2010-01-01

The Acquisition of Colloquial Speech and Slang in Second Language Learners of English in El Paso, Texas

Patricia Brannon Bradford

University of Texas at El Paso, brannon.bradford@gmail.com

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THE ACQUISITION OF COLLOQUIAL SPEECH AND SLANG IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN EL PASO, TEXAS

PATRICIA BRANNON BRADFORD

Department of Languages and Linguistics

APPROVED:

________________________________________________________________________
María Blume, Ph.D., Chair

________________________________________________________________________
Ana Schwartz, Ph.D.

________________________________________________________________________
Alfredo Urzúa, Ph.D.

Patricia D. Witherspoon, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
THE ACQUISITION OF COLLOQUIAL SPEECH AND SLANG IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN EL PASO, TEXAS

by

PATRICIA BRANNON BRADFORD, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Languages and Linguistics
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
December 2010
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my faculty adviser Dr. María Blume, without whom I would have been eternally lost in the thesis writing process. I would also like to thank my other two readers Dr. Alfredo Urzúa and Dr. Ana Schwartz who also helped me immensely. Dr. Urzúa helped me learn all about the grammatical secrets writings of a thesis, and Dr. Schwartz taught me everything I needed to know about statistics. I am very grateful to all three of them. I would also like to thank Jennifer Mansour Adams for all of her help and support, and Martha Dominguez for teaching me how to code data and open SPSS!
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Colloquial speech seems to be one of the more difficult areas for achieving native-like language competence in the acquisition of a second language (L2), though very few studies have been conducted on this topic. Acquiring the colloquial speech of a discourse community is crucial for second language learners who wish to achieve native-like proficiency in the target language of such community. However, research on L2 colloquial speech acquisition is extremely limited. The majority of materials available in this area are dictionaries or thesauruses that list colloquial speech and slang examples in a given language but often do not define the specific terms of *colloquial speech* and *slang*, much less comment on the acquisition of this type of speech. Other studies have focused on attitudes towards the teaching of colloquialisms in a language classroom setting, or the attitudes that native speakers have towards non-native speakers’ use of colloquial speech and slang. Typically, L2 researchers’ explain the lack of acquisition of L2 colloquial speech because of the difficulty that the learner faces as an outsider to achieve group membership. Fishman (1965) reported that physiological and sociological factors such as race, sex, age, and religion contribute to the type of language people use and with whom. According to this theory, typically a speaker who is not part of a particular group will not use language specifically associated with that group. Researchers have often theorized that L2 learners tend to stay away from colloquial speech and slang because they may not feel that they are authentically part of the language group or culture that uses a culturally specific vocabulary (McAlpine and Xu, 2008). Though group membership may be important for an L2 learner’s production of colloquial speech and slang, this study aims to examine to what degree L2 learners comprehend and acquire this type of speech. I want to explore if there are linguistic
aspects that could also be responsible for hindering or helping the acquisition of English L2 slang.

The study focuses on second language acquisition in the city of El Paso, Texas. This is a particularly interesting area to study because El Paso is a city where two cultures are merged. The downtown of El Paso and the downtown of its sister city Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico are separated by a short bridge that allows thousands of residents of both cities to travel back and forth. Before the drug war in Mexico began in 2008, students from both U.S. and Mexican universities would often participate in exchange programs at local universities such as the University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso Community College, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, and Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua. This was a great environment for linguists to study second language acquisition amongst teenagers and young adults studying either English or Spanish. Sadly, as the drug war has worsened, we see less and less U.S. students going to study in Ciudad Juárez, but many more young students from Ciudad Juárez are coming to study in El Paso. Thus, the integration of the two languages and cultures amongst language learners of this age in El Paso provides a great resource for linguists to examine the scarcely studied subject of colloquial speech and slang acquisition in Second Language Learners. This study originally hoped to note and compare the acquisition of Spanish colloquial speech and slang by L2 learners as well as the acquisition of English colloquial speech and slang by L2 learners, based on the linguistic differences between the colloquial speech of both English and Spanish. However, a lack of previous research and resources on these issues has forced the study to become more limited1. The current study will only focus on colloquial speech and slang of the English

1 The research presented in this study depended partly on the availability of a spoken language corpus to check the frequencies of the test items. Though I initially hoped to test colloquial speech and slang in Spanish as well as English, there was no spoken Spanish language corpus available for the dialect of Spanish I was interested in, i.e., Border area Mexican Spanish. Our research in Spanish colloquialisms and slang was also further hindered by a university order that prohibited all university-related research in Ciudad Juárez due to the violence of the drug war.
language spoken in El Paso. Even though the frequency of the terms that I selected were checked against a corpus that included several dialects, the selection of the terms was based on my experience with the dialect of this area and a test with monolingual speakers in this area confirmed that these monolingual speakers knew the selected terms.

Colloquial speech and slang are a rich part of every languages vocabulary. Though it is often not studied in a language classroom setting, its acquisition could be useful to second languages learners for social integration into a community and comprehension of organic media.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the acquisition of colloquial terms by Spanish-speakers learning English as a second language at the University of Texas at El Paso. As stated above, the acquisition of colloquial terms is important if the goal of the second language learner is native like fluency and competence. Colloquial speech is a very important aspect of a language. Even though this type of speech may not be taught in a classroom setting, its acquisition is important, especially for social interactions. Even if the L2 learner does not produce some of the colloquial or slang language himself, the knowledge of these linguistic items is still valuable for comprehension in media where this type of language is often used, such as in movies, television, other forms of media, and basic conversation with peers. In order to understand how this type of language is acquired, we must first define it and understand it linguistically before we can go about implementing ways of teaching it. Research in the area of
second language acquisition of colloquial speech and slang is extremely limited, though its acquisition could be very beneficial to second language learners.

Colloquial speech in English consists of both lexical and phrasal items. Items are considered lexical if they have only one word, such as cool, and they are considered phrasal if they contain more than one word, such as take it easy. All phrasal items tested in this study consisted of either two or three words. It is hypothesized that phrasal colloquial speech will be harder for L2 learners to acquire than lexical colloquial speech. We expect that even low frequency lexical items will be more familiar to the L2 learners than high frequency phrasal colloquial speech and/or slang.

The study examines whether or not L2 learners of English are acquiring its colloquial speech. As mentioned above, and discussed further below, English colloquial speech is often phrasal in nature. The main claim of the study is that in the borderland of El Paso, Texas, speakers of Spanish attempting to acquire English will know more colloquial speech that is lexical as opposed to colloquial speech that is phrasal, when frequency is controlled. Frequency is also a proposed factor; students are expected to know more high frequency items than low frequency items. Also, two different levels of students are tested; intermediate and advanced. Thus, it is also expected that the advanced students will know more colloquial speech than the intermediate students. Four types of stimuli are tested: high-frequency lexical items, high-frequency phrasal expressions, low-frequency lexical items, and low-frequency phrasal expressions.

The hypothesized pattern of colloquial speech acquisition is: high-frequency lexical items, followed by low-frequency lexical items, then high-frequency phrasal expressions, and
finally low-frequency phrasal expressions, which the students are predicted to know the least. This pattern will be limiting for the L2 learners since English colloquial speech is often phrasal, varied, and low in frequency, as was shown by natural speech observations and surveys that lead me to believe that colloquial English contains a large number of phrasal expressions, as compared with colloquial Spanish for example, and often these phrasal expressions are neither fixed nor high in frequency.

1.2 Organization of this thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on colloquial speech and slang in second language acquisition. This section begins by discussing the terms colloquial speech and slang and the problems found in their definitions. Next an overview of the few studies on the topic of colloquial speech and slang is presented, in Second Language Acquisition; including some background data collected by the author to confirm her intuitions about the differences between English and Spanish colloquial speech. Finally, this ends with a brief discussion on the significance of the current study in view of the available research.

Chapter 3 continues by explaining the research questions and hypothesis of this study, as well as a detailed description of the data collection, methods, and procedures. The original observations that lead to study are also described. Information about the subjects such as age, gender, and English proficiency level are documented. Finally, the tests given and procedures followed are discussed.
Chapter 4 is the final chapter and it discusses the results of the study. This section presents the results of the multilingualism questionnaire and the comprehension test. Finally, the conclusions of the study are explained, followed by some discussion.
Chapter 2: Colloquial Speech and Slang in Second Language Acquisition.

Colloquial speech and slang have not been widely researched and studied. Material on these topics does exist, but often in the form of dictionaries or thesauruses with the goal of teaching an outsider the colloquial speech of a culture. There have also been studies focusing on where slang and colloquial speech comes from, who uses it, and whether or not it is proper to use. However, in terms of second language acquisition and usage of colloquial speech and slang, there have been very few studies. Some of the questions about L2 colloquial speech acquisition that have yet to be explored are: How is L2 colloquial speech and/or slang acquired, and to what extent do L2 learners feel that this type of speech is important?

2.1 Defining colloquial speech and slang.

One thing that linguists who have written about colloquial speech and slang seem to agree on is that there is no easy way to define either term. Often researchers decide not to devote much time to the definitions. For example, Karl Sornig (1981) begins his book on slang, colloquialisms, and casual speech by stating that the aim of the paper “cannot be to give an ultimate and exhaustive definition of slang and similar phenomenon” (1). Sornig groups the terms colloquialisms, slang, and casual speech together and describes them only as terms that are used “indiscriminately to denote a type of language usage somewhere between individual speech and standard language norms” (2). Much in the same manner as Sornig, Steel (1985) begins his book A Textbook of Colloquial Speech in Spanish by claiming that the book “does not set out to find theoretical solutions to the vexing question of terminology” (13). However, Steel provides a bit more specificity. First he points out that the book will use the term colloquial Spanish as
opposed to *spoken Spanish*, maintaining that the latter is “too ambiguous for our present purposes” (13). He defines the term *colloquial* as “informal, often racy or popular” spoken language that “differs in some way from formal language” (14). Steel writes that the term *colloquial* is “intuitively understood by all of us”, and is classified as so if it falls under category ‘a’ and/or categories ‘b’ or ‘c’.: 

a) Speech that lies outside the areas (and often categories) described by standard syntax;

b) Speech that displays peculiarities of meaning not amenable to literal interpretation;

or

c) Speech that fulfils particular dialogue functions and needs (14).

Steel’s definition offers some useful insights, although the categories proposed are rather vague and these do not make any distinctions between *colloquial speech* in general and more specific speech that could be considered *colloquial*, such as *slang*, *euphemisms*, *taboo words*, etc. McAlpine and Xu (2008) defined the type of speech they explored in their study only as “culturally specific vocabulary”. This way they were able to avoid the arduous task of definitions. In their study *slang* and *colloquialisms* were limited to items specifically used in Canada and that generally described Canadian past times, food, or culture (14). They labeled this “culturally specific vocabulary” “Canadianisms”.

Dumas and Lighter (1978) focus particularly on slang, and immediately begin by relaying the daunting task of defining the terms; “the term *slang* has rarely been defined in a way that is useful to linguists. Annoyance and frustration await anyone who searches the professional literature for a definition or even conception of slang that can stand up to scrutiny” (5). However, they do attempt to give us a concrete definition of slang. According to their definition
an expression should be considered "true slang" if it meets at least two of the following four criteria:

1) Its presence will markedly lower, at least for the moment, the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing. This does not mean that the term has actually been discovered in such contexts. It does mean, however, that an individual who has some familiarity with the expression will not expect to find it in the midst of a serious discourse in otherwise standard English except for one special rhetorical effect: to signal that the speaker or writer is deliberately being undignified or intimate with his audience. If there seems to be no reason to expect this effect, the expression will appear to a sensitive audience as a glaring misuse of register (or, as we prefer to call it, situational dialect).

2) Its use implies the user's special familiarity either with the referent or with that less statusful or less responsible class of people who have such special familiarity and use the term. This "special familiarity" usually implies disdain for what is conventionally accepted or esteemed, or an overfamiliarity with what the dominant society finds unseemly or unacceptable. We generally learn neutral terms first, disdainful or "in" terms later. Even if by chance we learn one of the latter sort first, we soon discover that the referent has another name that is more appropriate for formal use.

3) It is a tabooed term in ordinary discourse with persons of higher social status or greater responsibility. On occasion, of course, normal taboos do not apply, but once again we are speaking of the norm of verbal behavior. At the present time this category includes all of our nonlatinate sexual and scatological terms with the exception of nursery euphemisms. In other
eras and in other cultures the sexual terms may be much less tabooed than, for example, profane reference to the Deity. Because the deliberate use of taboo language in the presence of someone of higher social standing is a form of linguistic defiance, such terms are functionally similar to those that fit the first criterion. They usually fit the second criterion as well. Though the name has been changed, the first example is a real quotation from a college classroom.

4) It is used in place of the well-known conventional synonym, especially in order (a) to protect the user from the discomfort caused by the conventional item or (b) to protect the user from the discomfort or annoyance of further elaboration. Ordinary euphemisms protect the audience as well as the user, but items in this category are employed solely to protect the speaker or writer, sometimes at the expense of the listener or reader. These expressions are used deliberately but their quasi-euphemistic function is not always at a conscious level. (14-15)

Dumas and Lighter gave an overview of slang, though more work is still required. For example, the four criteria in Dumas and Lighter’s definition is not considered slang in Spears (1981) definition, but instead a euphemism, which, to Spears, is a separate, and equally vexing, category. Also, the second slang criterion seems to be describing slang as an in-group language phenomenon, something that several authors such as Fishman (1965), McAlpine and Xu (2008), etc., have also noted. However, Dumas and Lighter describe the in-groups as groups of a “less

2 Though it goes beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to test the learning attitudes and motivation of the students who genuinely want to study at UTEP and the attitudes of the students who feel that they were forced to come to El Paso because of the war taking place in Ciudad Juárez.
responsible class”. This description minimally explains slang in-group membership, as slang can be used within specific groups that are not considered of a “less responsible class” of people. For example, various groups could possess their own form of slang within a group that is not considered “less statusful” or “less responsible” as Dumas and Lighter have claimed.

Dumas and Lighter asked for critiques of their definition, though it still seems to be the most accepted definition of slang amongst linguists. Spears (1981) went a few steps further in his definition than Dumas and Lighter, and also listed the criteria in a simpler form. He says that *colloquial speech* is “a culture’s vocabulary”, and says that slang, though “there is no sure test for deciding when an expression is slang or something else” follows ten basic generalizations:

1. Slang is not considered suitable for formal or serious matters.
2. Slang terms are usually synonyms for standard terms.
3. Slang terms and slang speech symbolize a lack of allegiance to social conventions.
4. Slang terms and slang speech flourish in nonliterate affairs, slang is a spoken phenomenon.
5. Slang and the standard language are at odds by nature. Slang is used defiantly by young people whom society is attempting to make respectful of literacy.
6. Slang is used to indicate membership in, and the integrity of, social groups which do not conduct their business in standard language.
7. Slang that changes the meaning or form fairly rapidly is often used by the young, who also change rather rapidly.
8. Slang is used by the “outsiders” to indicate empathy with subgroups, especially with the young.
9. The use of slang is avoided when speaking to a person of higher status.
10. Slang that can be subclassified as aggressive, rude, bawdy, or scatological serves additional functions in channeling aggression, establishing and maintaining rank, and in virility affirmation in groups of males. (Spears, vii-viii)

For uses of this paper, colloquial speech is classified as language that, in nature, is spoken or written in discourse. It is informal. It is shared between people who have some sort of relationship either with each other or with a common entity that ties them together, whether it be age, politics, social interests, etc. In accordance with Sornig’s definition, I agree that colloquial speech is often not literal, especially in phraseology. For example, the meaning of a phrase like “another one bites the dust” is not compositional. However, this phenomenon is not only true in fixed phrases, it can also happen in both lexical and non-fixed phrasal colloquial speech, such as in expressions like “Oh nuts!” or “She’s on fire”. This can add a level of difficulty for second language learners, who must be able to identify the figurative meanings of the items.

Slang is considered a subset of colloquial speech, as noted by Zuckermann (2003). All slangisms are colloquial, and all the criteria specified in the above paragraph about colloquial speech is also true of slang. However, slang is more specific than colloquial speech. This thesis assumes all the above criteria specified by Spears (1981), but also adds that slang is language that may not be understood by all native speakers of the language. This last point is important in differentiating slang from colloquial speech. All native speakers should be able to recognize and understand colloquialisms. However, not all native speakers will be able to recognize and understand all the different slang terms used amongst various in-groups.
At this point in the thesis, I will only refer to the type of language that I am exploring as “colloquial speech”. Slang is considered a subset of colloquial speech and will only be specified when necessary.

2.2 Background.

There are studies on colloquial speech in L2 learning, especially studies concerning attitudes or appropriateness of teaching this type of speech in the language classroom. However, the study of how this type of speech is acquired in the L2 is limited. Below is some of the research that was helpful to the current study.

McAlpine and Xu (2008) conducted a study on ESL learners studying in Canada. The study aimed to test the learner’s acquisition of Canadian colloquial speech, dubbed Canadianisms. According to McAlpine and Xu, each variety of language has special, culturally conditioned vocabulary, and the character of a particular region or country is often represented by its distinct vocabulary. Therefore, this type of vocabulary will exist in all languages, making its acquisition important in order to achieve native-like abilities, such as comprehension of media (television, film, etc.) and the capacity to engage in casual conversation with native speakers of the target language.

McAlpine and Xu’s main research questions were: 1) Are there special difficulties that culturally specific vocabulary poses for the learner? 2) Does the L2 learner have special difficulty acquiring these lexical items? 3) Are language background or time spent in Canada factors in the acquisition of the Canadianism?
Two instruments were used to investigate whether ESL learners in Canada acquired Canadianisms; a lexical survey and a questionnaire. Results indicated that ESL learners’ knowledge of Canadianisms was limited. Furthermore, they found no correlation between the time learners had spent in Canada and their knowledge of Canadianisms, although the ESL speaker’s proficiency in English did play a part. They also found that the student’s native language played no significant role in the acquisition of Canadianisms. However, the results did show that the more relevant a Canadianism was to an ESL learner’s life, the more likely he or she was to acquire it.

In analyzing the results, McAlpine and Xu came up with a conclusion that supports the present study. They listed two factors as to why the ESL learners in their study demonstrated such a limited knowledge of Canadianisms: 1) A disproportionate quantity of culture-specific and culturally freighted vocabulary consists of multiword units. 2) Multiword units are more difficult for learners to recognize, to look up, and to use appropriately. Thus, multiunit colloquialisms, such as *two-four*, were more difficult for L2 speakers than single word units, such as *peewee*. This result supports the hypothesis formulated for this study that English colloquial speech is very highly phrasal, and thus often difficult for L2 speakers to acquire.

One factor that McAlpine and Xu found was that the ESL learners knew more colloquialisms that related to their lives. For instance, over 70% of the students knew slang words for beer. Thus, motivation and desire to be part of a social group seems to be important in the acquisition of colloquial speech.

Garder (1985) proposed a socioeducational model of L2 acquisition about the role that attitude and motivation play in the process of learning language. Within attitude he defined two levels: integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation. Integrativeness refers to the
learner’s willingness to identify with a certain language community. Attitude toward the learning situation encompasses the learners’ satisfaction with the teaching context and the teacher. In Gardner’s model both levels have an indirect influence on a learner’s achievement mediated through motivation—called integrative motivation.

Colloquial speech is social in nature. A motivation to acquire colloquial speech would require some sort of “willingness to identify with a certain language community”, as Gardner proposed. If the students are acquiring this type of speech, it may be because they are motivated to learn colloquial speech and slang of El Paso in order to be a part of the social groups around them. Colloquial speech may serve as portal for them to fit in with the rest of the student population in El Paso.  

A research goal of other existing studies has been to compare native and non-native speakers of American English on their attitude toward American English slang (see Charkova, 2007 for a review). In 1996, Register investigated taboo knowledge in L2 learners of English, the results indicating that international students knew more taboo words than neutral slang. Thus, many L2 students were able to learn isolated, more offensive words, but were unable to make a full acquisition of neutral and colloquial lexicon.

Charkova (2007) reports that the acquisition of slang in L2 has not been very thoroughly examined. She says many questions still have not been investigated such as: How is slang acquired in L2 contexts? Is it governed by the same principles as the acquisition of L1

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3 Though it goes beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to test the learning attitudes and motivation of the students who genuinely want to study at UTEP and the attitudes of the students who feel that they were forced to come to El Paso because of the war taking place in Ciudad Juárez.
slang? What sources and methods do L2 learners use to learn L2 slang, as it is not formally taught? In what situations do L2 learners use slang? Charkova proposed these questions but did not answer all of them.

Charkova studied 101 Bulgarian learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL). She proposed seven main research questions all together. Three of the seven research questions are interesting for this study: 1) What sources did Bulgarian EFL learners use in order to learn English slang?, 2) Why were Bulgarian EFL learners interested in learning English slang?, and 3) What methods did Bulgarian EFL learners use to understand and internalize the meanings of new English slang terms?

Her results indicated that Bulgarian EFL students use intuition, discussion with friends, and media (i.e. song lyrics, television, etc.) as a means of learning slang. Secondly, their motivation for learning slang was to understand American media, and express themselves better with native speakers. Finally, the EFL learners reported that they used slang with friends or in chat rooms.

Charkova’s main findings and discussion in her study were focused on the topic of age. Her subjects were split between Bulgarian high school and college students. She found a difference between the two group’s knowledge and use of slang. She found that the high school student’s production of slang was higher than the university student’s production. However, the university students performed better than the high school students on a receptive knowledge test.

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4 This is one of the questions Charkova does not answer. However, she asserts that slang acquisition in L1 happens naturally. It is governed by various motives of sociopsychological nature such as a person’s desire to identify with a particular group of people or a faddish trend or to express oneself in a less conventional way.
that they were given. Thus, the older students understood more terms, but the younger students were more inclined to use the terms.

2.3 Significance

Exploring colloquial speech, slang, and culturally conditioned vocabulary is very important for the field of second language acquisition if the goal of the learner is native like fluency and competence. Colloquial speech is an important part of a language, and the comprehension this type of speech may lead to a greater grasp of many relevant aspects of the culture. As previously mentioned, colloquial speech is a social phenomenon, and its acquisition could help L2 learners become more comfortable and competent socially in the target language. Also, we see in Gardner (1985) that “particular motivational characteristics facilitate the acquisition of a second language” (50). Furthermore, McAlpine and Xu (2008) reported that second language learner learned more colloquial speech that pertained to their lives. Thus, combining both Gardner and McAlpine and Xu’s logic, the acquisition of colloquial speech could promote a more socially exciting environment to the L2 students, causing their motivation and desire to learn the language to grow, and thus more overall success in the acquisition of the L2. Even if the L2 learner does not produce some of the colloquial language himself, it is still necessary to understand this language for comprehension in movies, television, other forms of media, and basic conversation with peers. Comprehension might also make the L2 learners comfort level greater, thus providing a less anxious environment to interact socially and allow the integrativeness that Gardner’s model promotes for successful acquisition.
Chapter 3: Rationale, experimental design, data collection methods and procedures.

3.1 Rationale

In the beginning I wanted to compare the colloquial speech of English and Spanish and examine if there were linguistic differences between the two languages that could either hinder or help colloquial speech acquisition in the L2. As I began my study, it started to become more apparent that research on colloquial speech in Second Language Acquisition was limited. As Charkova (2007) mentioned, there were many questions that had not been addressed. How do L2 learners acquire this type of language? Is it acquired in the same ways as formal language in the L2? Do L2 learners feel that learning colloquial speech and slang is important? Do they feel motivated to learn this type of speech? Are there linguistic differences between colloquial speech/slang in Spanish and English?

Research on the above questions had either not been explored at all or been explored very limitedly. In order to begin answering some of the above questions, I had to start from the beginning and limit the original idea of comparing English and Spanish colloquial speech as a means of exploring acquisition. The main reason for this was that there was not a corpus of spoken, Mexican dialect of Spanish that was available to me. This caused problems for the research that I wanted to do, since there was no way to control frequency for the Spanish colloquial speech items. Since there was no available documented evidence on frequencies of the Spanish colloquial speech of this geographical area, I could not compare and test those items against the colloquial speech items that I found in the English corpus. Thus, the study had to
focus only on English colloquial speech and attempt to answer the questions of whether or not L2 learners in the city of El Paso, Texas are acquiring colloquial speech and slang.

Arriving at the end results of this study was a process. As mentioned above, the original idea for the study changed and developed over time. Though the original ideas were not ultimately carried out, much of the preliminary research and work that was performed while exploring those original ideas lead to the research questions of the present study. Thus, it is fitting to discuss some of the initial observations that eventually lead to the research questions at hand.

The study began with three main intuitions about colloquial speech and slang acquisition, particularly in English and Spanish. These were:

1. L2 learners often cannot translate colloquial speech or slang into a concept that makes sense in their native language. L2 learners have trouble “conceptualizing” the meanings of this type of speech.

2. There is a difference between the structure of Spanish and English slang. Spanish slang is more commonly expressed in one-word units, whereas the majority of English slang is produced in phrases.

3. Slang and colloquial expressions of the dialect of Spanish used in Ciudad Juarez are often composed of high frequency words; i.e. the same words are used habitually by most speakers. On the other hand, the slang used in English is more varied and unpredictable. There is less consistency across speakers.
To test these observations I conducted two preliminary tests, which will both be described below, and also gathered some natural speech data.

The first intuition was based on a component of Kroll and De Groot’s (2007) Word Association model that stated that L2 learners access concepts via words in the L1. They called this the “conceptualizer”, and thus, it is proposed that the “conceptualizer” plays a part in L2 learners’ struggle with idiomatic phrases since learners have trouble “conceptualizing” the meaning of this type of speech. Often slang and idiomatic speech are untranslatable or the L2 learner cannot conceptualize the new idea. This observation was tested using an informal translation test in both English and Spanish that asked the participants to translate colloquial phrases and/or slang to target the actual meaning of the phrase, as opposed to translating the individual words:

**Examples of English phrases to be translated into Spanish**

1. “Thanks for the heads up.”
2. “I had a ball at the party.”
3. “I pulled an all-nighter.”
4. “I’m so burned out.”

**Examples of Spanish phrases to be translated into English**

1. “Échame aguas”
2. “Qué chafa el video.”
3. “Me dio hueva.”
4. “No hay pex.”
The complete test can be found in the appendix. The test was piloted to ten native English speakers who were learning Spanish and ten native Spanish speakers who were learning English. Since it was only a pilot test, language proficiency was not controlled more so than by the author’s opinion. The author aimed to give the test to intermediate and advanced learners.

When this test was piloted I was not pleased with the results for several reasons. First, it was difficult to get the participants to translate the phrases for the target meaning. Most of the participants only translated the phrases word for word. Second, if the participants did not know the meaning of the words, they would often just leave the questions blank. We received some tests back that were entirely blank. Although these facts seemed to indicate that indeed the subjects were having trouble conceptualizing and translating these forms, it was difficult to analyze the results in order to see whether or not L2 learners were having trouble conceptualizing the meanings. This led me to create the multiple choice test that was eventually used as the formal test in the study. This test will be discussed at length later in the paper.

The second intuition that English colloquial speech was often phrasal in structure, whereas Spanish colloquial speech was highly lexical in structure was tested using natural data exchanged casually between friends and family of the researcher. Six conversations were recorded; three in English and three in Spanish. Each conversation was recorded for about thirty minutes. In total there were fifteen participants recorded. All of the conversations took place in the residences of the author in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez. Six sample transcripts were produced. No theme or subject was given.
In several of these conversations we see repeated and frequent colloquialisms and slang in Spanish, but in the English data we see varied items that are often times phrasal. Some examples are shown below. Relevant terms are underlined and bolded:

**English:**

A: The border patrol guy just told me I look pregnant. Not happy about that..

B: That **mother f-er**

A: I know, and I thought I looked cute today. Now I'm sad.

B: He's **full of shit** and hates his life. Don’t listen to him, you look cute.

A: Whatever… They **kicked our asses** last night at kickball, but I was the pitcher!

B: **Awesome! Go you!**

A: I’m trying to work out, but I’m just so bad at drinking beer and eating bad stuff. I mean, I am better, like I didn’t drink at all on Monday or Tuesday, but kickball Wednesdays always make **me go downhill**.

B: **Dude**, it's kickball! That counts as exercise.

**Spanish:**

A: ¿Porqué andas tan peinado? ¿Vienes de la reunión?

B: Es que ando buscando **jale**.

A: ¿Cuánto tienes sin **jalar güey**?

B: ¿Un rato como medio año, está bien **culero** todo acá **gacho**.
A: ¿Y a donde fuiste güey?
B: Varios lados. Vengo del Chuco güey ay ay, no pues a varios lados.
A: ¿Y los cablesillos güey?
B: Ahí está todo creo.
A: Oye Winkle acá con los stands bien metaleros verdad..
B: Bien culeros verdad..
B: Jajaja..
A: Sí así güey pinche chinga..

The natural data was much more extensive than the samples given above. Complete transcripts are found in the appendix. However, even with the small sample one can see that words are often repeated and frequently used in the Spanish data, whereas no words or phrases are repeated in the English data, and several of the colloquialisms or slang are phrasal.

The third intuition that Spanish colloquial speech and slang consists of more habitual one-word items and English colloquial speech and slang is often phrasal and varied was tested using a survey. The survey was given to forty people; twenty native English speakers and twenty native Spanish speakers. We asked participants to list colloquial words or phrases that could be used as synonyms of common words in their L1. Again, since this was just a pilot study, controlling the selection of participants was not priority. The Spanish participants were ESOL students of the author, and the English participants were friends and family of the author. Proficiency level was not an issue for this survey, since the survey was answered in the participants L1. The surveys consisted of ten questions each. Participants were asked to provide synonyms to common words, as well as rate the frequency with which they used those words. There was also an option “Only as jokes” that the participant could select. This is not a measure of
frequency, and had the test been officially given, that option would have been taken out. However, the option of using the words “only as jokes” does provide an understanding as to how the word it used.

Below is an example of how the questions were formed in both English and Spanish:

**English Example:**

“What are some other words that you can use to say “money”? And how often do you use these words?

a. Very often b. Sometimes c. Sometimes, but not often d. Almost never e. Only as jokes

**Spanish Example:**

“¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “dinero”?

“Y con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?”


The results of this survey seemed to confirm my observations. We found the Spanish L1 participants gave more uniform answers whereas the English L1 participant’s answers were more varied. The Spanish L1 participants also rated the frequency with which they use the words higher than the English participants:

**Spanish Table and English Tables:**

Tables 1 and 2 below show the results for the example terms above:
Table 1: Slang/colloquial terms for job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Only As Jokes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Grindstone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gig</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Slang/colloquial terms for trabajo ‘job’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trabajo (Job)</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Only As Jokes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jale</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camellar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talacha</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above tables we see that the answers that the Spanish speakers provided were more frequent. Even if the participants rated their frequency as “not often”, the fact that so many participants wrote the same answers show that those synonyms are frequent and recognized. However, the English table shows few words, none of which seemed frequent. It is noteworthy, however, that in this particular English example, not many synonyms are given for job. The English participants answered some of the survey questions with very limited synonyms for the word allotted. However, in other survey questions, the word allotted would receive many synonyms, though none were reported to be used frequently.

These initial observations lead up to the test that was done for this study. As previously mentioned, for various reasons we had to eliminate Spanish colloquial speech and slang from the research. The final study focuses only on English colloquial speech and slang. Based on the
observations and pilots, it does seem that English has a lot of colloquial and/or slang phrases. Thus the study hopes to discover several aspects about the acquisition of colloquial speech and slang in second language learners in the student population in El Paso, Texas. These research questions and hypotheses are discussed in the next section.

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

3.2.1 Research questions

The main research questions in the study are 1) Are young college students, originally from Mexico, who are studying English as a second language in El Paso, Texas acquiring colloquial speech and slang? 2) Will they acquire lexical colloquialisms earlier than phrasal colloquialisms? 3) Does the frequency of items play a role in the acquisition? Will students acquire high frequency items more easily or lexical items more easily? 4) Is there a difference between language proficiency and acquiring this type of speech? Two different levels of ESOL students were tested: intermediate and advanced\(^5\). Have the advanced students acquired the speech more than the intermediate students?

3.2.2 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that ESOL learners will acquire some of the colloquial speech and slang used in the El Paso area due to the situation of young college students from different cultures having the chance to be immersed together in this border town. It is expected that

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\(^5\) Intermediate students were classified as students who were enrolled in ESOL classes 1309 and 1406, and advanced students were enrolled in ESOL classes 1310 and 1311 at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The UTEP ESOL department classifies these four classes as intermediate and advanced.
learners will most be familiar with colloquialisms that are lexical as opposed to phrasal. Frequency will be a factor. It is anticipated that the learners will be more successful with the items that deal with high frequency lexical items as opposed to high frequency phrasal. However, it is predicted that the ESOL learners will acquire even low frequency lexical items earlier than high and low frequency phrasal items. Thus it is hypothesized that the students will acquire earlier lexical items of both high and low frequency before acquiring phrasal colloquial and slang items of either high or low frequency.

3.3 Data Collection Methods, Design, and Procedure.

Data was collected to answer the questions of whether L2 learners acquire colloquial speech and slang. A language test was designed specifically for the purposes of answering the research questions of this study. The details of the data collection methods, design, and procedure are given below.

3.3.1 Overview of Data Collection Methods

Data was collected at the University of Texas at El Paso in the ESOL program. All of the students were native speakers of Spanish from Mexico who were enrolled in intermediate or advanced English classes. The intermediate or advanced level was judged depending on the class in which the student was enrolled. If the student was enrolled in either 1309 or 1406 he or she was considered an intermediate student, since the ESOL program considers these intermediate classes. If the student was enrolled in either 1310 or 1311, then he or she was considered an advanced student, in concordance with ESOL programs classification of these
classes. The research instrument used was a comprehension test that is described in more detail in section 3.3.4.

### 3.3.2 Subjects

The subjects who participated in this experiment were all students of the University of Texas at El Paso. Forty second-language learners of English were tested. One subject’s test was removed because she was not a native speaker of Spanish. Thus, the results analyze thirty-nine of the language tests given. All the subjects were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two, with the exception of one subject who was thirty-three. The mean age was 19.35 years. Twenty-one females were tested and nineteen males, though, again, one of the females was removed because she was not a native Spanish speaker, making the analyzed tests from a total of twenty females and nineteen males. When the students were administered the test, the second language learners were all enrolled in ESOL classes. Twenty-two of the participants came from ESOL classes 1309 and 1406, the intermediate level, and the remaining eighteen students came from ESOL 1310 and 1312 classes, the more advanced level. In addition, ten native English speakers were tested as a control group before the test was given to the ESOL participants to make sure that all the definitions of the items on the language test were recognized by native English speakers. The control group was made up of six males and four females between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five. All ten participants recognized English as their first or native language.
3.3.3 Multilingualism Questionnaire

A multilingualism test was also given to the subjects to gather information about the participant’s language background.

3.3.3.1 Description

The Multilingualism Questionnaire is used to document the language background of participants who take part in language studies. The questionnaire consists of six sections, but only four of the sections were important to this study: Information about the administration of the questionnaire, Information about the participant, Information about the participant’s languages, and Information about the participant’s family. Part one, information about the administration of the questionnaire has four different questions about the date, place, name, and contact information about both the participant and the interviewer. Part two is information about the participant, which has about seventeen questions all dealing with information on the participant such as nationality, occupation, places of past and present residence, and languages the participant has been exposed to. Part three asks for specific information about the participant’s languages, focusing on the participants reading and writing knowledge, language abilities, use of language in different situations, and language preference. There are about fifteen questions in this section. Part four asks for background information on the participant’s family, the languages they used growing up, and the languages that they use with their children. There are around seven questions. Parts five and six of the questionnaire are irrelevant to this study.

The questionnaire is available in both English and Spanish.
3.3.3.2 Procedures

The questionnaire was administered either individually to subjects or it was given in a classroom setting in the same session in which the participants filled out a consent form and the comprehension test. The multilingual questionnaire was completed last because of its length. Each participant filled out all of the information his or herself. All participants were given instructions and a brief explanation about the documents and the overall research of the study. Participants were advised that they could ask the administrator if they did not know the meaning of a particular word, understand a particular concept, etc. On average it took a participant around thirty minutes to complete the three documents, about fifteen of which were spent completing the questionnaire.

3.3.3.3 Analysis

The questionnaire provided the information about the age, sex, and some language background. As mentioned, the average age was 19.35 years. There were twenty females and nineteen males.

The questionnaire also provided some language history background. All participants had lived the majority of their lives in Mexico. All the subjects had been living in the United States between three months to four years, with an average of 1.76 years. Sixteen of the thirty-nine participants said they had begun learning English before the age of ten. Of those sixteen, nine said that they sometimes spoke to their siblings in English. Three participants said that they sometimes spoke to their parents in English. If the participants are speaking to their parents in English, then perhaps the whole family is attempting to assimilate into the El Paso culture. This is a great motivation for the learner to learn the language and all of its colloquialisms, if the
entire family unit is acquiring the language. Thirty three participants said that they watched television and movies in English. Of those thirty-three, seven said they watched television and movies only in English.

The results of the questionnaire confirmed my expectations of the level of students that I wanted to test. They were Mexican students, some of them living in the United States, all attending an American University, and watching American television. This was the type of sample that I wanted to obtain for the study.

3.3.4 Comprehension Test

The comprehension test was the main research instrument used to test the hypotheses of the study of whether second language learners studying at UTEP 1) are acquiring English colloquial speech, 2) are acquiring more lexical than phrasal items, 3) if frequency affects acquisition, and 4) if language proficiency affects acquisition. The comprehension test was developed especially for this study.

3.3.4.1 Description and design of the Comprehension Test.

The comprehension test consisted of 40 colloquial speech and slang items that were split into four groups of ten: high frequency lexical, high frequency phrasal, low frequency lexical, and low frequency phrasal. The frequencies were determined from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) developed by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University in 2008.

The Brigham Young University corpus is the largest freely available corpus of English and, it is a balanced corpus, meaning that the corpus incorporates several different types of word
sources including television and radio shows, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. The corpus is composed of over 410 million English words from the years 1990-2010.

Because colloquialisms arise mainly in speech, I only worked with the spoken subset of the entire corpus which consisted of 80 million words. The corpus allows you to search for frequency. I tested many words and their frequencies. I selected words to test from watching television shows and noting colloquial or slang terms that people would say in casual conversation. In terms of frequency, a word or phrase was considered high in frequency if it appeared in the spoken language subset of the COCA more than one hundred times. For the purposes of this study, a word or phrase was considered low frequency if it appeared under fifty times in the corpus. There was at least an eighty word difference between words or phrases that were considered high and low frequency. This means that a word that is low frequency will have shown up at least eighty times less than a word that is considered high frequency. For example, a high frequency phrasal word that was chosen was take it easy and a low frequency phrasal item was love handles. Take it easy showed up in the corpus one hundred and fifteen times and love handles showed up twenty one times, thus there was a ninety-four word difference between the times that take it easy and love handles showed up.

If a word being tested had several meanings then I went through the greater context of each word to retrieve the manner in which the word was being used. After I separated all of the uses, I counted the number of times that the word was used in the colloquial context that I was looking for and based on that number, I determined if it was high frequency or low frequency, the details of how I determined high or low frequency are described below. For example, crib is most commonly used to describe a baby’s bed, but in this study we were looking for the slang definition of crib, meaning house. The spoken English corpus found two hundred and fifty
sentences containing the word *crib*, so I used the context that the corpus provided to separate the different meanings. Once the word was separated only with the slang definition, the word “crib” meaning house, only appeared thirteen times, making it low frequency lexical.

In the comprehension test the participants were asked to determine the meaning of a colloquial or slang word or phrase. The test was scrambled with high frequency lexical, high frequency phrasal, low frequency lexical, and low frequency phrasal items. As mentioned above, the previous test that I piloted used a format where the participants wrote in their own responses. Since this format was difficult to analyze, I made this test multiple-choice so that the participants did not have to write in his or her own responses. Instead each participant was given four answers to choose from; three answers were incorrect and one answer was correct. All of the answers were written in a uniform manner. For instance, all answers contained the same amount of words and parts of speech. An example is given below;

If someone says, “That woman is a cougar” what does this mean?

a. That woman dates older guys  
b. That woman dates younger guys  
c. That woman dates older women  
d. That woman dates younger women

The test consisted of forty questions similar to the one above that contained high frequency and low frequency lexical and phrasal colloquial speech and slang items. The full test can be found in the appendix.
The test was expected to show that second language learners have more knowledge of lexical colloquial items than of phrasal colloquial items. Secondly, it was predicted that learners would know more high frequency items than lexical items. However, structure was predicted to be more important than frequency. Thus, it is expected that participants will answer correctly more questions containing high frequency phrasal items than low frequency phrasal and the same for lexical. However, as previously mentioned, I expect the participants to be more familiar with lexical items than with phrasal items, regardless of frequency. It is also expected that the advanced students will answer more items correctly than the intermediate students.

### 3.3.4.2 Procedures.

All participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and were asked to do the comprehension test and then the multilingualism questionnaire. The researcher was present during all of the procedure, and participants were informed that they could ask questions at any time concerning words they did not know or if they had any doubts.

### 3.3.4.3 Scoring and analysis

Scoring was done by entering the data into SPSS. I was testing for three independent variables: frequency of the colloquialism (high or low), structure of the colloquialism (lexical or phrasal) and participant class-level (intermediate or advanced). Frequency and structure were treated as within-participant variables and class-level was treated as a between-participants variable. The dependent variable was percent accuracy in choosing the correct definition of the
I submitted mean percent accuracy across the four colloquialism conditions to a mixed 2X2X2 ANOVA.

### 3.3.5 Summary

This chapter gave a review of all of the data collection, methods, design, and procedures. The results support the hypotheses. The comprehension test results showed that second language learners were more familiar with colloquial items that are lexical, and they were less familiar with colloquial items that are phrasal. The results showed that frequency was also a factor. However, as predicted, frequency did not diminish the impact of structure. Also, the advanced students performed better on the test than the intermediate students.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The results supported the hypotheses of the study in several ways. Second language learners in El Paso, Texas do appear to be acquiring colloquial speech. Also, the structure of the colloquial items affects the acquisition of the specific colloquial terms. Learners answered correctly more lexical colloquial items than phrasal colloquial items. Finally, the learners in the advanced classes performed better on the comprehension test than they intermediate students.

4.2 Comprehension Test Results

The analysis of the comprehension test results was designed to test for three independent variables: frequency of the colloquialism (high or low), structure of the colloquialism (lexical or phrasal) and participant class-level (intermediate or advanced. Frequency and structure were treated as within-participant variables and class-level was treated as a between-participants variable. The dependent variable was percent accuracy in choosing the correct definition of the colloquialism. I submitted mean percent accuracy across the four colloquialism conditions to a mixed 2X2X2 ANOVA.

The analysis revealed two main effects, one for frequency (F (1, 37) = 14.5, p < .05) and one for structure (F (1,37) = 7.0, p < .05). The main effect of frequency reflected more accurate responses to high-frequency colloquialisms versus low-frequency colloquialisms. The main effect of structure reflected more accurate responses to lexical items relative to phrasal items.
The main effect of frequency was qualified by a marginally-significant (F (1, 37) = 4.0, p = .052) two-way interaction with class level. This interaction reflected the fact that frequency affected accuracy for the two class-levels differently. More specifically, only participants in the advanced class showed a benefit in accuracy for high-frequency items.

It is remarkable that the effect of structure was not qualified by any interaction either with frequency or class-level. This is consistent with my hypothesis that the effect of structure is so reliable that it remains unchanged irrespective of any potential effects of frequency.

Table 3: 2X2X2 ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL * frequency * lp</th>
<th>Measure:MEASURE_1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low lexical</td>
<td>67.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A high lexical</td>
<td>79.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I low lexical</td>
<td>67.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I high lexical</td>
<td>71.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of proficiency in English, twenty-two intermediate students were tested and eighteen advanced students. Their proficiency was judged by the level of ESOL class in which they were currently enrolled. There does seem to be somewhat of a difference between the
intermediate and advanced levels. The advanced level classes answered seventy two percent of all questions on colloquialisms and slang correctly. The intermediate classes answered sixty six percent correct. This leaves a six percent gap between the intermediate and advanced classes, which does show a difference, though not an important one.

4.3 Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this test serve as evidence that phrasal and multi-word colloquial items can be a challenge for second language learners to acquire. Thus, pedagogically phrasal items should be given special attention in language classroom environments. We see that English is a phrasal language. It is probable that colloquialisms are not the only type of difficult speech to acquire, but all phrasal language. It could be helpful in SLA to point this type of language out.

There has been some discussion in SLA whether or not to include colloquial and informal speech into the language classroom. Teaching colloquial speech in any language can be important for acquisition and assimilation into the languages cultural group, which as Gardner (1983) reported, can serve as great motivation for the learner. The test also shows that frequency alone may not be enough for the language learners to acquire this type of speech, since the test revealed that structure was not qualified by frequency. Thus, integrating this type of speech into a language classroom may help the students prosper in social situations and media comprehension.

Since the participants answered over fifty percent of the questions correctly in each of the categories, it does seem that the students are acquiring colloquial speech and slang in El Paso, Texas. This result is different from McAlpine and Xu’s (2008) result that ESL learners were not
acquiring Canadianisms. What reasons could there be for the results of this test being different from the results of McAlpine and Xu’s study? One difference could be time. The subjects in McAlpine and Xu’s study had been in Canada a range of time going from one to thirty-seven months, with an average mean of 7.44 months. However, the participants in this study averaged 1.75 years living in El Paso. Also, the subjects in this study may have been exposed to English from earlier ages because of their location living on the El Paso-Juárez border. In fact, forty-one percent (sixteen out of thirty nine) of the participants answered in the multilingual questionnaire that they had begun to learn English before the age of ten. Thus, the bilingual nature of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico may be a factor in the second language learners of this particular region acquiring colloquial speech and slang more than the participants in McAlpine and Xu’s study.

Based on the answers that were given in the multilingualism questionnaire, it is also evident that exposure to media sources such as television, movies, and newspaper is also helpful for colloquial speech acquisition. In a classroom setting teachers could integrate this type of media exposure to students. Identifying structure of the language through exercises where the student is asked to underline or pick out phrasal colloquialisms could help the student’s awareness of this type of speech.

Above all, exposure is necessary for the acquisition of any type of speech, as well as colloquial speech. The participants of this study are in a situation where they are exposed to colloquial speech and slang because of their age and circumstances as college students. Also, the city of El Paso offers countless opportunities of exposure to media outlets. The best environment for learning is exposure, as well as formal study. Second language learners of English need to be
made aware of colloquial speech structure, and perhaps can be more aware of its existence, and thus more inclined to make note of the speech and acquire it.
References


Appendix A

Vocabulary Survey

Instructions: Please choose the answer that most describes the phrases below.

1. When someone says, “the movie sucks”, what does he think about the movie?
   a) It is a good movie
   b) It is a bad movie
   c) It is a funny movie
   d) It is a violent movie

2. When someone says, “He is some big shot over there,” what does this mean?
   a) He is not important over there
   b) He is important over there
   c) He fights a lot over there
   d) He is very happy over there

3. When someone says, “Welcome to my crib,” what does this mean?
   a) Welcome to the baby’s room
   b) Welcome to my house
   c) Welcome to my web page
   d) Welcome to my car

4. When someone says, “You are out of touch,” what does this mean?
   a) You are not being nice
   b) You are acting crazy
   c) You are not aware of facts
   d) You are acting drunk

5. When someone says, “the movie was awesome”, what does she think about the movie?
   a) It is a good movie
   b) It is a bad movie
   c) It is a funny movie
   d) It is a violent movie
6. When someone says, “The clothes are up for grabs,” what does this mean?
   a) The clothes are pretty
   b) The clothes are ugly
   c) The clothes are old
   d) The clothes are free

7. When someone says, “I hate my love handles,” what does it mean?
   a) I hate my relationship problems
   b) I hate my in-laws
   c) I hate my pimples
   d) I hate my stomach fat

8. When someone says, “Mike is a loser”, what are they saying about Mike?
   a) He isn’t often successful
   b) He is often successful
   c) He often cries
   d) He often wins

9. When someone says, “They are my peeps,” what does this mean?
   a) They are my enemies
   b) They are my friends
   c) They are my parents
   d) They are my teachers

10. When someone says, “hit it up,” what does this mean?
    a) to take away something
    b) to drop by somewhere
    c) to beat up someone
    d) to go out with someone

11. When someone says that he “has a new gig,” what does that mean?
    a) He has a new kind of party
    b) He has a new friend
    c) He has a new house
    d) He has a new job
12. If someone tells you, “holla”, what do they want you to do?
   a) have a drink with them
   b) go out with them
   c) go to a party with them
   d) communicate with them

13. When someone says, “Let’s hang out,” what does that mean?
   a) Let’s go to a party
   b) Let’s spend time together
   c) Let’s go on a date
   d) Let’s leave the house

14. When someone says, “The joke is corny”, what does that mean?
   a) The joke is funny
   b) The joke is crazy
   c) The joke is offensive
   d) The joke silly

15. When someone told you, “You’re trippin’”, what does this mean?
   a) You are being warned
   b) You are acting weird
   c) You are arriving late
   d) You are losing money

16. When someone says, “Who is that dude?”, what does “dude” mean?
   a) That regular guy
   b) That older man
   c) That attractive person
   d) That little kid

17. When someone says, “That girl is a jerk,” what does that mean?
   a) That girl is sweet
   b) That girl is mean
   c) That girl is crazy
   d) That girl is funny
18. When someone says, “I’m down to go,” what does this mean?
   a) I’m sad to leave
   b) I want to exercise
   c) I want to go
   d) I’m asleep

19. When someone says, “It’s cool,” what does it mean?
   a) It’s bad
   b) It’s good
   c) It’s silly
   d) It’s beautiful

20. When someone says, “I am going to blow it off,” what does this mean?
   a) I am going to dedicate time to something
   b) I am going to ignore something
   c) I am going to make something fun
   d) I am going to hit something

21. When someone says, “Just chill,” what does that mean?
   a) You should have fun
   b) You should get a drink
   c) You should go to sleep
   d) You should calm down

22. When someone says, “She takes me for granted,” what does that mean?
   a) She doesn’t appreciate me
   b) She doesn’t take me out
   c) She doesn’t like me
   d) She doesn’t love me

23. When someone says, “That dress is hot,” what does that mean?
   a) That dress is expensive
   b) That is dress is short
   c) That dress is sexy
   d) That dress is ugly
24. When someone says, “I’m going to head out,” what does this mean?
   a) I am going to leave
   b) I am going to eat
   c) I am going to drink
   d) I am going to study

25. When someone says, “He was wasted,” what does this mean?
   a) He was tired
   b) He was angry
   c) He was drunk
   d) He was stupid

26. When someone says, “He is out of his mind,” what does this mean?
   a) He is fun
   b) He is crazy
   c) He is drunk
   d) He is funny

27. When someone says, “That guy is a douche,” what does this mean?
   a) That guy is great
   b) That guy is a drunk
   c) That guy is crazy
   d) That guy is irritating

28. When someone says, “Check her out,” what does this mean?
   a) Point to her
   b) Look at her
   c) Talk to her
   d) Laugh at her

29. If someone is your “boo”, what are they to you?
   a) your enemy
   b) your boyfriend/girlfriend
   c) your friend
   d) your date
30. When someone says, “She hit rock bottom,” what does this mean?
   a) She reached her lowest point in life
   b) She finished the bottle of alcohol
   c) She fell down very hard
   d) She lost her patience

31. When someone says, “She is really bummed,” what does this mean?
   a) She is poor
   b) She is happy
   c) She is rich
   d) She is sad

32. When someone says, “The idea was shot down,” what does this mean?
   a) The idea was accepted
   b) The idea was rejected
   c) The idea was controversial
   d) The idea was bad

33. When someone says, “You ditched me,” what does this mean?
   a) You left me
   b) You yelled at me
   c) You insulted me
   d) You hit me

34. When someone says, “It is just for the in-crowd,” what does this mean?
   a) It is just for strong athletes
   b) It is just for popular people
   c) It is just for smart people
   d) It is just for young children

35. When someone says, “Her house is a dump,” what does this mean?
   a) Her house is not nice
   b) Her house is decorated badly
   c) Her house smells bad
   d) Her house is large
36. When someone says, “She is going to freak out,” what does this mean?
   a) She is going to have a strong reaction
   b) She is going to be calm
   c) She is going to want to dance
   d) She is going to cry

37. When someone say, “He is a couch potato,” what does this mean?
   a) He is lazy
   b) He is boring
   c) He is studious
   d) He is hungry

38. When someone says, “Take it easy,” what does this mean?
   a) Be mad
   b) Be happy
   c) Be worried
   d) Be calm

39. When someone says, “I’m going to make my move,” what does this mean?
   a) I’m going to go for what I wants
   b) I’m going to move to a different house
   c) I’m going to go to a different bar
   d) I’m going to go home

40. When someone says, “I got your back,” what does this mean?
   a) I’m mad at you
   b) You are my enemy
   c) I’m on your side
   d) You are my boss
Appendix B

Vocabulary Questionnaire:

Please write a list of all the words in English you can think of that have the same significance as the words below and with what frequency you use them.

1. What other words could you use to say “money”?

How often do you use these words?

a. Very often  
   b. Sometimes  
   c. Sometimes, but not often  
   d. Only as jokes  
   e. almost never

2. What other words could you use to say “job”?

How often do you use these words?

a. Very often  
   b. Sometimes  
   c. Sometimes, but not often  
   d. Only as jokes  
   e. almost never

3. What other words could you use to say “house”?
4. What other words could you use to say “to go out drinking” or “drunk”? 

How often do you use these words?
   a. Very often  c. Sometimes, but not often
   b. Sometimes    d. Only as jokes
      e. almost never

5. What other words could you use to say “be careful”? 

How often do you use these words?
   a. Very often  c. Sometimes, but not often
   b. Sometimes    d. Only as jokes
      e. almost never

6. What other words could you use to say “yes”? 

How often do you use these words?
7. What other words could you use to say “beer”?

a. Very often  c. Sometimes, but not often
b. Sometimes   d. Only as jokes
e. almost never

8. What other words could you use to say “problem”?

a. Very often  c. Sometimes, but not often
b. Sometimes   d. Only as jokes
e. almost never

9. What other words could you use to say “people”?

a. Very often  c. Sometimes, but not often
b. Sometimes   d. Only as jokes
10. What other words could you use to say “woman?”

a. Very often          c. Sometimes, but not often
b. Sometimes           d. Only as jokes
                        e. almost never
Cuestionario de Vocabulario:

Por favor escribe una lista de todas las palabras en español que puedes pensar que tiene el mismo significado y con qué frecuencia las usas.

1. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “dinero”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido
b. A veces
c. A veces, pero no muy seguido
d. Sólo en broma
e. Casi nunca

2. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “trabajo”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido
b. A veces
c. A veces, pero no muy seguido
d. Sólo en broma
e. Casi nunca

3. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “casa”?
¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca

4. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “tomar alcohol” o “salir a tomar alcohol”? 

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca

5. ¿Cuáles son otras palabras que puedes usar para decir “cuidado”? 

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca
6. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “sí”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca

7. ¿Qué otras palabras que puedes usar para decir “cerveza”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca

8. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “problema”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces

c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma

e. Casi nunca
9. ¿Qué otras palabras que puedes usar para decir “gente”?

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces  
c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma  
e. Casi nunca

10. ¿Qué otras palabras puedes usar para decir “mujer”? 

¿Con qué frecuencia usas esas palabras?

a. Muy seguido  
b. A veces  
c. A veces, pero no muy seguido  
d. Sólo en broma  
e. Casi nunca
### Appendix C

FREQUENCY TABLE RESULTS, ENGLISH

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Appendix D

Vocabulary Translation Test

Por favor traduce al inglés las siguientes oraciones. Asegúrate de escribir algo para cada oración, aunque no esté seguro de la traducción correcta. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Intenta traducir las oraciones de manera que se entienda bien el significado en vez de traducir cada palabra.

Please translate the following sentences into Spanish. Make sure you write something down for every sentence, even if you do not know or are unsure of the translation. There is no right or wrong answer. Try to translate the sentences to target the actual meaning of the phrase, as opposed to translating the individual words.

1. “Thanks for the heads up.”

Translation into Spanish:

___________________________________________________________________________________

2. “I had a ball at the party.”

Translation into Spanish:

___________________________________________________________________________________

3. “I pulled an all-nighter.”

Translation in Spanish:

___________________________________________________________________________________

4. “Playing sports after school helps kids blow off some steam.”

Translation into Spanish:

___________________________________________________________________________________

5. “I’m so burned out.”

___________________________________________________________________________________
6. “We cut a deal.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

7. “It’s a little hole in the wall.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

8. “I hate my love handles.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

9. “It’s probably not your cup of tea.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

10. “She screwed everything up.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

11. “He is so wishy washy.”
Translation into Spanish:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

65
12. “I’m gonna go pig out.”

Translation into Spanish:
VOCABULARY TRANSLATION TEST, SPANISH

Prueba de Traducción de Vocabulario

Please translate the following sentences into Spanish. Make sure you write something down for every sentence, even if you do not know or are unsure of the translation. There is no right or wrong answer. Try to translate the sentences to target the actual meaning of the phrase, as opposed to translating the individual words.

Por favor traduce al inglés las siguientes oraciones. Asegúrate de escribir algo para cada oración, aunque no esté seguro de la traducción correcta. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Intenta traducir las oraciones de manera que se entienda bien el significado en vez de traducir cada palabra.

1. “Échame aguas”

Inglés

________________________________________

2. “Qué chafa el video.”

Inglés

________________________________________

3. “La neta es que no me gustó”

Inglés

________________________________________

4. “Ya ni la friegas.”

Inglés

________________________________________
5. “Me dio hueva.”
Inglés

6. “No hay pex.”
Inglés

7. “Ármate las guamas.”
Inglés

8. “No quiero meterme en un pedo que no es mío.”
Inglés

9. “El muchacho ni me pela.”
Inglés

10. “No mames. Está horrible esta calle.”
Inglés

11. “Estoy harto de tus pendejadas.”
12. “¡Qué poca madre! Alguien tomó mi diario.”
Appendix E

NATURAL DATA

Conversation 1:

A: She's pretty cute
B: **Hell yea!** She's gonna get pregnant. Yup! Good thing she can't cross the border (laughs).
A: You're horrible
B: (laughs) **Don't hate**
A: That's why you have to marry her.
B: She's gonna be your aunt when we visit down there. Yet I'm more attracted to her friend. Is that horrible?
A: Good, I need some aunts. Oh lord.
B: Her friend is CUTE!
A: Of course you are
B: What should i do?
A: Why didn’t you **go for her** in the first place?
B: Cause I didn't know anyone, then she brought her to some party, and now **I'm all into her**.
Come on...it’s still really early and **fresh**...
A: You could test out just how good of a friend she is.
B: How's that? By hitting on her and see if she tells Teresa.
A: Yeah or if she goes out with you.
B: **She was into me**, but I think only because she saw the movie stars and all the lights and **shit**.
But I'm just tryin to get her pregnant anyways. Why should i care, huh?
A: The friend **was into you too**?
B: Yeah.
A: You should get them both pregnant so they can be **preggers** at the same time and keep each other company since you are gonna flee.
B: But teresa was **in the way**. (laughs). That sounds **awesome**! I'm gonna think about that one. Might have to be the challenge of a lifetime, but i bet i can do it.
A: I bet u can.
B: well boundaries aren't **your thing**.
A: Woo hoo. What you gonna do?
B: (Sighs), I dont know yet. Got an idea for me? Probably have to spend Friday with my mijo since I am going to be bartender extraordinaire on Saturday. Are u talking to Klaw? You are definitely workin' on a list o' mijas..
B: Yeah, so we can go on a double date, and I'll pretend like you're a nice guy and then the girl will like you. I'd **stoop to that level** cause i get so bored in Juárez, but I’m excited for the tequila festival, and the feria is here.
A: **Dude! I'm soooo down!** I got a mija in Juárez I'm **mindtwisting**. (laughs) Just kidding.
B: You’re horrible. The 19 year old?
A: Yup! Primetime!
B: u could be her father
A: (laughs) Almost.
B: Call me the *giff*. You are a *giff*. Maybe she's lying and she's really only 17 and they'll put you away for....oh! it's in Juárez never mind!
B: (laughs) I'll probably meet her friend. Hopefully older, and then I'll hit that! I'm kidding about *hittin* the young one, but I do want to meet some mijas from Juárez cause I'm gonna do a movie over there, and then I'll meet some older girls. You think i could use your *crib* for the movie.
A: Yeah, we're getting a new one
B: When?
A: Cause Cristobal made too much noise in the *freakin'* other one. Well his madrina has a house that is pretty big and has a lot of windows and a place for hangin’ outside and stuff.
B: I need to shoot inside
A: But it's far away by Las Torres, so today we are gonna go look at 3 other ones closer to the bridge when he gets off work.
B: So they kicked him out already?
A: Yeah.
B: (laughs) Pinche Cristobal!
A: It sucked cause it had everything there.
B: Well what kind of rave was he throwing? *Damn*! But that's lame he couldn’t make any noise!! But he did. I wanna see your house. It’s not going to be a big production. Just a small set up with Juárez actors and maybe some from El Paso, but all the *pussies* in El Paso are scared to cross. You know how that is.
A: I'd be so downtown julie brown with that, makes me in with the in crowd.
B: (laughs) *Fuck* the in crowd. I can’t stand them. They are so lame! Not lame, just ridiculous.
A: When are ya'll gonna shoot here?
B: But fun (laughs) The week of my birthday.
A: Fun
B: Which is 9/19 thru 9/26. A whole week of getting’ *honeys* knocked up. Yea!
A: That's every week for you.
B: (laughs) So look out for some good looking and descent acting women, have to be *hot* but the acting quality isn’t that important. Not too *hot*, cause then they can't act. Just good looking and have prior model experience would be nice but not necessary, but prior acting experience would be a *major plus*! Again not super *hot* cause then I'll never get any work done!
A: I know a gay guy actor, He's in all the plays in Juárez!
One of my students was in the Juárez production of Chicago (laughs), bet that was awesome. She's cool.
B: Not the gay dude. You got a pic on your student?
A: Why don’t you want the gay dude? You’re not an equal opportunity employer? Noooo, I didn’t take a pic of her, that would’ve been weird.
A: Don't need another dude, I got many of those. She's not your facebook friend?
B: No, what’s your stance on facebooking your students? You’re for it, right?
A: I'm friends with most of my professors, and the dean of my college, but I'm only myspace music friends with my students. What do you think?
B: I don’t really want to friend them cause I’ll feel guilty if I wanna status update about gettin' drunk or bein' hung-over.
A: (laughs)
B: which is all i ever basically say in a status update
A: yea, awesome. So get me some actresses and maybe an actor or two, but can't be gay unless they look like regular guys.
A: Ok I'll be looking.
B: Most gay guys look like metrosexuals, and you can totally tell.
A: P.S. really wanna go see Juan Gabriel in Guadalajara September 25.
B: Find me a promiscuous one instead
A: But I aint got no money.
B: He's not playing Juárez.
A: Ok, that'll be easy. All the girls in juarez are. (laughs)
B: (laughs) I meant gay men! (laughs). Any good music goin’ to feria?
A: I haven't even seen the roster
B: Damn.
A: Probably just naco vaquero music
B: (laughs)
A: Which I love, of course.
B: Yeah! I'm out. Call u later, un abrazo.
A: Ok bye!
Conversation 2:

**Persona 1:** ¡Qué tranza!

**Persona 2:** ¿Por qué tan peinadito? Dime.. ¿Dónde andabas?

1: Acabo de llegar de con mi **jefa**, yo pensé que no **se iba armar** nada.

**Persona 3:** ¿No te ha hablado Juanjo?

1: **Nel**, anteayer creo, que se cortó el pelo me dijo Edgar.

3: Ahorita ha de estar ahí con el Tuyo no.

2: No te dije yo.

1: **Neta.**

2: Sí, **mamón**.

1: ¿Cómo se ve acá bien **fresón**?

3: Se ha de ver como puerco no acá bien sádicon.

2: Y si nos llamamos los nastis **güey**?

1: Nastis. ¿Cómo se traduciría nastis en español?

2: Como los sádicos.

3: Los cerdos. Eyy. ¿No tienes cigarros?

1: Aventé unos en el techo, unos nuevos.

3: **Neta.**

1: **Simón**, unos nuevos.

3: ¿Esta semana?

1: El domingo.

3: ¿Te peleaste con ella?

1: No, no pero **me caga** que fume **güey** y no.

2: ¿Quién Pamela?

1: Simón.
1: Y los aventé al techo están nuevos güey.

3: ¿Y cómo me subo?

1: Por ahí o por acá por el patio.

2: ¿Qué hora es?

Persona 4: No sé……

1: Los porkis….porki porki.

3: ¿Por qué andas tan peinado, vienes de la reunión?

1: Es que ando buscando jale.

2: ¿Cuánto tienes sin jalar güey?

1: ¿Un rato como medio año, está bien culero todo acá gacho.

2: ¿Y a donde fuiste güey?

1: Varios lados. Vengo del Chuco güey ay ay, no pues a varios lados.

3: ¿Este cable es el que te aaaaa no…..? Oye? Te trajiste a la Pirris para qué?

3: ¿Y los cablesillos güey?

1: Ahí está todo creo.

2: Oye Winkle acá con los stands bien metaleros verdad..

1: Bien culeros verdad..

2: (laughs).. 

1: Sí así güey pinche chinga..

3: ¿Te los puso la otra vez verdad?

1: Pesan un nuevo esas mierdas verdad..

3: ¿El micro se lo llevó?

1: ¿Qué güey?

3: ¿El micro ese, ¿se quedó aquí o se lo llevó?

1: Ahí guardé uno pero bien chafota…ay ay.
2: ¿Dónde está el de la bolsa güey?
3: No este no es (laughs)… pinche feo.
2: A ver güey …
3: El negro el que traía yo.
1: No pues no jala no
3: ¿No güey?
1: Hay esta ese tráetelo.
3: Prestame el cable güey.
1: Guacha __, hay en el Wal-Mart 200 baros, se me hace que no jala.
2: ¡Pirris!
1: ¿Cómo les fue en la escuela?
2: (laughs)
1: Acá verdad como la mamá.
2: (laughs) te mamas.
3: Como la Señora Thompson.
1: A mí me gusta preguntarles como les fue ¿Qué tiene? Quiero saber cómo están de salud y todo.
2: (laughs)
3: A ver. dame re.
4: Déjame afino primero.
1: No me gusta la acústica del cuarto, ¿No tienen por hay unos pedazos de alfombra para ponerlos en la pared?
3: Ahí tengo una alfombra del tamaño de la pared.
1: Tráetela la cortamos en pedacitos
2: (laughs) No mames.
3: Dale la rola que sacamos la otra vez.
4: ¿Cómo iba?

3: Así ese ritmo que le estabas dando.

1: Ay güey ni me acuerdo.

3: Dale para irle agarrando y acordarnos de la segunda parte.
Conversation 3:

A: The border patrol guy just told me I look pregnant. Not happy about that…

B: That mother f-er.

A: I know, and I thought I looked cute today. Now I’m sad.
B: He's full of shit and hates his life. Don’t listen to him. You look cute.

A: Sorry, I have to pee. Whatever, I bet you told it good. Did you tell about how you farted?

B: No, I left that part out. Awesome! Go you!

A: I need to pee. Whatever, I bet you told him good. Did you tell about how you farted?

B: They kicked our asses last night, but I was the pitcher!

A: Are they nice? Why does he intimidate you?

B: Cause he trains me! And he's apparently shy, but I thought he just didn’t like me.

A: Damn, you have your own trainer?

B: Not really, he's just the guy that owns the gym and does the 6 a.m. class Zac and I go to. What are you doing tonight?

A: Uh, I wish I was working out like you at 6 in the morning. Nikita is coming!

B: What? Oh my god! I didn’t know that! What are we gonna do?

A: I’m trying to work out, but I’m just so bad at drinking beer and eating bad stuff. I mean, I am better, like I didn’t drink at all on Monday or Tuesday, but kickball Wednesdays always make me go downhill.

B: Dude, it’s kickball. That counts as exercise.

A: I dunno! But I’m excited.

B: I had beer and chocolate yesterday.

A: Does he make a lot of dinero? Noooo, not til the first week of May.

B: Well, more than I do. Oh! I want to go!

A: That’s cool, I want a miojo that makes dinero. Tell him to buy you a ticket.

B: I’m kind of scared to ask for anything. He wanted to buy Keith a miter saw for his birthday.

A: Are those expensive?

B: Yeah. Ok, so his birthday is in like a week. He doesn’t like to go out.

A: Not even to restaurants?

B: So I was gonna get him 2 books, a big bottle of delicious beer and a good cd., and make him a bookmark. No, restaurants he likes, but it's not anything special.

A: Does he like to read?

B: How do you feel about that present? Yeah.

A: I think that is a really cute present!

B: Are you serious?

A: Its lots of presents! Yeah!

B: I hate giving gifts, lord. Ok. Good, cause I already ordered them online. Now I have to make a gd bookmark.

A: How are you going to make it? What books did you order?

B: Monte Walsh and Sometimes a Great Notion. I don’t know, maybe get some fun paper and use Jessica’s stuff?

A: That will be cute

B: I guess. You’re better at this shit than me.

A: Are you kidding me? I’m horrible! Kata is the good one. She goes to craft night on Tuesdays. Yesterday I told Kata she’s pushover with Cimi and she needs to grow some balls and stick up for herself with him. Guess who had one too many Bud Lights?
B: Oh (laughs) Well, she does. What did she say? And what? Craft night? With who?
A: I dunno, some weird older women.
B: **Oh, man.**
A: Well I said, she'll say no, no, no to everyone and always even overly stick up for herself and then she lets Seemster walk all over her, cause she was tired and wanted to leave. She went on a trip early this morning, and Cimi didn’t want to leave, he was agarrando la fiesta.
B: Yeah, oh no.
A: And she was too scared to leave him there by himself.
B: That **sucks**. Did anything happen with those texts that he didn’t want her to read?
A: No. She yelled at him a lot, according to her.
B: Uh huh.
A: I know.
B: So did she stay the whole time till he was ready to go?
A: Yeah, and me and Martha offered her like 700 rides home, but she just got **crabby** and said she wanted him to leave now with her, but wouldn’t say anything to him.
B: **Dude,** Kata…
A: She gets **outta control**. I'm like "you have noooo problemo saying no to me!" Hey guess what, did I tell you that Kiko moved into our old house?
B: What? No way! **Awesome!**
A: Yeah!
B: **I heart Kiko.**
A: We're gonna **sprink and drink** in the back yard next weekend. Me too.
B: Oh my God, I hate you.
A: That **was all me**, obviously.
B: Remember our redneck s&d in the back of the Mundy?
A: His girlfriend Rubi promised me she won’t let anyone paint over our mural.
B: Good!
A: Yes.
B: I'm surprised it's lasted this long
A: God, that's what I’m telling them. Corto house will help us be less redneck!
B: Yay! At least there's a fence/wall thing.
A: But Kiko keeps saying he's gonna paint over our mural, but he's just trying to **get my goat**! Rubi promised she wouldn’t let him.
B: Good. Tell Rubi I like her.
A: **She's the shit. They're a power couple.**
B: **Dude,** I believe it.
A: I know, I wish I was a **power couple**. Me and John are like not very cool.
B: **Dude,** my new boyfriend doesn’t like to go out, like ever, and I say *dude* way too much. You are too a **power couple**! I saw your fancy birthday party' flyers and i was totally jealous!
A: Nah, we're not. Oh did you see my new bday pictures that Sofia just put up?
B: Hmmm...I don’t think so, on Facebook?
A: Si
B: I can't go on till tomorrow, I just salir'd de un chat.

Conversation 4
A: Qué bueno que fue eso, pensé que era algo más feo. También a mi sobrino le pasó eso hace 2 días pero el güey se tomó como medio vaso de pinol y se intoxicó todo. Decía mi tía que andaba como borracho, pero a él si le hicieron lavado bien cabrón, pero no mames. mi tía tuvo la culpa por dejar esa madre en una botella de soda y él pensó que era como sprite ajaja y se la tomó toda casi.

B: (laughs) No mames pues porque dejan eso ahí pues es bien peligroso pues qué bueno que se dieron cuenta luego luego. Me hubieran avisado y mi vecino es doctor aquí tiene su consultorio enseguida.

A: Pues ya sé pensé pero mi tía entró como en pánico y ya tenía a niño en el carro y se arrancaron para allá, decían que andaba tipo pedo y como drogado.

B: Que raras cosas pasan y más de niño. Esta uno bien pirata nos pasan cada penejada pero es parte de todo, nos tiene que pasar algo así bien rarote, eso es casi seguro.
Person 1: ¿Que honda men? Ni ensayaste verdad?

Person 2: Le di un rato, me puse a ensayar en la noche pero no puedo tan tarde porque los vecinos se molestan, pero estudié poquito solfeo que creo es lo que me hace falta.

1: La verdad es que yo tampoco le di mucho solo saqué 3 canciones luego llego mi morra con mi chavo malo y lo llevamos al hospital.

Person 3: Neta que tenía?

1: Traía infección en el estomago y le hicieron un lavado pero antes de ahí vomito y se recupero se sintió mejor.

2: Qué bueno que fue eso pensé que era algo más feo. También a mi sobrino le paso eso hace 2 días pero el guíe se tomó como medio vaso de pinol y se intoxicó todo decía mi tía que andaba como borracho, pero a él si le hicieron lavado bien cabrón, pero no mames mi tía tuvo la culpa por dejar esa madre en una botella de soda y él pensó que era como sprite (laughs) y se la tomó toda casi.

3: (laughs) No mames, pues por qué dejan eso ahí pues es bien peligroso pues qué bueno que se dieron cuenta luego luego, me hubieran avisado y mi vecino es doctor aquí tiene su consultorio enseguida.

1: Pues ya sé, pensé pero mi tía entró como en pánico y ya tenía al niño en el carro y se arrancaron para allá, decían que andaba tipo pedo y como drogado.

2: Qué raras cosas pasan y más de niño esta uno bien raro nos pasan cada pendejada pero es parte de todo nos tiene que pasar algo así bien rarote, eso es casi seguro.

3: Pues pero también nos gustaba hacer cosas (laughs) así como verles los calzones a las mujeres yo hacía eso pero una vez se dio cuenta una amiga de mi mama (laughs) y me dio un pellizco.

2: Yo jugaba a picarle la colita a mis amigas jugamos a la trae picacola (laughs).

1: Yo me robaba el dinero de las bolsas de gente que iba a la casa pero eso está feo.

2: Bueno viejos me retiro mi morra está embarazada así que a la casa voy de caza por una pizza chido.

3: Chido men mañana nos vemos voy a bajar calzones a mi novia.

1: Y yo a robarme los besos de mi vecina (laughs) Chidos menssssss.

Curriculum Vita
Brannon Bradford was born in Montgomery, Alabama. She attended high school at the Montgomery Academy. After graduating high school she moved to Asheville, North Carolina where she attended the University of North Carolina at Asheville. After completing degrees in Political Science and Spanish, she moved to Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico where she worked full time at a school and woman’s center called Centro Santa Catalina for two years. In the fall of 2008 she entered the Languages and Linguistics department at the University of Texas at El Paso. She is currently working as an ESL and Spanish instructor around the El Paso-Juárez area, and is currently applying for doctoral admissions.

Permanent Address: 3309 Elebash Hill

Montgomery, AL 36106