treatment and no. But not me, I [me] went out, I [me] went out to walk.] (Interview JA 17)

Once again, this subsection just provides a general overview of some of the most unique morphosyntactic features of modern-day TNMS reported in the literature when compared with Southern New Mexican Spanish. Again, while other properties have been discussed in more detail in the literature, due to length constraints, they are not discussed in the current chapter.

Lexical

As already mentioned, TNMS has been one of the most widely studied varieties of Spanish, mostly because of its unique linguistic characteristics and its history (Vergara Wilson, 2015). The history and the different language contact situations that this community has experienced throughout its existence, which is best reflected in its lexical peculiarities, are described in this subsection.

Figure 7.3. **Map showing the distribution of archaisms in New Mexico and southern Colorado (map extracted from U.S. Geographical Survey, 2017, and annotated by the authors following the map found in Bills and Vigil, 2008).**



TNMS shows lexical retentions from earlier periods, which are typically classified as "archaisms" once they disappear from the standard (normalized) language. Although this is a phenomenon common in all varieties of the language, it is true that TNMS shows many archaisms of the customary kind (Bills, 2010; Bills & Vigil, 1999), which has led to the most propagated myth that this variety of the language was Golden Age Spanish, perfectly preserved in this isolated region (Vergara Wilson, 2015). A clear example of archaisms in TNMS is represented in Figure 7.3, which represents the distribution of the words used for the concepts **dress**, **skirt**, and **marble**. While the normalized language marks "vestido," "falda," and "canica" as the norm (in red), we observe that, in the northern regions, the forms "túnico," "naguas," and "bolita" are more frequent (in green) (Bills & Vigil, 2008). The case of the word "túnico" as an archaism is unique, as it is known with this meaning only in this region.

However, TNMS has also experienced the influence of other languages, including lexical borrowing from the pre-colonization native languages, *Mexicanisms*, and most recently from English. One example of borrowing from an indigenous language is the word [mosquito], represented in Figure 7.4. While in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado there is a preference for using the word "jején" (borrowed from Taíno and represented as a red circle in the map),[8] the word "mosquito" is more common in the southern regions (green square), and other options such as "moyote" (borrowed from Nahuatl) are much less common (black star).

One force influencing TNMS is the Spanish of Mexico. Four centuries of isolation notwithstanding, New Mexican Spanish has changed mostly due to Mexicans who arrived at the beginning of the 20th century (Bills & Vigil, 1999), an influence that is commonly described as *Mexicanisms*. For example, some words that have entered the dialect are "papalote" [kite], "cacahuate" [peanut], and "cuates" [twins] (all of them originally Nahuatl words). However, the most significant external impact on New Mexican Spanish has been the 150 years of contact with the English language (Bills & Vigil, 1999), an effect that can be easily observed in all the lexical borrowing and code-switching that the language has experienced in the last centuries. This effect has been attested since the beginning of the 20th century in the work of Espinosa (1917, reprinted in 1975), and Table 7.3 provides some of the borrowings of *Anglicisms* provided by Espinosa (1917/1975). Even though language contact is inevitable, the next section

[8] In this region, there is a stiff competition from the word "mosquito," probably due to its similarity with the English form (Bills & Vigil, 1999).

will discuss how the influences of both English and Mexican Spanish are threatening the current status of TNMS.

Figure 7.4. **Map showing the distribution of the different lexical options to refer to the word [mosquito] in New Mexican Spanish (map extracted from U.S. Geographical Survey, 2017, and annotated by the authors following the map found in Bills and Vigil, 2008).**

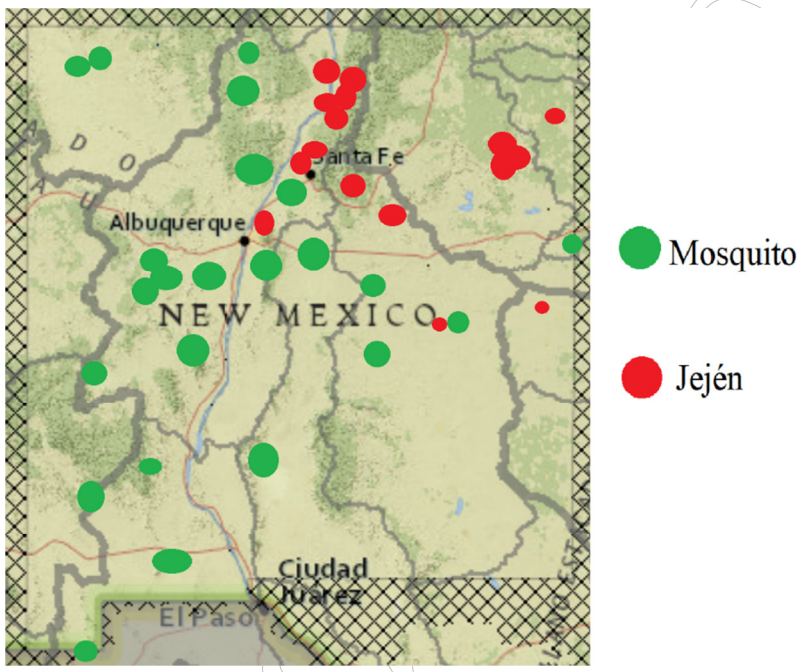


Table 7.3. ***Borrowings in New Mexican Spanish***

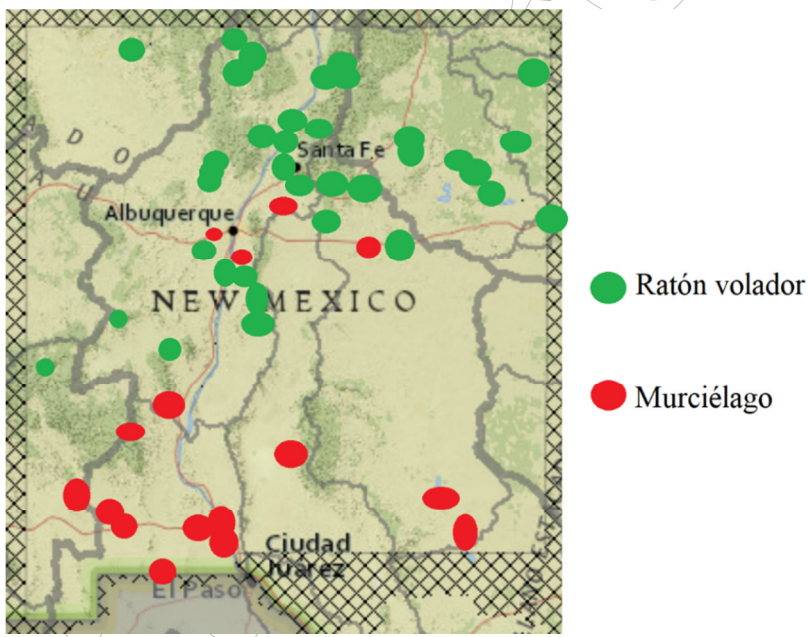
Traditional New Mexican Spanish	English	Traditional New Mexican Spanish	English
"Bisnes"	[Business]	"Breca"	[Break]
"Crismes"	[Christmas]	"Cuque"	[Cookie]
"Daime"	[Dime]	"Espor"	[Sport]
"Greve"	[Gravy]	"Lonchi"	[Lunch]
"Nicle/niquel"	[Nickel]	"Queque"	[Cake]
"Sanamagón"	[Son of a gun]	"Troca"	[truck]

(Documented by Espinosa, 1917/1975)

TNMS has evolved not only due to external influences, but also by means of internal resources, as a response to new concepts and circumstances (Bills & Vigil, 1999). One of the most unique ways that this variety of the language deals with new concepts involves simple

compounding of existing words. Figure 7.5 (taken and adapted from Bills & Vigil, 1999) shows the example for the concept [bat]. Three options to refer to this concept can be found in the region. On the one hand, "ratón volador" (literally, [flying mouse]) is the form of majority preference in TNMS (represented in green). The standard "murciélago" (often realized in its original, non-metathesized form as "murciégalo") is found mainly in the areas of recent Mexican contact (in red). Finally, the borrowed word from English (either as a fully integrated word as "bate" or in the original form) is the preferred word choice of the younger generations (in black).

Figure 7.5. **Map showing the distribution of the different lexical options to refer to the word [bat] in New Mexican Spanish (map extracted from U.S. Geographical Survey, 2017, and annotated by the authors following the map found in Bills and Vigil, 2008).**



One peculiarity of this variety of the language is that it seems to prefer regularizations over a list of irregular forms, as we already mentioned in the case of the regularization of the verb "haber." This regularization pattern is also observed among some of the lexical phenomena reported in TNMS, particularly in the case of gender regularizations. In standard Spanish, most of the words ending in *–o* are masculine, while those ending in *–a* or *–d* tend to be feminine (Eddington, 2002; Harris, 1985). However, standard Spanish also includes a considerably large number of irregular

forms that do not follow this pattern. TNMS tends to favor the use of the regularized forms of these exceptions. For example, TNMS seems to show a major preference towards assigning feminine gender to the word "mapa" ([map]), which is irregular in standard Spanish.

As we did for the phonetic/phonological and morphosyntactic phenomena, this subsection provides a quick overview of some of the most unique lexical features of modern-day TNMS reported in the literature, to compare it with Southern New Mexican Spanish. Other lexical properties have been discussed in more detail in the literature but, due to length constraints, only a general overview is provided in the current chapter.

Traditional New Mexican Spanish: What does the future hold?

Because of its unique characteristics, TNMS has been one of the most widely studied varieties of Spanish (Vergara Wilson, 2015), beginning with Aurelio Espinosa's *The Spanish Language in New Mexico and Southern Colorado* (1911) and continuing more recently with extensive work from Bills and Vigil (Bills & Vigil, 2008). The linguistic atlas of the Spanish language of New Mexico and southern Colorado created by Bills and Vigil and their NMCOSS have allowed most of the current research conducted on this variety of the language, together with some other new resources that are now emerging (e.g., the Barelas corpus). TNMS was chosen as a model in the current chapter to showcase the importance of documenting the uniqueness and richness that can be found in the different varieties of the Spanish language spoken worldwide before language contact and the standardization process unify most of them to the point of disappearance.

Language is a dynamic, ever-changing process that affects any language (variety and dialect) and in any community of practice (Bybee, 2010), and TNMS is a clear example of this never-ending systematic process (Valdivia Ruiz, 2016), as the previous section shows. Espinosa (1911) believed that the dialect was quite conservative in maintaining its form and that this clear example of 16th-century Spanish, due to its geographical isolation, could never be changed. However, the current trend seems to indicate otherwise, mostly as a result of the arrival of native speakers of English and of different varieties of Spanish, mostly from Mexico.

New Mexico maintained its linguistic heritage without the influence of English speakers until the middle of the 20th century, when the population of Anglos started to increase consistently (Travis & Villa, 2011). The strong influence that English speakers have had on New Mexican Spanish was not limited to only linguistic change but also included social

change. This social change has led the Hispanic population to relinquish Spanish in favor of English, particularly among the younger generations (Bills & Vigil, 1999). English has been considered the more prestigious language, especially in economics, politics, and cultural power. Everyday usage of English has increased in situations where Spanish was used in the past. (Bills & Vigil, 1999), exemplified by the court cases and the bills passed by the state. As the previous section describes, *Anglicisms* have arisen in the speech of TNMS speakers, particularly among the younger generations, among whom there is a clear preference towards using English or *Anglicisms* (Travis & Villa, 2011). Table 7.4 presents the responses in labeling a picture of the 10-cent U.S. coin [dime], dividing the data obtained into four age groups of roughly equal size (Bills & Vigil, 1999). The table clearly shows how the oldest age group (those over the age of 72) preferred the Spanish form "diez centavos," while the youngest groups (40 years old or younger) more frequently offered some variant of the English borrowing.

Table 7.4. ***Percentage of Labeling Responses of the Word [Dime] by Age***

Age group	"10 centavos"	"Daime"
20-40	10.0 %	90.0 %
41-57	20.0 %	80.0 %
58-71	22.9 %	77.1 %
72-96	60.5 %	39.5 %

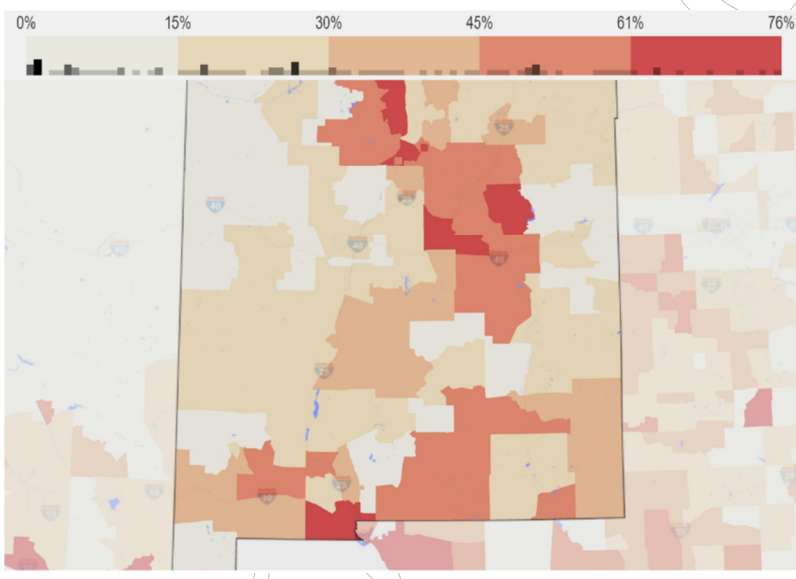
(Data extracted from Bills & Vigil, 1999)

The preference for English over Spanish has led to parents not passing their language on to succeeding generations, and young New Mexicans are expected to lose their language skills (Bills & Vigil, 1999). After four centuries of this unique heritage, they might lose their ethnicity and heritage by rejecting the language that led them to this moment in history. Because they do not use the language, they may not have the ability to think in it or to communicate with it. At present, the use of Spanish in situations outside the home is being abandoned while within generations it is still transmitted. As noted by poet E. A. "Tony" Mares, when "language is only used at home, language is dying" (Bills & Vigil, 1999).

However, the influence found in TNMS is not just limited to the growing Anglo population in the region. Interestingly, the population of New Mexico is drastically changing, from 125,000 Spanish-speaking persons (of whom approximately 40,000 or 50,000 lived in Colorado and the remainder in northern New Mexico) at the beginning of the 20th century (Hills, 1906) to an estimate of more than one million persons (48.8 % of the population) over the age of 5 who speak Spanish at home in the state of New Mexico, according to some of the latest data offered by the US Census

Bureau (United States. Bureau of the Census, 2017). In just a century, the population increased eightfold, which implies that the language may have changed due to the most recent immigration flows, both across national borders and from other US states. Figure 7.6 provides a representation of the percentage of population who used Spanish at home among speakers of age 5 and older in the state of New Mexico in 2016, by county.

Figure 7.6. **Percentage of the total population living in households in which Spanish is spoken at home (%)**



Since Spanish is a rather conservative language (Espinosa, 1911) and since this community has existed for so long (Bills & Vigil, 1999), "archaisms" are common in TNMS. However, they also affect the sociocultural position of TNMS speakers, as they are seen as having less value, an example of a lack of education (Valdivia Ruiz, 2016). The sociocultural effect on TNMS is twofold: On the one hand, it is affected by more contact with Mexican Spanish; on the other hand, it is influenced by exposure to what is considered "educated Spanish" (Bills & Vigil, 1999). Formal Spanish instruction in high schools and universities, as well as contact via international travel and communication, were the primary factors that led to this awareness of the more standard language. Once again, these forces have drastically changed the language, especially in younger generations. Language change is more likely to be found among those of the youngest speakers who have received more formal instruction. New Mexico's Spanish speakers seem to be very sensitive to

the Spanish they use. Therefore, they tend to restrict the use of Spanish to their immediate neighborhood or home (Bills & Vigil, 1999).

Table 7.5 provides a clear example of how language instruction has had a direct impact on TNMS, by showing the responses in labeling a picture of a student, dividing the data obtained into four age groups of roughly equal size, as before (Bills & Vigil, 1999). The table clearly shows how the oldest age group (those over the age of 72) preferred the traditional forms "escuelero" and "discípulo," while the younger generations prefer the standard forms "estudiante" and "alumno."

Table 7.5. ***Labeling of Word [Student] / Age***

Age group	"Estudiante"	"Alumno"	"Escuelero"	"Discípulo"
20–40	81.6 %	10.5 %	7.9 %	0
41–57	68.3 %	9.8 %	22.0 %	0
58–71	54.3 %	17.1 %	20.0 %	8.6 %
72–96	42.5 %	5.0 %	37.5 %	15.0 %

(Data extracted from Bills & Vigil, 1999)

All the evidence seems to suggest that in coming centuries TNMS will change such that the specific features we have documented in this chapter will no longer exist. Changes will favor English to the north and the influence of Mexican Spanish to the south (Bills & Vigil, 1999). Everything seems to indicate that this variety will be extinguished within two or three generations unless young people rediscover their linguistic roots and are eager to pursue seriously a return to the use of their ancestors' language. However, TNMS is one of the few varieties of Spanish that has received considerable attention, and future researchers and even future generations will be able to go back to those papers and sociolinguistic recordings to see and to hear how this unique variety of the language sounded.

Even though TNMS has received considerable attention, this chapter has already detected some gaps and lines for future research before this variety becomes obsolete. One important consideration is that there are no major studies on syntax or semantics in this variety of the language, as most of the work has focused on phonetics and morphology. Even though these two parameters of the language are important, they do not provide us with the full picture of how the language really works (Floyd, 1978). In a broader sense, it is important to note that the Southwest Spanish in the United States has yet to be described, comparing the varieties as mentioned in this chapter and looking especially at those speakers with minimal formal education in Standard Spanish (Lance, 1970; Floyd, 1978). The geographic area of the Southwest is phenomenal in size, with the US–

Mexico border extending more than 1,700 miles in length, with a growing number of Spanish speakers in the area (Martínez, 1994), creating an unmatched scenario for language contact and language change.

By reporting the latest findings regarding TNMS, the main purpose of this chapter is to give the reader a sense of the current situation of this variety. However, it also provides evidence of the importance of corpora for the field of documentary linguistics (although its importance is not limited to this field of study). It shows how, having access to these resources, experts can extract the information necessary to document an endangered variety/language before it disappears, which could eventually be used to revitalize the language whenever needed.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the latest findings regarding TNMS, while showcasing the importance of creating linguistic materials to help us document and keep alive the richness of our language. TNMS is one of the most studied varieties of Spanish, and yet it is in the process of disappearing in the upcoming generations. However, we are fortunate that several researchers in the last years have worked toward creating sociolinguistic corpora and sociolinguistic recordings that will allow the community to keep this variety alive, even when the last speakers pass away. Language change is an inevitable process. Our decision not to document some of the richness found in our language today is voluntary, and we should not miss our opportunity.

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