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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND IDENTITIES: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF COLLEGE
LEVEL SPANISH STUDENTS AND AN INSTRUCTOR IN A SPANISH HERITAGE
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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2020

DEDICATION

In loving memory of Guillermo Avila, whose life inspired this dissertation.

This dissertation is dedicated to J.C. and all the Spanish heritage language learners who shared with me their life stories and reassured me that this research was purposeful as it provided “an outlet for a lot of students whose voices are down and they have so much to say about the school, about the way it’s taught, about representation and don’t have a chance until things like this.”

May your voices always be heard and may you be the hoped for change!

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LEVEL SPANISH STUDENTS AND AN INSTRUCTOR IN A SPANISH HERITAGE
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

Research on Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) began in the 1970s when the term heritage languages originated in Canada (Cummins, 2005); later in the 1990s, the subfield of heritage language education was created. HLLs are defined as “students who [are] raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or at least understand the language, and who [are] in some degree bilingual in that language and English” (Valdés, 2001, p.38). From its inception, research on the education of HLLs has focused heavily on linguistic aspects (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Colombi & Alarcón, 1997; Potowski & Carreira, 2010), however, during the early part of the 21st century, interest in the sociocultural context(s) in which language learning as well as language use takes place has shifted research on minoritized languages and education to focus on the relationship between identities, power, and language learning (Achugar & Pessoa, 2009; Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Villa, 2002). Despite such interest, there is a dearth of qualitative studies on HLLs, language learning, and identities in general, and, more specifically, qualitative studies that center the voices and experiences of HLL students are at all but absent from the literature.

Given the gap in the literature, this one-year qualitative study sought to understand how wider language ideologies influenced the identities of 22 Spanish Heritage Language Learners (SHLLs) and an instructor in a heritage language college course at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) located on the U.S. - Mexico border. Drawing on a theoretical view of identities and identity formation as dynamic and contextual within and across social processes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and the theoretical lens of coloniality/modernity (Mignolo, 2005 & 2012), findings highlight the particular ways in which dominant language ideologies intersected with SHLLs lived language experiences in schools and in their family lives to reflect the hegemonic dichotomization of

standardized, academic language as an asset and heritage language as an obstacle. Findings also show how SHLLs suppressed their heritage language and identities by reproducing the wider dichotomization of languages that they encountered in their PreK-12 and higher educational experiences. The findings of this study have implications for post-secondary level policy and practice as well as for research related to textbooks and curriculum among SHLL college students.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This qualitative study seeks to explore the language ideologies and identities of Spanish Heritage Language Learners (SHLLs) as well as an instructor in a university level Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) classroom at a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) located on the U.S.-Mexico border. It was anticipated that the knowledge generated from this study would afford new insights on the relationship between language and identity for SHLLs, and thus, inform higher education practice within SHL classrooms.

This chapter begins with an overview of the background and context that frame the study. Following are the problem statement, the statement of purpose, the research questions and the research approach as well as my positionality as a researcher and the origins of the study. The chapter concludes with the significance of the study and a brief overview of the organization of the study.

Spanish Language in the United States

Around the world, the position of English as the pre-eminent language seems unchallenged, especially in the U.S. where its influence can be seen in all realms. However, it is important to mention that to date the U.S. does not have an official language at the federal level despite a long push to make English the official national language. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau in 2015 reported that over 350 languages were spoken in U.S. homes stating precisely that, “[w]hile most of the U.S. population speaks only English at home or a handful of other languages like Spanish or Vietnamese, the American Community Survey reveals the wide-ranging language diversity of the United States” (U.S. Census, 2015). On a global level, Mandarin Chinese (with 917 million native speakers) and Spanish (with 460 million native speakers) surpass English (with 379 million) in native speakers (Ethnologue, 2020).

To this point, the U.S. has more than 50 million Spanish speakers, the second highest concentration in the world after Mexico. In actuality, there are more people speaking Spanish in the U.S. than in Spain or Colombia where there are 47 and 48 million speakers (Instituto Cervantes, 2019). Globally, Spanish is spoken by more than 559 million people and in the U.S., it is the most common non-English language spoken in U.S. homes. Spanish is also the official language of twenty-one countries. Despite efforts to silence minoritized languages, especially Spanish in the U.S., Spanish use prevails. It is estimated that by 2050 the U.S. will become the largest Spanish-speaking nation on Earth (U.S. Census, 2015).

History of Spanish Language in the United States

Despite the strong and continual debates by different groups that claim the benefit of national unity or national achievements possible through making English the official language the country remains, what it has always been, a nation of immigrants and therefore a multilingual and linguistically diverse nation (Lo Bianco, 2001). While the English language may now predominate in most parts of the U.S., Spanish has been around much longer. Spanish has a long and important history since before the U.S. even became a nation. Spanish was the first European language spoken in the U.S. The history of Spanish in the U.S. began in 1513 when Spain began to conquer and settle in the American South, which soon experienced successive domination (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). This, without forgetting that prior to the Spaniards claiming possession, there were Native people inhabiting the land.

In this sense, Spanish has never been a foreign language in the U.S. The Southwest was originally part of Mexico and with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - Mexican Cession in 1848 that ended the U.S. - Mexican war, many Mexican settlers were granted citizenship and were not required to learn English (Lozano, 2019). Evidence of the influence of Spanish speakers on the

formation of the U.S. territory is found in the names of major states like California, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Montana, and Florida. Moreover, is that fact that well into the 19th century, Spanish was used within official capacities in parts of the Southwest. Yet the quick demographic growth of Hispanics in the U.S. due to both annexation and immigration, which included Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Central Americans into the 20th century, started to create xenophobic tensions that led to political actions and thus, the use of Spanish in official capacities was short-lived because of prevalent language ideologies associated with xenophobia (Colombi & Alarcón, 1997).

Language Policies and Repression

Language ideologies are a body of ideas, regarding language and ways of using language. They are also characteristic of any group or class closely linked to social, political and economic power and as a consequence, language ideologies are key in the development of political actions (Kroskrity, 2000). The strength of language ideologies, which are sociopolitical ingrained assumptions, derive and depend on continual recurrences of accustomed behaviors that take for granted power differences (Fairclough, 1989; Blommaert, 2006). Despite the growth of the Hispanic population and the influence of Spanish even in the media, ballot propositions have risen against Spanish use and Hispanics in general. Hispanics and their use of the Spanish language have been viewed as a threat to the national unity of the U.S. and have provoked tensions and changes in language policies, which have slowly eroded the linguistic rights that once belonged to Spanish speakers (Tamasi & Antieau, 2015).

Wide-spread dominant language ideologies against Hispanics and the Spanish language have also been present in the educational system in which academic policy has favored monolingual English schooling denying children their linguistic birthright and segregating them

(i.e. Mendez vs. Westminster, 1945). Abundant stories of linguistic repression against Spanish users depict painful punitive measures for speaking Spanish in classrooms that go beyond verbal to corporal abuse. Measures such as school detention threats to the trimming of fingernails down low almost to bleeding point which left not only bodily but mental traces and traumas, that had ripple effects over generations (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000). During the 1960s and 1970s, the Mexican American civil rights struggle, best known as the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, rose not only to manifest opposition to the education system subjugating Mexican Americans but also to other issues such as racism, economic deprivation and police brutality. Inspired by the Black Civil Rights Movement, the Chicano Civil Rights Movement sought justice, cultural renewal and a search for identity within language by questioning the ideals of democracy and equality in the face of racial repression against minorities (Rosales, 1997).

Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States

While the story of the Mexican American civil right struggles is practically untold, it inspired changes within the educational arena. Between 1970 and the 1990s, Spanish language maintenance became a primary objective and a symbol of resistance linked to identity within education. After the immediate growth of Chicano and Puerto Rican student presence in higher education institutions, it was evident that foreign language instruction was not fitting for these students and resulted in a call for the creation of new courses (Valdés, 1994). In this sense, the field of heritage languages (HL), a term that originated in Canada used to refer to minoritized languages, began to gain strength in the U.S. within the academic world, to reference languages other than English, the dominant language. Because of its prevalence, Spanish as a heritage language became an area of study (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). Learners of a HL became known as Heritage Language Learners (HLLs).

Though there are multiple definitions for HLLs sometimes also referred to as heritage speakers (HSs), these are centered among two key elements: 1) personal or familial connection to a language and 2) degree of proficiency in a language. Despite the many definitions available, HLLs in the U.S. are commonly defined as “students who [are] raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or at least understand the language, and who [are] in some degree bilingual in that language and English” (Valdés, 2001, p.38). It is important to mention that SHL research feeds from the fields of bilingual education and second language acquisition.

Research on Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States

In the past, research with regards to Spanish as a minoritized language in the U.S. has concentrated on: foreign language and bilingual learners (Carreira, 2011; Potowski, 2013; Valdés, 2015), demographic shifts in learners (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Porcel, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2010; Valdés, 2015), and questions of assimilation to U.S. norms (Anzaldúa, 2007; Coles, 2010; Gutierrez, 2008; Rivera-Mills, 2012; Leeman et.al., 2011). Also, on the connection between language and identity (García, 2007; Leeman, 2015), language varieties and perceived prestige (Urciuoli, 2008; Villa, 2002), language politics and policy (Cashman, 2010; Leeman, Rabin and Román-Mendoza, 2011), and language ideologies (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Helmer, 2013; Showstack 2012). While these studies have contributed and been influential in understanding the field and teachers’ pedagogical practices in Spanish Heritage Language Learner classrooms, as well as sociolinguistic and sociopolitical issues, the dire absence of student voices in the literature represents a major gap that needs to be addressed.

Problem Statement

Research shows that there are differences between foreign language and bilingual learners (i.e. zero language experience versus some language knowledge) that must be acknowledged within pedagogical practices. Research also indicates that language maintenance and shifts towards English as it regards Spanish as a heritage language in the United States are dependent not only on intergenerational transmission but also on the ongoing immigration and rise of native Spanish speakers in the U.S. as its influx allows for shifting patterns towards English to slow down (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Porcel, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2010; Valdés, 2015). In addition, HLLs face diverse struggles (i.e. questions of assimilation to U.S. norms) and make efforts (i.e. language resistance and learning) to maintain their HL (Anzaldúa, 2007; Coles, 2010; Gutierrez, 2008; Rivera-Mills, 2012; Leeman et.al., 2011). While this research has made significant contributions, it has derived mainly from linguistic analysis as well as contexts other than SHL classrooms within higher education institutions. Furthermore, research also pinpoints that sociolinguistic and sociopolitical issues (i.e. standard vs. non-standard language varieties) are vital to understanding language phenomena holistically as a fixed view on the linguistic aspect, though important, is not sufficient and given that it has remained in an infancy stage, more research is needed (Aparicio, 1997; Leeman, 2012). Certain limitations such as the absence of student voices have also left gaps that need to be addressed specifically to better understand the language ideologies of SHLLs and the impacts of such on their identities.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the beliefs and practices of twenty-two SHLLs as well as an instructor at a university level SHL classroom located on the U.S.-Mexico border as it pertains to Spanish language. Specifically, I sought to understand

connections between their perceptions of language and their identities as SHLLs. In so doing, this study sought to contribute to the body of literature on SHLLs by drawing on qualitative methodology and theories of modernity/coloniality to examine the language ideologies of SHLLs.

The main research question that drove my study was:

- How do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs?

There were also two sub-questions, which were:

- What are the language ideologies of SHLLs (students) and an instructor in a higher education institution located on the U.S. - Mexico border?
- What are their language ideologies representative of?

Research Approach

With the approval of the university's institutional review board, I studied the experiences and perceptions of a purposefully selected group of twenty-two SHLLs and their instructor in a SHL undergraduate course. Data was collected through classroom observations and phenomenological semi-structured interviews using qualitative research methods.

In-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection. Interviews lasted between thirty to seventy minutes in the participants' language preference – English, Spanish or both. Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information, to draw a timetable of key events in their life as it pertained to language experiences which helped to elicit rich descriptions and each participant was identified by a pseudonym. The information obtained through the twenty-three total individual interviews (22 SHLLs and one instructor) consequently formed the basis for the overall findings of the study. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Codes were thus developed and refined on an ongoing basis guided by the

study's theoretical framework and my continuous engagement with the literature, creating an iterative process of analysis. Codes led to three major themes: 1) language dichotomizations, 2) identity suppression and 3) identity recovery.

Positionality and Origins of the Study

As a researcher, I brought to the study over ten years of experience teaching Spanish at the university level with all levels of learners - native and non-native. My initial involvement with SHLLs began when I started teaching Spanish and my interest was sparked after noticing the constant repetition of "I don't know Spanish" from SHLLs despite their ability to speak and understand the language. The interest in research on language ideologies and identities emerged from those interactions in which their constant repetitions of not knowing Spanish became almost a chant in the classroom. As I conducted this qualitative study on the language ideologies and identities of SHLLs, I made sure that I engaged in a constant and ongoing process of reflection to see how my own identity and background was similar to or different from that of the participants in this study. Reflexivity was key throughout the entire study as I recognize that as a qualitative researcher, I am also the primary instrument of the research and as such, data is filtered through my own eyes (Lichtman, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Understanding the lived experiences of SHLLs as pertains to language can provide insights into their language ideologies and into how such ideologies shape their identities. Moreover, by including student voices, an important contribution to the existing literature on HLLs, this study provides new insights on what students view as essential to their learning and what in turn, instructors, schools and society need to address. Without listening to students, their needs cannot be met since what an instructor might consider important might not coincide with

what students need (Beaudrie, 2012). Furthermore, the acknowledgement of student voices is essential for inclusion and diversity (Banks, 2008 & 2013; Giroux, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2011) and thus, for social justice.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters as follows. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study by presenting the challenges of Spanish language and Spanish speakers in the U.S. In this chapter, I also describe the research questions and purpose of the study. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of the SHL field and an in-depth explanation of the theoretical framework used to inform the findings of the study. Specifically, I look at relevant literature on ethnically minoritized students' language use in schools and language ideologies. I explain how the lens of coloniality/modernity and sociocultural theories of identity and language ideologies inform the theoretical framework. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology used in this study and justify my choice for a qualitative research design. I also describe the procedures for participant selection, data collection and process of analysis. Chapter 4 presents my analysis of the data. It explores the participants' language ideologies. The chapter provides a broad picture of the participants schooling trajectory in U.S. schools, which served as a critical foundation for their own perceptions as it pertains to language and identity. In Chapter 5, I discuss the main findings and implications for policy, practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore with a purposefully selected group of 22 SHLLs and an instructor in a university level SHL classroom their perceptions of language as it pertains to their identity. Specifically, I sought to understand what their language ideologies were, what these represented, and how such ideologies shaped their identities. To carry out this study, a critical review of current literature was needed. The review of literature was ongoing throughout the study. This chapter reviews preeminent studies and methods used to understand the current field of heritage languages, specifically Spanish in the U.S. as it pertains to identity, and points to gaps in the literature, which this study sought to address. In this chapter, I also present the theoretical perspectives that provide the basis for my understanding of language ideologies and that served to inform the analysis of this study on how SHLLs in the context of a SHL classroom make sense of their identity as a minoritized language group.

Literature Review

In the following literature review, I lay the groundwork for the study. To this end, I examine literature on: HLLs, specifically SHLLs, language ideologies and identities. This literature is important to situate the study because it provides an overview of the existing ideas and theories about Spanish and SHLLs, shows how this literature informs my research and how deficiencies in this literature provide a motivation for it. It also demonstrates the role of schools as institutions, in creating labels and identities based on certain language ideologies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Freire, 1970; Foucault, 1983).

Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) and Spanish Heritage Language (SHL)

The term heritage languages (HL) was coined during the 1970's in Canada and was used to refer to languages other than the official and dominant one (Cummins, 2005). Yet, it was not until the 1990's that this term was widely adopted by U.S. academics to classify languages other than English and speakers of those languages as HLLs. In the U.S., a HLL is commonly defined as a "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 in some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). The adoption of the term *heritage* by academics brought about criticism for the many connotations such a label could have (e.g. the term evoking a past rather than a present or a future which signals losing of ground for language minorities), especially after the Chicano Movement in the 1960s that brought awareness about the importance of the Spanish language for community identity and social activism (Rivera-Mills, 2012).

In fact, the genesis of the SHL programs in the U.S. originally known as Spanish for bilingual speakers was in the Chicano Movement which sought, among many things, to end the systematic subordination of Spanish language speakers in schools (Aparicio, 1997; Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Rosales, 1997). It was the increasing number of enrollments of non-traditional students, specifically Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, at higher education institutions that led to the realization that the existing Spanish language teaching practices, those of Spanish as a foreign language, were inappropriate for this group of students (Valdés, 1994). The rise of this population called for the need of HL courses and so the creation of courses formally began first at university level and then at high schools. Though the mention of courses for native Spanish speakers first appeared at elementary and high school levels as can be seen in the 1966 *Invisible Minority* National Education Association report (later discussed).

Defining HLLs

One of the primary originators of the SHL programs is Guadalupe Valdés. Her definition for HLLs in the U.S. also referred to as Heritage Speakers (HSs) is more widely used within research and the educational field given its emphasis on proficiency as a requirement in the language. As previously shown, her definition stated, that a HLL is “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 in some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). However, there is no universal agreement on one specific way to define a HLL or a single profile of what one entails (Hornberger & Wang, 2008). Proficiency is not the only element central to the many definitions proposed. Many see Joshua A. Fishman’s definition as broader and more inclusive in that it defines a HLL simply as an individual with a personal or familial connection to a non-majority language and to the heritage culture (Fishman, 2001). In Fishman’s definition, there is no expectation in terms of proficiency but rather just a connection to the language, which he further categorizes, based on their socio-historical relationship with the U.S. into three major groups; indigenous, colonial and immigrant languages (Fishman, 1999).

It is also important to recognize that the term HLL was coined and has been used by researchers and instructors to define students and not by students themselves. This, despite an ecological view such as that proposed by Hornberger and Wang (2008) that emphasizes not only familial or ancestral ties to a language other than English but also individuals “who exert their agency in determining whether or not they are HLLs of that HL and HC (heritage community)” (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, pg. 27). As a result, tensions are created in trying to fit under one term a heterogeneous group that is far from being homogeneous. Research has shown that there is a wide variety of competencies and proficiencies within those considered HLLs because of variance in the exposure to the language, the way in which such exposure happened, the time of

exposure as well as age without including attitudes (Bills, 1997; Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Montrul, 2008). When describing their competencies and proficiencies researchers have characterized HLLs as having strong oral (speaking) and aural (listening) skills but limited academic literacy skills as can be seen reflected in their writing abilities (e.g. placement of orthographical accents) (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Pascual Y Cabo & DeLaRosa- Prada, 2015). In the section that follows, I will discuss the differences between HLLs and foreign language learners.

HLLs Versus Foreign Language Learners

During the 1980s, Valdés argued that while the Latino population was being acknowledged because of its numbers, it remained underserved because the perspective held by educators was one of language deficiency. Students' use of non-standard language varieties was being contrasted with standard language variety and falling short of teacher expectations and thus, they were receiving remedial courses to help undo the believed damage that had been done at home (Valdés, 1997). About this Valdés argued that students were being held back and forced to re-learn what they already knew, what they were taught at home. Instead, she proposed that as teachers one should work with what students already had, meaning students' funds of knowledge. Valdés also argued that even though SHLLs have been in the U.S. since before it even became a nation and while it was still Mexico; such learners have remained ignored within our educational school system because they are what many consider a race and language minority in comparison to the dominant society. She further suggested that instructional methods for teaching HLLs derived from foreign language instruction. Yet, the major difference strongly underlined by Valdés (2015) and other researchers (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Colombi & Alarcón, 1997) is that HLLs versus foreign language learners have a family connection to the

language. That is, they have a home background to which they can refer and are not without a tie. As a result, HLLs are, to some degree bilingual unlike foreign language learners who start their language experiences from zero. In the case of Spanish speakers in the U.S., Spanish is not a foreign language as it has long been viewed and is, in fact, ‘an American language’ (Lozano, 2019). Meaning that it is not a language spoken in a distant land but rather something that HLLs have interacted with and been surrounded by despite a lack of formal instruction in the language, which would allow them to use metalinguistic terms often learned by foreign language learners. As such, Valdés stressed the point that HLLs instructional needs are different from those of foreign language learners and as such, they must be recognized and not forced into assimilation by “giving up their languages and cultures in the process of becoming Americans” (Valdés, 2001, p. 8 & 43).

Growth of SHLL Field

In the past decade, much research with regards to Spanish as a minority language within the U.S., has focused on: foreign language and bilingual learners – similarities and differences as well as pedagogical practices and their impact (Carreira, 2011; Potowski, 2013, Valdés, 2015), demographic shifts in learners – immigration and language patterns (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Porcel, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2010; Valdés, 2015), and questions of assimilation to U.S. norms - struggles and efforts to maintain HL (Anzaldúa, 2007; Coles, 2010; Gutierrez, 2008; Rivera-Mills, 2012; Leeman et.al., 2011). While vast research shows that there is a difference between HLLs and foreign language learners and that such differences (linguistic and cultural connections) are becoming obvious due to demographic shifts within the U.S., and while issues of assimilation are still being debated, what is not truly being brought into the studies are the voices of HLLs. Neither is there a clear relationship between theory and practice. That is,

there is research on teaching methodologies, the impacts of immigration and language shifts to explain assimilation to culture, but there are very few studies that show students' beliefs and practices as well as limited research in which methods and practice are bridged (Anzaldúa, 2007; Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Carreira 2011; Coles, 2010; Gutierrez, 2008; Leeman et.al., 2011; Porcel, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2010; Rivera-Mills, 2012). Rather what we see is a highlight of teacher perspective, which is important but does not suffice for an inclusive conversation.

Despite constant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent federal agency of the U.S. government, to connect SHL teachers from both higher education and K-12 institutions in the U.S., to assess and advance the state of the field, it is evident that the major focus of research has been on linguistic aspects since its inception. Perspectives, that in of themselves, inform our understanding of the language systems and how such are used by students according to teacher perspective yet, the dire absence of student voice is evident and must be addressed to better understand the students' experiences as it pertains to language and identity. It is not a secret that the growth in the research of Spanish as a HL has really gone hand in hand with the research on foreign language (second language acquisition) and bilingual education in a parallel manner as these have served to inform the current field. It should also be noted that within the fields of second language acquisition and bilingual education, three major shifts have occurred: (1) linguistic shift, (2) sociolinguistic shift and (3) critical shift. These shifts will be discussed in what follows, specially the critical shift as it relates to my study.

Early Studies of Spanish Language and Speakers in the Southwest

The research of Valdés and others has pinpointed early studies of Spanish language and speakers in the Southwest that one cannot discredit as they serve as a cornerstone for SHLL

research. These studies are evidence of the long history of atrocities and difficulties endured by Spanish speakers that as a minoritized group, they have suffered within the educational system. For example, the work performed by Aurelio Macedonio Espinosa, a scholar who promoted the study of Spanish language and literature, focused on *New-Mexican Spanish* (1909) to show the influence of different dialects within a language (Spanish in this case) using phonetical analysis. His work also reflects an early interest to teach Spanish to students who already spoke the language.

The interest of some teachers to meet the needs of Spanish speakers specifically in the Southwest - Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas - have long been present as can be seen in the 1966 report of the National Education Association of the United States (NEA), *The Invisible Minority - Tucson Survey On the Teaching of Spanish to the Spanish-Speaking*. The purpose of the report was to obtain as much information as possible through the surveying of schools (elementary to high school) as it pertained to bilingual programs under way in order to mitigate the academic failure of Mexican American children who had little to no experience in speaking English and were still expected to learn as their English-speaking classmates. For this, several Spanish speaking Tucson teachers of Mexican ancestry were recruited so that with the help of instructors from various universities they could gather information at several schools in the Southwest. The purpose of these meetings was to share ideas and to call attention to approaches for the education related-problems schools were facing. Those problems were: high rates of low achievement among Mexican American students and a high number of school dropouts.

Both issues were due in part to linguistic barriers that were not being properly addressed and in the majority of cases simply ignored by placing non-English speakers in classes taught

solely in English. The goal of the Tucson report was to help students adjust to the dominant Anglo culture and to foster pride in those students for their Spanish speaking culture and Mexican origins. What the Tucson teachers learned from visits to different schools which they were surveying, was that despite the lack of support from the school districts who were ignoring the issue at hand, educators were already attempting to help students by encouraging bilingualism. Educators in border cities such as Laredo and El Paso, Texas, which are places with high concentrations of Mexican Americans, were taking students' Spanish-speaking abilities and using them as a bridge to close the "cultural and linguistic gulf...between [them], the "invisible minority,"... and Anglo-Americans" at both elementary and high school levels (NEA Tucson Survey, 1966, p. 13).

It is also important to mention that the 1966 Tucson report evidences that not only was the use of Spanish forbidden in schools but that in some cases, students would receive corporal punishment. Also, and up until recently, Mexican Americans were considered inferior and were thus segregated into particular schools (Herschel, 1930; Mendez vs. Westminster, 1945). The surveying members' report made evident that English was imposed on Mexican Americans. Students were placed with all English-speaking peers without any language help. The intent was for them to grow up as Anglos and thereby deny them their linguistic and personal value. Ultimately, this caused inferiority complexes as it sent children the message that their language, their culture, and consequently they, had no worth.

The Tucson report reads:

Thus, by one of history's ironies, the majority became a minority. Spanish-speaking people who had been the first whites to settle the Southwest, became, if not an alien group, an alienated group. They were Americans, yes, but with a language and culture

different from the language and culture of the region in which they found themselves.

(NEA Tucson Survey, 1966, p. 13)

The report references the Mexican Cession of 1848 in which the Southwest became part of the U.S. under the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. The established Mexicans who were granted citizenship upon annexation, and their descendants, did not cross the border but rather the border crossed them. They were a population that did not choose to be part of the country but became a part of it. While westward expansion brought a wide array of linguistic diversity to the U.S. and while such diversity seemed to be initially met with relative tolerance, such acceptance did not last long because of the belief that immigrants posed a menace to the Anglo way of life that led to a rising wave of xenophobia. As a result, harsh language policies were enacted whose aim was clearly race and language purity.

While other languages, like German used in the Midwest of the U.S. by Central Europeans, were much more tolerated until the 19th century, the situation was not the same for Spanish speakers in the Southwest who encountered a hostile environment. In all schools visited by the Tucson surveying members it was found that punitive measures were ineffective. In fact, it was conscientious instructors who, with an understanding that the eradication of Spanish was harmful, would frequently violate the prohibition of using Spanish and set a base for what is now known as biliteracy programs in the Southwest. Such programs were not formally established until 1968 with the passage of the Bilingual Education Act. This, as they had seen for themselves, that in order to achieve a confident self-identity students needed a friendly and familiar environment in which they could receive assurance and affection. While there were different approaches to helping students, the similarity lay in adapting teaching material to students needs as well as incorporating and emphasizing culture. The NEA report shows, just

like Valdés, that recognition of the student's language and culture are essential and that the denial of such, results in negative repercussions. Repercussions have been seen in light of language orientations.

Language Orientations

An important contribution to the literature on bilingual education as well as language planning and therefore to heritage languages, is that of Richard Ruiz (1984) which called for a transition from a mere linguistic view to include a sociolinguist one. Ruiz' research was influenced by Fishman's (1964) remarkable intergenerational model that opened the way into understanding the dynamics of language contact between English and other minority languages in the U.S. and has served as a foundational framework for much of HL research. Fishman argued that to be maintained a language must be transmitted from one generation to another otherwise the result is language loss. In a seminal paper titled *Orientations in Language Planning*, Ruiz (1984) added to previous research by arguing that language planning and policy in the U.S. had to be evaluated in terms of language orientations which refer to "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society" (Ruiz 1984 as edited in Hornberger, 2017 p. 14).

By orientations, Ruiz refers to an organizing frame related to language attitudes that shapes and informs language interventions in that such determine what is thinkable about a language in a society. The three orientations signaled by Ruiz (1984) were: (1) language as a problem, (2) language as a right and (3) language as a resource. His tripartite orientations sought to draw attention to the values about language underlying policymaking. Ruiz (1984) was the first to pave the way for a political vocabulary related to language planning and its relationship to societal valuations of linguistic diversity. The first orientation, language as a problem, sees

linguistic diversity as a threat to national unity thought to be achieved with a common language and falsely aligns language problems with social problems such as, but not limited to, poverty and low academic achievement. The second orientation, language as a right, seeks to address linguistically based inequities using legal mechanisms as it recognizes language as a fundamental factor in one's ability to access the life chances afforded by a society. Lastly, the third orientation, language as a resource, views linguistic diversity as good for society. With the use of the neutral term "orientations," Ruiz (1984) argued that language dispositions were sometimes unconscious and pre-rational, that language orientations were multiple and complex, and could be related. Each of these three orientations represents a particular and different idea about language, which enables language attitudes.

Language Attitudes

The ideas a person has and can have in relation to language(s), prompts language attitudes. Attitudes are a reaction to an object; in this case, an aspect of language. They locate language concepts on different dimensions of judgment (e.g. good vs. bad, valuable vs. non-valuable) and while attitudes are individual, they can add up to become collective reactions of a particular group and or society (Martínez, 2006). In *Power and place: Language attitudes towards Spanish in a bilingual academic community in Southwest Texas*, Achugar and Pessoa (2009) used discourse analysis to examine the language attitudes of twenty creative writing students in an academic community of bilingual speakers of English and Spanish in El Paso, Texas. This analysis showed how attitudes relate to the larger social and socio-historical contexts in which one is immersed and located. Achugar and Pessoa "consider attitudes as being constructed socio-historically as the result of learned patterns of evaluation and identification, consequently making it possible to educate or transform people's attitudes" (Achugar & Pessoa,

2009, p. 201). From the analysis of the interviews they conducted, Achugar and Pessoa noted that when trying to develop understandings for themselves, participants referred to feelings. Such feelings were attached to the description of atmospheres and environments in which language occurred and thus affected the interviewees' points of reference due to their previous history with language.

Findings from this study suggest that while in El Paso, Texas, a border city with Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, Spanish is frequently used, it is prevalent and valuable with its varieties for those who have had a history in the region when compared to other places in the U.S. Yet, for Spanish monolinguals from Latin America, who hold standard language beliefs and have had no previous history in the region, El Paso provided a different reading and interpretation of the context. One in which though the use of Spanish is evident, it is not valued as the English language is and nor is it valued when its use does not match the believed standard variety, challenging in this sense preconceived notions of language norms and values. Furthermore, while in Achugar and Pessoa's study there was agreement among the participants in that the use of Spanish was normal and frequent, within the community, there was also a notable internalization by both speakers of standard varieties and speakers of local variety in that the Spanish used within the community was different though functional. This "different" was referred to as "slang," "full of errors," a "mixture of English and Spanish," and used by people of "lower" socioeconomic status (Achugar & Pessoa, 2009, p. 211-212).

The researchers also showed the connection students made between language and identity as they highlighted how a lack of language abilities and or use of standard varieties positioned users as insiders/outsideers and or authentic/inauthentic in terms of national and cultural alliances. Such ideas of different values associated with standard and local varieties influenced speakers'

feelings (e.g. inferiority or guilt) as well as positionality (social judgment). In the study, affective reactions and social judgments implied that the notion behind the participant's evaluations was that there was *one* Spanish - the standard - and any variations of such, like the local one in contrast to the idealized *one* were considered deviations that were a result of repressive policies of Spanish in the community (e.g. legislation). Consequently, hybridity in language or identity was not recognized as valid, making evident the tensions between ideas of homogenization versus heterogeneity. In this sense, any deviations from standardization were seen as not abiding to the assumption in which language indexed identity and were thus seen as problematic and denaturalized. The analysis also showed that hierarchies of language were reflected in social judgements where the use of Spanish by Latin American monolinguals was seen as "the most intellectual" vis-à-vis that of local residents creating a differentiation within the bilingual creative writing students. Latin Americans such as Colombians, Argentinians and Uruguayans, were seen as superior, followed by Anglo English-speakers and at the bottom local Spanish-speakers of non-standard varieties. This was in spite of attempts by the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program to create an academic space where biliteracy was accepted and valued. In sum, differentiations made about language in which standard varieties implicitly hold more value in contrast to local varieties were visible in the study as the combination of negative attitudes that collectively make up an ideology. This, as language attitudes can be considered the building blocks of a language ideology.

SHLL Field Shifts

It is important to highlight that within the past fifteen years, SHL research has also focused more on sociolinguist and sociopolitical issues as have the fields that nurture it. This includes the connection between language and identity (García, 2007; Leeman, 2015), language

varieties and perceived prestige (Urciuoli, 2008; Villa, 2002), language politics and policy (Cashman, 2010; Leeman, Rabin and Román-Mendoza, 2011), as well as language ideologies (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Helmer, 2013; Showstack, 2012). It should be emphasized that while initial studies of SHL were not conducted with a particular sociolinguistic and or sociopolitical focus, these studies have nonetheless critically analyzed representations of language varieties and language practice. Both areas of language use (language varieties and language practice) are ones where beliefs may impact Spanish language maintenance and shifts. In addition, and as has been mentioned, because SHL research feeds from research on second language acquisition and bilingualism, SHL scholars have relied on interdisciplinary perspectives to inform their theoretical frameworks. Such is the case within research that emphasizes the study of language ideologies since language ideologies have some overlap with studies of languages attitudes as is in the aforementioned study of Achugar and Pessoa (2009). In the following, I provide an overview of two prominent language ideologies: (1) the one nation-one language ideology and (2) the standard language ideology. Later in this chapter, I elaborate on language ideologies as a major theoretical lens informing this study.

The One Nation-One Language Ideology and the Standard Language Ideology

Language ideologies are a system of ideas about language structure and use that work in conjunction to the benefit or detriment of a particular social group (Errington, 2000; Martínez, 2006). Rather than individual beliefs about language, they are “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine, 1989, p. 255).

In a recently published book titled *Speaking Spanish in the U.S.: The Sociopolitics of Language*, Fuller and Leeman (2020), examine various language ideologies related to Spanish.

Although their attention is not specifically centered on a SHL classroom, they speak in relation to a broader panorama, the U.S. Through detailed examples of language ideologies, including the one nation-one language ideology and the standard language ideology, Fuller and Leeman (2020) show how hegemonic language ideologies are naturalized and maintained in a manner that mirrors social hierarchies.

The one nation-one language ideology is the notion that each nation is defined by a single language and vice-versa. Within this ideology, any other language that is not considered the language of the nation is seen as unpatriotic and a threat to national unity which oftentimes lead to language panics, which “are not really about language [i]nstead they are about race” (Hill, 2001, p. 45). The standard language ideology presupposes that there is a correct (a standard) way of speaking (that which reflects the elite class variety) which is perceived as better than any other varieties and which in turn are automatically seen as non-standard, characterized as non-valuable and more, when the written language is named its model (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Language ideologies would be harmless if they were simply opinions about language yet as Fuller and Leeman (2020) demonstrate they are used to achieve certain sociopolitical goals, which have real world consequences. In this sense, it is not so much about what one can say but how one says it and even beyond, also about who says it (e.g. Flores & Rosa, 2015). Language expresses social meaning through indexicality. Indexicality is the process of pointing to an object, which occurs when a linguistic feature is associated with a specific stance, social category or characteristic, provided and dependent on specific contexts that can result in social differentiation in which different social categories or identities are assigned to people (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

For example, in *The Sanitizing of U.S. Spanish in Academia* by Daniel Villa (2002), the idea of a standard variety of Spanish has its historic roots in Spain when the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, instituted the Castilian dialect as the national language of Spain to consolidate the Spanish crown and territories. With time, in 1713 the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) was established to maintain the Castilian variety as the prestige form of the Spanish language, which until present day has founded twenty-two academies including one in the U.S. and yet remains a symbol of power and a strong reflection of the tie between a nation and a language. Such idea was clearly seen in the dictatorship of Francisco Franco when he pronounced “*una lengua, una nación*” [one language, one nation], in which the official hegemony of one particular variety can be seen over any other. The RAE’s motto of “*Limpia, fija, y da esplendor*” [To cleanse, fix and enhance] further testifies to this (<http://www.rae.es>). The idea being that any other variety of language that is not the standard must be sanitized, or made pure, in order for advancement and success to be possible. Here indexicality is present in two ways. First, between Spanish standard variety and class, education, and secondly, between the use of non-standard varieties and impurity or lack of refinement. The prevalence of such ideologies is vividly present within SHL curriculum as language ideologies are codified into language policies, which involve ad nauseam rhetoric and text which reflect the language as a problem orientation.

Prevalence of Language Ideologies in SHL Textbooks

In *From Identity to Commodity: Ideologies of Spanish in Heritage Language Textbooks*, Leeman and Martínez (2007) examined the discourse of twelve Spanish textbooks for Spanish heritage speakers published between the years 1970 and 2000. By paying close attention to the titles and prefaces, they sought to understand the subtle messages to both students and instructors

about the value of the Spanish language. The study revealed that textbooks, as cultural artifacts that embody particular ideologies of knowledge and reify specific types of it, underwent two main periods. First, in early publications dating from 1972 to mid-1980's the portrayal of Spanish as a private language bounded to family, inheritance and identity only served to stress the hegemony of English as the only legitimate public language relegating Spanish to a private space. This, though the intention was to include students' experiences and knowledge within the curriculum as a way to acknowledge the call for justice and recognition through language. Recall that language was seen as central to identity within the Chicano Movement. Examples of book titles in the first period included: *Nuestro Español* [Our Spanish] and *La lengua que heredamos* [The Language we Inherited].

The second period on textbooks for SHLLs occurred during the late 1980's and the 90's, when with the forces of globalization and the end of the Cold War, diversity began to be regarded as an economic potential of a new national market. The Spanish language was seen as a type of economic and social capital, one that advertised dollars and whose economic rewards were the primary motivation to study the language. Language, that in turn, had to be made "appropriate" and subjugated to the standard variety for the professional demands of the market and delegitimized at the same time, any variety of Spanish that was not the standard (i.e. that of Spain). Examples of book titles in the second period included: *Nuevos Mundos* [New Worlds] and *Mejora tu español* [Improve Your Spanish].

An exegesis of the shifts in SHL textbooks makes evident that textbooks, just like language ideologies, are multifaceted. This, as early publications first underlined student language ownership through metaphors (e.g. *Nuestro Español* [Our Spanish]) and later portrayed Spanish language as a national resource, a world language (e.g. *Nuevos Mundos* [New Worlds]),

disembedding it from the local and the community, in favor of the global. Moreover, is the fact that across these two periods is the enduring emphasis on standard Spanish, which is always subjugated to English even when it is seen as a commodity.

Ad Nauseam Rhetoric of Language as a Commodity in the Classroom

In *Symbolic power in the heritage language classroom: How Spanish heritage speakers sustain and resist hegemonic discourses on language and cultural diversity*, Rachel Elizabeth Showstack (2012) analyzed the classroom discourse of two SHL courses in central Texas within four segments of interaction. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), she found that SHLLs used socially constructed discourses on the value of different language varieties and cultural experiences to describe their Spanish language skills and the way they categorize themselves and others. Showstack (2012) stressed that the view of Spanish standard variety ingrained within academic spaces is strongly linked to its views as capital. In her study, Showstack points to Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) notion of linguistic capital in which standard varieties of language provide symbolic power "to influence other peoples' understandings of the world" and further notes, that the value associated to language and other social goods can be sustained and contested through discourse (Showstack, 2012, p. 6). Nonetheless, Showstack's (2012) study is limited to the analysis of classroom discourse just as Leeman and Martínez' (2007) study is restricted to the analysis of textbooks. Yet, what is evident in the studies is that discourse is the conduit for identity formation, as the means of becoming.

Discourse and Identity Formation

While essentialism views identity as static, social constructivism stresses that identities are multiple and contextual. On *Heritage Language Education and Identity in the United States* (2015), Leeman explicates that the term *HLL* is not just an educational classification but also an

identity constructed and assigned to students that fails to consider students themselves. Leeman (2015) further expresses that while a speaker's agency plays an important role in the construction and performance of identity such are limited by the identities ascribed by others. In this regard, the tensions between a claimed and an ascribed identity are from the questioning (the deauthentication) or the authentication of an identity through language. This results from the concept that mastery of the standard variety of a language and its grammar is seen as legitimate proof. In short, Leeman (2015) and Showstack (2012) highlight that the ideological elevation of a monolingual standard variety equates language with ethnic identity.

Kimberly Adilia Helmer (2013) in *A Twice-Told Tale: Voices of Resistance in a Borderlands Spanish Heritage Language Class*, sought to uncover the reasons why Mexican-origin students at a U.S. Southwest charter high school resisted Spanish instruction in their SHLL class. Helmer (2013) concluded that student resistance was due to two factors: (1) rejection of the teacher's perceived student identities and (2) student othering of the teacher based on the teacher's nonnative accent. Students in the study believed that their native-English speaker teacher, though an advanced Spanish speaker, mischaracterized their social and linguistic identities in her attempt to embrace a critical pedagogical stance, which failed from the student's perspective, as they felt disrespected, delinked from their imagined communities, rather than valued. In turn, students othered their teacher because of her nonnative accent and positioned her as a learner of the language, thus questioning the teacher's authenticity and legitimacy as a Spanish language teacher, speaker and interlocutor. From the students' perspective, the perceived lack of oral mastery in Spanish language from their teacher, deauthenticated her identity and delegitimized her presupposed authority.

Literature Gaps

As shown, even though these perspectives go beyond the control of language to the use of it, its relation to society, in this body of research there is still a limited incorporation of the voices of SHLLs that needs to be addressed. Again, most of what is known derives from studies in foreign language and bilingual programs where student language acquisition and maintenance are analyzed, as well as *testimonios* (Alvarez, 2013), which are written by language teachers who were HLLs themselves and have survived within the academia. While there have been long and repeated messages of an infancy stage in this regard that make evident that a critical approach is necessary, research has been narrow and could benefit from further research specifically within SHL classrooms (Aparicio, 1997; Leeman, 2012). Critical approaches are necessary as they help “to bridge the gap between *el dicho* (saying) and *el hecho* (doing)” (Martínez, 2006, p.7).

The need to include and bring about student voices is essential for inclusion and diversity (Banks, 2008 & 2013; Giroux, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2011). As Beaudrie (2012) states:

Because what researchers and educator believe most important may not always coincide with what the students expect and need, students’ voices must be incorporated into the design of SHL programs. A successful SHL program, first and foremost, needs to meet the needs of the students it is intended to serve. (Beaudrie, 2012, p. 214)

As indicated in Beaudrie’s quote, students’ needs cannot be met if their voices are not acknowledged and brought to the forefront of discussion. Research demonstrates that schools continue to widen the academic and social gap that exists between majority and minority students who speak a language other than English - the dominant one - in the U.S. (Barton, 2007; Gee, 2011; Graff & Duffy, 2008). Schools as institutions have historically been a place where social inequalities are reproduced through diverse mechanisms (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Cole,

2010; Gutek, 2001; Rury, 2008; Rogoff, 2003; Weber, 2001). Language ideologies are one such mechanism as they shape and are shaped by language policies as constructed in social practice.

Given that schools have been the primary vehicle for the assimilation of individuals of various backgrounds and for the advancement of mainstream cultural and linguistic forms as well as values, educational institutions are key sites that provide a crucial context to explore the intersections of language ideologies, policies, and the exercise of language regulating power (McCarty, 2011; McGregor, 2000). While it is evident that schools are microcosms of society, not only do they have the potential to reproduce dominant assumptions about how the world works, but they also have the ability to disrupt them. As Cornel West mentioned on an interview with MSNBC News (2020) regarding racial inequality, brutality, and reform,

...they wanna immediately grab something and mainstream it. And when you mainstream it, you deodorize it, when you deodorize it, you sanitize and sterilize it. I come from a funky people... [and] but you gotta keep it funky. And when you keep it funky, you are getting beneath all the superficiality in dealing with the raw reality of struggle, pain, love, laughter, joy and freedom. (West, 2020)

This study, hopes to contribute to the literature on SHL by expanding on research focused on language ideologies and identity from within students perspectives in an attempt to keep it funky.

In the following paragraphs, I discuss the interdisciplinary theoretical framework used for the study, which allowed me to address gaps in the SHL research by critically examining the relationship between SHLLs identity formation and language ideologies.

Theoretical Framework

Through a sociocultural approach, one can see that language gains symbolic power as it is ascribed symbolic capital and economic value. Within this, schools as institutions serve as a

place of societal control and enculturation by playing a major role in influencing and valuing specific views of what language is supposed to be - the dominant and standardized - as well as the purposes it should serve. Among them: language as a marker of knowledge, of being educated, and the inculcation of a spirit of nationalism, union, and membership. The view of the dominant and standardized languages imposed by the transmission of language ideologies, ultimately, influences the identities of students. That is, the way they view themselves, the way they view others and the way they are viewed. On one side, some students are included, that is those who can master the valued language/variety and on the other side, the students who are excluded (those who cannot master the valued language/ variety) resulting in their silence, erasure or symbolic violence.

I come to this research with an interest and a theoretical view of identities and identity formation as dynamic and contextual within and across social processes (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). I draw on the theoretical lens of coloniality/ modernity (Mignolo, 2005) to analyze and explain how Spanish students in the context of a SHL classroom make sense of their identities as a minoritized language group. Specifically, I analyze the ways in which power, symbolic violence and silence represent different ways in which language dichotomizations are created or (re)emphasized and identity is suppressed through the naturalization of certain ideologies. A look at these theories allowed me to understand the perceptions of SHLLs as it pertains to language and identity. In the following sections, I will expand on the theoretical lenses from which I draw.

Coloniality/ Modernity

Walter Mignolo (2012) in *“An Other Tongue”: Linguistic Maps, Literary Geographies, Cultural Landscapes*, expresses the idea that language since colonialism has been the fundamental mechanism for nation building. About this, he states:

[o]ne of the strong weapons in building homogeneous imagined communities was the belief in a national language which was tied up with national literature and contributed, in the domain of language, to the national culture. Furthermore, the complicity between language, literature, culture and nation was also related to geopolitical order and geopolitical frontiers. Language and literature were part of a state ideology, supported by its organic intellectuals.... (Mignolo, 2012, p. 218)

According to Mignolo (2012), language was not only attached to territories but it was also attached to cultures as consolidated within literary tradition, the canon. This is representative of geopolitical order and frontiers, which dismissed Amerindian languages and erased its people from the linguistic map and literary geography, as they were considered inferior and an obstruction to the imagined homogenization. Mignolo (2012) emphasizes that speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction. As such, they can also be used to analyze the effects that have occurred through the naturalization of language including the defending of its purity. Within this view, the standardization of languages can be said to be a European invention. It is not something natural, but a deliberate planning. “A false “reality” which has been consciously engineered” (Romaine, 2000, p. 90). Language then is manipulated by those in power to impose an identity or manipulate the identity formation of people.

In *The Idea of Latin America* (2005), Mignolo accentuates that America exists today only as a consequence of European colonial expansion and its narrative of modernity from the European perspective. An invention of the elite class that with the loci of enunciation created things into existence with a false façade of standardization that is, and has been nothing but, a chief agent of inequality. The indicated, under mantras like the one language-one nation, that seek to control capital and knowledge, jeopardize individuality in the name of progress, a so-

called collective good. In talking about language standardization, specifically Spanish, it is important to recognize that there is a very fixed view of what is to be considered as standard, which comes from the global north. Recognized as the mother country (*la madre patria*), Spain, influences the way in which Spanish speakers are positioned and portrayed, not from an internal point of reference per se but rather from the outside, an external construction. Recall that as research has shown, in the case of Spanish the RAE only focuses and promotes Castilian Spanish, a European Spanish (Villa, 2002). With this in mind, it is indispensable to ask what kind of mother one is talking about because in questioning the past, we see Spain as an adoptive but also as an appropriative mother. There is no childbirth data but rather abundant evidence of kidnapping, theft and identity suppression and the denial of origins. It is in this way, that it becomes important to understand the relationship between identity and language ideologies.

Identity and Language Ideologies

Bucholtz and Hall (2005), refer to identity as the social positioning of self and other. They express that identity is the product of linguistic and semiotic practices, a social and cultural phenomenon that emerges through interaction. Identity is linguistically constructed through the use of a particular language or dialect and linguistic forms. For such reason, one ought to consider how language ideologies influence identity through the use of discourses which signal what is “correct” and “acceptable.” This occurs as discourse covers all forms of communication which shape the world through compulsory repetitions that produce, replicate and transform (Foucault, 1980; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007).

Language ideologies is a relatively new term that emerged from linguistic and anthropological studies during the last decade of the 20th century (despite now knowing that ideologies have been in place always) in an effort to investigate the relationship of language and

culture. In brief and as previously shown, ideologies are a body of ideas characteristic of any group or class closely linked to power. They are sociopolitical assumptions, rooted conventions, whose strength derives and depends on constant repetitions of familiar behaviors that take for granted power differences (Fairclough, 1989; Blommaert, 2006). As Fairclough (1989) argues, they are ideological assumptions embedded in particular conventions, and so the nature of those conventions themselves, depend upon the power relations which underlie the conventions... simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations of power differences for granted. (p. 2)

Clearly, ideologies and power are espoused yet ideologies as ideas and thoughts motivated by social interest are not translucent and a close examination of their repercussions is therefore needed as ideologies are largely below our awareness, invisible to the distracted eye. Following, I go over five levels of organization that characterize language ideologies and discuss their application to Spanish as a HL.

In *Language Ideologies* (2004), Paul V. Kroskrity pinpoints five interrelated levels of organization that characterize language ideologies. These are:

- (1) group or individual interests, (2) multiplicity of ideologies, (3) awareness of speakers, (4) mediating functions of ideologies, and (5) role of language ideology in identity construction. (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 501)

First, and as mentioned before, language ideologies are linked to the social, political, and or economic interest of a particular group, which results in a disproportionate balance of privilege or power for an individual or group and consequently in subordination for another. In the case of Spanish, as Villa (2002) has expressed, the ideological link of nation-states to language is visible in the way the RAE has founded academies to promote Castilian Spanish which reflect the

political and economic interest of the Spanish state to maintain their influence not only in Latin America but also in the U.S. Secondly, language ideologies are multiple and not uniform provided the plurality of social divisions (e.g. class, gender...) with which a speaker identifies and can identify over time. Because language ideologies evolve over time, so do perceptions especially as dominant conceptions of language are situated in particular sociohistorical contexts. As Achugar and Pessoa (2009) made evident in their study, the Spanish frequently used by locals of El Paso was valuable with its varieties granted their history in the region. Yet, for Spanish monolinguals from Latin America with no previous history in the region, the Spanish used by locals was deficient.

Thirdly, there is variability in speakers' conscious awareness of language ideologies within a group and across ideologies. This, given that they are naturalized, they are made invisible. Again, as research has shown language ideologies are invisible to the eye and sometimes one is unaware of what one is creating/recreating (Fuller & Leeman, 2020). Achugar and Pessoa's (2009) study for example, show how Spanish monolinguals from Latin America recreated language hierarchies and in turn how local Spanish speakers internalized such hierarchies. Fourthly, language ideologies "mediate between social structures and forms of talk" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 507). That is, they shape indexical links of specific linguistic forms to specific sociocultural features. As Fuller and Leeman (2020) show, this can be seen in the valuing of one language or variety over another which discredits any other not considered the language of the nation, official. At the fifth level, language ideologies are key in creating and representing (performing) identities. As Helmer (2013) expressed, associations made about Spanish have the ability to authenticate or deauthenticate identities. Because language ideologies are powerful, it is important to look beyond linguistic differentiation, "the ideas with which

participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings unto people, events and activities that are significant to them” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 35).

Linguistic Differentiation

Judith Irvine and Susan Gal (2000) in *Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation* best describe the power of language ideologies, when they express that these are *regimes of language*. Regimes of language are the unchallenged rules and practices of language use. That is, the social and political control of language. Consequently, Irvine and Gal (2000) argue that it is important to look beyond linguistic differentiation, ideologies, and focus on the consequences of such for they are suffused and subject to “the interest of their bearers’ social position” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 35). According to these authors, in order to be able to focus on the consequences of language ideologies, these must first be uncovered as again, they are well below ones awareness. As they state, three hidden semiotic processes make differentiation possible. These are: (1) iconization, (2) fractal recursivity and (3) erasure.

Iconization, Fractal Recursivity and Erasure

These three semiotic processes are significant, as they are tools that allow for the identification of different language ideologies (conceptual schemes). In the context of studying the language ideologies of SHLLs as it pertains to identity, these three semiotic processes help to not only highlight and identify language ideologies but also the ways in which they are produced and reproduced via these hidden processes. However, it is important to keep in mind that these three semiotic processes do not happen in a linear and specific order. Rather, they are simultaneous and presuppose each other at different levels and in non-uniform ways.

Iconization is an ideological representation, a sign that binds a linguistic feature (or variety) and social image in what appears to be an inherent linkage that relies on erasure and at the same time an erasure that relies on a previous iconization. Erasure is the act that makes invisible any variation or opposition that is unfitting to any particular iconization of a thought conceptual scheme. Not because variation or opposition is not present (existent) but rather because is seen as a disruption to the inherent linkage that was presupposed from a specific view to serve and achieve a specific purpose or agenda. Fractal recursivity is then the reoccurrence, the reactivation, of oppositions (dichotomies) at a smaller scale and which can be applied to other aspects than in and of themselves continue to presuppose these three semiotic aspects.

These three semiotic processes can be seen exemplified in the narrative that portrayed and mapped America, in the complicity between geography and epistemology, in the genealogy of thought, which included language. Mignolo (2005) asserts that the same division that occurred in Europe over imperial disputes under which not only money but also language hierarchies were contested, was transplanted to America. The division between Northern Europe as Christian and capitalist and Southern Europe as Catholic and Latin was reproduced between North America as Anglo (English) America and South America as Latin (Spanish) America. The portrayal of a firm image into a map (iconization) as in a mirror was duplicated (fractal recursivity) not only as a conceptual space, a spatial image, but in all aspects including the colonization of being (erasure). This, without mentioning that in its depiction, certain people (i.e. Indians and Africans), their languages, and histories were disqualified from history (erasure). All while simultaneously, linking modernity to Europe which was seen as an icon of progress as well as salvation and ignoring any variations that would not model it, fit its ideological construction, its cosmovision. Highlighting in this sense, differences that made invisible the relations of power

and one in which the logic of coloniality/modernity was maintained, only power changed hands. Language then, says Mignolo (2005), was used to name the continent – America – and to further divide it into North and Latin (South) America from within a European idea and invention, which even until present day, dominates epistemological views and reproduction. These geographic divisions are important as they are further outlined through the dichotomization of languages, English versus Spanish. Multiple accounts attest that the colonizers did not have to learn the language of the colonized nor adjust to their ways of knowing. The colonized, however, had no choice.

Social Construction of Language Policies

Concerning Spanish in the U.S., it is imperative to remember that despite its long history it has also been seen as a threat to the national unity, as a problem to be fixed. Relatedly, Kathryn Woolard (1998) points out that ideologies are not a mere possession that one has, but rather a result of social construction, a social process. Elana Shohamy (2006) further states, that language ideologies are masked in the form of language policies which include some and outcast, erase, “the Other.” Language policy as framed by Hornberger (2006 in Lo Bianco (2010)) as a tripartite characterization of status, acquisition and corpus planning, “is a situated activity whose specific history and local circumstances influence what is regarded as a language problem, and whose political dynamics determine which language problems are given policy treatment” (Lo Bianco, 2010, p. 152). Evidence shows that minoritized students have been viewed as linguistically inferior to majority groups because society fails to recognize their prior funds of knowledge based on social, economic and cultural differences. Differences that are marked as diseases that require treatment, a prescription to be cured (Barton, 2007). This is of relevance to my study as it points out one of the main ways in which HLLs are perceived, portrayed and constructed based

on language ideologies. Ideologies that in turn shape attitudes and actions, the way one sees oneself and others (The Language Gap Forum, 2015).

In total, language ideologies as the beliefs of a dominant class or group are linked to power. It is through discourse that ideologies are disseminated and in turn act to legitimize political power. One of the ways in which this happens is through the production of images of social reality, of an imaginary world that is determined to shape the identity of people through the use of language. Specifically, the language of the dominant majority, which seeks within the West a model to follow, rejecting any non-majority languages and their varieties and deeming them as unfit according to ideologies as reflected in language policies. SHLLs are not the exception and while there has been much research since the 1970's, there is still a much needed incorporation of student voices as it relates to the understanding of language ideologies and identities which is the reason that motivated my research.

Summary

The field of HLLs saw its growth in the U.S. during the 1990's after U.S. academics widely adopted the term of HL originally coined in Canada during the 1970's. While there is yet no agreement on one specific way to define a HLL, Valdés (2001) definition has been mostly used given its emphasis on proficiency. The field of HLLs has fed from research on the fields of second language acquisition and bilingual education that in themselves have undergone three main shifts - linguistic, sociolinguistic and critical. Though Valdés is one of the originators of the SHL programs that arose during the Chicano Movement and though research has made significant contributions much of its focus has remain on the linguistic aspects making an evident call for further research that incorporates a critical aspect and student voice. Recently, a look at sociolinguistic and sociopolitical issues have allowed for a look at language ideologies,

specifically the one nation-one language ideology and the standard language ideology. These are important for they allow for a critical examination of the relationship between language and identity formation.

The power of language since colonialism has been used as the primary mechanism for nation building. Through representative geopolitical order and frontiers, linguistic maps and literary geography have painted an imagined homogenized identity in which any deviations from such façade of standardization has become Othered, erased. This has been possible, through constant and repeated discourses that make possible certain statements and not others at a particular time, place and location. Discourse, which covers all forms of communication emerges from ideas and thoughts motivated by social interest - ideologies. Again, because of compulsory repetitions, ideologies are naturalized and often go unquestioned as they are below our awareness. Yet, ideologies influence identity formation as identity is the product of linguistic and semiotic practices - interaction. While ideologies are invisible, there are tools that can help one pinpoint these regimes of language specifically within language policies, which claim success in the name of modernity.

This chapter provided a review of key literature about the SHL field with current and prior studies, language ideologies about Spanish in the U.S. and in the SHL classroom as well as identity studies concerning SHLLs within the SHL field. After highlighting the gaps within the research, I presented the framework that informs my understanding of the language ideologies and identities of SHLLs within a SHL classroom. In the following chapter, I will describe the methodology used in this study and justify my choice for a qualitative study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research methodology and procedures I used to explore the language ideologies and identities of SHLLs as well as an instructor in a college level Spanish heritage language class at a university on the U.S. - Mexico border. I first describe my choice for a qualitative study. Following, I describe the research context and participants as well as data collection methods and the process of analysis I followed. I conclude this section with an account of who I am as a researcher and my positionality as it relates to my research interest.

Methodology

Justification for my methodology requires consideration of the research question that drove this study. The overarching question was:

- How do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs?

The sub questions were:

- What are the language ideologies of SHLLs (students) and an instructor in a higher education institution located on the U.S. - Mexico border?
- What are their language ideologies representative of?

My choice for a qualitative study relates to the interpretative nature of the research questions.

Given that “what” questions are exploratory - used to investigate that which is not clearly defined - and that “how” and “why” questions are more explanatory - deal with complex linkages that need to be traced over time to understand why something is happening, the study was most suited for a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). More specifically, qualitative research is a scientific method of observation used to gather non-numerical data (Babbie, 2014). It relies on verbal and visual communication, words and images, to answer *why*

and *how* questions to expound on the meanings of social phenomena in a given context (Litchman, 2013). In this study, the overarching question was a *how* question which focused specifically on the language ideologies and identities of SHLLs and their instructor in a SHL classroom at a university on the U.S. - Mexico border. Because the social and physical setting are also crucial aspects of an environment, in the specific case of this study, a college level Spanish heritage language class, context matters. Context is key in understanding how meanings are both constructed and negotiated. Therefore, observing SHLLs and their instructor in their natural setting provided “a way of knowing that assumes that the researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information with his or her eyes and ears as a filter” (Litchman, 2013, p. 9).

In total, a qualitative researcher understands that while he/she is the instrument of the research, the one who will assist in making the unfamiliar familiar and the familiar unfamiliar, it is ultimately, the participant’s meanings, which are at the heart of the research. That it is not about “the” view of reality, but about “a” view of it. That it is not about universal “truths,” but about multiple perspectives (Frank, 1999). The focus is on extracting and interpreting the meaning of experience(s) by entering the world of others and attempting a full understanding. In the following section, I provide a description of a pilot study, which I conducted prior to the dissertation research and which, played a major role in the conceptualization and design of this study.

Why This Study? The Pilot

After eight years of working as a Spanish language lecturer, I became very intrigued by the continuous repetition of “I don’t know Spanish” from my students. I was teaching all levels of Spanish language to native and non-native Spanish speakers at a university located on the U.S. - Mexico border, which serves the second largest student population of Mexican Americans in

the U.S. (*University Fact Book*, 2020) ¹. The students who said that they “didn’t know Spanish” were young SHLLs (ages 18-35) even though they could speak Spanish. The regularity of this statement led me to wonder, what exactly did “I don’t know Spanish” mean for them, especially since they spoke and answered in Spanish. Intrigued by this I started to pay more attention to what they would express and when they would express it. At the beginning, I saw it as a wakeup call to my teaching style, I felt an ethical obligation to make sure that if they felt they were not learning the language then I had to somehow teach them better, teach them more and provide more oral practice. However, to my surprise, they preferred written grammar drills rather than oral practices. They were persistent in the idea that without grammar drills they would never be able to know Spanish. Even though I continuously emphasized that in communicating, grammatical perfection was not the goal that it was more about being able to transmit a message, they did not seem to believe this and held strongly to the idea that only by mastering grammatical rules would they be able to say that they knew Spanish. This surprised me for two reasons: 1) I could not seem to understand what they meant, and 2) I consequently could not meet their learning needs though I continued to think about how to address this concern.

While I continued working as a Spanish language lecturer with Spanish language native and non-native speakers at the university located on the U.S. - Mexico border, I also became involved in a senior adult (ages 50 and over) educational program at the same institution. The senior educational program is one of 124 institutes on college campuses in the U.S. The program is supported by a foundation established in 1977, which makes endowments to colleges and other non-profit organizations. All senior educational programs provide a distinctive array of non-credit courses and activities specifically designed for senior adults who are interested in learning

¹ All names used (for people, places, and locations) in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

for the joy of learning. There are no prior academic credentials required, no exams, papers assigned, grades, diplomas or certificates issued. The difference between the classes that I was teaching was not just about an age difference (young versus old) but also more noticeably about the accountability of the courses. The young Spanish language learners I had were required to take class examinations versus the senior Spanish language learners who did not as their course was more to satisfy an intellectual curiosity and not a core course requirement for a degree.

One Friday evening in 2016, while telling jokes in the senior adult class I paused to allow a student to introduce himself since he had missed the first session. He introduced himself in Spanish, stating: “*Mi nombre es Memo Alarcón y hablo español, pero estoy aquí porque no sé español.*” [My name is Memo Alarcón and I speak Spanish, but I am here because I do not know Spanish]. I froze. Memo, the senior Spanish language learner, was repeating the same thing the younger SHLLs kept on saying. I felt immobilized; it was as if his words had run too quickly through my brain and I could not process his words nor believe what I was hearing. How could someone be speaking in Spanish and yet claim that they did not know the language? At that specific moment, I could not tell if I was dumbfounded because of what he was saying, how he was saying it or if it was like reliving a nightmare that haunted me. I was hearing the same message over again. I stood static with a blank face for a moment and then I asked him, still surprised, what he meant because his introduction was in Spanish, the Spanish he himself was claiming not to know. His peers all turned to look at him as if to say, “wrong class buddy this is for beginners, for non-natives.” In response to my question, he proceeded to tell us his story.

Memo had been born and had lived for many years in McOndo, U.S., where he had also attended school in the heart of the city before moving with his parents to central Texas. His parents, of Mexican descent, spoke Spanish and Spanish was his first language yet school had

denied him the right to speak it. As a result, he turned to English and started to forget about Spanish. Now as an adult, he wanted to recover what he had lost because of a school system that would punish him if he used or spoke Spanish. He wanted to recover his language, the language of his parents. He added: “*No nomas nos daban detention, también nos golpeaban con una tabla así.*” [Not only would they give us detention, they would also hit us with a wood stick this big]. As he told his story, my eyes as well as his began to fill with tears; it became almost impossible for me to swallow. Then, all of a sudden like an outburst, other students whose first languages were other than English began to add their own, similar stories to his. They had all witnessed and or experienced firsthand language repression in schools for speaking languages other than English. They testified that because their parents wanted them to be successful academically in the U.S., they had taken the decision to expose them to and to use more English thus resulting in them forgetting their mother tongue.

By listening to story after story about language repression, I started to understand what “I don’t know Spanish” meant from a student perspective. I looked back, reflected on the repeated message of my SHLLs, and began to wonder if they had somehow shared the same experiences of the senior adults. Had they too suffered a form of language repression? Could it be that mastering grammatical rules was a way of recovering their mother tongue? The instance of awareness that I experienced in the Spanish adult course, was a determining factor that shaped the design of a pilot study I conducted prior to this study. I realized then, that it was important to directly ask the students what they meant when they expressed that they did not know Spanish. Convinced that I had the responsibility to understand what my students meant, especially the ones who seemed to own the phrase, “I don’t know Spanish,” I decided to explore and focus on what were their language ideologies and beliefs.

It is important to present an overview of the six-month pilot study - a preliminary small - scale qualitative research study since that study was key in helping me form the present study. I conducted the pilot study during the Fall of 2016, with the aim of understanding HLLs experiences and perspectives of learning Spanish in a university Spanish classroom designed for HLLs. The three questions that guided the pilot study were:

1. What are the language ideologies of SHLLs (students) and instructors in a higher education institution located on the U.S. - Mexico border?
2. How do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs? and,
3. How do changes to language policies influence SHLLs ideologies and identities?

The IRB-approved pilot study involved a total of five participants, four females and one male, at the same higher education institution in which the focal study took place and in which I work as a Spanish language lecturer. In the pilot study, the participants selected through purposive sampling, were SHLLs, age range 20 to 34, and the fifth participant was their Spanish instructor, a colleague of mine. For all participants, their first native language was Spanish and all student participants, SHLLs, were currently enrolled in the university's SHL classroom, first native level.

Data was collected by doing classroom observations during which I took field notes and by conducting individual interviews with the four SHLLs. The individual interviews had open-ended questions, lasted between 30 to 55 minutes each and were recorded. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, which was to understand their ideas of language, and ethical guidelines were followed at all times by the signing of consent forms. After individual interviews were finalized, the recordings were transcribed and coded. Analytic memos were

written in order to better organize and interpret the data (Charmaz, 2006). Upon analyzing the data, two major findings resulted: 1) knowing language as a way of legitimizing identity and 2) knowing language as a way of negotiating social spaces. The data showed that SHLLs had the desire to learn “standard” Spanish, the grammar, as it represented for them the ability to associate Spanish language to being Mexican. In the same manner, knowing language resulted for them as a way of negotiating between different spaces (e.g. work, home, school) for various purposes beyond legitimizing their identity.

The pilot study showed that while the participants all seemed to agree on what language itself is –a way of communicating– there was a tension. The tension was between what they claimed language to be (again, a way of communicating) and what they felt responsible for knowing (grammar) in order to say that they know a language. Such tension was tied to the value(s) attributed to language(s). For example, Spanish used at home was informal and improper versus the Spanish used by the instructor, which was formal, correct, as it equaled grammatical rules. Such ideas of the value(s) of language(s) were not just about a present state/context, but rather an accumulation of lived experiences between their home(s) and school(s) as narrated by the participants. The pilot revealed a need for a deeper understanding of such complexities, as well as the need to explore the role of educational institutions in shaping the beliefs of SHLLs. Because of the pilot study, I saw that it was important to look at the entire life history, all the experiences from elementary school to college, of the students as it relates to language and school and not just at a current moment in time. This additional information was necessary to understand the “why” behind their statements and the reasons for such a strong desire to master grammar rules.

As expressed, the pilot study served as preparation for the present study. It was a way of “putting a toe... in the research waters before diving in” (Sampson, 2004, p. 399). The pilot added to my degree of immersion and allowed me to: 1) establish access, trust and rapport, 2) refine interviews and adapt the research approach, and 3) after coding and analyzing the small sample data collected it highlighted gaps. More specific to the third point, after coding and analyzing the data collected in the pilot study, I recognized that I had not asked the participants about their past educational experiences, I was only asking about their experiences in the context of the SHL class. I realized that this limited my understanding of the phenomena. In addition to this, access for the present study was established much more easily after the pilot study as such allowed the Spanish instructor teaching the course to feel less threatened by the idea of being observed and thus became more comfortable over time. As time passed and the participating instructor noted that all information was kept confidential, mutual trust was consolidated and I was able to establish better rapport with her and her students. Sampson (2004) states: “familiarity with the researcher and the research process allows research ‘subjects’ to relax, to be themselves, and to behave more naturally” (p. 398). With all of this, a deeper degree of immersion helped me in focusing the lines of enquiry.

Design of the Study

Initially I had thought about designing an ethnographic study for the dissertation research since I had conducted the pilot study as an ethnographic study, albeit a very brief one. However, after realizing that the major source of the findings for the pilot was based on individual interviews over participant observations and that the questions I wanted to ask were more about understanding participants’ attitudes and perspectives than classroom, I decided that a qualitative approach was most suitable.

For this study, I revisited and rewrote the research questions from the pilot study to more fully explore the language ideologies of SHLL's and how such ideologies shaped their identities.

Thus again, the overarching question that drove this study was:

- How do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs?

In addition, the two sub questions analyzed were:

- What are the language ideologies of SHLLs (students) and an instructor in a higher education institution located on the U.S. - Mexico border?
- What are their language ideologies representative of?

In what follows, I further elaborate on the conceptual framework of the study by describing the research context, data collection methods, analysis and my positionality as researcher.

The Focal Research Project Context

McOndo-the Borderland, the Community and the Higher Education Institution

The present one, a one-year research study, was conducted at a public HSI located on the U.S. - Mexico border from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018 in a city that is recognized as bilingual and bicultural. The city of McOndo is one of the sixth largest cities in Texas with a community of more than 840,000. Its population is composed of 81.3% Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It encompasses a border that divides two sister cities characterized by the socioeconomic inequalities of first and third world countries. While visible physical borders mark clear spaces, there are also less visible but real and present divisions between languages and cultures that connect these worlds. It is a place of in-betweenness, a "place of [constant] contradictions" that merge to form a new consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.20).

The city is also home to one of the largest military bases in the U.S. Within the surrounding mountain desert terrain of McOndo and under its abundant sunshine, lays the urban university covering a total of 420 acres of land. Established in 1914 and now a designated top tier research university, it serves its primary constituency- residents of far west Texas, southern New Mexico and northern Mexico. In this Southwestern U.S. higher education institution with an enrollment of over 25,000 students, 81% of the student population is Hispanic and another 4% of student population are Mexican nationals (*University Fact Book*, 2020). Additionally, there is a 36% Hispanic faculty composition (*University Fact Book*, 2020). The university serves as a reflection of its binational metropolitan area by serving the second largest Mexican American majority student population in the U.S. It is common to hear and encounter Spanish in every context. In the university, six Spanish courses are offered of which two are designed for Spanish Heritage Language Speakers.

Courses for Spanish Heritage Language Speakers

The two courses designed for Spanish Heritage Language Speakers within the institution are Spanish 2303 and Spanish 2304. Table 3.1 shows the description of both courses according to the academic catalog.

Table 3.1

Description of Courses for Spanish Heritage Language Speakers

Course	Description
SPAN 2303 Spanish for Spanish Speakers One	<p>A first course for bilingual students who have acquired listening and speaking skills in Spanish because it is spoken in their home or social environment. Development of reading and writing skills, with attention to spelling and use of the written accent. Entrance into SPAN 2303 is by examination only; completion of this course with a grade of "C" or better entitles a student to eight hours of credit by examination for SPAN 1401 and SPAN 1402.</p> <p>Prerequisite(s): (BSPN score of 5 AND ISPN score of 10 AND SPAN score between 000 and 073).</p>
SPAN 2304 Spanish for Spanish Speakers Two	<p>A continuation of Spanish 2303, with additional opportunities for reading and composition, a review of the written accent, and an introduction to the systematic study of Spanish grammar.</p> <p>Prerequisite(s): (SPAN 2303 w/D or better) OR (BSPN score between 6 and 6 AND ISPN score of 10 AND SPAN score between 074 and 083).</p>

Placement for all students who will enroll in any course from the university's Spanish language program, non-native or native, is done via a language placement test called the Spanish Placement Test (SPT) or credit equivalency. That is, students who do not have transferred credit(s) from another institution where they had previously taken Spanish are required to take the Spanish language placement test prior to their first semester of enrollment in a language course. The SPT is used as a basic measurement scale for their knowledge of language, an association of a test score to language proficiency. The majority of students who take a Spanish course are trying to fulfill a core requirement of their degree plan, six credit hours, the equivalent

to two courses depending on their major although there are also students who may decide to take a Spanish course for personal reasons such as intellectual curiosity. The SHL courses, SPAN 2303 and 2304, differ from the other four Spanish courses, SPAN 1301, 1302, 2301 and 2302, in that they are designed for SHLLs. That is, students who speak or at least understand Spanish to some degree versus the beginner courses (SPAN 1301 and 1302) designed for novice non-natives of Spanish and intermediate non-natives courses (SPAN 2301 and 2302).

Negotiating Access

Negotiating access to the Spanish heritage classroom within the university where the one-year qualitative study took place, from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018, was not very difficult as fortunately for me, I was able to approach the same Spanish instructor from the pilot study who again was to be teaching Spanish 2303 and 2304 during the time of the study. Due to my position as a Spanish lecturer, I was able to talk to the instructor prior to the beginning of both semesters and given the trust built during the pilot study, the Fall of 2016, the teacher very willingly agreed to allow me into her classroom again. I explained to her that in trying to understand the attitudes and perspectives about language of SHLLs within a SHL college classroom, doing participant-observations in her classroom would provide me more opportunities to observe student language practices and to talk to students about their beliefs as it concerns language(s).

After talking to the Spanish instructor, I obtained permission to conduct my research study first through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) which reviews the methods proposed for research to ensure they are ethical and then by contacting the department chair of the Languages and Linguistic department at the university. The IRB approval process involved outlining all procedures and processes needed to ensure adherence to standards put forth for the study of human subjects, including participants' confidentiality and informed consent. Approval

from the department chair was requested in person by explaining the aim of the study, the time requested to complete the study, and the classroom in which I was requesting permission with the previous instructor's agreement. Following the in-person request to the chair, I wrote a letter requesting formal permission so that with the professor's consent, I could be allowed to enter the SHL classroom. Permission was granted, the letter was signed, and I then continued to follow approved IRB procedure as proposed for the recruitment of participants in which it was decided that proper steps would be taken to protect the rights and welfare of all participants in the study. The recruitment of voluntary participants was done in person and via email within the SHL classes to which I had admittance. The purpose of the study was explained to the SHLLs both verbally and in written form so that they could clearly understand why their voluntary participation was being requested and those who agreed to participate signed consent forms.

Participants

Given the focus of this study on identities of SHLLs, participants were selected using purposive sampling. That is, "samples of individuals who are selected on purpose based on what types of individuals would be especially good sources of data for a particular research topic" (Galvan, 2006, p. 57). In this study, participants had to meet the criteria of being over 18 years of age and enrolled in any of the two sections offered for SHLLs, Spanish 2303 or Spanish 2304, during the semesters in which the research was conducted - Fall 2017 and Spring 2018.

A total of two class sections (Spanish 2303 and 2304) were observed, one per semester, Fall 2017 (Spanish 2304) and Spring 2018 (Spanish 2303). Fourteen SHLL participants took part in individual interviews during the first semester (Spanish 2304 during Fall 2017) and eight during the second semester (Spanish 2303 during Spring 2018), as well as the assigned instructor who was the same for both semesters. The participants in the study were recruited via face-to-

face interaction and with the use of a flyer which was disseminated in class, as well as in an online platform specifically designed for the students enrolled in the course and sent via email with prior teacher approval. Following, is a list of all the participants (Table 3.2) - there is no significance to the order and organization of it.

Table 3.2

Research Participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Birth Place	Educational Background	Major
Erdosain	26	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	Criminal Justice
Diddy	31	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Pre-Kindergarten. -Immigrated to the U.S. at age 10.	Organizational Communications
Adriana	20	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten. -Immigrated to the U.S. permanently at age one.	Psychology
Joanna	35	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten.	Linguistics
Oliver	20	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	Criminal Justice
Eduardo	21	U.S. (Puerto Rico)	-Educated in the Puerto Rico from Kindergarten to 6 th grade. -Immigrated to the U.S. at age 13. -Educated in the U.S. from 7 th grade until present.	Psychology
Ester	23	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten.	Psychology

Pseudonyms	Age	Birth Place	Educational Background	Major
Lourdes	21	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	Social Work
Emiliano	35	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	Social Work
Iliana	21	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Kindergarten.	Social Work
Damián	23	U.S.	-Educated in the Mexico from Pre-Kindergarten to 8 th grade. -Immigrated to the U.S. at age 13. -Educated in the U.S. from 9 th grade until present.	Criminal Justice
Luna	23	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten.	English and American Literature
Dayana	22	México	-Educated in the Mexico from Pre-Kindergarten to 8 th grade. -Immigrated to the U.S. at age 13. -Educated in the U.S. from 9 th grade until present.	Biomedical
Claudia	23	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Kindergarten.	Bilingual Education
Cristina	32	México	-Educated in the U.S. since Pre-K (Daycare) -Immigrated to the U.S. on the 3 rd day of her birth.	Bilingual Education
Aurora	33	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Pre-Kindergarten.	Criminal Justice
Jennifer	24	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	French
Gerardo	21	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S since Kindergarten.	Graphic Design

Pseudonyms	Age	Birth Place	Educational Background	Major
Ana	20	U.S.	-Educated in the U.S. since Pre-Kindergarten.	Psychology
Rosa	20	U.S.	-Immigrated to Mexico at age two. -Immigrated to the U.S. at age four. -Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten.	History
Marisela	28	U.S	-Educated in the U.S. since Kindergarten.	Bilingual Education
Arlt	23	Guatemala	-Educated in the U.S since Pre-Kindergarten.	English

It is important to mention that the background of the participants in this study, as presented in Table 3.2, can be compared in terms of origin to other studies that document the origins of Spanish speakers, who in their majority come from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico (Zamora, 2013). Further, it should also be noted that there are limited studies on the current state of SHL courses offered at U.S. colleges and universities. The first and only nationwide study designed to assess the state of SHL programs titled *Report on the NFLC/AATSP Survey of Spanish Language Programs for Native Speakers*, was done in 2002 by Ingold, Rivers, Tesser, and Ashby. The report indicated that out of 240 randomly selected higher education Spanish programs across the U.S., 146 small and large institutions responded to the survey, and only 26 (17.8%) reported having Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) programs (Ingold et al., 2002).

A more current study done in 2011 by Sara Beaudrie titled *Spanish Heritage Language Programs: A Snapshot of Current Programs in the Southwestern United States*, looked at four-

year universities only within the American Southwest. The study reported that out of 173 universities that had a Hispanic presence of at least five percent of the undergraduate enrollment and that offered Spanish language classes, only 66 offered SHL courses (Beaudrie, 2011). The greater number of SHL courses were reported in the states of Texas and California where there is a high concentration of Hispanics. Total number of SHL courses offered in both states was 56, 20 in Texas and 36 in California. Amongst this information, the study revealed that there were nine different terms used for this population of students and out of 122 descriptions available for the SHL courses offered, 94 (71%) mentioned writing as one of the main foci of the courses.

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

The data for this qualitative study derived from multiple sources, which include but are not limited to: classroom observations, field notes, phenomenological semi-structured interviews, and artifacts. Data collection lasted two semesters (Fall 2017 and Spring 2018), a year.

Observations and Field Notes

Although this was not an ethnographic study per se, I employed ethnographic approaches for understanding social phenomenon, specifically, how students used and talked about Spanish in a SHLL college course. This involved two primary data collection and analytic activities: participant observations and field notes (production of written accounts). With participant observations, the researcher seeks an immersion into others' worlds in order to participate and experience events and meanings as the participants do (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). Participant observations involve more than just "hanging out," it is beyond noting the physical environment and behaviors taking place, to how participants make sense of these and how their understanding influences their behavior. With field notes the emphasis is on describing in full

and rich detail, thick notes, the moment to moment activities which will result in “active processes of interpretation and sense-making” (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011, p. 9).

After being granted IRB approval and with prior the permission of the department, observations were conducted in the classroom of SHLLs during two semesters - Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. I obtained teacher permission and conducted weekly observations -Mondays and Tuesdays depending on class schedules. Observations lasted approximately 80 minutes each, which was the duration of each class session. An approximate total of 2,400 minutes, the equivalent to 40 hours of observations were conducted. Prior to observing, I introduced myself to the students as well as the purpose of the study to build and establish rapport. Given the focus of the study on language ideologies, observation was focused on behavior patterns and repeated messages concerning language. For example, the ways in which language was seen and or talked about as well as language uses. I paid special attention to side conversations and reactions of the participants as they listened to each other when speaking and reading in the classroom for these activities became points of comparison in language proficiency amongst them.

Individual Interviews

Individual in-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection and were conducted to understand student and teacher perspective(s) and experiences about the Spanish language. I interviewed both students and the instructor in the SHL classroom. Interviews lasted between 30 to 70 minutes and were conducted in the language preference of the participant – English, Spanish and or both. The interview process started one month prior to the end of each semester to allow rapport to be established during classroom observations and grant sufficient time to the students who wanted to participate to choose a date and time convenient for them. Questions were open-ended to allow participation and encourage conversation (see Appendix A

and Appendix B). I started by asking the participants to provide basic demographic information such as name, age, race/ethnicity, major, language uses at home, school and work, as well as for them to draw a timetable of events they would consider key as it pertains to their language experiences since birth up until present day. This allowed the participants' time to think about key moments that marked their life as it pertains to languages and such elicited rich descriptions. Furthermore, this allowed me the opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information. Because the goal of the study was to address the overarching question of how do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs, questions focused on understanding how their language trajectories intersected with their educational lives. For example, I asked to which languages they were exposed during their childhood, their reason for taking the SHL course, and what language and culture meant for them. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Artifacts.

Artifacts were also collected as a way to triangulate the data in this study. These included but were not limited to: books, syllabus, handouts, student work, program web page sites and written reflections by students and the teacher. Artifacts were a window to exploring language ideology sources, to better understand student and teacher perspectives and to enhance the validity of the research findings. Through the use of multiple sources I looked for patterns and convergence, I also paid equal attention to inconsistencies and contradictions as I aimed to understand the participants' behaviors and their complexities. As Mathison (1988) suggests, "whether the data converge, are inconsistent or are contradictory the researcher must attempt to construct explanations for the data and about the data" (p. 15). Through the collection of artifacts, I was able to corroborate what the vast majority of participants were expressing in the individual interviews. That is, they had almost all taken or were taking a Chicano course class

which was key in shaping the way they view themselves and in such cases, they had been deeply moved by readings that portrayed the struggles and sufferings of migrants in search of a better life in the U.S. In this study, validity was ensured by the use of data triangulation in the analysis of multiple sources of data (observations, interviews and artifacts), member-checks during the data collection (verifying information gathered through observations and in the interviews), peer debriefing (with my dissertation chair) to enhance the accuracy of the accounts by examining my assumptions and considering alternative ways of looking at the data and reflexivity.

Data Analysis

The aim of analysis was to understand the relationship between language ideologies and SHLLs' identities and beliefs about the Spanish language. The process of data analysis was emergent and ongoing; it was built step-by-step from the ground up. It began in the data collection process up until the writing of the findings. I started by reading and rereading through the data, the field notes, the transcribed interviews and the artifacts, several times in order to become intimately familiar with it until "people, events and quotations sift[ed] constantly through [my] mind" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 158). I then wrote analytic memos to record my first thoughts on analysis. Memo writing provided a space "to become actively engaged in [my] material, to develop [my] ideas and to fine-tune [my] subsequent data-gathering" as well as reflect (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72). After this, I did a first-hand open coding of the transcribed individual interviews using paper and pencil on hard copy printouts, which I divided into three columns (first column contained a transcribed interview, second and third columns were used for coding) and on which I coded two times. Using paper and pencil gave me more control over and ownership of the work as it allowed me to "touch the data" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 28).

Codes, “often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-base or visual data” (Saldaña, 2009, p.3) where first done line-by-line (naming each line) and at times mix-matching with In Vivo codes (using the direct words of the participants). Line-by-line and In Vivo coding allowed my coding to become more focused with each interview and it allowed me to attune myself to the participant’s language, perspectives, and worldviews (Saldaña, 2009). As Charmaz (2006) explains, “careful coding ...helps you to refrain from imputing your motives, fears, or unresolved personal issues to your respondents and to your collected data” (Charmaz, 2006, p.54). Following the first coding cycle, I hand coded again for a second time using focused coding specifically topic coding, which “summarizes in a word or short phrase - most often as a noun- the basic topic of a passage” (Saldaña, 2009, p.88). Topic coding allowed me to concentrate on what were the key salient topics and thus determine the adequacy of the initial codes. Although the first codes provided me with a preliminary set of ideas to explore and examine, it was through focused coding that I was able to move across interviews and observations and compare participants’ experiences, actions and interpretations (Saldaña, 2009).

After having hand coded two times one by one each of the twenty-three total interviews of the study, I wrote topic memos for each on which I expounded on the topic codes. Through the topic memos, codes and raw data were transformed into findings. It is important to mention that as I progressed through my coding and the writing of memos, I kept in conversation with my dissertation chair and this provided me the opportunity to articulate my internal thinking process and to clarify my emergent ideas. Once I had finished writing topic memos and even during the process, I used a giant Post-it note to sort and arrange the coded into clusters to see the smaller pieces of the larger puzzle and as a way to corroborate the coded and the analyzed, making sure

that what was being defined was grounded in the data. The codes, the memos, and the giant Post-it note, allowed me to ultimately identify the three following themes: (1) language dichotomizations, (2) identity suppression and (3) identity recovery. These themes will be presented and discussed in chapters four and five. With the themes that were generated based on codes, I hope to contribute to the existing literature on SHLLs in two ways. First, by providing a space for student voices to be heard for which there is a dire need. Secondly, by bridging the previously disconnected fields of linguistic anthropology and education as I highlighted in chapter two. Thus, I hope a better and more holistic understanding of complex phenomena can be reached. As a final important component of designing and conducting qualitative research, I describe my positionality in the following section.

Positionality

Stating ones' positionality is an ethical responsibility. As Malterud (2001) points out:

A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions (p. 483-484).

Because the researcher is instrumental in constructing an interpretation of the data, self-reflection— a systematic reflection of who one is and one's personal biography—is necessary since it indicates awareness of self and ones influence in the research process.

I was born December 29, 1985 in the middle of the bridge between Mexico and the U.S. right between the division line of the metal plate that with a fine golden line marks the division between Mexico and the U.S. - half of my body facing south, the other half to the north. My mother who had legal status as a U.S. resident had paid five hundred dollars to a midwifery

clinic in McOndo, Texas as she wanted her first born to be American, to have better opportunities than those she had. Though she prepared as best as she could, things did not go as she planned. She says she started having pain and she knew the time was coming. She managed to get to the clinic accompanied by one of my aunts but many hours passed and I would not come out. They decided to give her body time, hours passed by and with medication her contractions subsided. My aunt who had been by her side all this time became tired and hungry and so thinking I would take longer, she decided she would go to McDonalds to have lunch. Since no one else was there, she took my mother's purse and all her documentation. Little did she know that the moment she walked out the clinic's door, labor would resume stronger than before announcing my arrival.

My mother started screaming, she says she could not even breathe and though she tried to push with all she had I was way too big and she fainted. The midwives tried to get her to respond but as time passed her breathing became slower and she did not respond. The midwives decided that they could not help her, that she was going to need greater help and thought it would be best to transfer her to the local hospital. They quickly grabbed her records but it was then that they realized that they did not have a copy of her passport nor her social security card on file. Since my aunt had left with her purse, there was no one they could contact and thinking she would die, they decided that it should be in her land: Mexico. Instead of transferring her to the local hospital and thinking she was illegally in the U.S., they called for a Mexican ambulance to meet them half way on the bridge and when they were transferring her from one ambulance stretcher to another, right in the middle of the bridge, she opened her eyes and I was born. A decision had to be made fast and since she was already on the Mexican ambulance stretcher they decided to take her to the closest hospital on the Mexican side. She recalls she had no strength and since I did not

cry, all she cared to know was if I was alive. After a couple days, she sued the midwives for sending her to Mexico against her will. She also sought to have me declared a citizen of the U.S. However, the U.S. court decided I was going south not north, even though I was not going but was being taken, and declared me Mexican.

I lived in Mexico until I was four years old and was constantly and illegally (through the bridge and through the river) being taken back and forth between the border as my mother worked in the U.S. but resided in Mexico until my family permanently established in McOndo, Texas when I was eight years old. Growing up in Mexico was hard as I discovered the horrifying face of poverty. My parents offered me all they had, which was little for they were poor and uneducated. At an early age, I had already noticed that my house was different, far from anything like others. The walls, made out of newspaper, cardboard, and plastic, offered little protection against the harsh wind that relentlessly slammed into my body; making it ache so much, that I can still feel a chill rundown my spine, whenever I remember those cold, winter nights. I cursed the days rain poured down on our house, soaking the “walls” and producing an ink smell, that would linger in our house for days. Summertime offered no consolation either, it only meant that the intense heat of the day would irritate my skin. As for the floor, we had none - at least from my point of view. Our floor was literally brown dirt and every time I would drop water, the earth would immediately devour it, just like quicksand. Unfortunately or fortunately, I still remember my “bed”, an old *Chiquita* banana box, as if I still slept in it. When I would go to bed with only two meals a day, the banana smell that had penetrated the box permanently, would mock me incessantly from the time I went to bed to the time I rose. Sometimes, my stomach would wake me up in the middle of the night, begging for a banana, or for any kind of food for that matter. One of my mother’s brothers led a political party in Mexico that would fight rich *latifundistas*

(landowners) and take over land by force to give to the poor. Her brother's political activities endangered us and this, combined with our extreme poverty led my mother against my father's will, to make the decision to move to McOndo in an attempt to strive for a better future, not necessarily for her but for me and my sister- who had been born in the U.S. Early Sunday morning on April 19th of 1992, on Easter, my mother grabbed my six month old sister and I and we crossed the border. With tears in her eyes she promised us we would have a better tomorrow and never be in need again. My father had initially stayed behind in Mexico as he, just like me, was undocumented.

Growing up my first language was Spanish and I was first enrolled in an English immersion course at the age of six in a U.S. school. Prior to this, in Mexico at the age of four I was already in third grade as I had learned to read at an early age and no one could take care of me at home. When my mother first enrolled me in school in the U.S., I was placed in kindergarten because of my age and my lack of English despite having passed third grade in Mexico. The school had promised to promote me back to third grade once I could speak in English but they never did. I went from doing math to drawing maps in kindergarten. In the English immersion course I was exposed to an IBM program with repetitions of English vocabulary words and images for which I had to wear an orange headset. The process of acquiring English language was quite difficult for me and I relied heavily on ninety-nine cent dictionaries and thesaurus to translate especially when homework was assigned to me as no one in my family spoke English. There were a couple of times in which I was accused of cheating as my teachers could not believe the homework submitted was mine. They questioned my writing and claimed that my vocabulary use was too advanced for my age. It took me some time to understand that what they claimed to be elevated vocabulary use was ordinary every day Spanish

use for me. I started to keep track of what they marked as elevated, started to build my repertoire and polished my writing. By fifth grade, I became fully bilingual being able to speak, read and write in both English and Spanish. The last time I participated in a bilingual program was in sixth grade and it was not until middle school and high school in which I had the opportunity to enroll in Spanish courses, which were offered as foreign language courses although Spanish was not foreign to me. It is also important to mention, that once I learned English I used it often as I had to hide my illegal status. This became especially evident to me after middle school when my dreams shattered in a blink of an eye.

When I was in 7th grade I meet a wonderful teacher who saw potential in me and convinced my mother to allow me to join the math team. At that time, we lived in *the projects*, and as is the case with low income and undocumented families – my father and I in this case - we had to live almost in silence, moving like ghosts in the wind. Given that it was difficult to make money, we had to secretly make and sell *tamales* to survive. Because I was the oldest and the only one able to speak both languages, English and Spanish, after school I would have to run to the apartment without losing time to sell *tamales* outside a store. Sometimes we would finish the sales fast but other nights it would take time and we would return home past midnight. It is funny to remember but my mother would threaten to punish me if I would do my homework so after selling *tamales*, I would have to hide under a blanket with a flashlight to complete my assignments. As stated, I was undocumented and had no time to spare and so participating in anything was a luxury I never even considered.

One day in a math class, the teacher was asking questions and she noticed I could perform beyond basics so she started to challenge me with algebraic equations. When they noticed I could solve mathematical problems, they told me I was bright and put me in Advance

Placement (AP) courses from which they never let me out. The teacher asked me to join the math club, I explained I would love to but I could not and after much insistence, I told her why. She told me she wanted to talk to my parents and I said they would not listen but she insisted non-stop until she negotiated with my mom. Since I could not join practice sessions after school, I would practice at 5:00 am every day and I could participate on Saturday competitions only after I had finished selling *tamales*. My mom had made herself very clear: no *tamales*, no competition and they agreed. Long story short, I became so good in math I started to believe I could become an architect and I started to dream I could finally buy my mother a house. Therefore, I sold and competed, sold and competed and with every transaction at the store and every early morning practice, I grew in math skills until I scored high on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test. Unexpectedly I was awarded a full ride scholarship from a prestigious university because of my high-test scores. I could not believe my eyes, it all felt like a dream. A dream that did not last long because as soon as they knew I was illegal, they snatched the scholarship out my hands. My teacher fought to try and save my scholarship but couldn't do much other than get the school to protect my identity. It was like a bucket of cold ice water, a slap on the face and a wakeup call - if I wanted to amount to anything I needed legal status. After that more than ever, I vowed to protect myself. Even though I could do nothing but wait for my illegal status to change, from previous experiences and with this, I realized that at least if others knew I knew English, my legal status would not even be questioned despite my brown complexion.

After middle school, I went on to complete high school where I was awarded several scholarships that I was able to claim before their expiration date as I was finally, after ten years of waiting, awarded residency in the U.S. Currently but not before the many struggles I faced due to my illegal status which has now been resolved, I am a college level Spanish instructor

who teaches both natives and non-natives, all language levels (beginners, intermediates and advanced) and ages sixteen and up. I have experience teaching face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses. I also teach medical Spanish to medical students in the border region. As an instructor, I am aware that I have gained some insider perspective. It is my belief that every situation and context experienced has shaped and influenced the way in which I see language and the kind of instructor I think I have become. This, as I have experienced third world marginalization living in extreme poverty in Mexico, illegally in the U.S. for many years under the shadows during which English became both a challenge and a shield and yet also, in first world opportunities that developing countries might not otherwise have. As I have read and meditated about language, I have become interested in understanding its power and influences. I hope that the inclusion of student voices into research can contribute a deeper understanding of how they currently view language and their relation to it and to that of others.

Summary

In this chapter, I described this study's methodology, the research context, participants, data collection and analysis process. Finally, in the section of positionality I describe who I am as a researcher and locate myself both as an insider and an outsider. In subsequent chapters, I present and analyze the data collected.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This one year qualitative study explored the perceptions of a purposeful sample of 22 SHLLs and their instructor in a SHL classroom at an HSI located on the U.S. – Mexico border regarding the Spanish language as it pertains to identity. I believe a better understanding of this phenomenon will provide new insights on the relationship between language and identity for SHLLs and will inform higher education practice within SHL classrooms. To this end, the study was based on the following overarching question: How do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs? To get to this larger question, two sub questions were explored: What are the language ideologies of SHLLs (students) and an instructor in an HSI located on the U.S. - Mexico border? and What are their language ideologies representative of?

In this chapter, I present the key findings to these questions, which came from in-depth interviews as well as classroom participants' observations and artifacts, which served as secondary data to the interviews. Specifically, I present and explain three major themes, which emerged as the key findings from this study:

1. Language dichotomizations;
2. Identity suppression;
3. Identity recovery

Through “thick description,” I present these themes and supporting evidence so that the reader may have the opportunity to enter into this study and understand the perspectives and experiences of the 22 SHLLs and instructor who participated in this research (Geertz, 1973). The emphasis is on the voice of the participants so that they may speak for themselves. Quotes from interview transcripts attempt to exemplify and portray the participants' perspectives as well as capture the richness and complexity of the subject matter. Where suitable, classroom

observations and artifact data are woven in with interview data to further contextualize and illustrate the findings.

Theme 1: Language Dichotomizations

The first theme of this study is language dichotomizations. In this study, language dichotomizations represent the ways in which wider language ideologies informed participants' experiences of learning English and Spanish in school (Pre-Kindergarten to college) and their attendant ideas about differences between the Spanish and English languages. Specifically, language dichotomizations in this study represent language ideologies, which view Spanish and English as opposing dichotomies and which in turn served to afford and or constrain students' identities as SHLLs. Following, I explain how participants produce and reproduce language ideologies surrounding Spanish and English as dichotomies. Next I explain how they internalized them and finally, I highlight the repercussion of language dichotomizations on their identities as SHLLs.

Geographical Dichotomies

In this study, participants frequently pointed to the geographical border of the U.S. and Mexico to express and conceptualize the dichotomization of Spanish and English. Recall, that this study occurred on the U.S. - Mexico border where the actual physical territorial division between Mexico and the U.S. is a lived reality, symbolically captured in the common reference of “over there and over here”. Where “over there” points to Mexico (Latin America) and “over here” to the U.S. (North America). To represent the significance of the actual physical demarcation to language, participants drew on the wider ideology that connects a nation with a language as evidenced in the representative remark from Oliver, a 20-year-old male participant, who stated, “every country has their own language” (Oliver, individual interview, 11/04/2017).

One of the primary ways in which the geographically oriented dichotomization between English and Spanish entered into and influenced participants own dichotomized language ideologies was through their PreK-12 schooling experiences.

Learning English Language: Internalizing Dichotomizations

In this section, I discuss the participants' PreK-12 schooling experiences. All participants attended U.S. schools and it was through the learning of English language that participants internalized language dichotomizations between English and Spanish. It is important to mention and reiterate that while 18 of the participants were born in the U.S., one in Puerto Rico (unincorporated territory of the U.S.), two in Mexico, and one in Guatemala, they had all attended U.S. schools for a majority of their PreK-12 education (see Table 4.1). For 19 out of the 22 participants, enrollment occurred at an early age, either Pre-Kindergarten designed for children below the age of five (11 participants) or Kindergarten for children age five (seven participants) (see Table 4.2). Out of these 19 participants with early age enrollment, nine entered directly in English monolingual courses. For three out of these nine participants, parent choice was key. According to these participants, their parents' choices reflected their own language experience with English in the U.S., which was not positive. The English language for their parents in particular, was a language barrier with which they struggled and so, wanting something different for their children, they strongly believed that monolingual enrollment would be the solution.

For the other six (out of the nine) participants in English monolingual courses, bilingual classes were not an option as per school policy (see Table 4.3). Two participants out of the six stated that at their Catholic private school, instruction was only in English and that the use of Spanish was prohibited and sanctioned. Another participant expressed that bilingual classes in

his public school “*no era necesario, era nomas para los que no hablaban inglés o tenían problemas con inglés*” [were not needed, it was only for those who did not speak English or had problems with English] (Emiliano, individual interview, 11/08/2017). The following tables summarizes the information presented up until now:

Table 4.1

Number of Participants per Place of Birth

SHLL participants	N (22)
Participants born in the U.S.	18
Participants born in Puerto Rico	1
Participants born in Mexico	2
Participants born in Guatemala	1

Table 4.2

Number of Participants Early Age Enrollment by Grade Level

Participants that attended U.S. schools	N (22)
Participants that enrolled at an early age (Pre-Kinder/Kinder)	19
Participants that enrolled in Pre-Kinder (below age five)	11
Participants that enrolled in Kinder (age five)	7

Table 4.3

Number of Participants English Monolingual Enrollments by Election/Policy

Participants directly placed in English Monolingual	n (9) *
Participants enrolled by parent choice	3
Participants enrolled by school policy	6

Note. This number (*n* 9) is out of 19 total participants that enrolled at an early age (Pre-Kinder/Kinder) which appear on a separate table above (Table 2).

Moreover, two participants out of the nine who had an English monolingual enrollment, had a particular and short experience either in a bilingual course (one female participant born in the U.S.) or an English as a Second Language (ESL) course (one male participant born in Guatemala but brought to the U.S. after birth). For the female participant placed in a bilingual course, this occurred for half a semester in 5th grade due to a surgery which forced her late enrollment after which she found no availability in the English monolingual classes due to maximum class capacities though she had been enrolled in them since Kindergarten. For the male participant born in Guatemala a similar experience in an ESL course, also happened in 5th grade for a few weeks. It followed his return from a one-year stay in Guatemala after his parents' divorce despite his past schooling history from Pre-Kindergarten to 4th grade in the U.S. in English monolingual classes. Recall that though he was born in Guatemala, he was brought to the U.S. shortly after birth. According to him, "they [the school] puts you there [in ESL] to see where you are at and if you do well, they take you out and they put you in normal English courses" (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). Both of these participants described their experiences in the bilingual and ESL course as brief and conditional upon proving themselves fluent in English to school authorities. "And right away, they saw that I was fluent and they moved me straight to English courses," said the male participant from Guatemala (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018).

In sum, this group of nine participants, who were all placed into monolingual English during Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, quickly internalized that "over here" in the U.S., English was valued while Spanish was not. The early schooling and placement of participants in English monolingual classrooms is important as it served as a key critical foundation of the participants' own language ideologies as the school became a mechanism to produce and

reproduce geographical dichotomies portrayed in and through language. Such dichotomizations were also produced through assessments where again, the emphasis was on the English language.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Recall again, that 19 participants enrolled at an early age in U.S. schools of which nine entered directly into English monolingual classes. Ten out of the 19 that did not enter directly into English monolingual classes had a similar exposure to language dichotomies between English and Spanish through transitions from Spanish, bilingual or dual language classes to English monolingual classes. This, after passing a standardized test in English as they recall, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) now known as the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. Meaning, 10 out of the total 22 participants were initially placed in Spanish (three participants), bilingual (six participants), or dual language classes (1 participant) however, such classes were only used to transition students to English monolingual courses which was always the aim of the school and not for the maintenance of their biliteracy and biculturalism.

The majority of the participants recall that such transition happened after passing the TAKS test. The TAKS test was the fourth Texas state standardized test used to assess students' attainment of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies skills required under Texas education standards and state mandated curriculum, for students in grades three to eleven. Though there is evidence that the TAKS test was also available in Spanish in grades three to six, as is now in the STAAR test, none of the participants of this study knew this was an option. Further, it should be mentioned that while a Spanish version of the TAKS was available and is now again an option under the STAAR test, ultimately an English version must be taken to graduate from high school. Previous research has shown that the pressure to succeed in high

stakes testing used for school and district rankings at both state and federal levels, imposes monolingual policy in bilingual classrooms showing that teachers teach children in the language they will ultimately test, transitioning children away from Spanish even more quickly (i.e. Palmer & Lynch, 2008).

One of the 10 participants in particular recalls being traumatized by her first-grade teacher who forced her to write a structured three-page paper by herself in Spanish to get her accustomed to English essay structures, a key component of the TAKS writing portion. The teacher had requested an introduction, three paragraphs, and a conclusion. Such specific structure was in preparation for third grade where the participant, as she recalled, would be transferred into English monolingual classes and where taking the TAKS test in English for her was mandatory as she recalls². Again, she had to become familiar with the writing structure - an introduction, three paragraphs and a conclusion as she was told it was key to passing the writing portion of the TAKS test. The participant with a broken voice said, “...*mi maestra me traumó... estaba forzándonos... en primer grado estaba preparándonos para 3rd grade pero en primero grado... era bien estricta, bien mala... me quedé traumada*” [... my teacher traumatized me... she was forcing us... in first grade she was preparing us for 3rd grade but in first grade... she was very strict, very mean... I became traumatized] (Rosa, individual interview, 04/04/2018).

As can be seen, assessments also served to emphasize the language dichotomization between English and Spanish by highlighting the importance of English over Spanish and at the same time functioning as a marker and form of gatekeeper for academic advancement. The rigidity of the teachers portrayed in the teaching of English language, which in this case caused

² In elementary grades three to five, the TAKS reading and math tests were required. In fourth grade, the writing test was included followed by the science test in fifth grade. It is unknown if the writing test the student recalled taking in English was a mock test. Recall that participants recounted childhood experiences. Yet, what is certain is the sentiment they all felt and made evident. That is, English was emphasized and not Spanish.

traumatization, serve to underline the goal of the school system specifically in the enculturation proclaimed “over here,” in the U.S. This, through the English language no matter how far or close “over there” can be from “over here” as was evident in the schooling trajectory of the only participant from Puerto Rico, an unincorporated territory of the U.S., and therefore geographically dichotomized and marked as “over there.”

Language Learning in Puerto Rico

The schooling experiences of Eduardo, the only participant from Puerto Rico, also show how teacher demands influenced his own language ideologies as he witnessed the repercussions possible for failing to comply with school mandates. The 20-year-old male participant described enrolling in English monolingual classes during 7th grade at a middle school in Alamogordo when his family moved to New Mexico from Puerto Rico following a job offer his father had accepted. Eduardo expressed having no difficulty with the English language due to his prior enrollment in a bilingual, English and Spanish, Christian private school on the island. However, he made evident that his language abilities were not only the result of equal language use but also due to teacher demands. From his description, teachers were strict and sought for one to speak and write “*lo más perfecto que tú pudieras*” [as perfect as you could] (Eduardo, individual interview, 11/06/2017). He reiterated that expectations in his Christian private school were high, that teachers were strict and students were expected to write both in English and Spanish as well as they spoke the languages otherwise their grades were affected. Fortunately, for him, he was constantly showcased especially for his abilities with the English language, which distinguished him from his peers and earned him praise.

Eduardo stated that both of his parents, a doctor and a nurse both fully bilingual in English and Spanish, decided to enroll him and his siblings in a bilingual Christian private school

in Puerto Rico as they were well aware that in case of a possible migration to the U.S. (incorporated territory), language would then not be a problem. Eduardo was the only participant whose parents had completed a college education and one of two participants who had completed at least elementary school within a private school. Eduardo also expressed that his mother exposed him to both languages at a very early age and that he was instructed along with his older brother so that by the time he was four years old and was about to enroll in school, he already knew English and Spanish as well as all subjects being taught. At school, he was immediately promoted from Kindergarten to first grade given his knowledge and English language abilities and would have been further promoted to second grade except that his mother intervened as she wanted him to be surrounded by kids his own age.

Clearly, Eduardo's ability to use "perfect" English earned him recognition and promotion in school. This recognition and promotion was something that his parents sought for him through his mastery of English language in Puerto Rico. A mastery, according to teacher perspectives and standards with which they and he, internalized he would be granted acknowledgement "over here" in the U.S. - incorporated territory - and have no problems in the event of a possible migration. Such dichotomization of languages not only highlighted English as the language of opportunities but also explicitly promoted perfection. This language dichotomization was similarly evident in the schooling experiences of two more participants, a Mexican national and an American with an assumed dual citizenship, who like the participant from Puerto Rico, migrated to the U.S. at a later age but who unfortunately, were not on par with U.S. school standards of English.

Language Learning for Mexican Nationals

The schooling experiences of Dayana a 22-year-old female born in Mexico and Damián a 23-year-old male born in the U.S. but taken to Mexico after birth, also show the role of schools (PreK-12) as a vehicle for the stratification of languages. A stratification that again, places English over Spanish through various processes, like placement in English monolingual classes and grade penalties. These two participants (out of the 22 total participants), enrolled in U.S. schools during their high school years and the school administration placed them in ESL courses without giving them language examinations nor validating their pupilage in Mexico. These placements resulted from school officials assuming that both students lacked knowledge of the English language although both had taken basic level English courses in Mexico with Mexican teachers who had specialized in the English language. The knowledge Dayana and Damián possessed was ignored by the school system which disregarded what they had learned “over there” in Mexico further reinforcing in this manner geographical dichotomies between the U.S. and Mexico as well as English and Spanish.

Both of these participants took ESL courses until they also passed the TAKS test and were later placed in what Dayana described as “normal” English classes where the English spoken was “*super rápido*” [super fast], “*muy fluido*” [very fluid] and not “*medio mocho*” [half mutilated] (Dayana, individual interview, 11/27/2017). Damián, who born in the U.S. but who was taken to Mexico shortly after birth, further related that the prior school credits he had earned in Mexico where he was classified as a Junior (11th grade) became annulled and he was downgraded to 9th grade, a Freshman. According to him, he was not the only one downgraded, so were his ESL peers, Mexican nationals, who spoke little to no English. In his words, these actions damaged his self-esteem as it was like restarting from zero, imposing a 360-degree turn on him for he had to learn both a new language and a new school system. He said, “*yo lo pondría*

como si fuera vuelto a nacer” [I would say that it was like being born again] (Damián, individual interview, 11/10/2017).

All participants made evident in their individual interviews that the emphasis of the schools (PreK-12) was always on the English language. It was in school, where they unconsciously internalized that if they wanted to succeed, to advance, to progress, they had to speak English as English was the language of the U.S. as emphasized and seen in school.

Catching the English Bus

For all the participants, the overwhelming emphasis on English that characterized their PreK-12 schooling experiences came at the expense of their first language, their mother tongue, Spanish, which was again, devalued, ignored and downgraded. With regard to geographical dichotomies and language ideologies, this shows how demarcations stress the replication of contrasts not only between territories, the U.S. and Mexico, but also through indexations of languages with specific territories - English in and for the U.S. and Spanish in and for Mexico. In what follows, I expand on how schools (PreK-12) functioned as a mechanism for the production and reproduction of dominant language ideologies in the lives of SHLLs and how then in turn, the schools shaped their ideas and views about language. Among one of the comments cited were those of Cristina, a 32-year-old female participant who was born in Sonora, Mexico but who was brought to the U.S. three days after her birth. Cristina said: “When I was born my primary language was Spanish but when I had to go to daycare in the U.S., they forced me to learn English... and in school, it was always English” (Cristina, individual interview, 03/26/2018). For Cristina, English was the language of the U.S. as seen in school and Spanish the language of Mexico.

Like Cristina, Jennifer, another female participant who was 24 years old and was born in the U.S., related that since English was always the focus at school, she neglected Spanish and lost the language. In telling of her transition from bilingual to English monolingual classes and her effort to pass the TAKS test, Jennifer expressed that it was like catching the “English bus” (Jennifer, individual interview, 03/29/2018). A bus from which she felt she was far behind and which was constantly moving. This, in comparison to students in English monolingual courses. She said, “it took me a little bit but I guess eventually trying to catch up so hard I completely neglected my Spanish... like completely just let it go out of my mind...” (Jennifer, individual interview, 03/29/2018). Jennifer told me that she realized that if she wanted to advance academically, she needed to focus on English because for her (according to the teachers) English “was the problem” a comment she heard her teachers tell her parents at a parent-teacher conference (individual interview, 03/29/2018). Having internalized that the lack of English according to teacher standards was impeding her academic success overtime her focus on English increased and with it the disuse of Spanish. Jennifer’s story resembles that of all participants who felt as though, in order to catch the “English bus” to advance, they somehow had to neglect their first language and as a result, ended up forgetting their Spanish.

Punitive Measures

As I have shown up to this point, participants’ schooling experiences in PreK-12 point to the ways in which both public and private schools highlighted the dichotomy between English and Spanish by valuing English over Spanish. Valuing English over Spanish represents one tacit process through which schools reproduce dominant language ideologies. Data from this study also revealed that instilling fear in students by prohibiting students to use Spanish on school grounds was another way in which this happened. One female participant, Adriana, a 20 year old

born in the U.S. who completed elementary school at a Catholic private school, clearly remembers how they were threatened with detention if they were caught speaking Spanish. This was the case despite all students at the school being Hispanic and having Spanish as their first language. Adriana said, "... the classes were just English and like we did not have Spanish and then if we were caught speaking Spanish, we would get detention, so then I started speaking English... I was worried about getting detention so I never spoke it; I only spoke it in my house" (Adriana, individual interview, 11/03/2017). Her fear of castigation quickly led to Spanish disuse. Since English was the only language to be spoken at school, in a public space, Spanish was restricted to private use at home. Language use was delimited for Adriana according to location as it carried a penalty: detention.

Punitive measures for Spanish language use were not limited to detention but also occurred through wrong medical diagnosis. Ester, a 23-year-old female participant born in the U.S., confessed that her sister was medicated and falsely diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a chronic condition including attention difficulty, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. This diagnosis was made for simply for not knowing English. Though her parents tried to explain to school authorities that her sister's inability to respond to questions in school was because she did not understand English, her sister was still medicated. Ester said:

They [my parents] always spoke to her [my sister] in Spanish and they [the school] put her in Kinder... First in English, straight English and they put my little sister on medication because she wasn't listening, but because she didn't understand English...the school sent her [to the doctor] cause she was ADHD and stuff... or that she was all over the place, but because she didn't understand English. And my mom told' em, but they

didn't unders- like they didn't care... they gave my sister the medication and then they stopped...because it... well, obviously it wasn't that.... (Ester, individual interview, 11/06/2017).

According to Ester, the school saw the lack of her sister's English understanding as a medical problem that required medical treatment yet, as Ester pointed out, her sister did not know English because at home her parents only spoke Spanish and at school her sister was being forced into English monolingual classes, where she was forced to "swim or sink" (individual interview, 11/06/2017). It is important to note that while English was being imposed through punitive measures in a parallel manner Spanish was also being associated with a private sphere, home, versus English with a public sphere, school.

The distinction between language use in a public and private space (school versus home) was further highlighted by Ester who said, "it was weird, because we... my parents would speak to us straight Spanish at home - and then, um, at school that's where we interacted with English" (Ester, individual interview, 11/06/2017). The use of Spanish was not promoted in schools (PreK-12) as was the use of English. The contrast is also evident in the fact that Spanish use was not only chastised but was also treated as an illness, which needed to be cured and which, required a prescription to suppress and conceal the condition. Because a lack of English was marked as a problem to be fixed, Ester's sister and parents stopped using and speaking Spanish at home. The lack of Spanish language use both at school and at home, the public and private sphere, resulted in a language loss. Ester's sister would forget words and at times, she just could not find the words to express whatever it was she wanted to say. Nowadays, Ester's sister understands Spanish but cannot speak it. It is as if her tongue is stuck, "*[se le] traba la lengua*" (Ester, individual interview, 11/06/2017). Ester's sister is unable to communicate with her own

family and this keeps her from building a relationship with them. Such description was representative of many participants including Ester, who also said they felt “tongue-tied.”

Through the narrative of these participants, it becomes evident that the pressure to “catch the English bus” and the attendant result of becoming “tongue-tied” are consequences of dominant language ideologies, which are not only generated but also reproduced in and through school (PreK-12). Language dichotomizations were not just produced through placement in English monolingual classes and punishment for Spanish use but were further replicated at a social level. Thus becoming “tongue-tied”, and/or having a loss of language, participants were unable to communicate and connect with their own families. These social divisions were not just reproduced with family members but also with peers in school as will be discussed next.

“English Kids” Versus the “Spanish Kids”

The dichotomization between English and Spanish not only caused geographical indexations between Mexico and the U.S. and between a public and a private sphere (school vs. home) but also between the speakers of the languages with whom relationships were or were not built. Marisela, a 28-year-old female participant born in the U.S. who was one of two participants to experience a brief stay in a bilingual class in 5th grade despite past English monolingual enrollment, told me about how such experience in the bilingual class, opened her eyes to realizing the kind of divisions being made in school between classrooms and students. This division between English monolingual students referred to as “the English kids” and bilingual students at school referred to as “the Spanish kids,” Marisela vividly remembered:

Back in elementary, we always used to be the Spanish kids, and the English kids.... And, we just would always fight. We'd never get along... And, that's how we would divide each other: the Spanish kids, and the English kids. The majority of us knew Spanish. Just

at school, we didn't practice it, because back then bilingual integration, where you speak kind of both, wasn't a thing. It was like... Only the kids who spoke Spanish needed help in English, would learn. We never... We spoke Spanish and we all knew it, but we would still separate. Only in school. (Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018)

The bilingual class Marisela was able to briefly experience and where she went from an “English kid” to a “Spanish kid” gave her a new perspective. A perspective in which she was able to question why they fought the “Spanish kids” and analyze from where the distinctions were coming. She realized that the root of the divisions was language. The same language they shared at home (Spanish) just not at school (English). Because English at school was valued and Spanish was not, the fact that not everyone spoke English equally well or at all at caused the divisions.

Marisela emphasized that she thought the social divisions that had happened in the past and that continue to have an effect on her present and on the people with whom she grew up. When asked if she was the only one who felt that way about the social divisions made based on language use she said:

No! Everybody. Like, even people who I still talk to back from elementary school. Like, "Remember the Spanish kids?" Or, "Remember we would call ourselves the English kids?" Or, I honestly have no idea. I just remember that we would even play sports like that. And, we would hate playing against them, because they're so good at soccer. You know? (Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018)

The divisions and fights that occurred in school, from the classrooms to the playground, are for her and her peers, a collective memory of the dichotomies produced by the school system that views Spanish as a problem that students needed to get rid of. It was, "You need to learn English,

and you're gonna test in English. And, you're gonna read in English,” said Marisela (individual interview, 04/10/2018). In comparison to English, Spanish was demonized and was the reason for the social distinctions made in school. Again, because English was the only language valued its emphasis devalued the student’s home language, Spanish. This began the moment students were placed into English monolingual courses and separated from the “Spanish kids.” Marisela told me that in the English monolingual courses she lost her language (Spanish) and her peers, “the Spanish kids.” According to her, the devaluing of Spanish initially led her as an “English kid” to the unconscious rejection of the “Spanish kids” only because of their language use.

The data in this study shows how the wider language ideology of one nation - one language caused language dichotomizations through constant comparisons between “over there” (Mexico) and “over here” (U.S.) and how such ideology entered into the schools (both public and private) to further generate and reproduce dichotomies. This, as a stratified view of language is produced and replicated in the PreK-12 schooling experiences of the participants through placement in English monolingual programs, punitive measures, and social peer distinctions. All of which together, reinforce, promote and advance the dominant language ideologies that portray English as the only way to succeed. And though the participants’ PreK-12 schooling is a primary mechanism for reproducing dominant language ideologies and influencing the participants own views of language, it is not the only vehicle of transmission for they also learn the dominant language ideology (one nation - one language) within higher education institutions.

Linguistic Dichotomization in Higher Education

In this section, I explain how the participants in this study also learn the dominant language ideology at higher education institutions via language standardization - elevating the language of the dominant social group and institutions in both English and Spanish. Specific to

this study, standardization occurred through placement tests in college, which, like the TAKS test previously mentioned, served as a marker of the participants' knowledge, an apparatus of classification. In this sense, from the participants' perspectives not only is language seen as heavily indexed to a location or territory, but also to very specific linguistic requirements that must be met in order to claim knowing a language and thus an identity. In interviews, field notes and artifacts collected (i.e. compositions), participants made clear that the requirements specifically relied on the mastering of accentuation - the spoken and written- which further replicated linguistic dichotomizations.

Language Standardization: Placement Tests

In this study, participants saw oral accentuation for English and orthographical accents for Spanish as key components of the formal, standard variety. Their perceptions were a result of the placement examinations they were required to take at higher education institutions that portrayed accentuation (oral and written) as a marker of knowledge mastery, of standardization and progress. In this study, all participants were required to take the Spanish Placement Test (SPT) prior to enrolling in any Spanish language class. The SPT served as a basic measurement scale of their knowledge of the Spanish language, an association of a test score to language proficiency with which students could try to place out of the entry-level Spanish courses. The SPT is a 90-minute timed test that has 104 multiple-choice questions and is scored on a 100-point scale. In order for students to be enrolled in one of the two Spanish language courses offered for SHLLs (SPAN 2303 or 2304), the SPT must track students as native speakers and test scores must be 0-73 (for SPAN 2303) or 74-83 (for SPAN 2304). A score of 84 and above indicates students have the capacity to take a 33XX level Spanish course with a focus on Spanish literature/culture. While there is no public access to the SPT when I asked participants to

describe the test, they all expressed that it was difficult because of the grammatical terminology used and accents. According to one of the participants, they were being tested on “*español castellano*” [Castilian Spanish] (Damián, individual interview, 11/10/2017).

For all 22 participants in the SHL class, not knowing how to place grammatical accents in Spanish meant that they could not claim to know the language and further, they could not claim to be, even in part, “Mexicans.” Recall that the participants felt the same way when they could not pass the TAKS test and be placed into English monolingual classes where they could then claim proficiency in English and thus to be “American.” This, belief again emanated from constant placement examinations with which they had to comply during their schooling experiences. As part of the individual interviews conducted, I asked the participants to create a timeline of events that had been key for them as pertains to language and Lourdes, a 21-year-old female participant born in the U.S., simply drew a placement test. Following is a copy of Lourdes picture (Figure 4.1):

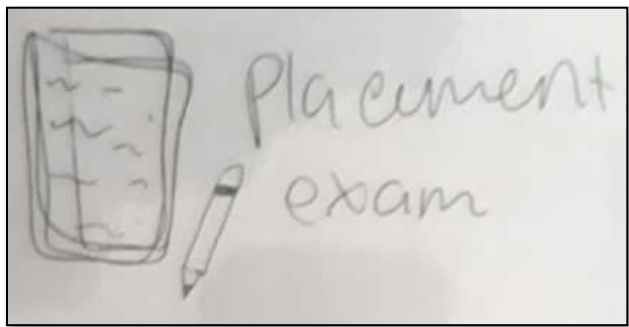


Figure 4.1

Lourde's Hand Drawn Picture (11/08/2017)

When I asked Lourdes about the picture drawn and its significance, she expressed that language tests had always been a part of her life. She elaborated by saying that it all started in 1st grade as far as she could recall and on and on through high school, then in college and even

when applying for a job. Lourdes told me that in trying to apply for a job with the city, she had to take an examination via computer where she had to write a paragraph in both English and Spanish in order to prove not only that she understood the language, but also that she had written control of it.

Acentos [Ortographical Accents]

In this study, orthographical accents just as placement tests also replicated language dichotomies. Written accents were symbolic of the idealized standard variety of Spanish as seen in dictionaries and grammar books. Dichotomizations occurred when any written or oral non-standard variety of Spanish was compared to the standard Spanish variety. The representative remark of Claudia, a 23-year-old female participant born in the U.S., serves to show how all participants viewed orthographical accents as iconic to Spanish. In her words, Spanish is “*acentos, acentos, acentos y más acentos*” [accents, accents, accents, and more accents] (Claudia, individual interview, 12/04/2017).

The placement of orthographical accents in Spanish was seen as a representation for the participants of the mastery of grammatical rules and, in turn, as a right to claim belonging in a group, a culture. Such views derived from an accumulation of what the participants referred to as ingrained ideas within the school system and society. It is important to mention that despite the portrayed character of the Spanish instructor by the students as being understanding and flexible in adjusting to what they constantly referred to as their language level, and the teacher’s constant repetition in class of “*no estoy aquí para juzgarlos*” [I am not here to judge you], the book used in the course sent the opposite message (Field notes, 08/30/2017; 10/18/2017; 11/08/2017). While the Spanish instructor insisted in free writing without judgements based on lack of orthographical accents, the book emphasized written Spanish from its title, *Español Escrito*

[Written Spanish]. Furthermore, it emphasized Castilian Spanish use as normative, the de facto norm, according to the Real Academia Española (RAE) and it signaled correct and incorrect Spanish language usage. In this sense, a lack of accents for the students meant incorrect Spanish language use because of a lack of language knowledge.

Speaking Versus Writing Spanish

The emphasis on writing and specifically writing with accents according to the prescriptive norms of the RAE, deemed as the standard variety, led the participants to internalize the view that proficiency could not be complete without orthographical accents. Accents in this regard, constituted legitimate language proficiency. While a vast majority of participants told me that they were able to understand more Spanish than they were able to speak, all said that they struggled with writing. When asked about this, they all said that they did not know how to place orthographical accents and such was their struggle in writing. For all, as Aurora, a 33-year-old female participant born in the U.S., expressed:

if you wanna like classify yourself as very proficient in Spanish then you should also learn how to write it properly. I mean not just speak it or read it,... it is very important that you know that you also learn how to like spell it correctly, spell the words...[because] we really don't know how to spell the word correctly if you don't put the *acento* on it... In order for you to be proficient, you gotta write just as good as you speak.... (Aurora, individual interview, 03/27/2018).

As Aurora makes evident in her belief, without knowledge of grammatical rules, written accents, one cannot claim proficiency in Spanish. Such beliefs were also true for Dayana and Damián, the two participants who migrated from Mexico and enrolled during their high school years despite

their formal schooling in Mexican schools and their direct exposure to Spanish language. Dayana said, “*pero al momento de escribir... volvemos a lo mismo de los acentos, que no sé mucho... no me acuerdo donde iban los acentos exactamente...*” [but when it comes to writing... we return to the same thing about accents, that I don’t know much... I don’t recall exactly where the accents go...] (Dayana, individual interview, 11/27/2017). For the participants, Spanish proficiency (with its various domain, varieties, modalities, registers, features, syntactical structures and vocabulary) was reduced to accents by ideologies that define “real” Spanish speakers as those who know how to place orthographical accents.

“Stuck in the Middle”

Language dichotomizations were not only replicated via orthographical accents but also via oral accents. These too, were used as an indexation of language knowledge and national identity, of belonging either “over there” or “over here.” It is important to mention that the common reference of the participants of “over there and over here” was not only used to index and compare Spanish to and in Mexico and English to and in the U.S., but also for “*pocho*” [Americanized] Spanish (here - locally) and proper standard Spanish (there - Mexico). Participants told me that if others in their way of speaking English or Spanish would notice a trace of either language based on perceived oral accents, they were automatically indexed to a location (Mexico or the U.S.) and thus to a nationality regardless of their place of birth.

Marisela, the participant who signaled the division from the classroom to the playground, added that the feeling of non-belonging was not only for the “Spanish kids” who had to fight the “English kids,” but also for her. She as an “English kid” has also always had to fight for recognition. This, as she is “too American” in Mexico and “too Mexican” in America granted her pronunciation, her oral accent (Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018). She added:

I felt like I did lose a lot of my ... Like it was like, "Oh, I'm American. I speak English and that's it." Like, I mean. And when they would tell me, "Oh, you have a ..." Like, oh, it would almost make me cry to a point where they would tell me, "Oh, you have a, an accent in, in English." And I'm like, "I've learned English all my life. I don't feel like I have an accent." "Yeah. You have kind of like a Spanish accent." And, I would like, literally, I would cry about that, because I would be like, "No! They don't think like I can speak my own language right." And then, when I go to Mexico, it's like, "*Oh eres una pocha. No sabes hablar español bien. Esto y el otro*" [Oh you are a *pocha*. You do not know how to speak Spanish right. This and that]. (Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018)

Others perceptions of Marisela are based on perceived traces of another language when she speaks, an oral accent, that is automatically indexed geographically, linguistically and symbolically. As a result, she has questioned why she is not enough for either group, Mexico or the U.S., and describes herself as “stuck in the middle” (Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018). Marisela felt trapped in between two places and thus two nationalities without being able to claim fully either one. All participants shared this feeling as according to them, just like Marisela, their spoken accent for English speakers reflects a trace of Spanish and for Mexicans, a trace of English. These traces in themselves further highlight dichotomies, borders that are symbolic.

Concerning oral accentuation and belonging, Eduardo, the 21-year-old male participant from Puerto Rico, added that though he believes he does not have an oral accent when speaking English, as he attended a Christian private bilingual school where he was well instructed by strict

teachers who sought perfection, people get surprised when he speaks Spanish. This happens as he has a Puerto Rican accent. He said:

Hay gente que todavía no sabe que de la forma que yo hablo inglés, no saben que yo hablo español. Hasta que hablo español, me dicen: Oh ¿tú hablas español? Pues porque como estaba aprendiendo, para el tiempo que yo aprendí hablar también aprendí inglés. Los dos básicamente a la misma vez. Entonces yo no tengo acento en inglés y en español tengo el acento puertorriqueño. Amh, pero si solamente me escuchas hablando inglés no vas a saber que yo hablo español, pero no me hizo muy difícil. Le digo sí [hablo español]. ¿Qué pensabas que yo era?, le pregunto. ¿Tú que pensabas que yo era? ¿De dónde crees que yo era? Si no me veo como alguien que habla español, no sé, ¿de dónde soy?

[There is people that still do not know that in the way in which I speak English, I speak Spanish. Until I speak Spanish, they tell me: “Oh, you speak Spanish? Because well by the time I was learning to speak it, I also learned English. Both basically at the same time. So then I do not have an accent in English and in Spanish well, I got the Puerto Rican accent. Oh but if you only hear me speaking English you will not know that I speak Spanish, but it was not difficult for me. I tell them, yes, I speak Spanish. What were you thinking that I was?, I ask them. What did you think that I was? Where did you think that I was from? If I do not look like someone who speaks Spanish, I don’t know, where am I from?]. (Eduardo, individual interview, 11/06/2017)

Eduardo is aware, just as the other participants, that spoken accents influence the perceptions others have of one in terms of one’s nationality (place/location). Yet, as is clear in what he expressed, a spoken accent can be deceiving and has to do with exposure to language. In his

case, he was exposed to both English and Spanish in Puerto Rico at an early age in a Christian private bilingual school. He told me that spoken accents are “something big” (Eduardo, individual interview, 11/06/2017). That is, accents have the power to influence the perceptions of people. He said that when he tells others that he is Puerto Rican, he, as all the other participants, is immediately asked to prove his nationality. The first thing he is asked to do, is to speak “*puertorriqueño*” [Puerto Rican] which he says he still does not know what that means because “*puertorriqueño es español, no sé que me dices cuando hable en puertorriqueño*” [Puerto Rican is Spanish, I do not know what you are telling me when you tell me to speak in Puerto Rican] (Eduardo, individual interview, 11/06/2017). Eduardo further told me that, as an extreme measure, others have asked him to read aloud just to prove with his oral accent his nationality. Yet, as he says, “*te puedo hablar normal porque para mí no es un acento*” [I can speak normally to you because for me it is not an accent] (individual interview, 11/06/2017). From his perspective, it is simply his way of speaking. The way he has always spoken but that which others associate geographically, linguistically and symbolically.

As the data in this study have shown, orthographical accents are iconic of Spanish. They are used as a marker of proficiency in Spanish and in turn, an identity. That is of a “real” Spanish speaker. In the same way, oral accents are used as a proof of English language knowledge, which serve to validate and legitimize a national identity, belonging. A belonging that is deeply desired by the participants not only within geographical confines but also within school, the representation of wider society. Thus, schools (PreK-college) as a mechanism of language dichotomizations have the potential to afford or constrain the identities of the participants who feel as though, they are “stuck in the middle.”

Inherited-Heritage

In this section, I expand on how the dominant language ideologies constrained the identities of SHLLs as they tried to conform to the standard language variety normalized through inscribed sanctioned practices. Specifically, I look at how language dichotomizations go beyond contrasts between languages to within languages. Dichotomies were between English and Spanish and within the SHLL's Spanish, a heritage Spanish, and Castilian Spanish, the standard Spanish according to the RAE. Language dichotomizations were reproduced when the participants' inherited Spanish varieties were compared to the standard variety as such comparisons resulted in language judgements (i.e. good or bad). It is important to highlight, that while some of the participants confessed being aware of the dichotomies that were produced and reproduced in and through schools (PreK-college), they themselves continued to replicate such dichotomies given the deep-rooted internalization of indoctrinated language dichotomizations from which they could not seem to escape. Specifically, participants in this study reproduced language dichotomies based on perceived distinctions in class and status between the Spanish they spoke, their inherited Spanish, and the standard Castilian Spanish seen in class and promoted in the classroom textbook. A standard Spanish for which again, orthographical accents were iconic of proficiency and an identity. The participants through the devaluing of their inherited Spanish, which according to them was not on par with the iconic, standard Castilian Spanish, reproduced dichotomies. All participants described their inherited Spanish in a negative manner and underlined that such had been the inheritance of their parents. In contrast, the participants described standard Spanish positively and as the key to progress and success.

The portrayal of all participants as it pertained to their inherited Spanish, circulated around through the following descriptors: "*naco*" [ghetto], "broken," "sloppy," "*mocho*" [mutilated], "street like," "ugly," "*pochó*" [Americanized], "Tex-Mex," "lazy," "made up,"

“rough,” “mixed,” “crippled,” “choppy,” “Spanglish,” “medium,” “not professional” and “not correct.” On the other hand, the Spanish seen in class and modeled in the textbook was referred to as all the opposite. In contrast, the descriptors use for the Spanish seen in class were: “Spanish, Spanish,” “*bonito*” [beautiful], “perfect,” “professional,” “the right way,” “standard and official,” “proper” and “high level.” Clearly, by the distinctions made between their inherited Spanish and the standard Spanish, the participants reproduced language dichotomies. Such dichotomies within a language (i.e. heritage Spanish versus Castilian Spanish) paralleled the dominant language ideologies between languages (i.e. English and Spanish) that they had witnessed in their PreK-12 schooling experiences where again, English was elevated over Spanish. In order for their inherited Spanish to be “right” and “official,” to be legitimate, to be “real,” it had to be according to the standard and the standard implied knowing how to place orthographical accents, following grammatical rules, which according to them, they lacked and with which they struggle.

When asked about this, the participants pointed to two things: 1) their limited exposure to Spanish language in school (PreK-12) that led to what they called a language loss and 2) their parents’ lack of formal education given their low socioeconomic status. Recall that out of the 22 participants, only the parents of Eduardo, the participant from Puerto Rico, had completed a college education. The story of Diddy a 31-year-old male participant born in the U.S. serves to exemplify the perspective of all 22 participants in this study who aspired to master orthographical accentuation in order to claim proficiency and a “real” identity as Spanish Heritage Language Speakers. Knowing this was representative to them in turn, of class and status. It is important to stress, that though Diddy told me that he was aware that Spanish language loss was a result of the school system which is funded by the government and which

does not want to teach kids Hispanic culture and thus Spanish, he repeatedly pinpointed and blamed his parents for his inherited Spanish. He described both parents as poor factory workers who handed him a “*naco*” [ghetto] Spanish (Diddy, individual interview, 11/01/2017).

According to Diddy, “*naco*” [ghetto] Spanish refers to the use (both oral and written) of the “low status” words he inherited from his parents and the pronunciation of them, which he said, was not perfect (individual interview, 11/01/2017). His parent’s “*naco*” [ghetto] Spanish lacked accents, which according to him make things “way better” and “pretty” (Diddy, individual interview, 11/01/2017). Diddy told me that he wished he knew to how to place orthographical accents in Spanish and not have an oral accent when speaking it so that he could be like his Mexican friends who have a “perfect” Spanish and no oral accent, which is “just cool” (individual interview, 11/01/2017). Again, for Diddy because of his parents’ lack of formal schooling, his Spanish is not “pretty.” Accents for Diddy as for all other participants were iconic of standard Spanish and so were what participants called “high level” words as seen in the Spanish classroom textbook, though at times, they often wonder what they meant as they were “too proper” and too hard to “digest.” All participants mentioned that the textbook “high level” words were words they had never heard nor used.

Diddy further told me of an anecdote he heard from one of his professors in college about a little boy who had elevated vocabulary and as a result was very successful. As he remembered the anecdote very vividly, he compared himself by saying: “and then again, he had his parents working for the government... Then again, I had my parents working in a factory” (Diddy, individual interview, 11/01/2017). When asked if he thought if there was any connection between the Spanish used at home and that in the Spanish class, he said that they were two “totally” different things (individual interview, 11/01/2017). It is worth noting that while I was

conducting participant observations in the Spanish class, I repeatedly witnessed how the instructor constantly reiterated the same phrase of “*no estoy aquí para criticar su español de casa sino para agregar*” [I am not here to criticize the Spanish that you bring from home but to add to it] (Field notes, 11/27/2017; 02/06/2018). The instructor told me that through that constant phrase, her intention was to make students feel comfortable with what they already knew. Yet, all the participants just as Diddy, felt that their inherited Spanish was lacking no matter how many times the Spanish instructor reiterated the same phrase. They always made comparisons to the standard Castilian Spanish recreating language dichotomies.

Moreover, even when the Spanish instructor avoided deducting points for lack of orthographical accents in the student’s assigned compositions, students wanted their “errors,” missed accents, to be marked. The Spanish instructor told me:

Yo no califico las composiciones... porque quiero que pierdan el miedo al español.

Quiero que se suelten... si una de las principales quejas es que al hablar mal el español los critican y luego ya se enmudecen, pues yo no quiero que eso pase con ellos, quiero que se suelten, que tengan confianza, aunque con errores pero que empiecen a escribir, escribir, escribir, no importa...pero que escriban en español.

[I do not grade the compositions... because I want them to lose their fear of Spanish. I want them to let loose... if one of the main complains is that when they speak Spanish they are criticized for speaking it wrong and then they are muted, well I don’t want that to happen with them, I want them to let loose, to have confidence, even with errors but that they start writing, writing, writing, it doesn’t matter... but that they write in Spanish].
(Spanish instructor, individual interview, 05/01/2018)

According to the Spanish instructor, she would not grade the assigned class compositions for she wanted the students to be able to express, to feel free and not criticized for their lack of accents or misspelled words. The instructor firmly believed that without grade point deductions and penalizations for missing accents, the students would lose their fear and eventually boost their confidence in Spanish and not feel muted. However, even though students acknowledged this, they still wanted to be corrected, they wanted the deduction of points. It was almost as if they demanded for their writing errors to be signaled and so in this way too, they continued to reproduce language dichotomizations.

Diddy, again for example, made a comparison between his mother and the Spanish instructor. He said that though both shared the same name, were about the same height, and dress almost the same way, they too were very different. Diddy went about devaluing his mother, criticizing her for her lack of orthographical accents any time she would write and for her “low status” words with which she “would totally decapitate a sentence and turn it into something else” (Diddy, individual interview, 11/01/2017). In comparison to his mother, the Spanish instructor knew how to place orthographical accents according to the rules of the RAE and knew “high level” words. Diddy told me that unlike his mother, the Spanish instructor was the representation of “elegant”, altogether “cute” (individual interview, 11/01/2017). From Diddy’s perspective, his inherited “*naco*” [ghetto] Spanish and the classroom standard “perfect” Castilian Spanish were an extended comparison between his mother and the teacher.

As the data have suggested, language dichotomizations within school (PreK-college) were not only produced between English and Spanish language, but also between the standard Castilian Spanish seen in class and the participants inherited Spanish. Their inherited Spanish was devalued when compared according to the standards of the RAE for which written accents

were iconic. In this manner, the lack of orthographical accents gave way to the reproduction of language dichotomies and in turn, to unending distinctions of race, class and status from which the participants tried so hard to run from even at the expense of their own identities, which they had to suppress if they wanted to succeed in school. Because of the comparisons the participants made between their inherited Spanish and the iconic Castilian Spanish, any non-standard use of Spanish (spoken or written) was deemed at fault and thus, marked as “ugly” and as a problem that required fixing in order for progress to exist. Following, I will explain how identity suppression happened in this study.

Theme 2: Identity Suppression

The second major theme from this study is identity suppression. In this study, identity suppression is a consequence of the internalization of language dichotomizations represented by the wider dominant language ideologies of a one nation - one language and language standardization. Both ideologies produced and reproduced in and through schools (PreK-college) as a norm according to the experiences of the participants. Language dichotomizations in this study were not only made between English and Spanish, but also between Spanish (Castilian Spanish) and Spanish (inherited Spanish). Language dichotomizations led participants to consciously or unconsciously reject and resist a language and thus any associations possible with a place and people. Participants referred to this rejection and resistance as the “performance” and “acting” of another identity at the expense of their own. Specifically, participants expressed that the “performance” and “acting” of another identity was possible using accents - written or spoken. In what follows, I explicate how identity suppression occurred for the participants from their perspective through “performance” with accents.

Given that the school system promoted one language over the other, English over Spanish, and at the same time a standard variety as seen reflected via examinations, language dichotomizations became internalized by the participants as the norm. A norm, representative of the school system and society as whole according to them. One way in which participants talked about this norm, which they wanted to meet in order to succeed academically, was by referring to English monolingual classes and standardized tests as something the schools imposed on them. Iliana a 21-year-old female participant born in the U.S. told me: “And... the university [too] as a whole tries to do it, [to force us], it’s just like standardized testing... that’s how you prove yourself... which is wrong because... not everybody’s brain works the same way” (Iliana, individual interview, 11/09/2017). From Iliana’s perspective, schools, including higher education institutions, want everybody to be same and disregard students learning differences. Iliana believes that schools have a lot of control and determine how classes and thus students are to be managed and structured. She further added that such control in her opinion derived from the state’s funding “that requires the schools to run a certain way and that’s why the school do it... because if we don’t run the schools a certain way, then we don’t get enough funding” (Iliana, individual interview, 11/09/2017). In this sense, English monolingual classes and standardized tests functioned as apparatuses of classification that highlighted homogenization and disregarded diversity. The emphasis of English language over Spanish in schools unconsciously led students to reject and resist the Spanish language and thus any possible indexations to a place or to people including their own families. Again, this as the result of the dichotomizations internalized geographically between Mexico and the U.S., linguistically between oral and written accents, and symbolically in terms of race, class and gender.

Performing Americanness

In this section, the ways in which the participants attempted to meet the norm be it their placement in English monolingual classes or peer acceptance at the expense of their own identities will be described. Adriana, the 20-year-old female participant born in the U.S. who was threatened with detention at a Catholic private school if she spoke Spanish on school grounds, expressed wanting to meet the norm so badly that she “wanted to be like them,” the white English speakers even at the expense of her own identity (Adriana, individual interview, 11/03/2017). In a flash back, she recounted without wanting to sound superficial how she wanted to be like the group of popular girls who belonged to white middle class families and who were distinguished for using English only. Adriana said:

...at one point I got disconnected from my culture because they [the school] told us only English. I wanted to be American... and they were like me, but they would only speak English and they were more like of a whiter population ... I wanted to fit into that group, and it was like: no, I had to be like them. .. I associated... English [with] money... and Spanish with like lower [class]. How I saw it was... if I speak English I will become more successful... than brown ones which is dumb to think... an unreal thought....

(Adriana, individual interview, 11/03/2017)

For Adriana, the associations she would make as a child were real. She thought Spanish was not important to succeed and therefore disregarded it wanting to be like the group of popular girls in school, wanting to be whiter, wanting to use only English. Adriana relates that she started to forget Spanish, the language spoken at home, and provided examples of the different ways in which she started to resist her own family and suppressing her identity to fit in. Instead of *tamales*, she would request pizza. According to her, in her house there was only “*arroz y frijoles*” [rice and beans] versus her friend’s house where they were having casseroles (Adriana,

individual interview, 11/03/2017). English, the language used in school (K-12), only led her to internalize the idea that class and status was in relation to language. English for her meant big houses, planes, and money versus Spanish, which was not about success. Again, this internalization led her to reject her own customs, her family, and her first language, to suppress her identity.

In another example, Arlt, a 23-year-old male participant born in Guatemala but brought to the U.S. after birth added that the only way to fit in was through what he called performing and acting “Americanness” via English language (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). According to Arlt, he performed and acted “Americanness” to prove himself worthy of belonging in the eyes of others. More specifically, in the eyes of his professors from the English department where he studies to become an English teacher himself. Arlt specifically expressed identity suppression as a struggle that in his case was even greater than that of his Mexican American peers. He said:

And with me, it's almost like a trilingual struggle. Because it's like at home with my mom, I have to act Guatemalan. With my [Mexican] friends I have to act, I don't have to act but I, I act a little bit more Mexican. And if I'm with my colleagues [from the English department], English. With people that just speak English, I have to perform Americanness. So it's almost a struggle within a struggle. (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018)

Arlt believes that his struggle is tripartite and that he has to deal with adjusting to three cultures- Guatemalan, Mexican and American. Each specifically used with family, with friends or at school and each with expectations specifically set by society about language use and accent. By performing and acting an identity via oral accentuation, Arlt tried to prove that he was worthy of

belonging to a group and would avoid the questioning of his legitimacy. When Arlt was asked about, what he believed allowed for the performance of all these three cultures, he said that it was language and accents; both oral and written played a major role.

Accents for Arlt were an indication of one's nationality and something that though he feels is part of his essence he somehow tried to hide by performing what he called an "American" accent (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). An accent that is not perhaps his, only to appear "American" before the eyes of others, specifically that of his English professors and colleagues. Arlt also told of two of his English instructors who would also try to mask their spoken accents as again, for Arlt, it is all about "a struggle with accents" (individual interview, 04/11/2018). With regards to hiding accents and his instructors he said:

I even had a professor once ... from Austria. She's an English teacher and ... one time she was talking and they [Austrians] say the word, like the W is a V. And she said the V and she immediately corrected herself. And I thought to myself, "Why are you doing that? Why are you correcting your accent?" ... But I think it's something that's ingrained in us. Especially if we are studying English literature. That we have to some, to, to, not just appropriate the American language, but to almost be ashamed of where we come from. And you can tell, because right away she said, she corrected herself. She changed ... Because she didn't want people to, to be like, "Oh, she has an accent. Why is she teaching English, blah, blah, blah...." (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018)

Arlt recognized that hiding an accent is something not only he does but others do as well as they do not want to give an impression of incorrectness and/or be questioned. While Arlt claimed that accents are not something one should be embarrassed of, he expressed that the automatic

response of trying to conceal them is a result of the ingrained language ideologies set by the school system. Ideologies, which again map onto the geographical binaries of “over there” (Mexico/ Latin America) and “over here” (U.S. / North America) and in turn to race, class and status. For Arlt, the fear of what others will think of him, of the possible indexations that can be made, is what led him to try to auto correct and hide his origin, his accent. In this sense, “appropriating” of English language for Arlt is not only about knowing how to pronounce, about an “American” accent, but also about denying oneself, one’s spoken accent to obtain validation.

From all the participants’ perspectives, not only does the elevation of English within the school system lead to the devaluing of Spanish and consequently to a language loss, but so does the standardization of Spanish. First, the participants suppress their identities when they try to be part of the norm, to be “American.” Then, they suppress their identities for a second time when they try to conform to the standard Castilian Spanish. As previously discussed, the participants in this study referred to their inherited Spanish in a negative manner by pinpointing that it was “low status,” “*mocho*” [mutilated] and “ugly.” In contrast, Castilian Spanish was described as “high status,” “perfect” and “beautiful.” The dichotomies produced between the participants Spanish (inherited Spanish) and the classroom Spanish (Castilian Spanish) led the participants to suppress their identity by trying to conceal their inherited Spanish, which according to them delegitimized their identity as “real” Spanish Heritage Speakers.

To try to hide their inherited Spanish and at the same time claim knowing “Spanish Spanish” and thus an identity, participants resorted to: 1) the use of orthographical accents and 2) “*palabrotas*” [big words]. The participants in this study saw orthographical accents and “*palabrotas*” [big words] as iconic of Castilian Spanish and thus as an unquestionable proof with

which to authenticate their identities as SHLLs. All the participants constantly and at all times tried to use orthographical accents and “*palabrotas*” [big words] to prove themselves as “real” SHLLs even if it implied using their notes, making use of automatic spell checkers in their cell phones or Google to help them identify where accents belong and the definition of certain words. For the participants, the important thing was to try to conceal their inherited Spanish no matter what as it was “butchered” and as such delegitimizes their identities as SHLLs. In the representative remark of Eduardo, the Puerto Rican participant, the use of grammatical rules, of accents, was important to “*no solamente [para] parecer educado, pero [para] ser educado en las dos partes del lenguaje*” [not only to appear well educated, but to be educated in both aspects of the language] (Eduardo, individual interview, 11/06/2017).

Further, the participants in this study also expressed feeling pressure when speaking Spanish with their own family members as they pejoratively called them “*pochos*” [Americanized Mexicans] because of their perceived oral accents in Spanish. The pressure to be correct, to be “real,” was intensified for the participants any time they had to write in Spanish as their writing was a visible representation of the Spanish language knowledge or a lack of it with which again, their identities as “real” SHLLs could be legitimized or delegitimized. Any writing that included orthographical accents became a tangible proof to others of the participants’ claimed identity sheltered under compliance with the norm, with the grammatical rules of the standard Castilian Spanish seen in Spanish class. The words of Iliana, the 21-year-old female participant born in the U.S. who expressed that standardization was wrong, serve to exemplify the stress that all participants felt when writing to be correct. Iliana said:

Well, pretty much it all happened this year when I started Spanish because... I tested out of all the lower level of Spanish... but like when we started this course... learning all the grammar... specially the accents... I have a lot of trouble [with them]... Writing is a lot harder... 'cause' when you are writing it, like, you have to be correct in the grammar that you use and everything... For the *composiciones*, um, with the accents... when I write ... I have like this little, like the little table of the rules from the book... so that I can be checking every word ... 'cause I don't wanna... make mistakes.... So, that's where like all the pressure is put on...to be correct... like right in the professor's eyes, cause I know she grades us... like all the accents.... (Iliana, individual interview, 11/09/2017)

The pressure that Iliana feels when writing in Spanish derives from the stress of knowing that others have the potential of questioning her identity as a SHLL and thus delegitimize it by pointing out the lack of orthographical accents iconic of Castilian Spanish. Iliana feels stress because from her perspective her instructor grades them based on accent use and so she feels as though she must prove why she deserved to be in the SHL class. Recall that after taking the SPT students are tracked as SHLLs only if by the score achieved they test out of the entry-level Spanish courses. In this sense, orthographical accents were a manifestation of an expectation, of an expected outcome by association, an automatic indexation made between the ability to think, speak and write as well as a nationality and a language as signaled by the dominant language ideologies. For Iliana these expectations were unquestionable even though as mentioned before, the Spanish instructor told me that she did not grade the compositions as she wanted her students to feel free and not criticized.

The pressure that all the participants felt because of the language dichotomizations between their inherited Spanish and Castilian Spanish went beyond the classroom walls. All participants in this study confessed trying to use accents in as many ways as possible (e.g. social media and text messages) as a public demonstration of their identities as SHLL. Moreover, participants in this study also defended their identities as SHLLs by pointing to the lack of orthographical accents in others' writings specifically amongst those who tried to question their identities calling them "*pochos*" [Americanized] because of a perceived oral accent that signaled a lack of fluency in Spanish. Recall that participants in this study told me that their displayed public knowledge of Spanish grammatical rules was very often the result of the use of installed cell phone automatic spell checkers, Google and other internet sources on which they relied to appear as knowledgeable and thus as "real" SHLLs. The purpose was again, to appear educated especially as it pertained to written accents and elevated vocabulary words such as those seen in the Spanish classroom textbook iconic of the de facto norm. All this to demonstrate the authenticity of a claimed identity that was questioned when their inherited Spanish (both spoken and written) was compared to Castilian Spanish.

The data in this study revealed that the participants emphatically tried to hide their inherited Spanish by making use of orthographical accents and high-level vocabulary iconic of standard Castilian Spanish to meet the norm of the RAE as reflected in the classroom textbook and thus suppressing their identity. With written accents participants tried to prove that they were "real Mexicans" and not "*pochos*" [Americanized Mexicans]. They did this as an attempt to legitimize their identity as SHLLs in the eyes of others. While the participants had to suppress their identities in order to meet the standard and achieve academic success as well as validation,

some of them were also presented with the opportunity to redefine their perspectives and, in turn, the possibility to recover their identities.

Theme 3: Identity Recovery

The third theme in this study was identity recovery. Identity recovery refers to the restoration of a suppressed identity. In this study, a few participants were afforded the possibility to critically reflect on the language dichotomizations produced and reproduced by both society and schools (PreK-college). The critical reflections in which these students engaged resulted in an awareness that opened the way for the possibility to recover their identities. Following, I will explain how the opportunity to recover an identity was possible for a handful of participants who, once able to view language and racism among Mexican Americans through a critical lens, were able to interrogate the dominant language ideologies to which they were exposed in school. It is important to mention that the interrogation of the dominant language ideologies fractured the logic of homogenization that constrained the participants and led them to suppress their identities in search of standardization. This suppression was the result first through the language dichotomizations made between English and Spanish that resulted in a Spanish language loss (their mother tongue) and then through dichotomizations between their inherited Spanish and Castilian Spanish.

In this study, nine out of the 22 total participants had the opportunity to reflect on the dichotomies produced and reproduced through their schooling experiences. All of these nine participants took either a Chicanos Studies college course (seven participants), a social linguistics college course (one participant) or a bilingual education college course (one participant). For all of the nine participants, these courses were part of their degree plan curriculum, mainly block elective courses for the college of Liberal Arts at the HSI in which this

study took place. In these courses, all nine participants were invited to critically engage with their history, their cultural, racial and linguistic background. The participants acquired awareness as it pertains to language and racism among Mexican Americans and immigrants. Again, the awareness that these nine participants obtained punctured the logic of homogenization school (PreK-college) had subsumed them to and thus they were able to see themselves for the first time reflected in the image of their Hispanic instructors in a public space. In the representative words of Damián, the 23-year-old male participant who had a double nationality, these courses allowed for “*una reflexion hacia el pasado pero hecha desde hoy, desde el presente*” [a reflection towards the past but done as of today, from the present] (Damián, individual interviews, 11/10/2017). With such reflection, the participants related that they were able to tap into the local histories of McOndo, their cultural and social communities, which had been erased through a one-sided story, that of the colonizers.

Chicano Studies

The Chicano Studies course was described as an interdisciplinary class that explored how ethnic Mexicans in the U.S. have created a distinct culture and examined the history of Mexico as well as issues of nativity, class and gender. As previously mentioned, this course formed part of the block elective courses within the curriculum for the college of Liberal Arts in which the students studied. The seven participants that took the Chicano Studies class related that while talking about the Civil Rights Movement in class, they learned that schools only show one side of the story (of U.S. history) and not a complete recount of the facts. The history shown is one in which they even see more of African American history at times but no key figures for Mexican Americans. As Adriana, the 20-year-old female participant born in the U.S. and who was threatened with detention for speaking Spanish at a Catholic private school, put it:

...I know who Christopher Columbus was, I know who George Washington was, but I didn't know who Cesar Chavez was, or like Dolores Huerta, like Corky and like all this important figures that did a lot too, for... Mexican - Americans... And then that is when it clicked and like: Oh my God, like all this whole life my whole story that I did not know about...like how it happened...like I knew it from the Texas side, but then I realized like: oh my God, like we are just stealing land... like it kind of clicked how we got treated... we also got... police brutality, we also got kicked out and that is when I was like: Oh my God, like I do not know anything like about my own history and that is when I started being like, no, it is my mission to find out more about like my roots and get more connected with my roots that I had forgotten. (Adriana, individual interview, 11/03/2017)

Adriana's reflection is a quick glance at her past, yet it was sufficient for her to question history and the role of the school system. Adriana told me that because of the Chicanos Studies class she realized that she did not know a lot about her own culture. Adriana said she felt disconnected from her culture and her family because in school (K-12), they always told to her to use "only English" (individual interview, 11/03/2017). The dominant language ideologies she was exposed to at school, led her to forget Spanish (her mother tongue) and thus became unable to communicate with her own family. However, because of the Chicano Studies class, Adriana said, "but now I know that I am a Mexican – American... and that is why I picked Spanish because... I was out of touch with my family and my roots" (individual interview, 11/03/2017). The Chicano Studies course was a space in which Adriana learned to questions that which she had believed to be true, that is the language associations, and became aware of her own background. Adriana saw herself somehow in the course for the first time within a public space, a space that had been restricted before by language and condemned to a private sphere (home) she once

rejected because she did not know she could be “snagged in the middle between Mexican and American” (individual interview, 11/03/2017). Because of her gained awareness, Adriana was able to acknowledge a “we” so much so, that she made learning Spanish and history a mission of her own and one she wants to share with others so that they don’t have to suppress their identities as she did due to portrayed binaries.

Relearning History

In the Chicano Studies class, Adriana and six other participants were able to see the dominant language ideologies society and school (PreK-college) had exposed them to as well as question the language dichotomizations that had suppressed their identities by understanding the history of colonization and the suffered ethnolinguistic genocide – historical censures. Arlt, the 23-year-old male participant from Guatemala, for whom accents were key in “performing” an American identity, told me that historical censures have real consequences. He told me that now looking back in retrospect, he recognizes that English was the only language school exposed him to and as a result, he did not know about other authors. Recall that inscribed within the one nation – one language ideology, only selected literature is included (national language – national literature). Arlt told me that all he could ever imagined to be and hoped to become was that which the school system had presented him with - English, a white world. He said:

...And so, it's almost as if like, you have to be Anglo, Caucasian, preferably male, right?

Uh, and they say uh, a dead white guy? Why are we learning from dead white guys?

Because that's all that's taught in the canon.... (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018)

In his words, what schools (PreK-college) present as intellectual literature is “whitewashed” and male dominated (individual interview, 04/11/2018). Though he now knows that there are other

great authors as seen in the Chicanos Studies class, (e.g. Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga), he told me that such will never be included in the canon because of their use of Spanish language, their gender and background. From his perspective, these authors' backgrounds, linked not only to Latin America but also to the Spanish language, just as he and the other participants do not fit within the canon because they are not white and they do not represent Standard English use.

Because of the awareness obtained in the Chicano Studies course as it pertains to a social imaginary created by the school system through historical censures that highlight language dichotomizations, Arlt firmly believes that representation is what education is lacking. Arlt told me that apart from books, everywhere he looks within the university all he sees are white professors and hardly any Mexican American professors. According to Arlt, it is hard for him to imagine himself in them as they do not look like him nor speak his language, Spanish. As the English teacher he is studying to become, he does not want to stand in front of a class who will simply think "who is this white guy who doesn't identify with our own struggles" (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). He told me that because of the Chicano Studies class, he does not want to "perform" within his classes but rather he wants his future students to see him so that they can have the representation he never had. Arlt strongly believes that students do not need someone to "feel bad for them. That's pity, that's sympathy" but rather they need someone with passion who will help them "not just get a good education, but elevate their language" (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). For Arlt, it is important that schools (PreK-12) stop devaluing the students' Spanish for again, such results in a language loss and the inability to communicate with their families. The valuing of English over Spanish and Castilian Spanish over an inherited Spanish leads students to suppress their identities in an attempt to fit in just as he did when he

tried to conceal his oral accent with an “English” accent to perform “Americaness” in order to fit in and to have a voice within a public space.

Empathy

Arlt said that empathy is what education needs. He said:

empathy comes when you and I, we know what it’s like to live... in another country and... like understand [immigrants’] struggles. Why they are coming over here for... for better opportunities... so there is that connection. But we can’t do that if we don’t have teachers that represent the students, that understand the students... and for that to change, we need teachers that care. We need teachers that understand their students.... (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018)

Arlt related that personal experience is what educators need in order to reach a true understanding of their students. Specifically, personal experience of minoritized students like him who are not heard by the school system because of their language use and who wish to be reassured by teachers like his SHL instructor that, “*no eres de aquí ni de allá. Eres de acá y de allá*” [you are not from here or over there. You are from here and over there] (Arlt, individual interview, 04/11/2018). Arlt expressed that in their struggle of self-identity students need instructors that will show them that they belong “over here” and “over there” and are not “stuck in the middle” as he felt for a long time before taking the Chicano Studies class where he learned about the historical censures that resulted in the language dichotomizations that constrained his identity. Again, for Arlt it is important that students see themselves reflected in their teachers for without representation students must suppress their identities because of the dominant language dichotomizations that surround their everyday life.

Ana, a 20-year-old female born in the U.S., who also took a Chicano Studies course, agreed with Arlt as she expressed that the educational system needs to undergo several changes specifically as it regards to the ways in which schools (PreK-12) view immigrants and language. As Ana was describing what she learned in the Chicano Studies course she denounced the expectations that schools held Mexican American children accountable for and reflected on how the white complexion she inherit from her Caucasian father had become a privilege others like her cousin, a “*morena*” [dark – skinned], did not have (Ana, individual interview, 04/02/2018). Ana stated:

...those videos that [the Chicano Studies instructor] shows, like it says that these teachers [here in the U.S.] think that like these parents because they are Mexican, and because they are immigrants, like yeah some of them aren’t like educated in this [in English], but they are so smart, and they have so much to say, and I don’t think your intelligence just has to come from a school system, and to come from your education, I think you can be smart in so many other ways.... (Ana, individual interview, 04/02/2018)

In the Chicano Studies course, Ana became aware of the injustices against Mexican American children by the school system that ignores their funds of knowledge by discrediting what their Mexican Spanish speaking parents can contribute to them simply because of language. Ana said that discrimination against Mexican immigrants because of the Spanish language is strong amongst society and that learning about ballot propositions in the Chicano Studies course opened her eyes to see what her own family has faced. Ana told me that she learned about Proposition 187, which was passed 26 years ago in the state of California prohibiting undocumented immigrants from receiving public, social, educational and health services, and as result she now has utmost admiration for her mother. Ana related that her mother migrated from Mexico to

south central California at age 13 without knowing English and using a visitor's pass in search of a better future and that though she knew that, she had never really understood what it was like for her mother as a Mexican Spanish speaking woman. Because of such awareness, Ana has now also gained appreciation for the Spanish language, which she lost when placed into English monolingual classes and wishes to use her "white privilege" to denounce racism (Ana, individual interview, 04/02/2018).

Giving Back

In this study, through the relearning of history nine participants were able to become aware of the language dichotomizations they had been exposed to at school; first through distinctions between English and Spanish (in PreK-12) and then between their inherited Spanish and Castilian Spanish (in college). By critically interrogating the dichotomies that historical censures had created, these participants reflected on their Spanish language loss and thus on the suppression of their identities. A closer look at themselves, the landscape and the blood, painted a different image that allowed for the deconstruction of a white social imaginary previously created by the school system through English language. Further, these nine participants reflected on the ways in which they could contribute to society with their gained awareness to give back what they had received in either a Chicano Studies course, a social linguistic course or a bilingual education course at college level.

Marisela, the 28-year-old female participant born in the U.S. who had been part of the "English kids" and who took a bilingual education course, specifically said that she too did not want to see any more children losing their Spanish language because of the distinctions made at school (PreK-12) between English and Spanish. Marisela told me that in her bilingual education

course her instructor taught them empathy and patience by reversing the established language roles in class. She related how her instructor used Spanish language to teach in class instead of English and how they were required to submit class work in Spanish rather than in English to which they were accustomed. While Marisela expressed that at the beginning she felt frustration and uncertainty because Spanish was again her lost language, she said that the experience made her understand what migrant children feel when school officials (in PreK-12) place them in English monolingual classes without consideration of their mother tongue. Marisela said:

...And I find that kind of sad. Like, granted we are in America, you can say whatever you want, but language... English is still not our official language. And, we don't have one. It is predominant, but it is not official... [now] I want to kind of make a difference

(Marisela, individual interview, 04/10/2018)

Marisela learned empathy and patience in her bilingual education class by putting herself in the shoes of Spanish speaking students who the school system forces into English monolingual classes without knowing the English language. She also learned that even though English is predominantly used in the U.S., it is not the official language at the federal level. Marisela told me that because of the bilingual education course she now wants to advocate for the use of Spanish without depriving students from their own culture as she was deprived when placed in English monolingual classes. Marisela said, “[students] are trained to know one language [English], and they have to forget about where they come from and I hate that” (individual interview, 04/10/2018). She is now hopeful that in becoming a bilingual teacher she can achieve the best experience possible for other Spanish-speaking children so that they do not forget about their roots as she forgot about hers because again, schools only emphasized English language use. Marisela wants to ensure that in her classroom, language will not be a barrier as it was for

her and her peers, the “Spanish kids” who were socially separated because of the dominant language dichotomizations that started in the classrooms but permeated to the playground and have imbued their present.

The nine participants who were afforded the opportunity to critically interrogate the language dichotomizations to which they had been exposed, expressed that making a change would not be easy but that change started with them. Ester, the 23-year-old female participant born in the U.S. whose sister was falsely diagnosed at school with ADHD and medicated for not understanding English, took a social linguistic course and like all other of these eight participants, she also wanted to give back. Ester wants to give back specifically by constantly reflecting on her own ideas and examining her actions as they pertain to language and people for, according to her, without a constant examination she cannot break from what “society made us think” and thus change (Ester, individual interview, 11/06/2017). Ester told me that in the social linguistic course she learned to question the language dichotomizations between English and Spanish to which she had been exposed in K-12 by reflecting on her personal experiences and that of her Spanish speaking family. She described that in the social linguistic class the instructor would have students write self-reflections as they pertain to language and attitudes amongst them and society. In the social linguistic course, Ester was able to meditate on the consequences of language dichotomizations and the indexations that resulted from them. She said:

here in the U.S., they [American society] think Mexicans are less, they see Spanish as in like, “this is America. Speak English”...and you can’t because we are a border- border town... and border towns usually always speak both. And we have English and Spanish... we share... I was ignorant about it... like I never even knew this [the study of language] was a thing [a degree/ a career]... but there’s different ways... Oh, it’s in

Spanish class too like the ways different types of Spanish that you can speak.... (Ester, individual interview, 11/06/2017)

Because of the course, Ester said that she expanded her understanding of language and people specifically of Spanish speakers who are discriminated because of the indexations of class and status made to Spanish and within the Spanish language. Ester reflected on how she and her sister suffered a Spanish language loss at school because of the constant emphasis on English and on how her own family has been mistreated and ignored for speaking Spanish because of the dissemination of wider language ideologies that associate them to “less” (individual interview, 11/06/2017). Ester told me that not only did she learned how she and her family have been ostracized because of Spanish but that she further learned how even they had internalized the distinctions and recreated them with other people. Again, she mentioned that for her, self-reflections and introspections were important to break the mentality society had created and for change to be possible.

Remembering

In this study, for all nine participants who took a course in which they were presented with a critical lens that allow them to question the language dichotomizations to which they had been exposed, remembering was key in recovering their identities. In the representative remark of Aurora, the 33-year-old female participant born in the U.S. who believed that orthographical accents were needed to claim proficiency in Spanish and who took a Chicano Studies course, “everything like the roots, the culture, is forgotten [in school (PreK-12) with English]... but these classes remind you... And we can’t forget... we [have to] keep it going and going and going” (Aurora, individual interview, 03/27/2018). For Aurora, the Chicano Studies courses are important as they help Mexican American students remember their historical past, a censored

past that schools do not teach and which further led students to forget by emphasizing only English language use which results in a Spanish language loss and the suppression of their identities. Aurora told me that because of the awareness she now has of the distinctions made between English and Spanish and Mexico and the U.S., she constantly reminds her wife Zaira, a Mexican national learning English at college in McOndo, to never forget who she is. She told me that she tells her:

you're gonna learn a lot in school, and then you're probably not gonna wanna speak Spanish no more, but don't ever forget where you came from. Just know that. Yes, you're gonna advance, you're gonna do good things, but don't ever forget where you come from. A lot of people forget... they get their education and they forget. *Y hacen de menos a todos alla* [they treat those over there as less]. And like no,... don't be that person. Don't be ignorant...cause she cries and its hard for her ... she struggles... [she hasn't seen her family in a year and a half and they can't cross]... And I say... the only way you're gonna learn is if you fail just a little bit and get back up... sky's the limit... no matter where you ... come from... The only one that can stop you is yourself... and know that... school is gonna pass just like rain. That quick, that easy... And you know what can anybody say? Can't take her education away. She earned it... No matter where you come from. (Aurora, individual interview, 03/27/2018)

Because of the importance of remembering that she learned in her Chicano Studies course, Aurora's advice for her wife, Zaira, is to never forget her roots. Again, Aurora told me that Mexican Americans forget their culture as schools (PreK-college) only value English and highlight its use as the key to success thus resulting in a Spanish language loss. Aurora does not want her wife to forget the struggle she now has to learn English and attain an education for

according to her, if she does, she would be forgetting who she is, suppressing her identity as she has seen many do because of dominant language ideologies “over here” which devalue and degrade everything “over there.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and explained three major themes that emerged as key findings in this one-year qualitative study. These were: 1) language dichotomizations, 2) identity suppression, and 3) identity recovery. Language dichotomizations in this study represented language ideologies that view Spanish and English as well as inherited Spanish and Castilian Spanish as opposing dichotomies and which in turn served to constrain students identities as SHLLs. Identity suppression in this study was seen as a consequence of the internalization of language dichotomizations represented by the wider dominant language ideologies of a one nation – one language and language standardization. The internalization of the dominant language dichotomies occurred via placement in English monolingual classes, punitive measures, and examinations. Identity recovery in this study referred to the restoration of a suppressed identity and is seen as possible when a handful of participants were provided with the opportunity to critically interrogate the language dichotomizations to which they had been exposed both in school (PreK-college) and by society.

As shown, data from individual interviews, classroom observations and artifacts revealed research participants’ perceptions vis-à-vis their own personal experiences. Using the participants’ words, I aimed to accurately represent their reality. Again, one that signals how through broader language ideologies, that of one nation - one language and language standardization, dichotomies are created and recreated. So much so, that due to the internalization of ideas via their schooling experiences they attempt to suppress their identities

through oral and written accentuation. These suppressions ultimately lead to Spanish language loss, which they try to recover along with their identities but because of the power of language dichotomizations the possibility of a fracture with which they can redefine who they are is something not all are afforded.

CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
-Bob Marley (1973)

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature's laws wrong,
it learned to walk without having feet. Funny, it seems but by keeping its dreams; it learned to
breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else even cared.
-Tupac Shakur (The Rose That Grew from Concrete)

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore with a group of 22 SHLLs and their instructor, their perceptions of language as it pertains to identity. The conclusions from this study follow the research questions and the findings and therefore address: (1) language dichotomizations, (2) identity suppression, and (3) identity recovery. Following is a synthesis of the main findings and conclusions drawn from this research. This synthesis is followed by recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Synthesis of Findings and Conclusions

In concluding this dissertation, I return to my overarching question: how do language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs? For participants in this study, the answer is that dominant language ideologies suppressed their identities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the PreK-12 as well as higher education schooling experiences of all the participants in U.S. schools where English was the valued language served as a key critical foundation of the participants own language ideologies as the school became a mechanism to produce and reproduce geographical dichotomies portrayed in and through language (Mignolo, 2005 & 2012). The language dichotomies described in chapter four involved distinctions between the English language and Spanish as well as, Spanish (inherited Spanish) and Spanish (Castilian Spanish)

which resulted in indexations of race, class and status. The indexations were a result of the one nation-one language ideology and the standard language ideology that replicate social hierarchies (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Irvine & Gal, 2000). The portrayal of a naturalized dominant language and a standard variety presuppose that there is a single language and a correct way of speaking, that of the elite class, which is perceived as better than any other language/variety and which in turn are consequently characterized as non-valuable (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Lippi-Green, 1997; Martínez, 2006; Villa, 2002). Because of these ideas, people are seen as superior or inferior (Mignolo, 2005 & 2012).

For myself, although I did not originally set out to study the entire schooling trajectory of SHLLs in the context of language ideologies within a SHL classroom in a HSI, in designing this study I discovered that the participant's perceptions could not be completely understood without taking into account their past experiences in U.S. schools (PreK-12), which played a major role. Over the course of completing this study I came to understand the significance of the participants' PreK-12 schooling particularly in terms of the inculcation of dominant language ideologies which extend into higher education. These findings add to existing literature that emphasizes that schools (PreK-college) are key sites where students are socialized into hegemonic value systems (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Cole, 2012; Gutek, 2001; Rury, 2008; Rogoff, 2003; Weber, 2001). The valuing of one language (English) and a standard variety (Castilian Spanish) over another (Spanish/inherited Spanish) within schools created dichotomies. Through the idealization of English over Spanish, students were seen "giving up their language and cultures in the process of becoming Americans" (Valdes, et. al., 2001, p. 8 & 43). In this study, participants specifically mentioned how the feeling of needing to catch the "English bus" led them to forget Spanish, their mother tongue, and thus left them unable to communicate with

their families. Participants also related how classrooms divisions based on language protruded into the playground causing social division that separated them from their peers. Moreover, with the idea of a standard variety of Spanish, that of Castilian Spanish as promoted by the RAE and classroom textbooks, students internalized their inherited Spanish as deficient and in need of “sanitizing” (Leeman & Martínez, 2007; Lippi-Green, 1997; Villa, 2002).

In coming to understand the historical experiences of Spanish speakers in U.S. schools (PreK-12), and the creation of SHL programs as well as the development of SHL educational research, I also became aware of the degree to which existent literature excluded student voice and mainly focused on linguistic aspects (Aparicio, 1997; Martínez, 2006; Leeman, 2012). Research about Spanish as a minority language within the U.S. has fed from research on second language acquisition (foreign language) and bilingual education, which have undergone three major shifts: (1) linguistic shift, (2) sociolinguistic shift, and (3) critical shift. While there is vast research that shows the differences between HLLs and foreign language learners (Carreira, 2011; Potowski, 2013; Valdés, 2015) and that such differences (linguistic and cultural connections) are becoming obvious due to demographic shifts with the U.S. (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Porcel, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2010; Valdés, 2015), and while issues of assimilation are being debated (Coles, 2010; Guitierrez, 2008; Rivera-Mills, 2012; Leeman et. Al., 2011), the voice of HLLs is not truly being incorporated. Also, though in the past fifteen years SHL research has focused more on the sociolinguistic and sociopolitical issues (Helmer, 2013; Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Leeman, 2015; Showstack, 2012; Urciuoli, 2008; Villa, 2002), student voice is still limited (Aparicio, 1997; Leeman, 2012). Consequently, as I stated at the beginning of this study, one of the all-encompassing goals of my dissertation was to include the voice of students. More specifically of SHLLs in a SHL classroom at a higher education institution, in order to

understand from their perspective their perceptions of language as it pertains to identity. As mentioned, though there is research that focuses on language ideologies this has not been conducted qualitatively within a SHL classroom at the college level. For example, there is research about language ideologies as it pertains to Spanish speakers in the U.S. (Fuller and Leeman, 2020), ideologies within SHL textbooks and discourse (Leeman & Martínez, 2007; Showstack, 2012), and ideologies within SHL classrooms at the secondary level (Helmer, 2013) but yet again, not specific research within a SHL classroom at an HSI. Again, there has not been a qualitative study that analyzes the relationship between language ideologies and identity within a SHL classroom at a higher education institution. Therefore, the findings from my study make the following contributions to the literature: (1) document the production and reproduction of language dichotomizations by including student voice, (2) demonstrate how language ideologies constrain identities, and (3) show how a critical lens can make a difference in the recovery of identities.

Findings in this study document the way in which wider societal ideologies enter into schools (PreK-college) and are produced and reproduced via student placement in English monolingual classes, punishment and examinations. These apparatuses ultimately constrained the students' identities once the dominant language ideologies that idolize English and demonize Spanish become internalized and further when their inherited Spanish was compared to a racialized and colonized Spanish: Castilian Spanish. These findings were important because they showed how the language ideologies to which the participants were exposed since Pre-kindergarten and which continued into college were internalized and thus constrained their identities. Clearly, the enduring emphasis on standard Spanish shows how the Spanish language is always subjugated to English, the dominant language, even when Spanish is seen as a

commodity (Leeman & Martínez, 2007). A related conclusion is that placement tests are a bridge between PreK-12 and higher education through which language dichotomizations continue to be enacted. The idea of language standardization is seen permeating students' lives and shaping the way they view themselves, the way they view others and the ways others view them (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Showstack, 2012; Villa, 2002). In this study, participants tried to achieve standardization through accentuation both spoken and written because of the indexations of race, class and status presupposed by the dominant language ideologies that led them to suppress their identities. Participants performed and acted an American identity by an English accent, at the expense of their own identities because of the emphasis on English within schools (PreK-12) that devalued Spanish, their mother tongue. Participants in this study also made use of orthographical accents iconic of Castilian Spanish to appear knowledgeable of Spanish grammar and thus claim to be "real" SHLLs. The participants' description of their language abilities reflect that of previous research that signals strong oral and aural skills but limited writing abilities such as the placement of orthographical accents (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Pacual Y Cabo & DeLaRosa- Prada, 2015). The findings also add to existing literature that highlight how a lack of language abilities and/or use of standard varieties position users as authentic or inauthentic in terms of national and cultural alliances (Achugar & Pessoa, 2009; Helmer, 2013). This is because the participants in this study cannot claim to know a language and or be at least in part Mexican without mastery of the Spanish grammatical rules, and orthographical accents that are an icon to them of Spanish (Leeman, 2015).

In addition to that, I also described how nine participants had the chance as part of their degree curriculum (in Liberal Arts) to take a class that critically engaged with their cultural, racial and linguistic background. This afforded them an opportunity to interrogate and question

the dominant language ideologies to which they were exposed to from society and school, giving way to a new perspective. A perspective with which these participants were able to puncture and fracture the logic of homogenization they had been subjected to and thus had the possibility to recover their suppressed identity (Mignolo, 2005 & 2012). As one of the participants representatively expressed, to learn to “redefine” themselves from the “misconstrues” others had of them and which denied them their identity. Their new perspectives arose, not only by valuing Spanish, their mother tongue, which was devalued when compared to English (the dominant language) but also by valuing their inherited Spanish – instead of holding it in constant comparison to the standard Castilian Spanish (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Valdés, et. al., 2001; Villa, 2002). A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that in order for students to be able to recover their identity, opportunities within the SHL classroom for SHLLs to engage with their background as happened in classes like the Chicano Studies class, are needed. It is important for students to understand the history of colonization and ethnolinguistic genocide so that there may be a complete recovery of lost language and lost self (Mignolo, 2005 & 2012).

In total, societal wider dominant language ideologies in this study are seen entering into the schools (PreK-college) where language dichotomizations are produced and reproduced between the English language and Spanish as well as between inherited Spanish and Castilian Spanish. The participants through placement in English monolingual courses, punitive measures and examinations internalized language dichotomizations that led them to suppress their identities. The valuing of English devalued the participants’ Spanish and resulted in a Spanish language loss and thus the inability to communicate with their families. Further, the divisions made in the classrooms based on language use extended to the playground and caused social divisions among peers. In this study, participants made use of accentuation to perform/act an

American identity by using an English accent at the expense of their identities. In addition, participants make use of orthographical accents iconic of Castilian Spanish as a way to demonstrate knowledge of Spanish and thus claim to be “real” SHLLs. Findings in this study align with existing literature that show how language ideologies replicate social hierarchies (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Lippi-Green, 1997; Martínez, 2006; Mignolo, 2005 & 2012; Villa, 2002), that emphasize schools as sites where students are socialized into hegemonic value systems (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Cole, 2012; Gutek, 2001; Rury, 2008; Rogoff, 2003; Weber, 2001), and that highlight how a lack of language abilities or use of standard varieties position language users as authentic/inauthentic in terms of national and cultural alliances (Achugar & Pessoa, 2009; Helmer, 2013; Leeman, 2015). Findings add to existing literature by including SHLL’s (student) voices and examining the relationship between language ideologies and identity within a SHL classroom at a higher education institution.

Recommendations

In the previous section, I presented the synthesis of the major findings that emerged from this study: (1) language dichotomizations, (2) identity suppression, and (3) identity recovery. In this section, based on the findings, analysis and conclusions of this study, I present recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Policy and Practice

In this study, exploring the perceptions of SHLLs as pertained to language and identity shed light onto the type of language dichotomizations that were produced and reproduced within PreK-12 and a SHL classroom in a higher education institution and the ways in which a critical lens allowed for the critical interrogation of these and the possibility of identity recovery.

Findings in my study serve to inform the SHL field of the need to revise SHL textbooks and curriculum as well as the need of PreK-12 teachers to reflect on the ways in which Spanish language and Spanish speakers are talked about/valued in the classrooms. Specifically, SHL courses need to adopt a critical lens that will allow students to engage with their history, their cultural, racial and linguistic background as happened for nine participants in this study in either a Chicano studies course, a social linguistic course or a bilingual education course.

One way in which a critical lens can be applied is by using an interdisciplinary approach in which not only other disciplines are included within Spanish language curriculum but also where instructors across fields can collaborate to teach. A cross flow covering other programs would be beneficial for students told me that they learned more when they were able to unite and apply knowledge/theories within and across classes. A joint collaboration between instructors that bridges fields (disciplines) can serve as a first step. For example, SHL programs could be designed to bring a Chicano professor to talk about some of the ways in which colonization led to ethnolinguistic genocide, or a Bilingual Education instructor to emphasize the struggles of English language learners and vice versa. A critical lens will allow students to critically interrogate and reflect on the language dichotomizations produced and reproduced by both society and schools as well as other dichotomization within and across fields which, if addressed and bridged, could allow for the building of biliteracy more broadly within universities.

Similarly, SHL textbooks need to adopt this lens and value students' inherited Spanish. Including more local histories with which students can identify and exposing students to a full continuum of the language where different varieties, modalities and dialects are seen and not simply reduced to accents could also be helpful. Students made evident that awareness of sociolinguistic issues expanded their understanding as language learners and allowed them to

reflect back on their own lived experiences as a way of meditating in the ways in which language dichotomization could be disrupted. Additionally, HL programs would benefit greatly by reflecting on teacher preparation and practices. For example, instructors with a background in sociolinguistics can help students understand problems around assuming phonology indexes competence or is representative of language knowledge. In this manner, this research suggests a direction for a more culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Future Research

While the current study focused on the impact of language ideologies on the identities of SHLLs, findings from this study suggest areas for future research. In general, I argue for more qualitative research that will first include student voices at higher education institutions and that will then explore other factors such as location and class formats/platforms that influence and contribute to the shaping of SHLLs identities. Future research could attempt to explore and answer questions such as:

- What can be done to ensure that SHL classrooms in higher education institutions become a space that accepts and values biliteracy?
- What are the perceptions of SHLLs in higher education institutions who are taking online courses as it pertains to identity and language?
- How do proficiency guideline changes in SHL policies influence SHLL ideologies and identities?
- How do different higher education institutions' curriculum within SHL classrooms differ or correspond with that in this study?

Answering these questions could lead to a greater understanding of the context in which language ideologies shape the identities of SHLLs. Additionally, answering these questions could provide ways to help address SHLLs' curriculum needs from their perspectives.

Conclusion

This study examined the perceptions of 22 SHLLs and their instructor. Qualitative inquiry enabled me to observe and interpret the complex reality of the participants. By “using [my] eyes and ears as filters” (Lichtman, 2013), I believe that I was able to accomplish the fundamental goal of this work; that is, to provide a fair representation of the participants' voices. I began this chapter with two quotes. One from a song by singer and songwriter Bob Marley that exemplifies historical redemption and one by Tupac Shakur that reminds us of the power of tenacity. Marley's song serves to remind us that mental emancipation is needed and is dependent upon oneself. Language ideologies are a part of a colonization that has two dimensions - ontological and epistemic - and a single purpose - to rank. As such, Mignolo (2005) urges us to engage in “border thinking,” to the “decolonization of knowledge and being” (p. 156). Inspired by the candidness and open-handedness with which the participants in this study shared their experiences so that I could document how language ideologies shape their identities, I vow to use my voice and my work to shape the current condition in higher education SHL classrooms into something consciously just and transformative, to keep it *funky*. I will do this so that when others ask, “did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?” (Shakur) we can talk beyond its marks and scratches and celebrate its tenacity.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENT'S INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

- Tell me about your background.
- Where did you grow up?
- Were you exposed to different languages in your childhood?
- Tell me about your experiences with Spanish.
- Tell me about your experiences with English.
- Tell me about your educational experiences and current language practice.
- Why are you taking Spanish?
- How would you describe your experience in the Spanish (2303/2304) course?
- How do you feel taking this class?
- Is there anything specifically that you like about how your teacher teaches you Spanish?
- What helps you learn in the course?
- What would help you learn more?
- Does the Spanish you learn in the course connects with the Spanish you spoke or speak at home or with a formal classroom setting?
- Is there anything you do not like? Tell me about it.
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

- Tell me about your background.
- Where did you grow up?
- Were you exposed to different languages in your childhood?
- Tell me about your experiences with Spanish.
- Tell me about your experiences with English.
- Tell me about your educational experiences.
- What led you to teach Spanish at the university level?
- Why do you teach Spanish?
- How would you describe your experience in teaching Spanish (2303/ 2304)?
- How long have you taught Spanish?
- How do you think heritage learners respond to taking HLL classes?
- How do you feel teaching HLLs? Why do you feel that way?
- How do you feel teaching non-native speakers? Why do you feel that way?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

CURRICULUM VITA

Viridiana Vidaña earned her Bachelor's degree in Spanish with a minor in secondary education for modern language majors from the University of Texas at El Paso, in 2008. In 2011, she then received her Masters of Arts degree in Spanish (literature) from the University of Texas at El Paso. In 2013, she joined the doctoral program in Teaching, Learning, and Culture at the University of Texas at El Paso.

While pursuing her degree, Ms. Vidaña worked as a Spanish instructor at the University of Texas at El Paso and Medical Spanish at the University of Texas Tech at El Paso (Paul Foster School of Medicine). At the University of Texas at El Paso, she had the opportunity to design four online Spanish courses for nonnatives. She also holds three additional nonacademic jobs to provide for her family and had the opportunity to work as a doctoral research assistant.

Ms. Vidaña presented at several conference meetings including the International Sun Conference on Teaching and Learning, the 14th Inter-American Symposium on Ethnography and Education, the Working Conference on Discourse (Ohio State University), and the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Her dissertation entitled "Language ideologies and identities: Beliefs and practices of college level Spanish students and an instructor in a Spanish Heritage Language Classroom", was supervised by Dr. Christina Convertino.

This dissertation was typed by Viridiana Vidaña.