



# DIMENSION 2020

Clara Burgo  
María Carreira  
Kristin J. Davin  
Paula Garrett-Rucks  
Elizabeth Goulette  
Charlotte R. Hancock  
Jason A. Kemp  
Chance W. Lewis  
Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza  
Gabriela Moreno  
Ariana Mrak  
Linwood J. Randolph Jr.  
John A. Williams, III

EDITORS

**Paula Garrett-Rucks**  
**Linwood J. Randolph, Jr.**

*Dimension* is the annual volume of peer-reviewed articles sponsored by the 2020 Joint Conference of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology (SEALLT), the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC), and the South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers' Association (SCFLTA).





# DIMENSION 2020

Clara Burgo  
María Carreira  
Kristin J. Davin  
Paula Garrett-Rucks  
Elizabeth Goulette  
Charlotte R. Hancock  
Jason A. Kemp  
Chance W. Lewis  
Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza  
Gabriela Moreno  
Ariana Mrak  
Linwood J. Randolph Jr.  
John A. Williams, III

EDITORS

**Paula Garrett-Rucks**  
**Linwood J. Randolph, Jr.**

*Dimension* is the annual volume of peer-reviewed articles sponsored by the 2020 Joint Conference of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology (SEALLT), the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina (FLANC), and the South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers' Association (SCFLTA).

© 2020 Southern Conference on Language Teaching

Dr. Leslie Baldwin, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 11348  
Winston-Salem, NC 27116  
Phone: (336) 422-6192  
<http://www.scolt.org>

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,  
in any form or by any means, without written permission  
from the Executive Director.

# Table of Contents

Review and Acceptance Procedures . . . . .	iv
2020 SCOLT Editorial Board . . . . .	v
<b>1</b> Introduction to Heritage Language Learning: An Interview with <i>María Carreira</i> . . . . .	6
<i>María Carreira, Paula Garrett-Rucks, Jason A. Kemp, Linwood J. Randolph Jr.</i>	
<b>2</b> Language, Culture, and Spanish Heritage Language Learners: Reframing Old Paradigms. . . . .	19
<i>Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza</i>	
<b>3</b> University Students' Experiences in Spanish Heritage Language Programs in the Midwest. . . . .	35
<i>Jason A. Kemp</i>	
<b>4</b> Heritage Language Learners in a Mixed Class: Educational Affordances and Constraints. . . . .	64
<i>Elizabeth Goulette</i>	
<b>5</b> Developing Writing in Spanish Heritage Language Learners: An Integrated Process Approach . . . . .	82
<i>Ariana Mrak</i>	
<b>6</b> Writing Strategies to Develop Literacy Skills for Advanced Spanish Heritage Language Learners . . . . .	97
<i>Clara Burgo</i>	
<b>7</b> Streamlining the Placement of Spanish Heritage Language Learners .	108
<i>Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza, Gabriela Moreno</i>	
<b>8</b> Global Initiatives in North Carolina: The Impact on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. . . . .	132
<i>Charlotte R. Hancock, Kristin J. Davin, John A. Williams, III, Chance W. Lewis</i>	
SCOLT Board of Directors. . . . .	151
2020 SCOLT Sponsors: Individuals . . . . .	152
2020 SCOLT Patrons: Individuals and Organizations . . . . .	154

## Review and Acceptance Procedures

### *SCOLT Dimension*

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in *Dimension* begin by the authors emailing manuscripts to the editor at SCOLT. Dimension@gmail.com.

The editors then use a double blind review process to review the manuscripts. That is, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and information identifying schools and colleges cited in articles are removed from the manuscripts prior to review by members of the Editorial Board, all of whom are published professionals, committed to second language education at research universities. Neither the author(s) nor the reviewers know the identity of one another during the review process. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two members of the Editorial Board of Reviewers, and one of the following recommendations is made: “accept as is,” “request a second draft with minor revisions,” “request a second draft with major revisions,” or “do not publish.” The editor then requests second drafts of manuscripts that receive favorable ratings on the initial draft. These revised manuscripts are reviewed a second time before a final decision to publish is made.

The editors of *Dimension 2020* invited prospective authors at all levels of language teaching to submit original work for publication consideration without having to commit to presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Starting as a proceedings publication, *Dimension* has now become the official peer-reviewed journal of SCOLT and is published once annually in the spring. To improve visibility of the authors’ work, the Board voted to publish the journal on the SCOLT website in an open access format. In the first few years of being placed online for global consumption, authors’ work is being read and cited globally.

## **SCOLT Editorial Review Board 2020**

Kelly Davidson  
Valdosta State University  
Valdosta, GA

Linwood J. Randolph Jr.  
University of North Carolina  
Wilmington, NC

Vicki Galloway  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Atlanta, GA

Victoria Russell  
Valdosta State University  
Valdosta, GA

Stacey M. Johnson  
Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, TN

Sheri Spaine Long  
Independent Scholar and  
Editor of *Hispania*  
Birmingham, AL

Shuai Li  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, Ga

Paul D. Toth  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA

Lara Lomicka-Anderson  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC

Manuela Wagner  
University of Connecticut  
Mansfield, CT

Gillian Lord  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL

Dolly J. Young  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN

With gratitude to the additional reviewers and proofreaders

Melisa (Misha) Cahnmann-Taylor, June Carter,  
Jason Kemp, Madelyn Hernandez, Tim Jansa, Kaishan Kong,  
Raul Llorente, Ji Ma, Oscar Moreno, and Patrick Wallace

# 1

## Introduction to Heritage Language Learning: An Interview with María Carreira

**María Carreira**

*California State University—Long Beach*

**Paula Garrett-Rucks**

*Georgia State University*

**Jason A. Kemp**

*University of Wisconsin—Madison*

**Linwood J. Randolph Jr.**

*University of North Carolina Wilmington*

### Introduction

We are delighted to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Heritage Language Learning* in this Special Issue of *Dimension*. Our hope for this Special Issue is not only to bring attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in the following chapters, but also to stimulate discussion in the field on supporting the increasing number of Latinx students enrolled in Spanish language programs. Also included in this discussion is the increasing number of heritage language and second language (L2) learners in Dual Language Immersion programs who subsequently enter language classrooms with unique needs to further their language maintenance and development.

Heritage language learners (HLLs) of Spanish are a diverse population of students with diverse needs. Important issues for HLLs include, but are not limited to, sociolinguistics (topics such as translanguaging, language variation), the affective dimension of language learning, the acquisition of new registers (for careers/use in professional/formal settings), literacy, using Spanish to (re)connect with family and community members, linguistic insecurities, identity, culture, and linguisticism, just to name a few. HLLs participate in many different program models: dual language immersion schools, traditional second/world language classes, and heritage language tracks when available. It is not an easily accomplishable task; however, language educators—at all levels of instruction—must strive to create classrooms and curricula that appropriately respond to the diverse needs of this student population.

In order to contribute to HLLs' language maintenance and development, educators must know and understand their students so that their needs and goals can be identified. In her review of university-level Spanish HL programs, Beaudrie (2012) highlighted that these programs “are no longer confined to those regions of



the United States with large, long-established Spanish-speaking communities” (p. 217). With the expansion of Spanish HL programs, it is important to keep in mind that a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction does not work for the varied levels of experience students have with using Spanish in formal and informal contexts. Gaining an understanding of the local variety(ies) of Spanish and the ways in which HLLs currently use their HL can inform instruction that helps HLLs set and attain goals for how they want to use Spanish in new ways.

We had the honor and pleasure of interviewing Dr. María Carreira for this Special Issue of *Dimension*. Carreira, professor of Spanish at California State University, Long Beach, is a leading scholar in the field of heritage language studies. She is also the co-director of the federally-funded National Heritage Language Resource Center where she oversees heritage language learning and teaching initiatives and projects. Carreira, furthermore, is a heritage language learner. At the age of 12, her family moved to the United States. Carreira’s parents spoke Spanish at home, and she was immersed in English at school and the community in which she lived. We sincerely thank Dr. Carreira for sharing her personal and professional insights on heritage language learning in the U.S. with us during her telephone interview with co-author Paula Garrett-Rucks for this Special Issue.

### **An Interview with Dr. María Carreira**

*Question 1: Can you tell us how you became interested in heritage language learning?*

I became interested in this topic when I started teaching at California State University, Long Beach in the 90s. A good number of students were heritage speakers, and I was interested in meeting their needs. The field was beginning to gain great momentum then, although admittedly, Guadalupe Valdés was writing “good stuff” in the area in the 70s, but with the 1990 census people started noticing the large population of speakers of other languages, and it was really a decade of great growth in the U.S. But it was the personal interactions with my students that alerted me to their needs, so I went off and started to read more about this topic.

I taught a course for Spanish heritage speakers in 1991, but it was a much different course than what I am doing now. Initially the focus was on getting students to learn the standard Spanish language without cutting down their language, but it was still standards-based and linguistic-oriented. It was called Spanish for Native Speakers with four goals: (1) acquisition of a standard language or variant, (2) expansion of the bilingual register, (3) development of age-appropriate literacy skills, and (4) expansion of the bilingual range—being able to use the language in more contexts and situations and purposes. The goals were very language focused and very academic focused. Now we use project-based learning for mastery. We do not spend much time with grammar, only insofar as it is needed to complete the project. Mostly, the language development emerges when working on the project—I notice gaps with what they turn in that I identify to fill the gap. In these instances, we stop and go over the type of language we need to complete the projects. This process also helps me to understand and connect with my students.

In project-based learning (PBL), models are important. What is so special about Spanish in the U.S. is that there are models online of culture that is produced

here in the Spanish language. For example, a number of years ago I went to Wyoming to train teachers on PBL. Someone asked about what makes a good topic in PBL, so we brainstormed local needs for Spanish materials—and teachers mentioned that at the local DMV, nothing was written in Spanish, yet. So, I suggested a student project to make DMV books in Spanish. There were models that already existed in California and New York, so it was possible for students to get those models, study them, and adapt them to their state. So, you can see how authentic models of DMV materials are readily available in the U.S., yet the concepts are unique to local areas. Another example we brainstormed was to create a vaccination handout in Spanish. The key to PBL is models, and we definitely have models in the U.S.

Many Spanish instructors are native speakers—people who by the time they arrived in the States had fully formed language by having completed high school or college in another language. There are many L2 speakers of Spanish who are great teachers too, but, like the native speaking teachers, they do not know what it is like to grow up in the United States as a heritage speaker. They have not lived the affective parts—community and interaction with parents and identity. Heritage speakers who *lived* that experience might be better able to address the affective issues—being questioned as a legitimate speaker or incomplete speaker of Spanish or another language, or not having a language that you can claim as your own. The native speaker and the second language speaking teachers do not have that experience; they have a language they can claim.

- *Question 1a: Can I ask you about your own language learning experiences?*

Yes, I was born in Cuba and left Cuba with my family when I was 8 years old. We then went to Spain for four years, so I was 12 when we came to the U.S. and immersed in English.

- *Question 1b: Did you struggle learning English?*

I am sure there was a struggle, but I do not remember it. I was held back a year for no reason when I first moved to Spain, and at the end of the first grading period I had the highest score in the class. When we moved to the U.S., I was not held back in school in Chicago. But I do not remember struggling with English. Though language teachers were not used to dealing with language minority students back then, I had the good fortune of having Sister Patricia Murphy as a high school teacher. She gave me a Spanish test in literacy and spelling, and decided I should not be in the Spanish language program. She understood that “regular” Spanish classes were not a good fit for me. Rather she worked with me individually until I was ready to go into the literature course. So, this was a very early example of Spanish for Spanish Speakers. I was taught Spanish on what interested me in our conversations, and she would correct it. Of course, my parents spoke Spanish at home, and then they told me I had to take it in high school.

When I was a college undergraduate, I majored in Math, but I had a minor in French and Italian. I was naturally attracted to linguistics in graduate school (phonology, in particular), because it was mathematical, yet also had language. After training as a phonologist at the University of Illinois, I was hired at the University of California, Long Beach. There was a large Spanish speaking population, and I felt I needed to learn how to meet their needs in learning Spanish.

I have evolved in my self-understanding as a heritage speaker of Spanish. The term *heritage speaker* did not exist, perhaps until ... 1999. That was the first time I heard *heritage speaker* used in a conference title. Before that we called heritage speakers native speakers. There was no distinction. It was there that I could place myself.

• *Question 1c: Who coined the term “Heritage Language Speaker?”*

Well, for a time there was “Spanish for bilinguals.” But in the 90s, the term *bilingual* became a bit of a dirty word. In the 90s, California eliminated bilingual education, and the word became politically charged. But the term *native speaker* did not quite describe us. We typically learned Spanish as a first language at home, but upon starting school, exposure to Spanish was greatly diminished before the period of acquisition was complete. For example, typically, Latino children speak Spanish as first language at home until they go to school around age five, and then they spend most of the day occupied in English, so Spanish input declines. There was a debate of what to call them, including the term *community language learner* then, but by the time the 1999 first conference was held, the term was used and it caught on.

*Question 2: Please tell us about your Center and what it does.*

The National Heritage Language Resource Center, at the University of California, Los Angeles, is a federally funded language resource center whose mission is to develop effective pedagogical approaches to teaching heritage language learners, both by creating a research base and by pursuing curriculum design, materials development, and teacher education. I have been a part of the Center since its inception in 2007, under the direction of a UCLA Russian Professor and HL specialist, Olga Kagan. I am now a co-director, in charge of language learning and teaching, with Maria Polinsky who directs the linguistic research.

The Center focuses on the teaching and learning of all heritage languages, including the less commonly taught languages, where the need for HL materials and teacher training is particularly high. There is room to think Spanish is a “premier case” for heritage language learning. Spanish heritage language learning has been positioned to lead the field due to the large number of students we serve and its long-standing record of teaching and research in the area of HLs. And although resources are limited, we are fortunate to have some Spanish heritage language learning textbooks and developed teacher training materials due to the high demand with a bigger population. Despite this, Spanish as a heritage language is not always given its proper recognition. In 2017, a highly important paper commissioned by the Academy of Arts and Sciences set five priorities for the profession (see Flaherty, 2017). The paper established Heritage Language Learning among the five priorities in the profession, yet mentioned nothing specific about Spanish, despite its status as the de facto second language of the United States and the most commonly taught language in American language departments.

*Question 3: What do you believe are the most pressing issues in the field of heritage language learning?*

It depends on the language. I’ll start with the general; teacher training is so important—a lot of people are writing about how to teach heritage languages, but

there is still a gap between research and practice due to the fact that there are few heritage language teacher training programs. We cannot move the field forward without teachers who can teach with best teaching practices across languages. This is particularly important with some languages that primarily teach heritage speakers. For example, Vietnamese and Persian are mostly taught by heritage speakers, but there is currently no specialized heritage speaker teaching program.

- *Question 3a: But your center offers online modules for teaching heritage speakers?*

The modules are an introduction, but there should be a certificate program. Heritage language teaching is harder than second language teaching, because you need to manage the wide range of profiles in the classroom. You also need to be sort of a language arts teacher, as well as being a language teacher. Heritage language teaching is a lot like language arts teaching in that the focus is on using real-world language in a wide range of contexts, in the U.S. as well as abroad.

As such, teachers need to know about the communities of speakers within local contexts, not just communities abroad. With regard to Spanish, you need to know about the literature produced in the U.S. by Latinos, not just the literature of Latin America or Spain.

*Question 4: How do you see the field evolving from where we have come to where we are now, and how do you see the future?*

As I mentioned earlier, the field has moved from a deficit model of teaching, where the focus was on “fixing” deficient speakers as well as on form-focused teaching of the standard language to a more student-centered, meaningful language use such as project-based learning.

- *Question 4a: Can you explain how you have used project-based learning in your current Spanish for Heritage Language Learners courses?*

To determine projects themes, I group students by similar majors or professional interests. For example, in one class I grouped together students loosely connected to mass communication (a journalism major, a marketing major, and a film major), and they had to create a project based on a common interest. The journalism student knew that this department would soon be offering its first course in Spanish, and the department needed to market the course. His group put together a professional video on “Why do journalism in Spanish?” in which they assessed the ways in which Spanish media was growing and why it was a valuable field to get into. They interviewed students and people from Spanish news stations and described the course that the university would offer. The department ended up posting the video for the course on their website. It was a real-world project with a real purpose.

A doctor friend of mine once lamented that he had been studying Spanish forever but that he could not communicate with his patients. He knew standard medical terms but not Spanglish, or “home terms.” So I grouped my students interested in the medical field (majors in hospital administration, pre-med, and nursing), and they worked with the doctor to come up with a four-way glossary—Standard English to Standard Spanish and Spanglish to dialects in English. It was helpful for the doctor and the students. The doctor learned dialectal Spanish and students learned standard Spanish.

Project-based learning has three components:

(1) *Information collecting*: this is where you gather information that will inform your work. In a language class you are not only researching concepts, you are also researching language: looking for models of the type of product that you want to create, talking to people, and looking at dictionaries;

(2) *Information processing*: looking at what you collected and deciding on what you can use, or what you need to go back and get more of. At this stage, I guide my students in studying the language of the authentic models;

(3) *Information presenting*: the presentation of the work is done in two stages: (1) pieces of the project are presented to the instructor for feedback, as students work on them; and (2) the final product is presented to an audience—preferably one from the real world.

For example, for the medical glossary project, students would search a model to find out what makes a useful and complete glossary. Following an iterative process, students would start by making one entry, and at the end of class they would turn it in. I would take it home and point out mistakes and make suggestions. I then had them compare the authentic models of glossaries that they had collected to their own glossaries and notice the differences. In the process, they learned an important lesson: that learning words in isolation is not as useful as a word in a phrase. Project-based learning is an iterative process with a lot of revising and changing.

PBL is also very supportive of differentiation, as different projects call for focusing on different aspects of language. In my class, students who did the video project for the Journalism Department focused on using discourse-level language that was formal. On the other hand, the glossary students looked at the word level or phrase level and they also focused on dialectal terms. In all cases, the students collect models, and I bring attention to the different styles of language. This aligns well the goal of expanding students' bilingual range.

For presentations, we start by looking at the opening statement of each group's project. We soon realized they were all really dull. So we all had to reflect on different ways to captivate the audience, and then talked about the language that they needed to do this, like by asking a question. Students then started learning how to formulate a question. Every project requires different vocabulary and grammatical structures. Project-based learning is very differentiated and uses real-world language—language that will be useful to learners and further their language skills in an area where they are going to use the language.

• *Question 4b: Where is the field going?*

StarTalk initiatives have put money into resources and training teachers. We produced the modules with StarTalk funds. How we benefit from bringing the languages together creates a market for teacher training materials. But there needs to be a move toward teaching for real language use. Not teaching for academic use or use of the language in a monolingual setting. We need to stop teaching monolingual Spanish. We need to teach Spanish to use in the U.S. and how to navigate the varieties used here, as well as navigating Spanish and English. We need to take a more local approach—the Spanish used where we are rather than the imagined other place. Different dialects of Spanish come here and share the space with English. Many Spanish speakers have

challenges in academic English use. So talk about English, talk about both languages. Let's just help each other and model that practice in classroom instruction.

*Question 5. What practical suggestions do you have for districts and schools that cannot have a dedicated Heritage Language Program to meet the needs of these students in traditional Spanish courses?*

We do not have a methodology for teaching mixed classes, but the current practice—the de facto situation in most cases—is that when heritage language speakers are present, it is still taught as an L2 class. This practice is not benefiting either group. Take advantage of your resources! It is a challenging environment, and there is not a true methodology for this context yet. This remains a priority in the field, especially given that there are many types of mixed classes—at advanced level, and lower levels of instruction, and with a class that is predominately heritage speaker versus a class that only has a few HL learners. These are very different contexts with slightly different methodologies. Research is great, and it is growing, but until it is applied in a mixed classroom, this will remain a priority.

Another priority is changing the belief that heritage language teaching is about figuring out what students do not know grammatically and targeting instruction to that. I am often surprised by the level of interest in linguistic research that tells you what they do not know. Teachers flock to these presentations thinking that if we can only break that code, then we can teach them...but that is not what teaching is; it is about expanding the ability of HL learners to use their HL in different contexts and for different functions, not perfecting the use of grammatical forms.

The scientific research is important, but it is not what should drive HL teaching and curriculum design. With HL learners it is more the language arts style that is needed. Let's use the language they have. There are no shortcuts. Specifically, we need to target literacy development. Again, it goes back to a language arts approach; what you do with English in mainstream schools, and learning social studies and history and science...It is the ability to talk about a wide range of topics, and the topics mostly depend on the learners. What is specific to heritage language learning is often the interest in family backgrounds and family experiences, so this needs to figure predominantly: validate lived experiences, show these experiences as rich and important.

Literacy is different when you talk about heritage languages. Literacy can be an academic concept in language departments which boils down to "Can you write a literature paper?"; whereas literacy in the real world can be writing emails or reading a newspaper article. It is more a place-centered approach—what do they need to do to read and write to have effective use of Spanish? It is not writing literature papers. We need to be more like English Departments, where we teach a living language. It needs to be a concept of multi-literacies—different types of reading and writing skills for different purposes, contexts, situations, and needs.

*Question 6. Is there anything else you would like Dimension to know about this topic from you?*

Heritage language teaching poses challenges, but these are vastly outweighed by the opportunities it presents for making language learning relevant and fun for language minority students.



## Dimension 2020: Focus on Heritage Language Learning

Carreira's interview provides an insightful overview of the development and evolution of the field of HL education. In addition, in her 2018 article with Olga Kagan, "Heritage Language Education: A Proposal for the Next 50 Years," the authors offer several proposals for advancing the field in terms of research, instruction, and programming. Among other recommendations, the authors call for researchers and practitioners to (1) embrace nontraditional language learning models that reflect the ever-increasing linguistic diversity of our students and their communities and (2) work to mainstream HL education so that it is allotted the same amount of resources and curricular value as other core subjects (Carreira & Kagan, 2018). The articles included in this special issue highlight the innovative research that is being conducted in the field and reflect a promising future for the continued development of HL education.

This first chapter provides the background for this Special Issue of *Dimension* that focuses on Spanish Heritage Language Learning in K–16 contexts and aligns with the ACTFL Position Statement on Language Learning for Heritage and Native Speakers (2010) that advocates for constant reevaluation of practices, models, and policies to help address the unique learning needs of heritage and native speakers. In her powerful and timely essay, "Language, Culture, and Spanish Heritage Language Learners: Reframing Old Paradigms" (Chapter 2), Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza (New Mexico State University) helps Spanish HL education enter the new decade by highlighting historical and current deficit views about Spanish HLLs in the U.S. The author analyzes approaches to instruction that persist in Spanish HL programs even though research, conducted from various perspectives, has established the inappropriateness of the reviewed classroom practices. MacGregor-Mendoza puts into question alleged shifts in paradigms in Spanish HL education that do not wholly embrace HLLs as fully-realized legitimate users of Spanish nor respond to the specific linguistic and psychosocial needs of the diverse population of students enrolled in Spanish HL classes. The author stresses the inextricable link that exists between language and culture in HL instructional contexts, as this important relationship has not been appropriately incorporated into HL curriculum.

The essay debunks four false beliefs about HLLs, and MacGregor-Mendoza asks all educators to reevaluate their own views on language and culture through a journey of self-reflection. A critical examination of one's own beliefs and practices, according to the author, will allow educators to help HLLs participate in this same line of self-reflection and questioning of power structures, ideologies, and educational policies. MacGregor-Mendoza insists that educators acknowledge and encourage HLLs' "linguistic super powers" (p. 21) and that the field not become complacent with the advances that have been achieved in Spanish HL education.

Carreira echoed many of the points raised by MacGregor-Mendoza when she recommended that educators "teach Spanish to use in the U.S. and how to navigate the varieties used here." Furthermore, Carreira called for "expanding the ability of HL learners to use their HL in different contexts and for different functions" instead of trying to perfect students' grammatical forms. This statement aligns with MacGregor-Mendoza's critique of ideologies that frame HLLs' knowledge of Spanish as

imperfect. The author also comments on some ways in which old *and* current paradigms can be reframed so that Spanish HL classrooms can address issues of inequity and social justice, and connect with Spanish-speaking communities.

In the next chapter, the author, through interviews and classroom observations, responds to the calls for more Spanish HL research that includes students' perspectives (Alarcón, 2010; Ducar, 2008; Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2008). Jason A. Kemp (University of Wisconsin) in the third chapter, "University Students' Experiences in Spanish Heritage Language Programs in the Midwest," interviews five HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging Spanish HL programs. The analysis of their responses points to a disconnect between their self-reported needs and the curriculum of their classes. Participants consistently reported on a writing focus in their classes, which addressed their concern about limited experiences with academic writing in Spanish. However, the participants also commented on the lack of attention given to the other three skill areas (speaking, listening, and reading). Links to future careers are also perceived as missing from the Spanish HL classes, and the curriculum tends to place continued emphasis on discrete forms of grammar instead of language functions.

As Carreira noted during her interview, she does "not spend much time with grammar" in her Spanish HL courses. Instead, she uses project-based learning which allows her students to focus on the language they need to complete a project. The participants in Kemp's chapter reveal a disconnect between in-class activities and real-world uses of their HL. Project-based learning, as recommended by the author, could reconcile this divide by shifting instruction away from discrete forms of grammar to contextualized language functions that are linked to students' personal and professional interests as, per Carreira, HL instruction must "validate lived experiences, [and] show these experiences as rich and important."

Next, Elizabeth Goulette (Madonna University) in the fourth chapter, "Heritage Language Learners in a Mixed Class: Educational Affordances and Constraints," provides insight into the experiences of HLLs of Spanish in an eighth grade mixed-level Spanish class. Through a six-month ethnographic case study, the author was able to identify the Spanish teacher's labeling practice that sorted students into distinct groups of either "Spanish-dominant" or "English-dominant." Goulette, as participant observer, noticed that these imposed labels both restrict learning opportunities for some students and provide advantages for students across the two groups. As such, this narrow framing of students' linguistic skills and cultural affiliations did not acknowledge the language resources of students (Hornberger & Link, 2012) which led to a lack of instructional support for the advanced "Spanish-dominant" group that was also physically separated from the rest of the class.

Carreira, when addressing pressing issues in the field, discussed teacher training as a priority as "we cannot move the field forward without teachers who can teach with best teaching practices across languages." Goulette's chapter underscores the ways in which classrooms can impact HLLs when best practices are not employed. When students are not allowed to "fully explore and negotiate their own social identities in the classroom" (p. 73), the consequence is that certain academic opportunities are only granted to a select group of students.

Both of these studies show the importance of knowing your students. Car-



reira mentioned that through project-based learning, she is able to connect with her students. Students' needs and interests are not monolithic, nor are they universal. The chapters in this section highlight the diverse needs of HLLs across different levels of instruction. Differentiated instruction for mixed classes (Carreira, 2016) that builds on students' linguistic repertoires and taps into their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) addresses some of the issues raised in the two chapters. Together, Chapters 3 and 4 support the including of and responding to student-centered perspectives in both Spanish HL research and classroom practices.

In the following section, Chapters 5 and 6 turn our attention to the role of writing in the HL classroom. In the fifth chapter, Ariana Mrak (University of North Carolina) surveys the research on teaching writing in "Developing Writing in Spanish Heritage Language Learners: An Integrated Process." Her theoretical framework draws insights from the field of New Literacy Studies, which argues that literacy is not limited to the discrete skills of reading and writing, but is also influenced by orality to a certain degree. Mrak proposes an integrated approach to writing within a critical pedagogy framework. She presents the concept of critical language awareness as a socially responsible pedagogy that empowers HL speakers to use their sociolinguistic knowledge to decide which variety of the language is best suited for the multiple contexts and communities in which they experience the language.

While being interviewed, Carreira stressed the importance of multiliteracies in the teaching of heritage languages: "It's a living language. It's a concept of multiliteracies—different types of reading and writing skills for different purposes, contexts, situations, and needs." Mrak's chapter thoughtfully contextualizes the concept of multiliteracies as an effective pedagogy for teaching writing to HL learners. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations for developing literacy skills through conversational discourse, descriptions, narratives, evaluations, and arguments.

Clara Burgo's (Loyola University) "Writing Strategies to Develop Literacy Skills for Advanced Spanish Heritage Language Learners" is Chapter 6 in this special issue. The author provides a thorough review of the literature and outlines specific activities that could be incorporated into an advanced Spanish course. In particular, she emphasizes a process-oriented approach to writing in which students are able to compose and edit multiple drafts after receiving instructor feedback. Burgo supports holistic assessments of HLLs' writing, and she provides recommendations that encourage a social approach to teaching writing that incorporates students' personal narratives (e.g., autobiographies) and writing for their community (e.g., distributing a newsletter locally).

Both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 emphasize the need to develop HL learners' literacy skills by first building upon the students' existing linguistic assets, including their strengths in interpersonal speaking. In addition, both chapters acknowledge the importance of critical pedagogies and the exploration of the role of power as it relates to literacy. Although the two chapters share some similarities, they are both included in this volume due to their unique contributions to the field. Both chapters acknowledge the importance of power; however, Mrak delves deeply into this theme and paints a vivid picture of how critical pedagogy can be applied to the teaching of writing to HL learners. Mrak makes innovative interdisciplinary connections among

such concepts as New Literacy Studies, critical language awareness, and multiliteracies. She challenges critical educators to “help learners negotiate power relations in order to construct their identity as legitimate speakers of the language of study” (p. 85). Burgo focuses on strategies for scaffolded instruction using culturally authentic texts and holistic models of feedback. Burgo is particularly concerned about guiding HL learners to distinguish between registers and genres by incorporating assignments and resources that those learners would find easily accessible. She writes, “Since [HL learners’] writing tends to imitate their speaking, they need to be exposed to assorted genres of academic texts, and instructors need to find the appropriate strategies to maximize their learning experiences using authentic resources whenever possible” (p. 103). Burgo posits such strategies as chronical writing, oral history, and project-based learning informed by inquiry to achieve such goals. Carreira also praised project-based learning, saying that it is “very differentiated and uses real-world language—language that will be useful to [HL learners] and further their language skills in an area where they are going to use the language.”

During her interview, Carreira highlighted how the field of HL education “has moved from a deficit model of teaching the standard language in a linguistic-oriented way to more student-centered, meaningful language use such as project-based learning.” She later commented, “I’m often surprised by the level of interest in linguistic research that tells you what [HL learners] don’t know.” Taken together, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 help readers realize Carreira’s vision by offering important and unique insights on how to combat some of the marginalization and disempowerment that have traditionally been associated with the teaching of literacy skills to HL learners. Moreover, both chapters link theory to practice by providing specific examples throughout.

In Chapter 7, “Streamlining the Placement of Spanish Heritage Language Learners,” Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza and Gabriela Moreno (New Mexico State University) ask the field to consider students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge when making decisions about placement into courses. Their placement test assesses *ser/estar* (Spanish copular verbs), spelling, reading, and the subjunctive. The 17 items across these four areas tap into students’ literacy and real-world experiences using Spanish. Their recommendations for using a small-scale in-house placement test are adaptable to any Spanish HL program, and could be particularly helpful for universities that offer multiple courses in their HL sequence.

Carreira, during her interview, articulated the importance of “using real-world language in a wide range of contexts” in classes that endeavor to meet the needs of HLLs. In turn, as MacGregor-Mendoza and Moreno signal, real-world uses of Spanish should play a role when assessing HLLs for placement purposes. The authors’ approach to placement testing also aligns with Carreira’s focus on “meaningful language use” that does not seek to show what students “do not know grammatically.”

This special issue concludes with “Global Initiatives in North Carolina: The Impact on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners.” In Chapter 8, Charlotte R. Hancock (University of North Carolina), Kristin J. Davin (University of North Carolina), John A. Williams, III (Texas A&M University), and Chance W. Lewis (University of North Carolina) discuss dual language programs and their link to heritage language education. The authors address the proliferation of dual language programs

that offer instruction in English and a partner language (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, etc.). These programs cater to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, who are often HLLs of the partner language, and students for whom the partner language is not their home language. The researchers document the ways in which state-level initiatives in North Carolina encourage the growth of world language and dual language programs across school districts. Specifically, Hancock et al. demonstrate the state's commitment to meeting the academic needs of all students through equity. For example, North Carolina education officials want to increase the number of CLD students who earn the nationally-recognized Seal of Biliteracy diploma endorsement. This perspective, according to the authors, helps prepare students "for a globally-competitive world that [values] language other than English" (p. 147).

As Carreira noted, HL instruction needs to incorporate a "language arts style... Specifically, we need to target literacy development." K-12 dual language programs that focus on biliteracy, bilingualism, and sociocultural competence have been shown to be of benefit to all students. Moreover, as Hancock et al. signal, these programs "can close the achievement gap most quickly" (p. 136) for CLD students. In addition to a focus on literacy, Carreira called for an approach that emulates how we teach "social studies and history and science... It's the ability to talk about a wide range of topics." Dual language programs can help meet this goal for HL and L2 students who receive content instruction in more than one language.

We would like to state again how delighted we are to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Spanish Heritage Language Learning* in this Special Issue of *Dimension 2020*. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of several individuals who helped shape this volume. In addition to the tremendous efforts of the members of the Editorial Board who helped review and edit the chapters, we would like to thank the additional reviewers and proof-readers needed to sort through the great number of manuscripts submitted for this Special Issue including Melisa (Misha) Cahnmann-Taylor, June Carter, Madelyn Hernandez, Tim Jansa, Kaishan Kong, Raul Llorente, Ji Ma, and Oscar Moreno, who are all from research universities. Thanks to the combined efforts of many individuals, we hope this Special Issue brings attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in these chapters to recognize and support the varied needs of heritage language learners beyond the Spanish language. The ultimate goal of this special issue is to stimulate discussion in the field on supporting the increasing number of heritage speakers, native speakers, and dual language immersion students enrolled in language programs to further the development and maintenance of languages other than English.

## References

- Alarcón, I. (2010). Advanced heritage learners of Spanish: A sociolinguistic profile for pedagogical purposes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(2), 269-288.
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2010). Position Statement on Language Learning for Heritage and Native Speakers. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/language-learning-heritage-and-native-speakers>.
- Beaudrie, S. M. (2012). Research on university-based Spanish heritage language programs in the United States: The current state of affairs. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 203-221). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Carreira, M. (2016). Approaches and strategies for teaching heritage language learners: Focus on mixed classes. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed.), *Advances in Spanish as a heritage language* (pp. 159-176). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2018). Heritage language education: A proposal for the next 50 years. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(1), 152-168.
- Ducar, C. (2008). Student voices: The missing link in the Spanish heritage language debate. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(3), 415-433.
- Flaherty, C. (2017). Language study as a national imperative. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/02/28/academy-arts-and-sciences-makes-case-increasing-foreign-language-learning-capacity>
- Hornberger, N. H. & Link, H. (2012) Translanguaging in today's classrooms" A biliteracy lens. *Theory into Practice*, 51, 239-247.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Valdés, G., Fishman, J. A., Chávez, R. & Pérez, W. (2008). Maintaining Spanish in the U.S.: Steps towards the effective practice of heritage language re-acquisition/development. *Hispania*, 91(1), 4-24.

## Language, Culture, and Spanish Heritage Language Learners: Reframing Old Paradigms

**Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza**

*New Mexico State University— Las Cruces*

### *Abstract*

*Traditionally, the curriculum guiding many language programs has centered on the teaching of a “foreign” language to an audience of primarily second language learners (e.g. del Valle, 2014). Such a philosophy has relied on the belief in the existence of a single linguistic standard and an idealized community of native speakers from other countries. The increasing enrollment of Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners requires educators to reconsider the efficacy of such an approach in order to better address the needs of today’s student populations. A shift in classroom practices, however, requires a critical evaluation of the ideas that underpin the system of beliefs on which a traditional curriculum was built. Only after such an assessment can educators begin to acknowledge, value, and embrace the legitimacy of the diverse U.S. Spanish-speaking population and work to bridge the knowledge of classroom to that of the communities in which SHL learners live. The present article criticizes some of the firmly held opinions that sustain outdated perspectives and impede a reorientation of a traditional Spanish language curriculum. In doing so, the article offers a path to reorienting a program of study around the perspectives and needs of Spanish Heritage Language learners.*

**Keywords:** *Spanish as a Heritage Language, culture, standard language, idealized native speaker communities*

The 2017 Digest of Education Statistics indicates that the teacher workforce is predominantly both female (76.6%) and ethnically White (80.1%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, Table 209.10). This profile of teachers stands in stark contrast to the increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners in public schools, particularly Latino students entering Spanish classrooms. The challenge lies in reorienting a curricular mindset that has often positioned the Spanish classroom around teaching second language (L2) learners a “foreign” language to one of acknowledging, accepting and legitimizing the linguistic and cultural skills brought to the classroom by Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) learners from their communities here in the U.S. Such a shift in paradigms is not easy to accomplish, but is necessary in order to not only “rupture the yoke of colonialism” (Macedo, 2019) in Spanish language education, but also to provide SHL learners with the critical connections between language, community and classroom to allow them to grow to their full linguistic, cultural and academic potential. The present paper proposes a path for educators to shed false narratives that uphold notions of

language and culture and instead look toward embracing new ways of envisioning their classrooms and learners.

Many Spanish language teachers waiver between uncertainty, skepticism, and frustration regarding the abilities of SHL learners. They witness the SHL learners' understanding of sometimes complex structures and their knowledge of pragmatic tasks but are distressed by their apparent lack of mastery of seemingly simple grammatical principles or inability to recite the explicit rules explained in class that govern verb conjugations and spelling. Combined with SHL learners' use of non-conventional vocabulary and intermittent switching between English and Spanish, language teachers often assume that SHL learners are in need of focused grammatical instruction in "standard" language forms and the elimination of an "uncultivated" variety of language. However, what is more in order is for teachers to re-evaluate their perspectives on culture and language and readjust the lenses with which they view SHL learners.

One area that often occupies the periphery of curricular reform discussions is the notion of culture. Abstractly, we often think of culture as a quality that is detached from us; something that is externally displayed rather than as a code that is internally guiding us. This blind spot toward the cultural mores of a predominantly White, middle-class society renders the flaws of such systems of belief as invisible and unquestioned; the traditional, mainstream cultural points of view are deemed to be so "natural" and "common sense" that they allow us to "ignore existing structural and historical issues of power and domination" (Mitchell, 2013, p. 342). Viewed in the context of the U.S. educational system this blind spot toward embedded majority cultural biases only serves to perpetuate educational inequities that foster failure for CLD learners and subsequently blame them for their lack of success (e.g. Mitchell, 2013; Valencia, 1997). As teachers of language and as individuals with multiple cultural orientations, we must make the effort to raise our own awareness of the hidden beliefs we hold regarding SHL learners, the values we have regarding "appropriate" language, as well as the educational policies and practices we enact with respect to our classrooms based upon these notions.

### **View toward Spanish-speaking populations and the Spanish language: Historical and modern**

Schools in the U.S. have been an historical site of conflict for Spanish-speaking populations as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Spanish-speaking communities had long-standing cultural and linguistic customs that differed from those of English-speaking populations, clashes arose when these communities sought to retain their linguistic and cultural traditions and resist assimilation to an Anglo cultural model which presumed English monolingualism (Getz, 1997; San Miguel & Donato, 2010). From the onset, the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S. were seen as foreign, inferior and incompatible with educational and economic progress.

These notions carried through in the approach to teaching Spanish in public schools during this same time. While there was resistance to retain the use of Spanish in public schools in the early grades in the Southwest, it was acceptable in the high school to further a student's aspirations for higher education (Getz, 1997). Thus, the tradition of teaching Spanish in schools has long been oriented around the instruc-

tion of learners who have not been exposed to the language outside of the classroom environment (Valdés, 1989). Accordingly, approaches to teaching Spanish have been geared toward providing L2 learners, who arrive with no previous knowledge of the language, with the rudiments of grammar and vocabulary, punctuated with “cultural tourism,” highlighting superficial cultural features of food, dress, music and holidays (Kubota, 2004; López, 2011). Such an approach only serves to perpetuate the comparative and contrastive “othering” of Spanish-speaking communities, does little to make meaningful connections between the classroom and SHL learners and, distilled in this manner, could easily devolve into lists of trends, tendencies and ultimately stereotypes (Ladson-Billings, 2017).

Efforts have been made to guide the teaching profession in the direction of greater consideration and adaptation of the curriculum to better include and meet the needs of Heritage Language (HL) learners. The works of exemplary authors in the HL field draw attention to the ways in which the textbooks continue to exclude authentic experiences related to HL learners (e.g. Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman & Martínez, 2007), illustrate the psychosocial needs of HL learners (e.g. Beaudrie, Ducar & Potowski, 2014; Parra, 2016), and show how strengths of HL learners and second language (L2) learners are different in approaching grammatical judgements or classroom tasks (e.g. Montrul & Perpiñán, 2011; Potowski, Jegerski & Morgan-Short, 2009) provide avenues for more authentic engagement of linguistic and cultural skills of HL learners (e.g. Carreira & Kagan, 2018) and outline the dangers of judging HL speakers by monolingual standards (e.g. Beaudrie, 2015; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003).

Before language teachers seek specific pedagogical remedies, it is important to recognize that the skills and abilities that HL learners bring to the language classroom are intrinsic qualities of their cognitive development through and regarding language and that distinct cognitive processes guide the acquisition and display of HL learners’ linguistic skills (Hulstijn, 2011; Zyzik, 2016). The early, natural exposure to language that HL learners experience provides them with a foundation of skills about how the language is organized with respect to the systems of phonetics and phonology (inventory of sounds, their combinations, and sentence intonation), morphology and grammar (the composition of words and the organization of words in sentences) as well as the meanings of frequently used words and sentence structures mapped into their linguistic network. HL learners process this information implicitly and automatically as part of what Hulstijn (2011) and Zyzik (2016) term Basic Language Cognition (BLC). Because of their BLC, many HL learners can evaluate the appropriateness of forms and meanings on an intuitive basis and can perform certain linguistic tasks more readily than they can explain how to do them or why a word, sound or expression “sounds right.” Thus, by virtue of their early exposure to language, HL learners are equipped with a linguistic “super power” that even they are largely unaware of; it is thus up to language educators to not only acknowledge the existence of these innate abilities, but to also aid HL learners in activating their skills to advance and develop their own linguistic potential to its fullest.

As an additional move in the direction of recognizing HL learner’s abilities, Trujillo (2009) creatively adapted the American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages’ (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards for Language Learning (WRS) (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) to better exemplify the ways in which



the elements of the standards can be better interpreted for HL learners. Rather than conceive of the five Cs (Communication, Cultures, Communities, Connections, Comparisons) of the WRS as a set of separate rings that converge at one point, Trujillo places the dimension of Communication at the center of his figure enclosed in a triangle. The sides of the triangle denote the different modes of communication (interpretive, presentational and interpersonal) and the points intersect a first circle that envelops the four means of performing these modes of communication (reading, speaking, listening, and writing). This circle is surrounded by a larger one which includes the four remaining Cs. Referencing Freire's (1972) concept of *conscientização*, Trujillo encompasses all within a final circle which contains an additional element, "Consciousness."

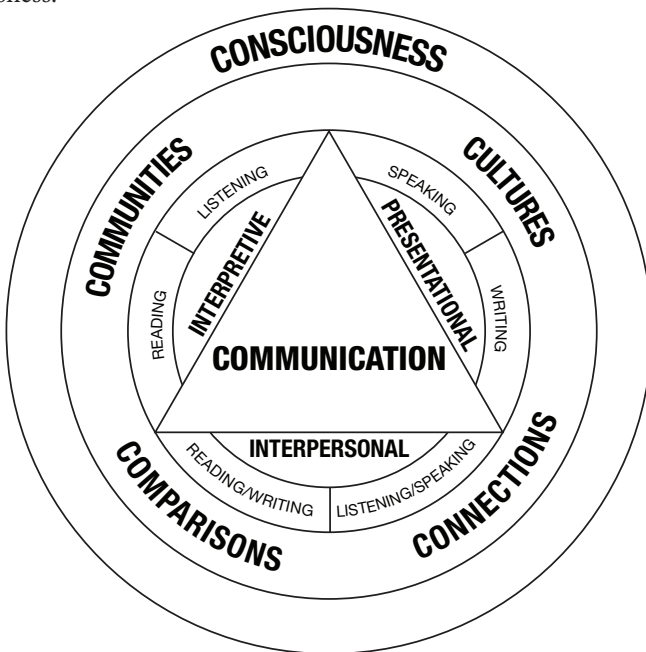


Figure 1. Reconceptualization of World Readiness Standard's 5C's into 5C + 1 by Juan Antonio Trujillo (2009, p. 379), reprinted with permission.

This reconceptualization and modification of the 5Cs of the WRS to create what Trujillo has termed 5C + 1, allows us to view these elements from a perspective that is more appropriate to HL learners. As communication is at the epicenter of the image, it is considered central to linguistic activities and the identity of the HL learner. As one pushes out from the center of the image, we notice that these linguistic activities can take the shape of many different modes and engage different skills. Importantly, Trujillo's encircling of these modes and skills with the other four Cs indicate that these linguistic activities are not separated from the concepts of culture, communities, comparisons and connections for HL learners. Rather these notions shape and are shaped by the diverse forms of communication in which HL learners engage on a daily basis; these notions surround and flow through the HL learner's identity and existence. Their linguistic performance is thus not separate from who



they are and how they see themselves when they interact with others. As one reaches the outer ring of the image, the addition of the notion of “Consciousness” reminds us that languages and their speakers are not always treated equally in society. Trujillo’s inclusion of this element recognizes the need for teachers and students to be aware of how the language is used and perceived outside of the classroom, and to foster the development of the other Cs that are not only enhanced by this awareness, but with an aim toward promoting equity.

#### **Four erroneous beliefs regarding HL learners**

There are several persistent, often implicit, “stock stories” associated with the Spanish language classroom that represent erroneous assumptions about language teaching and SHL learners (e.g. Delgado, 1989). Teachers’ belief in stock stories provides structure to what they perceive to be social and moral realities which, when left unchecked, ultimately perpetuate unwarranted stereotypes and hinder teachers from embracing a more open view of SHL learners.

The first mistaken belief is that SHL learners arrive with deficient knowledge about Spanish when measured on native speaker norms (see explanations in Lynch, 2012; Pascual y Cabo & Rothman, 2012; Valdés, 2005). Such a view assumes that SHLs’ linguistic knowledge is haphazard, unstable, and represents an obstacle to their linguistic, academic, and professional advancement. A second, and related faulty assumption is belief in idealized hypothetical communities of Spanish speakers (e.g. Carroll, Motha & Price, 2008; Fassett & Warren, 2004; Flores Flores, 2014; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Leeman, 2012; Valdés, 2005). To this end, some teachers feel that the objective of the classroom is to prepare HL learners to interact with unnamed future interlocutors, rather than real people that currently reside in their Spanish speaking communities. A third hindrance is the tendency to hold shallow views of real culture (e.g. Garrett-Rucks, 2016; Gay, 2002; Guest, 2002; Moncada Linares 2016; Nugent & Catalano, 2015; Trujillo, 2009). A misunderstanding of the nature and complexity of culture in general and a failure to recognize the diversity within and across Spanish-speaking communities in particular means that there is often little opportunity for SHL learners to make meaningful connections with the classroom. A final limitation is the misconception that the study of language is apolitical, devoid of prejudice, pretentiousness or injustice (e.g. Correa, 2011; Felix, 2009; Macedo, 2019; Suárez, 2002). In order to begin to adjust one’s view of SHL learners, we need to dismantle the faulty viewpoints on which they are founded.

#### **False belief #1: SHL learners arrive with deficient knowledge about Spanish.**

The first misconception regarding the linguistic skills of HL learners is perhaps the most persistent, that their repertoire of Spanish is somehow imperfect, impure, undeveloped or in some way deficient. Some of the earliest textbooks purportedly created to address the needs of SHL learners fanned these flames. Authors emphasized the corrective nature of the pedagogical approach as designed to eliminate “...la tentación de emplear anglicismos, arcaísmos y otros vicios de dicción [...the temptation to use anglicisms, archaisms and other vices of diction]” (Barker, 1972, p. iii). Such instruction was meant to go beyond a purification of one’s grammar; it

was to address issues of HL identity which the author deemed illegitimately formed through his/her lived experiences. Through the erasure of the SHL learners' connection to their informally-learned linguistic and cultural knowledge, the author hoped that "...el estudiante se adelante dejando a un lado vicios de gramática y a la vez ideas falsas acerca de su herencia hispana [...the student will advance leaving behind both vices of grammar as well as false ideas regarding his/her Hispanic heritage]" (Barker, 1972, p. iii) which the author termed "barbarismos [barbarisms]."

SHL textbooks produced during the subsequent 25 years commonly carried this legacy forward, albeit more subtly, by continuing to disregard and deny SHL learners as legitimate speakers of Spanish. In Leeman and Martínez's (2007) review of a dozen SHL texts produced during this time period, it was found that the objective of these materials was "not to improve attitudes regarding the Spanish that students speak, and certainly not to critically examine its subordination, but rather, to take students' particular circumstances into account in order to better teach them an ideologically elevated variety of Spanish" (p. 48).

The attitudes displayed in texts and/or perpetuated in classrooms through other means presume that SHL learners have acquired linguistic skills in rogue fashion, beyond the reach of rules and norms. Sociolinguists, however, know this assumption to be patently false. There are no "accidents" in acquiring a language in a natural environment. Individuals, perceive, process, and organize language in purposeful fashion whether done consciously or below the level of conscious thought. Languages do not develop in a vacuum; rather linguistic knowledge, such as that noted as part of BLC is acquired through exposure and interaction with others in real-life contexts.

Well-known examples of children learning English producing forms such as "goed" and "holded" do not illustrate a lack of rules, rather a lack of knowing, at that time, all of the exceptions to a rule that the child has created to make sense of how language is put together (see Jackendorf, 1994, for a broader explanation). Moreover, because adults understand the communicative intent behind these forms, they are not alarmed and dismayed by their presence and may not be sufficiently motivated to offer a correction. In fact, studies on first language acquisition have demonstrated how little impact direct, overt correction has on the child's reformulation of their own rules since they are not held at a conscious, explicit level (see again, Jackendorf, 1994 for summaries of this research). Finally, the use of words like "goed" and "holded" is seen as a stage in a child's linguistic development, and children who use such words are not viewed as linguistically condemned or irrevocably impaired in their ability to acquire forms that are representative of an adult model.

In similar fashion, SHL learners reproduce forms commonly found in their environment or create forms to fill in gaps in their knowledge based on an internalized set of rules grounded in this early exposure. What is different about SHL learners is that these unconscious rules regarding Spanish may have become infused with their understanding of English. There are often no hard and fast cognitive boundaries that are formed between the languages in one's repertoire that are prevalent in one's community, particularly when they are acquired early and to some extent simultaneously (e.g. Rothman, 2009). When placed in new situations, such as moving from a casual conversation in an informal environment to a formal presentation in a language classroom, SHL learners may try out novel forms of words and structures reflective

of the creative amalgamation of community linguistic models to which they have been exposed suffused with English.

The dilemma of the Spanish language teacher, then, is to resolve the conflict between the view of a “standard” and “community-based” varieties of language. At the heart of this perceived impasse is the notion that a “standard” variety is superior over the other. Nothing could be further from the truth. Speakers of all languages have a linguistic repertoire that adjusts to differences in speaker, circumstance and goals, and reflects a lifetime of internalized rules and norms learned through experience; no two speakers will be exactly alike. Holding fast to the existence of a linguistic holy grail in the form of a single “standard” only represents a highly romanticized notion of Spanish, one that can be easily invalidated by spending time in community settings where Spanish-speakers interact, watching any number of programs on television, listening to modern music or reading how characters interact with one another in narratives. Perpetuating the false notion of the existence of a single “standard” variety of Spanish and by extension, to holding SHL learners accountable to an artificial ideal, only serves to obscure the rich and diverse linguistic reality of Spanish-speaking communities in and out of the U.S. (e.g. Leeman, 2005)

A corollary to the theory of a single, universal linguistic “standard” is often expressed by language educators who have been schooled in Spanish-speaking countries who attempt to present their academic experiences as justification for adhering to particular linguistic norms (e.g. Austin, 2019). This skewed view not only attempts to invalidate the authentic experiences of SHL learners, it exemplifies Freire’s notion of “cultural invasion” whereby an outside entity, penetrates the authentic context of a community and begins to impose its norms, standards and world view (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). This perspective is denounced by Macedo (2019) who notes that

In order to avoid the violence of cultural invasion, foreign language teaching must move beyond the false and racist notion of “purity” and be informed by radical language pedagogy that respects and celebrates the language practices that students bring to school and makes concrete such values as solidarity, social responsibility and creativity (p. 12).

A presumed inferiority of the language and culture and the community from which they derive leads to SHL learners being questioned and judged more harshly despite their often greater wealth of authentic knowledge than L2 learners. Rather than looking to the prescriptive philosophies espoused in textbooks, or imposing standards from a cultural context that is far removed in time and space from that of the lived realities of today’s SHL learners, language educators would be better served by gaining an understanding of the linguistic and cultural influences that have molded and continue to shape SHL learners’ knowledge and their connection to the Spanish language in and out of the classroom setting.

### **False belief #2: The idealization of hypothetical communities.**

Romanticized notions of linguistic standards and purity are often coupled with idealized beliefs about the communities with whom SHL learners may potentially interact. Such beliefs frequently reference hypothetical, rather than authentic language communities and are often framed as a rationalization for the resolute adherence to

certain norms, standards, and values of pedagogical practice. Flores Flores (2014) notes that these notions spring from presumptions or stereotypes teachers make regarding the learner community “*La idealización del imaginario de la lengua-cultura objeto de aprendizaje suele venir con su contraparte: la formación de clichés sobre las deficiencias reales o hiperbolizadas de la cultura del aprendiente, sin que medie una valoración objetiva ni una reflexión sobre esta posición [The idealization of the imagined form of the language-culture that is the object of learning is usually accompanied by its counterpart: the formation of clichés regarding the real or hyperbolized deficiencies of the culture of the learner without taking into consideration either an objective valuation or reflection regarding this point of view]*” (p. 187).

These unrealistic impressions and subsequent expectations come in many forms. Some teachers may express such beliefs as wanting to prepare SHL learners to be able to interact with a businessperson from another country. Others may state that they do not want to hold a “double standard” or a “lower standard” for SHL learners as they do for L2 learners. Other guises of this rationalization include wanting SHL learners to seamlessly integrate with or at least “not stand out” to native speakers from other countries. Finally, teachers may profess that they do not want SHL learners to “fail” in becoming “true” native speakers.

As with the idealized notions of language, these conceptualizations of SHL learners’ social and conversational needs are more fanciful than real and are imbued with a healthy dose of elitism. By virtue of their cultural and linguistic circumstance, SHL learners are already members of legitimate Spanish-speaking communities prior to arriving to the classroom. As such they already negotiate relationships with family and friends, participate in cultural events, perform everyday tasks of taking children to school, patronizing businesses, getting medical and legal advice, etc. Their roles, identities and linguistic skills shift and adapt to all manner of circumstances and interlocutors that they encounter along the way such that “HL learners may use language to index hybrid social and cultural identities, a process that reflects belonging to and moving in and out of ‘simultaneously-existing multiple groups’” (Leeman & Serafini, 2016, p. 59). Thus, just as a SHL learners’ system of rules regarding language are not without organization, the ways in which they engage with other members of their community in different circumstances are purposeful and exhibit community conventions; language educators should thus seek ways to bridge, not obstruct, a path for the community-based norms and customs to be held in equal esteem in the classroom setting.

Relatedly, it is critical that language educators be aware of the starkly different connection between language and identity for L2 and SHL learners. While L2 learners can readily assume and cast-off a façade of being a Spanish speaker for the purposes of class exercises without suffering any social or psychological penalties, the same cannot be said for SHL learners. The effects of privileging the norms of an idealized language or a hypothesized community can be particularly damaging to SHL learners when aspects of their home language, culture and identity have been placed in conflict or denigrated in the classroom. No linguistic or academic advantage is to be gained by separating or erasing the authentic linguistic and cultural experiences of the SHL learner in favor of mythical, prospective encounters with an imagined community of speakers. Promulgating such a view only creates an

unnecessary divide between the classroom and the communities from which SHL learners originate.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that an individual's pronunciation and use of vocabulary or unique turns of phrase often are used by others as an index of a speaker's origin in any language (e.g. Lippi-Green, 1997). Only when there is a presumption of inferiority associated with linguistic features is there a belief that a speaker would desire to conceal his or her identity. Given that SHL learners effectively use their linguistic skills in everyday situations, there would be little benefit to them to mask their identity in most circumstances, and therefore there should be no presumption that SHL learners should need to attempt to do so.

### **False belief #3: Holding shallow views of real culture.**

The negation of the legitimacy of U.S. Spanish-speaking communities is often coupled with or supplanted by a shallow understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures in general. Textbooks aid in promoting these superficial notions by relegating the presentation of culture to side bars and sprinkling in profiles of famous people, historical events, traditional celebrations and foods between explanations of grammar and lists of vocabulary. Some classrooms may add folkloric traditions of dress, dance and music culture the form of posters or designated days of cultural celebration. While the intention of these efforts is to enrich learners' knowledge regarding the communities where Spanish is spoken, the reality is that this fragmented, tenuous presentation instead fosters the essentialization of culture rather than its appreciation from a deep, meaningful perspective (Garrett-Rucks, 2016).

True culture lies well beyond a collection of products and performances which represent only the tip of what Edward T. Hall (1976) conceived of as a cultural iceberg. While such surface manifestations illustrate a small fraction of what culture is, the remainder is held well below the surface of awareness. While often oblivious, even to the individuals that form part of the culture, these beliefs, values, and thought patterns are often associated with deeply held emotions and are much more subjective and resistant to change (Hall, 1976). These deeper aspects of culture include conceptualizations of time, the purpose and pace of work, the ways in which decisions are made that affect individuals and groups, the conceptualization of self, the notion of illness and approach to healing, the roles of individuals according to their gender, age, status, kinship, etc. just to name a few. Thus, far from clearly observable surface features, true culture is a complex, multifaceted, system of implicitly embedded values, traditions and perspectives that guide patterns of belief and behavior.

An additional misconception regarding culture is that while there may be variations in the manifestation of the surface features, there is a presumed commonality of the deeper aspects (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). However, it should not be assumed that because individuals from different places share a commonly understood language, that they share the same points of view or that they hold the same values and beliefs or behave in similar fashion in reaction to the same circumstances. This is particularly relevant as language educators at times may attempt to view SHL learners as mirrors, either wholly or fractured, of the heritage cultures from which their family is descended, rather than as individuals with unique personalities that have absorbed viewpoints from multiple sources. As Michael Guest (2002) reminds us

Culture, therefore, should be seen as an interplay between social and personal schemas, since when we carry out classroom management we are aware of and deal primarily with specific personalities and specialized group dynamics, not national or racial cultures *en masse*. There is no culture that does not have its share of rebels, the fashionably bored, the self-obsessed, the overly friendly, the terminally sulen, and so on. It is these characters, not monolithic cultures, that we regularly confront in our classrooms. (p. 157)

Focusing on only the surface features of a culture does little to acknowledge the significance of cultures at large, nor recognize their complexity. Similarly, envisioning SHL learners as uncritical embodiments of essentialized, or stigmatized cultural features, alienates them from the Spanish language classroom and fails to recognize them as individuals who comprise a unique, yet intricate system of linguistic and cultural qualities.

#### **False belief #4: Language is apolitical.**

In language classrooms, there is a common belief that the study of language is nearly universally constructive, enlightening, fosters tolerance, and is not burdened by controversy. This view, however firmly believed, is somewhat limited and overly simplistic in its perspective, particularly with respect to SHL learners. As a base concept, teachers need to first recognize that HL learners in general and SHL in particular are the survivors of several decades of failed societal and institutional attempts to eradicate their home languages (Austin, 2019; Macedo, 2019). Decades of societal contempt for speaking Spanish in public or on school grounds have been manifested as symbolic violence or open hostility ranging from microaggressions, to legal restrictions of work and residence, to arrest, to school segregation, to disproportionate relegation to special education classes, and to physical and emotional punishments (e.g. MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000, 2013). These abuses represent generations of mistreatment that are not overcome quickly and lightly, particularly if they are not acknowledged either as part of the foundation of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the learners in the classroom or as part of the continued prejudice that SHL learners face outside of the classroom. The “co-naturalization of linguistic and racial categories results in the profound social fact that populations come to look like language and sound like a race across cultural contexts” (Rosa, 2019, p. 122).

Classrooms therefore should not be bastions of cultural neutrality. Gay (2002) notes that such a perspective leads to the pointed circumvention of controversial topics such as

...racism, historical atrocities, powerlessness, and hegemony...[and promotes the] decontextualizing [of] women, their issues, and their actions from their race and ethnicity; ignoring poverty; and emphasizing factual information while minimizing other kinds of knowledge (such as values, attitudes, feelings, experiences, and ethics) (p. 108).

Failure to acknowledge or address controversial topics in language classrooms is not analogous to neutrality since “[a]ll too often heritage language programs may reproduce hegemonic power relations in promoting a dominant heritage without regard to the actual cultural diversity of its students” (Austin, 2019, p. 138). Silence on such topics implies, at a minimum, an unwarranted acceptance of discriminatory



perspectives and unfair practices which results in the complicity in the continuation of injustices. Confronting such societal inequities not only raises the *conscientização* of all learners, it empowers learners to consider ways to become agents of change for the betterment of society.

To provide such empowerment for her students, María Sweeney (1997) enacted such practices with fourth graders in New Jersey as they engaged in lessons regarding apartheid. In describing her overall approach, she explains,

I ask students to consider alternative views of events past and present. I ask them to look for missing or silenced voices in the materials we read and to consistently ask of what they read, hear, or witness:

Is this fair? Is this right? Does this hurt anyone? Is this the whole story? Who benefits and who suffers? Why is it like this?

Through such questions I seek “to give students the tools to critique every idea that legitimates social inequality, every idea that teaches them they are incapable of imagining and building a fundamentally equal and just society (Christensen, 1994, p. 8)” (p. 279).

Such an approach is at the core of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) approaches to teaching which seek to “[empower] students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural and historic references to convey knowledge, impart skills, and to change attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 13). Embracing such a perspective implies that language teachers will integrate genuine scenarios that reflect diverse, yet authentic points of view, provide L2 and SHL learners with the opportunity to challenge conventional points of view, and allow all learners to grow in their linguistic and cultural knowledge in a relatable and contextualized fashion in one course or across several (e.g. Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2016; Moreno & MacGregor-Mendoza, 2019).

Achieving the goal of becoming a more culturally and linguistically responsive language teacher is not beyond the realm of possibility, but it does require moving beyond traditional mindsets and standard activities. The acknowledged qualities of CLR teachers are that they

(a) are socioculturally conscious, (b) have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, (c) see themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing about change to make schools more equitable, (d) understand how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction, (e) know about the lives of their students, and (f) design instruction that builds on what their students already know while stretching them beyond the familiar (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 20).

### **Initiating the reframing of old paradigms with respect to SHL learners**

As a society, we do not seem to know how to educate a diverse population well. Nor do we collectively seem to know how to approach many other challenges that relate directly to equity and diversity such as distributing resources in ways that work for diverse communities or

communicating across lines of difference without regarding the differences themselves as a problem (Sleeter & Flores-Carmona, 2017, p. 7).

Shedding notions that are informally or formally believed is not an easy path as it requires a reconfiguration of the concepts that often have guided one's philosophies and approach toward teaching and learning. Nonetheless, new methodologies cannot be adopted fully or effectively without a critical re-evaluation of one's own system of beliefs regarding language, power, culture, identity and communities (e.g. Guest, 2002; Hollie, 2017; Kubota, 2004; López, 2011; Matias, 2013; Peterson, 2014; Sleeter, 2001). Failing to conduct such an examination will only promote successive cycles of half-hearted implementations and missed opportunities for achieving real change, all of which will result in ineffective outcomes and continual disappointment. Nonetheless, the growing number of SHL learners that are enrolling in K-20 classrooms obligates our commitment to such a goal.

The heart of a language does not reside in the mechanical features and system of rules that form its structures. Rather, it is found in the ways that people interact with one another in their own communities to joke, to barter, to praise, to educate and connect with one another to express love, joy, sympathy, remorse, and a host of other sentiments, which work to establish trust and friendships. Accordingly, SHL learners are products of such vibrant communities, not damaged goods that need to be either discounted or fixed, weighed and measured against a set of idealized notions. Instead, they are the bearers of linguistic and cultural treasures that are anxiously waiting to be revealed and examined.

To foster the acceptance and legitimacy of SHL learners' Spanish language use and to further their language education pursuit, we must make efforts to bridge local Latino communities and Spanish language programs. Through connecting our classrooms, and ourselves, to the variety of skills, knowledge, and cultures from the local Hispanic community and listening to the issues that affect them, we provide the type of relationship-building linguistic opportunities that foster learners' interactional competence.

The need to enhance the intercultural and interpersonal communication skills of all learners, starting at beginning levels of language instruction, is described by Fantini and Garrett-Rucks (2016) as crucial "...[to enhance] learners' ability to see beyond their own paradigm and to reflect upon their own singular way of seeing the world" (p. 6). Affording learners linguistic opportunities to deal with racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural differences, in a positive way—to understand and appreciate them—prepares our learners to push back against misguided impressions of Latino communities that propagate societal inequities. If we have any hope to "engag[e] students in deep reflections to raise their critical awareness around important and sensitive issues such as language ideologies and the power structures that have shaped students' beliefs about their own languages, cultures and identities [in order to] empower students' ethnolinguistic identity as part of their lives in the United States and as part of their global citizenship." (Parra, 2016, pp. 166-167), then we must be committed to embarking on a similar journey ourselves first.



## References

- Austin, T. (2019). Towards decolonizing heritage language teacher education. In D. Macedo (Ed.), *Decolonizing foreign language education: The misteaching of English and other colonial languages* (pp. 131–151). New York: Routledge.
- Barker, M. E. (1972). *Español para el bilingüe [Spanish for the bilingual]*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Beaudrie, S. M. (2015). Approaches to language variation: Goals and objectives of the Spanish heritage language syllabus. *Heritage Language Journal*, 12(1), 1–21.
- Beaudrie, S. M., Ducar, C., & Potowski, K. (2014). *Heritage language teaching: Research and practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Carroll, S., Motha, S., & Price, J. N. (2008). Accessing imagined communities and reinscribing regimes of truth. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 5(3), 165–191.
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2018). Heritage language education: A proposal for the next 50 years. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51, 152–168.
- Correa, M. (2011). Advocating for critical pedagogical approaches to teaching Spanish as a heritage language: Some considerations. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(2), 308–320.
- Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, 87(8), 2411–2441.
- del Valle, J. (2014). The politics of normativity and globalization: Which Spanish in the classroom? *Modern Language Journal*, 98(1), 358–372.
- Fantini, A. E. & Garrett-Rucks, P. (2016). Expanding our educational goals: Exploring intercultural competence. *Dimension Special Issue: Focus on Intercultural Competence*, 51, 2016, 6–21.
- Fassett, D. L., & Warren, J. T. (2004). “You get pushed back”: The strategic rhetoric of educational success and failure in higher education. *Communication Education*, 53(1), 21–39.
- Felix, A. (2009). The adult heritage Spanish speaker in the foreign language classroom: A phenomenography. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(2), 145–162.
- Flores Flores, O. (2014). Mi acento y mi horizonte de comunicación [My accent and my view of communication]. *Fuentes Humanísticas*, 49, 181–194.
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149–171.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Garrett-Rucks, P. (2016). *Intercultural competence in instructed language learning: Bridging theory and practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Gadotti, M., & Torres, C. A. (2009). Paulo Freire: Education for development. *Development and Change*, 40(6), 1255–1267.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106–116.
- Getz, L. M. (1997). *Schools of their own: The education of Hispanos in New Mexico, 1850-1940*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Guest, M. (2002). A critical ‘checkbook’ for culture teaching and learning. *ELT Journal*, 56(2), 154–161.

- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Holguín Mendoza, C. (2018). Critical language awareness (CLA) for Spanish heritage language programs: Implementing a complete curriculum. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 12(2), 65–79.
- Hollie, S. (2017). *Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning: Classroom practices for student success*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2011). Language proficiency in native and nonnative speakers: An agenda for research and suggestions for second-language assessment. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 8(3), 229–249.
- Jackendorf, R. (1994). *Patterns in the mind: Language and human nature*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kubota, R. (2004). The politics of cultural difference in second language education. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1(1), 21–39.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2017). The (r)evolution will not be standardized: Teacher education, hip hop pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 141–156). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Leeman, J. (2005). Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 35–45.
- Leeman, J. (2012). Investigating language ideologies in Spanish as a heritage language. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. A. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 43–59). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Leeman, J., & Martínez, G. (2007). From identity to commodity: Ideologies of Spanish in heritage language textbooks. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 4(1), 35–65.
- Leeman, J., & Serafini, E. J. (2016). Sociolinguistics for heritage language educators and students: A model for critical translanguing competence. In M. A. Fairclough & S. M. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative strategies for heritage language teaching: A practical guide for the classroom* (pp. 56–79). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. London: Routledge.
- López, A. E. (2011). Culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy in diverse English classrooms: A case study of a secondary English teacher's activism and agency. *English Teaching*, 10(4), 75–93.
- Lynch, A. (2012). Key concepts for theorizing Spanish as a heritage language. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. A. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 79–97). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Macedo, D. (2019). Rupturing the yoke of colonialism in foreign language education: An introduction. In D. Macedo (Ed.), *Decolonizing foreign language education: The misteaching of English and other colonial languages* (pp. 1–49). New York: Routledge.

- MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2000). Aquí no se habla español [Spanish is not spoken here]: Stories of linguistic repression in Southwest schools. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24(4), 333-345.
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2013). US immigration policies and their effects on Spanish speaking communities. *International Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest*, 32(2): 111-131.
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P., & Moreno, G. (2016). Connecting SHL students with the community through service learning. *Heritage Language Journal*, 13(3), 405-433.
- Martínez, G. (2003). Classroom based dialect awareness in heritage language instruction: A critical applied linguistic approach. *Heritage Language Journal*, 1(1), 44-57.
- Matias, C. E. (2013). Check yo'self before you wreck yo'self and our kids: Counterstories from culturally responsive White teachers?...to culturally responsive White teachers! *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 68-81.
- Mitchell, K. (2013). Race, difference, meritocracy, and English: Majoritarian stories in the education of secondary multilingual learners. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16(3), 339-364.
- Moncada Linares, S. (2016). Othering: Towards a critical cultural awareness in the language classroom. *HOW*, 23(1), 129-146.
- Montrul, S., & Perpiñan, S. (2011). Assessing differences and similarities between instructed heritage language learners and L2 learners in their knowledge of Spanish tense-aspect and mood (TAM) morphology. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(1), 90-133.
- Moreno, G., & MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2019). Language, culture and service: Innovative strategies for bridging SHL classrooms and communities through service-learning. In G. Thompson & S. Alvord, (Eds.), *Contact, community, and connections: Current approaches to Spanish in multilingual populations* (pp. 277-304). Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2018). Digest of education statistics: 2017. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_209.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_209.10.asp)
- National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages*. 4th ed. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Nugent, K., & Catalano, T. (2015). Critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom. *NECTFL Review*, 75, 15-30.
- Parra, M. L. (2016). Critical approaches to heritage language instruction: How to foster students' critical consciousness. In M. A. Fairclough & S. M. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative strategies for heritage language teaching: A practical guide for the classroom* (pp. 166-190). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Pascual y Cabo, D., & Rothman, J. (2012). The (IL)logical problem of heritage speaker bilingualism and incomplete acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(4), 450-455.
- Peterson, D. S. (2014). A culturally responsive alternative to "drill and kill" literacy strategies: deep roots, civil rights. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16(4), 234-239.
- Potowski, K., Jegerski, J., & Morgan-Short, K. (2009). The effects of instruction on linguistic development in Spanish heritage language speakers. *Language Learning*, 59(3), 537-579.

- Rosa, J. (2019). *Looking like a language, sounding like a race: Raciolinguistic ideologies and the learning of Latinidad*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rothman, J. (2009). Understanding the nature and outcomes of early bilingualism: Romance languages as heritage languages. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13(2), 153–163.
- San Miguel, Jr., G., & Donato, R. (2010). Latino education in twentieth-century America: A brief history. In E. G. Murillo, S. A. Villenas, R. T. Galván, J. Sánchez, C. Martínez, & M. Machado-Casas (Eds.), *Handbook of Latinos and education theory, research, and practice* (pp. 27–62).
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94–106.
- Sleeter, C. E., & Flores Carmona, J. (2017). *Un-standardizing curriculum: Multicultural teaching in the standards-based classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Suárez, D. (2002). The paradox of linguistic hegemony and the maintenance of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 23(6), 512–530.
- Sweeney, M. (1997). “No easy road to freedom”: Critical literacy in a fourth-grade classroom. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 13(3), 279–290.
- Trujillo, J. A. (2009). Con todos [With everyone]: Using learning communities to promote intellectual and social engagement in the Spanish curriculum. In M. Lacorte & J. Leeman (Eds.), *Español en Estados Unidos y otros contextos de contacto: Sociolingüística, ideología y pedagogía* [Spanish in the United States and other contact contexts: Sociolinguistics, ideology and pedagogy] (pp. 369–395). Madrid: Iberoamericana.
- Valdés, G. (1989). Teaching Spanish to Hispanic bilinguals: A look at oral proficiency testing and the proficiency movement. *Hispania*, 72(2), 392–401.
- Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(3), 410–426.
- Valencia, R. R. (1997). Conceptualizing the notion of deficit thinking. In R. R. Valencia (Ed.), *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (pp. 1–12). Oxford, UK: Routledge Falmer.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Re-thinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20–32.
- Zyzik, E. (2016). Toward a prototype model of the heritage language learner: Understanding strengths and needs. In M. A. Fairclough & S. M. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative strategies for heritage language teaching: A practical guide for the classroom* (pp. 19–38). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

## University Students' Experiences in Spanish Heritage Language Programs in the Midwest

Jason A. Kemp

University of Wisconsin-Madison

### *Abstract*

*Historically, Spanish heritage language (SHL) scholarship has had connections to communities with established Spanish-speaking populations (Rivera-Mills, 2012). Regional SHL course offerings expanded in tandem with increases in Spanish-speaking populations, and little is known about students' experiences in these new and emerging SHL programs. This study investigated the experiences of college students enrolled in SHL courses in the Midwest. Findings suggested a disconnect between the self-reported, sociolinguistic needs of students and the curriculum presented in their SHL classes. For example, some participants believed a link to future careers was missing from the SHL curriculum. Pedagogical implications and future research are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *heritage language learners (HLLs), Spanish, curriculum, student-centered perspectives, phenomenography*

### **Background**

Heritage language learners (HLLs) have “a personal, emotional connection to a language other than English... there is a link to that language that is important” (Webb, 2003). As such, students enrolled in heritage language (HL) courses bring with them a gamut of experiences, skills and knowledge of the HL that is often linked to notions of family, friends, community(ies), identity and culture(s) for these students (García, 2005). This unique connection to the target language (Spanish, in this study) stands in contradistinction to the experiences of traditional second language (L2) learners since these students are often introduced to a L2 via formal classroom instruction. For most L2 students, their journey begins in the classroom where they can develop an appreciation for an L2 that fosters an integrative approach to language learning (Noels, 2001). However, HL students' bilingual trajectory begins at home where the language (e.g., Spanish, French, etc.) functions as a mode of communication among family members. Hence, it seems critical that educators and researchers listen to and document the voices of students enrolled in HL courses as their prior experiences with the language might inform HL curriculum and pedagogy in innovative ways.

Research in the field of HL education is not a new area of research in the United States (U.S.); however, the term *heritage language* and its importance in research, policy and practice only began to gain traction in the 1990s in the U.S. (García, 2005; Hornberger & Wang, 2008) when discussions about school-based language policies

and practices became a part of national discourse. Kondo-Brown (2003) noted there has not been sufficient research on the efficacy of the majority of HL programs at the university-level. Furthermore, as qualitative studies in HL education have not deeply explored the perspectives of students enrolled in HL programs (classes designed for students who were exposed to a HL in the home), researchers have called for an expansion in this area of HL studies in the U.S. (Alarcón, 2010; Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relación-Pastor, 2009; Ducar, 2008; Valdés, 2001; Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2008).

Moreover, current research has not adequately explored Spanish heritage language (SHL) programs in certain areas of the U.S. (Potowski, 2016). In the fall of 2010, Beaudrie (2012) distributed an online survey with the goal of creating profiles of SHL programs in the U.S. at universities with at least five percent Hispanic/Latinx enrollment. The Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Nebraska, and Wisconsin) had 20 programs which were 37% of the 169 identified SHL programs. Fourteen of the 20 programs in the Midwest were in Illinois, which was one of the ten states with the highest number of SHL programs (Beaudrie, 2012). If you remove Illinois and its 26 universities that met Beaudrie's criteria, the other nine states in the Midwest had six SHL programs across 28 universities. Few studies have focused on college-aged HLLs of Spanish residing in different communities in the Midwest (see exceptions Velázquez, 2015; Velázquez, Garrido, & Millán, 2014). None of the participants in this current study were students in Illinois, while several participants were students at universities that did not offer SHL courses when data from Beaudrie's (2012) study was published. Perspectives from students enrolled in new and emerging SHL programs in the Midwest could provide insight into the regional needs of HLLs of Spanish.

The present study is phenomenographic in nature as it used a second-order approach to research (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 1988; Orgill, 2007). First-order (etic) approaches, by design, focus on the point of view of the researcher, while a second-order, or emic, perspective strives to focus on the participants. For phenomenographic research, this experiential or second-order perspective seeks to "characterize how something is apprehended, thought about, or perceived" (Marton, 1988, p. 181). A second-order approach encourages the study of how a group of people experiences a phenomenon (Orgill, 2007). Thus, the purpose of this study, which was part of a larger research project, was to examine a specific phenomenon: the experiences of bilingual speakers of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging post-secondary SHL classes in the Midwest, an under-researched region in SHL studies.

## **Literature Review**

This research aimed to fill a gap in the literature by examining the lived experiences of bilingual users of Spanish enrolled in post-secondary SHL courses. Specifically, the researcher consulted and included the voices of five students in the Midwest as they represent HLLs of Spanish that have not frequently been included in contributions to the body of knowledge on SHL in the U.S. The perspectives of students enrolled in new and emerging SHL programs in the Midwest, and other similar geographic regions that do not have long-standing Spanish-speaking populations, are of importance as the aforementioned programs are a growing norm in the U.S. (Beaudrie, 2012; Potowski, 2016). These students' self-reported needs could influence SHL curriculum and pedagogy in the participants' institutions and across similar contexts.



### *Exclusion and Inclusion in Research*

Historically, the research dedicated to SHL education has not investigated or accounted for students' perspectives on, evaluations of and experiences in SHL programs. As detailed in this section, the implementation of HL programs tends to privilege course design while making little or no mention of the students enrolled in HL programs and their language needs, backgrounds and individual linguistic profiles. The beneficial and productive ways in which HL students' classroom language development experiences can inform program design (or modification) are often not addressed.

First, Potowski (2002) conducted a questionnaire and focus group-based case study with the goal of understanding the choices 25 Spanish-speaking students made about course selection and their classroom experiences in 100- and 200-level Spanish world language classes. Potowski (2002) noted the emergence of three themes. The first theme described students' negative self-evaluation of their Spanish as most of them had received little to no formal schooling in Spanish (p. 37). The second theme focused on bilingual students' comparisons to their L2 classmates in which the participants recognized advantages and disadvantages associated with being a heritage speaker of Spanish (p. 38). The third theme that emerged labeled teaching assistants as language authorities who taught *proper* Spanish and provided corrective feedback on the bilingual students' work that was deemed problematic (pp. 38-39). The researcher concluded her study with recommendations for Spanish language instructors and departments based on the insight provided by the Spanish-speaking participants.

For her study, Alarcón (2010) used survey research to learn about the "language behaviors and attitudes" (p. 272) as well as backgrounds of five HLLs enrolled in an advanced SHL course. The participants' responses yielded a profile of advanced Spanish-speaking students (p. 278), demonstrated similarities and differences between advanced and lower-level Spanish-speaking bilingual students (pp. 278-80), and provided suggestions for pedagogy for courses designed for Spanish-speaking students (p. 280-81). Alarcón's research provided us with a greater comprehension of the affordances of reaching out to HLLs of Spanish that researchers and educators seek to better understand.

Felix (2009) utilized a phenomenographic approach to investigate participants' lives in the U.S. as a heritage speaker of Spanish; she also delved into participants' experiences in Spanish world language classes (p. 147). Felix (2009) collected data via a questionnaire, and then she conducted focus group interviews (p. 148). The researcher's analysis of the data produced two thematic headings for her question about life in the U.S. as a heritage speaker of Spanish (p. 149) and three thematic headings for her research question concerned with HLLs enrolled in Spanish world language courses (p. 154). Students' reasons for taking Spanish classes were both economic (advancement in the workplace) and personal (reconnect with family and culture) (Felix, 2009, p. 155). In the classroom, HLLs were sometimes viewed as experts in the Spanish language and hence, they become "instructors" in their classes while their literacy needs were ignored (Felix, 2009, p. 161). Some Spanish-speaking students felt empowered by the task of increasing literacy skills in a language with which they were already familiar; other students expressed feelings of shame and inadequacy when confronted with the preconceptions of their instructors and classmates. The

author argued that HLLs' participation in world language classes has the potential to inhibit the expansion of literacy skills in Spanish when they are limited by activities not designed for HLLs (p. 161). Felix (2009) called for more SHL studies that research the regional needs of HLLs in order to contribute to the realization of appropriate approaches for the teaching and learning of SHL. Finally, this study of experiential knowledge incorporated voices that, historically, have been ignored. Felix recognized the importance of eliminating mismatches between the goals of an HL program and the goals/needs of the students served by the HL program.

### *Classes Designed for Heritage Language Learners*

The limited research that has investigated Spanish-speaking students' experiences in and their understandings of HL classrooms demonstrates that Spanish-speakers are uniquely positioned in HL classrooms to provide insights about the value, effectiveness and responsiveness of curriculum materials, approaches and practices. Prior research has not adequately accounted for the ways in which bilingual students' experiences in HL courses could inform curriculum and pedagogy in HL programs in the U.S. This section gives attention to Spanish-speaking students enrolled in SHL classes and the pedagogical implications of their experiences in these particular types of courses.

The impetus for Ducar's (2008) study with 150 Spanish-speaking students was her observation of the influential nature of school on language attitudes (p. 416). The results of the study focused on the importance of keeping students' goals in mind when designing curriculum for SHL programs (p. 422); thus, Ducar called for the inclusion of student voices in "the debate surrounding the use and teaching of language in the Spanish heritage language classroom" (p. 425). As such, it is fundamental that the goals of a SHL program align with the goals of its students.

For their case study, Schwarzer and Petrón (2005) interviewed three HLLs of Spanish in order to learn about the reality of these students' study of SHL. Through emergent thematic analysis, the researchers detailed the four themes as expressed by the participants: 1) critique of Spanish classes; 2) self-assessment of their proficiency in Spanish; 3) familial reasons for studying Spanish; and, 4) cultural ties as a motivator for studying Spanish (p. 571). The authors then proposed a framework with the goal of providing an outline of what is possible in a university-level HL course based on students' needs and the researchers' knowledge as language educators (p. 574).

Few studies have explored HLLs' preferences for instructors in their SHL courses. Therefore, Beaudrie (2009) conducted research with 213 students enrolled in a large SHL program in order to determine if "the purported superiority of the native speaker in the language classroom" (p. 95), as reported in prior research, held true for the SHL classroom. The results indicated students prefer that native speakers of Spanish teach their SHL classes (p. 99). However, being a good teacher trumped other defining characteristics of SHL instructors (p. 104). This feedback highlighted the importance of pedagogical training for instructors of all backgrounds (p. 103). Ultimately, by listening to the voices of students enrolled in SHL programs, researchers and educators can gain insight into their classroom experiences with instructors from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, comprehending these experiences can help guide teacher training for instructors of SHL courses.



Leeman, Rabin and Román-Mendoza (2011) documented that “the best educational programs recognize and value students’ home identities, building on their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge” (p. 484). Hence, incorporating students’ cultural knowledge into the curriculum helps “raise cultural awareness and self-reflection among students” as noted by Beaudrie, Ducar and Relaño-Pastor (2009, p. 166). In their study, Beaudrie et al. (2009) investigated students’ understandings of cultural awareness and the impact of instruction on the cultural identity of bilingual speakers of Spanish. The authors found that cultural knowledge (self-cultural, intra-cultural and inter-cultural) were all taught in the classes surveyed (p. 165). Beaudrie et al. (2009) also noted that students acknowledged the importance of both “big C” and “little C” cultural knowledge. These results led to pedagogical suggestions for the SHL program in which the student-participants were enrolled. The researchers believed the inclusion of student voices was of great importance when deciding on pedagogy for SHL courses (p. 170), which, they stated, can be accomplished by “giving students’ voices a forum in which they can be heard” (p. 172).

As the above cited research indicates, the field of SHL has not adequately explored the in-class experience of HLLs in post-secondary settings. Potowski (2002) and Felix (2009) consulted HLLs that had been enrolled in Spanish world language classes, while Alarcón’s (2010) research focused on students in a SHL course. All three studies highlighted the ways in which including students’ voices can impact language program design; however, there was no detailed discussion of participants’ reflections on their classroom-based experiences with Spanish as a HL. The studies summarized in the second half of this literature review all underline the importance of seeking and responding to HLLs’ concerns about SHL curriculum. The four research projects were also all conducted in universities in the Southwest, a region with an established Spanish-speaking population that pre-dates the creation of the U.S. The present study aims to expand knowledge in SHL studies that draw on students’ reflections on their experience in post-secondary SHL classes. There is lack of understanding of the ways in which SHL curriculum aligns with students’ self-reported needs, and this is most prevalent in new and emerging SHL programs in regions with a growing Spanish-speaking population.

### *Research Questions*

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of students enrolled in linguistically heterogeneous SHL courses across the Midwest. In this context, students’ linguistic repertoires in Spanish can vary greatly. The following research questions shaped the study:

1. What are the different ways in which bilingual speakers of Spanish experience the linguistically diverse Spanish heritage language classroom?
2. How are students’ self-reported language development needs addressed in their SHL classes?

## Methods

### *Participants and Research Site*

Participants in this study were five HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new or recently established college-level SHL courses in the Midwest. The participants' post-secondary institutions all offered no more than two SHL courses. This figure is the norm of newer programs nationwide (Beaudrie, 2012), and these programs tend to serve students with linguistically heterogeneous backgrounds (Beaudrie, 2012; Ducar, 2008; Stafford, 2013). As previously mentioned, none of the participants were students in the state of Illinois, the Midwestern outlier in Beaudrie's (2012) study that profiled SHL programs in the U.S. The student body at the participants' universities had a Hispanic/Latinx population between six and 12 percent. At least three of the universities represented in the current study did not have SHL classes when Beaudrie (2012) collected data in the fall of 2010. Table 1 provides profiles of the participants (all names are pseudonyms):

Table 1

### *Participants' Backgrounds*

Name	Major	SHL Variety	Year
Ana	Undecided/Business	Argentine	Freshman
Bianca	Criminal Justice	Mexican	Junior
Lupe	Psychology	Southern Mexican	Senior
Rosa	Physiology	U.S. Mexican	Sophomore
Sara	Criminal Justice	Mexican	Sophomore

Participants self-reported their SHL variety in the online questionnaire where they responded to demographic questions, or they commented on their HL during their interview. Lupe, for example, when describing the linguistic diversity present in her SHL class said: "There were some people whose parents were from northern Mexico, and they speak Spanish differently than we do in southern Mexico." The SHL varieties of participants were also linked to the racial/ethnic group with which they identified. This study did not specifically explore participants' identities nor affiliations with a particular variety of Spanish; however, future research on classroom-based experiences of HLLs could examine this area of interest.

### *Procedures and Data Collection*

The five participants had previously responded to an online questionnaire as part of a larger study during which they indicated their willingness to be interviewed. The researcher contacted participants via email to schedule semi-structured one-on-one interviews that were, following the IRB requirement, mediated through a secure online meeting space that allowed for the audio recording of each interview. Participants' names and places of study were anonymized during the data collection process, and the audio recordings were saved on a secure server. Interviews lasted 50-90 minutes.

An analysis of responses to the previously mentioned open-ended questionnaire aided in the generation of eight themes (see Appendix A) that were explored during the semi-structured one-on-one interviews. This study used phenomenographic interviewing that encouraged the participants to produce “rich, evocative, metaphoric accounts” (Cousin, 2009, p. 194) that captured their experience of a phenomenon, the linguistically diverse SHL classroom in the Midwest. In accordance with phenomenographic modes of research, personal interviews allowed participants to verbalize their experience so that outsiders (researchers, educators) could gain access to the life-worlds of the participants (Felix, 2009). The interviews between the investigator and the participants were dialogic in nature (Bowden, 2000) that established a “conversational partnership” (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 302) in which the interviewer encouraged the participant to reflect on her/his experience with the phenomenon.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis began at the conclusion of an interview. During each interview, the researcher took notes and audio recorded the interviews. The audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher with the goal of becoming thoroughly familiar with the data by listening to the interviews multiple times while transcribing. The researcher identified emergent themes in the data both within and across interviews through memo writing (Maxwell, 2005), note taking, and reflecting on participants' similar and dissimilar experiences in their SHL classes. As an aim of phenomenography is to yield an account of reality as described by a group of people (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 1988; Prosser, 2000), data analysis sought to treat the data set (the five interviews) as one unified depiction of the SHL classroom space as experienced by HLLs of Spanish in a post-secondary setting. The participants' collective understanding provided insight into what students experience in the SHL classroom in a particular context.

The findings represented an outcome space that was comprised of related categories of description (Marton & Pang, 2008). The categories of description conveyed “a distinctively different way of experiencing or seeing the phenomenon,” (Marton & Pang, 2008, p. 536) and these descriptions were based on a second-order approach to qualitative research that regards participants' accounts of their lived experiences with and understandings of a particular phenomenon as the central source of data. Thus, an inductive approach to data analysis was employed that afforded the researcher an investigative lens that aimed to give primacy to the views of the participants instead of the interpretations of the researcher.

As mentioned earlier, second-order research focuses on the ways in which a group experiences a phenomenon (Orgill, 2007); however, the research process cannot occur in a vacuum. The researcher's understanding of the data is inevitably influenced by prior experiences and knowledge of the topic. Hence, a combination of etic (outsider) and emic (insider) knowledge can yield a better account of the data collected (Duff, 2002; Heath & Street, 2008). Schweber (2006) provides a comprehensive commentary on the contextualized nature of insider/outsider status and the implications of such a status for qualitative research.

The researcher is a L2 learner of Spanish who first became interested in Spanish as a HL while teaching Spanish for the first time as a graduate student at a large research university in the South. Teaching 1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>-, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-generation HLLs of Spanish in traditional L2 classes helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic needs of a heterogeneous population of students, and the ways in which these needs were (not) being met in class. Furthermore, several of the researcher's fellow teaching assistants were HLLs of Spanish who graciously shared their bilingual/bicultural experiences during formal and informal interactions. These professional and personal experiences contributed to the researcher's interest in the field of Heritage Language Education. Moreover, these experiences have shaped the researcher's perspectives on Spanish as a HL in the U.S.

## Findings

### *(Dis)connections*

Data from the semi-structured interviews revealed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections that highlighted the ways in which participants' needs are/are not met in their SHL courses. This outcome space consisted of three categories of description: 1) the positioning of Spanish as a key to success, 2) the importance of learning grammar, and 3) the teaching of the four language domains (Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading). For each category of description, summaries of interviewees' responses are followed by an analysis.

#### *Spanish: A requirement for success*

Ana

I think I took it because I felt that I may potentially go for a minor in a language since it would probably be useful to be able to have proof of being bilingual on a résumé and in my future career.... Its focus was business focused, to ensure you could use it in the workforce.

Bianca

I was losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class to kinda perfect it and get back the grammar skills that I needed to get better at it....

Lupe

I graduate this spring, and I needed to finish my foreign language credits. I wanted to take American Sign Language.... I tested out of a bunch of Spanish classes, and they told me to enroll in this one. I think it was the first time it was offered.... Now, I could see myself pursuing that [Spanish] more than the psychology major.... I would really like to find a way to put them two of them together.

Rosa

Well, the first reason [why I decided to enroll in this course] was to start a minor in Spanish. The second reason was just to see how much practice I would need to actually get a job in the real world working, showing that I'm, you know, proficiently bilingual on a résumé.

Sara

My first reason [for taking this class] is that my major had a foreign language requirement, and I knew that I would probably just want to take a Spanish class. My advisor told me they were offering this new class, so I told her it would be interesting because I speak Spanish and the class was supposed to be specifically for Spanish speakers, so I decided to sign up for it.

When asked to explain their reasons for enrolling in a SHL course, the participants answered with similar responses. At the time of the interview, Ana had not officially declared a major. However, she stated that she was interested in pursuing a business degree with a possible focus on finance. Ana was considering a minor in Spanish while enrolled in her SHL course as “it would probably be useful... to have proof of being bilingual on a résumé.” Ana also indicated an interest in working abroad and working with people; therefore, she thought Spanish could be of relevance for a future career.

Like Ana, Bianca was considering a minor in Spanish. Bianca, a criminal justice major, had already fulfilled her university's language requirement by taking two French classes. Bianca expressed “I kinda grew up speaking the language, and over the years I lost it.... I only spoke English, so I was kinda losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class....” During the interview, Bianca mentioned that she wanted to perfect her Spanish and recoup grammatical skills that she had lost.

Lupe, a psychology major, enrolled in her SHL course because “I graduate this spring, and I needed to finish my foreign language credits.” Lupe took a placement test that allowed her to receive retroactive credits for less advanced Spanish courses, which qualified her for a minor in Spanish. Lupe's advisor suggested that she begin her study of Spanish in the SHL course (Spanish for Heritage Speakers: Grammar and Composition) which was being offered for the first time. While taking the SHL course, Lupe learned about the department's Certificate in Translating and Interpreting. Lupe decided to pursue this certificate as she only needed to take two more classes to earn the certificate and doing so would still allow her to graduate next semester.

Rosa was a physiology major with a minor in Spanish for the health sciences. Her SHL class was a literary analysis course that allowed Rosa to begin meeting the requirements for the minor in Spanish. Rosa had taken Spanish in high school, and she recalled not being required to speak in Spanish often. Rosa also wanted to determine how much practice she needed to “get a job in the real world.” Rosa wanted her SHL class, and ultimately the minor in Spanish, to serve as proof of proficiency in Spanish on her résumé. Like Ana, Rosa wanted to formally document her bilingualism.

Sara was a criminal justice major which is an area of study that “[had] a foreign language requirement” at her university. Sara was interested in taking a Spanish class, and her advisor suggested that she take the SHL course (Spanish Grammar for Heritage Language Learners) that was being offered for the first time. Sara was interested in taking the SHL class because it was designed for speakers of Spanish.

*We need to know grammar*

Ana

The class was just more for people who already knew the language, and it focused more on the needs of someone who is actually bilingual. Like, it focused on how to use accents which is something that I've always struggled with, and apparently, I wasn't the only one.

Bianca

One of the main reasons [for taking the SHL class] was that it was for heritage speakers. I kinda grew up speaking the language, and over the years, I lost it in middle school and high school. It [the school system] was monolingual. I only spoke English so, I was losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class to kinda perfect it and get back the grammar skills that I needed to get better at it.... The class did help me a lot with my grammar, with my writing skills, my oral skills in the language, so there was a lot that I learned. There were many things that I wasn't aware of before about the language which now I know, and it really helped me a lot actually.... The grammar was really important. It was really difficult sometimes because some rules can get confusing. I know there are a lot of rules that kind of make it tricky and just complex for us to remember. I would ask her about either writing certain words or putting an accent on certain words. I would definitely raise my hand in the middle of class and just ask her and she would fully explain the rules of it, how it works.

Lupe

I thought that it [the SHL class] would really focus on like grammar and pretty much grammar. That was all that I really thought I would get out of it. I didn't really know what to expect because I'd never heard of a Spanish heritage speakers class before. The name of the class was Spanish for Heritage Speakers: Grammar and Composition, so that's pretty much what you expect it to have. The main focus was definitely composition and grammar. [The professor] focused on things like accent marks.... I can hear these accents, and I can hear, you know, the meaning, but not the rules behind it. The teacher was obviously teaching us that.... I didn't even know that I could hear the tonic accent. But I didn't know the rules at all.

Rosa

Accents. We spent so long on accents that I feel like at the end we were more rushed to learn about the subjunctive and all types of verb conjugations. We could have spent a little bit more time on that.... We just spent a lot of time on accents. ...this class taught me a lot.... I think [the professor] just taught me everything over again because previous Spanish classes didn't make sure that I was understanding everything.... Especially verb conjugations and stuff like that. She made sure that like we understood that to the best of our abilities.

Sara

I was pretty sure that they would teach grammar and just things that I didn't learn at home. So, I don't know how to write with accent marks and all that. I was expecting that they would focus a lot on that because as a heritage speaker, I assume a lot of other students don't learn that at home.... Yes, I can recall most of our quizzes always had something to do with grammar, and the terms they use like the *pretérito* and using the accent marks. She always had that on the quizzes.... For the curriculum, I would definitely keep the teaching of [and] focusing on the grammar and the accent marks....

As further evidence of (dis)connections in the outcome space, this data illustrated that participants' course expectations often predicted the study of grammar. Participants mentioned key words such as grammar, rules, accents, and verb conjugations that support an approach to SHL instruction that gives preference to the teaching of grammar. Teaching grammar and raising metalinguistic awareness are not intrinsically inappropriate practices for the SHL classroom (Fairclough, 2005). However, based on participants' perceptions of their SHL classes, it is valid to question the ways in which these features of the language are handled in the linguistically heterogeneous SHL classes represented in this study.

When asked what they expected to study in their SHL classes, both Sara and Lupe began their responses by mentioning grammar. For example, Sara anticipated that her professor would teach grammar "and just things that I didn't learn at home." Lupe even pointed out that name of her SHL course contained the word "grammar." The rules of grammar were "difficult," "confusing," and "tricky" for Bianca. Furthermore, all five participants mentioned the study and use of written diacritics as a topic in their SHL courses. Written accent marks were viewed as problematic for most of the participants. Ana shared that she had always struggled with the use of written accent marks, while Lupe noted that she did not know the rules that govern the placement of written accent marks. Sara's in-class assessments tested students' knowledge of written accent marks. Rosa, like the other participants, discussed accent marks; however, she felt that her SHL class dedicated too much time to this topic. Thus, students, according to Rosa, were not able to practice other aspects of the language such as learning about the subjunctive mood.

### *An imbalanced representation of the four language domains*

#### *Speaking*

Ana

The majority of what we did for speaking was in the class in Spanish: the conversations we would have would all be in Spanish.... It was more of just a matter of practice rather than specific tasks. You had one oral presentation which we had to do in a group, but aside from that, it was mostly just in-class practice.

Bianca

I personally went out of my way to ask the professor about certain things because I know that my speaking skills and writing skills aren't



as perfect as when compared to the professor. We gave presentations.... We did talk about different things from Hispanic culture.

Lupe

Well, we could only speak in Spanish in our class. If [the professor] heard us speaking in English, she'd say 'Spanish only please.' Because we would start working in groups, and then we would get really comfortable with each other and then just switch to English out of habit. We would speak in Spanish, and she would ask us 'Do you think this sounds right?' She would tell us 'You know that's actually not right. So, this is how we conjugate it' and then we would all practice that together. Also, I think providing those services in the classroom everybody had to speak in Spanish there to the teachers and the students.

Rosa

We had a presentation. I had to be 10 minutes total, five minutes per person. It was a partner presentation. [The presentation] wasn't as much of a challenge as I thought it would be in the beginning of the semester when I looked at the syllabus. It was still kind of a challenge because I wasn't super comfortable with speaking for long periods of time in front of the whole class...in Spanish.

Sara

I don't think we really focused much on speaking except for the fact that we were only allowed to speak Spanish in class. Um, [the professor] kind of explained how we're taught at home to pronounce certain words but grammatically it's incorrect but, I don't, from what I recall, we really did not spend that much time on the speaking aspect of Spanish.

## Writing

Ana

Once a week we would have to write a short maybe one-page essay. Throughout the semester we had three large essays about four pages that were basically just extended versions of the short ones. The essays were just good practice to see if I could hold up on the writing portion which is definitely a good way of measuring.

Bianca

[The class] did help me a lot with my grammar, with my writing skills, my oral skills in the language... I would ask her about either writing certain words or putting an accent on certain words.

Lupe

I learned a lot.... I wish I could have had more time to develop [my writing in Spanish] instead of starting now. [The professor] would take sentences from things that we had written. [The anonymous] examples from people in the classroom were things that weren't necessarily written correctly or the right word wasn't used or the right

conjugation wasn't used. I didn't see that so much as negative. I saw that as a positive because she always built on it. She wouldn't necessarily say 'No that's wrong.' [Instead,] she would ask 'What's a better way to say this?' So, I guess that I wasn't calling it a negative and I always saw that as her building on what we already know.... I mean she called [some of the writing assignments] 'tickets in or out the door.' It wasn't every single class that she would assign those writing prompts. It would be probably like every other class sometimes, and sometimes she would go two weeks without doing one. We also had papers due every three weeks almost. So, there was constantly material to write. I think she really, at the end of the semester, wanted us to write another paper. But I think she realized that maybe she had assigned too many and canceled that last one.

Rosa

We wrote essays and our homework: we would answer questions. We would read a story out of the book, and then we'd have reading comprehension questions. The most challenging one was probably the in-class essay because you had to do your pre-writing before class, but you couldn't bring a really solid essay. You had to bring a little outline... so you didn't get to use all the tools you needed like a dictionary or Google Translate [when writing in class]. You didn't have that so, that one was probably the most challenging one for me.

Sara

Writing was very big in the class. We had five or six papers that we had to write completely in Spanish on varying topics. They were all three- to five-pages long. We always did writing exercises in class, or our homework [focused on] writing. [The professor] would take out some of the stuff from our papers that we turned in and use them as examples on quizzes, or we would go over it in class and she would help us correct that.

### *Listening*

Ana

The professor would occasionally play some audio...in either English or Spanish. We had to shorthand what the recording was saying in the other language to practice...switching between languages. I thought [that activity] was interesting. I didn't have many problems with it since that's how I speak with a lot of my family. I thought it was a very clever way of testing that sort of knowledge.

Bianca

Um, let me think, there weren't really activities that would help us um... Well, yeah, we would actually hear some audio. I remember this one specific audio we listened to.... This poet recited one of his poems in Spanish. So that helped a lot. I think he was Cuban, and we were mostly Mexican, but it did actually help us with understanding more.

It gave us a better sense of it. I think that was the main listening activity that we did. Other than that, we would learn from her, the professor. [Because] she was from *País* (the professor's home country), she kind of had a little [bit of an] accent, but it still helped us because she is perfect in that way. Fluent in the language, I should say. We would actually learn from her, just by listening to her speak every day. And then it would help us.

Lupe

I think in terms of listening, I guess listening to [the professor] and listening to everybody else in class.... I think the biggest one would be that interview. Then the transcribing of that. I had to listen to the words and make sure I transcribed them correctly and got the right word for the right meaning. And just having to listen to it, that was pretty big. That was a lot. [The professor] played a three-minute news clip once. I can't think of something else that involved our listening skills, aside from just general instruction.

Rosa

We listened to TED talks, and we watched a couple of videos on the disappearances in South America and stuff like that. Then after we listened, we would have quizzes on what we listened to. [The professor] checked our comprehension there.

Sara

I think the big assignment that we had for listening was the interview.... We had to actually forward that interview and turn it into [the professor]. And we also had to do the transcript, and we had to write exactly what we heard, how we heard [the interviewee] speaking and how we heard ourselves speaking in Spanish and kind of explain why we think [the interviewee] spoke that way.

## *Reading*

Ana

About once a week, as a class, we would read aloud something from the textbook. The textbook contained a bunch of short writings and snippets from books or essays. Sometimes after reading, there would be snippets that we would discuss in class because we would later have to write something on what we read...but that was about it.

Bianca

Reading. [The professor] actually helped us improve a lot. I know there were many, many readings that were assigned to us which were kind of lengthy too but [it] was nice because we were able to practice [reading]. We had some for homework, but then during class time we would also have some readings to go over, to hear one another pronouncing each word so we can learn from it and then any error we would make the professor corrected it on the spot saying: 'You

know this is how you pronounce it' or 'This isn't how you pronounce it.' Little things like that would help us. We would actually talk about some of the readings...they were either poems or a biography about an author....

Lupe

We read a lot, but the main focus was definitely composition and grammar. [The professor] would assign articles, and we would have to read something for each class: it met twice a week. There's also a class that I took this semester called 'Advanced Spanish Literature.' I focused more on reading skills in that class than I did in this one, but that class isn't for heritage speakers.

Rosa

[The professor] liked a lot of poetry. We did read a lot of poems and short stories. One of the topics that I liked was a short story about Africanism, Afro-Latino people. That's not a topic that you see usually in Spanish classes. [The reading assignments] weren't just boring poems. They have meaning. I felt like she cares a lot for this course.

Sara

From the textbook, [the professor] would assign some of the readings, and we would just have to answer comprehensive questions. I think most of our reading assignments came from the textbook or she would post some outside sources on our course website, and we would have to read and discuss it in class. Most of the readings never showed up on the quiz because the quizzes [tested] grammar. Our homework assignments were based on the readings, and we got points for discussion in class, but [the readings] were never on the quiz.

Table 2

*Perceived Priorities of SHL Class*

Name	Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading
Ana	—	+	—	—
Bianca	+	+	—	+
Lupe	+	+	+	—
Rosa	—	+	—	+
Sara	—	+	+	—

Key: + higher priority / — lower priority

As the participants' perspectives indicated, their SHL classes featured an imbalance in the treatment of the four language domains (see Table 2). It is clear from the participants' observations of and reflections on their experience in a SHL class that writing was heavily favored as the language domain that was most frequently practiced and assessed. Research has shown that writing in the HL is a skill that requires attention in the SHL classroom (Acevedo, 2003; Colombi, 2000; Villa, 2004).

Nonetheless, the other three language domains should not be shortchanged as the acquisition of academic Spanish, a frequent goal of SHL programs (Acevedo, 2003) “is a lengthy process... that will extend over several semesters” (Fairclough, 2005, p. 137). As described earlier, the participants’ SHL classes were part of a one- or two-semester HL sequence. Some of the participants are pursuing or considering a minor in Spanish and therefore, they will have opportunities to continue expanding their competency in the four language domains. Students who do not match this profile are, subsequently, being exposed to extensive practice in just one or two language domains.

Starting with Ana, the honing of speaking skills primarily revolved around the speaking that occurred during class as their conversations were entirely in Spanish. They had to use the language regularly: “it was a matter of practice rather than specific tasks.” Ana had to give one presentation in a small group during the semester. In essence, speaking in Spanish was a byproduct of enrollment in a SHL class. Ana did not seem to place much value on what students produced orally in class. Initially, she linked writing to explicit grammar instruction: “About once a week we would have a worksheet that had a bunch of instructions on a specific thing, like how to use the subjunctive. It specifically focused on how to use one aspect of the language and then we would practice it.” Ana liked the worksheets because they “laid out a step-by-step way on how to use certain things.” She often referred to these worksheets during the semester when completing writing assignments for the course. Later, Ana talked about how the students had to write a one-page essay once a week in Spanish. During the semester, she wrote three large essays that were about four pages long. Ana considered the essays good practice that allowed her to determine her ability to write completely in Spanish, yet practicing speaking in Spanish was perceived to be less valuable.

One or two times during the semester, Ana’s professor played an audio file in either English or Spanish. Students were required to create a shorthand summary of what was said in the other language. For Ana, this activity provided the class with practice switching between two languages. This listening activity was “interesting” to Ana, and she did not find it difficult because “that’s how I speak with a lot of my family.” Ana, however, thought it was a good way to test this particular area of proficiency. To practice reading, students would read aloud a passage from the textbook about once a week, and the level of difficulty increased as the semester progressed. Sometimes Ana’s class would discuss the post-reading questions from the textbook as a class because they were sometimes required to write “something based on what we read.”

Bianca began her reflection on the language domains by sharing that her speaking and writing skills were not as perfect as the professor’s, therefore, she “personally went out of her way to ask the professor about certain things.” Bianca’s questions focused on grammar (how to spell a word, where to use an accent mark). Bianca said that she and her classmates were comfortable with raising their hand during class and asking the professor for an explanation of a particular rule. The professor would answer, and this was helpful to everyone according to Bianca. This participant’s feedback on the speaking domain was limited; however, Bianca did remember classmates presenting on muralism and how this art form demonstrated “how Hispanics express themselves through art throughout a city.” When talking about writing, Bianca, like Ana, made a connection to grammar and knowing grammar rules: “The grammar was really important [for writing]. It was really difficult sometimes

because some rules can get confusing.” Bianca also spoke about complex rules and having to remember them.

At first, Bianca recalled that her class listened to a few audio files during the semester. Once, they listened to an audio file of a poet recite one of his poems in Spanish. This activity was helpful to Bianca as the poet was Cuban, and “we were mostly Mexican,” and this difference pushed students to practice their listening skills. Bianca believed that most of their practice came from listening to the professor who was from País. Bianca noted that “she had a little [bit of an] accent, but it still helped us because she is perfect in that way. Fluent in the language....” Bianca proposed that the class still benefited from listening to the professor (despite her accent) as listening to her speak was viewed as a form of learning for Bianca.

Bianca believed her professor helped the class improve their ability to read in Spanish. For Bianca, some of the readings were lengthy; however, she considered this a positive as it provided the class with practice. Most assigned reading was done for homework; however, they read out loud during class sometimes “to hear one another pronouncing each word so we can learn from it and any error we would make, the professor would correct it on the spot, saying: ‘You know this is how you pronounce it’ or ‘This isn’t how you pronounce it.’” This feedback was perceived as “little things like that would help us.” Bianca claimed that she and her classmates “were comfortable with it; we were comfortable enough to make those mistakes because we knew we would learn and that it would help us eventually.” As a class, they discussed reading assignments (poetry, for example) and “videos of different aspects of culture.” Some of the different themes that the class read about and discussed were “immigration, police brutality and things like that make us who we are,” and we explored “what our stories tell.” These textual and visual readings allowed Bianca’s class to expand their focus beyond “grammar and oral skills.” Thus, they were able to discuss the culture(s) of speakers of Spanish in the U.S.

Lupe spoke at length about the requirement to only speak in Spanish in her HL class. The professor would remind students of this rule if she heard them speaking in English “because we would start working in groups, and then we would get really comfortable with each other and then just switch to English out of habit.” Lupe also described the type of feedback provided when students were speaking with one another during pair/group work: “We would speak in Spanish, and she would ask us ‘Do you think this sounds right?’ ‘*Haiga*,’ words like that, that are kind of nonsense words. She would tell us ‘You know that’s actually not right. So, this is how we conjugate it’ and then we would all practice that together.” Here, this classroom practice was an example of an innovative way of focusing students’ attention on academic varieties of Spanish without delving into explicit grammar instruction. This approach could also be used as a way to teach language functions that correspond to certain contexts (i.e., professional). Hence, SHL pedagogy would respond to student-reported needs and help diminish current trends of (dis)connections. Lupe also believed that providing services in Spanish in a local school was a great way to practice speaking Spanish: “Everybody had to speak in Spanish there to the teachers and the students.” Some of her classmates did more than the 10 hours of service-learning required for the course: “a lot of people really enjoyed that aspect of it [the class],” and someone even did 30 hours.

Lupe began her reflection on writing by quantifying her classroom experience: “I learned a lot.” Lupe’s professor would anonymize students’ work and then share examples of “things that weren’t necessarily written correctly or the right word wasn’t used or the right conjugation wasn’t used.” For Lupe, this approach was viewed positively “because she always built on it.” Instead of describing students’ language as “wrong,” the professor would ask “What’s a better way to say this?” Lupe reiterated that her professor’s approach to analyzing writing built on what she and her classmates already knew in their HL. Writing prompts were used as “tickets in or out the door” and students turned in formal papers approximately every three weeks. Ultimately, Lupe liked the amount of writing she completed in her SHL course because she felt that she learned best by writing. However, Lupe recounted “I don’t know if others in my class felt the same. I heard a lot of moaning and groaning about how much writing we had to do [laughing].”

Lupe identified listening to the professor and her classmates as sources for practicing listening skills in Spanish in her HL class. For Lupe, the interview assignment was the most important task that tested and advanced her listening skills. While transcribing, Lupe had to “listen to the words and make sure I transcribed them correctly and got the right word for the right meaning.” No films were shown in Lupe’s class; however, the professor did show a three-minute news clip once. Lupe recalled reading “a lot,” but in her reflection on reading, she circled back to the primary focus of her SHL class: composition and grammar. When her professor gave reading assignments, articles, for example, she would give students a list of words “she knew we wouldn’t know.” Lupe and her classmates were then required to define the list of words based on their understanding of the reading assignment. Interestingly, Lupe was also enrolled in “Advanced Spanish Literature” at the time of the interview. She stated that the literature class “focused more on reading skills” than her SHL class. Lupe seemed to have compartmentalized what was appropriate as an area of study in different language courses. In this vein, the SHL class was not the best context for expanding one’s reading proficiency in the HL.

When the semester began, Rosa observed that she would have to give a presentation at the end of the semester in her SHL course. Students worked in pairs to present for 10 minutes. Rosa realized the presentation “wasn’t as much of a challenge as I thought it would be.” However, “it was still kind of a challenge because I wasn’t super comfortable with speaking for long periods of time in front of the whole class...in Spanish.” For Rosa, the most difficult writing assignment was an in-class essay. Students were required to complete a pre-writing exercise at home that they could then bring to class; however, they were not allowed to bring a “really solid essay” to class on the day of the in-class writing assignment. They could bring their outline, but “you didn’t get to use all the tools you needed like a dictionary or Google Translate [when writing in class].”

Rosa’s class listened to TED talks and watched a few videos on topics such as “the disappearances in South America.” After these interpretive activities, the professor gave the students a listening comprehension quiz. The reading assignments (often poems and short stories) focused on topics that Rosa found to be of relevance. For example, the class read a short story “about Africanism, Afro-Latino people” and Rosa enjoyed the short story as “that’s not a topic that you see usually in Spanish



classes.” The poetry that Rosa read was deemed to be interesting as the poems “have meaning.” Rosa linked the reading selections to her perception that the professor cared about students’ learning and their success in the SHL course: “she wanted us to do very well, but at the same time learn.”

Finally, Sara could not recall specific instances in which her class honed their speaking skills. She did, however, point out that they “were only allowed to speak Spanish in class.” Also, her professor explained that “how we’re taught at home to pronounce certain words [is] grammatically incorrect.” As a reminder, this research did not include classroom observations nor interviews with course instructors, and therefore, the researcher cannot confirm or deny what a professor did/did not say to students. However, it is crucial that researchers give full consideration to students’ perceptions of what instructors do and say in the HL classroom as educators’ words and actions can have an impact on students’ views of their HL. Like Ana, Bianca, and Lupe, advancing one’s speaking proficiency in the HL was seen as incidental to Sara. She did not hold in high esteem speaking in Spanish in class even though she, and other participants, discussed, at later points in their interviews, the benefits of having been enrolled in a SHL course. These benefits included, for some, being more comfortable with speaking in Spanish for extended periods of time. Ultimately, the onus is on educators to make clear the role of oral communication so that learners perceive, at the start of their language study, the pedagogical relevance of speaking in the HL in class, which should be supplemented by assignments that necessitate students’ use of oral language in the local community.

Sara asserted that writing was an important element of her SHL course. The students wrote five-six papers in Spanish. The topics varied, and the length of each paper ranged from three-five pages each. This example was another imbalance among the four language domains in Sara’s SHL class. Writing, as recounted by other participants too, was given precedence in the SHL curriculum. Sara also completed some writing exercises in class, and her homework was tied to building/increasing proficiency in writing. The professor would use anonymized excerpts from students’ papers as examples on quizzes, or they worked in small groups to correct the mistakes. Sara correlated her interview project with listening practice as students “had to do the transcript, and we had to write exactly what we heard, how we heard [the interviewee] speaking and how we heard ourselves speaking in Spanish and kind of explain why we think [the interviewee] spoke that way.” Like Lupe, Sara focused on the iterative process of transcription as a form of advancing one’s interpretive competency in the HL.

In Sara’s class, the professor assigned readings from the textbook, or she posted assignments to the course website. Students answered comprehension questions, and then discussed the readings in class. Sara shared that “most of the readings never showed up on the quiz because the quizzes [tested] grammar. Our homework assignments were based on the readings, and we got points for discussion in class, but [the readings] were never on the quiz.” This stance points to a disconnect between Sara’s expectations and her professor’s use of reading materials. Sara seemed to discount the importance of reading activities as she was not assessed, in a traditional sense, on the content of what she read.

As a reminder, the data in this phenomenographic study revealed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections to participants' needs. Table 3 (below) summarizes the key findings for the three categories of description (COD) in the outcome space which were: *Spanish: A requirement for success* (COD 1), *We need to know grammar* (COD 2), and *An imbalanced representation of the four language domains* (COD 3).

Table 3

*Key Findings*

	COD 1	COD 2	COD 3
Connections	Participants wanted formal recognition of bilingualism for future careers (e.g., minor in Spanish).	Curriculum addressed HLLs' linguistic insecurities (e.g., using diacritics).	Curriculum addressed a documented concern of HLLs: Writing in the HL.
Disconnections	Curriculum had few links to the use of the HL in professional settings.	Emphasis on form, not function that promoted a deficit framing of the HL (a focus on what students do not know).	Imbalanced treatment of the other three language domains (especially Reading, another documented area of concern).

**Discussion***Spanish: A requirement for success*

The concept of requirement thus shaped participants' reasons for enrolling in a SHL course, whether it be a requirement for success at the university or a requirement for success in a future career. Indeed, Carreira and Kagan's (2011) analysis of the National Heritage Language Resource Center's (NHLRC) national heritage language survey identified professional reasons and fulfilling a language requirement as two of the top four motivators that encouraged students to study their heritage language. According to the NHLRC survey, the other top two motivators for studying a HL were exploring linguistic and cultural roots and communicating with family and friends in the U.S. (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). In this study, to be sure, the five interviewees expressed extrinsic motivations for studying Spanish. Participants' responses concentrated on the potential career benefits of studying Spanish and being able to use it in a professional setting, and the "proving" of such ability, associated with taking a SHL class and obtaining a minor or other type of credential (i.e. a certificate) in the language. This trend mirrored the results of the Spanish-speaking sub-group of HLLs in the NHLRC survey as 71.1% of the respondents indicated that "they were studying their HL with a future career or job in mind" (Carreira & Kagan, 2011, p. 51). This professional motivation outranked personal goals for studying one's HL.

Second language learners who enroll in a language course as true beginners are not likely to do so for professional reasons as the completion of a beginning two- or three-semester language sequence is minimally meaningful for a résumé, as students at this stage in language acquisition have not gained a high level of communicative competency. However, both L2 learners and HLLs can enroll in language courses in order to meet a language requirement. The clear difference between these two groups is that HLLs have a familial connection to the language that has influenced their prior exposure to and use of the heritage language. In this study, motivations for enrolling in the SHL course were quite similar among the participants. These factors provided a clearer understanding of why students enrolled in SHL courses. As such, it is important that educators keep in mind that the active use of Spanish ranked highly in what students wanted to get out of their SHL class. The burden is on us to help students comprehend that their SHL course will be much more than just meeting a requirement. More immediate ties to professional uses of the HL can help counter the current disconnection identified by participants.

### *We need to know grammar*

As some of the participants revealed, and as seen in previous research (Carreira & Kagan, 2011), professional reasons are a strong motivation for Spanish-speakers who decide to study their HL. The data in this category of description uncovered a division between the sociolinguistic needs of the participants and the curriculum presented in their SHL courses. Practicing grammar and increasing HLLs' metalinguistic knowledge can be a gateway that leads to a deeper understanding of the HL. A privileging of student-centered perceptions calls for a reorientation of the teaching of grammar in SHL classes that are similar to the ones represented in this research. Approaches to second language instruction place function, and not form, at the center of language teaching and learning (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). HL instruction can, and should, do the same. Sara, for example, appreciated a focus on grammar in her SHL course. Overall, however, a grammar and rules-based SHL curriculum does not align with the participants' current and future uses of the Spanish language. Developing deep metalinguistic knowledge, of course, can be beneficial to future language educators. That said, it is difficult to imagine a situation in which a student majoring in physiology or criminal justice, like some of the participants in this study, will need to explain, in detail, a specific grammatical structure present in the Spanish language.

Thus, SHL pedagogy should reorient the foci of SHL courses as knowing grammar in and of itself does not convey what students can do with their HLs. Applying the National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSFL)-American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Can-Do Statements (2017) to HL instructional contexts seems appropriate as these statements frame interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication in terms of what students can do with a language. The Can-Do Statements (2017) also describe learners' intercultural communication competencies which is of particular relevance for HLLs' in-class explorations of the culture(s) represented by their HL. Moreover, a focus on grammar also serves as a reminder of what HLLs "lack" in their use of the HL in specific contexts. As Burgo (2015) signaled, educators need to know their bilingual students and "not confuse a lack of metalinguistic knowledge with linguistic limitations" (p. 223).

*An imbalanced representation of the four language domains*

This last category of description was best described by the imbalance between the four language domains in participants' SHL classes. Participants did not perceive balanced, structured practice in the four skill areas. The data suggested the participants' classes were too heavily focused on writing. Previous research has explored the role of writing in the SHL classroom (Acevedo, 2003) as students are likely to have had limited experiences with writing for academic purposes before enrolling in a HL course (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Writing and reading were the skills that HLLs self-assessed as least native-like (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Participants' reflections indicate that HL curriculum needs to strike more of a balance in the way the four language domains are practiced in order to support HLLs' language development. This balance is of particular importance for students enrolled in new and emerging programs as students might have fewer opportunities to take HL courses that are designed to target their specific sociolinguistic needs.

Participants, across the SHL courses represented in this study, provided evidence of interactions with the four language domains. Writing, as previously noted, was understood as the area that required the most practice. Sometimes, writing in the HL meant practicing orthographic norms in the HL (e.g., spelling, the use of diacritics) for participants. Both Ana and Rosa talked about approaches to writing that allowed for revisions (a focus on the process). Ana mentioned that her smaller writing assignments led to longer essays that were "extended versions of the short ones." Rosa also hinted at a more innovative approach to teaching writing as she was required to complete pre-writing exercises, and she used an outline for the in-class writing assignment. Sara and Lupe both highlighted the amount of writing they had to complete in their SHL classes.

Speaking in the HL with the course instructor and classmates was the most common description for this skill area. Meaningful oral communication in the HL has to offer students something more than what the participants described. Interpersonal communication in pairs and small groups is beneficial to HLLs as, if they plan to use Spanish in a career, they will most likely need to engage in this mode of communication. Several participants, however, mentioned participating in the presentational mode of communication by giving an end-of-semester presentation to their classmates which is also of relevance in professional contexts. Guided participation in local Spanish-speaking communities, like the projects described by Lupe and Sara, afford new opportunities for HLLs to use their HL in innovative ways.

The SHL classes in this study tend to be characterized by linguistic heterogeneity among the student population (Beaudrie, 2012). Therefore, this resource should be tapped into more frequently in SHL courses. An increased exposure to different varieties of Spanish, both in and outside the classroom, could be of benefit to HLLs as students and as future users of Spanish in professional settings. Take, for example, the activity Ana described. In her SHL class, the professor played audio files that actively encouraged translanguaging practices (García, 2013) that placed value on students' linguistic repertoires as HLLs had to use both Spanish and English. For Ana, this in-class activity was reminiscent of the ways in which she communicates with her family. This activity and other forms of focused practice in the interpretive

mode, in class and as homework, could help build learners' confidence and ability to interact with multilingual speakers of Spanish from backgrounds that differ from their own. Furthermore, additional experience in this domain in professional contexts (e.g., internships, service-learning assignments, etc.) can reinforce this skill that is often-overlooked in the classroom as it is valuable when using Spanish in the workplace.

Sometimes practicing reading skills was confused with practicing pronunciation in the HL (Ana and Bianca). Bianca defined these "reading" activities as times during which the class could learn from each other's mispronounced words. Neither student explicitly mentioned that the "reading" activities were inappropriate for their level of study; however, it has been documented that these types of "read aloud" activities tend to infantilize HLLs (Edstrom, 2007). Lupe, Rosa and Sara described this receptive skill as an aspect of their SHL classes that focused on textbook-based reading assignments or supplemental reading such as articles, poems, and short stories.

In sum, a salient takeaway from the categories of description was participants' focus on using Spanish in professional settings upon graduation. Participants' career-oriented motivations influenced their enrollment in a SHL course; therefore, future uses of Spanish in the workplace should have a role in SHL curriculum for adult HLLs. For HL programs, and especially so for new and emerging programs, it is important that decision-makers get to know the students (Burgo, 2015) enrolled in the program so that students' needs can be appropriately identified and met through the HL course offering(s).

### **Pedagogical Implications**

To reconcile some of the concerns expressed by participants in this study, SHL education should look to further incorporate Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), experiential learning, and differentiated instruction (DI) into the curriculum. First, IPAs (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2013) have the potential to address participants' concerns about the presentation of the four language domains in their SHL classes. IPAs are inter-related tasks designed to assess the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) in authentic contexts (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). IPAs encourage a more balanced approach to language teaching and evaluation. In a HL class, IPAs could be situated in both informal (family, friends) and formal contexts (the workplace) that allow HLLs to practice different registers. Furthermore, grammar in the SHL classroom should serve as a link to the ways in which students will use the Spanish language in certain formal settings. Thus, priority should be placed on understanding language functions and not studying isolated language forms. IPAs have the capacity to impact in-class activities in a way that is beneficial and relevant for HLLs and their self-reported needs.

A greater incorporation of experiential learning into SHL curriculum can help expand students' views of their HL. Experiences using Spanish that link community and classroom are advantageous for HLLs (Carreira & Kagan, 2011) as they can tap into and build on students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Various forms of experiential learning such as volunteering, job shadowing, service-learning assignments, etc. provide students with opportunities to use their HLs in new contexts. This community-based approach gets students involved with

local Spanish speakers, it combats feelings of not belonging (Pak, 2018), and it also supports the career-centered motivations that encourage students to study their HL.

HL scholar Maria Carreira has been an advocate for the implementation of DI into mixed HL-L2 classes and HL classes (see Carreira, 2007; Carreira, 2012; Carreira, 2016; Carreira, 2018; Carreira & Hitchins Chik, 2018; Carreira & Kagan, 2011). DI in the HL classroom centers “on expanding HL learners’ functional skills and linguistic repertoires, attending to their aspirations and relational needs” (Carreira, 2018, p. 6). As such, DI is of particular relevance for the linguistically diverse SHL classes in which this study’s participants were enrolled. Carreira and Kagan (2011) suggested that HL educators incorporate practices that are common in multilevel English as a Second Language and elementary classrooms such as “grouping students to promote engagement, using portfolios to assess learning, and offering independent studies to learners who want to pursue a topic outside of course offerings” (p. 58). For HL students in contexts similar to the one represented in this study, DI could provide greater exposure to the ways in which Spanish is used in professional settings. Participants had notions of the benefits of expanding their linguistic repertoires in Spanish for career-oriented goals. The HL classroom, through DI, could help further foster students’ appreciation for their HL and deepen their understanding of its importance in the workforce post-graduation.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

First, this study sought to learn from a specific group of students: HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging linguistically diverse post-secondary SHL programs in the Midwest. Due to the specificity described, the findings based on students’ perspectives cannot and do not aspire to be characteristic of all students’ experiences enrolled in similar courses in similar settings. However, the findings from this study could inform and deepen our understanding of similar HL learning contexts in the U.S.

Future research focusing on student-centered experiences could include focus groups with students enrolled in the same HL class. Moreover, future research could video record focus group meetings as the collection of video recordings that use a sociocritical frame could add an extra dimension of analysis (Tochon, 1999). A goal of phenomenography is to discover new understandings (Marton, 1988), and video study groups with a sociocritical lens can assist participants in critically reflecting on their experiences by engaging them in dialogues that raise awareness of pertinent issues and these mutually-constructed analyses can inspire change (Tochon, 1999).

### **Conclusion**

This phenomenography aimed to uncover the ways in which bilingual speakers of Spanish experience linguistically diverse SHL classes across an under-researched region. Findings detailed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections that consisted of three categories of description which were *Spanish: A requirement for success*, *We need to know grammar*, and *An imbalanced representation of the four language domains*. Participants provided insight into the reasons that motivated them to study their HL. These motivations mirrored the patterns reported by HLLs of



Spanish on a national survey (Carreira & Kagan, 2011); however, the SHL classes did not adequately address and incorporate students' career-oriented aspirations into the curriculum. Furthermore, grammar took center stage in the second descriptive category. Participants seemingly internalized the expectation that studying grammar was the key to unlocking their HL so that they could gain a deeper understanding of the language. Finally, expanding proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading the HL were not given equal treatment. Participants' classroom-based experiences in their HL contributed to an understanding that placed writing in Spanish as the primary language domain that participants needed to practice. Future research in this area could be enhanced by the use of a sociocritical lens during focus group meetings. HLLs bring a unique connection to the language of study, and as such, students' perspectives should guide a bottom-up approach to HL curriculum design.

## References

- Acevedo, R. (2003). Navegando a través del registro formal: Curso para hispanohablantes bilingües [Navigating through the formal register: A course for Spanish-speaking bilinguals]. In A. Roca & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi lengua: Spanish as a heritage language in the United States* (pp. 1-21). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Adair-Hauck, B., Glisan, E. W., & Troyan, F. J. (2013). *Implementing integrated performance assessment*. Alexandria, VA: The American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Alarcón, I. (2010). Advanced heritage learners of Spanish: A sociolinguistic profile for pedagogical purposes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(2), 269-288.
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2017). *NCSSFL-ACT-FL can-do statements*. Retrieved January, 2020, from <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>
- Ashworth, P., & Lucas, U. (2000). Achieving empathy and engagement: A practical approach to the design, conduct and reporting of phenomenographic research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 25(3), 295-308.
- Beaudrie, S. M. (2009). Teaching Spanish heritage learners and the nativeness issue. *ADFL Bulletin*, 41(1), 94-112.
- Beaudrie, S. M., Ducar, C., & Relaño-Pastor, A. M. (2009). Curricular perspectives in the heritage language context: Assessing culture and identity. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22(2), 157-174.
- Beaudrie, S. M. (2012). Research on university-based Spanish heritage language programs in the United States: The current state of affairs. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 203-221). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Bowden, J. A. (2000). The nature of phenomenographic research. In J. A. Bowden & E. Walsh (Eds.), *Phenomenography* (pp. 1-33). Melbourne, Australia: RMIT University Press.
- Burgo, C. (2015). Grammar teaching approaches for heritage learners of Spanish. In A. J. Moeller (Ed.), *Learn languages, explore cultures, transform lives* (pp. 217-233). Selected Papers from the 2015 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.



- Carreira, M. (2007). Teaching Spanish to native speakers in mixed ability language classrooms. In K. Potowski & R. Cameron (Eds.), *Spanish in contact: Policy, social and linguistic inquiries* (pp. 61-80). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Carreira, M. (2012). Meeting the needs of heritage language learners. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 223-240). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Carreira, M. (2016). Approaches and strategies for teaching heritage language learners: Focus on mixed classes. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed.), *Advances in Spanish as a heritage language* (pp. 159-176). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Carreira, M. (2018). *Towards a national strategy for capacity-building in heritage languages and Spanish: A response to America's languages: Investing in language education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. *Hispania*, 101(1), 5-9.
- Carreira, M., & Hitchens Chik, C. (2018). Differentiated teaching: A primer for heritage and mixed class. In K. Potowski (Ed.), *The handbook of Spanish as a heritage/community language*. New York: Routledge.
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2011). The results of the national heritage language survey: Implications for teaching, curriculum design, and professional development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(1), 40-64.
- Colombi, M. C. (2000). En vías del desarrollo del lenguaje académico en español en hablantes nativos de español en los Estados Unidos [Developing academic language in Spanish in native speakers of Spanish in the United States]. In A. Roca (Ed.), *Research on Spanish in the U.S.* (pp. 296-309). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Cousin, G. (2009) *Researching learning in higher education: An introduction to contemporary methods and approaches*. New York: Routledge.
- Ducar, C. (2008). Student voices: The missing link in the Spanish heritage language debate. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(3), 415-433.
- Duff, P. A. (2002). The discursive co-construction of knowledge, identity, and difference: An ethnography of communication in the high school mainstream. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(3), 289-322.
- Edstrom, A. (2007). The mixing of non-native, heritage, and native speakers in upper-level Spanish courses: A sampling of student opinion. *Hispania*, 90(4), 755-768.
- Fairclough, M. (2005). *Spanish and heritage language education in the United States: Struggling with hypotheticals*. Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana.
- Felix, A. (2009). The adult heritage Spanish speaker in the foreign language classroom: A phenomenography. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(2), 145-162.
- García, O. (2005). Positioning heritage languages in the United States. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89, 601-605.

- García, O. (2013). El papel de *translenguar* en la enseñanza del español en los Estados Unidos [The role of *translanguaging* in the teaching of Spanish in the United States]. In D. Dumitrescu & G. Piña-Rosales (Eds.), *El español en los Estados Unidos: E pluribus unum? Enfoques multidisciplinares* [Spanish in the United States: E pluribus unum? Multidisciplinary Perspectives] (pp. 353-373). New York: Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Español [North American Academy of the Spanish Language].
- Heath, S. B., & Street, B. V. (with Mills, M.). (2008). *On ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College.
- Hornberger, N., & Wang, S. (2008). Who are our heritage language learners? Identity and biliteracy in heritage language education in the United States. In D. M. Brinton, O. Kagan & S. Backus (Eds.), *Heritage language education: A new field emerging* (pp. 3-35). New York: Routledge.
- Kondo-Brown, K. (2003). Heritage language instruction for post-secondary students from immigrant backgrounds. *Heritage Language Journal*, 1(1), 1-25.
- Leeman, J., Rabin, L., & Román-Mendoza, E. (2011). Identity and activism in heritage language education. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95, 481-495.
- Marton, F. (1988). Phenomenography: Exploring different conceptions of reality. In D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education* (pp. 176-205). New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Marton, F., & Pang, M. F. (2008). The idea of phenomenography and the pedagogy for conceptual change. In S. Vosniadou (Ed.), *International handbook of research on conceptual change* (pp. 533-559). London: Routledge.
- Maxwell, J. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Noels, K. A. (2001). Learning Spanish as a second language: Learners' orientations and perceptions of their teachers' communication style. *Language Learning*, 51(1), 107-144.
- Orgill, M. (2007). Phenomenography. In G. M. Bodner & M. Orgill (Eds.), *Theoretical frameworks for research in chemistry/science education* (pp. 132-151). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Pak, C. H. (2018). Linking service-learning with sense of belonging: A culturally relevant pedagogy for heritage students of Spanish. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 17(1), 76-95.
- Potowski, K. (2002). Experiences of Spanish heritage speakers in university foreign language courses and implications for teacher training. *ADFL Bulletin*, 33(3), 35-42.
- Potowski, K. (2016). Current issues in Spanish heritage language education. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed.), *Advances in Spanish as a heritage language* (pp. 127-142). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Prosser, M. (2000). Using phenomenographic research methodology in the context of research in teaching and learning. In J. A. Bowden & E. Walsh (Eds.), *Phenomenography* (pp. 34-46). Melbourne, Australia: RMIT University Press.

- Rivera-Mills, S. (2012). Spanish heritage language maintenance: Its legacy and its future. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 21-42). Washington, DC: Georgetown.
- Schwarzer, D., & Petró, M. (2005). Heritage language instruction at the college level: Reality and possibilities. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(4), 568-578.
- Schweber, S. A. (2006). Donning wigs, divining feelings, and other dilemmas of doing research in devoutly religious contexts. In K. Barton (Ed.), *Research methods in social studies education* (pp. 111-137). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Shrum, J. L., & Glisan, E. W. (2010). Assessing standards-based language performance in context. *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction* (pp. 394-448). Boston: Cengage.
- Stafford, C. (2013). Spanish in Wisconsin: Advantages of maintenance and prospects for sustained vitality. In T. Purnell, E. Raimy & J. Salmons (Eds.), *Wisconsin talk: Linguistic diversity in the Badger State* (pp. 123-141). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.
- Tochon, F. V. (1999). *Video study groups for education, professional development, and change*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.
- Valdés, G. (2001). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. In J. Kreeft Peyton, D. A. Ranard & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 37-77). McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Valdés, G., Fishman, J. A., Chávez, R., & Pérez, W. (2008). Maintaining Spanish in the U.S.: Steps towards the effective practice of heritage language re-acquisition/development. *Hispania*, 91(1), 4-24.
- Velázquez, I., Garrido, M., & Millán, M. (2014). Heritage speakers of Spanish in the US Midwest: Reported interlocutors as a measure of family language relevance. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(4), 386-403.
- Velázquez, I. (2015). Media consumption and social media use among college-age heritage speakers of Spanish in three communities in the Midwest. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 21(1), 21-33.
- Villa, D. (2004). No nos dejaremos [We will not be intimidated]: Writing in Spanish as an act of resistance. In M. Hall Kells, V. Balester & V. Villanueva (Eds.), *Latino/a discourses on language, identity & literacy education* (pp. 85-95). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Webb, J. B. (2003). *I speak Arabic*. (D. Scalera, Interviewer) [Video file]. Retrieved November, 2019, from <https://vimeo.com/111338925>

## **Appendix A**

Themes that will be explored during semi-structured interviews:

1. Reasons for taking a Spanish heritage language class.
2. Course expectations.
  - a. Classroom environment.
3. Studying with other bilingual students.
4. Alignment of student needs with course curriculum.
5. Teaching and learning of Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading skills.
6. Student's academic language experiences in Spanish heritage language class.
  - a. Positive and negative examples.
7. Language variety presented in class.
8. Best and worst aspects of course.
  - a. Things you would do differently.
  - b. Things you would keep the same.

## Heritage Language Learners in a Mixed Class: Educational Affordances and Constraints

Elizabeth Goulette

*Madonna University*

### *Abstract*

*Despite a general consensus that heritage language learners (HLLs) and second language (L2) learners are best taught in separate classes, they often end up in mixed classes (Abdi, 2011; Burgo, 2017; Draper & Hicks, 2000). To date, however, there remains a lack of sufficient research on how to best support HLLs in mixed classes (Burgo, 2017). In this ethnographic case study, the researcher set out to understand the lived experiences of eighth grade HLLs in a mixed Spanish classroom. The researcher visited a Spanish class over the course of six months during which audio and video recordings captured classroom interactions. The findings reveal that the teacher's use of the labels "advanced Spanish-dominant" and "English-dominant" created two distinct groups which were physically separated in the classroom. This dichotomy appeared to simultaneously constrain and provide affordances for various learning opportunities for the two different groups.*

**Keywords:** *heritage language learners, mixed classes, social identities, learning identities*

### **Background**

The rapidly growing number of Spanish speakers in the United States has major implications for classroom instruction across content areas. Students born in the U.S. who do not consider themselves native speakers of Spanish are often labeled heritage language learners (HLLs). For the purposes of this study, the definition of a HLL is adopted from Valdés's (2005) widely-used definition: "the student may speak or merely understand the heritage language and be, to some degree, bilingual in English and the heritage language" (p. 412). Some HLLs are highly proficient in both Spanish and English. Others may have very limited to no receptive or productive skills in Spanish. A great deal of variety can come between these two examples.

Spanish-speaking students bring a wide range of diverse language and cultural experiences to the classroom. Scholars have been discussing the linguistic and cultural diversity of Spanish-speaking students in the U.S. for quite some time (Roca, 2001; Valdés, 1997). Despite the tremendous variability of linguistic mastery among HLLs, schools have categorized them dichotomously in ways that marginalize their language practices, restrict evolving identities, and constrain academic opportunities available to them, as demonstrated in this study.

## Literature Review

### *Spanish Heritage Learners in American Schools*

HLLs do not comprise a homogenous group but rather their diverse backgrounds, attitudes, linguistic needs, and expectations fluctuate among lower-level and more advanced proficiency groups (Alarcón, 2010; Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; He, 2010; Montrul, 2010). Therefore, research has demonstrated that HLLs have distinct instructional needs from second language (L2) learners when they study Spanish (He, 2010; Montrul, 2010; Roca, 2001; Valdés, 1997). Montrul and Bowles (2010) explain, “Spanish language programs are increasingly accommodating heritage speakers, whose linguistic profile, academic experience, and needs differ fundamentally from those of second language learners” (p. 47). An example of HLLs’ unique linguistic needs can be found in Montrul’s (2002) study of incomplete acquisition and attrition of Spanish tense/aspect distinctions in adult bilinguals.

Despite scholarly recognition of the linguistic, cultural and academic differences between HLLs and L2 learners, current policy and instructional practices tend to deny them. For example, some Spanish-speakers who lack Spanish literacy skills are denied access to Spanish courses. This is crucial because the majority of Spanish speakers could benefit from some type of Spanish instruction, especially with writing skills (Kondo-Brown, 2010; Montrul, 2010; Parra, 2017; Szilágyi, Giambo, & Szecsi, 2013). It has been noted that many Spanish speakers are successful with regard to oral communication but they have never learned to write the language: “Unlike second language (L2) learners who learn Spanish in instructional settings and normally learn receptive and productive skills more or less simultaneously, heritage speakers with excellent comprehension abilities may not be able to speak fluently” (Leeman, 2005, p. 36). With a one-size-fits-all approach, HLLs are commonly placed in classes where they are unable to meet their fullest potential (Abdi, 2011; García & Sylvan, 2011; Hornberger & Link, 2012).

As the research on providing special HLL only courses shows, it is insufficient to group HLLs in one classroom and expect this alone will meet their needs. More attention needs to be paid to HLLs’ unique needs, and teachers need support in identifying and then addressing these needs (Alarcón, 2010; He, 2010; Kondo-Brown, 2010). Accurate course placement based upon proficiency level is critical (Fairclough, 2012). In order to achieve this, it is crucial for educators to take the time to acquaint themselves with HLLs in order to gather information about their linguistic and cultural backgrounds and previous educational experiences. However, teachers may meet resistance from students who do not wish to open up about their home language and cultural experiences due to a perceived sense of vulnerability. HLLs might worry about retaliation by authorities regarding their family’s immigration status, for example. However, without critical information regarding HLLs’ prior educational experiences and language proficiency, it can be difficult to address their individualized needs in the classroom.

Academic concerns surround Spanish speakers in the U.S. educational system because it is precisely these students who have been underserved by educational institutions in the past, as is well documented with high dropout rates for this population. Data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) show that Latino

youth have the second highest status dropout rate when broken down by racial/ethnic group. Only American Indian/Alaska native youth have a higher dropout rate (10.1%) than Latino youth (8.2%), as compared to an overall national dropout rate of 5.4%. Although Latino youth dropout rates have declined considerably in recent years (from 21.0% in 2006 to 8.2% in 2017, according to ACS), these rates are still disproportionately high when compared to other racial/ethnic groups. High dropout rates and underachievement of Latino youth in schools can be largely attributed to a school structure which often denies their social and affective needs and constrains their educational opportunities. As Hornberger and Link (2012) explained, “as school populations become increasingly linguistically diverse, refusing to acknowledge the language resources of students and their families limits the possibilities for their educational achievement” (p. 240).

### *Mixed Classes*

Despite a long-standing assumption that HLLs and L2 learners are best taught in separate classes, they often end up together in mixed classes (Abdi, 2011; Burgo, 2017; Draper & Hicks, 2000). HLL only courses are rarely offered in American K-12 schools today, even in areas with large concentrations of Spanish speakers. Instead, HLLs typically find themselves in courses designed for L2 learners that are commonly “designed for monolingual speakers of English with little or no knowledge about the language or the people and the cultures involved” (Blyth, 2003, p. 109). This situation presents a challenge for educators of mixed Spanish classes (Abdi, 2011; Burgo, 2017; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Reyes, 2006). Montrul and Bowles (2010) agree, purporting that combining “non-heritage and heritage learners in a single classroom present serious challenges for both teachers and students” (p. 47).

Despite the fact that mixed classes are a common occurrence for Spanish teachers today, there is a lack of classroom research about the complexities of such a class (Burgo, 2017; Carreira & Kagan, 2018). Of the scant literature available, previous studies have focused on the teachers of mixed classes but not the students. Russell and Kuriscak (2015) surveyed preservice and current high school Spanish teachers on their attitudes and pedagogical practices toward Spanish HLLs, discovering that although the teachers recognized challenges facing the HLLs, they struggled with supporting them in practice. Randolph Jr. (2017) also examined high school Spanish teachers’ instructional practices implemented while teaching HLLs in mixed classes. Randolph Jr. (2017) reported that the teachers’ actual instructional practice conflicted with their stated philosophical views of HLLs.

The few previous studies focused on students in mixed classes have mostly focused on affective aspects and participant perceptions by interviewing students about the advantages and disadvantages of such a class (Edstrom, 2007; Katz, 2003). Other studies have compared specific linguistic outcomes of HLLs and L2 learners (Bowles, 2011; Montrul, 2008; Potowski, 2002) without addressing how linguistic diversity can be used to collectively achieve goals in the language classroom. Draper and Hicks (2000) advocated for the investigation of HLL/L2 learner collaboration as an avenue for “using the linguistic diversity...as a learning tool for both teachers and students” (p. 16). In the literature that does treat mixed groups, research has primarily been conducted at the post-secondary level (Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010), while



the present study is conducted in a middle school, a context which has not yet been sufficiently explored.

Therefore, this study set out to better understand the lived experiences of eighth grade HLLs in a mixed Spanish classroom. Adopting Wortham's (2006) core notion that social identification and academic learning are deeply interdependent, this study was designed to answer the following research question: In a mixed Spanish class of heritage language learners (HLLs) and second language (L2) learners, what does the classroom discourse reveal about the HLLs' experiences and learning opportunities?

## **Methods**

Inspired by a challenging personal experience teaching a Spanish class consisting of L2 learners and one HLL, the idea for a research study was borne. Although the researcher taught Spanish in a relatively homogenous rural community of Caucasians, one year a Latina HLL enrolled at the school. The HLL was highly proficient in the language and possessed a great deal of knowledge about her heritage culture, which made it difficult to find a suitable Spanish class for her. The high school offered Spanish I through IV but the standard curriculum would not sufficiently challenge her.

After discussing the predicament with the teacher (researcher), administrators decided to place the HLL in a Spanish I class but asked the teacher (researcher) to treat the HLL as an independent study. Administration also decided that the HLL could be utilized as an "assistant teacher" for the students in Spanish I whenever she was not working on independent study assignments. At that time, there were no specialized textbooks or instructional materials available for teaching Spanish to HLLs and the teacher (researcher) did not know where to find appropriately challenging materials to supplement the existing curriculum.

Although she did her best in a tough situation, the teacher (researcher) knew she was not meeting all of the HLL's social, affective, and educational needs that year. At the end of the school year, the teacher (researcher) decided to go to graduate school in order to equip herself with better strategies for teaching a mixed class. What resulted was a strong desire to conduct a research study of a mixed classroom to explore the case in detail. The teacher (researcher) ultimately wanted to help other teachers in similarly challenging situations better serve HLLs and L2 learners in the same class. This situation deeply influenced the present study's ethnographic case study design and implementation. The researcher adopted the role of participant observer in the focal classroom in order to meet her research goals.

Qualitative case studies such as this one are particularly useful for educational inquiry in that they offer a complex view of the case under investigation. A case study, in which "the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection including multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case-based themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73), suits the research goals of focusing on one specific classroom that presents an "unusual or unique situation" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). The unique situation presented here is that of a mixed class made up of HLLs and L2 learners of Spanish.

While it is important to emphasize that case study research is not about generalizing to other contexts, educators still stand to learn a great deal about language classrooms from insights provided by studies like this one. The analytical insights

gained as an outcome of case study research are particularly pragmatic for the advancement of educational practice, as well as future research. Applied social research, such as the present study, is uniquely tied to problem-solving. Bickman and Rog (2009) emphasized this important feature of applied social research: “applied research uses scientific methodology to develop information to help solve an immediate, yet usually persistent, societal problem” (p. x). In this case, the ‘immediate, persistent, societal problem’ is the lack of a solution for improving students’ experiences in mixed Spanish classes that have recently become commonplace in American schools. This study offers a glimpse into life as a student in a mixed Spanish class. As is the case with all educational research, this study furnishes analytical insights to add to the discussion about educating students in mixed classes.

Researchers’ own perceptions of what is “typical” versus what is “atypical” in a classroom setting can influence the study. For example, if a classroom practice veers from a researcher’s conceptualization of what is “typical” or expected, it may be deemed an anomaly. Therefore, the researcher kept the phrase ‘make the familiar strange’ (Holliday, 2002) at the forefront of her mind during classroom visits. Being a reflexive researcher was another important strategy used to manage subjectivity during this study. Hammond and Wellington (2013) described researcher reflexivity as: “the examination of one’s own beliefs, judgments, and practices during the research process and how these may have influenced the research” (p. 129). In this case, the researcher was cognizant of the importance of seeing the classroom context in new, unexpected ways, and this helped greatly avoid the danger of taking things for granted. Consequently, the researcher employed the following strategies to ensure that the findings were not based on the researcher’s own beliefs about language learning: a.) using bracketing techniques to separate personal thoughts from observations in the fieldnotes and b.) using classroom participants’ own words to illustrate their classroom experiences.

### *Context and Participants*

To locate a mixed Spanish classroom, the researcher sent out an e-mail solicitation to all identifiable schools within one school district. A few teachers responded to the original solicitation, and Mrs. Lola Flores, after a face-to-face meeting with the researcher, agreed to allow the researcher to observe her class. After receiving clearance from both Mrs. Flores’ building principal, as well as her district administration, a discussion of the logistics ensued. The study was granted IRB approval before data collection began. All names are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the study’s participants. Care was taken to anonymize students, the teacher, and the district where the study took place.

This qualitative case study was conducted at Pablo Neruda Bilingual Institute (PNBI), a public, Title I, pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school in the north-eastern United States. PNBI is part of a large, urban school district. At the time of data collection, PNBI had a total enrollment of 664 students with 83% categorized as Hispanic or Latino. 52% of the student body was English Language Learners (ELLs). 88% of the students were eligible for free lunches and 2% were eligible for reduced-price lunches. This demographic school data came from the state’s department of education website.

PNBI is located in a community where Spanish maintains a strong presence. For example, one block away from the school there is a small grocery store called “El Pueblito” which caters to Spanish-speaking customers. Students end up at PNBI because of where they live. Since 83% of the student body is Hispanic or Latino, most PNBI students have had some exposure to the Spanish language and culture at home. However, there are also some monolingual English speakers that live in this community and attend PNBI.

PNBI is an early-exit transitional bilingual school, meaning its main goal is to help ELLs rapidly acquire academic English so that they may be integrated into classrooms with native speakers of English. This model aims to move ELLs toward higher levels of English proficiency. At PNBI, student course placement is heavily guided by standardized tests given at the beginning of the school year. Spanish and English language skills are assessed by bilingual teachers and these scores impact student placements for the academic year. For example, students whose test scores reveal a strong Spanish dominance are placed in both a “Native Language Arts” (NLA) course (conducted in Spanish) and also in an “English Language Arts” (ELA) course (conducted in English). Students who are either completely “English-dominant” or HLLs deemed to have proficiency in both English and Spanish are placed in a traditional ELA course. Once they reach eighth grade, these students are offered a beginning Spanish elective, and at the end of their eighth-grade year, “advanced” Spanish students are selected by their teacher to take a district-wide Spanish placement test. Based upon their test results, some eighth graders earn high school credit for Spanish I.

The focal Spanish class was selected for this study via input from both the researcher and the classroom teacher. After visiting three of Mrs. Flores’ mixed class (8A, 8B, and 8C), the researcher met with Mrs. Flores to select one focal class. Based heavily on Mrs. Flores’ input, an agreement was made to focus on class 8B. The primary deciding factors were the number of HLLs, student behavioral issues in some classes, and student willingness to participate in the study.

Consequently, the focal class selected for the study was an eighth grade mixed Spanish class. The ten HLLs in the focal class constituted the majority, but each was unique in terms of linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, and educational background. According to information obtained from the classroom teacher, the HLLs all spoke Spanish at home (but to varying degrees). For example, some HLLs had been educated in a Spanish-speaking country before arriving at PNBI. Others had limited contact with Spanish-speaking relatives and therefore, had a low Spanish proficiency. The fourteen students in 8B had a range of ethnic affiliations; the L2 learners were either of European descent or African American whereas the HLLs were either Puerto Rican or Dominican. It was not unusual to have only fourteen students in a class at PNBI.

Table 1

*Focal Student Demographics*

<b>Name</b>	<b>HLL or L2</b>	<b>Dominant Language (determined by teacher)</b>	<b>Ethnicity (self-reported)</b>	<b>Spanish Literacy Level (determined by teacher)</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Antonio	HLL	English	Puerto Rican	intermediate	M
Araceli	HLL	Spanish	Puerto Rican	advanced	F
Cristina	HLL	Spanish	Puerto Rican	advanced	F
David	HLL	English	American	beginner	M
Destiny	L2	English	African American	beginner	F
Dylan	L2	English	African American	beginner	M
Hernando	HLL	English	Puerto Rican American	beginner	M
Ignacio	HLL	Spanish	Puerto Rican	advanced	M
Jamarion	HLL	English	African American/ Puerto Rican	beginner	M
Jessie	L2	English	American	beginner	F
Jimena	HLL	Spanish	Dominican	advanced	F
Liliana	HLL	Spanish	Puerto Rican American	intermediate	F
Logan	HLL	English	Puerto Rican American	beginner	M
Madison	L2	English	American	beginner	F

Mrs. Flores was a middle-aged, short, joyful, and energetic lady who was passionate about being a bilingual teacher. She spoke fondly of special moments from her sixteen-year teaching career where she had felt she made a positive impact on students' lives. A native speaker of Spanish, born and raised in Ecuador, Mrs. Flores moved to the U.S. for school and career opportunities in her twenties.

*A Tale of Two Semesters*

Although there were ten HLLs and four L2 learners in the focal class, the two groups often evened out due to some HLLs' frequent absences and administrators periodically removing other HLLs from Spanish class for English language remediation. During the observations that occurred in October, November, and December, Mrs. Flores primarily had her students work in mixed dyads (HLL-L2 learners). Mrs. Flores initially approached the curriculum with the mindset that pairing students heterogeneously was the most effective way to teach them. While there were many other available options, Mrs. Flores asked the so-called "Spanish-dominant" students to teach their "English-dominant" partners. In fact, she constantly referred to her pairing strategy and the roles and responsibilities inherent in these partnerships. Positioning "Spanish-dominant" students as teachers for the "English-dominant" students reveals Mrs. Flores' underlying assumption that the "Spanish-dominant" HLLs possessed sufficient linguistic and cultural expertise to teach the content to their "English-dominant" peers. On the other hand, Mrs. Flores clearly assumed that the

“English-dominant” students in her room required assistance from peers, regardless of their language aptitude or heritage connection to Spanish.

Mrs. Flores’ instructional choice of creating “Spanish-dominant” and “English-dominant” dyads reveals the accretive effect of her conceptions of her diverse group. Because she had taught mixed classes in bilingual schools for sixteen years, Mrs. Flores approached her students through the lens of her previous experience and impressions of working with similar students over time. Wortham (2006) spoke to the issue of presuppositions: “classroom identities early in the year are constrained by widely circulating presuppositions” (p. 18). So rather than starting with a blank slate, Mrs. Flores drew on her store of experiences and implicit and explicit messages about students that circulated more broadly in the school.

However, Mrs. Flores opened the second semester with the following statement that characterized her change in instructional approach: “Listen up. A big change is coming” she said. The “big change” was that Mrs. Flores had received administrative approval to begin test prep for students deemed advanced enough to try the state Spanish language assessment. The state had not allowed students to take this assessment for the two previous years but it had recently been reinstated. Mrs. Flores explained that eighth grade students who could pass the state’s Spanish language assessment would receive high school credit for Spanish I. The students who were deemed “advanced” by Mrs. Flores would be set on a different instructional path, marked by this test preparation.

Mrs. Flores labeled HLLs Antonio, Araceli, Ignacio, Jimena and Liliana “advanced Spanish-dominant,” thereby granting them the opportunity to take the state Spanish assessment. When the researcher inquired about how students were selected, Mrs. Flores characterized these “advanced Spanish-dominant” students as possessing a larger linguistic skill set than their “English-dominant” peers. Her tracking procedures imply the assumption that the “advanced” students separated themselves from their peers through the linguistic skills that they brought to the classroom. In contrast, students who either had a loose heritage connection, or none at all, were depicted as entering the classroom with a “*tabula rasa*” upon which to begin dumping information.

### *Data Collection*

Acting as a participant observer, the researcher became an active part of the classroom community, visiting the class 26 times between October and March. Both the teacher and students came to see the researcher as a Spanish resource in the classroom. The students regularly approached the researcher to ask procedural or content questions. The students seemed comfortable with the researcher, and in informal one-on-one conversations with her, revealed personal information, such as their home language use and knowledge about their heritage culture as well as prior educational experiences.

In order to capture whole-class interaction ethically, consent forms were sent home which asked parents for permission to video record 26 class sessions. All fourteen students were ultimately recorded because each parent provided written consent and the students gave assent. A small video recorder was positioned on a tripod in the back of the classroom with the majority of the video capturing the back of

the students' heads in order to be as inconspicuous as possible. Additionally, naturally occurring paired and group work was audio recorded for all students in the focal class. The oral activities were assigned by the classroom teacher without input from the researcher. Small, discreet audio recorders were chosen to help mitigate students' sensitivity to the recorder. Detailed transcripts of the classroom discourse were created by the researcher after each visit. Throughout the analytic process, the researcher returned to the transcripts of interactional data to check and re-check the data in order ensure its adherence to actual classroom events.

The video recorder was utilized to record photographic artifacts of both the classroom setting and local classroom interactions to capture the classroom setting in a broad way. Student work was also photographed with the goal of gauging the sort of academic learning that was typical in the class. Copies of any papers handed to students were collected by the researcher and analyzed to facilitate a better understanding of general learning tasks and activities.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis was an ongoing, recursive process. During observations, a laptop was used to record observations of classroom interactions in observation notes for the purpose of answering the research question. These observation notes were detailed to create more composed and polished fieldnotes after each visit. Information gleaned from the observations and fieldnotes assisted the researcher by adding important information about classroom structure and procedures, student participation, and contextual cues that helped identify subtleties in the classroom discourse.

The analytic process was ongoing during the data collection period because each evening the researcher typed up the day's fieldnotes and added as many relevant details to the notes as possible. The purpose of completing the write up as close as possible to the site visit was that it remained freshest in the researcher's memory. Transcription also happened continuously over the six month course of the study. The researcher transcribed corresponding video and audio recordings from each classroom visit as soon as possible before visiting the classroom again. The researcher transcribed any feature of the classroom discourse that could possibly offer insight into the students' classroom experience. For example, both tone and eye rolling were included in transcripts when they were noticed. These discourse features alerted the researcher to moments where students appeared to be sarcastic or irritated. Proximity was also important when the two student groups were physically separated. The researcher transcribed instances when students communicated amongst their smaller groups as well as when they elevated the volume of their voices to reach the other group. Ultimately, 21 hours of video recordings and six hours of audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher using transcription software.

Once written transcripts were checked for adherence to actual classroom events, the researcher began first cycle coding and then proceeded to second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). Descriptive codes like "off task" and "eager to learn" were salient during first cycle coding. The researcher then utilized pattern coding by color coordinating common first cycle codes to chart their appearance within and across the lessons and days. Pattern coding (a second cycle coding method) was particularly useful for grouping descriptive codes into emerging themes or explanations. For ex-

ample, “resistance” and “compliance” ended up being the link between descriptive codes like “off task” and “eager to learn” and larger emerging themes about classroom behavior. After reviewing and revising the first and second cycle codes, final codes were aggregated into categories. Salient patterns and trends emerged to provide insight into answering the broad research question. Using the constant comparative method, the researcher emerged with themes which captured the essence of the data (Thomas, 2011).

The researcher triangulated the data by collecting multiple sources (artifacts, observations/fieldnotes, audio recordings, and video recordings) and incorporating member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking consisted of asking Mrs. Flores to inspect the fieldnotes and transcripts for accuracy. The data were also triangulated by checking for patterns within and across different visits and data types for congruence.

## **Findings**

### *Educational Affordances and Constraints*

Instead of allowing her current students to fully explore and negotiate their own social identities in the classroom, Mrs. Flores’ past teaching experiences came to bear on the options available to this particular class. Since students were initially labeled and categorized by Mrs. Flores, based upon her assessment of their language proficiency, their identities developed according to the various constraints placed upon them. The social identities ascribed to students based on the labels given to them had important implications for academic learning, as these labels opened doors for certain students while simultaneously closing them for others. For example, the state language assessment was only available to students that Mrs. Flores deemed ready for the test. Only the so-called “advanced Spanish-dominant” HLLs in the focal class were allowed to take the state test and thereby possibly earn credit for Spanish I in high school.

In contrast, the so-called “English-dominant” students were not conceived of as capable of passing the test by Mrs. Flores, despite their language abilities or motivation levels. This type of categorization was evident throughout the discourse and had pervasive implications for student learning because Mrs. Flores clearly assumed that the “advanced Spanish-dominant” HLLs already knew a sufficient amount of Spanish and did not require classroom instruction. However, this stance did not afford the “advanced Spanish-dominant” HLLs the learning opportunities they deserved as students in this Spanish class at a bilingual school. To problematize Mrs. Flores’ entrenched vision of what it means to be a prototypical heritage learner, the “English-dominant” HLLs were not blank receptacles awaiting an information dump. Instead, these diverse learners demonstrated students’ individual uniqueness even within subcategories of heritage learners.

### *Physical Separation of Two Subgroups*

Starting in January, Mrs. Flores physically separated the five “advanced Spanish-dominant” students from the remainder of the class. For the majority of the time, this group was relocated to a table at the back of the room where they worked togeth-



er quietly on form-focused test-prep worksheets while Mrs. Flores used direct instruction with the other group of students. Mrs. Flores definitely attempted to check in with the “advanced Spanish-dominant” group but a majority of her instructional time and attention was devoted to the other group. This physical separation in accordance with the corresponding labels created a tension between the two groups of learners which is demonstrated interactionally in the following excerpt.

### Excerpt

HLL Ignacio: I guess we have to do our own work because we are Spanish-speakers...we're *advanced*. So, that's why they don't join us.

HLL Antonio: But why do we have to do extra work? It's way harder... what we do.

HLL Jimena: Well, their work is too easy for us because we already know it from home. So, we have to do more advanced stuff. That's why we're *advanced*.

HLL Antonio: But, I don't really speak *that* much Spanish. I'm not really *advanced* like you two.

HLL Ignacio: Look at David. He's over there working with them because he doesn't speak Spanish.

HLL David: Yes, I do! I just don't speak *that much* Spanish...I only know a little. [motions with his hand to signal a little]

This exchange between HLLs of varying proficiency levels and diverse heritage connections typifies the classifications set up by the teacher and the resulting student negotiations of their places within such a rigid system. The HLLs were subcategorized based on language skills. Therefore, only the “advanced Spanish-dominant” HLLs were provided membership into the test-prep group. In contrast, the “English-dominant” HLLs were grouped with the L2 learners.

In this excerpt, students attempted to make sense of their physical separation in the classroom which was never addressed by the teacher. Additionally, students grappled with understanding how Mrs. Flores had subcategorized the HLLs into the “advanced-Spanish dominant” subgroup. Note that while David is a HLL, Mrs. Flores did not consider him to be a part of the “advanced-Spanish dominant” subgroup like his fellow HLLs Ignacio, Antonio, and Jimena. Consequently, during this excerpt, David was sitting with the L2 learners and the other HLLs whom Mrs. Flores had not labeled “advanced Spanish-dominant” working on textbook assignments. The classroom was small so the groups could often hear each other talking.

In this excerpt, the “advanced Spanish-dominant” group attempted to understand their physical distance from their classmates as well as their differentiated tasks. HLL Ignacio supposed that the distinction between the two groups had to do with the labels applied to them. He employed the strategy of what Gumperz (1982) called “contextualization” of the differences in signs between the two groups. Wortham (2006) described signs as “any utterance or object that people find culturally meaningful” (p. 32). Clearly, these four HLLs found the sign or label “advanced” impactful in categorizing the two groups. The sign “advanced” in this interaction was meaning-

ful as it related to the shifting metapragmatic model (Wortham, 2006) that students were trying to make sense of. That is to say, the salience of the term “advanced” for this group and the implications for social identification and academic learning was based upon the shifting metapragmatic model or “model of recognizable kinds of people participating in a recognizable kind of interaction” (Wortham, 2006, p. 32).

The classroom discourse in this excerpt reveals affordances and constraints for certain students based upon their teachers’ categorizations of them. Ignacio’s opening statement depicts this dichotomizing at work interactionally, as he used the pronoun “we” to reference the group of “advanced Spanish speakers” while creating a marked boundary between the advanced group and all other students in the class. He said, “I guess we have to do our own work because we are Spanish speakers... we’re *advanced*. So, that’s why they don’t join us.” Ignacio distinguished himself and the other advanced students as “Spanish speakers” and implied that the other students in the class are not Spanish speakers, utilizing the pronoun “they” to refer to them. There is clearly an “us versus them” situation constructed in Ignacio’s remarks as he tries to make sense of this new configuration.

Although Ignacio equated the “advanced” status with being “Spanish speakers” and effectively depicted “advanced” students as the only Spanish speakers in the class, his conversational partners took issue with the generalization that the labels and enactment of being “advanced” and a “Spanish speaker” went hand-in-hand. First, Antonio rejected Ignacio’s characterization of him as “advanced” by contesting his status with an assessment of his perceived language ability: “But, I don’t really speak *that* much Spanish. I’m not really *advanced* like you two.” In this utterance, Antonio problematized Ignacio’s interpretation of the “advanced” status by creating a distinction between himself and Jimena and Ignacio. Antonio self-identified in this utterance as less advanced than his peers. Antonio problematized the assumption that all of the “advanced” students deserved the labels “advanced Spanish speakers” on the grounds of their linguistic abilities. He seemed to suggest that the local models of identity available to the students did not accommodate for the nuances of their realities.

Antonio not only problematized his inclusion in the “advanced Spanish-dominant” group, he connected this social identity of “being advanced” with additional assignments of incremental difficulty that he mildly resisted. He questioned his placement in the group and the additional work he was therefore required to complete, saying: “But why do we have to do extra work? It’s way harder... what we do.” It appears that Antonio believes this is unfair treatment as he does not position himself as a true “advanced” student in the classroom discourse. While an adult like Mrs. Flores can see the value in testing out of a high school language course, Antonio does not seem to view this as an advantage.

In sum, the students worked discursively to understand and explain the new classroom structure which subcategorized the HLLs and separated them into two distinct groups. This exchange and the information revealed within it help us begin to understand students’ complex experiences and negotiations as language learners in this mixed class. It allows us to examine in greater detail the various experiences different students had in this environment. For students in the “advanced Spanish-dominant” group, the curriculum and instruction on an interactional level privileged

them as “legitimate” Spanish users but simultaneously marginalized them as HLLs deemed to not need instructional support. These social identities afforded the “advanced” students educational opportunities as well as classroom autonomy but also constrained their classroom language learning by presupposing that they already knew Spanish well enough. Conversely, the curriculum as it was enacted constrained opportunities for the “English-dominant” group regardless of heritage status. These students were categorized as learners requiring assistance and incapable of matching the “advanced” group’s Spanish skills. They were viewed as non-Spanish speakers even if they had a loose heritage connection to Spanish. Furthermore, they were positioned both physically and interactionally as outsiders by the existing hierarchical structure. However, they did receive the vast majority of the teacher’s attention and were provided opportunities to improve their limited Spanish skills in class which were not available to the “advanced” group.

### *Temporarily Reunited*

There was a brief, temporary departure from the subcategorization of the HLLs and resultant physical separation in class during a research project that Mrs. Flores assigned everyone. Students worked primarily in mixed dyads (HLL & L2 Learner) chosen by Mrs. Flores. The dyads were assigned a Spanish-speaking country to research, and provided with a rubric detailing project requirements and expectations. Students utilized a classroom set of iPads to complete the research. The research project culminated in each dyad creating a Glog (an interactive, web-based poster) on their country. This collaborative research project on Spanish-speaking countries created a new learning opportunity, allowing students to work on open-ended tasks to explore the language and culture creatively.

Mrs. Flores stated to the researcher that the project was designed to provide the HLLs an opportunity to use their cultural knowledge as a resource. However, she insisted that each group select a different Spanish-speaking country to research and present so that the entire class could learn about multiple countries during the final presentations. Since the class’ heritage learners were of Dominican or Puerto Rican descent, the project guidelines created opportunities for some students to share their knowledge of the heritage culture whereas other HLLs researched an unfamiliar country.

Overall, the students were engaged and worked collaboratively in pairs during this project. Students appeared to enjoy using the iPads for research purposes as they learned about the currency, religion, music, cuisine, etc. of their assigned country. The HLLs seemed excited to share their knowledge of cultural elements with their peers. Some HLLs made connections between the culture of their assigned Spanish-speaking country and their heritage country, if they were different. For example, HLL Liliana was excited that she could share her grandmother’s flan recipe with classmates, as flan was also considered a typical dessert of her assigned country, Spain. Other HLLs noticed distinct cultural traditions from their heritage country and the assigned one. In one illustrative example, a Puerto Rican HLL named Araceli was researching Colombia and encountered the native Colombian Carnival dress. She was very surprised because the clothing did not resemble anything she had been exposed to in Puerto Rican culture.

During the presentation phase, each dyad taught the class about their country using their Glog, which was displayed on the overhead projector. Students played audio clips of their country's music, showed videos of traditional dances, and offered samples of authentic cuisine to their classmates. Students who researched cultures that were familiar used their cultural "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) as a resource. Although not explicitly instructed to do so by their teacher, when HLLs presented on an unfamiliar country, they often brought up differences between their heritage culture and the one they were presenting to the class (like the flan example above). Students seemingly enjoyed sharing their new knowledge of the Spanish-speaking culture with the class during the presentation of their Glogs. The iPad portion of the assignment, along with the interesting content they researched, kept the students actively engaged with the project. All of the students completed the country project and earned a B or higher.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of middle school HLLs in a mixed Spanish classroom. The findings reveal that the teacher's categorization of her diverse class created a rigid hierarchical structure that students were unable to traverse. Mrs. Flores first labeled and categorized her class as either "Spanish-dominant" or "English-dominant" based upon her assessment of their language abilities. Later, according to her own perception of their language abilities, she subcategorized some "Spanish-dominant" students into a smaller group which she labelled "advanced Spanish-dominant."

Assumptions about students' linguistic skills and cultural affiliations constrained their potential social identities in the classroom. These social identities correlated with specific classroom roles and responsibilities for particular kinds of students. The "advanced Spanish-dominant" HLLs were privileged by their ascribed social identities and therein had extra learning opportunities which were unavailable to the "English dominant" group. Hornberger & Link (2012) cautioned against such a narrow view of diverse students and the correlated academic impact, "as school populations become increasingly linguistically diverse, refusing to acknowledge the language resources of students and their families limits the possibilities for their educational achievement" (p. 240).

This paper argues that labels attributed to the focal students constrained the social identities available to them in class. These social identities were inextricably linked to students' learning identities (Wortham, 2006) which marginalized the "advanced Spanish-dominant" group by way of partitioning them off from the rest of the class and leaving them without instructional support. The teacher's stance was that this group of students already "knew enough" Spanish and this justified her decision to work almost exclusively with the other group during class time. The curriculum and instruction in general appeared geared toward the so-called "beginners" in the class. In contrast to her conceptualization of the "advanced" group, the teacher believed that the "beginners" needed significant support in the classroom, so she bestowed upon the "advanced group" the task of helping their "English-dominant" peers.

This study supports the argument that schools often constrain opportunities for HLLs instead of promoting the development of their linguistic repertoires. De-

spite wide-spread recognition in the field of heritage language education that “minority languages are worth preserving and maintaining, rather than suppressing or ignoring” (Montrul, 2010, p. 3), it became evident that in this Spanish class, most of the HLLs were in fact either ignored or given very little attention. In general, the “advanced Spanish-dominant” students slipped through the cracks in Mrs. Flores’ class, which is not a new story, as it is widely recognized that it is precisely these students whom the educational system has underserved for decades (Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Fairclough, 2012). Norton and Toohey (2001) also noted this marginalization of language users, when they wrote about the “often unequal relations of power between language learners and target language speakers” (p. 312). This type of situation is a cause for concern but it is also not completely surprising, as language educators on the whole have yet to figure out how to adapt schooling practices and pedagogy to meet the needs of their diverse student populations.

### **Limitations and Pedagogical Implications**

This case study sheds light on the significant work that remains in the field of language education which often incorporates both HLLs and L2 learners in mixed classes. Classroom research is critical because HLLs are already in a great deal of American public classrooms today. Teachers are largely unaware of *how* to effectively teach HLLs and as an extension, *how* to approach the mixed classes that are commonplace in our nation’s schools (Burgo, 2017; Kagan & Dillon, 2009). Therefore, more classroom-based studies such as the one presented here are needed to provide language instructors with information about how to meet the needs of these diverse classes (Carreira & Kagan, 2018).

Upon reflection of the situations observed in this class, educators must work collaboratively to reflect upon the impact of their classification systems and labeling practices on academic opportunities for *all* students. As Weis (2008) explained, “within schools, we need to acknowledge and legitimate the lived experiences of *all* students” (p. 252). Restrictive classification systems in schools often spill over into the classroom, where teacher practices have the opportunity to acknowledge and legitimate students’ lived experiences, as Weis (2008) suggested, or marginalize and delegitimize them, as this study has shown. In maintaining status quo, educators are doing nothing to adapt schooling practices that have long been seen as underserving the culturally and linguistically diverse students that end up in American schools.

Students should be allowed to self-select labels, as Holley, Salas, Marsiglia, Yabiku, Fitzharris, and Jackson (2009) suggest, “at the very minimum, practitioners must allow youths to name themselves using labels they self-select” (p. 24). Self-identification without input from teachers or administrators is critically important because as this study has shown “schools have opportunities to shape youths’ identities” (Holley et al., 2009). However, in this case, assumptions about students’ linguistic and cultural identities constrained their potential social and learning identities in the classroom.

Furthermore, instead of blindly implementing the curriculum, educators ought to consider the actual consequences of the enacted curriculum for their specific diverse student population (Johnson, Yerrick, & Kearney, 2014). Teachers likewise must continually reflect on their practice during the planning, implementation,

and reflection stages in order to improve their pedagogy. Instead of casting students off as “lazy” or “incapable,” educators must consider to what degree students may be resisting the enacted curriculum for the simple fact that they believe the curriculum does not reflect their reality. A better approach would be to utilize the strategy of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) whereby all students could “maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically” alongside one another (p. 476).

One limitation of this study is that the researcher did not interview the HLLs on how they self-identified regarding language dominance. Although interviews are not a main focus of ethnographies such as the present study, it would have been interesting to compare the HLLs’ self-perception of their language dominance with their teacher’s perception. Therefore, future studies should interview HLLs to illuminate conflicts between students’ self-perception and their teacher’s perception of their language dominance.

## References

- Abdi, K. (2011). ‘She really only speaks English’: Positioning, language ideology, and heritage language learners. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 67(2), 161-189.
- Alarcón, I. (2010). Advanced heritage learners of Spanish: A sociolinguistic profile for pedagogical purposes. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(2), 269-288.
- Bateman, B., & Wilkinson, S. (2010). Spanish for heritage speakers: A statewide survey of secondary school teachers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(2), 324-353.
- Bickman, L., & Rog, D. J. (2009). (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Blyth, C. (2003). (Ed.). *The sociolinguistics of foreign-language classrooms: Contributions of the native, near-native, and the non-native speaker*. Boston, MA: Thomson Heinle.
- Bowles, M. (2011). Exploring the role of modality: L2-heritage learner interactions in the Spanish language classroom. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(1), 30-65.
- Burgo, C. (2017). Meeting student needs: Integrating Spanish heritage language learners into the second language classroom. *Hispania*, 100(5), 45-50.
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2018). Heritage language education: A proposal for the next 50 years. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51, 152-168.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Draper, J. B., & Hicks, J. H. (2000). Where we’ve been; What we’ve learned. In J. B. Webb & L. Miller (Eds.), *Teaching heritage language learners: Voices from the classroom* (pp. 15-35). Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Edstrom, A. (2007). The mixing of non-native, heritage, and native speakers in upper-level Spanish courses: A sampling of student opinion. *Hispania*, 90(4), 755-768.



- Fairclough, M. (2012). Key theoretical considerations in the academic placement of Spanish heritage language learners. In S. M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 259-278). Georgetown University Press.
- García, O. & Sylvan, C. E. (2011). Pedagogies and practices in multilingual classrooms: Singularities in pluralities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(iii), 385-400.
- Gumperz, J. J. (Ed.). (1982). *Language and social identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hammond, M., & Wellington, J. (2013). *Research methods: The key concepts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- He, A. W. (2010). The heart of heritage: Sociocultural dimensions of heritage language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 66-82.
- Holley, L. C., Salas, L. M., Marsiglia, F. F., Yabiku, S. T., Fitzharris, B., & Jackson, K. F. (2009). Youths of Mexican descent of the Southwest: Exploring differences in ethnic labels. *Children & Schools*, 31(1), 15-26.
- Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Hornberger, N. H. & Link, H. (2012). Translanguaging in today's classrooms: A biliteracy lens. *Theory into Practice*, 51, 239-247.
- Johnson, J., Yerrick, R., & Kearney, E. (2014). Linguistically diverse students: In an era of science education reform. *Science Scope*, 37(5), 23.
- Kagan, O., & Dillon, K. (2009). The professional development of teachers of heritage language learners: A matrix. In M. Anderson & A. Lazaraton (Eds.), *Bridging context, making connections: Selected papers from the fifth international conference on language teacher education* (pp. 155-175). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.
- Katz, S. (2003). Near-native speakers in the foreign-language classroom: The case of Haitian immigrant learners. In C. Blyth (Ed.), *The sociolinguistics of foreign-language classrooms: Contributions of the native, near-native, and the non-native speaker* (pp.131-160). Boston, MA: Thomson Heinle.
- Kondo-Brown, K. (2010). Curriculum development for advancing heritage language competence: Recent research, current practices, and a future agenda. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 24-41.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Leeman, J. (2005). Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 35-45.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Montrul, S. (2002). Incomplete acquisition and attrition of Spanish tense/aspect distinctions in adult bilinguals. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 5(1), 39-68.
- Montrul, S. (2008). *Incomplete acquisition in bilingualism: Re-examining the age factor* (Vol. 39). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.



- Montrul, S. (2010). Current issues in heritage language acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 3-23.
- Montrul, S. & Bowles, M. (2010). Is grammar instruction beneficial for heritage language learners? Dative case marking in Spanish. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(1), 47-73.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Status dropout rates* [Data file]. Retrieved October, 2019 from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_coj.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coj.asp)
- Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307-322.
- Parra, M. L. (2017). Resources for teaching Spanish as a heritage language. *Informes del Observatorio*, 32(6), 1-27.
- Potowski, K. (2002). Experiences of Spanish heritage speakers in university foreign language courses and implications for teacher training. *ADFL Bulletin*, 33(3), 35-42.
- Randolph, L. J., Jr. (2017). Heritage language learners in mixed Spanish classes: Subtractive practices and perceptions of high school Spanish teachers. *Hispania* 100(2), 274-288.
- Reyes, I. (2006). Exploring connections between emergent biliteracy and bilingualism. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 6(3), 267-292.
- Roca, A. (2001). Heritage language maintenance and development: An agenda for action. Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource. *Language in education: Theory and practice*, 307-316.
- Russell, B. D., & Kuriscak, L. M. (2015). High school Spanish teachers' attitudes and practices toward Spanish heritage language learners. *Foreign Language Annals* 48(3), 413-433.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Szilágyi, J., Giambo, D., & Szecsi, T. (2013). Teaching Strategies: "What if I don't speak it?" Classroom strategies to nurture students' heritage languages. *Childhood Education*, 89(2), 117- 121.
- Thomas, G. (2011). *How to do your case study: A guide for students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Valdés, G. (1997). The teaching of Spanish to bilingual Spanish-speaking students: Outstanding issues and unanswered questions. In M. C. Colombi & F. Alarcon (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes* (pp. 8-44). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(3), 410-426.
- Weis, L. (2008). "Excellence" and student class, race, and gender cultures. In J.U. Ogbu (Ed.), *Minority status, oppositional culture, and schooling* (pp. 240-256). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification and academic learning*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

## Developing Writing in Spanish Heritage Language Learners: An Integrated Process Approach

Ariana Mrak

University of North Carolina Wilmington

### *Abstract*

*There is no clear-cut division between orality and literacy (Street, 1993). This idea is central to literacy development in the Spanish heritage language (SHL) context because the opportunities to use heritage language (HL) skills are often oral, not written. Furthermore, the cultural situations that speakers find for their language are less extensive since they are in an environment where their HL is not the dominant language. This paper surveys the research on the writing of SHL learners (SHLLs) and proposes an integrated approach of product, process and post-process writing within a critical pedagogy that allows SHL writers to own the development of their HL literacy.*

**Keywords:** *heritage languages, Spanish, multiliteracies, writing*

### **Background**

Traditionally, we view speaking, listening, reading and writing as distinct abilities. We can even attest that each develops at different rates in every student. However, researchers in the field of New Literacy Studies (NLS) point out there is no clear-cut division between orality and literacy (Street, 1993). Literacy goes beyond the cognitive processes of acquiring reading and writing. It is not a stand-alone practice, but one culturally situated and affected by power. The application of the skills gained by the individual needs to be considered within the cultural institutions the speaker inhabits. Casting an ethnographic perspective on literacy allows a look at actual practices in their cultural settings and at how power relations influence its development. Such a view allows investigators to go beyond dominant discourses of literacy and to understand the socially and culturally meaningful ways in which subordinate groups apply their knowledge (Street, 1993). Gee (2015) connects NLS to what he labels Situated Cognition Studies by putting forth a dynamic version of schema theory in which individuals use their prior knowledge and experiences to act, or for the purposes outlined here, write. Researching specifically the language abilities of Spanish/English bilingual students, Martínez (2010) suggests identifying ways to connect the skills they bring to the classroom to help them develop academic literacy. He considers Lee's (2007) Cultural Modeling framework helpful to demonstrate to students what they already are able to do with the language and to help them extend it to new situations. A specific example of this application is Orellana's (2009) use of SHLLs skills in translating and interpreting as resources for academic writing. Cultural Modeling ties back in with

the original research put forth by NLS as it has its foundation in sociocultural learning theory, situating literacy in social and cultural practice (Freire, 2000; Gee, 1990).

The blurring of orality and literacy is central to any discussion of literacy development in the SHL context within the United States because the opportunities to use Spanish language skills are more often oral, not written. Furthermore, the culturally relevant situations that speakers find for their language are usually different from those in a predominantly Spanish-speaking country. For many SHL speakers, their use of the HL is limited to the home and the community (Colombi, 2015). Because it is speaking abilities within the community that play a central role in the lives of most SHL speakers, the culturally significant uses that these individuals find for their language skills bear strongly on their literacy development.

Fortunately for SHL instructors, an acknowledgement of the hurdles present in the maintenance of Spanish in the United States has been at the forefront of researchers' agendas as we continue to work on the development of successful and socially responsible pedagogies. At the moment, SHL education finds itself trying to reconcile two models. The second dialect acquisition approach intends to add the academic variety to the learner's linguistic repertoire. Its critics find its central concept of *appropriateness*—the idea that varieties have a place and an interlocutor—problematic as it completely takes the choice away from the speaker (Fairclough, 2013; Mrak, 2014). Critical language awareness (CLA), developed to counter this criticism, is an approach that seeks to inform the learner on questions of linguistic prestige and subordination, the validity of all language varieties and the fact that the choice of which variety to use belongs with the individual. While the former provides students the tools to learn the academic variety of Spanish, the latter gives them the sociolinguistic knowledge that will allow them to decide which variety is right for them (Lee-man, 2005). In an attempt to further the insight into Heritage Language Education (HLE), the question this paper addresses is what model of literacy development is best suited to the writing needs of SHLLs in a university-level SHL course.

### Spanish Heritage Language Learners' Writing

Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014) categorized the types of studies that have been conducted on the writing of HLLs into three groups. In the first, speakers were asked their opinions about their writing in Spanish. Carreira and Kagan's (2011) research asked speakers to rate their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in their HL. They gave themselves the lowest marks on writing. In a survey of Latino professionals in California, Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, and Pérez (2006) found that even though 76% of the surveyed used at least some Spanish at work, only 1.1% wrote in Spanish at work. Callahan (2010) interviewed high school and college age SHL speakers. They reported minimal use of written Spanish. Tse's (2001) subjects with high levels of HL literacy credited voluntary reading for the results. Overall, the participants in these investigations did not write in Spanish very often, and when they did, many felt they did not do it well.

The second group of studies comprised accounts of the writing produced by HL speakers. García (2002) described how her subjects—bilingual teachers—transferred the mechanics, structure and discourse style of English onto their Spanish papers. Spicer-Escalante (2004) looked at the writing of SHLLs, second language (L2) learners

and monolingual Spanish speakers, and found characteristics of both L2 and monolingual Spanish writers in the production of the SHLLs, concluding that these writers create their own rhetorical and linguistic space. Colombi's (1997) corpus analysis of students' oral and written academic language showed how students used the conversational resources they had developed in their HL to write in academic contexts. Her results signaled a need to guide students from informal to formal registers (see also 2000, 2002, 2006, 2009; Achugar & Colombi, 2008). Schleppegrell and Colombi (1997) compared English and Spanish essays of bilingual writers and found that they transferred the academic strategies they had developed in English while writing in the HL. Martínez (2007) examined two types of writing assignments—graded and non-graded—and found greater influence from English in the more formal work, as demonstrated by the realization of subject pronouns. Callahan (2010) discovered two strategies used by SHLLs, translating and using intuitive knowledge by uttering a phrase aloud to test it for morphosyntactic and/or lexical acceptability. While some of these analyses found influence from English in the writing of SHLLs, others indicated SHLLs have their own way of applying their oral experiences to their writing.

The third group of studies examined the development of students' writing. In a qualitative analysis of one subject, Nichols and Colón (2000) noted that it took their learner three years to increase her spelling accuracy and her fluency when producing journals. The use of think-aloud protocols allowed Schwartz (2003) to determine that students availed themselves of four different strategies: prewriting, composing, surface-level editing and deep-level editing. She noted that the papers that had received more deep-level editing were also the ones that received the better grades. She also found heavy reliance on translation. Jegerski and Ponti (2014) looked at the effectiveness of peer reviews on essays written by SHLLs and reported that even though there was no change in lexical density or syntactic complexity, and transfer from English was present, there was improvement in vocabulary acquisition. They concluded that peer reviews can be a useful tool for students when combined with instructor feedback. Because Colombi (2003, 2009) found that SHLLs apply their knowledge of spoken language to their writing, she proposed a curriculum that makes social and cultural conventions of both oral and written forms explicit to students (Colombi & Harrington, 2014). When taken as a whole, these investigations suggest that a process-writing approach that takes students from informal to formal writing would suit SHLLs best.

Additional work analyzing the writing of SHLLs suggested changes to approaches previously taken. Two of these discussed the need for writing prompts that take into account students' experiences as speakers of a minority language (Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2013; Martínez, 2005). Martínez (2005) exemplified this with the introduction of genre chains, writing assignments linked to a theme with meaning and importance to the SHL learner. He further suggested the definition of genre needs to be expanded beyond traditional academic writing to take into account the linguistic and social realities of the SHL community. His post-process approach to writing falls within the CLA and critical pedagogies that have been advocated for HLE (Carreira, 2000; Correa, 2011; Gutierrez, 1997; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003; Mrak, 2014). CLA centers on the connection between the curriculum and the students' social reality to evince the power differences found in existent discourses (Achugar, 2015). Loureiro-Rodríguez (2013) believes that writing activities that are meaningful to the

students because they focus on their experiences and emotions work as a springboard to allow them to think about their language identity. As Ruiz (1997) has stated, "...voice and agency are central to critical pedagogy; without them there is no such thing as 'empowerment'" (p. 327). Along this same line, Darvin and Norton (2017) describe critical pedagogies as multiple ways in which educators can help language learners within their own social practices and experiences, taking into account their identities and inequitable power relations in society. Critical educators help learners negotiate power relations in order to construct their identity as legitimate speakers of the language under study. These researchers go on to explain their view of *identity* as "multiple, fluid, and a site of struggle" (2017, p. 3). This is precisely what defines the SHL university student—an individual who is bi-cultural, who has to function between a Hispanic and an American identity and who is looking for ways to fit into both (Clayton, Medina, & Wiseman, 2019; Tse, 1998).

Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014) suggested nine principles to assist HLLs in developing writing proficiency: (1) take into account the stage of proficiency; (2) use process writing tasks and prewriting activities; (3) require multiple drafts and guided peer reviews; (4) design clear grading rubrics; (5) respond to content, organization and sentence-level errors; (6) develop writing through reading; (7) teach composing and editing explicitly; (8) work on vocabulary development; and (9) incorporate multiple forms of literacy. Along these lines, Chevalier (2004) proposed a pedagogical model for a multi-stage writing process for HLLs—reproduced here in Table 1—where students work through a continuum that goes from least formal to most. The four stages of development cover six different writing modes within which are subsumed specific target topics, per Table 1 (Chevalier, 2004, p.7) below.

Table 1

*Pedagogical Model for the SHL Writing Class*

STAGES	STAGE I	STAGE II		STAGE III		STAGE IV
WRITING MODES	CONVERSATION	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE	EVALUATION	EXPLANATION	ARGUMENT
PROCESSES	composing written forms of conversational discourse	describe	sequencing in time and space; recount	expressing opinions	sequencing: causal relationships; explain	persuading readers to accept a point of view; interpretation
DISCOURSE TYPES	dialogue, interior monologue	descriptions: object, landscape, people	narratives: personal family histories, stories, fairy tales	evaluations: reviews, critiques	explanations: news articles, summaries, reports	essays, academic papers
TARGET TOPICS	orthography, punctuation	adjectives, intersentential cohesion	verbal morphology, intersentential cohesion	intersentential cohesion: linking words, set phrases	passive voice, intersentential cohesion	subordination, intersentential cohesion

This paper incorporates the nine principles suggested by Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014) and the model recommended by Chevalier (2004) into a proposal for developing the writing of university-level SHLLs.

## **An Integrated Approach to Writing for the Spanish Heritage Language Learner**

In general terms, the instructional needs of SHLLs fall somewhere between those of L1 and L2 learners, depending on their proficiency levels and how much exposure to reading and writing they have had. While SHLLs have an implicit sense of how the language works, it is important to determine their level of grammar in the acquisition continuum which depends on exposure to Spanish language and Latino culture. For some, this would have happened upon entering elementary school; for others, their parents and siblings' use of English in the home will be determining factors (Carreira & Potowski, 2011). Because of this heterogeneity, instructors need to find out what students bring with them to the classroom in order to be able to assist them in expanding their linguistic repertoire and to understand what skills their students wish to develop in their HL. There is agreement among scholars that when it comes to SHLLs, it is crucial to create a differentiated classroom and a flexible curriculum that takes into account where each student's strengths and needs lie (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014; Carreira, 2012; Parra, 2013; Tomlinson, 1999).

Another point of agreement among investigators on the instructional design of HL classes is the advantage of creating a bilingual environment (Anderson, 2008; García, 2009; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Nichols & Colón, 2000). In the same way that García (2009) explains that HL classes should work within a dynamic bilingualism paradigm in which bilingual speakers make use of both of their languages as they need them; Martínez (2007) talks about a "forward biliteracy" where HLLs use multiple resources from both languages and cultures to express themselves; and Lacorte and Canabal (2003) posit codeswitching as a pedagogical strategy in bilingual methodology. Anderson (2008) reminds us that the "notion of two developed and separate language systems operating independently of each other as well as of broader environmental factors is considered naïve" (p. 84) and that bilingualism is necessary for identity formation. Along these same lines, Velasco and García (2014) discuss the concept of *translanguaging*, originally posited by Williams (1996) and further developed by García (2009), who proposed it as a theory of learning for bilingual minority populations. Within this framework, bilinguals are not considered speakers of an L1 and an L2 but individuals with a single linguistic repertoire from which they draw features as needed depending on the social or cultural context. What this means in the SHL classroom is that bilingual writers have writing strategies that are unique (Cumming, 1990). Examples of these are back translations (writing in Spanish and then translating the word to English to make sure the meaning fits the writer's intention), rehearsing (searching and trying out the best fitting word within someone's linguistic inventory), and postponing (writing the word in English and then returning to it at the end) (Velasco & García, 2014).

Due to meager or no access to Spanish-language instruction, lack of status—and therefore, use—of the HL, and/or pressure from the majority language, the SHL classroom is often the first time that SHLLs have a chance to write or even read in their HL. Therefore, students need opportunities for low stakes writing, that is, frequent and informal writing such as journaling or drafts of an essay with minimal or no grading involved (Elbow, 1997). These types of activities will reduce the affective filter and allow students to feel more comfortable. Along the same lines, Mikulski



and Elola's (2011) findings support the idea proposed by Colombi (1997) for a curriculum that takes students from less cognitively demanding writing activities to more challenging ones. They also agree that frequent, low-stakes writing helps students increase their degree of familiarity and comfort with the process of writing in the HL. As Schwartz (2003) has noted, SHLLs display a lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities. Going from informal letters written to a friend or family member and gradually working towards more formal texts helps students' writing grow. Another area of research suggests that students should be provided with abundant reading materials from which to choose for which they have low accountability (McQuillan, 1998). It can help students build vocabulary and notice how expressions or syntactic structures work. This connection between reading and writing steps away from the traditional foreign language pedagogies that have students memorize vocabulary lists, and it parallels how a native speaker in a Spanish-speaking country would go about accomplishing these tasks (Mikulski & Elola, 2011).

As part of process-writing, peer reviews have been recommended. However, evidence from the studies conducted is contradictory. While in Hedgcock and Lefkowitz's (1992) analysis there was an improvement in content, organization and vocabulary; grammar did not improve. In work by Lockhart and Ng (1995), students' feedback centered on content not on language use. On the other hand, other research showed peer comments addressed language form and not content (Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Paulus, 1999). Of course, given SHLLs intuitive knowledge of their language and their lack of a metalinguistic one, it would seem logical that they would be stronger in content and organization (Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009; Schwartz, 2003). In their study on SHLLs, Jegerski and Ponti (2014) found some limitations on the peer review process due to the partial metalinguistic knowledge of the reviewers. All this research points to the need to walk students through structured peer reviews. While SHLLs may find it easier to look at micro-level errors—spelling, grammar—and they should have opportunities to do so since this will provide some immediate satisfaction; they should receive assistance in macro-level corrections such as content and organization.

A student-centered approach incorporates collaborative brainstorming, free-writing, personally meaningful topics, peer reviews and group editing. As literacy theory has developed from product to process to post-process oriented, it grew from seeing writing as a linguistic endeavor to a cognitive activity to a social act with genre theories that emphasize the part that communities play in its development. This new understanding of writing sees it as a public, interpretive and situated activity (Kent, 1993). The literacy pedagogy that the New London Group (NLG) has termed *multiliteracies* to encapsulate “the realities of increasing local diversity and cultural differences” (1996, p. 64; also referred to as multiple literacies by Street, 2000) proposes four curricular components that fall in line with the development of literacies in SHL.

The NLG (1996) defines Situated Practice as “[i]mmersion in experience and the utilization of available discourses, including those from the students' lifeworlds and simulations of the relationships to be found in workplaces and public spaces” (p. 88). The focus is on communicating in the ‘here and now’, on learners' personal experiences, and on the spontaneous expression of their thoughts, opinions and feelings, without conscious reflection or metalanguage. Parra (2013) points out that the multiliteracies approach of the NLG creates a pedagogy in which all forms of mean-



ing—language included—are reformulated by their users as they see fit for the particular cultural needs of the Hispanic communities.

The second component, Overt Instruction, refers to “[s]ystematic, analytic, and conscious understanding. In the case of multiliteracies, this requires the introduction of explicit metalanguages which describe and interpret the Design elements of different modes of meaning” (p. 88). It involves creating scaffolded learning activities, not just drills and memorization. It also requires giving students the metalanguage they need in order to engage in the type of editing and reviewing that goes beyond surface changes.

Critical Framing (CF) requires “[i]nterpreting the social and cultural context of particular Designs of meaning. This involves the students’ standing back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context” (p. 88). It comprises drawing on the metalanguage that was developed through overt instruction to direct learners’ attention to relationships among elements within the linguistic system as well as relationships between language use and social contexts and purposes. CF thus engages the ability to critique systems and their relations to other systems in terms of power, ideology, and values. CF fits precisely into the critical pedagogy approach that guides students to analyze power relationships as they exist and gives them the tools to change them.

The last component proposed by the NLG is Transformed Practice (TP). The authors describe it as “[t]ransfer in meaning-making practice, which puts the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites” (p. 88). Writing an analytic essay about a text that has been read would be one common academic example. The focus is on the process of designing meaning to suit the constraints of both immediate and larger sociocultural contexts. TP is where SHLLs could put their acquired skills to use.

Kern (2004) provides some specific examples that offer direct application to the SHL classroom. Reading journals, where students choose the material, indicate why they chose it, summarize the text, provide a personal response, and reflect on the process of reading—what was challenging, how they dealt with it—provide both situated practice and critical framing. Lessons based on students’ comments get into overt instruction. An activity Kern suggests for transformed practice has been part of SHL instruction for some time. Translation, and the discussion that stems from it, makes students aware of word choice but also how word-to-word correspondence does not always exist and more on point still, it opens up a dialog on how to deal with metaphorical and/or culture-specific expressions and how to reinterpret them in the target language.

Work by Orellana, Dorner, and Pulido (2003) delved into the experiences of SHLLs as interpreters and translators for family members, and how they align with the literacy skills needed to interpret texts, paraphrase, summarize and display audience awareness. Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, and Carbone (2008) have developed curricula that use the translating experiences of HLLs to develop their academic literacies. It is central to note that the overt instruction of literacy-based teaching does not imply a linear structure of teaching grammar, paragraph structure, idea development and essay organization but a collaborative activity where models are used as suggestions and sources of ideas to be discussed in class (Kern, 2004).

## Developing Spanish Heritage Language Learners' Writing

### *Conversational Discourse*

Putting it all together, the first step is to decide where the students' level of proficiency lies, realizing it will not be the same for everyone. A first prompt that asks them to write a letter to a relative or to write a dialogue between themselves and someone they know would help with this formative assessment. This task provides a purpose and an audience, both required for the development of advanced literacy (García, 2002). Whether the recipient of the text is monolingual or bilingual must be clearly specified, as the definition of audience for the bilingual writer is two-fold: the person addressed and the language(s) used. As Grosjean (1997) has pointed out, bilinguals have three different modes of speaking available to them. In the case of Spanish/English bilinguals, they can operate in monolingual mode in English, when the interlocutor is a monolingual English speaker. Option two is monolingual mode in Spanish when the interlocutor is a monolingual Spanish speaker. Thirdly, when two bilingual speakers are communicating, they know they are able to do it in bilingual mode. Therefore, students must know whom they are addressing in order to produce the appropriate code. If they are writing to a relative who does not speak English, they will engage in monolingual mode in Spanish; however, if the recipient speaks both languages, bilingual mode will result. Pre-writing activities that discuss audience and its relevance in the writing process are pertinent at this point. In the early stages, many students will find reviewing a classmate's work overwhelming. The instructor should ask reviewers to target a specific area, and it should be limited to a topic that was discussed in class. Suggestions include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or pluralization. This first assignment might be given a completion grade only, keeping in mind the possible anxiety for students who have never written in their heritage language.

### *Descriptions*

A description is the next activity in Chevalier's model, and it lends itself to a pre-writing reading activity. It could involve the entire class, small groups or individuals. Places, people, or objects are all possibilities. The key is letting students find a topic that motivates them. An audience needs to be determined, and again, it could be different for every student. As far as topics to review, students' linguistic repertoire will dictate. They might include the *ser/estar* distinction (the two copulative verbs in Spanish, *to be*), irregular present tense verbs, or noun phrase agreement. Targeted peer reviewing should follow with the rubric that will be used before they turn in the final draft. At this point, instructors can comment on content and organization but should refrain from correcting sentence-level errors. Let students know the location of the errors and—either individually or with peers—ask them to make their own corrections. As students get more exposure to grammar and orthography points, the instructor can start indicating non-target forms.

### *Narratives*

From a grammatical point of view, a narrative provides the groundwork for practicing the preterite/imperfect distinction, which—depending on the level of the students—may or may not be necessary. It is also an appropriate time to teach

composing overtly: introductions, sequencing, cohesion, and conclusions. The previously targeted peer reviews need to be bolstered by showing students how they also can edit their own work. For instance, Schwartz (2003) found that SHLLs tend to paraphrase, which she attributes to a lack of vocabulary. Teaching students how to use both bilingual and Spanish dictionaries as well as how to maximize the use of the spell-check function of the word processing software are extremely valuable. SHLLs also tend to produce calques, word for word translations of set phrases. They may be unaware that a metaphorical expression in English may not have the same meaning in Spanish. After giving examples, students can be set out to look for idioms that they translated literally from English in their own work. As far as content is concerned, narratives are prime material for family histories, stories of migration, remembering how and from whom students acquired their languages.

### *Evaluations and Explanations*

Writing reviews or critiques of a familiar book or movie falls under the evaluative mode. These types of activities provide students with vocabulary to add to their lexicon. They also lend themselves to different forms of literacy. For example, students could exchange opinions via blogs or other forms of social media. Explanations also fit well into these types of activities. This is the time to help students work on their macro-level editing. Working from a list of linking words and set phrases, they can start introducing them into their writing. It is common for SHLLs to think in English and translate to Spanish when they write, especially in cases of formal or graded writing (Martínez, 2007). One of the effects tends to be a high frequency of passive voice, not only more often than is found in Spanish discourse but also extended to contexts where Spanish does not allow it. For some metalinguistic insight, this is the point where teaching students how to convert passive sentences to active voice or to passive *se* constructions (a construction in Spanish that allows avoidance of passive voice) would be useful.

### *Arguments*

The last stage in the model is the traditional academic paper. Whether students work on developing a persuasive or interpretative paper, they will most likely need to use verb tenses in the subjunctive. This is an area of grammar where many SHLLs have shown loss or incomplete acquisition (Montrul, 2009). Instructors may have to step back from working on writing and explain subjunctive formation and usage. It is important to keep in mind that while for some students, academic papers are a format they need to master; others may not find it worthwhile. The model in Table 1 is ample enough to allow to leave out the last stage. Furthermore, how many of the assignments discussed here can be completed depends on the duration of the class and what other work is included. Where in the model to start depends on the proficiency level of the class.

### **Future Directions**

Mikulski and Elola (2011) have suggested that more analyses on the writing behavior of SHLLs are needed, as they would provide information to assist in developing appropriate curricula. Evaluations of the strategies for teaching writing

that have been proposed are essential as well. Another area of research that remains unattended is how current critical pedagogies for SHLLs can share space in a classroom setting with current literacy development practices. If the intent is to inform students about how language is used in society in order to be able to make individual decisions, then they also need to have access to different language varieties from which to select (Mrak, 2011). For instance, the genres students will need to learn will vary, depending on the intended purpose of their studies. The pursuit of a degree in Spanish will require different literacies than the desire to apply the knowledge of the language in the community. How do we deal with the heterogeneity of the classroom in order to give students a voice that is able to externalize what they want to take away from the class?

Furthermore, recent research on literacy studies has taken the field from the multiliteracies proposed by the NLG to multimodal forms under critical media literacy (Hobbs, 2011; Kellner & Share, 2007). As consumers of these forms, HLLs need to be taken into account. This is the time to extend these multiliteracies approaches to the varied forms in which our students are involved (Velázquez, 2017). A class project in which students create a photographic map or video of their Hispanic community works well. However, Mirra, Morrell, and Filipiak (2018) warn that as instructors, we run the risk of orienting digital literacy towards deficit-oriented and protectionist views, a warning that is very pertinent when teaching a minority language. These investigators propose the need for “digital invention,” where students are not just critical consumers but inventors in order to reconstruct power structures. This would entail helping students analyze the power structures behind digital representations of the Hispanic communities and then create new representations from their point of view.

## Conclusion

Combining product, process and post process theories of literacy with the critical pedagogy of the SHL classroom calls for an integrated approach. Going beyond process-writing, post-process theories are ideally suited to SHL literacy development because they open up a dialogue with students that fits with the critical pedagogies that are vital in the classroom. As Kastman Breuch (2002) points out, teaching (within post-process theory) is not about “mastery of content” but a dialogue “*about content*” (p. 145, emphasis in the original). Product, process and post-process writing are all complementary. As Kern (2004) suggests, what is needed is a comprehensive pedagogy of literacy. Combining a product approach such as the use of models, grammar study, sentence-combining and paragraph structure analysis can be accompanied by the collaborative methodologies of process writing.

In turn, a word of warning needs to go out so as not to fall in the trap of a strict notion of process that does not take into account genres that are meaningful and useful to the students. Furthermore, all of the activities need to be developed within a critical pedagogy that makes learners conscious of their choices and provides them with the sociolinguistic awareness to make informed decisions about the language variety they select for a particular setting. At the same time, such a methodology would afford students the prospect of developing their writing abilities in genres of interest to them. It is the creation of a learning environment that allows participants

not just to have choices but to create them. In Ruiz's words (1997), "[t]eachers do not empower or disempower anyone, nor do schools. They merely create the conditions under which people can *empower themselves*, or not" (p. 323, emphasis in the original).

## References

- Achugar, M. (2015). Theme: Critical language awareness approaches in the Americas: Theoretical principles, pedagogical practices and distribution of intellectual labor. *Linguistics and Education*, 32, 1-4.
- Achugar, M., & Colombi, M. C. (2008). Systemic functional linguistic explorations into the longitudinal study of the advanced capacities: The case of Spanish heritage language learners. In L. Ortega & H. Byrnes (Eds.), *The longitudinal study of advanced L2 capacities* (pp. 36-57). New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, J. (2008). Towards an integrated second-language pedagogy for foreign and community/heritage languages in multilingual Britain. *The Language Learning Journal*, 36(1), 79-89.
- Beaudrie, S., Ducar, C., & Potowski, K. (2014). Developing literacy skills: Writing. *Heritage language teaching: Research and practice* (pp. 134-166). Boston: McGraw-Hill
- Callahan, L. (2010). U.S. Latinos' use of written Spanish: Realities and aspirations. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(1), 1-27.
- Carreira, M. M. (2000). Validating and promoting Spanish in the United States: Lessons from linguistic science. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24(4), 423-442.
- Carreira, M. M. (2012). Formative assessment in HL teaching: Purposes, procedures, and practices. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 100-120.
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2011). Results of the National Heritage Language Survey: Implications for teaching, curriculum design, and professional development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(1), 40-64.
- Carreira, M., & Potowski, K. (2011). Commentary: Pedagogical implications of experimental SNS research. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(1), 134-151.
- Chevalier, J. F. (2004). Heritage language literacy: Theory and practice. *Heritage Language Journal*, 2(1), 26-44.
- Clayton, A. B., Medina, M. C., & Wiseman, A. M. (2019). Culture and community: Perspectives from first-year, first-generation-in-college Latino students. *Journal of Latinos & Education*, 18(2), 134-150.
- Colombi, M. C. (1997). Perfil del discurso escrito en textos de hispanohablantes: Teoría y práctica. In M. C. Colombi & F. X. Alarcón (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría* (pp. 175-189). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Colombi, M. C. (2000). En vías del desarrollo del lenguaje académico en español en hablantes nativos de español en los Estados Unidos. In A. Roca (Ed.), *Research on Spanish in the United States: Linguistic issues and challenges* (pp. 296-309). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

- Colombi, M. C. (2002). Academic language development in Latino students' writing in Spanish. In M. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages: Meaning with power* (pp. 67-86). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Colombi, M. C. (2003). Un enfoque funcional para la enseñanza del lenguaje expositivo. In A. Roca & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi lengua: Spanish as a heritage language in the United States* (pp. 78-95). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Colombi, M. C. (2006). Grammatical metaphor: Academic language development in Latino students in Spanish. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 147-163). London: Continuum.
- Colombi, M. C. (2009). A systemic functional approach to teaching Spanish for heritage speakers in the United States. *Linguistics and Education*, 20, 39-49.
- Colombi, M. C. (2015). Academic and cultural literacy for heritage speakers of Spanish: A case study of Latin@ students in California. *Linguistics and Education*, 32, 5-15.
- Colombi, M. C., & Harrington, J. (2014). Advanced biliteracy development in Spanish as a heritage language. In S. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: State of the field* (pp. 241-258). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Correa, M. (2011). Advocating for critical pedagogical approaches to teaching Spanish as a heritage language: Some considerations. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(2), 308-320.
- Cumming, A. (1990). Metalinguistic and ideational thinking in second language composing. *Written Communication*, 7, 482-511.
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2017). Identity, language learning, and critical pedagogies in digital times. In J. Cenoz, D. Gorter, & S. May (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education: Vol 6, Language awareness and multilingualism*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 43-54). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Elbow, P. (1997). High stakes and low stakes in assigning and responding to writing. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, 69, 5-13.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). The appropriacy of appropriateness. In N. Fairclough (Ed.), *Critical language awareness* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 33-56). New York: Routledge.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed.) (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York: Continuum.
- García, O. (2002). Writing backwards across languages: The inexpert English/Spanish biliteracy of uncertified bilingual teachers. In M. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages* (pp. 245-260). Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- García, O. (2009). Education, multilingualism and translanguaging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, R. Phillipson, A. K. Mohanty, & M. Panda (Eds.), *Social justice through multilingual education* (pp. 140-158). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.



- Gee, J. P. (2015). The New Literacy Studies. In J. Rowsell & K. Pahl (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of literacy studies* (pp. 35-48). London: Routledge.
- Grosjean, F. (1997). Processing mixed language: Issues, findings, and models. In A. M. de Groot & J. F. Kroll (Eds.), *Tutorials in bilingualism: Psycholinguistic perspectives* (pp. 225-254). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gutierrez, J. R. (1997). Teachings Spanish as a heritage language: A case for language awareness. *ADFL Bulletin*, 29, 33-36.
- Hedgcock, J., & Lefkowitz, N. (1992). Collaborative oral/aural revision in foreign language writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1, 255-276.
- Hobbs, R. (2011). What a difference ten years can make: Research possibilities for the future of media literacy education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 3, 29-31.
- Jegerski, J., & Ponti, E. (2014). Peer review among students of Spanish as a heritage language: The effectiveness of a metalinguistic literacy task. *Linguistics and Education*, 26, 70-82.
- Kastman Breuch, L. M. (2002). Post-process 'pedagogy': A philosophical exercise. *JAC Online*, 22(1). Retrieved from <http://www.jaconlinejournal.com/archives/vol22.1/breuch-postprocess.pdf>
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy is not an option. *Learning Inquiry*, 1, 59-69.
- Kent, T. (1993). *Paralogic rhetoric: A theory of communicative interaction*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP.
- Kern, R. (2004). Literacy and advanced foreign language learning: Rethinking the curriculum. *Advanced foreign language learning: A challenge to college programs*, 1, 2-18.
- Lacorte, M., & Canabal, E. (2003). Interaction with heritage language learners in foreign language classrooms. *The Sociolinguistics of Foreign Language Classrooms: Contributions of the native, the near-native, and the non-native speaker*, 1, 107-129.
- Lee, C. D. (2007). *Culture, literacy, and learning: Taking bloom in the midst of the whirlwind*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Leeman, J. (2005). Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 35-45.
- Lockhart, C., & Ng, P. (1995). Analyzing talk in ESL peer response groups: Stances, functions, and content. *Language Learning*, 45, 605-655.
- Loureiro-Rodriguez, V. (2013). Meaningful writing in the heritage language class: A case study of heritage learners of Spanish in Canada. *L2 Journal*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3mp064qx>
- Macaro, E. (2001). Analysing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision making. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85, 531-48.
- Martinez, G. (2003). Classroom based dialect awareness in heritage language instruction: A critical applied linguistic approach. *Heritage Language Journal*, 1(1). Retrieved from <http://hlj.ucla.edu/Journal.aspx>
- Martinez, G. (2005). Genres and genre chains: Post-process perspectives on heritage language writing in a South Texas setting. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*, 24(1 & 2). 79-90.



- Martínez, G. (2007). Writing back and forth: The interplay of form and situation in heritage language composition. *Language Teaching Research*, 11(1), 31-41.
- Martinez, R. A. (2010). Spanglish as literacy tool: Toward an understanding of the potential role of Spanish-English code-switching in the development of academic literacy. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 45(2), 124-149.
- Martínez, R. A., Orellana, M. F., Pacheco, M., & Carbone, P. (2008). Found in translation: Connecting translating experiences to academic writing. *Language Arts*, 85, 421-431.
- McQuillan, J. (1998). The use of self-selected and free voluntary reading in heritage language programs: A review of research. In S. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan (Eds.), *Heritage language development* (pp. 73-87). Culver City: Language Education Associates.
- Mikulski, A., & Elola, I. (2011). Spanish heritage language learners' allocation of time to writing processes in English and Spanish. *Hispania*, 94(4), 715-733.
- Mirra, N., Morrell, E., & Filipiak, D. (2018). From digital consumption to digital invention: Toward a new critical theory and practice of multiliteracies. *Theory into Practice*, 57, 12-19.
- Montrul, S. (2009). Knowledge of tense-aspect and mood in Spanish heritage speakers. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13(2), 239-269.
- Mrak, N. A. (2011). Heritage speakers and the *standard*: Fighting linguistic hegemony. In L. A. Ortiz-López (Ed.), *Selected Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Hispanic Linguistics Symposium* (161-168). Sommerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Mrak, N. A. (2014). Social justice through critical language pedagogy in the heritage language classroom. In M. Mantero, P. Chamness Miller, and J. Watzke (Eds.), *Readings in Language Studies*, Volume 4 (pp. 161-177). Grandville, MI: International Society for Language Studies.
- Nelson, G. L., & Murphy, J. M. (1992). Writing groups and the less proficient ESL student. *TESOL Journal*, 2(2), 23-26.
- New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Nichols, P., & Colón, N. (2000). Spanish literacy and the academic success of Latino high school students: Codeswitching as a classroom resource. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(5), 498-511.
- Orellana, M. F. (2009). *Translating childhoods: Immigrant youth, language, and culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Orellana, M.F., Dorner, L., & Pulido, L. (2003). Accessing assets: Immigrant youths' work as family translators or "para-phrasers." *Social Problems*, 50, 505-524.
- Parra, M. L. (2013). Expanding language and cultural competence in advanced heritage-and foreign-language learners through community engagement. *Heritage Language Journal*, 10(2), 115-142.
- Paulus, T. M. (1999). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 265-289.
- Potowski, K., Jegerski, J., & Morgan-Short, K. (2009). The effects of instruction on subjunctive development among Spanish heritage language speakers. *Language Learning*, 59(3), 537-579.

- Ruiz, R. (1997). The empowerment of language-minority students. In A. Darder, R. D. Torres, & H. Gutiérrez (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader* (pp. 319-328). New York: Routledge.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., & Colombi, M. C. (1997). Text organization by bilingual writers. *Written Communication, 14*, 481-503.
- Schwartz, A. M. (2003). No me suena! [It does not sound right to me!] Heritage Spanish speakers' writing strategies. In A. Roca and M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi Lengua: Spanish as a heritage language in the United States* (pp. 235-256). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Spicer-Escalante, M. (2004). Writing in two languages/living in two worlds: A rhetorical analysis of Mexican-American written discourse. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Latino language and literacy in ethnolinguistic Chicago, 1* (pp. 217-244). Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ.
- Street, B. V. (1993). Introduction: The new literacy studies. In B. V. Street (Ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B. V. (2000). Literary events and literary practices: Theory and practice in the New Literacy Studies. In M. Martin-Jones & K. Jones (Eds.), *Multilingual literacies: Reading and writing in different worlds* (pp. 17-29). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tse, L. (1998). Ethnic identity formation and its implications for heritage language development. In S. D. Krashen, L. Tse, & J. McQuillan (Eds.), *Heritage language development* (pp. 15-29). Culver City: Language Education Associates.
- Tse, L. (2001). Heritage language literacy: A study of US biliterates. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum, 14* (3), 256-268.
- Valdés, G., Fishman, J. A., Chávez, R., & Pérez, W. (2006). *Developing minority language resources: The case of Spanish in California*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Velasco, P., & García, O. (2014). Translanguaging and the writing of bilingual learners. *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education, 37*(1), 6-23.
- Velázquez, I. (2017). Reported literacy, media consumption and social media use as measures of relevance of Spanish as a heritage language. *International Journal of Biligualism, 21*(1), 21-33.
- Williams, C. (1996). Secondary education: Teaching in the bilingual situation. In C. Williams, G. Lewis, & C. Baker (Eds.), *The language policy: Taking stock* (pp. 193-211). Llangefni, Wales: Canolfan Astudiaethau Iaith.

## 6

# Writing Strategies to Develop Literacy Skills for Advanced Spanish Heritage Language Learners

Clara Burgo

Loyola University Chicago

### *Abstract*

*Heritage language learners (HLLs) need to be exposed to different genres of academic texts (Chevalier, 2004; Correa, 2016) and instructors need to find resources to maximize HLLs' learning experiences. There are multiple gains in improving HLLs' writing to create an awareness of the power of the HL through the use of authentic resources with a meaningful goal. Since HLLs should be able to distinguish between registers and genres (Chevalier, 2004), writing chronicles is an effective way to master their communicative competence (Fuentes, 2018). Finally, HLLs' writing is assessed holistically through rubrics moving from a focus on content to language.*

**Keywords:** *genres, literacy skills, assessment*

### **Introduction**

It is well known that one of the main learning goals for Spanish heritage language learners (HLLs) is the transfer of their literacy skills from English to Spanish. According to Kagan and Dillon (2008), HLLs entering Spanish language programs are often characterized as not having literacy skills developed beyond basic levels in their HL. However, they can develop them quickly. Other desirable outcomes are promoting the development of Spanish in three areas: grammatical competence, the acquisition of the academic register, and the extension of textual functions (Belpoliti & Gironzetti, 2018). These outcomes can be reached through reading and writing activities. Nonetheless, mastering orthographic and grammatical conventions is not enough to become good writers; HLLs need to be taught stylistic discourse conventions as well (Chevalier, 2004). This article attempts to shed light on how educators can maximize and assess HLLs' writing performance to advanced levels of proficiency.

### **Background**

Spanish for HLLs courses are crucial whenever possible so that students can work on their academic writing and reading abilities in language courses that serve as a bridge to content courses such as literature or linguistics. Thus, writing and reading become a real challenge for these learners, many of whom have not acquired these skills in Spanish yet. These skills are a challenge for instructors too due to the complexity of teaching writing (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014). Nevertheless, as

these authors claim, instructors should keep in mind that the fact that HLLs do not display a high proficiency in academic literacy skills does not mean that they do not have a good command of informal contexts such as social media. HLLs should be granted opportunities to practice their writing skills in their communities. In spite of their need to improve their writing, HLLs tend to perform better than their second language (L2) counterparts. For example, Potowski (2007) found that among dual immersion graduates, HLLs had higher ratings than L2 learners on a narrative exercise. HL learners have fewer difficulties when completing writing activities. What they have in common with L2 learners is that both student populations are in need of learning writing conventions like organization and transitions (Minor, 2017).

In the same vein, formal writing is usually a priority for HLLs, since their writing tends to mirror their speaking (Colombi, 1997); although students should be exposed to authentic materials of all varieties (Correa, 2016). Furthermore, successful academic writing is inevitably linked to spelling, so common errors should be addressed. In fact, HLLs' writing may sometimes be ungrammatical and show transfer errors from English (García, 2002). This is a consequence of their limited options to acquire writing proficiency (Callahan, 2010). As Beaudrie (2017) argues, poor spelling can affect HLLs' attitude and self-confidence towards writing because of its saliency. Thus, effective instructional approaches are crucial for correct accent placement.

One proposal to teach writing has been that of Chevalier (2004) with six writing modes from assorted discourses: conversation, description, narrative, evaluation, explanation, and argument (p.7). A common trend for HLLs is to develop a "backwards literacy" due to the transfer from English rhetoric (García, 2002). These learners write backwards in their heritage language (HL); that means, they use English structures when writing in Spanish. On the other hand, Spicer-Escalante (2005) argued that HLLs find their own path and their writing becomes influenced by English and their HL, showing a "forward literacy" since they create their own rhetorical space and find their own ways of expression using resources from English and Spanish.

Critical pedagogy may also play an important role in the teaching of writing in terms of literacy transfer. Loureiro-Rodríguez (2013) performed a case study with a first-year Spanish HL class in Canada using meaningful writing to encourage students to reflect upon their Latinx identity and the role of Spanish in Canada, beyond working on their writing skills. She used online discussions and compositions in the form of linguistic biographies to discuss cultural topics with the objective of making students aware that they are part of a bigger community. Writing biographies is especially challenging for HLLs since they move from the familiar (talking about their past experiences) to the abstract aspects of language; students work on the development of academic literacy practices through the deconstruction of biographies in Spanish (Gómez-Pereira, 2018). On the hand, another way of connecting the community with the school and narrowing the gap between them can be through the writing of newsletters as authentic resources with a meaningful goal (Lopes & Lopes, 1991).

One of the persistent challenges in HL pedagogy for writing instruction is that many world language instructors are not trained in teaching writing during the certification process (Lefkowich, 2011; Willis Allen, 2018). If educators intend to empower students to become good writers, they need to know how to do so, especially when grading with regard to assessment. It is key to leave behind a traditional

approach to error correction based on prescriptive grammar; above all since HLLs' local variety must be validated in the HL classroom, academic Spanish should be presented as an addition to their linguistic repertoires (Leeman, 2005). Furthermore, these students should be focused on the content and gradually move to working on spelling, grammar, and stylistics (Kagan & Dillon, 2001). Language should be seen as a continuum ranging from informal to formal settings (Colombi, 2009). In order to exemplify this, Colombi (2009) presents a project consisting of an interview of an older family member of the student and a transcription of the interview. The next step is writing an academic composition with multiple drafts based on the interview so that students can develop an awareness of the difference in registers. She uses a systemic-functional framework to promote the development of reading and writing skills through a genre-based pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012) and an intensive practice of these skills.

Regarding effective instructional strategies, Jegerski and Ponti (2014) conducted a classroom-based study on the efficiency of peer review in a Spanish HL class. Writing is considered a process in which writing drafts, revising, and editing are needed. As these authors argue, there are multiple benefits to this process if this peer-review is implemented along with the instructor's feedback, such as independent learning, problem-solving, self-awareness, and self-reflection. These benefits occur despite the linguistic limitations of the peer reviewers that are shown in the language they used in their feedback.

Concerning more innovative teaching strategies for writing, Martinez (2005) proposed the use of a succession of genres (thematically linked) to incorporate discursive practices of the Latinx community in the curriculum. What is more, due to the overemphasis on literacy skills in the courses for HLLs, there may be a lack of dedication to other skills such as the improvement of oral competence (Beaudrie, 2011), which may be secondary especially with fluent speakers in the HL.

### **Proposals to Teach Writing Skills to HLLs**

There have been major pedagogical concerns about how to improve HLLs' literacy skills. HLLs have basic skills; however, they may lack sophisticated academic or formal vocabulary that allows for accurate listening and written comprehension of formal Spanish. Therefore, Gutiérrez Spencer (1995) suggested using class time to gain confidence before completing reading and writing tasks. Practicing writing can provoke more anxiety than practicing other skills since HLLs feel insecure mainly about their grammar and orthography (Torres, Arrastia-Chisholm, & Tackett, 2018). Cheng (2002) suggested giving a positive emphasis on the perception that HLLs have about their writing and preparing their mindset before putting them to work on their task.

HLLs' instruction should be based on macro-teaching approaches where scaffolding can take place, building on their previous knowledge of the HL. The students can start with readings that include an integration of content, stylistics, grammar, and spelling (Carreira, 2014). Schwartz (2003) found that HLLs struggle through certain limitations: they lack writing strategies due to their lack of experience with academic writing, so they tend to do just surface editing; they have limited vocabulary; and above all, they lack linguistic confidence. Thus, she suggested four stages

in writing for Spanish HLLs to become more aware of how to write: (1) prewriting (organizing and brainstorming ideas), (2) composing (planning the order of ideas), (3) surface-level editing (grammar, mechanics, spelling), and (4) deep-level editing (altering the meaning of the text).

In addition to suggesting different proposals, a key question is how these learners will *use* their writing in Spanish, as Callahan (2010) argued. The HLLs in her study reported that they would use Spanish first for personal correspondence and translation to communicate and connect with their family. Those enrolled in Spanish courses had other goals in mind such as creative writing, but their use of written Spanish was fairly minimal. In this study, HLLs started presenting opinions orally and then they completed a written task as an extension which was discussed orally. Callahan (2010) found that HLLs do scaffolding of written work based on previous oral work to make the task more familiar. Explicit instruction is recommended by Gatti and O'Neill (2018) to treat issues in an abstract way, which seems hard for HLLs. Consequently, Parra, Llorente Bravo, and Polinski (2018) argued that a macro-based approach and explicit instruction on narrative genres would allow HLLs to narrate events in more complex ways.

On the other hand, Yanguas and Lado (2012) implemented think-alouds in the HL classroom and found benefits in their writing regarding fluency and accuracy. This strategy allowed HLLs to test their native intuitions about what sounded right or not. Language educators should be incorporating meaningful writing activities (culturally contextualized) as ACTFL (2015) recommends, mainly because they can use this opportunity to make HLLs feel like part of a bigger community, regardless of their families' country of origin (Loureiro-Rodriguez, 2013). Loureiro-Rodriguez (2013) suggested a social approach and used two writing assessments (online discussions and compositions) so that students could reflect on their own experiences and linguistic practices. This approach focuses on fostering student awareness and appreciation of their own language varieties and allows instructors to get to know their students better and accommodate the curriculum to them. Furthermore, Loureiro-Rodriguez (2013) mentioned four principles in the writing process: an autobiographical narrative to explore personal narratives, an emotional writing, a more personal stage, and finally bringing the writing to the social domain. She used online discussions and compositions to assess writing; the former of a more informal nature to interact with their peers, and the latter of a more introspective nature to reflect on a variety of topics.

In the same vein, Potowski (2005) understood writing as a step-by-step-guided process starting with content and ending with grammar. In fact, Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014) suggested nine stages for instructors to teach writing to HLLs. The first stage consisted of moving from more simple to more complex discourse from beginning to more advanced levels, so students were presented with the kind of discourse that they were ready to understand at the right time. There were several proposals to do so, such as the use of *HelloTalk* and *Tandem* to produce output in short excerpts that would provide students with confidence in the HL (Vollmer Rivera & Teske, 2018). HLLs were able to work on their spelling errors or any other difficulties they may find when writing (Beaudrie, 2011). The second stage focused on designing writing tasks and prewriting activities based on context, with a commu-



nicative goal in mind. During the third stage, students were able to obtain feedback from their peers following a rubric. The next stage detailed the selection of a good rubric. According to these authors, rubrics should be holistic and analytical. Regarding error correction, based on Williams (2012), instructors should correct what is not understood, errors that can be fixed by the student, and what has been studied in class. In the specific case of HLLs, Beaudrie et al. (2014) made a relevant point about the importance of distinguishing between errors and non-standard uses in the community. Guiding students to writing via reading is also a crucial stage to improve their proficiency in literacy skills. In order to do so, explicit teaching is required so that students understand writing as a process: planning, composing, revising, and editing. The connection between reading and writing should be promoted so that HLLs can further develop their linguistics skills in Spanish (Mikulski & Elola, 2011). The next stage focused on vocabulary instruction and its importance in developing writing skills, above all since HLLs' vocabulary tends to be limited. Finally, engaging students in multiple literacies facilitated the enhancement of their writing skills. In fact, a proposal to teach writing through the study of literature is also an effective tool to expand the knowledge of Spanish, especially through the study of U.S. Latino literature to include their voices in the curriculum (Loza, 2017).

One issue that has not been mentioned so far is whether the use of code-switching with English is acceptable. Potowski (2005), Loureiro-Rodriguez (2013), and Camus and Adrada-Rafael (2015) have a positive view on this matter; they all agree that HLLs should use English when needed on the drafts of the composition so that their dominant language can have a positive impact on improving their writing skills in their HL.

Overall, there is a need to create new pedagogical materials to develop literacy. Torres, Pascual y Cabo, and Beusterien (2017) propose using task-based approaches centered on problem-solving communicative tasks to obligate HLLs to interact with different genres while making form-meaning connections.

### **Activities with a Focus on Writing**

Aparicio (1983) proposed controlled activities for writing for HLLs with a low proficiency in Spanish; that is, substitution-transformation activities to compare and contrast oral and written Spanish. Additionally, self-editing exercises with the most common errors and writing dialogues are beneficial to develop composition skills along with free writing to practice the art of writing. HLLs can monitor their development through the writing of a journal as well and reflect upon what they have learned throughout the course. Similarly, Roca (2007) suggested some of the following activities for HLLs: a linguistic and cultural autobiography, oral interviews with a composition about the content of the interview, writing about being bilingual, their communities, topics of the textbook or preparing for a trip, and interviewing their grandparents and writing about it. Along with Roca's mentioning of the linguistic and cultural autobiography, one could add the importance of the "personal essay" or "self-person narratives". These strategies echo what Pennebaker (2004) called "the reconstruction of self" through the writing of life experiences. Furthermore, Reznicek-Parrado (2014) advocated for the use of journals or personal essays for academic writing to advance literacy of HLLs, not only to improve their linguistic skills, but



also to incorporate their voices in the curriculum as bilingual and bicultural. She suggested that the instructor could use the personal essay to connect the topics of readings by renowned authors to theirs so that there is a comparison between their own stories and those that they read in class; “storytelling through writing.” Explicit pedagogical tasks should be used to scaffold students’ writing skills that they need to develop to build these personal narratives. It is crucial that HLLs be encouraged to use their own language varieties to write their personal narratives to reflect their voice (Callahan, 2010). This approach is considered authentic writing and students can use it as a transformative act. These journals or diaries become a tool for the instructors through which they can get to know their students better, as well as their thoughts and feelings towards the language (Velásquez, 2015). Of particular note is the importance of focusing on academic registers when the ultimate goal is academic, or the incorporation of informal home registers when the goal is to advocate for the inclusion of the Spanish varieties of their own communities.

Since HLLs are expected to distinguish between registers and genres (Chevalier, 2004), writing chronicles is an effective activity because of its hybrid nature and the three modes of communication that are involved in this genre (interpersonal, interpretative, and exposition) to master their communicative competence, as Fuentes (2018) argued. Fuentes described multiple advantages of using the chronicle genre in the classroom; among them, the fact that it involves a critical reflection and an opportunity to become active participants in the construction of their own knowledge. In this study, most students reported learning gains in acquiring the formal register. To a lesser extent, they also appreciated improving their grammar, vocabulary, and orthography.

In a Spanish dual immersion program in Arizona called *Exito Bilingüe*, Smith and Arnot-Hopffer (1998) described how a literacy program can be implemented successfully. This program consisted of eight components: reading aloud to children, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Furthermore, oral history is also an effective tool to bring the community to the classroom through the HLLs’ families’ narratives. Foulis (2018) conducted a study in a service-learning course in which Latinx communities were seen as agents of social change.

Another strategy could be dictation, but this is better used at the intermediate level. Dictation can help HLLs to make the connection between speaking and writing. However, it might not be effective at the basic level since students may not be ready for this (Pyun & Lee-Smith, 2011).

On the other hand, Belpoliti and Fairclough (2016) proposed the use of projects centered on an inquiry-based model, since there are learning gains at many levels including writing, and it is a good model to measure individual progress. Regarding writing skills, students demonstrate analytical and critical skills when analyzing the data they collect and writing a report in academic Spanish based on this research. In order to do this, students go through a process of editing and reviewing while at the same integrating the linguistic and discourse knowledge that they have been covering in class.

Finally, another creative way of making students write is the proposal by Parra (2016). As a final project in one of her advanced courses, she asked students to create

an art object that reflected what they learned in class and to describe the connection between the object and the class in the form of an essay. At the same time, this project raised students' awareness of their HL varieties, their ideologies about language, and the role of their HL in their identities.

### **Writing as an Act of Resistance and Assessment**

Writing in Spanish can play a role in fighting the hegemony of English versus the HL. According to Villa (2004), L1 literacy predicts the level of success in acquiring L2 literacy. Writing can serve an ulterior purpose beyond improving literacy, developing an awareness of the power of their HL. In a nutshell, instructors should be able to provide students with opportunities so that they know how to use their HL in ways that they had not done before. Students need to have an audience in mind and establish a social interaction between the writer and the reader (Graham, Gillespie, & McKeown, 2012). Gee (2002) considered writing a social practice where language, identity and the social context are interrelated.

Additionally, reading culturally relevant texts might be of better use for bilingual students. Flores-Dueñas (2004) reported that these students were more engaged with texts written by Mexican American authors; it was easier for them to identify with these culturally familiar texts, which made them produce higher-level writing. Concerning writing assessment for HLLs, there is not a parallel standardized assessment to that of L2 learners. However, Beaudrie et al. (2014) argue that HLLs manage interpersonal situations better than presentational modes, so the instructor's job is to help them to move from one to the other in writing. Writing is a difficult skill to acquire for both L2 and HLLs; however, it might even be perceived as harder for HLLs (Silva, 2011). Holistic assessment is recommended to improve the teaching of writing by helping teachers guide students to become better writers (Escamilla & Coady, 2001). According to Escamilla and Coady (2001), these rubrics should contain conventions such as spelling and accentuation. Spicer-Escalante (2005) found that HLLs' writing does not compare to that of native speakers or L2 learners; they have their own and unique way of written expression.

### **Conclusions**

This article attempts to offer effective writing strategies to implement in the HL classroom while achieving the learning goals expected with the HL teaching pedagogy. Since HLLs' writing tends to imitate their speaking, they need to be exposed to assorted genres of academic texts, and instructors need to find the appropriate strategies to maximize their learning experiences using authentic resources whenever possible (for example, newsletters). As it is well known, instructors need to validate students' Spanish variety while at the same time helping them in the process of adding more registers. What is more, HLLs need to have a positive view about their use of code-switching with English (Camus & Adrada-Rafael, 2015; Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2013; & Potowski, 2005). Writing is a process where students have to work on different drafts, focusing on content first and then on language, and peer-review is an important part of the process (Jegerski & Ponti, 2014; Potowski, 2005; Rose & Martin, 2012).

On another note, a social approach is strongly encouraged so that students can use their writing to reflect upon their lives through personal narratives (self-narratives) or biographies (Roca, 2007). What is more, these narratives should be a transformative act through which HLLs can express their voice and be heard outside of their communities (Callahan, 2010). Finally, writing can play an activist role to push back against hegemonic perspectives and practices toward the HL (Villa, 2004). Ultimately, there are multiple gains in improving the writing in the HL, not only for the sake of acquiring literacy in Spanish, but also to create an awareness of the real power of students' HL. More research is needed regarding assessment, since it is hard to find a standardized test just for HLLs. Regardless, a holistic approach has been highly recommended (Escamilla & Coady, 2001). Furthermore, specific rubrics are needed with a focus on spelling and accents, and above all, it is important to conclude that HLLs' writing is unique and very much worthy of further study.

## References

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) National Collaborative Board. (2015). *World readiness standards for learning language: 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Aparicio, F. (1983). Teaching Spanish to the native speaker at the college level. *Hispania*, 66(2), 232-239.
- Beaudrie, S. (2011). Spanish heritage language programs: A snapshot of current programs in the Southwestern United States. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(2), 321-37.
- Beaudrie, S. (2017). The teaching and learning of spelling in the Spanish heritage language classroom: Mastering written accent marks. *Hispania*, 100(4), 596-611.
- Beaudrie, S., Ducar, C., & Potowski, K. (2014). *Heritage language teaching: Research and practice*. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Belpoliti, F., & Fairclough, M. (2016). Inquiry-based projects in the Spanish heritage language classroom: Connecting culture and community through research. *Hispania*, 99(2), 258-273.
- Belpoliti, F., & Gironzetti, E. (2018). Hablantes de herencia [Heritage learners]. In J. Muñoz-Basols, E. Gironzetti, & M. Lacorte (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish Language Teaching: Metodologías, contextos y recursos para la enseñanza del español L2 [Methodologies, contexts and resources for the teaching of L2 Spanish]* (pp. 447-462). New York: Routledge.
- Callahan, L. (2010). U.S. Latinos' use of written Spanish: Realities and aspirations. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(1), 1-27.
- Camus, P., & Adrada-Rafael, S. (2015). Spanish heritage language learners vs. L2 learners: What CAF reveals about written proficiency. *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages*, 2(2), 32-51.
- Carreira, M. (2014). Basic principles for teaching mixed classes. *NHLRC: Research*. UCLA.
- Cheng, Y.-S. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(5), 647-656.
- Chevalier, J. F. (2004). Heritage language literacy: Theory and practice. *Heritage Language Journal*, 2(1), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://www.heritagelanguages.org>

- Colombi, M. C. (1997). Perfil del discurso escrito en textos de hispanohablantes: teoría y Práctica. [Profile of the written discourse in texts of Spanish speakers: theory and practice]. In M.C. Colombi & F.X. Alarcon (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: praxis y teoría [The teaching of Spanish to Spanish speakers: praxis and theory]* (pp. 175-189). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Colombi, M. C. (2009). A systemic functional approach to teaching Spanish for heritage speakers in the United States. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 39-49.
- Correa, M. (2016). Critical approaches to heritage language learning: From linguistic survival to resistance and action. In P. Trifonas & T. Aravossitas (Eds.), *Handbook of research and practice in heritage language education* (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Springer International.
- Escamilla, K., & Coady, M. (2001). Assessing the writing of Spanish speaking students: Issues and suggestions. In S.R. Hurley & J.V. Tinajero (Eds.), *Literacy assessment of second language learners* (pp. 43-63). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Flores-Dueñas, L. (2004). Reader response, culturally familiar literature, and reading comprehension: The case of four Latina(o) students. In F. Boyd & C. H. Brock (Eds.), *Multicultural and multilingual literacy and language: Contexts and practices* (pp. 180-206). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Foulis, E. (2018). Participatory pedagogy: Oral history in the service-learning classroom. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 22(3), 119-134.
- Fuentes, R. (2018). Una exploración de la conciencia crítica intercultural y de la identidad de los hablantes de herencia del español a través de las crónicas literarias. [An exploration of the intercultural critical conscience and of the identity of Spanish heritage speakers through literary chronicles]. *Sincronía*, 73, 245- 275.
- García, O. (2002). Writing backwards across languages. In M. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages*, (pp. 245-260). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gatti, A., & O'Neill, T. (2018). Writing proficiency profiles of heritage learners of Chinese, Korean, and Spanish. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(4), 719-737.
- Gee, J. P. (2002). Literacies, identities, and discourses. In M. J. Schleppegrell & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages. Meaning with power* (pp. 159-175). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gómez-Pereira, D. (2018). *Developing academic writing and cultural identity for Spanish heritage language learners (HLLs) through writing texts in Spanish* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pittsburg.
- Graham, S., Gillespie, A., & McKeown, D. (2012). Writing: Importance, development, and instruction. *Reading and Writing*, 6(1) 1-15.
- Gutiérrez Spencer, L. (1995). Reading and vocabulary: Recommendations for Spanish for native speakers materials. *Bilingual Review/ La Revista Bilingüe*, 20(2), 176-186.
- Jegerski, J., & Ponti, E. (2014). Peer review among students of Spanish as a heritage language: The effectiveness of a metalinguistic literacy task. *Linguistics and Education*, 26, 70-82.

- Kagan, O., & Dillon, K. (2008). Issues in heritage language learning in the United States. In N. Van Deusen-Scholl & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, 2nd Edition, Volume 4: Second and foreign language education*, (pp. 143-156). Springer Science+Business Media LLC.
- Kagan, O. & Dillon, K. (2001). A new perspective on teaching Russian: Focus on the heritage learner. *Slavic and East European Journal*, 45, 507-518.
- Leeman, J. (2005). Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 35-44.
- Lefkowitz, N. (2011). The quest for grammatical accuracy: Writing instruction among foreign and heritage language educators. In T. Cimasko & M. Reichelt (Eds.), *Foreign language writing instruction: Principles and practices* (pp. 225-254). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Lopes, J. M., & Lopes, M. (1991). Bridging the generation gap: the collection of social histories in the Portuguese heritage language program. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/ La Revue Canadienne des langues vivantes*, 47(4), 708-711.
- Loureiro-Rodriguez, V. (2013). Meaningful writing in the heritage language class: A case study of heritage learners of Spanish in Canada. *L2 Journal*, 5(1), 43-58.
- Loza, S. (2017). Transgressing standard language ideologies in the Spanish heritage language (SHL) classroom. *Chiricú Journal: Latina/o Literatures, Arts, and Cultures*, 1(2), 56-77.
- Martinez, G. (2005). Genres and genre chains: Post-process perspectives on heritage language writing in a South Texas setting. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*, 24(1&2), 79-90.
- Mikulski, A., & Elola, I. (2011). Spanish heritage language learners' allocation of time to writing processes in English and Spanish. *Hispania*, 94(4), 715-733.
- Minor, D. (2017). Language instruction in the expanding borderlands teaching heritage language learners enrolled in L2 classrooms. *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 50(2), 149-179.
- Parra, M. L. (2016). Critical approaches to heritage language instruction: How to foster students' critical consciousness. In M. Fairclough & S. M. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative strategies for heritage language teaching* (pp. 166-190). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Parra, M. L., Llorente Bravo, M., & Polinski, M. (2018). De bueno a muy bueno [From good to very good]: How pedagogical intervention boosts language proficiency in advanced heritage learners. *Heritage Language Journal*, 15(2), 203-241.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (2004). *Writing to heal: A guided journal for recovering from trauma & emotional upheaval*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- Potowski, K. (2005). *Fundamentos de la enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes en los EE.UU. [Foundations of the teaching of Spanish to Spanish speakers in the U.S.]* Madrid: Arco Libros.
- Potowski, K. (2007). Characteristics of the Spanish proficiency of dual immersion graduates. *Spanish in Context*, 4(2), 187-216.
- Pyun, D. O., & Lee-Smith, A. (2011). Reducing Korean heritage language learners' orthographic errors: The contribution of online and in-class dictation and form-focused instruction. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 24, 141-158.

- Reznicek-Parrado, L.M. (2014). The personal essay and academic writing proficiency in Spanish heritage language development. *Arizona Working Papers in SLA & Teaching*, 71-83.
- Roca, A. (2007). Intermediate-level Spanish as a Heritage Language: Issues in developing Literacy, *AP Spanish Language. Special Focus: Teaching Writing*, 142-154.
- Rose, D., & Martin, J. R. (2012). *Learning to write, reading to learn: Genre, knowledge and pedagogy in the Sydney school*. London: Equinox.
- Schwartz, A. M. (2003). ¡No me suena! [It doesn't ring a bell!] Heritage-Spanish speakers' writing strategies. In A. Roca & M.C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi lengua: [My language:] Spanish as a heritage language in the United States* (pp. 235-256). Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press.
- Silva, G. V. (2011). Textbook activities among heritage and non-heritage Portuguese learners. *Hispania*, 94(4), 734-750.
- Smith, P.H., & Arnot-Hopffer, E. (1998). *Exitó bilingüe [Bilingual success]: Promoting Spanish literacy in a dual literacy immersion program*. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 22(2, 3, & 4), 261- 277.
- Spicer-Escalante, M. (2005). Writing in two languages/Living in two worlds. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Latino language and literacy in ethnolinguistic Chicago* (pp. 217-244). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Torres, K. M., Arrastia-Chisholm, M. C., & Tackett, S. (2018). Perceptions of writing anxiety and self-efficacy among Spanish heritage language learners. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 19(1), 84-98.
- Torres, J., Pascual y Cabo, D., & Beusterien, J. (2017). What is next? Heritage language learners shape new paths in Spanish teaching. *Hispania*, 100(5), 271-278.
- Velásquez, E. V. (2015). *Reconocimiento léxico y comprensión lectora de los estudiantes de español como lengua de herencia [Lexical recognition and reading comprehension of students of Spanish as a heritage language]* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Houston, TX.
- Villa. D. (2004). *No nos dejaremos: [We won't let it happen to us]: Writing in Spanish as an act of resistance*. In M. H. Kells, V. Balester, & V. Villanueva (Eds.), *Latino/a discourses on language, identity, & literacy education* (pp. 85-95). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Vollmer Rivera, A., & Teske, K. (2018). The critical intersection of heritage language learning and e-tandem learning environments. *IALLT, Journal of Language Learning Technologies*, 48, 97-112.
- Williams, J. (2012). The role(s) of writing and writing instruction in L2 development. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21, 321-331.
- Willis Allen, H. (2018). Redefining writing in the foreign language curriculum: Toward a design approach. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(3), 513-532.
- Yanguas, I., & Lado, B. (2012). Is thinking aloud reactive when writing in the heritage language? *Foreign Language Annals*, 45(3), 380-399.



# Streamlining the Placement of Spanish Heritage Language Learners

**Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza**

*New Mexico State University— Las Cruces*

**Gabriela Moreno**

*New Mexico State University— Las Cruces*

## **Abstract**

*The rise in Spanish heritage language and Spanish native speaker (SHL/SNS) learners in language programs traditionally designed for second language (L2) learners has prompted an interest in the development of a more inclusive placement exam for diverse learners. Some practitioners opt for an instrument that compiles a comprehensive profile of the learner's ability. Taking the perspective of the natural acquisition of SHL/SNS of select linguistic areas as well as background information on the learners' exposure to Spanish, we developed a simplified placement exam that efficiently identifies learners of different backgrounds and abilities. A one-way ANOVA demonstrates that the small number of items developed in the test effectively index different levels of ability. Additional informal analyses indicate that once the parameters for course recommendations are applied, levels of ability can still be observed after the SHL/SNS and L2 learners are separated. The present article outlines the approach and outcomes of the placement test to illustrate how an in-house instrument can be designed to meet the needs of an institution's programs and diverse learners.*

**Keywords:** *Spanish heritage language learners, placement, assessment*

## **Introduction**

Students in today's Spanish courses come from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including Spanish heritage language (SHL) and Spanish native speaker (SNS) households. U.S.-born Latinos comprise the principal group driving the increase in diversity in both K-12 schools and institutions of higher education (Gramlich, 2017; Krogstad & Fry, 2014). Despite this demographic shift, SHL/SNS learners, whose knowledge about the language has been built on a variety of lived experiences in the U.S. and/or abroad, continue to be placed in courses that are designed with second language (L2) learners in mind. Even with a strong desire to meet the needs of students from diverse populations, the placement of SNS/SHL learners in Spanish language programs often remains inadequate, inconsistent or haphazard.

The task of developing Spanish placement exams with a diverse student population in mind is recognized as challenging (e.g. Fairclough, 2012; MacGregor-Men-



doza, 2012; Potowski, Parada, & Morgan-Short, 2012; Vergara Wilson, 2012). Both the traditional L2 orientation of the field as well as the elusive nature of SHL/SNS learners' implicit knowledge have steered test designers toward more prescriptive, grammar-based measures centered on idealized native speaker norms (Fairclough, 2012; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012). Since most placement measures reflect knowledge that centers on formally learned skills, SHL/SNS learners, whose foundation of linguistic knowledge does not reside in declarative, rule-based categories, are at a disadvantage. As a result, their true linguistic abilities are sorely underestimated and/or misinterpreted, and they are often misplaced in lower-level courses designed for L2 learners (e.g. Belpoliti, 2015).

Commercially produced placement measures are often selected as an expedient solution to identifying learners' skills since few individuals undertake the task of designing a customized test (Fairclough, Belpoliti & Bermejo, 2010). However, while appearing to be efficient, a one-size-fits-all approach may be better suited for the larger L2 population whose knowledge can be more readily quantified in terms of mastery of grammatical features and is rarely appropriate for identifying the abilities of SHL/SNS learners. By not considering and integrating the breadth and depth of SHL/SNS knowledge, commercial measures tend to highlight the formal grammatical features that SHL/SNS have failed to master, rather than identifying their linguistic skills. Such a deficit approach favors L2 learners, whose grammatical knowledge is highly regulated and traceable, and simultaneously fails to acknowledge the vast array of skills that SHL/SNS learners possess. Ultimately, such measures provide little in the way of meaningful placement for SHL/SNS populations because they fail to gauge their level and skill of language acquired primarily orally. While customized tests may require more initial effort in design, they can render results that are more meaningful and appropriate to the institution and underserved student populations, particularly with respect to the needs of SHL/SNS learners (Fairclough, 2012; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012; Vergara Wilson, 2012).

Rather than measure grammatical deficits from a prescriptive perspective, a more appropriate approach for placement could involve tapping into the knowledge that represents authentic language use from a SHL/SNS point of view. That is, finding areas of linguistic knowledge that "seem" or "feel" right to SHL/SNS learners but would be unlikely to represent information that could be easily learned in a classroom setting. Such an approach means shedding comparisons of SHL/SNS speakers with the idealized norms associated with speakers raised and educated in the country of origin, and instead, searching for areas of knowledge that can represent an intuitive foundation of language.

The present paper offers just such an approach to placement. Here, we examine the results of a new Spanish placement measure which replaces a previous test that had been used at a Hispanic Serving Institution near the U.S.-Mexico border for more than two decades. While the previous placement measure was lengthier, more comprehensive, and had been developed for use at an institution with a similar student population, it was ultimately found to be inaccurate with regard to the placement of SHL/SNS students (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012). Conducting a detailed item analysis of the test questions, author MacGregor-Mendoza found the previous Spanish placement test (SPT) to be problematic concerning item difficulty, with

nearly half of the items classified as either too easy or too difficult. Moreover, she found that the discriminatory power of all 90 content items was low to non-existent in the ability to distinguish between learners' ability levels, invalidating the test as a whole with regard to SHL/SNS learners. She concluded:

For our SHL learner population, the SPT is working poorly at best and, more likely, not at all. This is a disturbing result as it implies that not only are we not aiding our SHL learners in confirming their skills and finding an appropriate place in our program in which they can grow, we are likely doing them harm (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012, p. 14).

Our need to develop an accurate placement measure was urgent, given that our Hispanic Serving Institution has a diverse student body with over 56% self-identified as Hispanic (NMSU Office of Institutional Analysis, n.d.). Although our Spanish language program offers two tracks—a traditional L2 Spanish course track and a track for Spanish Heritage Learners/Spanish Native Speakers—we have found that SHL/SNS students are more frequently misplaced in the L2 courses than are L2 learners in SHL/SNS courses. SHL/SNS learner misplacement has typically arisen from the flaws in the previous placement exam, a reticence on the part of SHL/SNS learners to recognize the purpose and validity of the courses, or a lack of awareness on the part of formal and informal advisors of our programmatic structure and objectives. Once the failures of the former placement measure had been revealed and the test had been discarded, students began to be placed through a time-consuming process consisting of an individual interview conducted by author Moreno, the director of the SHL/SNS program, and her teaching assistants who conducted further diagnostic writing exercises to confirm placements in the SHL/SNS courses.

Mindful that our previous flawed placement test was designed with the traditional focus on assessing knowledge learned through formal study rather than the lived language skills of SHL/SNS, we endeavored to create a brand-new assessment that focused on SHL/SNS students first, yet simultaneously serve as a means to accurately measure the abilities of L2 learners, while considering the courses into which both groups of students would enter. Through pilot testing items over several semesters with both SHL/SNS and L2 learners in our student population, we were able to identify items that conformed to parameters of item difficulty, item discrimination and reliability for both L2 and SHL/SNS populations. These pilot tests also allowed us to identify performance levels that could be set as thresholds for courses and designed an algorithm based on these outcomes to automatize placement (MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2015). In the end, we arrived at a measure that is accurate and streamlines the placement process for our L2 and SHL/SNS learners.

We illustrate here how adopting the perspective of the SHL/SNS learner as our point of departure, lends to a more efficient means of identifying and placing SHL/SNS learners without compromising the accuracy of placement for L2 learners. That is to say, by focusing on items that correspond to SHL/SNS learners' intuitive knowledge about language, we find that we can also identify levels of language ability in L2 learners. This is the reverse of the perspective traditionally adopted. Given the known flaws of the test we replaced and the dangers of a lack of oversight, we endeavored to closely monitor the outcomes of our placement measure to ensure that it was performing adequately for our student population and curricula, particularly

with respect to our SHL/SNS learners who, for a variety of reasons, often erroneously enroll in courses designed for L2 learners (e.g. Belpoliti, 2015). Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to provide background on the areas of items we selected for inclusion in our redesigned placement test and demonstrate how well it could identify misplaced learners to recommend placement in courses more appropriate to their needs and abilities.

## **Review of the Literature**

Accurate and efficient placement with mixed populations is necessary because SHL/SNS and L2 students enter the classroom with distinct cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills. One of the first tasks in designing an effective placement measure is distinguishing between heritage language (HL) and L2 students. Attempts at making this distinction have been forwarded by Valdés (2001), who defined a HL learner as an individual “who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (p. 38). While this definition is useful as a general description and essential for understanding the diverse conditions in which SHL/SNS learners experience language linguistically and culturally, it is overly broad to be applied in operational terms to be directly transformed into measurable characteristics on a placement test. While Valdés clearly signals home language exposure as critical to discerning SHL/SNS learners, the concept of “to some degree bilingual” in Valdés’ definition remains ambiguous. Thus, placement exams should elicit both information about the environment in which learners were first exposed to Spanish and assess linguistic elements likely to be acquired “in a home where a non-English language is spoken” and rarely accessible to L2 learners (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). Nonetheless, Valdés (2001) clearly acknowledges that SHL/SNS and L2 speakers will both display a range of skills based on their myriad of ways in which they are exposed to Spanish; it is precisely the range of abilities espoused by learners between and within their respective groups that a placement exam should be able to detect.

A first step in the distinction between SHL/SNS and L2 learners is grounded in the ways that each group is hypothesized to process linguistic information differently (Hulstijn, 2011; Zyzik, 2016). While L2 learners may have little to no prior knowledge of Spanish as a baseline before entering a classroom, the same cannot be said for SHL/SNS learners. Because of their early exposure to Spanish in a natural environment, SHL/SNS learners have access to information at the level of Basic Language Cognition (BLC) (Hulstijn, 2011). BLC forms the foundation of how the language is put together and references learners’ implicit or intuitive understanding about the language. This knowledge has been learned primarily through oral communication, exclusive of exposure to literacy. Lying below the level of conscious knowledge, this linguistic foundation of skills represents more procedural rather than declarative knowledge (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Characteristics of Basic Language Cognition (BLC) and Higher Language Cognition (HLC)*

<b>Basic Language Cognition (BLC)</b>	<b>Higher Language Cognition (HLC)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generated by early exposure to language in oral form</li> <li>● Entails common words and structures that are accessible to all speakers with early exposure</li> <li>● Acquires and processes knowledge of phonetics, phonology, prosody, morphology &amp; syntax unconsciously (instinctively)</li> <li>● Matches meanings to forms of lexical items consciously</li> <li>● Is processed automatically</li> <li>● Accessible to all L1 learners (Heritage and Native speakers)</li> <li>● Not accessible to L2 learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does not require early exposure to language</li> <li>● Acquired through exposure to both oral and written forms of language</li> <li>● Entails less frequent vocabulary, more complex grammatical structures</li> <li>● Is promoted by greater exposure to literacy</li> <li>● Can entail transfer of complex skills from L1</li> <li>● Only means of access to target language for L2 learners; can become highly proficient through purposeful effort</li> <li>● L1 learners (Heritage and Native speakers) will have variable knowledge based on lived experiences with the language</li> </ul>

Due to the automatic and performative nature of BLC, individuals processing knowledge at this level may know how to perform a linguistic task or make linguistic judgements regarding what appears to be correct, but may not be able to explain the reasoning behind their decisions (Hulstijn, 2011; Zyzik, 2016). Possessing unexpressed abilities does not mean that their linguistic knowledge is unorganized, rather it implies that the knowledge and the ways that it is compiled and categorized is done so in a fashion that is not consciously recognized by the SHL/SNS learner. By contrast, L2 learners' exposure to their second language is learned primarily through a more formal setting at a stage of their lives where it is more difficult to develop intuitive nuances about language. Although L2 learners can become highly proficient through practice, access to the foundational linguistic knowledge at the level of BLC is expected to be the exclusive domain of heritage and native speaking (HL/NS) learners of any language and thus differences in performance at this level are anticipated (Hulstijn, 2011; Zyzik, 2016).

Complementing Hulstijn's notion of BLC is what is termed Higher Language Cognition or HLC (Hulstijn, 2011; Zyzik, 2016). While there is no hard and fast line delineating between these concepts, Hulstijn argues that HLC extends the reach of BLC and integrates less frequent vocabulary as well as more complex grammatical struc-

tures. These linguistic features are consumed and produced orally as well as in writing. Thus, while all HL/NS will be assumed to be similar with regard to their access to BLC knowledge, it is anticipated that they will be different with regard to their HLC depending on their exposure to higher level structures, vocabulary and literacy skills (Hulstijn, 2011). Hulstijn emphasizes that the universal acquisition of BLC does not discount the existence of a range of linguistic abilities which can be attributed to HLC. He notes,

[t]he fundamental question of why almost all people appear to possess the cognitive abilities to succeed in acquiring their L1 to an impressive extent, and why people nevertheless differ in intellectual skills, causing substantial differences in L1 [proficiency] (HLC), is likely to remain a mystery for a considerable time, requiring a multi-disciplinary approach (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 234).

A further distinction from BLC is that HLC is not assumed to be exclusive to HL/NS speakers. Given enough exposure to the language in a range of contexts and formats, "L2 learners can be as proficient in HLC as L1-ers of the same intellectual, educational, professional, and cultural profile, despite some deficiencies in their L2 BLC" (Hulstijn, 2011, p. 242).

Research lends support to these theoretical notions with respect to the outcomes of L2 and SHL/SNS learners on grammatical tasks (e.g. Montrul, Foote, & Perpiñán, 2008; Montrul & Perpiñán, 2011; Montrul & Potowski, 2007; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009). For example, Potowski et al. (2009), noted L2 learners to be more accurate on tasks that are grounded in overt grammatical rules acquired explicitly through the exposure to text and through practice as compared to HL learners. Exposure to explicit grammatical rules in the classroom has some benefits, at least in the short-term for HL learners (e.g. Montrul & Bowles, 2010; Potowski, et al., 2009). However, such explicit learning has not been demonstrated to be sufficient or consistent in being able to unseat or modify a lifetime of informal learning that entails linguistic processes that SHL/SNS learners are unaware of even when they apply them (see Montrul & Perpiñán, 2011). Contrastively, other areas of grammar defy mastery by L2 learners yet fit into the internalized, experiential knowledge of SHL/SNS learners.

To develop items for placing today's HL/NS learners appropriately in language courses test designers need to reflect on the linguistic skills that HL are likely to exhibit in their own lives. These skills take into account the areas that represent linguistic information likely early acquired and processed at the BLC level. Hulstijn (2011) admits that this theory has not been fully tested. Nonetheless, the alignment of his theory with research on differential performance represents an appealing approach to attempt to distinguish SHL/SNS learners from L2 learners from a processing point of view. Consequently, this approach offers an operational point of departure for developing a placement measure since it suggests that learners from different learning/acquisition backgrounds will respond to particular linguistic data differently. Primarily, SHL/SNS learners will display knowledge about how language is put together that is not accessible to L2 learners. Moreover, a fuller range of linguistic concepts, rather than explicitly learned grammar elements, which tend to favor L2 and/or advanced SHL/SNS learners, can be used to distinguish these two types of learners from one another at lower levels. Instead, we view this information as enhancing placement decisions.

The approach adopted here strikes a balance between placement effectiveness

and efficiency with a resident population that comprises a heterogeneous mix of SHL/SNS and L2 learners who must both be placed in Spanish courses according to their background and linguistic abilities. Thus, rather than amass a thorough account of our learners' mastery of concepts, as has been done traditionally, we instead created a small number of items intended to provide a general estimation of a learner's overall language ability. That is, we are not seeking to have a complete profile of learners' abilities, rather, only identify abilities in a select number of areas, supported by research, that are indicative of a broader range of language skills.

### *Creating a New Placement Measure*

To accomplish this task in our new placement measure, we first compiled information regarding the background of students in a series of sociodemographic questions to gain insight into how they learned Spanish prior to presenting language items. We then coupled that information with a series of content language items that we purposely chose due to their relationship to BLC and HLC. We anticipated some of these items would tap into the more automatic, instinctive knowledge (BLC) of SHL/SNS learners, which may only enter as HLC for more advanced L2 learners. We also chose a small number of items that would reveal formal linguistic abilities (HLC) of SHL/SNS learners and L2 learners, albeit to differing degrees. The specific content areas chosen for inclusion in our placement measure are ones that previous research suggested might illustrate differences in mastery by L2 and SHL/SNS learners. We summarize how we anticipate these areas will align with BLC and HLC in Table 2.

Table 2

### *Alignment of Test Categories with BLC and HLC*

	<b>SHL/SNS learners</b>	<b>L2 learners</b>
Canonical <i>Ser/Estar</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early acquired (BLC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastery of concepts takes time (HLC)</li> </ul>
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly variable; depends on formal exposure to written forms (HLC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written forms dominate exposure, build familiarity/stability with common words and writing patterns (HLC)</li> </ul>
Conversational Reading Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarity of lexical items and idiomatic expressions accessible to most learners (BLC)</li> <li>• Discursive cohesion and reading fluency (HLC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lexical items, idiomatic expressions, discursive cohesion, reading fluency inaccessible to novice learners; varies in accessibility with advanced learners (HLC)</li> </ul>
Subjunctive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct/indirect commands (BLC)</li> <li>• Adverbial clauses requiring subjunctive (BLC/HLC)</li> <li>• Adverbial clauses with optional subjunctive depending on meaning (HLC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All forms only accessible to advanced learners (HLC)</li> </ul>

In brief, the areas of included items were canonical uses of copular verbs *ser* and *estar*, spelling, and uses of the subjunctive. The students' reading skills were assessed by a series of items that accompanied an innovative, nontraditional reading passage that followed these more traditional items. It is important to note that although we estimate that L2 and SHL/SNS learners perform differently on these items, we are not asserting that any one category of items is definitive in making a determination of either background or ability, rather it is the cumulative outcome of learner performance in all categories, coupled with the information derived from the series of background items, that aid in making a placement decision.

## Methods

### *Data Collection Procedures*

Acknowledging that students enroll in courses through a variety of avenues and that SHL/SNS learners in our program are often misplaced in L2 courses, we administer the placement test to all students enrolled in all L2 courses during the first week of the semester. The placement test is available online and graded automatically. Placement recommendations are automated based on the parameters developed in the pilot testing phase of the test development. These recommendations are communicated individually to test-takers through an automated email program. Students are encouraged, but not required to switch into courses that are identified by the placement exam. Some students may not switch due to a lack of knowledge about the program and the different courses and sequences, scheduling conflicts, or financial concerns.

### *Participants*

Data accumulated over the first three semesters of administration of the exam were compiled for initial review. Collectively, a total of 962 separate records were generated and analyzed across the four content areas—*ser/estar*, spelling, reading, and subjunctive—in relation to their course level (Spanish 1 (L2 I), Spanish 2 (L2 II), Spanish 3 (L2 III), and Spanish 4 (L2 IV)). Outliers from the mean score were identified either for potential Heritage Language Learner status (High scores in *Ser/Estar*, Reading, and Subjunctive) or for a more appropriate level of L2 coursework. The fourth semester after the study, we conducted a supplemental post-hoc analysis of misplacements which entailed a total of 1218 unduplicated records.

### *Context*

Our Spanish language program addresses the needs of SHL/SNS and L2 learners in separate tracks. The L2 track represents the typical four-course 100-200-level sequence of basic language instruction; the initial courses at the 300-level are comprised of grammar review and composition which are taught separately. While the SHL/SNS courses do not directly parallel the L2 four-course sequence, we use the comparison for ease of reference. Our SHL/SNS basic language sequence consists of three courses, one at the 100-level (labeled SHL I & II in our tables) that is similar to a combination of the first two semesters of the L2 track. The remaining SHL/SNS courses include two courses at the 200-level, prior to advancing to separate grammar and composition courses at the 300-level. Be-



cause the expectations in a four-course L2 sequence are familiar to language teachers, we will not belabor a description here, however the characteristics displayed by typical learners enrolled in each of the SHL/SNS courses is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

*Skills Exhibited by a Typical Student Enrolled in SHL/SNS Courses*

<b>Learner characteristics</b>	<b>SHL I &amp; II</b>	<b>SHL III</b>	<b>SHL IV</b>	<b>SHL Grammar</b>	<b>SHL Composition</b>
<b>Exposure</b>	*Limited or inconsistent exposure to Spanish	*Somewhat consistent exposure to Spanish	*Consistent exposure to Spanish in certain contexts	*Consistent exposure to Spanish in multiple contexts	*High exposure to Spanish in multiple contexts
<b>Sociocultural identity with Spanish</b>	*Limited exposure to positive models of Spanish language use *Looking for appreciation of own language variety	*Comfortable using code-switching and other language varieties *Acquiring appreciation for standard and community language varieties	*Learning how to utilize standard and community language varieties outside of the academic setting	*Recognizes standard and community language varieties in diverse environments; academic, family and employment	*Utilizes standard and community language varieties in the academic, family and employment
<b>Listening</b>	*Comprehends minimal use of Spanish in an informal setting *Not very comfortable listening Spanish in the classroom	*Comprehends simple conversations in Spanish *More comfortable listening to Spanish in classroom	*Possesses existing but still developing listening abilities *Comfortable with listening to Spanish in the classroom	*Very comfortable with listening Spanish in the classroom *Demonstrates solid foundation of listening skills	*Very comfortable with listening and using Spanish in the classroom *Demonstrates solid foundation of listening skills
<b>Speaking</b>	*Uncomfortable with speaking Spanish in the classroom *Unable to engage in conversation entirely in Spanish *Prefers the use of English in the classroom	*Engages in simple conversations in Spanish *Uncomfortable speaking Spanish in the classroom	*Comprehends and engages in conversations in Spanish comfortably *Possesses existing but still developing speaking abilities	*Engages in complex activities and interactions *Very comfortable speaking Spanish *Able to express knowledge with ease about topics related to culture, literature, and linguistics *Demonstrates solid foundation of speaking skills	*Engages in complex activities and interactions *Able to express knowledge with ease about topics related to culture, literature, and linguistics *Demonstrates solid foundation of speaking skills
<b>Reading</b>	*No formal literacy skills	*Limited abilities in reading	*Possesses existing but still developing literacy abilities	*Demonstrates solid foundation of reading skills	*Demonstrates solid foundation of reading skills
<b>Writing</b>	*No formal writing skills	*Limited abilities in writing	*Possesses existing but still developing writing abilities	*Demonstrates solid foundation of writing skills	*Demonstrates solid foundation of writing skills
<b>Grammar/Vocabulary</b>	*No formal grammatical knowledge *Very limited vocabulary	*Limited grammatical knowledge *Limited vocabulary	*Has limited grammatical knowledge of metalanguage *Expanding range of vocabulary	*Acquiring knowledge of grammar and vocabulary-metalanguage	*Acquiring knowledge of grammar, orthography, and vocabulary

(Adapted from MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2016).

### *Rationale for the Content Areas of the New Placement Test*

For the purposes of placement in our Spanish program, we only needed an estimate of students' skills sufficient to determine whether or not the student has crossed the threshold of knowledge between any two particular courses for which s/he might be eligible. Keeping the entry-level expectations in mind for each course, we sought to find a brief set of items that would allow us to identify when students might show enough skill to cross into a higher-level course. While a small number of items may be cause for concern for test developers regarding the potential for sampling error, we follow Ebel and Frisbie's (1986) advice noting that representative items are representative of a sample, not the entire population and that as such, "... population size does not place a *lower* limit on the size of the sample. A population of 1000 potential items can be sampled by a test of ten, 50, or 100 items" (p. 120). We attempted to mitigate the potential effects of sampling error through our development and piloting of the items. The final new placement test had a total of 17 items—two *Ser/Estar*, four Spelling, five Reading, and six Subjunctive.

***Ser/Estar.*** Canonical uses of *ser* and *estar*, two forms of the copular verb *be*, highlight differences of SHL/SNS and L2 learners with respect to BLC and HLC (see examples 1a and 1b, below). For SHL/SNS learners, frequent early exposure to these forms renders a solid foundation of knowledge of their use by age three (e.g. Geeslin & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2006; Montrul, 2004). For L2 learners, the aspectual properties that contrast their use are not readily learned despite their frequent presence in L2 classrooms at all levels (Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela, 2006; Silva-Corvalán & Montanari, 2008; VanPatten, 2010). We therefore anticipate that items using these copular forms would align with SHL/SNS general linguistic knowledge at all levels and only L2 learners' knowledge at more advanced levels.

- (1) a. *Yo estoy contenta con mi nueva computadora.*  
[I am (cop.: *estar*) happy with my new computer]
- b. *Nosotros somos los mejores amigos de Luis.*  
[We are (cop.: *ser*) Luis' best friends.]

***Spelling.*** By contrast, the spelling of words falls into the area of HLC for both L2 and SHL/SNS. L2 learners, whose primary exposure to words in Spanish is through literacy, the written form of words with full diacritic marks is recognizable and replicable. However, for SHL/SNS learners, many of whom have acquired their language skills primarily in oral form, identifying a standard spelling of certain words varies broadly (Fairclough, Belpoliti, & Bermejo, 2010). Additionally, SHL/SNS learners may rarely have seen particular words, even ones in their active vocabulary, in written form or may have seen accepted variations in spelling (e.g. *pozole*, *posole*, referencing a typical hominy-based stew).

Moreover, their BLC-acquired knowledge regarding the sound inventory of Spanish, combined with the sound-form mapping conventions of English, the language in which many learners have received some or all of their schooling, may interfere with SHL/SNS learners' mapping of sounds to written forms in Spanish (Meschyan & Hernández, 2006). SHL/SNS learners who have had more exposure to literacy in Spanish will possess enhanced knowledge of spelling conventions. For all SHL/SNS learners, an increase of exposure to text in Spanish will hone the

sound-form associations and enhance SHL/SNS learners' recognition of how words are spelled.

With respect to placement, the spelling accuracy of common words will generally vary less for L2 learners than for SHL/SNS learners. As such, we predicted spelling items to be moderately useful for detecting previous exposure to Spanish classes for L2 learners, but more beneficial for SHL/SNS placement since exposure to literacy can suggest greater exposure to formal, academic aspects of language study, suggesting placement in higher classes.

**Subjunctive Forms.** Subjunctive constructions were also selected because of their varied relationship to both BLC and HLC (Blake, 1983; Carreira & Potowski, 2011; Lynch, 1999; Pérez-Leroux, 1998). For SHL/SNS learners, research indicates that some subjunctive forms begin to emerge in children's speech as early as age three (Blake, 1983). Complete mastery of the full range of subjunctive expressions, however, takes time and may not occur until adolescence (Collentine, 2003; Pérez-Leroux, 1998). Blake (1983) posits that in SNS populations, mastery of subjunctive forms is achieved in sequential developmental increments according to their pragmatic uses or syntactic requirements. For Blake, subjunctive use in direct and indirect commands, such as those seen below in examples 2a and 2b, is acquired first. Subjunctive forms in adverbial and relative clauses that explicitly require the subjunctive, such as those seen in examples 3a and 3b, are acquired next. Adverbial clauses that can either take an indicative form when they indicate a habitual action or a subjunctive form when they refer to a specific anticipated event, seen in examples 4a and 4b, are acquired later. In comparing three generations of SHL speakers, Ocampo (1990) finds that each subsequent generation shows a diminished use of the subjunctive as compared to native speakers indicating a subtle unmooring of the semantic and pragmatic features in which their use is grounded. Nonetheless, the pattern of reduction indicates that the obligatory categories, such as those indicated by volition (such as those in 2a and 2b) were the most resistant to loss followed by obligatory adverbial clauses (such as those in 3a and 3b) with variable cases being the most vulnerable to disappear.

- (2) a. *No abras eso.*  
[Don't open (subj.; you fam.) that.]
- b. *Quiere que abras eso.*  
[(S/he) wants you to open (subj.; you fam.) that.]
- (3) a. *Mandamos dinero **en caso de que** lo ocupes.*  
[We'll send money **in case** you need (subj.; you fam.) it.]
- b. *Iremos **a menos que** nos recomiendes que no.*  
[We will go **unless** you recommend (subj.; you fam.) us not to.]
- (4) a. ***En cuanto** llegas le hablas.*  
[**As soon as** you arrive (indic.; you fam.) you call her (every time).]
- b. ***En cuanto** llegues le hablas.*  
[**As soon as** you arrive (subj.; you fam.) you'll call her (next time).]

The many uses of the subjunctive are largely elusive for English-speaking L2 learners as these forms represent a complex interface between syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic concerns for which there is little grammatical foundation in English on which L2 learners can anchor their knowledge (Collentine, 2010; Correa, 2008). The subtle phonetic and orthographic differences between subjunctive and indicative forms in Spanish, combined with the relative infrequency of the forms only adds to this complexity and diminishes L2 learners' ability to recognize appropriate uses of the subjunctive (Collentine, 2010; Pérez-Leroux, 1998; Potowski et al., 2009). As such, the uses of the subjunctive are not readily transparent and mastery of some forms by L2 learners begins to emerge around the intermediate (fourth semester) and advanced (fourth year and graduate student) stages (Gudmestad, 2006). The triggers for L2 subjunctive use in intermediate learners are not consistent (Gudmestad, 2006). With advanced learners, however, they appear to hinge on the presence of specific sentence features such that "Spanish L2 learners build a representation of mood that is different from that of native speakers, with the former adhering to syntactic, morphological, and semantic features while the latter tend to consider pragmatic features" (Collentine, 2014, p. 277).

Based on this research we estimated that mastery of a variety of pragmatically based subjunctive forms could serve as an estimator of broader aspects of overall language ability. Accuracy of basic subjunctive forms would align with SHL/SNS learners' early exposure to these linguistic features in a home environment. Accordingly, accuracy of a greater variety of subjunctive forms would point to greater mastery of more complex structures. We thus estimated that primarily advanced L2 learners, placed near or at the fourth-semester level course, would demonstrate limited use of a few subjunctive forms. Since lower-level L2 learners would have had less opportunity to learn the forms and would have a lesser foundation of knowledge regarding their pragmatic usage, we estimated that their accuracy with the forms would be somewhat sporadic. Thus, for most L2 learners we projected an overall floor effect with respect to the subjunctive items, with accuracy of even the basic items suggesting learners' placement in higher level L2 courses.

**Reading.** The final element included in the new placement test was an innovative, non-traditional reading task. Although reading tasks integrate a variety of linguistic skills and background knowledge in a more holistic perspective (Alderson, Figueras, & Kuijper, 2006), they are frequently poorly suited for the placement of L2 and SHL/SNS learners. Reading passages in traditional assessments often fall into an informational genre, are written in a formal, academic tone and touch on topics that may be unfamiliar to readers and are distinct from the cultural frames of literacy to which they are accustomed (Au, 1998; May, Bingham, & Pendergast, 2014). If passages happen to examine cultural features associated with speakers of Spanish they do so superficially, through their choice of topic or through the setting where the events in the reading take place and/or use of isolated elements of academic vocabulary (Gay, 2002). Tasks associated with the reading selections often call upon learners to identify the meaning of individual words or phrases or to extract specific pieces of information to which they have little prior connection (Ermis, 2008).

Given these limitations, traditional reading tasks generally favor L2 learners who have learned Spanish through engaging their academic literacy skills. SHL/SNS

learners, whose acquisition of the language occurs primarily orally and whose exposure to written forms of Spanish may be either nonexistent or inconsistent, are at a disadvantage since such activities are not only out of step with their prior knowledge of language and culture, but may also require they expend more cognitive effort at lower-level decoding skills as they read, limiting their interpretation of the overall meaning of the text they are reading, raising doubts about their language abilities. To minimize the influence of such “construct-irrelevant difficulty” (Messick, 1995) we sought to integrate a reading task that was more relevant to the literate forms to which SHL/SNS were exposed to and engaged in regularly to engage SHL/SNS learners’ culturally-bound literacy knowledge (Garth-McCullough, 2008).

Given the nature of SHL/SNS learners’ acquisition of Spanish and the unpredictability of their exposure to formal texts, we use an alternative text genre that represents a familiar form of modern-day literacy events such as those found in social media. Such a reading task was intended to provide a more authentic means of accessing the intuitive knowledge of SHL/SNS learners through writing. Although they appear in written form, social media exchanges replicate conversational dialogues and as such provide a bridge between the oral and written aspects of language. By presenting a text that represented a (re)creation of a dialogic exchange we decreased the formality and artificiality of traditional test passages and instead provided learners of all backgrounds with a format that was both familiar, but also represented a more authentic use of Spanish (See example 5).

(5) **Carlos:** Estoy muy triste. Ya es hora de regresar a casa.

**Adriana:** Gracias por haber visitado mi país. Espero que te haya gustado México.

**Carlos:** Sí. Es muy bonito. Además la gente es muy cálida.

**Adriana:** Y no te puedes quejar de la comida.

**Carlos:** Claro que no. Aquí sí se usa bien el dicho de “panza llena, corazón contento”

**Adriana:** ¿Qué es lo que más vas a extrañar de mi país?

**Carlos:** Lo que más voy a extrañar son los apapachos de tu mami. Ella es una linda persona.

**Adriana:** Sí. Mi madre es muy consentidora. Me tiene muy chiple.

**Carlos:** Lo malo es que a mí también y yo ni soy su hijo.

**Adriana:** Te voy a extrañar amigo.

**Carlos:** No es un adiós, sino un hasta luego.

**Adriana:** Nunca olvides que mi México lindo y mi familia siempre te esperan.

[**Carlos:** I am so sad. It’s time to head back home.

**Adriana:** Thanks for visiting my country. I hope you enjoyed Mexico.

**Carlos:** Yes. It’s beautiful. Plus, people are so warm.

**Adriana:** And you can’t complain about the food.

**Carlos:** Of course not. The saying of “full belly, jolly heart” fits here.

**Adriana:** What will you miss the most from my country?

**Carlos:** I will miss your mom fussing over me. She is a wonderful person.

**Adriana:** Yes. My mom pampers everyone. I am pretty spoiled by her.

**Carlos:** That's the bad part, she does that for me too and I am not her son.

**Adriana:** I am going to miss you, friend.

**Carlos:** It's not a goodbye, just a see you later.

**Adriana:** Never forget that my beautiful Mexico and my family will always be here for you.]

Because of their informal conversational style such texts require students to comprehend the reading at the discourse level rather than at the word or sentence level. The informality of the format and authenticity of the language and cultural references diminish the disadvantage SHL/SNS learners experience in traditional reading tasks and allow for a more accurate measurement of their literacy skills while still providing a sound measure of L2 learners' literacy skills in Spanish.

### *Data Analysis*

Initial confidence in the new placement exam's ability to distinguish between learners was established during the piloting phase of the exam's development. The data in this article provide a measure of oversight regarding the new exam's outcomes and continued ability to identify and place learners in our unique program. We present here an analysis of the performance of the new placement exam based on the results compiled over several semesters of data. The responses analyzed in Tables 4 and 5 represent the accumulated results of three semesters' worth of testing; Table 6 provides a summary of the first four semesters' results. Students who were already enrolled in L2 courses took the test during the first week of classes. Additionally, students who were not currently enrolled in courses but had been independently advised to take the exam in order to determine a recommended Spanish course to take during that same time period are included.

The primary analysis for examining placement outcomes consisted of a one-way ANOVA with corresponding Tukey's HSD post hoc tests. The mean scores for both the overall test as well as the separate content areas served as dependent variables. The independent variable in the ANOVA was the L2 course in which the learner had initially enrolled at the time s/he took the test; students who had taken the test independent of a course enrollment were also included in the data set. Any duplications of students were eliminated prior to analysis.

A secondary, more informal analysis reorganized these same data around the courses into which individuals had been recommended by the exam. These reorganized results represent the outcomes of the application of the placement algorithms mentioned above. When compared with the results of the ANOVA we can observe differences in the profile of the average performance of students suited for each course.

## **Findings**

### *Performance of Students Enrolled in L2 Courses*

The results of the ANOVA and post hoc analyses examining the means of the test overall and the subcategories of the content items by enrolled course are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Analysis of Performance on Test Items by Current Course Enrollment*

	<b>Total Content</b> (17 Items)	<b>Ser/Estar</b> (2 Items)	<b>Spelling</b> (4 Items)	<b>Reading</b> (5 Items)	<b>Subjunctive</b> (6 Items)
<b>Current Course</b>	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)	Mean (sd)
None (N= 197)	8.62 (5.695)	1.43 (.803)	2.27 (1.384)	2.49 (2.082)	2.43 (2.188)
L2 I (N= 454)	4.21 (4.160)	0.84 (.816)	1.45 (1.266)	0.97 (1.554)	0.94 (1.496)
L2 II (N= 139)	6.56 (3.955)	1.27 (.797)	1.97 (1.142)	1.89 (1.731)	1.42 (1.579)
L2 III (N= 103)	8.82 (3.798)	1.50 (.684)	2.49 (.917)	2.80 (1.694)	2.04 (1.715)
L2 IV (N= 69)	9.88 (4.507)	1.52 (.720)	2.57 (1.144)	2.91 (1.900)	2.88 (1.967)
significance	p = .000 F(4,957) =57.22	p = .000 F(4,957)= 32.81	p = .000 F(4,957)= 30.29	p = .000 F(4,957)= 48.86	p = .000 F(4,957)= 39.57
significant post hoc tests	all but None/L2 III None/L2 IV L2 III/L2 IV	only L2 I compared with all other levels	all but None/L2 II None/L2 III None/L2 IV L2 III/L2 IV	all but None/L2 III None/L2 IV L2 III/L2 IV	all but None/L2 III None/L2 IV

The mean for the overall score as well as the scores in the subcategories followed a similar pattern. When we examine the range of scores from the known courses (L2 I to L2 IV) we see that the means all increase as the course level increases in the total content (4.21 to 9.88), *ser/estar* (0.84 - 1.52), spelling (1.45 - 2.57), reading (0.97 - 2.91) and the subjunctive (0.94 - 2.88). This observation confirmed the findings of our previous pilot tests that rising scores likely correspond to different levels of ability as indexed by course levels. In the case of individuals who took the test prior to enrolling in a course, identified as “None,” the mean does not follow a clear pattern. Instead, the means for the “None” category align most closely with the means for L2 III in all categories. This observation is consistent with a typical placement scenario, indicating that these individuals’ skills prior to placement are more likely to be wide ranging for both the test overall as well as for each subcategory of items.

It is also noteworthy to recognize that there are large differences in standard deviations that characterize each course level both in overall scores and in each subcategory. The standard deviation indicates the average number of points each individual’s score differs from the mean. Thus, for those students enrolled in L2 I, the 4.160 standard deviation for the total content means that the scores differ from the mean by an average of slightly more than 4 points, a figure that is close to the mean itself. L2 I standard deviations for reading (1.554) and subjunctive (1.496) actually exceed the means for their categories (0.97 and 0.94, respectively), indicating that students enrolled in that course vary wide score ranges in each of those categories. Similarly large standard deviations can be observed in all other courses across all content categories. In nearly all of the categories, the standard deviation is greatest among “None” learners, signaling that the true test of the new placement measure will be in adequately placing learners who possess a wide variety of skill levels who are not yet enrolled.

Overall, these findings suggest that while there are detectable differences between learners at each level, there are also large ranges of ability represented within





The data in this table are presented for the purposes of comparison only to observe the benefits of the placement measure. While Table 4 represents the performance of students on the test based on the classes in which they were enrolled, without the benefit of the placement measure, Table 5 represents these same outcomes reorganized around the courses they were recommended to enroll in by the exam parameters. In essence, this table represents the courses in which students should have enrolled had they all had the opportunity to take the placement test prior to signing up for courses.

Similar to what was observed in Table 4, the average scores for subcategories of items and for the test overall were seen to increase as course levels rose. These results were found to be consistent even within both the L2 and the SHL/SNS sequence of courses. For example, average scores for total content ranged from 1.76 to 11.61 for learners placed in L2 courses. For learners placed in SHL/SNS courses, their total content scores ranged from 6.07 to 16.12. Standard deviation scores have also gone down considerably indicating that the placement algorithms developed during the pilot phase have placed similar students in similar categories, as would be expected.

**Reading.** Examining the scores obtained in the reading items illustrates their value. In Table 4 the average reading scores ranged from 0.97 to 2.91 with standard deviations ranging from 1.554 to 2.082, again, showing low, but widely ranging average scores within each course level. After placement, indicated in Table 5, the reading items for L2 learners demonstrated averages ranging from 0.16 to 3.97 with standard deviations from 0.462 to 1.205; the lowest standard deviation was found at the beginning L2 course while greater variation was found in higher level L2 courses. This finding suggests a floor effect for beginning L2 learners, but that as learners had more experience with the language, they varied in their ability to understand the cultural and linguistic nuances of the discourse.

With respect to SHL/SNS learners, the average scores for the reading items ranged from 1.69 to 4.83 and standard deviations ranged from 0.408 to 1.437. However, a larger standard deviation, indicating a wider range of reading abilities, was seen at the beginning SHL/SNS level; the standard deviation narrowed among students in more advanced courses. Thus, even beginning level SHL/SNS learners were able to extract meaning from the discourse to a greater extent than were beginning level L2 learners. Beginning level SHL/SNS learners were more widely varied in this ability, which reflects these students' variability in exposure to Spanish in written form. As language ability increased, SHL/SNS showed less variety in their ability to apply their linguistic knowledge to a written text. Overall, extracting the scores of SHL/SNS learners from the overall L2 course results placed SHL/SNS learners' literacy skills in greater relief and illustrated that integrating an innovative reading, imbued with authentic cultural and linguistic information shows promise for placement measures.

**Subjunctive Forms.** Subjunctive items also played a role in illustrating differences between SHL/SNS and L2 learners and levels of ability, though more so for SHL/SNS groups. L2 learners' average scores on the six subjunctive items ranged from 0.25 at the beginning L2 I course to a high of 2.86 at the Grammar course stage, which would be the first course after the basic four-course sequence. Average scores at the intervening course levels are statistically tied. With respect to SHL/SNS learn-

ers, accuracy on subjunctive items at the lowest level, SHL I & II (1.12), mirrored that of the L2 learners. However, at all subsequent levels average scores on the subjunctive exceeded even the highest L2 score, ranging from 3.11 to 5.68. Although not evident at the beginning SHL/SNS level where we would still expect a greater level of accuracy than that displayed by L2 learners at the same level, the degree of exposure to a variety of subjunctive forms in a home environment appears to influence SHL/SNS learners' outcomes on these items.

As noted with the reading items, the range of standard deviations for subjunctive items has reduced from those observed in Table 4 prior to the disaggregation of the scores of the two groups of students. It is again interesting to note that for L2 learners, the standard deviations increase as course level rises, reflecting more variety in skill as course level rises and exposure to more sophisticated features of the language increases. The standard deviations hold steady for all levels of SHL/SNS learners until they narrow at the level of grammar. These results indicate that collectively, even as SHL/SNS learners display increased accuracy across course levels, they also are more cohesive at each level than are L2 learners.

While we have yet to objectively confirm the appropriateness of the placement outcomes, author Moreno conducts regular informal checks with her teaching assistants in SHL/SNS courses to ensure that students in the courses, whether placed through the recommendation of the placement exam or enrolled by other means, reflect the range of skills expected in each course. These anecdotal reports have not revealed distinctions related to the placement exam, suggesting a good fit between the exam recommendations and the course expectations.

As an additional informal check, we summarized the overall distribution of placement recommendations to ensure that all courses were represented in the recommendations generated by the exam. By four semesters after beginning the implementation of the new placement exam a total of 1,218 unduplicated student records had been accumulated, representing the data from the first three semesters (analyzed above) plus one additional semester's submissions. The information, presented in Table 6, compares the L2 courses in which students were originally enrolled at the time they took the placement measure with the course recommendations made by the placement test. While we cannot make claims of accuracy of placement based solely on the distribution of recommendations, we can state that learners at all levels of L2 enrollment (again where SHL/SNS learners are more likely to be misplaced), as well as those yet to enroll in a course received a variety of recommendations, both with regard to track (L2 & SHL/SNS) and course level. This fact represents a marked improvement over our previous placement measure which failed to identify all but advanced SHL/SNS learners (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012). Our next steps in continuing to monitor our placement exam entail examining the student performance and satisfaction post-placement, recalculating the item analysis statistics to ensure that they still fall within expected parameters of item difficulty, discrimination and reliability, and creating a more robust set of items to ensure the integrity of the measure.

Table 6

*Distribution of Placement Recommendations*

	Recommended Enrollments based on Placement Test Outcomes									Total
	L2 I	L2 II	L2 III	L2 IV	L2 Gr/Cmp	SHL I&II	SHL III	SHL IV	SHL Gr/Cmp	
<b>Current Enrollment</b>										
None	59	17	5	8	45	17	3	10	25	189
L2 I	296	49	21	12	19	104	12	10	20	543
L2 II	68	37	22	10	22	33	5	3	11	211
L2 III	21	24	9	14	30	28	14	9	11	160
L2 IV	12	14	4	10	39	12	4	4	16	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1218</b>

*Limitations and Directions for Future Research*

While we have only begun to examine the performance of our new placement measure, we acknowledge that there are nonetheless, limitations in the current study that provide avenues for further research. First, given that students enroll in courses for a number of reasons (e.g. formal or informal advising, scheduling concerns, guessing, etc.) we need to independently confirm that placement recommendations result in courses that are a good fit for students, and ideally, a better fit than other methods. That is, are students who have been recommended for enrollment in particular courses by means of taking the placement test better suited for those courses than when they place themselves in a course by other means? While the small scale of the application of the test (our students at our institution) does not warrant developing a formal predictive analysis model, an evaluation of periodic formative assessment tasks, instructor and student surveys and/or qualitative interviews of students enrolled in different courses could provide insight toward this end.

Second, although we believe we have begun to tap into areas that may correspond to BLC and HLC, these areas could be further explored by increasing the variety and type of areas examined. In particular, listening tasks, some representing authentic conversations and others representing more formal discourse as well as writing tasks, could aid in further discerning linguistic abilities in areas that we have not yet explored. Similarly, a formal reading task, in addition to the innovative reading task may aid in identifying both SHL/SNS and L2 learners who have acquired more formal literacy skills and allow for greater precision in placement at higher levels.

Lastly, test items are not imbued with the quality of timelessness; they need to be monitored and adjusted to the changing characteristics of our student population and the needs of our program. We will continue to develop and introduce new items, based on relevant research, that assist us in our ongoing endeavor to appropriately place SHL/SNS and L2 learners in our courses.

## **Conclusion**

The challenge of a language placement test, particularly when undertaken with a population of learners of SHL/SNS and L2 backgrounds, is to effectively and efficiently discern between different types and levels of learners. While conceptually simple, it is a task that requires a conscientious attention to the linguistic skills to be examined as well as a consideration of the characteristics of the population of learners and the program into which learners will be placed and may take several iterations of testing and analysis. The best way of providing this efficient means of placing students within a program is by developing a placement instrument in-house applying the principles of test design and analysis, selecting items according to research on acquisition of both L2 and SHL/SNS populations and keeping in mind the characteristics of both the students and the program (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012).

It is also critical to continually monitor the viability of the items as an effective means for placing our population of students within our curriculum. The previous placement test, which did not have that oversight in place, was found not to be up to the task for which it had been employed for decades (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012). While the pilot testing of the items conducted prior to the launch of the new test as a placement measure pointed to the promise of the items, the results of our analyses here indicate that the items, with the assistance of sociodemographic information, can be useful in making distinctions between both learner types and levels of ability. We further demonstrate that it is possible to identify different learner types and different levels of mastery without the need for an extensive, comprehensive profile of skills in a multitude of areas.

Moreover, the disaggregation of the L2 and SHL/SNS learner data highlights different performance levels for each type of learner. While we cannot claim that findings support Hulstijn (2011) and Zyzik (2016) in their assertions of differential cognitive processing based on learner type, we continue to find the concepts of BLC and HLC useful in creating items that better respond to the different ways in which language is organized from a cognitive point of view, particularly when that perspective aligns with previous research (e.g. Montrul, Foote, & Perpiñán, 2008; Montrul & Perpiñán, 2011; Montrul & Potowski, 2007; Potowski et al., 2009).

We particularly find the contributions of the innovative reading task and the subjunctive items promising in our placement efforts. The reading passage format is familiar and less intimidating than a traditional, more formal reading (Williams, 2005). While the format is equally familiar for L2 learners, their interpretation of the conversational style of Spanish used in its expression offers a way to measure language ability in less prescribed fashion. For both types of learners, the challenge lies in moving away from surface level decoding of passages and toward a broader interpretation at the discourse level.

Similarly, the subjunctive items allowed SHL/SNS learners' pragmatic knowledge about Spanish to shine through. Consistent with Lynch's (1999) and Blake's (1983) theories regarding acquisition of subjunctive forms, learners' responses to the diverse types of subjunctives in the items demonstrated differences in ability that corresponded not only to level but also to learner type. L2 learners, given their limited exposure to and understanding of the forms, demonstrated little mastery of

them, even in advanced levels. By contrast, except for the lowest level of SHL/SNS learners, these learners recognized the appropriate forms to be used in context far more readily than L2 learners.

Overall, the increased presence of Latinos in Spanish classes requires that placement efforts shift from a prescriptive L2 or “foreign” language perspective to one that reflects the linguistic and cultural knowledge that is found within U.S. SHL/SNS communities. Accomplishing such a task requires an investment on the part of faculty and an attention to the research on the different ways that SHL/SNS and L2 learners process linguistic information. Nonetheless, such an objective is not beyond the reach of institutions, and it is a worthwhile endeavor to ensure that learners’ and programmatic needs are being effectively met.

## References

- Alderson, J. C., Figueras, N., & Kuijper, K. (2006). Analysing tests of reading and listening in relation to the Common European Framework of Reference: The Experience of the Dutch CEFR Construct Project. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 3(1), 3-30.
- Au, K. H. (1998). Social constructivism and the school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 30(2), 297-319.
- Belpoliti, F. (2015). Moving forward: Revisiting the Spanish for High Beginners course. *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages*, 2(1), 1-19.
- Blake, R. (1983). Mood selection among Spanish-speaking children, ages 4 to 12. *The Bilingual Review/La revista bilingüe*, 10, 21-32.
- Bruhn de Garavito, J., & Valenzuela, E. (2006). The status of *ser* and *estar* in late and early bilingual L2 Spanish. In C. A. Klee & T. L. Face (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 7th Conference on the Acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese as First and Second Languages* (pp. 100-109). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Carreira, M., & Potowski, K. (2011). Commentary: Pedagogical implications of experimental SNS research. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(1), 134-151.
- Collentine, J. (2003). Acquisition of subjunctive. In B. A. Lafford & Salaberry, R. (Eds.) *Spanish second language acquisition: State of the science* (pp. 74-97). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Collentine, J. (2010). The Acquisition and teaching of the Spanish subjunctive: An update on current findings. *Hispania* 93(1), 39-51.
- Collentine, J. (2014). Subjunctive in second language Spanish. In K. Geeslin (Ed.), *The handbook of Spanish second language acquisition* (pp. 270-286). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Correa, M. (2008). Metalinguistic knowledge and the acquisition of Spanish subjunctive by learners at three proficiency levels. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.
- Ebel, R. L., & Frisbie, D. A. (1986). *Essentials of educational measurement*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Ermis, S. (2008). Using graphic organizers to facilitate elementary students' comprehension of informational text. In M. M. Foote, F. Falk-Ross, S. Szabo, & M. B. Sampson (Eds.), *Navigating the literacy waters: Research, praxis and advocacy* (pp. 87-102). Commerce, TX: The College Reading Association.
- Fairclough, M. (2012). A working model for assessing Spanish heritage language learners' language proficiency through a placement exam. *Heritage Language Journal* 9(1), 121-138.
- Fairclough, M. A., Belpoliti, F., & Bermejo, E. (2010). Developing an electronic placement examination for heritage learners of Spanish: Challenges and payoffs. *Hispania*, 93(2), 273-91.
- Garth-McCullough, R. (2008). Untapped cultural support: The influence of culturally bound prior knowledge on comprehension performance. *Reading Horizons* 49(1), 1-30.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116.
- Gramlich, J. (2017). Hispanic dropout rate hits new low, college enrollment at new high. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/29/hispanic-dropout-rate-hits-new-low-college-enrollment-at-new-high>
- Geeslin, K. L., & Guijarro-Fuentes, P. (2006). A longitudinal study of copula choice: Following development in variable structures. In N. Sagarra & A. J. Toribio (Eds.) *Selected proceedings of the 9th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium* (pp. 144-56). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Gudmestad, A. (2006). L2 variation and the Spanish subjunctive: Linguistic features predicting mood selection. In C. A. Klee & T. Face (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 7th Conference on the Acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese as First and Second Languages* (pp. 170-184). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Hulstijn, J. H. (2011). Language proficiency in native and nonnative speakers: An agenda for research and suggestions for second-language assessment. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 8(3), 229-249.
- Krogstad, J. M., & Fry, R. (2014). Dept. of Ed. projects public schools will be "majority-minority" this fall. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/18/u-s-public-schools-expected-to-be-majority-minority-starting-this-fall/>
- Lynch, A. (1999). The subjunctive in Miami Cuban Spanish: Bilingualism, contact, and language variability. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2012). Spanish as a heritage language assessment: Successes, failures, lessons learned. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 1-26.
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P., & Moreno, G. (2015). *Spanish language assessment: The development of items for an improved SHL/SNS placement measure*. Paper presented at the 25th Conference on Spanish in the U.S., New York, NY.
- May, L. A., Bingham, G. E., & Pendergast, M. L. (2014). Culturally and linguistically relevant read alouds. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16(4), 210-218.



- Meschyan, G., & Hernandez, A. E. (2006). Impact of language proficiency and orthographic transparency on bilingual word reading: An fMRI investigation. *Neuro-Image*, 29(4), 1135-1140.
- Messick, S. (1995). Validity of psychological assessment. *American Psychologist*, 50(9), 741-749.
- Montrul, S. (2004). Subject and object expression in Spanish heritage speakers: A case of morpho-syntactic convergence. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 7, 125-42.
- Montrul, S., & Bowles, M. (2010). Is grammar instruction beneficial for heritage language learners? Dative case marking in Spanish. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(1), 47-73.
- Montrul, S., Foote, R., & Perpiñán, S. (2008). Gender agreement in L2 learners and Spanish heritage speakers: The effects of age and context of acquisition. *Language Learning*, 58(3), 50--553.
- Montrul, S., & Perpiñán, S. (2011). Assessing differences and similarities between instructed L2 learners and heritage language learners in their knowledge of Spanish tense-aspect and mood (TAM) Morphology. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(1), 90-133.
- Montrul, S., & Potowski, K. (2007). Command of gender agreement in school-age Spanish bilingual children. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 11(3), 301-328.
- New Mexico State University Office of Institutional Analysis. (n.d.) 2018 Quick Facts. Las Cruces, NM: Author. Retrieved from <https://oia.nmsu.edu/files/2019/01/2018-Quick-Facts-Final.pdf>
- Ocampo, F. (1990). El subjuntivo en tres generaciones de hablantes bilingües. In J. Bergen (Ed.), *Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic issues* (pp. 39-48). Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Pérez-Leroux, A. T. (1998). The Acquisition of mood selection in Spanish relative clauses. *Journal of Child Language*, 25(3), 585-604.
- Potowski, K., Jegerski, J., & Morgan-Short, K. (2009). The Effects of instruction on linguistic development in Spanish heritage language speakers. *Language Learning*, 59(3), 537-79.
- Potowski, K., Parada, M., & Morgan-Short, K. (2012). Developing an online placement exam for Spanish heritage speakers and L2 students. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 51-76.
- Silva-Corvalán, C., & Montanari, S. (2008). The acquisition of *ser*, *estar* (and *be*) by a Spanish-English bilingual child: The early stages. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 11, 341-60.
- Valdés, G. (2001). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. In J. Kreeft Peyton, D. Ranard & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 37-77). McHenry, IL: Delta Systems, Inc.
- VanPatten, B. (2010). Some verbs are more perfect than others why learners have difficulty with *ser* and *estar* and what it means for instruction. *Hispania*, 93(1), 29-38.
- Vergara Wilson, D. (2012). Developing a placement exam for Spanish heritage language learners: Item analysis and learner characteristics. *Heritage Language Journal* 9(1), 27-50.

- Williams, B. T. (2005). Leading double lives: Literacy and technology in and out of school. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(8), 702-706.
- Zyzik, E. (2016). Toward a prototype model of the heritage language learner: Understanding strengths and needs. In M. Fairclough & S. M. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative strategies for heritage language teaching: A practical guide for the classroom* (pp.19-38). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

# Global Initiatives in North Carolina: The Impact on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

**Charlotte R. Hancock**

*University of North Carolina— Charlotte*

**Kristin J. Davin**

*University of North Carolina— Charlotte*

**John A. Williams, III**

*Texas A&M University— College Station*

**Chance W. Lewis**

*University of North Carolina— Charlotte*

## **Abstract**

*In 2013, the North Carolina state Task Force on Global Education put forth a goal of preparing students to be globally prepared for the twenty-first century. This study explored, through interviews with officials from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as well as NCDPI's website, the influence of that global initiative on dual language (DL) programs and the Seal of Biliteracy (SoBL) in the state through the lens of culturally and linguistically diverse learners' (CLD) involvement. For other states seeking ways in which to increase DL programming and the number of students earning the SoBL while simultaneously ensuring the inclusion of CLD learners, this article illuminates ways in which NC is working towards this goal and provides concrete ideas that other states may seek to emulate.*

**Keywords:** *bilingualism, biliteracy, Seal of Biliteracy, dual language immersion, language policy*

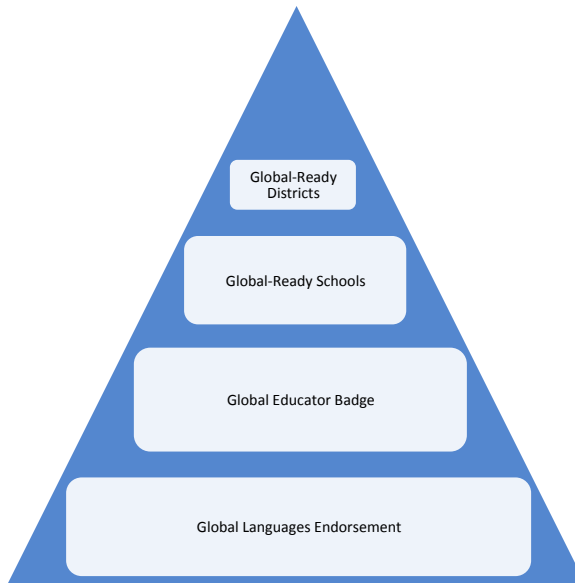
## **Background**

In 2011, the State Board of Education (SBE) in North Carolina came together under the leadership of Chairman William Harrison to create a Task Force on Global Education and to recommend ways in which the state could prepare students for a globalized society (NCDPI, 2013). Two years later, in January of 2013, the Task Force released its findings and made recommendations on how to achieve the SBE's mission "that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century" (NCDPI, 2013, p. 2). As part of the report, the Task Force recognized that North Carolina was already linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse and that

the state needed to prepare not for the “global tomorrow” but rather the “global today” (NCDPI, 2013, p. 5). The 2013 Task Force report provided five commitments to which the state should adhere: (1) *Robust and Cutting-edge Teacher Support and Tools*; (2) *Leading-edge Language Instruction*; (3) *New School Models*; (4) *District Networking and Recognition*; and (5) *Strategic International Relationships* (NCDPI, 2013, p.6).

The purpose of the present exploratory study was to delve into two of these five commitments, Commitment 2 (Leading-edge Language Instruction) and Commitment 4 (District Networking and Recognition) to understand their influence across the state. Commitment 2.1 specifically recommended that the state implement “a plan for statewide access to dual language/immersion opportunities beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school” (NCDPI, 2013, p. 6). Dual language programs offer a different approach to the traditional English-only classroom by instructing academic content in two languages, English, and another language, termed *the partner language*, for a minimum of 50% of the instructional day (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). While dual language is commonly referred to as dual language/immersion (DL/I) in North Carolina, the authors chose to use the term dual language (DL) in this article to maintain consistency in terminology, as suggested by the U.S. Department of Education (2105) report.

Commitment 4 (District Networking and Recognition) aimed to provide a support system and recognition for districts, schools, teachers, and students who adhered to the 2013 Task Force Report recommendations. As motivation, the state developed a badging system and released rubrics with specific guidelines describing how: (a) districts could earn the designation of a *Global-Ready District*, (b) schools could earn the designation of a *Global-Ready School*, and (c) teachers could earn the *Global Educator Badge* (NCDPI, 2017a; 2017b). To earn the Global-Ready designation, districts and schools had to include a specific focus on students enrolled in languages in addition to English. For example, at the district level, to receive full points on the rubric section *Leading-language instruction*, 75% of students in the district had to be enrolled in proficiency-based world language or DL programs. At the school level, to receive full points on this rubric category, a school had to have 100% of students enrolled in such programs. The language programs offered had to be responsive to local and regional linguistic needs (NCDPI, 2017a; 2017b). To earn the Global Educator Badge, educators had to embed global education into instruction, complete 100 hours of professional development related to global education, and complete a Capstone Project within a two-year period (NCDPI, n.d.d). Specifically for students, Commitment 4.2 connected to the Seal of Biliiteracy movement occurring across the country by encouraging “a process and incentives for K-12 second language opportunities for all students” (NCDPI, 2013, p. 6). The Seal of Biliiteracy is a designation given to high school students who have shown mastery in two or more languages by the time the student graduates from high school (Seal of Biliiteracy, 2019). Figure 1 displays the state badging system.



*Figure 1.* North Carolina State Badging System

In this article, the researchers explored how the state of North Carolina incentivized districts to develop DL programs and to award the Seal of Biliteracy to graduate students who were globally prepared and globally competitive. Recognizing how such initiatives may privilege English-dominant students (Subtirelu, Borowczyk, Thorson Hernández, & Venezia, 2019), the researchers also examined the extent to which culturally and linguistically diverse learners were included in the process. English-dominant students are those who grew up in monolingual homes and arrived to school speaking English whereas culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners are students who come from a home in which a language other than English is spoken. Three research questions guided this investigation: (1) In what ways did the Task Force Report influence the Seal of Biliteracy policy and implementation? (2) In what ways did the Task Force Report influence the rate of growth of DL programs in the state? (3) In what ways did the Task Force Report encourage accessibility and inclusion of CLD learners in DL and the Seal of Biliteracy?

### **Theoretical Framework**

To understand how the Task Force Report influenced DL programming and the Seal of Biliteracy in North Carolina, this study drew on the theory of extrinsic motivation. The theory of extrinsic motivation had its beginnings in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the researchers Thorndike and Skinner (Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). While intrinsic motivation, a theory that surfaced during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focuses on motivations inherent in individuals, extrinsic motivation focuses on factors such as rewards or punishment that come from outside and impact the actions of the individual (Lepper & Henderlong, 2000). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation “is a construct that pertains whenever

an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (p. 60). The Task Force created a system of rewards that included badges, seals, and designations in an attempt to extrinsically motivate districts and schools to expand global initiatives. This article explores how that rewards system influenced DL programming and Seal of Bilingual implementation and attainment.

## Literature Review

### *Seal of Bilingual*

The Task Force Report came at a crucial time as a national movement for student recognition for multilingualism, called the Seal of Bilingual (SoBL), was underway and gaining momentum. The vision behind the SoBL was “to help students recognize the value of their academic success and see the tangible benefits of being bilingual” (Seal of Bilingual, 2019). Beginning as a grassroots effort in 2008, the SoBL took shape in California, was officially passed by the California state legislature in 2011, and was implemented in January of 2012 (Seal of Bilingual, 2019). As of Fall 2019, 37 states (plus the District of Columbia) had adopted the SoBL. North Carolina was the ninth state to adopt the SoBL, termed the *Global Languages Endorsement (GLE)* in North Carolina, in January of 2015 (Seal of Bilingual, 2019). The first SoBL-eligible graduating class was from the 2014-2015 school year (NCDPI, n.d.b.). While most states went through the state legislature or through a policy approved by the state department of education, North Carolina was one of only four states that followed a path that included a policy resolution that was later passed by the state board of education (Heineke & Davin, 2018).

As the SoBL spread across the country, some began to question whether the SoBL inadvertently prioritized English-dominant students over CLD students (Davin & Heineke, 2017; Davin, Heineke, & Egnatz, 2018; Heineke & Davin, 2018; Subtirelu et al., 2019). In a case study of three school districts in Illinois, Davin and Heineke (2018) found that CLD students were less likely to know about the SoBL than English-dominant students, especially those not enrolled in world language classes. In a study exploring the differences in SoBL policy state to state, Davin and Heineke (2017) found that of the 25 states that had adopted the SoBL policy at the time of investigation, six states—Arizona, Illinois, Nevada, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin—required English learners to pass an additional assessment to demonstrate their English proficiency to be awarded the SoBL.

No study to the authors’ knowledge has specifically examined how the combined efforts of DL programs and the SoBL have merged simultaneously to support CLD learners or how extrinsic motivators at the state level could potentially contribute to the increase of both of these initiatives. Further, while previous studies have looked in-depth at the SoBL journeys of states such as Illinois (Davin, et al., 2018) and Minnesota (Okraski, Hancock, & Davin, forthcoming), none to our knowledge have explored the journey of North Carolina. While three states, Delaware, North Carolina, and Utah, have received specific attention for their expressed goals of expanding DL program access to all students (Collier & Thomas, 2018), at the time that the U.S. Department of Education (2015) released its findings on DL nationwide, in comparison to Delaware and Utah, North Carolina had the largest number of

English learners (ELs), the second largest number of DL programs, and was the only state of those three that had adopted the SoBL at that time, thus making it a prime state to explore further. Additionally, in the most recent data released, North Carolina had the second largest number of SoBL earners, behind California, nationwide in the 2017-2018 school year (Chou, 2019).

### *Dual Language Programs*

Whereas Commitment 4 of the Task Force Report established statewide incentives to increase global competence and incentives for K-12 students to learn languages, Commitment 2.1 of the NC Task Force report focused on “statewide access to dual language/immersion opportunities beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school” (NCDPI, 2013, p. 6). The goals of DL programs rest on three main pillars that include biliteracy and bilingualism, academic achievement, and sociocultural competence (Howard et al., 2018). *Biliteracy* is the ability to read and write in two languages while *bilingualism* refers to the ability to speak and understand two languages. *Sociocultural competence* refers to “identity development, cross-cultural competence, and multicultural appreciation” (Howard et al., 2018, p. 3). This third goal emphasizes that the curricula embodies “multiple opportunities for students to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others, and to develop cultural knowledge and a sense of their and others’ identities—ethnic, linguistic, and cultural—in a non-stereotyped fashion” (Howard et al., 2018, p. 34).

Research suggests that these three goals lead to benefits such as increased cognitive functioning (Barac, Bialystok, Castro, & Sanchez, 2014; Thomas & Collier, 2017), enhanced academic achievement for all types of learners (Thomas & Collier, 2012), and an appreciation of culture, both one’s own and that of others (Thomas & Collier, 2012). Further, research focusing on DL programs and ELs has shown that DL programming can close the second language achievement gap most quickly (Collier & Thomas, 2009) and that ELs in DL programs outscore ELs not in DL on state standardized testing in math (Vela, Jones, Mundy, & Isaacson, 2017). Lastly, students in DL programs “have more favorable attitudes toward being bilingual and toward students who are different from themselves” and as well “have stronger cultural identity and self-esteem” (Thomas & Collier, 2012, p. 2).

Beyond the previous benefits mentioned, DL programs prepare learners for an ever-changing world and a dynamic and competitive future work force (Collier & Thomas, 2018). DL programs hold “the promise of giving students access to key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, namely bilingualism, biliteracy, and global awareness” and thus “some states have moved to increase the numbers of dual language programs in an effort to equip students with multilingual skills that will make them more competitive in the global marketplace” (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, pp. 8-9). Namely, three states in particular, Delaware, North Carolina, and Utah, have made efforts to expand DL throughout all public schools statewide (Collier & Thomas, 2018).

## **Methodology**

### *Context*

North Carolina was purposefully selected (Creswell & Poth, 2018) for this study due to its large number of DL programs, its adoption of the SoBL, and its



increasing student home language diversity. North Carolina is situated in the south-eastern region of the United States and is a state that is growing in diversity. About 17% of the student population in North Carolina speaks a language other than English as the primary language of the home (NCDPI, 2018c). A minimum of 336 languages other than English are spoken by students who attend public schools in the state (NCDPI, 2018c). The top five languages spoken by students other than English in order of frequency are Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Hindi/Indian/Urdu (NCDPI, 2018c).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data sources for the present study included Google sites and documents found within the NCDPI website and semi-structured interviews with two officials at NCDPI. The interviews were conducted over the telephone in April of 2019 and audio recorded with the permission of the interviewees. To respond to the first research question regarding the Task Force and the SoBL, the researchers used the NCDPI Google site for the SoBL to explore the policy and implementation of the SoBL, the number of SoBL earners annually, and the number of participating districts. To answer the second research question regarding the Task Force Report and DL, the researchers used the NCDPI DL Google site and documents found within to examine which particular districts had the largest numbers of DL programs and to look at the change in DL programs over time. Further, to best understand change over time and to investigate if a change in growth occurred after the release of the 2013 Task Force Report, the researchers used SPSS to run a multiple linear regression. For the third research question, in addition to the interviews with the two NCDPI officials, the researchers triangulated the following data from the 2017-2018 school year: the districts with the largest percentage of CLD learners, the 15 districts with the most SoBL earners, and the 15 districts with the highest numbers of DL programs.

## **Findings**

### *Task Force Report and the SoBL*

The first research question focused on the ways in which the Task Force Report influenced the SoBL policy in North Carolina and its statewide implementation. Shortly after the release of the Task Force Report, the SoBL was adopted to incentivize students to pursue higher levels of proficiency in two or more languages. According to an official from NCDPI, while “there was support in the Task Force Report for our state Seal of Biliteracy,” it was also important that the “Seal of Biliteracy movement was already underway nationwide.” When one state official was asked if initiatives at the state level had been extrinsic motivators, this official explained that the goal of the Task Force Report was to serve as an extrinsic motivator. She explained,

Yes, in looking at [...] the original Task Force Report and the recommendations that came with it, there were a number of things that were designed to incentivize our districts, our charter schools, our educators, our students to look more carefully at global education and what that means and how they could show that they are globally ready for the future.

As previously mentioned, incentives with a badging system existed at the district, school, teacher, and student level. The student level incentive, the SoBL is one of five possible high school diploma endorsements that exist in the state (NCDPI, n.d.a.). To receive this designation, students must demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one world language (NCDPI, n.d.a.). To demonstrate English proficiency, students must maintain a minimum unweighted GPA of 2.5 in the four required English courses. ELs must also demonstrate a proficiency level of *Developing* on an English language proficiency test identified by the state (NCDPI, n.d.a.). To demonstrate proficiency in the additional language, students must demonstrate a minimum proficiency level of *Intermediate Low* based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012; NCDPI, n.d.a.). To demonstrate proficiency at this level, students can test at *Intermediate Low* proficiency using a test approved by the state, have a minimum unweighted GPA of 2.5 in four levels of the same world language, or receive Credit by Demonstrated Mastery—a policy that allows students the ability to earn credit for a class through demonstrating mastery of course material by other means than requiring seat time, such as an assessment (NCDPI, n.d.a.).

Analyses suggested that the Task Force report did positively impact SoBL implementation. From 2015 to 2018, the number of SoBL earners increased by 7,712 students, a 388% increase. However, the increase was not consistent nor was the way in which earners were reported to the state. Before the 2017-2018 school year, districts had to input the number of SoBL earners in each district manually, but after the 2017-2018 school year, this process became automated through PowerSchool, the state's data management system (NCDPI, 2018d). In 2015, the first year of SoBL implementation, 1,579 students earned the SoBL in the state of North Carolina (NCDPI, 2018d). The following school year showed a 52% increase, with that number rising to 2,401 students (NCDPI, n.d.a.). In 2017, it was common knowledge across the state that reporting was about to become automated. Therefore, it seems likely that the 59% decrease in SoBL earners that year, a decline of 1,421 students reported from the previous year for a total of only 980 students, was likely not representative of the actual number of students who earned the recognition. When the process became automated the following year, the number of SoBL earners in North Carolina rose by 8,311 students, an 839% increase (NCDPI, n.d.a.). In 2018, 9,291 students earned the SoBL (NCDPI, n.d.a.).

In North Carolina to date, students have earned the SoBL by demonstrating proficiency in 13 languages including American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Persian, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili (NCDPI, n.d.a.). Three of the top four most spoken languages of CLD learners in the state (Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese) are represented in the languages through which the SoBL has been earned.

### **Task Force Report and DL**

The second research question focused on the ways in which the Task Force Report influenced the rate of growth of DL programs in the state. North Carolina currently offers DL programs in eight languages, including Cherokee, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Spanish, and Urdu (NCDPI, 2018a). Three of the top five languages in the state are also represented in DL programs: Chinese, Spanish, and Urdu.

Figure 2, created by NCDPI, demonstrates the growth that has taken place over time with DL programs (NCDPI, 2018a).

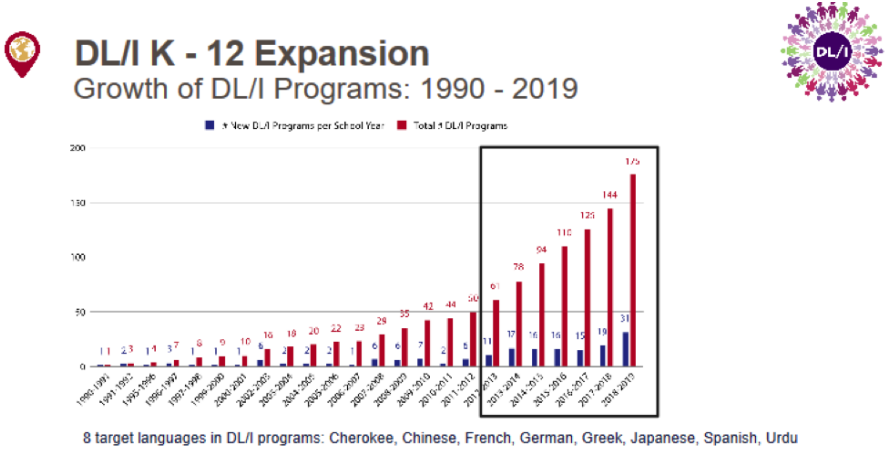


Figure 2. DL/I and K-12 Expansions in North Carolina (reprinted with permission of NCDPI)

Before the Task Force Report in 2013, DL programs in the state had grown from one to 50, with the growth being slow in the beginning stages and including only nine new programs in the first 10 years. However, in 2012-2013, the year of the release of the Task Force report, DL programs grew by 11 from the year prior. The school year immediately following the report, 2013-2014, there was an increase of 17 programs, the largest annual increase ever in the state. Since the release of the Task Force Report, DL programs have increased by 125.

Statistical findings suggest that the publication of the Task Force Report in 2013 was impactful. Results of a multiple linear regression suggested that the publication of the Task Force Report accelerated the growth of DL programs in the state. The solid line in Figure 3 represents hypothetical linear growth, whereas the dotted line represents the actual growth that occurred.

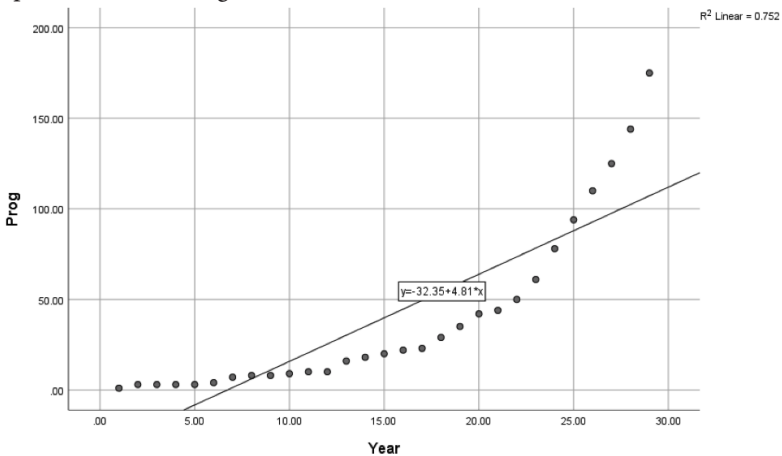


Figure 3. Hypothetical DL/I Growth (solid line) vs. Actual DLI Growth (dotted line)

While a linear model would have predicted 112 DL programs after 30 years, the presence of 175 DL programs in year 29 (2018-2019 school year) illustrated a higher rate of acceleration later on in implementation.

When one of the officials from NCDPI was asked whether she thought that the Task Force Report extrinsically motivated counties in the state to focus on increasing global language instruction through DL programs, she responded:

We had a significant increase in DL/I programs when the Task Force Report was implemented starting in 2013, and so I think that's good evidence that having a state policy regarding the implementation of DL/I programs and the idea that they should be accessible to all students has really had an impact on our districts and charter schools' thinking about those DL/I programs.

Although the NCDPI official attributed much of the change to the Task Force Report, she did suggest that two other factors might also have influenced these changes. The official explained that "there [were] some other drivers as well," including a research study by Thomas and Collier (2007-2010) that showed the positive impacts of DL programs in North Carolina. According to the interviewee, that study "clearly showed that students in the DL/I program have higher academic achievement over time, and they outscore and outperform their monolingual peers, sometimes by one grade level or more, on standardized tests." The official added that this research "also showed that those students [in DL programs] have greater intercultural competence and that they have a number of advantages going forward." The official interviewed further suggested that another contributing factor to the increase in DL programs was that, over time, the state began to take "a team approach" to its support of DL programs. This change included a seminar which gave DL programs "a professional home" with the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina at their spring conference, allowing for networking and collaboration.

### **Task Force Report and CLD Learners**

Research question three focused on the ways in which the Task Force Report encouraged accessibility and inclusion of CLD learners in DL and the SoBL. Table 1 displays the districts with the largest percentage of CLD students. Table 2 shows the 15 districts with the highest number of SoBL earners, arranged from highest percentage to lowest. Table 3 displays the 15 NC districts with the largest number of DL programs in the state.

Table 1

*Districts with the Largest Percentage of CLD students**Districts with the Largest Percentage of CLD students*

<b>Districts</b>	<b>% of CLD students</b>
Asheboro	≥31%
Duplin	≥31%
Lee	≥31%
Lexington	≥31%
Montgomery	≥31%
Sampson	≥31%
Thomasville	≥31%
Alamance	21-30%
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	21-30%
Chatham	21-30%
Clinton	21-30%
Durham	21-30%
Forsyth	21-30%
Greene	21-30%
Henderson	21-30%
Hickory	21-30%
Kannapolis	21-30%
Mecklenburg	21-30%
Newton-Conover	21-30%
Wake	21-30%

*Note.* CLD = Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Data compiled from NCDPI (2018c).

Table 2

*SoBL Information from 2018*

<b>Districts</b>	<b>SoBL Earners</b>	<b>Total Students to Graduate</b>	<b>% of Graduating Students with SoBL</b>
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	537	908	59.1
Iredell-Statesville	333	1, 877	17.7
Chatham	106	703	15.1
Wake	1,838	12, 205	15.1
Union	491	3, 445	14.3
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	1,376	11, 025	12.5
Winston Salem/Forsyth	561	4, 570	12.3
Guilford	664	6, 056	11.0
Cabarrus	247	2, 627	9.4
New Hanover	186	2, 238	8.3
Buncombe	128	1, 953	6.6
Durham	152	2, 878	5.3
Gaston	121	2, 567	4.7
Cumberland	184	4, 073	4.5
Johnston	88	2, 668	3.3

Note. Data compiled from NCDPI (2018b) and from Accountability Services Division (n.d). SoBL= Seal of Biliteracy.

Table 3

*Dual Language Programs in North Carolina*

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Total Number of DL programs</b>
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	22
Union	11
Alamance-Burlington	9
Buncombe	5
Cabarrus	5
Winston Salem-Forsyth	8
Cumberland	7
Guilford	4
Harnett	6
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City	5
Chatham	4
Onslow	5
Johnston County	4
Greene	3
Iredell-Statesville	3
Nash-Rocky Mount	3
Wake	3

*Note.* Data compiled from NDCPI (n.d.c).

As Tables 1 and 2 indicate, there were some districts that appeared in both tables, indicating that some of the districts that had high numbers of CLD students also had the most SoBL earners. Specifically, six of the 13 districts with large numbers of CLD learners (21-30%) also appeared on the list of districts with the largest number of SoBL earners in 2018. However, the seven districts with the highest number of CLD learners (31% or more), did not correspond to the districts with the largest number of total SoBL earners.

As Tables 1 and 3 demonstrate, some districts with large numbers of CLD students corresponded with the districts that had the largest numbers of DL programs. There were seven districts that had large numbers of CLD learners (21-30%) that also had large number of DL programs. The districts that had the most CLD learners, 31% or more, did not correspond to the districts with the largest number of DL programs in the state.

As Tables 1, 2, and 3 display, some districts with high numbers of CLD learners corresponded with the largest number of SoBL earners and DL programs. Five of the 13 districts that had large numbers of CLD learners, 21-30%, also had both the greatest total number of SoBL earners and the largest number of DL programs. Districts with the largest number of CLD learners, 31% or more, were not the districts with the largest numbers of SoBL earners or DL programs.

When asked how the initiatives, such as the badging system and the push for increasing DL programs, from the state had impacted or supported CLD students across the state, one of the officials from NCDPI responded that these initiatives had



“supported them in a very comprehensive way,” with one of those ways being that CLD students “can earn [the SoBL] in their home and heritage language and any other languages they qualify for.” The official further explained that:

when we established this policy it was accessible to all students, so it doesn’t matter what your first language or your home language is, or what your second language is, you can access and qualify and become eligible for the Global Languages Endorsement in the same way for all the languages you have.

One question of interest concerned the one pathway to fulfill the world language requirement of the SoBL that requires students to take four levels of a world language class. Students who are native and heritage speakers of languages other than English sometimes do not take all four levels of a world language because beginner language courses are too basic for their skillset. Instead, they may start out in level 2, level 3, or level 4 of the class. The NCDPI official explained that students who test into a higher level and do not take four consecutive classes can still qualify for the SoBL. If they choose this pathway, they must have completed the fourth level of a world language, even if they did not take the first level. Additionally, the official shared that students could also use *Credit by Demonstrated Mastery* or an alternative test approved by the state to fulfill the world language requirement.

Interviews also revealed that ELs across the state were earning the SoBL. In 2018, ELs earned the SoBL in 25 of the 115 participating districts. The NCDPI official stated that the SoBL “champions being bilingual and biliterate in your home language” as well as English. She explained, “we have made sure that this policy, like the other diploma endorsement policies, are available and accessible to all students.”

In speaking with another official from NCDPI regarding CLD students and the SoBL, the researchers were told that “[equity is] really something that’s on the radar at the national level as well for us at the state level.” This official further explained that “we have a couple of years under our belt now. We are able to collect data and see what our data show.” With data for the SoBL becoming automated, the official said that the state had “what we consider to be pretty clean data.” The interviewee continued, “What we do have now is the awareness that we’re not bringing in as many of our CLD students as we would like.” The official discussed that having these data now allows them to look deeper into ways to increase participation of CLD learners. This official explained that individuals at NCDPI are in the brainstorm stage which compels them to consider “how do we market to make sure that we’re reaching a broader audience and then taking it a step further” by “look[ing] at what our guidelines are, look at what other states are doing.” The official continued by saying they were asking themselves:

Are there things that we might want to look at in order to try to increase the number of students, that would be able to still have rigor in attaining the Seal, but that would be able to open the door up for more students?

When asked how the initiatives from the state level, such as the Global-Ready Schools, Global-Ready Districts, Global Educator Digital Badge, and the SoBL, have impacted CLD students, the official stated by:

raising that awareness, especially in a value-added way of saying these students aren’t just coming in not knowing English, let’s say, they’re com-

ing bringing a culture, they're coming in bringing a language, they're coming in bringing experiences, and these are experiences that are valuable to all students, to all staff as we're looking at being globally ready...

Thus, the Task Force Report placed value on the linguistic and cultural assets students brought with them to the classroom and intended to increase this mindset throughout the state.

In sum, the rubrics for the badging system recommended by the 2013 Task Force Report require a commitment from districts and schools to provide access to world language or DL programs to all students that meet the local linguistic needs of the community if they want to receive the recognition. Whereas districts with the largest number of CLD learners are not the same districts with the largest numbers of SoBL earners and DL programs, five of the 13 districts with large numbers of CLD learners are the same districts with the largest numbers of SoBL earners and DL programs. The interview data indicate that North Carolina is dedicated to utilizing DL programs and the awarding of the SoBL to provide access and inclusion of CLD students and that they are currently working on ways in which to increase the number of CLD students in the earning of the SoBL.

## **Discussion**

This study explored ways in which the Task Force Report influenced SoBL policy and implementation, growth of DL programs, and the inclusion of CLD students in the process through the use of extrinsic motivators. North Carolina, a state that has a large number of DL programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015), the second largest number of SoBL earners in most recent data reports (Chou, 2019), and a growing diversity of students (NCDPI, 2018c), is a noteworthy state to investigate. The research in this study revealed that North Carolina has utilized the Task Force Report to incentivize stakeholders across the state to be more globally-ready and is providing rewards for districts, schools, and students that encourage CLD learners to be part of earning the SoBL and to have access to DL programs.

While other studies have looked at the grassroots importance behind the SoBL movement (Heineke & Davin, 2018), this study examined movement from the state level down, specifically how state level initiatives can incentivize increasing the number of SoBL earners. Not surprisingly, the number of SoBL earners has increased since its adoption. While the Task Force Report did not in itself create the SoBL policy, it paved the way for its adoption. The badging system that followed the recommendations from the report also provided incentives for districts and schools to increase world language and DL offerings, which over time can provide an even larger increase in the number of SoBL earners across the state.

The Task Force Report appears to have been a motivating factor with the increase of DL programs statewide. The multiple regression model showed that the programs increased more drastically in later years, after the release of the Task Force Report. Previous studies have suggested that DL programs can have positive outcomes on CLD students (Collier & Thomas, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2012; Vela et al., 2017). This study shows that state-level incentivizing initiatives can be impactful on increasing the number of DL programs across the state. The authors are encour-

aged to find that a state as culturally and linguistically diverse as North Carolina has experienced a significant increase in DL programs statewide with the intention of all students having access.

Previous literature (i.e., Subtirelu et al., 2019) has discussed concerns arising from the privileging of English-dominant students in SoBL implementation. The 2013 Task Force intended to positively impact CLD students, and the rubrics following the recommendations in the report provided specific incentives for schools and districts to provide learning environments conducive to CLD learner success. Currently, however, districts with the largest number of CLD learners (more than 31%) are not necessarily the same districts with the highest numbers of SoBL earners and DL programs. On the other hand, five of the 13 districts with large numbers of CLD learners, 21-30%, are the same districts with the largest number of SoBL earners and DL programs. These data combined indicate that while there is still work to be done, most notably in relation to increasing SoBL earners and DL programs in some of the most culturally and linguistically diverse areas of the state, the state is making progress towards the inclusion of CLD learners. The Task Force Report combined with the interviews with the two NCDPI officials highlight that there is commitment at the state level to include CLD learners in the awarding of the SoBL and DL programs. Further, North Carolina now gathers SoBL earners' data through an automated statewide system, which is advantageous to the state. With these data the state can move beyond the awareness stage to a place of examining how to include more CLD learners in the awarding of the SoBL and provide more access to DL programs to these students. What district motivations will derive from this release of data to increase CLD learners in the earning of the SoBL have yet to be seen. Bringing this information to the forefront may encourage districts to consider how they are meeting the needs of this group of students with the earning of the SoBL and may serve as a further motivator to increase diversity among SoBL earners. Additionally, having a comprehensive set of data may allow officials at the state level to delve deeper into the SoBL policy to explore if there could be changes made within the policy itself, such as removing any additional barriers, increasing CLD awardees, and ensuring equity in the way in which the policy is written.

North Carolina appears to have utilized—and continues to utilize—state-level incentives to motivate stakeholders to work towards meeting these goals. As the state continues in its efforts to place value on bilingualism, it will be of interest to see how DL programs and the SoBL policy increase inclusion of CLD learners across the state and what further initiatives and motivating factors will drive change. While there were multiple contributing factors to the increase in DL programs and SoBL earners across the state, state initiatives and the utilization of extrinsic motivation as a means to carry out the commitment to global education likely were influential.

## **Recommendations**

For states interested in implementing or increasing DL programs, adopting the SoBL, increasing the number of SoBL earners, and meeting the needs of CLD learners, North Carolina's initiatives through the use of incentives could be a model. State Boards of Education, Legislatures, and Departments of Instruction can play a pivotal

role through initiatives to encourage and demonstrate the value of multilingualism to the general public. Thus, for states desiring to follow a similar path, it is critical that these three government stakeholders recognize that the initiatives in North Carolina were accomplished only through concerted collaboration among these entities. For these states interested in duplicating the steps North Carolina took, it is recommended that the State Boards of Education, State Legislatures, and State Departments of Instruction, in collaboration, create a committee with the specific focus of moving the state forward in global education. Offering rewards at the district, school, educator, and student level is highly recommended so that such initiatives can reach all stakeholders. Ensuring that CLD students in local and regional student populations are included in these initiatives is critical. Creating rubrics that give specific guidelines for receiving designations was a strategy for North Carolina to accomplish its global initiatives while simultaneously meeting the needs of its diverse learners. Further, analyzing the data in such a way that allows the state to self-reflect on how CLD learners have been included in these initiatives—as North Carolina is currently doing—is imperative. Collaborative discussions and planning should consider ways in which North Carolina has worked towards its global goals, as well as which components can be copied and which would need to be modified to best fit the respective state context in consideration.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

While there is a large number of DL programs and SoBL earners in districts with a high percentage of CLD Learners, limitations exist in knowing the current totals of CLD students that are enrolled in DL programs and receiving the SoBL. While some districts have large numbers of SoBL earners, it is important to delve into the specifics of which students, CLD or English-dominant, are earning the SoBL and participating in DL programs. Further research thus should consider which student populations (race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, and sexual identity) are receiving the SoBL, and how the SoBL is impacted due to the financial resources at specific school types (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural). Future research may additionally include deeper investigations of the existing data to develop a better understanding of what other factors could be contributors to high or low numbers of CLD inclusion and access in both the awarding of the SoBL and DL programs.

### **Conclusion**

As discovered in this research, the Task Force Report initiated multiple incentives in a holistic and comprehensive nature that appear to have contributed to the increase of DL programming and the adoption of the SoBL. These initiatives stemming from the state have arguably shown a commitment to preparing students for a globally-competitive world that include valuing languages other than English. The SoBL was possible in North Carolina in part due to this initiative. The number of SoBL earners in the state has grown substantially, with an increase of 7,712 earners from its implementation year to 2018. Additionally, the state's commitment to cutting-edge language instruction appears to have made positive changes in the state with the number of DL programs increasing by 125 programs since the release of

the Task Force Report. Of particular interest to these authors was demonstrating the importance of initiatives that include CLD learners.

As a nation, individuals across states must work together to ensure that every student graduates high school prepared for life in the 21st Century. Biliteracy, as well as its accompanying cognitive and social benefits, is critical to such preparedness. While individual districts can certainly work toward these goals, initiatives at the state-level can go a long way toward ensuring a clear vision for global readiness.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks and Dr. L.J. Randolph, Jr. for making this Special Issue possible. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers who made our manuscript stronger through their recommendations. Lastly, we would like to thank the two officials that spoke with us to give us more insight into the journey of North Carolina.

### References

- Accountability Services Division. (n.d). Cohort graduation rates [Data set]. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgradrate>
- ACTFL. (2012). ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>
- Barac, R., Bialystok, E., Castro, D., & Sanchez, M. (2014). The cognitive development of young dual language learners: A critical review. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 29*(4), 699–714.
- Chou, A. (2019). 2019 National Seal of Biliteracy report for 2017-2018 academic year. Retrieved from <https://sealofbiliteracy.org/doc/2019-National-Seal-of-Biliteracy-Report-Final.pdf>
- Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2009). *Educating English learners for a transformed world*. Albuquerque, NM: Dual Language Education of New Mexico Fuente Press.
- Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2018). *Transforming secondary education: Middle and high school dual language programs*. Albuquerque, NM: Dual Language Education of New Mexico Fuente Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Davin, K. J., & Heineke, A. J. (2017). The Seal of Biliteracy: Variations in policy and outcomes. *Foreign Language Annals, 50*, 486-499.
- Davin, K. J., & Heineke, A. J. (2018). The Seal of Biliteracy: Adding students' voices to the conversation. *Bilingual Research Journal, 41*(3), 312–328.
- Davin, K. J., Heineke, A. J., & Egnatz, L. (2018). The Seal of Biliteracy: Successes and challenges to implementation. *Foreign Language Annals, 51*, 1-15.
- Heineke, A., & Davin, K. (2018). Prioritizing multilingualism in U.S. schools: States' policy journeys to enact the seal of biliteracy. *Educational Policy*.
- Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, B., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). *Guiding principles for dual language education* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

- Lepper, M. H., & Henderlong, J. (2000). Turning “play” into “work” and “work” into “play,” 25 years of research on intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation. In C. Sansone & J. Harackiewicz (Eds.), *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The search for optimal motivation and performance* (pp. 257-307). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Lindholm-Leary, K. (2012). Success and challenges in dual language education. *Theory into Practice*, 51(4), 256–262.
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2013). Preparing students for the world: Final report of the state board of education’s task force on global education. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/globaled/final-report.pdf>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2017a). NC global-ready district: Implementation rubric [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/globaled/actions/district-rubric.pdf>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2017b). NC global-ready schools: Implementation rubric [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/globaled/actions/rubric.pdf>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2018a). 1st quarter DL/I quarterly update with spotlight on State Board of Education update on DL/I. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncdli/professional-development>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2018b). Data by district for global languages endorsement (GLE), North Carolina’s Seal of Biliteracy. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/worldlanguages/policies/ncs-seal-of-biliteracy-global-languages-endorsement>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2018c). Language diversity in North Carolina. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/worldlanguages/>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2018d). Measuring world language proficiency with credentialing. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/worldlanguages/policies/ncs-seal-of-biliteracy-global-languages-endorsement>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.a). NC’s Seal of Biliteracy Global Languages Endorsement. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/worldlanguages/policies/ncs-seal-of-biliteracy-global-languages-endorsement>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.b). North Carolina Department of Public Instruction high school endorsements: Based on state board of education policy GCS-L-007. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/scholars/endorsement-require.pdf>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.c). North Carolina dual language/immersion. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncdli/>
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.d). NC global education: Students ready for the world. Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/globaled/>
- Okraski, C., Hancock, C. R., & Davin, K. J. (forthcoming). Promoting equitable access to the Seal of Biliteracy: The case of Minnesota. To appear in A. J. Heineke & K. J. Davin (Eds.), *The Seal of Biliteracy: Case studies of language policy in practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

- Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54–67.
- Seal of Biliteracy. (2019). *Seal of biliteracy*. Retrieved from [www.sealofbiliteracy.org](http://www.sealofbiliteracy.org)
- Subtirelu, N., Borowczyk, M., Thorson Hernández, R., & Venezia, F. (2019). Recognizing whose bilingualism? A critical policy analysis of the Seal of Biliteracy. *Modern Language Journal, 103*(2), 371–390.
- Thomas, W. P. & Collier, V. P. (2007-2010). *Full Reports*. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/ncdli/resources/thomas-collier-research>
- Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2012). *Dual language education for a transformed world*. Albuquerque, NM: Dual Language Education of New Mexico Fuente Press.
- Thomas, W. P. & Collier, V. P. (2017). *Why dual language schooling*. Albuquerque, NM: Dual Language Education of New Mexico Fuente Press.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2015). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/resources.html>
- Vela, A., Jones, D., Mundy, M., & Isaacson, C. (2017). Determining the effectiveness of bilingual programs on third grade state exam scores. *Research in Higher Education Journal, 33*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aabri.com/rhej.html>





**Southern Conference on Language Teaching  
Board of Directors  
2019-2020**

Carmen Scoggins [2021] President Watauga HS, NC	Dr. Mark Linsky [2022] Program Co-Director Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, GA
Dr. Bobby Hobgood [2022] President-Elect, Recording Secretary University of North Carolina at Charlotte, NC	Dr. Victoria Russell [2022] Exhibits & Advertising Co-Director, SCOLTalk Co-Editor Valdosta State University, GA
Thomas Soth [2019] Immediate Past-President Chapel Hill HS, NC	Lisa Podbilski [2021] SCOLT Representative to ACTFL Louisville Collegiate School, KY
Carolyn Wright [2020] Scholarships Director North Carolina State University, NC	Heidi Trude [2023] Co-Program Director & Social Media Loudoun Valley High School, VA
Lee Burson [2020] Awards Director Heard County HS, GA	Christine Hutchins [2023] Awards Co-Director St. Francis School, KY
Pam Benton [2021] SCOLTalk Co-Editor & Registrar Pinellas County Schools, FL	Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks Editor, <i>Dimension</i> Georgia State University, GA
Delandris Jones [2021] Program Co-Director Rock Hill School District 3, SC	Dr. Leslie Baldwin Executive Director

## 2020 Individual Sponsors

Laurel Abreu	MS	Effie Hall	VA
Brittany Bankston	AL	Elizabeth Harrison	MS
Naima Bary	GA	Graciela Helguero Balcells	FL
Elizabeth Becker	MS	Sandrine Hope	AL
Pamela Benton	FL	Daphne Hrib	GA
Janet Bunch	MS	Billie Hulke	TX
June Carter	SC	Christine Hutchins	KY
Krista Chambless	AL	Maria Ingram	AL
Heidi Clemmons	AL	David Jahner	GA
Mara Cobe	NC	Norah Jones	VA
Anna Cox	GA	Delandris Jones	SC
Cori Crane	NC	Zoya Kahn	AL
Catherine Danielou	AL	Jessica Kelly	SC
Kelly Davidson Devall	SC	Horst Kurz	GA
Bill Denham	WV	Courtney Lee	FL
Leah Dupré	AL	Raegan Lemmond	AL
Danielle Engle	GA	Douglas Lightfoot	AL
Nathalie Ettzevoglou	GA	Bettina Linden	SC
Albert Fernandez	FL	Greta Lundgaard	TX
Allison Franks	GA	Whitney Martinez	GA
Nicole Garcia	FL	Noah McLaughlin	GA

## 2020 Individual Sponsors

Shawn Morrison	SC	Stephanie Schenck	SC
Melanie Morton	TN	Carmen Scoggins	NC
Kelly Moser	MS	Tracy Seiler	SC
Michelle Olah	FL	Thomas Soth	NC
Joeseph Parodi-Brown	CT	Helen Stapleton	TN
Jamie Patterson	GA	Kathleen Stein-Smith	NJ
Lori Pierce	MS	Erika Stevens	TN
Lisa Podbilski	KY	Ken Stewart	NC
Bethany Powell	AL	German Suarez	GA
Stacey Powell	AL	Zachary Thomas	AL
LJ Randolph	NC	Heidi Trude	VA
Diana Reece	VA	Jon Valentine	GA
Christine Rinne	AL	Hope Velasquez	AL
Cristina Rodriguez Villa	FL	Ana Velazquez	NC
Amanda Romjue	NC	Linda Villadoniga	FL
Rebecca Rubenstein	GA	Kim Watson	MS
Pamela Ruffner	GA	Mac Williams	SC
Dawn Samples	SC	Lisa Worthington-Groce	NC
Jenny Santilli	WV	Carolyn Wright	NC
Deanna Scheffer	FL		

## 2020 Patrons Representing Institutions and Organizations

SCFLTA, SC Jason Bagley	FLAG, GA Patricia McCoy
SCOLT, NC Leslie Baldwin	National Spanish Examinations, IN Salvatore Muffoletto
Auburn University, AL Sue Barry	Wesleyan School, GA Suzanne Ragains
ACTFL, VA Howie Berman	AFLA, AR Martha Reynolds
Central High School, GA Lee Burson	FLAVA, VA Sue Robertson
UMS-Wright Preparatory School, AL Mirella Chavez	ACTFL, VA Paul Sandrock
Trinity Episcopal School, LA Robins Comprere	EF, GA Mark Shafer
Global Seal of Biliiteracy, IL Linda Egnatz	Experience, WA David Shriver
Trinity Episcopal School, LA Eric Hache	AATSP, AL Sheri Spaine Long
Lexington Sch.District 1, SC, SC Amanda Hajji	Lexington Sch.District 1, SC, SC Liza Speece
College of Charleston, SC Devon Hanahan	Carolina Forest High School, SC Tracy Stroud
UNC Charlotte, NC Bobby Hobgood	Presbyterian Christian School, MS Nolvía Ventura
FLAVA, VA Dick Kuettner	AATSP, AL Dieter Waldvogel
Savannah Chatham County Public Schools, GA Mark Linsky	DeKalb County School District, GA Rhonda Wells
Experience, NC Catherine Long	Experience, WA Chad Zbinden
	Trinity Episcopal School, LA Perla Zimmerman



