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A Comparative Analysis of Home Language Usage in San Andrés and Providencia and Santa Catalina Islands, Colombia: A Statistical Account

Jim Ross

1. Context

On this truncated archipelago of islands lying 480 miles from Cartagena on the mainland Colombian Atlantic coast but only 110 miles from the Central American mainland of Nicaragua and 250 miles south-west of Jamaica, an English-speaking community lives on despite almost five centuries of Spanish and then Colombian rule.¹ However, their survival as an ethnic community is endangered and retention of their English language heritage is central to this. This has been recognised and since the 1980s various Bilingual and special education programmes have been tried but none has achieved much. The latest manifestation of this is the Ethno-education programme which addresses not just language issues but those of culture and tradition. This paper analyses survey data on Home Language use among the different communities of the islands seeking to discover the degree of language retention and loss, and to compare the language patterns of the two islands.

This is necessary as although the islands of San Andrés and Providencia and Santa Catalina have until recently shared the same history, in the last 50 years they have diverged. San

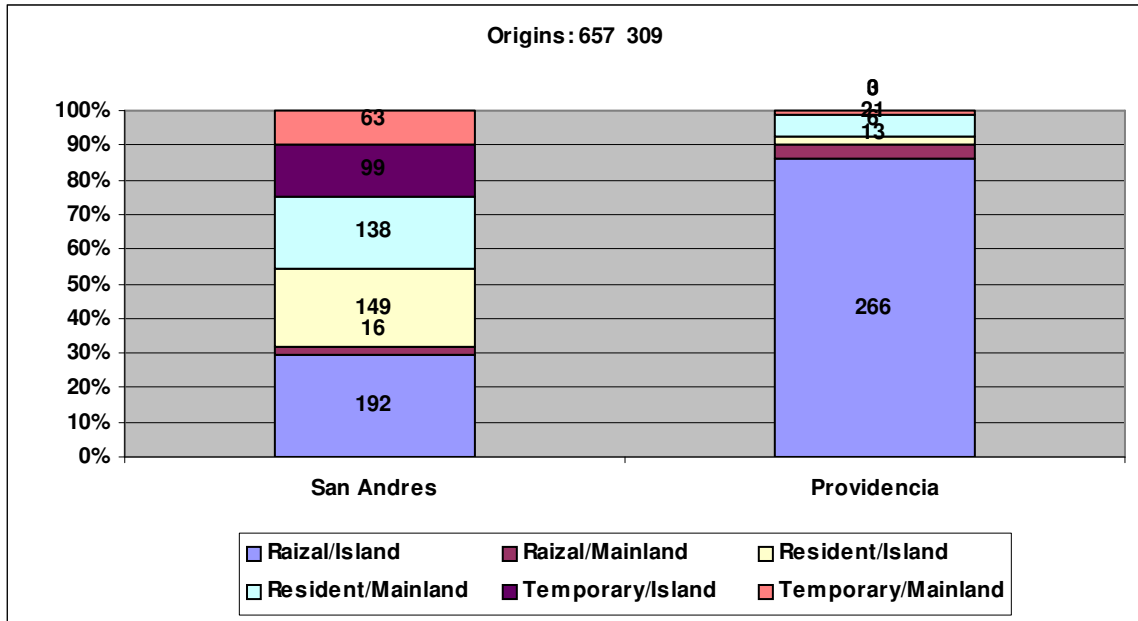
Andrés experienced rapid and uncontrolled development after the declaration of a Freeport in 1953.² This sucked in an ‘invasion’ of Spanish-speaking, Catholic Colombians who have radically, and dangerously, altered the physical and cultural environment of the island. Native Islanders, Raizales, have been marginalised and despite resistance and some important gains in the 1991 Colombian Constitution,³ are still endangered communities. Providencia and Santa Catalina have not suffered such a traumatic change; being a volcanic island, there is less easily habitable land and no large airport to facilitate immigration. With considerably less immigration, commerce and tourism, a more traditional way of life of Raizales has been preserved. This paper seeks to measure this difference in terms of Home Language use by the different communities.

2. The Surveys

The surveys were carried out in August 2004 in San Andrés and January 2005 on Providencia using the same questionnaire and substantially the same methodology.⁴ On San Andrés, 1,932 questionnaires were distributed and 775 (40.1%) returned while on Providencia, 1,000 questionnaires were distributed and 362 (36.2%) were returned. Respondents were given a choice of three languages in which to answer the questionnaire: English, Spanish and Creole.⁵ This raised issues around translation and the meaning of the terms in each of the languages and cultures as Creole is not how many Islanders refer to the everyday language they speak, using instead terms such as Islander English or Patwa.⁶ However, all make some sort of distinction between English and this other English-related language and so Creole was not confusing to them in this context. Among Native Islanders, there is no clear, agreed definition of what is English and what is Creole; what one may call English, another may call Creole so in the analysis, Local Languages are also analysed as a set. In this study, only respondents with a Home Language, Occre Card and Place of Birth response are used. On San Andrés this makes for a sub-set of 657 respondents accounting for 84.8% of all respondents, and on Providencia, 309 respondents accounting for 85.4% of all respondents in the survey.

3. Data

3.1 Origins



3.1.1 San Andrés

There are 657 valid respondents of whom the Raizal/Island, Native Islander, group with 192 (29.2%) respondents is the largest group and 1.38 times more frequent than expected. The Raizal/Mainland, Native Islander but Mainland Born, group with 16 (2.4%) respondents is the smallest and only 0.23 times as frequent as expected. The Resident/Island, New Islander, group with 149 (22.7%) respondents is the second largest but only 0.76 times as frequent as expected. A third of the Island Born are of immigrant ancestry and over half of all immigrants are Island Born but both sets are significantly under-represented as responses are widely dispersed, a consequence of being such a mixed set. The Resident/Mainland, immigrant, group with 138 (21%) respondents is the third largest and 1.46 times more frequent than expected.; a solid and non-dispersed group as expected of this most immigrant group. The Temporary/Island, local but Undefined, group with 99 (15.1%) respondents is the fourth largest and only 0.91 times as frequent as expected. The Temporary/Mainland, immigrant and Undefined, group with 63 (9.6%) respondents is the second smallest and 1.18 times more frequent than expected.

3.1.2 Providencia

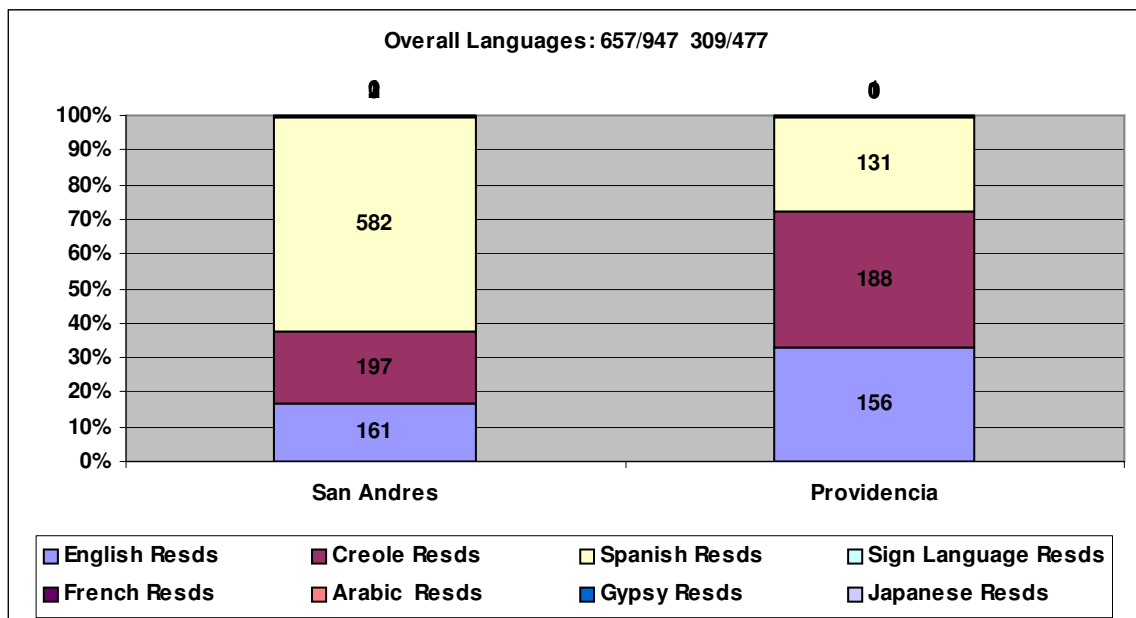
There are 309 valid respondents of whom the Raizal/Island, Native Islander, group with 266 (86.1%) respondents is the largest group and 1.08 times more frequent than expected. The Raizal/Mainland, Native Islander but Mainland Born, group with 13 (4.2%) respondents is the third largest and only 0.39 times as frequent as expected. The Resident/Island, New

Islander, group with 6 (1.9%) respondents is the third smallest and only 0.25 times as frequent as expected. Under a quarter of all immigrants are Island Born and both sets are significantly under-represented. The Resident/Mainland, immigrant, group with 21 (6.8%) respondents is the third largest and 6.56 times more frequent than expected. There are no Temporary/Island respondents. The Temporary/Mainland, immigrant and Undefined, group with 3 (1%) respondents is the second smallest and 7.5 times more frequent than expected.

3.1.3 Compared

On Providencia, Raizal Islanders are proportionally very significantly stronger than on San Andrés while Raizal Mainlanders are only significantly stronger. On San Andrés, Resident Islanders are significantly stronger than on Providencia, as are Resident Mainlanders. Temporary Islanders are significantly stronger than on Providencia, as are Temporary Mainlanders. There is a significant imbalance but patterns of use in the first three Origins sets is possible, and they are the most important, together with Resident Mainlanders. The Temporary respondents are by nature, difficult to analyse meaningfully.

3.2 Home Languages



3.2.1 San Andrés

Of the 947 responses, 358 (37.8%) are Local Languages, with 161 (17%) English and 197 (20.8%) Creole. 582 (61.5%) are Spanish, over 6 in 10 of responses. Of the 657 respondents, 270 (41.1%) have a Local Language with 161 (24.5%, 59.6%) English and 197 (30%, 73%)

Creole. 582 (88.6%) have Spanish. In terms of respondents, Spanish is significantly more dominant and accounts for almost 9 in 10 of respondents. With 88.6% of all respondents, and 2.16 times more frequent than Local Languages, it underlines how pervasive Spanish is even in the home domain. Of the Local Languages, 3 in 10 use Creole in the home while 1 in 4 use English; with Creole recognised as the mother tongue,⁷ there is less difference than expected.

3.2.2 Providencia

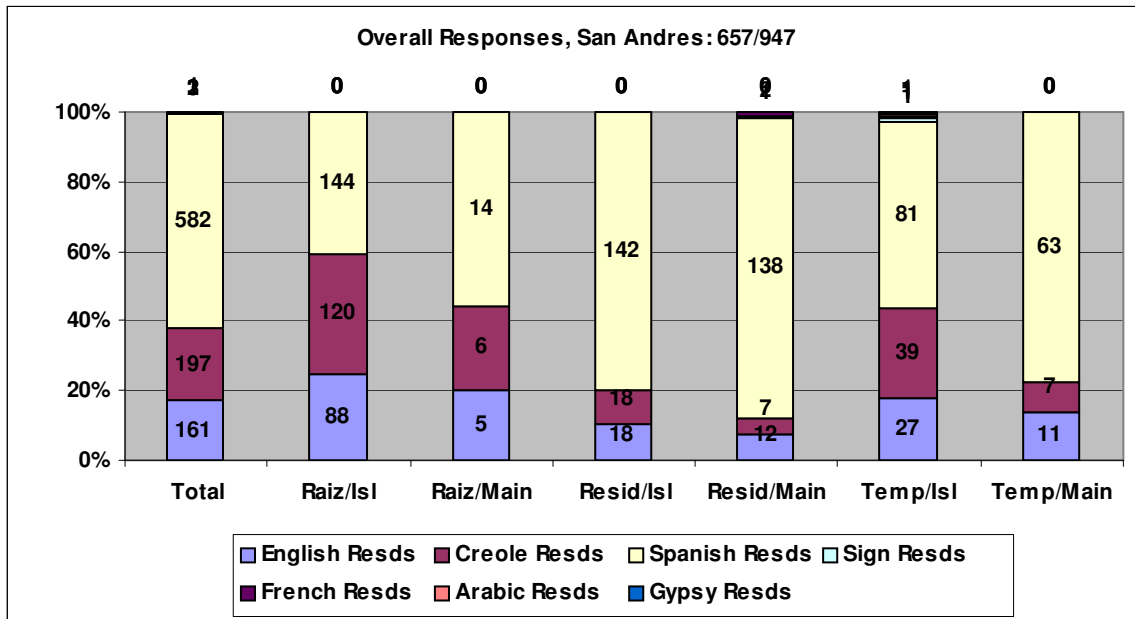
Of the 477 responses, 344 (72.1%) are Local Languages, with 156 (32.7%) English and 188 (39.4%) Creole, and 131 (27.5%) are Spanish. Over 7 in 10 of responses are Local Language. Of the 309 respondents, 131 (42.4%) have Spanish and 286 (92.6%) a Local Language with 156 (50.5%, 54.5%) English and 188 (60.8%, 65.7%) Creole. In terms of respondents, Local Languages are significantly more dominant and account for over 9 in 10 of respondents. With 92.6% of all respondents, and with over twice the frequency of Spanish, it underlines how dominant Local Languages are in the home domain. Almost two-thirds use Creole in the home while half use English; with Creole recognised as the mother tongue, there is less difference than expected.

3.2.3 Compared

On San Andrés, English is significantly weaker than it is on Providencia, and is slightly under-represented overall, while on Providencia it is quite significantly over-represented. Creole is significantly weaker than it is on Providencia, and is slightly under-represented, while on Providencia it is significantly over-represented. Spanish is significantly stronger than it is on Providencia, and is over-represented, while on Providencia it is significantly under-represented. All other respondents are only found on one of the islands.

3.3 Languages and Origins

3.3.1 San Andrés

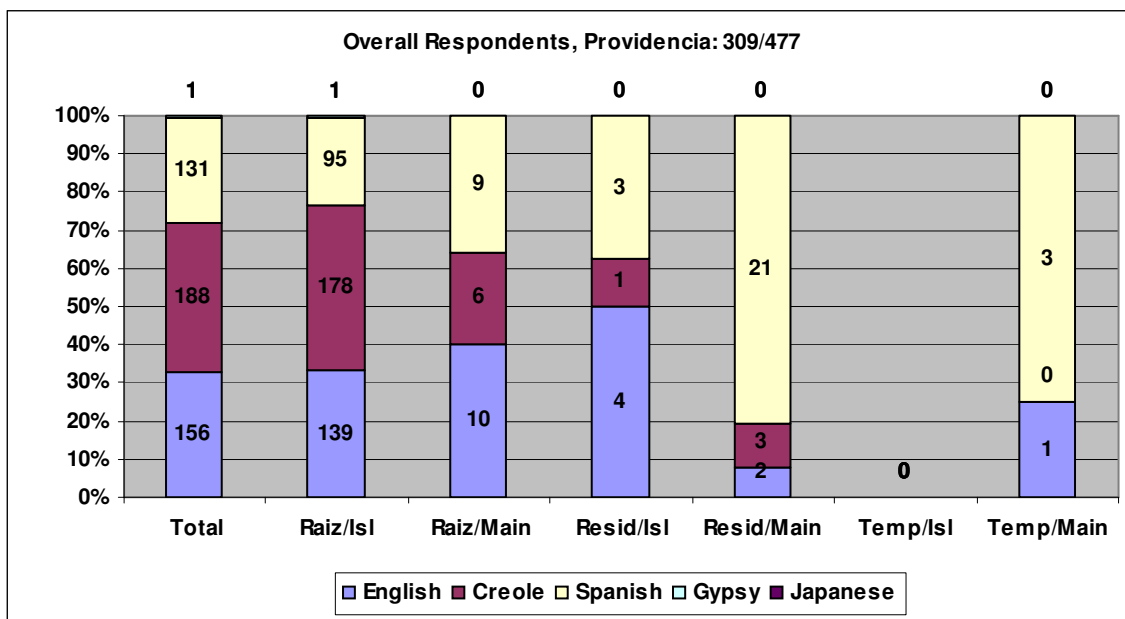


Just under 60% of Raizal Islander responses are of a Local Language while only under 45% of Raizal Mainlanders are. In both sets, there has been considerable take-up of Spanish but significantly more so among the Mainland Born. Only 54.7% of Raizal Islanders use English and 62.5% use Creole; 154 have a Local Language, 80.2% of Raizal Islanders. 31.3% of Raizal Mainlanders use English and 37.5% use Creole; 8 have a Local Language, 50% of Raizal Mainlanders. 144 (75%) Raizal Islanders have added or switched to Spanish in the home while 14 (87.5%) Raizal Mainlanders have; in both there is considerable language change.

Just under 80% of Resident Islander responses are Spanish while 85% of Resident Mainlanders are. There is no significant difference as in both sets there has been little take-up of Local Languages. 95.3% of Resident Islanders use Spanish and only 12.1% use English, 12.1% use Creole; 28 (18.8%) use a Local Language; under 1 in 5. 100% of Resident Mainlanders use Spanish and only 8.7% use English, 5.1% use Creole; 14 (10.1%) use a Local Language; only 1 in 10. 36 (24.2%) Resident Islanders have added or switched to a Local Language in the home while 19 (13.8%) Resident Mainlanders have; proportionally Islanders have switched significantly more.

55% of Temporary Islander responses are Spanish while just under 75% of Temporary Mainlanders are. 81.8% of Temporary Islanders use Spanish and only 27.3% use English, 29.4% use Creole; 53 (53.5%) use a Local Language. 100% of Temporary Mainlanders use Spanish and only 17.5% use English, 11.1% use Creole; 13 (20.6%) use a Local Language. Local Languages are significantly more frequent among the Island Born. Temporary Islanders use more Local Languages and less Spanish than Temporary Mainlanders.

3.3.2 Providencia



Just

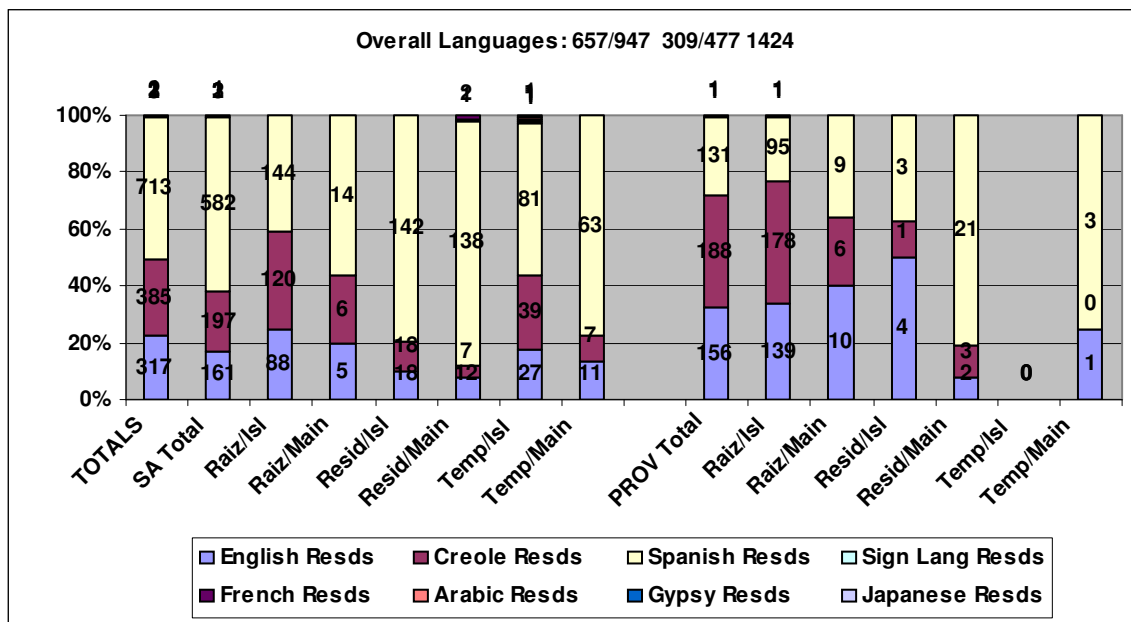
over 75% of Raizal Islander responses are of a Local Language while under 65% of Raizal Mainlanders are. There has been significantly more take-up of Spanish among the Mainland Born. Only 52.3% of Raizal Islanders use English while 66.9% use Creole; 264 have a Local Language, 99.2% of Raizal Islanders. 76.9% of Raizal Mainlanders use English but only 46.2% use Creole; 12 have a Local Language, 92.3% of Raizal Mainlanders. 95 (35.7%) Raizal Islanders have added or switched to Spanish in the home while 9 (69.2%) Raizal Mainlanders have; Mainlanders have switched significantly more but in both sets there is considerable language change.

Only 37.5% of Resident Islander responses are Spanish while over 80% of Resident Mainlanders are. In both sets, there has been significant take-up of Local Languages and with no significant difference. Only 50% of Resident Islanders use Spanish but 66.7% use English, 16.7% use Creole; 4 (66.7%) use a Local Language; two-thirds. 100% of Resident Mainlanders use Spanish and only 9.5% use English, 11.1% use Creole; 5 (23.8%) use a

Local Language; almost a quarter. 4 (66.7%) Resident Islanders have added or switched to a Local Language in the home while 5 (19.2%) Resident Mainlanders have; proportionally Islanders have switched significantly more.

75% of Temporary Mainlander responses are Spanish; 100% of Temporary Mainlanders use Spanish and only 33.3% use English, 0% use Creole; 3 (33.3%) use a Local Language; a third. There are no Temporary Islanders.

3.3.3 Compared



3.3.1.1 English

The highest concentration of English with 50% is among Resident Islanders, followed by Raizal Mainlanders, 40%, and Raizal Islanders, 35%, all on Providencia. Most of the lowest concentrations are on San Andrés but there are no Temporary Islanders on Providencia and Resident Mainlanders are second lowest of all, 7.7%, with their San Andrés cousins the lowest of all, 7.5%.

However, in terms of how over-represented they are, the picture changes somewhat. Resident Islanders on Providencia, with 4 responses making 2.7% of Englishes, are 1.51 times more frequent by responses and 1.35 times more frequent than expected by respondents, and remain in the lead. This is unexpected but with so few respondents, 6, this is unreliable but may be because they have learnt it as a foreign language and in Islander dominated situations, chose to accommodate by using English rather than the other lingua franca, Spanish. That

they are followed by Raizal Islanders on San Andrés who, with 88 responses making 54.7% of English responses, are 1.47 times more frequent than expected by responses and 1.87 times more frequent by respondents, is not a surprise. Next are Raizal Mainlanders on Providencia who, with 10 responses making 6.4% of Englishes, are 1.23 times more frequent by responses and 1.53 times more frequent by respondents. Next are their Raizal Mainlander cousins on San Andrés who, with 5 responses making 3.1% of Englishes, are 1.19 times more frequent by responses and 1.29 times more frequent by respondents. None of these strong Raizal results are surprising. Next are Temporary Islanders on San Andrés who, with 27 responses making 16.8% of Englishes, are 1.06 times more frequent by responses and 1.11 times more frequent by respondents. They are followed by Raizal Islanders on Providencia who, with 139 responses making 89.1% of Englishes, are 1.03 times more frequent by responses and proportional by respondents.

The most under-represented are the Resident Mainlanders on Providencia who, with 2 responses making 1.3% of Englishes, are only 0.23 times as frequent by responses and only 0.19 times as frequent as expected by respondents. They are followed by their Resident Mainlander cousins on San Andrés who, with 12 responses making 7.5% of Englishes, are only 0.44 times as frequent by responses and only 0.35 times as frequent as expected by respondents. Next are Resident Islanders on San Andrés with 18 responses making 11.2% of Englishes, are only 0.59 times as frequent by responses and only 0.49 times as frequent as expected by respondents. They are followed by Temporary Mainlanders on San Andrés, who with 11 responses making 6.8% of Englishes, are 0.79 times as frequent by responses and only 0.71 times as frequent as expected by respondents.

3.3.1.2 Creole

The highest concentration of Creole in terms of responses is among Raizal Islanders on Providencia, over 45.4%, and San Andrés, 34.1%. That Temporary Islanders on San Andrés, 26%, are the next highest is slightly surprising. That Raizal Mainlanders on both islands also feature is not surprising; on San Andrés, 24%, and on Providencia also 24%. The lowest concentration of Creole, apart from Temporary Islanders on Providencia with no respondents, is among Resident Mainlanders, 4.3%, and Temporary Mainlanders, 8.6%, both on San Andrés. Next lowest are Resident Islanders, 10.1%, significantly under-represented, on San Andrés and then Resident Mainlanders on Providencia, 11.5%, and Resident Islanders on Providencia, 12.5%.

However, in terms of how over-represented they are the picture changes somewhat. Raizal Islanders on San Andrés, with 120 responses making 60.9% of Creoles, are 1.64 times more frequent by responses and 2.09 times more frequent than expected by respondents, and are the most over-represented as expected. They are followed by Temporary Islanders on San Andrés, with 39 responses making 19.8% of Creoles, who are 1.25 times more frequent by responses and 1.31 times more frequent than expected by respondents. This is less expected but suggests that there are some really Raizal and that some really Resident may have taken up Creole through growing up alongside Raizales. Raizal Mainlanders also on San Andrés, with 6 responses making 3.0% of Creoles, are 1.17 times more frequent by responses and 1.27 times more frequent than expected by respondents. Raizal Islanders on Providencia, with 178 responses making 94.7% of Creoles, are 1.09 times more frequent by responses and 1.10 times more frequent than expected by respondents. That these are Raizal sets is not surprising.

The most under-represented in Creole are Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, with 7 responses making 9.1% of Creoles, are only 0.21 times as frequent by responses and 0.17 times as frequent as expected by respondents. Next are Resident Mainlanders on Providencia, with 3 responses making 1.6% of Creoles, are only 0.29 times as frequent by responses and 0.23 times more frequent than expected by respondents. They are followed by Resident Islanders on Providencia, with 1 response making 0.5% of Creoles, are only 0.31 times as frequent by responses and 0.28 times more frequent than expected by respondents. Next are Temporary Mainlanders on San Andrés, with 7 responses making 3.6% of Creoles, are only 0.41 times as frequent by responses and 0.37 times as frequent as expected by respondents. Then come Resident Islanders on San Andrés, with 18 responses making 9.1% of Creoles, are only 0.49 times as frequent by responses and 0.40 times as frequent as expected by respondents. That all of these weak sets are either Resident or Mainland or both is not surprising. However, Raizal Mainlanders on Providencia, with 6 responses making 3.2% of Creoles, are only 0.61 times as frequent by responses and 0.76 times as frequent as expected by respondents; that they are under-represented is surprising. There are no Temporary Occre respondents with Creole on Providencia.

3.3.1.3 Spanish

The highest concentration of Spanish is among Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, 85.7%, and Providencia, 80.8%; both high. Resident Islanders on San Andrés are next highest; 89.8%, followed by Temporary Mainlanders on San Andrés, 77.8%, and Providencia, 75%. That they are prominent suggests they are mostly ‘really’ Residents with Spanish their mother tongue. Next are Raizal Mainlanders, 56%, and Temporary Islanders, 54%, both on San Andrés. The lowest concentration of Spanish is among Raizal Islanders, 19.9%, and Raizal Mainlanders, 36%, on Providencia. They are followed by Resident Islanders, also on Providencia with 37.5%.

However, in terms of how over-represented they are, the picture changes somewhat. Resident Mainlanders on Providencia, with 21 responses making 16% of Spanishes, are 2.91 times more frequent by responses and 2.36 times more frequent than expected by respondents. Temporary Mainlanders on Providencia, with 3 responses making 2.3% of Spanishes, are 2.86 times more frequent by responses and 2.29 times more frequent than expected by respondents. Next most over-represented are Resident Islanders on Providencia who, with 3 responses making 2.3% of Spanishes, are 1.35 times more frequent by responses and 1.07 times more frequent than expected by respondents. They are followed by Raizal Mainlanders on Providencia, with 9 responses making 6.9% of Spanishes, who are 1.32 times more frequent by responses and 1.64 times more frequent than expected by respondents. This is surprising but a sign that being Mainland born has had a significant effect on Raizal use of Spanish in the home. Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, with 138 responses making 23.7% of Spanishes, are 1.39 times more frequent by responses and 1.13 times more frequent than expected by respondents. Similar are Resident Islanders on San Andrés, with 142 responses making 24.4% of Spanishes, who are 1.30 times more frequent by responses and 1.07 times more frequent than expected by respondents. The last of the over-represented sets are the Temporary Mainlanders on San Andrés, with 63 responses making 10.8% of Spanishes, who are 1.26 times more frequent by responses and 1.13 times more frequent than expected by respondents.

The most under-represented group are Raizal Islanders on San Andrés, with 144 responses making 24.7% of Spanishes, who are only 0.63 times as frequent by responses and 0.85 times as frequent as expected by respondents. They are followed by their Raizal Islanders cousins on Providencia who, with 95 responses making 52.7% of Spanishes, are 0.84 times as

frequent by responses and 0.84 times as frequent as expected by respondents. They are followed by Temporary Islanders on San Andrés, with 81 responses making 13.9% of Spanishes, who are 0.88 times as frequent by responses and 0.92 times as frequent as expected by respondents. Raizal Mainlanders on San Andrés, with 14 responses making 2.4% of Spanishes, are 0.93 times as frequent by responses and proportional by respondents. There are no Temporary Islanders on Providencia.

4. Summary

The highest concentrations of English are all on Providencia led by Resident Islanders, also the most over-represented, and followed by Raizal Mainlanders and Islanders. Even Temporary Mainlanders on Providencia are as concentrated as Raizal Islanders are on San Andrés, 25%. This highlights how different they have become from their San Andrés cousins, and this difference is generally recognised in the literature.⁸ However, Raizal Islanders on San Andrés are the second most over-represented in English. Most of the lowest concentrations of English are on San Andrés but there are no Temporary Islanders on Providencia and Resident Mainlanders on Providencia are second lowest of all, with their San Andrés cousins the lowest of all. That Resident Mainlanders on both islands are also the most under-represented in English is to be expected; they are doubly Colombian. Next are Resident Islanders, followed by Temporary Mainlanders, both on San Andrés.

The highest concentration of Creole is among Raizal Islanders on Providencia, but they are only slightly over-represented, followed by Raizal Islanders on San Andrés, the most over-represented of all. This is not surprising given that it is commonly held to be the mother tongue of Islanders. The next most concentrated, and second most over-represented, are Temporary Islanders on San Andrés; this is less expected but suggests that some are really Raizal and that some really Resident may have taken up Creole. Through growing up on the island and through interaction with Raizales in school and the street, they have picked it up, or they live in a mixed Raizal/Resident family. Raizal Mainlanders also on San Andrés are the next most concentrated and over-represented. The lowest concentration of Creole, apart from Temporary Islanders on Providencia with no respondents, is among Resident Mainlanders and Temporary Mainlanders both on San Andrés. This is as expected from the two most Colombian sets; they have little opportunity or desire to mix with Raizales and so cannot pick this up unless living in a mixed Raizal/Resident home. However, the most under-represented in Creole are Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, followed by Resident

Mainlanders and Islanders on Providencia. As in English, these doubly Colombian sets have the least Creole.

The highest concentration of Spanish is among Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, and Providencia; both high but with a significant difference. This is not surprising given that Spanish is their mother tongue and the lingua franca on the islands; they have no real need for Local Languages. Resident Islanders on San Andrés have the next highest concentration, followed by Temporary Mainlanders on San Andrés and Providencia. That the most over-represented in Spanish are Resident and Temporary Mainlanders on Providencia is a result of there being few Raizales on Providencia with Spanish which also explains why the next most over-represented are Resident Islanders on Providencia. The lowest concentration of Spanish is among Raizal Islanders and Mainlanders on Providencia. This underlines how little Spanish has penetrated into the home in Providencia - there is less media as until recently Colombian terrestrial TV did not enter, fewer immigrants, less commerce and less tourism which have all contributed to the maintenance of traditional language use. Next lowest are Resident Islanders, also on Providencia. However, the most under-represented group are Raizal Islanders on San Andrés followed by their cousins on Providencia; that these doubly Raizal sets have the least Spanish is to be expected. They are followed by Temporary Islanders on San Andrés.

75% of Raizal Islanders have added or switched to Spanish in the home on San Andrés, while on Providencia only 35.7% have. This reflects the different concentrations of Residents on the two islands which brings Spanish much more to the fore in San Andrés. Among Raizal Mainlanders, the pattern is the similar but with higher percentages and the difference less marked; while 87.5% of Raizal Mainlanders on San Andrés have Spanish, on Providencia only 69.2% have. Mainlanders have switched significantly more than Islanders but in both there is considerable language change towards Spanish.

24.2% of Resident Islanders have added or switched to a Local Language in the home on San Andrés while on Providencia 66.7% have. This shows a much greater accommodation to Local Languages on Providencia. Among Resident Mainlanders on San Andrés, 13.8% have added or switched to a Local Language while on Providencia 19.2% have; again there has been greater take-up of Local Languages on Providencia but much less than among the Island

born. On both islands, Islanders have proportionally switched significantly more than Mainlanders.

81.8% of Temporary Islanders use Spanish while only 53.5% use a Local Language(s) on San Andrés while on Providencia there are no respondents. On San Andrés, 100% of Temporary Mainlanders use Spanish and 20.6% use a Local Language(s) while on Providencia 100% of Temporary Mainlanders use Spanish and 33.3% use a Local Language(s). All Temporary Mainlanders have Spanish and significantly more on Providencia have a Local Language. On San Andrés, Temporary Islanders use more Local Languages and less Spanish than Temporary Mainlanders.

5. Conclusions

The biggest switchers of all are Raizal Islanders on San Andrés; this is the largest but also the most endangered of the groups. This brings out the irony of their situation. By having gone further than any other set in developing the multilingualism which is envisioned for the islands, they are weakening their traditional languages and in some cases, losing them altogether; 38 (19.8% of Raizal Islanders) Raizal Islanders on San Andrés gave a Spanish monolingual response. The biggest switchers to Local Languages are Resident Islanders on Providencia; as a small, minority community Residents have to interact with Raizales in a much more equal way and do so primarily with English. However, with 24% of Resident Islanders on San Andrés having a Local Language, they also show that being born and living on the islands both creates a need and a means to learn a Local Language and so the multilingual future envisioned is happening, but needs further encouragement. However, with only 4.7% of Resident Islander on San Andrés giving a monolingual Local Language response, there is no danger of them, as a community, losing their maternal Spanish. This move towards Local Languages is even more evident among Temporary Occre respondents, who by definition are of mixed or uncertain origins, especially among Islanders in San Andrés.

The Bilingual and Ethno-education programmes need to be strengthened to ensure Local Language maintenance by Raizales. Residents, especially Mainlanders, on the other hand have still not significantly taken up Local Languages. The multilingual future envisioned for the island in the Constitution will only be achieved if strong measures are taken to promote the use of English. For this to happen, a distinct Bilingual programme starting from the

maternal Spanish and developing English is needed in the schools with a predominantly Resident in-take.

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Notes

¹ Parsons. 1956.

² Petersen, 2002.

³ Gallardo, 1993.

⁴ It was not possible to use the sixth form students in the Secondary school on Providencia, as had been done on San Andrés, as the school was late opening for the new academic year due to delays in a refurbishment programme.

⁵ Assistance in writing the Creole version came from the Christian University, set up by the Baptist church on San Andrés in the 1990s, which is involved in Creole projects in collaboration with Universities in Nicaragua and Belize.

⁶ de Chaves, 1993.

⁷ de Chaves, 1990; Forbes, 1987.

⁸ Edwards, 1970; de Chaves, 1990; Forbes, 1987.