Are We Meeting the Needs of Our Spanish Heritage Language Learners?

Funds of Knowledge, Language Ideology, and Practices in the Spanish Classroom

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the experiences of Spanish-speaking heritage language learners in the Spanish program at a high school in Rhode Island to see how dominant language ideologies position heritage speakers and their funds of knowledge in the curriculum and in the classrooms of a predominately Latin American school. This study used a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis: former students and teachers were interviewed about their experiences and key curriculum documents were thematically analyzed. While the results could not be generalized due to the small sample size, the data suggested that complex linguistic and ethnic hierarchies of power are at play in the school which marginalize some heritage language learners. The conclusions suggest that reforms are needed to the school's Spanish program in order to deliver more equitable instruction.

Keywords: heritage language learners, dominant language ideology, monolingualism, sociolinguistics, funds of knowledge, Latin Americans, secondary education

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In schools across the United States, the student body has grown increasingly diverse over the past decades, reflecting the greater demographic trends taking place in the country towards cultural pluralism (e.g. Randolph, 2017, p. 274), where no single ethnic or racial group makes up a majority nationally. The integration of students from myriad cultural backgrounds has created a new and diverse school culture and, for administrators and teachers, this change carries a serious implication: the longstanding curricula and policies that were designed for a much more homogenous population can no longer be sufficient for our students. While all disciplines can reform to better reflect our pluralistic culture, world language teachers in particular need to reshape their classrooms to reflect the *linguistic* diversity of the United States.

Our students come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds: some students are native-born Anglophones and have only used English throughout their lives; others are new immigrants for whom English is an additional language; and there are also those students who have grown up in homes and communities in the United States where languages other than English serve as the *de facto* everyday language (see the examples of students in Abdi, 2011; Walqui, 1997). In the world language classroom, it is this last group who has become the subject of inquiry and research over the past three decades by researchers in the fields of education, linguistics, and sociology. These students, dubbed *heritage language learners* (Valdés, 2001), form a unique group. Often second and third generation children of immigrants (Valdés, 2001, pp. 43-44), these students come to the classroom with the lived experience of bilingualism and biculturalism, positioning themselves between differing worlds, holding various identities, and coming with differing degrees of linguistic abilities and strengths (see Abdi, 2011; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Potwoski, 2005, pp. 34-35; Valdés, 2001).

Tallon (2009) states that "when instructors attempt to apply a standard foreign language curriculum and foreign language teaching strategies to the teaching of a heritage language, it can lead to discomfort, and even frustration and failure, for both students and instructors alike" (p. 117). Numerous other researchers have confirmed these findings and have found that the curriculum of the traditional world language classroom is neither sufficient nor appropriate for these students (e.g. Helmer, 2014; O'Rourke & Zhou, 2018; Randolph, 2017; Russell & Kuriscak, 2015; Valdés, 1981). The main professional body for language teachers, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in 2010 even called for reform and the creation of "curriculum design that reflects the fact that the needs of… heritage students are often significantly different from non-native and non-heritage speakers" (para. 3). Yet, despite decades of research and experimental teaching, many world language classrooms have remained static entities where little has changed (e.g. the classroom of majority heritage learners in Helmer, 2014; the mixed classes in Randolph, 2017). This is deeply problematic because heritage speakers are often marginalized in the world language classroom, with their teachers tending to only see their deficits, rather than their strengths and unique experiences (see Abdi, 2011, pp. 175, 180; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, pp. 373-374; Walqui, 1997, pp. 45-46).

Living between two languages and two cultures, these students don't fit neatly into the existing binary schematic of "native speaker" versus "second language learner," a notion that has long guided educational policy related to languages (Hornerberger & Wang, 2008) and which has hierarchically ranked members of the educational institution (Valdés, González, López García, & Márquez, 2008, pp. 107-109), including amongst students (Abdi, 2011). In the world language classroom in particular, the lived experiences of the individual in the community, the home language, and the knowledge that heritage learners bring with them to the classroom are

often discounted and stigmatized by language teachers who, unconsciously or not, serve as agents of the perpetuation of a stigmatizing monolingualist ideology through their curricula and teaching methods (Abdi, 2011; Helmer, 2014; Randolph, 2017; Walqui, 1997). As a result of their marginalization in the classroom, heritage language learners may have a negative experience in the classroom and thus internalize the stigmatizing attitudes about their own language which, in the longer term, will lead to greater marginalization of their community and the disappearance of their heritage language (Leeman, 2005).

In this study, I looked in depth at the experiences of Spanish-speaking heritage language learners at a high school in Rhode Island through interviews with former students and their teachers and through textual analysis of curriculum documents. The goal of this study was two-fold: first, I hoped to provide critical information to stakeholders in the school and community who are in the process of developing a program for heritage language learners to help guide their decision-making, and, second, I intended to introduce the student perspective into the wider conversation on heritage learners and examine how heritage language students have been impacted by ideologies of power in the world language classroom. Through this study, I sought to answer two critical research questions to guide stakeholders and provide valuable information to the field: (1) What do heritage learners say about the existing Spanish classroom? and (2) How does dominant language ideology position heritage language learners and their knowledge in the Spanish classroom?

Chapter 2: Sociocultural Context

To better understand the background of the participants in this study and their families, and to better understand the context in which I am working, I provide in this chapter a brief history of the different Latin American communities in Rhode Island, an overview of recent developments in one public school system, and a profile of the school where the study took place.

History and Demographics of the Latin American[1] Communities in Rhode Island

Rhode Island has had a Latin American presence since the early 20th century, with evidence of Latin American *communities*[2] dating back to the 1920s (Martínez, 2014, pp. 17-19). The Latin American communities of Rhode Island are culturally and historically diverse, coming from vastly different backgrounds and linked together only by a common language. Martínez (2014) was able to determine that the first Latin American communities in Rhode Island were Mexican workers contracted through the *bracero* program (pp. 48-51) and Puerto Rican migrant workers (pp. 30-31). The Latin American presence in Rhode Island grew significantly after World War II, with the biggest growth taking place from the 1960s through the 1990s, and consisted of a large migration of people of Dominican, Puerto Rican, Colombian, Guatemalan, and Mexican origin who chose to make the Ocean State their new home (Martínez, 2014). The reasons for the immigration were different for each community. The Dominican community was established by immigrants who had fled the tyrannical Trujillo régime and who were unhappy

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[1] For the purposes of this study, I will be using the term "Latin American" to refer to Spanish-speaking peoples originating from the Americas. The usage of other terms (for example, "Latino(a)", "Latinx", "Hispanic", "Chicano", etc.) is reflective of the language of the cited source or quotation.

[2] I use the term "communities" in order to reflect the different experiences and realities of diverse ethnic groups who share the Spanish language in common.

with life in New York and, along with members of the Puerto Rican community, found Rhode

Island to be safer and have more opportunities (Martínez, 2014, pp. 26-32). The Guatemalan

community formed around refugees, who, fleeing the civil war in their home country and

intending to seek refuge in Canada, decided to stay and they quickly found work because of the

local need for unskilled laborers and agricultural workers (Martínez, 2014 pp. 44-48). Rhode

Island is also home to a large Colombian community, many of whose members were immigrants

who were recruited to work in textile mills (pp. 39-44).

  The Latin American communities of Rhode Island faced numerous challenges during the

later-half of the 20th century, including language barriers, isolation and difficulty maintaining

their culture and language (until the arrival of more newcomers), alienation from public

institutions, questions of identity in the heavily segregated environment of the era,

discrimination, poverty, and political exploitation (Martínez, 2014). Nevertheless, the

community has been resilient in their efforts to improve their economic and political situation,

from its early community advocacy in the 1960s and 70s to its major role in politics today

(Martínez, 2014).

  Today, the different Latin American communities make up a small, but growing and

visible group in Rhode Island. The United States Census Bureau's (2019a) American

Community Survey estimated that about 16.3% of the state's residents (and close to 50% in some

urban areas) identify as Hispanic or Latino[3], with the largest ethnic groups being, in order,

Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Mexicans, Colombians, Salvadorans and Bolivians

(2019b). When it comes to language, the US Census Bureau (2019c) estimated that about 22.7%

of all residents speak a language other than English at home, and 12.8% of all residents

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[3] The Census Bureau uses the terms "Hispanic" and/or "Latino" interchangeably to refer to Latin American
populations in the United States.

specifically speak Spanish at home. Nevertheless, the majority of Spanish-speakers (over 60% in general and over 75% of children) reported being able to speak English "very well" (United States Census Bureau, 2019c).

Bayside Public Schools: Recent Developments

The public schools in Bayside[4] have been struggling for decades to meet the needs of the students and to improve educational outcomes. According to data from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) (2018), the majority of Bayside schools perform extremely poorly and are among the worst-rated in the state when areas such as graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, and performance of minorities are factored into abysmal scores on standardized state assessments. Educational outcomes are especially unfavorable for multilingual learners. According to one report[5], many multilingual learners[6] were placed in schools without appropriate programs, often through coerced parental waivers, that teachers were neither properly trained nor certified to work with this population, and that multilingual learners were often inappropriately segregated from the general student population and lacked access to both advanced courses and special educational services.

A recent report[7] detailed the systemic failure of Bayside's schools to support their students, even when compared to similar school districts in the nation, citing a large and ineffective bureaucracy, the lack of a coherent and district-wide curriculum, unqualified or unprepared teachers, low academic expectations, a reliance on lower-level thinking skills in the

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[4] The name of the district where this study took place has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

[5] Not cited for confidentiality reasons.

[6] The term "English Language Learners" was widely used in the past and continues to be used by some teachers and administrators, but RIDE and other educational bodies have shifted to using the term "multilingual learners."

[7] Not cited for confidentiality reasons.

classroom, major inequalities between schools, segregation of students, cultural disconnects between teachers and students, and a toxic school climate as major issues. Multilingual learners were at an especially high disadvantage, with the report noting that there were few resources to serve multilingual learners or their parents. This view is backed by observations from a contemporary report[8] which noted serious barriers faced by multilingual learners, such as the lack of a coherent pedagogy across grades and schools, an ineffective "seat-based" placement model for ESL programming, and poor communication with parents, including a lack of interpreters for certain languages.

Profile of Concordia High School[9]

This study focuses on the experiences of former students and current teachers at Concordia High School. Concordia High School is a public secondary school located in an ethnically diverse, mixed-income neighborhood of Bayside. According to data from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) (2018), Concordia serves a primarily Hispanic[10] population with a large African-American minority and a small number of White and Asian students; the teachers, on the other hand, are primarily non-Hispanic Whites. The vast majority of the students are classified as "economically disadvantaged" and have scored significantly below expectations on all standardized assessments in English, math and science, with ELL students having performed particularly poorly (RIDE, 2018). According to one teacher, most students who take Spanish courses at the school are native-speakers of this language and heritage

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[8] Not cited for confidentiality reasons.
[9] Pseudonym used to protect the privacy of participants.
[10] "Hispanic" is the term used by the Rhode Island Department of Education when collecting statistical data.

learners and second-language learners make up a minority within Spanish classes (Personal Correspondence, February 2020).

As for school climate, results from surveys of students conducted by RIDE (2018) have shown that students are deeply alienated from the school as an institution, given their mainly negative responses to questions on school engagement, school climate, school safety, student-teacher relationships, and academic expectations. Nearly half of all students are chronically absent and the graduation rate is significantly below average (RIDE, 2018). Interestingly, according to teacher responses to a survey given by RIDE (2018), teachers believe that they are addressing questions of diversity well and a majority of teachers have a good sense of efficacy, however, poor school climate and a lack of resources were cited as major issues.

Regarding the physical environment of the school, the building itself is dilapidated and unwelcoming. The building retains its old, 20th century architecture as it crumbles around the people inside. The ceilings are stained and dirty, lockers are rusted, and large pieces of paper are used in place of window shades. The hallways are dark and displays of student work, including murals, are limited. Students hang around in the stairways in lieu of going to class and, in the main office, a parade of students arrive late and punch in with a computer that the school has set up for this sole purpose. Much of the equipment is antiquated (for example, a single phone line is shared between two teachers in separate classrooms) and the contemporary technology that the school has purchased (Chromebooks, Smartboards, wireless internet) causes constant issues in the classroom. The classrooms themselves are welcoming environments, with posters, displays of the standards and daily schedules, and examples of student work, but there are negative "do not" rules posted in big letters.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical frameworks with which I conducted my analysis. I then review the existing literature on heritage language learners in general, and on Spanish-speaking heritage learners in particular, which helped to guide the study. I then provide a brief summary about contemporary issues regarding heritage language teaching: the mixed classroom and teacher education.

Theoretical Frameworks

In this section, I briefly go over the theoretical frameworks that guided the qualitative analysis of the data in this study and helped to answer the research questions. There were three main areas of interest for this study: (1) funds of knowledge, (2) dominant language ideology, and (3) additive and subtractive pedagogies.

Funds of Knowledge.

Two scholars who helped to develop the framework of Funds of Knowledge are González and Moll (2002), who state the premise behind this concept is that "people are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (p. 625). Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992) define Funds of Knowledge as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). Broadly speaking, this refers to all of the abilities and information that a person has acquired through lived experiences within a cultural group. Moll et al. (1992) list numerous examples of practices that contribute to an individual's Funds of Knowledge, such as farming techniques, medical expertise, concepts of morality, and

household repair methods (p. 133). This idea can also be extended to the linguistic domain as a language is a culturally developed necessity for surviving and functioning in a society. Therefore, heritage language learners bring a rich and diverse body of knowledge with them into the classroom, including their home language in all of its aspects (pronunciation, usage, lexicon, etc.).

The idea of Funds of Knowledge has major implications for pedagogy. González and Moll (2002) emphasize that for students, especially those from minority backgrounds, to succeed in school, the "instruction must be linked to students' lives and that the details of effective pedagogy should be linked to local histories and community contexts" (p. 623). To meet this need, Moll et al. (1992) recommend that teachers become active researchers and take an ethnographic approach wherein they seek to learn *from* families and use their Funds of Knowledge in the classroom. The consequences of not engaging with the community and developing a relevant pedagogy can be disastrous for students. González and Moll (2002) describe how when teachers and the curriculum dismiss students' Funds of Knowledge, they are marginalizing the students, and they note that, in such environments:

> The knowledge that is privileged is external to their own communities, the construction of knowledge can be seen by adolescents as inscribed within communities other than their own. This can ultimately negatively impact the decisions that adolescents make, because the forms of knowledge that emerge from their knowledge base are seen as lacking and deficient. (p. 624)

What can be understood from this is that "knowledge is not neutral, and particular types of knowledge are academically validated in schools" (González & Moll, 2002, p. 625). For heritage language learners, this kind of marginalization occurs in the language classroom when

their home language is stigmatized by teachers who deem it "incorrect" or "broken" and when their home culture is derided as "corrupted." In such an environment, heritage speakers may internalize the negative attitudes and develop a poor sense of self-efficacy, as can be seen in the interview responses in the study done by Valdés et al. (2008), and perform poorly and withdraw in the classroom, as can be seen with the marginalized heritage student in the study done by Abdi (2011).

That being said, many professionals in the field have embraced a funds of knowledge standpoint in regards to heritage language students. Valdés (2005) argued that the language of heritage learners evolved in such a way that they in fact possess two knowledge systems that help them to carry out their needs as bilinguals between two worlds. In 2010, ACTFL added a new policy document on the teaching of heritage learners and native speakers that can be interpreted as coming from a funds of knowledge standpoint, which noted that "heritage learners...benefit from instruction that draws on and enhances their native or heritage language skills and cultural knowledge" and called on schools to develop "challenging curriculum that builds upon the existing linguistic skills and the cultural heritage and knowledge of the students" and "systems to award credit… for oral and written proficiency and prior learning for native and heritage speakers." María Carreira (2016), an expert in the field of heritage language teaching, proposes that teachers adopt what she calls a *macrobased* approach to teaching that starts from taking advantage of the skills and knowledge students bring to the classroom, such as strong listening and speaking skills, and authentic and relevant themes and texts to expand student knowledge and abilities. Walqui (1997) goes beyond this and proposes a Vygotskian style of pedagogy for the heritage language classroom that respects students' funds of knowledge to a point where the teacher reconceptualizes him or herself as a learner who collaborates *with* the

students to *share* knowledge rather than simply dictate it to the students (pp. 50-51). In a similar vein of pedagogical reconceptualization, Leeman (2005) proposes a critical pedagogical approach to the heritage language classroom in which the students' experiences and language are analyzed critically in relation to their own social context and to the power structures of society.

Dominant Language Ideology.

Tying into the concept of funds of knowledge and how certain types of knowledge are valued in the school environment is the notion of dominant language ideology. Potowski (2005) summarizes the idea of a dominant language in the context of the United States, having observed that "*la política lingüística de los Estados Unidos se caracteriza por una asimilación completa a la cultura dominante y al inglés. En vez de reconocer que los idiomas son un recurso, se los considera barreras que hay que superar*"[11] (p. 22). Drawing from this idea, Valdés et al. (2008), Leeman (2005), and Hornberger and Wang (2008) describe how, in the United States, language policy is guided by a hegemonic belief that English should be the one and only "national language" and that social institutions like the school stigmatize and marginalize speakers of other languages. Hornberger and Wang (2008) trace this idea back to the Americanization Movement of the 20th century and how schools sought to assimilate new immigrants into Anglophone society through "transitional bilingual" programs, the longer-term effect being that the next generation loses the "foreign" language since the institution of the school pressures them into the usage of English, even within the immigrant community and in the home (p. 12). Walqui (1997) notes that even when there are classes that attempt to maintain the students' home language,

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[11] "The language policy of the United States is characterized by a complete assimilation to the dominant culture and to English. Instead of recognizing that languages are a resource, they are considered barriers that must be overcome." (I translated)

these courses implicitly serve only to develop academic skills that will transfer to the English-only classroom and setting when students complete them (pp. 48-49) .

Xenophobic groups like "English Only" pushed monolingualism through their advocacy and some states have stipulated that English is the only official language (Potowski, 2005, p. 31). Those new immigrants who do not linguistically assimilate are suspect and considered disloyal by wider Anglophone American society (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 22). There have been very real consequences of this ideology on Spanish speaking communities in particular: Potowski (2005) notes how a Texan mother was charged with child abuse for not speaking English, students in Arizona were beaten for speaking Spanish in school, and workers in New York were fired for speaking Spanish during their breaks (p. 31). Guardado (2009) noted a similar, though far less extreme, situation of linguistic discrimination in Canada and he emphasizes the community consequences: he describes how some Spanish-speakers in Vancouver have "distanced themselves" from their language and ethnic identity because of the media's association of Latin Americans, and, by extension, Spanish-speakers, with drugs and crime in the city (p. 102). It is interesting to note, however, that speaking Spanish is marginalized based on *who* the speaker is: society views heritage speakers as outsiders who refuse to assimilate to mainstream culture whereas second language learners are seen as important resources for conducting the nation's foriegn affairs (Correa, 2011, p. 315).

Like other institutions, this idea of hegemonic monolingualism is deeply embedded into school cultures and curriculum. The teaching of languages other than English has been, according to Hornberger and Wang (2008), reduced to a commodity in the post 9/11 world and certain languages, like Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, are valued much more than others because of their usefulness in the current geopolitical context, and, as such, heritage learners are

expected to speak the standard dialect perfectly in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the

United States (pp. 23-25). The ideology has permeated deep into practice: Valdés et al. (2008)

studied a Spanish department at the tertiary level and found that the native speakers of Spanish

were valued as experts whereas the heritage speakers were viewed as imperfect and deserving of

correction, thus validating the hegemony of American monolingualism. Walqui (1997)

emphasizes the role of the teacher in the perpetuation of monolingual ideology in the Spanish

classroom as most language teachers, having been trained only as second language teachers,

view their students as a *tabula rasa* onto which new knowledge can be dictated and, as such, "*los*

dialectos del español hablados por el alumnado son vistos como deformaciones de la norma

culta, que, por lo tanto, deben ser corregidos o erradicados"[12] (p. 48). Randolph (2017) and

Russell and Kuriscak (2015) both found through interviews that even when teachers consciously

believe that they are sensitive to the needs of heritage learners, in practice they often

subconsciously enforce the dominant language ideology by correcting the heritage students'

"incorrect" Spanish and believe that the dialect pushed by the textbook is "correct." This ties into

the long legacy of colonialist and Eurocentric views of the Spanish language that continue to

permeate in Latin America and abroad: for example, Amorós-Negre and Quesada Pacheco

(2019) found that Spanish speakers across Latin America have a tendency to view the Spanish of

Spain and Colombia as the most "correct," while the Spanish of the Carribean nations, Mexico,

Guatemala, and Argentina are seen as "incorrect." These researchers even found that many

Dominicans themselves think that their language is "incorrect" (ibid.).

  Even the parents of Spanish-language heritage learners have discouraged their own

children from taking Spanish classes altogether when they have had experiences with linguistic

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[12] "The dialects of Spanish spoken by the students are seen as corruptions of the prestige dialect and must therefore be corrected or eradicated." (I translated)

discrimination (Potowski, 2005, p. 35). Potowski (2002) describes how she found in interviews that young heritage speakers who have been exposed to such ideology in the school may internalize their oppression and, as such, describe their Spanish as "ghetto Spanish" and "improper" and the ideology may even seep into the community, where members can reinforce the stigmatization by self-describing as "uneducated" (p. 37).

Heritage language teachers must be cautious to ensure that their classrooms do not become spaces of ideological perpetuation. In his study of a heritage language scouting troop in Canada, Guardado (2009) found that the parent leaders, despite creating an environment of resistance against Anglophone assimilation, unintentionally reproduced the dominant language ideology by praising the children's English abilities and using English-language materials, including in communicative activities, thus privileging English-language skills above the Spanish language. In regards to Spanish itself, Leeman (2005) describes how heritage language classrooms using an additive, but non-critical, approach can also reproduce this ideology through the prescription of norms associated with non-US varieties of Spanish, implicitly denying the legitimacy of students' home language and showing their exclusion from the Spanish-speaking world, thereby pushing them towards assimilation into Anglophone society (pp. 38-39). The prescription of these outside norms is itself problematic according to Villa (2002) as they are determined by elite institutions in countries of hegemonic political power, such as the Real Academia Española of Spain, who judge aspects of the language as belonging to a self-defined *norma culta* (educated norm) or *norma rural* (rural norm), these labels carrying their own biases and perceptions.

Additive and Subtractive Pedagogies.

In the classroom, the much broader theories of funds of knowledge and monolingualism are put into practice with the concepts of additive and subtractive pedagogies. An additive pedagogy based on the funds of knowledge theory seeks to *add* to the students' linguistic repertoire while respecting and incorporating their prior experiences and language. On the other hand, a subtractive pedagogy based on monolingualism seeks to *eliminate* what students bring to the classroom that the dominant ideologies view as "incorrect."

In the specific context of the heritage language classroom, Randolph (2017) states that "the additive model implies that HLLs maintain their heritage language and culture during the process of adapting to the new cultural environment, whereas the implication with the subtractive model is that one set of cultural values is rapidly and completely replaced by another" (p. 275), and adds that:

In the Spanish language classroom, pedagogical practices can be understood as additive if Spanish is presented in such a way that students deconstruct the role of linguistic power and are encouraged to validate their own dialects. Subtractive practices, on the other hand, take an elitist (often Eurocentric) approach to learning Spanish and devalue nonstandard varieties of the language; students are taught that some varieties are "more correct" than others. (p. 275)

Examples of subtractive practices might include enforcing a certain pronunciation or accent of the language and marking dialectal variations in vocabulary as "incorrect." Examples of additive practices might include the biloquial model and using community resources. The pedagogy used by the teacher has a direct impact on heritage students' performance and attitudes in the course, as seen by the withdrawal of the marginalized student in observations by Abdi (2011) or the student resistance to the teacher seen in observations by Helmer (2014) and

Randolph (2017). These cases can be contrasted with the usage of additive practices in

successful heritage language programs (e.g. Anderson, 2017; Kagan, 2017; Tocaimaza-Hatch &

Walls, 2016). It is important to note that critical scholars such as Leeman (2005) have stated that,

in order for heritage language students and their communities to be empowered, additive

pedagogies must be applied through a critical sociolinguistic framework that teaches students to

analyze the richness their own home language and deconstruct dominant linguistic norms,

otherwise, it is simply an imposition of prescriptive language norms developed by outsiders

which stigmatizes students for their language. Even so, some critical detractors like Rosa and

Flores (2017) argue that an additive approach may still be problematic, as teachers "reproduce

inequality by positioning [students'] linguistic practices as less 'appropriate' for academic

settings than others" (p. 178).

In his critical analysis of the field of heritage language education, Villa (2002) found that

this subtractive approach has been the dominant view of theorists in the United States for over a

century. Valdés (2005) appears to confirm Villa's conclusion because, drawing on past research,

she argues that the language of heritage learners has been studied by researchers through a

monolingualist lens that compares their language to that of the ethnically-dominant bourgeoisie

in foreign nation states, thus creating the illusion that heritage languages, as contact languages,

are flawed. Because of its hegemonic ubiquity, teachers have in turn absorbed this ideology into

their practices. Potowski (2002) found that the instructors she interviewed tended to focus on the

deficits of the heritage students and adopted subtractive practices. This trend may however be

changing, as seen through the teachers described by Randolph (2017) who, while sometimes

unsuccessful in practice, consciously tried to shape their instruction using additive pedagogies in

the classroom.

Definition of Heritage Language Learners

In this section, I will look in depth at the term "heritage language learner." This idea is controversial and there are several conceptualizations or definitions as to who falls under this label. This variation in definition occurs because "perceptions of language educators and linguists do not always coincide with those of various language communities to be served or with those of the public at large" (Wiley, 2001, p. 29).

Some researchers, such as Wiley (2001), state that one can conceptualize the idea of heritage learners by their perceived needs or abilities in the classroom or by their differences from native speakers. A. Lynch (2008), for example, uses a "pedagogical continuum" model and describes third- or fourth-generation heritage learners as having language abilities that are much more similar to second language learners than to native speakers, but having the advantage of the heritage cultural background. Polinsky and Kagan (2007) use a similar theoretical model, adopting a variation of the creole continuum to describe heritage learners' diverse abilities and noting that most heritage language learners have an "incomplete" acquisition of the heritage language. Conceptualizations like this are useful in the placement of students and give an idea as to what abilities learners may have, but they do not provide a broad idea of "who" the learner is nor do they address the questions of group identity that the term "heritage language learners" implies.

The most simplified definition of this group of students comes from Guadalupe Valdés (2001), an expert in the field who has specialized in working with Spanish heritage language learners, who uses a definition linked to notions of linguistic ability and defines a heritage language learner as, "a language student 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). This definition is problematic as native speakers who have immigrated to an Anglophone country could be considered "heritage language learners," even though they would have had a far greater exposure to the language (or even formal schooling in the language) than would second-generation children of immigrants. Additionally, the notion of a "heritage language learner" is intimately linked to questions of identity and is not exclusive to the idea of simply using or understanding a community language: the student needs to view him or herself as a heritage learner.

The definition given by Hornberger and Wang (2008) clarifies the question of identity, defining heritage language learners as "individuals with familial or ancestral ties to a language other than English who exert their agency in determining if they are HLLs of that language" (p. 6). Nonetheless, disregarding the notion of language ability and use is also problematic: Wiley (2001) describes how a language learner who was raised Anglophone, but who has more distant familial ties to the language, such as a grandparent, could be classified as a "heritage language learner" (p. 34) when, in this case, the student is actually learning the language for the first time, having not been exposed to it as a child. As such, the label of "heritage language learner", from a pedagogical, developmental, and linguistic standpoint, would be inappropriate to use when classifying this student for program development and for research purposes.

For this study, I used a combination of the conceptualizations provided by A. Lynch (2008) and the definitions provided by Valdés (2001) and by Hornberger and Wang (2008) to reconcile the ideas of identity and language ability into a compact working definition that will help me to identify the students who could benefit most from the study: *those who use Spanish to some degree outside the school setting, are connected to the language through direct family ties, and who view themselves as "heritage learners," that is to say positioning themselves*

somewhere between a native speaker and a second language learner on a spectrum of language

ability.

Characteristics of Spanish Heritage Language Learners

The Spanish-speaking heritage language learners in the United States reflect the same diversity of the Spanish-speaking world, coming from numerous different backgrounds and cultures, only sharing the same heritage language. They also reflect the diversity of language ability and usage, some learners having higher proficiency than others. Nevertheless, there are some common characteristics that are critical for educators and stakeholders when discussing this population. In this section, I will review the literature to determine the shared experiences of this group so that our research can better take into account these students' backgrounds and experiences. The existing literature tends to express more of a deficit-based view of the heritage language students' abilities, focusing primarily on their areas of weakness or how they could be a challenge in the traditional second language classroom. The three common areas that researchers have identified are (1) difficulty with the written language, (2) usage of a stigmatized popular or English-influenced dialect of the language, and (3) motivations to learn the language which are different and often distinct from second language learners. In this study, I am going to take a critical pedagogical view, similar to Leeman (2005) and Rosa and Flores (2017), on these first two characteristics. In the case of the first, students have been denied access to the written language through the imposition of monolingualist ideology in the school. In the case of the second, students use an equally legitimate dialect that has been marginalized and stigmatized through the imposition of outsiders' prescriptive norms onto the Spanish language. Teachers should take these characteristics into consideration as they seek to build on the students'

strengths, such as strong oral language skills and knowledge of a local community dialect, and *add* to the students' knowledge through an empowering curriculum that allows students to take consciousness of the social issues that they face (Correa, 2011, pp. 311-313). I consider the third to be a trait of which teachers can take advantage in order to design effective lessons for *all* students, as these motivational profiles open the door to the usage of more creative and learner-centered methods of pedagogy in the classroom.

Challenges with the Written Language.

Both research studies and observations by teachers have established that a common trait shared by Spanish-language heritage learners is difficulties with written production. In heritage language learners in general, Polinsky and Kagan (2007) found that because of their exposure in the home setting, these students will have very strong aural comprehension skills, though their abilities in speaking may vary significantly depending on the level of usage in the home (p. 371). Since the majority of these students have not had access to formal education in the heritage language, writing skills, and to a lesser extent, reading skills, are not as strong as the oral language skills in these students.

Spanish-language heritage learners present a set of unique challenges in the areas of reading and writing because of certain characteristics of the written Spanish language that do not transfer to oral language or vice-versa, as well as the fact that heritage language learners have typically only been exposed to colloquial or regional dialects of the oral language. At the same time, it is also important to note that the written standard of the Spanish language is based on a prescriptivist interpretation of the Spanish spoken in Spain (Villa, 2002) and, as such, does not necessarily reflect students' *actual* linguistic competence and abilities.

In the field, Parodi (2008) analyzed the linguistic abilities of Chicano[13] heritage language learners and found that while the students' reading skills were decent, especially because certain skills from English transferred over (such as decoding the Latin alphabet, for example), they nonetheless had difficulties with writing, as the spelling of Spanish words is not necessarily phonemic, and used colloquial oral language that would not be considered contextually appropriate for writing. Parodi (2008) also notes that the heritage language students displayed usage of English grammar and spelling into the Spanish text. Interestingly, this kind of skill transfer does not occur in oral language, as noted by A. Lynch (2008). Contradicting these findings, however, is an in-depth analysis of the writing process of Chicano heritage language learners by Elola and Mikulski (2016) which found that heritage learners actually made *overall fewer* grammatical errors than second language learners and that heritage learners planned and executed larger phrases than second language learners when composing texts in Spanish. Nevertheless, Elola and Mikulski (2016) also found in the same study that heritage language learners struggled primarily with spelling of words, much like Parodi (2008). Teachers themselves have reported that orthography is one of the primary challenges for heritage language learners in the classroom, such as the educators interviewed by Russell and Kuriscak (2015) and the direct classroom experiences reported by Gutiérrez Marrone (1981), who also notes that heritage language learners are frequently placed in inappropriate courses due to writing abilities alone. It is important to know that this is not to say that students do not have any desire to build on their writing skills: students interviewed by Callahan (2012), for example stated that they wanted to learn strategies for writing in personal correspondences, for writing in professional activities, and for writing creatively (p. 12). It is crucial for teachers to be sensitive and

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[13] The term "Chicano" refers specifically to Mexican-Americans (most often in the Southwest of the United States) and it is the term used in the source (and likewise in all other instances where "Chicano" is used).

supportive to heritage students in activities and courses that rely on written language, as Tallon (2009) found that they display far higher levels of "foreign language anxiety" than their Anglophone peers in these settings.

Usage of a Stigmatized Dialect and Colloquial Register.

Another characteristic shared by Spanish-speaking heritage language learners is the usage of a stigmatized or colloquial form of the language and *not* what is considered to be the standard or prestige dialect. Polinsky and Kagan (2007) state that most heritage language learners will not have had formal education in the heritage language and, as such, will be further from the "baseline" of the fluent and formal register, regardless of their ethnic dialect (p. 372-373). Heritage language learners will often come into the classroom with a dialect that is marked with numerous differences from the standardized Castilian Spanish taught in the second language classroom. In their interviews with heritage speakers, Valdés et al. (2008) found that heritage speakers self-reported using only English in formal situations and restricted their Spanish to informal situations where the colloquial forms would be used and accepted (p. 109) and that the form they learned at home reflected the fact that their parents were not highly educated in their countries of origin (p. 110). Torres and Turner (2017) noted from their interviews of heritage speakers that they often struggled retrieving words in "standard" Spanish and some felt ashamed of using features of their dialect, like certain words only used in Puerto Rico. Another example of the usage of stigmatized forms of language comes from Parodi (2008), who studied heritage speakers in the Chicano communities in the areas of the United States near the border with Mexico, and found that the language used was stigmatized as "uneducated" in educational institutions and by native speakers outside the US, including in Mexico, the country from which

the community originated, but discovered, however, that their dialect had in fact simply preserved features of the colonial-era Spanish spoken in the rural areas of Mexico.

The implications of such value judgments on the dialects used by students can be huge. Walqui (1997) describes how, due to this bias, an asymmetric relationship is created between student and teacher and, as a result, the student becomes a passive agent who must accept the teacher's privileged knowledge, marginalizing them in the institution (p. 49). Correa (2011) describes how students will "enter the classroom with a sense of 'not belonging' and bringing with them a Spanish that is 'broken' or, simply, 'not good enough'" (p. 315) and Lacorte and Canabal (2003) report that "correction" of heritage students' language is perceived as an attack on their identity. In practice, the marginalization is evident in all areas. Gutiérrez Marrone (1981) observed that students from Puerto Rican, Chicano, Cuban, and Argentinian background had their language - which often shows strong differences in phonology, lexicon and grammar (and in the case of Chicano students, heavy exposure to English) from the standard - stigmatized in the classroom as teachers insisted that they were "wrong" and the author observed how these students would abandon Spanish classes as a result (p. 71). Even today, these observations hold up based on the results of research by Amorós-Negre and Quesada Pacheco (2019) that show that these dialects are still considered "incorrect" throughout Latin America, even by their own speakers, though it is important to note that Valdés (2005) argues that the language of heritage speakers is a "contact" dialect and takes influences from many different sources and, as such, features that may be stigmatized abroad can actually be reconceptualized as more prestigious in the local community. Valdés et al. (2008) observed an even more complex hierarchy in a tertiary-level Spanish department where native speakers from Spain were often privileged and viewed as experts, followed closely by native speakers from Latin America and that colleagues

who were of heritage language backgrounds were frequently stigmatized by judgements and "corrections" by their colleagues. The heritage learners themselves may be hierarchized by dialect, as Abdi (2011) noticed in a Canadian high school Spanish classroom, where those heritage speakers who showed greater closeness to the standard form were valued by the teacher whereas others were stigmatized by both peers and the teacher for not being able to speak the "good" Spanish that they expected based solely on the heritage student's ethnic background. Heritage language students themselves can in fact internalize attitudes about their language, such as the students interviewed by Ducar (2008) who reported that they *wanted* correction by the teacher, though this is contrasted by Potowski (2002; 2005) and Lacorte and Canabal (2003) who report that heritage students may often consider these "corrections" to be attacks on their identities and the identity of their community (p. 56).

Different Motivations.

The motivations of heritage learners to undertake language courses are also much different from their peers who are learning the language as a second language. Potowski (2005) describes how there exists a notion of a "heritage motivation" (p. 17) and she describes some of the motivators for heritage language learners in the classroom as being a desire to connect with family and community, finding a way to overcome being the "Other" in their own ethnic group and gaining valuable professional skills (p. 34). Regarding curriculum, O'Rourke and Zhou (2018) did not study Spanish-speaking heritage learners, but they found that heritage learners of other languages in the STARTALK program were dissatisfied because the courses were designed for second language learners and the heritage learners had much different expectations of what they would be learning, such as direct teaching of grammar and writing skills and learning about

the *culture* of the heritage language *community*. While these can be considered general interests

for students, there are some specific motivational factors that speak to the experience of the

Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. In their analysis of community schools and

groups teaching Spanish in Los Angeles, Carreira and Rodríguez (2011) found one major

influence to be parental attitudes as the parents whose children participated in these programs

had a strong desire for their children to maintain the Spanish language and express *Latinidad,* the

cultural essence of Latino identity (p. 165). While parents do indeed play an important role in

motivating their children, it is the students themselves who must be motivated to take the

initiative to expand upon their linguistic skills in the classroom. Insights can be drawn from a

study done by Helmer (2014) who observed a Spanish heritage language classroom at a charter

school serving mainly Chicano students and linked student resistance to the fact that the

curriculum was not motivating: students wanted exposure to authentic Spanish materials (and not

texts designed for second language learners), real-world interactions with the community and

opportunities for self-expression. Torres and Turner (2017) support similar observations

connected to cultural motivations, finding that students were highly motivated by a sense of

pride in their identity as a Hispanic person and a desire to preserve their cultural heritage. Other

motivators may be more pragmatic: students surveyed by Ducar (2008) expressed a similar

interest in developing real-world skills from the language course to help them in the workplace

and, as such, the author suggested that language courses be made "personally relevant" to student

needs (p. 422). All in all, it can be stated that the motivators and interests of the Spanish-

language heritage learners is distinct from second language students because of the strong

cultural connections to the language.

Characteristics and Best Practices of Successful Heritage Language Programs

In this section, I will take a look into the best practices shared by successful heritage language programs that researchers have identified over the last few decades across languages and cultures. Three major areas that researchers have identified that may be especially relevant for Spanish-speaking heritage learners are (1) community input and participation in program design and in activities, (2) awareness of sociolinguistics and sensitivity to dialectical variation in the classroom, and (3) the usage of authentic, culturally-relevant texts. All of these practices use an approach that respects students' Funds of Knowledge and seeks to use them and add to them rather than eliminate and replace what students bring to the classroom.

Community Input and Participation.

Wiley (2001) states that "to ensure that heritage language programs do not merely become symbolic gestures, imposed by outsiders to the community, it is important to define heritage language programs from a community perspective" (p. 32). The literature has shown that successful heritage language programs, no matter the population that they serve and no matter the country in which they operate, incorporate this philosophy into their structure. Since these programs seek to preserve a community language, the interests and the knowledge of the community which uses the language must be incorporated into the curriculum design and into the learning activities. The first area where there must be community engagement is in the design itself of the heritage language program. B. Lynch (2008) in his text on program design suggests that educators start by identifying and mapping out community resources (including neighborhood groups, libraries and places of worship, to name a few examples) and the connections between them and identify how their assets could be incorporated into the

curriculum. In the same text, B. Lynch (2008) also states that community members should be directly engaged in the creation of the program, contributing to setting its goals and evaluating both ideas and, later, results (pp. 330-331). This notion of community involvement in design is supported by Kagan (2017), who observed that Vietnamese heritage language programs in public schools in a suburb of Los Angeles only came into being through strong community advocacy and pressure, and by Carreira and Rodríguez (2011), who observed successful and strong community educational initiatives among Spanish-speakers in Los Angeles, including Sunday schools, private schools, and home tutoring programs.

The second area where there must be engagement of the community is in the curriculum and lessons themselves. Activities where community engagement is the means of content delivery has shown itself to be a highly effective part of the heritage language curriculum. Using the community as an object of study can be one means to meet this need as Potowski (2005) notes that, in the curriculum, "*además de la lengua, la historia y las contribuciones de los hispanos deben figurar de un modo prominente en los cursos de EHN para establecer un vínculo personal con los alumnos*"[14] (p. 58). To meet this goal, Potowski (2005) suggests that teachers use literature from the Hispanic diaspora in the United States to connect to students and create projects in which they study their family histories (pp. 58-59). Direct interactions with the community have shown even more promising results. Service-learning is one effective means of content delivery: Tocaimaza-Hatch and Walls (2016) observed a service-learning project at the university level where students collaborated with a local zoo to help translate and prepare Spanish-language materials for visitors and the heritage learners in the class benefited not only from increasing their lexicon, but felt fulfilled because it was a way to "give back" to their own

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[14] "Beyond language, the history and the contributions of Hispanics must be emphasized in heritage language classes in order to establish a personal connection with the students." (I translated)

community. Multidisciplinary approaches that directly engage families are also highly

successful: Anderson (2017) observed classes in the United Kingdom for heritage learners and

saw major successes at a Chinese-language school that used a scrapbooking project in one class

(parents reported that their children were more enthusiastic and curious about the language), at a

public school where the Tamil language teacher and the dance teacher collaborated with a

community group to teach the art of storytelling through dance (students retained vocabulary

better through the incorporation of music and kinesthetics and parents were motivated to

participate in this project), and at a public high school where students worked virtually on a

storytelling project with peers from countries where the language is spoken (students were able

to reaffirm their identity and use resources from out of school to help them with the project). In

short, the heritage language communities need to have an active role in all aspects of a heritage

language program for the program to be successful and for students to feel empowered to express

their culture and develop their language skills.

Awareness of Sociolinguistics and Sensitivity to Dialectal Variation.

One of the best practices that is particularly important for Spanish-speaking heritage

learners is for teachers to have an awareness of sociolinguistics and a sensitivity to dialectal

variation among their students. As previously stated, Spanish-speaking heritage learners come

from a variety of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and generally tend to speak

popular registers of an ethnic dialect, which itself may be stigmatized (as is the case, for

example, of Puerto Rican and Dominican Spanish). Many heritage learners have had negative

experiences in the classroom and will "disconnect" because their language has been labeled as

"wrong" by both instructors and fellow students, and the curriculum has continuously reinforced

this idea in practice (see Abdi, 2011; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003; Potowski, 2002; 2005; Randolph, 2017). The goals of a traditional second language curriculum do not typically align with heritage learners' needs and have an implicit ideological bias, as Hornberger and Wang (2008) and Leeman (2005) describe how the curriculum privileges the standard, literary variant of the language. Valdés (1981) describes teachers' practices in those courses as a misguided attempt at "fixing" the heritage language students' "bad Spanish," using the analogy of placing African American students in an ESL class to teach them "good English." The stigmatization of students' language and the dismissal of their abilities can have disastrous results: Helmer (2014) reports that students may rebel against the curriculum because it is a direct attack on their identities and Abdi (2011), Hornberger and Wang (2008, pp. 24-25), Leeman (2005), Potowski (2002), and Valdés et al. (2008) all report that students can internalize the stigmatization of their language and view the classroom as a marginalizing institution.

Scholars in the field recommend that, for a successful heritage language program, teachers must be highly aware of sociolinguistics and the population which they serve (e.g. Correa, 2011). Beaudrie (2015) notes how if the students' home language is valued in the classroom, they will feel empowered and more motivated. Tallon (2009) states that teachers of heritage learners must "inform the students that the goal of the class is not to eradicate [their] home variety, but rather to expand their bilingual range by building on their existing strengths" (126). Practical examples on how to apply this principle come from Parodi (2008), for example, who suggests that the home language be permitted in the classroom, and from Valdés (1981) who suggests using a model of *biloquialism* in the classroom, in which teachers make it a goal to *add* the standard form to students' language abilities by teaching how the standard form is appropriate in certain contexts and that their home language is appropriate in others. Walqui

(1997), however, goes further and posits that the teachers need to shift the focus away from the *form* of the language and towards the *usage* of the language in collaborative learning and community building (p. 52). It should be noted as well that critical pedagogical theorists like Leeman (2005) and Rosa and Flores (2017) recommend going beyond simply *respecting* the home dialect because not actively using it in the classroom and using a purely *biloquial* approach reinforces the notion that the student's language is not valid; instead, they propose that teachers should actively use their heritage students' home language as an object of critical study and help the students to develop consciousness of monolingualist ideologies at play in society.

Usage of Authentic Texts.

One final characteristic of a successful heritage language program is the usage of authentic texts, or media produced by and for speakers of the target language in the target culture. While the usage of these is now considered to be a general best practice in the second language classroom for their pedagogical benefits, such as showing students actual language usage by the community and providing perspectives on other cultures (see American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "Guiding Principles for Language Learning"), it is critical that they are used in the heritage language program (see Carreira, 2016; Parodi, 2008). Tedick and Walker (1994), Valdés (1981; 2005), and Warner and Dupuy (2018) describe how many of the textbooks traditionally and historically used in the second language classroom are inappropriate for heritage learners and they often take a subtractive approach to their home language. Even though textbooks have evolved since that time to include differentiation for heritage learners, Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) found in their survey that many schools and teachers are still using older materials that provide no opportunities for differentiation and, even

when there are suggestions from the textbook, a majority of teachers simply do not use them (p.

338). Carreira and Kagan (2018) argue that publishers do not have the incentive to produce

textbooks appropriate for heritage learners and that teachers of heritage learners should

collaborate to create more appropriate materials. Many of the existing textbooks are designed to

teach using what Carreira (2016) calls a *microbased* approach which teaches grammatical skills

and vocabulary to build up to a theme, rather than the more appropriate *macrobased* approach

which starts from the relevant themes and texts to capture the interest of heritage learners and

then move to teach grammar and vocabulary in context. Authentic texts can serve an important

purpose of replacing the traditional textbooks, but they must be chosen carefully. Carreira (2016)

suggests that materials be "age appropriate and integrated [and] dictated by function and

context" (p. 125). Both Correa (2011) and Carreira (2016) note that the materials used in the

classroom should reflect the topics of interest to the students and Carreira (2016) adds that

multiple genres, types of texts (music, films, and art in addition to written language), and

registers should be used to maximize authentic linguistic input. Summarizing contemporary

research studies, Warner and Dupuy (2018) mention the potential benefit of using authentic

materials within a multiliteracies framework in the heritage classroom because this approach can

help to create a space where all registers of the language are valued and considered academic.

Leeman (2005), as part of her critical approach to the heritage language classroom, emphasizes

working with texts from the heritage community, including those produced by the students

themselves, to analyze and deconstruct them.

Observations from the usage of authentic texts in the real-world heritage classroom have

spoken to the success of this practice: Kagan (2017) noted the successes at a charter school in

Granada Hills, California, which used this practice, as well as the benefits of using imported

textbooks meant for native speakers in Khmer and Armenian classrooms in Los Angeles, and

Carreira and Rodríguez (2011) observed how heritage learners in Spanish-language religious

education developed a broad lexicon that included formal and literary words due to the usage of

authentic religious texts. Students themselves express a desire for authentic texts in the

classroom. For example, one student interviewed by Helmer (2014) expressed how she would

like to watch *telenovelas* (Spanish language soap-operas) in class because those, like other

popular media in the target language, have high appeal to students *and* potential for pedagogical

usage through development of a more varied lexicon (p. 198), unlike, for example, the videos

provided with a textbook written for second language learners.

Contemporary Issues

  Two of the major contemporary issues in the field of heritage language education are

teacher education and the mixed classroom. As a young field that arose out of the need to address

the changing demographics of Spanish classrooms in the 1970s (Valdés, 2005), many aspects of

heritage language education are still the subject of research and debate. While interest in the field

sparked in the 1990s and numerous professional development opportunities and resources for

teachers came on the scene during the early 2000s (ibid.), it wasn't until 2010 that ACTFL

released a statement of guiding principles on heritage language education. Due to this rather

recent historical development, teacher education has often failed to consider heritage learners in

the preparation of teacher-candidates. Even before heritage language education became more a

more "mainstream" topic, researchers like Tedick and Walker (1994) recognized and criticized

the deep systemic issues in the preparation of language teachers that often prevented them from

working effectively with what they termed "language minority students:" the widespread

conception of language as an "object" to be transmitted to students (and based on the standard of the textbook), the separation of TESOL and world language programs so that candidates had little exposure to heritage language students, coursework that mainly prepared candidates to teach *about* the language and detaches them from social context, and poor instruction regarding the connections between language and culture, which in turn led to candidates often teaching surface-level, Eurocentric notions of culture in the classroom. Although teacher education programs have undergone change since then and more research and resources regarding heritage language education have been brought to light, there are still many issues in preparing world language teachers to work with heritage learners and in allowing heritage speakers to access teacher preparation programs. In many Spanish classrooms at the tertiary level, researchers like Potowski (2002) and Valdés et al. (2008) have found that dominant language ideology very much shapes the curriculum and the attitudes of Spanish-speaking faculty, teacher assistants, and Anglophone students, who all often devalued the language of heritage speakers and tended to view the individuals' abilities through the binary schematic of native versus non-native speakers. As such, heritage speakers are not only excluded from these spaces of privilege, but the dominant language ideology is transmitted to the next generation of teachers to reproduce in their classrooms, as was seen in the studies done by Randolph (2017) and Russell and Kuriscak (2015).

In schools of education, researchers have identified different challenges, though primarily the fact that the teaching of heritage learners is glossed over. Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) surveyed Spanish teachers across Utah and found that 45% of the teachers in the study received no training whatsoever and that only 27% received any training on teaching heritage learners during a college methods course, with most teachers undergoing training through professional

development workshops and personal research. In the same study, nearly half of all teachers

surveyed reported that they felt less than adequately prepared to teach heritage learners (ibid.).

Burgo (2017) adds that existing programming at universities is insufficient because "even if

[teachers] have knowledge of HL instructional methodology, they are rarely familiar with

approaches to mixed classes" (p. 46). Even the materials used to train new teachers are not

working: Warner and Dupuy (2018) claim that the vast majority of methods books used in world

language teacher training programs do little to help teachers because they do not approach

teaching language from a perspective of multiliteracies. Carreira and Kagan (2018) describe

how, though texts for teacher preparation programs on heritage language learners have been

produced, "both preservice and in-service training in HL teaching remain underdeveloped" (p.

162) because few universities offer programs dedicated to heritage language teaching and they

further argue that teacher candidates who plan to work with this population need training in areas

outside of traditional language teaching programs, such as sociolinguistics.

Another contemporary area of interest and debate in heritage language education is the

widespread practice of mixed classrooms of heritage learners and second language learners (and

in some settings, native speakers as well). Due to budget constraints and low numbers of heritage

learners in many districts (e.g. Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; Carreira & Kagan, 2018), mixed

classrooms are the environment where many heritage learners will be placed, especially heritage

learners at lower linguistic proficiency levels (Carreira & Kagan, 2018). Research on the

dynamics and effectiveness of mixed classrooms has been mixed at best. Though negative results

in the mixed classroom might be due to poor teacher education on this topic (Burgo, 2017), the

literature suggests that there are other dynamics at play in the mixed classroom that make it so

challenging to create an equitable space for all students. In terms of student interactions, Bowles,

Adams, and Toth (2014) analyzed and compared L2-L2 and L2-heritage learner dyads in a tertiary Spanish course and concluded that, while heritage learners generally felt that they were helping the second language learners, they appeared to gain little from working with second language learners, and that second language learners, while they indeed benefited from working with heritage learners (both in error correction and in amount of words spoken), they tended to feel less confident in their abilities. Walls (2018) also analyzed dyads of second language learners and heritage learners in a novice level Spanish course and found that, while pairs of students from similar linguistic backgrounds worked cooperatively, mixed groups of heritage learners and second language learners tended to have unequal dynamics where the heritage language learner was seen as an expert and thus dominated the conversation while the second language learner was reduced to a more passive role and spoke in English in many cases. Other researchers, however, have seen better interactions in mixed classes. For example, Edstrom (2007) studied student opinion in a mixed upper-level Spanish course and found that the strong interpersonal relations that developed between students of different backgrounds and the ability to collaborate and use the other partner's areas of strength (the speech of heritage learners and native speakers and the grammar knowledge of second language learners) allowed all groups of students to appreciate the mixed classroom. Some teachers interviewed by Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) also discussed the collaborative benefits of mixing the students and that mixed classrooms helped to bridge the racial divide at their schools. Even so, Edstrom (2007) did mention that second language learners sometimes felt intimidated vis-à-vis the other students (and heritage learners would feel the same way towards native speakers) and that heritage learners and native speakers might feel frustrated with their second language learner classmates and believe that instructors have lower expectations of them. In her survey of second language

learners, Burgo (2016) found similar results, with most second language learners speaking positively of the mixed classroom and being able to learn from their heritage language classmates, but most of the second language students still felt intimidated by the heritage learners' speech and some of the students held negative perceptions of them. The teacher also plays a role in the mixed classroom and teachers may inadvertently display favoritism towards one group. Lacorte and Canabal (2003) found in their study that second language learners perceived that heritage learners received more attention from native speaking teachers. Abdi (2011) found that the teacher in one mixed classroom dismissed and marginalized a heritage learner who felt uncomfortable speaking Spanish in front of classmates, who had previously criticized her Spanish, and that this teacher strongly favored the perceived native speakers in the classroom. Regarding curriculum, mixed classes have proven to be challenging for teachers to work in. Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) note that teachers rarely have sufficient time to prepare differentiated materials for heritage students and that, of the teachers surveyed, a plurality make little to no accommodations to instruction and a majority make little to no accommodations to assessments, with a number of teachers believing that differentiation is not necessary because the heritage learners need to learn many of the same skills as the second language learners, primarily grammar. The teachers in Bateman and Wilkinson's (2010) study also discuss the major obstacles to differentiation in the mixed classroom, indicating that heritage learners are bored with the content for the second language learners, but resist differentiated activities that include more work. All of these challenges make the mixed classroom a difficult environment for world language teachers and this represents one of the major questions in the field today and a focus for new research (Carreira & Kagan, 2018).

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss how my research study was conducted, including my

positionality as a researcher, the qualitative approach to the data, data collection methods, and

the materials used.

Research Design

The goal of the data collection was to describe, find commonalities, and draw

conclusions from the lived experiences of the participants and the educational environment of

which they are a part in order to develop a more complete picture of how heritage learners and

their knowledge are positioned in Spanish classrooms at schools with similar demographics. As

such, this study was designed to take a qualitative approach that emphasizes the voice, the role,

and the experiences of the heritage language students above all. The general design of this study

followed what Creswell (2009) defines as phenomenological research as it seeks to "identify the

essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants [through]

understanding the lived experiences" (p. 13). This study approaches the research questions

primarily from what Greenwood and Levin (2007) describe as an "action research" lens:

analyzing the actual situation in relation to the possible (p. 119), viewing and using local

community knowledge as expert knowledge (ibid.), and analyzing the roles of power relations,

ideology, and history on the phenomena (pp. 120-121) with the goal of empowering members of

disenfranchised communities to undertake social change.

To achieve this goal, I interviewed both former heritage language students and current

teachers in depth about their experiences with the Spanish language inside and outside of the

secondary classroom. From the information gathered in the interviews, common themes were

identified and coded and discrepancies between teacher and student reports were noted. This was followed by a textual analysis of various curriculum documents. This allowed me to develop a connection between what I heard from the participants to the systemic level of the school curriculum. These two pieces of the research method aimed to reveal the larger picture of how dominant language ideology operates in the Spanish classroom and how this impacts the heritage language students.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in the middle of developing this study, the original design had to be significantly modified and adapted for an online environment, with all interviews being done remotely. Classroom observations had been planned, but this was abandoned due to the stricter health and safety regulations caused by the pandemic and the subsequent shifts to remote and hybrid learning.

Researcher Positionality

Greenwood and Levin (2007) state that one cannot "separate the research process from its human dimensions" (p. 116). Since this is a qualitative study and data interpretation is colored by the lived experience of the researcher, it is important that I recognize and address my place in society and, more specifically, in this research study, so that I can address my own biases and so that I can better clarify the nature of this study.

Identity is complex and multifaceted as it is the intersection of several individual characteristics and group memberships. Regarding group memberships, I am well cognizant of the fact that, for both the students and teachers in this study, I am an outsider. As a native-born, white Anglophone, I have great privilege in American society and I have a position of relative power that has come from the discriminatory policies that continue to govern this country. I

recognize that my experiences have been very different from the participants as they have been

denied access to many privileges from which I have benefited, such as the representation of my

language and experiences in the school curriculum.

That being said, I do share some of the lived experience of marginalization from other

aspects of my identity. I can, to a certain extent, also sympathize with the heritage language

students. The cultural and linguistic heritage that my family carried from Italy, Québec, and

Austria was erased as my ancestors were forcibly "Americanized" during the 20th century when

they immigrated to this country, losing their language and many of their traditions as they

adopted Anglo-Saxon norms and the English language to blend in and gain better access to the

privileges of society. For five months, I lived and attended school in Québec, a province where

my native language is the minority language and where English-speakers are looked down upon

as cultural outsiders. It is these particular linguistic experiences which have helped to develop

my interest in the preservation of heritage languages and cultures in our communities.

In the context of this particular study, I have, in the past, interacted and collaborated with

the Latin American community in Bayside. While Spanish is not my native tongue, I have a high

proficiency in the language and I have used it among the community in both academic and work

settings.

With this personal context in mind, my aim is to engage in the role of an outsider

working *with* the members of the community being studied in order to elevate their voices and

knowledge. My position as a researcher is what Greenwood and Levin (2007) refer to as the

"friendly outsider" in action research, a researcher whose goal is to "[open] up lines of

discussion" (p. 125) and "help local people inventory and assess the local resources available for

a change project" (p. 126) in an open-minded manner that respects local cultural norms and

allows for reflection. In short, I wish to use my position of privilege not to stifle out the voices of

these marginalized groups, but to elevate them and inspire others to work for a more just and

equitable society.

Research Method

      For the first part of data collection, I conducted interviews virtually over Zoom with

former students and current Spanish teachers from Concordia High School. I had acquired a list

of about 15 former Concordia students at Rhode Island College who were heritage learners. All

potential participants received an initial email recruiting them for the project and, of them, two

agreed to participate, and I sent them a consent form with more information. A similar process

was done with the teacher participants, who were known to my advisor and who were interested

in participating after I spoke to them in person before the pandemic. The questions that I asked

(see Appendix A) were broad and open-ended to encourage respondents to provide multiple

relevant experiences and to lead them to engage in a dialogue with context-related follow-up

questions. These interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour and respondents were able to

speak in English, Spanish, or some combination of the two languages. I recorded the audio from

the interviews with a portable device and I transcribed it afterwards. To protect privacy, all

names were changed during the transcription process. When I completed the transcriptions, I

analyzed the documents for common themes that arose during the dialogue and reflected on the

research questions and prior research. From these themes, I identified, coded, and counted

examples and I also took note of any discrepancies.

      For the second part of data collection, the chair of the world languages department at

Concordia High School provided me with copies of curriculum documents. These included the

general curriculum framework for the district, names of the textbooks used in the Spanish classes

in the district, and sample lesson plans. I conducted a thematic analysis of these documents

through the lens of both the literature and the information noted in the interviews.

Chapter 5: Data and Analysis

Interview Data and Analysis

In this section, I provide a brief summary of the common themes discovered from my

interviews with the former students and teachers. I then provide an analysis of these

commonalities in relation to the theories and practices discussed in Chapter 3.

Teachers.

I interviewed three current teachers from Concordia High School. A brief profile of the

teacher participants is presented in Table A below.

Table A
Profile of Spanish Teachers at Concordia High School

Name[15]	Languages Spoken	Type of Spanish Language Speaker	Ethnicity(ies)
Vanessa Álvarez	Primary Language: English Heritage Language: Spanish (self-identified)	Heritage Speaker (self-identified)	Dominican
Gabriela Mendes	First Language: Cape Verdean Creole (Kriolu) Second Languages: English and Spanish	L2 Speaker	Cape-Verdean
Carla Vásquez	First Language: Spanish Second Language: English	Native Speaker	Venezuelan and Dominican

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[15] Names changed to protect privacy of participants.

Following the interviews, I compiled the main points from the teacher into a table by topic, found in Appendix B. I then drew from these topics to code common themes in the interviews and I counted the total number of instances these were brought up per interviewee, as shown in Table B below. The exact text of the instances is listed in Appendix C.

Table B
Common Themes among Teachers

Theme	Teachers Mentioning the Theme	Total Number of Instances
Heritage learners as sources of knowledge	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 9 Gabriela: 15 Carla: 5
Dominance of one group in the classroom	Vanessa, Gabriela	Vanessa: 5 Gabriela: 3
"Incomplete" or broken language in heritage learners	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 1 Gabriela: 2 Carla: 6
Importance of family and home culture connections	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 5 Gabriela: 11 Carla: 6
Broken curriculum	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 7 Gabriela: 8 Carla: 3
Priority of teaching of the standard language	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 2 Gabriela: 5 Carla: 2
Disconnect between teachers and students	Vanessa, Gabriela, Carla	Vanessa: 1 Gabriela: 4 Carla: 6

Heritage Learners and Community Connections.

Across the interviews, teachers generally highlighted the positives of their heritage language students and how they were sources of cultural (and sometimes linguistic) knowledge in the language classroom, and at times acted as leaders for their peers. For example, Ms. Álvarez said that "they bring a lot of culture, cultural experiences with them" and that "if there is

something that requires English, then I can team up my heritage learners and my native speakers and they work out." Similarly, Ms. Mendes noted that heritage learners "speak about their backgrounds, where they come from… to be an example or a model in front of the classroom" and that they "explain what the word is to the rest of the class… [and she] use[s] them… as a co-teacher," and Ms. Vásquez mentioned that "even me too, [heritage learners] teach me." The teachers all generally highlighted the importance of connecting to the students' home culture, families, and community and gave examples of what they are doing within the current framework or what they would like to see in the future. For example, Ms. Vásquez spoke in detail about the multicultural day, Ms. Mendes discussed her ideas for community field trips, and Ms. Álvarez highlighted how she connects to student experiences in her thematic units.

Issues with the System.

Ms. Álvarez and Ms. Mendes both discussed the major issues with the current curriculum and how it has created situations of inequity, often with one group in class dominating the conversation and the teacher's attention. Ms. Álvarez spoke at some length about some of the systemic issues, primarily the "curriculum framework" (discussed later in this chapter). She said about this framework that "we don't have a real curriculum, so it allows you to go as deep as you need… or just go as, like skim the surface" and added that "not everyone follows the framework, some teachers do just teach from the book… they already have their own way of doing things and are not willing to change." While teachers have the opportunity to go into depth and be creative, Ms. Álvarez noted that the existing framework allows for great inequities for students, even within the same school. Both Ms. Álvarez and Ms. Mendes focused on the problems of the mixed classroom. Ms. Mendes, for example, talked about why she can't tailor the curriculum to

heritage learners, explaining that "I have not done [community activities] because we don't have that heritage program and it's like, we are always trying to catch-up with the rest of the class," implying that most of the time in the classroom is probably devoted to working with second language learners. Ms. Mendes mentioned that the second language learners tended to dominate her lower-level courses, describing how "there are those kids who need more attention, trying to bring them up to the heritage learner… with their learning, so it takes a little bit more time." Ms. Álvarez described a similar situation, but with the roles reversed, noting that "as much as you don't want to, you gravitate towards one group… I had a class of mostly heritage learners and maybe two L2 learners… I've been teaching to the group of heritage learners and almost forgetting, without wanting to, the other two students."

Priority to Teach the Standard Language.

While not as prominent as other themes, all of the teachers mentioned the importance of teaching the standard language to the students. For example, Ms. Álvarez mentioned that "if we are focusing on literacy… strengthening the writing, I would focus more on grammar there." Likewise, in response to a question on what heritage learners need the most in the classroom, Ms. Mendes said that they needed help "with their conjugations, maybe just the way of s,[16] writing with the accents," and Ms. Vásquez stated that "they don't know where [the grammar] come from, so now I'm teaching what, where they come from." These and other statements indicate that this norm of teaching the prestige variety of Spanish is deeply ingrained into the school curriculum and culture.

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[16] This is likely referring to the tendency of many Caribbean Spanish speakers to drop the "s" sound at the end of the word or before a consonant in speech (e.g. "nosotros estamos" is realized as "nosotro' e'tamo'").

Social and Linguistic Disconnects.

There also appeared to be a disconnect between students, teachers, and, at times, the administration based on the data, though this varied greatly between the individuals. When comparing individual responses, there is an interesting discrepancy. Ms. Álvarez, a heritage speaker, and Ms. Mendes, an L2 speaker of Spanish, appeared to be more sensitive to the conditions and needs of the heritage learners than Ms. Vásquez, a native speaker of Spanish. Though Ms. Mendes at times expressed how she felt frustrated with the heritage learners and occasionally disconnected from them, she was able to recognize the need for differentiated instruction and pointed out the immense funds of knowledge that these students bring to the class as bilingual and bicultural individuals. Nevertheless, since she did mention more than the other teachers that heritage learners needed to understand and use the standard language, this could suggest that her view of the students might be colored by her own experiences with the language as a second language learner. Ms. Álvarez only mentioned a disconnect with the students once, and this was in the context of discussing other teachers' methods and the poor implementation of policy at the district level, suggesting that she feels strongly that she connects and relates to the heritage language learners well because of her similar cultural background. While she also highlighted the heritage learners' abilities, she primarily focused our conversation on discussing the structural issues she faced in delivering effective instruction and the results of inequity in the classroom, along with her attempts to differentiate and follow her own curriculum.

As previously mentioned, Ms. Vásquez's responses were the most divergent and it appeared from what she said that, at times, she was reinforcing the preconceived notions and stereotypes of heritage learners in her classroom. She mentioned their language flaws and issues more than the other two teachers. This is not to say that she is a "bad teacher," rather it simply

indicates that her perspective is likely colored by the cultural norms of her upbringing as a native speaker from abroad. For example, when asked how she identifies the heritage learners in her classes, she responded that she can tell because they speak "dialects" in the classroom, referring to indigenous languages like K'iche'. While the students may very much be speaking in K'iche', the framing of this statement positions heritage learners as the Other in the classroom, with their language existing outside of the norms of standard Spanish or English and akin to the marginalized indigenous peoples and languages of Latin America. Some of her other statements revealed a similar othering of the heritage learners and the devaluation of their language as an inability to speak Spanish, such as when she claimed that heritage learners "can't do anything, even like… conjugate in the past" and that "they think, um, they know more that [sic] they know… and the final, they don't know anything and they say '*Miss, pero yo hablo español y yo no sé cómo yo me quemé*.'"[17] Because of her background as a native speaker of Spanish from outside of the U.S., it's possible that these statements could have been influenced by the cultural norms about the Spanish language and the prestige dialect that were carried over from Latin America. It is also of note that she felt the most alienated from her students, going into great detail about how unmotivated some students were and how some students bullied her, indicating on the students' part a major cultural and linguistic disconnect because of her background as a native speaker of a more prestigious variety.

The results of these interviews show a school and a language department that is still struggling with its identity. While teachers can recognize that heritage learners have distinct needs and motivations and some teachers have made serious efforts to be more equitable, there is still a disconnect between teachers and students and the rigid cultural norm that the school must

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[17] Miss, but I speak Spanish and I don't know how I messed up. (I translated)

teach the "prestige" dialect and disvalue the knowledge that the students bring to the classroom is implicitly enforced. Teaching the foreign "academic" Spanish is considered the *de facto* goal of the department and heritage learners are often left behind as teachers struggle to accommodate them, being forced to focus their attention on the native speakers or L2 learners in their classrooms. For this reason, two out of three of the teachers expressed the need for a separate program that can focus exclusively on the heritage learners and operate from a different pedagogical perspective.

Former Students.

     I interviewed two former students who had attended Concordia High School and were identified as heritage learners. A brief profile of the former students is presented in Table C, below and continued on the following page. I did not know the exact years they attended Concordia, but based on their current year in college, both students would have been in the school between 2014 and 2017.

Table C
Profile of Former Students

Name[18]	Languages Spoken	Language(s) Spoken at Home	Ethnicity	Spanish Classes Taken	Other Notes on Background
Luka Garza	First Language: Spanish Second Language: English	Spanish (Mexican dialect)	Mexican	Spanish 3 AP Spanish	Born in the U.S. and moved between Mexico and the U.S. several times throughout his life. Lived with his aunt in the U.S. and attended part of elementary school and all of

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[18] Names changed to protect privacy of participants.

					high school in Bayside.
Julia Mejía	First Language: Spanish Second Language: English	Spanish (Dominican and Honduran dialects)	Dominican	Spanish 2 Spanish 3 AP Spanish	Born in the U.S. to Dominican parents who later divorced. One of her stepparents is Honduran. Lived her entire life in Bayside and attended local schools.

Following the interviews, I compiled the main points from the students into a table by topic, found in Appendix D. I then drew from these topics to code common themes in the interviews and I counted the total number of instances these were brought up per interviewee, as shown in Table D on the following page. The exact text of the instances is listed in Appendix E. It is important to note that the number of common themes is rather small because these two students had significantly different viewpoints.

Table D
Common Themes among Former Students

Theme	Students Mentioning the Theme	Total Number of Instances
Enforcement of a more locally prestigious dialect (Dominican Spanish and/or formal European Spanish)	Luka, Julia	Luka: 12 Julia: 3
Spanish as a part of individual cultural identity	Luka, Julia	Luka: 6 Julia: 6
Importance of cultural and linguistic pluralism	Luka, Julia	Luka: 9 Julia: 5
Incorporation of cultural identity as a best practice in the classroom	Luka, Julia	Luka: 1 Julia: 7
Teacher efforts for equity in class	Luka, Julia	Luka: 6 Julia: 9

Opposing Viewpoints.

Generally speaking, despite attending the same school during the same time period, Luka and Julia reported having diametrically opposing experiences in Spanish class in high school and in their relationships with others and with the community. Luka's experience was mostly negative and his story described a deeply marginalizing institution serving an ethnically segregated neighborhood and population, with multiple structures of power at play. On the other hand, Julia adored her Spanish classes and felt a strong connection to teachers, classmates, and her local community. For her, Spanish class was an open place for self-expression and self-discovery.

One reason that could explain this major contrast is the ethnicities of the students. Even though to Anglophone outsiders both students would appear to be Spanish-speaking Latin Americans and have a great deal in common, this is hardly the case. The Latin American population, like any other broad cultural group, is not a monolith and different ethnic groups that fall under this umbrella term will have different experiences, with locational context playing an especially major role. In this case, Julia, as a Dominican, is a member of a locally populous and influential community, with even greater representation at the level of the school, including in the teaching corps. For this reason, while she may be marginalized in the broader white-dominated culture of the United States, she is a member of a locally dominant group in Bayside, whereas Luka, as a Mexican, faces marginalization not just from the national structures of power, but from the local structures of power as well. Consequently, his language would appear to be triply marginalized: first from the perspective of English as the dominant language of the nation, then from the perspective of standardized, formal, European Spanish as the language of

the classroom, and finally from the perspective of Dominican Spanish as the language of the community and the student body.

Spanish Language and Identity.

Despite the major differences between these two experiences, I was able to determine a few common themes during analysis. For both students, the Spanish language was an integral part of their identities. For Luka, the language was intimately tied to the cultural heritage of his family and to his family still in Mexico, including his mother, saying that "my family always stays attached to their culture, even though they go to the U.S." He also mentioned several times the relationship between language and self-esteem. Similarly, for Julia, the language was connected to close family members and the community, and it was an important part of her process in developing her bilingual and bicultural identity as a Dominican-American, describing how "coming home talking my native language to [my grandmother], it's just something that's un, unexplainable, cause it hits home and your able to speak that loving language that relates, you know, to those surrounding you." Likewise, both students mentioned the importance of using a pedagogical approach that respects both linguistic and cultural pluralism in the classroom, highlighting both existing practices and practices that could be done in the classroom. Julia, for example, brought up the existing Culture Week activities where, according to her: "we… talked about our different cultures and what it means to be a Dominican, for example, what it means to be a Guatemalan, for example, and [the teacher] took days out to incorporate that, which made [the class] feel more like a home." Luka, on the other hand, suggested that he "would have liked… to know how and why the other cultures in Hispanic cultures write the Spanish the way they do." Both students also highlighted culturally-responsive teaching that uses

student identity as an important stepping stone in building student interest and creating a

classroom community, though Luka only mentioned this once in the context of a suggestion for

improvement, saying that, regarding activities about sharing home culture, he "would have like,

enjoyed to work on that, because [he] feel[s] like [students] would just… have different

perspective for everybody."

Teacher Efforts for Equity.

In regards to teachers, both recognized that the teachers made significant efforts to try

and create a more equitable situation in the mixed classroom, with Luka saying that "for non-

speaking-Spanish students, [the teacher] actually, uh, after class she always be open [sic] to help

them out." Julia, however, was far more pleased with the existing efforts, claiming that "even

those students that, they would find themselves occasionally saying, 'Oh, I don't understand this,

I can't understand Spanish,' truly, just seeing the way she worked with them and put that passion

inside them to do their work, it made me just wanna be in the class more," and, for this reason,

she felt conflicting feelings about developing a separate heritage program.

Linguistic Hierarchies and Prestige Dialects.

The commonality that is perhaps most interesting, however, is that both students

described, either explicitly in Luka's case or implicitly in Julia's case, a linguistic hierarchy in

the school that placed one form of the Spanish language above all others, either Dominican

Spanish (as the locally dominant language) or the standardized, formal European Spanish (as the

national and global prestige variety). For Luka, Spanish class tended to be an alienating and

isolating experience where he felt unvalued, marginalized, and isolated because of his Mexican

Spanish. In his interview, he described how he would avoid interacting with both his classmates, for fear that they would bully him, and his teacher, for fear that she would misunderstand him and react with hostility. He described his interactions with the teacher, who was of Dominican origin, in particular as "somewhat uncomfortable for me to actually ask her a question or talk to her, all because we wouldn't actually connect or she wouldn't understand what I was trying to ask her." Luka also described in detail how his teacher linguistically marginalized him, saying how "I wouldn't like that the Spanish of my Spanish and the teacher's were different… I would always have a clash in my head, like now I gotta change the way I think of this, now can I write it like this" because "I would say like [to the teacher], 'What are you saying, I don't do that,' and she would be like, 'Oh yeah, but if you don't do it like this, you get it wrong.'" In essence he found himself forced to modify his language to a more locally prestigious form. At times, he felt like he had to copy the Dominican Spanish of the majority and of the teacher, and he said about this experience that, "I did feel like my Spanish was just not invited in the classroom, like I had to adjust, I had to force myself to use Spanish, um, in a Dominican way and not in the Mexican way that I grew up with." In other cases, it was the formal European Spanish taught in the classroom, such as when he described getting points deducted for using words or phrases specific to Mexican Spanish (*mexicanismos*): "[I lost points] all the time. That's why I had to force myself to write it down the way she wanted and not the way I grew up writing it." Though he never directly stated that this devaluing of his language hurt him on an emotional level, he spoke in the third person and generalized that when the home language was corrected, "you only lowered the self-esteem of the Spanish speaker and you make them well, feel like they don't know anything."

Luka also described the existence among the students of an ethnically-based hierarchy of linguistic power in the school and in the Spanish classroom (similar to that observed in Abdi, 2011) that more so reflected the local demographics than preconceived notions about "correct Spanish" carried over from Latin America (e.g. Amorós-Negre & Quesada Pacheco, 2019). This reflects the phenomenon described by Valdés (2005) of how the contact languages of heritage learners borrow from different registers and reconceptualize the notions of "prestige" in their speech. As the most populous and well-established group, Dominicans and their language appeared to be dominant in student interactions. Guatemalans, though also populous, seemed to lack the same social prestige and generally had their language fall in the middle, as Luka noted that, "whenever a Guatemalan would try to talk to a Dominican student, they'll make fun of him." Outsiders, whether they were Latin American or otherwise, were often stigmatized and made into the Other, such as the Anglophone student Luka described who was relentlessly bullied in class by Spanish-speaking peers.

In the classroom, however, the "standardized" Spanish language, based on the formal European dialect, was still generally the most valued form of the language and very much surpassed Dominican Spanish, even though the teacher was Dominican. This can be seen when looking at Julia's commentary about this same teacher because, even though she enjoyed learning this form of the language and had a positive experience, she mentioned, albeit more subtly, this privileged position of the prestige dialect. Throughout the interview, she described her Dominican Spanish as "informal," whose connotation implies that the dialect is only good for the home and friends and that it might even be shameful to use elsewhere. She even very implicitly revealed the deep internalization of colonialist views of the Spanish language, saying of the classroom dialect: "it's more like a formal Spanish because it's European." This

Eurocentric view of the language is rooted in the hierarchies of power of colonialism that have

left a lasting legacy in contemporary Latin America and this statement reveals that the same

monolinguistic view of the language appears to have been carried over to the context of speaking

Spanish in a predominately Anglophone country like the United States. It seemed that this view

of the superiority of the European standard was passed on to the students through the teacher and

the learning activities. For example, Julia described how the teacher "was correcting our essays

and, for example, she would like take points off because of our Domini-, our, the way we wrote

the word and she's like, 'You guys are doing great, remember we're doing European Spanish.'"

Despite their vastly different experiences in the classroom, both Luka and Julia have revealed

that systems of linguistic power are reproduced in the microcosm of the classroom environment,

and that the curriculum itself implicitly maintains a subtractive approach to the students'

linguistic funds of knowledge, despite the teachers' efforts to better embrace and incorporate

students' cultural funds of knowledge and create a situation of equity between all groups in the

mixed classroom, much like what was previously observed by Randolph (2017).

Textual Data and Analysis

For the textual data, I analyzed Bayside's "curriculum framework" for the teaching of

languages[19], sample lesson plans from Ms. Álvarez, and publicly available information related to

the textbooks used in the district.

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[19] Not cited due to confidentiality reasons.

Curriculum Framework.

Bayside's curriculum framework for world languages (used for all of the languages taught in the district: Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Arabic, and Latin) is not a true "curriculum" in the traditional sense as it does not dictate the content or style of pedagogy that teachers can employ, stating that it "is designed to provide a foundation… while providing the flexibility to teach our unique language learners." The format of this document is that there is a general theme that must be covered each quarter (or each semester) at each level and a list of objectives related to the ACTFL World Readiness Standards and to the Common Core State Standards, however, there are no targets for proficiency outlined in the framework, which is typically assessed comparing student abilities to "can-do" statements. Essentially, the curriculum framework uses a *macrobased* approach that starts from general themes and objectives and allows teachers to develop units with backwards design. On one hand, this is beneficial because teachers have the independence to create units that are appealing to heritage learners and follow Carreira's (2016) pedagogy. On the other hand, this level of teacher freedom, combined with mixed classes, can allow teachers to follow a textbook and "teach to the middle" or teach to a subgroup within the classroom, leaving some learners, including heritage learners, behind. In my interview with Ms. Álvarez, she mentioned that this curriculum framework was only developed in 2014 and that, not only do teachers indeed follow their own content interests and styles of pedagogy, but that some older teachers are not really using it, leading to disparities across the district and issues when new students transfer to the school.

Apart from a few specific tasks, the objectives are intentionally vague and describe generic language and culture goals at each level, such as "identify the main ideas from level appropriate print or non-print materials" and "understand the geography and cultural elements of

the target language countries studied." None of the objectives specifically speak to heritage language learners or the needs and interests, but it is clear through certain objectives that this document was constructed with Anglophone second language learners in mind with constant references to English, for example "compare linguistic elements of the target language and English" or "Compare and Contrast [sic] the viewpoints of target language speakers to English speakers." Most bizarrely, the document cites Common Core State Standards verbatim and includes statements like "demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate" and "demonstrate the command of conversations [sic] of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. The World Readiness Standards can be aligned to what students are doing in their ELA courses and ACTFL (2012) itself created a document that "translates" Common Core standards to world language and explains how the standards referencing English directly are aligned in the sense that they reflect the abilities and levels of students in the second language. Because of this, it is jarring to see standards explicitly on the usage of English in a document detailing world language courses, especially when ACTFL's 2012 document had already been available for two years at the time of the creation of the framework. The implication is that courses in a language other than English are only there to help students meet the standards for ELA standardized testing.

Some of the objectives are in line with best practices in teaching heritage learners. The objective "use target language resources, such as individuals and organizations in the community… to broaden academic and cultural understanding," for example, encourages community involvement in the curriculum and connecting to heritage learners. In practice, however, this is rarely done: Ms. Álvarez told us in her interview that in her decade of teaching at Concordia, she has never done service learning or experiential learning projects and the closest

community involvement is at the family level. Another community-related objective is "students will apply target language skills and their knowledge of the target culture beyond the classroom," yet, this is worded so vaguely that it could describe homework or simply heritage learners' daily lives.

One positive aspect of the framework in regards to heritage learners is the emphasis on using and analyzing authentic texts throughout, from simple correspondences at the novice level, to music and websites at the intermediate level, and finally to literature at the advanced level. No matter where the heritage learner may place in the existing system, the curriculum framework shows that they will, in theory, be exposed to authentic materials. That being said, it is again up to the teacher to follow through with this. Ms. Álvarez, for example, uses "free-reading" time to get heritage language students interested in literature and she has had some success in doing so.

Two objectives in the program that seemed potentially useful for heritage learners in the sense of identity were "discuss the role of culture in the development of relationships between the United States and target language countries" and "compare and contrast the *cultures* of the United States with the culture(s) of target language [sic]" because they provide the opportunity for teachers to incorporate family histories and discussions on cultural fusion and identity among heritage language communities in the United States, perhaps helping the students to shape and define their identities. That being said, this could also be considered problematic because the phrasing of these objectives positions the students' cultures as "foreign."

The few required tasks included opportunities for students to reflect on their future career plans which may help inspire heritage language students to work in a field that requires the language, one of the "heritage motivations" described by Ducar (2008). Other objectives and wording, however, appeared problematic for heritage learners. For example, the phrase "use

level-appropriate vocabulary and structures" could be interpreted in the sociolinguistic sense of tailoring speech to the audience, but it could also be interpreted as using an unrealistic "standard" or a policed "academic" language that punishes heritage learners for using their home dialects. The objective "demonstrate that language and meaning do not transfer directly from one language to another" is very vague and could imply that heritage students' language should be monitored to prevent code-switching, even though that manner of speaking is perfectly acceptable and comprehensible in their own community (e.g. Valdés, 2005). The curriculum mentions the importance of spelling several times, but because of the vague wording and teacher freedom, this could be used to justify hypercorrection of heritage learners' written language. Likewise, the objective "to accurately use intonation and oral pronunciation" could justify attempts to eradicate heritage learners' home dialects and replace it with the "standard" because of the subjective phrase "accurately."

The final section of the framework provides suggestions for instructional methods and resources. Many of the suggested methods were excellent ideas for heritage learners, including (once again) using authentic texts (including music, art, film, and television shows), organizing trips to community sites like restaurants and museums, using experiential learning via art, exploring student identities, having students complete reports on subjects that they have experience in (and exposing them to new subjects they might develop an interest in), creative writing, interviewing community leaders, reaching out to professional language organizations, and comparing practices and products of target language cultures with their own cultures. These suggested activities meet the heritage language learners' motivations to learn more about themselves and to gain confidence in the language and also follow previously-discussed best practices in the field.

Once again, the question of effectiveness comes down to implementation. Teachers like Ms. Álvarez and Ms. Mendes mentioned in their interviews that they wanted to do more experiential activities, especially community-based activities, but were prevented because of logistical challenges. With the open nature of this framework, teachers could easily choose not to do any of these activities with heritage learners and focus on activities that are of more benefit to second language learners. The suggested resources list was short and very limited, with few ideas for heritage learners. Some of the links provided were broken and the Spanish-language resources were limited to materials aimed at second-language learners. The list even suggested usage of "the textbook" and English-language government websites as resources, which can hardly be considered useful in any language course! There were no specific authentic materials listed and teachers are expected to find "target language films" and "banking brochures" on their own time.

In short, while the framework provides teachers with broad ideas and the opportunity to create engaging content for heritage learners in their classroom, the problematic objectives and a lack of resources, combined with the negative side of teacher autonomy and issues with school bureaucracy, unfortunately create a broken system where heritage learners lack institutional support and have to rely entirely on the teacher to accommodate their needs and interests.

Sample Lesson Plans.

Ms. Álvarez provided me with three sample lesson plans, briefly summarized in Table E on the following page.

Table E
Summary of Sample Lesson Plans

Lesson Theme	Course	School Year
Usage of the subjunctive	Spanish III	2012-2013
Fine arts	Spanish II	2013-2014
Heroic figures	AP Spanish	2014-2015

It is important to note that these lessons were designed to be taught in the context of formal observations by school administration and that most lessons in the classroom do not have formal documentation tailored to this audience. That being said, it is likely that these still reflect typical instruction in the classroom. The timeframe of the lessons roughly correspond to the period before or during which the students interviewed would have been in high school.

The first lesson is built around a grammatical topic rather than a thematic unit. As such, the objectives are all written from a strictly linguistic standpoint and implicitly show a valuing of standard, academic Spanish. Later during the description of a preliminary activity, the plan mentions how she will reward extra points on the test to the student who writes the correct conjugation of the verb first, thus clearly and explicitly demonstrating how usage of the prestige dialect is valued in the classroom. English is mentioned in the objectives, but as a point of comparison. Nevertheless, the choice of saying "English" rather than "students' home language(s)" positions English as a default point of reference and as the dominant language. One of the outcomes, however, is more grounded in the community as she states that the goal of this lesson (and many others) is to prepare students so that "they can communicate with most of the student body at Concordia," which recognizes the fact that Spanish is an important community language and that both heritage learners and second language learners can benefit from instruction. On the profile of the students, Ms. Álvarez highlights that this class is a majority of

heritage learners, which appears to contrast with what she reported during her interview. It is

possible that she may have classified some native speakers as heritage learners, especially given

the flexibility of the definition, but it is clear that second-language learners are a minority in this

classroom. She mentions in particular three students who "are the true definition of heritage

learners" and rarely participate because, according to her description of language abilities, are

not as strong as the other students. She also mentions that one of these students is chronically

absent. She also describes another group of students, though it is unclear whether they are

heritage learners or not, who act as class leaders. The lesson plan seems to describe a mixed class

that is working as the students "highlight each other's strengths and help each other overcome

their weaknesses." However, the prior statement about the three heritage learners appears to

contradict this description as these three students feel excluded and left behind from peers who,

though also heritage learners, have a stronger grasp on the prestige dialect, much like the second

language learners. The primary activity for the lesson is the creation of a dialogue, in mixed

groups formed by proficiency level, between a parent and a child where there is usage of the

subjunctive. The description of the activity mentions that, in this dialogue, they have an

argument and the child is reprimanded. While the usage of a situation that takes place in any

household with children is a good way to connect to the experience of heritage learners, the

artificial context of this activity and the requirement to use standard forms in one language, when

in reality a heritage learner would use their home dialect and likely code-switch, negates some of

the value of this activity for the heritage learners because they can't emulate the language they

would actually use at home and draw on their funds of knowledge. The activity's context of a

dispute also associates the Spanish language to negative emotions and memories. One final point

on this lesson plan concerns the materials used. While the students are assigned an authentic text

for homework (the song *Quizás* by Enrique Iglesias), the materials explicitly mention the textbook, *Realidades*, and the usage of a book designed for second language learners (this particular textbook is discussed further in the following section of the chapter) in a majority-heritage class is problematic. Though Ms. Álvarez claimed to avoid the textbook in her interview, it's clearly still used to some extent in the classroom. While the textbook isn't explicitly mentioned in any of the learning activities for this lesson, its inclusion nevertheless indicates that at least some value is placed on its content, which is the prestige dialect. The focus on grammar and linguistic form frames this lesson in such a way that the heritage students' language is in need of correction through unnatural dialogues that are simply a simulacrum of their lived experiences.

The second lesson is designed around the theme of fine arts and this particular lesson has students research an artist and a specific work from this artist's oeuvre. Like the other lesson, this one is being taught to a class composed primarily of heritage learners. The lesson objectives describe how the language used in this lesson is necessary for "everyday topic[s] like history and art" and while this language might be used in certain community contexts, it is not necessarily the "everyday" language used by heritage learners in the home. That being said, the framing of the objectives in this lesson is different and Ms. Álvarez writes that the goal is for students "to become well-rounded individuals," indicating that the goal is not subtractive in nature, but rather to broaden the students' repertoire and build from the funds of knowledge that they bring. The design of the lesson and activities is fairly typical and students will be working in pairs; however, these pairs are assigned at random and students from different backgrounds and abilities are made to work together. The differentiation comes in the form of assigning the artists and students with strong prior knowledge of art will be given a more complex painting to

analyze. While the works of art are authentic texts, the readings that the students receive to research information on the artists are not authentic texts, but teacher-created summaries of their biographies. The artists whose works are highlighted are Spanish and Mexican which, while they might be interesting to the students, do not really reflect their home cultures, either the country of their heritage or the local Latin American community. This lesson could have been an ideal opportunity for heritage learners to research artists from their families' cultures or to make a connection with the local artistic scene, such as Bayside's Latin American artist collective. By no means is this to dismiss the content taught, because all students can benefit from exploring the arts in cultures other than their own, but the opportunities to build upon the heritage students' funds of knowledge and highlight the role of Spanish in the community were there and left unused. The homework assignment for this lesson is not really connected to the theme, apart from a blurb about how the artists studied all started their craft very young, but it provides students an opportunity to draw from their experiences while writing about their childhood. While it is clear from the wording that the assignment is to get them to use a specific grammar point (the phrase "used to" is highlighted and bolded, indicating that students must use the imperfect), the open-ended nature of the assignment allows students a degree of creative expression. While this lesson shows a transition towards more appropriate *macrobased* instruction for the heritage learners, it still approaches the topic of Spanish-speaking artists from the lens that they are "foreign" to students' experiences.

The last lesson that I analyzed is also built around a thematic concept, the cultural idea of a heroic figure. The class context is similar to the other two lessons, with a majority of heritage learners (including one student who completed most of her schooling in the Dominican Republic) and a small minority of second language learners and native speakers (who are this

time clearly distinguished from the heritage learners). The description of the learners specifically

highlights their talents, interests, and skills, describing their activities in school and in the

community. This description indicates that Ms. Álvarez has taken much time and effort to learn

from the students and their backgrounds so that their funds of knowledge can be incorporated

into the classroom. More implicitly, it shows that she values the students and considers their

funds of knowledge important enough to warrant mentioning in the lesson plan. The lesson is

built around a reading which, upon careful observation of the materials list, evidently comes

from a textbook, *Abriendo Paso*. In the description of the lesson procedures, second language

learners are actually the group that is most accomodated in the class and it appears that they need

the most attention from the teacher and peers. In terms of accomodations, Ms. Álvarez writes

that she allows the second language learners to speak in their L1 (likely English) and that, during

grouping, second language learners are placed with the strongest heritage learners. While this

shows that the heritage learners can play an important role as a linguistic and cultural mediator,

bridging the gap for the second language learners, it also highlights that the class is still very

much tailored to Anglophones at the expense of heritage learners. From the wording "L1 or L2

can be used in order to accommodate the non-heritage learners," it appears that Anglophone

second language learners may lose the incentive to communicate in Spanish and can rely on their

home language, which happens to be the dominant language in this country, whereas heritage

learners might not be able to use *their* home language (which may include code-switching

between English and Spanish) and may have to tailor their speech. This is one of the situations of

inequity faced in a mixed classroom, much like what both Ms. Álvarez and Ms. Mendes

described in their interviews. The final activity of the lesson is also worded a bit problematically

as it asks students to generically list "national heroes." From the section on "accomodating the

needs of diverse learners," it can be inferred that this activity is framed in an Anglophone (and at times U.S.-centric) lens, as the examples listed from the students' history class are Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X and figures from their English class like Robin Hood, Hester Pryne, and, bizarrely enough, Jay Gatsby. While these are interesting and relevant figures (apart from Gatsby), they don't necessarily represent the experiences and knowledge of the students. This could have been an opportunity to highlight historic heroes to the Latin American community in Rhode Island, like Juanita Sánchez, or heroes who are relevant to the students' own lives, like family members or current community leaders. One objective's wording could also be interpreted as problematic because it states: "with today's competitive work force [sic], job seekers benefit more if they know a second language other than English." This statement seems to reduce the learning of Spanish to a commodity to make money and frames the "default" language of the United States as English. This lesson again highlights the issues of equity in the mixed classroom and the challenges faced by teachers in such situations. Certain aspects also highlight the difficulties in deconstructing dominant language ideology in the school and moving the frame of reference away from English and Anglophone experiences and towards sharing it with the bilingual and bicultural experiences of the heritage language students.

Textbooks.

Bayside does not use a single textbook uniformly across schools and, for this reason, several different books are in use, dependent on the choices of individual schools and teachers. In my interview with Ms. Álvarez, she was quick to point out that she does not use any textbook in her personal curriculum and that she finds those used in the district to be dated and inappropriate for heritage learners.

None of the textbooks used in the district are designed specifically for usage with heritage language learners, but they could be used appropriately to supplement instruction. Using publicly available information, I was able to analyze the basic format of these textbooks and evaluate their appropriateness in the heritage language classroom.

Voces Digital is published by American Eagle Co. Inc and has texts for introductory middle school levels through AP Spanish. The texts are supplemented by an online, multimedia platform. *Voces Digital* has been published since 2001, according to the copyright date on their website (Voces Digital, 2019). In addition to standard textbooks, *Voces Digital* distinguishes itself because of its series of readers for the Spanish language. Although these are not authentic texts because they are written by teachers and professionals for classroom use (ibid.), they contain themes that may be of interest for the heritage classroom, including a story for level 2 specifically about heritage learners and identities called *Gracias por preguntar*, a story also for level 2 about immigration and family separation called *Las mariposas vienen de visita*, a story for level 3 that fictionalized a historic event from Latin America called *Los sobrevivientes*, and a story for level 4 about gender identity and cross-cultural relations called *Secretos* (ibid.). These readers may be of use in the heritage classroom because of their discussion of relevant themes and, though the language is more 'controlled' compared to authentic texts, they may be of use when guiding heritage students who are still developing their reading skills. The primary textbook series *Nuestra historia* follows thematic units with six themes per level and many of the units align to both the curriculum framework and to the AP curriculum (ibid.). Many units may be of interest to heritage speakers, based on the "heritage motivation" theory (see Potowski, 2005), including discussions of "national identity and ethnic identity" in level 1, "social well being" in level 2, "alienation and assimilation" and "education and professional careers" in level

3 and "personal beliefs" in level 4 (Voces Digital, 2019). The book also claims to have "up-to-date and relevant authentic resources" (ibid.) in addition to the stories written by teaching professionals, and the online platform offers additional authentic texts. *Voces digital* also provides teachers with the ability to differentiate and customize online assignments. Though designed for second language learners, it's possible that heritage language students could benefit from careful selection of supplementary resources from this series, especially those students who may have had less exposure to the language at home and less opportunities to refine their reading skills in Spanish.

　　¡Avancemos! is published by the textbook giant Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and has texts that span middle school through Spanish 4. The most recent edition is from 2018 and includes an interactive, multimedia platform. The publishers of *¡Avancemos!* directly claim that their textbook, though designed for second language learners, provides "unique support for heritage learners" (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p. 13). This claim is made based on their suggestions in the teacher's edition for differentiation and their special supplementary text called "HMH Spanish Resources for Heritage Learners," which includes a diagnostic exam and, bolded by the original authors for emphasis in the brochure, "modules that *target known and well-documented nonstandard language errors* common among heritage learners" (ibid.). This statement on the supplementary text is deeply problematic in the sense that it frames heritage learners' language as "nonstandard" and containing errors and, as such, seeks to "target" (eliminate) this language, thereby promoting a subtractive pedagogy that enforces the dominant prestige dialect (Randolph, 2017). In the example provided on differentiating for heritage learners, the textbook suggests simply asking students about their cultures' cuisines and, if the teacher has Puerto Rican students, have them talk about what they already know about Puerto

Rican cuisine (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p. 13). This is hardly differentiating instruction

because this could be done with any group of students, but at the very least, it is asking teachers

to draw on students' funds of knowledge and learn from them. The brochure additionally claims

to have differentiated assessments for heritage learners at levels 1 through 3, though no example

is provided (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p. 16). The supplemental online platform appears

to be the most promising aspect for heritage learners because it provides student links to

authentic texts from which they can select ones that are most personally relevant (ibid., p. 10-11)

and it uses contemporary technology to engage students in virtual field trips with performance-

based assessments (ibid., p. 7). Apart from these resources, *¡Avancemos!* seems to have little to

offer heritage learners in content and it appears to take an archaic and subtractive view on their

language. Like with *Voces Digital*, it is up to the teacher to determine how to use what the book

provides with their students.

  Realidades is published by Savvas Learning (formerly by Pearson) and has textbooks that

go from middle school through 12th grade. The most recent edition is from 2014 and earlier

editions date back to 2004. The publishers of *Realidades* provide very limited public information

regarding their textbook, but it appears to be the weakest of the three in terms of teaching

heritage learners. This is the oldest of the three texts and is likely to already be out of date in

terms of language and technology. The "Overview" page makes no mention of differentiation or

ideas of what content is explored in the book, only mentioning some of the online components

that can save teachers time planning (Savvas, 2014). The website does provide the table of

contents for the textbooks and each chapter appears to follow a thematic unit, with mentions of

structures and general semantic fields of vocabulary. The textbook for level 3 does mention a

few themes of relevance to heritage learners, such as community, personal responsibilities, and

the environment, but only level 4 seems to go beyond these basic ideas and propose engaging with the students' prior knowledge and their communities, with units touching upon careers, social and environmental issues, nutrition, identity and diversity, popular culture, and relationships (ibid.). The very vague topic of "styles of communication" in the chapter on relationships could lead to a discussion of sociolinguistics, but this topic is not brought up until the middle of the level 4 sequence (ibid.), when, in actuality, heritage learners need this discussion at the start of their classroom experience. There is no mention of authentic texts anywhere on the website, though the publishers claim in the "correlation" section that they are aligning their content with ACTFL standards (ibid.). Any teacher using this textbook would more than likely have to supplement it with numerous other resources in order to effectively teach heritage learners because little, apart from vague themes and grammar topics, is brought to the table.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Discussion

The results of this study have revealed a few conclusions and provided some answers to the research questions. While the results have shown that great progress has been made in this particular school regarding heritage language education, primarily due to the efforts of individual teachers to differentiate in the classroom, there are still deep systemic problems that need to be addressed in order for heritage learners to achieve a situation of equity in the Spanish classroom.

In regards to the first research question on how heritage learners feel about the existing program, the two students provided me with mixed answers and, because of the small sample size, it was impossible to develop a broader picture on the "general" feelings of heritage students in Bayside. Nevertheless, some insights could still be drawn from the data. The students generally had positive feedback regarding their teachers and both students recognized that their teachers put in much effort to reach individual students and try to level the playing field in the mixed classroom for different populations. The major discrepancies between the two students' responses also suggested that the existing program is indeed working for *some* heritage learners. Those students like Julia who belong to the majority cultural group in the school, Dominicans, and who see themselves represented in the teaching corps appear to be benefiting from the existing Spanish program whereas other Latin Americans, including the sizeable Guatemalan population, in addition to other cultural groups, might be left behind and excluded. The data gathered from the teachers correlate with these observations, as the teachers themselves admitted that, despite their best efforts, the program as it is remains imperfect and they often struggle to reach some of the heritage learners.

In regards to the second research question, a careful analysis of the interview and textual data appears to show that heritage learners and the funds of knowledge, in particular their linguistic experience as bilingual individuals, are marginalized in this institution, from the level of the curriculum down to the unconscious actions of teachers and internalized beliefs of the students. The linguistic hierarchy revealed is complex and is affected by often conflicting ideologies and questions of identity. As an institution in the United States, the school first and foremost appears to value the English language and draw on the experience of Anglophones when implementing pedagogy, as was seen at the curricular level with the constant references to this language in the curriculum framework and the usage of textbooks that are not very appropriate for heritage learners and that may promote subtractive views of their language skills. Even at the classroom level, the omnipresent ubiquity of the English language can be seen, with the lesson plans allowing students to use English in an AP Spanish course and making explicit references to Anglophone U.S. culture and history, thereby framing the Spanish language and Latin American cultures as foreign and outside of student experiences. This can be seen in the fact that some teachers tended to spend more of their effort and attention on Anglophone second language learners at the expense of heritage learners.

Following English was the prestige variety of European Spanish. All of the students mentioned that this was the form of Spanish taught in the classroom and one of the students even internalized the culturally transmitted value that this form of Spanish was "formal," and therefore more important and prestigious, compared to her home dialect. Likewise, the teacher interviews appeared to show a preoccupation with this form of the language and the idea that this Spanish was the "correct" form, with teachers implicitly believing that the language of the heritage learners was not equal to the prestige variety. In practice, heritage students were penalized for

expressing themselves in Spanish outside of the *norma culta*, even when teachers claimed to be sensitive to the home language or when they tried to incorporate sociolinguistic consciousness into their classroom practices and curriculum. Even within classroom dynamics, native speakers who were educated in Spanish in another country dominated the classroom discourse and the teachers' attention. Though unintentional, this culturally transmitted notion that the prestige variety of Spanish is the only acceptable form of the language for classroom usage seems to be deeply ingrained into classroom culture and curriculum and, as such, the same systems of enforced monolingualism in Latin America are reproduced in this country, doubly marginalizing heritage speakers as they cannot identify fully with either English or this idealized and foreign form of Spanish.

Below this standardized European Spanish are the various ethnic dialects of Spanish, but even among these, there appears to be a hierarchy that ties into student and teacher identity. In this particular school, Dominican Spanish, even though it is marginalized in the context of English and the prestige variety of Spanish, is in a position of dominance over other forms of the Spanish language, given the fact that Dominicans make up a large part of the school population, are represented in the teaching corps, and have significant power within the local community. All other forms of Spanish, including Guatemalan Spanish (even though it is also spoken by a significant portion of the student body) are generally considered the most inferior in this hierarchy. The linguistic hierarchy, despite all efforts to deconstruct it by individual teachers, is firmly maintained through the curriculum and the internalized cultural norms of both teachers and students. The efforts of teachers to counteract the evident flaws of the curriculum and the biases held by both themselves and their students are noble, but they are not enough to provide heritage learners with truly culturally-responsive education in the mixed classroom. For this

reason, most teachers and students had favorable views towards the creation of a separate

program for heritage learners in order to create a situation of equity for students. This is most

certainly a good idea, but the curriculum and practices of such a program will need to be

carefully designed so that the same linguistic hierarchy is not reproduced in the heritage

classroom and that students' funds of knowledge (including their language) and interests are

represented in the curriculum. Many of the best practices reviewed in the literature (and only

partially implemented in the current classrooms) are effective methods to counteract the

influence of hegemonic monolingualism and hierarchies of language and, along with increased

teacher education on working with heritage learners, provide an opportunity to not only make

language education more equitable, but empower heritage learners to make changes in their own

community and question the dominant cultural narratives.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First and foremost, I had to work with a much smaller

sample size of students than I had anticipated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting

difficulty of finding and reaching out to these students. As such, these results are not exhaustive

and do not show a complete picture of the situation at the school and cannot be generalized.

While valuable information could be drawn from their interviews and I could reveal the systems

of power at play in the school and give suggestions for improvement, these two interviews only

provide a partial picture and these students may in fact be outliers to the typical situation. It is

also important to note that these students attended Spanish courses that were given further in the

past and the current situation may have changed significantly (for example, the evolution of

instruction is evident from the lesson plans alone). Another major limitation to this study was the

fact that I was unable to observe actual classroom dynamics and I was forced to rely on the

potentially biased and/or inaccurate memories of students and teachers. Therefore, while these

testimonies can give insights, the claims cannot be fully backed without direct observations of

interactions in the classroom and implementation of curriculum. One final limitation to consider

is the textual data from which I was able to work. The lesson plans that I obtained were not only

designed for the specific audience of school administrators, but they are only a snapshot in time

and their actual implementation may have differed significantly from the plan written. Likewise,

I was unable to access the actual textbooks used in the school and I had to rely on publicly

available information to conduct an analysis.

Implications for Further Research

Further research will need to be done, both for the local situation in Bayside, and for

other communities in the United States with large and diverse Latin American populations. The

research presented in this study shows that while the classroom dynamics and the influence of

dominant language ideologies is similar to the more ethnically diverse or majority-white schools

previously studied in the literature, there are unique differences when the school population

serves a predominantly Latin American population of both native speakers and heritage learners

from myriad ethnic backgrounds. Further studies will also need to expand the scope to see the

perspectives of native speakers and second language learners in these mixed classrooms so that

their experiences are also accounted for. In the context of Concordia and Bayside, more research

will need to be done in the future to develop a broader picture of the experiences of heritage

learners, not only in this school, but in other schools across the district, so that major policy

changes at the district level regarding heritage learners can be planned and justified.

Pedagogical Implications

In general, the results of this study indicate that schools serving majority Latin American populations should deeply and critically examine their Spanish programs and the relations among students and between students and teachers. The intersection of linguistic and ethnic hierarchies of power in the school environment must be addressed before any changes to curricula and programming can be made, otherwise, the heritage classroom may very well reproduce the same structures of power and inequity that it is intended to dismantle.

For Concordia in particular, this study has revealed some areas that need to be changed to better support the heritage learners and create equity among different groups. Although students had mixed reception to the idea of a separate program for heritage learners (or heritage learners and native speakers), it is clear that this would be the most practical method to "level the playing field" and deliver more equitable instruction across all groups. That being said, it is critical that the goals of this program are in-line with current best practices and approach students' home language and cultural experiences from a funds of knowledge viewpoint. The objectives of the program should shift away from exclusively teaching the prestige dialect and focus on developing multiple literacies in the classroom (Warner and Dupuy, 2018), adopting a *biloquial* approach to introducing the standard language (e.g. Tallon, 2009; Valdés, 1981), *and* including critical commentary on the sociolinguistics of the Spanish language and the hierarchies of linguistic power (e.g. Leeman, 2005). The teachers will benefit from engaging in professional development opportunities to learn more about the field of heritage language education (Carreira and Kagan, 2018) and taking time to reflect on the nature of the Spanish language and their own potential biases regarding it (e.g. Abdi, 2011). From this training, teachers can then seek to dismantle the linguistic hierarchies that exist in the school culture through their instruction and

start bridging the ethnic divide between different groups of students, first at the classroom level,

and then students will start to do so on their own outside of the space of the classroom.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Student Questions

Could you tell me a little about yourself and your story?

¿Puedes hablarme un poquito sobre ti mismo(a) y tu historia?

Could you tell me a little about your family's background and your heritage?

¿Puedes hablarme un poquito sobre la historia de tu familia y tus orígenes?

What is your life at home like? What do your parents do for work? What do you do with your
friends? What is your extended family like? What is your neighborhood like? What did you like
to do outside of school?

*¿Cómo es tu vida en casa? ¿Qué trabajo hacen tus padres? ¿Qué haces con tus amigos? ¿Cómo
son tus parientes? ¿Cómo es tu barrio? ¿Qué te gustaba hacer fuera de la escuela?*

When would you speak Spanish outside of school? Who do you speak Spanish with? How often
do you speak Spanish? Do you use Spanish in the community (for example, when you are
shopping or eating at a restaurant)?

*¿Cuándo hablabas español fuera de la escuela? ¿Con quién hablas español? ¿Con qué
frecuencia hablas español? ¿Usas español en la comunidad (por ejemplo, cuando vas de
compras o cenas en un restaurante)?*

What was your experience in Spanish classes? What did you think about Spanish class? Did you
find Spanish classes to be useful (and why or why not)? What is one memorable story from your

Spanish classes? Did you feel like you were a part of the class and that you were valued (how or how not)?

¿Cómo fue tu experiencia en las clases de español? ¿Qué pensabas de la clase de español? ¿Te parecía que las clases de español eran útiles (por qué sí o por qué no)? ¿Cuál es una historia memorable de todas tus clases de español? ¿Crees que eras parte de la clase y que se te valoraba (cómo o cómo no)?

What kind of activities did you like in Spanish class? What kind of activities did you dislike in Spanish class? What did you like to learn about in Spanish class?

¿Qué tipo de actividades te gustaba en la clase de español? ¿Qué tipo de actividades no te gustaba en la clase de español? ¿Sobre qué te gustaba aprender en la clase de español?

Could you tell me about how you felt about your Spanish teachers? Could you tell me about how you felt about your classmates in Spanish classes? Could you tell me about how your teachers treated you? Could you tell me about how your classmates treated you?

¿Puedes hablarme de cómo te sentías hacia tus profesores de español? ¿Puedes hablarme de cómo te sentías hacia tus compañeros en la clase de español? ¿Puedes hablarme de cómo te trataron tus profesores de español? ¿Puedes hablarme de cómo te trataron tus compañeros en la clase de español?

What would you change about Spanish class? What would you have liked to learn about in Spanish class? If there were a seperate Spanish class for students from similar backgrounds to you, what would you like to see in that class?

¿Qué cambiarías en la clase de español? ¿Sobre qué te habría gustado aprender en la clase de español? ¿Si hubiera una clase de español distinta para estudiantes que tienen conocimientos y experiencias como los tuyos, qué te gustaría ver en esa clase?

Teacher Questions

Could you tell me a little about yourself and your story?

¿Puede hablarme un poquito sobre usted mismo(a) y su historia?

Could you tell me a little about your experiences teaching Spanish here?

¿Puede hablarme un poquito sobre sus experiencias con la enseñanza de español aquí?

For you, who is a "heritage language learner"? How do you identify these students as such? Typically, what skills do heritage language learners bring with them to the classroom? What do you feel heritage language learners need to learn in the Spanish classroom? What activities do you think benefit them the most?

¿Según usted, quién es un "estudiante con español de lengua heredada?" ¿Cómo identifica usted a este tipo de estudiante? ¿Qué conocimientos aportan típicamente los estudiantes con español de lengua heredada al aula? ¿Qué cree que los estudiantes con español de lengua heredada necesitan aprender en el aula de español? ¿Qué actividades beneficiarían más a estos estudiantes?

Could you tell me about your experiences teaching heritage language learners?

¿Puede hablarme sobre sus experiencias con la enseñanza de los estudiantes con español de lengua heredada?

Could you identify some best practices for heritage language learners? How do you differentiate your teaching and curriculum for these students in your classroom? How do you incorporate and build upon the skills and experiences of these students in your teaching? To what extent do you reach out to families and the community in developing your instruction?

¿Puede identificar algunas de las prácticas más adecuadas para los estudiantes con español de lengua heredada? ¿Cómo diferencia su enseñanza y el currículo para estos estudiantes en su aula? ¿Cómo incorpora y añade a los conocimientos y las experiencias de estos estudiantes en su enseñanza? ¿Hasta qué punto se acerca usted a las familias y a la comunidad en el desarrollo de su instrucción?

What is your opinion on the curriculum in regards to meeting the needs of heritage language learners? What would you change? Do you believe that there needs to be a seperate program (why or why not)? If there were such a program, what would you include in the curriculum?

¿Cuál es su opinión sobre el currículo en cuanto al cumplimiento de las necesidades de los estudiantes con español de lengua heredada? ¿Qué cambiaría? ¿Cree que debería existir un programa separado (por qué sí o por qué no)? Si hubiera un programa así, ¿qué incluiría en el currículo?

Appendix B: Summary of Teacher Responses

Topic	Vanessa	Gabriela	Carla
Who are heritage learners	Somebody born in the U.S. exposed to another language at home, but learns it in school	Somebody who uses another language at home and whose first language at home is not English	Somebody whose parents came from another country and another language is spoken at home
How to identify a heritage learner	Talking to the students at the beginning of the year and learning about their family backgrounds and identity Uses a placement test to identify where in the traditional sequence heritage learners should be placed (typically in Spanish 2 or 3)	When the student is ahead of others and speaks in Spanish in class	When the students talk in "dialect" or an indigenous language that the teacher doesn't understand
Skills of heritage learners	Varies on the student's exposure, but typically cultural experiences and listening skills, sometimes reading	No direct answer, but listening and speech implied	Reading, using cognates from English, singing Peer tutoring

Needs of heritage learners	Literacy (grammar and writing), learning how to accept themselves and create their identity	Writing (including spelling and conjugations), hands-on cultural experiences	Building a richer vocabulary that goes beyond the home language

Writing, reading, and listening

Grammar (goes into detail about conjugations) |
| Differentiation for heritage learners | Stations, prepare lessons based on student backgrounds, RTI grouping, using authentic texts | She has heritage learners expand on their writing or speaking, to mixed results | Speaks in English and Spanish and has the instructions and materials in both languages |
| What activities work well for heritage learners | Thematic units (in lieu of teaching grammar out of context)

Free voluntary reading (including authentic texts); she mentions how, as a student, she liked reading authentic texts | Speaking, especially on topics related to identity and cultural traditions | Recordings (speaking)

Research projects (carefully structured)

Group and collaborative work

Multicultural day |

Connections to the community and home culture	Centers her units around authentic experiences	Has the heritage learners bring up their own experiences in class activities (such as how they celebrate holidays and their traditions)	Mentions one uncooperative student who was engaged only on a project where he got to research his heritage country
	Communicates with parents (but only about student performance); communication is challenging because of language gaps and parents missing out on information	No service or experiential learning done	During Multicultural Day, students collaborate across grades to prepare a party and the parents help the students prepare food: students respond very well and parents also enjoy it.
	Works with students from local colleges, but has not reached out herself		
	No service or experiential learning done		
Need for a separate program	A program needs to be established to provide equity for different groups of learners	The existing curriculum is effective to an extent, primarily in regard to language objectives, but a heritage program would provide better material for the students	Against the idea because she thinks the students in mixed classes learn from each other well

What changes should be made	Shift to a language arts type of curriculum built around thematic units and incorporating history and culture	She would include more hands-on activities, including going out into community sites like *bodegas* and cooking dishes from the students' home cultures. She also mentions how she would have more personalized discussions where the kids talk from their own experiences and share. She would include literature and art. Students would have a choice with the books.	More time to work one-on-one with students, including office hours
Respect for the students' home language	She mentioned that, as a student, the teacher wanted her to slow down	Mentions having heritage learners use their vocabulary from home When learning new vocabulary words, the heritage learners use their home language (including English if they are more comfortable) to define the word instead of just translating it	Mistakes students' Spanish dialects for indigenous languages Tries to teach by making connections from students' home language and grammatical points Believes that the students know less than they claim to know Says that they lack metalinguistic skills

Student identity	Mentions several times the importance of working on questions of identity in class	Students who take pride in themselves and their education succeed in her class	Mentions the importance of Hispanic students not losing their *lengua*
	Mentioned the benefit in her own experience of having a class with students from similar backgrounds	Cultural diversity is an important part of the student experience at this school	Avoids discussing immigration because it is sensitive to students
			There are no lessons on identity
Relationship with the students and families	She mentions that, as a student, the personal connection with the teacher and shared cultural values were extremely important	Feels frustrated with the heritage learners at times because they are too ahead of the other students and she feels like she isn't able to support or teach them well	Difficult to say; she claims students respect her for the "way she talks" but goes into detail about student's bullying her, a student who threatened physical violence against her and a student who refused to participate in class that she referred to the social worker
	Stays in touch with families, but only about performance in class and the students often don't like that		A student accused her of being racist over their grade
			Contacts the families when there is a problem
			Multicultural Day is a positive example of family participation

Mixed classes	Mixed classes in general are not working: too much time needed for planning differentiation and L2 learners need direct instruction, one group drowns out the other in class (typically, L2s are getting drowned out by the heritage learners in class and she finds herself teaching to the heritage learners, unconsciously excluding the L2s) Heritage learners and native speakers can work well together, heritage learners help them with English and the native speakers help with Spanish; heritage learners can sometimes work well with L2 learners as well	Heritage learners sometimes act as "co-teachers" Activities that might be interesting to heritage learners are not done because she is working on "catching-up" the L2 learners Heritage learners are bored; she has to spend most of her time with the L2 learners Feels like she is "focusing more on teaching the language that sometimes, [culture] is left out"	She believes that they work well because students of different abilities learn from each other
Motivation and engagement of heritage language students	Becoming more difficult to keep students interested and engaged	Students are disengaged and resistant to her efforts to get them to expand on their language	Students are disengaged and resistant; she believes students have family issues

Teacher education	Teacher education does not adequately prepare pre-service teachers to work with heritage learners, the information she needed came from Spanish courses	n/a	Teaching is a second career for her, she originally specialized in public relations; much of her experience in the field comes from prior work experience (such as substitute teaching)
Administration and curriculum	Access to authentic texts is an issue She does not use the textbook, considers it to be old and unhelpful Not a true curriculum, which allows her to have creative freedom, but she mentions that this gives teachers a *carte blanche* to teach however they like (including straight from the textbook) and creates gaps across schools and teachers throughout the district The scheduling system prevents teachers from doing service learning and activities in the community	There is too much material to cover, so it becomes difficult to incorporate community-based activities The curriculum is focused more on language than culture Teachers aren't included in decision making Students need to be surveyed on what they want to get out of the class The district should not just copy models from other places; any program should be based around community context and the leadership should be from within the community	Constant change in placement between several schools Usage of computer programs to teach, finds them helpful The district uses too many programs Does not use the textbook

Appendix C: Instances of Themes in Teacher Interviews

Note: These are transcribed verbatim and non standard language is preserved, as well as code-switching. Any modifications for context are in brackets.

Theme	Quote and Teacher Name
Heritage learners as sources of knowledge	"Strengthen the language my students are coming with… it's not a foreign language for them" (Vanessa)
	"I [as a heritage learner] understood the language, understood the spoken language" (Vanessa)
	"They bring a lot of culture, cultural experiences with them" (Vanessa)
	"They have that auditory usually already… developed" (Vanessa)
	"I think being exposed to the language, having that access to the language elsewhere, helps them catch on like the speaking, the listening, and sometimes even the reading" (Vanessa)
	"If there is something that requires English, then I can team up my heritage learners and my native speakers and they work out" (Vanessa)
	"I try to center a lot of what I do around [the heritage learners'] authentic experiences" (Vanessa)
	"I want the students to look into their family backgrounds… and do a bit of research on what they do know, what experiences that they had with that topic" (Vanessa)
	"[I'm] trying to find ways to tie whatever theme or whatever unit we're in with [ther heritage learners'] lives" (Vanessa)
	"[Heritage learners] can speak Spanish, and they can have or they can hold a conversation" (Gabriela)
	"Instead of teaching them 'okay, this is Puerto Rico… and the capital of Puerto Rico is San Juan'… most of them already know it" (Gabriela)
	"Have them do more like history and understand how their parents got here" (Gabriela)
	"You can go right into the lesson and have [the heritage learners] using those vocabs in their experience" (Gabriela)
	"Most of [the heritage learners] can say it better than me" (Gabriela)
	"[Heritage learners] wanna be the example to try to get the other kids to speak" (Gabriela)
	"Speak about their backgrounds, where they come from… to be an example or a model in front of the classroom" (Gabriela)

	"[When] we're learning a new… set of vocab, so what I do is ask [the heritage learners] to explain… not to translate, but to explain what the word is to the rest of the class… use them… as a co-teacher" (Gabriela) "Use [heritage learners] to give some examples like… at home, what they hear their parents speaking about" (Gabriela) "For instance, when it comes to holidays, Christmas, ask [the heritage learners] like how they do, how they celebrate them" (Gabriela) "Bringing into it and what they have experience, I feel like it gets them more… they feel more valuable" (Gabriela) "Instead of teaching them the vocabs about food or all that, have them bring a dish from the country and talk about it, talk about the ingredients, teaching each other about each other's culture" (Gabriela) "Survey the students" (Gabriela) "I feel like, in that sense, we have very lucky… with all different backgrounds, but at the same time, we're not using that to… help the students" (Gabriela) "When they're reading, they can understand because some word is like the English in the Spanish" (Carla) "Every single day [the heritage learners] use the word, so that way I'm teaching now" (Carla) "You has to combine both [heritage learners and L2 learners] because they learn to another person" (Carla) "Even me too, [heritage learners] teach me" (Carla) [In response to a question on peer tutoring] "Yeah, tutoring [for Spanish]" (Carla)
Dominance of one group in the classroom	"But when you have [heritage learners, L2 learners, and native speakers] mixed in, or you have your heritage learners and your L2 learners… it gets a little more difficult to really reach both groups" (Vanessa) "One group ends up drowning out… the other" (Vanessa) "As much as you don't want to, you gravitate towards one group… I had a class of mostly heritage learners and maybe two L2 learners… I've been teaching to the group of heritage learners and almost forgetting, without wanting to, the other two students" (Vanessa) "You have a few students that can be quiet the whole time… they just feel like they don't have a voice because the other students are overpowering in the class and the airtime" (Vanessa) [In response to a question about if native speakers are dominating the classroom] "Absolutely" (Vanessa)

	"There are those kids who need more attention, trying to bring them up to the heritage learner… with their learning, so it takes a little bit more time" (Gabriela)
	[In response to a question about L2 learners taking up her classroom time] "Yes, definitely… they don't know how to respond to you or they have no idea what you're talking about… heritage learner, it will go by more like, way faster" (Gabriela)
	"There's so much work trying to bring both of them and have a balance" (Gabriela)
"Incomplete" or broken language in heritage learners	"When they have to produce written work, the grammar's not there 100%" (Vanessa)
	[In response to a question on what heritage learners need the most in the classroom] "With their conjugations, maybe just the way of s, writing with the accents" (Gabriela)
	"When it comes to writing, maybe [heritage learners are] like 'Oh, like, I don't know how to spell that. I can say it, but I don't know how to spell it.' It can be "Am I spelling it wrong?' if not 'I get a lot of stuff wrong, you're always telling me this or that'" (Gabriela)
	[On identifying heritage learners] "When they talk a dialect, they're like uh, Guatemala, they talk in K'iche'... they talk in Mexico, they talk in another language like, *india* thing" (Carla)
	"They need connection with the word… they need to working on the vocabulary" (Carla)
	"They know, *pero* they don't know what is the meaning" (Carla)
	"They think, um, they know more that they know… and the final, they don't know anything and they say 'Miss, *pero yo hablo español y yo no sé cómo yo me quemé*' '*Tú no hace' nada*'" (Carla)
	"Writing, listening and understand because it is, they can't understand what, when I explain they can't do anything, even like… conjugate in the past" (Carla)
	"They think they know more than what think that's they know" (Carla)
Importance of family and home culture connections	"We like to start the year with identity and that really helps me identify [heritage learners] when we're discussing where we come from, our families' background" (Vanessa)
	[In response to a question on what heritage learners need in the class] "I also think that just spending a piece on, I guess identity, really knowing who they are, like realizing their heritage and accepting it" (Vanessa)
	"[I have] books about different countries and, like, sports… it really depends what they're interested in" (Vanessa)
	"I want the students to look into their family backgrounds… and do a bit of research on what they do know, what experiences that they had with that topic" (Vanessa)

"We are always encouraged to reach out to families… we don't just call home for bad things, we try to call home to praise the students for doing a good job, let families know what's happening" (Vanessa)

"Bring some culture experience into the classroom… as if they were visiting the country… where their family's from" (Gabriela)

"Bringing in someone with experience and talking about the countries and have them do more like history and understand how their parents got here" (Gabriela)

[In response to a question on what's working in class] "When they have to speak, so to say, to speak about their backgrounds, where they came from" (Gabriela)

"Use [heritage learners] to give some examples like… at home, what they hear their parents speaking about" (Gabriela)

"For instance, when it comes to holidays, Christmas, ask [the heritage learners] like how they do, how they celebrate them" (Gabriela)

"Bringing into it and what they have experience, I feel like it gets them more… they feel more valuable" (Gabriela)

"Instead of teaching them the vocabs about food or all that, have them bring a dish from the country and talk about it, talk about the ingredients, teaching each other about each other's culture" (Gabriela)

"[Reaching out to families and community organizations] probably should be incorporate" (Gabriela)

"I would probably include more like hands-on stuff, maybe do more 'let's go out in the community, let's go out like in the *bodegas* maybe and have them work and interact with the community that's coming in shopping" (Gabriela)

"Let's spend more time… teaching each other about each other's culture… have them talk about how their family get together for a supper" (Gabriela)

"Don't just see what other district is doing… cause every district is different, every community is built up different" (Gabriela)

"They use all these words in the house in every single, in daily life… so that way I'm teaching now" (Carla)

"He working only for one project… is because, I say choose the country you wanna work and they choose for the mom country" (Carla)

"Hispanic people, they has to… don't lose you own *lengua*" (Carla)

[On Multicultural Day] "[We] invite their parents to see what they students, they learn, and the parents, they enjoy it too, because the parent, they cooked with the student and they recorded with the student too!" (Carla)

	"[The parents are] teaching what kind of food they do in the country" (Carla) "One student they want to talk to me about the immigration or the, maybe their house, so I can, I can enjoy that" (Carla)
Broken curriculum	"My goal would be to read one book per year… I think access to those books has really made it an issue" (Vanessa) "It's been a little harder to keep [the students] engaged, but it's now more than ever… I realize we need a program *for* [heritage learners]" (Vanessa) "[I] stray really far away from our textbooks, that are older than some of our students" (Vanessa) "We have a framework, we don't have a real curriculum, so it allows you to go as deep as you need… or just go as, like skim the surface" (Vanessa) "The way the school's schedule is set up, getting the kids out of the building doesn't always work out" (Vanessa) "The current curriculum… has to do with what the teacher's willing to do" (Vanessa) "Not everyone follows the framework, some teachers do just teach from the book… they already have their own way of doing things and are not willing to change" (Vanessa) "I have not done [community activities] because we don't have that heritage program and it's like, we are always trying to catch-up with the rest of the class" (Gabriela) "The mixed class, I don't think it really works, especially like in the lower levels for Spanish 1" (Gabriela) [Describing the current approach to teaching vocabulary in class] "Tell them, 'this is how you say it, this is what it means'" (Gabriela) "[Heritage learners are] done with their work… they're clearly like 'Ugh, what am I doing here? Why am I in this class?' when… they're there because they need credit" (Gabriela) "There's definitely a need for a curriculum where we focus on… heritage learner or the kids that already speak Spanish" (Gabriela) "Art, books, talking about the authors… all that stuff that we don't get to include right now in what we have to do" (Gabriela) "I think [what's needed] is more input from the teachers… from the students too" (Gabriela) "We have school communities built… with all different backgrounds, but at the same time, we're not using that to, like, help the students" (Gabriela)

	"They no enjoy the book… *ese libro tan grande, ¡y yo voy a leer eso!*" (Carla)
	"The students, they no want to do anything and they say, 'Miss, don't wasting time with me because I no want to anything… I no want to learn anything'" (Carla)
	"We has too many thing in the platforms… too many program" (Carla)
Priority of teaching of the standard language	"If we are focusing on literacy… strengthening the writing, so I would focus more on grammar there" (Vanessa)
	"When they have to produce written work, the grammar's not there 100%" (Vanessa)
	"[Heritage learners] might need a little help where they need to build more on their academics, so to speak, in Spanish" (Gabriela)
	[In response to a question on what heritage learners need the most in the classroom] "With their conjugations, maybe just the way of s, writing with the accents" (Gabriela)
	[Describing the current approach to teaching vocabulary in class] "Tell them, 'this is how you say it, this is what it means'" (Gabriela)
	"When it comes to writing, maybe [heritage learners are] like 'Oh, like, I don't know how to spell that. I can say it, but I don't know how to spell it.' It can be "Am I spelling it wrong?' if not 'I get a lot of stuff wrong, you're always telling me this or that'" (Gabriela)
	"I feel like [heritage learners] are left behind because it's like focusing more on teaching the language that sometimes, that [cultural] part is left out" (Gabriela)
	"They don't know where [the grammar] come from, so now I'm teaching what, where they come from" (Carla)
	"Writing, listening and understand because it is, they can't understand what, when I explain they can't do anything, even like… conjugate in the past" (Carla)
Disconnect between teachers and students	"Not everyone follows the framework, some teachers do just teach from the book… they already have their own way of doing things and are not willing to change" (Vanessa)
	[On teaching heritage learners] "It's been sometimes… frustrating… it makes me feel like… not a good teacher" (Gabriela)
	[When heritage learners realize they are being asked to expand on their work] "I feel like they try to push back if they realize that's what's going on" (Gabriela)
	"When it comes to writing, maybe [heritage learners are] like 'Oh, like, I don't know how to spell that. I can say it, but I don't know how to spell it.' It can be "Am I spelling it wrong?' if not 'I get a lot of stuff wrong, you're always telling me this or that'" (Gabriela)

| | [In reference to administration] "Bringing people from all over the country making decisions that has no idea what's going on, or what community they're serving" (Gabriela)

[On identifying heritage learners] "When they talk a dialect, they're like uh, Guatemala, they talk in K'iche'... they talk in Mexico, they talk in another language like, *india* thing" (Carla)

"I send him to the social worker, I send to the counselor" (Carla)
"The students, they no want to do anything and they say, 'Miss, don't wasting time with me because I no want to anything… I no want to learn anything'" (Carla)

"I want to help a lot the student and he know I want to help but… he say 'No, no, no, no, Miss Carla, don't wasting time with me… I don't wanna do anything'" (Carla)

"The students [in middle school], they enjoy bullying me" (Carla)

[When asked about staying in touch with parents] "Every time would you have problem, you has to communicate with the parent… you has to document everything" (Carla)

"[The student] say I'm put the bad grade because I'm racist" (Carla) |

Appendix D: Summary of Student Responses

Topic	Luka	Julia
Spanish Language	Says he only spoke Spanish at home and school because speaking Spanish out of these places would lead to trouble. Would only speak Spanish at a store if others were speaking it or he saw it. Spoke Spanish with both his aunt and his cousins, but he mentions that his cousins' language "wasn't that good… they have that accent" and that his aunt would lapse into Spanglish. He consciously avoids speaking in Spanglish because it is a "bad habit." The teacher's Spanish (Dominican) was different from his own and he felt like he had to modify his home language to Dominican Spanish in the classroom. When the teacher deducts points for the student's home dialect, it's humiliating and lowers self-esteem.	Spanish is one of her two languages, but it is the language she primarily uses at home Spanish is strongly related to her identity and her Dominican roots; Spanish evokes warm feelings of home and family Says she likes learning the Spanish of her Honduran stepmother; refers to it as "formal" Spanish Her grandmother only really speaks Spanish (she can understand English) and for a while she spoke English to her, but now only speaks in Spanish *with* her As a child, the school wanted her to only speak English and punished her for speaking Spanish; they put her into ESL classes; at times, she felt unsure of her identity and how to navigate with both languages Spanish was widely spoken in her community Describes the Spanish taught at school as formal and European Says that reading and writing in Spanish are difficult for her

Funds of Knowledge	His aunt primarily speaks Spanish, but he mentions that she occasionally speaks Spanglish	Bilingual, says she had to learn two languages at the same time because she comes from a Spanish household
	His aunt maintains Mexican cultural traditions (ie. *Día de los Muertos*)	Mother and grandmother own daycare businesses
	His mother in Mexico is a nurse	Her mother came to the U.S. very young, her father immigrated later in life (in his 20s)
	His aunt works in a factory that makes medical supplies	
	He lived in both the U.S. and Mexico at different points of his life and did some of his schooling in Mexico. Said that "going back and forth, you see a lot of things, you mature in the mind pretty fast."	Father is a painter
		Her parents are divorced, but she feels lucky to be able to have two households
		Her stepmother is from Honduras and has many recipes for dishes from there that she cooks for the family
		Spent a lot of time outside of school helping her grandmother and at church
Relations with Peers	As a small child, the other students treated him well until he reached 5th grade	Had many different friends across different groups of people; spoke Spanish, Spanglish, and English depending on the person
	Was respected in high school because of his maturity	In class, peers were willing to help her when she needed it
	Says that the other students in high school "liked [his] accent"	
	Was isolated from his classmates, not only because of their immaturity, but because of their different ethnic heritage	
	Says that he could only relate to his classmates in the sense that they all spoke Spanish	
	He was afraid of talking to peers outside of classwork in Spanish class because it	

	would be an invitation for bullying: "they didn't hold back at all"	
Role of the Community	Describes his neighborhood as "ghettoish" and racially and economically segregated (wealthier "Americans" on one side and poor blacks and Dominicans on the other) His aunt forbade him from doing much outside of school because of her concerns about gangs and drugs in the neighborhood Says he only spoke Spanish at home and school because speaking Spanish out of these places would lead to trouble His aunt made him attend a bilingual Catholic church, but he didn't feel any connection to it	Says she grew up in the housing projects Spanish was the primary language of the community Her neighborhood was primarily Latino, says it was a tight-knit community Mentions the local *bodegas* as a place where she would speak Spanish and how she got to know the store owners well Church was another important community site for her

Relation with Teachers	He says his teacher was kind, but because she was Dominican and her Spanish (as well as her culture) was different, he couldn't relate to her He says multiple times that his teacher would correct his language, explicitly saying that "if you don't do it like this, you get it wrong" He felt like his Spanish was not good enough for the teacher and he had to change his language for her Even though the teacher tried treating him fairly, he felt alienated and even intimidated by the teacher, to a point where he didn't want to ask her questions because of a fear that "she wouldn't understand"	Had a very strong and positive relationship with her teachers and says she could trust them and that they would put it lots of effort to work with her when she needed help Mentions Ms. Álvarez helping her with the recital of a poem in particular Says that the teachers were interested in learning about the students' identities Ms. Álvarez made an effort to reach out to students who weren't necessarily interested or engaged The teachers were role models for her and she mentions that the similar background was especially important Teachers did not correct her *dominicanismos*, but encouraged her to use the formal language In general, teachers were extremely supportive and made efforts to work with all the students

Class and School Dynamics	He describes one Mexican girl who grew up in the U.S. as being "scared" and he would sit with her in the corner to help her	As a child, she would speak Spanish at school and be reprimanded for doing so; she was placed in ESL classes for several years
	The one L2 learner (who, from his description, was white) was viciously bullied by the Latino students	Describes her class as being mixed-race and mixed ethnicity, but that the students seemed to get along well
	The school is heavily segregated and there is an ethnic hierarchy among Latino students with Dominicans at the top, Guatemalans in the middle, and all other Latinos at the bottom. He says the Dominicans saw themselves as superior and would mock Guatemalan students.	One fellow student who had stronger reading and writing abilities in Spanish worked with her to improve; students who helped her would be considered native speakers because they did their schooling in a Spanish-speaking country
	Behavior in the classroom could get out of control, up to a point where some students were sexually harassing the teacher	When there were opportunities for everyone to share their culture with the class, she says that they became more of a community
	He says the teacher made an initiative to dedicate time to L2 students, including after school time	When she had difficulty with reading and writing, she had developed a support network after she stepped out of her comfort zone and approached the teacher or classmates
	He says the teacher would pay attention to Latino students only if they showed an interest	The school administration made efforts to celebrate the diversity of the students (for example, the murals)
	He says the teacher was at times distracted by issues with the school department/union	
	He says the teacher unconsciously did not respect other Spanish dialects and the teacher, though she briefly talked about different Spanish dialects, maintained her own and did not modify it for the students	

Spanish Class	Says the majority of students already knew Spanish and we're taking the class because it was easy and they could get AP credit. He was motivated by the promise of AP credits. Says he enjoyed the class only because of the teacher He felt like he didn't belong in the class, felt alienated Ironically, he enjoyed working in groups in class because the other students knew they had to be on-task He was afraid of talking to peers outside of classwork in Spanish class because it would be an invitation for bullying: "they didn't hold back at all" Hated grammar lessons, especially accent marks The prestige dialect was enforced in the class and the teacher would take off points for his usage of *mexicanismos* The textbook was used for group work and readings Mexican culture was only even discussed at the surface level in class Culture in general was talked about on a surface level (for example, all he learned about Dominicans was that they eat *plátanos*) A little bit of literature, no history or politics Immigration was a recurring theme	Says she really enjoyed the Spanish classes she took The Spanish taught was formal and European, but she enjoyed learning it because she could compare it with her Spanish and connected it to the Spanish spoken by her stepmother Says that the class helped her to learn that there are other dialects of Spanish and that it is worth adding to her own language so that she can communicate and relate to people of different backgrounds and that this has been helpful in the professional sense as well Ms. Álvarez's class provided students with many opportunities to speak and talk about their cultures Ms. Álvarez stressed the importance of being bilingual No penalties for the usage of *dominicanismos*; that being said, writing exactly how the word is pronounced in the student's home dialect would lead to points taken off if it didn't match standard norms of the written language She loved opportunities to read and especially to write in Spanish, she mentions her AP Spanish teacher who had the class journal in Spanish and write about whatever was on their mind She liked being able to learn about her roots and explore in depth her identity as a Dominican-American

			She enjoyed grammar instruction and being able to compare the differences between her speech and the writing
			She enjoyed Culture Week as it was an opportunity to share aspects of the students' home cultures (especially through food) and that the classroom really became a community through activities like that
			For her, expression of identity was recurrent throughout all of her classes and it made her feel motivated and accepted
			When she had difficulty with reading and writing, she had developed a support network after she stepped out of her comfort zone and approached the teacher or classmates
			She enjoyed projects where she got to research another culture that wasn't as familiar (she mentions Uruguay in particular)

Changes to the Classroom and Program	Wants discipline to improve and be culturally appropriate (claims Latino students learn from being lectured in front of the class)	The classroom environment was perfect; she would only like the class to be longer and have more opportunities for writing
	More group projects that touch on the cultures of different countries, not just the ones of the majority	Some more of the history and culture would be ideal, but she says that it would be difficult with the curriculum
	No deduction of points for using home dialects, as long as it is understood and respect for other dialects of Spanish that might be less familiar to the teacher	Mixed-feelings about a separate class for heritage learners because while each group can get better tailored instruction, students might feel excluded and there is a loss of the diverse classroom community
	Would like to explore different dialects of Spanish in content	
	Would like assignments where he could share his cultural and ethnic background, but in an anonymous way	
	Open to a language arts style curriculum, but it needs the sociolinguistic piece	
	Supportive of separating the HLLs and native speakers from the L2s	

Appendix E: Instances of Themes in Student Interviews

Note: These are transcribed verbatim and non standard language is preserved, as well as code-switching. Any modifications for context are in brackets.

Theme	Quote and Student Name
Enforcement of a more locally prestigious dialect (Dominican Spanish and/or formal European Spanish)	"I would say like [to the teacher], 'What are you saying, I don't do that,' and she would be like, 'Oh yeah, but if you don't do it like this, you get it wrong'" (Luka) "A new kid joined the Spanish class and he... was American because he didn't know the Spanish well… and he [got bullied]" (Luka) "Whenever a Guatemalan would try to talk to a Dominican student, they'll make fun of him" (Luka) "I wouldn't like that the Spanish of my Spanish and the teacher's were different… I would always have a clash in my head, like now I gotta change the way I think of this, now can I write it like this" (Luka) "I did feel like my Spanish was just not invited in the classroom, like I had to adjust, I had to force myself to use Spanish, um, in a Dominican way and not in the Mexican way that I grew up with" (Luka) [In response to a question on whether different kinds of Spanish were respected in the classroom] "Unconsciously, no. I know she didn't mean it, but… it wasn't" (Luka) "She wouldn't really try to adjust [her Spanish], even for the little, us, like me and my friend, she would just stick to her own Spanish" (Luka) [In response to a question on whether the teacher would deduct points for the usage of *mexicanismos*] "All the time. That's why I had to force myself to write it down the way she wanted and not the way I grew up writing it" (Luka) [In response to a question on whether he had to use formal 'textbook' Spanish] "Yes. It was annoying, I'm not going to lie, I hated it… I don't wanna lose points, so I couldn't complain, you know?" (Luka) "It was something, somewhat uncomfortable for me to actually ask [the teacher] a question or talk to her, all because we wouldn't actually connect or she wouldn't understand what I was trying to ask her" (Luka) "It's like you're forcing us to speak the way you do and write the way you do even though, just because that's the way you do it" (Luka) [On why separate programs are needed] "Watching from what I saw, all [the Anglophone student] got from that class was bullying" (Luka)

	"The Spanish that you take in high school, it's not like the informal Spanish which I was talking about earlier, it's more like a formal Spanish because it's European" (Julia) "In the way us Dominicans speak, we take out the endings, so every time she discussed that with us, I would like, smile, I'm like 'Ooh! But we don't pronounce it this way,' but 'Oh, you do pronounce this way'" (Julia) "She was correcting our essays and, for example, she would like take points off because of our Domini-, our, the way we wrote the word and she's like, 'You guys are doing great, remember we're doing European Spanish'" (Julia)
Spanish as a part of individual cultural identity	"My family always stays attached to their culture, even though they go to the U.S." (Luka) "I try not to let [Spanglish] rub off on me" (Luka) "In Mexico, we, um, use Spanish words differently" (Luka) "Don't take away points [for usage of home dialects] because not only is it disrespectful, but it also lowers the self-esteem of Spanish-speakers" (Luka) [On correction of home dialects] "You only lowered the self-esteem of the Spanish speaker and you make them well, feel like they don't know anything" (Luka) "Have a respectful way for each Spanish grammar, because every, different cultures, it's correct, just because we use different words doesn't mean it [isn't] correct" (Luka) "Coming from a Spanish, you know, household, I was required to learn two languages at the same time" (Julia) "There's different types of Spanish… like the informal one, which is what we Dominicans kinda speak" (Julia) "I was in that point of, you know, trying to see where my identity lies, sometimes like I would get home and I'd speak English to [my grandmother]... [but] it's different when you come home and you speak your home language, you know, your native language to the people surrounding you" (Julia) [Describing why she started speaking Spanish to her grandmother again] "It was my, kind, my coming-of-age moment where I was like 'No, I have to learn about my roots, because this is important to her, this is important to my family, and it's a part of who I am'" (Julia) "Coming home talking my native language to her, it's just something that's un, unexplainable, cause it hits home and your able to speak that loving language that relates, you know, to those surrounding you" (Julia) "The only place I spoke English was in school. Yeah, cause most of, in my neighborhood, most of my neighbors, they were Latinos" (Julia)

	"I only went to the *bodegas* and stuff like that, we spoke a lot of Spanish and, like, I got to know those who were the owners of the store… you can describe it as a tight-knit community" (Julia) "I really like Spanish… and just learning about, you know, my Spanish root" (Julia)
Importance of cultural and linguistic pluralism	[In response to a question on what he would change in the curriculum] "More group projects that involve different cultures" (Luka) [In response to a question on what he would change in the curriculum] "Not taking away points if other people's Spanish is different" (Luka) "Don't take away points [for usage of home dialects] because not only is it disrespectful, but it also lowers the self-esteem of Spanish-speakers" (Luka) [On correction of home dialects] "You only lowered the self-esteem of the Spanish speaker and you make them well, feel like they don't know anything" (Luka) "Have a respectful way for each Spanish grammar, because every, different cultures, it's correct, just because we use different words doesn't mean it [isn't] correct" (Luka) "If a student is [speaking their home language] and the students make fun of him or they criticize him… you shouldn't be… criticized for it" (Luka) "I would have enjoyed learning… to write in different Spanishes" (Luka) "I would have liked… to know how and why the other cultures in Hispanic cultures write the Spanish the way they do" (Luka) [In response to a question on if he would have liked being able to talk about his home culture in class] "I would have like, enjoyed to work on that, because I feel like we would just… have different perspective for everybody" (Luka) "Even though some of us, some of my classmates, they didn't have a background in, um, being Hispanic or being a Latino, they were able to, to basically learn and were able to share our identities and see that we're not as different as it seems" (Julia) "You can't just limit yourself to… your own basically form of Spanish" (Julia) [When asked if she would lose points for using *dominicanismos* in class] "No, we wouldn't!" (Julia) [Talking about Culture Week] "We also talked about our different cultures and what it means to be a Dominican, for example, what it means to be a Guatemalan, for example, and [the teacher] took days out to incorporate that, which made [the class] feel more like a home" (Julia) [When asked about things she would like to see added to the class] "Maybe more history about each culture" (Julia)

Incorporation of cultural identity as a best practice in the classroom	[In response to a question on if he would have liked being able to talk about his home culture in class] "Yes, like making a paper of what we know, our background, and where we come from, cause everybody's different" (Luka) "My teachers, they also allowed us to share like who we are, our identities, and different parts, you kno, cause I remember in my Spanish classes… there were various people, there were Guatemalans, there were Dominicans, there were Puerto Ricans" (Julia) "Even though some of us, some of my classmates, they didn't have a background in, um, being Hispanic or being a Latino, they were able to, to basically learn and were able to share our identities and see that we're not as different as it seems" (Julia) "I really like Spanish… and just learning about, you know, my Spanish root" (Julia) "We had to take our journals and write how [our] day was, how our weekend was, write whatever we want, like free writing in Spanish… I just love it" (Julia) [Talking about Culture Week] "We also talked about our different cultures and what it means to be a Dominican, for example, what it means to be a Guatemalan, for example, and [the teacher] took days out to incorporate that, which made [the class] feel more like a home" (Julia) "I feel like with Spanish class, I feel like every time you walk in, it was like an opportunity to share your story… [the teacher] was also flexible in being, getting able to know us… she made it like an opportunity every time you stepped into her classroom to get to know more about you and I, that's why I feel like I felt more love with, you know, learning more about my roots" (Julia) "It's not just another class, I can share who I am, I can share, you know, my identity… they didn't push us to the side, they actually, you know, listened to you" (Julia)
Teacher efforts for equity in class	"[The teacher] was always saying stuff of how the Bayside schools, like they don't care about learning, all they care about is the numbers, like it's not fair how us teachers were putting all this effort, but the schools are limiting us, but overall she tried to make the best of it" (Luka) "For non-speaking-Spanish students, [the teacher] actually, uh, after class she always be open to help them out" (Luka) "[The teacher] always tried to give us attention" (Luka) "I actually did enjoy the class… because of the teacher because she actually tried her best, she tried to make the best out of it, even for us, the students" (Luka) "[The teacher] did mention [linguistic diversity] at a certain point because she realized that there was a huge variety of students" (Luka) "I could tell she tried treating me fairly" (Luka)

"The educators, they were very helpful, they were very understanding, and when you didn't understand the material, they would sit back with you and help you" (Julia)

[On talking about a poem she was having trouble reading] "Ms. Álvarez, she sat with me and helped me" (Julia)

"Even though some of us, some of my classmates, they didn't have a background in, um, being Hispanic or being a Latino, they were able to, to basically learn and were able to share our identities and see that we're not as different as it seems" (Julia)

"Even if some of my classmates didn't know the language, [Ms. Álvarez] tried very hard to influence it and teach us the importance of knowing another language" (Julia)

"[Ms. Álvarez] always gave us opportunities and allowed us to participate and even when she saw that um, some classmates wouldn't participate, she would basically, as we say, 'flip the switch,' and try to use other participation tactics" (Julia)

"A lot of my classmates… even if they weren't interested, [Ms. Álvarez] would basically speak to them and allow them to share where they're coming from" (Julia)

"I feel like with Spanish class, I feel like every time you walk in, it was like an opportunity to share your story… [the teacher] was also flexible in being, getting able to know us" (Julia)

"I wasn't the best reader or writer in the class, but they helped me and I, I really appreciated them for that" (Julia)

"Even those students that, they would find themselves occasionally saying, 'Oh, I don't understand this, I can't understand Spanish,' truly, just seeing the way she worked with them and put that passion inside them to do their work, it made me just wanna be in the class more" (Julia)