

Brenda Jackson, *Occidental College*  
Advisor: Jongnic Bontemps, *Occidental College*

## Background:

Latinx artists have created a resurgence of Spanglish music with one foot rooted in American tradition and style and the other in that of their Latin American home country. The recent surge in Latinx Spanglish music can be seen as product of the bicultural identities these bilingual and often first and second generation American artists inhabit.

In this project I used the Bicultural Identity Integration concept as the framework for investigating how Latinx bicultural individual perceive their two cultural identities in relation to the music they consume (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002).

## Methods:

For this project, I read scholarly works on bicultural identity and rock en español to provide context on the topic I was researching.

I created a online survey tool that provided insight on the consumers of Spanglish music.

I conducted phone interviews with Latinx folks who are consumers of Spanglish music.

I also conducted an interview with Jaz Vargas, a LA based organizer and manager of Latinx indie artists.

I wrote and recorded 4 Spanglish songs that can be found on my Soundcloud along with the presentation audio.

# Spanglish Music and Latinx-American Identity

"I felt like I had trained myself to be the 'right kind' of Mexican and then when I started to find these kinds of artists (Latinx indie artists)....it just helped me be able to be myself with out training myself to do anything, like I was before"-

*Interviewee, 2020*

"I remember when I was 8 or nine, my friend made such fun of me for having Spanish music on my iPod Nano that I went home and deleted everything in Spanish from my Apple music."

*Interviewee, 2020*

"[Spanglish music] is always gonna be a form of resistance, even if it's not intended to"

*Interviewee 2020*

"We can only be parts of ourselves at certain times"-

*Interviewee 2020, on growing up Bicultural*

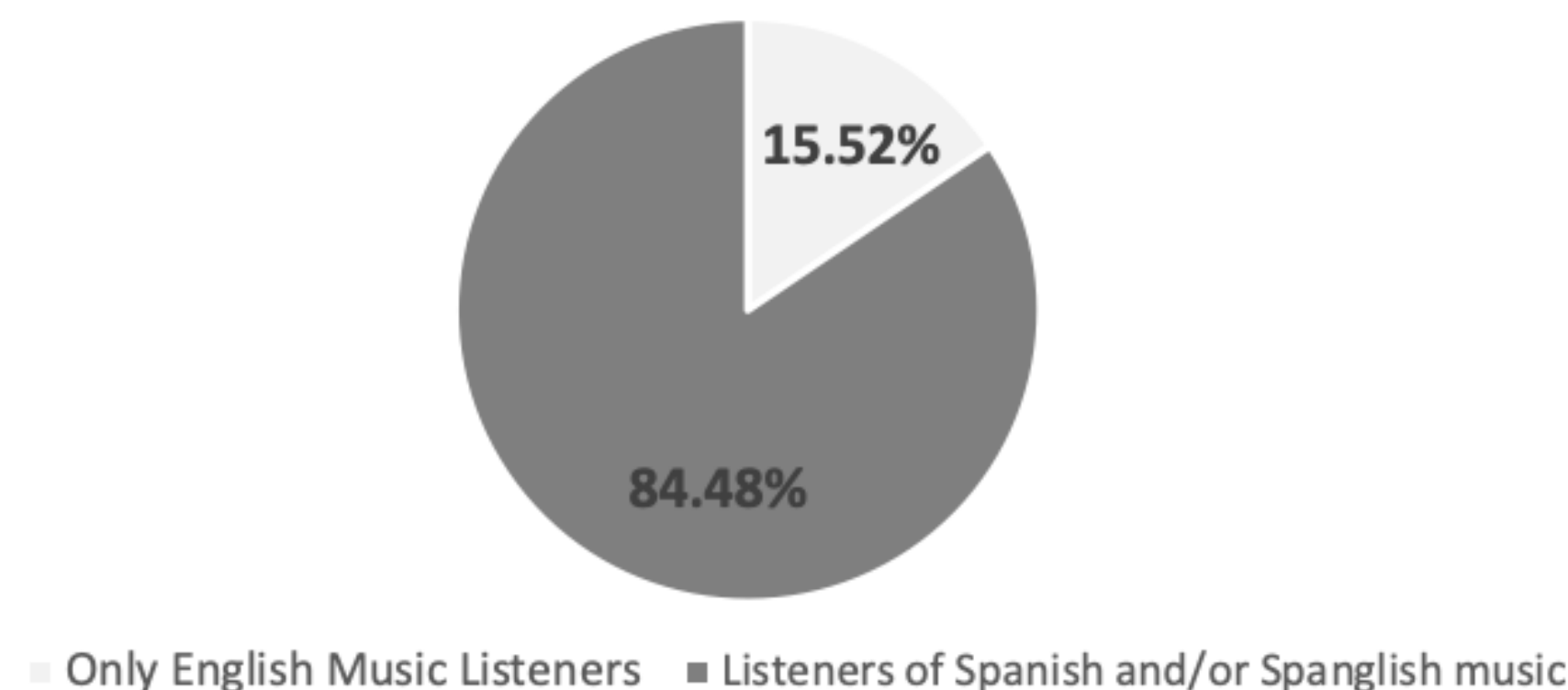
"It was really was a grassroots effort, us trying to make space for each other so that we could build momentum and normalize it [Latinx indie music]."

*Jaz Vargas of Mija Management, 2020*

"I think it [Spanglish music] helps folks who dont have family members to teach them Spanish, they can rely on these types of songs to help them start to learn and just appreciate the language, it has a bigger impact than just sounding pretty"

*Interviewee, 2020*

Latinx Respondants' Musical Preferences



This work was supported by funding from the Mellon Arts and Urban Experience Fellowship

## Findings:

Latinx-Americans often struggle with being bicultural, especially if they grew up in a predominately white area, and this can lead to sense of shame of their cultural background. But Spanglish music made by Latinx artists is powerful form of representation and resistance to the pressure to assimilate that many Latinx Americans experience. This music exists as a part of a "third-culture" one woven with both influence and admiration of cultural roots and American tradition.

Only 15.5 percent of Latinx identifying respondents reported not being listeners of Spanish or Spanglish music.

Latinx managers of Latinx indie artists in LA saw a gap in representation of Latinx artists in indie music and have done successful organizing work to promote their and other Latinx indie artists, and using their platform in support of other social justice causes.

## Next Steps:

This project is a part of my senior comprehensive project for my Music major. I will continue to conduct research on the consumers and producers of Spanglish music in order to have a more in-depth body of information for my comprehensive project due Spring 2021. I am working on an self-written Spanglish music EP to directly contribute to the topic I am researching.

**OXY**  
Occidental  
College

Brenda Jackson  
Occidental College  
Music Production  
bjackson2@oxy.edu

