



Primary Languages of English Learner Students As an Indicator of Ethnic Diversity and Distribution

INTRODUCTION

Each year the K through 12 schools in California take a census of what are now referred to as English Learner (EL) students (formerly known as Limited-English-Proficient or LEP students). “EL students are those students for whom there is a report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey and who, on the basis of the state approved oral language (grades K-12) assessment procedures and including literacy (grades 3 – 12 only), have been determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary to the school’s regular instructional program” (California Department of Education’s Web Site at data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_learners.htm). Table 1 contains the major primary languages of the English Learner (EL) students enrolled in Orange County schools during the 1999 – 2000 school year.

The total number of students enrolled at all levels and in all types of K-12 schools in Orange County for

Table 1
Primary Languages of English Learner (EL) Students
By Level: 1999 - 2000

Native Language	Alternate	Continuation	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
Spanish	2,316	1,980	76,658	16,904	18,788	116,646
Vietnamese	33	53	7,763	1,586	3,371	12,806
Other	53	68	1,877	476	850	3,324
Korean	107	33	1,854	320	795	3,109
Mandarin	3	3	443	109	310	868
Filipino	3	15	402	121	234	775
Farsi	6	5	424	100	225	760
Japanese	3	1	492	101	123	720
Khmer	6	9	355	125	169	664
Arabic	12	13	426	70	140	661
Cantonese	13	1	211	29	92	346
Hmong	0	5	186	43	50	284
Lao	8	7	164	34	63	276
Urdu	1	0	179	18	49	247
Russian	9	1	122	36	62	230
Hindi	3	2	60	23	37	125
Punjabi	2	0	74	9	37	122
Armenian	0	1	52	12	24	89
Portuguese	1	0	46	12	16	75
Tongan	0	0	50	9	10	69
Total EL	2,579	2,197	91,838	20,137	25,445	142,196
Total Enrollment	4,690	4,333	255,680	75,055	123,818	463,576

SOURCE: California State Department of Education

Table 2
Primary Language Enrollment as a
Percentage of Total EL Enrollments by Level

Native Language	Alternate	Continuation	Elementary	Middle	High School	Total
Spanish	89.80	90.12	83.47	83.94	73.84	82.03
Vietnamese	1.28	2.41	8.45	7.88	13.25	9.01
Other	2.06	3.10	2.04	2.36	3.34	2.34
Korean	4.15	1.50	2.02	1.59	3.12	2.19
Mandarin	0.12	0.14	0.48	0.54	1.22	0.61
Filipino	0.12	0.68	0.44	0.60	0.92	0.55
Farsi	0.23	0.23	0.46	0.50	0.88	0.53
Japanese	0.12	0.05	0.54	0.50	0.48	0.51
Khmer	0.23	0.41	0.39	0.62	0.66	0.47
Arabic	0.47	0.59	0.46	0.35	0.55	0.46
Cantonese	0.50	0.05	0.23	0.14	0.36	0.24
Hmong	0.00	0.23	0.20	0.21	0.20	0.20
Lao	0.31	0.32	0.18	0.17	0.25	0.19
Urdu	0.04	0.00	0.19	0.09	0.19	0.17
Russian	0.35	0.05	0.13	0.18	0.24	0.16
Hindi	0.12	0.09	0.07	0.11	0.15	0.09
Punjabi	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.04	0.15	0.09
Armenian	0.00	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.06
Portuguese	0.04	0.00	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05
Tongan	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.05
Total EL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total enrollment	4,690	4,333	255,680	75,055	12,3818	463,576
Percent EL	54.99	50.70	35.92	26.83	20.55	30.67

SOURCE: California State Department of Education

the 1999 – 2000 school year was 463,576. Of those, 142,196 or 30.7% were found to be EL students (Tables 1 and 2). The largest numbers of EL students are enrolled in the elementary school system (91,838). A sizable number are also enrolled in middle schools (20,137) and high schools (25,445). From a proportion point of view, however, the largest representation of EL students is found in the Alternate School System. Of the 4,690 students enrolled in an alternate school, 2,579 (55%) are classified as EL students. Not far behind the Alternate School System are the continuation schools. Of the 4,333 students enrolled in a continuation school in Orange County, 2,197 (50.7%) have been identified as EL students.

In the regular school system, the proportion of EL students declines with grade level. Among the elementary school students, 35.9% are EL students. Among middle school students, only 26.8% have been identified as EL students, and among high school students 20.6% are identified as EL students.

The most common primary language among EL students in Orange County is Spanish. A total of 116,646 (82% of all EL students) of the EL students

were identified as having Spanish as their primary language. Another 12,806 (9%) were identified as having Vietnamese as their primary home language. The Korean language (2.19%) is the third most common language among EL students in Orange County. All of the remaining languages each account for less than 1% of the EL students. Prominent among these are Mandarin (.6%), Filipino (.55%), Farsi (.53%), Japanese (.51%), Khmer (.47%) and Arabic (.46%).

In the alternate and continuation schools, Spanish is more prominent than in the regular school systems. In both the alternate and continuation schools, Spanish represents about 90% of all EL students. In the elementary and middle schools, Spanish constitutes about 83.5% of all EL students, while in high school, Spanish is only 73.8% of the EL enrollments. The Vietnamese language speakers are only slightly represented in the alternate and continuation enrollment data but are very prevalent in the high school enrollment data (13.25%).

The EL data is reported for schools and not the student's residence. None-the-less, the aggregation of the data by zip codes of the schools and by

Table 3
Distribution of Students Whose Primary Language is Spanish by Zip Code

Zip Code	Spanish	Zip Code	Spanish	Zip Code	Spanish	Zip Code	Spanish
90620	685	92640	343	92676	1	92782	30
90621	1,529	92643	436	92677	300	92801	3,566
90623	160	92644	507	92678	31	92802	2,439
90630	235	92646	107	92679	29	92804	5,862
90631	1,142	92647	1,753	92680	335	92805	6,977
90633	1,735	92648	398	92683	2,944	92806	3,305
90680	784	92649	194	92686	109	92807	149
90720	112	92651	93	92687	9	92808	17
90740	13	92653	312	92688	138	92821	480
92606	78	92655	316	92691	862	92823	19
92612	59	92656	230	92692	491	92831	701
92614	37	92660	49	92701	9,047	92832	1,396
92620	21	92663	438	92703	6,209	92833	1,031
92624	117	92665	383	92704	11,787	92835	42
92625	6	92666	471	92705	2,716	92840	2,162
92626	2,037	92667	2,097	92706	3,732	92841	2,612
92627	2,751	92668	1,003	92707	7,913	92843	3,827
92628	52	92669	1,536	92708	988	92844	572
92629	573	92670	1,542	92714	104	92845	108
92630	626	92672	684	92720	4	92869	14
92631	484	92673	338	92730	229	92870	530
92632	1,847	92675	1,628	92780	3,022	92887	7

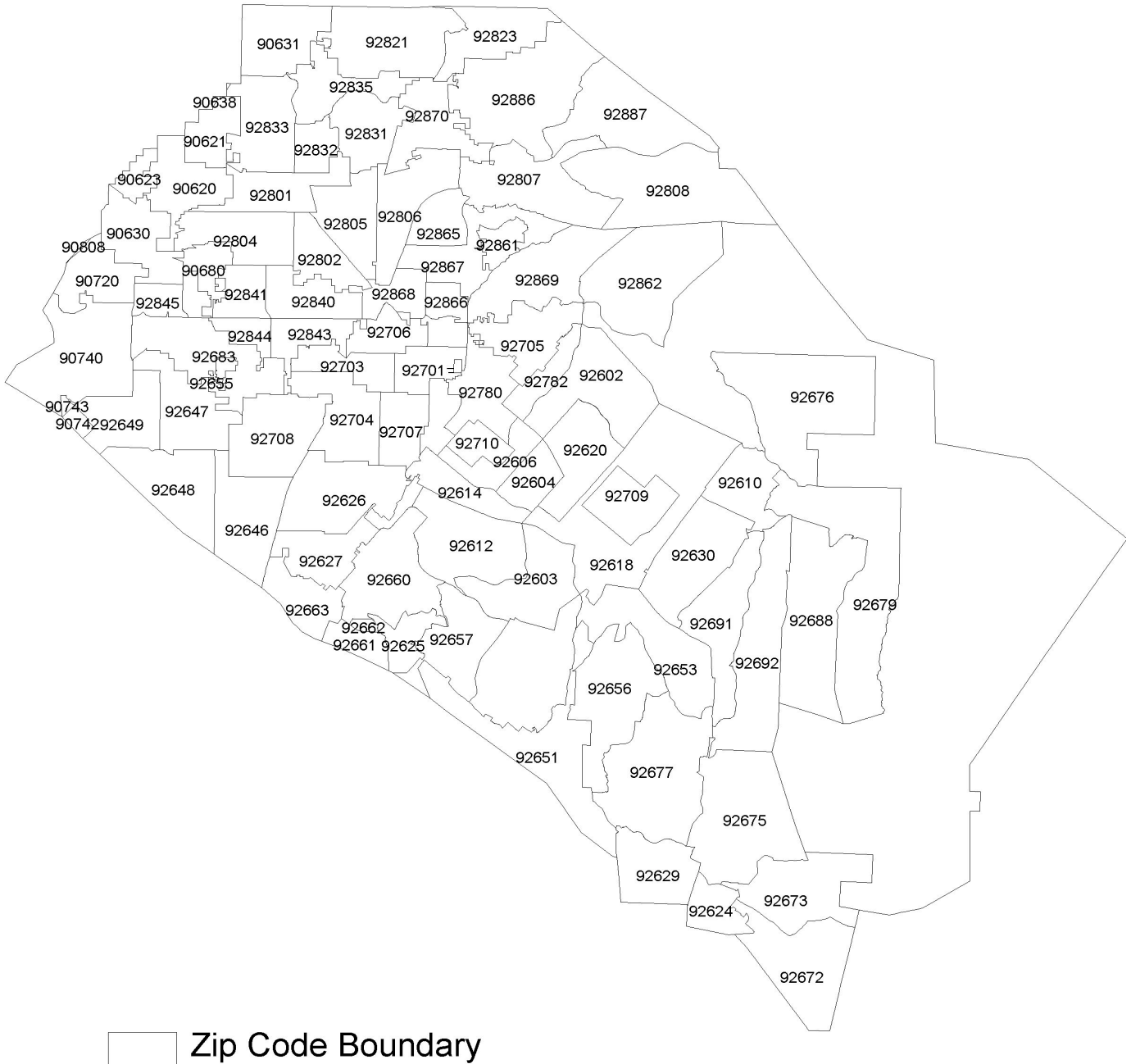
SOURCE: California State Department of Education

Table 4
Distribution of Students Whose Primary Language is Vietnamese by Zip Code

Zip Code	Vietnamese	Zip Code	Vietnamese	Zip Code	Vietnamese	Zip Code	Vietnamese
90620	47	92640	100	92676	0	92782	14
90621	44	92643	57	92677	14	92801	153
90623	14	92644	604	92678	0	92802	71
90630	36	92646	66	92679	2	92804	380
90631	2	92647	352	92680	1	92805	62
90633	2	92648	54	92683	2,702	92806	92
90680	63	92649	61	92686	10	92807	28
90720	2	92651	0	92687	1	92808	8
90740	0	92653	10	92688	12	92821	9
92606	53	92655	382	92691	52	92823	0
92612	17	92656	51	92692	30	92831	48
92614	19	92660	2	92701	14	92832	56
92620	29	92663	1	92703	262	92833	55
92624	1	92665	22	92704	584	92835	0
92625	1	92666	7	92705	25	92840	765
92626	146	92667	137	92706	23	92841	937
92627	14	92668	71	92707	128	92843	1,503
92628	2	92669	54	92708	822	92844	1,097
92629	7	92670	49	92714	38	92845	78
92630	34	92672	3	92720	5	92869	1
92631	3	92673	3	92730	3	92870	4
92632	25	92675	5	92780	80	92887	2

SOURCE: California State Department of Education

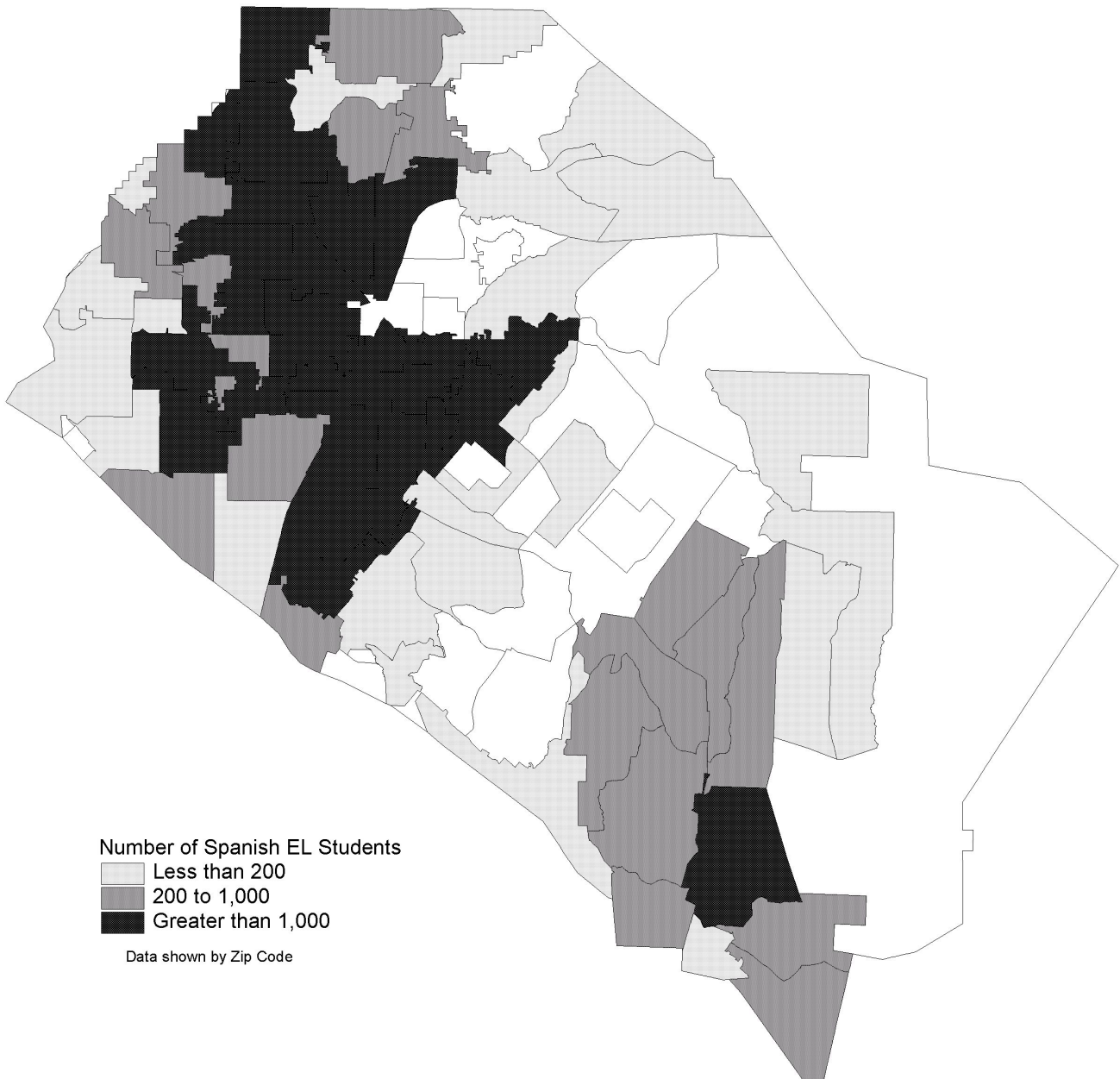
Orange County Zip Codes 1999



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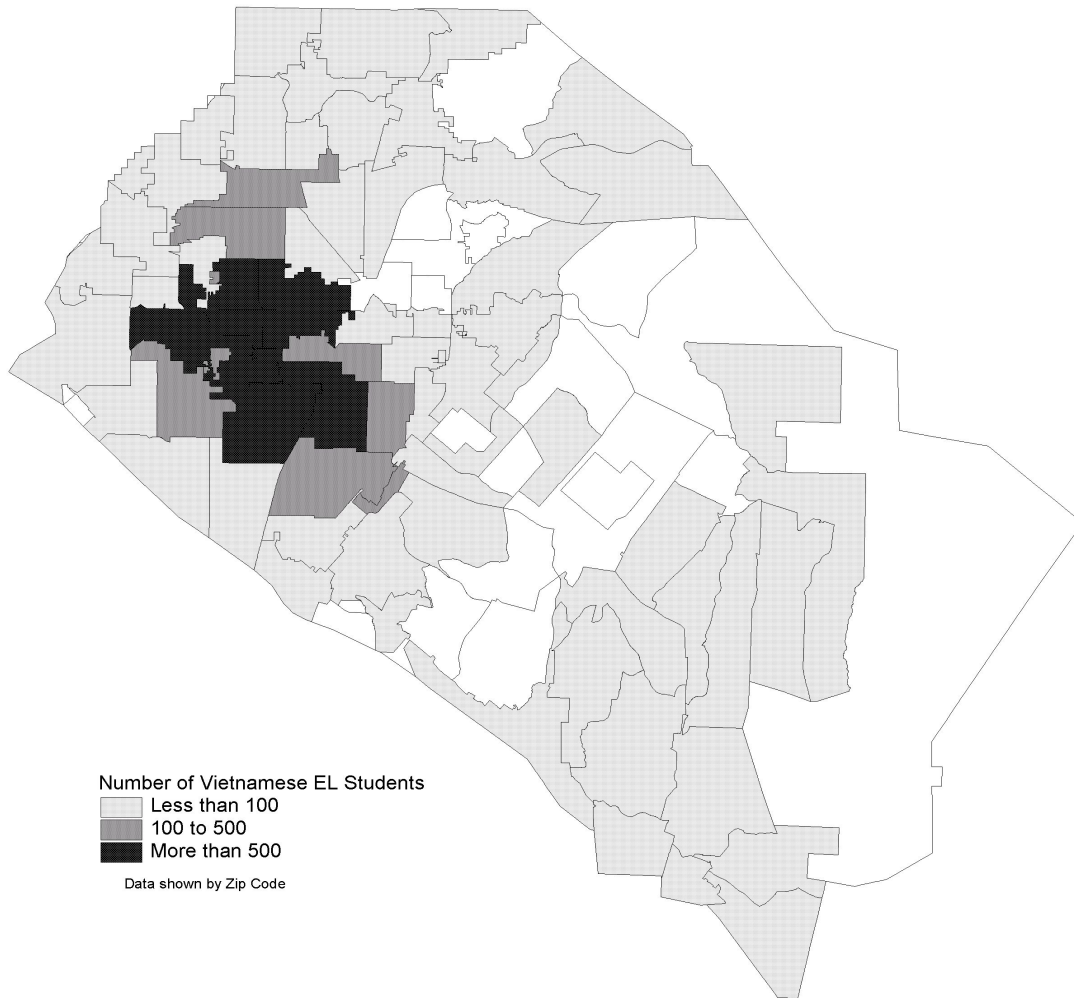
census tracts of the schools does provide a rather good picture of the general geographic distribution of households with various languages as the primary language. The data for the Spanish and Vietnamese languages have been aggregated here and are reported in Tables 3 and 4 by zip code of school location. This data has also been mapped to provide a picture of these distributions. People familiar with Orange County will not be surprised by the resulting images.

Orange County, K-12 Enrollment Data Spanish English Learner (EL) Students 1999-2000



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Orange County, K-12 Enrollment Data
Vietnamese English Learner (EL) Students
1999-2000



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