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## Spanish-Language Print Media Use As an Indicator of Acculturation

*More than three-fourths of  
Hispanics never read Spanish-  
language and newspapers.  
Evidence is mixed on relation  
of use of Spanish-language  
media and acculturation.*

► Publishers are increasingly interested in better ways to communicate with the Hispanic market and often consider publishing bilingual or Spanish monolingual newspapers and magazines to serve the Hispanic audience better. Communication researchers have also begun to pay special attention to this important cultural subgroup.<sup>1</sup>

This interest by media managers in Spanish-language publications, however, assumes that the Hispanic audience has not become fully acculturated into the U.S. mainstream. Acculturation has been defined as an ethnic individual becoming acquainted with and adopting the "norms and values of salient reference groups of the new society."<sup>2</sup> As Weinstock pointed out in his study of Hungarian refugees, use of English-language print media is an indicator of an individual's level of acculturation. Use of print media seems to be a better indicator of acculturation than use of broadcast media,<sup>3</sup> probably because reading a new language is more difficult

than understanding oral communication.

Young Yun Kim says that communication is both a cause of and an indicator of an individual's level of acculturation, with the individual's ethnic mass media use decreasing over time as he or she becomes more acculturated. In Kim's theory, acculturation and communication are interdependent and inseparable processes, so that changes in communication patterns reflect changes in acculturation.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, we may adopt Hispanics' Spanish-language print media use as an indicator of their level of acculturation into the U.S. culture. If Hispanics are fully acculturated, then there is little reason for newspaper and magazine publishers to offer bilingual or Spanish monolingual editions. This study seeks to determine the extent of acculturation among Hispanics by studying Hispanics' media use patterns. We will also seek to discover the demographic predictors of that acculturation and will compare Hispanics' media use to that of Anglos.

Several recent studies have looked at language and media use among Hispanics. A 1981-82 voter registration survey among Hispanics in Los Angeles and San Antonio found that 89% of Hispanics are either

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication sponsored a mini-plenary at its August 1984 meeting in Gainesville, Fla. on "The U.S. Latino Audience: How to Communicate with Them."

<sup>2</sup> Young Yun Kim, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Communication-Acculturation," pp 436-453, Dan Nimmo, ed., *Communication Yearbook*, 3, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> S. Alexander Weinstock, "Some Factors That Retard or Accelerate the Rate of Acculturation," *Human Relations*, 17.321-40, 1964

<sup>4</sup> Kim, *op. cit.*

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bilingual or speak only English, with only 11% relying solely on Spanish. In this study, de la Garza and Brischetto showed that the Spanish monolinguals were concentrated within the older part of the Hispanic population,<sup>5</sup> and there were clear relationships between education (and income) and the likelihood that an individual was a Spanish monolingual.

A 1981 study by Yankelovich, Skelly and White for the SIN National Spanish Television Network found that many Hispanics relied on the Spanish language, with 90% of Hispanics speaking Spanish, 43% speaking "only enough English to get by," and only 10% of Hispanics speaking English only or primarily. Spanish-language media are an "excellent way to reach Hispanic-Americans," the report said, with half of Hispanics reporting that they use English-language media. Yankelovich, *et al.*, also found that Hispanics spent more time with English-language print media than with Spanish-language print media.<sup>6</sup> In a 1984 replication, they discovered that use of Spanish-language print media had declined since 1981.<sup>7</sup>

Another picture of Hispanic language and media use is presented in a 1983 book by Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon and Korzeny.<sup>8</sup> In a comprehensive series of studies, the authors looked at both Hispanic and Anglo language and media use and found that 80% of Hispanics are bilingual, with 14% reporting speaking only Spanish. The addition of data on Anglo media use is a particularly useful part of the Greenberg, *et al.*, study. Anglos did consume more print media than Hispanics, but those Hispanics who did read newspapers and magazines spent as much

time as the Anglos with those publications in a given day.<sup>9</sup>

These studies indicate that Hispanics are becoming increasingly acculturated, with Spanish-language print media losing its importance more for younger Hispanics than for the older generation.

Our study was designed to test these hypotheses:

1) Anglos read newspapers and magazines more frequently than Hispanics.

2) Anglos spend more time than Hispanics reading newspapers and magazines on days when they do read.

If Hispanics are totally acculturated, then we would expect their overall print media use to be similar to Anglos' overall print media use, other things being equal.

3) Hispanics read more newspapers and magazines in Spanish than Anglos do.

4) Hispanics place more importance on having a Spanish-language daily newspaper to read than Anglos do.

If Hispanics are totally acculturated, then they will be no more likely to use and prefer Spanish-language print media than Anglos do.

5) The older a Hispanic is, the more Spanish-language print media he will read.

6) The older a Hispanic is, the more importance he will place on having a Spanish-language newspaper to read.

We believe that age will be an important predictor of acculturation level, with cultural changes occurring in the younger generations before they occur in the older ones. Therefore, if the Hispanic population is in the process of becoming acculturated, then we should see use and support of Spanish-language publications coming primarily from older Hispanics. Younger Hispanics should use the media differently than older Hispanics do; young Hispanics should use the media similarly to young Anglos.

<sup>5</sup> Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Robert R. Brischetto, *The Mexican American Electorate: A Demographic Profile* (San Antonio, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, 1982), pp. 13-18.

<sup>6</sup> Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc., "Spanish USA: A Study of the Hispanic Market in the United States," a report to the SIN National Spanish Television Network, June 1981, pp. 4-10.

<sup>7</sup> Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc., "Spanish USA 1984: A Study of the Hispanic Market," a report to the SIN National Spanish Television Network, 1984.

<sup>8</sup> Bradley S. Greenberg, Michael Burgoon, Judee K. Burgoon, and Felipe Korzeny, *Mexican Americans and the Mass Media*, (Norwood N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Greenberg, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-104.

### Method

Like the Greenberg, *et al.*, study, we interviewed both Hispanics and Anglos, oversampling the Hispanics. Unlike previous studies, however, we did not restrict our sample to large urban areas where many Hispanics live, but instead interviewed people from all over the state of Texas. The primary sample was drawn via a two-stage random digit dialing process.<sup>10</sup>

Telephone interviews were completed by professional interviewers during the spring of 1984. All interviewers were bilingual in Spanish and English, and the questionnaire included English and Spanish versions side-by-side on each page. The first two questions were designed to find out which language the respondent was most comfortable in using for the interview. Interviewers were encouraged to switch between languages as necessary for the respondent. Interviews covered the following:

*Print media use.* Frequently of use and time spent with television, radio, newspapers and magazines, regardless of language used.

- Number of magazines subscribed to or read regularly.
- Time spent per day reading magazines.
- Number of days a week that R reads a daily newspaper.
- Time spent per day reading daily newspapers.

*Spanish-language print media use.* Estimates concerning actual use of Spanish-language print media as well as the importance of Spanish-language newspapers.

- How many of the newspapers and magazines that R reads are in Spanish. Possible responses for these questions range from none of the time to all or most of the time.
- Importance for R of having a daily newspaper to read in Spanish. Responses ranged from not important at all to very important.

• Access to Spanish-language print media. We determined this by calling public libraries and Chambers of Commerce in the respondents' areas (as determined by the first three digits of their zip codes).

### Demographic measures.

• R's race (white, black, American Indian or Alaskan native, Asian or Pacific Islander).

• Is R's ethnic origin Hispanic or not? A respondent was coded as Hispanic if he said that he was wholly or partially of Hispanic origin. A respondent was coded as Anglo if he said he was white and not Hispanic. Respondents of other races were excluded from the analyses presented in this paper.

- R's education level.
- R's total family income.
- R's age.

### Results

There is mixed support for the idea that the Hispanic audience is unacculturated, needing and wanting Spanish-language newspapers and magazines. Clear differences in media use according to age indicate that young Hispanic adults may be more acculturated than their parents or grandparents.

<sup>10</sup> Two hundred telephone exchanges were drawn at random without replacement from the 2,638 Texas exchanges listed in the AT&T Long Lines directory for January 1983. As part of the pretesting procedures of the survey, telephone calls were made to random numbers within the various exchanges until a valid residence number was obtained in each exchange. The last two digits were dropped from each residence number thus obtained to make a "seed number." Each seed number was turned into a cluster of 20 numbers by adding two random numbers to the seed and repeating this operation 20 times. After 800 interviews had been obtained, those clusters that produced Hispanic respondents were over-sampled in an attempt to reach other Hispanic respondents. At the end of the over-sampling, the total N of the sample stood at 1,076 with 168 Hispanics. The number of Hispanics was regarded as inadequate, so a special sample of Hispanic-surnamed individuals was drawn at random from telephone books of the Texas towns. The final sample size was 1,218, composed of the regular sample of 800, the augmented sample of 276, and the special Hispanic sample of 142. For this sample the completion rate was 55.5%, and the sampling error for an equal probability sample was 2.98%. For the analyses presented in this paper, all respondents who reported that they were other than Hispanic and/or white or who refused to report their ethnicity were dropped from the sample in order to test for differences between Hispanics and Anglos. This subsample included 308 Hispanics and 739 Anglos.

TABLE 1

Mean Newspaper and Magazine Reading by Texas Hispanics (n=308) and Anglos (n=739).

	Hispanics	Anglos
<b>Newspapers</b>		
Number of days a week that a daily newspaper is read.	3.43 <sup>a</sup>	4.33 <sup>a</sup>
Time spent in a day reading daily newspapers. (0=none, 1=1-29 minutes, 2=30-59 minutes, 3=60-89 minutes, 4=90-119 minutes, 5=120+ minutes.)	1.62	1.72
<b>Magazines</b>		
Number of magazines subscribed to or read regularly.	.76 <sup>a</sup>	1.24 <sup>a</sup>
Time spent in a day reading magazines. (0=none, 1=1 to 29 minutes, 2=30-59 minutes, 3=60-89 minutes, 4=90-119 minutes, 5=120+ minutes)	1.68	1.71

<sup>a</sup>Difference significant at .001 level.

TABLE 2

Newspaper Reading by Texas Hispanics and Anglos, Controlling for Education, Age and Income.

Control variable	Mean days per week read a daily newspaper			
	Hispanics		Anglos	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>Education</b>				
Grade school	1.37 <sup>a</sup>	86	2.60 <sup>a</sup>	-20
High school	3.71	117	4.16	303
College or trade school	4.97	86	4.43	337
Graduate school	4.93	15	4.97	77
<b>Age</b>				
18 to 27 years old	3.70	82	3.31	162
28 to 36 years old	3.70	84	4.23	179
37 to 53 years old	3.35 <sup>b</sup>	78	4.67 <sup>b</sup>	192
54 to 91 years old	2.87 <sup>b</sup>	62	4.94 <sup>b</sup>	201
<b>Income</b>				
Under \$10,000 yearly	2.26 <sup>a</sup>	93	3.20 <sup>a</sup>	81
\$10,000 to \$29,999 yearly	3.94	139	4.10	312
\$30,000 or more yearly	5.34	38	4.86	270

<sup>a</sup>Difference significant at .05 level.<sup>b</sup>Difference significant at .001 level.

Hypothesis 1 was supported: Anglos do read daily newspapers and magazines more than Hispanics (Table 1). When we control for education, age and income, however, we see that these differences tend to be limited to the less-educated, older, and lower income respondents (Tables 2 and 3), which supports Hypothesis 5. Our

results do not allow us to determine whether this is a generational difference which will persist over time or a lifecycle difference that will disappear as the higher income and better educated Hispanics become older.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported, as Table 1 shows, since both Hispanics and

TABLE 3

Magazines Subscribed to or Read Regularly by Texas Hispanics and Anglos, Controlling for Education, Age and Income.

Control variable	Mean number of magazines read or subscribed to			
	Hispanics		Anglos	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
<b>Education</b>				
Grade school	.36	86	.58	19
High school	.74 <sup>b</sup>	117	1.01 <sup>b</sup>	304
College or trade school	1.13 <sup>a</sup>	86	1.39 <sup>a</sup>	337
Graduate school	1.20	15	1.69	77
<b>Age</b>				
18 to 27 years old	.84	82	.96	162
28 to 36 years old	.82 <sup>c</sup>	84	1.36 <sup>c</sup>	180
37 to 53 years old	.71 <sup>c</sup>	78	1.31 <sup>c</sup>	192
54 to 91 years old	.63 <sup>c</sup>	62	1.27 <sup>c</sup>	200
<b>Income</b>				
Under \$10,000 yearly	.49 <sup>b</sup>	93	.85 <sup>b</sup>	81
\$10,000 to \$29,999 yearly	.86 <sup>c</sup>	139	1.12 <sup>c</sup>	313
\$30,000 or more yearly	1.21	38	1.53	270

<sup>a</sup>Difference significant at .05 level.

<sup>b</sup>Difference significant at .01 level.

<sup>c</sup>Difference significant at .001 level.

Anglos spend on the average less than one-half hour per day reading newspapers, and the same was true of time spent with magazines.

Table 4 shows that, while Hispanics use Spanish-language media more than Anglos do, the vast majority of Anglos and more than three-quarters of all Hispanics *never* read Spanish-language newspapers and magazines, even in areas of the state where they are available. This does support Hypothesis 3, although the recent interest among publishers and researchers in Spanish-language media led us to expect that more than one-fourth of Hispanics would read Spanish-language print media. Table 5 shows that the proportion of print media read in Spanish decreases dramatically with age. This supports Hypothesis 5: that the older a Hispanic is, the more Spanish-language print media he will read. While almost three-fourths of the publications read by those 54 and older is in Spanish, those who are 18 to 27 read only about one-fourth of their newspapers and magazines in Spanish. This positive relationship between age and use of Spanish-language publications is even

more interesting given the negative relationship between age and use of general print media (Table 5). Young Hispanics read more newspapers and magazines than older Hispanics do, and only one-fourth of those publications are in Spanish.

Hispanics are more likely than Anglos to place importance on having a daily Spanish-language newspaper to read, but a majority of Hispanics say that having a Spanish-language newspaper to read is "not at all important" (Table 4). This does support Hypothesis 4, but we expected Hispanic support of Spanish-language newspapers to be much higher than it actually was. Table 5 shows that older respondents placed more importance on Spanish-language newspapers than younger respondents, even controlling for availability, consistent with Hypothesis 5. Support for Spanish-language newspapers and magazines comes from older, less well-educated and lower-income Hispanics. While younger, better-educated and higher-income Hispanics use Spanish-language print media more than their Anglo counterparts, these younger His-

TABLE 4

Spanish-Language Newspaper and Magazine Reading among Texas Hispanics  
(n=308) and Anglos (n=739).

	Percentage	
	Hispanics	Anglos
<b>Proportion of newspapers and magazines which are read in Spanish</b>		
None	77.1%	98.6%
Less than half	9.8	1.2
About half	5.6	.1
More than half	2.3	.0
All	5.2	.0
<b>Proportion of newspapers and magazines which are read in Spanish, controlling for availability</b>		
None	75.9%	99.1%
Less than half	10.0	.7
About half	6.3	.2
More than half	2.2	.0
All	5.6	.0
<b>Importance of having a daily newspaper to read in Spanish</b>		
Not at all important	51.8%	95.9%
A little important	13.4	3.0
Somewhat important	14.1	.8
Very important	20.7	.3

Difference between Hispanics and Anglos significant at .001 level for all three questions.

TABLE 5

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Texas Hispanics' Print Media Use and Demographic Variables

	Age		Education		Income	
Newspaper reading frequency	-.12 <sup>a</sup>	(306)	.48 <sup>c</sup>	(304)	.33 <sup>c</sup>	(270)
Number of magazines read or subscribed to regularly	-.10 <sup>a</sup>	(306)	.40 <sup>c</sup>	(304)	.34 <sup>c</sup>	(270)
Amount of print media that is read in Spanish	.17 <sup>b</sup>	(304)	-.19 <sup>c</sup>	(303)	-.22 <sup>c</sup>	(268)
Amount of print media that is read in Spanish, controlling for availability	.19 <sup>b</sup>	(135)	-.25 <sup>b</sup>	(136)	-.29 <sup>c</sup>	(119)
Importance of having a Spanish-language newspaper to read	.22 <sup>c</sup>	(303)	-.31 <sup>c</sup>	(301)	-.31 <sup>c</sup>	(267)
Importance of having a Spanish-language newspaper, controlling for availability	.17 <sup>b</sup>	(136)	-.24 <sup>b</sup>	(136)	-.27 <sup>c</sup>	(120)

N in parentheses

<sup>a</sup>p < .05

<sup>b</sup>p < .01

<sup>c</sup>p < .001

panics use Spanish-language media substantially less than their grandparents. This suggests that the Hispanic population is gradually becoming more acculturated and that the need for Spanish-language print media will decrease over time.

### Discussion

Use of Spanish-language print media is one indicator of Hispanic acculturation, consistent with Young Yun Kim's theory of communication and acculturation being interdependent and inseparable processes.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we assume that the more acculturated Hispanics are, the less they will read Spanish-language newspapers and magazines.

In this study we tested whether the Hispanic population in Texas is fully acculturated by studying their use of Spanish-language print media and by comparing their media use to that of Anglos. If Hispanics are fully acculturated, then their print media use—both Spanish-language and in general—will be similar to that of Anglos.

Previous research suggests that Spanish-language use among Hispanics is related to age and that use of Spanish-language print media is declining over time.<sup>12</sup> Such a decline suggests that the Hispanic population is becoming more acculturated and that the demand for Spanish-language print media will decline over time.

In our statewide study of Texas Anglo and Hispanic adults, we found support for this suggestion. Although Hispanics do use Spanish-language print media more than Anglos, regardless of age, the younger Hispanic generation's use of Spanish-language print media is substantially lower than their parents' or grandparents'. This age differentiation is echoed when we compared Hispanics' and Anglos' general print media use. While older Hispanics do use print media less than older Anglos, there is no difference between the youngest Hispanics and Anglos in newspaper-reading frequency or in the number of magazines subscribed to.

Our findings suggest that demand for Spanish-language print media is declining. This decline apparently reflects a change

in the acculturation level of Hispanics, if we accept Kim's connection between acculturation and communication.<sup>13</sup> It also suggests that the acculturation process is occurring slowly over time, so that as the largely unacculturated older generation is succeeded by the younger, the overall acculturation level of Hispanics will rise. With the demand for Spanish-language print media being primarily from the older generation, there should be less interest in and use of Spanish-language media with each succeeding generation.

We are not implying, however, that demand for Spanish-language print media will completely disappear; while this may be possible, we cannot predict this from our current study. Today's young Hispanics do use Spanish-language print media more than their Anglo counterparts, and we have no way of knowing whether this difference will remain or whether interest in Spanish-language media will steadily decrease until virtually no young Hispanics read Spanish-language newspapers or magazines at all.

While declining interest in Spanish-language publications indicates that Hispanics are becoming more acculturated, it is possible that interest in Spanish-language newspapers and magazines will revive. Such a reverse trend would reflect a change in the acculturation process, such as Hispanics' increasing interest in their culture and language. Reverse acculturation is also a possibility, and there is already evidence of Hispanic culture affecting Anglos' everyday lives in Texas. Not only has Hispanic culture influenced Texans' dress and food, but bilingual election ballots and public signs are the norm throughout much of the Southwest.

Given the large number of Hispanics in Texas (about 21% of the population in the 1980 census),<sup>14</sup> the proportion of Hispanics to Anglos may become large enough to  
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<sup>11</sup> Kim, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Yankelevich, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 1981 and 1984.

<sup>13</sup> Kim, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1982-83*, 103rd edition, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, p. 32

information as to create the screenplay for the most fantastic and vulgar of Hollywood melodramas."<sup>42</sup>

The prime minister wondered why the big U.S. media spent so much time on tiny Grenada; related how, after Caribbean editors had been invited to the U.S. by the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA) in 1981, papers in the region carried identical editorials negative to Grenada. The prime minister denounced USICA and Inter American Press Association as twin enemies of democracy and Trinidad newspapers as parts of big business enterprises spreading negative information about Grenada. Bishop called on the region's journalists to democratize their media in their own ways, to work for peace and expose examples of imperialists threatening the area and to fight concentration and monopoly ownership of Caribbean media.<sup>43</sup>

The conference declaration condemned U.S. military maneuvers in the region and information flow imbalances and urged journalist organizations of the Caribbean to join IOJ and LAFJ and to "democratize media," removing them from the control of private interests and placing them in "the hands and the service of our peoples." Additionally, the declaration sup-

ported the role UNESCO played in the establishment of the New International Information Order and recognized the "serious financial constraints" on non-traditional news services (CANA, Prensa Latina and IPS) brought about by increasing telex fees.<sup>44</sup>

The decade since Grenada became an independent nation has left its imprint upon newspapers and broadcasting stations. Yet, the mass media seemed to be on the verge of their most systematic organization in the two years before the United States occupation. Equipment was slightly updated for better coverage, training was commenced and media personnel were organized under MWAFFG.

After 1982, the Grenadian journalists increasingly looked outward, attempting to unify other Caribbean media in much the same way Cuba had done earlier with cinema, and seeking closer ties and aid from East European countries. These latter efforts were probably feared by other Caribbean governments and the U.S. as further evidence of the growth of Communism in the area.

<sup>42</sup> Bishop, "Address," p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> "Caribbean Journalists Meet in Grenada," *Democratic Journalist*, 7/8, 1982, p. 14.

## SPANISH-LANGUAGE PRINT MEDIA

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obviate Hispanics' need to conform to the dominant culture. A halt in Hispanic acculturation to the U.S. culture and an increase in Anglo acculturation to the Hispanic culture might result. Such a shift would, of course, be accompanied by an increase in the availability and use of Spanish-language mass media.

Such a process of reverse acculturation is not unlikely, since we are already seeing large Hispanic populations exerting influence in large cities such as San Antonio. Therefore, although our current finding

suggests that acculturation of Hispanics is a linear process, we cannot be confident that the process is linear over a long period of time. We may be observing a linear component of an overall curvilinear acculturation trend, with environmental factors such as the proportion of Hispanics to Anglos providing a ceiling for acculturation. Future research might pursue this notion through comparisons of Spanish-language use in geographic areas having different proportions of Hispanics to Anglos.



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