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Spanish from the "East Side" of Las Vegas: Simplification of Tense/Aspect Distinction in Ser and Estar in Spanish Heritage Speakers of Sunrise Manor

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SPANISH FROM THE "EAST SIDE" OF LAS VEGAS: SIMPLIFICATION OF TENSE/ASPECT DISTINCTION IN *SER* AND *ESTAR* IN SPANISH HERITAGE SPEAKERS OF SUNRISE MANOR

By

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Abstract

Spanish heritage speakers in the United States are a reflection of the influence of linguistic and sociolinguistic pressures that creates variation across linguistic generations. This exploratory investigation seeks to fill this gap of linguistic knowledge in the Spanish-speaking community of Las Vegas, Nevada through a sociolinguistic study of the process of simplification of the simple forms of the past tense in Spanish heritage speakers of Sunrise Manor (Clark County, Nevada, USA), locally known as the "East Side". The investigation focuses on the tense-aspect semantics in the verbs *ser* and *estar* of 9 heritage speakers between the ages of 18 and 30. Through the analysis of sociolinguistic interviews, the tenses of Imperfect and Preterit tense of these copular verbs will answer the following research questions: (1) What type of simplification exist in past verb forms in Spanish heritage speakers in Sunrise Manor-Las Vegas? (2) What factors, linguistic or non-linguistic, account for the type and stages of simplification in perfective/imperfective features of *ser*/*estar* in the data? The investigation identified linguistic simplification in the absolute tense, lexical aspect, and aspect variables in all participants. The results also showed how those linguistic variables as well as the non-linguistic factors of heritage, age, and sex accounted for the type and stages of simplification identified in the past tense forms of *ser* and *estar*. Overall, I concluded that there is preliminary evidence of dialect formation in Sunrise Manor and argue that there is a relationship between the use of the absolute tense and ethnic heritage.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Spanish heritage speakers, tense/aspect, East Side, Sunrise Manor, Las Vegas

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Spanish from the "East Side" of Las Vegas:

Simplification of tense/aspect distinction in *ser* and *estar* in Spanish heritage speakers of Sunrise Manor

Introduction

With the Latinx[1] community of Southern Nevada making up 30%[2] of the population, it comes as no surprise that Spanish is the language most spoken outside of English in the Las Vegas community (U.S. Census, 2018a; Pew, 2014a). Take a trip to the "East Side" (refer to Figure 1.1) and you will be immersed by the Latinx community of Las Vegas. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), Sunrise Manor is the town with the highest proportion of Hispanic/Latino population in the state of Nevada with a reported 53.4% of its population. It is possible to spend an entire day there without uttering a single word of English.

Of this population, a Pew Research Center analysis in 2014(b) reported that 78% of the Hispanic community comes from Mexican origin. Mexican and Mexican Americans make up one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States and have contributed to the growth of the Spanish language in speech communities across the United States (Lipski, 2008). Given the historical presence of this population and the

[1] For the purposes of this study, the Spanish-speaking community of Latin American descent will be referred to as the "Latinx" community. The term "Latinx" will be used to remain inclusive of all identities in the Las Vegas community that come from Latin American descent since this is the larger community that is being studied (Rodríguez, 2017).

[2] It should be noted that most of the statistics presented on the Latinx population is expected to be underestimated because of the general sentiments of distrust from immigrants and especially that of the undocumented community (Simich & Wright, 2005, 2010).

Figure 1.1: Map of Las Vegas Valley highlighting Sunrise Manor ("East Side") Area

(Downtown Vegas Alliance, 2020)

widespread geographic presence in the United States, the Spanish variety of Mexican origin has been studied most in-depth (Lipski, 2008). As a Las Vegas local, I have witnessed the presence of the Mexican culture here for the past 15 years, from the sounds of Mexican *norteñas* at the swap meet at Broadacres Marketplace, the aromas of *elotes* after mass outside of St. Anne's Catholic Church, and the conversations of code switching with friends speaking with the unique Mexican dialect. The oral histories collected through the UNLV Oral History Research Center (2018-ongoing) have reflected

not only the linguistic mosaic of the community highlighting the various Spanish dialects from across Latin America as well as the inter-generational differences of the Spanish language; but also, the prevalence of the Mexican community in Las Vegas, with 57% of their narrators identifying as Mexican or Mexican-American. Although other reports have further discussed the diversity of the Latinx community and growth of the Mexican population in Las Vegas (Simich & Wright, 2005, 2010; U.S. Census, 2018b), no investigation has explored this *linguistic* diversity of the Spanish speaking population.

The present study investigates the sociolinguistic characteristics of Spanish heritage speakers from the East Side— the town with the highest proportion of Hispanic/Latino population in the state of Nevada with a reported 53.4% of its population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The prevalence of Spanish speakers within this region of Las Vegas, reflects the rise of homogeneous ethnic neighborhoods among the working-class immigrant community has produced a nearly monolingual community, providing a unique opportunity to test the effect of linguistic and extralinguistic factors in motivating language change within this dialect contact community – a phenomena Mufwene (2001) refers to as "language evolution" driven by the interactions between speakers in a space of dialect contact.

Given the historical and demographic significance of the Latinx community on the East Side of Las Vegas as shown by the interviews from the Latinx Oral History Project (Álvarez, 2020; Salgado, 2019; Vargas, 2018) and population records (Census, 2010; Pew, 2014a, 2014b, 2016), I decided to explore Spanish language variation and consider the extent of influence Mexican Spanish patterns have on heritage speakers in this dialect contact area (Lipski, 2008; Trudgill, 1986). These internal ethnic

sociolinguistic pressures have been investigated at length in spaces of dialect contact as motivating linguistic variation as highlighted by Trudgill (1986, 2004) (see also Potwoski, 2016; Mufwene, 2001; Zentella 1990).

The goals of the investigation were two-fold: explore dialect formation in Sunrise Manor within second-generation heritage speakers through an ethnic sociolinguistic lens and identify the patterns of simplification in heritage speakers in the verbs *ser* and *estar* in the simple past tense system in the indicative form of heritage speakers.

A Brief History of the Spanish-Speaking Community of Las Vegas

A study of the migration patterns of Spanish-speaking people from Latin America in Las Vegas provides the historical and cultural context that creates the current societal conventions that have influenced the dialectology of the Las Vegas area. According to Shobhana Chelliah (2013), a historical and cultural analysis of the geographic area of study reflects "language contact and the roots of the bilingualism and multilingualism that exists" within the geographical area of study (p. 55). The historical record further suggests the historical presence of the dialects and speech patterns of those communities in Las Vegas.

The Spanish-speaking community of the Southwest region of the United States dates to the early expeditions of the Spanish along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and Camino Real de California during the mid-1500s (Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia, 1985). Driven by their desire for territoriality to expand the development of their Catholic missions and *encomienda* system, the Spanish continued the "Hispanization of the Indian population" of the region as they searched for the wealth of the Aztecs in gold led by

conquistadores and missionaries alike (Miranda, 1997, p. 7). Fast forward to the 21st century and the Spanish-speaking community has spread across the country to become the top minority language in the country, continuously growing at a near exponential rate (Lipski, 2008). According to local historian, Tom Rodriguez (2018), there were no written records on this "invisible minority" until he started his own research to write his book, *A Profile of Hispanics in Nevada: An Agenda for Action* in 1980. Since then a small number of studies have investigated the history of the Latinx population to develop the following framework of the historical record of the Latinx community in Las Vegas (Lipski (2008); Miranda (1997); Simich and Wright (2005, 2010); UNLV Oral History Research Center (2018- ongoing).

According to Miranda (2005), the first Spanish-speaking inhabitants of Las Vegas were of Mexican origin and their migration into Las Vegas began with the end of the Mexican American War in 1848, in which the northwestern states of Mexico were annexed by the United States (p. 56). The beginning of the twentieth century marked the beginning of a series of waves of Mexican migration starting with the Porfiriato era during the Mexican Revolution, followed by the Bracero Program during World War II, and by the Immigration and Nationality Act from 1965 which increased the number of visas distributed to foreigners (Miranda, 2005, p. 56-57). In his oral history, Sergio "Checko" Salgado (2019) talks about how his father came to Las Vegas from Juarez as a part of the Bracero Program and how his friends soon followed him in the late 1950s. The 1980s brought a new wave of Mexican immigrants as a result of the oil crisis in search of economic and job stability that was booming in the Las Vegas community (Miranda, 2005, p. 58-59).

As is the trend with many other Latinx immigrant groups, Las Vegas had an attractive pull to many of these groups due to the economic attractiveness of the city with blue-collar jobs with minimal education or English language requirements that would give a "a quick taste of the materialism of U.S. life" (Arriaza, 2005; Clayson, 2010; Miranda, 1997, 2005; Monkman, 2010; Pratt, 2010; Tuman & Gearhart, 2010; Wright & Moody, 2005). During the late 1990s until the late 2000s, the undocumented Mexican community has grown despite the increased regulation over the regulation of the border in areas of California and Texas by the U.S. Border Control (Miranda, 2005). As described prior, the East Side is one of the major hubs of the Mexican community. Annual events such as the Life in Death Festival at the Winchester Cultural Center directed by Irma Varela, the success of local restaurants such as Lindo Michoacán founded by Javier Barajas, and the Cardenas market chain further support the presence of this cultural patrimony and welcome other Mexican immigrants to the valley.

Following the Mexican migration, the second largest group of Latinx peoples to migrate to Las Vegas was the Cuban community. Like the Mexican community, the migration patterns of the Cubans were in waves driven by the political situation of the island. The first wave of migrants to Las Vegas aligned with the rise of Fidel Castro in the early 1960s as the casino industry became nationalized (Clayson, 2010). Local Liliam Lujan-Hickey (2018) was a member of this migratory group and went to Miami in 1960 to "escape" the Castro regime. She later came to Las Vegas by train to Union Station in 1962 (Lujan-Hickey, 2018). The common trend of the Cuban population prior to the 1960s, as it is today, was to emigrate from Cuba to Florida or New York (Lipski, 2008). Clayson (2010) and current President of the Latin Chamber of Commerce (LCC), Peter

Guzman (2018), described the growth of the Cuban population that followed led to the creation of *El Circulo Cubano*, a socio-cultural association created by Agustín Menéndez in 1970 (Clayson, 2010).

The second wave of the Cuban emigration to Las Vegas is characterized by the working-class who found employment in the service industry (Clayson, 2010). Lujan-Hickey (2018) witnessed these waves of migration up until the 1980s as she worked alongside the Catholic Charities to aid the incoming "Marielitos"—the third massive wave of Cuban immigration—to Las Vegas who left the island when Castro opened Mariel harbor (Clayson, 2010). Locally, the Cuban community is considered the third largest Latinx community in Las Vegas (Pew, 2014a). The community has been known to congregate at St. Anne's Catholic Church on Maryland Parkway, on the East Side (Clayson, 2010). They are involved with the political and commercial community and through the LCC, supporting local Latinx businesses with Cuban community members Otto Merida, President Emeritus of the LCC, and Peter Guzman.

Moving on to the second largest Latinx group of Las Vegas, the presence of the Salvadoran community is most seen in the number of *pupuserias* that can be found from the Las Pupusas restaurant chain to small local restaurants such as *Pupuseria Cabañas* on the East Side. The migration of the Salvadoran community to Las Vegas although the most recent, grew at a rapid exponential rate. Similar to other Central American countries, migration to the United States was driven by political turmoil. The civil war of El Salvador [1972-1992] was the push factor that motivated many to migrate to the United States seeking not only economic stability, but also political asylum from persecution and violence (Wright & Moody, 2005). Migrants like Nery Martinez (2018),

describe the experience of her family being separated as her brothers found themselves having to escape persecution from the guerilla in the late 1980s. Another wave of migrants came after 2001 when El Salvador suffered from an earthquake that took many lives and contributed to the growing poverty rates of the nation (Wright & Moody, 2005). Wright and Moody (2005) identify the "culture of immigration" as a primary push factor for many Salvadorans who see migration to the United States as a "rite of passage" (p. 249-250). The Salvadoran community continues to grow as many come seeking economic stability and settling for any job that has low-skill and English language requirements (Lipski, 2008; Wright & Moody, 2005).

Outside of these groups, nearly every Latin American heritage group has been identified in studies on the diversity of the Las Vegas community (Lipski, 2008; UNLV, 2018-ongoing). Other Latinx communities that have been highlighted in the historical record include the Guatemalan (Tuman & Gearhart, 2010), Chilean (Arriaza, 2005), Colombians (Pratt, 2010), and Argentines (Monkman, 2010) of Las Vegas. These groups, although present in the historical record, do not bear as much demographic and statistical significance as the Mexican, Cuban, and Salvadoran communities as reported by Pew Research Center (2016). By highlighting the migratory patterns of the most statistically significant groups, the historical influence of the Spanish speech patterns of these communities have played a role in the development of a regional dialect in the East Side—an area attractive for its proximity to the Nellis Air Force Base and the Strip (Miranda, 1997).

The Latinx population of Las Vegas as reflected by statistics (Hardcastle, 2018, 2019; Pew, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; U.S. Census, 2010, 2018a, 2018b) and historical records

(Lipski, 2008; Simich & Wright, 2005, 2010; UNLV, 2018-ongoing) is projected to grow as a result of the continued chain migration that draws relatives and friends from Latin America to Las Vegas (Hardcastle, 2018). This was the case of Nery Martinez (2018) who came to Las Vegas in the late 1990s to live with her brothers as she escaped the violence of *"las Maras"*[3] (gangs) who were taking control of areas across El Salvador. Local historian Paco Álvarez (2020), a native Las Vegan of Argentine roots, has witnessed the growth of the Latinx community on the East Side since the eighties which further supports this theory of chain migration. The development of ethnic communities such as those found on the East Side and other areas of North Las Vegas further reflect this trend of migration.

The East Side is a space for Latinx immigrants to interact with similar and dissimilar Spanish dialects that has contributed to the preservation of Latin American dialects and, in relevance to this investigation, influenced the development of unique variations among the second-generation immigrants within these speech communities. The pressures to assimilate and varying levels of linguistic knowledge of first-generation immigrants within a socio-historical context defined by Latin American migratory patterns results in unique variations among the second-generation immigrants who are monolingual, have varying skill level in both languages, or are fully bilingual (Miranda, 1997). People such as Gabriel Garcia (2019), who grew up on the East Side, talks about speaking "construction Spanish," while on the job as a student at Las Vegas High School. Although each Latin American community brings a specific linguistic variety or group of

[3] Las Maras of El Salvador have been known to be of the most violent gangs in Latin America for the past 25 years. Their acts of violence have made the country one of the most dangerous countries in the world with "62 registered deaths for every 100,000 inhabitants per day" (Vera, 2019).

varieties that play a role in dialectal formation within a region, with Mexicans making up 78% of the Hispanic community, Sunrise Manor has not been "cut off from Mexico" sets the stage for dominating Mexican varieties among community members (Lipski, 2008; Pew, 2014b)

Literature Review

Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States

For the majority of Spanish heritage speakers, unlike learners of Spanish as a second language, their methods of acquiring the language takes place in their home and community. As a speech community, these speakers have developed their own distinct Spanish variety as a result of these acquisition methods, intra-linguistic interactions, and age of exposure to Spanish and other languages. Studies on the Spanish varieties spoken by heritage speakers among others in the United States have been conducted to map these variations to highlight differences intergenerationally, regionally, and between different ethnicities among others (Benevento, et al., 2015; Bills & Vigil, 2008; Carvalho, 2012-ongoing; Lipski, 2008; Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia, 1985; Potowski, 2016; Sánchez, 1982; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Shin & Otheguy, 2013; Velasco, et al., 2015). This section is a short summary of the linguistic and sociolinguistic variables that are of particular interest for this investigation: (a) Simplification in the verb tense/aspect system and (b) Heritage as a sociolinguistic variable.

Simplification, as it occurs in areas of dialect contact, refers to the phenomenon that results in a reduction and elimination of the linguistic system (Silva-Corvalán, 1994). Although the definition of the term is contested and considered one of the "most elusive concepts used in the characterization of language," since this sociolinguistic study was

inspired by Silva-Corvalán's investigation on Spanish in East Los Angeles, her definition has been adopted in the present study (Ferguson, 1982, pp. 58). Silva-Corvalán identifies simplification as the process in which a higher frequency of certain linguistic form is preferred to another that is semantically similar. She identified pattern of tense extensions in the Preterit and Imperfect forms, especially in the stative verbs, along the proficiency continuum. Her analysis revealed that the use of the Preterit tense shrunk across the linguistic generations with native speakers using an even distribution of Preterit and Imperfect tense verbs and the third-generation which used more of the Imperfect tense. By comparing the patterns of the first-generation with those of later generations, Silva-Corvalán was able to identify patterns of simplification in the Preterit and Imperfect morphology along the continuum.

[1] *Imperfect for Preterit*

*Yo fui el único hombre que **tenían** (Imp).* *(A29, m60, 2,ELA2)*

[I was the only son they **had**.]

(Silva-Corvalán, 1994, p. 44)

Her analysis of these Absolute Tense forms in addition to other verb forms, allowed her to identify 7 Stages of Simplification (S) and Loss (L) (see Silva-Corvalán, 1994, pp. 30). For the purpose of this study, the focus is on Stage 3 in which the Imperfect Indicative and Preterit tenses were identified as being simplified in the 2nd and 3rd sociolinguistic generations (see Table 1.1).

In areas where the language of investigation was the minority language (in this case Spanish in the United States), it was also seen that heritage speakers also acquired a

variety that was not only simplified but also had undergone processes of convergence[4] and dialect leveling[5] (Potowski, et.al., 2009; Romaine, 1995; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). In this section I will summarize the findings of simplification in heritage speakers in the verbs *ser* and *estar* as well as the tense/aspect system.

***Ser* and *Estar*.** The Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar*, 'to be' in English, have been investigated in various linguistic contexts such as syntax and semantics (Bessett, 2015; Gallego, 2016; Reyes, 2017 among others). Given that these copular verbs both translate to 'to be' in English, these two semantically similar verb forms are prone to simplification in English speaker's Spanish language-learners and in heritage speakers.

[2] *Estar* for *Ser*

"Creo que tengo una vida muy bien desde que ***estaba*** *chiquita."*

["I think I have (had) a good life, since I ***was*** *little."]*

(Participant BF26)

Acquisition studies have shown that although these verbs are developed simultaneously in bilingual children, *estar* is delayed and as suggested by Silva-Corvalán and Montanari (2008) may suggest an influence from English and interactional practices with adults (see also Lingwall Odio, 2018; Miller, 2013; Reyes, 2017). Patterns of use as it relates to individual level and stage level predicates[6], locatives[7], and adjectives have suggested lexical borrowing from English that have resulted in simplification with

[4] Convergence is "defined as the achievement of greater structural similarity in a given aspect of the grammar of two or more languages, assumed to be different at the onset of contact" (Gumperz & Wilson, 1977).

[5] Dialect leveling refers to a reduction in the differences among the dialects spoken within a region as a result of dialect contact and leads to t he development of a widely practiced regional dialect variation (Kerswill, 2013)

[6] Stage-level/individual-level classifications of predicates refers to the "boundedness" to describe the temporal characteristics of a state with it being bounded/unbounded, respectively (Husband, 2012, p. 5)

[7] Locatives are nouns, pronouns, and adjectives that express location.

speakers favoring *ser* over *estar* in a majority of these contexts (Gallego & Uriagereka, 2016; Reyes, 2017; Silva-Corvalán & Montanari, 2008). Another point of inquiry has been the copula choice between these two verb forms through an analysis of other linguistic components in the discourse and accurately determine the use of *ser* instead of *estar* and vice-versa, known as functional overlap (Camacho, 2012; Roby, 2009; Schmitt & Miller, 2007). As identified by Perpiñán, et.al. (2020), grammatical aspect has played a role in the dominance of the *ser*/*estar* distinction.

This phenomenon has been investigated minimally in heritage speakers and seen exclusively in *estar* as the "innovative *estar*" when used in contexts other than those appropriate for *estar*. Silva-Corvalán (1994) found evidence of the innovative *estar* in Mexican-American Spanish of East Los Angeles and also highlighted investigations in Mexico by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (1971, 1976) and Gutiérrez (1989) which found evidence of innovative *estar* in native speakers from Mexico. Before exploring the evidence of simplification found in the use of the Preterit and Imperfect Tense by heritage speakers, a brief overview of the distinction between tense and aspect.

Tense & Aspect. The focus of the study will be on tense and aspect in bilingual second-generation immigrants. To clarify how these morphosyntactic and semantics concepts will be addressed, the following description of tense and aspect as developed by Comrie (1973) will be used to identify the focus of this study.

Tense is used to "create a link between the time in which a distinct action occurs and another moment in time" (Comrie, 1976, p. 3). This distinction is divided into three primary segments in time: past, present, and future.

Aspect, on the other hand, provides "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation," (Comrie, 1976, p. 3). There are two main categories found within verbal aspect: perfectivity and imperfectivity. *Perfective* aspect refers to a single, completed occurrence that is described without creating a distinction between the different stages that led to the completion of the occurrence in question (Comrie, 1976, p. 16). *Imperfective* aspect is used to describe the stages as they develop within the occurrence being described (Comrie, 1976, p. 24). The perfective and imperfective aspects can be seen in the past tense in English and in the morphologies of the Preterit and Imperfect tenses in the indicative form in Spanish (refer to Table 1.1). In Spanish, typically the Preterit tense expresses a perfective aspect and the Imperfect tense marks and imperfective aspect. For the purposes of this study a focus will be made primarily on the perfective and imperfective aspects of verbs constructed through the Preterit and Imperfect simple tenses of the Spanish language.

Preterit Tense and Imperfect Tense in the Indicative Forms. Silva-Corvalán's (1994) investigation on "Tense-Mood-Aspect Across the Continuum" provided the foundational framework on simplification in the verb system. In dividing her sample by sociolinguistic generation (see Table 1.2), which has also been adopted for this investigation, she identified a trend of simplification as it occurs in certain obligatory or optional linguistic contexts as determined by other contextual features such as temporal adverbials and has since been supported by other findings (Cacoullos, 2011; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). By analyzing the morphology that translate the grammatical tense and lexical aspect of the verbs used in discourse, studies have identified a trend of heritage speakers to use the Preterit tense instead of the Imperfect tense or use the imperfect

Table 1.1

Perfective & Imperfective Aspects in the Indicative Past Tense in English & Spanish

Aspect	English	Spanish	Semantic Value	Verbal Morphology
Perfective	Jane <u>went</u> to the store to pick up apples.	Jane <u>fue</u> a la tienda para recoger unas manzanas.	The event has ended. Jane has gone to the store and successfully picked up apples.	The verb conjugation indicates the 3rd person subject (Jane), preterit-indicative tense, and perfective aspect.
Imperfective	Jane <u>was going</u> to the store to pick up apples.	Jane <u>iba</u> a la tienda para recoger unas manzanas.	The event is occurring progressively. Jane was in the process of going to get apples and it is not known when she went or whether she will successfully pick up apples.	The verb has a distinct conjugation indicating the 3rd person subject (Jane), imperfect-indicative tense, and imperfective aspect.

morphology in both imperfective and perfective aspects (Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Miller, 2013; Montrul, 2002, 2009) Given that the Spanish verbal tense system is divided into two paradigms as determined by the perfective and imperfective aspects, heritage speakers have two competing tense systems between Spanish and English, the dominant national language, which doesn't grammaticalize this difference. As a result, these tense

Table 1.2

Sociolinguistic Generation Criteria and Linguistic Characteristics

Generational Category	Criteria	Linguistic Characteristics
G1	Speakers born in Latin America, who immigrated to the United States after the age of eleven; at least 5 years of residence in the United States	Spanish: 1st Language English: second Language; mastery dependent on the time spent in the United States
G2	Speakers born in the United States or immigrated from Latin America before the age of six	Spanish: Varying levels mastery but tends to have a strong control of the language English: Strongest control of the language
G3	Speakers born in the United States; at least one of their parents aligns with the criteria of Group 2	Spanish: Varying levels mastery but tends to have a strong control of the language English: Strongest control of the language

Note. The data on the Sociolinguistic Generations was adapted from "Language Contact and Change: Spanish in Los Angeles" by C. Silva-Corvalán, 1994, Oxford [England]: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.

distinctions tend to overlap (Silva-Corvalán, 1994). To investigate these phenomena, linguists have used corpora-based analysis, written tasks, and sentence judgment tasks (Montrul, 2002, 2009; Montrul & Slabakova, 2003). Ayoun & Salaberry (2008) argue that the mastery of aspect and tense concepts suggest syntactic and semantic competence of a language; however, given the increasing evidence of simplification and unique acquisition and influences on heritage speakers, the criteria for "mastery" in their Spanish variety are arguably different (Montrul & Perpiñán, 2001).

Ethnic Heritage as a Sociolinguistic Variable. Ethnicity and language are both methods of social construction. The way one speaks communicates and influences ethnic identity, making it one of the most complex categories to investigate (Fought, 2013).

Linguists and anthropologists alike have battled with what determines ethnicity from the concept of "place," heritage and lineage, to race (Ericksen, 2010; Fought, 2013). In mapping the Spanish varieties of the United States, linguists have discussed the nuances of heritage and native speaker patterns as it relates to their ethnicity and national-origin as done by Silva-Corvalán (1994) and others (see also Benevento & Dietrich, 2015; Potowski (2016); Shin & Otheguy, 2013). Silva-Corvalán paved the way for in sociolinguistic investigations on heritage speakers of Mexican-American bilinguals across three generations in her study *Language Contact and Change* (1994). Although her investigation has provided insight on all heritage speakers, her findings are also particularly focused on Mexican-Americans. Potowski (2016) suggests that heritage speakers from mixed heritage (each parent originates from a different Hispanic country) are more likely to adopt the speech patterns of their mother who they spend more time with as shown by her investigations on "MexiRicans" (heritage speakers of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent) in Chicago. Another lens offered by Shin & Otheguy (2013) explored the level of affluence to explain national-origin differences in pronoun rates of native speakers in New York City who in turn influence the bilingual speaker community. Investigating these areas of minority ethnic group contact and dominant and minority ethnic group contact, allows linguists to map language change as it occurs among groups of similar national heritage and distinct of groups divided by geographical spaces.

Research Questions

The history of the Spanish-speaking community of Las Vegas has given rise to an incredible linguistic diversity within the Spanish-speaking community. Spanish heritage

speakers have been studied in communities across the United States to identify the varieties of Spanish that exist in the nation through language acquisition and sociolinguistic investigations (Montrul, 2002, 2009; Potowski, 2016; Silva-Corvalán, 1994, among others), However, no such documentation or analysis has been conducted in Southern Nevada. This exploratory investigation serves as preliminary stage in mapping the varieties that exist in Las Vegas.

The East Side (Sunrise Manor) provides a unique site of investigation as the region with the highest population of Spanish-speakers of Mexican heritage where minority ethnic groups and members of dominant and minority ethnic groups interact. As supported by studies previously highlighted and my own observations as a heritage speaker, the distinct contextual conditions that determine the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar* and the existence of two distinct morphologies for the simple past tense in the Preterit and Imperfect are two difficult linguistic concepts for heritage speakers to acquire.

Thus, this study focused on simplification of tense-aspect distinction in the verbs *ser* and *estar* in second-generation immigrant Spanish heritage-speakers from the East Side to answer the following research questions:

1. What type of simplification exists in past verb forms in Spanish heritage speakers in Sunrise Manor-Las Vegas?
2. What factors, linguistic or non-linguistic, account for the type and stages of simplification in perfective/imperfective features of *ser*/*estar* in the data?

Methodology

Design and Protocol

The investigation was modeled after the study conducted by Silva-Corvalán (1994) in order to capture a small corpus of data of this particular variation of "Spanish from the East Side." The study consisted of two sections: (a) a non-recorded demographic questionnaire and bilingual language profile questionnaire[8] and (b) a recorded sociolinguistic interview[9].

The methods used for section (a) was adopted from the Corpus del Español en el Sur de Arizona (CESA) protocols directed by Ana M. Carvalho (2012-ongoing). G2 participants were verbally asked questions to fill out a demographic information sheet and bilingual language profile sheet in Spanish as modeled after Carvalho's protocol for CESA (2012-ongoing). Participants shared non-threatening personal demographic information and information regarding linguistic history, language use, comprehension, and attitudes towards their use of Spanish and English.

The demographic sheet created a profile for each participant and demonstrated that all participants followed the criteria requested and came from a similar linguistic background. The information obtained through this demographic sheet allowed the creation of a participant linguistic profile. Initiating the interaction with a non-recorded questionnaire, allowed for me to "break the ice" with the participants so that they felt more comfortable and were more likely to elicit a more natural form of speech once the recorded portion of the interview began. Prior to starting section (b), the participants were

[8] All consent forms and questionnaires can be found in Appendix A.
[9] Ibid.

also told that they may code-switch when necessary to take away the formalities of the "interview" that may drive them to be hyper-corrective, as discussed in Labov's Observer's Paradox (Schilling, 2013). Doing so also ensured that they "elicit as much reliable narrative data in Spanish as possible" (Potowski, 2016, p. 46).

The methods for section (b) followed the standard protocol of William Labov's sociolinguistic interview as were adopted from Silva-Corvalán (1994), Potowski (2016), Carvalho (2012-ongoing). Participants participated in a 60-minute loosely structured interview in which they were asked to recount events from their personal life and their use of Spanish and English (Potowski, 2016; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). The questions asked inclined the speaker to speak in past-tense so that they have to describe past experiences using either the Preterit or the Imperfect forms of the verb (outlined further under Linguistic Variables). Moreover, as supported by Labov's Vernacular Principle, in asking questions about real life events that elicit an emotional response, the narrator was more inclined to produce unguarded speech and captures the true "vernacular" of the speaker as supported by Natalie Schilling (2013). Participants may feel uncomfortable responding to the questions asked during the interview but may choose not to answer any question.

Participants

The study collected linguistic data from 9 heritage speakers (refer to Table 2.1 for distribution) that aligned with the following criteria:

a. Second-Generation Latinx (G2)[10]
b. 18-30 years old

[10] The sociolinguistic generations identified in this investigation were adopted from Silva-Corvalán (1994) and are outlined in Table 3 in Appendix A.

c. 1st-Generation College Student
d. Started Elementary School in the Clark County School District within Sunrise Manor
e. Parents are First-Generation Latinx immigrants (G1)[11] to the United States from Spanish speaking Latin American countries
    1. 3 participants of Mexican Descent (Heritage A)
    2. 3 participants of Non-Mexican Descent (Heritage B)
    3. 3 participants of Mixed Latinx Descent (must have 1 parent of Mexican heritage) (Heritage C)

Similar to Silva-Corvalán's (1994) conducted in East Los Angeles, the participants originate from the region with the highest Hispanic population—Sunrise Manor (Bureau, 2010). The population is concentrated on first-generation college students to ensure that all participants come from a similar educational background. Moreover, with the participants having been raised in Sunrise Manor it can be concluded that their speech patterns were acquired from the speech networks of other second-generation speakers and first-generation speakers in their community and home (Buchstaller & Khattab, 2013; Montrul, 2002; Potowski, 2016). Dividing the participants into two groups by age allowed for further analysis in regards as it relates to age. Including participants of Mexican, Non-Mexican, and Mixed descent, allowed me to address the first and second research questions (outlined further in the Sociolinguistic Variable).

[11] Ibid.

Table 2.1

Participant Distribution by Heritage, Sex, and Age

Heritage Classification	Participant Letter Code	G1 Heritage		Sex	Age
		Parent 1	Parent 2		
Heritage A	A	Mexican	Mexican	Female	23
	B	Mexican	Mexican	Female	26
	C	Mexican	Mexican	Male	23
Heritage B	E	Mexican (F) *	Nicaraguan (M)	Female	22
	F	Guatemalan	Guatemalan	Female	25
	G	Cuban	Cuban	Male	21
Heritage C	I	Mexican (F)	Salvadoran (M)	Female	19
	J	Mexican (F)	Guatemalan (M)	Female	20
	L	Mexican (F)	Salvadoran (M)	Male	26

Note. Although of Mixed Descent, Participant E was included in the Non-Mexican descent sample because they were raised by their maternal Nicaraguan family. F denotes Father and M denotes Mother.

Sampling and Data Collection Instrument

Research participants were recruited using a hybrid-method of the snowball sampling and quota sampling techniques. At least two initial participants who fit the necessary criteria were identified from my own social network and were asked to participate with their consent. The rest of the participants were identified using the snowball sampling method, as practiced in the study conducted by Potowski (2016), and by reaching out to other members of my social network until a minimum of 9 participants were identified (refer to Appendix A). Using the snowball sampling method also aided in limiting the impact of the separation between myself as the interviewer and the narrator. The fact that the participant was recommended by a fellow participant as a means of "network sampling," also minimized the distance between myself and narrator given that we had a "friend" in common (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013).

Since the participants nominated other individuals for the study and I was selective in choosing participants who I knew had graduated from schools on the East Side, this type of sampling served as an accurate reflection of the social network that exists among the speech community of the second-generation immigrants of Sunrise Manor as supported by Buchstaller and Khattab (2013).

Approximately 10 hours of audio-recorded conversations were collected to develop a small corpus of linguistic data consisting of represent the second-generation speakers of the East Side. The interviews were recorded using SquadCast, an audio-recording podcast software, in which the participant and I could see one another throughout the course of the interview during both section (a) and section (b).

Each of these interviews was then transcribed using the following criteria:

- False starts and ellipses noted with '—' (em-dash)

  *"…mis padres me llevaban **a—era** como creo que es donde hacen…"*

  ["… my parents would take me to—it was a place where they do…"]

  (Participant EF22)

- Phonetic transcription

  *"**'Taban** en las noticias por un problema que han tenido con…"*

  ["They were on the news for a problem that they've had with…"]

  (Participant LM26)

- Names and places that could implicate the identity of the speaker were replaced with '---'

- English words were italicized

> *"No fue hasta **high school**, por ejemplo que ya empezó como a estresar…"*
>
> *[It wasn't until high school, for example that things started to become stressful…"]*

(Participant FF25)

Analytic Framework

To investigate the morphosyntactic variation in the verb tense-aspect features of this particular population, a variationist analysis was adopted to investigate the factors that intervene in the grammatical variation observed. Doing so allowed for me to distinguish patterns in the grammaticalization[12] of the speakers in occurrence with other features within the linguistic context (Cacoullos, 2011). Considering the following study has not yet investigated the verb tense-aspect features of native speaker patterns a full diachronic grammaticalization investigation cannot be fulfilled to reveal the gradual change between the 1st-generation and 2nd-generation populations of the East Side. Therefore, a synchronic study is presented to highlight the dialect differentiation in the Spanish of the East Side. Using quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, this exploratory research sought to provide a framework for future investigations.

[12] For the purposes of this investigation, the first definition proposed by Hopper & Traugott (1993) will be adopted which states that it is "the study of language that focuses on how grammatical forms and constructions arise, how they are used, and how they shape the language," (pp. 1).

Linguistic Variables

The focus of the investigation is on the tense-aspect characteristics of *ser* and *estar* in the Preterit and Imperfect indicative forms. The following linguistic variables were identified in the 785 tokens of *ser* and *estar* identified from the sociolinguistic interviews:

1. Tense: Preterit and Imperfect
2. Lexical Aspect: Ser and estar
3. Presence or Absence of Temporal Adverbials (as adopted by Aaron (2006, pp. 42-43)
    a. If present, distinguished as either:
        i. Specific (i.e. *mañana, un día, ayer*)
        ii. Non-Specific (i.e. *luego, después, siempre*, etc.)
4. Aspect: Perfective and Imperfective
5. Functional overlap of *Ser*/*Estar*

First, the copular verbs *ser* and *estar* were identified in the Preterit and Imperfect tenses. They were coded separately as Preterite or Imperfect to account for tense, and as *ser* or *estar* for lexical aspect. When coding the tokens for the analysis the following cases were excluded:

1. False Starts (including instances of functional priming)

   "Era super raro una que no fuese mexicana y estaba—acababa de nacer una de mis sobrinas que era de pelo rizado…"

   ["It was super weird to find a girl who wasn't Mexican and we were—one of my nieces had just been born and she had curly hair…"]

   (Participant FF25)

2. Repeats

   "Pero cuando era chiquito, cuando era bebé, decían que si…"

   ["But when he was little, when he was a baby, they would say if…"]

   (Participant CM23)

3. Clauses in the progressive form of "*estar* + present participle"

   "Estaba trabajando on the 'Strip' as a bus boy, as a mesero."

   ["I was working on the 'Strip' as a busy boy, as a waiter."]

   (Participant LM26)

4. Passive voice "*ser* + past participle"

   "siempre fui comparado con --- en una manera por eso…"

   ["I was always compared to ---, in some way which is why..."]

   (Participant JF20)

Then, the aspect of the verb was identified as perfective or imperfective as indicated by its aspect.

To find evidence of tense-aspect simplification and answer question 1, functional overlap of the Preterit and Imperfect tense was investigated in the verbs *ser* and *estar*. At this point I have only included these two stative verbs. A further investigation will include all stative and non-stative verbs. The instances in which the speakers used the predicate in place of the imperfect and vice-versa were identified as evidence of tense-aspect simplification.

To investigate the patterns in the selectivity of choosing between the preterite or the imperfect and answer question 2, the presence of a temporal adverbial as independent variable was identified within the linguistic context. Temporal adverbials have been reviewed as one of the key elements in the contextual features that aids speakers in determining what verbal morphology will be used in the clause in regards to tense and aspect (Aaron, 2006; González et. al., 2019; Fistrovic, 2016). They facilitate the cognitive load of discerning not only the proper verb morphology of tense but also to translate the aspect. The types of adverbials that were identified as adopted from Aaron (2006) to analyze how the type adverbial influenced the resulting verb tense-aspect choice within the discourse.

Also, considering both verbs translate to the English functional verb “BE”, as identified in various linguistic and acquisition studies have identified the difficulty of comprehending the distinct contexts in which they each should be used in heritage (Lingwall Odio, 2018; Reyes, 2017; Silva-Corvalán & Montanari, 2008; Schmitt & Miller, 2007) and L2 Spanish learners (Gallego & Uriagereka, 2016; Perpiñán, 2014; Perpiñán et.al., 2020; Zagona, 2015). To analyze these patterns in these two copular verbs, functional overlap was also identified and coded to find out the frequency at which

the participants used *ser* for *estar* or *estar* for *ser*. Studies have identified the various uses of *estar*, however, none have focused on the innovative uses of *ser* in heritage speakers (Silva-Corvalán 1994). Bessett (2015) investigated the use of *estar* in contexts in which *ser* was most favorable, however, this was done in analyzing the adjective types that followed these copular verbs and not in relation to the linguistic and non-linguistic variables of this investigation. Bessett (2015) identified a 20% likelihood of overlap.

Non-linguistic Variables

The following non-linguistic variables were chosen for the analysis of the token identified from the 9 participants of the investigation and displayed in Table 2.1:

1. Heritage
    a. Mexican Descent
    b. Non-Mexican Descent
    c. Mixed Descent
2. Sex
3. Age
    a. 18-23 – Young Group
    b. 24-30 – Old Group

Heritage as a sociolinguistic variable was the primary independent variable because I was interested in the variation of the speech patterns among these groups. Unlike other variationist investigations that choose an extralinguistic dimension to explore upon analyzing the data collected, as a member of the Latinx community in Las Vegas, I was drawn to consider the speech pattern varieties that exist between heritage

speakers of different national heritage and decided to conduct this investigation. Dividing the participants by heritage allowed for an analysis of how the majority Spanish-speaking community of Mexican descent may have had an influence on the speech of heritage speakers to emulate that of native speakers and their peers of Mexican descent. This feature addresses the first and second research questions.

Sex as a sociolinguistic variable was also considered because of the role it plays in language variation (Manjon-Cabeza Cruz, 2016; Shin & Otheguy, 2013). Studies have shown that females in particular have a greater influence in the development of regional dialects and the evolution of heritage speaker patterns within areas of dialect and language contact (Potowski, 2016 & 2009; Shin & Otheguy, 2013). Linguistic studies outside of the Spanish-speaking domain have also identified this trend as highlighted in Wodak and Benke (1997). Since this study is the initiation of a developing a greater understanding of the verbal speech patterns of the heritage speakers of the East Side, it was essential to also consider the patterns of the females in the study as potential carriers of the patterns that would be maintained in the future (Potowski, 2016; Shin & Otheguy, 2013).

Age as a sociolinguistic factor, was also taken into account to further discuss the development of particular speech patterns as it differentiates by age. As highlighted in Eckert (1997), age plays a central role in identifying the stage in history that these particular patterns are being identified. Although this investigation is synchronic, including age as a non-linguistic factor provides information about apparent time and could reveal variation across time or possible language change.

Quantitative Analysis

For all analyses in the current study, the dependent variable is the absolute tense of the verbs *ser* and *estar*. Once each tensed *ser* and *estar* token was coded for the linguistic and non-linguistic variables identified above, each linguistic and non-linguistic variable was quantified to identify the patterns of usage among the different variables. These results were then evaluated as they related to the absolute tense codified to identify the relationship between each linguistic and non-linguistic variable and the resulting Preterit or Imperfect tense.

Through the use of pivot tables and a series of bar charts and pie charts, the speech patterns among the participants was outlined as it relates to the linguistic and non-linguistics variables. All analyses were conducted using the absolute tense of the Preterit and Imperfect tenses as the dependent variable. In doing so, these groups were then compared and contrast to identify variation between the groups as they are divided by linguistic variable and non-linguistic variables. This data was also used to recognize similarities among all heritage speakers of the study.

At this point, no statistical analysis has been conducted due to the small number of tokens collected. A full quantitative diachronic analysis will be overseen in the future across ~~the~~ sociolinguistic generations.

Results

For analysis in the current study, the dependent variable was absolute tense. It comprises of the Preterite and Imperfect tense of Indicative forms. Given that this is a pilot project, only the stative verbs *ser* and *estar* were included in the codification. This section investigates the relation between the dependent variable and the independent linguistic and non-linguistic variables.

Linguistic Variables

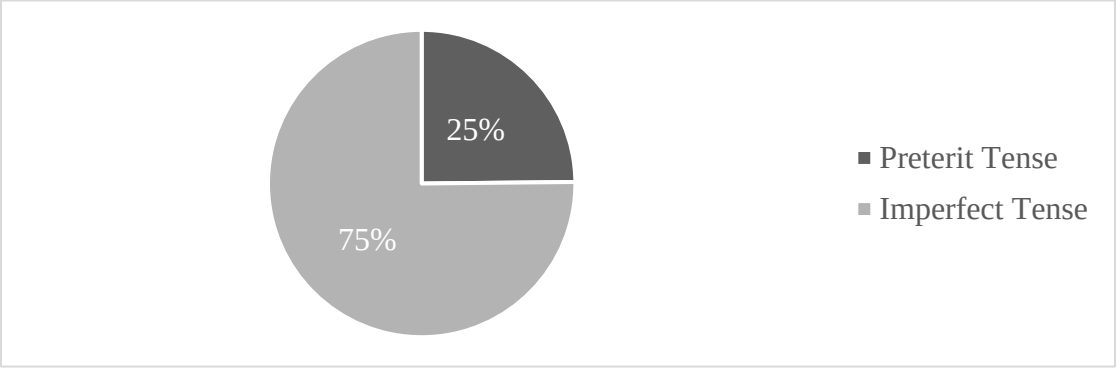
The following independent linguistic variables were selected to study the linguistic constraints on verb tense: (a) lexical aspect, (b) presence of temporal adverbials, (c) aspect, and (d) functional overlap of *ser*/*estar*. A total of 785 tokens were identified and analyzed for the following investigation, excluding false starts, repetitions and verbal periphrases.

Tense

The analysis of tense reveals an absolute tense distribution of 75% Imperfect verbs (N=590) and 25% Preterit verbs (N=195) (see Chart 3.1). This pattern of preference for the Imperfect tense in heritage speakers mirrors the findings of Silva-Corvalán (1994) in East Los Angeles, Montrul (2009) in adult bilingual speakers, and Miller (2013) among others.

Chart 3.1

Token Distribution by Absolute Tense



Lexical Aspect

First, in order to investigate the effects of lexical aspect on past tense, I present the distribution of *ser* and *estar*. Of the 785 tokens of *ser* and *estar* analyzed by the participants, there was a lexical aspect distribution of approximately 80% *ser* verbs (N=626) and 20% *estar* verbs (N=159) (see Table 3.1). These results, contrast to those of the of the 2nd-sociolinguistic generation (Group 2) of Silva-Corvalán's (1994) analysis of the use of *ser/estar* opposition in a 'fill-in-the-gap' task in which more *estar* tokens (N=853) were coded instead of *ser* tokens (N=833), although marginally. This distribution, however, matches those conducted with other bilinguals in other regions (Sánchez, 2004). As previously mentioned, the preference of Imperfect tense was seen in all tokens and seen in the distribution of the tokens (see Chart 3.2).

Table 3.1

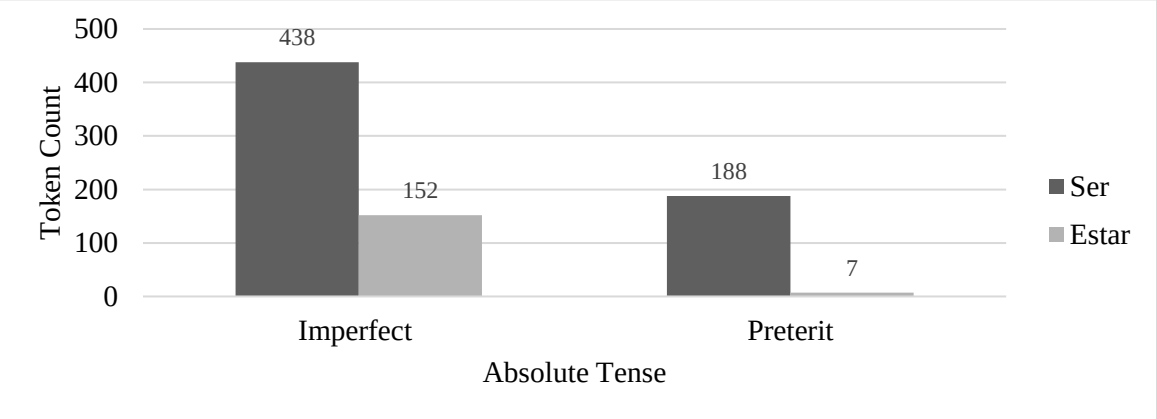
Lexical Aspect Distribution by Tense in 'ser' and 'estar'

Absolute Tense	Lexical Aspect					
	Ser		Estar		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	438	55.80%	**152**	**19.36%**	590	75.16%
Preterit	188	23.95%	**7**	**0.89%**	195	24.84%
Total	626	79.75%	159	20.25%	785	100%

The distribution displayed in the table and chart above show a preference for the Imperfect with the two stative verbs considered. Observe that this tendency is more evident with *estar* forms.

Chart 3.2

Distribution of Lexical Aspect by Absolute Tense



Temporal Adverbials

When considering sociolinguistic variable (b), the presence or absence of temporal adverbials within the context of the tokens was observed. If a temporal adverbial was present, it was distinguished as being specific (S) or non-specific (N)

(defined in “Linguistic Variables”). In both the Imperfect and Preterit tenses, a majority of the tokens were not modified by a temporal adverbial clause (see Table 3.2 and Chart 3.3). Here we notice that a majority of all verbs analyzed lacked temporal adverbials with approximately 83% of all tokens lacking specific or non-specific temporal adverbials. For the cases in which temporal adverbials were present, out of the 137 tokens, 82 were specific and 55 were non-specific. Within these cases, more than half of the tokens for both specific and non-specific temporal adverbials were coded in the Imperfect tense, with 64% of the temporal adverbials being specific 73% being non-specific. These findings contradict with those of Fistrovic (2016) as seen in intermediate/advanced language learners who were more likely to use temporal adverbials to distinguish the bounded or unbounded aspect.

Table 3.2

Distribution of Temporal Adverbials by Absolute Tense

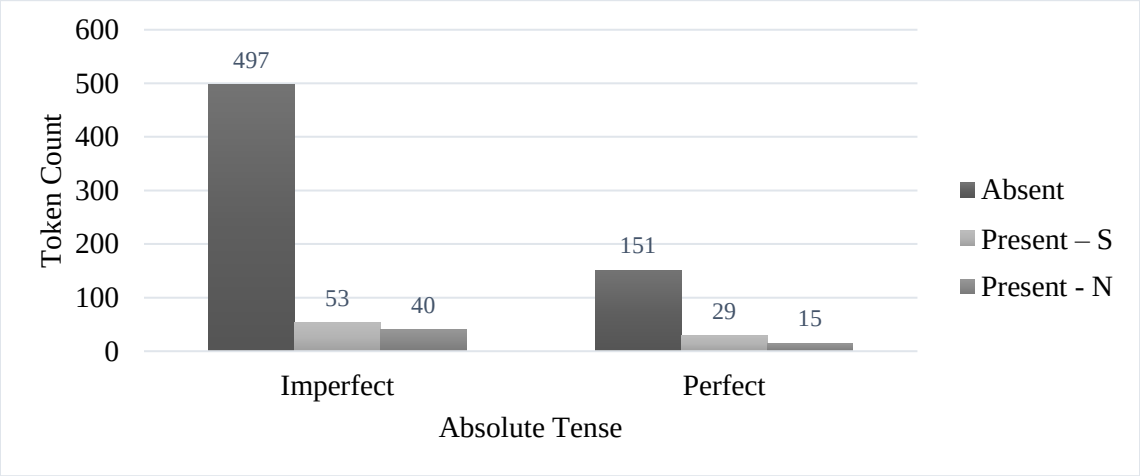
	Temporal Adverbial							
Absolute Tense	Absent		Present – S		Present - N		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	497	63.31%	**53**	**6.75%**	40	5.10%	590	75.76%
Preterit	151	19.24%	29	3.69%	15	1.91%	195	24.84%
Total	648	82.55%	82	10.45%	55	7.01%	785	100%

Notice that within the specific temporal adverbials, although only about 10% of the temporal adverbials, more of the tokens coded in the Imperfect tense (N=53) than the Preterit tense (N=29). This mismatches with the typical trend seen in specific temporal adverbials being used with a bounded aspect (perfective), that is the aspect of the Preterit

tense. Moreover, this pattern suggests how the speakers are inclined to use adverbials to impose a certain sense of activity by using adverbials to express “perfectivity”.

Chart 3.3

Distribution of Temporal Adverbials by Absolute Tense



Aspect

The resulting production of absolute tense was also measured by aspect (c). This linguistic factor was divided in two indicators: perfective and imperfective. Of the all 785 tokens, 73% were coded in the imperfective aspect (N=576) and 27% in the perfective aspect (N=209). The increased amount of tokens coded in the imperfective aspect by both the Imperfect and Preterit tense was also seen in the analysis of Silva-Corvalán (1994). These results are summarized in Table 3.3 and Chart 3.4.

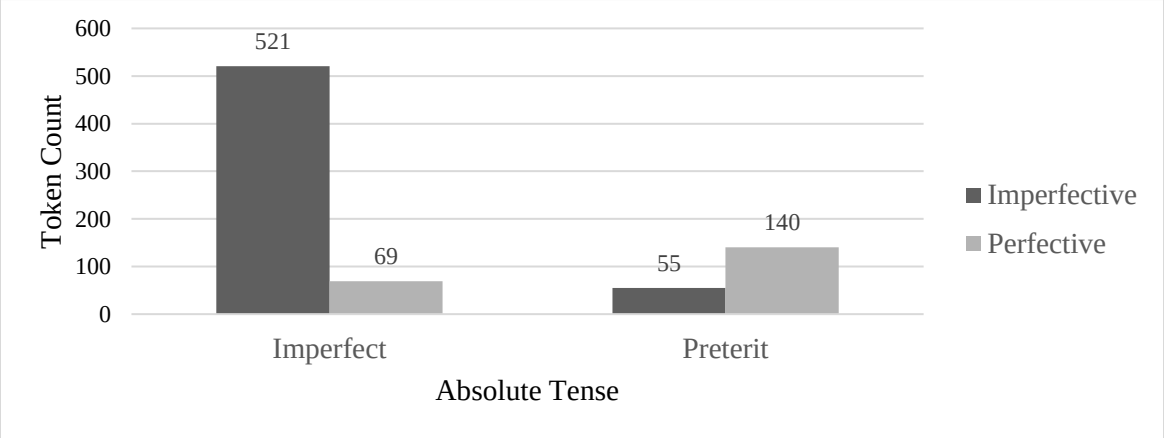
Table 3.3

Distribution of Aspect by Absolute Tense

Absolute Tense	Aspect					
	Imperfective		Perfective		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	521	66.37%	69	8.79%	590	75.16%
Preterit	55	7.01%	140	17.83%	195	24.84%
Total	**576**	**73.38%**	209	26.62%	785	100%

Chart 3.4

Distribution of Aspect by Absolute Tense



Ser and Estar Overlap

Finally, the production of the absolute tense as it relates to sociolinguistic variable (d) was evaluated as whether the participant produced a functional overlap between *ser* and *estar*. This overlap of *ser* and *estar* was more likely to occur in the Imperfect form with approximately 94% of Imperfect instances codified as presenting functional overlap; however, these occurrences were only 4.04% (N=32) of all the tokens collected (see Table 3.4 and Chart 3.5). This finding was significantly less than the portion of tokens of

estar that were coded in *ser* contexts in Bessett's (2015) investigation (N=20.8%) and Silva-Corvalán (1994) (N=34%).

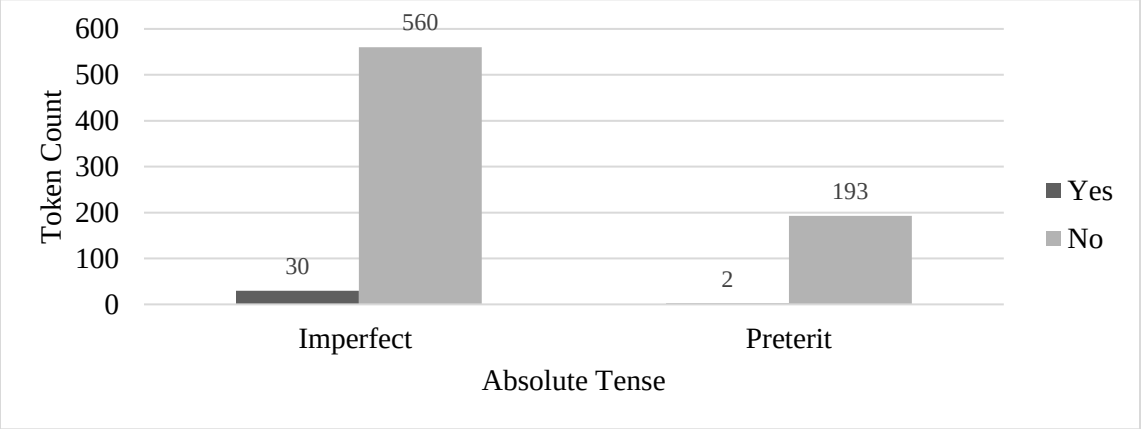
Table 3.4

Functional Overlap Distribution of 'ser' and 'estar' by Absolute Tense

Absolute Tense	Functional Overlap					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	30	3.82%	560	71.34%	590	75.16%
Preterit	2	0.25%	193	24.59%	195	24.84%
Total	32	4.08%	753	95.92%	785	100%

Chart 3.5

Functional Overlap Distribution of 'ser' and 'estar' by Absolute Tense



Non-linguistic Variables

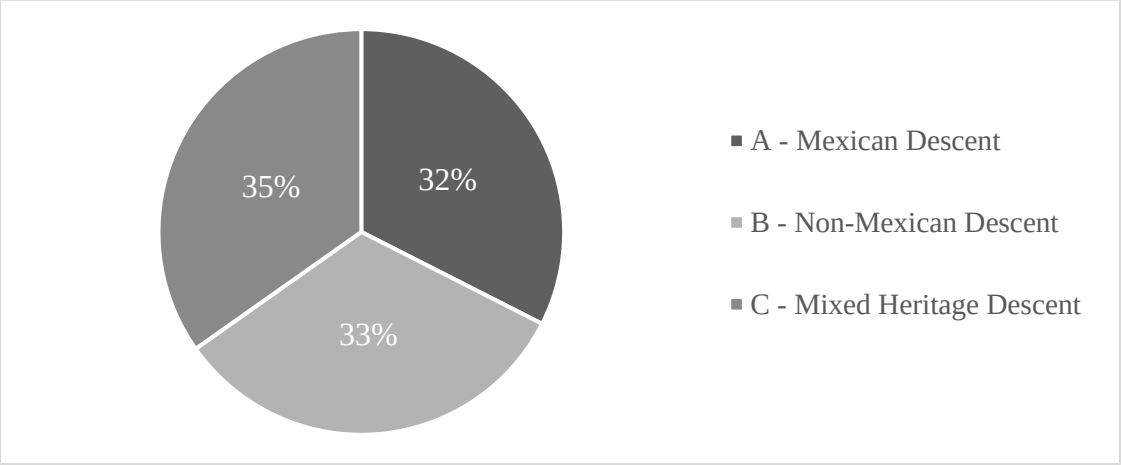
The following non-linguistic variables were considered as independent variables to study the selection of Imperfect or Preterit absolute tenses: (a) Heritage, (b) Age, and (c) Sex.

Heritage

First, approximately one-third of the data came from each heritage group of the analysis, as Chart 3.6 shows. The even distribution allows for reliable calculations to be made regarding the distribution and patterns within each group; however, as previously stated, these findings cannot be used to make any conjectures about the speech patterns of these communities from the East Side.

Chart 3.6

Token Distribution by Heritage



Observing absolute tense distribution across the heritage groups showed that all groups produce more tokens in the Imperfect than the Preterit tense; however, when looking closely at each individual group there are differences in the relationships between the heritage groups and tense. When considering the Imperfect tense (N=590), the majority of the tokens were from Heritage A participants (N=229) with 38.81% and Heritage C participants in the minority (N=158) with 26.78%. For the Preterit tense (N=195), the inverse pattern is seen with Heritage A participants (N=26) being coded for only 13.33% of all Preterit tokens and Heritage C participants (N=115) being coded for

58.97% of the Preterit tokens. This relationship between Heritage A and Heritage C is also evident when considering all tokens (N=785) as shown in Table 3.5 and Chart 3 where there is a 9.04% (N=71) difference in the Imperfect tokens and a 11.34% (N=89) difference in the Preterit tokens.

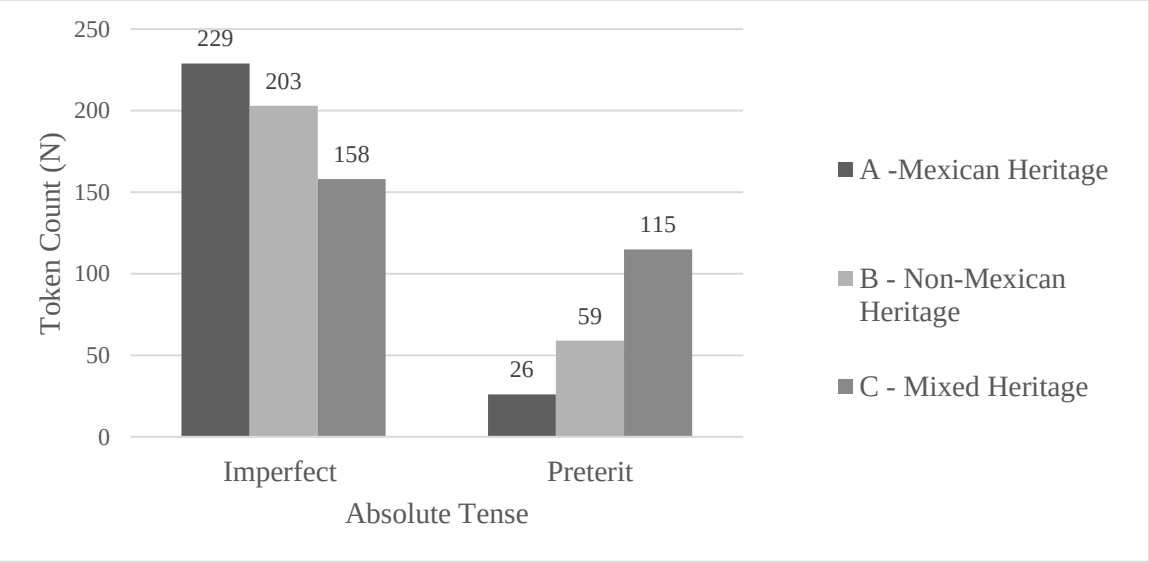
Table 3.5

Heritage Group Distribution by Absolute Tense

Absolute Tense	Heritage						Total	
	A Mexican Heritage		B Non-Mexican Heritage		C Mixed-Heritage (at least 1 parent of Mexican descent)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	**229**	**29.17%**	203	25.86%	**158**	**20.13%**	590	75.16%
Preterit	**26**	**3.31%**	59	7.52%	**115**	**14.65%**	195	24.84%
Total	255	32.48%	257	32.74%	273	34.78%	785	100%

Chart 3.7

Heritage Group Distribution by Absolute Tense



This is in contrast to the findings of Potowski (2016) in her investigation on the lexicon, discourse marker use, and phonological features of heritage speakers of mixed-heritage, had no set of features that distinguished "MexiRican" speakers from those of Mexican or Puerto Rican descent.

For both tenses, the tokens codified for Heritage B participants (Imperfect N=203/Preterit N=59) were between those of Heritage A & Heritage C tokens.

Age

Second, regarding absolute tense and age groups, there is a stark contrast between the number of tokens produced by the young (age 18-23) and old (age 24-30) participants, reflecting the uneven sample distribution with the "young" group generating approximately 59% of the data analyzed in the Age variable. Looking closely into the distribution as it relates the tense, the "young" group produced nearly 50% of all tokens the Imperfect tense. In the Preterit tense, however, the old group (N=120) produced more tokens than the young group (N=75). It should be noted, however, that the distribution between "young" and "old" age groups was uneven, with 2/3 of all participants falling within the "young" category, therefore skewing the data.

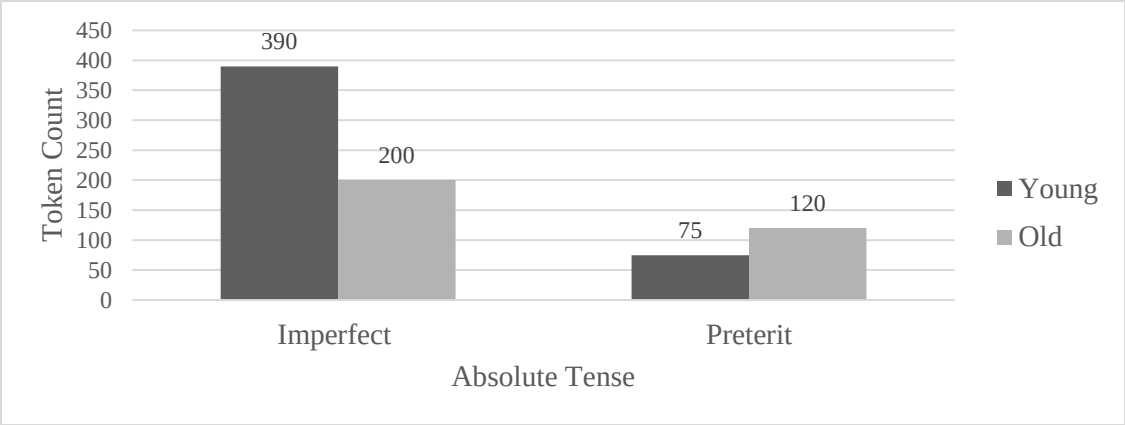
Table 3.6

Age Distribution by Absolute Tense

Absolute Tense	Age					
	Young		Old		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	390	49.68%	200	25.48%	590	75.16%
Preterit	75	9.55%	120	**15.29%**	195	24.84%
Total	465	59.24%	320	40.77%	785	100%

Chart 3.9

Age Distribution by Absolute Tense



Sex

Finally, non-linguistic variable (c) divided the participants between female and male sex to investigate the spread of the absolute tense in the tokens. Similar to the quantity of tokens distributed in non-linguistic variable (b), the distribution of participants in the female (N=6) and male (N=3) groups was uneven. Of all tokens analyzed, a majority of the data collected was from participants who identified as female (N=72.2%). Of all the tokens produced by females, 80% were in the Imperfect tense while 62% of the tokens produced by males were in the Imperfect tense. Notably, observing the tokens in the individual sex categories, females were coded to produce about four times as many Imperfect tokens (N=454) than their Preterit (N=136) counterparts. Males, on the other hand, had only a minimal difference between the number of Imperfect tokens (N=136) and Preterit tokens (N=82). Similar to non-sociolinguistic variable (b), the distribution of participants was uneven with 2/3 of all participants identifying as female, therefore skewing the data.

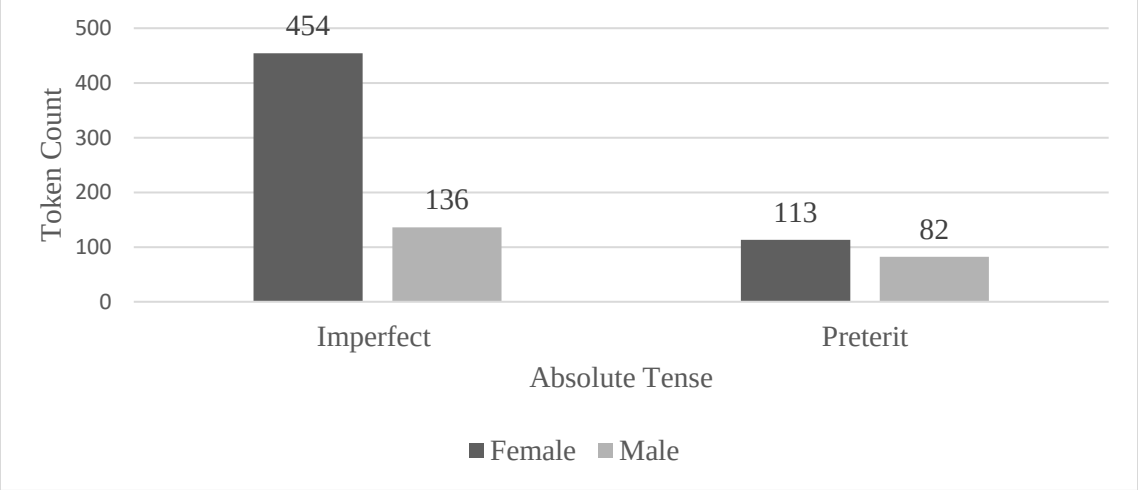
Table 3.7

Sex Distribution by Absolute Tense

	Sex					
	Female		Male		Total	
Absolute Tense	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	454	57.83%	136	17.32%	590	75.16%
Preterit	113	14.39%	82	10.45%	195	24.84%
Total	567	72.23%	218	27.77%	785	100%

Chart 3.11

Sex Distribution by Absolute Tense



The following section discusses these results in relation to the goals and research questions of this investigation. In addition, other observations and features of the speech patterns of this group will also be addressed and the implications they hold in characterizing the Spanish from the East Side of Las Vegas.

Discussion

The purpose of the investigation is to explore dialect formation in Sunrise Manor through a study of the speech patterns of heritage speakers in the verbs *ser* and *estar* in the simple past tense system of the indicative form. Through an analysis of the discourse of sociolinguistic interviews with 2nd-generation immigrants from the East Side to identify the instances of Imperfect and Preterit tense of the indicated verbs, each token was coded alongside linguistic and non-linguistic variables. The linguistic variables were (a) lexical aspect, (b) presence or absence of temporal adverbials, (c) aspect, (d) functional overlap of *ser/estar*. The non-linguistic variables were (a) heritage, (b) age, and (c) sex. Using these variables, trends were identified between the dependent variable of absolute tense and the independent linguistic and non-linguistic variables to find evidence for simplification and define the variables that factored into the simplification process to answer my two research questions.

Before moving forward with the analysis of the results, it is essential to note that these findings are of an introductory investigation on the heritage speakers of the East Side. No concrete conclusions can be made at this point due to the small sample size and uneven distribution of participants along the demographic features considered for this investigation. To make any conjectures on the speech patterns of the community, further data collection and statistical analysis is required.

Patterns of Simplification by Linguistic Variable

To identify the type of simplification that exists in the past verb forms in Spanish heritage speakers in Sunrise Manor-Las Vegas to answer my first research question, I will

address the results of the trends seen in *ser* and *estar* for each of the dependent and independent linguistic variables. These findings summarize the speech patterns that existed across all participants regardless of heritage, age, or sex (nonlinguistic variables). Also, as per the definition identified by Silva-Corvalán's (1994) definition of simplification, if there is evidence of participants having a higher frequency of certain linguistic form over another that is semantically similar, then it will be classified as evidence of simplification. This linguistic phenomenon is done primarily to minimize the cognitive load of the speakers so that a single judgment is made regarding similar contexts.

The results regarding the trends of the dependent variable of absolute tense showed that a three-quarters of all tokens coded were in the Imperfect tense in contrast to the Preterit tense. Although it could be argued that this would not serve as evidence of simplification because they are semantically different, I argue that they can be considered as proof of this phenomena in the heritage speakers of the East Side. Sociolinguistic and language acquisition studies have revealed that these are two tenses that are often interchanged as it occurs in other linguistic features among native speakers such as the Preterit and Present Perfect tense (Jara Yupanqui, 2006). Few sociolinguistic investigations on heritage speakers exist on this phenomenon, however, those referenced in language acquisition investigations suggest that this pattern of Imperfect tense usage is common among most heritage speakers in the United States. Thus, absolute tense is considered to be evidence for simplification.

The first independent variable analyzed was lexical aspect. The increased use of *ser* in stative copular verbs instead of *estar* was seen as a trend with 80% of all tokens

being coded as *ser*. This pattern of *ser* and *estar* from the East Side is seen Sánchez (2004) and was identified as a sign of simplification. Therefore, lexical aspect has been characterized as a linguistic feature prone to simplification.

The pattern of lexical aspect identified however is different from Silva-Corvalán (1994) who described a trend towards the *increased* use of *estar* instead of *ser* along the continuum of sociolinguistic generations. She stated that "speakers with a longer history of family bilingualism (Group 3)" had the greatest use of *estar* (pp. 105). Through this analysis of lexical aspect, there is suggestive of a distinction between the heritage speaker patterns of East Los Angeles and the East Side of Las Vegas. It should be noted, however, that these findings by Silva-Corvalán (1994) were taken from written-tasks and exclusively from a Mexican-American demographic.

In observing this trend in lexical aspect, it was also noted that this pattern was even more evident in the *estar*. Table 4.1 brings forward this distinction with a nearly 40% difference between the Imperfect and Preterit tense tokens of *ser* and 90% difference between the tenses of the *estar* tokens.

Table 4.1

Cross-tabulation of Lexical Aspect by Tense

Absolute Tense	Lexical Aspect			
	Ser		Estar	
	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	438/626	69.97%	**152/159**	**95.56%**
Preterit	188/626	30.03%	**7/159**	**4.02%**
Total	626		159	

This is suggestive to the nuance of *estar,* which as identified by Silva-Corvalán (1994), carries semantic load not only with *ser* as another copular verb, but also because it can be used within three different pragmatic contexts. Given that most heritage speakers are more likely to describe narratives in the imperfect, in order to further minimize the cognitive load of distinguishing the context for the use of *estar*, the speakers are more likely to use *estar* in the Imperfect tense. This is also suggestive evidence of dialect levelling[13] occurring on the East Side of Las Vegas among 2nd-generation immigrant Spanish speakers, however, it is possible that this could have been triggered by cognitive reasons.

Next, the tokens were coded for the presence or absence of temporal adverbial, in which it was made clear that there was a trend of absence (%=82.55%) of this phenomenon in the participants' speech. The specific and non-specific temporal adverbials coded comprised of only 17.46% (N=137) of the 785 *ser* and *estar* tokens. This pattern has been identified in native speakers who had minimal use of temporal adverbials in comparison to intermediate/advanced language learners which used the adverbials to aid in indicating an aspectual distinction (Fistrovic, 2016). The minimal use of temporal adverbials by all participants indicates that the participants are able to comprehend the temporal aspect by the morphology of the verb. The absence of the temporal adverbial, therefore, is not considered as evidence of simplification in this sample size.

[13] Dialect levelling is defined as "the eradication of socially or locally marked variants (both within and between linguistic systems) in conditions of social or geographical mobility and resultant dialect contact," (Milroy & Llamas, 2013, pp. 431).

In regards to aspect, although the results weren't entirely in line with those of Silva-Corvalán, the predominant use of the imperfective aspect for both the Imperfect and Preterit tense show a favorability for this aspect. Therefore, it serves as further evidence of simplification in the tense/aspect distinction of the verbs *ser* and *estar* in this population.

The cross-tabulation analysis in Table 4.2 reveals the extent to which the participants showed a preference for the imperfective aspect. Although the Preterit tense is used in perfective aspects, nearly 30% (N=55) of all Preterit tense tokens were coded in the imperfective. These results mirror those of Silva-Corvalán (1994). Her analysis, however, consisted of both stative and non-stative verbs. This study focuses on only two stative verb forms. In contrast, the Imperfect tense showed only about 10% of it's tokens in the perfective aspect. The link the data shows between the Imperfect tense and imperfective aspect further supports the findings of Silva-Corvalán (1994), Montrul (2002, 2009), Miller (2013). The increased use of the imperfective aspect, particularly in the Preterit tense, contributes to the comprehension of how heritage speakers in the United States subjectively view and depict the past in progression rather than bound events as the perfective aspect would suggest.

Finally, the patterns of functional overlap in *ser* and *estar* was also codified. The results revealed a pattern that was contrary to those of other investigations that studied this occurrence. Since there is a low frequency of instances of functional overlap, this cannot be used as evidence of simplification.

Table 4.2

Cross-tabulation of Aspect by Tense

Absolute Tense	Aspect				
	Imperfective		Perfective		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Imperfect	521/590	88.31%	**69/590**	**11.69%**	590
Preterit	**55/195**	**28.21%**	140/195	71.79%	195
Total	576		209		785

Contrary to the findings on lexical aspect, the data leads me to consider that the participants do have an understanding of the uses of *estar* despite the nuances that exist in defining its use in particular linguistic contexts. In comparing the results with Silva-Corvalán (1994) which had an even distribution of *ser* tokens (N=833) and *estar* tokens (N=853), of these instances 34% of the *estar* tokens were seen in cases where the normative *ser* was deemed appropriate in Spanish. In order to concretely identify a unique dialect variation more tokens must be collected from more participants to see if the absence of functional overlap of these copula verbs holds true.

Overall, the results suggest that there is evidence of simplification in the heritage speakers of the East Side. The patterns were partially similar to those of Silva-Corvalán (1994) and others as it related to the dependent variable of (a) absolute tense and the independent linguistic variables of (b) lexical aspect, (c) presence of temporal adverbials, (d) aspect, and (e) functional overlap of *ser*/*estar*. Variables (a), (b), and (d) indicated that there was simplification in these elements of the speech of the participants.

Patterns of Simplification by Non-Linguistic Variable

To identify the factors, linguistic or non-linguistic, that accounted for the type and stage of simplification in the perfective/imperfective features of *ser/estar* in the data and answer the second research question, each linguistic and non-linguistic variable was analyzed alongside the simple past tense forms. Since the focus of this investigation is on the Imperfect and Preterit tenses of the indicative form, I searched for evidence of simplification in these two variations that were characteristic of Stage 3 in the "Stages of Simplification and Loss" identified by Silva-Corvalán (1994, pp. 30).

After analyzing the dependent linguistic variables, we can conclude that the variables identified above as types of simplification are connected to the simplification of the absolute tense of *ser/estar*. As for the dependent non-linguistic variables, a similar analysis to that conducted above was done through a sociolinguistic lens to see whether (a) heritage, (b) age, and/or (c) sex could be considered as influencing the simplification of the Imperfect and Preterit tense in the heritage speakers of the East Side.

First, as shown in the analysis of absolute tense alongside non-linguistic variable (a) heritage, all groups showed preference for the Imperfect tense; however, when divided by heritage groups A (Mexican heritage), B (Non-Mexican heritage), and C (Mixed heritage (at least 1 parent of Mexican descent)), there appeared to be trends within each heritage group. As noted in the results, there appears to be an inverse relationship between Heritage A and Heritage C in the use of the Imperfect and Preterit tense. Although the first analysis suggested that Absolute Tense showed suggestive signs of leveling, when the data is split by heritage group it is clear that more tokens in the Imperfect tense (N=229) were produced by Heritage A group (N=229) than Heritage C

group (N=158). To see why this was occurring each of the tokens of the individuals was explored to provide an explanation.

In analyzing absolute tense on an individual basis, notwithstanding, this ratio of 75% Imperfect Tense tokens to 25% Preterit Tense tokens was not homogeneous across all individuals (particularly in the Heritage C group). Of the 80 *ser* and *estar* tokens coded for participant LM26, 82.5% (N=66) of the tokens were in the Preterit tense, thus dramatically contradicting the trends identified by the participants as a whole (see Table 4.4). Since these tokens made up 57.39% (N=66) of all Preterit tokens coded for Heritage C (N=115), it is clear that LM26 swayed the data to reflect Heritage C as producing more tokens in the Preterit tense. When considering the distribution of tokens from each individual in particular, although LM26 produced the least amount of *ser* and *estar* token (see Chart 4.1), they made a significant impact on the analysis of Heritage C absolute tense production. De Kock (1990) argued that Mexican varieties of Spanish had more instances of Preterit tense than Imperfect tense in narratives, suggesting that this participant mirrored Mexican speech patterns in his home. Contrary to Shin & Otheguy (2013) which argues that heritage speakers are more likely to adopt the linguistic characteristics of their mother, LM26's mother is of Salvadoran origin.

The analysis conducted on the non-linguistic variables of sex and age, unlike heritage, provided an uneven distribution of participants in the groups divided. Therefore, these results cannot reliably lean into indications of speech patterns within these group. Nevertheless, as shown by the cross tabulations within these groups and analysis of the individuals in the non-linguistic groups I still searched for trends across the individuals in the Imperfect and Preterit tenses of *ser* and *estar*.

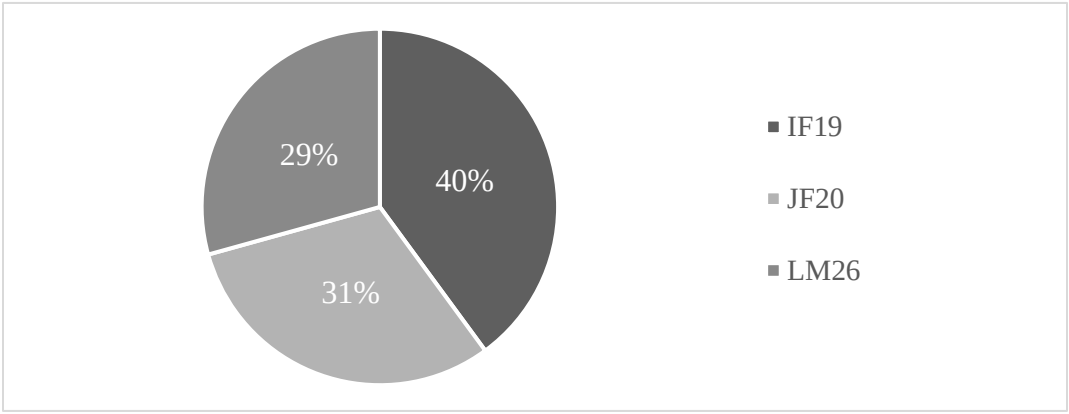
Table 4.4

Heritage C Distribution by Absolute Tense and Individual

Absolute Tense	Participant							
	IF19		JF20		LM26		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	64	58.72%	80	95.24%	14	17.5%	158	57.88%
Preterit	45	41.28%	4	4.76%	**66**	**82.5%**	115	42.12%
Total	109		84		80		273	

Chart 4.1

Token Distribution by Heritage C Participants



Age as a non-linguistic variable suggested that both age groups use the Imperfect tense of *ser* and *estar* in discourse and supports the trend of simplification in Absolute Tense; notwithstanding, as shown by Table 4.5, in the tokens for each of the young and old age group, the old age group (N=75) had more than a 20% increase in instances of Preterit tense use than the young age group (N=120). Although not as dramatically impacted as it was for Heritage C above due to the distribution of tokens in the old age

group (see Chart 4.2), the tokens of LM26 have most likely shifted the data within this non-linguistic variable to show this tendency of use in the Preterit tense. Note how different the tokens coded for the Preterit tense varies for each individual (see Table 4.6). This further shows the linguistic exposure and biography of each individual is unique and creates distinct variation among individuals, despite the holistic trend of Imperfect tense use.

Table 4.5

Cross-tabulation of Age by Tense

Absolute Tense	Age				
	Young		Old		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Imperfect	390 /465	83.87%	200 /320	62.5%	590
Preterit	75 /465	**16.13%**	120 /320	**37.5%**	195
Total	465		320		785

Chart 4.2

Token Distribution by Old Group Participants

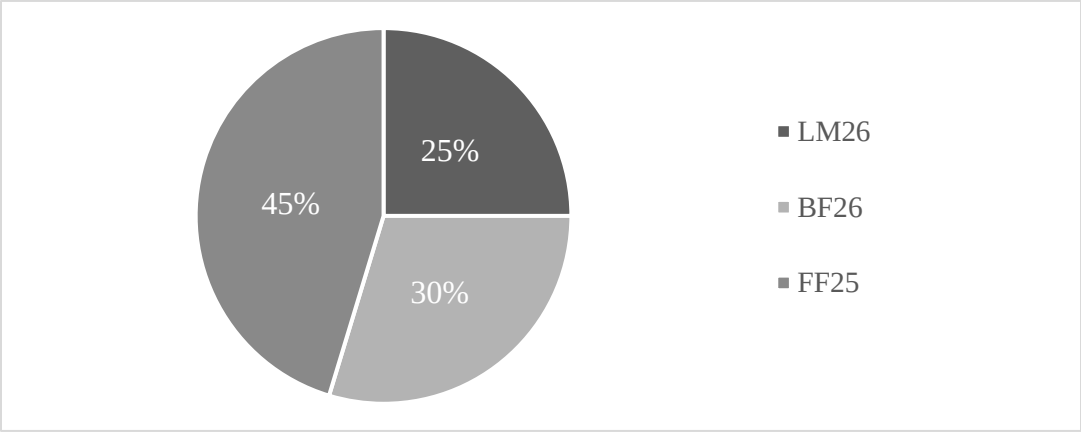


Table 4.6

Old Group Distribution by Absolute Tense and Individual

Absolute Tense	Participant							
	LM26		BF26		FF25		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	14	17.5%	91	95.79%	95	65.52%	200	62.5%
Preterit	**66**	**82.5%**	**4**	**4.21%**	**50**	**34.48%**	120	37.5%
Total	80		95		145		320	

Finally, sex as a non-linguistic variable further supports the simplification pattern of the use of the Imperfect tense in the heritage speakers in both groups. As shown by Table 4.5, in the tokens for each of the female and male groups, the male group (N=82) had about an 18% increase in instances of Preterit tense use than the young age group (N=113). Notably, there is minimal distinction between the Preterite (N=136) and Imperfect (N=82) tense tokens in the old age group. Similar to the previous two non-linguistic variables, this is due to the tokens of LM26. Considering their data (N=66) was 37% of all male tokens (N=218) (see Chart 4.3) and 80% of all Preterite tokens (N=82) (see Chart 4.4), their tokens have swayed the results of the male demographic.

Table 4.7

Cross-tabulation of Sex by Tense

Absolute Tense	Sex				
	Female		Male		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Imperfect	454 /567	80.07%	136 /218	62.39%	590
Preterit	**113 /567**	**19.93%**	**82 /218**	**37.61%**	195
Total	567		218		785

Chart 4.3

Token Distribution by Male Participants

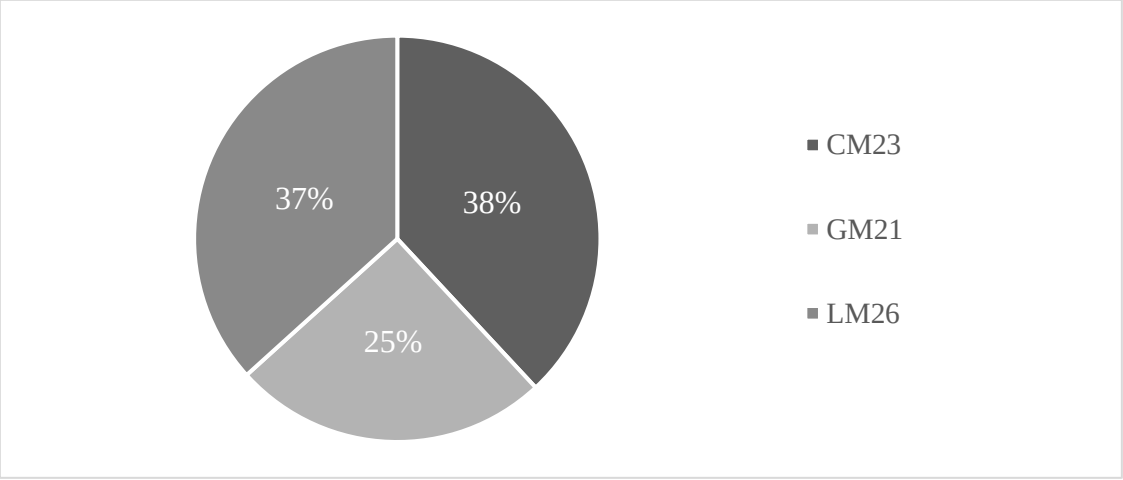


Chart 4.4

Preterit Token Distribution by Male Participants

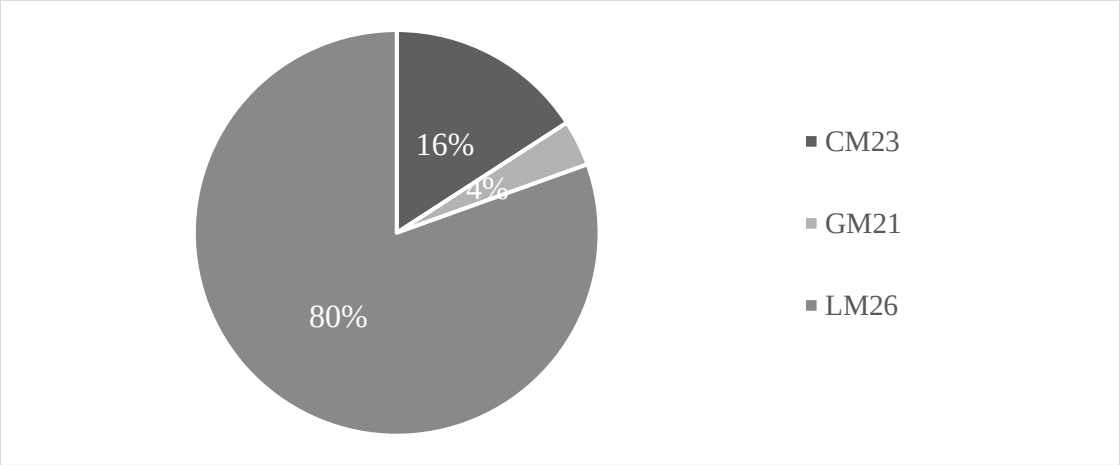


Table 4.8

Male Group Distribution by Absolute Tense and Individual

Absolute Tense	Participant							
	CM23		GM21		LM26		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Imperfect	70	84.34%	52	94.55%	14	17.5%	136	62.39%
Preterit	**13**	**15.66%**	**3**	**5.45%**	**66**	**82.5%**	82	37.61%
Total	83		55		80		218	

As it relates to sex, it is possible that when conducting the sociolinguistic interview, male participants may have been less inclined to provide a subjective perception of their narrative because I am a female. Since I am an outsider, this may have influenced how the participants interacted with me. This phenomenon has been identified in Manjon-Cabeza Cruz (2016).

In conclusion, I argue that evidence of simplification in Absolute Tense also exists across all non-linguistic variables of study, that is heritage, age, and sex. Although, there were limitations to these results as shown by the uneven distribution of data and the outlier tokens collected from LM26, a majority trend of Imperfect tense is evident. Note that in order to corroborate these trends across the entire 2nd-generation speech community of the East Side and within each of these sociolinguistic groups, more data collection and statistical analysis is required to conclude any significant findings.

Further Observations

In addition to identifying the relationships that exist between the non-linguistic variables and Absolute Tense, these variables were also used to see if there were any trends within each group in non-linguistic variable (a) heritage. Trends seen along the other linguistic variables that were coded, were analyzed to search for further evidence of dialect formation on the East Side. The major findings are discussed below.

The presence or absence of temporal adverbials within each of the heritage groups there appears to be further evidence of dialect leveling across heritage speakers. Regardless of heritage difference, each group had a similar number of tokens coded for the absence and presence of specific/non-specific adverbials (see Table 4.9). Considering there is minimal variation, particularly in Heritage B which is of non-Mexican descent, the data leads me to consider that this may be characteristic of the Mexican native speakers that make up the majority of the demographic makeup of the East Side. Regional variation in the use of temporal adverbials has been identified in studies such as, González et al. (2018) which identified variation in the use of temporal adverbials between native speakers in Spain, Peru, and Argentina. I argue that this trend provides

further evidence of a regional dialect formation on the East Side in the use temporal adverbials in the heritage speakers of the East Side.

Table 4.9

Token Distribution of Temporal Adverbials in Heritage Groups

Heritage	Temporal Adverbial							
	Absent		Present – S		Present - N		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A (Mexican Descent)	202	**25.73%**	32	**4.08%**	21	**2.68%**	255	32.48%
B (Non-Mexican Descent)	214	**27.26%**	26	**3.31%**	17	**2.17%**	257	32.74%
C (Mixed-Descent)	232	**29.55%**	24	**3.06%**	17	**2.17%**	273	34.78%
Total	648	82.55%	82	10.45%	55	7.01%	785	100%

Although the participants had very few instances of functional overlap in *ser* and *estar*, I found it notable that those that did have instances of overlap were those of Heritage A (Mexican-descent). Moreover, those of Heritage C (Mixed-Descent) had a frequency that fell in between Heritage A and B. As shown in Bessett (2015) in investigating the use of *estar* between heritage speakers in Arizona and monolingual speakers in Mexico, there was no evidence of distinction in innovative uses of *estar* between the two groups demonstrating how both groups used *estar* and *ser* in distinct contexts. Taking Bessett's (2015) findings, I argue that similar to the use of temporal adverbials, minimal functional overlap may be a trend seen in the 1st-generation Mexican community of the East Side that has contributed to dialect formation in the heritage speaker community.

Moreover, in reviewing the discourse of the nine participants, other linguistic trends outside of the variables that were originally considered were identified. Although not tied to the particular variables of focus for this investigation, these unique characteristics are linguistic features that distinguish this speech community from the "standard" Spanish variation that is taught and used by most native speaker groups.

Five of the participants had instances in which they used the verb *estar* instead of *haber* (see example (1)), which has been observed by Silva-Corvalán & Montanair (2008). Participant JF20, however, used *ser* instead of *haber* (see example (2)).

(1) *"serían cuando no* ***estaba [había]*** *mucho el calor…" (*Participant LM26)

["it would have been when it wasn't too hot…"]

(2) *"nos cansamos muy rápido porque era mucha gente…"* (Participant JF20)

["we became tired very quickly because there were a lot of people…"]

Other instances that show evidence of convergence with English grammar and discourse are instances of *ser + como*, seen in which parallel the construction of to be + like in English (see example (3)).

(3) *"fue como—no sé—como el despertar cultural…"* (Participant FF25)

["it was like—I don't know—like a cultural awakening…"]

Conclusion

In conclusion, this sociolinguistic investigation has provided a preliminary phase of developing a map of the linguistic speech patterns of Las Vegas. To investigate the speech patterns of the most predominantly Hispanic community of Southern Nevada, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What type of simplification exist in past verb forms in Spanish heritage speakers in Sunrise Manor-Las Vegas?
2. What factors, linguistic or non-linguistic, account for the type and stages of simplification in perfective/imperfective features of *ser*/*estar* in the data?

After a close analysis of the linguistic data of 9 heritage speakers from the East Side, the questions have been addressed in the following manner:

1. Evidence of simplification in past verb forms of *ser* and *estar* in Spanish heritage speakers in Sunrise Manor-Las Vegas is seen in the following linguistic variables:
    a. Absolute tense with a higher frequency of the imperfect token use
    b. Lexical aspect with a higher use of *ser* copular verbs
    c. Aspect with a higher frequency of imperfective aspect tokens.
2. The factors that account for the type and stages of simplification in perfective/imperfective features of *ser/estar* in the data are:
    a. Linguistic factors
        i. Absolute tense
        ii. Lexical aspect
        iii. Aspect

b. Non-linguistic factors

i. Heritage

ii. Age

iii. Sex

Language communicates history and regional culture. This undergraduate thesis serves as a pilot study as to how heritage speakers in the East Side of Las Vegas reveal the wealth of cultural diversity in the region. The distinct variations seen across linguistic and non-linguistic variables, show how their individual biographies as well as the demographics of their family and community have an impact on how they communicate their heritage. The evidence shown of simplification adds to the literature of simplification in heritage speakers and offers new findings on the relationship between absolute tense and ethnic heritage. In considering heritage as a non-linguistic variable, this investigation highlights the similarities that exist in a diverse regional community as well as the particular nuances that exist within each individual's language history. Here we see as Fought (2013) argues, "how different elements of the language system play a role in the construction of ethnicity and how these individuals form their identity as it relates to the nationality of their parents" (p. 14n).

Like many other studies being conducted during this time, this study serves as a linguistic portrait of individuals who are living through the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The sociolinguistic interviews have touched upon the lives of the participants before the pandemic as well as since they had to go into quarantine. Moreover, these interviews also reflect the linguistic impact of this pandemic on the East Side heritage speakers. Having found themselves spending more time in their Spanish-speaking households, their

Spanish speaking patterns of the participants, who would otherwise be surrounded by the dominant linguistic English-speaking community, may have shifted. Nevertheless, since it had only been two to three months in isolation at the time of the interview, their patterns are more reflective of the Spanish speaking patterns heard in school, the neighborhood, and in their family. As argued by Montrul & Silva-Corvalán (2019), social contexts play a pivotal role in language acquisitions particularly for heritage speakers and this pandemic has certainly shifted the Spanish varieties they listening and emulating.

Studies such as this provide the framework to understand the linguistic practices that exist in the Latinx community of Las Vegas. With the Clark County School District having one of the highest growing emerging bilingual population, it is essential for teachers both native and non-native to Las Vegas to be aware of the language patterns of the community. This will allow for them to be able to see how students are interacting with their families and their community, so that they can connect with Latinx students and their families. More specifically, often Spanish language courses taught to Heritage Speakers punish students for the varieties they speak that diverge from the standards set in place by the Real Academia Española. Investigations such as this, reveal the wealth of linguistic diversity that exists in the community and helps shift the conversation to consider these oral varieties to be seen as valuable rather than a deficit.

Studying the dialect contact community of the East Side allowed me to see quantitatively, as I have heard from a local's perspective, evidence of dialect formation; however, no concrete conclusions can be made at this time. As stated previously, considering this investigation consisted of a small sample size and investigated only two verb forms, these results cannot speak for the speech patterns of the entire 2nd-generation

community of the East Side. Further collection of data is required to concretely identify the process of dialect formation on the East Side. Nevertheless, this exploratory research has provided some unique insights into the linguistic patterns of the Latinx community of the East Side and initiates a trajectory for future sociolinguistic research.

Future Directions

In order to have an accurate perception of the "Spanish from the East Side," these findings should be compared with corpus data collected from native Spanish speakers in the East Side, Mexico, and other Latin American heritages implicated in the study (Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Salvadoran). This will provide more evidence of dialect formation among the 2nd-generation immigrant community and insight on how they have acquired these patterns. This comparative method could provide further evidence to explain the speech patterns of participants of Heritage C (Mixed-Heritage) and see if similar trends exists cross regionally. Trends such as those identified by Potowski (2016) who found that Latinx children born in the US will adopt the speech patterns of their mother not their fathers. Methodologies comparing heritage speakers and native speakers has been used to identify dialect formation in Hispanic populations to draw conclusions on the influence of age of exposure to Spanish and sociodemographic factors as evidence of simplification (Martinez Mira, 2006). This has also been customary of linguistic investigations in other non-Romance languages (Chang & Yao, 2016; Love, 2016; Yang, 2015).

The sociolinguistic interviews collected should also be analyzed further to characterize all the verbal tokens of the discourse. Doing so would comply with Labov's Principle of Accountability to take into consideration all non-occurrences of the use of

ser and *estar* to translate a stative lexical aspect in addition to all other verb forms. Considering the elements outside of the envelop of variation, has been supported by Tagliamonte (2011) and Aaron (2006), to reveal the diachronic shifts that occur between 1st and 2nd generation speakers. Looking into other non-linguistic data collected through the biographical and demographic sheets could also reveal trends across other variables. Studies such as Montrul (2009), identified a correlation between the proficiency and overlap with 46.6% of the participants classified as having "low proficiency" made errors (p. 251). Future investigations could consider the proficiency level of participants as it correlates to see if this trend continues.

Moreover, although this study provides unique insight into the linguistic effects on this population given the sociohistorical conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, future studies should consider a sociohistorical diachronic methodology. Tagliamonte & Poplack (1988) were able to accurately track a pattern of overgeneralization in the English spoken by the Black community in Samaná. In doing so, a variationist comparative method could be used similar to Poplack & Tagliamonte (2001) and Tagliamonte (2002) to tract the formation of speech patterns on the East Side. Conducting a synchronic investigation could reveal the impact quarantine practices have had on the language patterns of heritage speakers spending more time in their Spanish-speaking households, who would otherwise be surrounded by the dominant linguistic English-speaking community. Moreover, the phase in which this community may be experiencing dialect formation may be identified.

Linguistic investigations offer an insightful view into the way communities perceive the world and perform their various identities. As we see the evolution of

language over time, we also see the evolution of identity. The Latinx community is the largest minority community of the United States, however, it is not a monolith (Lipski, 2008). Each Latin American culture carries with it a unique variation of their language whether it is Spanish, Portuguese, or Indigenous language. Documenting how they speak within these spaces of dialect contact shows how these groups "negotiate their identities linguistically… [and] see how elements of language in contact settings are woven together overlap time to create new varieties" (Fought, 2013, pp. 19). Considering the unique migration patterns of different Latinx communities more in-depth and their history in the region, may have implications on the process of dialect formation in East Las Vegas.

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