A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County
Census 2000
Non-English Speaking Population

Welcome to the June, 2004 edition of "A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County." This month, the use and knowledge of English will be explored. Using the responses from the 2000 US Census, these attributes will be examined in order to create "A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County." For further information on the demographics of Frederick County, please visit the Demographics Home Page at http://www.co.frederick.md.us/planning/Demographics/DemographicsHome.html

Beginning in the 1980s, the US Census Bureau asked people over 5 years old what language they spoke at home. If the answer was something other than English, they were asked how well they spoke English. Prior to 1980, the US Census questioned people on their mother tongue, or the language they spoke as a child. This statistic may give you indicators as to how many people are bi-lingual; however, it does not really inform as to what extent people are speaking a language other than English on a regular basis. The use of language is an important element in society; it is the ability to effectively and efficiently communicate. The official language of the United States is English; however, more and more people are speaking other languages.

From 1990 to 2000, the United States reported an increase in the number of people aged 5 years and over that did not speak English at home. This trend has been true in Frederick County as well. In 1990, 1 in every 29 people spoke a language other than English at home. In 2000, 1 in every 18 people spoke a language other than English at home. The population that does not speak English at home most frequently speaks Spanish. 1 out of 3 people who do not speak English at home, speak Spanish (Figure 1). This progressive trend may have many implications on the ways in which people communicate and learn in the future.

Language Frederick County Residents Speak at Home, Aged 5 Years and Over

	1990	2000
English	133,418 (96.5%)	170,995 (94.4%)
Spanish	1,562 (1.1%)	3,759 (2.1%)
Asian	698 (0.5%)	2,201 (1.2%)
Other	2,573 (1.9%)	4,263 (2.4%)

Figure 1.

As would be expected, the majority of the population that speaks a language other than English at home, are concentrated in Frederick City (Figure 2). The majority of

which are located on the Golden Mile sections or western portions of the city. One interesting distribution of the Non-English speaking population is in Downtown Frederick. There are three census tracts along Market Street, where only 1-5% of the population over 5 years old are Non-English speakers at home. The surrounding census tracts and along the I-270 corridor and Adamstown, have more than 5% of the population speaking a language other than English at home.

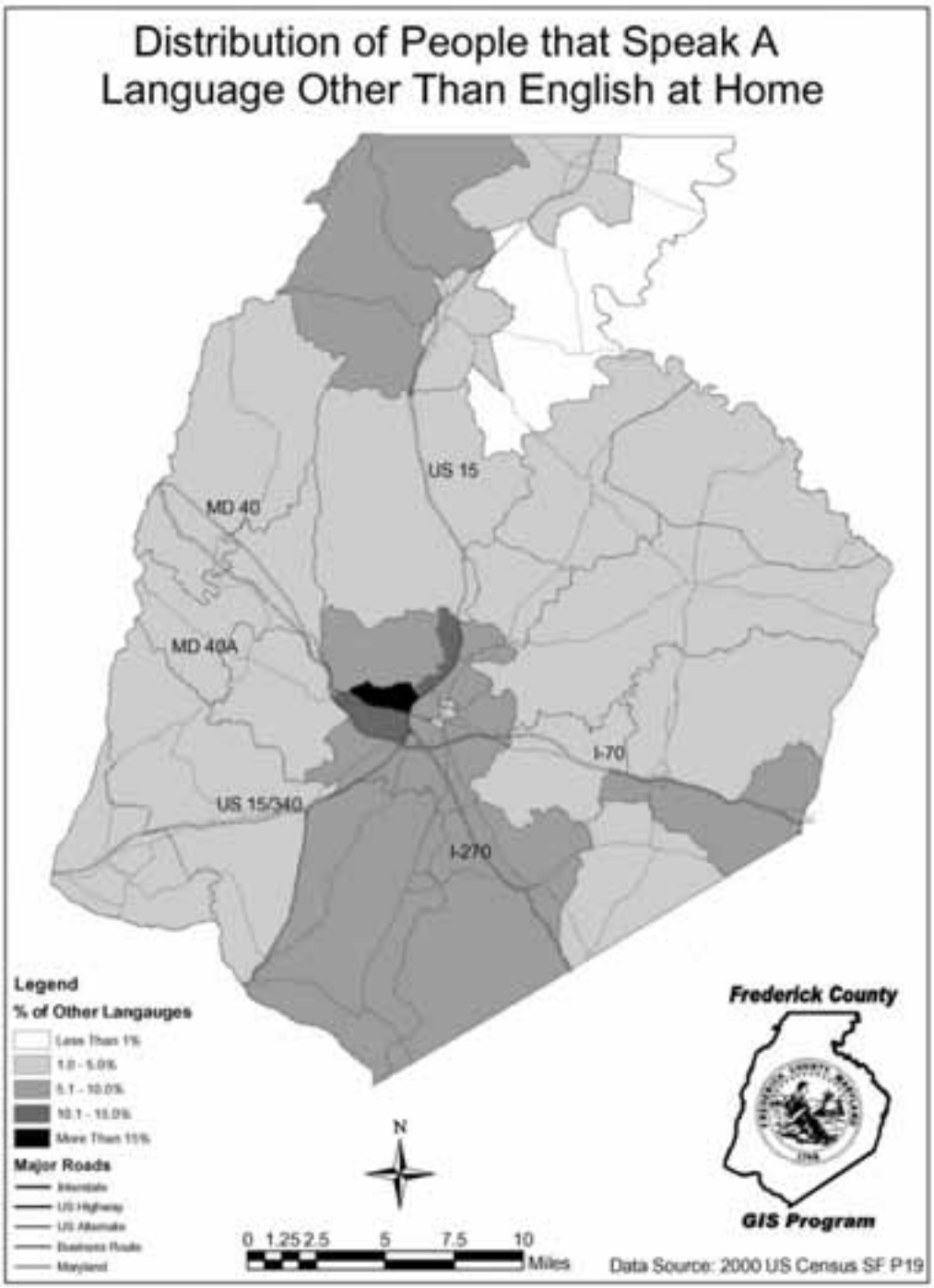

Figure 2

There is only one Census Designated Place (CDP) where no one speaks a language other than English at home, Burkittsville. Frederick City is the number one CDP where a language other than English is spoken at home with Discovery-Spring Garden and Ballenger Creek not far behind.

1. Frederick City 9.6%
2. Discovery-Spring Garden 8.5%
3. Ballenger Creek 8.3%

The progressive trend of more people speaking a language at home other than English does not seem to be slowing down or reversing in the future. More people aged 5 to 17 years old live in Non-English speaking homes (Figure 3). The majority of which are speaking Spanish. In 1990, 1 in 29 people aged 5 – 17 spoke Spanish at home. In 2000, this number increased to 1 in 23 people. One of the largest influx of Non-English speakers is the age group of 18-64 years old that speak Spanish. 1.2% more people in 2000 spoke Spanish in this age cohort than in 1990. This age group's rise in Spanish speakers could mean that more children are going to be born into families that speak Spanish at home in the 2010 US Census. This increase in Non-English speakers will have to be examined, if effective communication is to take place within schools and the public domain.

Language Spoken at Home by Age Group, Frederick County									
	5-17 Years Old			**18-64 Years Old**			**65 Years Old +**		
	1990	**2000**	**Change 1990-2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**Change 1990-2000**	**1990**	**2000**	**Change 1990-2000**
English	26,629 (96.5%)	38,014 (95.7%)	-0.8%	92,953 (96.3%)	115,014 (93.7%)	-2.6%	13,836 (97.6%)	17,967 (95.7%)	-1.9%
Spanish	356 (1.3%)	728 (1.8%)	+0.5%	1,138 (1.2%)	2,893 (2.4%)	+1.2%	68 (0.5%)	138 (0.7%)	+0.2%
Asian	151 (0.5%)	364 (1.0%)	+0.5%	519 (0.5%)	1,700 (1.3%)	+0.8%	28 (0.2%)	137 (0.7%)	+0.5%
Other	434 (1.6%)	599 (1.5%)	-1.0%	1,891 (2.0%)	3,127 (2.5%)	-0.5%	2,573 (18.1%)	537 (2.9%)	-15.2%

Figure 3.

When the US Census asked what language people spoke at home, they also inquired into how well the person knew English, "Very well", "Well", "Not well", or "Not at all". This quantifier leads into another important factor of Non-English speakers, linguistic isolation. The US Census reported on whether a household was linguistically isolated in the 1990 and 2000 Census. In order for a household to be considered linguistically isolated, there is no one in the household over the age of 14 that speaks English at least "Very well." Frederick County only has 570 linguistically isolated households, or 1 in 138. This is a 0.3% increase from 1990, when only 234 households were linguistically isolated. In both 1990 and 2000, the most linguistically isolated households were those where Spanish was spoken.

As with the language spoken at home, the areas where most households are linguistically isolated occurs in the western portions of Frederick City. In three of the western census tracts more than 50 homes do not speak English very well (Figure 4.)

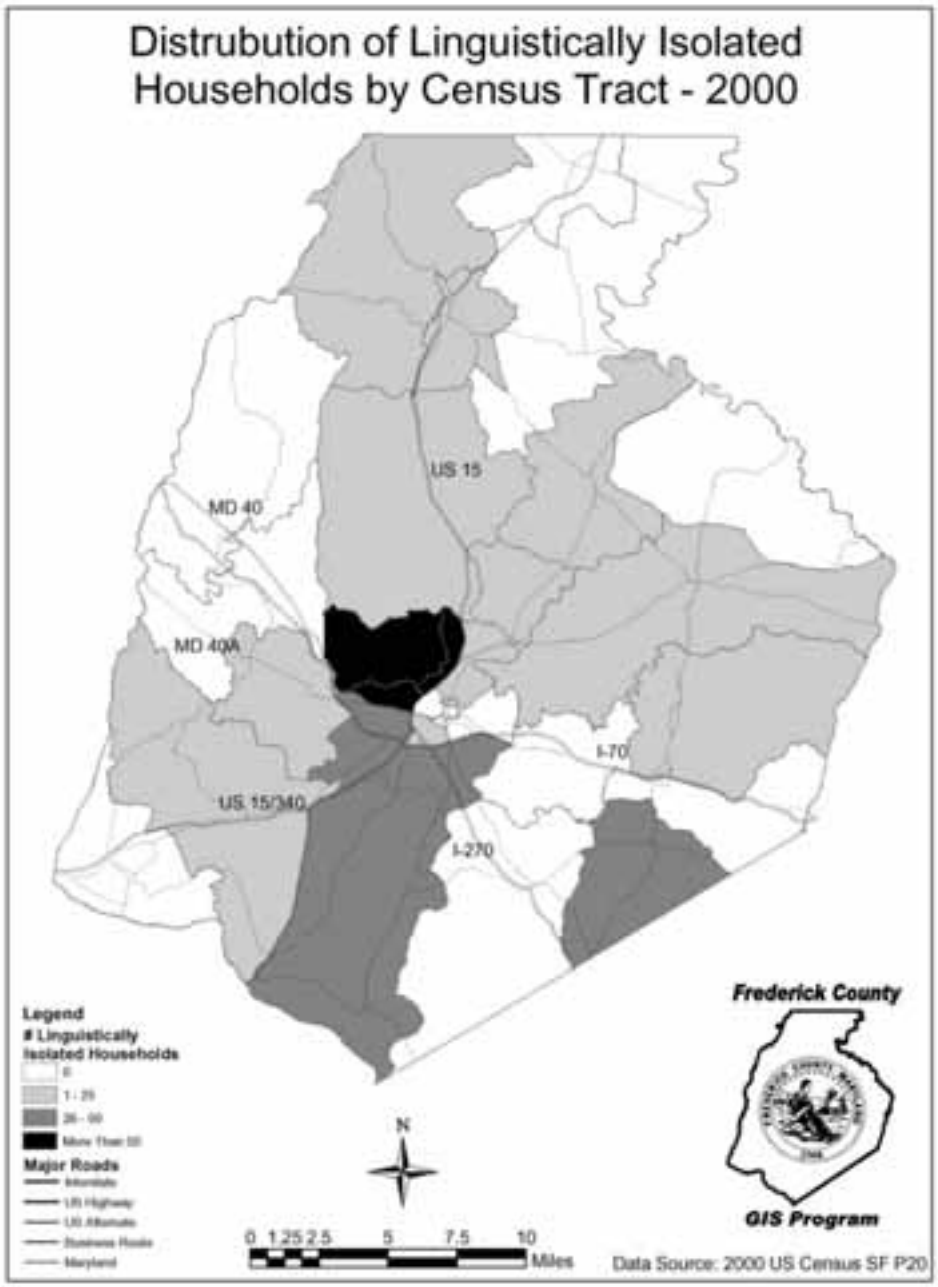

Figure 4.

As can be seen, Frederick County is not immune to the national progressive trend of bi-lingual and Non-English speaking families. In the future, this sector of the population will continue to grow. The schools and public domain have already started to face these issues, because effective communication is a key factor in the wellness of our society and community.