



# SERVING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN U.S. PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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2007 ANALYSIS OF LIBRARY  
DEMOGRAPHICS, SERVICES  
AND PROGRAMS

**ALA** American  
Library  
Association

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OFFICE FOR  
RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

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A Report by the ALA Office for Research and Statistics

Office for Literacy and Outreach Services

Office for Diversity

Public Programs Office



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Dr. Christie M. Koontz, GeoLib Program, Florida State University (Tallahassee, FL) and Dean Jue, independent consultant to the GeoLib Program served as principal investigators for the study. This study would not have been possible without the efforts of Christie and Dean in developing the block group file of public libraries serving linguistically isolated (non-English speaking) populations and with additional graduate student support to administer a survey to the identified libraries. And, the unique library marketing expertise Christie brought to the data interpretation increases the value of the study findings to the library community.

The findings of this study will make it possible for the ALA and libraries to understand what services and programs are being offered, and what barriers library staffs perceive influence participation in these programs and services or impacted the development of such services among this community. Further, the ALA will be positioned to improve services and programs to libraries serving a rapidly changing group of library users and for libraries not currently serving concentrated populations of non-English speaker to understand what is possible.

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## Executive Summary

About 21 million people in the United States speak limited or no English, 50 percent more than a decade ago. This impacts public agencies in health care and education the most but impacts other public agencies, as well. Library staff is faced daily with someone who needs services, and does not speak English.

Funded through the 2006 World Book – ALA Goal Grant and supported by the ALA Offices for Literacy and Outreach Services, Public Programs, and Diversity, the ALA Office for Research and Statistics engaged the services of Dr. Christie Koontz and Dean Jue of Florida State University to conduct a study to determine the non-English languages supported and services provided to these patrons of U.S. public libraries.

The study was completed in spring 2007, and three themes emerged:

- Spanish is far and away the most supported non-English language in public libraries. Seventy-eight percent of libraries reported Spanish as the priority #1 language to which they develop services and programs.
- Smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers. The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents (484 of all responding libraries).
- Literacy is both a barrier to using library services designed for non-English speakers and is what most libraries support in specially designed services and programs.

This is the first national study to consider the impact of specialized library services to non-English speakers both in terms of barriers to developing language-based services and regarding perceived success of these services as reported through anecdotal information by library staff. This study also looked closely at library service area population and patron proximity to the closest library branch as a market service indicator. It is anticipated that libraries, library supporters, and the research community will find this study valuable as a planning tool. The study principals also hope this study will spark additional, more detailed research in the area of specialized public library services.

*(The) effectiveness of Milwaukee Public Library is increasing in reaching the Latino population by:*

- *Increase in acquisition of Spanish materials at 13 libraries, especially at the Forest Home and Zablocki Libraries which have service areas with increasing/dominant Latino populations.*
- *Increase in partnerships with agencies that serve these populations.*
- *Increase in strategies that welcome patron visits.*
- *Increase in useful, bilingual programs such as computer training programs and pre-school storyhours.*

*Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, WI*

## Key Findings

There are several interesting findings from this study, but three key themes emerged:

1. The dominant language spoken is Spanish.
  - Spanish is far and away the most supported non-English language in public libraries. Seventy-eight percent of libraries reported Spanish as the priority #1 language to which they develop services and programs.
  - Asian languages ranked second in priority at 29 percent. Another 17.6 percent of libraries indicated Indo-European languages as a second priority.

Approximately 63 percent of the block groups identified from the 2000 decennial Census of the United States had a 20 percent or more concentration of Spanish-language speakers, so it is not surprising that a majority of libraries indicated this as the primary non-English language supported by programs and services.<sup>1</sup> Population estimates since 2000 indicate Spanish speakers is one of the fastest-growing groups.

*Our Spanish language collection is 15% of the total collection. We do Spanish language cataloging (at least subject headings) for all Spanish language and bilingual materials so our catalog can be searched in Spanish.*

*Commerce Public Library, CA*

Although block group data indicate more multi-language households (24.6 percent), libraries indicated Asian (Asian Pacific Islander, 6.2 percent of block groups) languages as the second priority language.

Very few libraries ranked multi-language or Indo-European except as third priority languages.<sup>2</sup> When analyzed by programs or services offered, fewer than 77 (16.8 percent) of libraries indicated developing any programs or services to support these languages. Those that did focused on computer use/classes and children's programs.

*[We collaborate] with community college ESL teachers to bring classes to the library for library cards & Learning English materials.*

*A branch of San Francisco Public Library*

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census 2000. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> . The Census FactFinder provides information on population estimates since 2000 <http://factfinder.census.gov> .

<sup>2</sup> Non-English languages are nicely outlined in a definitions document for the Census Bureau American Community Survey, "Languages spoken at home"  
[http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2002/usedata/Subject\\_Definitions.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2002/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf) .

Historic patterns of immigration to the U.S., by country of origin, are available for further analysis of any possible trends that could influence the need for programs or services by libraries to non-English speakers.<sup>3</sup>

2. Smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers.
  - The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents (484 of all responding libraries).
  - The majority (53.6 percent) of residents in these smaller communities traveled between 1-3 miles to reach a library, and another 21 percent traveled between 4-6 miles.

Conventional wisdom predicted that the density of service would have been in larger, urban settings. The data from this study indicate quite the opposite. Libraries in much smaller communities are meeting the demands of non-English speaking residents. And, the distance traveled to get to the nearest branch reported by a majority of respondents was three miles or less. Although any distance may be a barrier when transportation is an issue, it was the lowest ranked barrier to use reported by libraries (see detail for question 14 in this report).

*We have a waiting list for our ESL classes. Graduates of the program have received their GED, have become citizens and gained full-time employment.*

*East Providence Public Library, RI*

3. Literacy is both a barrier to using library services designed for non-English speakers and is what most libraries support in specially designed services and programs.
  - Reading and library habits negatively impact use of the library by non-English speakers (76 percent). Knowledge of the services offered by the library was the second most frequent barrier to their participation (74.7 percent).
  - The most frequently used services by non-English speakers were special language collections (68.9 percent), and special programming (39.6 percent).
  - Libraries reported the most successful library programs and services developed for non-English speakers were: English as a Second Language (ESL), language-specific materials and collections, computer use and computer classes, story time and special programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. <http://www.dhs.gov/ximgt/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtml> (see tables including "country of birth")

When considering developing programs and services for non-English speakers, native language literacy is a significant factor. Native language proficiency is very important before learning a second language. It is not surprising that ESL was the most successful service provided by libraries to its non-English speaking community. Following this, it makes sense that use of specialized collections and programs, and computer use/classes were highly ranked as successful services and programs.

*We have worked hard over the past five years, using grant money from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey State Library, to upgrade our circulating collection of print and AV ESL materials. Our circulation of these materials has tripled. We work closely with the Literacy Volunteers of Morris County and currently have six classes taught by their tutors in our building. The classes include Beginning English, Writing for ESL Students and English Conversation. Our in-house mini-language lab offers Rosetta Stone ESL on 3 levels and can be used by anyone during the hours the library is open.*

*Morristown & Morris Township Library, NJ*



## Findings by Population Range

The detailed information that follows in this report provides a wealth of information about the overall services and programs provided, as well as the distribution by language supported. This section draws attention to some interesting patterns that emerged when the responses were sorted by the population of the legal service area of the libraries responding to the survey.

**Figure 1. Languages by Population of Legal Service Area**

	Language														
	Spanish			Asian			Indo-European			Multi Language			Other		
	Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority		
	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
<b>Population</b>															
4,999 or less	27	5	3	0	3	5	1	5	1	0	2	1	1	2	4
5,000 to 9,999	30	5	2	2	6	4	1	6	2	1	4	6	0	2	1
10,000 to 24,999	68	14	11	13	26	15	8	21	11	3	8	10	0	1	5
25,000 to 49,999	86	18	8	11	27	22	11	15	10	1	7	15	2	7	8
50,000 to 99,999	87	23	4	14	33	25	10	26	18	2	9	18	1	4	15
100,000 to 249,999	43	5	3	1	25	4	4	3	14	0	2	11	2	3	4
250,000 to 499,999	11	1	0	0	8	3	1	3	3	1	0	3	0	0	1
500,000 to 999,999	4	1	0	2	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1,000,000 or more	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0

Figure 1 demonstrates the rather surprising distribution of responding libraries. The population served ranges used were segmented using existing categories commonly used by the American Library Association and its division dedicated to public libraries, the Public Library Association.

It was anticipated that a stronger response would come from large, urban public libraries. However, libraries from our smallest communities elected to tell us about the important services and programs they are providing to the non-English speakers, and the barriers to developing and sustaining services to this population.

In four major metropolitan communities serving more than 1 million people, libraries reported Spanish as the priority language, followed by Asian-Pacific Island and Multi-language. No

libraries in this population served range reported providing programs or services to Indo-European language speakers.

The distribution of density of languages also sheds light on demographics of the smaller library service areas that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. It might be expected that a large urban library would cater to a broader spectrum of non-English language speakers. However, as Figure 1 shows, even with Spanish being the most heavily supported single language, communities under 100,000 residents benefited from libraries providing programs and services to Asian-Pacific Islander, Indo-European and Multi-language speakers.

**Figure 2: Library Building Detail by Population Served**

<b>Population Served</b>	<b>Average Hours Open</b>	<b>Average Year Built</b>	<b>Average Square Footage</b>	<b>Average Distance Nearest Branch</b>				
				<b>Less than 1 Mile</b>	<b>1-3 miles</b>	<b>4-6 miles</b>	<b>7-9 miles</b>	<b>10 or more miles</b>
4,999 or less	33	1965	3,456	3	10	8	6	15
5,000 to 9,999	40	1963	5,485	4	19	8	4	11
10,000 to 24,999	47	1953	11,023	10	69	18	12	17
25,000 to 49,999	50	1963	19,231	11	75	28	4	14
50,000 to 99,999	55	1965	31,038	12	73	35	4	8
100,000 to 249,999	57	1951	57,621	10	26	13	4	2
250,000 to 499,999	54	1963	61,513	2	6	2	1	2
500,000 to 999,999	55	1960	273,283	0	5	1	0	0
1,000,000 or more	61	1960	218,189	2	3	1	0	0

Figure 2 provides general details on the libraries in each population served range. Figure 3 summarizes additional information gathered about the library and its services ("n" indicates no data reported). Libraries serving the mid-range population served groups were more willing to provide additional detail about their libraries. It is interesting to note that libraries with modest infrastructures are providing very useful services to their community, and to non-English speakers. The average number of computers available and the size of the library buildings provide sobering details in which to contextualize the services and programs offered by the libraries reporting.

**Figure 3. Overall Library Use by Primary Language Spoken and Population**

Population Served	Visits	Spanish			Language			Asian		
		Borrowers	Circulation	Computers	Visits	Borrowers	Circulation	Computers	Visits	Borrowers
4,999 or less	6,826	990	10,762	4	n	n	n	n	n	n
5,000 to 9,999	37,099	3,481	26,045	7	n	n	n	n	n	n
10,000 to 24,999	53,808	4,440	135,389	8	111,008	12,820	163,582	10.8		
25,000 to 49,999	87,589	11,259	95,860	4.6	302,640	64,811	400,650	20		
50,000 to 99,999	170,009	27,294	236,951	20.7	298,667	33,426	524,689	32		
100,000 to 249,999	298,424	78,678	402,559	27	n	n	n	n		
250,000 to 499,999	495,861	142,787	677,716	53	n	n	n	n		
500,000 to 999,999	2,123,949	264,140	1,255,886	217	n	n	n	n		
1,000,000 or more	3,444,337	765,557	31,318,331	384.7	n	n	n	n		

## How to use Findings

Prepared by Denise M. Davis and Christie Koontz, PhD

### How to Use these Data at the National Level

As described earlier, there are very few national datasets which describe actual and potential public library customers. While this dataset may not meet highly rigorous statistical analysis standards, it does meet the criterion of providing valuable insights and trends. The snapshot this survey offers to key library stakeholders at the national level is valuable by lending credence to the often discussed multitude of services libraries are providing to very disparate customer groups, despite often limited resources and staff. A recent study (McClure et al 2007) indicated that libraries often take on services that used to be provided by government in their attempt to 'serve all' and meet the needs of all those who walk in the door.

A national study of this kind can lend a voice to the chorus that libraries are premiere and unique community agencies yet primarily funded by local dollars (over 90%). Therefore, public libraries in communities which lack resources, and may serve new populations and those more in need, require increased support from the federal and state government and other partners to assure new citizens and people with less literacy skills benefit from library services as much as English speakers.

### How to Use these Data at the Local Level

This study also offers conceptual support for the existence of the US Public Library Geographic database which includes demographics; library use data and locations of 16,000 public libraries, desktop and free. Currently anyone anywhere can log onto [www.geolib.org](http://www.geolib.org) and obtain a cursory view of any library's service or market area.

As with previous national studies of this kind (Jue, D.K. et al, 1999; Koontz, C.M. and D.K. Jue, 2002) the total findings nationally are not as valuable as use of the same dataset at the local level. A community level librarian, with answers to questions 1-16 of this study (those who responded) have sufficient information to improve services to the special language population they serve. Question 16 which asks for examples of effective services is one question that should be shared at the national level as it offers practical suggestions of services that other professionals believe work. This information, in conjunction with that available in GeoLib, provide meaningful figures to use in preparing a local dialog.

Here is a case study of use. These types of case studies should accompany all data reports so practicing librarians can understand how to use available results and data.

Library A, 25,000 square feet and built in 1967, is three miles from its nearest library B, located in upper rural New York State. They are open 30 hours a week, collection of 75,000 books etc, and circulation of 110,000 annually. Library A has 3700 registered borrowers of a town of 12,500. Their visits are quite high (72,600) per year—almost commensurate with circulation. The library has three computers available to the public. They serve a new burgeoning Hispanic speaking population, with pockets of older and longer settled German and Italian immigrants. The staff believes there are few barriers to library service as the community is small. They provide books in Spanish and feel they are effective in reaching the non-English speaking groups through their book collections and special programming and outreach.

Upon reading this report, or hearing about the results at a recent ALA, the library director decides to:

1. Share her survey results with other branches in the system to identify any services or materials her groups might benefit from. She will start with neighboring branch B, since she now understands distance impacts services.
2. She realizes that only 30% of her community is registered. She considers the list of barriers to service and wonders if some of these may be affecting potential customers as well. It has been over 8 years since the US Census data was gathered. She decides to go to the local county office to obtain their latest demographic reports from the state, and see what newer non-English speaking groups may have moved into the area.
3. She reviews the results from question 16 and decides that some new services might attract an even greater portion of the Hispanic market. She decides to hold a focus group with actual Hispanic customers to have them review and suggest new services or programs.
4. She looks at the array of library use statistics that she usually only gathers and decides to develop per capita counts, not just for total population, but for the other important use categories.
5. The director reviews the study with staff, who in turn suggest that the director hire a bi-lingual staff person and begin ESL and computer classes for the senior Hispanics. Staff also suggests pursuing access to the Spanish version of the Internet. The director had not thought this necessary.

And so on. This is a case study derived from one data set in this study. Information from this study, and others, should spark activity and proactive management. This study will have been for naught if the study results are not put to use operationally.

## The Anticipated Significance of the Research

About 21 million people in the United States speak limited or no English, fifty per cent more than a decade ago. This impacts public agencies in health care and education the most but impacts other public agencies as well. Staff is faced daily with someone who needs services, and does not speak English. There are experiments in many fields on how to better communicate with these disparate populations, ranging from bi-lingual staffs for the larger groups, graphical multimedia, and smaller efforts of translated phrases, and even hand motions (Neergaard, 2003.)

Literacy in the dominant language is considered essential for linguistic minorities to prosper and thrive and contribute. While functional literacy is defined as the ability to read and write in the dominant language to conduct daily tasks, it is usually *only* tied to the dominant language. This approach excludes the individual's literacy in non-dominant languages or differences in literacy levels when engaged in different circumstances. For example, if one does not know what libraries are, and how information is organized within them, people such as immigrants who may not be familiar with libraries will have difficulties gaining access to them (Chu 1998.) This is why outside research is needed to pre-identify groups who may not make themselves known to agencies such as libraries.

Several suggestions are made as to how librarians can facilitate linguistic minorities in developing literacy skills so these groups do not remain disenfranchised not only in libraries but also in the wider society. These include: better examining what is literacy in a broader context of social as well as the learning environment; acceptance and recognition of the language and cultural knowledge of linguistic minorities; and helping to develop strategies for coping and transitioning across diverse communities (Chu 1998.) Librarians, aware of the demographics of the communities they serve, and also cognizant of services and programs that are successful, can better help linguistically isolated populations and *not* linguistically isolated populations have better discourse.

*Staff who speak other languages provide translations services and promote library programs and services.*

*George Mason Regional Library, VA*

## Challenges to using Demographic and Other Data for Service Planning

In this country, US Census demographic data is low in cost and high in availability. The data are valuable to describe and explain important characteristics of *actual* and *potential* library customers. In our world—these are library users and non-users. *Potential customer* is a private sector term implying the possibility of an exchange between buyer and seller based upon seller-identified customer wants and needs, and seller understanding of unique customer characteristics and behavior. The result is often new markets—i.e., people with shared characteristics and interests in specific products and services. By contrast, the *non-user* has always frustrated librarians, leaving many feeling hopeless and negative about creating users from this group. This may be largely due to lack of understanding of how to best use various types of customer data for planning to increase number of users, or market share.

This study provides insight into the demographic variable, linguistically isolated people, who are actual users, and can guide libraries not currently offering services to these *potential* customers. To transform some into actual customers, the barriers reviewed in the study can be eliminated in part by library staff. Mechanisms might include: better and targeted communication of what the public library is in the US, and what services it can and does provide for people; outreach and optimized facility location; reduction of time needed to access library materials and services; and enhanced community partnerships (i.e., transportation planning and other aspects of community life which facilitate provision of equitable library services).

The availability and use of US Census data at the local level for other public agencies is widespread (i.e., police, fire, schools). The library field has been less facile in acquiring and using this data for planning. Research outside this study indicates that a lack of training and understanding of demographic data for library planning stems from: deficits in library education curriculum; limited development of datasets at the local, state and national levels; and a perception at the local level by planners that the library does not need this data in the same critical timeframe and nature as other agencies. Yet demographics, while only a partial predictor of use for library planning, are essential.

All demographics are most useful when used in combination with other relevant statistics (i.e., library statistics, and the experiential knowledge and perceptions of the library staff). This study utilized all three sets, relying on GIS to identify public libraries serving communities of the linguistically isolated, library statistics, and the perceptions of librarians about this use (i.e., effective services, and the barriers to service amongst the more important).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings presented in this report can provide a venue for developing better and more precise materials, services and programs for those linguistically isolated. Librarians can better predict what specific language materials and services may be required to optimally serve linguistically isolated groups by learning from the experiences of librarians in other parts of the country serving these groups. Research and experimentation can occur not only in a public library environment but can also use and incorporate other public agencies that are also challenged by communication with linguistically isolated populations in these studies.

This significance of using any relevant demographic data to better identify segments within the community served is also illustrated. Future research is recommended to analyze linguistic isolation in combination with other demographics relevant to library use such as age, or race/ethnicity.

This and future research studies must support development of: information and learning resources in diverse formats and languages; literacy programs that begin with one's native /heritage language using content relevant to the learners; collaborative efforts that include business and industry, government, community and other institutions that increase literacy efforts and delivery channels that reduce isolation; and effective means to promote and develop outreach to individuals who are isolated from the community (Chu 1998.)

Finally—the perceptions of the actual and potential customers libraries serve must be garnered and reviewed, just as those of library staff in this study.



## Appendix A: Public Library Service to the Nation's Linguistically Isolated: An Analysis Using the Public Library Geographic Database<sup>4</sup> and US Census Data 2000.

Report prepared by Christie Koontz, PhD and Dean K. Jue, Florida State University (May 21, 2007) for the American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics.

### Nature and Scope

The goal of this study is to develop an accurate baseline distribution of linguistically isolated areas in the United States relative to public library location. In order to do so, a comparative analysis of the new US Census 2000 data category, linguistic isolation,<sup>5</sup> in Summary Tape File (STF 3), relative to the geographic location of public library outlets, was conducted. Libraries serving these populations were identified, and subsequently, perceived effective library services, materials and activities were identified through survey of these libraries. A web-based outcome survey of those participating was conducted to assess benefits of the study. This study utilized the US Public Library Geographic Database files, PLGDB < <http://www.geolib.org> >.

This study was modeled in part after a previous analysis conducted by the Geo Lib program for the American Library Association, Office of Information Technology and Policy, in which levels of poverty around libraries were assessed within US Census categories of less than 20%, 20-40% and over 40%.<sup>6</sup> These types of national datasets, which are few and rare, are critical in national policy debates regarding type, level, and accessibility of public library services in America. The lack of the poverty database in 1997, left policymakers with little data to prevent use of the free school lunch program as criteria for library eligibility for the E-Rate program (Jue et al, 1999; Koontz et al, 2002.)

The use of school related criteria left adults in poverty 'out of the picture,' in the debate. A nationally-available poverty database provides library policymakers with data to argue for unique and critical criteria for library receipt of federal discounts for telecommunications. The poverty database and study also supports ALA Ahead to 2010 Goal Area I, Goal Statement One, Strategic Objectives I and III; and, Goal Area III, Strategic Objectives I, II, and III  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governingdocs/aheadto2010/adoptedstrategicplan.htm> .

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<sup>4</sup> Public Library Geographic Database (PLGDB) [www.geolib.org](http://www.geolib.org)

<sup>5</sup> For more detail please refer to the US Census Bureau's glossary of terms.  
[www.census.gov/dmd/www/glossary/glossary\\_a.html](http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/glossary/glossary_a.html). **Linguistic Isolation: Household Language by, STF3, P20.** A household in which all members 14 years old and over speak a non-English language and also speak English less than 'very well' (have difficulty with English) is 'linguistically isolated.' All the members of a linguistically isolated household are tabulated as linguistically isolated, including members under 14 years old who may speak only English. This is the first decennial of collection, and the level of collection is block group. Prior to this only **Ability to Speak English, STF3, P19**, was collected at the census tract level, defined as a respondent who speaks a language other than English at home, refers to his/her assessment of his ability to speak English, from "very well" to "not at all."

<sup>6</sup> Unpublished, completed for ALA/OITP, August, 2003.

Like a nationwide poverty database for public libraries, the development of a new data set that assesses the locations of libraries in relation to those populations who by new definition are, 'linguistically isolated,' will also be valuable and critical for proactive decision-making. This type of information is needed at the community level, and offers definitive insight into a nationwide problem. Identification of the location of people who are summarily barred from melding into American society because of lack of bi-lingual English and other language skills, is critical for the library and information profession. This project developed a dataset that provides an accurate baseline of the distribution of this new Census category, linguistic isolation, at the block group level, and identification of public library services and activities to same.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Importance of the Study**

Public libraries remain a premiere agency for insuring equitable information access. This mandate of equitable information requires special focus because it is substantially lower in low income, minority and certain demographic populations such as those linguistically isolated and non-speaking English populations (Koontz 1997.) While distance affects the library use of these population groups more than others, it should be noted that this situation is greatly exacerbated by language barriers as well.

It is noted that in order to succeed in the current and intensive information and technology world, one is required to read and write using multimedia, preferably in English (Chu 1998.) Therefore, many public agencies are seeking better ways to assure that immigrant populations can more easily meld into society through diverse literacy programs and activities. The need for full participation in the wider society by specific groups and communities is the subject of many reports, professional meetings and governmental edicts. Librarians and educators seek to assure that materials do not promote invisibility, stereotyping, isolation and language bias ('Cultural Sensitivity...' 2003).

The challenges of provision of equitable services have been discussed in the library field for the past century, originating in the earlier portion, when Eastern Europeans were the highest count of immigrant. The challenges continue into the seventies when the immigration of Southeast Asians increased, to now burgeoning numbers of Hispanics from many diverse Spanish-speaking countries. As new countries form and un-form and economies change, people emigrate from smaller areas such as Cambodia, Haiti, and third world countries and regions, where singular and diverse dialects may be spoken. Historically, librarians and other public officials struggled primarily with provision to the physically disabled, and those geographically isolated through non-access, and the need for a singular bi-lingual materials and services. Yet increasingly libraries and other public agencies, commensurate with these common outreach efforts, are more and more struggling to serve those linguistically isolated--a growing number that do not speak or understand English at a high enough level to understand the most elemental of communications (Brown, 2003.)

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<sup>7</sup> A block group is a smaller and more discrete geographic boundary of census data. Block groups are smaller than census tracts. The average block group can be up to 1000 people, while a census tract is normally 4000 to 8000 people.

For example, in the library field, while traditional library users are limited by the number of static service points and opening hours, the non-traditional, those technically illiterate, and illiterate in the dominant language, are further limited, increasing isolation which may also have a geographic or physical component as well.

The U.S. is proud of its young history, its ambitious growth and productivity due to citizen participation. Yet if this citizen participation which the US is built upon, whether at the local, regional or national level is to continue, it is critical to improve and enhance all those activities which make a country a home for individuals and families. “A half a century of research indicates that human development requires much more than economic growth, it requires political, social and cultural concerns and the inclusion of values that touch people’s minds, hearts and souls—this comes from non-isolation, acceptance and melding in...” (‘The Internet...’ 2003) — as the Eastern Europeans were able to one hundred years ago.

There are over 208,000 block groups in the US. While most ordinary people do not think of what block group or census tract they live in, researchers are able to scrutinize discreet population groups within small, almost neighborhood geography. Thereby, this level of information provides a better analysis of access to local services, i.e., public library service. The PLGDB ([www.geolib.org](http://www.geolib.org)) uses Census data at this block group level in order to best serve users of the database who are interested in the services and population characteristics that surround and bound library branches (Koontz, ‘Where...,’ 2002), as opposed to the traditional view of library systems (e.g., a county library with 7 branches.) The database of the PLGDB provides the basis of this study. The following steps provide the methodology used by this study.

- a. A nationwide digital map of all block groups was imported into a geographic information system (GIS) software. The attribute table developed for each block group within the GIS environment included a calculated attribute for each language group that was the percentage of households for that language that was linguistically-isolated. A block group was deemed to be a linguistically-isolated block group if greater than 20% of the households within that block group were identified as ‘linguistically isolated’<sup>8</sup> by the U.S. Census Bureau.
- b. The 2003 NCES Public Libraries in the United States outlet file for fiscal year 2003 was geo-coded. Library outlets that could not be accurately assigned a latitude and longitude by geo-coding underwent special processing to improve their geographic accuracy.

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<sup>8</sup> The universe is ‘households’ including, English, and the following: Spanish; Asian and Pacific Island languages; other Indo-European languages; other languages: linguistically isolated.

- c. These two data sets were then overlaid in the GIS environment to identify all public library outlets that had at least one block group within a one-mile radius of the outlet in which at least 20% of the households of that block group were linguistically-isolated. Note that this method ignores possible geographic barriers (e.g., rivers, roads) that may limit access to the outlet by some residents that are within a one-mile radius of that outlet. The 20% level was used as the break point because it is the same numeric level that is used to identify block groups that are said to be in poverty. A total of 1844 public library outlets were identified using this procedure as serving at least one linguistically-isolated block group.
- d. The initial strategy was to conduct a stratified random sample of the libraries (e.g., if 80% of the public library outlets serving a linguistically-isolated block groups were Spanish-speaking, then 80% of the total sample universe sent to the public library outlets would serve Spanish-speaking linguistically-isolated block groups). However, it was decided by the American Library Association that the survey would be sent to all 1844 public library outlets identified by the GIS. The content of the survey included input data; an agreement or disagreement by the library staff that they served these markets; what barriers were perceived to service; and subsequently what services and activities are directed to these populations. A full interview schedule is in Appendix B.
- e. A web-based exit survey of participating libraries was conducted to assess outcomes of the project, e.g., what benefit was identification of these linguistically isolated communities with this methodology, and what benefit was the enhanced knowledge of optimal services and activities provided by other libraries to these populations.
- f. A final product is a dataset identifying linguistically isolated areas in the US and relative locations of public libraries, and a summary report of librarian awareness of these markets, and services and activities offered to linguistically isolated communities.

### **The Population**

The 1,844 public library outlets represented 672 unique public library entities (system headquarters) in 41 states and the District of Columbia. The states with no public library outlets within a one-mile radius of a linguistically-isolated block group were Alaska, Delaware, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Each of the public library outlets was then related back to the one public library entity to which the outlet belonged. Obviously, some entities had many public library outlets assigned to them while other entities had only one outlet.

A letter was then sent to the library director of each of the 672 entities identifying the purposes of this study, the public library outlet(s) within the library entity that was identified as serving at least one linguistically-isolated block group within a one-mile radius of the outlet(s), and the survey instrument itself. The library director was instructed to fill out a copy of the survey instrument for each of the identified public library outlets and to return the survey to the researchers.

Of the total library outlet universe of 1,844 library outlets, 586 usable surveys were returned. Twenty-four were eliminated due to survey or data entry error by the surveyed library.

Of the 586, 480 (82%) agreed they served a linguistically isolated market while 106 disagreed (18%). Of the 480 libraries that agreed, eight did not respond to the population served questions and are not included in tables with responses by population served ranges. Another 19 libraries did not respond to languages served questions are noted accordingly.

A review of the 106 libraries that believed they did not serve a linguistically-isolated market showed no obvious differences or trends from the other 480 library outlets. This is not surprising. The use of the 1-mile radius to identify an outlet's market area is simply a convenient artifact for identifying an approximate library outlet market area in lieu of actual real-world data. Consequently, some of the 106 library outlets that were selected may not serve linguistically-isolated populations because:

- 1) The linguistically-isolated block group that fell within their one-mile radius criterion was merely a geographic sliver. The households of that linguistically-isolated block group was actually being served by another library outlet.
- 2) The one-mile radius criterion ignored physical or socioeconomic barriers that affect a library outlet's market area. For instance, a library outlet that is just south of an interstate highway with no overpass or underpass usually does not serve the block groups to the north of the interstate, even if it is just a hundred yards away. Such barriers to library service also exist because of sharp socioeconomic and demographic boundaries between city or town blocks even though they may not be immediately discernable to the average citizen.
- 3) The block groups were selected using 2000 census data. In some neighborhoods, the turnover rate may be high so that while the area was occupied by significant numbers of linguistically-isolated households then, the situation was no longer true in 2006 when this study was being conducted.
- 4) As mentioned earlier, this survey is based on librarians' perceptions rather than hard rigorous scientific studies that verify or disprove their perceptions. A librarian may simply be unaware of the fact that there are linguistically-isolated populations within a one-mile radius of the library outlet and, with no outreach to those populations, may simply not serve those users needs at all. Hence, it's a self-fulfilling perception on the librarian's part.

That some public library outlets disagreed with the researchers' initial assessment of serving linguistically isolated populations is not surprising. Some block groups that fell within a mile of the public library outlet and selected by the GIS software may have a physical or cultural barrier that hinders or prevents access to the outlet by residents of that block group. Also, demographics may have changed since the 2000 Decennial Census was conducted.

Figure 4 summarizes the primary languages served by responding libraries and includes libraries that responded "No" to serving linguistically isolated groups (7 cases). In each case, Spanish was the primary language spoken, followed by Asian and Other or Multi-language. Second and third language choices are available for review in the findings section under Question 12.

The primary language categories in this study and illustrative examples include:

Spanish: Spanish, Ladino  
Asian: Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean  
Indo-European: French, Haitian Creole, Scandanavian, Croation, Bengali  
Other: Native American, Hungarian, Arabic, Hebrew, African<sup>9</sup>  
Multi-language: More than 20% of households within the block group had more than one primary language category (Non US Census category.)

**Figure # 4: Primary Languages Reported**

Primary Language Served	Libraries Reporting	Percent
Spanish	365	79.5%
Asian	44	9.6%
Multi-language	8	1.7%
Indo European	36	7.8%
Other	6	1.4%
TOTAL	459	100%

Using 1,844 as the universe of public library outlets meeting the project definition for serving non-English speakers, the Census data identified

- 70.8% of library outlets serving Spanish speakers;
- 14.9% serving Asian, 55.4% serving multi-language;
- 12.8% serving Indo-European; and,
- 1.4% of library outlets serving other languages.

The most distinguishable skew is in the Multi-language category (1.6% of respondents versus 55.4% of the Census classification). The second area of skewing was with Asian and Indo-European languages. These results suggest that any of the following are possible explanations: libraries serving Multi-language, Asian and Indo-European linguistically-isolated block groups did not respond to the survey; demographic shifts have occurred since the 2000 Census; or, that most libraries prefer to identify themselves as serving a particular language group rather than as Multi-language.

When asked to identify the linguistically-isolated language being served by the library outlet, some respondents wrote in 'English' but discussed other languages in other parts of the survey. These answers were included in the survey responses as appropriate.

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/main/www/glossary.html> November 19, 2007



## **Survey Instrument**

The survey was comprised on a total of 16 questions. Each of the questions will be explained and discussed in the Findings section. The first ten questions requested input data including such descriptors such as square footage, year built, distance to nearest library, hours open, library use statistics and population served. Question 11 asked for agreement if a linguistically isolated market was served. If the respondent disagreed, data entry ceased.

Question 12 asked for identification of the three most frequently spoken languages, ranked 1st to 3rd. Question 13 asked for the respondent to gauge the effectiveness of service to each of the three. Question 14 asked for a ranking of 5 barriers to service that might affect each of the three language groups. Question 15 asked for the three most frequently used services by each language group. Question 16 asked for the perceived most successful activity for each language group.

The survey was pre-tested in November 2006, and mailed to participants in December 2006. Responses were received through the end of March 2007. No survey was considered late, and all surveys received that were usable were considered for data entry. Data entry began at the beginning of March. Survey instrument is in Appendix B.

## **Treatment of Data**

The responses to each survey were entered into a Microsoft Access database. Each survey sent out had been pre-coded with its Federal-State Cooperative System (FSCS) identifier number assigned to the library outlet.<sup>10</sup> This FSCS identifier number links the library responses to the FSCS library use data collected annually for the library outlet and is useful for building comparative databases. Question 15 was misinterpreted by an estimated 50% of the respondents who did not rank the services for each group, but rather ranked amongst the three groups. The data was standardized by choosing only the first three non-ambiguous answers for the data set from those surveys which responded incorrectly.

## **Discussion of Each of the Sixteen Questions and Resulting Data**

### **Discussion of definitions, scope and limitations of data**

The following is a brief discussion of the rationale for each survey question, its associated data, and the intended relevance of the responses to libraries serving linguistically isolated markets. Any potential limitations of the collected data will be discussed as well (e.g., differing interpretations of the question). Discussion of each question is divided into 4 broad categories: Library Building Detail (questions 1-4); Library Use Statistics (questions 5-9); Populations Served (questions 10-11); and, Findings by Language (questions 12-16). A final analysis of responses was made by population served ranges and follows the individual question discussion.

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<sup>10</sup> The public library data collection program moved from NCES to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on October 1, 2007. Further information about the annual library survey is available at <http://harvester.census.gov/imls/index.asp>.

### Number of responses

Of the 1,844 public library outlets surveyed, 586 (approximately 30.7%) returned a survey. However, the library resources available to each of the responding outlets were not necessarily equal. Libraries serving smaller populations usually have fewer staff and resources available and this may affect their response to linguistically-isolated populations and to this survey (see discussion for Question 10, Population Ranges).



## Library Building Detail

### Question 1. Square footage

The collection of square footage as a library input variable that is collected in conjunction with library use and demographic variables is recent. The Public Libraries in the United States annual survey began collecting square footage for library outlets only in the last three years.

In retailing, square footage is considered as a quality or attractiveness variable, meaning most customers will travel to stores with higher square footage than less. This was shown to be true in some library studies as well, which indicated that people will travel farther for special collections and services, i.e. central facilities.

But the caveat is that for some demographic groups, which may include linguistically-isolated ones, the desire to access higher quality facilities may not necessarily translate into such actions because of low desire or ability to travel outside a perceived cultural community (Koontz, 1997, pp. 56-58.). Other library user groups that fall into this category include the elderly and juveniles who cannot always travel independently. Square footage data in conjunction with knowledge about the distance a user group will or will not travel (or for whom transportation is a barrier) is critical to helping libraries better serve areas with high densities of non-English languages.

### Question 2. Year Built

Libraries do not normally lead growth in communities—they usually follow. Typically county population growth and school district data is used by local planners when deciding where and when to site libraries. When acknowledging the year the library is originally built, insight can be garnered regarding how long library service existed in the community. Immigrant communities often develop in neighborhoods that have been abandoned by those who desire to leave inner city or older neighborhoods for newer communities.

Libraries or staff who work or will work in communities with a high degree of linguistic isolation must develop an understanding of the possible depth of awareness of library service which may or may not exist due to longevity and 'over time' impact of services, as well as the need for new and different services for populations who are dissimilar to the old. Year built is a critical indicator of awareness, as well as of interest in observing how library service spreads throughout the geography of the library's service area. In this study, the average year that branches were built is around 1967—and this held true for each primarily served language group. This is interesting because it was in 1964 that more LSTA funds became available for building to promote more equitable library service after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. It is interesting to speculate what original neighborhoods most of these libraries served and how these populations have changed over time.

### Question 3. How many miles to the nearest library and name of nearest library

This question is complementary to square footage. The mileage information provides insight into the distance a library within a system can realistically ‘hope’ that customers will travel for any good or service, or special collections or services. Over 97% of the survey respondents knew the nearest library to their particular library outlet and could name it. The indicated distance could not be affirmed as this was a subjective reply. The purpose of these questions is not necessarily as useful for a national dataset statistic but rather to create local awareness and recognition of the data and its relevance to daily local library operations and service to special populations. Interestingly, most of the libraries in this study considered themselves to be within six miles of the next nearest library. Studies indicate the average customer will travel two miles, but the customers in this survey are not average—and will probably use libraries that are most proximate unless transportation is not a factor.

**Figure 5. Distance to Nearest Branch**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Libraries Reporting</b>
Less than one mile	55
1-3 miles	291
4-6 miles	117
7-9 miles	35
10 or more miles	70

### Question 4. Hours Open

The number of hours that a library outlet is open is often discussed as a library usage factor. When hours decrease haphazardly and it becomes difficult for a user to predict when a library is actually open, library use can diminish. For this study, cognizance of the hours available for library service will be critical to those markets which identified lack of discretionary time (Q 14) as a primary barrier to library use for the linguistically-isolated. When cutbacks occur local governments may choose to cut back library hours rather than cut back on competing local entities such as police and fire or schools. This type of data when used in conjunction with local demographics, become powerful weapons in fighting against cutbacks in hours.

### Library Use Statistics

Questions 5 – 9 are data collected by all libraries for the FSCS database. These library use data can be looked at most usefully in conjunction with relevant demographics, or looked at comparatively within population ranges. These measures are commonly referred to as “output measures”.

Question 5. Total collection count

Question 6. Total circulation

Question 7. Total registered borrowers

Question 8. Total visits

Question 9. Number of computers for public

One way to view the data from these questions is relative to the self-ascribed largest group of linguistically-isolated population being served by each library outlet. This was referred to as Language 1 in the survey. If an average numeric value for each of the questions is derived for each of the major language categories from all of the library outlets that self-ascribed themselves to that category, the values make sense from consideration of known research. For example, it is generally accepted that increased square footage and 'hours open' increase use. This holds true in the table below. Studies which analyze specific demographics such as linguistic isolation, race ethnicity, children under 18, female heads of household, in relationship to specific library use variables would be valuable and provide better in-depth understanding of optimal library service to specific segments of society, at the local and national level.

**Figure 6. Other Library Statistics – Use**

<b>Example Input Averages Language 1</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Indo Euro</b>	<b>Multi</b>	<b>Other</b>
Average Square Feet	30,028	30,016	18,774	14,893	37,680
Average Circulation	518,094	538,212	262,116	259,187	538,212
Average collection size	132,416	122,266	91,558	143,850	274,174
Average Hours open	50	51	54	44	59
Average borrowers	43,327	29,416	26,620	8,884	28,802
Average public computers	228	23	21	16	41
Average number of visits	210,285	204,011	154,429	120,362	358,696

A limitation of these aforementioned possible studies remains the lack of desire or ability by professional librarians to ascertain geographic customers market areas. Geographic market areas are developed by actual customer groups—and are not ascribed like legal service areas—which denote the geography funded for library service. Since there are few attempts to develop market areas by public libraries—this remains a major barrier to conducting research that would offer valuable customer statistics at the individual library level.

## Populations Served

### Question 10. Population Ranges

One question of the survey asked for the respondent to indicate the population range served by the particular outlet. Regardless of response to linguistic isolation (true or false), most responding libraries fell into the population ranges of 50,000 or less (N=351 or 62% of the respondents) while a smaller percentage (N=215 or 38% of the respondents served populations up to over one million (Figure 7). Eight of the 480 libraries indicating they serve populations that do not speak English could not be coded by population served.

Because of the wide range of population sizes being served, it will be important that detailed comparisons of library services within a language group control for the size of the population being served by the outlets. Each response should be considered valuable and not relegated to a broad statistical norm. Overall response was lower when cases reporting “false” to the linguistic isolation question were removed (N=472).

**Figure 7. Response by Population Served**

<b><u>Population Served Range</u></b>	<b><u>Libraries</u></b>
4,999 or less	43
5,000 to 9,999	46
10,000 to 24,999	127
25,000 to 49,999	135
50,000 to 99,999	133
100,000 to 249,999	56
250,000 to 499,999	13
500,000 to 999,999	7
1,000,000 or more	6

### Question 11. Agree or Disagree that the Non-English Population is Served

It is not surprising that approximately 18% (106 of 586) of the libraries identified as serving linguistically-isolated block groups within a mile radius of the outlet disagreed with that assessment. This difference could be due to:

- a) A very small fraction of the one-mile radius circle intersected a linguistically-isolated block group so that most of the block group may actually utilize another library that is closer;
- b) The block group is physically unable or unlikely to utilize the identified library outlet (e.g., on the other side of a major highway or river, completely different socioeconomic profile between the block group and the area in which the library outlet resides);
- c) Marked population growth and change in the block group since the original data collection date for the 2000 census; and
- d) Non-use of the library by the linguistically-isolated population and unawareness of this population group by the librarian.

States that would be expected to have large populations of linguistically isolated individuals such as California, Florida, Texas and New York were well represented in this study. Data entry ceased if a respondent said they 'disagree' that they serve a linguistically isolated market.

## Findings by Language

Question 12. Languages Identified as Three Most Frequently Spoken in the Library's Service Area

**Figure 8. Most Frequently Spoken Language**

	Language Priorities		
	#1	#2	#3
Spanish	365	77	33
Asian	44	133	81
Indo European	36	82	61
Multi-Language	8	32	68
Other	6	20	40

The most commonly spoken language, other than English, was Spanish. Asian was the second most commonly spoken language, then Indo European (Figure 8). The Spanish speaking population in the US is the largest outside any Spanish-speaking country. The counts above do not include respondents who selected 'English' or who made no language selection for their most frequently-spoken language. Language selections dropped significantly as library respondents were asked to choose the second and third most common languages. The 'other' language category included French, German and Russian predominately.

### Question 13. Effectiveness of Services to the Population by Language

**Figure 9. Effectiveness of Services by Language**

Effectiveness	Spanish	Asian	Indo-Euro	Multi	Other	Total	Percent
Very effective	78	5	9	3	2	97	24%
Effective	88	13	5	1	0	107	26.6%
Fair/Moderately effective	108	11	13	1	4	137	34%
Poor/Not effective	54	4	4	0	0	62	15.4%

Responses to Question 13 were calculated manually by reading the open ended responses (Figure 9). Those stating 'quite well', or 'very' or 'highly' were placed into 'very effective' category. Those responding simply 'good,' 'effective' or other similar term were placed in the effective category. Those responding 'fairly' or 'moderately' were combined into a single category 'fair/moderately effective'. Those responding 'not very', 'quite little' or 'poor' were put in the final category. Slightly more than half of responding libraries think they are effective in providing library services and slightly less than half feel their services need improvement. Some reasons for lack of effectiveness are described as a lack of specialized resources or staff, or just starting to serve these groups. Only a very few (approximately 3.7%) described LI service effectiveness as 'dismal.' Not surprisingly, many respondents felt like services were most effective with experienced staff and appropriate resources.

Question 14. Potential Barriers to Use of the Library and its Services Presented by Language and Barrier

**Figure 10. Perceived Barriers to Services by Language Priority**

Perceived Barrier	Spanish			Asian			Indo European			Multi			Other			Total	Percent
	Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority				
	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3		
Reading/Library Habit	209	96	44	6	10	22	12	6	14	1	3	1	4	0	2	430	76.0%
Transportation	88	114	132	7	11	26	1	1	17	0	1	3	0	1	4	406	71.7%
Literacy Skills	157	139	45	7	11	15	7	5	8	3	4	2	3	2	1	409	72.3%
Discretionary Time	110	146	73	12	16	15	9	14	8	1	2	2	1	2	3	414	73.1%
Knowledge of Services	192	114	35	10	16	14	11	10	10	3	0	2	2	3	1	423	74.7%
Other	38	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	42	7.4%

(n=566)

Barriers to services were selected based upon a review of library literature, eliciting barriers and factors that decrease use. Respondents were asked to identify and rank those barriers they thought affected the three ranked population groups (Figure 10). This is very rich and important data. One can see at a glance that while it is perceived that Hispanics lack the reading and library habit, Asians by contrast lack discretionary time. This is supported by some secondary data such as many Asian immigrants have two jobs (CNN, live broadcast May 10, 2007.) These data are most valuable locally to facilitate understanding of what barriers there might be to library use in a community which serves linguistically isolated groups.



## Question 15. Most Frequently Used Services

By far in all language groups (selected as primarily served) special language collections were most frequently used, followed by outreach and ESL (Figure 11). It is not surprising to see parallels between services use and perceived most effective services (Figure 12). Row totals in Figure 11 present the total number and percent of libraries reporting a service as a priority for all languages.

**Figure 11. Most Frequently Used Services by Language Spoken**

Service	Number of libraries by Language Priority															Total	Percent
	Spanish			Asian			Indo-Euro			Multi			Other				
	Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority			Priority				
	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3		
Outreach	96	38	30	5	1	5	8	3	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	193	34.1%
InLibrary ESL	76	44	22	11	4	1	2	3	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	171	30.2%
Special language collections	154	122	42	24	14	2	10	6	5	5	2	0	3	0	1	390	68.9%
Special programming	13	79	93	1	9	8	7	3	6	0	2	1	1	0	1	224	39.6%
Other	8	19	26	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	66	11.7%

(n=566)

Question 16. Most Successful Activity by Language Group

**Figure 12. Most Successful Programs by Language**

Most Successful Activity	Spanish	Asian	Indo- Euro	Multi	Other
ESL	81	7	0	0	1
Special materials/collections	67	11	2	1	2
Computer Use/Classes	52	6	6	1	1
Story times	46	1	0	0	1
Special programs	31	4	0	0	0
Children's Programs	22	2	4	0	0
Family Story times	17	2	0	0	0
Outreach	14	1	0	0	0
Summer Reading Program	11	0	2	0	0
Literacy	9	3	0	0	0
Staff	9	1	0	0	0
Festivals	7	0	0	0	0
Homework Help	6	0	0	0	0
Citizenship	5	1	0	0	0
Crafts	5	1	0	0	0
English Conversation Groups	5	3	0	2	0
Health Screenings	4	0	0	0	0
Multi Cultural Programs	4	3	0	0	0
Social Security	3		0	0	0
GED	2	0	1	0	0
Tours	2	0	1	0	0
ILL	2	0	0	0	0
Book groups	3	0	1	0	0
1 to 1 teaching	1	3	0	0	0
Driver's License information	1	0	0	0	0
Displays	1	0	0	0	0
Book Expo	1	0	0	0	0
Holiday Open House	1	0	0	0	0
Voting machines	1	0	0	0	0
Concerts	1	0	0	0	0
Parental tutoring	1	0	0	0	0
Music, dance, theater	0	1	1	0	0
Reference(culturally sensitive)	0	1	0	0	0

Since the respondents' majority language served was Spanish (Q12), most of the results are about service to Spanish populations. Even so, this list and array of services can offer and illustrate types of services and materials and programs that non-English speaking audiences might enjoy and participate in at libraries.

The emphasis on family programming, as well as targeting programming and collections to children, was powerful. This type of effort begins to overcome a major barrier that non-English speaking adults face 'lack of the reading and library habit,' as well as 'lack of knowledge about the library.' Special collections and ESL classes provide immediate resources for learning English and support the acculturation process while embracing the original culture.

## Appendix B. Questionnaire and Cover Letter



January 3, 2007.

[insert mail merge FSCS ID, library address with zip code]

Dear Library Director,

The American Library Association has identified your library as one that may be serving people who do not speak English. If you agree that your library serves this population, we need your help in completing the attached two-page questionnaire. The information you provide will help other libraries in their planning efforts for similar services to non-English speakers.

The questionnaire includes general questions about your library and specific questions about services to non-English speaking populations. We also want to understand the challenges to providing such unique services to your community. Additional copies of the questionnaire are included if you have branch libraries that may also be serving people who do not speak English.

Dr. Christie Koontz, College of Information, Florida State University will be compiling the results of this survey for ALA and may follow up with further questions if necessary. The information you provide is confidential and will be made available on the ALA website as a summary report.

Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope by **January 31, 2007**. If you misplace the envelope, please be sure to send your completed survey(s) to:

Christie Koontz  
College of Information/Florida State University  
Louis Shores Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2100

Thank you for taking the time to help us gather this information for your library, and branch libraries as appropriate. Please let me know if you have question – I may be reached a [sorange@ala.org](mailto:sorange@ala.org) or 312-280-4295.

Satia Orange, Director  
Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS)

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### “Library Services to People Who Do Not Speak English”

Name of person completing this survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond to the following questions as of the close of the library FISCAL YEAR 2006.** Questions in Section A may be part of your annual report to your State Library, so we encourage you to look to that report to complete this section.

#### A. General information about your library:

1. Square Footage of Facility: \_\_\_\_\_ SQ FT
2. Year Built: \_\_\_\_\_
3. (a) How many miles is the NEAREST library or library branch from your library? (This library may be in the same system as yours, or not.)  
☐ less than one mile   ☐ 1-3 miles   ☐ 4-6 miles   ☐ 7-9 miles   ☐ 10 or more
- (b) What is the name of the library closest to yours? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hours Open per typical week: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Total collection count (all books, magazine titles, A/V, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Total Circulation: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Total registered borrows: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Total Visits: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of computers available for use by the public: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Please estimate the population served by your library and mark the appropriate box. (Library headquarters or main library should report the population of the total service area; branch libraries should estimate as best they can the population served by the branch.)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1,000,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> 500,000 to 999,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 250,000 to 499,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 100,000 to 249,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,000 to 99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 25,000 to 49,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 to 24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000 to 9,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 4,999 or less

## B. Services to the Community

11. Your library was identified as one that serves a large population of people who do not speak English. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with this analysis:

☐ Agree (Please complete the remaining questions.)  
☐ Disagree (Thank you. Please return the survey in the envelope provided.)

12. What language(s) are the THREE most frequently spoken languages? Choose only ONE response for each column. (Language 1 the most widely spoken, and so on)

Language 1	Language 2	Language 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Indo-European	<input type="checkbox"/> Indo-European	<input type="checkbox"/> Indo-European
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Language
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

14. How effective do you believe your library is in reaching the linguistically isolated communities in your service area?

15. For each language population enumerated in Question 13, please CIRCLE the number that best RANKS any of the following potential barriers to use of the library and its services by these groups. (ONE a frequent barrier, THREE a less frequent barrier).

	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3
Lack of reading and library habit	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Transportation	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Literacy skills	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Lack of discretionary time	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Lack of knowledge of what a library offers	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Other (describe):	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

16. What are the THREE most frequently used services for each language group?  
(ONE more frequently use, THREE less frequently used)

	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3
Outreach	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
In-library ESL classes	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Special language collections	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Special programming (please describe)	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Other (please describe)	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
None (please explain)	0	0	0

17. What is your most successful activity for each language group and why? If the activity is the same for each group, please indicate that by writing "same" in the appropriate column.

Language 1	Language 2	Language 3

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE!***

Please return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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