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THE ESSENCE OF THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PERSPECTIVES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF UNIVERSITY SPANISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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OF UNIVERSITY SPANISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

To my fellow language teachers present and future: May the findings from this work inspire you to teach with an open mind, compassion, and patience. We can achieve wonderful things in our field simply by listening to and supporting our students. They are amazing teachers in their own right.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Abstract

U.S. schools are emblematic of the increasingly linguistic and cultural diversity present in this country. Despite this well-documented shift, U.S. foreign language teacher education programs have yet to align learning outcomes with the cognitive and affective needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Providing educators with opportunities to learn about and prepare for the needs of these students is essential, but this alone will not address the essence of the underlying problem. If foreign language teacher education programs are to evolve, a deeper understanding of the teaching/learning process is critical.

In response to this need, this qualitative study explored how multiple participant groups affiliated with a Spanish program at a U.S. Southwest university described their lived experiences and perceptions regarding the teaching and learning of Spanish. Principles from case study and grounded theory methodologies were used to provide a flexible body of knowledge through which current and prospective educators can better

recognize and attend to their students' learning needs. The data collection and analysis were grounded in Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* [one's lived experiences], *vospitanie* [nurturing], and *obuchenie* [teaching/learning process]. This framework allowed for a conceptual understanding of how the dialectical unity of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie*, combined with an understanding of students' sociohistorical and emotional experiences, yields opportunities for reciprocal teaching and learning between an educator and her students.

Insight gleaned from the findings therefore has implications for the evolution of teacher education programs. To provide equitable instruction across all learner profiles, teachers need to understand how an openness and willingness to listen and learn from their students can help them take pride in and control of their own learning. This is the essence of an efficacious pedagogy.

Keywords: qualitative study, foreign language teacher preparation, Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, *obuchenie*, efficacious pedagogy

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Key Terminology

To facilitate the clarity of this dissertation, I have provided a list of key terms and concepts that I use or make reference to throughout my study. While some of these terms and concepts may be familiar to the reader, I explain or define each one in order to make explicit how I have operationalized these ideas in my work. Definitions that do not have citations are ones that I have developed through this research process.

Critical Pedagogy: In the context of teacher education programs, there is a need for "prospective teachers to examine the political and cultural role that counter-hegemonic resistance can serve to contest and transform the exclusionary, harmful, and fundamentally undemocratic values and beliefs that inform dominant educational practices in the United States" (Bartolomé, 2004, p. 98). The conscientization of how the educational norms and values of the dominant social class have historically oppressed the voices and lived experiences of marginalized students is what researchers refer to as critical pedagogy (CP).

Interestingly, Brazilian educator and philosopher, Paulo Freire, rarely referred to his social theory as critical pedagogy. Yet, his philosophical contributions serve as seminal sources to the field. His most widely referenced work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/2000), famously denounces the intellectual and socioeconomic oppression of historically disenfranchised peoples. His work has been instrumental in empowering impoverished and illiterate people around the world, and it continues to serve as a foundation from which to develop critical awareness of social justice issues. Various critical theorists, such as Henry Giroux, Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, bell hooks, and others, have further developed Freire's original educational philosophy by

expanding on the goals for a critical approach to education (Bercaw & Stooksberry, 2004). However, the multiple perspectives that shaped the developing framework also produced similarly varied stances on explaining what CP is. In a 2013 interview for *Global Education* magazine, Giroux shared his position on this philosophy:

> Critical pedagogy must be seen as a political and moral project and not a technique. Pedagogy is always political because it is connected to the acquisition of agency. As a political project, critical pedagogy illuminates the relationships among knowledge, authority, and power. It draws attention to questions concerning who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and skills, and it illuminates how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations (Barroso Tristán, interview).

Giroux's distinction of CP as a moral project rather than a technique is important, as I find that educators and researchers in the field often reference CP as a preferred 'methodological approach' in a heritage language classroom. I explain why this perception is problematic in Chapter 5: Analysis and Conclusion.

Foreign, Second, and World Language Education: While the terms 'foreign,' 'second,' and 'world' language education are used interchangeably throughout extant literature, each refers to a specific acquisition context. For example, students learning a second language in the U.S. generally do so in foreign language environments, since their linguistic exposure is often limited to the classroom (Bilash, 2011). Spanish is an obvious exception to this definition, as English-dominant students may still hear and use

the language beyond this learning context. In this case, students are acquiring Spanish as a second language (or heritage) language.

Important to note is that the term 'foreign' language is being replaced in many U.S. K-12 schools in favor of 'second' or 'world' language education, as these latter terms reflect global communication and cultural competence.   However, institutions of higher education still tend to have 'foreign' language departments. The irregular interchangeability of these terms is not unique to K-16 contexts, as this trend is evidenced in the literature as well. For the sake of consistency, I will use the term 'foreign' to connote traditional language teaching practices and language acquisition paradigms. However, I will use 'second' to describe the Spanish language program at my research site, as this is the name of their particular language program.

Heritage Language Learner: The term *heritage language learner* (HLL) is a widely used but generally misunderstood concept. Its multiple definitions exemplify this ambiguity, as there is no agreed upon description that fully captures the historical, social, and psychological experiences of heritage language learners. Indeed, the absence of an agreed upon definition for an HLL may partly explain why foreign language teacher preparation programs still emphasize traditional approaches to language instruction. Valdés (2000) provides the most widely referenced definition of an HLL, explaining that a *heritage language learner* is "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). However, this description is problematic, as it limits what tends to be a fluid linguistic and cultural identity.

To explain, students pursue heritage language studies for a variety of reasons, one of which may be to learn how to speak the language of their grandparents. To deny students the opportunity to enroll in heritage courses simply because their communicative proficiency fails to meet an arbitrarily determined bilingual range is unethical. For this reason, I align my understanding of a *heritage language learner* more closely with Fishman (2001): I define an HLL as any student who identifies culturally or linguistically to the language under study, who may or may not have some linguistic or aural competency.

Learning vs. Development: Social psychologist Lev Vygotsky distinguishes between 'learning' and 'development' in young children. In particular, he argues that 'learning' precedes cognitive development, and it is the learning process that furthers a child's psychical development and understanding of abstract concepts (Mahn, 2003; Vygotsky, 1997).

If we apply this understanding to how teachers learn how to teach, 'development' is something that must be nurtured over time through meaningful teacher-student interactions. As such, I believe an understanding of how teachers perceive their own learning is critical to recognize the ways in which they develop as educators.

Participant Identity Labels: Important to note is that I, as a non-Hispanic researcher have not imposed an identity labels, such as Hispanic, Mexican American, or Latinx, on any of my participants. The focus of this study is on the transparentization of my participants' thoughts, and as such, they selected the identity labels that they would prefer I use. The interchangeability of these labels throughout this manuscript is thus a

reflection of identity terms employed through various literary sources, as well as my participants' personal preferences.

Second vs. Heritage Language Acquisition Theory: Second language acquisition (SLA) theory is the traditional language learning paradigm employed in most foreign language classrooms. Heritage language acquisition (HLA) theory draws on some principles of SLA, such as attention to grammar, but it recognizes that heritage students acquire language in naturalistic settings. It therefore advocates for pedagogical approaches that recognize and build upon the linguistic knowledge heritage students already possess (Lynch, 2003).

Vygotsky's Concepts of Perezhivanie, Vospitanie, and Obuchenie: The interpretation of one's lived experiences shapes how she interacts with and is affected by her environment. This complex dialectical process is what Vygotsky (Mahn, 2012; Vygotsky, 1994) refers to as *perezhivanie*. In simpler terms, *perezhivanie* is manifest through our individual personalities. The way that we engage with our environment shapes our internal thought processes, and the way that we respond to these interactions shapes our environment.

Vygotsky (1997) conceptualizes *vospitanie* as the role of a child's caretaker. It is she who is the child's source of moral guidance and psychological development. In the classroom, this responsibility of care, nurturing, and emotional support falls to the teacher.

Obuchenie encapsulates the social and cognitive developmental relations involved in the teaching/learning process (Johnson, 2009). It is difficult to provide an English translation for *obuchenie* that fully captures the concept of a unified process. When a

teacher provides a level of care to her students, *vospitanie* unifies with *obuchenie* in a single process. When a teacher recognizes and validates *perezhivanie* of her students, she is in a better position to provide a level of *vospitanie* to their individual cognitive and affective needs. The unification of these three concepts is what leads to mutual teaching and learning between a teacher and her students.

<center>**Chapter 1**</center>

<center>**Introduction**</center>

Background

The realization of innovative reform in the field of foreign teacher preparation is a long-standing issue. For the past 40 years, language educators have struggled to adapt to the pedagogical rigors of teaching students who bring with them home and community varieties of their language (Diaz-Greenberg & Nevin, 2003; Veléz-Rendón, 2002). This concern is particularly poignant in traditional Spanish foreign language classrooms, as beginning teachers often do not possess the linguistic knowledge and cultural awareness needed to provide pedagogically appropriate instruction to students who are heritage learners of their language (Vélez-Rendón, 2002). The pervasive issue is that traditional preparation programs train educators to teach Spanish as a foreign language. In reality, Spanish is the language of a rapidly growing minority in the U.S. (The Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). As fallout from this pedagogical disconnect, instructors may inadvertently marginalize Hispanic students' home and community varieties and invalidate their cultural experiences (del Valle, 2014; Leeman, 2005).

The urgency for Spanish educators to recognize and support the linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs of this growing learner demographic has spiked during the past decade, renewing calls for the reconceptualization of the field of foreign language teacher preparation. In particular, methods coursework and experiential learning opportunities that allow "teacher candidates to develop their own theories and become aware of their own learning-to-teach processes" is desperately needed (Vélez-Rendón, 2002, p. 457). Despite the value of this professional training, foreign language teacher

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preparation programs have yet to evolve. I intend to explore through this proposed qualitative multiple-case study underlying factors that continue to hinder professional advancement in the field.

The Researcher

When I entered the teaching profession in 2009, I felt secure with the quality of my language methods coursework and experiential knowledge. I had just completed a yearlong internship teaching Spanish at two urban high schools near Washington D.C. as part of my master's in education program. I developed an understanding of the theoretical connections between second language acquisition research and pedagogical strategies during this time. I therefore felt prepared upon the completion of my program to adapt my understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) theory and transform it into classroom practice. However, my confidence waned the moment I walked into my new classroom: much to my surprise, I had a large number of students who either spoke or were somewhat familiar with the Spanish language.

While my training program had required me to purchase a published qualitative study (Webb & Miller, 2000) on the needs of heritage language learners, I do not recall delving into either the theoretical contributions or the pedagogical implications found in this empirical work. I consequently knew very little on how I should support students whose learning and familiarity with the language began within their homes and communities, which caused me to panic. I was stunned that my program had missed a critical opportunity to address a pervasive knowledge deficit in foreign language teacher education. My lack of understanding on this learner population was a precursor to the

pedagogical challenges I encountered in my classroom, and I would argue that this remains true for other non-Hispanic teachers entering the field as well.

Regardless of my limited knowledge and experience, I still had a moral obligation to provide equitable learning opportunities to all students. And so, I became interested in exploring how other language educators perceived, navigated, and responded to these challenges. My background as a Spanish language educator thus motivated my present study, and my hope is to articulate through this qualitative work the importance of understanding the *perezhivanie* of HLLs. This, I argue, is critical to provide all students with equitable learning opportunities.

Problem Statement

As a novice high school Spanish educator, I honed valuable teaching skills, such as classroom management and curricular design, and expanded my linguistic and cultural understanding through experiential learning. I do not wish to imply that my prior training coursework was unhelpful; it simply did not prepare me for the challenges of working in linguistically diverse settings. My perceptions regarding my perceived inadequacies were not unfounded. According to Sullivan (2001), "foreign language teachers[1] have very specific needs that are not easily addressed by generic teacher education programs or easily described by teacher standards" (p. 305). The underlying reason, as Sullivan explains, is that foreign language teacher preparation requires educators to understand and employ specific communicative teaching and second language acquisition theory

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[1] Specific U.S. Census data does not exist to confirm the number of non-Hispanic, Spanish-speaking educators in the United States. However, nearly three-quarters (77%) of the non-Hispanic population that speaks Spanish at home is white (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). We can assume that a large percentage of Spanish teachers in the United States is non-Hispanic and likely learned Spanish as a second language.

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frameworks as models for instruction. No other profession in the field of education requires such a unique understanding of methodologies and language learning theories.

The problem plaguing the theoretical advancement of the field is the continued absence of a modern foreign language teacher education model that prepares teachers to recognize and adapt to the multilingual and multicultural realities of today's language classrooms (Bunch, 2013; Sullivan, 2001; Tedick & Walker, 1994; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). As consequence, beginning language teachers may feel ill equipped to support the learning needs of linguistically diverse students. This knowledge and experiential deficit can in turn exacerbate teachers' negative attitudes toward their profession (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

Public and private K-12 schools also compound these sentiments, as many foreign language programs within these institutions arbitrarily place students who have some degree of linguistic competency in classes designed for second language learners. While funding and teacher shortages partly explain this practice (Kagan & Dillon, 2009), the reality is that this homogeneous grouping of language learners can be detrimental to the linguistic and cultural empowerment of marginalized speakers (Mrak, 2011).

For example, bilingual Spanish-speaking students or students with a cultural connection to the language often do not see their voices or lived historical experiences reflected in their textbooks or within the class curriculum (Correa, 2011; Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; Mrak, 2011). A plausible explanation for this silencing is that textbook companies, and by proxy classroom teachers, typically promote a single academic variety of Spanish. Gallego and Conley (2013) defend language educators on this practice, explaining that many non-Hispanic teachers adhere to an academic standard because they

are unfamiliar with other Spanish dialects. Subsequently, they reproduce the perception that the standard is a linguistic ideal by which Spanish language learners are expected to communicate.

Spanish language textbooks are far more intentional in their promotion of the standard, however. One need only be familiar with the pronoun *vosotros* (you all) to realize that the vocabulary and grammatical structures presented in most Spanish language textbooks are Spanish in origin. This is because varieties from Spain, particularly the Castilian dialect from Madrid, receive institutional and social support from the Real Academia de España, which formally regulates and informs the use of the Castilian variety for instructional purposes throughout the world. It is therefore unsurprising that the majority of U.S. textbooks base curricular design—and at times, language instruction—around this elite variety of Spanish. In addition to its linguistic prestige, Castilian also celebrates considerable social prestige: As the dialect of a white majority in Spain, the region of Castile is a popular site for U.S. study abroad programs (Lipski, 2009).

Regardless of whether an educator's promotion of peninsular Spanish is intentional, her adherence to a particular linguistic standard reinforces the notion that home, community, and regional varieties of the target language are linguistically inferior. As a result, students who are speakers of these varieties may feel compelled to suppress or abandon their dialects in order to conform to the linguistic expectations set forth in traditional foreign language classrooms (del Valle, 2014). When marginalized Spanish speakers subscribe to this dominant language ideology, they become the unconscious victims of the hegemonic nature of traditional foreign language curriculums (Anyon,

2011; Leeman, 2005). In doing so, they may ultimately sacrifice their way of speaking for a variety that is commodified and standardized through language textbooks, language curriculum, and teacher practice. Unfortunately, teachers are often unaware as to how these dominant culture ideologies manifest through their classroom practices.

For example, when I entered the profession in 2008, I was initially ignorant of the linguistic diversity present in my Spanish language classroom. I knew it was there, as I could hear it. Yet, I deliberately chose not to acknowledge it. My decision was rooted in fear. I was fearful of addressing something that ran counter to what I had been trained to do: teach Spanish as a second language. It was through my ongoing interactions with my heritage, bilingual, and native Spanish-speaking students that I realized I could no longer avoid the inevitable. I had to contend with my struggle as a White, second language Spanish speaker to provide equitable, instructional support to these linguistically diverse students. I explained my pedagogical dilemma to my administrators, but I was met with indifference. As they saw it, this 'problem' had a simple solution: I was to push the Spanish-speaking students to enroll in either French or German. The dismissal of these students and their unique learning needs was a major catalyst for my departure from this school, and it served as a motivational factor for this dissertation. I was complicit and compliant with the wishes of my administration, and I now wish to right what I perceive as a moral wrong.

That said, my administrators' response was not unusual. There still appears to be some mystification as to why heritage and bilingual students require materials and instructional methodologies that differ from their second language-learning peers, and research in the field generally confirms this misperception (Carreira, 2004; Hedgcock &

Lefkowitz, 2016; Lynch, 2003). This ongoing confusion has compounded the trajectory of inadequate foreign language teacher preparation (Gallego & Conley, 2013; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Indeed, extant literature widely confirms the perception that foreign language educators do not possess the content knowledge or pedagogical expertise to attend to the needs of all students (Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, and Carpenter, 2006; Huhn, 2012; Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Merryfield, 2000; Schwartz; 2001; Veléz-Redón, 2002).

Contributing to this problem is the fact that "research focusing on second language teacher education is conspicuously missing from the large amount of literature on general teacher education" (Vélez-Rendón, 2002, p. 458). Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) expand this concern, stating

> empirically…the field [of teacher education] has yet to generate substantial data-based evidence of how language teachers make sense of their professional lives at different stages of their career (to the extent that they do) and how (or whether) they become moral agents within their sociocultural, historical, and political contexts (p. 124).

The absence of this information limits opportunities for current and prospective teachers to prepare for linguistic and cultural diversity, to learn how to recognize and challenge educational inequities, and to help heritage language students reconcile how globalization and the commodification of language has influenced their perceptions of their home and community languages and lived experiences (Merryfield, 2000, p. 430).

Teachers who have mixed abilities language classrooms[2] are in a particularly precarious position, as they must recognize how traditional teaching methods fail "to consider the social and political complexity of language learning" (Okazaki, 2005, p. 176). Specifically, they must understand why popular SLA-based methods are not always appropriate for students who acquire their language in naturalistic settings. Teaching to this demographic requires the educator to contextualize the language, to "translate those activities that are part of [students'] everyday life at home and in the community into pedagogically sound and motivating tasks" (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 167). Language methods coursework has partially responded to this need by becoming increasing interdisciplinary, drawing on connections and content from "second language acquisition, psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and education" (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016, p. 121). Still missing, however, are alternative methodological approaches that would allow teachers to adapt more readily to the pedagogical challenges that they encounter in their classrooms (Schwartz, 2001).

The fact that foreign language teacher education programs have struggled to evolve in tandem with the needs of linguistically diverse students is indisputable. However, the question as to *why* this remains the case not yet been explored. This study was thus designed to illuminate the underlying perspectives and lived experiences of participants who are presently involved in the teaching/learning process of Spanish as a second and/or heritage language.

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[2] In K-12 language programs, it is not uncommon for teachers to teach both heritage speakers and second language learners (L2s) together in a traditional foreign language classroom (Carreira, 2016). It is these "mixed abilities classes" that comprise a significant pedagogical challenge for language teachers.

Statement of Purpose

The criticality for foreign language educators to respond to the needs of linguistically diverse students is well documented. Yet, the field of foreign language teacher preparation has evidenced little change in the way preservice teachers are educated. In response to this call for empirical insight, I conducted a qualitative study that explored how teaching assistants in two different Spanish language programs at a U.S. Southwest institution—Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) and Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL)—adapted their pedagogical practices to meet the needs of their second and heritage language learners. In addition to the TAs' voices, I also gathered the perspectives of former and current SSL/SHL teaching staff, current undergraduate SHL students, and program coordinators to better illuminate and analyze the interrelationships between my participants' thinking processes and their *perezhivanie* [lived experiences]. The transparentization of my participants' perspectives not only allowed me to identify potential areas for change and enhancement within the TA training program in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, but these findings also contributed to the conversation on how to re-envision the field of education of foreign language teachers.

Research Questions

In order to achieve authenticity in the representation and presentation of my participants' *perezhivanie*, I framed my investigation around the following questions:

1. How does an exploration of heritage language learners' *perezhivanie* [one's lived sociohistorical and psychical-emotional experiences] illuminate the underlying challenges of teaching to this student demographic?

2. What is the relationship between *vospitanie* [nurturing] and *obuenchie*

[teaching/learning] in a language learning classroom?

2.1. *What are the characteristics of a classroom that has a combination of*

both elements?

2.2. How does the transparentization of thinking processes for students

and teachers lead to transformative learning opportunities for both?

3. How can an understanding of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* lead to a

reconceptualization of language teacher education programs?

3.1. How does an analysis of these three concepts lead to an

understanding of the development of an efficacious pedagogy for heritage

language learners?

To understand the type of preparation model that teachers need, I hypothesized

that it was necessary to understand who my participants were and how their experiences

with learning and speaking the Spanish language have shaped the way that they now

teach. My study is subsequently guided by a hunch that this type of 'internal' insight is

what is missing from research on the teaching and learning of foreign language educators.

Rationale and Significance of Study

The current state of the field of foreign language teacher education is rooted in the

pedagogical traditions of the past. Indeed, a number of language educators still rely on

the Audio-lingual Method (ALM) from the 1960s to teach grammar, despite evidence

that contradicts its pedagogical effectiveness with both second and heritage language

learners (Diekhoff, 1965). Teacher education programs are not completely at fault for the

reproduction of this antiquated approach. Rather, the pervasive use of explicit language

teaching approaches is a manifestation of teachers' personal experiences with studying a language. As consequence, many language teachers are still teaching in a way that they themselves were taught (Oleson & Hora, 2014). To encourage innovate practice, then, preparation programs should provide preservice teachers with opportunities to reflect on their learning and development throughout their training. Teachers should also be required to consider how their practices and beliefs about teaching and learning shape and are shaped by interactions with their students.

The novel approach I have taken with this study is therefore something that I believe distinguishes it from previous empirical works on foreign language teacher education. I did not analyze or critique the participants' perceptions of their coursework and training, as literature already exists on this topic (Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Rather, I focused on documenting how my participants perceived themselves as learners in the process of becoming a teacher. To grasp the complexity of this dialectical process, I attempted to gather sociohistorical, sociocultural, and linguistic information from each participant. I believed that a holistic understanding of *perezhivanie* could elucidate the personality characteristics that should be nurtured, as well as the general learning experiences that should be provided, in a re-envisioned model for foreign language teacher education.

Design Overview

Approach

This study was bound to a specific research site and focused on a particular group of individuals, as I intended to document real-world phenomena within this particular case. However, case study methodology provided only a partial framework

from which I could aggregate and analyze my data. Grounded theory, which is another qualitative approach to studying reality, allowed me to probe from multiple angles the voices and experiences of my participants, thereby permitting my data to drive the storytelling. The methodological design of my study is subsequently comprised of principles from both qualitative case study methodology and grounded theory approaches. I refer to this hybrid methodology as 'qualitative' throughout the remainder of this manuscript.

Context

This study took place within a Spanish department at a Hispanic-serving institution in the U.S. Southwest. The Spanish department offers two language tracks: Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) and Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL).

Participant Sample

The participants consisted of four groups of individuals who were affiliated with the Spanish department at this particular institution: undergraduate students in the SHL program, teaching assistants (TAs) in the SSL and SHL programs, administrators of the SSL and SHL programs, and former TAs who became K-12 Spanish language teachers in the metro area. To be enrolled in the study, participants had to be involved in the teaching and/or learning of Spanish as a heritage language. At the end of my study, 69 SHL students, 14 TAs, two program administrators, and two Spanish teachers participated in some aspect of this research.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

To triangulate my data methods and sources, I conducted online surveys, interviews, and classroom observations. I administered the surveys to SHL students and SSL/SHL TAs through a website called SurveyGizmo. Individuals from these two groups could indicate at the end of their survey if they wished to participate in the second phase of the study. This optional step consisted of a single, face-to-face private interview for the SHL students, and for the SSL/SHL TAs, week-long classroom observations plus a final face-to-face interview. I maintained reflective memos following the classroom observations to record my developing thoughts, as well as to document my participants' reactions to their lessons.

Interview data from the SHL students, SSL/SHL TAs, Spanish program administrators, and the K-12 Spanish teachers consisted of a single 45-60-minute conversation. I saved all participant interviews via a digital recording device and then uploaded and transcribed the data using a software program called Express Scribe. My written survey data, field notes, interview transcripts, and reflective memos subsequently served as sources for my data analysis.

I condensed my aggregated data by reading, highlighting, and grouping together similar patterns of participant thought and written discourse. I conducted multiple iterations of this exploratory cycle until I felt comfortable extrapolating my open-codes. To track the codes and better categorize them visually, I designed a data matrix by using the table feature in Microsoft Word (Appendix V). This analytical display enabled me to better visualize and interpret the relationships and interrelationships between my

conceptual categories, which in turn allowed me to tie threads of data back to my research questions (Maxwell, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

By comparing data within and across my conceptual categories, I discovered units of thematic meaningfulness within the case under study. This thematic understanding informed my recognition of a core concept that represented the essence of my work.

Conceptual Framework

Language teaching is a global political practice whose diverse methods reflect the rich languages, cultures, and experiences of groups of people and countries (Godley, Reaser, & Moore, 2015; Kubota, 1998; Okazaki, 2005). To capture the depth and breadth of my participants' language learning experiences, I required a framework that would allow me to gather, analyze, and understand how my participants' sociohistorical, sociocultural, language learning experiences, and their affective state influence how they teach and how they are taught by their students. My study design therefore takes three concepts of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as its theoretical foundation: *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie*. Separately, these concepts acted as storage bins into which I separated the data. Together, however, these concepts served as a lens through which to visualize how the unification of these processes could lead to transformative teaching and learning opportunities between an educator and her students. I provide a more detailed overview of my conceptual framework in Chapter 2: Review of Literature.

Organization of the Dissertation

With the introductory chapter now concluded, I present an outline of my dissertation manuscript.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature that is relevant to understand the context of the problem under study. I also illuminate in this section the urgency for my research by identifying gaps in the literature and explaining how I intend to address them through my research. I conclude Chapter 2 by describing how my conceptual framework, which was informed by my critical review of literature, will guide not only my data gathering and analysis but also ground my data in theory.

Chapter 3 explores my rationale for drawing on strategies from case study and grounded theory approach as my methodological design. I also detail all of the working parts of my study in this chapter, including the context and setting, participant sampling methods, data collection and analysis methods, and issues of trustworthiness.

I present the findings from my study in Chapter 4, which is where my participants' voices and lived experiences are prominently featured. Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive synthesis and discussion of my findings, and I return to the literature and my conceptual framework to support my interpretations. Upon conclusion of my analysis, I close my manuscript by identifying the implications, recommendations for future research, and the limitations and delimitations of my study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

The rapid growth of the U.S. Latino population continues to shape economic, political, and educational domains, the effects of which continue to shakeup the status quo (The Pew Hispanic Center, 2004). U.S. public schools in particular evidence the impact of this restructuring, as an increasing number of students bring with them home and community varieties of the Spanish language into traditional foreign language classrooms. With the continuous growth of learner demographic, foreign/second language educators are becoming increasingly sensitive to the complexities and rigor of teaching Spanish to this learner demographic. They recognize the limitations of traditional foreign language frameworks in supporting the unique linguistic, affective, cognitive, and cultural needs of their home and community variety speakers (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003; Martínez, 2016). As consequence, many educators struggle with how to reconcile this paradigmatic knowledge deficit and provide equitable instruction across all learner profiles.

This ethical dilemma has situated foreign language classrooms as a site of pedagogical contestation, yet the call for pedagogical sensitivity to the needs of linguistically diverse Spanish learners is not new (Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008; Colombi & Roca, 2003; Valdés, 1992; Wilson & Martínez, 2011). Since the 1970s, national professional organizations, such as the Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), have corroborated these concerns through reports on the teaching of "Spanish to native speakers in high school and college" (Colombi & Roca, 2003, p. 6).

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The purpose of these original documents was to encourage professional development through the sharing of a list of comprehensive materials that were being developed for Spanish-speaking students. However, it is misguided to conceive of these Spanish-speaking students as a homogenous group of learners. In reality, they represent a broad array of linguistic profiles and sociohistorical experiences, the diversity of which reflects the extent of their exposure to their home or community language. These home and community language speakers do share a common characteristic, however, and that is "having identity and linguistic needs that relate to their family background" (Carreira, 2004, p. 21).

Holistically capturing this sociohistorical connection through a single term has been an interdisciplinary challenge[3]. The term *heritage language learner* is one such descriptor that seeks to capture the essence of familial and socially transmitted language and culture. Other descriptions for this population are often proficiency-based and include terms such as bilingual, semi-bilingual, residual speaker, quasi-native speaker, and home background speaker[4] (Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003). Regardless of terminology, the fact remains that this specific group of students represents a pedagogical challenge in the field of Spanish language education (Colombi & Roca, 2003).

The demand for appropriate teacher training and heritage learner-specific instructional materials is acute; however, national and state funding allocated to such

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[3] Researchers in the fields of linguistics, Hispanic linguistics, and applied linguistics have all explored issues related to heritage languages, such as heritage language maintenance, revitalization, and acquisition (Lynch, 2003; Montrul, 2010; Valdés, 2005). However, Montrul (2010) explains that the field of heritage language education is situated as an area in applied linguistics.
[4] Some of these terms have fallen out of favor in the field of heritage language education, as they point to a subtractive view of language maintenance and bilingual identity affirmation (Hornberger & Wang, 2008).

resources is limited. Wright (2007) explains the underlying rationale for this limited government support, stating that, "with English-only high-stakes tests and the intense opposition from state education leaders against bilingual education, few district and school administrators feel that providing heritage language instruction is worth the effort" (p. 11). Consequently, heritage language students are underserved in many of our nation's schools (Alacrón, 2010; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Schwartz Caballero, 2001). To reverse this trend, Lynch (2003) argues that, "it is imperative that Spanish assume a contemporary framework to provide the basis for future discussions among research, teachers, administrators, and politicians" (p. 29). Advancement in the field of heritage language education is thus contingent on elucidating more completely the factors that warrant critical attention.

For this reason, I believe an historical exploration of how and why such pedagogical considerations for heritage language education are presently necessary is required to justify the reconceptualization of foreign/second language teacher training programs. I focus on four key areas to frame my argument: 1) a brief historical overview of second language acquisition (SLA) and the emerging field of heritage language acquisition (HLA), 2) an introduction to heritage language learners, including the ways in which their learning needs differ from second language learners, 3) a review of pedagogical strategies and program models that have been suggested and implemented to address these concerns, and 4) a discussion of challenges that remain, particularly with heritage language-inclusive curricular design and second language teacher preparation. By explicating these issues, I believe current and prospective foreign/second language educators will be more prepared to draw on this insight when attending to needs of their

heritage language students. I conclude this chapter by outlining a conceptual framework

for my study that has been informed by this review of literature.

Historical Origins of Heritage Language Education

Moving Beyond the Traditional SLA Paradigm

Interest in second language acquisition (SLA) research surged in Great Britain in

the late 1970s in a renewed effort to explore a possible relationship between language

learning and teaching (Lightbown, 2000). During this time, the field of linguistics was in

the midst of theoretical change, influenced by Chomsky's nativist challenge to Skinner's

behavioral view of language learning. Teachers also contributed to the

reconceptualization of language learning, as many expressed frustrations with the rote

memorization and drills popularized through the audio-lingual teaching approach. SLA

research capitalized on the unrest, as teachers-cum-researchers hoped "to understand how

learners learn a second language (L2) in both untutored and tutored settings so as to

better incorporate those experiences that were found facilitative of learning

into…practice" (Ellis, 2010, p. 183).

Subsequent SLA-based studies explored factors, "such as orders of acquisition,

cross-linguistic transfer effects, and age factors," which researchers believed could clarify

some of the challenges students experience when acquiring a second language

(Lightbown, 2000, p. 431). Given the historical impetus for SLA research, findings from

such studies seem an empirically plausible way to inform practice and praxis in

foreign/second language classrooms. Nonetheless, linguists regard SLA as an applied

aspect of the field, and they continually debate the connection between SLA and

language pedagogy (Ellis, 2010, p. 183). Despite the questionable relationship, SLA has

since become an established paradigm in language teacher education programs (Ellis, 2010; Lightbown, 2000; Okazaki, 2005).

In general, SLA research offers several generalizations that inform language pedagogy. For example, SLA findings tend to confirm that language learners typically make the same systematic errors in their second language that a child learning his or her first language would also make. The sequence in which learners acquire new grammatical structures is also predictable. However, because learning a language is inherently complex, it is impossible to develop native-like proficiency in daily, one-hour classroom sessions. Research also suggests that explicit error correction is not an effective strategy to alter one's language behavior. Perhaps most salient to the field of language education, however, is the finding that age does not appear to limit an individual's ability to acquire a language. Even so, most adults are unable to achieve native-like competency in a second language. Practicing the second language therefore does not equate to proficiency, and simply knowing the grammar rules "does not mean one will be able to use [the language] in communicative interaction" (Lightbown, 2000, p. 432).

In addition to informing teachers of the science behind language acquisition, classroom-based SLA research has also influenced how educators are trained to teach language. For instance, "students who are preparing to become second or foreign language teachers often learn that the teaching of a second or foreign language should be student-centered, collaborative, holistic, anxiety-free, and communicative, and that it should make use of authentic language" (Kubota, 1998, p. 395). Lightbown (2000)

corroborates this idea, stating that most training programs convince preservice educators that a foreign language classroom should evidence differentiated instructional strategies[5].

SLA principles are fundamental in most alternative approaches to instruction as well. For example, communicative language teaching, content-based teaching, and tasked-based language teaching are all instructional approaches that draw on some of the aforementioned SLA research generalizations (Okazaki, 2005). Perhaps most notable among these language-learning theories, however, is Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis theory. Krashen argues that *comprehensible input*—not pedagogical guidance—is the key to language acquisition, and he maintains that, "the best methods are…those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear" (p. 7). In truth, Krashen has posed several influential hypotheses, but *comprehensible input* has left a lasting impression on the nature of language teacher training programs (Ellis, 2010; Lightbown, 2000).

While the discourse surrounding second language teaching methodology tends to aggrandize SLA-informed approaches, Lightbown (2000) cautions language teachers on the danger of referring to one body of knowledge, particularly when attending to the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. She references the work of Krashen to illustrate this point. Referring again to Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis theory, Lightbown (2000) notes that empirical evidence to support this approach is lacking. Yet, teachers widely regard the concept of *comprehensive input* as a pedagogical absolute in their classrooms (Lightbown, 2000, p 450). The concern with

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[5] Kubota (1998) explains that differentiated instruction calls for the use of multiple activities that engage students in meaningful communicative exchanges that still focus some attention on grammatical form (p. 433).

widespread, popular approaches to language education such as *comprehensible input* is that "such knowledge can become extreme, exclusive, and dogmatic. Once knowledge becomes dogma, it tends to dismiss other ways of thinking and to create a conceptual dichotomy…making one set of knowledge legitimate while rejecting the ones that do not conform to the canon" (Kubota, 1998, p. 395).

Rooted in the belief that "teaching should be responsive to the needs of linguistically, culturally, and cognitively different students as well as to the specific nature of the language being taught" (Kubota, 1998, p. 405), the field of heritage language education emerged in part out of the need to reconcile the limitations of SLA-based methodologies. Historically, however, heritage language education originated during the sociocultural turn of the 1960s.

Tracing the Roots of Heritage Language Education

The Chicano and Puerto Rican civil rights movements of the 1960s coincided with the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and it evidenced the first call for a paradigm shift in the way educators of Spanish-speaking children should approach language instruction (Rivera-Mills, 2012). Calling attention to the intricate interconnections between language and identity formation, movement leaders—as well as educators who were sensitive to the needs of Spanish-speaking children—advocated for the right of Hispanics to maintain and transmit their home variety to future generations (Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza, 2011; Said-Mohand, 2013). Despite these efforts, however, heritage language education did not gain traction as a valuable and necessary pedagogical practice in the United States until the 1990s (Carreira, 2012; Wiley, 2001; Wilson & Martínez, 2011). It was at this time when empirical evidence suggested the need for researchers to

look beyond traditional second language acquisition theory frameworks and explore the underlying social, cultural, and political factors that influence language acquisition and use (Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza, 2011, p. 483).

   Emergence of HLA. Interest in the research of Spanish in the United States subsequently exploded, ushering in a new era of scholarly work that focused on identity construction in addition to language maintenance and shift. With these developments, a reconceptualization of the field of SLA took root, where "the analysis of *intragenerational* variation and speaker social networks [began moving] to center stage" (Lynch, 2003, p. 35). Specifically, researchers identified the need to differentiate, as well as to compare the linguistic systems of heritage language and second language learners. Initial efforts to inform the emerging field of heritage language education therefore focused primarily on pedagogical rather than theoretical concerns. Thanks to breakthrough seminal works (Carreira, 2004; Lynch, 2003; Valdés, 1995, 2005), heritage language acquisition (HLA) took SLA as its theoretical base and developed significantly in terms of its own theory and research (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2014). However, more "systematically theoretically driven research on heritage learners, heritage acquisition, and the psycholinguistic processes involved in this type of learning" is still needed (Montrul, 2010, p. 4).

   In addition to researcher interest, the recognition and value of societal bilingualism was also evidenced for a time at the federal policy level. For example, the 1994 Bilingual Education Act promoted the development of bilingual skills and multicultural understanding while still focusing on the mastery of limited English proficient (LEP) students' English (Wright, 2007, p. 2). However, the general view of

non-English languages as a threat to the status quo eventually brought such federally funded programs to an end. Perhaps feeding off of this groundless fear, the English Only movement gained momentum at national and state levels, culminating in legislation that effectively reversed progress in the field of bilingual education. In addition to the federally instituted bill No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Proposition 227 in California and Proposition 203 reduced further already limited bilingual education resources. In the case of the latter two pieces of legislation, bilingual education was eliminated in favor of English assimilation (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003).

The pervasively negative attitude toward the maintenance of home and heritage languages has had significant repercussions in foreign language classrooms, where heritage-speaking students may feel pressured to conform to dominant social group norms. In doing so, they risk losing not only their language but also a sense of self (Ducar, 2008). The ability for foreign language educators to identify and understand who these students are is therefore intrinsic to the discussion of how to support their unique learning needs (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relaño-Pastor, 2009).

The Problem of Definition

The term *heritage language learner* (HLL) was first conceived in 1977 through the creation of specific language maintenance programs in Ontario, Canada (Cummins, 2005; Kagan & Dillon, 2008). Since its inception, much debate has centered on how a heritage language learner is defined, and who qualifies as a heritage speaker. Presently, no definition exists that fully captures the historical, social, and psychological experiences of heritage language learners (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Lynch, 2003; Montrul, 2010; Valdés, 2005). Nonetheless, Valdés (2000) provides the most widely

referenced description, explaining that a heritage language learner is "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). While popular, this narrow definition confines what tends to be a fluid linguistic identity (Carreira, 2004). Students pursue heritage language studies for a variety of reasons, one of which may be to learn and connect to the language of their grandparents (Carreira, 2003). For this reason, it is important to consider the sociohistorical factors that influence a heritage student's desire to learn and maintain his language.

Fishman (2001) employs a wider lens in his description of a heritage language learner, explaining that this term must also recognize speakers with familial or cultural ties to a language, for who learning or acquiring that language has personal relevance. Still missing from Fishman's more inclusive description, however, is an acknowledgement of the psycho-emotional struggles heritage learners experience when negotiating who they are with the variety that they speak.

The ongoing "difficulty of defining and characterizing the heritage speaker" illustrates the social and linguistic complexities inherent in this term (Zyzik, 2016, p. 19). Unsurprisingly, "there is still no general consensus on who U.S. HL speakers and learners are, which in turn has hindered the field from advancing pedagogically or theoretically" (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 3). The fallout from the problem of definition dilemma is especially evident in traditional foreign language classrooms, where educators have struggled for nearly 80 years to properly identify and support the unique linguistic, cultural, and affective needs of their heritage language learners (Carreira, 2012; Vélez-

Rendón, 2002). Despite the historicity of these pedagogical challenges, foreign/second language educators often lack the linguistic understanding and cultural awareness needed to support this demographic. This struggle arises in part because foreign language educators are still unfamiliar with the ways in which heritage speakers' prior knowledge and lived experiences manifest in differing linguistic proficiencies and affective domains. This concern is certainly significant, but perhaps more alarming is that many foreign language educators do not understand how these differences necessitate instructional support that is not always provided through traditional foreign language methodologies (Alarcón, 2010; Brinton et al., 2008; Montrul, 2012). Given that this misperception is continually confirmed by studies in the field of heritage language instruction (Carreira, 2004; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Lynch, 2003), the issue of how to identify and support heritage language learners is one of critical import.

To reiterate, heritage language learners bring a variety of communicative and cultural experiences with them into foreign language classrooms, which manifest in learning needs that are qualitatively different from those of traditional second language learners (Montrul, 2011). Foreign language instructors thus require specific training that prepares them to recognize, address, and support these specific learner necessities (Alarcón, 2010; Gallego & Conley, 2013; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Without this knowledge, beginning teachers may feel ill equipped to handle the rigor of working with students whose unique "linguistic, cultural, educational, and socioeconomic profiles" bear into question the utility of traditional approaches to foreign language instruction (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016, p. 2). Illuminating first some general heritage learner characteristics will do much to clarify the limitations of the SLA framework. More

importantly, this analysis will highlight ways in which educators can then inform best practices.

<div align="center">**Distinguishing the Needs of HLLs and L2s**</div>

Linguistic Differences

First, the context in which language is acquired is a principle distinction between heritage and second language learners. For second language learners (L2s), language learning takes place predominantly in formal classrooms. For heritage learners, however, language is acquired within the home or the community. As such, heritage learners may receive input that fluctuates over time, resulting in variable linguistic systems that reflect aspects of "incomplete acquisition, attrition, and acquisition of a contact variety" (Montrul, 2011; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009, p. 538). This spectrum is attributed ostensibly to the onset of formal schooling, as this is when U.S. children raised in Spanish-speaking households begin to shift to English (Potowski et al., 2009). By the time heritage speakers reach adulthood, they may have developed considerably diverse linguistic proficiencies that range "from minimal aural comprehension ability to full fluency in written and spoken registers, and everything else in between" (Montrul, 2011, p. 158).

At the linguistic level, some HLLs may come to view themselves as second language learners of Spanish (Lynch, 2003). This comparison is not without merit, as "both groups [of learners] usually fail to develop full linguistic ability in the target language and end up with similar grammars" (Correa, 2011, p. 128). For instance, both share similar struggles with error transfer from the dominant language and with inflectional morphology (Montrul, 2012; 2011). Commonalities notwithstanding,

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heritage speakers typically exhibit a stronger command of pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency than their L2 peers. The degree to which heritage speakers are able to draw on this information and use it in contextually appropriate ways is variable, however (Zyzik, 2016). In reference to vocabulary, for example, a heritage speaker may have a general understanding on the meaning of a particular word but may lack the confidence to use it in a sentence (p. 30). This implicit knowledge naturally correlates to advantages in certain learning contexts, such as oral production and aural comprehension (Carreira, 2016; Correa, 2014; Correa, 2011; Zyzik, 2016).

Conversely, second language learners by virtue of their formal schooling tend to outperform heritage language learners on explicit knowledge tasks, such as utilizing academic registers and metalinguistic terminology[6] (Beaudrie, 2009; Carreira, 2003; Correa, 2011; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Montrul, 2011; Roca, 2000; Torres & Turner, 2015; Tallon, 2009; Zyzik, 2016). While naturalistic acquisition certainly accounts in part for this disparity, important to note is that the variety of Spanish taught in traditional second language classrooms does not always align with the linguistic and cultural values of heritage students' language communities (Valdés, 2005; Lynch, 2003). Implications of this potential mismatch is often evidenced in heritage students' reported final grades in language courses where metalinguistic knowledge is emphasized (Correa, 2011). Metalinguistic knowledge (MK) has no observable connection to a heritage speaker's ability to produce the language, yet the value of learning such information

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[6] Metalinguistic knowledge pertains to an understanding of grammatical terminology, conducting grammatical analysis, and/or producing grammatical items on demand. L2s traditionally perform better on these tasks due to their formal schooling (Correa, 2014, p. 107).

persists. As consequence, heritage learners may react negatively to this type of instruction "in terms of performance and self-confidence" (Correa, 2014, p. 107).

The uncontested existence of the MK gap demonstrates why it is problematic for teachers to "enter the classroom with assumptions about the linguistic abilities of their students or their motivations for being there" (Lynch, 2003, p. 31). To reconcile this concern, educators must also explore the underlying social and psychological experiences that influence their heritage language students' motivations for enrolling in language courses (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003).

Affective Domain

Motivational differences. Heritage language learners study their language for a variety of reasons, some of which may overlap with the motivations of L2s. At the university level, for instance, heritage students may enroll in language courses to fulfill a graduation requirement. Some, depending on their linguistic abilities, may perceive this instruction as an opportunity to earn an easy A. Others still may be motivated to learn the language for its functional purposes (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003). What distinguishes these learners from their L2 peers is the sense of membership some heritage learners may associate with learning their language (Carreira, 2004). For example, in a study conducted on the motivations of Korean-Americans in a private Korean language program, Cho, Cho, and Tse (1997) determined that language was an integral component to how these participants framed their identity and membership within the Korean community. In essence, heritage students may seek instruction in their home and community language to "expand their cultural knowledge and deepen their understanding of their cultural heritage" (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003).

Sociohistorical factors. The linguistic and motivational differences described within the heritage learning population thus far share some occasional overlap with second language learners. However, there is no such commonality evidenced within a discussion of ethno-historic ties to the language. For many speakers, this connection is the beating heart of their heritage identity. It is therefore important to understand the various sociohistorical factors that continue to shape their identities within and beyond the language classroom.

For example, an historical exploration of Spanish in the U.S. Southwest reveals a pattern of linguistic and cultural oppression that is marked by periods of language loss, revitalization and maintenance (Nieto-Phillips, 2000). When analyzed through a sociohistorical lens, a reoccurring theme of linguistic trauma—both emotional and physical—clearly emerges from the discourse. Until the 1960s, New Mexican children who spoke Spanish within schools—and sometimes within their homes—suffered physical and emotional abuse for speaking the Spanish language. Vestiges of this painful past are evidenced in younger generations of heritage speakers, who have now internalized negative perceptions about their language variety. For instance, if these speakers speak Spanish, then they are often embarrassed by their lack of native fluency. If they do not speak Spanish, then they are often perceived by as failures by both native Spanish speakers and by the dominant culture at large (Krashen, 2000; Roberts, 2001). As consequence, U.S. born Hispanics may buy into the self-deprecating rhetoric that their Spanish is poor or broken (Carreira, 2000; Mrak, 2011).

For this reason, Wilson (2006) explains that, "Spanish cannot be separated from the social, historical, and political circumstances that surround it" (p. 2). These processes

are ongoing and are very much influenced by classroom instruction that either supports or devalues the linguistic and cultural knowledge heritage students bring with them into the classroom. In responses to these practices, heritage learners "may amend their self-identities in ways that go beyond the cultural norms and beliefs they gained in their home and community settings" (Torres & Turner, 2015, p. 5). For example, a study conducted on Spanish heritage learners at the University of New Mexico discovered that the majority of the participants understood the cultural premise of the heritage language program, yet each academic year a sizeable number of heritage students self-select into traditional foreign language classrooms (Wilson & Ibarra, 2015). While it is difficult to discern their underlying motivations, students frequently share that they believe they need to learn how to speak the language correctly. As such, heritage learner perspectives must also be taken into consideration when differentiating students' needs.

Anxiety and attitudinal differences. Researchers in the field generally agree that positioning a heritage speaker within a native/non-native speaker dichotomous framework is inherently problematic, as this limited view strips from the learner his ability to self-identify (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014; Lynch, 2003). Moreover, it may impose on the student unrealistic expectations concerning his knowledge of the language (Potowski, 2001). Heritage speakers, as established previously, vary tremendously in their linguistic proficiencies. As such, their anxiety levels may vary in accordance to their degree of natural exposure to the language. Some learners may also exhibit "feelings of inadequacy, lack of language learning aptitude, and fear of embarrassment" (Coryell & Clark, 2009, p. 486) for speaking a stigmatized or invalidated variety (Ducar, 2008; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003; Schreffler, 2007; Wilson, 2006).

To illustrate, Coryell & Clark (2009) examined the psycho-emotional ramifications of dialect invalidation in a study involving online language learning. Specifically, the authors explored self-reported anxiety levels amongst adult heritage and L2 learners in an online Spanish course at two post-secondary institutions in south Texas. Both learning groups expressed discomfort with the emphasis on grammatical correctness and lexical precision; however, the heritage language learners were particularly affected by the software's inability to recognize their individual sociolinguistic variation. As a result, these participants perceived their language learning as a performance, and they "frantically searched for the right pronunciation, word, phrase, and verb tense with every utterance and written product" (p. 493). In truth, pronunciation was a significant concern for both learner demographics. However, the heritage learners expressed acute anxiety over sounding inauthentic in their recordings to the instructor (p. 495).

While the Coryell and Clark (2009) study identifies speaking as a source of anxiety for heritage language learners, literature generally confirms that most heritage students feel less anxious about speaking their language than L2s (Ducar, 2008; Tallon, 2009). These same students may also exhibit reading, writing, and listening anxieties that are evidenced within the second language learner population (Tallon, 2009). Again, these differences reflect the heterogeneity of this group. Subsequently, some heritage speakers may feel that they lack the linguistic skills that would "qualify" them as insiders of their speech community (Carreira, 2004). The mismatch in implicational hierarchies—or the perceived logic of grammatical categories—between teachers and heritage students may stir up and enflame feelings of inadequacy. For example, students who bring with them non-standard varieties of language into the classroom may react

negatively to the instructor's use of an academic or prestigious variety, which in turn can make instructor correction a contentious issue (Kondo, 1999; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003).

To avoid such tensions, linguistically and culturally sensitive educators need to integrate activities and discursive interactions that authenticate the lived experiences of their heritage language learners (Beaudrie, 2015; Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003). In other words, foreign/second language educators should be prepared to draw on their developing understanding of the linguistic, affective, and cultural needs of heritage language learners to make informed decisions regarding heritage learner-specific pedagogical strategies. Familiarity with current methodological approaches and heritage-specific program initiatives is thus essential.

Supporting the Needs of HLLs

Differentiated Instruction

As suggested throughout this paper, the unique learning needs of heritage students necessitate tools and pedagogical strategies that cater to this diversity. Employing only one pedagogical framework is therefore inadequate. Rather, teaching to this learner demographic requires a hybrid approach, where methods and materials are informed by both SLA and HLA paradigms (Carreira, 2013, 2016; Beaudrie, 2009; Beaudrie et al. 2014; Lynch, 2003; 2008; Potowski et al., 2009). The need for such flexible instruction is especially apparent in situations where heritage speakers learn alongside second language learner peers. These mixed learner classrooms—which can be a reality even in designated heritage language classrooms—present a significant pedagogical challenge for educators, as they must respond to an even wider spectrum of student needs (Carreira, 2013, 2016).

One such strategy that seeks to address this dilemma is differentiated teaching. The premise of differentiation is to modify the content, process, and products of instruction so that learning is student-centered and learner specific (Carreira, 2007; Tomlinson, 2003). In the mixed learner classroom, these three elements manifest in the form of authentic resources, cooperative group learning, and ongoing assessment of student understanding and readiness (Santamaría, 2009). Differentiation can be particularly impactful when teaching is "used to empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically" (p. 222). However, while extant literature generally supports the value of this type of instruction (Carreira, 2016; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Santamaría, 2009), important to note is the absence of empirical research that discusses the perceived successes or challenges of employing these instructional methods within mixed language abilities classroom. Despite the dearth of literature on this topic, the need to balance individual needs with collective learning gains in these diverse learning contexts is uncontested (Carreira, 2016; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Santamaría, 2009; Valdés, 1997). Differentiated activities that engender both global understanding and personal appreciation for sociolinguistic awareness are likely popular for this reason (Carreira, 2012; del Valle, 2014; Ducar, 2008; Gallego & Conley; 2013; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003).

Dialect-based awareness activities. Given the history of linguistic subordination of heritage speakers, Fairclough (2005) and Martínez (2003) emphasize the importance of validating the linguistic and cultural knowledge that students bring with them into the classroom. With this need in mind, researchers recommend the implementation of dialect-based awareness activities to encourage heritage students to see variation as a

normal process (Gallego & Conley; 2013; Martínez, 2003; Martínez & Schwartz, 2012).

For instance, Martínez and Schwartz (2012) discuss a service-learning project that

allowed heritage students to explore the cultural and communicative value in knowing a

non-prestigious dialect in the medical profession. By exposing these students to

community and global views of language, they had an opportunity to develop the critical

lens needed to 1) recognize how dominant language ideologies marginalize minority

varieties (del Valle, 2014; Leeman, 2005), and 2) to decide how and in which contexts

lower prestige dialects carry greater social capital (Martínez & Schwartz, 2012).

   The inclusion and discussion of stigmatized features through dialect-based

activities is therefore important, since linguistic subordination is often attributed to the

social construction of non-standard aspects (Ducar, 2008; Martínez & Schwartz, 2012).

Once students have a deeper grasp of the sociopolitical complexities underlying language

use, they can then begin to confront hegemonic linguistic practices by exercising agency

in deciding how they wish to speak within a certain social context. While these activities

will not eliminate the miscommunication or misinterpretation of ideas, educators can

encourage students to view such instances as opportunities for the negotiation and co-

construction of sociolinguistic realities (del Valle, 2014; Leeman, 2005). More

importantly, viewing variation as a natural process will empower students to see value

within their own varieties.

   To extend and ground these sociolinguistic awareness activities into enduring

understanding, Carreira (2012) and Ducar (2008) suggest the use of linguistic

autobiographies or linguistic journals that will "help students reflect on their use of

language at different points in their life and in different domains" (Carreira, 2012, p.

225). It is through this reflective process that students may begin to explore their bilingual identities in a personally relevant manner. Additionally, they can use this as a space in which to examine and contend with societal attitudes toward Spanish speakers in the United States. Unfortunately, the ability for students to pursue such empowering knowledge is limited by the availability of programs that support this type of language education.

University Heritage Language Programs

Schwartz Caballero (2014) explains that "heritage languages are taught primarily in three settings: community-based programs, K–12 public schools, and higher education" (p. 362). He further states that "heritage learners are often included in dual language or immersion programs" at the elementary level, while "at the secondary level, the curriculum may include a single course for HL speakers or a sequences of courses" (p. 363). Subsequently, language classrooms comprised of both heritage and second language learners are common (Carreira, 2016). It is these "mixed classes" that comprise a significant pedagogical challenge for language teachers. That being said, most literature regarding heritage language education has targeted university populations (Alarcón, 2010; Beaudrie, 2011; Beaudrie, 2009; Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Ducar, 2008; Li & Duff, 2008; Potowski et al., 2009; Schwarzer & Petrón, 2005, Wilson & Ibarra, 2015; Wilson & Martínez, 2011). The reason for this focus is best explained by the increase of programs offered at this level.

For example, Ingold, Rivers, Chavez Tesser, & Ashby (2002) conducted the first nationwide survey on the availability of programs that offered Spanish as a heritage language at the post-secondary level. They determined that only 17.8 percent of the 60

percent response rate offered such coursework. Beaudrie (2011; 2012) conducted two similar surveys in 2010 and again in 2011. She discovered a remarkable increase in the total number of heritage-specific programs, which coincided with the boom in the Hispanic population: of the 422 universities surveyed, Beaudrie identified 169 institutions—or 40 percent—that offered Spanish as a heritage language coursework. Unsurprisingly, most of these programs tend to be located in the southwest, where the sizeable Hispanic population sustains such interest.

However, numbers alone do not account for the uneven distribution of heritage language programs across the United States. Funding for heritage language programs vary widely at all levels of education. At times, it is the community itself that funds heritage instruction, providing language and cultural access through local public or private schools, churches, or community gathering sites (Moore, 2014, p. 370). The concentration of heritage programs at the university level thus suggests two underlying factors that contribute to program sustainability: access to resources and opportunities for professional development.

Remaining Challenges in HL Education

HL Curriculum Development

Despite theoretical advances in the field of foreign language education (Martínez, 2016), language "programs [still] need to better align standards with students' proficiency levels and needs; value students' heritage backgrounds, learning styles and abilities; and promote a balanced worldview and positive intergroup or cultural relationships" (Li & Duff, 2008, p. 26). Presently, the field has seven learning outcomes, which researchers (Valdés, 1995, 1997; Beaudrie et al., 2014) have developed and expanded over time:

1. Maintenance of the heritage language

2. Acquisition of a prestige language variety

3. Expansion of bilingual range

4. Transfer of literacy skills

5. Acquisition of academic skills in the heritage language

6. Cultivation of positive attitudes toward the heritage language

7. Acquisition or development of cultural awareness (Martínez, 2016, p. 42).

Nonetheless, these learning goals—while widely cited (Beaudrie et al., 2014; Leeman, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2004) have not been formally standardized by the leading national organization on language learning standards and proficiency guidelines: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages[7] (ACTFL). I believe the absence of nationally validated HL learning standards and proficiency guidelines provides a plausible explanation as to why many foreign/second language educators continue to assess their heritage language learners from a traditional SLA paradigm (Valdés, 2005). To explain, ACTFL categorizes a language learners' communicative proficiency as either beginner, intermediate, or advanced. A heritage speaker's linguistic deficiencies are thus easier to identify rather than her strengths, as educators often anticipate an HLL to be proficient in her language (Zyzik, 2016; Martínez, 2016). Given the literature discussed thus far, however, we know this not to be the case for all heritage language speakers. Consequently, the proverbial glass for heritage language learners is pervasively viewed as half empty (Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007).

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[7] According to the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (Classroom Resources: Definitions, 2017), "the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is a professional organization for all foreign language educators and administrators. ACTFL is committed to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels".

To combat this deficit ideology, foreign/second language educators must establish "a more optimistic outlook based on how much heritage speakers already know (Kagan & Dillon, 2007, p. 374). Li & Duff (2008) use the term "locally developed" to refer specifically to effective placement instruments for heritage language programs (p. 20); however, this idea clearly applies to a more holistic and inclusive curricular approach. Specifically, a "locally developed" curriculum would place language learning in a familiar, community context. It could also potentially redress mismatches between an educator's expectations for the language variety used in the classroom versus the language spoken by learners in their communities (Li & Duff, 2008; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, p. 385).

Despite innovative suggestions on how to improve the quality of language education programs for all learners, however, the current political climate of high-stakes testing in English (Wright, 2007) continues to situate heritage language education at the periphery of national education standards and initiatives (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). Fortunately, there is some consensus amongst researchers in the field as to what instruction should look like in language classrooms with heritage language students. To reiterate, instruction in these mixed abilities learning contexts must be differentiated and student-centered in order to promote advanced linguistic and cognitive proficiency (Carreira, 2012; Li & Duff, 2008). Some attention to form is beneficial (Beaudrie, 2009; Beaudrie et al. 2014; Lynch, 2003; 2008; Potowski et al., 2009), but instruction should comprise of relevant "cultural, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic information" (Li & Duff, 2008, p. 26). Again, the goal

Undoubtedly, the breadth of knowledge that second language teachers must process, internalize, and then put into practice when working with heritage leaners is expansive (Potowski & Carreira, 2004), and I believe this is why progressive reform within the field of language teacher preparation remains a concern.

The Historical Inadequacy of Language Teacher Preparation

Schwartz Caballero (2014) reaffirms that "whether in mixed or specialized classes, teachers must have at least a basic understanding of what it means to be a heritage language learner" (p. 365). Even so, the ability to differentiate the learning needs of heritage language students does not in itself correspond to quality instruction (Beaudrie, 2012; Veléz-Rendón, 2002). Santamaría (2009) clarifies this point, arguing that "the best teaching practices are those that consider all learners in a classroom setting and pay close attention to differences inherent to academic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity" (p. 241). The inclusivity inherent in this idea thus raises a fundamental question: in addition to learner differences, what types of knowledge adequately prepare teachers for this task? (Tedick & Walker, 2014).

To begin, an inclusive approach to language instruction comprises an understanding of the translingual and transcultural realities of our globalized society (Kagan & Dillon, 2009). In the context of the global economy, then, linguistic competence is of central importance, since a meaningful exchange of language is required to participate in competitive markets (Fishman, 2001). Van Deusen-Scholl (2014) confirms the saliency of this issue, stating that "the age of globalization…entails a serious re-evaluation of our national policies and perspectives" regarding the teaching and learning of languages, especially heritage languages (p. 81). To this end, Ingold and

Wang (2010) envision the following goals for U.S. world language education programs: 1) to increase the number and variety of language programs offered, 2) to improve their perceived effectiveness, 3) to expand opportunities for program sequence and delivery, and 4) to articulate measureable learning outcomes for all students (p. 11). The authors admit, however, that "the key to successfully implementing globally competitive world language education in the United States lies in the redesigning the world language teacher supply system" (p. 11).

I believe it important to unpack this statement, as it alludes to a prevailing problem in second language teacher education. For the past 40 years, a visionary model for foreign/second language teacher preparation has yet to be fully enacted (Huhn, 2012; Veléz-Rendón, 2002), and we teachers-cum-researchers should be asking why. Ingold and Wang (2010) offer one explanation for the historical trajectory of this inadequacy, stating that the continued marginalization of foreign/second language education in K–12 systems has stagnated professional development within the field. Subsequently, foreign/second language education—and by default teacher preparation—are relegated as issues of minor importance in the eyes of policy stakeholders. I agree that marginalization is central to this problem, but I believe the real issue is far more subversive. The majority of today's educators are white and middle-class, and the ability—or willingness—to appreciate "multiple and conflicting perspectives, [such as though found in heritage language education], and the desire to work against race/class-based privilege do not come naturally to people who have always been centered in orientalist literature, imperialist history, and media stereotypes" (Merryfield, 2000, p. 441).

It is perhaps for this reason that departments of Spanish and Portuguese in institutions of higher education have traditionally been "the first responders to the heritage challenge" (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 156). In addition to being primary research sites, some Spanish programs now offer graduate coursework on Spanish as a Heritage Language. The University of Houston, for example, is presently the only U.S. institution of higher educator to offer a graduate certificate in Spanish as a Heritage Language. That said, "no state has certification, licensure, or endorsements in teaching HL learners" (Schwartz Caballero, 2014, p. 363). Inconsistent teacher certification requirements, which vary from state-to-state, compound the challenge of attaining state-sponsored teaching credentials in heritage language education. But as Kubanyiova and Crookes (2006) note, "certification is still no guarantee of adequate teacher competence" (p. 121). Similar to teacher certification requirements, standards for heritage language instruction also vary between states, school districts, and university programs (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). As a result, the aforementioned program goals, as well as proposed guidelines for improving teacher knowledge on language and culture (Potowski & Carreira, 2004; Webb & Miller, 2000), often remain nothing more than suggestions.

The call for reform to language teacher preparation is therefore predicated on the belief that educators are still not equipped with the expertise needed to provide equitable instruction across all student backgrounds (Guskey, 2002; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Merryfield, 2000). Potowski and Carreira (2004) confirm this perception, stating that, "there exists a perturbing assumption that teachers who have studied [Spanish as a Foreign Language] acquisition and have been trained in SFL methodology will make

good [Spanish for Native Speakers] teachers" (p. 431). To address this concern, a re-design of teacher preparation systems must align program objectives with realistic expectations for classroom practice. That is, what teachers are expected to learn in their methods coursework should be informed by what they may experience when working in these diverse classrooms. For instance, educators develop sensitivity to the needs of diverse learners through classroom practice and experience; however, its cultivation arises from the nature of their formal training (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Teacher preparation programs that prioritize a sensitivity to linguistic and cultural diversity can orient new and prospective teachers to the necessity for linguistically appropriate and culturally responsive instruction.

The knowledge provided through teacher preparation programs is emblematic of dominant culture perceptions regarding the instruction and maintenance of heritage languages. Lee and Oxelson (2006) confirm the ability for training programs to shape teacher attitudes, stating that the ways in which teachers respond to the needs of their heritage students is often indicative of viewpoints they acquire through training or professional development (p. 464). However, as Crookes (1997) notes, innovative teacher preparation does not necessarily equate to improved practice. To illustrate, Bateman and Wilkinson (2010) administered a small-scale, state-wide survey to Spanish language high school educators and discovered a troubling trend in their participants' responses: approximately 47 percent shared that they do not provide accommodations to instruction for heritage language learners. Moreover, an alarming 58 percent rarely made accommodations on assessments, requiring heritage students to adapt to the normative language views of the teacher. Rather than being representative of poor practice, this

finding—along with similar qualitative data from previous studies (Lee & Oxelson, 2006)—confirms the urgency for professional development on how teachers can implement heritage language theory into practice.

In an attempt to demystify this process, Webb and Miller (2000) completed a three-year, federally funded qualitative case study of three high school Spanish heritage language classrooms in New York City. The 1997-1999 ACTFL/Hunter College Project "sought to establish a model for teacher preparation that was collaborative and deeply grounded in practice" by observing the teaching practices of several heritage language educators in three New York City public schools (Valdés, 2000, p. 243). The findings informed the design of two, foreign/heritage language methods courses presently required for a bachelor's in Adolescent Teaching Languages other than English at Hunter College:

- SEDC 212 - Methods I: Foundations of Literacy, Language and Learning in the Foreign/Heritage Language Classroom, Grades 7-12, and

- SEDC 322 - Methods II: Instructional Planning for Literacy, Language, and Learning in the Foreign/Heritage Language Classroom, Grades 7-12 (Hunter College, 2017)

Hunter College thus became the first institution of higher education to mandate coursework on heritage and second language acquisition theory frameworks. In doing so, preservice teachers at this institution hypothetically receive the knowledge and training necessary to address more equitably the learning needs of heritage language students.

The ACTFL/Hunter College project was groundbreaking in its attempt to document through qualitative description the teaching practices of high school Spanish heritage language educators. Interestingly, literature on similar qualitative initiatives is

scarce (Huhn, 2012), and I find it remarkable that so few colleges and schools of education appear to embrace Hunter College's proposed model for coursework on SLA and HLA-based methodologies. I had an opportunity to speak with the director of the program, and I found that she struggled to articulate the different between the two methods programs. I speculate that the inability to articulate the essence of heritage language education is likely hindering much needed growth and professional development in the field.

Informed by this review of extant literature, I now explain how my conceptual framework will allow for an exploration of the teaching/learning process from the perspectives of teachers and heritage language students. This insight into the thinking and lived experiences of heritage language instructors and speakers is needed to substantiate a paradigmatic shift in foreign/second language teacher preparation.

Conceptual Framework

From the onset, my study is motivated by my belief that teachers need to see language learning and teaching as political processes that construct and are "constructed by the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future" (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p. 1). As such, recognizing how the interpretation of our lived experiences, or *perezhivanie*, influences our perceived reality of the teaching/learning process is the basis of my conceptual framework. In addition to *perezhivanie*, Vygotsky's concepts of *vospitanie* [nurturing] and *obuchenie* [teaching and learning] consist of two additional lenses through which to understand how my participants' perspectives of their language learning experiences shape and are shaped by their social interactions in the classroom.

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Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory: An Overview

Vygotsky focused primarily on understanding the role of social interaction in shaping an individual's internal system of knowledge and understanding (Mahn, 1999; 2010). To do so, he employed the abstract tenets of a dialectical approach to better study the development of human thought and language as a process (Mahn, 2010, p. 298).

For example, a dialectical approach to studying foreign/second language teacher preparation programs entails an exploration of its genetic origins. I will illustrate this process by first outlining the historical roots and initial purpose of foreign/second language teacher preparation programs. This insight will illuminate how language methods classrooms have evolved into their present function: as sites where nurturing, learning, and teaching are ongoing, interactive processes, which are mediated by and through social interaction (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Johnson, 2015; Johnson & Freeman, 2001). Additionally, I will utilize Vygotsky's levels of analyses to identify the genetic, structural, and functional components (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996) of foreign/second language teacher preparation. By drawing on the dialectical principles of Vygotsky's methodological approach, I believe I can better analyze and present a microcosmic example of the teaching/learning process as a unified system.

Articulating a dialectical method. The design and purpose of foreign/second language training programs has been largely guided by two questions: What do teachers need to know to be able to teach a language, and how can preparation programs best present this information? (Johnson, 2006; 2015; Johnson & Freeman, 2001; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). The answers to these fundamental questions remain open-ended, as

foreign/second language teacher education systems have remained relatively unmodified (Huhn, 2012; Veléz-Rendón, 2002). The ongoing debate over how to best improve the quality of teacher preparation programs implies a general lack of understanding on *what* needs to be fixed and *why*. To enlighten the interconnections between historical and present phenomena, Vygotsky (1978) analyzes the genetic origins of the educational system in the USSR. The approach I am taking with this study is fundamentally the same: we must shift our attention from teacher education in its present form and focus instead on the processes that have contributed to this form. In other words, "to study something historically means to study it in the process of change" (p. 64). A brief genetic overview of the development of foreign language education in the U.S. illuminates the "dynamic relation between changing and stable features" in the field (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 194).

Historical origins. The isolationist policies of World War I, resulted in unfavorable public opinion toward foreign language education. For example, secondary education teachers saw little value in teaching a two-year language program, as they believed students would be unsuccessful at developing communicative proficiency. In line with this thinking, some educators argued against teaching a language to students who were not college-bound. This negative sentiment permeated throughout the K-12 system and beyond, causing a number of foreign language education programs to disappear from public schools and institutions of higher education (Diekhoff, 1965).

The U.S. government did not weigh in on the necessity of foreign language education until World War II, when the urgency for soldiers to engage in espionage, prisoner interrogation, and radio transmission translations stimulated the study of non-

English languages. In response to this need, the army recruited linguists to teach foreign

languages—notably German and Japanese—in brief, but linguistically intensive,

acquisition sessions. These grammar drills and memorization of repetitious sentence

patterns led to rapid linguistic development. Despite the success of this mode of

instruction, however, the public remained skeptical of the need to learn a foreign

language (Diekhoff, 1965).

The 1957 launch of Russia's satellite, Sputnik, abruptly changed this perception.

Incentivized by the fear of falling behind in the race toward modernization, the U.S.

government allocated federal money through the National Defense Education Act to

promote the study of mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Empirical studies in

the field of language acquisition quickly proliferated as a result (Bangura, 1996),

situating universities as epicenters for linguistic research and teacher training programs

(Johnson, 2015). Consequently, teacher education programs became intimately tied to

and dependent on theoretical advances in research. The present structure of

foreign/second language teacher education programs is thus an amalgamation of

theoretical approaches that have contributed over time to our understanding of language

acquisition, which have in turn informed our teaching methodologies (Bangura, 1996).

Key structural changes.

Structural grammar. The success of the Army Method publicized the structural

grammar work of Charles Fries, who viewed language as comprised of "patterns of word

classes into which are inserted individual words in the phonemes of the language"

(Bangura, 1996, p. 2), and complemented the behaviorist work of B. F. Skinner.

Together, this theory-informed approach propagated the notion that languages could be

learned through repetition and rote memorization. Indeed, the rapid pace with which

U.S. army soldiers developed some linguistic competency through grammar and sentence

pattern drills contributed to its popularity as a method of instruction. The resulting

Audio-lingual Method (ALM), as it is more commonly known, spread rapidly throughout

schools and higher education institutions during the 1960s and early 1970s, and its

dominance in the field led to the reconceptualization of foreign language education in

public schools (Bangura, 1996; Diekhoff, 1965;). At its core, ALM positions language

teachers as the active providers of knowledge, which they then dispense to their passively

recipient students. While vestiges of this method are still present, the work of cognitive

psychologist Noam Chomsky undermined considerably the credibility of the ALM in

1969 when he called into question the viability of a behaviorist approach to language

learning (Bangura, 1996).

   Innate syntax. Chomsky unraveled the behaviorist view on language learning

when he distinguished between performance and competence, thereby highlighting the

"idealization of the language system" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 28). Performance, he

explained, it is the concrete use of language and, therefore, does not pertain to the study

of linguistics. Competence, however, is determined by individual genetics. Chomsky

postulated that humans are born with an innate linguistic system onto which they later

map sounds and words (Bangura, 1996). His nativist theory contributed to the notion of a

Universal Grammar, which argues that an underlying, language acquisition device

explains our propensity as humans to acquire language. While UG is not an approach to

language learning, Chomsky's hypothesis oriented new theoretical perspectives on how

second languages are acquired and why they should be learned prior to the critical period

of adolescent psychical development. Specifically, the dialectical transformation a child's mind undergoes during this age of development suggests a shift in the child's capacity to fully acquire a second language (Vygotsky, 1978).

The 1980s subsequently marked a surge in SLA research, heralding a new era of theoretical approaches to language learning and teaching methodologies. In particular, the conceptual works of linguist Michael Halliday and sociolinguist Dell Hymes—who expanded Chomsky's theory of performance and competence to include function and wider communication—contributed to a set of macro-strategies that are still popular in most language classrooms: the communicative language teaching approach (Kumaradivelu, 1992). Essentially, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) called for the use of authentic oral activities, such as interviews and role plays, that required learners to utilize the target language in contextually appropriate situations. As a result, grammar drills and rote memorization that were popularized through the Audio-lingual Method finally began to fade from classroom practice.

Before delving further into this epistemological shift, there is yet one more theoretical approach to discuss that has historically informed language instruction to beginners: the lexico-semantic approach.

Lexico-semantic. Lado (1990) challenged Chomsky's theory of a pre-existing linguistic system. Rather, he argued that prelingual, preliterate children and second language learning adults learn words first as unclassified lexemes (Bangura, 1996). As the number of learned vocabulary words increases, the expanding cognitive load triggers the development of storage and retrieval systems, which allows for the categorization of these lexemes into phrases and sentences. Lado thus likened second language learning to

a child acquiring her first language. This theoretical approach, while not widely referenced in the literature, is evident in the way teachers still introduce beginners to the target language: through the teaching of simple words, groups of words, phrases, short sentences, and lastly complex sentences.

Functional evolution.

The knowledge transmission perspective. The lasting influence of behaviorist and cognitive learning theories on the structure of foreign language education is evident in the present design of U.S. teacher education programs. To illustrate, training programs are viewed as opportunities for teachers to "learn about the content they [are] expected to teach." They then "observe and practice it in the teaching practicum, and develop pedagogical expertise during the induction years of teaching" (Johnson, 2006, p. 238). Most teacher education programs therefore operate under the notion that "teaching and learning can be transmitted to teachers by others," thus assuming that disciplinary knowledge can be compartmentalized and generalized to any teaching context (Johnson & Freeman, 2001, pp. 54-55).

The fundamental concern with this product-process paradigm is that the way "teachers actually use their knowledge in classrooms has come to be seen as highly interpretive, socially negotiated, and continually restructured with the classroom and schools where [they] work" (Johnson & Freeman, 2001, p. 56). Johnson (2006) reiterates this idea, explaining that the dynamic nature of knowledge and knowing are continually negotiated by and through a learner's social interactions. As such, learning to teach, which requires active participation from both the expert teacher and the learner, is a dialectical process that is mediated by internal processes and external interactions.

Because a positivistic paradigm neither captures "the complexities of teachers' mental lives," nor does it explain how these internal experiences shape how and what teachers do in their classrooms, the focus of empirical studies in the 1980s began to shift from teachers as doers of knowledge to teachers as learners (Johnson, 2006).

The sociocultural perspective. The sociocultural theoretical concepts of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, were the driving force behind the sociocultural turn in the language teaching profession. In particular, a growing body of research into teacher cognition began to draw on principles of Vygotsky's concept of *obuchenie*—which encapsulates the social and cognitive developmental relations involved in the teaching/learning process—to explain how the methods classroom can act as a catalyst for teacher growth (Johnson, 2009). With these empirical studies, the notion of teachers as learners of language teaching became a central argument in the re-shifting purpose of teacher education.

Johnson and Freeman (2001) identify key components of this reconceptualization, stating that a socially-situated, epistemological framework for language teacher education includes "theories of second language acquisition, classroom methodologies, [and] descriptions of the English language as content." Most importantly, this content must "be understood against the backdrop of teachers' professional lives, within the settings where they work, and within the circumstances of that work" (pp. 57-58). The rationale for this relevance, as Jones and Brader-Araje (2002) explain, is that a socially-mediated perspective will enable teachers to view "learning as an active process, taking students prior knowledge into consideration, building on preconceptions, and eliciting cognitive conflict" (p. 4). They will then have greater facility to "design instruction that goes

beyond rote learning to meaningful learning" (p. 4) that takes students' lived experiences into consideration. Advocates for a sociocultural perspective thus characterize teacher education as a lifelong process, and they situate teacher "learning as socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting" (Johnson, 2006, p. 239). What remains to be seen, however, is how—or if—the field will incorporate teachers' voices into professional discourse regarding content, pedagogy, and practice (Johnson & Freeman, 2001, p. 66).

An exploration of the history and structural and functional development of U.S. foreign language education suggests that the problem of theoretical advancement in the field lies largely within its origins. Johnson and Freeman (2001) seem to allude to this supposition as well, in revealing that efforts to transition fully from a cognitive to a sociocultural perspective have so far been unsuccessful. The epistemological battle to change in theoretical purpose is evidenced in language teachers' struggles to meet the needs of diverse learners. Moreover, shifting learner demographics point to the failure of a traditional paradigm in adequately addressing the social and psycho-emotional needs of heritage and bilingual speakers. I find this unsurprising, however, given that foreign language education—and therefore teacher preparation—has historically favored the linguistic and cognitive development of second language learners. A probable key to adjusting the purpose of foreign/second language education, then, is to adopt a sociocultural perspective that depoliticizes the theoretical approaches to language learning and teaching.

Application of sociocultural theory. As evidenced throughout this discussion, the "reconceptualization of how teachers learn to teach and how they carry out their work

in classrooms highlight the fundamentally social nature of cognition and learning"
(Johnson & Freeman, 2001, p. 56). Understanding teachers as learners is therefore
central to comprehending the essence of the teaching/learning process. (Johnson &
Freeman, 2001, p. 58). Johnson (2009) further argues that "the professional education of
teachers is, at its core, about teachers as learners of teaching" (p. 2). I therefore
employed Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as the foundation of my study to understand
beyond a superficial level the essence of my participants' individual experiences and
perspectives with the learning and/or teaching of the Spanish language. To attain such a
deep, comprehensive analysis of unobservable phenomenon, I ground my participants'
data in two additional concepts that comprise the teaching/learning system: *vospitanie*
[nurturing] and *obuchenie* [teaching/learning process].

Exploring *vospitanie* and *obuchenie*. Unfortunately, my field notes from my
classroom observations were limited to a discussion of the TAs' discourse and practices.
I was therefore unable to document how the TAs' social interactions with their students
appeared to mediate cognitive and social development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). To
work around this limitation, I asked all of my participants—SHL students, SSL/SHL
TAs, program administrators, and K-12 Spanish teachers—to reflect on their educational
and emotional experiences with learning Spanish as a native, heritage, or second
language speaker. I suspected that participants who were most complimentary of their
learning experiences would describe the qualities of their teachers and/or the nature of
their classroom practices. Of particular interest to me, then, was analyzing how
Vygotsky's concepts of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* were manifest in my participants'
recollections.

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Vygotsky (1997) refers to the concept of *vospitanie* when conceptualizing the role of a child's caretaker as the source of moral guidance, care, and psychological development. In the context of education, however, this responsibility falls to the child's educator. *Obuchenie*, which Vygotsky (1987) defined as "teaching/learning as collaborative interactions governed by a mutuality of purpose" (p. 212), is similarly referenced in terms of child psychical development. For *obuchenie* to function, however, the teacher must provide the conditions appropriate for a learner's cognitive and social development. In other words, *vospitanie* is integral to the learning/teaching process as it operates in conjunction with *obuchenie*. Cognitive development therefore arises from an understanding of these two processes (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). A mentor or methods course instructor therefore plays a critical role in the teaching/learning process for her preservice teachers.

Teacher as learner. Learning to teach is an emotionally charged and cognitively demanding endeavor. As such, a mentor's sensitivity to and nurturing response in regard to these challenges can directly impact an individual's cognitive development and social awareness. Hence, if a mentor instructor is "to enact *obuchenie*, [her] mediation cannot be predetermined or remain static; it must be emergent, contingent, and responsive to his or her moment-to-moment interactions with teachers" (Johnson, 2015, p. 518). The interpretation of one's lived experiences, which Vygotsky referred to as *perezhivanie*, is another concept that I took into consideration when I analyzed the teaching/learning process.

To capture this complexity, I was intentional in asking my participants questions that allowed them to explore how they came to define themselves as Spanish speakers.

Most openly discussed their emotional-cognitive struggles with this identity formation process, and they were not afraid to critique the oppressive practices of previous Spanish teachers that limited their voices in the classroom. A holistic overview of my participants' thought processes pointed to a conscious awareness of the personality characteristics and practices that are desirable in a 'good' teacher. I will expand on this idea in Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Analysis and Conclusion.

Conclusion

In U.S. Spanish language classrooms, the impact of Latino population boom continues to manifest through the complexities and rigor of working with students who are heritage speakers of their language. A review of extant literature illuminates more explicitly how several of these challenges continue to hinder the advancement of field. In particular, the struggle for teachers to identify who heritage learners are and understand how their needs differ from second language learners expose a continuing knowledge deficit. These ongoing concerns are a microcosm of a larger, more pervasive issue, however.

Foreign/second language teacher education programs across the U.S. have been slow to integrate coursework on non-traditional foreign language methodologies. By failing to evolve as a profession, we are failing to provide essential learner-specific pedagogy to our preservice teachers. Training curricula must include opportunities for educators to learn about and prepare for the multilingual and multicultural realities that they will encounter in their classrooms. To this end, a hybrid model of language instruction is critical, as today's foreign/second language educators require an understanding of both of SLA and HLA frameworks to address more completely the

broad spectrum of learning needs and learner profiles of their diverse students. However, the path to reforms begins with a willingness to challenge the status quo.

Change in "the field of heritage language is not driven by public or institutional policies, but rather by committed people who have a vision for a nation in which many minority languages happily and proudly coexist" (Schwartz, 2001, p. 367). We teachers-cum-researchers have the power to inculcate meaningful and enduring change, and we must endeavor in the continued documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of pedagogical strategies and tools that purport to support the unique learning needs of our linguistically diverse students. Innovation thus begins with our insight. If the end goal for teacher training programs is to produce knowledgeable educators who are linguistically and culturally sensitive to the needs of diverse students (Johnson, 2006), then these teachers must have access to content and social interactions in their training programs that foster critical consciousness and social awareness.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

When I designed this study, I intended to explore how new teaching assistants in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at this particular institution transformed their understanding of theoretical language learning paradigms, such as Second Language Acquisition Theory, into classroom practice. The study fit the description of a qualitative case analysis, as I was examining and comparing the thoughts and experiences of specific participants within a specific social context. However, I realized during the data collection process that my questions did not address the essence of my raw data. Rather than revise them, however, I continued to use these questions to guide the gathering and analysis of additional data:

Original RQ#1: How do Spanish language teaching assistants adapt their theoretical understanding of second and heritage language acquisition theory to meet the needs of all students?

Original RQ#2: How do teachers' and students' ideological beliefs about language learning intertwine?

Original SubRQ#2.1: How can this understanding potentially inform transformative pedagogical practice?

With my data driving the direction of my study, I decided to revise my methodological design to include strategies from case study and grounded theory methodology. The combination of these qualitative methodological approaches

enabled me to conduct an in-depth exploration and analysis of my participants' lived experiences and perceptions regarding the teaching and learning of Spanish. As such, I did not develop my final research questions until I had completed multiple cycles of data analysis.

Final Research Questions

As mentioned previously, the emergent nature of my data gradually informed the re-alignment of my research questions:

RQ #1: How does an exploration of heritage language learners' *perezhivanie* [one's lived sociohistorical and psycho-emotional experiences] illuminate the underlying challenges of teaching to this student demographic?

RQ#2: What is the relationship between *vospitanie* [nurturing] and *obuenchie* [teaching/learning] in a language learning classroom?

SubQ#2.1: *What are the characteristics of a classroom that has a combination of both elements?*

SubQ#2.2: How does the transparentization of thinking processes for students and teachers lead to transformative learning opportunities for both?

RQ#3: How can an understanding of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* lead to a potential reconceptualization of language teacher education programs?

SubQ#3.1: How does an analysis of these three concepts lead to an understanding on the development of an efficacious pedagogy for heritage language learners?

While my case was bound to specific individuals associated with a specific Spanish language department in the U.S. Southwest, the nature of my raw data made me

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pause periodically throughout the collection process and consider what I was actually researching. I found these moments of reflection both insightful and frustrating. I admit that my own bias as a second language methods course instructor initially clouded my ability to analyze the data with an open mind. Once I reconciled this limitation, I became excited by what my participants appeared to be teaching me about the learning and teaching of language and culture. To represent their voices, I had to create a detailed map of what occurred in my study and why.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how my selected hybrid qualitative methodology allowed for a comprehensive, holistic presentation of real-world social phenomena. I justify my design by first describing the applicability of case study and grounded theory approaches. I then outline my research plan, including a description of the context, setting, participants, sampling methods, data sources, and methods of analysis. I conclude this chapter by offering ethical considerations to enhance the credibility of my design.

Rationale for Research Approach

Qualitative Inquiry: A Brief History

During the 1970s, educational research in the UK and in the U.S. began to break from a traditional positivist model, as statistical analyses could not fully account for the nature of human thought and behavior observed in schools and classrooms. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) explain this paradigmatic shift in research philosophy, stating that the decontextualized evidence attained through traditional scientific methods fails to capture the "complexity of

education settings and the significance of the diverse individuals and organizations that enhance that complexity (p. 5)." An interest in documenting exploratory interactions surged, and qualitative inquiry emerged out of a desire to capture through rich descriptions an authentic moment of the human experience. As a qualitative researcher, my task was to make sense of my participants' narratives and to discover the ways in which they intersect (Glesne, 2016, p. 1). To accomplish this goal, I utilized strategies from two qualitative approaches, case study methodology and grounded theory, to construct a case-bound, theoretically driven theory that was grounded in and representative of my participants' experiences.

Case Study Methodology

Background. According to Yin (2014), case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 13). It is important to note that this concept of 'boundedness' can be ambiguous. As Merriam (1998) explains, "the process of conducting a case study is [oftentimes] conflated with both the unit of study (the case) and the product of this type of investigation" (Merriam, 1998, Kindle locations 389-390). To differentiate between case and product, Glesne (2016) suggests that boundedness be perceived as the system of working parts in a study (p. 289). For instance, specifying how many participants will be observed and interviewed, as well as describing the data-gathering site, establishes some parameters through which the study will operate. The product of these qualitative investigations is the thick, rich descriptions—or extended text—that seek to capture an instance of the human experience (Merriam, 1998, Kindle Locations 392-393).

Case study designs in the field of education are also often borrowed from other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology. As such, researchers who employ case study methodology are concerned with capturing through holistic, rich descriptions the discovery and interpretation of a single, real-life phenomenon. These comprehensive descriptions can serve an interpretative or an evaluative purpose. For example, an analytical interpretation of case study data may elucidate new categories or extend the findings of previous qualitative studies. Evaluative case studies, however, draw on this rich description to inform judgements. Teacher evaluations that generate naturalistic data, for instance, are a meaningful way to communicate knowledge and inform practice, as the data is representative of real-life experiences (Merriam, 1998, Kindle locations 541-542). Case study methods subsequently consist of two general goals: 1) "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding standing of the groups under study," and 2) "to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process" (Becker, 1968, p. 233).

Advantages. Case study methodology does not employ a singular approach to data collection or analysis, though some methods, such as observation and interviews, are more commonly used than others (Merriam, 1998). The preference for particular data gathering strategies is therefore determined by the nature of the study. This personal preference, in turn, means that the data collection net is as wide or as narrow as the researcher sees fit. The lens through which the researcher observes and analyzes phenomenon is subsequently much broader in focus than that used in scientific experiments and quantitative surveys

(Merriam, 1998). For instance, if the purpose of the investigation is to provide a holistic representation of a particular situation, the researcher may focus on thick description through prose and other literary techniques to attain an "on-the-ground" understanding of the phenomenon under study (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 1998, Kindle locations 432-434). One of the key strengths to employing case study methods, then, is that it allows for the "direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events" (Yin, 2014, p. 12).

Challenges. Researcher bias poses a significant threat to the credibility of case study design. To counter this limitation, case studies typically require several months to years of rigorous data collection. The volume of data presents another challenge for case study researchers, as there are no specific guidelines for the organization or analysis of the study's findings (Merriam, 1998). Despite these concerns, Merriam claims that the merits of case study research outweigh its limitations. The justification for case study strategies is therefore entrusted to the researcher.

Rationale for approach. Exploring the perspectives of my participants and how their lived experiences intersected and interacted within the parameters of my research site called for a methodological approach that situated my participants and their experiences as a single case. While the case is singular, I included multiple participant perspectives to allow for a compelling analysis across a variety of similar and contrastive cases (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This comprehensive, comparative lens illuminated the nature of my case, thereby allowing me to understand what the case was, and why it appeared to function in a certain way (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29). This

"multi-case sampling [added] confidence to [my] findings," which in turn lent to the credibility and stability of the overall research design (Miles et al., 2014, p. 33).

Given that case study methodology is "anchored in real-life situations," it can be combined with other types of qualitative research approaches to enhance the depth and quality of analysis (Merriam, 1998, Kindle locations 568-569). I now explain how grounded theory, which seeks to explain a phenomenon by exploring and analyzing it from multiple angles, served as a complementary methodological approach to enhance the overall design of my study.

Grounded Theory Approach

Background. In 1967, sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed grounded theory as a method of constructing theory that was derived from aggregated data. Grounded theory is subsequently a unique approach to qualitative research in that concepts are formed during ongoing, interrelated cycles of data collection and analysis. Grounded theory, much like case study, utilizes interviews and observations as primary data-gathering methods. However, written documents, such as survey responses, journals, and e-mails, can also serve as data sources for a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Srauss, 2015, p. 7). The data is continually analyzed and broken down into similar patterns and categories until enough information has been gathered to allow for the formation of a core category (pp. 6-7). This core category is the overarching concept of the study.

Advantages. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), grounded theory "[enables] researchers to examine topics and related behaviors from many different angles—thus developing comprehensive explanations." They further explain that grounded theory-based procedures can be used to gain new insights into ongoing issues. Lastly, grounded theory procedures can illuminate "new and emerging areas in need of investigation," as it allows for a comprehensive examination of a particular topic (p. 11). Given the stagnancy of reform within second language teacher education programs, I found grounded theory to be an appropriate methodological approach to investigate this topic. It allowed me to probe from numerous angles the cognitive processes and sociohistorical experiences that have contributed to my participants' understanding of the teaching/learning system.

Challenges. Engaging in a grounded theory approach is a test of patience, flexibility, and abstract thinking (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Researchers need to continuously look for and follow threads of data in order to arrive at conceptual understanding. The ability for a researcher to distinguish descriptive concepts from theoretical concepts is therefore imperative. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) explain, both description and theory are based on concepts. The key difference between the two, however, is that theory leads to the formation of a core concept that seeks to explain the origins of a particular process or phenomenon (p. 14). Rushing to conclusions is the greatest risk with a grounded theory approach, as researchers must devote time to conduct a thorough analysis. The quality of the study and its relevant contribution to the field is dependent upon "the depth and breadth of the investigation" (p. 308).

Rationale for approach. My dissatisfaction with the current status quo in second language teacher education research pushed me to challenge myself with the methodological design of this study. I was not afraid to draw on my own experiences to construct a theory, nor was I daunted by the idea of proceeding without concrete research questions. I had an idea of what I wished to learn through my study, but I remained open and flexible, allowing my data collection and analysis to guide the direction of my research. To understand my participants' perspectives, I realized that I had to capture their narratives and actions in vivid detail. I also needed to continually dig below the surface to probe the processes that have shaped their external interactions with and perceptions of learning and teaching the Spanish language. This interpretive method of qualitative research is the essence of a grounded theory approach, which is why I included such strategies in my methodological design (Charmaz, 2014, p. 33).

Situating Epistemological, Ontological, and Axiological Stances

In order to authentically represent the views of my participants, I recognized the importance of contending with my personal beliefs and understanding on what I believed to be self-evident in the teaching/learning process. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) note that this self-analysis is an important step of the research process, and it is often overlooked. When a researcher seeks to evaluate and justify the efficacy of her methodological framework, she should evaluate her epistemological, ontological, and axiological stances on the nature of reality. In essence, what we wish to understand through our research reveals our assumptions about what we believe exists.

My ontological perspective on the nature of teaching, for instance, situates the field of education as a socially constructed reality. Because this reality is not fixed, I argue that multiple realities of teaching exist. How I perceive these realities is unique to me, and it is motived by my epistemological and axiological perspectives. My lived experiences as a secondary Spanish language educator have shaped how I have come to value teaching and learning, which in turn has influenced how I believe the nature of teaching can be explained. I therefore understood the importance of remaining open and flexible in my interpretation of the data, as my biases could have informed and influenced my selection and execution of my hybrid methodology and methods (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, pp. 22–23).

I now explain how my openness, combined with an equally flexible and open hybrid methodological framework, allowed for a detailed presentation on how a group of individuals perceived their teaching and learning processes.

Description of the Case

Context

I conducted this qualitative study at a public state institution of higher education in the U.S. Southwest. The university serves approximately 24,000 students, nearly 50% of who identify as Hispanic. The use of this identity label is particular to this region, and it carries significant sociohistorical connotations that remain controversial to this day. Prior to this state's annexation, the term 'Hispanic' served to promote the state's colonial ties to Spain, thereby further disassociating the people from their Mexican neighbor (Roberts, 2001). This shift in state identity resulted in a successful bid for statehood in the early 1900s.

The university, which was constructed in in the late 1800s, presently has 18,000 undergraduates, 4,000 graduates, and 1,100 international students. Its campus is a blend of historic pueblo and modern architecture. New buildings, while offering the latest state of the art technology and infrastructure, still exhibit this pueblo revival effort. In addition to celebrating its cultural history, the university also recognizes the diversity of its regional Spanish language. Because of the state's colonial ties to Spain, a number of residents have been speaking Spanish as their first language since the 1500s. The names of street signs, buildings, towns, and Native American pueblos are indicative of these Spanish roots. The university's course offerings further reflect this linguistic history, as it offers two program tracks: Spanish as a Second Language and Spanish as a Heritage Language. The purpose of the heritage language program is to provide a space where students with cultural and/or linguistic ties to the language can explore their own varieties, as well as learn more about an endangered regional Spanish dialect. Per semester, the Spanish program serves approximately 900 students in SSL and 280 in SHL.

Setting

Most of this study took place on-site at the university. I visited classrooms in both the SSL and SHL programs, all of which were located in the Spanish, Portuguese, and Foreign Languages building. Some of these classrooms were rather dated in appearance, with traditional chalk boards lining the front and side walls. A few rooms were in the windowless interior of the building, so the only light came from dull fluorescent ceiling lights. Student desks were made of an ergonomic plastic material, and

each had a fold-up side panel for writing. The desks were often arranged in rows or in a circle, depending on the TAs' organizational preferences.

Despite the simplicity of the classrooms, each one came equipped with modern technology. The teaching podium in the back of the room offered a Dell computer, a DVD/VHS player, access to the LDC projector, a sound system, as well as additional cables so that TAs could attach their own laptops.

A few of TAs I observed taught in the community-style learning lab on the first floor. These classrooms were the epitome of technological modernity: two ceiling-suspended televisions for viewing content, multiple wall-length, white boards, circular tables with ready-to-use laptops, and a mobile TV dedicated for Skype. In addition to the large white boards, the classrooms had numerous mini white boards, which students would use during group work activities. The collaborative setup was, in my estimation, ideal for communicative learning activities.

When I was not conducting classroom observations, I spent the remainder of my time interviewing participants at a nearby campus library. I arranged for a semi-private study room for all face-to-face interviews. Each study room had a table and several chairs, along with a window or two that looked out into the basement lobby. I would always ask if my participants were comfortable with the windows before recording our conversation. The administrators preferred that I hold the interview in the privacy of their offices, while the teachers suggested that I meet them off campus at a restaurant of their choice. I therefore allowed my participants to control the time and the place of the interview, which may account for some of the richness of my data. I will expand on this assumption in Chapter 4: Findings.

Study Design

Participant Selection

My participant population consisted of four groups of individuals: undergraduate students in the SHL program, TAs in the SSL and SHL programs, administrators of the SSL and SHL programs, and former TAs who became K-12 Spanish language teachers in the metro area. To be enrolled in the study, participants had to be involved in the teaching and/or learning of Spanish as a heritage language. Administrative faculty were invited to participate, as they played a pivotal role in the mentoring of TAs who work with heritage students. In all, 69 SHL students, 14 TAs, two program administrators, and two Spanish teachers participated in some aspect of this study.

The participant sampling method for this study was therefore both convenient and purposive. Because I was both a TA and a graduate assistant in the Spanish department during the time of this investigation, the TAs, both current and former, as well as the Spanish program administrators, knew me very well. The SHL students were not familiar with me, but I made sure to explain my role in the department during the recruitment process.

Recruitment and Enrollment

SHL undergraduate students. I visited eight spring semester 2018 SHL classrooms to recruit students at a time of convenience for the SHL TAs. I first explained my position as a TA, a GA, and a researcher to the students. I then provided an overview of my study and passed out a 2-page consent form to those who were interested. The first page described the study procedure, and the

second page asked students to provide their name and preferred email address. I used this information to send students the link to my online survey, as well as to provide a list of student participants to the TAs. As compensation for their participation, the students would receive 1% extra credit. This extra credit counted toward part of the SHL program maximum of 3% for involvement in curricular program activities. SHL students who did not wish to participate in this study were still able to obtain extra credit by attending extra-curricular events that were offered by the Spanish Department throughout the semester.

Students were not screened for participation at this stage of the study. Rather, I pre-selected students for a follow-up interview based on their survey responses. Generally, I was looking for individuals who expressed interest in the learning and/or teaching of Spanish as a heritage language. Students who accepted an invitation to sit for the follow-up interview were compensated for their time with a $10 electronic gift card.

SSL/SHL TAs. I sent a recruitment email with a link to an online survey to all Spanish TAs in the 100 and 200 levels. Participants were not screened prior to participating in this stage of the study, and they were only required to read through and acknowledge an online consent from prior to viewing the full survey. At the end of the survey, I encouraged participants to consider continuing with the classroom observations and interview phase. If interested, participants typed their full name and provided a valid email address for me to contact them.

For each signed survey, I read through the participants' written responses and pre-selected those TAs who expressed interest in the learning and/or teaching of Spanish as a heritage language. In all, two SSL TAs, three SSL/SHL TAs, and one SHL TA

participated in this follow-up phase. However, one of the SSL/SHL TAs was

teaching online at the time, so I completed only an interview with him. TAs who

participated in the second stage of the study were compensated with a $20

electronic gift card.

   K-12 Spanish teachers/Spanish program administrators. I recruited

the Spanish teachers and the university Spanish program administrators through

their assigned business email addresses. I pre-selected these individuals based on

their previous and/or current work experiences with heritage language learners. I

have worked with each participant as a fellow TA or graduate assistant prior to

this study. As such, all were willing to contribute their voices to this work. I

compensated all four for their time and generosity with a $10 electronic gift card.

Data Collection Methods

   Observations. After reviewing signed surveys, I read through the

participants' responses and pre-selected six TAs who discussed their teaching

beliefs and practices regarding heritage language learners. I then sent a separate

consent form for the 3 observations/interview phase of the study to the

participants' email addresses. The length of the observations varied depending on

the day of the week. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday courses were 50 minutes,

while Tuesday and Thursday classes lasted 75 minutes. I visited each TA's

classroom for the duration of one week (either three days or two). I used a

prepared observation protocol (Appendix IV) to record my data. This tool

consisted of several columns: time of the activity, description of activities or

teacher discourse, and questions or comments that arose during my observations.

I also included two columns to track my developing theoretical analysis: one for critical pedagogy and one for critical language awareness. Unfortunately, I did not obtain any useful data to support my hunches about the interplay of these two theories. This missing theoretical input nonetheless proved insightful in helping me construct a theory about the social and cognitive processes at work in my study, which I will discuss in Chapter 5: Analysis and Conclusion.

In terms of my field notes, I limited the recorded data to teacher practice and/or discourse. I did not document student commentary or behavior. Rather, I recorded how a TA began and ended a learning activity and then transitioned to something else. I was curious, for instance, as to whether the activity was grounded in a particular language acquisition theory. For example, Total Physical Response (associating gestures with vocabulary words or ideas) and structured input are SLA-based teaching strategies that are useful for teaching vocabulary and grammar. Evidence of this connection would suggest that these TAs had some previous experience with or exposure to language learning methods. I was also interested in observing how, or if, TAs incorporated sociolinguistic elements that were meaningful to a heritage population. I was unable to document the students' reactions to this content. However, I jotted down a reminder note about these interactions so that I could ask the TAs about their perceptions of these types of activities during the face-to-face interviews.

Reflective memos. Following each observation, I briefly met with the TA for about 15 minutes or less to allow him or her a chance to reflect on the class. These conversations were informal, and I did not use a recording device. The location of these chats was one of convenience for the TA. For example, we debriefed inside the TA's

classroom, outside of the TA's teaching site, or on the way to a particular location on campus, such as the Student Union Building. If the TA did not have the time to talk, I left open the possibility for him or her to write me a reflection via email. I made sure to inform my participant that I would summarize his or her thoughts following each lesson, and I encouraged the TA to member-check my notes for validity.

While the TAs often discussed student-specific challenges during these chats, I excluded this information from the data. I did, however, reflect on what types of pedagogical decisions or activities could serve as a response to their concerns. I prepared all of these notes as either a brief jotting or an extended reflective memo, which I included at the end of my typed field notes (Appendix IV).

Interviews. I interviewed my five pre-selected SHL students from the online survey, as well as the same six pre-selected SSL/SHL TAs from the observations. I also interviewed two K-12 Spanish language teachers in the metro area and two tenured department faculty in the Spanish department. The student interviews lasted for about 45 minutes, while interviews for the TAs, teachers, and administrators averaged about 55 minutes. All interviews were semi-structured, as I had a list of prepared questions that allowed some flexibility in how I would then probe for additional detail or ask a follow-up question (Appendix III). All interview questions pertained to the teaching and/or learning experiences of the participants in heritage language classrooms. I asked my

questions in English for the sake of consistency, but I encouraged my participants to respond in the language of their choice: English, Spanish, or Spanglish.

In the case of the K-12 Spanish teachers, I spent more time asking questions that encouraged them to discuss their personal growth as an educator. These segments included details about students and faculty with who they work at their current schools. I have redacted all personally identifying information from this final writeup. As such, all real names and locations, specifically schools and universities, have been replaced with a pseudonym.

I recorded my interviews using a password-protected recording device, and I made it known prior to recording that my participants' responses would remain confidential. I then prepared and saved interview transcripts through a password-protected software program called Express Scribe Pro.

Online surveys. I utilized a paid online service called SurveyGizmo to gather written data from the SHL undergraduate students (Appendix I) and the SSL/SHL teaching assistants (Appendix II). Prior to beginning the survey, both groups had to respond to general demographics questions, such as age, gender, place of birth, identity label/ethnicity, and first language spoken at home. Survey questions then focused on the participants' experiences as either a student or a TA in the Spanish department. Questions made use of Likert scales, slide-bar and numerical rankings, and short and long answer responses. All questions were written in English, but the participants could respond in either Spanish, English, or Spanglish.

While the analytics of the website stated that both surveys would take about 30 minutes to complete, this estimation held true only for the SHL students. The TAs took

nearly 40 minutes to one hour to complete their survey. Fatigue because a serious

concern, and I revisited the website to add a 'pause' and 'continue' feature so that the

TAs did not have to complete the survey in one sitting. I also consulted about the

length of the survey with one of my stage 2 participants, and she shared that the

length of the survey was not the problem. Rather, she said that those who took a

long time to finish likely had a lot to say. Indeed, several TAs left rather

impassioned and lengthy responses for questions that concerned their methods

coursework.

Data Analysis

  Data condensation. My field notes, interview transcripts, reflective

memos, and artifact notes served not only as sources for this analysis but also as

methods to condense the volume of aggregated data (Miles et al., 2014, p 12).

Given that qualitative data analysis is an iterative process that begins prior to,

during, and following the collection of the data (Glesne, 2016; Maxwell, 2013;

Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), I continually selected, focused, simplified,

abstracted, or transformed data that I collected during and following the collection

process. To explain, I would review each data source upon its completion and

highlight information that I found insightful to understand the teaching/learning

process. I did not consider this step a cycle of open-coding, as I did not have

concrete research questions to guide my analysis. Instead, I highlighted words

and passages in my field notes, survey responses, and interview transcripts that

referenced or alluded to my participants' perceptions of their language learning

experiences. I allowed the data to gradually reveal its story, and the process began to feel much like piecing together a storybook.

As soon as I had collected several data sources, I began to compare my highlighted notes and discovered emerging patterns of discourse in the written surveys and face-to-face interviews. The rationale for this perpetual comparison and condensation, as Miles et al. explain, is that the data become stronger and sharper through each iteration. Data condensation is therefore a form of analysis, and from this intermittent data chunking, I was able to extrapolate my open codes.

Coding process. From late March 2018 until early November 2018, I cycled through multiple sessions of data collection and analysis. I did not begin to open code my sources until I had a comfortable grasp on the breadth of data that I had collected. I did not want to rush my analysis, nor did I wish to fit the data into any prematurely constructed codes. As Miles et al. note, "codes are a heuristic—a method of discovery. You determine the code for a chunk of data by careful reading and reflection on its core content or meaning" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 73). I therefore allowed my codes to "emerge progressively during data collection" via inductive coding (p. 81).

Some of my codes, particularly for the online surveys, were *descriptive* and summarized in a sentence or two a basic topic or idea from a chunk of data. I also tended to use *in vivo* codes for the participants' interviews, which consisted of "words or short phrases from the participant's own language," as well as *process* codes to denote a participant's interaction and response to a particular event in time (pp. 74-75). Within these three elemental methods to coding, I sub-coded affective ideas that concerned the participants' emotions, personal values, and evaluation of their language learning

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experiences (pp. 75-76). I now explain how my method of coding differed with each source.

Online surveys. I began the data condensation process with the most expansive source: the online surveys. With so many individual responses, and I worried over how I was going to analyze the volume of written data. Fortunately, SurveyGizmo has a 'text bucket' feature, which allowed me to read through each individual response and summarize in a single word or a sentence or two the key ideas present. For example, Figure 3.1 illustrates two participants' written responses to the question: *What are your current strengths as a Spanish speaker? (speaking, writing, etc.)* These summaries became my descriptive codes.

Once I believed I had reached saturation for 'text buckets' to a particular question, I reviewed the participants' individual responses a second time. I would then select corresponding 'text buckets' (Figure 3.1) to code for all information revealed through a participant's response. Upon completion of this coding phase, SurveyGizmo aggregated all of the codes and presented the data in the form of a word cloud (Figure 3.2) or a chart (Figure 3.3). Note, these figures represent the participants' responses to the same question: *What are your current strengths as a Spanish speaker? (speaking, writing, etc.)*. These codes thus provided "an inventory of topics for indexing and categorizing," which in turn provided me with a foundation from which to approach the coding of my interviews (p. 74).

Figure 3.1: Text Bucket Codes

1 Speaking in regards to certain topics using basic Spanish. I use it at the restaurant I work at over Summer break to facilitate communication with my coworkers.

- ☑ Speaking
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ All Areas
- ☐ None

2 reading and writing

- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Listening
- ☑ Reading
- ☑ Writing
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ All Areas
- ☐ None

Figure 3.2: Word Cloud Feature

Figure 3.3: Chart Feature
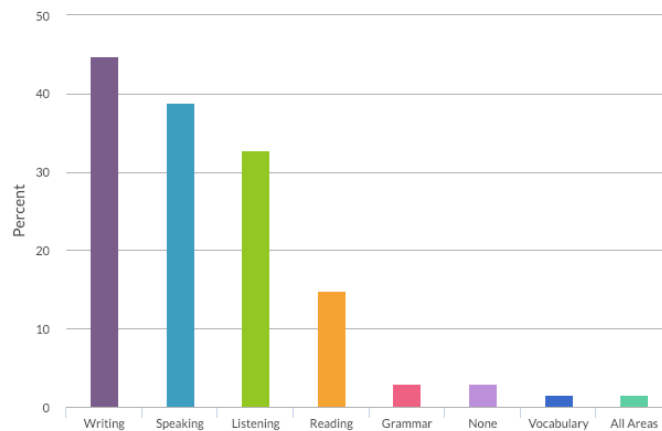
Interview transcripts and field notes. Following the descriptive coding of the online surveys, I returned to the highlighted words and passages in my interview transcripts and field notes to look for overlapping patterns of data. My coding process for these data sources was far less sophisticated than that of the online surveys, and I used sticky notes to track each reoccurring idea. However, I was able to group similar sticky notes into emerging conceptual categories. To better analyze the arrangement and

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possible connections between my sticky note codes, I designed a data matrix (Appendix V). This analytical display enabled me to visualize and interpret the relationships and interrelationships within and across my conceptual categories (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 110-111). As a result, I was able to tie together thematically-related threads of information to arrive at units of thematic meaningfulness for the case under study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). More importantly, this information informed the redesign my research questions, which in turn helped me construct a core conceptual category (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Miles et al., 2014, p. 86). I present these themes and discuss the overarching core concept in detail in Chapter 4: Findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Researcher Bias and Ethics

Planning a qualitative study is much like writing your own roadmap. You have an idea of where to begin, but you cannot predict how the journey will progress or where it will end. It is therefore important to remain flexible and ready to adapt to the conditions of the road.

Research, much like driving, is an iterative journey. The researcher pauses reflects throughout her investigation on the insight she has gleaned from planned and unforeseen pathways. However, Yin (2014) warns of the danger of getting lost in this process. With each iteration, the "researcher may slowly drift from the original topic of interest" (pp. 149–150). Losing sight of the study's original intent could contribute to researcher bias in the interpretation of data. For example, the researcher may disclose only those findings she found personally

salient rather than discuss the data set as a whole. Failure to account for all data not only compromises the integrity of the study, but it also calls into question the researcher's ethical approach to handling and disseminating sensitive information.

Such bias would negate the authenticity of my participants' lived experiences (Merriam, 1998). To ensure that my descriptions are in fact representative of what I heard and observed, I member checked throughout the data collection process (Hamilton & Corbett-Wittier, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Miles et al., 2014). I shared with my initial thoughts and reactions with the TAs following each classroom observation. I also confirmed with all interviewed participants that my transcriptions were an accurate representation of their voices. Lastly, I consulted with my dissertation chair throughout the data analysis process to discuss and receive input about the analysis of my findings.

Researcher Positionality and Participant Reflexivity

As a white, non-Hispanic female who learned Spanish as a second language, I am often questioned about my interest in heritage language education by fellow K-16 educators and researchers. In truth, it was through my teaching of Spanish as a heritage language in the SHL program that I came to learn about my family's linguistic history. Within a year of teaching this coursework, I began to ask my Jewish grandmother questions as to why our family has so many non-English words in our lexicon. I was stunned to learn that this extra vocabulary was no accident. My family lost our first language within two generations, and as consequence, we speak only fragments. The only connection we now have to the language is cultural. I subsequently share with my students a similar sociohistorical background regarding language loss. And like my

students, I am eager to reclaim a language that I never had an opportunity to learn at home.

The key difference between our experiences, however, is that my skin color has endowed me with the ability to blend in with White dominant society. I am aware of my social privilege, and I believe that this awareness calls on me to advocate for the educational rights of marginalized students. If I can help my heritage language students reconnect with something that they too believe they have lost, then I feel I am fulfilling a sense of personal purpose. However, if I can use my qualitative work to better inform language educators on how to help their own marginalized students, then I believe that I have contributed meaningfully to the field.

Navigating faithfully my status as both a high school Spanish language educator and a researcher is essential. I always disclosed my latter title to my participants, as I did not wish for them to feel uncomfortable with my presence. Interestingly, my participants seem unconcerned about this reflexivity, and as Maxell (2013) notes, reflexivity is not as significant a factor to the validity of data findings as some may think (p. 125). Instead, my participants, particularly the SHL students, the SSL/SHL TAs, and the K-12 Spanish teachers, felt that they were able to confide in me because of my longstanding administrative position in the Spanish department. I therefore had no difficultly in establishing rapport, and I would like to think that my intention to share my participants' input with the Spanish department made for honest, descriptively rich conversations. I provide data to substantiate my belief in Chapter 4: Findings.

Conclusion

As articulated throughout this chapter, I drew on strategies from case study methodology and grounded theory approach to explore from numerous angles my participants' perceptions of language and culture within a bounded system. This hybrid design allowed for a rigorous but flexible, progressive analysis and interpretation of my descriptive data. I was able to holistically document the lived experiences of multiple participants while also contending with various limitations and issues of trustworthiness to ensure an honest, ethical account of my participants' voices.

The presentation of the findings in Chapter 4 and its analysis in Chapter 5 will further demonstrate how these thick, rich descriptions (Geertz, 1973) contributed to the realignment of my research questions and the construction of a core theoretical concept.

Chapter 4

Findings

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how teaching assistants in two different Spanish language programs—Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) and Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL)—developed, restructured, and transformed their pedagogical practices to meet the needs of their second and heritage language learners. In order to elucidate the underlying dynamics of this teaching/learning process, I gathered the perspectives of former and current SSL/SHL teaching staff, current undergraduate SHL students, and program coordinators. The transparentization of my participants' thinking was essential to identify potential areas for change and enhancement within the TA training program for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. More importantly, I believed that a holistic understanding of participants' *perezhivanie* [lived experiences], as well as their perceptions regarding the learning and teaching of Spanish, was necessary to articulate in greater detail a potential, re-envisioned model for the education of second language teachers.

Chapter Organization

Before delving into the main findings, I begin with some general demographic information about the study participants, such as their place of origin, age, and first language. I obtained this information from two sources: the online surveys for the SHL students and the SSL/SHL TAs, and the interviews for all participant groups. I have subsequently separated the data by participant group and source. Because an understanding of *perezhivanie* is central to this study, I have included data from the

online surveys (Appendix I & II) and interviews that I believe provide a salient glimpse into the participants' thinking processes. This information will then serve as a foundation from which to build my thematic analysis.

To organize the presentation of the findings, I begin each section by restating my research question. I then interweave excerpts from my participants' interviews to allow their voices to drive the data storytelling. Lastly, I tease out the overarching themes of this study by looking across and within multiple threads of information.

Participant Demographic Analysis

Participants in this study consisted of four groups of individuals: SHL undergraduate students, teaching assistants in the SSL and SHL programs, the program coordinators of these two programs (SSL and SHL), and K-12 Spanish teachers in the metro area. To be included in this study, participants had to be involved in the learning and/or teaching of Spanish as a Heritage Language. Recruitment for students was limited to the SHL program. However, teaching assistants in the SSL program were screened prior to the interview process based on their survey responses to questions regarding heritage language learners in their classroom. Lastly, because program administrators for the SSL and SHL programs play a pivotal role in the mentoring of TAs, their perspectives are also represented to better understand the essence of the teaching/learning process.

SHL student survey demographics. A total of 69 SHL students completed the online survey via SurveyGizmo. Of these 69 students, 18 were male and 50 were female. One participant identified as gender non-binary. Participants ranged between 18 and 54 years of age, with an average age of 20.4 years old. The majority of the participants were originally from New Mexico (73.9%). Participants from California and Texas consisted

of the second and third largest states of origin (10.1% and 8.7%, respectively).

Approximately 52.2% of the participants identified as Hispanic, while 15.9% identified

as both Hispanic and White. The second most common ethnic identity label was Latino

or Latina, with 21.7% of participate using this term to describe their ethnicity. Given

these statistics, it is not surprising that a considerable number of participants (44.1%)

indicated that they spoke Spanish and English throughout their childhood. The findings

of this study also align with previous research (Wilson & Ibarra, 2015), as 43.5% of the

students from my study stated that they heard or learned Spanish predominantly from

their grandparents.

In terms of university demographics, approximately half (50.7%) of the

participants were in their freshman year of study, and a little over a quarter (26.1%)

identified as sophomores. When asked to identify their majors or minors of study, 11.6

indicated that they are completing coursework for a Spanish major, while 20.3% are

minoring in Spanish.

Given that heritage language learners vary in their linguistic proficiencies

(Carreira, 2003; Correa, 2014; Martínez, 2016; Montrul, 2011; Zyzik, 2016), the survey

included questions that required participants to describe their perceived strengths and

areas for growth in Spanish. A text analysis of the participants' described strengths

(Appendix I, Question 17) indicated that *writing* was the most prominent skill for these

students (44.8% frequency). *Speaking* was mentioned with 38.8% frequency, and

listening followed closely behind, appearing in the open-ended responses with 32.8%

frequency. Students mention *reading* only 14.9% of the time.

In a trend that ran counter to previous research on heritage learner abilities (Alarcón, 2010; Ducar, 2008; Tallon, 2009), this group of SHL students indicated that *speaking* was their greatest weakness. In fact, out of 69 participants, only 25 did not mention *speaking* in their open-ended responses (Appendix I, Question 19). *Speaking* as an area for growth accounted for 63.8% of all frequently reported responses to this question. *Writing* (indicated 30.4% of the time) and *grammar* (selected 27.5% of the time) rounded out the top three areas for linguistic improvement.

The contrast in self-reported data between Questions 17 and 19 is important to note. While participants seemed moderately confident in their ability to speak Spanish in Question 17, the data from Question 19 points to a significant discrepancy in how participants perceive the efficacy of their current capabilities. Text analysis from a follow-up question (Appendix I, Question 25) further suggests that *speaking* is a skill of significant import for heritage students, as a number of participants expressed that they were motivated to enroll in heritage courses to improve their verbal communication (26.1% frequency distribution). Participants also suggested in Question 32 that their TAs include more speaking activities (56.5% response frequency), as well as grammar practice (50.7%). These responses align with Question 45, where participants were asked to share whether they were satisfied with their current communication abilities. The text analysis revealed that a general 'dissatisfaction with current speaking ability' appeared 30 times in the open-ended responses (43.5% frequency). Given this data, it is unsurprising the participants ranked the option "Developing literacy and communication skills that will prepare me for the workplace" in Question 49 as their most important learning goal. Similarly, "learning how to speak (more) Spanish with my family" ranked second.

Aside from a desire to speak more fluently, SHL students also indicated in Question 24 that the SHL course descriptions piqued their interest in the heritage program (20.3% frequency distribution). Indeed, an opportunity to learn more about the Spanish language through their own culture appeared to capture the interest of many SHL students (18.8%). For example, when participants were asked to describe what they most enjoyed about the SHL program, a text analysis of Question 27 illuminated several factors that were consistently mentioned: Being in a community of linguistically and culturally similar students (39.1%), having an inclusive/safe learning environment (39.1%), and connection to Spanish-speaking culture (36.2%).

A follow-up inquiry in Question 36 revealed similar trends in the text analysis. When students were asked to explain how their TAs made learning meaningful to them, they shared that class discussions on culture (31.9%), and the connection of culture to the students' lived experiences (24.6%) made learning the language more personally relevant. Participants further alluded to the value of these course features in Question 38, where they were asked to describe the perceived strengths of their TAs. Notably, participants cited with 49.3% frequency that their TAs' were compassionate, relatable, and enthusiastic about sharing their own lived experiences with the students. They also described their TAs as knowledgeable of the language and the culture (43.5%). For SHL students, the validation and exploration of their cultural background is a feature that clearly defines their learning experience in SHL courses (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relano-Pastor, 2009). This commonality also suggests a key element that shapes their *perezhivanie*.

SHL student interviewee demographics. Upon completion of the online survey, five SHL students opted to participate in the second phase of the study, which included a face-to-face interview. General demographic information for this specific group of individuals is included in Table 1 below. I will reference and expand upon the information presented in this table more explicitly in the presentation of the main findings.

Table 1: SHL Student Interviewee Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Origin	Identity Label	Year of Study	Current SHL Course	Reason for Taking SHL Courses
Ana	Female	18	Albuquerque, NM	Hispanic	Freshman	SPAN 111	Mother's recommendation
Tori	Female	20	Amarillo, TX	White/Hispanic	Freshman	SPAN 112	Placement Exam
Marcos	Male	20	Ciudad Juarez, MX	Mexican American	Sophomore	SPAN 211; completed 111 & 112	Culture-centered course descriptions
Afsoon	Female	18	Middle East	White/Middle Eastern	Sophomore	SPAN 212; completed 111, 112, & 211	Culture-centered course descriptions
Luz	Female	21	Los Angeles, CA	Hispanic, Latina	Sophomore	SPAN 212; completed 112	Believed it would help her improve her Spanish

SSL/SHL TA survey group demographics. With regard to Spanish program distribution, eight of the 14 TAs who completed the online survey taught exclusively in the SSL program. Two TAs only taught in SHL, while the remaining four TAs taught courses simultaneously in both the SSL and SHL programs. Five of the surveyed TAs are first year teachers, only one of whom has no prior experience. The remaining nine TAs have been teaching in the department for three or more semesters. Interestingly, more than half of these TAs have either completed a B.A. in Linguistics or are currently working on an M.A. in Hispanic Linguistics. Only one TA held a degree in Education (Special Ed.).

These participants, 4 males and 10 females, comprised about 50% of the TAs in the Spanish department. They ranged between 23 years of age to 53, with an average age of 29.5 years. Five were born and raised in the U.S., while the remaining nine participants were raised in Mexico, South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. In terms of their linguistic profiles, five are native Spanish speakers, four were raised as Spanish/English bilinguals, three are native English speakers, and two grew up speaking another language (Portuguese and French). The TAs' preferred identity labels further reflect their linguistic and cultural diversity, with many recognizing themselves as Hispanic (42.9% frequency distribution), Latinx (28.6%), European (14.3%), Chicanx, Mexican, and Mexican American (14.3%); and Afrocaribbean, Indigenous, Nuevomexicano (7.1% frequency).

In addition to this diversity, the TAs also bring with them a variety of prior teaching experiences. Five TAs left their positions as K-12 educators to pursue graduate studies in the Spanish department. Three had taught Spanish and/or English to kindergarteners in Mexico, Caribbean, and Brazil, and two stated that they had taught Spanish for three years at public high schools in the U.S. and in Colombia. An additional four TAs also arrived with previous experience, having taught undergraduate Spanish courses at other institutions of higher education in the U.S., Mexico, and South America. The remaining three TAs were not paid for their services; however, they all served as on-campus tutors and/or educational aides at local high schools. Only two TAs surveyed in this study began their department assistantships without prior teaching experience.

Important to note is that the Spanish and Portuguese department at this institution requires all new TAs to attend a five-day orientation the week before the start of the fall

semester. Given this timeframe, the participants were asked to recall and rate their feeling of preparedness at the start of their first semester. I separated the participants' responses by program and discovered that the five TAs with K-12 teaching experience, all of whom taught in the SLL program, felt about 85% to 100% prepared to teach on their first day of class (Figure 4.1). The second largest rating of preparedness pertained to those TAs who had taught English abroad, had held a previous assistantship in another institution, or had mentored at a public high school: 50% to 65%, with the teach abroad candidate reporting the highest rating of preparedness. TAs who had completed minimal coursework on teaching and had either volunteered or tutored on occasion reported feeling the least prepared (29% to 40%). The two TAs with no previous experience presented an interesting case: The SHL TA predictably rated herself quite low at 20%, but the SSL TA felt 50% ready to teach.

Given that each participant at the time of this study had completed two semesters or more of teaching, they were asked to rate their current degree of self-confidence in their teaching abilities. Of the three TAs who had reported feeling 100% prepared to teach their first semester, one dropped to a 95% confidence rating after teaching for two semesters in SSL. Another TA in SSL, despite having taught for over 10 semesters, reported feeling only marginally efficient (85% preparedness to 95% confidence in teaching). However, most TAs appeared to develop greater self-confidence in their abilities the longer they remained in the department (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

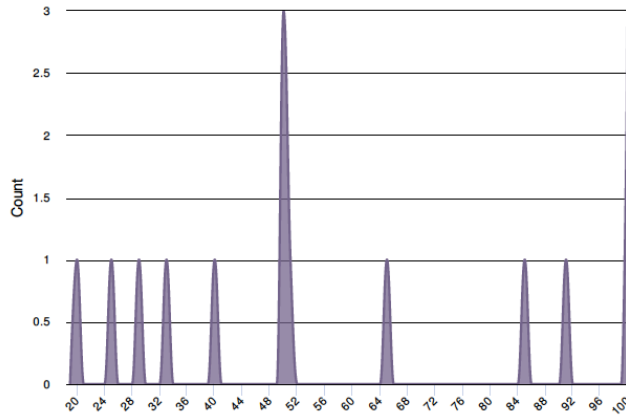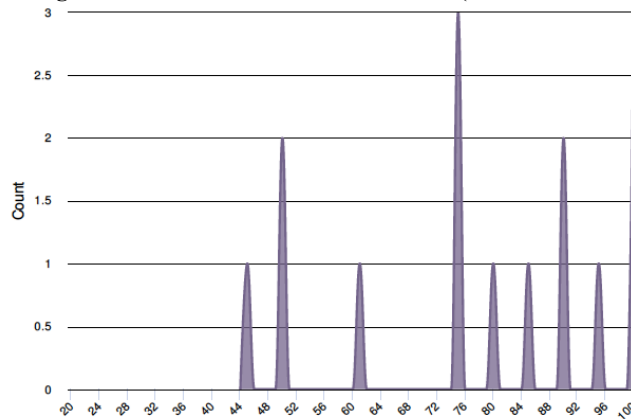**Figure 4.1: 1st Semester Preparedness**

Figure 4.2: Current Level of Confidence (2 ~ 12 semesters)

There exists one outlier in the data set, however, and that concerns the SSL TA with no prior teaching experience. After four semesters in the department, she believed that her confidence had not improved at all. This lack of overall change in self-efficacy is likely not a reflection of her teaching experience. Rather, it illustrates how our *perezhivanie* can influence the way we perceive our capabilities, regardless of experience.

Unfortunately, there were not enough participants in this study to compare how the TAs' developed over time between the two Spanish programs. Nonetheless, it appears that those TAs who taught courses in both SSL and SHL experienced the most dramatic increase in their feelings of self-confidence. To illustrate, a first-year SHL TA

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indicated that her confidence shifted from 20% at the start of the academic year to 45% after two semesters. One of her cohort members, who taught SPAN 101 and SPAN 111 concurrently, felt only 29% ready to teach at the beginning of the year. Yet, she reported feeling 75% confident in her abilities after two semesters. While this data is far from statistically significant, it may suggest that those whose assistantship experiences mirror realistic teaching duties have a prime opportunity to develop as language educators.

SSL/SHL TA interviewee demographics. Six of the 14 TAs who completed the online survey agreed to participate in the classroom observations and the face-to-face interview phases of this study. To protect their identities, their city of origin, as well as the classes each TA taught in the Spanish department, have been excluded from the demographic information in Table 2 below.

Table 2: SSL/SHL TA Interviewee Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Origin	Identity Label	1st Language	Prior Teaching Experience	Program	Semesters in Program
Carlota	Female	27	NM	Hispanic	English	Yes: ESL	SSL	4
Liam	Male	27	TX	Mexican American	English	Yes: TA	SSL/SHL	4
Mercedes	Female	23	NM	Chicana	English	No	SHL	2
Joaquín	Male	24	CO	Latinx	Bilingual	Yes: Volunteer	SSL/SHL	4
Ynez	Female	23	NM	Hispanic	English	Yes: Tutoring	SSL/SHL	4
Irene	Female	25	MX	Mexican	Spanish	No	SSL	4

Much to my surprise, most of the TAs stated that English was their first language. They undoubtedly all speak Spanish with varying degrees of self-reported proficiency. Yet, as with many of the SHL students, they were reluctant to claim a bilingual or heritage speaker identity. I will reference and expand upon the TAs' demographic information in the presentation of the main findings.

Spanish program administrators. A coordinator from both programs, SSL and SHL, participated in a separate, face-to-face interview for this study. Collectively, they

bring an average of 14 years of teaching experience to their department. Both are in their mid 40s and identify as Hispanic. However, they expressed reluctance over using this identity label due to its sociopolitical origins. They instead focused on their identity exploration by explaining how their sociohistorical experiences as Spanish speakers shaped their current concept of self. For example, while both administrators recognized Spanish as their heritage language, the SSL coordinator explained that learning the language was a necessity to complete her schooling in Eastern Europe. For the SHL coordinator, speaking Spanish was essential to affirm his heritage identity in the U.S.

In addition to their linguistic similarities, both participants began their careers in academia as Spanish language graduate teaching assistants. They then transitioned into their coordinator roles with little to no guidance from department superiors. In fact, the coordinators both stated that the absence of this support forced them to rapidly adapt to the demands of their positions. This 'trial by fire' way of learning the fundamentals of the job shaped how each administrator approaches TA training within their respective language programs. For example, one administrator provides her TAs with structured materials and an explicit, detailed curriculum. The second administrator, while also providing program structure and organization for his TAs, believes that TAs simply need to get into the classroom and teach. Regardless of the subtle differences in their approach to TA training, both agreed that the best way for TAs to learn and develop as professionals is to make mistakes in the classroom.

K-12 Spanish language educators. The last group of participants consisted of two former TAs who became Spanish language teachers at public high schools in the metro area. Sofía, 28, is a self-identified Mexican American from northern New Mexico.

She believes that Spanish was her first language, though she does not recall when she began to speak Spanish and English bilingually. Sofía began her teaching career in the Spanish department and taught courses in both the SSL and SHL programs. She struggled immensely with her assistantship and admitted that she thoroughly disliked teaching. She stated that she fell into her current teaching position at Peral High School somewhat by accident: A Spanish teacher had taken maternity leave, and Sofía decided to interview for the long-term substitute position. The job was not meant to be permanent, yet Sofía has now been teaching second and heritage language learners at Peral High School for the past three years. She is now in the process of obtaining her alternative teaching license.

Similar to Sofía, Adriana, 25, also identifies as a Mexican American. However, she was born in Mexico and moved to the U.S. Southwest as a toddler. She claims that English is her first language, though she recognizes her bilingual ability. Her family struggled to maintain the Spanish language upon relocating to the U.S. As consequence, she admitted that she has cousins who have completely lost their Spanish. She, therefore, must communicate with certain family members in English.

In terms of her prior experience, Adriana received an exceptionally rare assistantship opportunity during her undergraduate years. Despite being an undergraduate herself, Adriana taught a University 101 course to freshmen at an institution in a neighboring southwest state. She immediately developed a love of teaching and knew that she wanted to pursue a career in education. However, Adriana shared that finding a position in a public school for a non-licensed teacher was difficult. She had been informed that a Spanish teacher at Piñon High School suddenly resigned at

the beginning of the 2017 school year. While she somewhat believes that the administration hired her out desperation, she said that they have never once made her feel like a 'last resort.' She just completed her first year of teaching Spanish to second language learners at Piñon High School and is also in the process of obtaining her alterative teaching license.

The number of voices represented through this study necessitated an introduction that adequately described their personal characteristics and general experiences as learners and educators. This information will now serve as a frame of reference for the following presentation of findings. Specifically, the participants will lead the reader through an exploration of each research question, for which there will be no answers. Rather, as Merriam (1998) states, we seek perspective in qualitative research rather than truth. My study therefore addresses a call for research on teacher and heritage student perceptions (Beaudrie, 2015) by providing a small, yet authentic, snapshot of my participants' thoughts and lived experiences.

Presentation of Findings

RQ #1: How does an exploration of heritage language learners' *perezhivanie* **[one's lived sociohistorical experiences] illuminate the underlying challenges of teaching to this student demographic?**

In order to provide an authentic representation of my participants' sociohistorical backgrounds, I began each interview with a question about their linguistic experiences as children. For example, I asked for them to share in what contexts they heard or used Spanish with family and friends. I was particularly curious in learning about my participants' educational experiences in K-12 Spanish language classrooms. I suspected,

based on my professional experience as a heritage language educator, that a number of my participants would have intense, polarizing opinions on this topic.

Intimidating, strict, frustrating, embarrassing, traumatizing, and fearful. Regardless of their place of origin in the U.S. or abroad, all participants used these words to describe their public and private K-12 Spanish language education. In particular, the participants frequently mentioned how the idea of 'correctness' made studying their heritage language repetitious and meaningless. Marcos, a student in SPAN 211 said, "learning Spanish in high school was very repetitive. Here's the grammar, here's the language. Here is the vocabulary that you'll need for the test." The teaching and learning process seemed superficial, as most high school teachers seldom explained grammatical and sociolinguistic variation. As consequence, heritage student voices appeared to be stifled in these learning environments. Tori, a SPAN 112 student with Puerto Rican ancestry, explained that her Spanish teacher in a private high school was mostly concerned with students learning the correct way to speak. For this reason, "there was no conversation about, 'hey, well this is how we say it.' Or, 'hey, what's the difference between saying this and saying what's in the textbook?' she said. "It was just a matter of fact. This is black and white."

When the participants tried to challenge the notion of there being "one right way to speak" (Joaquín, SSL/SHL TA), several stated that they were publicly shamed or punitively punished by their teachers. Luz (SPAN 211) found it particularly challenging to adopt her Spanish teacher's manner of speaking. Born in Mexico, Luz thought her Mexican Spanish teacher in Los Angeles, California would recognize and support Luz's home dialect. Instead, the teacher seemingly suppressed her own way of speaking

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Spanish to adhere to the academic variety presented in the course textbook. The teacher

would tell Luz, "'Nope, you can't use that word. It has to be the word that's in the

glossary of the book." Luz, when telling me her story, emphatically said,

> What!? I learned it this way, and this is the only way I've learned it. I found it
>
> intimidating and kind of frustrating because they wouldn't let you express the
>
> word that you know in your own way, the way that you learned it. I don't know, I
>
> just tried to go with the flow. Because if you argue with them, you don't get
>
> nowhere. It's like forget it.

While Luz decided it was best not to challenge her teacher, she shared that she

would continue to speak her dialect outside of the classroom. Other participants refused

to acquiesce and speak the way that their teachers wanted. Ana, a SPAN 111 student

from northern New Mexico, explained that she offended that her native Spanish teacher

would correct her New Mexican Spanish. "She just wanted everyone to speak correctly,"

Ana said. "Cause I've personally never heard someone say *coche*. I mean no one in New

Mexico says 'oh, let's walk to my *coche*.' Like, no. *Carro*. *Troque*. Or something."

The emphasis on 'correct language' use in K-12 classrooms affected native

Spanish speaking students as well. For instance, Sofía, a former SSL/SHL TA and

presently a third-year Spanish teacher at Peral High School in the metro area, spoke of

the absence of dialect validation in her high school Spanish language classroom. As with

Ana, Sofía is also a native New Mexican. However, Sofía speaks a Mexican variety of

Spanish. She realized later in life that her former high school Spanish teacher, a

Spaniard, was mocking his Mexican students for their manner of speaking:

Nuestro maestro de español mi di cuenta que era terrible. No nos enseñó nada.
Pero creo que el problema- lo contrataron para enseñar español como segunda
lengua, y todos éramos mexicanos. Entonces creo que (*I realized that our
Spanish teacher was terrible. He didn't teach us anything. I think the problem—
he was hired to teach Spanish as a second language, and we were all Mexicans.
And so, I think that*) –he didn't know what to do with us. I thought, 'OK estos
chicos ya hablan espanol (*these kids already speak Spanish*), so I'm gonna sit
back and relax. I have nothing to teach them.' Y yo me acuerdo que (*And I
remember that*) I would ditch his class to go to McDonald's, y él nomás nos decía
(*and he would just tell us*), 'it's fine if you're late, as long as you bring me some
McDonald's.' OK, le comprábamos (*we bought him*) like whatever was on the
menu that was cheap. Y llegamos (*and we arrived*) at least halfway through the
class. He would sit and eat. He would have this little notebook where he wrote
what he called things 'mexicaniadas.' Basically words que decíamos nosotros
como mexicanos (*that we would say as Mexicans*), like guey (*bro*; *dude*), you
know? Pero ahora que me acuerdo, y mi memoria no es perfecta, pero siento
como que lo hacía en una forma como… ¿para burlarse? Porque era español y
siempre nos decía que, que no hablamos correcto. Y antes yo decía, pues es mi
maestro. Él sabe. Él sabe lo que es correcto, lo que no es correcto. Pero, ahora
que me acuerdo, me da como coraje (*But now that I remember, and my memory
isn't perfect, but I feel like he did it in a way to…make fun of us. Because he was
Spanish, and he always used to tell us that we didn't speak correctly. And before,*

I used to say, 'well, he's my teacher. He knows. He knows what is correct, what isn't correct.' But, now that I remember, it makes me mad).

Being ridiculed or mocked for not knowing enough Spanish or for speaking a non-standard variety is clearly a unifying aspect of these participants' lived experiences. But while high school educators were certainly a source for these negative sentiments, participants' family members also contributed to these pessimistic feelings. Carlota, a TA in the SSL Program, stated that her grandparents spoke Spanish, but her parents never encouraged her to learn it in her own home. It was not until high school when Carlota had formal instruction in her heritage language, and the wait impacted her self-efficacy as a Spanish teacher, saying,

> I think I can be a better [Spanish] teacher if I were more confident in it. Even when I learned like my high school Spanish, I was like, 'finally! Yes! I can talk to my grandma!' And I go to my grandma's, and I'm throwing all of this Spanish vocab that I learned that day at her, and she's like, 'muy mocho' (*offensive; non-native sounding Spanish*). And I'm like, 'oh god!' You know? So, then I try again, and my grandma would be like, 'better, but todavía muy mocho.' OK. And of course, it's just your grandma. It's a different dynamic. It's a different reason why she's calling me mocho. But I've always thought that, 'OK, you're still not good enough. I'm still not good enough.'

The drop in self-efficacy exemplified through Carlota's quote points to another problematic issue across K-16 Spanish language education: the assumption that a learner's exposure to the Spanish language is analogous with his or her communicative fluency. As we have already seen with several SHL students and SSL/SHL TAs in this

study, having Spanish-speaking relatives does not guarantee an opportunity to learn the language. To illustrate this point with some statistical data, the SHL Student Survey (Appendix I, Question 13) revealed that most of these participants (43.5% frequency distribution) heard Spanish while growing up from their grandparents. Only 23.8% (Question 16) claimed to use Spanish daily. As previously discussed, the linguistic proficiencies are variable among this learner demographic (Beaudrie, 2009). Yet, a number of Spanish language educators across K-16 language classrooms appear to hold to the bias that heritage learners are, in essence, bilingual speakers (Valdés, 2014). Liam, a TA in the SSL/SHL programs and a self-identified heritage speaker, spoke of this issue, stating that,

> we come in [to classrooms] and we feel that we should know something even
> though we're just starting. And I feel that some professors also come in with that
> kind of idea in mind, that you should know this by now."

For Tori (SPAN 112), the fact that she did not necessarily know the language caused her severe emotional distress. "It was traumatizing for me," she said. "Like I understand what you're saying, but I have no idea how to speak it back to you. I cried my first week [of high school Spanish] just 'cause I was so frustrated."

Joaquín, who also struggled to communicate in his heritage language, shared that his frustration ultimately led to the loss of his Spanish. Although his parents were both native Spanish speakers from South America, Joaquín stated that he would not speak to them in Spanish as a child. His schooling in the midwestern U.S., combined with his desire to have English-speaking friends, forced him to learn English at the expense of his first language. "There was a point where I didn't speak Spanish. At one point I was

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ashamed," Joaquín admitted. "And I would see it in my friends, too. A lot of [other] South Americans." He is now going through the process of reclaiming his native language.

Joaquín's story highlights another commonality shared by the participants in this study: the difficulty of describing and claiming a heritage speaker identify. Of the 15 individuals who contributed interviews to this study, only 5 identified as a heritage speaker. The question of identity and what it meant to be a heritage speaker stumped most of the participants, and several stated that the word was "tricky" (Ynez, SHL TA; Irene, SSL TA) and "complicated" (Carlota, SSL TA; Liam, SSL/SHL TA) to define. Liam (SSL/SHL TA) best described 'heritage' as being caught in the middle of two defined language groups, second language learners and native speakers. He revealed that his former Texas high school did not offer Spanish courses for students with his linguistic background:

> We had Spanish for natives and non-native Spanish. And for that reason, I felt that, well, I wasn't born in Mexico or another Spanish-speaking country, my family isn't from there. And I noticed that even some of these people probably looked down or corrected my family's Spanish because [we] used *arcaísmos* (*archaisms*) or just things like that. You know, even things that people in Spanish-speaking countries still use. Because of that I thought, I'm not a native speaker but maybe not a non-native. There's really no other track to take, so I took non-native.

Macros, a SPAN 211 student, echoed Liam's feelings of resignation with his limited course offerings, saying, "I took Spanish classes in high school, and it just wasn't

a connection for me. Speaking Spanish was something I wanted to do my whole life, and I never got to it." As Liam and Marcos both implied through their excerpts, K-12 language programs for heritage speakers are still rare (Beaudrie, 2011, 2012). This lost opportunity likely explains why a number of participants expressed a desire to explore their shared linguistic roots and culture in a designated learning space.

For many students and TAs, the SHL program at this institution was their first opportunity to study Spanish alongside peers with similar sociohistorical backgrounds and linguistic experiences. Mercedes, a northern New Mexican Spanish speaker and TA in the SHL program, had never heard of the term 'heritage' prior to taking university classes:

> The concept of Spanish being a heritage language was not introduced to me until I got to college. So, Spanish was taught to me [in high school] as if it was a foreign language. And it's really sad because it's really shaped how I speak it. So, I'm like if I had learned [it], I could speak this dying New Mexican dialect of Spanish that my dad and my grandma speak. But I DON'T!"

Mercedes then explained how the SPAN 212 course helped her claim her heritage identity:

> That 212 class that was so instrumental. That was the first time [a TA] ever played a clip of New Mexican Spanish in class. And I was like, 'that's how my dad sounds!' That was the first time I've ever had that experience.

> Macros (SPAN 211), who had previously expressed his disappointment with his high school education, explained that he was overjoyed to learn that he could take specialized heritage courses as an undergraduate student in the SHL program. While

learning to speak the language was personally important, Marcos desired a class that was based on his own cultural background. "Seeing that there was a cultural take to teaching Spanish here [at this university], I jumped at it as soon as I could." Sofía (Peral HS) who taught a year in the SHL program also enjoyed the cultural connection, stating that she "like[d] the idea that it was more culture-based. Eso me gustó" (*I liked that*)."

Student participants in general appeared to reference the culture-centered curriculum as an appealing feature of the SHL program (Appendix I, Question 27). For instance, Joaquín (SSL/SHL TA) shared that he did not read about the course descriptions for SHL until his senior year in college. He immediately switched from his SPAN 202 course to SPAN 212. "When I was in my last semester doing my undergraduate degree, I signed up for a heritage Spanish class because I saw the title," he explained. "I saw the description, and I identified myself with it." Joaquín then decided to continue with his graduate studies at this same institution and transitioned into a SHL instructor.

Joaquín had at first thought that the inclusion of students' cultures within the classroom was what drew them to the SHL program After his first semester of teaching in the program, however, he came to a different conclusion. Culture, he stated, is undoubtedly a unifying component within the SHL curriculum, but what distinguishes SHL courses from traditional Spanish teaching approaches is the exploration of students' identities. "I think [SHL] students are taking Spanish because of identity reasons," he explained. "It doesn't have to be family necessarily. It can be if you spend a lot of time with Spanish speakers. But [it's] the identity, and the debate of identity" that really brings the students together.

The debate of identity and what it means to be a heritage learner in today's globalized, multilingual society remain a contentious and oftentimes misunderstood topic (Lacorte & Canabal, 2003). Sofía (Peral HS) taught for two years in the SSL and SHL programs before becoming a Spanish teacher at a local high school. Despite her years of teaching experience, she admitted that she still does not have a firm understanding on what 'heritage' means. "I do not NOT identify as a heritage speaker," she said. "But I'm still trying to figure out what that means because I feel like it's so broad. But I mean, definitely, I'm in the heritage and not the SSL program as a person, you know?" Perhaps due to her feelings of uncertainty, Sofía is now struggling to articulate to her principal why her department should offer heritage language courses:

> I just had a meeting with the principal yesterday, porque le dije (*because I told him*), 'there's something obviously wrong here. You can't put native speakers or heritage speakers in second language classes,' you know? It's not working out. It's like putting an English speaker in an ESL classroom. Like, what are you thinking? And you can't assume that because they're heritage speakers, they're gonna do amazing in Spanish language arts. That takes a huge level of analysis. And you can't assume that they know just because they kind of speak Spanish. It bothers me. It's been bothering me since I started. It's like, dude, how can you not think about this? We can't also assume that native speakers and heritage speakers have to be together because they're not the same. And that's where problemas come in the classroom, you know? Like, yes, I want to differentiate, but there's only so much I can do. Just within the second language learning community, I have all of these proficiencies, y luego me traes (*then you bring me*)

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heritage. Y luego aparte (*and then in addition*), you enroll native speakers in the class, too! And I'm expected to grade all of their stuff.

The frustration Sofía experienced when trying to explain to her building administrator why it is imperative to offer separate heritage learner coursework is not unique (Lynch, 2008; Russell & Kuriscak, 2015). I also had a similarly disappointing encounter with my former high school principal. Despite my plea for administrative assistance, she was indifferent to the pedagogical import of creating a separate course for my heritage language students. The solution, she proposed, was to have my heritage students enroll in either French or German, as they already "spoke the language." This misconception of my students' language abilities was the main reason why I resigned from my position and decided to pursue doctoral studies in the field of heritage language education. As teachers, we understand quite well what can happen behaviorally and academically when heritage language students are taught alongside second language learners. However, our experiences within these mixed abilities classrooms (Carreira 2012, 2013, 2016) are seldom acknowledged by those in administrative positions.

For example, Adriana, a first-year Spanish teacher at Piñon High School and a former SHL TA, described her present reality of teaching in a mixed abilities classroom:

> They [the heritage students] stay with me, and it's horrible. Just horrible. Just this last semester, I implemented something new because it was driving me insane that they would finish within five minutes, and the rest of the time they're on their phones. I can't even penalize them for it because they did the work. But let's face it, they're not doing shit. So, I went down to the book room, found these books, and I made them read. And it was enlightening to them. They had vocab

questions and activities. And it was a little eye opening because they'd be like, 'Miss, what's an infinitive?' See? Exactly! So, sometimes just because you know a language doesn't mean you know the logistics behind it. I hope they got something out of it, but really, I was only doing it because they were driving me insane. I really don't like having them [in there] because it changes the dynamic too much. They don't even participate. Sit there and do nothing. It's not their fault that we can't place them in the class that best serves them. But that doesn't mean that they're going to sit there in the corner while we go over colors.

In this excerpt, Adriana confirms what is arguably the biggest pedagogical challenge in the field of second/heritage language education: Differentiating instruction to meet the unique linguistic, affective, and cultural needs of heritage language students (Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016).

Thus far, an exploration of my participants' *perezhivanie* has illuminated a web of shared sociohistorical experiences that span U.S. states, countries, and K-12 school systems. Unfortunately, the alarmingly similar nature of their stories points to a normalized pattern of teacher education which continues to neglect the sociohistorical underpinnings of language learning. I therefore find it essential to examine how SHL TAs and teachers who have heritage language teaching experience interact with their SHL students in order to change this trajectory.

RQ#2: What is the relationship between *vospitanie* [nurturing] and *obuchenie* [teaching/learning] in a language learning classroom?

One of the most frequent critiques directed toward SHL programs is that the type of instruction does not appear any different than that found in a traditional second

language classroom (Boyd, 2000; Lee & Oxelson, 2006). I would tend to agree with this generalization, as I also found that the instructional approach between the two programs was quite similar during my classroom observations. Where SSL and SHL differed, however, was in the inclusion and representation of student voices in the curriculum. A surface-level analysis would not be able to capture this teacher-learner dynamic. For this reason, the data tied to RQ#2 concerns the interplay of Vygotsky's concepts of *vopistanie* [nurturing] and *obuchenie* [teaching/learning process].

In an effort to understand how the TAs were interacting with and teaching to heritage learners within their classrooms, I conducted a week-long observation of five participants: two SSL TAs, two SHL TAs, and one SSL/SHL TA. This quantified as three visits for instructors teaching Spanish classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and two visits for instructors teaching on Tuesday and Thursday. My original objective for these observations was to document instances where I believed the instructor was eliciting students' awareness of language variation. Research has shown that raising heritage learners' sociolinguistic awareness is key to helping them recognize the value and authenticity of their own language varieties (Martínez, 2003). After multiple classroom visits, I seldom noticed discussions or activities on this topic. I then decided it was best to simply document what I was observing, and I refrained from anchoring my field notes to a particular theoretical framework. In doing so, I began to notice something more organic at work in the SHL classrooms.

Specifically, I became aware of a unique teacher-student relationship that tended to emerge during grammatical lessons. The TAs in both Spanish programs tended to favor explicit grammar instruction, where they would first explain the rules, provide

examples, and then allow students time to practice with the new structure. Interestingly, the SHL students I observed in SPAN 112 and SPAN 212 were not passive participants during these lessons. Rather, they were co-constructing their understanding of the grammatical concept with their TAs. At times, the students debated with their TA and peers on the efficacy of the grammar rules, often referencing personal experience to justify their opinions. Both of the observed SHL classrooms were bustling with overlapping discussions, during which some students would consult the internet to locate additional information on complex concepts, such as distinguishing the two past tenses, imperfect and the preterite. Students in SSL classrooms, conversely, were mostly quiet. They rarely asked clarifying questions of their TAs, and no student during my visitations challenged the efficacy of the grammar rules. Their attitudes were markedly similar to what Tori (SPAN 112) described when recalling her high school experiences: grammar is "black and white." The difference in student engagement between the two programs was therefore unmistakable.

Also noticeable in the SHL classrooms was the students' willingness to speak their own variety. Ana, a student in SPAN 111, expressed appreciation for this safe and inclusive learning environment. "I think that no one really judges you, which is a good thing," she shared. "Cause then if you say something stupid no one really cares. Cause everyone is in the same situation. I think that helps a lot." To reiterate, all of the SHL students in this study had never completed K-12 coursework in a heritage-specific program. The opportunity to take a course with culturally and linguistically peers was therefore a highlight for many (Appendix I, Question 27). Mercedes (SHL TA) expands on the notion of a judgement-free learning space and shared that one of the most

powerful experiences for a heritage learner, herself included, is to realize that there are other people who speak Spanish the same way that you do. The validation, she explained, is tremendous. "You walk into a Spanish class, and you think you don't know any Spanish, but you do. You know quite a bit. You've just never had an opportunity to realize how much you know."

Opportunities for students to learn about themselves as heritage speakers is arguably what distinguishes SHL from SSL. However, it is not necessarily the coursework that defines the students' experience. Rather, it is the relationships that students form with their TAs (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Ana (SPAN 111) pointed out something so simple that I find it important to mention here:

> [My TA] knows everyone's name. I think that makes a difference, too. Like, 'Oh, she actually knows my name! She knows who I am!' I guess it doesn't matter in a bigger class. You just do your work and you're fine. But when you're actually learning a language, I think it's pretty important to feel connected to your teacher in that sense.

I believe this feeling of connectedness is the essence of the SHL experience. While the SSL students enjoyed working with their TAs, it was obvious that the intimate connection I observed between TAs and students in the SHL program was not the same. Joaquín, for example, taught in the SHL and SSL programs simultaneously. During each of my classroom visits, he would share his family history and love for his culture with his students. The SHL students appeared interested in learning about his background, and several would reciprocate by sharing their own cultural experiences. When he tried to engage his SSL students in a similar discussion, they did not exhibit the same energy.

Some seemed completely disinterested. Joaquín shared with me after a particular SPAN 102 observation that he would often feel deflated when his SSL students "checked out" during his personal history presentations. Nonetheless, he remained determined to show these students that cultural understanding and appreciation is not confined to their textbook.

Joaquín's desire to support his students and their curiosity for learning about the language and culture is representative of *vospitanie* [nurturing]. He, along with all of the TAs who I observed, would bring a certain level of upbeat, positive energy to their instruction. The more enthusiasm the TAs exuded about a given topic, the more often their students appeared to listen and engage with the content. Marcos (SPAN 211) corroborated my observation, saying that it was his TAs' patience and passion for teaching the language and culture that made the SHL program a wonderful learning experience for him. He further recommended that the SHL program "keep hiring patient, passionate people." Through this endorsement, Marcos has provided an idea from a student's perspective as to which characteristics define a good teacher.

After an initial pattern analysis of the interview transcripts, I discovered that all participants were unanimous in identifying the qualities of a good teacher. According to the SHL students, a good teacher is someone who is sensitive to sociocultural differences, notices student potential, believes in student success, and is caring and open-minded. Tori (SPAN 112) referenced a former high school Spanish teacher who helped her recover from a previous, traumatic learning experience:

> He constantly told me how much he believed that I could do well in that [first high school class]. He was also very understanding with me, very encouraging.

So, even though I was struggling in Spanish, and I wasn't as caught up as the other kids, he definitely noticed a potential in me, and he tried to fuel that potential to make me a better Spanish speaker. That's what really motivated me. Part of me was even wondering if I wanted to take Spanish in college, but no, he made me promise that I would, so I'm gonna take Spanish. I'm gonna become fluent.

The SSL and SHL TAs agreed with these aforementioned qualities and added that good teachers also set high expectations for student success and are proud of students' accomplishments. Irene, a native Spanish speaker from Mexico and a TA in the SSL department, described how her educational experience in her home country shaped the teacher that she is today, saying,

They [the teachers] believed in me. They believed that I had potential, and they gave me support. And even though I remember back in Mexico where it was really strict, even those teachers showed pride in what I produced, and that encouraged me to be better. Instead of me hating the rules and hating the grammar, it was like, 'yes, all of this was bad, but it was a great job. You can improve.' So, the fact that they wanted me to go forward is something that I appreciated. So, I don't try to be pushy with my students, but I want to motivate them to also do their best.

The administrators summarized the thoughts of the previous two participant groups and simply stated that good teachers are compassionate and empathetic. However, the SSL Program Coordinator cautioned that, "compassion is passive. You have to understand your students, where they are, but the empathy is 'do' something

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about this," she explained. "To help them, [you need] compassion and empathy both. And patience." Sofía and Adriana, current high school Spanish teachers, expanded on this idea and reminded new and experienced teachers that they must be both humble and intentional in their instructional approaches.

> If you enter a classroom thinking that you know everything [laughs], you're going to be defeated. The reality is that you don't know anything. They will test you. I think just being humble and being open to actually learning and applying and being criticized. Observations? I love when people come now because I feel like I can grow from it (Sofía, Peral HS).

In other words, teach with purpose but be open and willing to accept critique so that you can learn from it.

As Sofía (Peral HS) implied in her except, teachers are not limitless repositories of information. She explains that,

> yo siempre les digo (*I always tell them*), 'I don't have the right way of speaking.' If I don't know something, I'm honest. Let's look it up. They teach me English, too. I'll tell them, sorry, I don't know how to say that.

Students genuinely seemed to appreciate this honesty. For example, Luz (SPAN 212) commended her SHL TAs for their willingness to honor students' voices in the classroom. "So, they learn from us, and we also learn from them," Luz said. "And that's how this is supposed to go. My teachers that I've had here for Spanish are very open-minded." This openness on part of the teachers to listen and learn from their students is a critical component of *obuchenie* [teaching/learning process].

As evidenced thus far, the participants' recollections of their high school Spanish experiences have illustrated how 'teaching' without openness and sensitivity to student interests can negatively impacted their *perezhivanie*. Teachers therefore need to consider how a level of care, or *vospitanie*, is essential to enhance the quality of the teaching/learning process. To understand how a combination of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* can produce mutually beneficial learning opportunities for the teachers and their students, I find it necessary to explore the characteristics of a language classroom where these concepts operate as a unified system.

SubQ#2.1: What are the characteristics of a classroom that has a combination of both elements?

The lived experiences that my participants have shared thus far demonstrate the criticality for educators of heritage language learners to recognize and affirm their students' variety and sociohistorical experiences. Tori (SPAN 112), for example, was fearful of speaking Spanish in front of others for most of her life. While she appreciated that her TA was kind and supportive of her efforts, she still wrestled with a negative perception of her heritage language. Her Spanish, she believed, was ugly. Tori was so self-conscious of her variety that she felt the need to apologize to her TA after her final oral exam for SPAN 112. "I haven't spoken Spanish for so long in such a long time," she explained.

> And at the end, I'm like, 'I'm so sorry, my Spanish is so ugly.' And he said 'no, it's not.' And then he just went on to tell me why it wasn't ugly. And he was like, 'every language has its own song, you just have to find your own part in it.' And that just made me so happy. I left smiling, and I was like, 'you know what? My

Spanish isn't perfect, but that doesn't inherently mean that it's ugly. I think that

gave me more confidence to speak Spanish in my class. Not enough to where I

can full-on speak Spanish just whenever, but I'll be more likely to do it.

Tori's willingness to confide in her TA is again illustrative of *vospitanie*, as she

implied that her TA had responded to her emotional state with a level of care. He

recognized her embarrassment and offered not only his support but also encouragement.

His acknowledgement of Tori's abilities, as she herself stated, led to a boost in her self-

efficacy. Mercedes (SHL TA) described a similarly empowering situation. When she

was an undergraduate student, Mercedes took SPAN 212 with a TA who helped her

realize that her Spanish was as authentic as any other variety.

He was really chill. He was basically the first professor that I ever had that taught

Spanish that was like, 'however you speak Spanish, whatever words you know,

whatever slang you know, that is all valid, and you should bring it into the

classroom.'

Based on the experiences of these two participants, it would seem that a

classroom where *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* function as a unified process is one where

students feel safe, motivated, proud, and confident in their abilities. From these feelings,

participants seem to gain a sense of control over their own learning. As the SHL

Program Coordinator stated,

The idea [for SHL] is that we not only provide language classes for these

students, but we try to get them united and recognizing that they are group, and

that they aren't alone. Just the fact that you get them together is a huge, very

strong, amazing statement.

Heritage speakers of other languages appeared to find this idea appealing as well.

Afsoon, who is a SPAN 212 student, completed all four courses in the SHL program: SPAN 111, 112, 211, and 212. She said that her first language was actually Farsi, but she admitted that she could not read or write in it. She was three years old when she and her family arrived in the U.S. as refugees from the Middle East. After settling in her new home, Afsoon's mother found a job in the restaurant industry and began to learn Spanish to communicate with her co-workers. She then began to teach Spanish words and phrases to her daughter. Afsoon subsequently feels a connection to the Spanish language through her mother, but she shared that it is her own experience has a heritage Farsi speaker in the U.S. that led her to the SHL program:

> That's one of the biggest things I like about the heritage language program. Cause I know in the regular classes they're teaching you, 'here's the list of vocabulary. Learn this for the next test.' Rather than, 'hey, this is your background. This is what you grew up with. This is your history. These are poems of other people who also share your experiences.' It kind of enriches your experience, I would say. It's not 'learn this for the sake of a test.' Like hey, learn this because it's a part of your life. It's part of who you are.

In this vein of thought, 'meaningful instruction' must go beyond a superficial attempt to acknowledge heritage students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in a language classroom. The students must see themselves as part of the teaching/learning process.

***SubQ#2.2: How does the transparentization of thinking processes for students
and teachers lead to transformative learning opportunities for both?***

For *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* to exist, both the teacher and her students need to be
open-minded and willing to listen to one another. However, it is the teacher who must
model this transparency of thought in order to inculcate a sense of security and
affirmation in the classroom. Irene (SSL TA) previously mentioned that she does not
want to be pushy with her students. She instead found that encouraging students to do
their best begins with allowing them to have a say in what they are learning. "Having the
freedom to choose what they want is when they are really learning," she stated. During
my observations of her SSL class, Irene would invite students to share favorite Spanish
songs, YouTube clips, or family photos. She explained that the heritage language
students who remained in her class seemed to appreciate the opportunity for them to
share personally meaningful artifacts. She also felt that disruptive incidents involving
bored heritage learners seemed to decrease.

Sofía (Peral HS) also commented on the importance of learning about and
incorporating her heritage learners' interests into the curriculum. "They talk about their
families," she said.

> And they tell me what they wanna work on. For a lot of them, it's writing." Her
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> heritage students also appeared to enjoy sharing her role as the teacher. "They
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> like explaining. And they like being the ones reading aloud because they're
>
> practicing también [*as well*]. So, I guess I haven't found a good way to
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> differentiate, pero for me, just getting to know them and who they are, I think they
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> find that very valuable. And I've never had an issue with them not wanting to

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participate. Al contrario [*on the contrary*]. They're practicing, and they've gotten better.

By analyzing these patterns of thought, it is becoming increasingly clear that TAs and teachers who are open-minded tend to promote, facilitate, and develop their students' control over their own learning. In doing so, the TAs are collaborating with their students in the co-construction of meaning, which has led to reciprocal, transformative learning opportunities for multiple participants in this study.

RQ#3: How can an understanding of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* lead to a potential reconceptualization of language teacher education programs?

The final research question in this study is perhaps the most important. As I mentioned in the review of literature, the field of second language teacher education has remained relatively unchanged for the past 40 years (Bemhardt &Hammadou,1987; Ellis, 2010; Lortie, 1975; Tedick, 2009; Tedick & Walker, 1994; Veléz-Rendón, 2002). And while the findings from this one study cannot serve as a panacea to resolve this issue, it may provide some insight as to what teachers believe that they require in order to be successful in the classroom.

Firstly, new teachers must understand that the process of becoming an educator takes time. Sofía (Peral HS) and I both found that our third year in the classroom was when we finally felt comfortable with our roles as Spanish language educators. Learning to teach requires patience, dedication, and an acceptance that this profession is not for everyone. As Adriana (Piñon HS) stated,

do it because you love it. Because let me tell you, we're overworked, we're

underpaid. There's more good days than bad days, but the bad days can

sometimes be very bad. They take you down. There were times I would get in

my car, and by the time I was driving home, I'd be crying. So, it's good to have a

support system. My department is awesome. I love my department.

Adriana and Sofía both explained that their district assigns a mentor to first-year teachers.

Despite the mandatory nature of this policy, Adriana shared that having a confidant who

would listen and provide her with constructive feedback was helpful.

Given that new Spanish and Portuguese TAs are not assigned a first-semester

mentor, I found it beneficial to ask my participants via the online TA Preparation and

Learning Experience Survey a question regarding their preference on having one

assigned to them. Only two TAs expressed disinterest, while the remaining 12

participants (87.5%) were overwhelmingly in favor of the idea (Appendix II, Question

31). Mercedes (SHL TA) commented on the proposal, saying,

just having that personalized, kind of individualized- like, someone who you can

say, 'I'm having this problem, I don't know what to do. My lesson plan went

really really poorly the other day, like I felt really horrible afterwards. The

students weren't engaged. They were bored. How could I have made this better?'

Stuff like that. I think just even that emotional support, where it's OK to feel like

you suck because it's [teaching] hard.

Teaching is undeniably difficult, particularly for those TAs who enter the

classroom with no prior experience. However, the best way to learn, as the SSL Program

Coordinator suggested, is for the TAs to trust in their capabilities and understanding of

pedagogy and teach. They need to recognize that they are in control and "not be so afraid of it," the SHL Program Coordinator added. He elaborated on this thought and also stated that having a plan to overcome these insecurities is but one step the TAs must take to further their own learning. "The goal is fine," he said. "You need to have goals. But it's the process of, 'how do you get there?' that I think is even more important than the end goal." Important to note is the administrators' indirect reference to Vygotsky's methodological process (1934/1994) for studying and understanding the development of human consciousness.

To help the TAs reflect on their own teaching/learning process, then, I asked them to rank a series of factors via the online survey that might have contributed to their professional development. Unsurprisingly, the TAs prioritized their classroom experience as the first and most valuable element (Appendix II, Question 29). Student feedback was the second most popular factor, followed by support from fellow TAs and program supervisors.

To provide SHL students with an opportunity to contribute to their TA's professional development, I included survey and interview questions that encouraged them to make suggestions for improvement. Marcos (SPAN 211) commented on overall competency in the classroom:

> You definitely have to know how to teach, how to run a classroom. You have to have that patience with newcomers to the language. Especially, in my case, Latinos and Latinas who should speak the language but really haven't had a lot of experience with it. And a lot of friends and myself, we kind of feel isolated. [I feel isolated from] my parents and my cousins from Mexico because I can't speak

Spanish very well. A lot of patience and a lot of passion for the subject makes the language classroom good.

Sofía (Peral HS) reiterated from a teacher's perspective the importance of linguistic and cultural competency in a mixed abilities classroom, saying,

I think it's great que people who learn Spanish become Spanish teachers. Pero, I feel like if they didn't do linguistics and look at the cultural aspect of it too, they have such a weird look at teaching Spanish. Like, a very limited- I feel bad saying this because our teachers have such great experience, but they're lacking…knowing the culture behind what it means to be a student in a school where everything is inglés, but they speak Spanish at home. Or maybe their grandparents speak it. They don't really know how to deal with that and like distinguish. And I've seen it! It's like, how long have you been teaching, and you've never thought about this? And I feel bad judging because I go back to my thought, you know, where you think you know everything you actually don't know anything? I'm becoming more humble. And it bothers me when people say, 'oh, I've been teaching for 20 years. I know everything about teaching.' No no no no no. I feel like we never stop learning. I get frustrated when people don't think they have anything else to learn to provide their students.

SubQ#3.1: How does an analysis of these three concepts lead to an understanding on the development of an efficacious pedagogy for heritage language learners?

Being humble, as Sofía suggested, requires that a teacher be willing to listen and learn from her students. As discussed throughout this chapter, teachers can provide

heritage learners with the confidence, control, encouragement and motivation needed to help them take pride in what they are learning simply by respecting, validating, and incorporating their voices into the curriculum. To attain this degree of efficaciousness, teachers must "dedicate some time for a chance for the students to have personal growth. Attending to those linguistic needs is [going to] help their own construction of identity and language" (Joaquín, SSL/SHL TA).

For example, Tori (SPAN 112), explained that enrolling in the SHL program helped her overcome her previous insecurities about speaking Spanish. I asked her what she would tell a fellow student who was unsure of taking a class in the SHL program. She said,

> maybe if they're kind of like me, where they come from not a…majorly Mexican background or a New Mexican background. It's like a Puerto Rican background. Maybe like they're Colombian or Venezuelan or something like that. I would be like, 'well you have different intricacies with your language. Wouldn't you want to talk about that and find out, 'hey there's other people who have the same intricacies as my Spanish? [People say it's] a strange Spanish or an ugly form or an incorrect form of Spanish. It's just as valid. It's just a different way of speaking it.' I would try to talk to them about it. Because it has helped me feel very validated in my own language, even though I'm like the only Puerto Rican in there. I can still see other people's forms of Spanish. Like there's so many different ways of saying something! That makes me feel more empowered with my way, you know?

Empowerment in its essence concerns the dialectical processes of internal thought with the external interactions one has with his or her environment. The manifestation of empowerment is ultimately, in my opinion, about intrinsic motivation. In a classroom with heritage leaners, teachers must consider how they can instill a feeling of pride and responsibility for learning within their heritage language students. Ynez (SHL TA) summarized the ethical import of creating a space for heritage language learners, stating,

I think that people really want to believe that their program is serving everyone's needs. I think people really really want to believe that they're differentiating enough that everyone's needs are being met. And what they don't recognize is how powerful it is to have a group of people with shared experiences. A group of minoritized people- that are being minoritized on ALL fronts. Heritage language learners are being minoritized by their parents because they don't speak Spanish, and they're not Mexican enough. Or Bolivian enough. Or wherever they're from. And, in the greater U.S. society, they're never American enough. My favorite quote is Selena's dad: 'You have to be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more American than the Americans.' And so, people don't recognize how powerful it is to put all of those students in a room, have them see first that they're not alone, that they're experiences are shared by a ton of other people. And have them validate their experiences, their culture, their own authenticity in their own lives.

However, as noted earlier in this chapter, K-12 language programs seldom offer heritage-specific tracks (Beaudrie, 2011, 2012). The absence of a separate physical space for these learners can result in unique pedagogical challenges, as high school teachers

Sofía and Adriana have explained. The findings from this study are therefore enlightening for those who teach in mixed abilities classroom, as the data suggest that heritage learners can benefit from a pedagogical approach that is grounded in Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie*.

Conclusion

Unraveling the longstanding, normalized system of language teacher education requires the efforts or more than one committed individual. To quote the SHL Program Coordinator,

> I feel like the little *golondrina*, the little sparrow. I don't know if you've heard that metaphor, but like it doesn't matter, the *bosque's* [forest] on fire. And I'm a little sparrow that's gonna come and drip by drip, try to put the fire out. I'm gonna go over to the river, get a drop of water, and drip by drip try to put that fire out. And I can't do it alone. It's gonna hurt, I'm gonna get burned. But guess what, if we get a bunch of sparrows, we could do it.

This call for unity reverberates within the teaching assistants, administrators, and teachers in this study. They share a more profound awareness of their students' lived experiences, and it is this understanding of *perezhivanie*, along with the unification of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* in the classroom, that is critical to the development of an efficacious pedagogy.

Chapter 5 continues with an in-depth, thematic analysis to illustrate how this data can inform the field of second language teacher education.

Chapter 5

Analysis and Conclusion

By allowing my participants' voices to drive the data storytelling, I was able to weave together their thoughts and lived experiences into a detailed, compelling narrative that brought into focus patterns of reoccurring discourse. From these patterns, I identified three data categories that aligned with my research questions. These topics concerned heritage language learner experiences, factors that contributed to the teaching and learning process, and suggestions for teacher success in the classroom. I then reviewed the entirety of Chapter 4 to better analyze the data from a holistic perspective. In doing so, I collapsed these three categories into two overarching themes. The first theme concerns the participants' conscientious resistance to dominant language ideologies within traditional second language classrooms. The second theme alludes to the characteristics that define a high-quality language teacher. It is through the latter thematic analysis where I identify the factors that may contribute to a reconceptualization of the field of second language teacher education.

Hence, the intent for Chapter 5 is to analyze more deeply the intentionality underlying the information shared by my participants. This analysis offers an additional layer of informed perspective, where I leave the audience to conclude what truths may be found within the study.

Theme 1: Demonstrating conscientious resistance

I believe that the repetitious nature of the participants' recollections of high school Spanish teachers (RQ#1) is both disappointing and disturbing. For one, the data points to widespread use of traditional second language practices that continue to

marginalize the experiences of heritage language learners. I would also argue that this information confirms an ongoing lack of reform within second language teacher education programs (Huhn, 2012; Johnson, 2015; Veléz-Rendón, 2002). The consequences of this unaltered system are clear: heritage language learners often feel isolated, misunderstood, and ridiculed by both native and non-native Spanish language teachers who remain unaware of their sociohistorical backgrounds and unique learning needs (Coryell & Clark, 2009; Ducar, 2008; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Helmer, 2013; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Kondo, 1999; Lacorte & Canabal, 2003; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003; Schreffler, 2007; Wilson, 2006; Zyzik, 2016).

Also apparent throughout a number of participants' excerpts is the conflation of power and authority that is found in these traditional language learning settings (del Valle, 2014; Leeman, 2005). For instance, Ana (SPAN 111), Luz (SPAN 212), Sofía (Peral HS), and Joaquín (SSL/SHL TA) all discussed how their experiences and perception of authority impacted how they felt about their own language varieties. The sharing of their beliefs, combined with an openness to discuss their negative encounters with prior Spanish language instructors, is again representative of the participants' *perezhivanie* (García, 2019). Fortunately, my participants did not seem dissuaded from studying their heritage language as a result of these past events. In fact, several SHL students, notably Luz and Ana, challenged their teachers' authority to require all students to speak an academic standard variety. Their resistance is significant, as it potentially undermines another argument that is often made about an idealized instructional approach for heritage language learners.

As discussed in the Key Terms section in Chapter 1, critical pedagogy (CP) has become widely regarded in the field of heritage language education as a quintessential approach to instruction (Correa, 2011; Correa, 2017; Leeman, 2005, 2018; Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza, 2011; Mrak, 2011; Villa, 1996, 2002). The purpose of CP, as experts often state, is the need for minoritized language students to recognize how traditional foreign/second language textbooks and curricula have historically suppressed their voices and lived experiences (del Valle, 2014; Leeman, 2005). CP-informed approaches in heritage language classrooms are therefore believed to guide students through the process of conscientization, where they are taught that their linguistic varieties are just as valid as an academic standard (Leeman et al., 2011). The moral intent of this social justice-oriented approach is admirable, yet it is often unclear in the literature what is within its foundations or how CP is facilitated and maintained in the language classroom.

The dilemma with implementing a CP-based approach is the absence of a methical framework that would guide teachers through the steps needed to raise students' level of consciousness. To reiterate, CP is dialectically opposed to Marx's theory of dialectical materialism, meaning that CP does not have a method to analyze the historical origins of oppression in our society (Novack, 1978). Yet, a frequent recommendation of critical pedagogues is to promote learner agency by having marginalized students explore the sociopolitical and sociocultural issues related to language education (Leeman, 2005; Pessoa & de Urzeda Freitas, 2012). To date, however, no longitudinal studies have explored how an examination of linguistic and cultural oppression contribute to learner agency outside of the classroom. It is therefore

difficult to verify the long-term effectiveness of CP-based approaches. Moreover, this literature gap brings into question the types of strategies that qualify as CP.

Thus far, consciousness-raising strategies in the language classroom have typically consisted of an exploration of sociolinguistic variation and variety validation (Gallego & Conley; 2013; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Martínez, 2003; Martínez & Schwartz, 2012). Martínez (2003) maintains that dialect-based awareness activities can help heritage language students recognize and appreciate non-standard language varieties. It is again unclear, however, how this language awareness constitutes a critical pedagogical approach to instruction. For instance, the study of sociolinguistic variation within learners' communities is an essential objective for SHL courses at this institution, and multiple SHL students and TAs in my study frequently repeated an inclusive message set forth by the SHL program: there is no one right way to speak a language. This singular statement helped students like Tori (SPAN 112) feel more comfortable with her manner of speaking. For other participants, such as Liam (SSL/SHL TA), this belief merely affirmed what some already knew to be true: they are authentic speakers of their heritage language.

The effectiveness of critical approaches therefore appears to correlate to the student's perception of their own linguistic variety, which again highlights the importance of understanding the students' *perezhivanie* (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Teachers must not assume that minoritized Spanish speakers are unaware of their own linguistic oppression, as doing so would ignore the validity of their students' lived experiences. To illustrate, Luz (SPAN 212) revealed that she was tracked through ESL and Special Education classes upon relocating from Mexico to Los Angeles, California.

She implied that being labeled Special Education limited her opportunities to make friends and learn English from her peers, which is in itself, a form of oppression. For Luz, the moment she was finally granted some control in the direction of her education was monumental:

> English for me was a little bit difficult to learn, since I didn't have it while growing up. But other than that, I just learned it from speaking it, reading it, and people helping me. That's probably why I was in special education all the time. It didn't hurt me that much. But when they finally had me in regular classes, that made me feel empowered in my own education. It just made me push myself a little bit more to meet the standards so that I could go with the other children. Special education students—they're unique, and they're special in their own way. It's not because they can't do it at all; it's because they have their own abilities that people won't understand. Like it's either a learning disability, a hearing disability, attention span issues, or something like that. And when you just tell somebody that [you're special ed], they just say that if you have these disabilities, that nope, you can't do it. They just look you down.

Luz's experience serves as cautionary tale: teachers cannot assume that a student can or cannot do something because of a label assigned to her. This reminder also rings true for heritage language learners. As established previously, heritage learners possess a wide array of linguistic skills and learning needs (Carreira, 2003, 2007, 2012; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2016; Kagan & Dillon, 2008). It is therefore important that educators ask these students what they believe they require in terms of instruction. For instance,

Mercedes (SHL TA) explained that she began her first semester of teaching by asking her heritage students some basic questions about their motivation for studying Spanish:

> I tried to start with 'why are you here? Why are you studying this language? And I was shook because so many of the students said, 'I want to advocate for my people. I can't do that if I don't speak their language.' They gave very profound, very community-oriented reasons for why they wanted to learn this language.

Developing the agency needed to advocate for one's community is a tenet of critical pedagogy (Leeman, 2005; Pennycook, 1999), yet my interview data suggests that most participants did not have an opportunity to study their language from this perspective. Quite the opposite, most described powerfully negative experiences that illustrated a subconscious awareness of the workings of an oppressive language education system (del Valle, 2014). Mercedes's comment is therefore enlightening, as her students are already demonstrating a desire to learn Spanish for a community-oriented purpose. In this instance, I believe it is safe to assume that Mercedes's students are aware of why they and their community members have been linguistically and culturally oppressed.

Examples of this self-determination were observable in other participants as well. Luz (SPAN 212) and Ana (SPAN 111), for example, discussed how they resisted pressure from their high school Spanish educators to conform to standard language practices. In doing so, they broke free from the dominant language ideologies that continue to subordinate non-standard varieties (Helmer, 2013). Even Irene (SSL TA), who is a native Spanish speaker from Mexico, discussed how she did not wish to reproduce the standard language ideologies that shaped her way of speaking with her SSL students. Her conscious decision to avoid participating in this 'banking process' of

education also appeared to be self-motivated and was possibly influenced by her past experiences with learning a linguistic standard (Freire 1970/2000). Lastly, Joaquín (SSL/SHL TA) and Mercedes (SHL TA) described how seeing the word 'heritage' in the course catalog for Spanish heritage courses triggered a moment of consciousness awareness, where both speakers immediately self-identified with the SHL program.

These findings suggest that numerous SHL students and TAs in this study were well aware of how their Spanish teachers' adherence to an academic standard limited their voices. Moreover, they all implied that studying or teaching this language now serves a personal purpose: to emancipate themselves from an invalidation of their lived experiences. This is not to say that the SHL students in this study have no need for conscious awareness raising teaching practices; they still depend on their TAs to provide them with the tools needed to meet their learning goals. However, I find it important to question the ongoing objective of a critical pedagogical approach in classrooms where marginalized students are already acting as agents of societal change. Extant literature has thus far not explored this teaching reality, nor has much attention been given to how the *perezhivanie* of a language teacher shapes her understanding of and interactions with her marginalized Spanish speakers (García, 2019). Without this insight, I find it difficult to conceive of a methodological approach that would prepare teachers to enact CP-based approaches.

Given this literary gap, I find that Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* serve as a lens through which to critically examine how teachers develop empathy and awareness of the internal and external factors that shape the needs, interests, and motivations of their heritage speakers. When analyzed

holistically, these three concepts point to a clear conceptualization of the ideal teacher: a person who possesses the personality characteristics, cultural and linguistic knowledge, and pedagogical skills to teach Spanish efficaciously to all learners.

Theme 2: Defining an efficacious language teacher

My interview questions (Appendix III) allowed for a natural discussion about my participants' educational experiences. While I did have to infer some underlying ideas, I explicitly asked each participant what she or he believed were the defining characteristics of a 'good' Spanish teacher. Most of these comments were presented in Chapter 4. As such, I focus on additional thoughts that contribute to my thematic analysis in this section.

The best teachers have likely "learned a lot from a bad teacher. You can learn from seeing bad teaching behaviors" (SSL Program Coordinator). Regardless of how we teachers perceive our past instructors, we tend to internalize their practices as exemplars for our own classrooms (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). For example, Mercedes (SHL TA) greatly disapproved of her freshmen and sophomore high school Spanish teachers, repeatedly stating that these learning experiences were horrible. By her senior year, however, Mercedes explained that she appreciated how her AP Spanish teacher was 'legit':

> I do think back to my senior in high school, like Spanish class. Because we did a
> lot of different stuff, and I always try to remember the type of things that he did,
> even though he very much taught Spain Spanish and Spanish as a second
> language. He made us write skits, like we did orals. We wrote stories. I had the

exact same final project as a senior in high school that the SPAN 112 class has. I

wrote a children's book, and we went to an elementary school and we read it.

Mercedes also shared that this teacher had been instrumental in the design of lessons and

activities for her heritage students. She admitted, though, that she would not have been

able to develop as a teacher if it were not for one critical aspect of teaching in the SHL

program: having the freedom to experiment and take ownership of her class.

> I'm held to a curriculum. I'm held to a syllabus, and that's nice, but it is MY
>
> class," she said. "It is distinctly mine. No one else would've taught it exactly the
>
> way I did, and I kind of like that. I like being able to develop that identity as a
>
> teacher, and I think students appreciate seeing how different people teach
>
> (Mercedes, SHL TA)

Ynez (SHL TA) reiterated these sentiments, stating that, "it's been so powerful being

able to teach SHL because it's an opportunity to really impact peoples' lives."

What both participants appear to reference in these statements is the flexibility

afforded to TAs by the open nature of the SHL curriculum. However, too much

flexibility can be problematic, particularly for those who are new to the profession. All

teachers require some sense of direction to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their

students, and several TAs discussed actively seeking out their students' feedback

throughout the semester to inform their instruction. Ynez (SHL TA) shared the following

about her development:

> I think I am very open to what students want to improve about the course. I
>
> always do feedback, and the last two semesters, the mid semester feedback was
>
> not helpful because there wasn't consensus. But I try to find at least one thing in

the feedback that we can change or address so that they feel like they have a voice

in the classroom. And I think as I get better at my job, there's less of a thing that

they to point out that they really want to change. Which makes it harder to use

feedback as an empowering element in the classroom. I have employed all of the

feedback that I can. But it's gotten to the point now where most of the time there

isn't a consensus. Some like history, some people hate history. And so, I try to

pick out one element that we can change, like the warmups or something.

An instructor's reception to and validation of student voice is a powerful tool that can

further strengthen the teaching/learning process (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Multiple

participants highlighted this aspect in addition to other characteristics and abilities as

ubiquitous in a high-quality teacher.

Teacher characteristics and abilities. My participants' past learning

experiences with Spanish language teachers likely shaped how they presently identify

favorable educators. With considerable frequency, they used words, such as 'kind,'

'patient,' and 'compassionate,' to describe these teachers, along with ideas, such as

'culturally sensitive,' 'notices student potential,' and 'openminded.' The omnipresence of

these descriptions is significant, and from this data I find it possible to conceive of a

design for a teacher education program that would allow educators to develop these

personal attributes. Before delving into the details of this reconceptualization, however,

we must first analyze the concept of a 'good' teacher in order to conceive of a process for

learning and development.

After combing through the interview transcripts, I believe that Marcos (SPAN

211) provided the most descriptive definition of a 'good' teacher, stating that "an ideal

Spanish teacher is someone who obviously has a firm grasp on the language and is very patient with newcomers to the language and can offer that cultural insight. They can offer that 'this is how the language has changed and has been shaped over the years.'" His belief suggests that variation is intrinsic to the study of the language, and it is a topic that teachers must be ready to discuss in detail if they are to work in heritage language classrooms. Sofía (Peral HS) also stressed the need for language educators to have both cultural awareness and a strong linguistic background. While she admitted that her education in Hispanic linguistics has biased her opinion, she reiterated that knowing the rules of language use is not enough. Language teachers must "always try to work from their students' base knowledge" (Mercedes, SHL TA). To have an understanding of this working knowledge is to again be cognizant of how the students' *perezhivanie* "acts as a source and driver of" cognitive development (García, 2019).

It is therefore imperative that language teachers engage in dialogic interactions with their heritage language students to provide them with emotional and cognitive support (García, 2019; Schwartz Caballero, 2014). If the teacher does not possess the necessary cultural insight to accomplish this task, then she must be willing to allow the students to drive these important conversations. In returning to Macros and Sofia's thoughts about 'good' teachers, their emphasis on a teacher's need to 'understanding the language' is key, as this alludes to the value of a background in educational or applied linguistics. In fact, Fillmore and Snow (2000) believe that a language educator's preparedness to teach educational linguistics is imperative to her success in the classroom. The authors explain that "if approached coherently, such preparation would also…cover many of the items on that long list of desired teacher competencies, relating

as it would to skills in assessing children, in individualizing instruction, and in respecting diversity" (p. 4). What can be assumed through Fillmore and Snow's suggestion is that the design of activities that are personable and representative of students' sociohistorical backgrounds is a defining feature of a high-quality language educator.

Activities and learning environment. To be sure, any learning activity should serve a meaningful purpose for the students. Exactly what type of content or practice a student considers meaningful, however, is ambiguous. To address this mystery, I asked my SHL students a series of questions via the online survey (Appendix I; Question 36) and interview questions about their ideal language learning classroom. Ana (SPAN 111) again pointed to the need for teachers to consider the learning desires of heritage language students, stating that she would benefit from

> ...really practical activities that we're actually going to use. I do think it's important to know how to write it and to read it and everything, but to be able to communicate… Yeah, I think that's the most important thing. Sometimes I feel like an idiot. I was at a convention with my mom, and she teaches early childhood development. There are some teachers who don't speak any English, and I went to talk to them. They speak SO fast, and I made a fool of myself. Like I can't think as fast as they're talking, I guess.

Afsoon (SPAN 212) and Marcos (211) also corroborated Ana's frustration with speaking Spanish in front of others, and they both mentioned in their interviews that they wished their TAs had incorporated more opportunities for communicative practice. This point again aligns with data presented in Chapter 4, as students' written responses to the online survey confirmed a desire to improve their speaking skills (Appendix I: Questions 24 &

30). However, students appeared to suggest that 'speaking' was only useful if the TAs provided timely, constructive feedback on their linguistic development.

In contrast to the TAs' perceptions about their feedback policies, several SHL students stated that they wish they had received more input more frequently throughout the semester. To illustrate, Afsoon (SPAN 212) explained that she was frustrated by the lack of feedback from some of her TAs in the SHL program. She shared that one of her favorite aspects of SPAN 212 was the instantaneous, computerized response she would receive after submitting her homework online:

> I didn't necessarily have to have my textbook to do the homework, and then I also got immediate feedback. If I was doing something wrong, [the online system] told me which ones. I wanna see which ones I got incorrect. And I wanna have that second or third attempt that she always gives us to re-do the homework. That proves to me that it's not about our grade. It's about learning, you know?

Afsoon's comment requires a deeper analysis to tease apart all of the implications. Firstly, she appears to suggest that any feedback, even if it is from a computerized system, is preferable over not receiving any at all. She does not discuss the quality of this online feedback, which is certainly something to explore in future research. Afsoon also alludes to the idea of linguistic 'correctness.' Heritage students undeniably want to learn more about their language and culture, but they also express a desire to understand the grammar rules and pragmatics that would enable them to communicate more effectively in certain contexts (Carreira & Kagan, 2017; Zyzik, 2016). As Afsoon said, it's not the grade that matters to these students but rather the engagement in meaningful learning opportunities that provide emotional support, foster cultural appreciation, and encourage

cognitive development. Again, her comment bespeaks the importance of knowing our students and their motivations for studying their language (Ducar, 2008).

While Afsoon may have expressed a bit of disappointment with her TAs' performance, most students appeared to recognize that their instructors did not have the experience needed to address all of their concerns. In truth, I was somewhat inspired by the students' sense of compassion and empathy for TAs who had no prior teaching experience. Tori (SPAN 112) said, "my TA is just a graduate student, you know? He hasn't had the years of experience to help him learn what works and what doesn't work." The patience and understanding represented through her comment are reminiscent of the qualities that define a good teacher. Moreover, I believe this example illustrates how *vospitanie*, when reciprocated between teacher and students, can lead to emotionally powerful and cognitively rewarding learning experiences.

The secret to mediating this type of learning environment is to "establish at the very beginning that this is an environment where we [the students and the teacher] try our best to speak Spanish. We're all going to make a lot of mistakes. We aren't fluent in the language yet, but we'll help each other with learning how to speak the language" (Tori, SPAN 112). Ana (SPAN 111) expanded on this community-oriented approach, stating that SHL offers "an environment that's accepting to everyone and what they've learned. [It] brings [our] backgrounds into it." It is therefore unsurprising that heritage students have such high praise for the course. As Tori stated,

> I think [SHL] is extremely beneficial. Incredibly beneficial. I feel that Spanish as
> a heritage language means that it IS part of your heritage, even though you may
> not be exposed to it much, or you may not have been raised with it. But it's like

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giving you the tools to take part of your heritage, to try and reclaim it again, you know? So that makes me very happy.

Establishing a community of practice is important to concretize *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* as enduring, dialectical processes between a teacher and her students. Developing this type of rapport requires commitment, and it begins with a sincere effort on part of the instructor to make learning inclusive to all students. "I try really hard to make it a community," Ynez (SHL TA) explained. "To make it a collective environment where we're learning together." This idea of learning together is the essence of *obuchenie* (Johnson, 2006; Johnson, 2015) and when this 'togetherness' allows for meaningful, reciprocal learning opportunities between the teacher and her students, then *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* are unified to yield moments of mutually engaging, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally rewarding experiences. The ability to attain this transformative consciousness lies within the educator herself. Based on my participants' perspectives, a transformative teacher is one who is conscientious and responsive to the needs of her students, and who embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as normative rather than as constituting an exceptional teaching practice (Johnson & Golombek, 2016).

Implications

I originally designed this study with the intent to study how Spanish language teaching assistants acquired, transformed, and implemented their theoretical understanding of Second and Heritage Language Acquisition theory into classroom practice. I realized while gathering my qualitative data, however, that learning theory did not appear to play as pivotal a role in my participants' learning-to-teach process as I had initially presumed. For one, my participants seldom mentioned language learning theory

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in their interview transcripts and survey responses. Those who did mention theory typically stated that they did not explore language acquisition models in detail during their methods coursework, and as consequence, felt unprepared to transform theory into practice. The findings subsequently informed the re-design of my research questions. I shifted from examining how the design of a teacher preparation program influences teacher development to focus instead on how the participant's internal thought processes and external experiences shape how she views her own learning-to-teach process.

This necessary realignment reveals several implications for the fields of second language teacher preparation and heritage language education. Foremost, it is evident through my participants' descriptions that a number of U.S. public and private classrooms do not provide inclusive learning spaces where the diversity of the Spanish language and culture is validated and authenticated. The data thus contributes to a growing body of literature on the inequitable teaching of Spanish to linguistically diverse students across K-12 contexts (Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman, 2014, 2018; Suarez, 2002). As such, my study further demonstrates the import for second language teacher education programs to re-evaluate the learning and professional goals of preservice language teachers.

At a minimum, the findings imply that teacher education programs should incorporate an exploration of second and heritage language theoretical models that would provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to synthesize via praxis their developing understanding of inclusive best practices. A diverse teaching toolbox benefits not only the teacher in her planning and assessment of students but also the learning processes of her linguistically and culturally diverse students (Santamaría, 2009). To better ensure the

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quality of these diverse pedagogical strategies, I believe it would be beneficial for teacher preparation programs to facilitate mentorships between beginning and experienced teachers at the start of their methods coursework. The TAs and K-12 teachers in my study confirmed the value of this suggestion, stating that new TAs should be assigned an experienced mentor for at least their first semester in the Spanish program. The opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences through this dialogic interaction is conducive for both professional development and mental health. Mercedes (SHL TA) and Adriana (Piñon HS) both mentioned the value of having a confidant with whom they could vent about daily stressors. Adriana in particular felt that she would have been miserable her first year at Piñon if she had not had a supportive and accessible mentor.

My data analysis also suggests that a number of U.S. K-12 Spanish language teachers are operating from a traditional, antiquated language learning paradigm. As a consequence, the majority of my participants stated that they did not learn anything beyond grammar rules from their high school language Spanish teachers. The issue with employing a traditional SLA paradigm, as Marcos (SPAN 211) pointed out in his interview, is that "Spanish is not this uniform language throughout the Spanish-speaking world. It's really alive and it's different everywhere you go." For this reason, he argued that only those teachers who are successful at incorporating culture and linguistic diversity into the study of the Spanish language should be hired to teach heritage language learners. When I asked him if he would prefer to learn Spanish from a native speaker, Marcos stated that it was more important to have an instructor who was sensitive to the backgrounds of her heritage speakers. Ana and Luz indirectly alluded to this preference as well, which is a finding that contradicts previous literature on heritage

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students' desire to learn their language through a native speaking teacher (Helmer, 2013). I therefore found it unsurprising that the students' preference to learn from welcoming, patient, and supportive educator mirrors the teaching aspirations of the SHL/SSL TAs.

To explain, when I asked the TAs to reflect on their first semester of teaching, I noted several reoccurring patterns of discourse. Foremost, the TAs wanted their students to like them, and they hoped that their students would come to respect them. The TAs also shared a similar fear, which was being successful enough at their jobs to avoid having to fail a student. This displaced sense of responsibility was a considerable mental burden for several TAs. Mercedes (SHL) described feeling completely overwhelmed by the prospect of assigned a student a grade, saying "it's already such an anxiety-filled thing." Ynez (SHL) also discussed how she "very much felt like [the students'] success or failure depended entirely on [her]." She realized, however, that not every student is going to pass a 100-200 level Spanish class:

> And so, I had to be like, 'OK, is it my fault they didn't pass? Probably not, right?'
> And so actually having to deal with my students failing the class forced me to be
> like, 'OK, this is also their responsibility. I'm a facilitator, that's all.' So that
> helped a lot. I also realized that I just put all of these unnecessary pressures on
> myself the first semester, which I think all new teachers do. I really wanted them
> to like me. And now I really don't care if they like me. [laughs] As long as
> they're learning something.

When Ynez transferred the responsibility for learning the content onto her students, she noticed a change in how the students seemed to respect her. Mercedes described this reorientation of the teacher-centered classroom as establishing a "two-way

relationship." She believed that it worked for her as well, stating that her "students have a lot of respect for her now." This revelation is made all the more salient when we consider how Luz (SPAN 212) stated earlier in this chapter that her most memorable moment of empowerment came when she had the ability to control the direction of her education. As implied throughout these excerpts, when students' voices and lived histories are incorporated into the classroom, they tend to exhibit a greater sense of self-motivation and trust in the teaching/learning process.

Literature has long advocated for student-centered classrooms (Anton, 1999; Burke, 2006; Leeman, 2011; Santamaría, 2009), but the concept would appear to be something that cannot be learned through reading alone. My participants had to *experience* how a student-centered classroom generated dialogic, reciprocal learning opportunities. This implication correlates with longstanding concerns in the field of teacher education about the efficacy of methods courses (Guskey, 2002; Hunh, 2012; Veléz-Redón, 2002). While coursework cannot serve as a substitute for classroom experience, it should supplement teacher learning in practical ways. To nurture personal growth, second language teacher education programs should incorporate tasks that allow teachers to analyze and reflect on how their *perezhivanie* shapes and is shaped by their teaching experiences. Preservice teachers need to understand how their past learning experiences and individual personality characteristics influence the way that they interact with and teach their students. This insight into who they are as educators is an essential first step in their understanding of the teaching/learning process.

In addition to identifying areas of improvement in second language teacher education programs, the findings of this study also bring to light the problematic use of

labels that do not capture the essence of the concept they are intended to describe. For example, only a handful of participants—all TAs or program administrators—identified themselves as heritage speakers. When I questioned the SHL students as to why they did not feel comfortable claiming this identity, several stated that they did not feel linguistically proficient to use this term. It is therefore important to consider how the continued use of Valdés's (2000) linguistic description to identify heritage language learners is marginalizing those who have limited speaking capabilities in their language. Their feelings of linguistic inadequacy may also account for why SHL students identified 'culture' as a key, identity-defining aspect (Appendix I; Question 27) of studying their heritage language. For this reason, I find it helpful to share Fishman's (2001) more inclusive definition of a heritage learner with students, as they can see that 'culture' is indeed a factor that links them to their heritage community.

Regardless of how SHL instructors choose to define a heritage speaker, it is essential for them to consider how identity labels can impact their students' *perezhivanie*. Labels can limit perspective, and as consequence, the essence of what it means to be a heritage speaker in today's globalized society is lost. To explain, I will use a metaphor: A label is intended to represent a 'product,' yet it is difficult to understand what the product is and what purpose it serves without taking into consideration the processes that contributed to its existence. To reiterate, heritage language speakers, by virtue of their unique *perezhivanie*, do not fit into a single 'product' definition. As such, K-16 heritage language program enrollment policies should consider a definition for this group of speakers that does not overlook their unique attributes and personality characteristics.

Interestingly, terminological clarity was problematic with another key concept in this study: critical pedagogy. Nearly all 14 TAs who completed the online survey were able to describe how critical pedagogy pertained to the empowerment of heritage language learners (Appendix II; Question 52), stating that CP invites students to take control of their own education. Yet, several TAs wrote in the previous question that they could not define it as a stand-alone theory. Several expressed that CP was too broad to describe, and one person indicated that the term was used frequently without any guidance on what it was or how it worked in the classroom. I found this discrepancy in the data insightful, as it highlights how the absence of a methodological approach to study CP's historical origins clouds the essence of what CP is and what it is intended to do for marginalized students.

To illustrate, I found a journal article while preparing this chapter that focused on a critical pedagogy of empathy. The authors, Damianidou and Phtiaka (2016), contend that teachers who are open and willing to learn from their students' perspective can help nurture their connectedness to one another, which in turn can emancipate all parties from the oppressive nature of today's educational system (p. 244). If I had not stated that the focus of this article was on critical pedagogy, I believe its premise could easily have described my own study. Yet, as stated earlier, CP does not provide a methodological approach to explain the teaching/learning processes between teachers and students, nor does it incorporate a sociocultural framework through which to analyze and understand these social interactions. I therefore find that this overlap of critical pedagogy with Vygotsky's *vospitanie* [nurturing] and *obuchenie* [teaching/learning process] speaks to a general misperception about what critical pedagogy is and what it looks like in the

classroom. To expand on this notion, the authors in this work are utilizing

epistemological approaches that focus only on observable phenomenon. They are

therefore not analyzing the entirety of the teaching/learning process from its origins,

which precludes them from understanding the essence of the teaching/learning system.

Despite this significant limitation to utilizing a critical pedagogical approach, it is

essential to work toward social justice within and across all levels of education. What is

unclear, however, is how critical pedagogy measurably contributes to and extends this

moral cause outside of the classroom. Important to recall, then, is that Paulo Freire

referenced his work as a *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/2000). He did not term his

analysis as 'critical.' In fact, Macedo's introduction to the 2000 release of this seminal

piece referenced this frequent misinterpretation of Freire's work:

> Unfortunately, in the United States, many educators who claim to be Freirean in
>
> their pedagogical orientation mistakenly transform Freire's notion of dialogue into
>
> a method, thus losing sight of the fact that the fundamental goal of dialogical
>
> teaching is to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably involves
>
> theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process. (p. 17)

The dialogical processes that allow for the mutual sharing of lived experiences and

knowledge between a teacher and her students is essential in Vygotsky's concepts of

vospitanie and *obuchenie*. However, critical pedagogy is not alone is its borrowing of

these two concepts. Similar to CP, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) also calls for

teachers to understand students' *perezhivanie* so that educators can then better attend to

students' diverse learning needs. CRT is also intended to enhance the academic

achievement, sociopolitical awareness, and cultural competency of minoritized students

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(Santamaría, 2009). Given the mission overlap between the two theories, it is unsurprising that the definition of CRT closely mirrors critical pedagogy. Specifically, it "is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory" (p. 223). A key difference between the two theories, however, is that CRT recognizes Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as the heart of its framework, whereas critical pedagogy does not.

The sharing of core principles between these three theories makes it difficult to untangle and separate their respective terminologies. This, I would argue, demonstrates the problem of relying on ideas, definitions, and premises to describe the reality being studied rather than employ a particular methodological approach to study the origins of this reality. I am guilty of committing this shortcut, as I attempted to align my study with an existing theory that would explain what I was observing in my data. When I finally allowed my data to drive my understanding, however, I noticed that the stated goals and premises of these three theoretical frameworks are quite similar. Critical pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory all emphasize the need to understand and validate student voice in the classroom. Of the three, however, only Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1987) provides a methodological approach to study the essence of voice. That is, a teacher needs to first be aware of the underlying psycho-emotional thoughts and lived experiences that have coalesced and interacted over time to form her students' individual *perezhivanie* in order to validate their individual voices. This exploration of each student's reality will allow for a clearer understanding on what a particular student's learning needs are and what the teacher can then do to address them.

For example, the heritage speakers who participated in my study all acknowledged that the U.S. public and private education systems limited their opportunities to study their language in personally relevant ways. For these participants, it is evident that the premise of critical pedagogy should do more than illuminate the power structures that have historically oppressed them. CP-based approaches also need to allow for an exploration of the origins of this oppression within each individual. However, because critical pedagogy does not consist of an ontological theory of state, it is not possible to use CP as a method to study the process of conscious awareness raising in oppressed individuals (Vygotsky, 1934/1994). As a stand-alone theory, then, critical pedagogy cannot account for the "indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the emotional experience [of] *perezhivanie*" (p. 342). Indeed, the absence of a methodological approach to study the origins of historical oppression may also explain why there are no empirical studies that have explored how critical approaches have led to enduring societal change for minoritized students. It is therefore uncertain as to how or if students who have received CP-based instruction utilize their awareness to advocate for linguistic and cultural representation outside of the classroom.

Unfortunately, the prevalence of literature that focuses on critical pedagogy in the field of heritage language education has left little room for critique of its application in the classroom (del Valle, 2014). Instead of utilizing a label (i.e. critical pedagogue) to describe a justice-oriented and socially responsive educator, I find it more pragmatic to ask our heritage, bilingual, and native Spanish speaking students about what their teacher can do to help them be successful learners and democratic citizens. As my participants

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have already shared, 'good' teachers are those who incorporate and validate students'

voices and their sociohistorical backgrounds. They are kind, empathetic, and

compassionate individuals who are sensitive to and appreciative of cultural and linguistic

diversity, and they teach to instill within students a love for learning their language.

Collaborating and engaging with students in the creation of a safe and open-minded

learning environment is therefore an essential component of the teaching/learning

process.

By defining the essence of high-quality teaching, I believe these participants have

pinpointed the personality characteristics and knowledge base that new teachers ought to

possess and/or develop through their teacher education program. The cultivation of

linguistic skills, cultural sensitivity, and empathy should therefore serve as the foundation

for methods coursework and experiential learning opportunities that are grounded in the

promotion and promise of diversity, equity, and inclusivity for all students. I would

argue that this finding is not unique to my study, which lends to greater generalizability

of my findings to other learning contexts.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings from this study, I find it important to continue gathering

perspectives from heritage and second language students, teaching assistants, program

administrators, and heritage-serving Spanish teachers across the U.S. These voices and

their thoughts about language learning and teaching can greatly inform a visionary model

for foreign/second language teacher education (Beaudrie, 2015; Ducar, 2008; Kubota,

1998). Yet, such influential data has been largely absent from extant literature. To

demonstrate the transformative power of these perspectives, I incorporated suggestions

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from the SHL students and TAs in this study to inform the sequencing of discussion

topics and the design of learning activities for the Spanish and Portuguese methods class

that I taught in Fall 2018. I did not file an IRB to collect personalized data from my

students, so I cannot divulge in detail anything specific about how they felt about my

class structure, assignments, or practices. I can share some preliminary thoughts on how

my students appeared to develop as educators throughout the semester, as they completed

several written assignments that illustrated increasingly complex critical analysis of

theory, practice, and praxis. From this personal practitioner action research, I have

identified areas that will require further exploration in the future.

     Integrating feedback. If new teachers are to understand the application of

Second and Heritage Language Acquisition theory, they require an opportunity to

connect these concepts to their own learning experiences and classroom practice

(Johnson & Freeman, 2001). Because methods courses typically focus on the study of

theory rather than its application (Huhn, 2012; Veléz-Rendón, 2002), I was not surprised

that TAs ranked their methods class as the weakest contributor to their feelings of

preparedness in the language classroom (Appendix II; Question 21). In particular, the

TAs felt that course readings about language learning theory were seldom examined or

applied to classroom practice.

     Based on this input, I realized the value of requiring my students to read all of

their assigned materials with intention. They completed weekly dialogue journals

through a private teacher-student discussion feature in Blackboard, and I provided a

rubric so that the students were aware as to how I would evaluate their responses. In

addition to reviewing two to three key points of the selected reading, the students also

had to ground their understanding of the text into personal context. That is, they needed

to explain how the text did or did not correlate to their teaching and learning experiences.

In instances where the TAs did not find an applicable relationship, I probed their

analytical thinking skills by having them question and critique the authors' theoretical

arguments. Lastly, the TAs had to share two, open-ended questions at the end of their

journal. I would either respond to the students' questions directly in my return

comments, or I would share with their questions with the class for further discussion.

I was initially concerned that the students would find this reoccurring assignment

redundant, but they surprised me. The reading load for graduate students is extensive,

and my class was no exception. However, my TAs said that they were excited to see

their own experiences reflected in the textbook. They found the text easy to read, and

they appreciated that the authors presented an extensive list of activities, rubrics, and

teaching scenarios. The textbook, along with our class discussions, affirmed that what

the TAs were doing as new teachers in their classrooms was theoretically sound.

Selecting a practical and accessible text was therefore fundamental to the functionality of

this methods course.

Secondly, providing a private space for the TAs to explore their thoughts and

make sense of their teaching experiences allowed for transparent communication between

the students and me. They shared their successes, doubts, and fears, and they asked some

challenging questions. I did not always have suitable answers, but I made the effort to

respond and support the TAs to the best of my ability. As a result, I found that the TAs

became more confident in referencing abstract theoretical concepts and connecting these

ideas to their own practice. They also felt more comfortable critiquing not only the

textbook but also traditional language learning paradigms and strategies as they gained additional teaching experience throughout the semester.

Opportunities for experiential learning. Each TA that I interviewed for this study wished that they had been able to practice teaching in front of their peers. The absence of this constructive feedback from the methods course was unsettlingly for some, and for others, it was a source of major anxiety. To address this concern, I decided to teach the content of the methods course by modeling various SLA, HLA, and ESL language learning strategies. I wanted to demonstrate to my students how an understanding of diverse teaching approaches can help a teacher differentiate instruction across multiple learner profiles.

While I believe that the students found my teaching style beneficial, they still required an opportunity to experiment with these tools on their own. I therefore required the TAs to prepare a 20-minute micro language lesson that they would present to their peers for in-class feedback. To receive credit, the TAs had to incorporate learning objectives and measurable students learning outcomes in their lesson plan. The lesson also had to demonstrate a clear connection to the World-Readiness Language Learning Standards (ACTFL), Spanish Language Arts Standards, or the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Standards (WIDA). Following each presentation, the students would provide the presenter with comments, suggestions, and questions. The presenters would then have to reference this feedback in a reflection memo that was due the following week.

According to my student evaluations for this particular class, the opportunity to conduct these micro language lesson presentations for immediate feedback was

immensely popular. In fact, several wished that the course had been a full 16-weeks to allow more time for practice and discussion. How these opportunities for controlled practice impact teacher performance in their own classroom is another avenue for future research.

       Enacting practice into praxis. For the purpose of this study, I identify praxis as the synthesis and understanding of educational theory via real-world classroom practice. While I did require my preservice teachers and TAs to reflect on their personal development as educators, I did not visit their classrooms to correlate their written thoughts with observable data. To explore further how new and experienced teachers come to understand their own teaching/learning processes, I find it necessary to conduct classroom observations, interviews, or focus groups with these individuals. Additional artifacts, such as reflection journals and lesson plans, should also be gathered to better triangulate the participants' perspectives. Future research should employ these multiple data methods and sources to arrive at a baseline understanding of the participants' *perezhivanie*, as this pluralistic input is critical to examine the intricate interplay of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* in teacher-student interactions. Analyzing how these three concepts manifest in dialogic and responsive practices will provide a lens through which to document how this unity of emotion and cognition can yield transformative learning opportunities for both the students and the teacher (García, 2019; Vygotsky, 1934/1994). This conceptual unity is the heart of an inspired, culturally responsive pedagogy.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Time. I spent approximately seven and a half months in the field (March – November 2018). I did not collect data every week, however, as I would my break from my field work in order to condense my information and conduct a preliminary analysis. I also worked carefully around my participants' schedules to ensure that my research would not disrupt their personal and professional routines. As such, I was actively collecting data from April until May, and again from August to November. I spent June and July condensing and analyzing my aggregated data.

I obtained a tremendous amount of data during this time, but I believe I could have collected even more. In truth, "the process of acquiring sufficient data to develop each category or theme fully" mystified me, and I was uncertain as to when I no longer needed to be in the field (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 239). I did, however, begin to detect some data redundancy in the data after completing all 15 interview transcripts. This saturation would suggest that I sufficiently compiled and integrated my data for analysis (Glesne, 2016).

Novelty approach. To the best of my knowledge, I am the first researcher to utilize Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* as a unified lens through which to examine and attempt to make sense of the teaching/learning process. Literature that discusses *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* as a unified system has not yet been translated, and I unfortunately do not speak Russian. My application of these concepts

and the interpretation of my data is subsequently novel, and I relied on my chair to help me dissect and interpret my findings.

Sole researcher. I served as my own research team. As such, it was critical for me to remain objective and truthful in the holistic representation of my participants' perspectives and actions. To reinforce the trustworthiness of my data, I requested the assistance of my dissertation chair to critique the consistency of my field notes and the credibility of my data analysis.

Generalizability. To reiterate, the premise of qualitative research is to capture through rich, comprehensive descriptions a small instance of the human experience. The findings from qualitative works therefore illuminate the complex, social nature of these interactions. They do not predict why or how they occur. Experimental design, conversely, can predict instances of human behavior, but this method fails to capture the context in which these social instances arise (Merriam, 1998).

Furthermore, the generalizability of a study's findings is not the goal of qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Rather, it is the transferability of these findings by way of thick, rich descriptions to similar contexts and settings (p. 47). The insight gleaned from my findings may therefore not be applicable to similar cases.

Delimitations

Participant selection. The IRB process for this study was extensive. With four different participant groups, I required four separate consent forms and four different recruitment processes (Appendix VI). Due to personally imposed time restrictions, I decided to not include an additional IRB that would permit me to document SHL student dialogue and social interaction during my classroom observations. As a result, I was

unable to describe observable teaching and learning interactions between the TA and her students. I attempted to navigate this limitation by asking my participants about their classroom-related learning experiences during the face-to-face interviews.

Rigor. A frequent critique of qualitative work is that it is not scientific. Merriam (1998) challenges this view, stating that the presence of the researcher during the data-gathering process is indicative of scientific work. To bolster this claim, however, researchers must provide convincing evidence that their study followed the proposed design. This faithfulness correlates to the rigor with which the researcher collects and analyzes her data. A researcher who "has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has allowed equivocal evidence to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions" jeopardizes the credibility of her findings (Yin, 2014, pp. 19–20). The triangulation of data methods and sources—of which I have already detailed—is therefore critical to a rigorous approach, as these multiple perspectives yield greater instances for patterns and relationships in the data. More importantly, this rigor is needed to counteract the potential for researcher bias (Glesne, 2016; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014).

Methodological approach. Due to my own level of comfort, I drew on traditional qualitative approaches to frame my study design. In the future, I would like to utilize Vygotsky's dialectical materialist approach to analyze in greater detail the unobservable reality of the teaching/learning process. To do so, I will require the additional perspectives of second language learners, as their

voices and learning experiences will help me better illustrate how and why their *perezhivanie* is qualitatively different from the *perezhivanie* of heritage language learners. Understanding this difference, I believe, is key to arriving at a clear, conceptual essence of the teaching/learning process between these two learner groups.

Absence of a pilot study. Because of my involvement in previous SHL student interview projects at this institution (Wilson & Ibarra, 2015), I decided not to conduct a pilot study to test the wording of my interview questions. Rather, I relied on my experience as both a researcher and a classroom teacher to inform what I thought would elicit thoughtful and detailed responses.

Conclusion

The goal for this study was to further my understanding of how new Spanish language teaching assistants adapt to the pedagogical rigors of working in linguistically diverse, higher education classrooms. I anticipated that the university TAs and metro area teachers would discuss how their methods courses facilitated their learning and professional development. However, their prior teaching and learning experiences accounted for a considerable degree of comfort and confidence in the classroom. I subsequently shifted my inquiry to explore *how* my participants came to perceive their own learning-to-teach process by encouraging them to discuss and reflect on their past and current language learning and teachings experiences. Through this narrative, I detected two overarching themes that have notable implications in the fields of second language teacher education and heritage language instruction.

The first theme concerns the participants' awareness of and resistance to mainstream language education practices that have largely omitted the voices and lived

experiences of heritage language learners. Counter to literature that calls for the conscientization of minority language learners, the SHL students in this study have already accepted their roles as agents of societal change. Of their own accord, they have taken steps to reclaim their language, and what they now require are Spanish instructors that can provide them with the linguistic skills and cultural knowledge needed to help them achieve their learning goals within the classroom and beyond.

The second theme pertains to the personality characteristics of teachers who can help students achieve these goals: openminded, compassionate, and supportive. Arguably, the information presented in this section of the study should be regarded as universal for all educators, regardless of their discipline. Firstly, we must be patient and willing to listen and learn from our students. As the diversity present in our classrooms increases, so too must our willingness to adapt to the changing linguistic and cultural landscape. The integrity of our profession depends on our commitment to this moral and ethical endeavor. If our educational programs will not bend to the will of the people, then we teachers will need to take this responsibility on our shoulders and do what our politicians cannot: change for the sake of equitable education.

This is where I believe an understanding of the dialectical unity of *perezhivanie*, *vospitanie*, and *obuchenie* can guide teachers through a critical analysis on how their lived experiences have shaped the way that they perceive and act upon their teaching/learning process. Teacher education programs that prioritize an exploration of these three constructs, in addition to providing experiential learning opportunities with minority language learners, can orient new and prospective teachers to efficacious,

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responsive teaching practices that honor the linguistic and cultural diversity of our minority students.

   The insight gleaned from this work, while micro in its potential transferability to similar hybrid-design qualitative studies, can thus contribute to the ongoing dialogue on how to prepare our foreign/second language teachers for the pedagogical realities of working with linguistically diverse students. In conclusion, being 'critical' with our intentions to become good teachers is but the first step to becoming a responsive educator. We must then act upon this intent and follow through with a level of care and open-mindedness to build and sustain a learning environment that embodies equitable teaching and learning opportunities for all students.

APPENDICES

Online Survey Report: SHL Student Perspectives

13. Who in your family speaks Spanish? How often did you speak Spanish with them while growing up? - Text Analysis
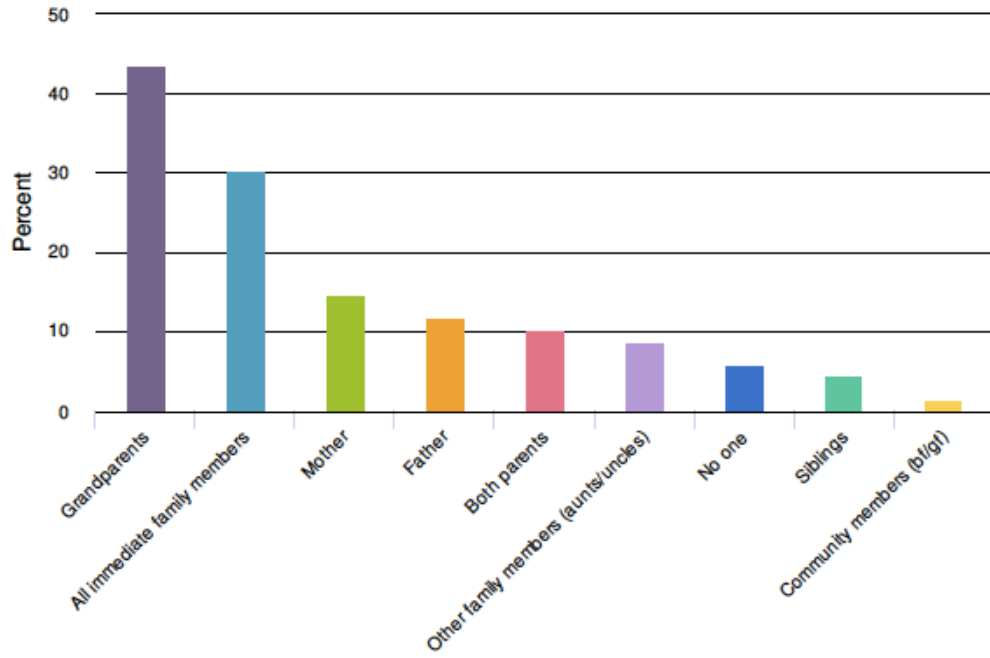
17. What are your current strengths as a Spanish speaker? (speaking, writing, etc.)
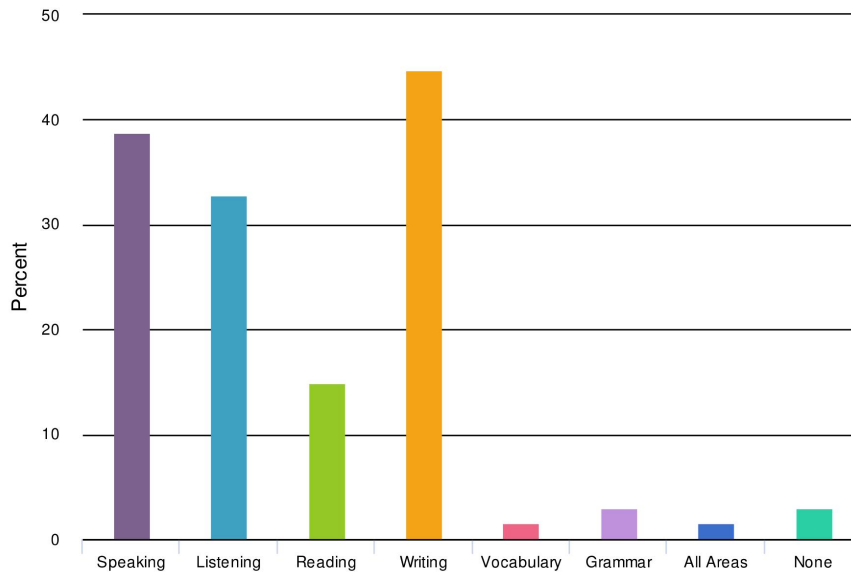
Value		Percent	Responses
Speaking		38.8%	26
Listening		32.8%	22
Reading		14.9%	10
Writing		44.8%	30
Vocabulary		1.5%	1
Grammar		3.0%	2
All Areas		1.5%	1
None		3.0%	2

19. What would you say are your weakness/biggest areas for growth?

conversational conversations
struggle tenses words practice
grammar speak growth
spanish writing
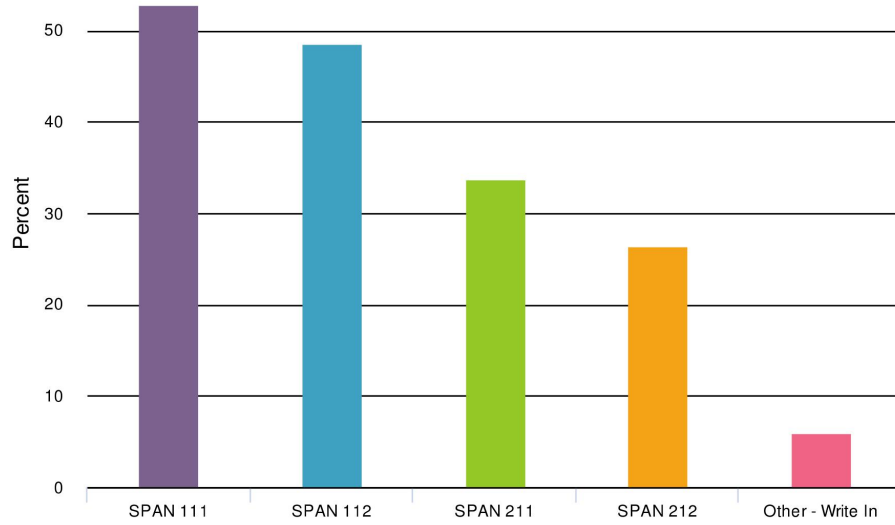time
speaking
area weakness biggest
conjugation vocabulary areas
conversation conjugating nervous work
language improve

20. What would you say are your weakness/biggest areas for growth? - Text Analysis
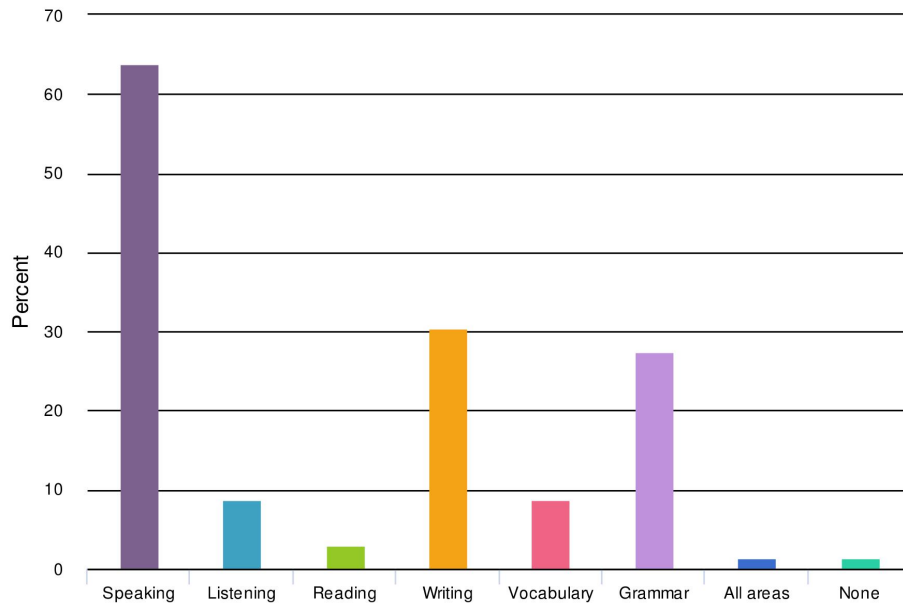
24. Why did you decide to enroll in a Spanish as a Heritage Language class? - Text Analysis
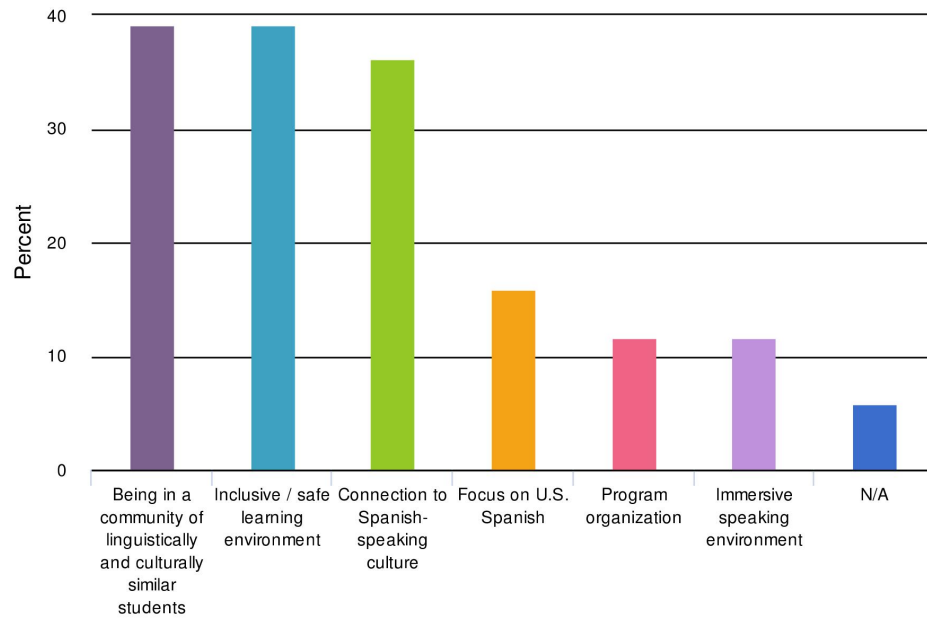
Value		Percent
Wanted to improve current level of Spanish		26.1%
Identified with the course description/Found it interesting		20.3%
Wanted to learn more about culture/heritage		18.8%
Told to take SHL/Tested into it		14.5%
Needed class for minor/major		10.1%
Surrounded by people who speak Spanish		8.7%
Wanted to connect more with family		7.2%
Wanted to be w/students that shared similar background		5.8%
Wanted to learn more than just formal Spanish		5.8%
Took classes just for credit		5.8%
Thought SSL would be too easy		4.3%
Thought SHL would be a challenge		4.3%
Career goal		4.3%
Love for the language		4.3%
Grew up in NM		2.9%
Fit schedule/convenient		2.9%
N/A		2.9%
Family member enjoyed class		2.9%
Wanted to experience a different learning format		1.4%
Took course by accident		1.4%

25. What SHL courses are you taking/have already taken? Check all that apply.

Value		Percent	Responses
SPAN 111		52.9%	36
SPAN 112		48.5%	33
SPAN 211		33.8%	23
SPAN 212		26.5%	18
Other - Write In		5.9%	4

27. What do you like the most about the SHL courses that you've taken? If you're taking one for the first time, what do you like so far? - Text Analysis

Value		Percent
Being in a community of linguistically and culturally similar students		39.1%
Inclusive / safe learning environment		39.1%
Connection to Spanish-speaking culture		36.2%
Focus on U.S. Spanish		15.9%
Program organization		11.6%
Immersive speaking environment		11.6%
N/A		5.8%

32. In terms of instruction, what would you like your Teaching Assistants to include
more of? Check all that apply.
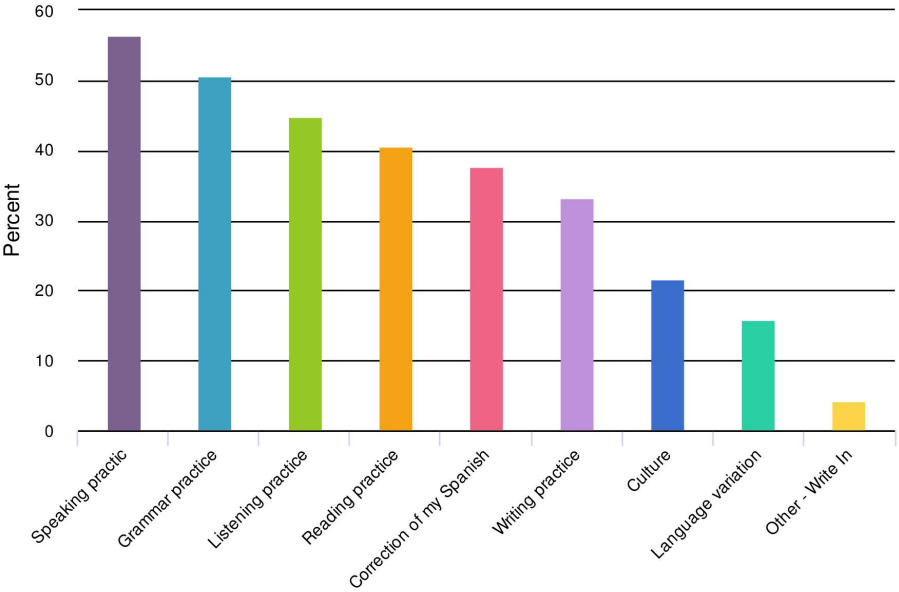
Value		Percent
Speaking practic		56.5%
Grammar practice		50.7%
Listening practice		44.9%
Reading practice		40.6%
Correction of my Spanish		37.7%
Writing practice		33.3%
Culture		21.7%
Language variation		15.9%
Other - Write In		4.3%

36. How does your Teaching Assistant make learning meaningful to you as a heritage speaker? - Text Analysis

Value		Percent
TA discusses the cultural connections to the language		31.9%
TA connects content to students' daily experiences		24.6%
TA focuses on students' hometowns and dialects		15.9%
N/A		14.5%
TA incorporates culturally relevant content (movies, readings)		13.0%
TA provides students with tools to learn the language		7.2%
TA is kind / funny		7.2%
TA helps students analyze the language (sociolinguistics)		7.2%
TA shares personal / family history with the language		5.8%
TA focuses on the important of being bilingual		5.8%
TA uses fun activities / games		4.3%
TA's passion for the language		2.9%
TA codeswitiches while teaching		2.9%
TA's interest in students' ideas / histories		2.9%
TA doesn't do this		2.9%
TA provides constructive criticism		2.9%

38. What do you believe are the strengths of your Teaching Assistant? What does he/she do well as an instructor? - Text Analysis
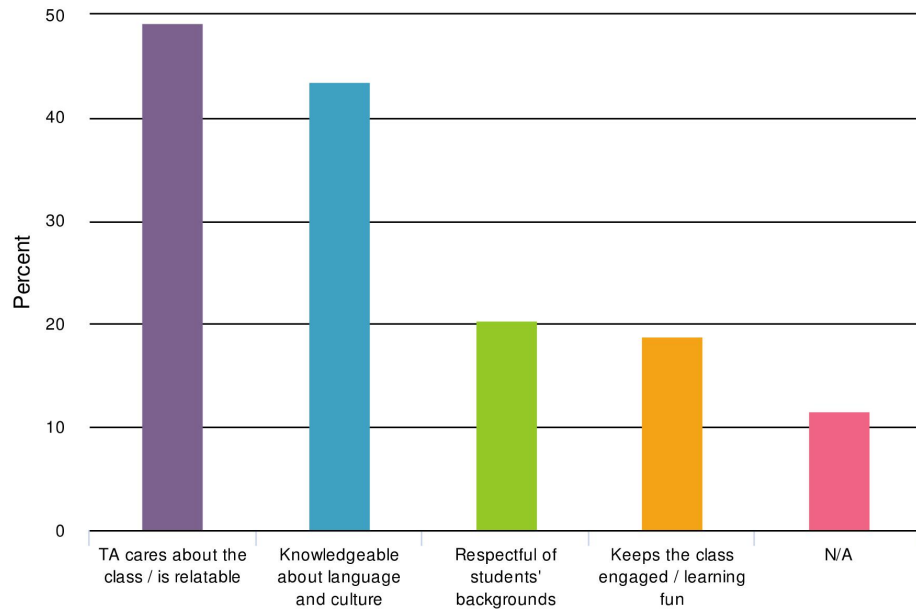
Value		Percent
TA cares about the class / is relatable		49.3%
Knowledgeable about language and culture		43.5%
Respectful of students' backgrounds		20.3%
Keeps the class engaged / learning fun		18.8%
N/A		11.6%

45. If you are dissatisfied with your current grammar instruction, what changes would you like to see? - Text Analysis
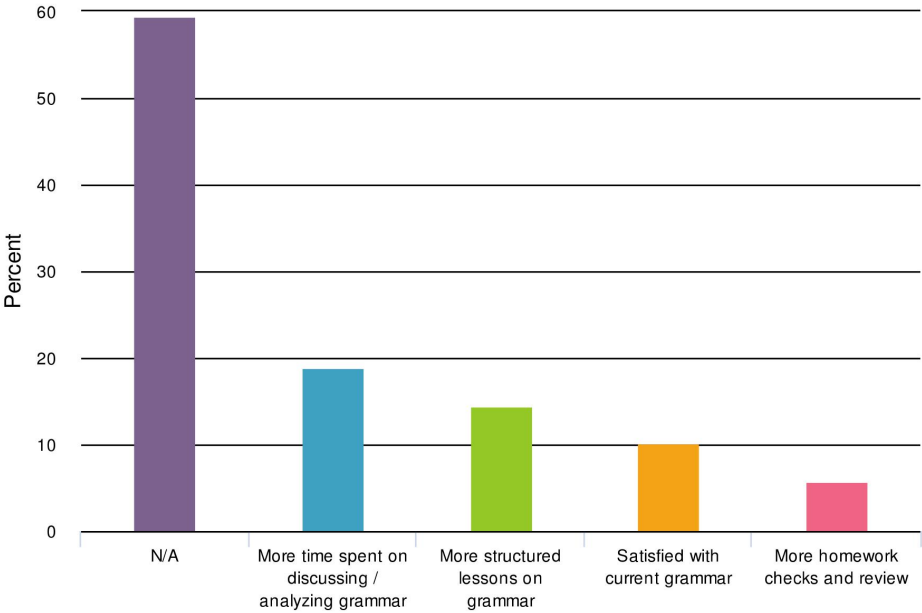
Value		Percent
N/A		59.4%
More time spent on discussing / analyzing grammar		18.8%
More structured lessons on grammar		14.5%
Satisfied with current grammar		10.1%
More homework checks and review		5.8%

49. In terms of preferred classroom environment and course goals, which of the following is most important to you? Rank 1 through 10 (being least important). Each number will be used only once.

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Developing literacy and communication skills that will prepare me for the workplace	1		363	64
Learning how to speak (more) Spanish with my family	2		351	58
Learning a variety of vocabulary, including words from my own dialect	3		349	60
Learning to speak and use an academic variety	4		332	59
Being encouraged to use what Spanish I already know with pride and confidence	5		325	55
Using textbooks and other materials that are relevant to U.S. Spanish speakers	6		310	62
Being encouraged by the instructor to share my personal experiences with the language	7		305	58
Learning with peers who share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds	8		304	59
Feeling safe and welcomed in my heritage language classroom	9		301	59
Learning from a teacher who is sensitive to my needs as a heritage student	10		289	58

Lowest Rank   Highest Rank
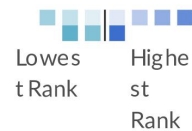
Online Survey Report: TA Preparation & Learning Experiences

21. What contributed to your feeling of preparedness? - Text Analysis
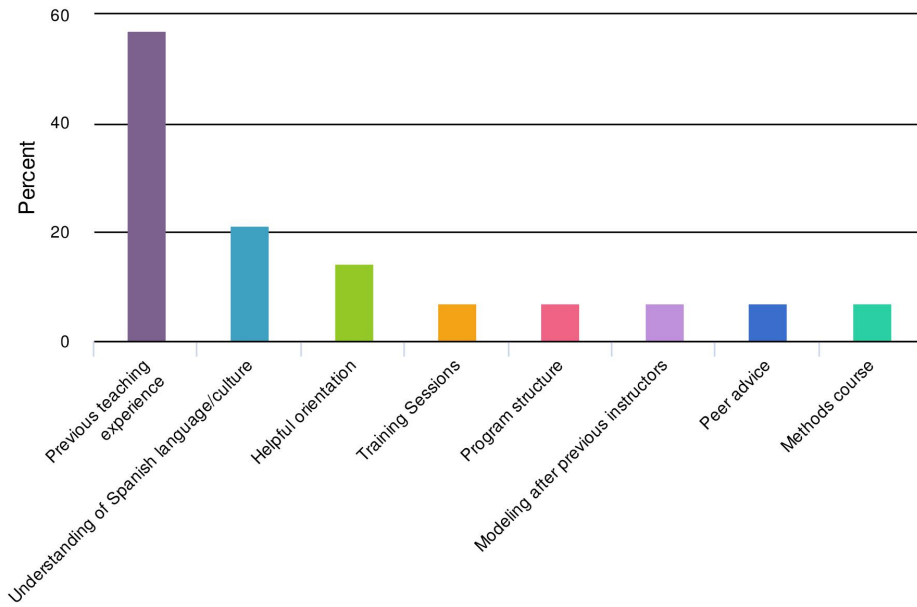
Value		Percent
Previous teaching experience		57.1%
Understanding of Spanish language/culture		21.4%
Helpful orientation		14.3%
Training Sessions		7.1%
Program structure		7.1%
Modeling after previous instructors		7.1%
Peer advice		7.1%
Methods course		7.1%

29. What or who has contributed the most to your professional development as a teacher? 1 = most important, 8 = least important. Each number will be used only once. If you wish to include an additional item that is not listed here, please use the text box in the next question.

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score	No. of Rankings
Your time in the classroom as a teacher	1		91	14
Feedback from your students	2		88	15
Your fellow Teaching Assistants	3		78	14
Your Program Supervisors	4		58	14
New and returning TA Orientation Week	5		55	15
Your Program Coordinator	6		54	13
Your assigned teaching materials (i.e. course textbook)	7		46	14
Your methods coursework	8		46	14

Lowest Rank   Highest Rank

31. What is your opinion on being assigned a "teaching" mentor during your first year in the program?
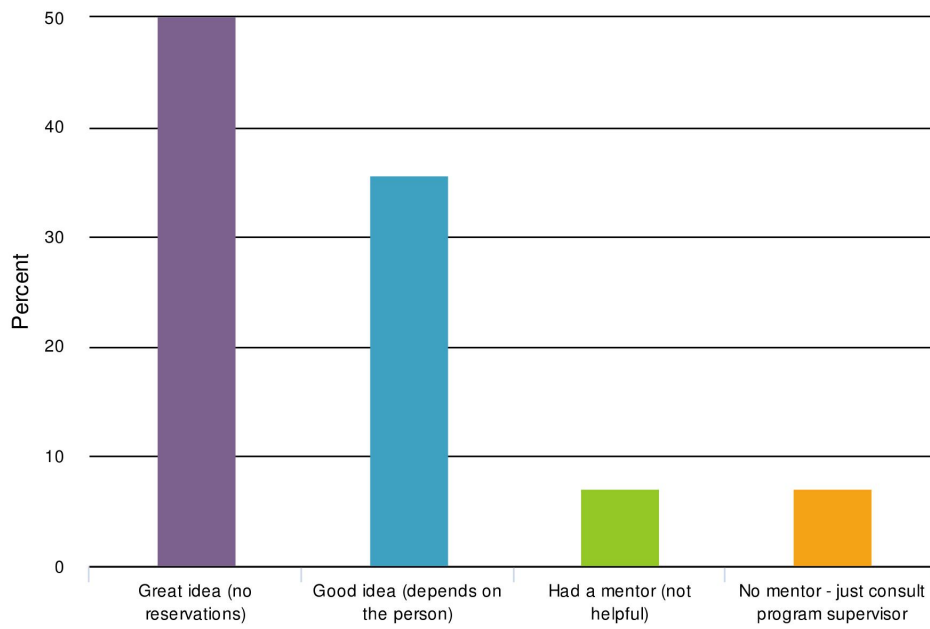
Value		Percent	Responses
Great idea (no reservations)		50.0%	7
Good idea (depends on the person)		35.7%	5
Had a mentor (not helpful)		7.1%	1
No mentor - just consult program supervisor		7.1%	1

51. Are you comfortable implementing heritage language theories into practice?(Ex. sociolinguistic analysis, community-based learning projects, critical pedagogy)
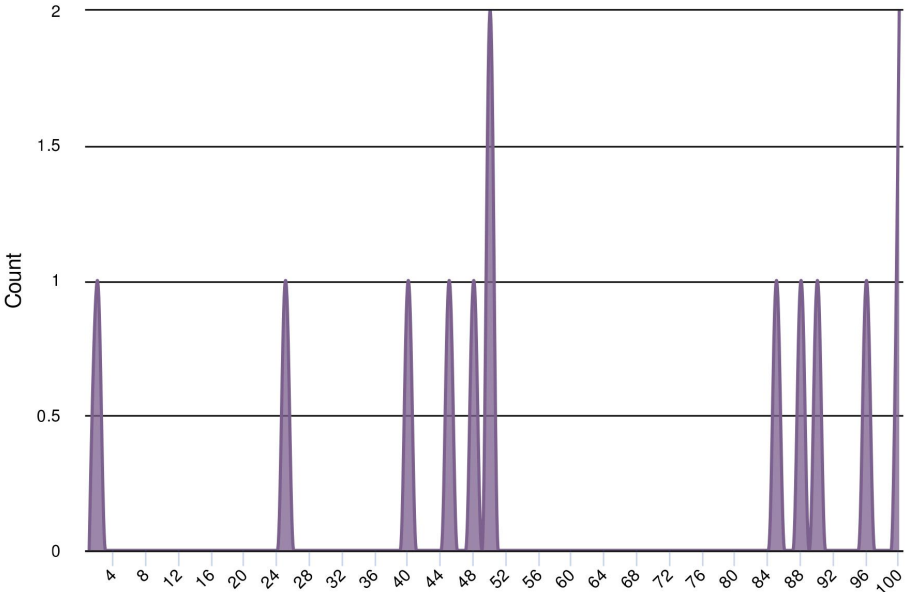
52. If you've taken SPAN 549, how would you explain critical pedagogy to someone who has never heard of this term?

APPENDIX III

Interview Questions

Undergraduate SHL Students
1. Demographic information:
   a. Name (redacted) and place of origin.
   b. Sex and Age.
   c. First and second/heritage language.
   d. Self-assigned identity label.
   e. Major/minor; year at UNM.
   f. Number of Spanish courses taken in SSL/SHL

2. How did you hear about the SHL program? Why did you decide to enroll in these courses?

3. How does this coursework differ from Spanish classes that you've taken previously?

4. Do you think it's beneficial for universities to offer SHL courses? Please explain.

5. In your words, what does it mean to be a Spanish as a Heritage Language student?

6. Describe your learning experiences so far in the SHL classroom.

7. What learning activities do you enjoy most and why?

8. What aspect of learning Spanish do you find most challenging? Can you explain?

9. Grammar is a key component to learning a language. In your opinion, what is the best way to teach grammar?

10. What about vocabulary? How do you best learn vocabulary?

11. In general, do you believe there is a good or ideal way of teaching a language? What are some elements that make a language class "good" for you?

12. If you were to change one thing about the way SHL courses are taught, what would it be and why?

13. What recommendations would you have to improve the SHL program?

14. would you like academic advisors and the Dean to know about this program?

Teaching Assistants

1. Demographic information:
   a. Name (redacted) and place of origin.
   b. Sex and Age.
   c. First and second/heritage language.
   d. Self-assigned identity label.
   e. Educational background. Year in the program.
   f. Number of semesters of teaching and levels taught, including current level.

2. Think back to your orientation as a new teaching assistant. What excited you the most about this week? What, if anything, made you anxious?

3. How well prepared did you feel for that first day of class? What went well? What did not go well? Have these feelings changed?

4. What were some of the initial challenges of learning to teach a university-level Spanish class? How did you work to overcome them?

5. Describe the student population that you currently serve. Do you believe that you have heritage learners in your classroom? How do you distinguish between second and heritage language learners?

6. Does having a population of heritage learners influence the way you teach? If so, please explain.

7. How do you get to know your students? How do you try to get them interested and engaged in learning?

8. Let's reflect on your methods coursework. What were some of the language learning theories and pedagogical strategies that you discussed? Were any learning activities particularly helpful to your professional development?

9. Did your methods coursework help you recognize and respond to the needs of heritage students? If not, what has contributed to your understanding?

10. Given your ___ semester(s) of experience, how do you go about planning a lesson? What do you think about? What adaptations do you make and why? Do you have a particular template that you must use?

11. How do you believe students best learn a language? How does this relate to your own experiences as a language learner?

12. In your opinion, what are some of the indicators of a successful lesson?

13. What about language use? How much Spanish do you use with your students? What

variety? Which Spanish do you believe your students use? How can you tell?

14. To date, what is your favorite approach to teach Spanish (ex. comprehensible input, output, TPR, etc.)?

15. Have you heard of or used heritage-based approaches? What about critical pedagogy?
    a. IF YES: In your opinion, what is CP and why is this approach often associated with the teaching of HLLs.

16. What are some of the pedagogical challenges do you encounter on a daily basis in your classroom? How do you respond to these issues?

17. To date, what would you say has been your greatest achievement as a TA?

18. Where do you feel you need to improve? Why? What resources do you believe you require to support your development?

19. Describe your professional support systems within your program. What aspects have been helpful? What do you believe could be improved?

20. What additional recommendations do you have to help improve the quality of TA training in the program?

21. Knowing what you now do about teaching, what would you say to an incoming teaching assistant who has no classroom experience?

22. Finally, do you consider yourself a teacher? Why or why not? Do you see a future career in education?

Administrators
1. Demographic information:
    a. Name (redacted) and place of origin.
    b. Sex and Age.
    c. First and second/heritage language.
    d. Self-assigned identity label.
    e. Educational background/field.
    f. Number of years of experience in current field.
    g. Number of years at current administrative position.

2. Why did you decide to become a program coordinator? How did your personal experiences and educational background prepare you for this position?

3. How would you describe your role to someone outside of the university? Similarly, how would you describe your Spanish program? (i.e. purpose, goals)

4. What would you say is your greatest achievement as program coordinator thus far? What about your biggest challenge?

5. In your opinion, what is the essence of good language teaching? How does this tie into your philosophy of education?

6. Preparing and mentoring TAs is part of your role. Describe this learning-to-teach process. How do you go about preparing someone who has no classroom experience? What do you do to nurture their growth?

7. What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current preparation model for TAs in the Spanish program (including methods coursework)?

8. What do believe TAs need to **know** prior to entering a classroom for the first time?

9. What do you believe TAs need to **understand** to be successful at their jobs?

10. Student placement is always a concern during the first two weeks of the semester. How do you encourage TAs in your program to resolve placement issues?

11. Describe the materials you use in your program. How do you help new TAs become familiar and comfortable with their course tools?

12. How would you explain to a new TA the difference between SLA and HLA-based approaches? What are your expectations for TAs to draw on one or both of these paradigms in their classrooms?

13. Describe your observation protocol. What do you look for in terms of language learning theory, pedagogical strategies, and student engagement?

14. In addition to the required methods coursework, how do you try to support the professional development of TAs? What changes, if any, would you like to implement to the program to enhance their experience?

15. What are some of the things that you encourage TAs to do throughout their time at UNM to prepare for a possible transition to K-12 education?

16. Lastly, if you were to offer some honest advice about teaching to incoming, inexperienced TAs, what would it be?

Teachers
1. Demographic information:
    h. Name (redacted) and place of origin.
    i. Sex and Age.
    j. First and second/heritage language.
    k. Self-assigned identity label.
    l. Educational background.
    m. Number of semesters at UNM and levels taught.
    n. Number of years at current teaching site and levels taught.

2. Think back to your orientation as a new teaching assistant. What excited you the most about this week? What, if anything, made you anxious?

3. How well prepared did you feel for that first day of class? What went well? What did not go well?

4. What were some of the initial challenges of learning to teach a university-level Spanish class?

5. What were the backgrounds of some of your students? Were they mostly second or heritage language learners? How did you know? Did this insight shape the way you taught? How so?

6. Let's reflect on your methods coursework, if you can remember. What were some of the language learning theories and pedagogical strategies that you discussed? Were any learning activities or classroom experiences particularly helpful to your professional development?

7. While you were teaching at UNM, did your methods coursework help you recognize and respond to the needs of heritage students? If not, what contributed to your understanding?

8. Did you hear or learn about critical pedagogy during your time at UNM? Are you familiar with what it is now?

9. Describe your transition from TA to fulltime teacher. How was the first day of school similar to and different from your first day as a TA?

10. Aside from age, how is the student population that you currently serve different from the student body at UNM? Do you believe that you have heritage learners in your classroom?

11. Does having a population of heritage learners influence the way you teach? Or are you bound to a particularly curriculum?

12. What about language variety? What "Spanish" do you use with your students? For

those who speak it, what variety do you believe they are using? How can you tell?

13. Given your ___ years of experience, how do you now go about planning a lesson? What do you think about? What adaptions do you make and why? Do you have a particular template that you must use?

14. In your opinion, what are some of the indicators of a successful lesson?

15. What pedagogical challenges do you encounter on a daily basis in your classroom? How do you respond to these challenges?

16. To date, what would you say has been your greatest achievement as an educator? Why?

17. Where do you feel you need to improve? What resources do you believe you require to support your development?

18. Describe your professional support systems here, such as possible teacher collaboration. What aspects have been helpful? What do you believe could be improved? How are these systems similar to or different from what you had at UNM?

19. For you personally, what has been the biggest change from being TA to an educator?

20. In what ways did your experience as a TA prepare you for the classroom? What recommendations would you have to help improve the quality of TA training in the program at UNM?

21. What would you like for TAs who are interested in becoming an educator to know about the process?

22. Finally, how would you describe the essence of good language teaching?

APPENDIX IV

Teaching Assistant Observation Protocol

Name (Pseudonym):
Level:
Date:

Context:

Description of Classroom Setting:

Time	Description of Activities	TA Discourse	Evidence of SLA/HLA Theory & Pedagogy	Evidence of Critical Pedagogy/CLA	Questions I have

Post-Observation Reflective Memo:

APPENDIX V

Data Matrix

Categories	SHL Students	SSL/SHL TAs	Program Administrators	Current Teachers
Identity labels	Hispanic Anglo Mexican American Middle Eastern Latinx	Hispanic Mexican American Chicana Latinx Mexican	Chicano Hispanic (reluctance)	Mexicana
Origin	California New Mexico Texas Middle East	New Mexico California Texas South America Mexico Europe	New Mexico Europe	Mexico New Mexico
1st Language	Spanish English English dominant	Spanish English dominant Bilingual	Spanish Bilingual	Bilingual English dominant
Early Educational Experiences with Spanish Language	**Repetitive** instruction Focused on **grammar** and form, **not on communication**; learning strictly for a test **Correction** of student dialects to match textbook vocabulary Punishment (loss of points) Forced to speak **correctly**; everything was "**black and white**" Dialects exist, but there's no validation or exploration of them Grammar was "beaten" into you	A "**correct**" way to speak; harsh learning Felt lost because there was no "in between" class for someone familiar with the language A disconnect between the grammar and what you see/hear in real life Grammar focus helped with reading/writing but **not with speaking** **Strict and explicit** in terms of grammar instruction – focus on the standard Not miserable when the teacher was personable and approachable Assignments were unhelpful	Not discussed	Did not learn anything Teachers made both participants act as "TAs"
Emotional Response to Early Education Experiences	Intimidating Frustrating Embarrassing Traumatizing Fearful	Unhelpful Frustrating	Felt like there was no place for a heritage speaker Passionate about language learning	Loved it; teacher made students feel supported Hated it; teacher taught nothing and ridiculed/mocks students' way of speaking
Family Experiences	Spanish was ugly; afraid to speak it Learned only from one parent or relative	Mocked for not speaking better Lost Spanish in favor of English	Hurt being told you were incapable of doing something (speaking) Reprimanded	Spoke Spanish with all members of family Spoke Spanish with only a few members of the family

Heritage Identity Exploration	Not sure what it means Refers to linguistic connection	Must have strong linguistic connection	Dislikes labels	Not sure what it means
Perceptions of SHL Program(s)	Beneficial Accepting Not forced Part of your identity Offers a new perspective; exploration of language variation Enriches your language learning experience A way to reconnect with your family members Friendlier than HS classrooms Validation of own language → empowerment	SHL is personally rewarding Students want to advocate for their people	A place for linguistically and culturally similar students A safety bubble that limits SHL students' experiences with others.	Wanted to teach because of the word "heritage" Loved working with SHL students
Critiques of Teaching and/or TAs	TAs must work on time management TAs must provide **feedback** in a timely manner Rubrics/calendar/syllabi should be up-to-date	(SHL) Not enough program exposure Disorganized; unstructured Hard to teach; a lot of work (SSL) Micromanaged; absence of creativity Spoonfed	Accountability Professionalism Equity	TAs (graduate students) can be arrogant; must be open to learning
Desires	More emphasis on communication Repeat instructions more than once Better organization of lessons Listen to student interests and incorporate their suggestions into the curriculum Practical activities related to "the context of the real world"	More practice with teaching More **feedback** from administrators	More **support** from faculty regarding the methods course More investment from the TAs in their own learning	More **guidance** on how to differentiate for HLLs More access to resources to support student learning More collaboration between department faculty
Perception of Good Teaching	Teacher must know how to teach the **language** Sensitive to **sociocultural** differences **Passionate** **Caring** and understanding Patient **Culturally** sensitive Teacher connects to the students Teacher **notices** student potential and **motivates** student Open-minded Very interactive with everyone	Organized Gets students participating Respectful atmosphere Teacher is approachable Teacher has high expectations for student learning Teacher **believes** in students' abilities Teacher understands and can teach the **language** and **culture** Teacher is **proud** of student accomplishments	**Compassionate** Empathetic Ethical Teacher **believes** in students; "yes, you can"	Intentional Humble Do it because you love it Teacher understands linguistics and the **culture** behind the **language**

**Learning to Teach: An exploration on how Spanish language teaching assistants
come to understand and enact SLA/HLA theory into practice
IRB #: 01818**

Informed Consent: SHL Student Online Survey
4/1/18

Sarah Schulman, who is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, is conducting a research study on how teaching assistants learn to become language educators. The purpose of this research is to gather student perspectives on their learning and study of Spanish as a heritage language. You are being asked to participate in this study because your experience as a student in the Spanish as a Heritage Language Program will contribute to an understanding on how heritage languages are taught and learned.

Involvement. Your participation in this study will involve the completion of an online survey, which should take about 30 minutes to complete. It includes questions such as: Why did you decide to enroll in heritage language Spanish course? And how is this coursework similar to or different from previously completed Spanish studies (i.e. high school)? All questions are in English, and you can choose to respond in English, Spanish, or Spanglish.

Risks and Benefits. There will be no benefit to you participating in this study. However, it is hoped that the findings will inform pedagogical strategies and learning activities that facilitate heritage student learning. This insight may in turn lead to an improvement of teacher training in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Participation risks may exist in the form of emotional distress, loss of privacy, or boredom caused by answering some of the questions. You can refuse to answer any of the survey questions at any time. Your survey data is confidential, and Sarah is the only researcher with access to this information. She will store this information on her password-protected laptop in an encrypted folder and will keep the laptop in a locked cabinet when not in use. If this study is published, de-identified results will be presented in the form of a dissertation manuscript.

Right to Withdraw. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you can contact Sarah via email or phone at any time. Any data linking you to this study will be destroyed and will not be included in the final write-up.

Compensation. Because the Spanish Department has a policy that allows you to earn up to 3% extra credit, your completion of this activity will count as 1% toward the max 3%. In order to receive the survey link, you will need provide your name and preferred email address on the following page. Sarah will then send the link to your inbox. Please bear in mind that your involvement is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You

will receive the extra credit by signing and submitting your consent form to Sarah. Completion of the online survey is not required to receive this compensation. If you decide not to enroll in this study, you can still attend other Spanish Department events throughout the semester to receive extra credit.

Questions? If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Sarah Schulman at (301) 730-0353. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____
Name of Adult Participant   Signature of Adult Participant

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member

_____
Date

Learning to Teach: An exploration on how Spanish language teaching assistants come to understand and enact SLA/HLA theory into practice
IRB #: 01818

SHL Student Informed Consent for Interview
4/1/18

Sarah Schulman, who is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, is conducting a research study on how teaching assistants learn to become language educators. The purpose of this stage of the research process is to allow a venue for SHL students to discuss in greater detail their personal and academic experiences in the Spanish as a Heritage Language Program. You have received this consent form because you expressed interest in the interview via signing electronically the box at the end of the survey.

Involvement. Your participation in this stage of the study will involve the completion of a 45 to 60-minute confidential interview. The questions are semi-structured, meaning that some are pre-planned while others may arise through natural conversation. For instance, you will be asked to share what you like about SHL courses and discuss what improvements you believe could be made. All questions and follow-up questions will pertain to the research.

Risks and Benefits. There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will help inform the preparation of teaching assistants within the Spanish Department. Your opinions and personal perspectives can potentially illuminate the successes of the SHL program, as well as help identify areas for needed improvement.

As with the survey, participation risks may exist in the form of emotional distress, loss of privacy, or boredom caused by answering some of the interview questions. You can refuse to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. Your interview will be recorded and transcribed. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be assign and all personally identifiable information will be removed. Sarah is the only researcher with access to this data, and she will save your digital recording to an encrypted folder on her password protected laptop. She will keep this laptop in a locked cabinet when not in use. If this study is published, anonymized interview excerpts will be presented in the form of a dissertation manuscript.

Right to Withdraw. You can contact Sarah via phone or email to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of penalty. All data linking you to this study will subsequently be destroyed and removed from the final write-up.

Payment. In return for your time and possible inconvenience caused by participating in this stage of the study, you will receive a $10 gift card.

Questions? If you have any questions about the interview process, please feel free to call Sarah Schulman at (301) 730-0353. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____
Name of Adult Participant   Signature of Adult Participant

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member

_____
Date

Learning to Teach: An exploration on how Spanish language teaching assistants come to understand and enact SLA/HLA theory into practice
IRB #: 01818

Informed Consent: SSL/SHL TA - 3 Observations/Reflections and 1 Interview
4/1/18

Sarah Schulman, who is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, is conducting a research study on how teaching assistants in the Spanish Department learn to become language educators. The purpose is to gather TA perspectives on how they come to understand and adapt theory and pedagogical strategies into practice. You have received this consent form because you expressed interest in completing the interview and observations via signing electronically the box at the end of the online survey.

Involvement. Your participation in this stage of the study will involve the completion of three classroom observations, the first of which is today. At the end of each session, I will encourage you to reflect on your teaching. These talks are informal and will take about 15 minutes or less. If the timing for these chats is inconvenient, you can always send me a brief reflection via email.

Upon conclusion of the classroom observations, we will have a single, 60-minute sit-down interview. We will stay in communication to decide on future dates and times for these events.

The classroom visits are not evaluative. I will be making no determination or allusion to "successful teaching." Similarly, I will not be recording student behavior. Rather, the purpose is to document the types of learning theories and strategies you appear to be using with your students. How do you navigate pedagogical challenges as they arise? How do you try to incorporate student interests into your lesson?

The interview questions are semi-structured, meaning that some are pre-planned while others will come through natural conversation. For instance, you will be asked to discuss your growth as a teaching assistant from your first day to the present. What were some of the initial challenges, and how did you try to overcome them? All questions and follow-up questions will pertain to the research. You can respond to these questions in English, Spanish, or a little bit of both. Whichever is most comfortable.

Risks and Benefits. There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gleaned from the findings will help inform the design of preparation coursework and experiential learning opportunities for TAs in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. This insight may in turn enhance the learning experiences of our undergraduate language students.

Participation risks may exist in the form of emotional distress, loss of privacy, or boredom caused by answering some of the interview questions. You can refuse to refuse

to participate in any aspect of the study that you find uncomfortable. Your interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you are welcome to review all transcription and observation notes. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be assigned, and all personally identifiable information will be removed. Sarah is the only researcher with access to this data, and she will save everything to an encrypted folder on her password protected laptop. She will keep this laptop in a locked cabinet when not in use. If this study is published, anonymized interview excerpts and observation notes will be presented in the form of a dissertation manuscript.

Payment. In return for your time and possible inconvenience caused by participating in this study, you will receive a $20 gift card, which will be split into two payments: one for completion of the classroom observations/reflections and the second for completion of the interview.

Right to Withdraw. You can withdraw from this study at any time without fear of penalty. Simply contact Sarah via email or by phone. Any data linking you to this study will be destroyed and will not be included in the final write-up.

Questions? If you have any questions about the interview process, please feel free to call Sarah Schulman at (301) 730-0353. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____
Name of Adult Participant   Signature of Adult Participant

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member

_____
Date

**Learning to Teach: An exploration on how Spanish language teaching assistants
come to understand and enact SLA/HLA theory into practice
IRB #: 01818**

Program Administrators - Informed Consent for Interview
4/1/18

Sarah Schulman, who is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, is conducting a research study on how teaching assistants in the Spanish Department learn to become language educators. The purpose of this study is to gather the perspectives of current and former teaching staff, undergraduate students, and faculty on the learning and teaching of Spanish as a second or heritage language. You are being asked to take part in this study because of your administrative position in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Involvement. Your participation will involve the completion of a 60-minute confidential interview, the date and time of which will be arrange on a date, time, and location of your choosing. The interview questions are semi-structured, meaning that some are pre-planned while others may arise through natural conversation. For instance, you will be asked to discuss the process by which TAs become educators in your program. What are some of the challenges associated with preparing TAs with no classroom experience? How do you prepare TAs to work with linguistically diverse students? All questions and follow-up questions will pertain to the research. You can respond to these questions in English, Spanish, or Spanglish.

Risks and Benefits. There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that insight gleaned from the findings will help inform the design of teacher preparation in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and beyond.

Participation risks may exist in the form of emotional distress, loss of privacy, or boredom caused by answering some of the interview questions. You can refuse to answer any question that causes you distress. Your interview will be recorded and transcribed. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be assign and all personally identifiable information will be removed. Sarah is the only researcher with access to this data, and she will save your digital recording to an encrypted folder on her password protected laptop. She will keep this laptop in a locked cabinet when not in use. If this study is published, anonymized interview excerpts will be presented in the form of a dissertation manuscript.

Right to Withdraw. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you can contact Sarah via email or phone at any time. Any data linking you to this study will be destroyed and will not be included in the final write-up.

Payment. You will receive a $10 gift card as compensation for your time and generosity.

Questions? If you have any questions about the interview process, please feel free to call Sarah Schulman at (301) 730-0353. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____
Name of Adult Participant   Signature of Adult Participant

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member

_____
Date

**Learning to Teach: An exploration on how Spanish language teaching assistants
come to understand and enact SLA/HLA theory into practice
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Informed Consent for Interview
4/1/18

Sarah Schulman, who is a PhD candidate in the Department of Language, Literacy, and
Sociocultural Studies, is conducting a research study on how teaching assistants in the
Spanish Department learn to become language educators. The purpose of this study is to
gather the perspectives of current and former teaching staff, undergraduate students, and
faculty on the learning and teaching of Spanish as a second or heritage language. You
are being asked to take part in this study because of your former teaching experience in
the Spanish as a Heritage Language Program.

Involvement. Your participation will involve the completion of a 60-minute confidential
interview, the date and time of which will be arranged at a non-worksite location of your
choosing. The interview questions are semi-structured, meaning that some are pre-
planned while others may arise through natural conversation. For instance, you will be
asked to discuss how you transitioned from being a TA in the Spanish program to
becoming an educator in your current teaching position. How did your experience as a
TA help prepare you for the classroom? What new challenges have since arisen? All
questions and follow-up questions will pertain to the research. You can respond to these
questions in English, Spanish, or Spanglish.

Risks and Benefits. There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study.
However, it is hoped that information gleaned from this study will help illuminate the
process by which TAs become educators, which can in turn inform the design of teacher
training in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Your opinions and personal
perspectives are therefore valuable.

Participation risks may exist in the form of emotional distress, loss of privacy, or
boredom caused by answering some of the interview questions. You can refuse to
answer any question that causes you distress. Your interview will be recorded and
transcribed. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be assign and all personally
identifiable information will be removed. Sarah is the only researcher with access to this
data, and she will save your digital recording to an encrypted folder on her password
protected laptop. She will keep this laptop in a locked cabinet when not in use. If this
study is published, anonymized interview excerpts will be presented in the form of a
dissertation manuscript.

Payment. In return for your time and possible inconvenience caused by participating in
this study, you will receive a $10 gift card.

Right to Withdraw. You can contact Sarah via phone or email to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of penalty. All data linking you to this study will subsequently be destroyed and removed from the final write-up.

Questions? If you have any questions about the interview process, please feel free to call Sarah Schulman at (301) 730-0353. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this form (or the form was read to you) and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

_____   _____
Name of Adult Participant   Signature of Adult Participant

_____
Date

_____   _____
Name of Research Team Member   Signature of Research Team Member

_____
Date

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