Portuñol and Border Identity in Rivera, Uruguay:
Reconciling identities and claiming space in the national imaginary

By

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Abstract

This thesis explores identity formation in the city of Rivera, Uruguay on the Brazilian border through exploring changing attitudes toward Portuñol, a mixed dialect of Spanish and Portuguese spoken along the Brazil/Uruguay border. The data analyzed was gathered through participant observation and ethnographic interviews of sixty-three Riverans between the ages of eighteen and seventy-nine during two stays in Rivera, Uruguay. This data indicates that the mixture of Uruguayan and Brazilian cultural traits evident in Riveran culture does not correlate with loss of attachment to Uruguayan national identity. Furthermore, there is a growing movement to value this mixed identity, particularly within the middle class and the Spanish or Portuguese-dominant bilingual population of the city. The author concludes that this border identity movement is the result of changes in conceptions of culture and national identity at the national and global level.

Acknowledgements

This study is dedicated to the people of Rivera, whose story inspired me and whose candor and generosity of spirit I will never forget. I am particularly grateful to Eli, Vargas and Rodrigo who not only offered their home and their help during my stay in Rivera but also welcomed me like a member of the family.

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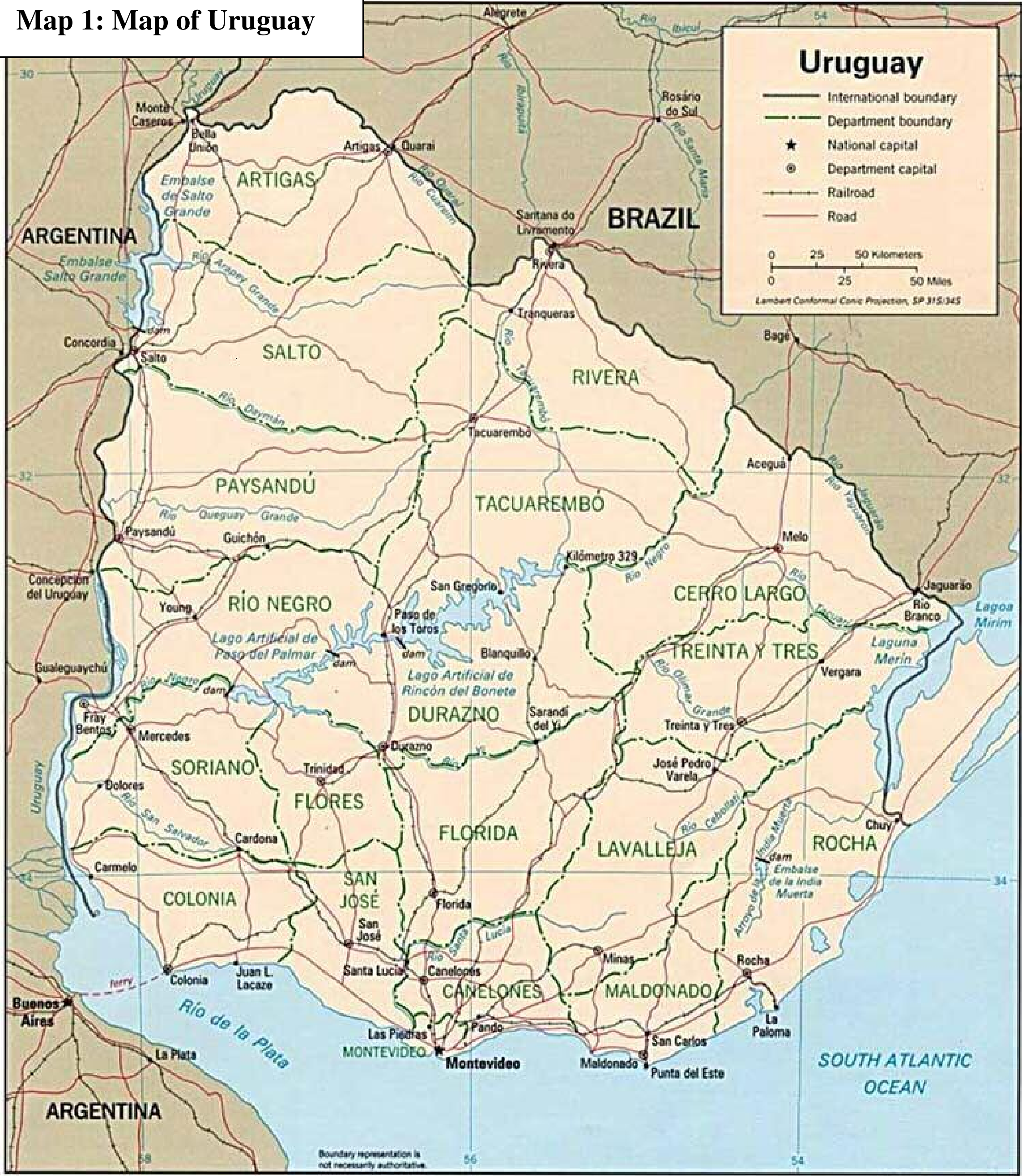
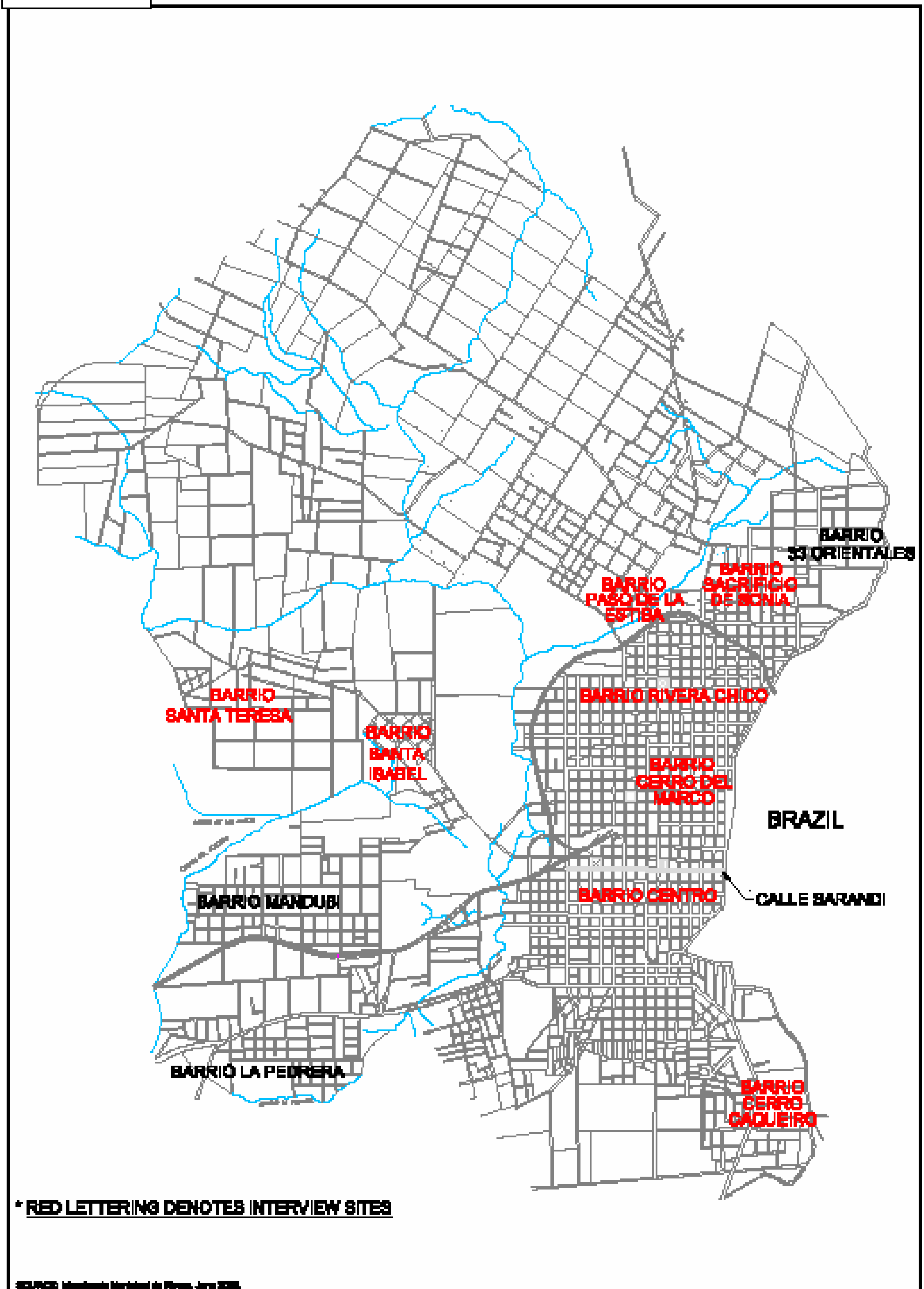
The constant support, wise counsel and unfaltering encouragement of my thesis chair, Mehrangiz Najafizadeh, have been truly exceptional. Words cannot express my gratitude for her tireless enthusiasm and her warm empathy throughout this process.

I would also like to thank Elizabeth Kuznesof and Tony Rosenthal for their supportive presence as professors, committee members and mentors and their insightful input into this project.

Map 1: Map of Uruguay



Map 2 MAP OF RIVERA, URUGUAY



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Introduction

“Me han criticado
en varios **“lado”**[*]
Porque he cantado
“Abrasileráo”
Que´s **“erejía”**
Pronunciar “**sía**”
O que na Bahía fui bautizáo”
Querido hermano
Montevideano
No soy “**bayano**”
“Tás engañáo”
Soy de Rivera
De la frontera
Donde cualquiera
Habla **entreveráo**

Soy fronterizo
Medio mestizo
“Sin compromiso”
Desde **gurí**
Tengo “mi doma”
No canto “en broma”
Soy “**Rompeidioma**”
Y “No ´toy ni aí”...

... De “Livramento”
Copio su “**asento**”
Pero “no miento”
Mi credencial
Soy: de “La Sesta”
“Duro de cresta”
Producto d’esta
Banda Oriental.

“I’ve been criticized
in many **place**
Because I sing
‘brazilianized’
Told it’s **‘heresy’**
To pronounce ‘**sia**’ (chair)
Or told that I was baptized in Bahia.
Dear brother
from Montevideo
I’m not “**bayano**”
You’re mistaken
I’m from Rivera
From the border
Where everyone
Speaks **mixed up**.

I’m fronterizo
Half mestizo
“With no apologies”
Ever since I was a **kid**
I’ve had my training
I’m not singing in jest
I’m a **language breaker**
And I’ll pay you no mind…

From Livramento
I copy my **accent**
But I don’t lie
My credentials are
I’m from ‘La Sesta’(a neighborhood in Rivera)
Hardheaded and proud
And a product of this
Banda Oriental.”

Rompeidioma by Chito de Mello

[*] Terms in bold are in Portuñol.

In 1967, the Uruguayan National Council of Primary and Secondary Education commissioned a study in Rivera, a city on the Brazil-Uruguay border. The reason for the study was the notably high number of children repeating grades. The Council had assumed that this was a problem of dyslexia, however the reading center they had founded some years before seemed to have made no difference in school success rates. The Council sent one of its members, Eloísa García Etchegoyhen de Lorenzo, a consultant on "mental retardation" for the Instituto Interamericano del Niño, to investigate. When García Etchegoyen began asking questions of the teachers in the border community, she was directed to the studies of Pedro Rona, a linguist who had recently identified a dialect of Portuguese spoken along most of the Brazil-Uruguay the border. This was the answer to the mysterious scholastic difficulties.[1]

This dialect Rona identified was Portuñol, a highly variable dialect of Portuguese mixed with Spanish and spoken monolingually by a large percentage of the border population. Despite the fact that many Uruguayan citizens spoke this dialect, its existence was unacknowledged at the national level. Chito de Mello's poem, "Rompeidiomas," shows some of the stigmas this group has faced over the years. Called "brazilianized" and "language breakers," Chito appropriates the name "rompeidiomas." He says he is Riveran and proudly Uruguayan, no matter what those in Montevideo want to think. Fifty years later, the first bilingual schools have been established in Rivera and, as the poem above attests, there is a growing recognition of

[1] García Etchegoyen de Lorenzo, Eloísa, Dialecto Fronterizo: un desafío a la educación, 1.

a border identity and pride in what was once confused at the national level with a learning disorder.

Language is an identity marker of belonging at many levels. The way one speaks identifies one as part of a national, regional, local or social "culture." Attitudes toward language mirror attitudes toward the specific "culture" it represents for the listener. However, these representations and attitudes are never static and are contingent on the social and historical context in which they are formed. My thesis is about changing attitudes toward Portuñol as a symbol of identity in the border town of Rivera, Uruguay. Specifically, it is about how and why Riverans are now reconciling their local and national identities through validation of Portuñol and cultural mixture as unique symbols of border culture.

To analyze changing attitudes toward Portuñol, I look at conceptions of identity and language on two principle scales: the national and the local. I argue that each scale contributes to Riveran identity formation and that recent changes in attitudes at both scales correlate with current changes in conceptions of national identity at the global scale.

On the national scale, my thesis presents the historical context of changing conceptions of Uruguayan national identity and the correlating effect on national language policy and attitudes toward Portuñol over time. This narrative highlights three key periods in Uruguayan history that I argue are key in the formation of national identity and attitudes toward language as an identity marker: First, the history of contested Spanish/Portuguese occupation of Uruguayan territory (1600-

1900) and the effort to create a “homogeneous” Uruguayan identity (beginning in 1870) led Uruguay to see the presence of Brazilian traits as a threat to national sovereignty. The military dictatorship (1973-1985) reinforced already existent ideas of Uruguayan national identity in ways that impact present-day attitudes toward language and national identity. Finally, the return to democracy (1985) and the signing of Mercosur (1994) led to reduced hostility toward Brazil, an acceptance of hybridity and a more pluralistic vision of national identity, and a new transnational concept of the border. This final period opened new space for valuing Portuñol as a symbol of border identity.

On the local scale, I argue that the openness of the international border and the resulting economic and social integration have led Riverans to adopt traditionally “Brazilian” cultural traits along with typically “Uruguayan” cultural traits. Portuñol, as a mixed dialect of the two national languages, is the most obvious symbol of this cultural mixture. The presence of Portuguese language and Portuguese/Brazilian cultural traits in this region has existed since the beginning of settlement. Attitudes toward this mixture have changed over time. While I argue that Riveran identity construction is inseparable from their location on this border, I also argue that acceptance of mixture as part of a unique identity are correlated with historic changes in conceptions of national identity at the national level. Attitudes toward Portuñol vary in relation to differences in language, class and age. I see this as evidence of the importance of both attachment to local identity and exposure to alternative discourses of national identity in empowering Riverans to embrace a mixed regional identity. I

also argue that Portuñol functions as a symbol of class, regional and national identity depending on the scale from which it is seen. I further argue that national and local level changes in attitudes toward Portuñol reflect global changes in conceptions of culture, language, borders and national identity.

Review of the Literature

Research on Portuñol began in the late 1950´s with Jose Pedro Rona's El Dialecto Fronterizo del Norte de Uruguay. His is the first attempt to understand the linguistic irregularities of the border from a linguistic perspective. This work as well as his 1963 article, "La frontera lingüística entre el portugués y el español en el norte del Uruguay," described a region with Portuguese language influence most intense at the border but also extending into the south. Nos Falemo Brasilero: Dialectos Portugueses del Uruguay, by Adolfo Elizaincín, Luis Behares, and Graciela Barrios, published in 1987, critiques Rona's (1965) study of DPU, Dialectos Portuguese del Uruguay, the term they coined for the border dialect(s).[2] They stated that Portuñol/DPU was more variable than Rona's clearly defined regional varieties would suggest.

After Rona's purely linguistic studies, Fritz Hensey completed the first sociolinguistic studies of the border, published in 1966 titled "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations" and in 1972, titled "The sociolinguistics of the Brazilian-Uruguayan border." His research revealed drastically

[2] The authors employ the plural 'dialectos' to emphasize the high level of variability of the dialect.

different levels of bilingualism on each side of the border and a strongly negative attitude toward Portuguese on the Uruguayan side. Hensey's 1966 study does not distinguish between Portuguese and Portuñol. His 1972 study relegates Portuñol to a sign of linguistic interference of Spanish on Portuguese, rather than defining it as a dialect in its own right. He interpreted the presence of Portuguese as a function of international relations at a community level and thus bilingualism and language loyalty were related to the socioeconomic structure of the contact communities. Adolfo Elizaincín's 1979 article, "Estado actual de los estudios sobre el fronterizo uruguayo-brasileño," summarizes early linguistic and sociolinguistic work on Portuñol, connecting it to the growing field of research on border and contact languages and suggests changes to pedagogy on the border. Las actitudes lingüísticas y el prestigio del Portuñol en la ciudad de Rivera, Uruguay, the 1999 doctoral thesis of Pasi Puranem from the University of Helsinki, explores attitudes toward Portuñol through questionnaires on language use and identity. He found that Spanish dominates in formal situations while Portuñol is used more often in interactions with friends. In general, he identified a negative attitude toward Portuñol as an identity symbol.

The bulk of work on Portuñol from the 1970's and 80's was written in an attempt to answer critiques from the national press and government concerning the "Portuguese invasion." Particularly important are the works of Adolfo Elizaincín, including "The Emergence of Bilingual Dialects on the Brazilian-Uruguayan Border" published in 1976 and "Algunas Precisiones sobre los dialectos portugueses del

Uruguay" from 1978. Beyond pointing out the historical roots of Portuguese in northern Uruguay, both articles emphasize that the dialect is spoken by the lower classes and is held in low regard by all speakers. He called for reforms in the educational system to help integrate this needy sector of the population.

Other work on Portuñol is specifically aimed at finding a solution to the educational disadvantage faced by monolingual dialect speakers. Luis Ernesto Behares published "Planificación Lingüística y Educación en la Frontera Uruguaya con Brasil" in 1985 as an overview of the historical reasons for the presence of Portuñol and a scientific answer to the nationalist discourse concerning the dialect. He presents the number of dialect speakers, describes their specific problems within the school system, and finally suggests the need for a reformed approach to education on the border. Behares' Portugués del Uruguay y Educación Fronteriza, published in 2003, addresses problems faced by teachers and students on the border caused by the low prestige of Portuñol and the unacknowledged bilingualism of the region. He provides linguistic and sociolinguistic background on Portuñol and contextualizes this linguistic situation through an overview of the history of Uruguayan-Brazilian interactions and the changing discourses of identity on the national level. He concludes with an argument for bilingual education in Spanish and Portuguese that does not preclude the use of colloquial variations, like Portuñol.

Recent works also analyze attitudes toward Portuñol and changes in national identity discourse. In early 2000, Graciela Barrios revisited the influence of national discourse on speakers of Portuñol in Rivera. In her unpublished article, "Discursos

Hegemonicos y Representaciones Linguisticas sobre lenguas en contacto y de contacto: Espanol, Portuguese y Portuñol Fronterizos," she explored the hegemonic linguistic discourse of the dictatorship era (1973-1985) and that of the 1990's into the present and their effect on language attitudes of speakers. Her work uncovers both reflections of nationalist discourse linking Portuguese with lack of identification with the nation as well as some growing recognition of the dialect as a regional patrimony.

"A Fronteira Inevitavel. Um estudo sobre as cidades de fronteira de Rivera(Uruguai) e Santana do Livramento(Brasil) a partir de uma perspective antropológica," the doctoral work of Andrea Quadrelli Sánchez of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, explores how Riverans and Santanenses as examples of border populations, experience the 'nation' in daily interaction. She explored local stereotypes of each nation and the ways Riverans and Santanenses define their identity within the economic and social context of this historically open border, including a section on Portuñol.

Other recent studies reflect a growing search for legitimation of Portuñol as a unique cultural artifact of the border. Os Som da Nossa Terra, published in 1997 with funding from UNESCO, is a compilation of oral and written poetry and narrative, songs and jokes compiled by Luis Ernesto Behares and Carlos Ernesto Diaz. The included works were found through visits to local libraries, contact with locals and familiarity with the emerging local literary critique in the cities of Artigas, Rivera and Mello and the towns of Bernabé in the *departamento*, or state of Rivera and Las Toscas de Caraguatá. The premise of the collection is to question one of the basic

affirmations concerning Portuñol that it is purely oral and exists in "pure" form only in illiterate communities.

Luis Ernesto Behares published Na Frontera Nos fizemo assim: Lengua y cocina en el Uruguay fronterizo in 2004. The book includes a collection of 101 recipes gathered in interviews in the departamentos of Rivera and Artigas, a lexographic study of the terms used in these recipes, a study of "border cuisine," a selection of the original recipes translated into Spanish, and concludes with a chapter on the "culinary-linguistic" and "socio-historic" character of the border with the purpose of creating a "marco de referencia a partir del cual sea posible interpretar lo fronterizo como cultura diferenciada."[3]

Most of the early studies of Portuñol focused on linguistic description, language attitudes and educational policy. Newer studies have begun exploring Portuñol as a symbol of a border culture. My work expands upon these more recent studies, however my particular contribution is in synthesizing research on changing conceptions of Uruguayan national identity with my extensive ethnographic data on the local outcomes of these changes. My thesis provides both a description of local identity construction on this particular border and an analysis of local, national and global reasons for movement to embrace this regional identity and reconcile this mixed cultural identity with Uruguayan national identity.

[3] Behares, et. al., Na Frontera Nos Fizemo Assim: Lengua y Cocina en el Uruguay Fronterizo, 7.

Theoretical Framework

Identity construction is multifaceted and complex. It involves defining what aspects mark members as part of a specific group as well as encompassing an individual's experience of 'belonging' to a specific group. Both of these processes involve value judgments about traits and individuals on a social and an individual level. These judgments determine both a group's decision to include or exclude as well as an individual's choice to identify with or disassociate from a specific group.

My research treats two types of identity, local and national, and emphasizes the trait of language as the central differentiating trait between these two identities. In this case, the local identity is also partially a regional identity, however I focus specifically on the local manifestation of this identity. To understand how Riverans are both beginning to embrace an identity in which diversity and mixture are markers of a unique regional and local identity and are reconciling this identity with a national identity based on homogeneity, I look at identity formation at these two scales, national and local.

I use Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation as an imagined community to emphasize the power of national identity as well as its 'imaginary' character. Anderson sees national identity as a powerful extension of the feelings of belonging to a religion or a kinship group.[4] This belonging is based on a sense of 'fraternity' in which members of a nation imagine themselves sharing a specific character and history. This link creates the sensation of unification with other nationals and

[4] Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, 5.

differentiation from other nations. The beginnings of this imagining are related to specific changes in the political and economic world of the late 18th and early 19th century, but the most pertinent to this study is the rise of printed vernacular languages.[5] The centrality of language as a marker of national identity has its roots in this process. The process of imagining is shaped by history and the outcomes of this imagining are clear in the process of consolidating the nation. A nation's leaders, the creators of institutions that enforce the characteristics of the imagined community, have the greatest impact on making the national imaginary a reality. Thus, those who do not 'belong' in the nation find themselves forced to assimilate or to be left out, to varying degrees.

In a border community, however, identity formation takes place at the edges of state control and in the meeting point of two 'nations.' Where, on the national level emphasis of difference is an important part of national identity formation, at the border other processes may encourage the erasure of differences. To analyze how this border community constructs its identity, I employ the concept elaborated by anthropologist Fredrick Barth (1967) and sociologist John Edwards (1985) that group boundaries are more permanent than the cultural symbols that distinguish one group from another. In other words, the feeling of belonging to one group, in this case a nation, does not have to change despite the blurring of cultural traits that, on the national level, distinguish one nation from the other. Since group identity is

[5] Anderson, 44.

negotiated through interaction, the type of interaction between two national groups can affect what traits mark difference.

These theoretical focuses coincide in capturing the emotional experience of belonging to a nation as well as its arbitrariness on an objective level. Belonging is based on an imagined connection, whether actual cultural similarity exists or not. Together, they provide a framework for understanding the power of the national imaginary to shape local experience while allowing understanding of identity construction in interaction at the local level.

Methodology

My study is based on participant observation and interview data collected during two stays in Rivera: two weeks in June 2005 and four weeks in June/July of 2006. With approval of the University of Kansas Human Subjects Advisory Committee, I completed 46 interviews adding up to 23 hours of audio recording interactions with 65 individuals. The majority are individual interviews; however, fourteen interviews were done in groups of 2, 3, 4, and 8. The longest interview was 100 minutes; the shortest was 6 minutes with an average interview length of 35 minutes. These were informal interviews. I attempted to guide the conversation rather than use a rote script in the belief that such an approach would elicit a more authentic response. Although such factors as socio-economic background, language use, and age come to bear on my analysis, this study is qualitative rather than quantitative in

format. Instead, I wanted to explore the panorama of perspectives on Portuñol in an ethnographic manner, letting Riverans speak for themselves, as much as possible.

Figure 1: Chart of Interviewees							
Language	**Gender**		**Class**		**Age**		
	Male	**Female**	**Middle**	**Lower**	**Under 30**	**30-59**	**60-79**
Spanish Monolingual = 17	2	15	16	1	7	7	3
Spanish dominant Portuñol Bi/tri-lingual = 21	7	14	18	3	5	16	0
Portuñol dominant Spanish Bi/tri-lingual = 12	4	8	2	10	0	11	1
Portuñol Monolingual = 5	2	3	0	5	1	2	2
Portuguese dominant Bi-Trilingual = 5	2	3	4	1	4	1	0
Spanish Dominant Portuguese Bilingual = 3	0	3	2	1	0	2	1
Total= 63 (100%)	17 (27%)	46 (73%)	42 (66%)	21 (33%)	17 (27%)	39 (62%)	7 (11%)

I interviewed Riverans from ages 18 to 79. The interviewees were teachers, street vendors, a local poet and folk singer known for his songs in Portuñol, the Riveran Municipal Director of Culture, students, stay at home moms, a beautician, and others. I interviewed informants in the central, higher class neighborhoods of

Rivera, shopkeepers on the main street, city hall officials in their offices, informants in the street vending stalls on the border, staff at a bilingual pilot program elementary school, and families in the outer poorer neighborhoods of the city. Some interviews were on the street where I asked a minimum of questions to get their feeling about Portuñol. Other interviews were scheduled beforehand with people contacted through the assistance of the family that housed me on both of my visits. Some were in group settings, including: a college-level geography class, a Catholic women's group and four classes of middle and high school age students, one from each of the four local secondary schools. To protect study participant's privacy, all interviewees in the study are identified by a pseudonym. Nationality of interviewees was determined by self-identification and language was determined by both self-identification and observation. See Appendix A for a description of interviews and interviewees and Appendix B for a chart correlating demographic markers and attitudes toward Portuñol.

In addition to interview data, I visited the local library to look at their newspaper archive, Rivera's municipal museum to browse local artifacts, the Riveran Intendencia Municipal for maps and city economic statistics. I kept abreast of Riveran news through Derivera.com, the city's on-line newspaper. Through contacts in the city, I obtained studies on Portuñol that I would not otherwise have been able to access. These studies include the theses of Puranem and Quadrelli Sanches, as well as an unpublished article by Graciela Barrios. I also mingled with residents at a *fiestas juninas* party and went dancing and wine tasting in Livramento. I spent as much time

as possible on the streets and in the barrios of Rivera, visiting and interacting with the locals. While in Montevideo, I visited the national museums and National Center of Statistics. I also interviewed Graciela Barrios and Luis Ernesto Behares of the Universidad de la República, two key figures in border linguistic research.

This thesis is divided into the following sections. In the *introduction* I clarify the focus of my thesis: the question of Portuñol and reconciling identities. Then I review research to date on Portuñol and introduce the theories I will use in my analysis. Finally, I outline my methodology and describe the chapters.

In *chapter one,* "Historical Background," I examine the historical context of Uruguayan nationalism, particularly focusing on the period of settlement, independence and national consolidation, and highlighting the period of military dictatorship and the return to democracy. Then, I give historical background on the experience of interaction and integration along the border in Rivera/Livramento that created the environment for the emergence of Portuñol and the context for border identity construction.

Chapter two, "History of Language and National Identity in Uruguay," outlines the history of language planning in Uruguay, particularly the evolution of educational language policy in relation to nationalist ideas and the outcome for Portuñol-speakers in Rivera. I end this chapter with a linguistic and sociolinguistic description of Portuñol focusing on how attitudes toward the dialect have changed over time, both on the local and the academic level.

In *chapter three*, “Identity Construction on the Border,” I first describe the city of Rivera and the geography of the border. Then I explore stereotypes of Uruguayans and Brazilians held by Riverans to contextualize this process of ‘othering,’ moving then to explore how these two categories converge in stereotypes of Riverans. I end this chapter with an examination of Riveran attitudes toward the cultural mixture apparent in their self-perception.

In *chapter four*, “Portuñol and Riveran Identity,” I look at the ways Portuñol functions as an identity marker in Rivera. The first half of this chapter shows negative perceptions of Portuñol. I present examples of Uruguayan nationalist thought on language and identity in Rivera, particularly the stereotypes of Portuñol-speakers as being Brazilianized and ignorant, as well as the results of these attitudes in experiences with the local school system. The second half of the chapter explores how Riverans challenge these perceptions and how they create a unique sense of identity based on Portuñol and cultural mixture.

I present my analysis and findings in *chapter five,* beginning with a statistical analysis of perceptions of Portuñol according to social class, mother tongue, age and gender. I then analyze how these variables affect the responses of my interviewees. Next, I analyze how Riverans construct their identity and reconcile this regional identity with their identity as ‘Uruguayan.’ I conclude with possible local, national and global factors that might explain changing attitudes towards Portuñol and cultural mixture in Rivera.

In my *conclusion*, I first summarize my findings and my contribution to research on Portuñol. I then present limitations to my research, suggesting future research possibilities.

Chapter 1: Historical Context of Uruguayan and Riveran Identity

When Benedict Anderson coined the phrase "imagined community" to refer to a nation, he was trying to capture the emotional experience of "belonging" implicated in national identity. A nation is "an imagined political community – imagined as both limited and sovereign." It is "imagined" because "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members… yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion," "limited" because all have finite boundaries, "sovereign" because the nation has taken the place left vacant by the collapse of the divinely ordained hierarchical dynasties, and is a "community" because "regardless of actual inequality… a nation is always conceived of as a deep horizontal comradeship… a "fraternity."[6]

Anderson's definition of the nation focuses on 'belonging,' however national identity is also about exclusion. Although closely correlated with ethnic identity, national identity has the added power of political hegemony, thus inclusion in the national 'imaginary' has far-reaching consequences in the lives of people within its borders. Walker Connor highlights "[t]he peculiar emotional depth of the us-them syndrome, which is an intrinsic part of national consciousness, bifurcating as it does all mankind into 'members of the nation' versus 'all others.'"[7] The process of deciding who is part of the nation takes place in the context of interaction with the "other." Yet, this process is not uniform throughout a nation and quite different types

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[6] Anderson., 6.

[7] As quoted in Conversi, Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism, 10.

of interaction may take place between nations along the edges of state control: the border.

In this chapter, I first look at the historical context of Uruguayan nationalism, focusing on three influential periods in national identity and attitudes toward Brazil: first, the history of contested Spanish/Portuguese occupation of Uruguayan territory (1600-1900) and the effort to create a "homogeneous" Uruguayan identity (beginning in 1870), the military dictatorship (1973-1985), and third, the return to democracy (1985) and the signing of Mercosur (1994). Then, I examine the differing experience of interaction and integration along the border in Rivera/Livramento, in order to contextualize border identity construction and the emergence of Portuñol as an instrumental and symbolic result of daily international interaction.

Uruguayan Nationalism in Context

The Portuguese presence and the animosity it engendered on the national level are important for understanding both the linguistic roots of Portuñol and its sociolinguistic position within the nation. La Banda Oriental, as present-day Uruguay was known, referring to its location on the eastern side of the Plate River, was mostly ignored in 16th century Spanish exploration. Only one third of its extension is suitable for farming and the stony, thin soils lent themselves to pasturing cattle. Although the territory of Uruguay is well watered by a multitude of rivers, only the Rio Uruguay is suitable for navigation, meaning that all travel within the country was

historically by land.[8] A few unsuccessful settlement attempts were made by the Spanish, however the existence of hostile indigenous groups and the lack of economic incentives kept serious settlement from occurring. Thus Buenos Aires, founded in 1536, became the main Spanish holding in the Plate River region. It was both the growth of the cattle market, the base of the colonial economy, and the threat of expansionist Portuguese settlement in the 17th century that motivated the settlement of the Banda Oriental.[9]

If the Spanish were at first unsuccessful in their attempts to settle from the south, the Portuguese were actively entering the region from the north during this time. *Bandeirantes,* or explorers from the settlement of São Paulo*,* had been invading the northern reaches of the Spanish viceroyalty, attacking the Jesuit *reducciones,* in search of precious metals, runaway slaves and indigenous people who could be sold as slaves in Portuguese territories.[10] The Portuguese penetrated the eastern coast, even founding haciendas in lands claimed by the Spanish.[11] In 1680, the Portuguese founded Nova Colonia do Sacramento on the eastern bank of the River Plate across from Buenos Aires, a bold challenge to Spanish claims on the region.[12] The Portuguese Colonia changed hands repeatedly between the two empires, but while in Portuguese hands, it was used as a port for shipping contraband. The Spanish didn't

[8] Kleinpenning, Peopling the Purple Land, 8 & 10.
[9] Alvarez Lenzi, Fundación de poblados en el Uruguay, 8.
[10] Arteaga and Coolighan, Historia del Uruguay: Desde los origenes hasta nuestros dias, 126.
[11] Arteaga and Coolighan, 133.
[12] Arteaga and Cooligh an,106.

have a large settlement on the eastern bank until Montevideo was founded in 1726 to better control trade and stop Portuguese contraband.[13]

According to Alfredo Traversoni, this contest for territorial control in the region was actually a unifying force for the Spanish. He states:

"From a military point of view, it could be said that there was a constant state of struggle between Portuguese and Spanish possessions in the River Plate. This was a positive factor for the solidarity of the Empire, because the foreign threat united the people and the authorities in a common struggle."[14]

Between 1786 and 1800, the colonial authorities tried to populate and control the border region, at that time an undefined and fluctuating line much further north than the current border with Brazil.[15] But the Portuguese outnumbered Spanish colonists even into the beginning of the 19th century, as Spanish settlements were limited mainly to military outposts.[16]

The enmity between the Spanish and Portuguese was exacerbated during the struggle for independence in Uruguay. Reflecting the contentious nature of claims to the region, the struggle for independence would involve two revolutionary periods. The first period (1811-1820) was the struggle to gain independence from Spain, the second (1821-1828) from Portugal/Brazil, however during both periods, Uruguayans also resisted incorporation into the Provincias Unidas, or United Provinces as the Viceroyalty of the Plate River was called after independence. When Viceroy de Elio in Montevideo, then the seat of Spanish control in the region, declared war on the revolutionary junta in Buenos Aires in February of 1811, José Artigas, a captain in

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[13] Arteaga and Coolighan, 135.
[14] Traversoni, Historia del Uruguay, 85.
15 Behares, Planificación Lingüística y Educación en la Frontera Uruguaya con Brasil,13.
[16] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 13.

the royal army, deserted his post in Colonia to fight for independence. Named Lieutenant Colonel and commanding a small contingent from Buenos Aires, he returned to the Banda Oriental to gather popular support from the gauchos that made up the majority of the population. After a successful battle, his forces laid siege to Montevideo.[17] Hoping for help against the rebellious Creole forces, the Spanish had asked for Portuguese assistance, thus the settlers of the region were under attack from both colonial powers. In October of the same year, an armistice ended the siege, however Artigas did not want to give up the fight and he, his army and the majority of the colonist population of the Banda Oriental, some 16,000 in total, marched north to exile in Entre Rios.[18]

In 1814, the Spanish were defeated by the Creoles and the Provincias Unidas was declared a nation with Buenos Aires as its capital. Artigas and his followers in Uruguay had fought for independence from Spain, however they wanted to be recognized as an independent nation and were thus declared outlaws by the centralists. The struggle for independence now continued against the army of Buenos Aires as well as those of the Portuguese.[19] In the end, continued Portuguese invasion was victorious, and the Banda Oriental became the Cisplatine Province of Brazil in 1820.[20] The struggle for independence continued and this second revolutionary period was fought against the Portuguese empire, and then Brazil when it became independent in 1822. The struggle was initially an effort of the *orientales*, as

[17] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 158-160.
[18] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 166-68.
[19] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 199 and 214.
[20] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 231.

Uruguayans are called, however the armies of the Provincias Unidas joined the fray in the hopes of winning back the region.

The highly contested nature of the region, first between the Portuguese and Spanish, then Creoles and Spanish, then Uruguayans and Centralists of the Provincias Unidas, and finally Uruguayans and Brazilians was resolved basically by an outside arbiter. The peace treaty of August 28, 1828 that would end the struggle and create an independent Uruguay was mediated by England and signed by Brazil and Argentina without the presence of any *orientales*.[21] This mediated end to the struggle for autonomy between what would become two cultural, geographical and political giants marked the newly formed nation in its search for an identity of its own. For Uruguay, the fiction of cultural autonomy would be much more difficult to support.

Part of the inspiration for Portuguese invasion was to quell the revolutionary sentiment of the region, something the Portuguese empire feared would infect the region of Rio Grande do Sul, a territory whose "geographical and sociological characteristics were so similar to the Oriental Province."[22] Portuguese incursion in Uruguayan territory would not ultimately prevent the feared revolt in Rio Grande do Sul (Farroupilha Revolution, 1835-1845), however this assessment of regional similarity is an important aspect of the history of the border between this southern Brazilian state and the nation of Uruguay.

At the time of independence in 1828, the country had a population of 75,000, 25% of which lived in Montevideo, the country's only major city. The rest were scattered

[21] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 288.
[22] Traversoni, La historia del Uruguay, 230.

throughout the rural areas of the Portuguese-speaking northwest and the Spanish speaking south. Between 1821 and 1828, the border zone fluctuated between *oriental* and Brazilian identity until the limits were fixed in 1830, corresponding roughly to the present-day demarcation. The political affiliation of the border *departamentos*, or states, may have changed, but the population of the region nevertheless remained almost exclusively Portuguese-speaking.

Even after Uruguayan independence, Portuguese-speakers continued to populate the northern section of the country.[23] Particularly during the years of the Guerra Grande (1839-1851), Brazilian immigration to northern Uruguay was greater than that of Montevideans to the region.[24]

In the first national census in 1860, Brazilians made up over 26% of the total foreign population and settled overwhelmingly in the north and east of the nation. In 1863, the total population of Uruguay was 240,000, with 40,000 Brazilians again concentrated in the border regions.

In 1862, the Uruguayan House of Representatives attempted to remedy this cultural imbalance by promoting emigration from the capital to the borderlands.[25] It was only from the late 19th century on that Uruguayan settlement of the northern region began in earnest. Thus, the roads and cities of the interior were created initially to stop Portuguese advance.[26]

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[23] Rona, El dialecto fronterizo, 8.
[24] Behares, Planificación Lingüística y Educación en la Frontera Uruguaya con Brasil, 14.
[25] Rona, El dialecto fronterizo, 11.
[26] Alvarez Lenzi, 9.

Figure 2: Urban Settlements in Uruguay (1868)

From: *Peopling the Purple Land: A Historical Geography of Rural Uruguay, 1500-1915, p. 271*

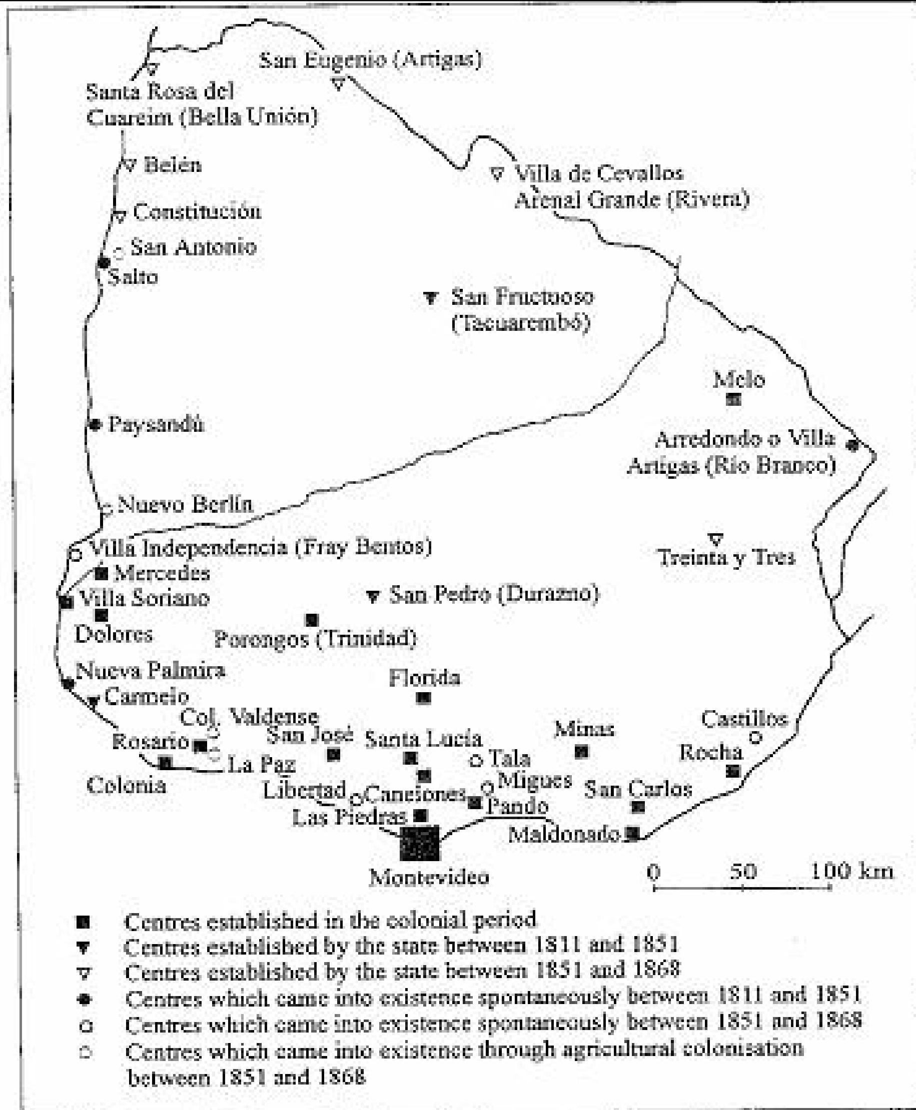

Fig. 10.1. Urban settlements existing in Uruguay in 1868 (after Klaczko & Rial, 1981).

The preceding map shows the pattern of settlement by 1868. Note that Santa Rosa (now Bella Union), Cuareim (now Artigas),Treinta y Tres, Villa Artigas(now Rio Branco) and Villa Ceballos (now Rivera) were specifically established to counteract Portuguese influence:[27]

The last quarter of the 19th century saw the percentage of Brazilian-born Brazilian citizens settled in the border decrease in comparison to the Uruguayan population for the first time, as the growth of coffee cultivation in Brazil after 1860 meant less immigration and the process of naturalization labeled established populations as Uruguayan. This did not eliminate anti-Brazilian sentiment, however. Instead, the growing presence of Spanish speakers made more apparent the conflicting claims to the cultural and political base of the region. Writing in 1876, Francisco Bauzá stated that, "our frontiers, empty of [Uruguayan] nationals, are invaded daily by elements of our neighbors, who not only take possession of our territory, but also *transform our language and radically change our customs, exchanging them for their own*."[28] (emphasis, and translation, mine)

Part of the cultural impact of the Brazilian presence was due to the relative economic power of these families. In 1890, there were 2,018 Brazilians in the *departmentos* of Artigas, Rivera and Cerro Largo. This was 40.8 % of the total number of landowners in the region, however their land investments represented over half of all investments in the region.[29] By 1908, in these same *departmentos*

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[27] Elizaincín, et. al., Nos Falemos Brasilero, 125.
[28] Arteaga, 398.
[29] Keinpenning, 250.

Brazilians still owned a large percentage of the land (1,269,000 hectares compared to 1,608,000 hectares owned by *orientales*).[30]

Promotion of a Uruguayan national identity was not a state project until the late 19th century when the state consolidated power through political reform and began promoting a homogeneous culture through a modern public school system. To legitimize this consolidation of power, Uruguayan intellectuals created a nationalist myth eulogizing the semi-nomadic and rebellious gaucho as the symbol of national independence.[31] The descendent and inheritor of the Charrua Indians who had kept the Spanish from settling the eastern bank of the Plata, the gaucho filled the romantic need for a shared symbolic past.[32]

At this time, Uruguayan society was extremely heterogeneous and lacking social discipline and group identity.[33] Another possible unifying force was the constant history of aggression of the Portuguese. Francisco Bauza writing in 1882 stated the nationalist sentiment then being promoted: "Portuguese conduct raised hatred in the country that made them the target of [Uruguayan] anger. Indigenous people and Spaniards alike formed a brotherhood in their mutual repulsion toward the Portuguese that would become hereditary."[34]

During the first half of the twentieth century, Uruguay benefited from a strong economy based on livestock export, a sophisticated, highly representative political system and a progressive social welfare system introduced under José Batlle y

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[30] Keinpenning, 250.
[31] Gonzales Laurino, La construccion de la identidad uruguaya, 98.
[32] Gonzalez Laurino, 170.
[33] Behares, Na frontera nos fizemo assim, 240.
[34] Gonzales Laurino, 121.

Ordoñez in the early 1900's.[35] "*Uruguayidad*" became the national model, beginning in the Batllist state with an ongoing influence on political thought into the present. This conceptualization of identity was based on attempts to integrate the nation's diversity in a social, political and cultural project through which any inhabitant of the territory could assimilate into the nation.[36] Uruguay was called the Switzerland of Latin America, a modern, safe society totally assimilated into the ideal of the European nation.[37]

However the comparison with Switzerland is an informative one. Unlike the state support for a diverse linguistic population found in Switzerland, part of the Uruguayan identity was its homogeneity. Unlike the "barbaric" nations that surrounded it, Uruguay's relative racial homogeneity allowed a sense of being more modern than Argentina and Brazil with their heterogeneous regions and ethnic diversity. It was thus an essential part of Uruguayan identity to keep any heterogeneity out of the national "imaginary," a disappearing act that would have profound consequences for the linguistic and ethnic group of its northern borders.

Juan Rial expounds upon the myth of the "happy Uruguay," referring to the period before and just after World War II in which economic prosperity and political stability allowed Uruguayans to believe they were a particularly unique and fortunate nation. There are four key foundational myths of Uruguayan identity consolidated during this period: Averageness as a prerequisite to security, Uruguayan uniqueness

[35] In Sosnowski, Repression, Exile and Democracy: Uruguayan Culture, 83.
[36] Gonzalez Laurino, 267.
[37] Gonzales Laurino, 170.

and superiority in comparison to Europe and Latin America, consensus and the rule of law, and a cultured citizenry, the *culturosos*, as Uruguayan progress.[38]

All of these myths in some way or another have to do with a belief in the superiority of the Uruguayan political system. The promotion of averageness relates to the state's catering to the middle class and their lifestyle through the social welfare system.[39] Uruguayans had more progressive social programs than many countries in Europe and considered themselves far more stable than other 'backward' Latin American nations with their large illiterate indigenous populations.[40] Consensus and rule of law emphasize the Uruguayan belief that their government played by the rules of the democratic contract, however, according to Rial, the focus was more on the contract than the actual exercise of democracy.[41] Uruguay's welfare state made total literacy one of its prime objectives. A continually rising 'cultural' level was the form that the myth of progress took in Uruguay. "May Orientals be as enlightened as they are brave," an old Artiguista slogan, embodies this national myth.[42]

During these years, the Brazilian presence in the northern part of Uruguay was used to confirm myths of Uruguayan superiority in the region. Contralmirante Carbajal's book La Penetración Luso-Brasileña en el Uruguay, printed in 1948, clearly illustrates the legacy of anti-Brazilian thought, particularly the last chapter which covers the consequences of Brazilian penetration into Uruguayan territory

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[38] In Sosnowski, Repression, Exile and Democracy: Uruguayan Culture, 68.
[39] Sosnowski, 64.
[40] Sosnowski, 66.
[41] Sosnowski, 69.
[42] Sosnowski, 68.

including “social backwardness,” the “lack of patriotic Uruguayan sentiment,” and “internal conflicts generated by the foreign population.”[43]

By the mid-1950’s, reality began to diverge markedly with respect to the national imaginary. The country was in economic decline as Import Substitution Industrialization was increasingly ineffective in promoting economic growth.[44] By 1960, Uruguay’s economic growth rate was the worst in the hemisphere after Haiti.[45] Denial of this change in fortunes left the majority clinging to the old myths while social activists began construction of a counter-imaginary. This counter-imaginary was not a breakdown of the old imaginary, but an attempt to reconsolidate basic myths in difficult times.[46] Now a return to averageness would bring back the former “happy Uruguay.” The belief in Uruguayan uniqueness eroded as Uruguayans lost their Europeanness and felt increasingly similar to other Latin American countries; however the majority still clung to their belief in their country’s uniqueness. The myth of Uruguay as a country of *culturosos* remained important, but now some intellectuals were not happy with simple intellectualism and turned to socialist solutions to their country’s problems.[47] Nevertheless, Uruguayans attempted to conserve their identity myths in the face of obvious contradictions with reality.

The move from a civilian government to a military dictatorship in Uruguay was an incremental process. Growing economic problems and frustration with the political system caused unrest in the national university as well as many secondary schools.

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[43] Carbajal, La Penetración Luso-Brasileña en el Uruguay, 169.
[44] Sosnowski, 83.
[45] Sonsowski, 84.
[46] Sosnowski, 71.
[47] Sosnowski, 72.

Trade unions and leftist groups began to protest. The guerilla group, the Tupamaros, emerged as a militarized expression of this discontent.[48] When Jorge Pacheco Areco assumed the presidency in 1967, his administration began the slow erosion of individual liberties, beginning with outlawing the socialist party and various anarchist and socialist newspapers.[49]

In 1968, Pacheco instituted the "Medidas Prontas de Seguridad" which, apart from a short period, was maintained throughout his term. Parliament suspended civil liberties twice during his government. After the escape of more than 100 Tupamaros from Punta Carretas prison, Pacheco put the army in charge of anti-guerilla activity.[50] In 1971, Juan Maria Bordaberry, a Colorado, won the presidency. In April of '72 the assassinations of several officers by the Tupamaros prompted Bordaberry to declare "a state of internal war," suspending all constitutional individual liberties and placing the country under martial law.[51] With the closing of parliament in 1973, the military dictatorship began.

According to Rial, during the period from 1973 until the return to democracy in 1984, disillusionment with reality and loss of faith in the old myths of Uruguayan identity left the nation to retreat into waiting and nostalgia. The military did not provide new myths as their approach was to "subjugate rather than to convince."[52] Instead, the military dictatorship used force to impose national unification. This affected groups within Uruguay that did not fit the national cultural stereotype of

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[48] Sosnowski, 84.
[49] Sosnowski, 84.
[50] Sosnowski, 86.
[51] Sosnowski, 86.
[52] Sosnowski, 74.

"Uruguayan-ness," including the northern regions of the country, as we will see in the section on national language policy.

The restoration of democracy in 1985 signaled the birth of a modified Uruguayan national imaginary. The new myth was based on a democratic Uruguay, where happiness was not the result of averageness, but of respect for individual liberties.[53] The fear of a return to any form of totalitarian government created a desire for real consensus, not simply an idealized belief in national consensus.

This political opening coincided with a regional movement toward economic integration. The signing of Mercosur in 1994 between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay had consequences not only for ties of trade but also for cultural ties between the signing nations as will be explored more fully in chapter three. However, this period of economic and political openness allowed growing tolerance of Portuguese and a different value of the border.

Rivera/Livramento

The "frontera de la paz" as the stretch of border between Santana do Livramento and Rivera is now called, began with more bellicose intentions. The hill where the present-day city of Santana now sits was first taken as an observation point in 1811 by one of the Portuguese patrols set up to monitor Spanish activity in the region.[54] Battles with Artigas' forces between 1816-1819 led to the reinforcement of the first encampment. In 1823, a chapel was built and in 1825 when the Cisplatine

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[53] Sosnowski, 76.
[54] Otero Schaffer, Urbanização na Frontiera, 37.

Province, as Uruguay was called at the time, declared itself independent of Portuguese rule, the encampment was occupied by military forces. No real residential building began until after Uruguayan independence in 1828. Santana continued to be a strategic military outpost during the Farroupilha Revolution (1835-45) and the Guerra Grande (1839-1851), growing economically by providing food for the troops. The settling of soldiers in the city after each conflict increased the population.[55] It wasn't until 1857 that Santana became a town and, in 1876, a city.[56]

Meanwhile, the Uruguayan nation, fearing further Brazilian advance onto its soil and particularly desirous of combating the influence of Santana do Livramento, then a town of 3000 inhabitants, planned the founding of a city across the border from Santana. On the 7th of May, 1862, Villa Ceballos, later renamed Rivera, was founded by government decree, with the first three settlers being two Argentines and one Italian.[57]

If the motivation behind settlement was less than cordial, the character of the two cities soon belied these roots. Commerce soon became the most important aspect of the cities' interaction. In 1862, a journalist for "La República" wrote a glowing prediction of the success Rivera was bound to have as a point of passage for cattle and carts bringing goods, particularly because of its close proximity to gold mines and other natural resources in the region and its nearness to the established town of Santana.[58]

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[55] Otero Schaffer, 38.
[56] Otero Schaffer, 39.
[57] Barrios Pintos, Una Historia Diferente: Volume I, 119.
[58] Barrios Pintos, Una Historia Diferente: Volume I, 118.

In fact, the growth of the two cities became inextricable with commerce being the binding force between the two, even into the present. Currently, the cities of Rivera and Santana are the most important, economically and demographically, of the entire Uruguay-Brazil border, with a combined population of over 160,000. In 2004, Rivera was home to slightly less than half this number, with 77,000 residents to 84,370 in Santana in 2000.[59] In national context, Rivera-Santana do Livramento as a whole make up the second largest "city" in Uruguay after Montevideo, the home of 1.3 million people, or forty percent of the country's population.[60] [61]

Sales and service are, and have been, the most important source of jobs in both Santana and Rivera, with 61.5% of Rivera's population working in commerce in 1989.[62] Informal commerce is an important source of income as well. Food stands, collection and sale of paper and trash, small-scale sale of contraband from Paraguay and Argentina, and money exchange (informal exchangers outnumbering the official 82 to 6 in 1987) are the most common informal activities. As a border region, contraband is an important source of income in the informal sector. Small-scale, individual level contraband, or "ant contraband," as it is called locally, is the most prevalent, although large-scale contraband is also important.[63] Since 1986, an

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[59] Quadrelli Sanchez, A Fronteira Inevitavel, 35.
[60] Instituto Nacional de Estadistica. "Sociodemografica: Población en el País, según departamento. Censos de Población años 2004 (Fase 1), 1996, 1985, 1975, 1963, 1908, 1860 y 1852." (26 November 2006), www.ine.gub.uy.
[61] Mazzei, Rivera(Uruguay)-Sant'ana (Brasil): Identidad, territorio e integración fronteriza, 11.
[62] Bentancor, Rivera-Livramento: de la integración de hecho a la integración de verdad, 36.
[63] Bentancor, 39.

essential aspect of formal commerce is the presence of duty-free shops, which were established to attract Brazilian tourists to Rivera.[64]

Nevertheless, Santana has a stronger commercial base, with over three times the number of small shops as Rivera, ten times as many large stores, four times the gas stations, five times the automobile stores, and thirteen large supermarkets compared to Rivera's one.[65] Santana's level of commercial development is high for its population due to the large number of Uruguayan consumers demanding Brazilian products.[66] In the service and entertainment sector, Santana has three times the number of restaurants and hotels as does Rivera.[67] The youth of Rivera tend to go dancing at one of the nightclubs in Santana and the only movie theatre is right beside the international plaza, in Santana.

In Rivera, industrial jobs are found in textiles, beverages, dairy products, timber, milling, tobacco, wool and leather. All of these factories are outside city limits and only four out of the fourteen factories employ more than 100 people.[68] However, Santana do Livramento has an industrial zone based around the meat processing plant ARMOUR, where many Riverans find employment.[69]

Overall, there are fewer jobs and lower wages in Rivera, meaning that much of the workforce finds employment in Santana or enters the informal sector. Both cities are clearly interdependent, with both relying on "international" customers and

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[64] Bentancor, 39.
[65] Bentancor, 38.
[66]Quadrelli Sanchez ,36.
[67] Bentancor, 38.
[68] Bentancor, 42.
[69] Bentancor, 27.

whose "relative" wealth has immediate affects on employment and sales. Residents on both sides of the border work in the other nation, many "illegally," but legal work is simply the matter of a little paperwork.

In national perspective, the entire Uruguayan border region is marked by higher levels of poverty, illiteracy, infant mortality, and inadequate shelter.[70] In 2000, the average Riveran household lived on 7,898 Uruguayan pesos per month (about 694$US) or 61% of the national average of 12,742 (about 1,119 $US).[71] This puts 83% of Riverans below the internationally established poverty line.[72] In the same year, 93% of the city population made less than the city average, meaning that incomes are extremely unequally distributed.[73] As for employment, only 47.9% of adults over 14 years of age were employed, over half of which worked in the informal sector.[74]

As far as necessities such as education, housing, and health, Rivera is far below the national average, while Santana is above average within Rio Grande do Sul.[75] In 2000, only 67% of Riverans over 14 years old had more than a primary school education, compared to the national average of 74%.[76] In 1985, Rivera had the highest percentage of homes lacking basic necessities in the country (41.3%) and in the period from 1985-1996, growth of the periphery of the city was 43.4% compared

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[70] Quadrelli Sanchez, 39.
[71] Intendencia de Rivera, Capitulo XII: Analysis de los beneficiarios del proyecto, 74.
[72] Intendencia de Rivera, 78.
[73] Intendencia de Rivera, 77.
[74] Intendencia de Rivera, 77.
[75] Quadrelli Sanchez, 38.
[76] Intendencia de Rivera, 75.

to 2.7% of formal growth, exacerbating the situation.[77] In 2000, only 28% of the population had access to sewer infrastructure.[78]

There is evidence both of a high level of integration and interdependence on the economic level between Rivera and Livramento and a comparatively high level of poverty within Rivera in comparison to the rest of Uruguay. Clearly, international relations at the border differ greatly from the interaction that shaped Uruguayan nationalist thought. The existence of Portuñol is one outcome of Brazilian settlement in the region and continuing border interaction. The difference between border reality and the Uruguayan imagined community will have important consequences on this language group.

[77] Mazzei, 11&12.
[78] Intendencia de Rivera, 80.

Chapter 2: History of Language and National Identity in Uruguay

Language plays an important, if not central, role in most conceptions of nationalism.[79] According to John Edwards in Language, Society and Identity, Johann Gottfreid Herder's Treatise upon the Origins of Language of 1772 is considered the seminal work of linguistic nationalism. Arguing against belief that language was divinely ordained or humanly invented, Herder saw language diversity as the result of varied social environments, which in turn create unique groups or nations. The retention of a nation's language was essential to its existence.[80] Herder felt reason and language were impossible to separate, as 'each nation speaks in the manner it thinks and thinks in the manner it speaks… we cannot think without words.'[81] Wilhelm von Humboldt and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, German thinkers and contemporaries of Herder, also linked reason and language. Fichte, in particular extrapolated that loss of language equaled loss of identity.[82]

According to Benedict Anderson, the printing of vernacular languages was the first step toward a national consciousness, as groups of previously disconnected people found a universe of information and concerns that they had in common.[83] Most states are not truly 'nations' in the original sense of the word: one culture-one

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[79] In fact, as Joshua Fishman points out, nationalist movements are not alone among modernization movements in utilizing vernaculars to pursue integration and authentication. Humanism, the Renaissance and the Reformation all utilized and prized vernaculars for many of the reasons nationalism would later follow suit. Thus the utilization of the vernacular within nationalism is mainly different in the intensity of its importance compared to other movements.(Fishman 1973: 40)
[80] Edwards, Language, Society and Identity, 23-24.
[81] Quoted in Mar-Molinero, The Politics of Language in the Spanish Speaking World, 8.
[82] Quoted in Edwards, 25.
[83] Anderson, 44.

language-one history. Thus, unification through language is usually consciously promoted by the state through language planning. This planning begins with the selection of official language(s). Planning can also include maintenance of certain linguistic aspects of a selected language through standardization of its grammar, definitions and spelling and protection from borrowing terms from other languages.[84]

The choice of official language is a clear indicator of who belongs in the national 'imaginary' while standardization highlights the belief in the importance of linguistic purity in a national language. If language change is perceived to mean a loss of culture and identity, then protecting the national language is a step towards guarding the national patrimony. In this mindset, Portuñol speakers of Rivera find themselves excluded on both fronts.

This chapter explores the history of language planning in Uruguay and its outcomes for Portuñol-speakers in Rivera. Reflecting on linguistic and sociolinguistic descriptions of Portuñol in the final section, I show how attitudes toward the dialect have changed over time, highlighting three key historical periods: the 1920's, the 1970's and the 1990's.

Language policy and opposition to Portuñol

The main vehicle of language planning in Uruguay has been the education system. Uruguay's first Institute of Public Instruction was established by the Government of the Defense in 1847 during the Guerra Grande as an essential tool for

[84] Mesthrie, Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics, 644.

the creation of social harmony, peace and order and as a tool for national prosperity and the development of civic consciousness.[85] However, it wasn't until the beginning of modernization in the late 19th century and the scholastic reform of Jose Pedro Varela that education was made free, secular and obligatory throughout the nation.[86] In 1877, the Ley de Educación Común made general education obligatory and the "Idioma Nacional," that is Spanish, the language of education.[87] Free, uniform, universal education was supposed to accomplish two nationalist goals. First, the constitution of a national identity, second the cultural and linguistic assimilation of all inhabitants. With Spanish as the medium of this culture, a large percentage of the population was already disadvantaged.

From 1877 on, Uruguayan language planning through educational policy was based on the model of an "imagined" monolingual nation. In addition to the Portuguese-speaking border communities, immigrant communities in the capital were targeted for linguistic homogenization. Despite the linguistic heterogeneity of the country, this educational policy was followed throughout the nation. Language planning was thus tacit, ignoring immigrant and border populations.

Over time, migrants more easily assimilated linguistically, a trend recognized as common in linguistic research on language contact.[88] However, in the north, the settled communities of Portuguese-speakers did not fare as well at integration. The negative view of Portuguese speakers within the precariously defined Uruguayan

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[85] Traversoni , Nuestro Sistema Educativo Hoy, 13.
[86] Traversoni, Nuestro Sistema Educativo Hoy, 15.
[87] Behares, Na frontera nos fizemo assim, 242.
[88] See Stanley Leiberson 's Language Diversity and Language Contact. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1981.

identity and the unacknowledged disadvantage of the local population within the school system laid the groundwork for an under-privileged linguistic group. As Eduardo Eiroa, Journalist for the "Voz de Galicia" picturesquely put it, "It [Portuñol] is what's left after mixing Portuguese as a mother tongue, Spanish as the language imposed by the education system and as a vehicle of culture, and a little lack of education and a subsistence economy."[89]

Educational-Linguistic planning on the border followed the assumed national model until 1967 when, for the first time, a plan of educational reform was discussed for the border region. In this year, Professor Eloisa Garcia Etchegoyen de Lorenzo presented a project of differentiated education for the frontier zone to the National Counsel of Primary and Normal Education.[90] As mentioned in the introduction, her research was initiated because of the high incidence of grade repetition in children on the border, a problem then attributed to an abnormally high occurrence of dyslexia.[91]

Her plan, which would have established a program of bilingual education in the area, was rejected, not on any scientific or practical basis, but on an ideological one. Namely, the parliament felt that Portuguese, a language advancing over Uruguayan territory and threatening national identity and sovereignty, could not be taught to Uruguayan children.[92] Instead of implementing bilingual education to help these populations succeed in the school system, the nation responded with more

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[89] Eiroa, "Descubriendo Lenguas Hermanas," 2.
[90] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 17.
[91] Garcia Etchegoyen, 1.
[92] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 19.

forceful protection of Spanish as the language of education and repression of the dialect.

During the years of dictatorship (1973-1985), these issues became extremely emotional and polemic, a time when the military government was concerned with the 'purification' of the nation of harmful social elements. This is indicated by the fact that, in 1978, the Montevidean press dedicated the most pages to border linguistics ever recorded before or since.[93] At the Congreso de Inspectores held that same year in Durazno, authorities in primary education declared: "It has become imperative to confront this linguistic deformation provoked by the penetration of another language in the border zone."[94] To do so, teachers were to be trained in dealing with the "pathologies" of the language and difficulties in learning and to explore the idiomatic "*trastornos*," or deformations, of the language at the preschool level.[95]

Uruguayan language and education policy included a conscious campaign against the dialect. To solve the problem of 'language deformation' represented by the presence of Portuñol, the Ministry of Education and Culture recommended that the government "promote our authentic 'oriental' way of life" and "put into practice a campaign to value our national language through the media of the zone."[96] In this vein, signs were placed in the border area with slogans such as "Speak Spanish-if you love your children. Remember-they imitate you!"[97]

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[93] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 19.
[94] Quoted in Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 20.
[95] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 20.
[96] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 21.
[97] Berdichevsky, Nations Language and Citizenship, 220.

In the department of Artigas, the school inspection committee reached the conclusion that the Spanish language was in jeopardy in the entire department. It was thus imperative "to take seriously the defense of Our Language and preserve it from nonsense, vulgarity and poverty of expression."[98]

After the end of the dictatorship in 1985, the possibility of implementing a differentiated educational approach in the border region was debated but never implemented. Although broached again in 1991, nothing was done. It wasn't until 1994 and the signing of Mercosur, the Mercado Común del Sur, which united Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay as a trading bloc, that this began to change. Although clearly economic in nature, the treaty also contained references to regional integration on other levels. Most importantly, member nations were required to provide public school instruction in the official languages of Mercosur – Spanish and Portuguese.[99] Promoting use of a unifying national language within a national population allows broader participation at the technological, scientific, economic and diplomatic level within the nation. Likewise, promoting education in the official languages of a regional trading bloc facilitates participation at these levels on a regional scale.[100] Linguistic planning changed from emphasis on national unity to promoting regional integration.

The border zone and its particularities were not initially considered in the implementation of such programs. However, the change in attitudes toward

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[98] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 21.
[99] Barrios, "Planificación lingüística e integración regional," 7.
[100] Barrios, "Planificación lingüística e integración regional," 8.

Portuguese on the national level made room for discussion and implementation of bilingual education targeted at monolingual Portuguese dialect speakers in the border region. In Rivera, bilingual education in Portuguese and Spanish was not implemented at the primary level until 2003. These pilot programs were introduced in neighborhoods whose population was considered in "critical condition," namely three schools in poor neighborhoods near the border: Cerro Caquiero, 33 Orientales, and Quintas al Norte as well as one school in Tranqueras, a city in the department of Rivera. (Interview #29)

In the next section I will specifically focus on Portuñol and elaborate what it is, who speaks it and where it is spoken and finally how local and academic attitudes have changed toward the dialect over time.

Portuñol

Carimbão, brasileiro, bayano, fronterizo, dialecto, Portuñol, fala mesturada, DPU... all of these are names for the language variety spoken along the Brazil-Uruguay border. Each term emphasizes some characteristic or perception of the language.

Carimbão, brasileiro and *bayano* (from *baiano*, originally referring to something or someone coming from Bahia) all highlight the Portuguese base of the linguistic variety.[101]

[101] Elizaincín, et al, Nos Falemos Brasileiro, 13.

The geographic aspect of the dialect is emphasized by the term *fronterizo*. Both Pedro Rona (1965) and Frederic Hensey (1972) use this term as does the local population, although it is sometimes pejorative.[102]

Other terms emphasize the mixed character of the language variety. *Fala mesturada*, or “mixed speech,” *rompeidiomas*, or “language breaker” are two commonly used terms.

“Dialectos Portugueses del Uruguay,” or Portuguese Dialects of Uruguay, henceforth, DPU, is the most precisely accurate linguistic term for Portuñol. First, this name distinguishes Portuñol from other Portuguese-variant dialects spoken in other Brazilian border regions. Second, the use of the plural “dialects” shows that the speech form is not uniform and is in fact a variety of closely related dialects. This scientific term is also used within Rivera by some and has value as a defense for the legitimacy of the language variety.

However, Portuñol, a portmanteau of Portugués and Español, holds the most emotive value. First used in Montevideo to disparage the mixed speech of the border, it has now been taken up by the local community, in some cases simply as the most commonly used descriptor, but for others it is as a re-vindication of what was once disparaged. (Interview, Barrios, 7/12/06). As it is the social aspect of the dialect, rather than its linguistic character, that is the focus of my study, Portuñol is the term I employ to refer to the mixed dialect spoken in Rivera.

[102] Elizaincín et. al., Nos Falemos Brasileiro, 12.

Portuñol is an unstable and variable colloquial form of Portuguese spoken as the mother tongue of a large population along the Uruguayan border.[103] Phonologically, it is a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish with a dominance of colloquial Riograndense Portuguese pronunciation, including:

1. Dropping of the final r words with stress on the final syllable

   Ex. Portuguese = Mulher, Portuñol = muié

   Portuguese = ganhar, Portuñol = ganhá

2. Retention of the final 'l'

   Ex. Portuguese pronunciation = faciu

   Portuñol pronunciation = facil

3. Replacing the sound [lh] with [j],

   Ex. Portuguese = trabalho, Portuñol = travaio

4. Loss of distinction between b-p, d-t, g-c

   Ex. Spanish = caballo, Portuñol = capallo [104], [105]

5. Confusion of pr-pl, gr-gl, er-el, dr-dl, tr-tl

   Ex. Spanish = problema, Portuñol = ploblema[106]

Portuñol contains many Portuguesisms in the form of Spanish cognates for Portuguese words, which include retention of colonial archaisms coming from the Leonese and Asturian dialects which more closely resemble Portuguese roots. [107]

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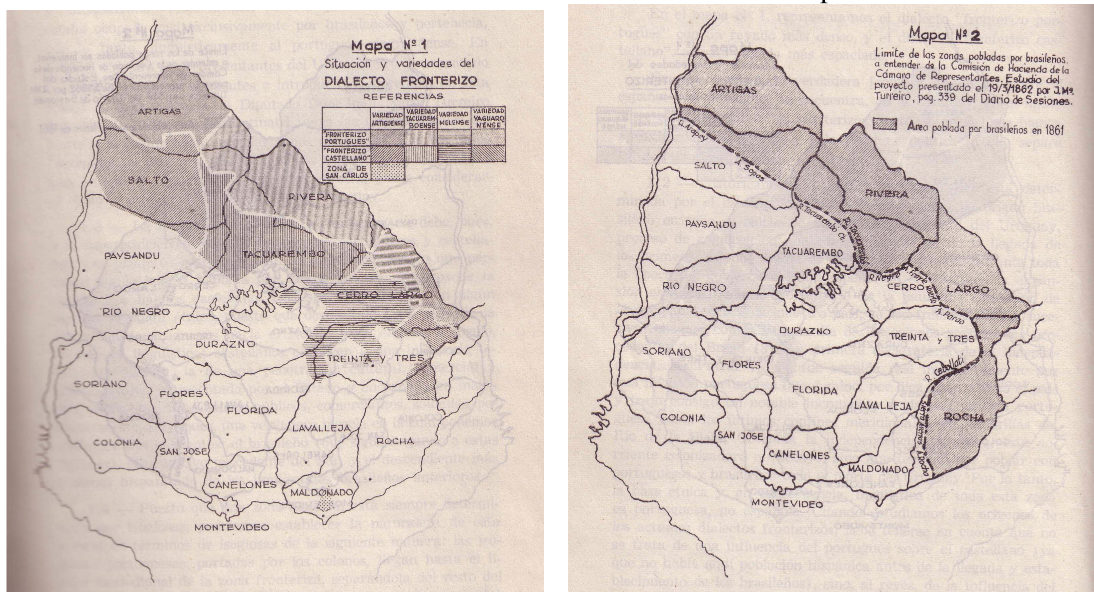
[103] Behares, Portugués del Uruguay y Educacion Fronteriza, 22.
[104] Rona, El dialecto 'fronterizo' del norte de Uruguay, 14, 31, and 44.
[105] Olyntho Simoes, locally acclaimed poet, plays on the ambiguity of b-p in local speech in his poem, "El Boema de la B" from Hojas Sueltas, Rivera, Uruguay: Grafica y Impresora de F.J. Gaal, 1976.
[106] Rona, El dialecto 'fronterizo' del norte de Uruguay, 14, 31, and 44.
[107] Rona, La frontera linguistica, 7.

Morphologically, verb endings generally follow standard Portuguese conjugations with some archaisms. Portuñol also uses Portuguese pronouns (with a use of tu, rather than voce for "you") and articles.[108]

Morphosyntactically, Portuñol follows the rules of colloquial Brazilian Portuguese, with one of the most typical traits being the loss of the "s" at the end of a plural noun. (Ex. Portuguese = dois ovos, Portuñol = dois ovo, Portuguese = as mulheres, Portuñol = as mulher)[109]

Figure 3: Correlation between Brazilian settlement and Presence of Portuñol
Extension of Frontier Dialects in 1958   Extent of Brazilian occupation in 1861



From: *Jose Pedro Rona. El dialecto 'fronterizo' del norte de Uruguay. (Montevideo: Adolfo Linare, 1965), pp 9 & 10.*

When Jose Pedro Rona began the first study of the linguistic situation in northern Uruguay, the historical basis for the phenomenon became clear. The first of the preceding maps shows the extension of frontier dialects at the time of Rona's

[108] Behares, Portugués del Uruguay, 27.
[109] Behares, Portugués del Uruguay, 31.

research. The second shows the extent of Brazilian settlement in northern Uruguay as recorded in 1861.[110]

Clearly, there is a correlation. Using questionnaires on spelling problems and "Portuguesisms" encountered by elementary school teachers, Rona's 1965 study revealed a spatially differentiated linguistic situation. Extending south from the Brazilian border, Rona (1965) identified bands of decreasing Portuguese influence. Along the border itself, the population spoke a dialect that was virtually purely Portuguese. Moving south, Portuguese influence decreased to a strongly Portuguese-based *fronterizo*, then a Castillian-based *fronterizo* and, finally, normative Uruguayan Spanish which, nonetheless, contains isolated Portuguese-isms.[111]

The border region itself was divided into three distinct linguistic zones. Near the sister cities of Chuy, Uruguay and Xui, Brazil on the eastern coast, there was no appreciable Portuguese linguistic influence. In the *departmentos* of Cerro Largo and Rivera there was intense Portuguese influence in the dialect. Finally, in the *departmento* of Artigas, Rona found the most intensely Portuguese dialect along the border, although this influence diminished rapidly with distance from the border.[112]

Fritz Hensey called the contact in Rivera/Livramento "intense" and "virtually unrestricted" although not totally equal as Livramento's economic advantage gave it greater regional influence.[113] In his 1966 study, "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations," Hensey points out the difficulty of studying

[110] Rona, El dialecto fronterizo, 11.
[111] Rona, La frontera linguistica, 20.
[112] Rona, La frontera linguistica, 9.
[113] Hensey, "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations," 522.

bilingualism in this region, both because of the stickiness of determining when interference from one language becomes high enough to speak of a mixed dialect and because the similarity of the languages in question makes determining actual bilingualism difficult. He did not try to distinguish between Portuñol and standard Portuguese; however the picture that develops clearly shows the negative value of Portuguese in Rivera and the more neutral view of Spanish in Livramento.

Comparing attitudes and numbers of speakers in Rivera/Livramento, Hensey determined that the number of bilinguals and Portuguese monolinguals was higher in Rivera. While 100% of students were said to speak a second language in Rivera, only 7.6% were observed to do so in Livramento. In Rivera, 93% of teachers interviewed said they would try to prevent this compared to 10% in Livramento.[114] Interference from the second language was seen as a problem for about 80% of teachers on both sides, however a little over 80% of those with language problems were identified as lower class in Rivera, compared to a little less than 50% in Livramento.[115] Bilingualism at lower class levels was seen to be increasing on both sides of the border; however bilingualism in the upper class was increasing on the Brazilian side and decreasing on the Riveran side.[116]

Luis Ernesto Behares' study (1985) of four elementary schools in Rivera revealed the extent and geographic distribution of Portuñol within the city. He divided Rivera into urban and suburban neighborhoods. Urban neighborhoods in the city center while

[114] Hensey, "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations," 525-6.
[115] Hensey, "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations," 528.
[116] Hensey, "Livramento/Rivera: The Linguistic Side of International Relations," 529.

suburban neighborhoods are the peripheral, poorer neighborhoods stretching out from this center. About 30% of elementary students in urban Rivera were DPU monolingual compared to about 67% in suburban Rivera. While 18% of the students in urban Rivera were monolingual Spanish speakers, only 4% were Spanish monolinguals in suburban Rivera. In urban Rivera, 44% were DPU/Spanish bilingual, compared to 30% in suburban Rivera.[117]

Behares hypothesized that there was actually a difference in the form of DPU used by mono- and bilinguals, saying that monolinguals most likely spoke a vernacular language, or dialect, whereas bilinguals seemed to use what might be closer to an "inter-language" or pidgin of Spanish and Portuguese, still with a stronger Portuguese base.[118]

In addition to the high level of bilingualism in the city, Rivera is a diglossic community. In other words, Spanish and Portuñol are used in different, mostly non-overlapping contexts. This division is hierarchical. Spanish is the language of government, educational institutions, and other official/formal situations, while Portuñol dominates in informal interactions.[119]

Neither Portuñol nor its sociolinguistic status has ever been static. Changes in sociolinguistic status reflect changing socio-historical contexts. Luis Ernesto Behares illustrates the changing relationship between Spanish, Portuñol (fronterizo Portuguese

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[117] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 26.
[118] Behares, Planificación Lingüística, 25.

in this chart) and Portuguese in three historical periods: ***Classic*** (ca. 1920), ***Authoritarian*** (ca. 1975) and ***New*** (ca. 1995).

Figure 4: Language Use and Attitudes of Classic Period (ca. 1920)

Diglossia	Varieties	Speakers	Use and Value
"Classic" ca. 1920	"Castizo Spanish" (foreign language)	Educators, professional, religious and administrative sectors.	Public use. Prestige as it came from capital. Sign of social superiority.
	Fronterizo Portuguese	General population's mother tongue.	Private use. Not considered a linguistic variety. Sign of social inferiority.

From: *Luis Behares, et. al.* *Nos Fizemo Assim: Lengua y Cocina en el Uruguay Fronterizo. Montevideo: Universidad de la República, (2004), 244.*

Before 1920, the border was monolingual in Portuguese. It wasn't until this year, the beginning of the ***Classic period***, that the impact of increased Spanish-speaking settlement and the introduction of Spanish as the medium of instruction created the beginnings of the diglossia we see today. "Castizo" Spanish was the mother tongue of educators, professionals, church officials and public administrators coming in from Montevideo. *Fronterizo*, or border, Portuguese, a non-standard dialect, was the mother tongue of the general population. Spanish, the prestige dialect, or the speech form associated with power and "culture", was used in public as a sign of social superiority while Portuguese was relegated to private use as a sign of social inferiority.[120]

[120] Behares, Diaz and Holzmann, Na Frontera Nos Fizemo Assim, 244.

Figure 5: Language Use and Attitudes of Authoritarian Period (ca. 1975)

Diglossia	Varieties	Speakers	Use and Value
"Authoritarian" ca. 1975	"Uruguayan Spanish"	Educators, professional, religious and administrative sectors. Literate population and middle class.	Public use. Prestige as coming from capital. Sign of social superiority. Linked to "oriental" identity.
	Fronterizo Portuguese	Lower classes with low literacy, as mother tongue. Middle class, in colloquial communication.	Private use. Not considered a linguistic variety. Sign of social inferiority. Anti-national. Prohibited. No adhesion in its speakers.
	Standard Portuguese	Cultured sectors of middle class.	Necessary for interaction. Enemy as cause of "mixture."

From: *Luis Behares, et. al.* *Nos Fizemo Assim: Lengua y Cocina en el Uruguay Fronterizo. Montevideo: Universidad de la República, (2004), 246.*

The relative prestige of each linguistic variety became more clearly delimited with time. During the ***Authoritarian period*** of the 1970's and 80's Portuguese speech in border areas was attributed to a recent idiomatic invasion, above all through the introduction of Brazilian television in the region.[121] This time period is also the historical moment when many of the linguistic studies of the phenomenon were published. Three linguistic varieties were present: Uruguayan Spanish, Portuguese *fronterizo* (Portuñol), and Standard Portuguese. Spanish continued to be the language of the educators, administrators, church leaders, the literate and the middle class.

[121] The presence of Brazilian television was simply a product of proximity as the strong signal of the Brazilian television stations was picked up by television sets in Rivera. The quality of the image and the popular character of programming made it more appealing to the local population than the one national Uruguayan channel, which did not reach Rivera until later.

Portuguese *fronterizo* (Portuñol), was the mother tongue of the barely literate lower class, while the Spanish mother-tongue middle class used Portuñol in colloquial communication. Thus Portuñol was in some sense a bridge between classes and nations in this moment. Standard Portuguese was present in some sectors of the cultured middle class as well as ever-present in Brazilian television.

The most important change in this era was the overt, politically supported association of language and national identity. Added to the prestige of Spanish was its link to Uruguayan identity. During this time, Portuguese *fronterizo* was not considered a linguistic variety. It was associated not only with the lower class, but also with anti-national sentiment and was even prohibited. It was spoken in private and with shame. Standard Portuguese fared better, being considered necessary in interactions with Brazilians if used as a second language, but was also considered one cause of the problem of language mixture.[122]

Studies during each of these historical periods correlate with the changing perceptions of Portuñol. In the 1970's and 80's, during the ***Authoritarian*** period, Elizaincín wrote two essays addressing nationalist concern over Portuñol. In "The Emergence of Bilingual Dialects on the Brazilian-Uruguayan Border," published in 1976, Elizaincín tried to allay national suspicion about Portuguese and Portuñol on the border by emphasizing both the historical roots of Portuñol and the fact that upper class Riverans considered Portuñol a brazilianized language spoken by the lower classes. He stated that even among Portuñol speakers, "there is neither a hint of

[122] Behares et. al, Na frontera nos fizemos assim, 246.

loyalty nor pride" toward their language.[123] [124] Elizaincín's 1978 article, "Algunas precisiones sobre los dialectos portugueses del Uruguay" responded to the plethora of articles in Montevideo press concerning the "linguistic penetration" of Portuguese in Uruguayan territory. In addition to reiterating the arguments from his first essay, he highlighted the plight of the children on the border who were expected to learn in Spanish as if it were their first language. He proposed a differentiated educational program for the border, reminding his readers that bilingualism is natural and that, since the concept of "one language-one country" is an ideal that only exists in a 'utopia,' questions of sovereignty should be separated from practical educational concerns.

Figure 6: Language Use and Attitudes of New Period (ca. 1995)

Diglossia	Varieties	Speakers	Use and Value
"New" ca. 1995	"Uruguayan Spanish"	Educators, professional, religious and administrative sectors. Literate population and middle class.	Public use. Prestige as coming from capital. Sign of social superiority. Linked to "oriental" identity.
	Fronterizo Portuguese	Lower classes with low literacy, as mother tongue. Middle class, in colloquial communication.	Private use. Not considered a "linguistic variety" although now linked to "regional" identity. Sign of social inferiority. Accepted as a "folkloric trait." No adhesion in its speakers in lower class, but adhesion in many middle class speakers.
	Standard Portuguese	Cultured sectors of middle class. Television.	Valued for its integrative function.

From: *Luis Behares, et. al. Nos Fizemo Assim: Lengua y Cocina en el Uruguay Fronterizo. Montevideo: Universidad de la República, (2004), 247.*

[123] Elizaincín, "The Emergence of Bilingual Dialects on the Brazilian-Uruguayan Border," 175.
[124] Elizaincín, "The Emergence of Bilingual Dialects on the Brazilian-Uruguayan Border," 126.

In the ***New period***, beginning in 1995 and continuing into the present, Uruguayan Spanish, Portuguese *fronterizo* and Standard Portuguese show no shift in language function. However, there is a shift in the perceptions and attitudes toward Portuguese *fronterizo* (Portuñol). Basically, there is a growing recognition of the dialect as a part of regional identity. Although still associated with lower class status, Portuguese *fronterizo* (Portuñol) is accepted as a folkloric attribute of the region. While middle class speakers show some loyalty to the language, this is not among those of the lower class.[125]

Similarly, work on Portuñol during the ***New*** period attempts to legitimize Portuñol as a unique cultural artifact of the border. Os Som da Nossa Terra, published in 1997, is a compilation of poetry and narrative in Portuñol, both oral and written. The premise of the collection is to question that Portuñol exists only in oral form and is "pure" only in illiterate communities. Certain themes seem to be common in the works compiled. Spells or home remedies and black people praying, a mother scolding her children and the musings of a poor farmhand, a dance, soccer game, and a street party ending in violence, a man musing on women, a collection of jokes, retorts to teachers and authorities and challenges to Montevidean assumptions about Rivera being like Brazil, and poems about the unity of Rivera and Livramento. The imagery presented of Portuñol gives an impression of rural life, of black culture, of moments of informality and diversion, of rebellion to authority, and of regional integration.

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[125] Behares et. al., Na frontera nos fizemos assim, 246.

Na Frontera Nos fizemo assim: Lengua y cocina en el Uruguay fronterizo is an ethno-linguistic "micro"-study of border culinary traditions. Published in 2004, the book is a compilation of recipes from the border that purports to create a "reference point from which to make possible an interpretation of 'lo fronterizo' as a distinct culture."[126] With this most recent work, one can clearly see changing ideas and perceptions of the border and border identity within the national culture.

Nevertheless, within Rivera, the change in attitudes is not as these compilations might indicate. Graciela Barrios' essay, "Discursos hegemonicos y representaciones lingüísticas sobre lenguas en contacto y de contacto: Espanol, Portuguese y Portuñol Fronterizos," examines how national ideas of language turn up in local discourse by looking at these national ideas in two historical moments; nationalist discourse of the dictatorship (1973-1984) and globalization discourse of the 90's into the present.[127] Nationalist discourse involved two campaigns. One was a campaign against the "Portuguese invasion," which identified the presence of the Portuguese language in Uruguay as a threat to national identity. The other campaign was for linguistic purity, urging the correct use of the national language. Globalization discourse, on the other hand, opens the door for linguistic and cultural diversity as part of a nation's identity. This diversity is also a tool of regional integration as seen in such trade agreements as Mercosur. Nevertheless, she claims that this door is truly open only to "standard" varieties and does not include a

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[126] Behares, Diaz and Holzmann. Na Frontera Nos Fizemo Assim, 7.
[127] Barrios, "Discursos Hegemónicos y Representaciones Lingüísticas sobre las lenguas en contacto y de contacto: Español, Portugués y Portuñol Fronterizos," unnumbered pages.

vernacular, like Portuñol. Barrios' interviews in Rivera reveal that the informants mostly reproduce the dictatorship's nationalist discourses, associating Spanish with the national patrimony and something that should be kept pure through eliminating Portuñol. Others see Portuguese as a tool toward integration and aspire for the re-vindication of Portuñol as a patrimony of the border culture.

In the following two chapters, I present my interview data on identity construction on the border. These chapters explore Riveran perceptions of cultural mixture in general and Portuñol in particular, looking at how Riverans both construct their cultural identity and reconcile it with their identity as Uruguayans.

Chapter 3: Identity Construction on the Border

"Oh Riverana, oh fúlgida frontera:
uruguay-y-brasil siempre amigados…
el producto final está en-cantado:
es infierno de amor que reverbera!

La academia no corre ya en el arte:
En el habla latidos son amores...
Una cosa es tratar con profesores
Muy distinto es prosear en cualquier parte...

El lenguaje se da en tantos niveles:
Platicando con **flora** en le portón
Laburando en las chacras y en los rieles
O sambando y **brigando** en el **bolón...**

De ahí que el español sea lengua *impura*
Y el portugués esté *contaminado.*
Que el buen dios popular todo ha creado
Con el barro feraz de la *mistura.*

Con esa mezcla construí estos versos:
Realidad-emoción-caricatura
Evocación de instantes y universos
Copia fiel de la vida sucia-pura...

...

Oh Riverana, oh brilliant border:
Uruguay-and-Brazil always friends
The final product is magical:
Inferno of love that reverberates!

The academy doesn't move in the arts
It's in speaking that love beats
It's one thing to interact with professors
It's very different to tell tales anywhere…

Language happens on so many levels:
Chatting with **flora** in the doorway
Laboring on farms and on the railways
Or dancing samba and **scuffling** with the **gang.**

Because of this, Spanish is *impure*
and Portuguese is *contaminated*.
And that the good god of the common has made everything
With the fertile clay of **mixture**

With this mixture I constructed these verses: Reality-emotion-caricature
Evocation of instants and universes
Faithful copy of dirty-pure life.

…

by Taunay de Barros (1997)

This poem is a critique of negative attitudes toward cultural and linguistic mixture, eulogizing the blurring of national boundaries and identities on this border.

“Riverana,” is a portmanteau of Rivera and Santana, mimicking the word Portuñol and showing that not only is language mixed here, the cities themselves are intermingled. This is not just a mixture of two cities, it is the uniting of two nations: “Uruguay-and-Brazil.” The author of the poem critiques the idea that only the educated can decide what is correct, and in fact it is the experience of interaction in daily life, “working,” “dancing,” “chatting,” and even “fighting”, that creates this bond and this mixture of languages. Ironically calling Spanish and Portuguese “contaminated” and “impure,” the poet sees no problem with this, as life is likewise both “pure” and “dirty.”

As explained previously, the Uruguayan imagined community has historically assumed a homogeneous nation and conceptualized Brazilian influence in particular as a threat to national sovereignty. Meanwhile, the social context of the border encourages integration and cultural mixture. How do Riverans reconcile their mixed identity with the purist nationalist identity portrayed at the national level? To answer this question, I look at how both national and regional identity are constructed on the border through an exploration of stereotypes. Stereotypes are constructed based on a series of attributes which reflect judgments about the “other.” Since stereotypes are social constructs for identifying which traits mark difference between one group and another, they provide insight into identity construction.

In this chapter, I first give a brief geographical description of Rivera and the border. Then, I outline stereotypes of Uruguayans and Brazilians held by Riverans to contextualize this process of ‘othering.’ Next, I explore self-perceptions of Riverans.

Finally, I examine Riveran attitudes toward the cultural mixture apparent in their self-perception.

The Border: Geography and Culture

Geologically, Uruguay is an extension of the plains of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil and the Argentine Pampas, a landscape of gently rolling plains with occasional peaks of the granite bedrock jutting out in ridges called *cuchillas.*[128] Despite the bold, black lines of the map, the border between Uruguay and Brazil is practically invisible to the ground-level observer, winding as it does between grassland and grassland and, with the exception of the stretch of river dividing Artigas, Uruguay from Quarai, Brazil, lacking any "natural boundary" to help it distinguish the territory of Brazil from that of diminutive Uruguay to the south.

On the stretch of border that interests us, the national boundary does little to enforce division. Separated from Montevideo by about 275 miles of highway passing rolling palm-punctuated pasturelands and only three major cities, all that separates residents of Rivera, Uruguay from their northern neighbor of Santana do Livramento, Brazil is a wide plaza where the flags of both nations wave side by side and the benches lining its edges are shaded by palm trees and a native evergreen species. Along the rest of the border there are large white *mojones,* which look like upside-down cement tops, that mark the international boundary. There are no customs officials, no one checking passports, and the flow from one side of the border to the

[128] Kleinpenning, 7.

other is uninterrupted and regular, except during soccer matches between the two nations when they temporarily stop border crossings.

The city extends along the international border, longer from east to west in part because the *cuchillas* Negra and Santa Ana limit southern expansion.[129] The principal economic area of both cities lies along the border, showing that economic growth has been actually centered on the border itself.[130] This border area is a center of commercial, administrative, financial and socio-cultural activity, lined with money exchange posts, shops, restaurants, food stands and at least one church.[131] An aerial photograph of both cities shows that the principal streets of each are continued across the border at a slight angle. Calle Sarandí, Rivera's main street, passes the semi-permanent market of cheap goods situated to the west of the international plaza, turning into Rua das Andrades, Livramento's main street, on the other side of the plaza. Both streets are lined with shops, although Rivera's Sarandí has primarily duty-free shops near the border, turning into internet cafes, banks, restaurants, *pulperias*, and municipal buildings further south. Santana's Rua das Andrades has brightly lit pharmacies, few restaurants or municipal buildings, and lots of bargain stores, or "Turkish shops" as they are called locally, selling mostly clothing and usually open onto the sidewalk.

The rest of Rivera extends out from this central zone and the neighborhoods in the city center. The low block houses of the center, painted white, yellow, pale pink,

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[129] Bentancor, 22.
[130] Bentancor, 26
[131] Bentancor, 26.

green and protected by fences that face the tree-lined sidewalks and narrow paved streets, fade into the more peripheral neighborhoods built into the low hills surrounding the city. Here, the pavements ends, thinly walled wooden shacks become more common and street lighting is spotty or non-existent.

The lack of a "natural boundary" between Brazil and Uruguay at the city of Rivera-Livramento, combined with, and leading to, a history of economic interdependence, have created a unique social system in this city that differs from other cities in Uruguay. Riverans regularly do their grocery shopping in Livramento and Brazilians are common customers in the fancy duty-free shops that line Sarandí. There is a bi-national Rivera-Livramento soccer team, an internationally integrated police force and a long history of shared celebrations, particularly the international Carnival. The television and radio waves obey no borders and Rivera and Santanenses watch the same channels. [132] Many Riverans are *doble chapa*, literally two license plates, a local term for having family from both sides of the border. [133] [134] In fact, Brazilian-Uruguayan unions made up 16.5% of couples married in Rivera between January and September 2000.[135]

It is in this integrated and open national border that Riverans construct their identity as both Riverans and Uruguayans. The following sections show the results of this process.

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[132] Bentancor, 55.
[133] Quadrelli Sanchez, 65
[134] In the 60's, Uruguay instituted a system in which a car bought and registered in Brazil could circulate within Riveran city limits if they paid a city registration fee. This entitled them to a second license plate, or *chapa*, hence the term *doble chapa*.
[135] Quadrelli Sanchez, 66.

Riveran Stereotypes of Brazilians and Uruguayans

The stereotype of the Brazilian has a strong visual aspect. In fact, in Andrea Quadrelli Sanchez's doctoral work on the Rivera-Livramento border, she identifies a metaphorical color dichotomy between the two national identities. She titles this section of her dissertation, 'Uruguayans are gray and Brazilians are yellow.'[136]

One defining trait of difference is style of dress. Gabriela, a retired primary school teacher from Montevideo, said, "Uruguayans are very classic in the way they dress. Brazilians use brighter colors. Their houses are brighter. Brazilians are always happy, always partying. Brazilians are more concerned with appearances. They have a big pool, a nice car, even if they don't have food to eat." (#2)[*]

Two high school students and their English teacher were quite animated in describing this difference:

Teacher – You can tell the difference between Brazilian and Uruguayan in the way we dress…
Maria Laura – The girls, the teenagers, they dress extravagant. They use big earrings and colorful…
Flavia - They are really colorful, you see they are cheerful people…
Maria Laura – And they…high heels
Teacher – like a platform
Maria Laura – And all have cellular phones
Flavia – And they are like Paulinha, Marzinha, Claudinha, inha inha
Teacher – all of them have a nickname also… even for Uruguayan people, they think that when you mix you are all the same, but I tell you when you go there, you tell the difference immediately
Flavia– little girls they already have highlights…
Teacher – They are different. They are more colorful. They like to be older younger.

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[136] Quadrelli Sanchez, 132.
[*] # Refers to my interviews. All references to interviewees are pseudonyms.

> **Flavia –** If they have a party, a Brazilian woman she will go with a really yellow dress, a pink dress. A Uruguayan will go with a more sober dress… pink, but LIGHT pink. They will go like PINK! You can see them a mile away… (#13)

There are various elements of the Brazilian stereotype expressed here. One is the idea that they are more ostentatious, wearing loud colors to outings, big earrings and platform shoes. Also, Brazilians are thought of as more modern, one aspect of this seen here in their carrying cell phones. Further, these girls identify a more exaggerated sexuality beginning earlier than what is considered proper by Uruguayan standards, with young girls already using highlights, trying to be "older younger."[137]

Brazilian colorfulness also translates into their stereotyped character, with Riverans describing them as open, friendly, happy and spontaneous as well as loud and ostentatious. Brazilian assertiveness and informality were also mentioned. Gabina, a woman in her late twenties who studied at a Brazilian university, describes Brazilians as "more aggressive… they just help themselves to things. They fight but then they fix everything. If something happens, they think they'll be fine the next day." (#11) These attributes are generally given a positive value, although there is often a sense of condescension mixed with admiration, which could be described as perceiving the Brazilian as charming, but less sophisticated than the Uruguayan.

[137] It is interesting to note the gendered stereotype, in the sense that Brazilian women were the iconic Brazilian character in this description. Quadrelli Sanchez noted in her research that Brazilian women were objects of desire for many Riveran men who described them as "pretty," "fiery, passionate" and "liberated." In fact, of the mixed marriages in Rivera between January and September of 2000, 82% were between a Uruguayan man and a Brazilian woman. (Quadrelli Sanchez, 2002)

There is also a fear of crime on the Brazilian side among some. During a trip to an Umbanda center in Livramento, one of the women I was traveling with spent the entire time in the car, for fear that it might be stolen.

In contrast, the *grey* Uruguayan is described as more “sober” and “somber.” Uruguayans are considered generally well educated and more cultured. This clearly reflects the myth of Uruguay as the country of *culturosos* identified by Juan Rial.[138] The Uruguayan channel from Montevideo most often shows news and cultural programs. For popular appeal, it can’t compete with the Brazilian channels and their *telenovelas*, sports, entertainment and variety shows.

Uruguayans are also considered more formal and distant, although also very courteous, as compared to Brazilian openness, informality and assertiveness. They are also resistant to change and conservative in their approach to life, as well as pessimistic. Gabina said “Things seem harder [for Uruguayans], they suffer when things are bad.” (#11)

In dress, the Uruguayan is “classic,” preferring more subdued tones and darker colors. My own experience corroborates this. While in Montevideo, unsuccessfully shopping for a red shawl, I was told by one storeowner that the few brightly colored articles she sold were for the tourists. According to Riverans, Uruguayans buy better made and more expensive products that last longer. Brazilian products are cheaper but also shoddily made.

[138] Sosnowski, 68.

The colloquial names for each nationality are useful at highlighting attitudes. Where Uruguayans are simply *castelhões*, or Castilians, reflecting their linguistic identity, Brazilians are referred to disrespectfully as *macacos* or monkeys, hinting at primitivism with, what seem to be racist undertones. Although I was told that the stereotypical Uruguayan was "white," there was no mention of Brazilian race when I was soliciting this information.

The stereotypes of both nationalities fall into quite dichotomous extremes, with one being associated with a sort of carefree, unsophisticated and colorful persona, the other being serious, cultured, formal and subdued. However, when looking at Riveran perceptions of their own culture, many of the traits associated with being Brazilian are reflected in their self-perceptions. Furthermore, Brazilian cultural symbols, such as music, dance and celebration, as well as food and religious traditions outnumber Uruguayan national cultural symbols in the cultural tastes of Riverans.

Riveran Self-perceptions

Riverans see themselves as more similar to Brazilians than other Uruguayans. This is seen as positive in the sense of making Rivera a happier, more 'cosmopolitan' place. Gaston, an engineering student, said that Rivera was "happy, happier that the rest of Uruguay… it's as if every day were carnival." (#4) For Samuel, a graphic designer at the local TV station and founding member of a local band known for songs in Portuñol, said that the best thing about Rivera is, "We are the happiest

people in Uruguay, because of the interaction with Brazil. The people are more open." (#18)

Being more similar to Brazil also has its negative side. Jorge, Gabina's officemate at town hall said of Rivera, "We have the defect of the border… we try and take advantage always… this is the Brazilian influence…" Gabina said "we call it "*viveza criolla*," Brazilians call it "*jeitinho brasileiro*." (#11)

Brazilian influence is also seen in local pettiness. Gabriela, originally from Montevideo, does not consider herself Riveran, "Thank God" she said because Riverans are "envious busybodies, which is [a trait] copied from Brazil." (#2)

The low level of "culture" in Rivera, as compared to the rest of Uruguay, is linked to the high percentage of Brazilians living in the city. Edma, a retired immigration worker who has lived in Rivera for close to thirty years equates the high level of illiteracy in Rivera with the presence of Brazilians. "I think the (cultural) level of the people in Montevideo is higher. Here, being close to Brazil, there is a higher level of illiteracy."(#1) Gustavo, an eighteen year old engineering student, told me, "Uruguay has always been a cultured people. Here in Rivera… we're not going to blame the Brazilians for this totally… but part of the "low," the uncultured, is their influence." (#4)

In addition to the influence of Brazilian culture, the actual proximity to the national border also influences Riveran character and behavior. This is most clearly seen in the common practice of contraband. Marcela related how in the past, Riverans were known for taking Brazilian goods into the interior and to Montevideo and

selling them for huge profits because of the exchange rate difference. Mario, a street vendor, sees this as part of the unification of the two cities. "Contraband brings money to Uruguay. The people here have lived more for contraband and friendship with the other. Here's the wall [showing me the low 'wall' that runs through the middle of the vending stalls marking the international border], but it's only symbolic." (#16) Sara, a history professor, spoke of the naturalness of contraband on such an open border. When the meat processing plant Armour was first established in Livramento, Uruguayan cattle were sent there, without any problem. The border was open. "It was something natural, contraband as a way of life… It's not socially sanctioned, no one will judge you if you are a *contrabandista*." (#33) Others point out that all Riverans are *contrabandistas*, as everyone buys clothes and food in Santana do Livramento.

Riveran taste in food, dress, and music, as well as local holidays, shows Brazilian influence. Musical tastes in Rivera differ from other parts of Uruguay. A 2002 national survey of cultural behavior found that the most popular musical style in Uruguay was Uruguayan folk music with about 40% of the vote, followed by salsa/merengue, pop and boleros tying for third place, tango and classical almost tying for fourth and Brazilian music in fifth place with 19% of the vote.[139]

Marcela said that Riveran culture is more Brazilian than Uruguayan. She has always been more interested in Brazilian music, particularly *sertanejo* and Brazilian gaucho music. She claims that this is common. The older people in Rivera rarely

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[139] Achugar et.al, Imaginaros y consumo cultural, 44.

listen to tango, preferring Brazilian gaucho music, and the young people like Brazilian rap, and maybe some *cumbia*. (#10) My own observation attests this claim. At the celebration of the anniversary of the YMCA in Barrio Sacrificio de Sonia, I was amazed at the children there dancing samba with the same fluidity and grace as any Brazilian. Clearly they have grown up hearing and dancing this rhythm.

Riveran cooking shows Brazilian influence as well. Dishes such as *mocotó*, made from cow's feet, and *vatapá*, a Bahian food, are examples of the border's Brazilian-influenced cuisine given in my interviews. Luis Behares' compilation of border recipes is a testament to the mixing of culinary cultures in Rivera. He identifies Spanish, Guaraní, and Afro-Brazilian culinary traditions as the main influences on border cuisine in general.[140] The ubiquity of beans and rice is one indicator. Along with the use of pork products, Behares identifies these cereals as the main contribution of Brazilian culinary tradition to border cuisine, with black beans and rice making up 95.5% of the cereals used in traditional border recipes.[141] Gabriela, the 55 year old retired primary school teacher from Montevideo said that since she's been living in Rivera, she has developed a taste for *feijoada*, a Brazilian dish of black beans and rice. This is unheard of in Montevideo, she told me, and she had only tried the dish because that was what her maid would make. "Now if we don't eat rice, it's as if we haven't eaten." (#2)

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[140] Behares et. al, Na Frontera Nos Fizemo Assim, 168.
[141] Behares et. al., Na Frontera Nos Fizemo Assim, 138.

In Rivera there are about 40 Evangelical churches as compared to 15 to 20 Catholic churches with some 20 to 30 Umbanda centers and 6 Mormon temples.[142] To put this in national perspective, however, over half of all Uruguayans are Catholic and about a third are atheist, the rest run the gamut of religions but none of these exceed 3% of the population in any case.[143] In Brazil, in contrast, although Catholics are the definite majority on a national level, 15.4% are Protestant, a marked difference from Uruguay.[144] Furthermore, atheism is not at all common in Brazil. The presence of Umbanda centers in the peripheral neighborhoods is mentioned as an aspect of Brazilian influence, but the presence of evangelical churches did not suggest Brazilian influence to Riverans.

One significant difference frequently mentioned between cultural expressions of the rest of Uruguay and those of Rivera is Carnival. While the typical elements of the Uruguayan Carnival as celebrated in Montevideo are *comparsas* and *murgas,* in Rivera they are samba schools and a *trio eléctrico.*[145] Similarly, the rest of Uruguay does not have a carnival queen, a Brazilian tradition, although along the border this is common. (#2) In the early 1970's, Rivera and Livramento celebrated carnival together, drawing tourists from the rest of Uruguay and abroad. During the dictatorship, integration was prohibited by the government, presumably as part of the

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[142] Approximations taken from records at the Intendencia Municipal de Rivera.
[143] Achugar et. al, 27.
[144] Demographic census: General Characteristics of Population 2000. http://www.ibge.gov.br
[145] The *comparsas* consist of groups of black Uruguayans and white Uruguayans in black-face who march through the streets singing and dancing to drum rhythms associated with *candombe. Murgas* are a form of popular musical theater performed by a small, colorfully dressed group singing about a theme usually related to current events and backed by percussion. The *trio eléctrico* is a truck driven along the streets blasting music from immense speakers, an important element in Brazilian Carnival.

campaign of national cultural purity in the border region. Then in the 80's when democracy was restored, attempts were made to reintegrate but with less success. The 2007 Carnival will not be 'international' as Livramento did not agree to an integrated production, however samba schools from Montevideo are scheduled to perform and there will be a *trio eléctrico* in addition to *murgas* and comparsas. [146]

Portuñol is also an aspect of Riveran culture frequently mentioned in my interviews. I will be exploring its role as an identity marker in greater depth in chapter four. Next I look at Riveran attitudes toward cultural mixture.

Attitudes toward cultural mixture

Riveran self-perceptions show the strong influence of Brazil on their culture. This influence and the resulting cultural mixture inspire differing responses. These responses reflect Riveran attempts to reconcile nationalist ideas of Uruguayan culture and identity with their own experience.

For some, Brazilian influence causes a loss of Uruguayan culture. Many who hold this perspective perceive strong Brazilian nationalism as part of the reason for their cultural influence. Brazilian 'refusal' to speak Spanish is often attributed to nationalistic feelings, thus Riverans must accommodate Brazilians through speaking Portuñol. The duty free shops lining Sarandí in downtown Rivera are frequented mainly by middle and upper class Brazilians, Uruguayans being prohibited from purchasing there. A common complaint among interviewees is that while Riveran

[146] Carnaval 2007: Ultiman detalles para fiesta de Momo. Edicion 131 (9 Feb 07). www.derivera.com.uy.

shopkeepers speak to Brazilians in Portuguese, on the other side of the border on Rua das Andrades in Livramento, the shopkeepers will not speak Spanish with Uruguayan customers. This is interpreted as either Brazilian lack of exposure to Spanish, the difficulty of Spanish for Portuguese speakers or as a sign of nationalism. Even among couples, the opinion is divided. When I asked one couple why Brazilians didn't seem to speak as much Spanish as Riverans, Edma thought perhaps Spanish was hard for Brazilians. Her husband, however, saw this as a sign of nationalism. "They won in the balance. Uruguay ceded to the bigger country… that's my impression." In his perspective, Portuñol was a sign of this battle… "the Portuguese language has subjugated our language." (#1)

A high school teacher from Rivera mentioned that even her Brazilian students, whom she knows can speak Spanish, act like they can't understand her when she addresses them in Spanish in Livramento. According to her, this is because of their strong nationalism. She said, "From their side… they have an imperialistic tendency… they tend to subjugate… and part of this is in the language..." (#33)

Some Riverans blame themselves for the dominance of Portuguese in the city. Berenice, owner of a kiosk selling candy in Rivera Chico, said that trying to speak Portuguese with Brazilians was a sign that Riverans do not value their own culture. She lives out this conviction herself. Her parents and sibling all speak "that Portuñol '*atravesado*' (backwards)," but she speaks only Spanish. (#40)

Nationalism and cultural symbols in the arts are highly linked. The 'Brazilian invasion' in the form of television programs meets little resistance in Uruguay, a fact

that some Riverans find very non-nationalist. While Riverans could choose to watch Uruguayan TV, consisting of one channel out of Montevideo and one local channel, the majority of my informants watch a large percentage of Brazilian TV. Even Edma, a Montevidean who claimed to only watch Spanish TV was a faithful viewer of "Beleza," a Brazilian *telenovela* popular during my stay. Daniel, an architect and founder of Derivera on-line magazine, said that "… on Brazilian TV there is a law that says for every foreign song, foreign program, foreign movie, there must be as many national… In Uruguay, there isn't anything like this." (#5) Riverans believe Uruguayan attempts to protect their national culture from change are less effective than Brazil's conscious protection of their national culture. Daniel mentioned the fact that there are two schools of Uruguayan music in Uruguay, one in Montevideo, the other in Rivera. According to Daniel, the reason the government founded one school along the northern border was to defend the Uruguayan culture against the "Brazilian cultural invasion." (#5)

A local radio program had a short piece on Riveran loss of culture, particularly evident, according to the speaker, in the ubiquitous celebration of the *fiestas juninas* in all Riveran schools. Celebrated in June, the Brazilian holiday is religious in origin, but takes the form of a masquerade party in which the participants dress like *caipiras*, or "country folk" from the Brazilian interior. The speaker saw this as yet another case of the loss of national identity in the city. Nevertheless, the holiday was well-accepted in general. In fact, I attended a *fiestas juninas* celebration hosted by the Riveran police force.

The Riveran Carnival receives critiques from some sectors for its Brazilian influence. This year's Carnival will not be organized with Livramento, meaning there will be a larger number of Uruguayan *comparsas* and *murgas* than in other years. This fact won approving commentary from one of the departmental legislators writing in *Derivera.com*. He said, "It's a shame that these traditions (of integration) were lost but I definitely believe that this initiative to bring *comparsas* from Montevideo and other *departamentos* to our city will do a lot of good. We can thus recuperate what is ours." [147]

One fear is that such cultural change actually reduces connection to the national culture. When I asked how Rivera might change if there were a closed border, Marcela, a preschool teacher, said, "…maybe we would feel more Uruguayan… I feel if we didn't have this influence of Brazil, we'd all be more like one people, Riverans, Montevideans, and Tacuaremboens." (#10) In other words, being less like Brazil and more like Uruguay would promote national unity.

Others see culture contact and change not as a form of loss, but as the creation of a new culture, unique in its own right. Nuri, the Portuguese teacher said, "Here the situation is very particular… This daily contact between the two [cities] created something like a particular culture, in the border, that is the border culture." (#30)

She related an incident where she had been at the bakery speaking in Spanish with the baker when a young man came in and she had addressed him in Portuguese.

"We were three people who spoke the dialect, Spanish, and Portuguese, all together. And someone said how funny and I said it's '*gracioso mismo*.' But we all

[147] Freitas, Heber. Eramos tan felices y...(parte final). Edicion 132 (16 Feb 07). www.derivera.com.uy.

understood each other perfectly. It's a mixture that enriches you, that doesn't diminish anything… Nothing disappears because of this mixture. On the contrary, it's enriching… If you don't know the word in one language, you can look for it in the others… It's enriches not only the language but also the culture." (#30)

Samuel pointed out that, despite the fact that Riverans were told that Portuñol was something that took away from Uruguayan culture, he said, for him it was something that added to the culture. "The culture is not what they want it to be. The culture is what it is." (#18) This perspective on cultural mixture disregards the nationalist ideal of purity in culture.

This mixture is also seen as the natural outcome of the geographic and economic reality of the region. The Director of Culture at City Hall said:

"We don't have a geographic border. It's simply a line on a map marked by *marcos*. The interactions between the countries were permanent in commerce… and culture…. And so everything was amalgamated, including the African cultural element… We had public schools when they didn't. Our train arrived 18 years before that of the Brazilian side. So, there was a form of social exchange, of [common] interests and caudillo politics with the Rio Grande zone, that created a lifestyle and point of view that was very different [from the rest of Uruguay]… To solve our problems [between the two countries]… what wasn't constructed from the legal point of view, through friendly relations and exchange we resolved our problems from outside the law." (#38)

Here, not only is the interaction a natural outcome of the border reality, it is the seed of a different lifestyle and viewpoint, distinguishing the city from the rest of the nation. In this new context, the regulations imposed on the national level lose their meaning and the daily interaction of individuals becomes the more important defining force of 'legality.'

The reality of cultural mixture and perceptions of this process in Rivera provide background for exploring the outcome of this reality on identity within the

city. In the next chapter, I focus specifically on Portuñol as an identity marker, exploring how it is viewed and seeing what conflicting opinions it inspire.

Chapter 4: Portuñol and Riveran Identity

"Muchos me dicen que yo soy **'bayano'**
Por **'ese yeito'** tan particular
Del hablar que tengo, 'aguántate' hermano
Que'n pocas **'palavra,'** te voy a **esplicar**.

Soy de Rivera y soy '**bién** uruguayo'
No me cambiés 'la nacionalidad'
No adulo 'rico,' vivo d'el **'bagayo'**
Y canto mis **'verso'** por la libertad"...

Lots of people tell me that I'm **bayano**
Because of this particular **way**
Of speaking that I have, Hang on brother
In a few **word**, I'm going to **explain.**

I'm from Rivera and I'm "**very** Uruguayan"
Don't change my nationality
The rich don't intimidate me, I make my living from **contraband**
And I sing my **verse** for liberty…

Náun véin que Náun Téin by Chito de Mello
"Don't try, 'cause it ain't gonna work"

This poem by Chito de Mello, a Riveran songwriter, poet and folk singer, captures the dilemma of Riverans in reconciling their identity with the Uruguayan imagined community. The first stanza responds to assumptions that the speaker is '*bayano*,' or Brazilian. Using Portuñol in the poem, he explains that while he may speak differently, he is very Uruguayan.[148] He does not claim to be rich, and identifies with the lower class, or "*bagayo*."[149]

Confusion about Portuñol speakers' national identity as well as assumptions of lower class status are two challenges to Riveran identity. How do Riverans reconcile their local identity with their national identity? Do Riverans claim Portuñol

[148] In bold in the text - '*yeito*', from *jeito* in Portuguese, dropping the final s in plurals in '*pocas palavra*,' and '*mis verso*,' etc.
[149] The *bagayo* are also small time contrabanders.

as a regional identity marker? Do they accept national stereotypes of their "brazilianized" national identity and lower class status? Or do they reconcile these differing ideas and perceptions of "Uruguayan-ness" in a way that validates their own unique language and culture?

In this chapter I answer these questions by first looking at the impact of Uruguayan nationalist thought on language and identity in Rivera, including its enforcement through the local school system and its impact on local perceptions. Then, I explore the ways Riverans see themselves, including class differences related to language, the way they challenge these perceptions, claim space in the national imaginary and construct a unique sense of identity based on Portuñol and cultural mixture.

Portuñol and the Uruguayan "Imagined Community"

Language, both Portuñol and the particular accent of the border, marks Riverans as different from other Uruguayans. Jose Luis, a street vendor on the international line, said: "What most identifies the border is the language… You go somewhere, to Tacuarembó and beyond… and you speak 4-5 words in Portuguese and you mix it with Spanish and Portuñol comes out. And they say, 'vos sos de la frontera.'" (#14)

Outsiders interpret this linguistic difference as a sign of being 'brazilianized.' To the rest of Uruguay, Riverans are *bayanos.* A *bayano* is someone or something coming from Bahia in northeastern Brazil, perhaps as the epicenter of black Brazilian

culture and thus the most stereotypical region of Brazilian national culture as contrasting that of Uruguay. Two monolingual Portuñol-speakers whom I interviewed in the neighborhood Sacrificio de Sonia had experienced the ambiguity of their national identity to outsiders. One, Cesar, said that when he was in Brazil, the people called him *castelhano* while in Montevideo he was called *bayano.* Miranda's boyfriend mentioned the irritation of being confused with a Brazilian in the rest of Uruguay.

Confusion about Riveran national identity leads to negative stereotypes of the border population. Sara, a history professor said, "They call us *bayanos* and make fun of us. It's a stigma; you have to know how to take it. It's not easy." (#33) Carola, a high school student, when asked how people from Montevideo see Portuñol, told me, "There is a *rejecão*(rejection) of this border zone, that it is more sympathetic to Brazil [than to Uruguay]." (#32) Rosaura, a school teacher, said, "Sometimes you feel the rejection… sometimes in jokes, but you still hear it, the thing that 'Ah, you are from RiVera, marking [the v], marking us that we are from here." (#28)

Lack of proficiency in Spanish is also associated with ignorance on the national level. When I asked Jose Luis what people from outside Rivera thought of Portuñol, he said, "We're *rompeidiomas*, we don't know how to speak well. For this reason, we're inferior." (#14)

On the state level, the fact that Riverans speak a different language has been simply ignored. Zoila, a high school Spanish teacher said that when she arrived at the border after completing her education degree at the Universidad de la República in

Montevideo, she was shocked to find out that the children were not native Spanish speakers. Portuñol was something that had never been mentioned in her classes. (#22) Nuri, the Portuguese teacher, pointed out that the linguistic situation in the border is not "a situation just of today, it's an old situation, but before they said Uruguay was monolingual when it wasn't. They ignored the situation that existed, the situation of the border. [But] we don't stop being Uruguayan because we speak Portuñol." (#3

Perceptions of Portuñol-speakers as "brazilianized' and 'ignorant' are also present in Rivera. I went to an English class in one of the private language institutions located in a residential area near the city center. The two pupils, high school girls, and the forty-something female instructor were all from Rivera. When I asked about Portuñol, the instructor told me:

> "What I don't like is that the Portuguese part is bigger than the little Spanish they use. It's not that they mix Portuguese with Spanish, it's Spanish with Portuguese. It's like they don't like our country. They live here, they study here, but they prefer to speak Portuguese. They don't do it correctly, but if they could they would speak Portuguese." (#13)

Some Riverans correlate the ability to speak standard Spanish with being "Uruguayan." During a talk with 12-year-olds at Liceo 2 in Pueblo Nuevo, I was asking questions and taking answers from students who started laughing among themselves at my accent in Spanish. The teacher stopped the session, saying to the students, 'listen how well she speaks Spanish and she's a foreigner. Her accent is different, but she speaks better Spanish than you as Uruguayans.' Carola, a high school student with dual citizenship told me that her boyfriend's mother corrects her

husband when he slips into Portuñol. “You need to speak Spanish. You’re Uruguayan.” (#32)

Nadia, a beautician in her fifties grew up speaking Portuguese and Portuñol at home and learned Spanish at school, but she said she hasn’t spoken Portuñol in thirty years. I asked her if she thought people saw Portuñol as part of Riveran identity and she said:

Nadia - “Yes, but I don’t think it’s right. They want to present it as a dialect… but I think it’s something that will end with time.
Q - Is this a good thing?
Nadia - Yes, yes, if we are Uruguayan and we belong to the rest of the republic, we have no reason to speak badly because for me speaking Portuñol is speaking badly.”
Q – And do you think people here feel less Uruguayan?
Nadia - I think so. I don’t [feel less Uruguayan], but I think…there are people who are more for the Brazilian side than the Uruguayan side.”(#21)

Nadia sees Portuñol as both incorrect in an objective sense and a sign of a lack of connection to the national culture. She is not alone in correlating Portuñol with lack of education. Rosaura a primary school teacher and participant in a university course on Portuñol and border education assured me that the stigma against Portuñol was not a question of national identity, but one of class. She said, “It’s like it lowers one’s prestige. I don’t know if it’s about being less Uruguayan, but it’s a mark of lower prestige.” (# 28) Marta, a 50-year-old Riveran of the upper middle class raised speaking Spanish, said that in Rivera Portuñol was associated with the lower class. She said, “It’s not the same to speak Portuñol as speaking like an Argentine, with their little accent. People say, ‘How pretty, how folkloric!’[In contrast] Portuñol is seen as something ordinary, horrible.” (#3)

The majority of monolingual Portuñol speakers held this same negative view of their language on both fronts. In Cerro Caqueiro, the location of one of the pilot programs of bilingual education, I spoke with three of the local families about whether bilingual education was a good idea. Lola, one of the cooks at the school is skeptical. She feels that teaching Portuguese simply makes learning Spanish harder. Her whole family speaks Portuñol, but she wants her children to learn Spanish well. Her reasoning is, "If we are Uruguayan we have to speak Spanish, right? Even if we speak it all wrong. It has to be Spanish, nothing else." (#35) When I asked her how Rivera would change if no one spoke Portuñol, she said, "If we didn't have this Portuñol, we wouldn't speak badly. Sometimes we are even ashamed… you're speaking idiocies. Spanish is much better." (#35) When I asked the daughter of Marina, a housewife in Cerro Caquiero, which class she preferred in school, Spanish or Portuguese, she didn't respond and her mother confided to me, "She speaks that mixture, so when she has to speak, she doesn't say anything." (#36) One of her sons said that he prefers Spanish class because he can learn to speak better there. (#36) Among monolingual and dominant Portuñol speakers, learning Portuguese in school is either seen as simply an obstacle to learning Spanish, a path toward future employment in Brazil, or a way to distinguish between Spanish and Portuguese and speak 'correctly.'

Jose Luis, a 43-year-old street vendor and Portuñol-dominant bilingual told me that speaking Portuñol makes him feel "less Uruguayan, because I should speak my language, not one invented on the border. That's Portuñol as they say. I myself

don't speak Spanish well. I am Uruguayan and I should know how to speak my own language well… that makes me feel inferior…" (#14)

Maria, a 77-year-old wife of a farm worker from Minas de Corrales, a town in the department of Rivera, speaks almost no Spanish. "I don't have a language," she confided. According to Maria, her daughter is ashamed of the fact that her mother doesn't speak Spanish. She remembers being in the hospital in Canelones waiting for her daughter and running into someone from her hometown. The two women had started speaking together in Portuñol and when her daughter returned and heard them, she was angry and embarrassed that her mother had spoken "*brasileiro*" in the hospital. (#42)

The names given to Portuñol by monolingual speakers show the internalization of the stigma against Portuñol. I was told that Riverans are "corrupted in their language." When I asked what language they spoke, these were the replies. "*No tengo idioma,*"or I don't have a language. "*Rompeidiomas*," or language breaker, is a term for Portuñol itself as well as its speakers. "*Metade e metade*," or half and half, is another way to refer to Portuñol. *Entreverado*, or mixed. "*Ni una cosa ni la otra*," which means neither one thing nor the other. "*Mas por alla que por aca*," or I speak more from there than from here.

Experiences in the Riveran school system reinforce national stereotypes and stigmas. Elsa, a 24-year-old resident of Sacrificio de Sonia and monolingual Portuñol speaker, told me that the teachers speak "Uruguayan" "They would hit you with a ruler if you spoke 'Brazilian' and pull your ears." (#13) Rosa, a thirty-year-old

kindergarten teacher remembered a time when her own teacher had embarrassed her. "I said some word in Portuñol and the teacher called my attention in front of the whole class, saying that I didn't know how to speak." (#9) Rosaura, now a school teacher herself, remembers that teachers were very rigid with Portuñol. "They discriminated against those who spoke Portuñol. They were the *burros* (dunces), those that would repeat the grade, they were marked… The student, in order not to speak badly, would not speak, to not write badly, would not write, and on the other hand understood very little." (#28)

However, there are indications that in the past decade, negative attitudes toward Portuñol in the schools are changing to some extent. Berenice, a 32-year-old candy vendor from Rivera said, "Before, the teacher corrected you because you were speaking badly. Now, if you speak *brasileiro* they let you. It's not a language, it's a dialect, now it's by law, and it's something from here, from the border that they can't get rid of." (#40)

Rosaura is one of those teachers who have taken a different perspective. Her own interest in languages prompted her to assign her students a writing project in Portuñol. She remembers, "They stared at me. 'What?' they said, 'What do you mean by telling us to write in Portuñol?' But I explained and they wrote some beautiful stories in Portuñol."(#28) Nevertheless she sees the changes in attitude toward Portuñol in the schools as superficial, and more a matter of theory than of practice. She mentions recently seeing an article in the local paper, written by the primary school inspector concerning a course in Spanish that would help 'contain the advance

of Portuguese…' "This sounded so archaic to me," she said, "I remember when we started the course (on border languages) that we talked of how people used to think like this… but even now!" (#28)

The existence of a bilingual education program is one of the most obvious signs of a change in attitude, at least at the national level. Bilingualism has become more accepted and the Portuguese language is being promoted as a tool of regional integration. Although this is not a change in attitude toward Portuñol on the national level, it does have some consequences for this Portuguese dialect at the local level. I interviewed people at the administrative level of the bilingual education program to hear their perspective of its purpose before speaking with some of the children and parents concerning their perspective on the program. Nuri, a Portuguese teacher at the bilingual school, had experienced the negative perceptions of Portuguese and Portuñol while growing up. This had inspired her to become a Portuguese teacher when the bilingual program was put in place.

"That's why I wanted to work in this program, [to have] the chance to save their self-esteem. Because for me it also saved my self-esteem because for a long time I told myself, "You can't speak Portuguese!" but now you can. They considered… and they consider… that Portuguese is something that takes away value, a demerit from speaking the language of hierarchy (Spanish)… and Portuguese is left as the language of the group with less economic power, principally the dialect… The people who speak the dialect aren't the people who stand out socially." (#30)

The director of the pilot program at this school was less pro-dialect. She told me:

"There was during much time the erroneous idea that speaking another language was a loss of identity or nationalism… [But] being bilingual is not going to make anyone less Uruguayan or less any other nationality… And bilingual formation opens lots of

doors for people. What we do need to emphasize is that now we in the schools will have this focus… that they be kids who speak correctly in both languages." (#30)

Her emphasis was on standard languages as beneficial, but did not give a positive utility/identity/culture value to the local dialect. When I asked if she thought Portuñol would disappear once there was a fully bilingual population she said, "We don't reach the family. When they speak with one another, they are going to speak in the dialect. That's the problem." (#30) Framing Portuñol as a problem clearly belies statements affirming its value.

Even among monolingual Portuñol speakers, there is some reticence toward having Portuguese in the classroom. According to the director of the bilingual school in Cerro Caqueiro, parents were wary at first, questioning why Portuguese was being taught instead of English and asking if students would now be forced to learn Brazilian history rather than Uruguayan.

Students are not immune to the stigma toward Portuñol, either. Sara, a retired history professor said that there are students that laugh at professors who speak in Portuñol. "They laugh, make fun of them, and do not listen to them. A lot of them speak just like the professor but they don't realize it. They don't expect a professor to speak Portuñol." (#33) Even at the university level, discrimination exists. The day of our interview, she had received a call about a local student who is studying to be a professor who is being discriminated against by her peers for speaking Portuñol.

Portuñol: Border identity and the national imaginary

Despite the odds, there is a large percentage of Riverans who value Portuñol and who are challenging the prevailing stereotypes that mark the dialect and its speakers. Samuel, a mid-thirties graphic designer and founding member of a local rock group related an experience that inspired his own production of rock songs in Portuñol.

"I work in the press and I was covering a commission of the Colorado Party in '99, a voting year. One of the candidates, who was vice-president until last year, said in his speech… to Riverans: 'I want those here in Rivera to stop wearing jerseys of Gremio and Nacional of Porto Alegre. I want you to wear Jerseys of Peñarol and Nacional. I want you to stop speaking in Portuñol and start speaking Spanish'…. And I was indignant. And the people applauded him! It was like calling us ignorant and then the people gave him a standing ovation… And I was indignant. And I said, no, I'm going to fix this somehow. And that's how it started." (#18)

Os Som de Nossa Terra contains various poems written as challenges to authority. One example is the poem *Manifiesto* by Yacaré/Tatú in which short lists of insults in Portunõl are directed at a doctor, teacher, and other authorities. After each list, the intended 'listener' is asked if they 'understand,' if its 'clear,' ending with "Intonce: ¡Vay tomá nu cú!," Or, roughly, "Well then, F---- you!."[150]

Many Riverans express pride in Portuñol and Riveran culture and recognize a growing movement of validation of the dialect in their city. When I asked Mauricio, a folk singer known for his songs in Portuñol, what he would like others to know about Rivera, he said, "that our dialect is not a sign of backwardness, that it's how we speak, just like an indigenous group…" (#7) Rosaura, a 39-year-old elementary

[150] In Behares, Os Som de Nossa Terra, 52.

school teacher, echoes this opinion that Portuñol is like an indigenous language. She said that whereas before, it has been rejected… "Now, it's felt as the language of here, an ethnic language, that identifies us as a border… there is a resurgence of the dialects… since about ten years ago… Even many students that, while [in Rivera] spoke Spanish, when they get together in Montevideo they speak Portuñol." The youth are speaking Portuñol now "because they like it, because they feel it." (#28)

In the high schools, students speak Spanish in the classroom, but during recess, the language of choice is Portuñol. Of the four high schools I visited, only at Liceo 1 in downtown Rivera did students speak mainly Spanish after classes were let out. At Liceo 4 in Barrio Santa Isabel, one student made a comment in Portuñol when I stood up to speak to his class and all the students laughed. He seemed to be using Portuñol as an act of rebellion toward authority and solidarity with his classmates. Other teachers, including Mara, said they had observed the same behavior.

Mara, a college student and student teacher, was one of the more vociferous in defending Portuñol. In an interview with a college-level geography class, she said, "If I could, I would speak Portuñol here… because it's something MINE… I feel identified with Portuñol. It's mine. It's ours. It was our creation."(#19) Silvia, another student in this class, said, "Portuñol is… a dialect from here, from our culture, that identifies us a lot and also identifies us within our country, differentiates us from the rest." (#19)

Portuñol is a mark of Riveran identity and a source of pride. Jorge, the 45-year-old kiosk owner, said Portuñol was the official language of Rivera. (#39)

Carlos, a high school student from the countryside said, "…In all Uruguay, the language is Spanish, but here on the border it's Portuñol. Spanish is for the south, here it's Portuñol, and crossing the border it's Portuguese." (#31)

For Rosa, a kindergarten teacher at a peripheral school, what makes her proud of Rivera is, "We're different. We speak differently. We have the advantage of being bilingual. Lots of people in the south laugh at us, at how we talk, but even so, I think it's different. I'm not sure if it's negative or positive, but it's an identity that we have." (#9) Jorge, a 44-year-old functionary at city hall said, "I speak various languages. It's a treasure, to know Portuñol. It gives us complicity. We understand ourselves, but those from the outside don't understand anything…It unites us and differentiates us… from the rest." (#11)

Despite nationalist fears to the contrary, most Portuñol speakers are adamant in saying that speaking Portuñol does not make Riverans feel less Uruguayan. When I asked Sara, a history professor in her fifties who had moved to Rivera from Minas de Corrales as a young woman, whether nationalism had anything to do with Portuñol, she denied it, saying that:

> "Even if we speak Portuñol, we know very well in what country we live and from what country we come… perhaps we're even more nationalist than those from the south, because we have [Brazil] beside us… we don't lose our Uruguayan identity… Montevideans don't understand this." (#33)

Gabina said, "[Portuñol] is what makes us different… Rivera is unique for this contact, but also its independence. We are Uruguayan. They are Brazilian. We keep our culture and they keep theirs, but at the same time, there's mix." (#11)

Samuel said, “On the outside, you see more weight of Brazilian culture, but each person knows what they are. I think all Riverans feel very Uruguayan. In fact, if someone from outside treats us as a Brazilian, we get offended.” (#18)

Carlos, a high school student from the countryside, supports this claim. He told me, “I speak Portuguese and I’m Uruguayan, Uruguayan to the death.” (#31)

Mauricio said, “It is common to run into a Riveran that says, ‘*Eu sou Uruguaio*.’ It is clear to him that he’s not Brazilian. Although he uses Brazilian terms, he’s distancing himself from Brazil. He feels Uruguayan and he expresses himself in the dialect of here, of the region.” (#7)

Stories from the Portuñol-dominant barrios of the periphery further support this assertion. One of the mothers in Barrio Cerro Caqueiro told me a story about her son. Apparently, she had told him in Spanish to take a shower since the water was warm. Her son replied in Portuñol, “*Nao me fale em brasileiro que eu nao gosto*,” meaning, “Don’t speak to me in Brazilian, because I don’t like it.” He had not recognized the Spanish word for shower, “*ducha*,” and had thought his mother was speaking Portuguese with him. A teenage monolingual Portuñol-speaker from the YMCA in Sacrificio de Sonia joked with one of the group leaders about the World Cup results. It seems he had bet her a soda that Brazil would lose one of the games. When asked why he had bet against Brazil, he had said in Portuguese, “…*porque eu nao gosto dos brasileiros*,” which means, “…because I don’t like Brazilians.” They teased him saying, if you’re going to say that, at least say it in your own country’s language. Despite speaking Portuñol, both boys were adamantly not Brazilian.

Riverans do associate Portuñol with the lower class; however their perception of this association is more nuanced. Marcela, a 35-year-old preschool teacher said, "Poor, middle class, rich, everyone here speaks Portuñol." (#10) Daniel, the 44-year-old architect agrees. He said, "[Portuñol] is seen as the language of the people without education, but that's not true. People with university degrees speak it, too." (#5) When I asked Gustavo, an 18-year-old Riveran with one parent from Montevideo, if he could speak Portuñol, he said, "Look, not to put it down, but Portuñol is used either among friends, like a slang… or if not, at a low (culture/class) level…at a more or less middle cultural level you either speak Spanish or Portuguese." (#4)

Mauricio, the folk singer, most clearly explains the situation: "There are two forms of speaking Portuñol… That you know nothing else and that you like to." The ideal is to speak Portuñol because you like to. I asked if he felt that monolingual Portuñol speakers felt more Riveran and he said, "No, I think bilinguals feel more Riveran. The person who only speaks Portuñol speaks it because in some sense they are not a developed person… I have friends that only speak Portuñol and they only live in the barrio. They live a monotonous life." (#7)

Bilinguals use Portuñol in informal situations. Samuel said that the contexts for Portuñol are with family, with friends, drinking beer. "There, Portuñol is king," he said. (#18) Among Marta's friends, Portuñol is used mainly by men when playing soccer or joking around. (#3)

In Rivera, the way one uses Portuñol is what marks social class. Monolinguals are exclusively those who have not had much schooling in comparison to bilinguals,

hence the social class correlation. This social class difference is also apparent geographically. Rosa had worked at a primary school in the city center where "Portuñol [didn't] seem to exist. Maybe in the house it does, but among the kids, no. But here [in the peripheral school she taught in], it's everywhere…There are two different worlds." (#9) My own experience visiting the local middle/high schools and one elementary school corroborates this. In the peripheral neighborhoods, the number of Portuñol speakers is much higher. In Sacrificio de Sonia, I was told that only one family doesn't speak Portuñol and they are apparently Argentine.

Challenging assumptions of being "brazilianized" and making Portuñol the domain of any social class are ways of responding to national stereotypes. Some Riverans go beyond defenses. These Riverans claim that Portuñol is actually part of a unique "border identity."

Gabina, a twenty-something intern at city hall, said:

"I always felt different in every place. I am Uruguayan. I have Uruguayan blood, for instance if I go to a football game Brazil-Uruguay, I always cheer for Uruguay. But my heart is Brazilian. Because I like Brazil a lot and I lived many years there. And if they play someone else, I cheer for them. **I feel fronteriza.** I have one foot in Rivera and one in Brazil. I learned to care a lot for Brazil. There are lots of people here who speak badly of the Brazilians, but I'll always defend them. They have something else. They are different. Not better or worse but different. I feel different from Uruguayans, and different from Brazilians. **I feel fronteriza, de Rivera**." (#11)

Marta, a school teacher, said:

"I wouldn't know how to live in a city that didn't have Brazil alongside…in some form, they are a part of us… I don't know, maybe it makes Riverans more cosmopolitan than the rest of Uruguay…I'm more Uruguayan than anyone, but you have a little part of your heart over there." (#3)

When I asked Nuri, one of the Portuguese teachers at the Escuela 86, how she identified herself, she said,

"At first I felt more Brazilian…Later, I asked myself which I felt more, more Brazilian or more Uruguayan, and I tell you it's like a border culture. I feel that in some things, I'm more Uruguayan and in others more Brazilian." (#30)

She said that in soccer and shopping habits she is more Brazilian and in education she is more proud of Uruguay. She seems to identify with specific elements that she is proud of in both nations and feels free to pick and choose what defines her.

At the city level, promoting border, or *fronterizo*, identity has become an accepted project with Portuñol as one of markers of this identity. According to Rivera's director of culture, the 2005 celebration in Rivera of the national patrimony was organized as an "homage to Portuñol and the rural worker." Local writing competitions are open to submissions in Spanish, Portuguese or Portuñol and one recent winner is a Uruguayan lawyer living in Rio de Janeiro who wrote a piece on the city of Rivera in Portuñol. (#38)

In the 1990's there was a diploma offered in Rivera by the Universidad de la República in "Language in Education and Society in Border Areas." The impetus for the program came from Rivera. There were two courses, with 56 students total completing the degree. The majority of students were professors and teachers from the region, although some were professionals who spoke Portuñol who came to learn more. According to the director of the program, "They felt reaffirmed.[They learned] 'I have a different identity. I'm from the border.' They understood being from the border." (#33)

In an interview about the bilingual Portuguese language program, Ester, the director of school inspectors, acknowledged the place of language in Rivera as a border identity symbol. She said:

"The language is part of the identity of the border regions to have a dialect, Portuñol, that is to say, Spanish-Portuguese. It's a richness, we need to see it like that, and we don't need to ignore it. Instead, I think we're giving it its place by teaching them Portuguese and Spanish."(#29)

This border identity is reflected in Portuñol's value in unifying Brazilians and Uruguayans. Unlike the nationalist ideal of a "pure" language, these perceptions highlight the utility of an intermediate point between two national languages. Mixture is "unique" in the same sense that a national language is 'unique.' Juan Wilmington feels that Portuñol unites the two cities into one. "Look, we're two different cultures, two cultures with totally different histories, one with Portuguese characteristics and the other with Spanish characteristics and today our city and our sister city… are one single city… the language unites… Portuñol… unites us." (#12)

Mario, a street vendor in his mid-twenties has dual citizenship but self-identifies as Brazilian and lives in Livramento. In our conversation on Portuñol and identity, he said that more than Brazilian he feels *fronterizo*. When asked if Portuñol gives an identity to the people of Rivera, he said: "Yes. Only we have this…No other city has this unification. Here you speak in the easiest way. You mix languages and use some words that only people from here know. It's a different language, a dialect

maybe, but only here can they understand it. It's good… it unifies the people. Brazilians and Uruguayans speak the same language." (#16)

The Director of Culture and City Hall called Portuñol the "language of friendship," saying that the language itself has

"…possibly relaxed situations of pressure that could have happened in a border zone…that it has operated to decompress many problems…the flexibility [of the dialect itself] decompresses and stores emotions and friendship codes. It prioritizes our way of life and possibly synthesizes things that are difficult to analyze from the social perspective." (#38)

Nevertheless, despite Portuñol's value as an identity symbol, there is a need to educate Riverans in the standard language as well. The director of culture said:

"I believe people need to speak a standard language… but I don't think we should lose our identity, because [Portuñol] is a fundamental element of identity. The standard language allows us to continue studies, but the dialect is an aggregated value. It marks a difference in us, but a difference that is valuable." (#38)

Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings

My interview data shows that Riverans identify many aspects of Brazilian culture as also part of their own culture. They are also aware of national stereotypes of Riverans as brazilianized and lower class. Portuñol is the most noted form of cultural mixture and Riveran attitudes towards Portuñol specifically, and cultural mixture in general, either reflect national stereotypes or challenge them, validating both language and mixture as part of Rivera's unique identity.

In this chapter, I quantify these general trends in attitudes toward Portuñol, looking at differences in attitudes according to social class, mother tongue, age and gender. Then, I analyze what factors might explain these statistics. Next, I analyze my interview data to explain how Riverans construct their identity, particularly focusing on attitudes toward Portuñol, and how they reconcile this identity with their national identity, taking into account the border as an important factor in shaping this construction. Finally, I present local, national and global factors that explain why there seem to be changes in attitudes toward Portuñol and border identity.

Statistical Trends and Analysis

Out of sixty-three total interviewees, thirty (48%) consider Portuñol a positive and defining trait of Riveran identity compared to twenty-two (35%) who see Portuñol as negative and associated with a loss of Uruguayan identity. There are also eleven interviewees (17%) who are not clearly pro-Portuñol or anti-Portuñol. Are there any patterns in attitudes toward Portuñol related to mother tongue, social class, gender and age?

Figure 8: Gender and Attitude toward Portuñol

Gender	Attitude Toward Portuñol		
	Positive	Negative	Equivocal
Male	10 (59%)	5 (29%)	2 (12%)
Female	20 (43%)	17 (37%)	9 (20%)
Total = 63	30 (48 %)	22 (35%)	11 (17%)

Looking at the data with gender in mind, there is a higher percentage of positive responses from men, than from women. Ten out of seventeen men, or 59%, are pro-Portuñol compared to twenty out of forty-six or 43% of women.

Figure 9: Age and Attitude toward Portuñol

Age	Attitude Toward Portuñol		
	Positive	Negative	Equivocal
Under 30	8 (47%)	5 (29%)	4 (23%)
30-59	21 (54%)	14 (36%)	4 (10%)
60-79	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)
Total= 63	30 (48 %)	22 (35%)	11 (17%)

By age, the least pro-Portuñol bracket are the sixty to seventy-nine year olds with 14% expressing positive regard for Portuñol and 43% expressing negative regard. Those under thirty years old are mainly pro-Portuñol with 47% expressing positive regard compared to 29% expressing negative regard. The most strongly pro-Portuñol group are thirty to fifty-nine year olds with 54% of interviewees expressing positive regard toward Portuñol compared to a 36% negative response. If we look at the responses that were equivocal, the highest percentage is in the oldest age bracket (43%), followed by those under thirty years old (23%), and finally the thirty to fifty-nine-year-olds (10%).

Figure 11: Language and Attitude toward Portuñol

Language	**Attitude Toward Portuñol**		
	Positive	**Negative**	**Equivocal**
Spanish Monolingual = 17	6 (35%)	10 (59%)	1 (6%)
Spanish dominant Portuñol Bi/tri-lingual = 21	14 (67%)	5 (24%)	2 (10%)
Portuñol dominant Spanish Bi/tri-lingual = 12	3 (25%)	5 (42%)	4 (19%)
Portuñol Monolingual = 5	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Portuguese dominant Bi-Trilingual = 5	4 (80%)	0	1 (20%)
Spanish Dominant Portuguese Bilingual = 3	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	0
Total = 63	30 (48 %)	22 (35%)	11 (17%)

If we look at attitudes toward Portuñol based on language proficiency, an interesting pattern emerges. The group that holds Portuñol in highest esteem are those whose dominant language is Spanish or Portuguese who are also bilingual in Portuñol. In this group, eighteen out of twenty-six, or 69%, express positive regard for the dialect and only five out of twenty-six, or 19%, express negative attitudes toward the language. In comparison, of the seventeen Spanish monolinguals interviewed, ten, or 59%, express negative regard toward Portuñol and only six, or 35%, express positive regard. Similarly, Portuñol dominant bilinguals and monolinguals express more negative regard toward Portuñol, with six negative out of seventeen responses, or 35%, compared to two positive responses, or 12%. This group also has the highest number of equivocal responses.

Figure 12: Social Class and Attitude toward Portuñol

Social Class	Attitude Toward Portuñol					
	Positive		Negative		Equivocal	
Lower = 21	4	(19%)	10	(48%)	7	(33%)
Middle = 42	26	(62%)	12	(29%)	4	(10%)
Total = 63	30	(48 %)	22	(35%)	11	(17%)

When looking at responses in terms of social class, the most positive group is the middle class with twenty-six out of forty-two positive responses, or 62%, compared to the lower class, which had four out of twenty-one positive responses, or 19%.

Figure 13: Language, Age and Attitude toward Portuñol

Language	Age and Attitude toward Portuñol								
	Under 30			30-59			60-79		
	+	-	+/-	+	-	+/-	+	-	+/-
Spanish Monolingual	2 29%	4 57%	1 14%	3 43%	4 57%	0	1 33%	2 67%	0
Spanish dominant Portuñol Bi/tri-lingual	3 60%	1 20%	1 20%	11 69%	4 25%	1 6%	-	-	N/A
Portuñol dominant Spanish Bi/tri-lingual	N/A	N/A	N/A	3 27%	5 45%	3 27%	0	0	1 100%
Portuñol Monolingual	0	0	1 100%	1 50%	1 50%	0	0	0	2 100%
Portuguese dominant Bi-Trilingual	3 75%	0	1 25%	1 100%	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Spanish Dominant Portuguese Bilingual	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 100%	0	0	0	1 100%	0

If we correlate age and language with attitude toward Portuñol, the sample size is quite small in some categories, making percentage data a bit misleading. However, all thirty to fifty-nine-year-old Spanish dominant Portuguese bilinguals and Portuguese dominant bi-trilinguals interviewed are pro-Portuñol. Seventy-five percent of under thirty Portuguese dominant bi-trilinguals are pro-Portuñol. Sixty-nine

percent of the thirty to fifty-nine-year-old Spanish dominant Portuñol bi-trilinguals are pro-Portuñol, followed by 60% of the under thirty population of this language use group. All sixty to seventy-nine-year-old Spanish dominant Portuguese bilinguals express negative regard toward Portuñol. Each age category in the Spanish monolingual group has an anti-Portuñol majority: 67% of the sixty to seventy-nine year olds, and 57% of both the thirty to fifty-nine year olds and those under thirty.

What might explain these patterns? One explanation for differences in attitudes toward Portuñol based on gender relates to language use patterns. The contexts where bilinguals use Portuñol most frequently are more male-centered, such as soccer games, drinking and telling jokes. This may influence perceptions of Portuñol as less acceptable for bilingual females than bilingual males. As the bilingual group is the most pro-Portuñol, this may affect these results, however the relation is not clearly statistically significant.

There is a general trend toward more positive attitudes toward Portuñol in the younger generations. If we correlate attitudes based on age with moments in national history, the oldest group and the most negative is least likely to be exposed to new ideas about culture change and national identity, however the other age categories might possibly be influenced by how intensely, and at what point in their lives, they experienced the years of the dictatorship. The 30-39 year olds grew up during the dictatorship and were in the public schools at the time. The 40-59 year olds were in their twenties and thirties and out of the public education system during this era. While some in the youngest group experienced the dictatorship, they are also the most

likely to have experienced changes in concepts of national identity in the current school system.

In the case of language proficiency and social class, there is a significant correlation between each of these variables and attitude toward Portuñol. Both variables are also correlated to education level. More education provides the opportunity for belonging to a higher social class. Education also enforces the national language. The Spanish or Portuguese dominant bilingual speakers of Portuñol are either mother-tongue speakers of the standard language who learned Portuñol with classmates, neighbors and friends or are Portuñol mother-tongue speakers who have successfully completed many years of schooling. Spanish monolinguals are mostly transplants to Rivera, while the rest grew up in families that either did not speak Portuñol or encouraged their children to speak only Spanish. Portuñol-dominant bilinguals and Portuñol monolinguals have either had little, or unsuccessful, education in the Uruguayan school system.

I believe the choice to claim rather than hide one's unique cultural identity is affected both by the strength of attachment to this culture and the level of empowerment provided through awareness of perspectives that challenge the status quo. Spanish dominant Portuñol bilinguals are more likely to be both attached to the local culture and empowered with alternative understandings of culture and identity. This group is the most likely to know about research on Portuñol and its status as a dialect. They are also more likely to know about changing conceptions of culture and identity on the national and global scale.

Border Identity: construction and reconciliation

Constructing identity is both a social and an individual process. All of us are marked as belonging to certain groups because of traits that we have no control over, such as skin color or sex, and others we can choose, like dress and religion. As far as malleability, language falls in between these two extremes. National identity is constructed socially, just like any other group identity. However, constructing one's national identity on an international border, where the 'other' nation is your neighbor, is different than constructing one's national identity in a place where the 'other' nation is merely a concept. While the 'other' is essential to identity construction in both cases, the actual process will differ due to the type of social interaction involved.

Riverans stereotype Brazilians as comparatively more "primitive" than Uruguayans, in the sense of being "…fun-loving, laid back and colorfully primitive…" as well as "conniving, highly sexualized, disorderly, lazy, violent and uncivilized."[151] This "othering" of the Brazilian and the association of Brazil with primitiveness can be traced back to the historical roots of Uruguayan national identity, particularly in the period of nationalism starting at the beginning of the 20th century, identified by Gonzalez-Laurino as "*uruguayidad*." This period emphasized the modernity and homogeneity of Uruguay in contrast with the "primitive" countries of the rest of the region, as noted by Juan Rial.[152]

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[151] Rodriguez et. al,, Common Border, Uncommon Paths: Race, culture and national identity in US-Mexico relations, 125.
[152] Sosnowski, 66.

While these perceptions reflect Uruguayan nationalist ideas, when we shift our attention to Riveran self-perceptions, we can see how national traits from both Uruguay and Brazil are considered “Riveran.” While Riverans are Uruguayan, they see themselves as culturally more similar to Brazil. Using Barth’s idea that groups negotiate what traits distinguish them from other groups through interaction, a border situation with high intermarriage and economic integration can lead to the desire to minimize objective differences.

This is emphasized in this description of border culture. The Director of Culture at City Hall said:

> “We don’t have a geographic border. It’s simply a line on a map marked by *marcos*. The interactions between the countries were permanent in commerce… and culture…. And so everything was amalgamated, including the African cultural element… We had public schools when [Livramento] didn’t. Our train arrived 18 years before that of the Brazilian side. So, there was a form of social exchange, of [common] interests and caudillo politics with the Rio Grande zone, that created a lifestyle and point of view that was very different [from the rest of Uruguay]… To solve our problems [between the two countries]… what wasn’t constructed from the legal point of view, through friendly relations and exchange we resolved our problems from outside the law.” (#38)

This does not lead to loss of attachment to national identity. Instead, the traits that are associated with Brazil become “Riveran” when incorporated into the local stereotype.

Gabina, a city hall functionary in her early twenties, said, “…Rivera is unique for this contact, but also its independence. We are Uruguayan. They are Brazilian. We keep our culture and they keep theirs, but at the same time, there’s a mix.” (#11)

While the boundaries between groups are long lasting, the actual cultural symbols that distinguish one group from the other, like language, dress or religion, can change over time. In Edward's words, 'the cultures which boundaries enclose may change…but the continuation of these boundaries is more longstanding.'[153]

In local judgments of culture change, some Riverans reflect nationalist ideas of cultural mixture as a loss of national identity. Attitudes toward Portuñol and its speakers on the national level also influence local perceptions. Two of the essential stigmas of Portuñol are that its speakers are 'brazilianized' and ignorant.

Ignorance, or lack of education, is correlated with social class. This link between social class and national identity in the case of a non-standard language is a natural outcome of exclusion from the national "imaginary." Any national language that is not the language of the education system will be spoken monolingually only by those with less formal education. A language that is not used in official transactions will necessarily be associated with less formal contexts. These associations apply to the speakers of the language as well.

This stigma of ignorance is reflected in attitudes towards Portuñol in the schools and among monolingual speakers from both extremes – Spanish and Portuñol. In this case, the way people are dealing with exclusion from the national imaginary is through acceptance, either of carrying the negative implications of being a Portuñol speaker or through disassociating from this identity and rejecting Portuñol.

[153] Edwards, 7.

Nevertheless, I would say that while other Uruguayans see Portuñol speakers as “brazilianized” and less Uruguayan, in Rivera itself, Portuñol use is correlated with social class status but does not reduce their sense of belonging to Uruguay. Instead, Riverans correlate Portuñol and social class based on how the language is used. There were two reasons to speak Portuñol in Rivera, for enjoyment or necessity. Bilinguals speak Portuñol because they like to, while monolinguals speak Portuñol because they have no other option. Generally, it was positive to speak Portuñol and Spanish, but to be monolingual in Portuñol was limiting and a sign of a lack of education.

While nationalist associations of Portuñol with being brazilianized are used within Rivera, particularly by Spanish and Portuñol monolinguals, being Uruguayan is important to Riverans whether they speak Portuñol or Spanish or both. An example is the perception of Sara, a history professor:

> “Even if we speak Portuñol, we know very well in what country we live and from what country we come… perhaps we’re even more nationalist than those of the south, because we have [Brazil] beside us… we don’t lose our Uruguayan identity… Montevideans don’t understand this.” (#33)

The response of Carlos, a high school student from the countryside, also corroborates this. He told me, “I speak Portuguese and I’m Uruguayan, Uruguayan to the death...” (#31)

As Mauricio said, “It is common to run into a Riveran that says, ‘*Eu sou Uruguaio*.’ It is clear to him that he’s not Brazilian. Although he uses Brazilian terms, he’s distancing himself from Brazil. He feels Uruguayan and he expresses himself in the dialect of here, of the region.” (#7)

I believe that Riverans assert their Uruguayan-ness for two reasons. One, they feel Uruguayan. Despite being culturally distinct, they connect with their nation. This is both related to Barth's idea of group identity maintenance and Anderson's claim of the power of national identity. Second, national loyalty has been constructed as a virtue. There is a negative connotation to lack of loyalty to one's country. This correlates with the final reason. It is beneficial to be part of a nation. National identity has the power of the state behind it. The state system, through its simple existence, reinforces the types of behavior its population is 'imagined' to display. In the case of a local identity that differs in significant ways from the national norm, it is still important to belong. Therefore, such a group must somehow reconcile who they are with who they 'should' be, according to this norm. I use reconcile because Riverans do not reject their identity as Uruguayans. As stated, they are careful to claim their identity as Uruguayan. Instead, they reconcile these identities by showing that they are both unique and yet loyal to the nation.

Interestingly, defenses of Portuñol also appropriate some of the elements of nationalist ideas of language and identity. One is that a 'nation' has a shared history and a common, unique language. For instance, Juan Wilmington, a retired school inspector, said:

"I don't believe Portuñol will disappear, it can't disappear, because it's our tradition, our history, it's a history of life that you live at the level of father, child, adult, salesperson…(#12)

Many referred to the fact that Portuñol is a dialect, defending its validity as a unique language variety and not mixed and incorrect. Some referred to Portuñol as similar to an indigenous language, like Mauricio the folk singer who said, "our dialect is not a sign of backwardness…it's how we speak, just like an indigenous group…" (#7)

I believe that the use of these concepts reflects an awareness of their power on the part of Riverans. These tools of validation are being taken up to defend something that is felt as their own.

The key concept in Riveran identity construction and reconciliation with the national culture was the concept of a border, or *fronterizo*, identity. All of the previous defenses of Portuñol come together in this idea of Riveran identity. Portuñol is a unique aspect of border culture. Its mixture is not a sign of loss of culture, but of a culture in its own right. This very 'mixture' is valued as a tool of integration between these two national communities.

Nuri, the Portuguese teacher said, "Here the situation is very particular… This daily contact between the two [cities] created something like a particular culture, in the border, that is the border culture." (#30)

Gabina, a twenty-something intern at city hall, said:

"I always felt different in every place. I am Uruguayan. I have Uruguayan blood, for instance if I go to a football game Brazil-Uruguay, I always cheer for Uruguay. But my heart is Brazilian. Because I like Brazil a lot and I lived many years there. And if they play someone else, I cheer for them. **I feel fronteriza.** I have one foot in Rivera and one in Brazil. I learned to care a lot for Brazil. There are lots of people here who speak badly of Brazilians, but I'll always defend them. They have something else. They are different. Not better or worse, but different. I feel different from Uruguayans, and different from Brazilians. **I feel fronteriza, de Rivera**." (#11)

I believe that the reason border identity is becoming a legitimate identity construct is connected to changes on the local, national and global scale.

Reasons for change: local, national, global

Some Riverans are reconciling their regional and national identities in the concept of a *fronterizo* culture. Cultural mixture and Portuñol are two traits that make this culture 'unique,' yet neither reduces their "Uruguayan-ness." Other Riverans repeat nationalist stereotypes of lower class status and Brazilianized identity associated with these traits and their community. Historically, Portuñol has not been claimed as a symbol of identity. Why is this changing?

I believe various factors have influenced the way some Riverans are reconciling their regional cultural identity with their national identity through a more flexible definition of culture. These factors are interconnected, but can be analyzed on a local, national and global scale.

Decisions based on who 'belongs' at the national level have important consequences in the experience of a nation's citizens. The border has never fit into the national image of what is "Uruguayan." While fitting the Uruguayan national imaginary would have been beneficial, circumstances on the local level made mixture of language and culture both inevitable and beneficial within the region. The highly interconnected economy of the two cities, the high rate of intermarriage, the dominance of Brazilian TV and the simple openness of the border have all fed the existence of the dialect and its utility in daily life in Rivera. The unique history of the

border is reflected in the language created through the unique experiences and processes that shaped the culture and the language.

Changes on the national level have made bilingualism in Portuguese a beneficial skill. The signing of Mercosur and the increased movement toward regional economic integration has made interconnection with Brazil an economic priority. The existence of bilingual programs in Portuguese attests to this change. After decades of calls for differentiated education for the border, it took a large shift in economic focus to bring Portuguese education to Rivera. This validation in the school system of Portuguese seems to be reducing the stigma of Portuñol speakers as ‘brazilianized’ and less ‘Uruguayan.’

Related to the idea of regional integration is a change in the way that borders are being conceptualized. Where before, the state saw borders as ‘walls’ protecting national sovereignty, they are increasingly being seen as ‘bridges’ or ‘ports,’ as places of international integration and commerce. [154] Whereas borders have been, by definition, the periphery of the ‘national imaginary,’ they are frequently becoming centers of commerce and communication.[155] This is an aspect of a growing transnationalism, in which the global nature of economic and cultural processes reduces the importance of the nation-state as the natural limit between economies. The fact that Portuñol is being valued for integrating two nations attests to this ‘opening’ of the concept of borders.

[154] Recondo, Evolución de la idea de Frontera: del orbe romano al Mercosur. La linea, el laberinto y el espacio definidor de la pertinencia, 88.
[155] Recondo, 73.

On a global scale, there are changes in conceptions of culture and national identity that have affected the way minority language groups are treated throughout the world. The idea of pluriculturalism, or a conception of national unity that allows for cultural diversity and special rights for certain cultural groups, is one aspect of this change.[156] The fact that two informants actually called Portuñol an indigenous, or ethnic, language points to the way that such languages are increasingly coming onto the global stage and are being recognized as legitimate and deserving of national and international protection.

Claiming unique status as a cultural symbol for a mixed dialect is an evolution of the idea of culture that also reflects global changes. Nestor Garcia Canclini identifies the growing presence of heterogenous and mixed cultural artifacts as cultural hybridity. This conception of culture includes mixture of elements from different traditions and genres as valid cultural symbols, rather than a sign of a loss of culture.[157] The idea of insular nations correlates with past approaches to the study of culture. Classic anthropology and sociology preferred clearly defined cultural groups as objects of study. Cultural traits were contained by the boundaries between groups, but these boundaries were not problematized. "Bounding" culture does not accurately reflect reality and in the past two decades, the boundaries between cultures have increasingly become objects of study themselves.[158] Valuing a mixed dialect as a cultural symbol better reflects the reality of cultural fluidity.

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[156] Mar-Molinero, 103.
[157] Canclini, Culturas Hibridas, 259-60.
[158] Donnan and Wilson, Borders: Frontiers of Identity Nation and State, 19.

Conclusions

"Señores pido **'licencia'**
Y ante ustedes me presento
Pa' decirle de **'onde'** soy
En estos humildes **'verso'**

Yo nací **'nuna'** frontera
Donde se juntan dos **'pueblo'**
Y **se fala misturáo**
Con **'sotaque'** brasilero

Donde se cantan milongas
Sambas, tangos y boleros
Al ómnibus llaman: **'bônde'**
Y los duraznos son: **'péscos'**...

... Donde tenemos...
Casino y Libre Comercio
Pobres que no tienen rancho
Y niños que andan pidiendo

Soy de Rivera señores
Se habrán dáo cuenta yo pienso
'mil gracias' por la atención
Y me despido; 'hasta luego'

Dear Sirs, **pardon me**,
Let me introduce myself
And tell you **where** I'm from
In these humble **verse**

I was born **on a** border
Where two **peoples** come together
And **they speak all mixed up**
With a Brazilian **accent**

Where they sing milongas,
Sambas, tangos and boleros
They call the bus a: **'bônde'**
And peaches are: **'péscos'**

…Where we have…
Casino and Free Trade
Poor people with no farm
And children begging

I am from Rivera sirs
You'll have noticed, I believe
Many thanks for your attention
And I take my leave; see you later!

La Riverense by Chito de Mello

Since before Uruguayan independence, the northern border region has been Portuguese speaking. It wasn't until around 1920 that the population of Spanish speakers on the border increased enough to impose the national language on the population. From this time on, border Portuguese, or Portuñol, was relegated to second-class status. Since then, Portuñol has been combated by the education system,

the main arm of Uruguayan national identity in the region. Throughout the 1970-80's, the dictatorial regime guarded Uruguayan national sovereignty through purification of dissonant voices. This gave renewed impetus to enforcing Uruguayan national identity and Portuñol speakers were targeted as anti-patriotic and brazilianized.

Over the past two decades, changing economic conditions have allied Brazil and Uruguay as partners in trade. Subsequently, Portuguese is now viewed as a tool of economic integration rather than a threat to national identity. This economic change at the national level is tied to global economic changes and related changes in ideas of culture and national identity. This has opened the door for Riverans to imagine themselves as both culturally '*fronterizo*' and Uruguayan.

My research on Portuñol and Riveran identity provides a narrative of the changing socio-historic context of Uruguayan national identity and its outcome in language policy and attitudes toward Portuñol as an identity marker. Through analysis of ethnographic interviews, I have explored the way group boundaries are maintained, in the case of national identities, while the content that is accepted as 'national' is shaped by context and interaction. I have further examined how Riverans reconcile their mixed cultural identity with the Uruguayan national ideal of homogeneity. My research substantiates that some Riverans are defending their mixed culture and language as legitimate symbols of a border identity. I have shown how this acceptance of a border identity reflects changing conceptions of culture and identity on the national and global level, particularly in a growing transnationalism and acceptance of cultural mixture.

The relationship between language and identity is complex. Regional, local, national and social identities are all reflected in an individual's speech. Nevertheless, neither the correlation between a language and a specific identity nor these identities themselves are ever static. They are ever in flux, ever negotiated, and are tied to the historical moment in which they are formed. My research contributes to understanding the complicated process of identity construction in the context of an international border.

While I have attempted to fit my analysis, organization and interpretation to my data rather than fitting my data to my analysis, as in any study one's previous ideas affect the approach taken, the questions asked, the places and people interviewed and of course the final results and analysis of all that is gathered. One limitation of my data is that it is biased towards the perspectives of women rather than men. Forty-six of my sixty-three interviewees were women. This was partially because of the large number of interviews that I conducted in the barrios where it tended to be the woman that was at home. Also, I interviewed many teachers, a field that is predominantly female. If there is a gendered difference in language perceptions, this could potentially skew the picture of Riveran attitudes I have gathered here.

One aspect of identity construction and language in Rivera that I did not explore in-depth is that of race. Though not an emphasis in my research, race is mentioned as an influence in Riveran border culture. From my observation, there was no obvious, direct correlation between phenotypical traits associated with African

descent and speaking Portuñol, however, there are certainly a higher percentage of darker-skinned individuals in the peripheral neighborhoods compared to those in the center. Many Brazilian cultural traits referred to as part of border culture were related to black Brazilian culture. The Director of Culture specifically noted that racial discrimination is an aspect of border discrimination, as did Behares in my interview with him. Border history reveals that the number of black Riverans was far higher than other ethnic groups at the city's founding due to the high number of slaves brought to work there. Further study of the impact that race, nationalism and language might have had on the formation of border identity could be a fruitful endeavor.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interviews

Interview 1: "Edma,"* 57, retired immigration officer from Montevideo, and "Victor," 65, ex-military and veterinarian from Rio Negro, residents of Rivera for 20 years. Spanish monolinguals. Interviewed at their home, June 2, 2005. (1hour 41 minutes)

Interview 2: "Gabriela," 55, retired primary school teacher, now Spanish teacher in Livramento, from Montevideo, Resident of Rivera for about twenty years. Spanish monolingual. Interviewed at her home, June 2, 2005. (53 minutes)

Interview 3: "Marta," 50, remedial education teacher at Escuela 113, from Rivera. Spanish and some Portuguese. Interviewed at her home, June 3, 2005. (50 minutes)

Interview 4: "Kara," 18, and "Gustavo," 18, engineering students, from Rivera. Spanish and Portuguese bilinguals, some Portuñol. Interviewed at my host family's home. 3, 2005. (55 minutes)

Interview 5: "Karla," 34, journalist from Montevideo and resident of Rivera for 10 years, and "Daniel," architect from Rivera. Karla was monolingual in Spanish, Daniel spoke Spanish and some Portuñol. Interviewed at my host family's home. June 4, 2005. (40 minutes)

Interview 6: "Eulalia," 43, cafeteria worker at escuela #133 from Rivera. Portuñol monolingual. Interviewed at Escuela #133. June 6, 2005. (33 minutes)

Interview 7: "Mauricio," 50's, singer and poet in Portuñol from Rivera. Spanish and Portuñol. Interviewed at my host family's home. June 6, 2005. (50 minutes)

Interview 8: "Juan," 55, notary from Rivera. Spanish and Portuñol bilingual. Interviewed at his office. June 6, 2005. (30 minutes?)

Interview 9: "Rosa," 30, kindergarten teacher in School #113 from Rivera. Spanish and Portuñol bilingual. Interviewed in her classroom. June 7, 2005. (1 hour)

Interview 10: "Marcela," 35, preschool teacher at CAIF el Ombú from Rivera. Portuñol, now Spanish. Interviewed at CAIF. June 7, 2005. (45 minutes)

Interview 11: "Jorge," 44, from Tranqueras, and "Gabina," 28, from Rivera, functionaries in Office of the Environment at city hall. Jorge spoke Spanish and Gabina spoke Spanish, Portuguese and Portuñol. Interviewed in their office. June 8, 2005. (1 hour 40 minutes)

Interview 12: “Juan Wilmington,” 60’s, retired school inspector and current office supply store (papeleria) owner from Rivera. Spanish (Portuñol with friends as a child). Interviewed at his store. June 8, 2005. (36 minutes)

Interview 13: “Alma,” 30’s English teacher from Rivera, “Flavia,” 18, student from Rivera, “Maria Laura,” 18, student from Rivera. Interviewed during an English conversation course in a private language center in downtown Rivera. June 8, 2005. (19 minutes)

Interview 14: “Jose Luis,” 44, street vendor from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed at vending stand on the border. June 8, 2005. (23 minutes)

Interview 15: “Jose Benito,” 43, street vendor from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed at vending stand on the border. June 8, 2005. (26 minutes)

Interview 16: “Mario,” 26, street vendor with dual citizenship. Portuguese, Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed at vending stand on the border. June 8, 2005. (38 minutes)

Interview 17: “Gerarda,” 50’s, Professor of Geography for satellite program of Universidad de la República, with Masters in Border Studies, from Canelones. Spanish and some Portuguese. Lives in Livramento. Interviewed at her home. June 8, 2005. (40 minutes)

Interview 18: “Samuel,” 35, graphic designer and musician from Rivera. Spanish, Portuguese and Portuñol. Interviewed at my host family’s home. June 9, 2005. (47 minutes)

Interview 19: “Silvia,” 26, from Rivera, speaks Spanish but parents speak Portuñol, “Marena,” 25, from Rivera, “Mara,” 31, from Rivera, speaks Spanish and Portuñol, “Beti,” 22, from Tacuarembó, speaks Spanish, “Cristi,” 23, from Tacuarembó speaks Spanish, “Lara,” 25, from Artigas speaks Spanish. Interviewed in graduate level geography class. June 10, 2005. (21 minutes)

Interview 20: “Victor,” 70’s from Rivera spoke Portuñol, “Claudia,” 20’s from Rivera. Interviewed on the street in Rivera Chico. June 12, 2005.(22 minutes)

Interview 21: “Nadia,” 54, beautician from Rivera. Portuguese and Portuñol as a child, now speaks Spanish (hasn´t spoken Portuñol in 30 years). Interviewed in her home. June 12, 2005. (32 minutes)

Interview 22: “Zoila,” 50, Spanish professor from Montevideo, Spanish. Interviewed at Liceo 4. June 16, 2006. (~30 minutes)

Interview 23: Liceo 4 in Barrio Santa Isabel. Spoke with 15 students between the ages of 14 and 17 in groups of 3 at a time. Discussion took place at middle/high school. June 20, 2006. (~2 hours 30 minutes)

Interview 24: "Miranda," 40's, odd jobs and homemaker from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed in her home in Barrio Sacrificio de Sonia. June 21, 2006. (~ 30 minutes)

Interview 25: "Mirta," 48, homemaker from Rivera, Barrio La Pedrera, spoke Portuñol and some Spanish, "Marcela," 77, from Tacuarembó, spoke Portuguese as a child, now Spanish, "Trinidad," 74, from Salto (62 years in Rivera), Spanish, "Carmen," 54, from Artigas (33 years in Rivera), Spanish and some Portuñol, "Evita," 50's, lived in Rivera since she was young, Spanish and some Portuñol. Interviewed in the Catholic Chapel in Paso la Estiva during a catholic women´s meeting. June 22, 2006. (~50minutes)

Interview 26: Liceo 2 in Rivera Chico, 10 students between the ages of 12 and 13 in groups of two or three. Discussion took place at middle/high school outside of classroom. June 26, 2006. (~2 hours)

Interview 27: Liceo 3 in Pueblo Nuevo, class of about 30 students between the ages of 12 and 14. Discussion took place in classroom as a group. June 27, 2006. (~45 minutes)

Interview 28: "Rosaura," 39, school teacher from Rivera, Spanish, Portuguese and Portuñol. Interviewed in her home. June 28, 2006. (33 minutes)

Interview 29: "Ester," 40's, director of school inspection from Rivera, Spanish and learned Portuguese in school. Interviewed in her office at inspection. June 28, 2006. (27 minutes)

Interview 30: "Manuela," 43, director of primary school from Rivera, Spanish and some Portuguese and Portuñol, and "Nuri," 41, Portuguese and Spanish teacher from Rivera, Portuguese and Spanish. Interviewed at Primary school 86. June 30, 2006. (40 minutes)

Interview 31: "Carlos," 17, high school student from countryside of department of Rivera, Portuguese, Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed at Liceo 1 in the city center. June 30, 2006. (16 minutes)

Interview 32: "Carola," 18, law prep student from Rivera but has lived in Montevideo and Canelones (Mom Brazilian, dad Riveran). Portuguese and Spanish. Interviewed at Liceo 1 in city center. June 30, 2006. (16 minutes)

Interview 33: "Sara," 52, history professor and former coordinator of "Diploma en language de educación y sociedad en areas de frontera" from Minas de Corrales. Spanish and some Portuñol. Interviewed in her home. June 30, 2006. (52 minutes)

Interview 34: "Marco," 50's, carpentry teacher at CECAP from Salto, but lived in Rivera since young Spanish and some Portuñol, and "Maura," 50's, from Rivera. Portuñol and Portuguese at home, Spanish. Interviewed at their home in Cerro de Marco. July 1, 2006. (36 minutes)

Interview 35: "Lola," 30's cook for primary school cafeteria from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed in her home in Cerro Caquero. July 3, 2006. (27 minutes)

Interview 36: "Marina," 38, housewife and mother of seven from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed in her home in Cerro Caquero. July 3, 2006. (14 minutes)

Interview 37: "Rita," 40, sister of "Marina" from Rivera. Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed in her home in Cerro Caquero. July 3, 2006. (11 minutes)

Interview 38: "Ana," 60's, Director of Culture of Rivera from Montevideo (40 years in Rivera), Spanish. Interviewed in her office. July 3, 2006. (30 minutes)

Interview 39: "Jorge," 45, kiosk owner from Rivera (lived from age 13-28 in Montevideo), Portuñol, Spanish and Portuguese. Interviewed at kiosk in Rivera Chico. July 4, 2006. (6 minutes)

Interview 40: "Berenice," 32, kiosk owner from Rivera. Spanish. Interviewed at kiosk in Rivera Chico. July 4, 2006. (6 minutes)

Interview 41: "Clara," 20 from Montevideo, Spanish and Portuguese and "Karina," 21 from Livramento, Portuguese. Interviewed on stoop outside house in Rivera Chico. July 4, 2006. (5 minutes)

Interview 42: "Maria," 77, from Minas de Corrales, Portuñol and "Alvaro," 77, retired farm hand from Paso de Gallo in Rivera Department, Portuñol and Spanish. Both had lived in Rivera for 7 years. Interviewed at their home in Pueblo Nuevo. July 5, 2006. (28 minutes)

Interview 43: "Elsa," 24, recycling collector and mother from Barrio Bisio, Rivera, Portuñol and some Spanish, "Andrea," 35, unemployed mother (had been babysitter/laundry washer) from Rivera, Portuñol, Portuguese and Spanish. Interviewed at "Elsa's" home in Barrio Sacrificio de Sonia. July 5, 2006. (23 minutes)

Interview 44: “Juanita,” 40, and “Cesar,” 47, have combined family of 13 kids and Cesar shears sheep and other odd jobs, from Rivera, Portuñol and Spanish. Interviewed at their home in Barrio Sacrificio de Sonia. July 5, 2006. (19 minutes)

Interview 45: Graciela Barrios, Professor of Linguistics and the Universidad de la República and author of Nos Falemo Brasileiro and other works on Portuñol. Interview at the Departamento de Linguistica of the Universidad de la República. July 12, 2006. (30 minutes)

Interview 46: Luis Behares, Professor of Linguistics and the Universidad de la República, author of Na Frontera Nos Fizemos Assim and other works on Portuñol. Interview at the Departamento de Linguistica of the Universidad de la República. July 13, 2006. (30 minutes)

Appendix B: Chart of Interviewees Correlated with Attitude toward Portuñol

Chart of Interviewees correlating Attitude toward Portuñol and Demographic Markers

#	Class	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Languages	Occupation	Education	Attitude
1	MU	Edma	F	57	spanish	retired immigration officer	university	negative
1	MU	Victor	M	65	spanish	veterinarian military	university	negative
2	MU	Gabriela	F	55	spanish	spanish teacher	university	negative
3	MU	Marta	F	50	spanish, some portuguese and portuñol	remedial ed. teacher	university	positive
4	MU	Kara	F	18	spanish, portuguese and some portuñol	engineering student	high school	positive
4	MU	Gustavo	M	18	spanish, portuguese and some portuñol	engineering student	high school	negative
5	M	Daniel	M	44	spanish, some portuñol	journalist	university	positive
5	M	Karla	F	34	spanish	architect	university	positive
6	L	Eulalia	F	43	portuñol	cafeteria worker	some primary	positive
7	ML	Mauricio	M	50s	spanish and portuñol	folk singer	primary	positive
8	M	Juan	M	55	spanish and portuñol	notary	university	positive
9	M	Rosa	F	30	spanish and portuñol	kindergarten teacher	university	positive
10	M	Marcela	F	35	portuñol as child, now spanish	preschool teacher	university	negative
11	M	Juan	M	44	spanish	functionary city hall	university	positive
11	M	Gabina	F	28	spanish, portuguese and portuñol	functionary city hall	university	positive
12	M	Juan Wilm.	M	55	portuñol as child, now spanish	retired school inspector	university	positive
13	M	Alma	F	30s	spanish	english teacher	university	negative
13	M	Flavia	F	18	spanish	student	high school	negative
13	M	Maria Laura	F	18	spanish	student	high school	negative
14	L	Jose Luis	M	44	portuñol and spanish	street vendor	primary	negative
15	L	Juan Benito	M	43	portuñol and spanish	street vendor	primary	equivocal
16	L	Mario	M	26	portuguese, portuñol, spanish	street vendor	?	positive
17	M	Gerarda	F	50s	spanish, some portuguese	geography professor	university+	positive
18	M	Samuel	M	35	spanish, portuguese, portuñol	graphic design, musician	university	positive
19	M	Silvia	F	26	spanish	geography student	university	positive
19	M	Malena	F	25	spanish	geography student	university	positive
19	M	Beti	F	22	spanish	geography student	university	negative

Social Class Categories: MU = Upper Middle, M = Middle, ML = Lower Middle, L = Lower, LP = Lower Precarious

Chart of Interviewees correlating Attitude toward Portuñol and Demographic Markers

#	Class	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Languages	Occupation	Education	Attitude
19	M	Jesusa	F	23	spanish	geography student	university	negative
19	M	Lara	F	25	spanish	geography student	university	equivocal
19	M	Mara	F	31	spanish and portuñol	geography student	university	positive
20	L	Aparicio	M	70s	portuñol	?	?	equivocal
20	L	Claudia	F	20s	spanish and portuñol	?	?	positive
21	ML	Nadia	F	54	portuñol as child, now spanish	beautician	university	negative
22	M	Zoila	F	55	spanish	spanish professor	university	positive
24	LP	Miranda	F	40's	portuñol, spanish	odd jobs, homemaker	?	equivocal
25	L	Marcela	F	77	portuguese as child, now spanish	homemaker	?	negative
25	L	Trinidad	F	74	spanish	catholic outreach leader	?	negative
25	L	Carmen	F	54	spanish, some portuñol	?	?	negative
25	L	Evita	F	50s	spanish, some portuñol	?	?	negative
25	L	Mirta	F	48	portuñol, some spanish	?	?	positive
28	M	Rosaura	F	39	spanish, portuguese, portuñol	school teacher	university	positive
29	M	Ester	F	40's	spanish, some portuguese	Director school inspection	university	positive
30	M	Nuri	F	41	portuguese and spanish	bilingual school teacher	university	positive
30	M	Manuela	F	43	spanish, some Portuguese, portuñol	bilingual school director	university	equivocal
31	M	Carlos	M	17	portuguese, portuñol, spanish	high school student	high school	positive
32	M	Carola	F	18	portguese and spanish	law prep student	high school	positive
33	M	Sara	F	52	spanish, some portuñol	history professor	university	positive
34	ML	Maura	F	50's	portuñol. portuguese and spanish	mother	?	positive
34	ML	Marco	M	50's	spanish, some portuñol	carpentry instructor	high school	positive
35	L	Lola	F	30's	portuñol and spanish	cook at primary school	primary	negative
36	LP	Marina	F	38	portuñol and spanish	mother	primary	negative
37	L	Rita	F	40	portuñol and spanish	mother	primary	negative
38	MU	Ana	F	60's	spanish	director of culture	university	positive
39	ML	Jorge	M	45	portunol, portuguese and spanish	kiosk owner	?	positive
40	ML	Berenice	F	32	spanish	kiosk owner	?	negative
41	M	Karina	F	21	portuguese, portuñol, spanish	student	?	equivocal
41	M	Clara	F	20	spanish, portuguese and portuñol	student	?	equivocal
42	L	Maria	F	77	portuñol	mother	no school	equivocal

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Synonyms for Portuñol –

Dialecto – "dialect," used to refer specifically to Portuñol
Fronterizo – "of the border"
Carimbão -
Brasileiro – also used to refer to Portuguese or to Brazilians
Bayano – also used to refer to people from the Uruguayan border by other Uruguayans, technically should refer to people/things from Bahia, Brazil
Fala Mesturada – "mixed speech"
Dialectos Portugueses del Uruguay (DPU) – Portuguese Dialects of Uruguay
Rompeidiomas – "language breaker," another name for a Riveran Portuñol speaker, both self-imposed and used by those from the outside

Regional Terms:

Orientales – A name for Uruguayans, coming from Uruguay's position on the eastern, or "oriental" bank of the Plate River.

Banda Oriental – Another name for Uruguay

Departamentos – provinces or states in Uruguay

Guerra Grande (1843-1851) - War between the Blanco y Colorado parties in Uruguay, tied to struggles in Argentina as well, ended through Brazilian aide, leading to economic concessions to Brazil.

Linguistic Terms:

Diglossia – A type of societal bilingualism in which two languages are spoken within a community in specifically defined settings. Usually one language dominates in formal, official settings and the other in informal, familiar settings.

Language Prestige – The value given to a specific linguistic variety, usually manifested in its use as the language of power in a speech community.

Morphosyntax - the grammatical rules governing verb conjugation and agreement

Morphology – the grammatical rules of word formation of a language

Phonology – the system governing the pronunciation of a language

Appendix D: Timeline

17th Century

1600	1611-1617	1626-1640	1680
	Cattle first Released in Banda Oriental	Jesuit missions to guaranies and tapes founded in north	Portuguese Found Colonia Del Sacramento On Plate River

18th Century

1700	1724	1753-1756	1767	1772-1777
	Montevideo Founded	Jesuit War	Jesuits Expelled	Conflicts between Spanish and Portuguese

19th Century

1801	1811	1812	1814	1812-1816
Misiones conquered by Portuguese	Artigas revolution Portuguese Fight Artiguistas	Exodus of Orientales	Spanish defeated	Oriental and Portuguese Domination oscillates area north of Rio Negro

1817-1828	1821	1823	1825	1828	1830
Portuguese Rule Uruguay	Brazilian Empire Established	Livramento founded by Brazil	Uruguay declares independence	Preliminary Peace Convention	Constitution of the Republic of Uruguay

1836-1845	1846	1843-1851	1860	1862
Farrapo Revolution Of Rio Grande do Sul	Slavery abolished In Uruguay	Guerra Grande in Uruguay	First Census	Rivera founded

1866	1877	1888	1892
First Public school founded in Rivera	“Law of Common Education” makes primary education universal in Uruguay	Slavery abolished in Brazil	Railroad connects Rivera and Montevideo

20th Century

1900	1909-1913	1958	1967
	Final border treaties with Brazil signed	Rona does first studies of border language	First proposal of differentiated education for border

1973-1985	1986	1994
Military Dictatorship	Duty Free stores established in Rivera	MERCOSUR signed

21st Century

2000	2003
	First bilingual education pilot program established in Rivera

Appendix E: Photographs of the Border

Flags of Uruguay and Brazil flying in the International Plaza in Rivera/Livramento (Meredith Church, 2005)

A "mojon" marking the Brazil/Uruguay border in Rivera, Uruguay (Meredith Church, 2005)

Above: The street vendor stalls on both sides of the international border.
Below: Looking down Calle Sarandi from the border.
(Meredith Church, 2005)

Looking out at Livramento, Brazil from Cerro de Marco in Rivera, Uruguay. (Meredith Church, 2005)