



Dissertation and Thesis Abstracts on Spanish Heritage Language Education 2000-2012

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This document contains a comprehensive list, including abstracts, of Spanish heritage language dissertations and theses on the topic of heritage language education written from 2000 through April 2012. Dissertations and theses are arranged by language studied and then sorted by author's last name. If multiple languages are the focus of the research, these dissertations and theses are under "Multiple heritage language populations." At the end of this document, you will find an index with page numbers, searchable by region researched, research interest, and research setting.

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Spanish heritage language education

Spanish heritage language learners in Canadian high school Spanish classes: Negotiating ethnolinguistic identities and ideologies

Abdi, Klara

The University of British Columbia (Canada), 2009

Abstract

Many young people today are growing up with two or more languages. The development of their heritage language (HL) plays a role in the learners' intellectual development, cultural identification, and family and HL community relations. Growing numbers of students are thus choosing to enroll in high school or post-secondary language classes for their HL development, posing challenges for teachers who generally have to teach them alongside other (non-HL) "foreign language" (FL) students. Although this area of research, particularly in relation to the teaching of Spanish in the United States, is growing, few studies have looked at the interactions of HL and FL students in mixed classes at the high school level in Canada or elsewhere.

This ethnographic case study investigated the interactions and positionings of Spanish HL (SHL) students in intermediate high school Spanish FL (SFL) classes. Three classes were observed over a six-month period and interviews were conducted with all participating students and teachers. One class was then chosen for in-depth analysis for this thesis. The goal of the study was to analyse the nature of the interactions of SHL and SFL students in order to provide insights into how best to accommodate various types of students in one language course. The study found that the SHL students were positioned in various ways depending on the instructional (whole class or group) setting and the nature of the students' relationships to those they were working with. Their various types and levels of language expertise was one factor in how they were perceived, with greater oral expertise at times making their cultural heritage more salient to their teacher and classmates. The SHL students' ages and social group affiliations were also important factors affecting their status in class. In fact, their ages or particular groups of friends were sometimes found to be greater factors in how their classmates and teacher perceived them than their language expertise. The study offers new insights into the complex nature of teaching SHL and SFL students in one class at the high school level and offers implications for pedagogy, theory and future research.

Spanish heritage language development: A causal-comparative study exploring the differential effects of heritage versus foreign language curriculum

Beaudrie, S. M.

The University of Arizona, 2006

Abstract

Dual tracks---for Foreign (FL) and Heritage languages (HL)---in Spanish language programs are becoming increasingly common in U.S. higher education institutions, although most only offer HL courses for intermediate and/or advanced learners. Few universities have incorporated specialized courses for receptive bilinguals into their programs. Contradictory arguments can be found in the HL education literature regarding the type of curriculum (FL or HL) that would best serve the pedagogical needs of these students (Carreira, 2004; Lipski, 1996; Potowski, 2005).

This study attempts to offer insights into this discussion by examining the effects of these two types of curricula on the written and oral language development of three groups of learners: two groups of HL learners enrolled in HL and FL courses, and a group of FL learners taking the same FL courses. The purpose of this study is four-fold: (1) delineate a profile of receptive bilinguals; (2) measure changes in oral and written production and other language-related variables after one semester of instruction; (3) examine the students' level of satisfaction with the language curriculum; and (4) uncover linguistic differences between FL and HL learners. The data collection consisted of series of written and oral-elicitation tasks and online questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester.

The results showed that all groups made significant gains in writing fluency and complexity but only the HL group in the HL course significantly improved their writing accuracy. Both HL groups made greater gains in oral fluency and complexity than the FL group but the HL group in the HL course outperformed both groups in syntactic complexity gains. The HL group in the HL course showed the highest level of satisfaction and the greatest improvement in self-confidence and language attitudes but no differences in language use outside the classroom and self-evaluation of language abilities. The results offer implications for the inclusion of receptive bilinguals in HL programs, their language placement, and pedagogical and curricular practices most suitable for these students in the HL classroom.

Attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students in urban schools

Boyd, R. R.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College, 2000

Abstract

Many Hispanic students do not have opportunities to develop their native language in efforts to adapt to an all English curriculum at the schools they attend. This is particularly evident among high school Hispanic students who usually possess oral fluency in Spanish but lack reading and writing skills in Spanish.

The purpose of this research was to explore the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward teaching Spanish to Hispanic students. This research was guided by four questions, What are the attitudes of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language toward (1) the use of Spanish? (2) teaching Spanish as a heritage language to Hispanic students? (3) the role of English in the United States? and (4) the use of English at home and at school in the United States?

The research methodology was qualitative and quantitative in design. Quantitative data was gathered from 48 teachers of Spanish of 3 Louisiana school districts by using the Attitudes of Teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language Survey and the *Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale (LATS)*. Qualitative data was gathered by conducting one group interview and 9 individual interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed using percentages, means, and standard deviations and qualitative data was analyzed based on emerging issues to develop an understanding of the problem. Findings indicated that Spanish heritage courses should be taught separate from Spanish foreign language courses because of the linguistic and cultural needs of Hispanic students. Participants identified several obstacles to the implementation of heritage programs. They also felt that the barriers they faced can be overcome by a supportive school administration, motivating Hispanic students to enroll in the courses, training teachers, acquiring financial resources for materials, curriculum, and assessment, working with guidance counselors for proper identification and placement. They provided suggestions for accommodating Hispanic students in foreign language courses. Teachers felt that this would be possible if they are prepared to meet their needs.

Translation and interpretation as a means to improve bilingual high school students' English and Spanish academic language proficiency

Cervantes-Kelly, M.

The University of Arizona, 2010

Abstract

This mixed-method study investigated how and to what extent direct instruction in Spanish-English translation and interpretation affects the acquisition of academic language proficiency in both English and Spanish by Heritage Language Learners of Spanish's (HLLS). The subjects of the quantitative part of the study were 24 participants who were from six high schools with a large number of minority students. These high schools were located in Tucson and Nogales, Arizona. The participants in the qualitative part of the study were six case study students, chosen from the whole group. The participants were enrolled in the 2006 annual 3-week Professional Language Development Program (PLDP), held in July at the University of Arizona. The PLDP's additive teaching translation and interpretation model engaged the participants in learning by not only the novelty of practicing real-life, challenging exercises in class, using their unique cultural and linguistic skills, but also by the dynamic collaborative learning environment. The improvement in the participants' academic language proficiency was assessed through a battery of 9 tests. The participants' perceptions of their experience in the PLDP were explored through individual interviews of six case study participants, their high school teachers and the two PLDP instructors.

The use of translation and interpretation to improve the HLLS's academic English (and Spanish) stands in stark contrast to the subtractive teaching English-as-a-Second-Language model that promotes English proficiency at the expense of the heritage language. The study, therefore, expands research on minority HLL's cultural capital that is not utilized in American education, where limiting the use of bilingual education for English language learners is the norm. The success of the program was demonstrated by the students' newfound appreciation for their heritage language and culture, academic learning, motivation for higher education, and statistically significant gains in Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP; Cummins, 2000).

Heritage language as portrayed in literature written by Latino authors: A transformative critical literary approach

Dominguez-Deleon, E.

University of San Francisco, 2004

Abstract

The Latino population has grown extensively in the past twenty years and now represents a new majority in the school population. Representation in popular culture, the media and school has not always been reflective of the life experiences of Latinos, especially of those who are new immigrants. There is a need to hear the voices of Latinos as they identify themselves and portray their experiences. To find this voice, the researcher studied the discourse in literature of contemporary authors of the immigrant and adolescent experiences. The researcher previewed extensively the sociolinguistic heritage of Latino Americans in the United States, and highlighted distinctions between each of the four largest Latino groups in America. Using a hybrid methodology which draws from Igor Iser's Reader-Response Critical Theory (and others) and Alma Flor Ada's Creative Reading Methodology, the researcher conducted a reading analysis of several major literary works of the contemporary Latino literary boom from 1960 to 2000. The researcher looked at heritage language as a source of empowerment, heritage language as a unifying factor in the formation of individual identity and community building, and the role of heritage language as a vehicle of inspiration and imagination. The researcher's analysis was structured by the practice of question posing as a means to generate meaning that was emancipatory in scope. The findings of the study illustrated that heritage language remained an important part of identity as a bearer of cultural distinction and definition amongst Latinos. It also showed the play of nostalgia, as heritage language became a replacement of a geographical space lost to memory and time. The researcher concluded with recommendations for further study in the area of student-response to literature, inclusion of more Latino/a writers in school curricula, and further exploration of the link between storytelling, identity and pedagogy.

Spanish heritage language socialization practices of a family of Mexican origin

Delgado, M.

The University of Arizona, 2009

Abstract

This ethnographic case study describes the patterns of language socialization and literacy/biliteracy practices and the patterns of language choice and language use of a Spanish heritage bilingual family of Mexican origin from the participant perspective, the emic view, and the research perspective, an etic view. This analysis attempts to broaden the knowledge of how Mexican origin families use language at home by demonstrating how literacy/biliteracy practices (i.e., reading, writing and talk/conversation), language choice (i.e., Spanish, English, code-switching (CS)) and language use (i.e., domains) contribute to reinforce, develop or hinder the use of Spanish as a heritage language. Using ethnographic methodology, this study analyzes the participants' naturally occurring language interactions. Socialization and language learning are seen as intricately interwoven processes in which language learners participate actively.

The analysis and discussion is presented in two sections: (1) language socialization in conjunction with literacy practices, and (2) language socialization in conjunction with language choice and CS. Language choice and CS are analyzed by means of conversation analysis theory (CA): the analysis of language sequences of the participants' conversation. The description of the domains (i.e., what participants do with each language and the way they use language) constitutes the basis for the analysis.

The findings of this study show that language shift to English is imminent in an environment of reduced contact with parents, siblings, and the community of the heritage language group. Understanding which literacy practices are part of the everyday life of Hispanic households is relevant to the implementation of classroom literacy practices.

(Re)presentations of United States Latinos: A critical discourse analysis of Spanish heritage language textbooks

Ducar, C. M.

The University of Arizona, 2006

Abstract

Though the field of Spanish heritage language (SHL) studies has seen a boom in research, such research has not yet addressed the materials available for SHL classes. This dissertation fills a gap in previous research by addressing the representation of US Latinos and US varieties of Spanish in the SHL context. The current study involves a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the presentation of both culture and language in intermediate level university SHL textbooks, in order to show how such texts present US Spanish-speaking people's culture and their language varieties.

Previous research on both history and Spanish as a foreign language textbooks show that US Latino populations in such texts are frequently reduced to numbers, faceless statistics or stereotypes (Arizpe & Aguirre, 1987; Cruz, 1994; Elissondo, 2001; Ramírez and Hall, 1990; Rodríguez and Ruiz, 2005; and van Dijk, 2004a; 2004b). Additionally, previous analyses of the presentation of Spanish in Spanish foreign language (SFL) textbooks show SFL texts provide "...varying or misleading intuitions about dialects of Spanish" (Wieczorek 1992, p.34; see also Fonseca-Greber & Waugh, 2003). This dissertation corroborates these findings in the SHL context and presents suggestions for improving the quality of materials used in the SHL context. The results of the current study clearly parallel those found by van Dijk (2004b); though the texts present "factual" information, it is the selective presentation of this information that culminates in an overall negative representation of immigrant and minority cultures, which is rooted in a metonymical understanding of what it means to be immigrant. Additionally, all the texts continue to promote a pseudo-Castilian variety of Spanish, while delegating student varieties of the language to appropriate home contexts. This bidialectal treatment of US varieties of Spanish excludes critical based dialect awareness altogether.

This dissertation addresses the need to both improve and develop "...pedagogically sound textbooks and new technology materials designed to meet the Hispanic bilingual student's linguistic needs" (Roca, 1997, pp.37-43). It is only through critical discourse analysis that we can assure that textbooks are indeed presenting a positive image of US Latinos and their language to students enrolled in university SHL classes.

High school heritage learners of Spanish: An investigation of language attitudes

Duisberg, S.

University of Arizona, 2001

Abstract

This study explored language attitudes of high-school-level heritage learners of Spanish. Five varieties of Spanish and English, namely, standard Mexican, non-native and local Southern Arizona Spanish, code-switching, and Chicano-accented English were presented to heritage learners using audio-recorded voice samples. Evaluations were recorded on semantic differential scales designed to reflect two distinct attitude dimensions, solidarity and socio-intellectual status/prestige. In addition to quantifying language attitudes, the study attempted to establish correlations with demographic factors. Demographic surveys and student interviews further yielded information to develop a current description of heritage learners in a formal, classroom setting. Teacher interviews provided insights into program structure and teacher preparation. The ultimate pedagogical goal of this investigation was to define implications for heritage language instruction and for the preparation of teachers for this relatively new, yet growing field. A total of 238 students from programs for Spanish heritage learners in ten schools encompassing four districts, public and private, took part in the study.

Structure and practices of heritage programs were found to differ widely, with teachers exercising considerable discretion over curriculum. Students were found to be 90% recently arrived or second-generation students of Mexican, mostly Sonoran, background. Students expressed largely instrumental motivation for their pursuit of Spanish in school and 85% planned to pursue higher education. Results indicate significant differences in students' attitudes between the normative and vernacular language varieties tested. In this academic setting, students' attitudes reflected a distinct preference for more standard varieties. The English test variety was ranked below these and above the vernaculars. Student-participants also showed sensitivity to fine distinctions in register and style. Gender of both speaker and listener were shown to affect language attitudes. Students' habits of language use, in particular the extent of outside reading and radio listening in Spanish, were significantly correlated with more positive language attitudes toward standard varieties. These habits also correlated with higher proficiency levels.

These results engendered three salient implications for teaching and teacher preparation: the need to enhance students' outside reading and listening habits, the need to extend students' familiarity with divergent speech styles, the necessary inclusion of sociolinguistic underpinnings in teacher preparation.

Spanish language of heritage: A study of the extent of its development at a Chicago public school

Falconi, C.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008

Abstract

This dissertation presents a research study of Spanish Heritage Language students who studied Spanish Heritage Language in the Spanish Heritage Language Program at Benito Juarez Community Academy, a Chicago Public School. This study presents data that has been collected from 2002 to 2006 during the time these students studied Spanish Heritage Language.

This qualitative study investigated the extent to which students in the Spanish Heritage Language Program at Benito Juarez Community Academy have been successful in their continued development of the Spanish Heritage Language, learning the academic standard of the Spanish Language. It also investigated the extent to which students in the program have successfully developed literacy skills and a greater sense of the Spanish language and culture. Finally, this study also sought to determine the extent to which students in the program have been successful in developing skills to succeed in other high school academic endeavors.

The subjects of this study were 60 students from the Spanish Heritage Language Program who studied Spanish Heritage Language throughout their high school experience at Benito Juarez Community Academy. Fifty five of the students in this study successfully developed proficiency in the academic standard of the language, high literacy skills in Spanish and a greater understanding and respect of the Spanish Language and Culture of Heritage. The skills they learned in the Spanish Heritage Language contributed to their academic development in three key, core subjects: English, Math, and Science. Forty-seven of the 60 students in this study received college credit for their accomplishments in their final AP exam. The students who were accepted, and were able to attend college after graduation, made a smooth transition to college.

The researcher of this study also served as the teacher of the 60 subjects in this study. She demonstrates the development of the Spanish Heritage Language at Chicago Public Schools as she eye-witnessed it since its beginning in the 1960's when she was also a student in the Spanish Heritage Language Program and throughout her experience in the Spanish Heritage Language Program.

The Spanish Heritage Language Program has undergone drastic reduction of students and teachers by 60% of the class size and number of teachers in the program. The changes that Chicago Public Schools allowed at Benito Juarez Community Academy's Spanish Heritage Language Program will make it difficult for the program's success to be reproduced with students in the Spanish language program.

Beyond high hopes: Educational attainment among children of immigrants

Feeney, S. L.

Oregon State University, 2011

Abstract

In light of broadening racial/ethnic educational attainment gaps, growing diversity within young populations, and the increasingly critical relationship between higher education and outcomes in adulthood, understanding the factors that shape educational attainment is an especially important task for research. With this goal in mind, the current study examined how national origin moderated the effects of gender, heritage language ability, and perceptions of discrimination in society on the odds of achieving substantial progress toward a four-year degree in early adulthood among Filipino, Mexican, and Vietnamese children of immigrants. Guided by an integration of segmented assimilation and critical network-analytic perspectives, each national origin group's mode of incorporation was theorized to shape educational attainment outcomes through its impact on coethnic networks' capacity to provide youth with institutional resources necessary for college attainment. Gender, heritage language ability, and perceptions of discrimination in society served as indicators of coethnic network embeddedness and reliance. Utilizing data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, findings revealed that female gender more than doubled the odds of substantial progress toward a four-year degree among Vietnamese youth, had no effect on Filipino youth's odds of educational attainment, and reduced the odds of educational attainment among Mexican origin youth by half. Heritage language ability was not found to have statistically significant effects on the odds of educational attainment within any of the three groups. Perceptions of discrimination in society demonstrated a negative effect on the odds of educational attainment among Mexican origin youth but did not significantly impact the odds of attainment among Filipino or Vietnamese origin youth. Given that all effects were observed despite controls for educational expectations and aspirations and other relevant covariates, findings suggest that future studies and interventions should consider the ways in which national origin may shape youth's chances of attaining a college degree through access to institutional resources.

Ethnic identity and academic achievement: A study of 5th grade Spanish-English bilingual Latinos

Feinauer, E.

Harvard University, 2006

Abstract

In the United States, Latino students have the highest high school dropout rate of any minority group and rank lowest in academic achievement measures beginning as early as elementary school (August & Hakuta, 1997; Gandara, 1995; Garcia, 2001; Goldenberg, 1996; NAEP, 2000). Latinos also comprise the fastest growing group of students in the public school system (Rittenhouse, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Many educational scholars report that identity formation, specifically ethnic identity formation, plays an important role in the educational achievement of minority and language minority youth. However, in this body of research the inquiry around ethnic identity has focused mainly on adolescents and young adults (Pegg & Plybon, 2005).

This study investigated how pre-adolescent bilingual Latino students in Boston and Chicago expressed aspects of their ethnic identity, namely ethnic identification, sense of belonging and attitudes toward their ethnic group. The role of context and heritage language use in the development of ethnic identity for these pre-adolescent bilinguals was examined. Finally, this study examined the relationship between ethnic identity and academic outcomes for these students.

When asked about aspects of their lives related to their ethnicity, student responses reflected the context of their everyday experiences. They spoke most often about their families. Similarly, Spanish language use functioned as an important ethnic symbol and as an activity that connected these students to their families. Findings from this study point to heritage language use as an internal psychological dimension of ethnicity---one that may be related to an internal affective aspect of ethnic identity.

The social and linguistic contexts in which students lived and went to school influenced expressions of ethnic identity. Students in the larger, more ethnically heterogeneous neighborhood in Boston expressed more awareness of their ethnicity than did students in the smaller, Mexican-enclave community in Chicago. Further, though studies with older students suggest a relationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement, there were no differences in the academic achievement measure related to expressions of ethnic identity for students in this study.

The adult heritage Spanish speaker in the foreign language classroom: A phenomenography

Felix, A. R.

Capella University, 2004

Abstract

For heritage speakers, the Spanish classroom is not the first point of contact with their native language. Though such learners would benefit from an educational philosophy that affirms the heritage language as a springboard for learning and increased self-awareness, there has been little support for non-dominant language research in the United States. This inattention breeds negative consequences not only for heritage speakers, but for national security and economic concerns. This study takes a phenomenographic approach to reveal the experiences of adult heritage Spanish speakers in programs designed for monolingual English speakers. Learners verbalize their own conceptions, thus providing entry to their life-worlds. The data gleaned from this research sheds light on the educational, social, and individual challenges faced by the adult heritage speaker in their quest to improve literacy skills in their native language.

Promoting positive ethnolinguistic identity in the Heritage Language classroom through dialect awareness

Gardner Flores, H. L.

Texas A&M University, 2011

Abstract

This study examined dialect awareness as an instructional practice when used to teach Spanish Heritage Language (HL) learners at a university located on the U.S.- Mexico border. The author employed bidialectalism as a theoretical perspective, recognizing the important role that U.S. Border Spanish plays in constructing ethnolinguistic identity. A mixed-methods research framework was used that included a pre-post survey instrument, focus group interviews, and classroom observations to examine HL student confidence toward learning a prestige language variety and attitudes toward speaking U.S. Border Spanish. Discourse analysis was employed to examine the discursive practices of the DA classroom. Quantitative survey results showed that students developed a number of significant attitudinal changes after taking a course infused with dialect awareness. Triangulated qualitative findings confirmed that student attitudes had changed after one semester. The author proposed an agenda for future application of dialect awareness in Spanish Heritage Language classrooms.

Semiosis of self: Meaning making in a high school Spanish for Native Speakers class

Frederick, T. G.

Georgia State University, 2010

Abstract

Located in social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988), theories of identity (Goffman, 1959; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), and third space (Gutierrez, Baquedano, & Turner, 1997; Rowe & Leander, 2005), this dissertation presents the findings from a year long, field-based qualitative study with a high school class of nine Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) students and their teacher. The study used an arts-infused multimodal curriculum exploring Spanish language texts and cultures from around the world. The following questions guided this study: (a) What factors were considered as the teacher and the researcher co-planned this arts-infused multimodal curriculum, and how did the consideration of those factors shape the curriculum?, (b) How did students enrolled in this SNS class negotiate meaning and identity as they worked within this class?, and (c) What discourses around students' meaning making practices and identities emerged within their visual texts over time and across texts?

Data sources included interviews, observations, student-generated visual texts, photographs from class sessions, student journals, and audio and videotapes of portions of class discussions and activities. Visual texts were coded for elements of visual design and apparent discourses with which the text-maker identifies (Albers, 2007b; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Five themes emerged from the data: (1) The teacher participant and researcher co-created the curriculum using critical-care pedagogy; (2) Actual participation in and creation of visual and multimodal texts shaped the classroom community; (3) Negotiation and meaning making occurred through the flexible use of sign systems; (4) Participants worked through understandings of self; and (5) Personally relevant discourses emerged within individual and group texts. The study suggested that heritage language courses like this one can teach more than language. Such courses deserve attention as havens where students' complex meaning making of themselves, their worlds, and their places in them are freely explored.

Heritage learners of Mexican descent in higher education: A qualitative study of past and present experiences

Gignoux, A.

University of Montana, 2009

Abstract

This is a qualitative interpretive study that explores the past and present experiences of heritage learners (HLs) of Mexican descent who were studying or had recently studied advanced Spanish in institutions of higher education. All of the participants had been exposed to Spanish in the home and began their studies in elementary or middle school in the United States. The population of HLs continues to grow and a need to understand this population exists. The statistics have shown that not all HLs of Mexican descent complete their studies in institutions of higher education and the reasons for this are not understood well.

The Seidman (1998) three-tier in-depth interview approach was used to gather information from the participants. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed by the researcher, and reviewed multiple times. Categories, topics and themes emerged from the data and relevant quotes were segregated into separate documents. The data was organized further as patterns were studied. Several categories and themes were chosen and the data was gradually reduced. The findings include a thematic presentation of the participants' quotes and interpretive summaries for each section. In addition, the participants' profiles, which are based on demographic and self-identification surveys, are presented in the findings.

The findings give some insight into what the experience has been like for these students as Spanish speakers educated in the United States. Categories, topics, and themes that addressed the research question and which were relevant to the study were chosen. Three categories emerged and include education, language, and identity. Within these categories several topics and themes emerged. These include advising, language perceptions, connections with other Spanish speakers and culture, defining identity, insecurity, desire, uncertainty, and unawareness.

The implications include recommendations for addressing retention and recruitment. Insight into topics such as advising, placement, and reasons why HLs study the heritage language were gained. A strong desire to learn the heritage language in order to connect to and maintain the culture stood out in the findings. The participants also provided insight into their experience and identity issues. In addition, a need to provide resources for professors, advisors, and HLs was found. In sum, the study has inspired the researcher to work to improve the HL educational environment.

Spanish heritage language maintenance: The relationship between language use, linguistic insecurity, and social networks

Gonzalez, G.

The University of Arizona, 2011

Abstract

The field of heritage language maintenance lacks an in-depth look at the social networks that make-up the linguistic interaction of heritage speakers of Spanish. Moreover, the social network studies that have focused on language maintenance have all investigated the maintenance of a first language spoken by immigrants or the use of a dialect. Undoubtedly, there is a lacuna of research with regard to heritage speakers of a language, which is the focus of the proposed study. There is an even greater deficit in the study of linguistic insecurity among heritage language speakers and the correlation that there may be with regard to social networks. The present research fills this gap by examining these issues within a population of heritage speakers of Spanish at the University of Arizona.

This study examines correlations between linguistic insecurity, social networks and language use in heritage speakers of Spanish. The population investigated are college aged students registered in the beginning and intermediate courses of the Heritage Language Program at the University of Arizona, Tucson (SPAN 103, 203, and 253). Linguistic insecurity is measured using an adapted version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986) and language use is measured through an online questionnaire. The subjects' social networks are identified using an adapted on-line version of the Cochran, Lerner, Riley, Gunnarson, & Henderson's (1990) social network questionnaire. This study details the social networks of heritage language speakers of Spanish and presents the correlation between these networks, the participants' use of Spanish and their linguistic insecurity in a discussion regarding the speakers' prospects of maintaining the heritage language. Secondly, it presents correlations between the linguistic insecurity of heritage language speakers of Spanish, Spanish language use, oral proficiency and social network structure. The information provided by this study will help in the understanding of the function of social networks in the maintenance of a heritage language. It will further assist in the understanding of linguistic insecurity and provide a foundation for further research into how to address linguistic insecurity in the heritage language classroom.

Conocimiento lingüístico del preterito y del imperfecto en los estudiantes de herencia hispana
Granja-Falconi, P.
Rutgers The State University of New Jersey – New Brunswick, 2010

Abstract

The knowledge of preterite/imperfect in Heritage bilingual students (Spanish/English) born in the USA is examined. Previously, their aspectual domain has been evaluated in terms of incomplete acquisition (Montrul, 2002 a and b) and reduction/simplification of simple past forms (Silva-Corvalán, 1994), but not in terms of optionality. In this study, existing POA, difference of the languages, semantic properties and optionality theories are reevaluated. In their production, the aspectual differences of both languages are analyzed, particularly under a model of English origin, which favors [+perfective] aspectual characteristic in the correspondence of lexical class and morphology. In their comprehension, the languages functional characteristics differences are analyzed considering the relationship between morphology, abstract characteristics and syntactic structure in the recognition of the [+punctual]/[+continue] readings and the distinction of semantic interpretations. Then, optionality sceneries of preterite/imperfect are identified. Heritage bilinguals (n = 25) of New Jersey are compared with Spanish monolinguals (n = 25) through two production tests and two comprehension tasks. It is found that Heritage bilinguals: have knowledge of Spanish aspectual system, but differ from monolinguals; behave better in the comprehension; and show preference in the use of preterite with telic verbs and certain difficulties in the use of imperfect with atelic verbs. Also, in the Heritage bilinguals, the effect of the Spanish lexical value is not clear in the non-prototypical test, where the effect of the context destabilizes their performance. In addition, interference of the [+perfective] characteristic in the different lexical classes is noticed; however, it does not completely explain their behavior with stative verbs. As far as the syntactic-semantic interface they understand the [+punctual] reading with the preterite and the [+continue] reading with the imperfect of achievements, states and, although with indecision, accomplishments verbs. Additionally, they recognize [+/-perfective] semantic interpretations, except the specific one of the perfective. Finally, they access to optional syntactic-semantic operations with both eventive verbs and estative verbs with [+/- perfective] characteristics, particularly due to the preference for the aspectual [+perfective] characteristic or to the overgeneralization of the imperfect. It is noticed that in some cases they accentuate certain optional tendencies already present in monolinguals.

Language socialization in Canadian Hispanic communities: Ideologies and practices

Guardado, José Martín

University of British Columbia (Canada), 2008

Abstract

Recent scholarship has highlighted the importance of supporting home languages for linguistic-minority families in multilingual settings, as the family language is the means through which they can more successfully socialize their children into the beliefs, values, ideologies and practices surrounding their languages and cultures. Although there has been some research examining issues of Spanish acquisition, maintenance and loss in Canada, the language socialization ideologies and practices of Hispanic families have not yet been examined in this context. This ethnographic study investigated language socialization in immigrant families from ten Spanish-speaking countries residing in Greater Vancouver. Thirty-four families participated, three of which were selected for intensive case study in their homes and in three grassroots community groups. More specifically, the study examined the families' desires and goals with respect to Spanish maintenance, the meanings they assigned to Spanish, and the processes through which they attempted to valorize Spanish with their children. The study found that many families formed support groups in order to transmit language and culture to their children. A cross-case analysis revealed that the families further exerted their agency by strategically turning these spaces into "safe houses" to resist assimilation and into venues for the Spanish socialization of their children, which enabled them to also transmit cultural values, such as familism. The families conceptualized Spanish maintenance as an emotional connection to the parents' selves and as a bridge between the parents' past and the children's future. It was also constructed as a key that opened doors, as a bridge for learning other languages, and as a passport to a cosmopolitan worldview. Detailed discourse analyses revealed how the families utilized explicit and implicit directives, recasts, and lectures to socialize children into Spanish language ideologies. These analyses also showed how children at times resisted the parents' socialization practices, but other times displayed their nascent understanding of their parents' language ideologies in their own use of cross-code self-repair. The study offers unique insights into the complexity of L1 maintenance and the dynamics of language socialization in the lives of linguistic minorities and concludes with implications for policy, pedagogy and research.

Year one at "city" high school: An ethnographic study of heritage language learners at an innovative charter school

Helmer, K.

The University of Arizona, 2007

Abstract

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) and Wortham (2006) propose that academic learning is both personal and social transformation. This transformation is continuously negotiated through classroom interaction and curricular choices. The current ethnographic study of an urban southwestern charter high school investigates academic learning in two contexts: a Spanish heritage-language (SHL) class and a humanities class.

The study examines Mexican-origin students' resistance to studying their ancestral language. From the first day of their SHL class, students refused to speak Spanish (despite their proficiency), rejected published Spanish-language materials, and acted out. Student resistance was rooted in their perceived lack of relevant tasks and materials, teacher-respect for their home language and culture, and student belief that learning "proper Spanish" could threaten social and familial relationships (see also Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Labov, 1972a; Mehan, Hubbard, & Villanueva, 1994).

The resistance of the heritage language learners contrasts sharply with the engagement of the same students in their Humanities course in which students connect enthusiastically with subject matter and instructor. Findings suggest that engagement was fostered through the teacher's strict adherence to the principles of place-based learning (Gruenewald, 2003a, 2003b), critical democratic pedagogy (Shor, 1992), and the instructor's teacher ethos .

Latinos have the greatest high school dropout rate in the United States while simultaneously being the largest growing demographic group (Carreira, 2003; "US Census Report," 2004; Waggoner, 2000). The pairing of these two statistics should draw alarm. Thus the study of Latino student engagement and resistance to academic learning is crucial for understanding this problem as well as exploring what pedagogies hold most promise. In terms of HL instruction, analyses reveal that a critical place-based approach to heritage-language instruction holds such promise.

Language attitudes and perceptions of New Mexican Hispanic students in a dual language immersion program

Hernandez-Zudell, E.

The University of New Mexico, 2007

Abstract

The focus of this dissertation was to explore the language attitudes and perceptions of New Mexican Hispanic students in a dual language immersion program. This includes: What they thought about English and Spanish? How and why they spoke as they did in the classroom, with peers, and with family members? What their actions said about them socially? How it did or did not reflect on the program they were enrolled in and the language they chose or refused to use?

Language is one tool we use that displays our social identities. The way we choose to use language and even the language we speak expresses a very meaningful and complex aspect of ourselves (Labov, 1982; Lippi-Green 1997; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Trudgill, 1983).

The voice of minority language or heritage language students was not present in the review of the literature in dual language programs. We need to understand language minority students' reasons, issues, concerns, and actions as participants in these programs if we are to continue to work on the development of language proficiency of the minority or heritage language through the institution of the American education system.

Utilizing the students' own words helped analyze students' feelings and ideas about these two languages. Investigation through the use of students' interviews, classroom observations notes and transcriptions of audio recordings of classroom interaction helped reveal their language attitudes and language perceptions through the analysis of language use, message forms, setting, key, and speakers. These led to the students' norms of interaction which were reflected in the classroom and in their interactions with peers and others. These findings led to the issue of language and power that was present in the students' lives and which affected the language use of the students.

Canadian school-aged heritage language learners' patterns of language use, proficiency and beliefs about learning their two languages

Jean, M. W. L.

University of Toronto (Canada), 2011

Abstract

The present dissertation examined the language use, proficiency and beliefs of child heritage language learners (HLLs) from Spanish and Chinese heritage language (HL) backgrounds exposed to English as a second language (L2) upon school entry (N=63). Data were collected via HL and L2 proficiency measures and a semi-structured interview and pictorial measure, during the primary years, a period noted for HL loss (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Study 1 focused on patterns of language input and use in children's lives. Children mostly used L2 in their activities and in their interactions with siblings, cousins and peers. With parents, grandparents and older relatives, children mostly used HL. Study 2 investigated children's proficiency and changes in proficiency across HL and L2 language and literacy domains. Children appraised their HL oral language skills at low to moderate levels, and viewed their HL literacy skills as very low. Contrarily, their appraisals of L2 skills were uniformly high across all domains. Children demonstrated limited HL proficiency, whereas they demonstrated moderate L2 skills in all domains. Concordance between perceived and demonstrated proficiency was low, with only one in three children accurate in their self-evaluations. While children indicated loss, stability and growth in their HL skills equally, most children indicated growth in L2 skills since beginning school. Children demonstrated growth in HL oral language and reading and in all L2 domains. Qualitative analysis indicated that children overwhelmingly referenced markers of language and literacy skill in explanations of their appraisals. Other attributions for proficiency and changes in proficiency included assistance from others, different learning approaches, the influence of language environments, and feedback received from others. Study 3 investigated children's affects and beliefs in relation to HL and L2 situations. Positive affect was associated with listening and speaking HL in the home context, and with L2 across all domains and contexts. Skill in the domain or language was a common rationale for children's affective responses to language and literacy situations. Children also associated their affect with interest in the target domain/language, availability of assistance, membership in language groups and the influence of language environments. Considerations for further research with this population and recommendations for relevant parties are discussed.

Identity and language ideology in the intermediate Spanish heritage language classroom

Lowther Pereira, K.

The University of Arizona, 2010

Abstract

This dissertation examines the negotiation of language ideologies and identity construction amongst university intermediate level Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners in the U.S. Southwest. Combining sociolinguistic and ethnographic methods with discourse analysis, this study seeks to provide deeper insight into the linguistic practices and the negotiation of language ideologies that takes place amongst SHL learners. Data from participant observation of interaction in the SHL classroom throughout the semester, questionnaires, interviews with students and instructor, and student focus group discussions were used to analyze discourses about language and the multiple values placed on English and Spanish in general, and on standard and local varieties of Spanish in particular. More specifically, this study analyzes, through the application of Bourdieu's (1991) notions of linguistic capital and symbolic power, how SHL learners negotiate these values and discourses as they study their heritage language. In addition, this study examines performances of identity observed during interactions within this group of SHL learners, recognizing the construction of multiple social identities, including bilingual, heritage learner and ethnic identities, as a dynamic and complex process that is recurrently shaped by interaction and the negotiation of competing language ideologies.

Hispanic parents: A sociocultural perspective on family, ideology, and identity

Malave, G.

The University of Arizona, 2006

Abstract

This dissertation presents a qualitative study that features in-depth interviews conducted in homes and the application of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand the discourses of Hispanic parents. Observing moments of dialogue between parents and children who participated in some interviews served to understand how parents attempted to influence their children's development of beliefs and values about language and identity. The study examined transcripts of narratives produced by Hispanic parents in 12 families in Arizona and Iowa, most of them immigrants from Mexico whose children were attending primary grades in two public schools. The purpose of the study was to understand the ideological dimensions of parental involvement in education and their socialization practices.

The theoretical framework can be described as a sociocultural approach to family, identity and ideology, combined with a critical perspective on language socialization. This sociocultural framework is influenced by Vygotsky's (1927/1997) cultural-historical theory, which provided the lens to look at the cognitive aspects involved in the reproduction of ideologies, and by diverse versions of CDA as formulated by other scholars, such as Fairclough (1995), Gee (2004), and van Dijk (1998). CDA was used to analyze conversational storytelling and argumentation about controversial topics such as bilingual education, the maintenance of Spanish as heritage

language, identity, English-only instruction, and official English movements in US. This approach (CDA) was particularly useful to examine texts with reported speech to understand the representation of other people's discourses and of the groups they represent.

The findings provide insights into experiences that would affect children's motivation to learn and use Spanish and English, paying attention to processes of ideological influence from diverse sources upon parents' and children's beliefs and attitudes toward those languages. This study has implications for language and educational policies because its findings inform educators about parents' experiences and perspectives on the education of language minority students. The study is useful to understand not only the parents' perspectives on the education of Hispanic children, but also the ideological dimension of parental involvement in education, especially when the latter includes language socialization of their children towards promoting the development of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Mood simplification: Adverbial clauses in heritage Spanish

Martinez Mira, M. I.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2006

Abstract

The use of the subjunctive in the Spanish of heritage speakers has been hypothesized as undergoing mood simplification, i.e. the progressive use of the indicative in contexts where monolingual Spanish speakers would use the subjunctive. Since purpose and concessive clauses have been found to favor the subjunctive in heritage speech (Silva Corvalán 2000[1995]), this dissertation investigates the factors which contribute to this higher retention of the subjunctive in these structures. Temporal clauses were also analyzed for being semantically related to purpose/concessive clauses. The variables of the study are the indicative/subjunctive alternation, the temporal sequencing between the clauses, the degree of interclausal dependency, and subordinate clause position. Due to similarities in subjunctive processing attested in Mexican and heritage Spanish speakers, it was hypothesized that heritage and monolingual speakers would show similar preferences regarding the choice of the subjunctive and subordinate clause position (postposed position in purpose clauses; preposed position in concessive clauses; preposed position in temporal clauses expressing prospective meaning). The same was tested with L2 learners of Spanish (L1 English) to determine whether heritage speakers resembled some processing strategies attested in Spanish L2 learning, mainly mood simplification. Three questionnaires (two linguistic tasks and one sociodemographic), plus a voluntary interview, were administered to college students: 98 monolingual speakers of Mexican Spanish in Mexico, 100 heritage speakers from New Mexico (different generational groups), and 202 advanced L2 learners. A written production task tested the participants' use of the subjunctive. A grammatical judgment task tested the participants' familiarity with the subjunctive in the adverbial contexts, whereas the oral interview tested their use of the subjunctive in oral communication. Results show that position does not play a big role in recognizing and using the subjunctive. There are similarities between the monolingual and heritage speakers regarding familiarity with and use of the grammatical subjunctive. Heritage speakers seem to be more tolerant towards the ungrammatical presence of indicative, like L2 learners; however, heritage speakers show

differences with the learners in that heritage speakers use the subjunctive more. Early exposure to Spanish during childhood and sociodemographic factors seem to explain this difference.

Native institutions, foreign struggles? Knowledge of the subjunctive in volitional constructions among heritage and traditional FL learners of Spanish

Mikulski, A. M.

The University of Iowa, 2006

Abstract

The Spanish subjunctive has been the focus of much SLA research, largely because it poses difficulties for learners of Spanish whose L1 is English (e.g., Collentine, 1993; Stokes & Krashen, 1990; Terrell et al., 1987). Investigating the same feature in heritage learners of Spanish can provide more information about their linguistic development and also has the potential to inform our knowledge of the acquisition of the subjunctive in traditional FL learners. The present study investigates whether heritage learners recognize grammatical and ungrammatical modal choice in volitional constructions. These constructions have been selected because this use of the subjunctive does not vary by a speaker's dialect or by belief about the idea being expressed. Furthermore, given that theories of language attrition posit that the structures that are acquired earliest are the last to be lost (e.g., De Bot & Weltens, 1991) and that Spanish monolingual children acquire the subjunctive in volitional constructions first (Blake, 1980; 1983), heritage learners who have experienced some language attrition may still have knowledge of this feature. To investigate the effect that language attrition or incomplete acquisition may have on this knowledge, I also compared the SHL learners in the sample who were early bilinguals in English (those born in the United States or who immigrated before age 6) with those who were late bilingual (those who immigrated between ages 6 and 13). Students enrolled in Spanish for Heritage Learners (SHL) and Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) courses at three universities in the Northeast completed grammaticality judgment (GJ) and editing tasks, which contained examples of correct and incorrect mood choices, as well as distracter items. The GJ task also required participants to explain their judgments. The results indicate that SHL learners outperform their SFL peers on recognizing correct mood selection. No significant differences were found between early and late bilinguals. SHL and SFL learners tended to correct utterances that they had rejected or judged neutrally but gave different types of reasons for accepting utterances. There were several similarities between early and late bilinguals in terms of their reasons for their judgments of utterances.

The study abroad experiences of heritage language learners: Discourses of identity

Moreno, K.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

Abstract

This study highlights the complexities associated with learning a heritage language (HL) abroad, specifically with regard to identity, expectations, and beliefs about language and language learning, by examining the ways that HL learners talk about themselves. These are important topics to study because perceptions of language learning have been shown to influence language acquisition in the study abroad context (Wilkinson, 1998). In addition, study abroad programs are becoming more popular and so are attempts to design language courses to meet the unique needs of HL learners.

The study explores the experiences of 17 HL learners who chose to study abroad in 2007 or 2008 to improve their HL proficiency. These HL learners had at least a basic ability to comprehend and communicate in the language that their parents or grandparents speak natively, and were themselves dominant in English. The participants included 5 males and 12 females who went abroad to 14 different countries to study Spanish (7), Hebrew (1), Tigrinya (1), French (1), German (1), Korean (1), Cantonese (1), or Mandarin (4). Data collected include 17 hours of interviews both before and after the sojourns, 34 email reflections written while abroad, blog entries, and a focus group. Data were analyzed using discursive psychology, which views discourse as being variable, co-constructed, purposeful, and context-dependent. By analyzing the data to find the interpretive repertoires, ideological dilemmas, and subject positions used (Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003; Edley, 2001), a deeper understanding of studying abroad as a HL learner was attained.

Findings include that the participants lack interpretive repertoires to discuss their HL and being a HL learner, used their HL as a resource to access other learning opportunities while abroad, encountered difficulties fully immersing themselves in the HL while abroad, received insufficient pre-departure support from the study abroad offices, and had backgrounds and HL learning experiences that varied considerably. The study's findings have implications for what topics to cover in classes and study abroad advising sessions that may help HL learners make decisions about where to study abroad, as well as help students process the experiences they have learning their HL and studying abroad.

Register and style variation in speakers of Spanish as a heritage and as a second language
Munoz, A. S.
University of Southern California, 2007

Abstract

One of the fundamental principles of sociolinguistics is that language is not homogeneous and that no single person speaks in the same way all the time. Numerous studies have provided evidence of linguistic variation across situations of use in English (e.g. Bell 1984; Biber 1988; Biber and Finegan 1994). However, under special conditions when a language is restricted to very familiar situations, speakers might not show register variation (Dressler 1982). For most heritage speakers of Spanish in the U.S., English is the dominant language while Spanish is largely restricted to home and family interactions. This dissertation explores the hypothesis of variation across registers in Spanish as a heritage language. Additionally, it examines speakers of Spanish as a second language since Spanish is also their non-dominant language.

For the purpose of studying register and style variation, this dissertation focuses on several linguistic features that are expected to vary in relation to the type of register: discourse particles, contractions, and various lexical choices. The data analyzed come from recorded spoken samples produced in Spanish by heritage and second language speakers and collected in three situations of use: conversations, interviews, and presentations, ranging on a scale from less to more formal.

The results indicate that both heritage and second language speakers show linguistic variation in their Spanish across registers. The results also reveal some quantitative as well as qualitative differences between the production of heritage and second language speakers across registers. These contrasts are the result of the different input to which the speakers have been exposed to during acquisition.

This dissertation contributes to further our understanding of bilingualism by examining Spanish as a heritage and as a second language across different registers, which has not been previously investigated. It provides evidence of variation in a relatively small range of registers in the speakers' non-dominant language. This is an important finding since it shows that even when the use of the language is largely restricted to a particular domain (home and family interactions for heritage speakers and classroom interactions for second language learners), we can still find register variation.

The Spanish heritage language learning experience in the rural Midwest: Voices from a newly diverse small town

Neuroth, C.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

Abstract

It has been shown repeatedly that Latino students often have a negative educational experience in U.S. schools (i.e. Cummins, 1984; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). This negative schooling experience is often associated with instruction that is not relevant to the students' lives and even subtracts away their home languages and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999). Recent steps toward the remediation of this injustice have included the recognition of the inappropriateness of Spanish foreign language classes for those students who come to school with a home background in Spanish and the subsequent establishment of heritage language courses for these Spanish-English bilinguals. The question remains whether the students' bilingual and bicultural competencies are being fostered as tools of student empowerment in such classes, figuring into the definition of what it means to be 'educated' (an empowering, 'additive' experience) or, in contrast, whether the SHL programs are further hurting the already weak academic status of the U.S. Hispanic students by alienating them from their home language and culture and subtractively assimilating them into the mainstream culture (a disabling, 'subtractive' experience). This qualitative, descriptive case study addressed this question via an investigation of a Spanish heritage language program in a newly culturally and linguistically diverse rural Midwestern U.S. town. Evidence of the students' additive and subtractive schooling experiences (Valenzuela, 1999) is detailed here, with a primary focus on the students' perspectives and voices, and suggestions are provided for future improvement of this and other heritage language programs. While much has been written by researchers and teachers about the impact of heritage language courses in U.S. locations with traditionally large Spanish-speaking communities, virtually nothing is known about the heritage language learning experiences of bilingual Spanish language learners in other communities. Hearing these students' voices and understanding their rural Midwestern Spanish heritage language learning experiences will contribute to the overall knowledge base that is being built in the literature on effective Spanish heritage language instruction in the United States.

Usage and experiential factors as predictors of Spanish morphosyntactic competence in US heritage speakers

Obregon, P.

The Ohio State University, 2010

Abstract

The present study investigates the degree to which social, experiential and usage-related factors correlate with Spanish linguistic competence among adult Hispanic Heritage Language (HL) speakers in the United States. Two online survey instruments were developed in furtherance of this research aim: a Likert-scale survey measuring five areas of Spanish usage and experience (time in Spanish-speaking countries (monolingual environment); formal education in Spanish; usage with family; usage with peers; and media usage) and a performance measure focusing on six areas of Spanish grammar that prior linguistic research has identified where the competence of Spanish HL bilinguals in the US may differ significantly from that of the monolingual standard.

The reliability and validity of surveys as indicators or predictors of heritage language proficiencies is of both theoretical and practical interest to researchers in the areas of bilingualism, language shift, language contact and loss, and language acquisition. This study incorporated a much larger sample size (N=453) than previous survey or questionnaire-based research in these areas, which in turn permitted the use of more sophisticated statistical and psychometric analytic methods than had previously been implemented. The results indicated that the basic psychometric functioning of the survey instrument was sound, particularly with respect to the three largest subscales. Multiple regression analyses showed that the set of survey subscale scores accounted for a significant portion (19%) of score variance on the morphosyntax measure. The factor most associated with grammatical competence (as determined by the performance measure) was the proportion of Spanish usage with family members not of the respondent's generation (i.e. parents and grandparents) and the single strongest individual predictor was proportion of use with one's mother or stepmother.

The role of Spanglish in the social and academic lives of second generation Latino students: Students' and parents' perspectives

Osorio, A.

University of San Francisco, 2010

Abstract

Minimal attention has been afforded to the motivations and perspectives regarding the use of Spanglish in social and academic settings. The purpose of this study is to explore the motivations and applications that encourage linguistic connections between English and Spanish among second generation Latino students and their parents. Furthermore, this study strives to promote awareness and understanding among Spanish educators, researchers, and the Latino community of the situational appropriateness of the use of Spanglish.

As an ethnographic research, data was collected through individual and focus-group interviews in Spanish, observations in social and academic settings, and a language choice questionnaire was administered to 32 students. All data was tape recorded, transcribed, and translated from Spanish into English. The main participants were six Latino high school students and their parents from a small community in Northern California. Research questions: (1) what are the experiences of second generation Latino students and their parents with regards to their use of Spanglish? (2) what are the students' reflections on how their use of Spanglish affects their success in both social and academic situations? (3) what role does the family play in the use of Spanglish?

The results of this study include that students perceive Spanglish as a natural and necessary medium of communication in their daily lives in the United States. Moreover, the use of Spanglish provides participants with a sense of social identity in their community. The loss of their heritage language was not due to Spanglish but to English immersion in their school and at home. These participants expressed the need to include all language variations in the classroom. Although the participants in this study recognized Spanglish as an informal form of communication, they acknowledged that people from all income and educational levels of society use Spanglish. Yet, participants were aware of distinguishing the situations in which the use of Spanglish was appropriate.

Organizational assimilation through heritage language programming: Reconciling justice and bilingualism

Pedroarias, R. J.

Loyola Marymount University, 2011

Abstract

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to analyze the effectiveness of a heritage language Spanish program from the standpoint of organizational, curricular, and co-curricular practices. In this study, *heritage language study* was defined as having an emphasis on maintaining cultural awareness and language needs (Beaudrie, 2009) through cultural mediation, in which the experiences and identity of students are developed as areas of strength in the educational experience (Bennett, 2003; Gollnick & Chinn, 2004; Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006). The setting for this mixed-methodology study was an all-male Catholic secondary school. The participants in this study numbered 78 students in the heritage language courses and 10 faculty and administration members. The data collected pointed to significant areas for growth in the school's distinction between heritage language learners and native speakers.

The findings suggested the prevalence of the following themes: class and racial discrimination, student internalization of deficit thinking, and the power struggle between the power structure and Latino student population. The implications of this study were that the program would benefit from greater teacher preparation in terms of degree background, increased emphasis in activities that promote student verbal communication in the heritage language, and greater incorporation of varied classroom practices in order to empower students to achieve a proficient level of bilingualism and biculturalism.

Language use in a Spanish-English dual immersion classroom: A sociolinguistic perspective

Potowski, K.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2002

Abstract

Dual immersion classrooms combine students who speak a non-English language (in this case Spanish) with English speaking students learning the native language of the nonnative English speaking students. This case study recorded the output of Spanish first Language (L1) and second language (L2) fifth graders over 5 months of Spanish language classes. The 2,203 turns of speech were coded according to nine sociolinguistic variables. Overall, students used Spanish 56 percent and English 44 percent of the time. Four major trends included the following: (1) girls used Spanish more often than boys, regardless of L1; (2) students averaged 82 percent Spanish when talking with the teacher but only 32 percent when talking to peers; (3) Spanish was mostly used for on-task topics (off-task social turns were made just 16 percent of the time in Spanish); and (4) students' peer English covered a wider range of functions (playing, teasing, and other off-task activity) than peer Spanish. Findings suggest that a kind of diglossia exists in immersion classrooms, with Spanish fulfilling mostly academic functions and rarely being used

for socializing, and English being overwhelmingly preferred for social talk. Students who invested in the identities as Spanish speakers more frequently spoke Spanish in the classroom, as long as no conflicts existed with their other identity investments.

A supplementary language curriculum proposal for high school and college level Spanish heritage language instruction

Sadowski, C. F.

Purdue University, 2011

Abstract

This study examined the need of pedagogically-sound curriculum designs for heritage language learners (HLLs) in the area of Rensselaer, Indiana, which is experiencing a steady increase of the Hispanic population due to a demand for workers in the growing industry of dairy farms. Statistics show that in the United States the Hispanic community, especially of Mexican origin, is considerably increasing and the area of Rensselaer, Indiana is no exception. Based on interviews with current Spanish instructors in the local high-school and college and a careful examination of the existing syllabi, we were able to determine that at present there is a need for curriculum designs that fulfill the needs of HLLs. Thus, following the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards for foreign language instruction and the current literature in the field of heritage language instruction, the present study attempts to provide an example of the type of syllabus that might be more optimal for HLL instruction.

Estudio sociolingüístico de los marcadores como, entonces y tu sabes en el habla de bilingües estadounidenses

Said-Mohand, A.

University of Florida, 2006

Abstract

The main objective of this dissertation was to assess the impact of English in the Spanish spoken by young Spanish bilingual speakers with regard to the use of the Spanish discourse markers como (like), tú sabes (you know) and entonces (so). The sociolinguistic variables of gender, Spanish language competence, generational adscription, and socioeconomic status were taken into account. The data stem from 56 semi-formal interviews with Spanish heritage language students at the University of Florida. All occurrences of Spanish and English discourse markers were codified according to their pragmatic and discursive functions to later correlate those functions with the sociolinguistic variables mentioned above. I first argue that the use of Spanish discourse markers is constrained by the speaker's Spanish language competence. Second, I propose that transfer from English to Spanish occurs at the semantic-pragmatic level. And third, the social variables influence the occurrences of the Spanish and English discourse markers in bilingual speech. The results revealed that the impact of English does not occur only at the semantic-pragmatic level but also at the grammatical level. While English and Spanish discourse markers share some of pragmatic functions, the function of like as quotative and linking device is transferred to the Spanish discourse marker como. However, the most significant result is that the

transfer of the function of like as linking device onto *como* breaches the Spanish syntactic norms, by which bilingual speakers omit the complementizer *que* (that) when using *como* as exemplification. With respect to the social variables, the most significant one is participants' Spanish level of competence. The general results indicate that bilingual speakers tend to use more Spanish discourse markers and fewer English discourse markers, in contrast to those least proficient Spanish speakers. At the individual level, the results indicate that the use of discourse markers, both Spanish and English, is very idiosyncratic in bilingual speech.

Possible heritage language loss in Hispanic students enrolled in English as a second language programs or in transitional bilingual education programs

Sheffield, M. M.

Texas A&M University, 2007

Abstract

The present study investigated the possibility of heritage language loss in twenty students of Hispanic origin, selected from six second-grade classrooms in one elementary school of a large district in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Ten students were enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) classes and ten students were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, during the academic year 2004-2005.

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) in English and Spanish were measured over a short-term progress monitoring period (i.e. sixteen consecutive weeks), and over a long-term follow-up period (i.e. nine and twelve months later, respectively). To answer the first research question on the amount and type of growth in English and Spanish ORF demonstrated by the students over time, two main types of analyses were conducted: (a) time series analysis of group improvement trends, and (b) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on individual student slope coefficients.

Results from quantitative analyses revealed that both groups of students improved in English reading over time. However, when considering the long-term progress, the TBE group demonstrated a faster rate of improvement in English reading when compared to the ESL group and also to their own Spanish reading. As for the ESL group, the students reached a plateau of performance in Spanish, indicating, at best, minimal skills in the heritage language while continuing to progress in English.

To answer the second research question, regarding parents' beliefs on bilingualism and maintenance of the heritage language in their children, semistructured Parents' Interviews (PI) with open-ended questions were conducted.

Results from qualitative analyses revealed three major themes: Both sets of parents believed in the connection between the native language and increased life opportunities, the TBE parents affirmed the heritage language as symbol of their cultural identity, and the ESL parents acknowledged their children's native language loss.

Findings from this study suggest that students instructed in their native language in the early elementary years appear to have a better chance of maintaining their heritage language over time, when compared to students instructed solely in English.

Spanish heritage speakers' Spanish and English writings: Contrastive rhetorical and linguistic analyses

Spicer-Escalante, M.

U of Illinois, Urbana, 2002

Abstract

Learning to write in the 21st century is a difficult activity and an ongoing process that entails several specific activities. However, this activity is even more difficult when children learn to write in a language which is different from the one spoken at home and in their cultural milieu. In fact, this is the situation that is faced by many bilingual speakers in the United States in general, and by Heritage Speakers (SHS) in particular. These children find themselves in a distinctive linguistic situation: they learn both Spanish and English at home and in their community through contact with their peers and adults. However, very few of them receive a formal education in Spanish (i.e. reading and writing). As a consequence, their writing capacity in Spanish has been repeatedly identified as one of the weakest areas of their Spanish language ability. Therefore, in these situations, SHS' Spanish and English writing presents very unique rhetorical and linguistic characteristics that this research explores.

The present study examines both the rhetorical patterns and the linguistic features that SHS incorporate in their Spanish and English writing discourse. For the purpose of this research, university students wrote two argumentative-persuasive essays from four to ten pages in length. The Spanish texts of SHS were compared to the Spanish writing of both Spanish Second Language Learners (SSLL) who are English Native Speakers, and Spanish Native Speakers from Mexico (SNS). The English texts were compared only to the English production of SSLL. A total of 216 pages (yielding a final corpus of 49,428 words) were analyzed. The rhetorical and the linguistic analyses show that there are very important and interesting differences in the way in which the three groups of writers incorporate the diverse linguistic variables examined in this study when composing in either Spanish or English. Moreover, this study suggests that both the Spanish and the English writing of SHS has unique characteristics that demonstrate both a cultural and linguistic transculturation: they do not thoroughly follow the beaten paths of SSLL nor SNS, but find their own pathway to expression.

A study on intergenerational language loss

Suarez, B.

Texas A&M University - Kingsville, 2007

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to look at intergenerational language loss from a descriptive, narrative, retrospective, and personal point of view. This study attempted to answer the question "What does it mean, in individual terms, to lose a language?" The assumption was that first language loss is a negative experience; this study examined whether, and in what manner, language loss had negative repercussions on the subjects' lives. It also revealed, from an insider's perspective, how first language loss happens and why it occurs for some individuals and not for others. This study also discussed situations or factors that families chose when they abandoned the first language in order to gain psychological distance from the past or in order to embrace the future.

The subjects who participated in the study were selected from Texas A& M University-Kingsville in South Texas. The students were Hispanics and some spoke Spanish, some had minimal knowledge of the Spanish Language, and some did not know Spanish. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 52 years old. The subjects were first, second, and third Hispanic generations enrolled during the fall 2006 semester. There were 1,500 surveys emailed and 150 surveys were returned. The researcher administered the survey by uploading the questionnaire (see Appendix C) on an online website called SurveyMonkey.com. The researcher emailed the subjects a letter (see Appendix A) informing them of the purpose of the study and provided them with the link (web page address) in order for them to conduct the survey and electronically submit the survey.

The initial data reflected intergenerational language loss among first, second and third generations. This maybe a result of upper generations clinging to more traditional values inherited from the past, whereas the young look at English as the key to career mobility and being accepted by and into society. The data reflected that the subjects learned their second language before going to school. The subject's parents spoke Spanish most of the time to each other. The subject's knowledge of Spanish was not proficient. The subjects stated that they used Spanish sometimes; this could be a reflection of minimal knowledge of Spanish language. Spanish was used sometimes where they lived and they indicated that English was only or mostly spoken where they lived. Growing up and currently the subjects stated that they only or mostly spoke English. They primarily spoke English to their parents, friends, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, their children and their spouses.

In this study's findings, it is apparent that English is the language used in this country, and by being citizens of United States, the subjects needed to learn the language. In doing this they acquired a language that is used more frequently in their environment. In order to survive and be successful in this country, they have deemphasized the heritage language and placed greater importance on English proficiency. If contact with Spanish speaking relatives is lost, and the workplace does not require a bilingual employee, Spanish is often abandoned. Despite varying degrees of Spanish fluency, subjects admitted to feeling frustration with their lack of Spanish

fluency. These subjects have managed to keep some Spanish in their home after being in the United States for generations. It is evident that some form of language maintenance was employed by the participants.

Coordination and contingency in mothers' behaviors during interactions with their 14-month olds: Relation to infants' language development in a sample of first generation Mexican heritage families

Tafuro, L. D.

New York University, 2011

Abstract

Past research has focused expressly on shared visual attention as a primary way mothers share attention with infants and guide early word learning in predominantly middle-income, European American families. Yet contemporary work highlights how parenting and in particular shared attention is culturally derived. The current study investigated other ways that mothers might share attention and signal referents to infants including language, gesture, and physical body orientation in a sample of 62 Mexican heritage mothers and their 14-month-old infants.

Mothers' expression of perceptually redundant cues is also thought to promote language and learning in young infants. To that end maternal coordination was examined including the frame-by-frame analysis of mothers' temporally paired behaviors (e.g., mothers' pointing coupled with talking) in relation to infants' language skills. Further, the positive long-term effects of maternal contingency on infant language are well documented. As mothers respond to their infants' signals (e.g., looking to an infant who vocalizes) they indicate a shared interest and provide meaningful context to infants' visual foci thereby promoting early language. The current study examined maternal contingency based upon mothers' expressions of the four behavior types (gaze, language, gesture, body orientation) in response to infants' visual attention and communication. Sequential analysis was used to test dependencies between pairs of mothers' behaviors (coordination) and mothers' responses to infants' behaviors (contingency).

Preliminary data suggest that mothers' forward body orientation is strongly related to infant language as it is a potentially salient way this group of mothers expressed communicative interest and intention. Mothers coordinated their behaviors in non-random ways as they coupled gesture with looks to infants and with language at higher relative proportions than all other coordinated pairs. Probability statistics revealed how mothers' verbal response to infants' visual attention to mothers predicted language measures. The dynamic and multimodal nature of mother-infant interactions as they unfold in real time and their impact on infant language development is discussed.

Meaning making: Learning Spanish as a heritage language in a dual-language immersion program

Takahashi-Breines, H.

The University of New Mexico, 2006

Abstract

This study explores the understanding of how Nuevomexicano fifth grade students learn Spanish as their heritage language in their elementary school with a Dual Language Immersion Program (DLIP). In this program, there was a mix of two groups of student population in terms of linguistic backgrounds: native speakers of English, and native speakers of Spanish. Together, they studied in Spanish and English, the two languages used at separate designated times of instruction. This study focuses on three Nuevomexicano students who started elementary school as English speakers, and were learning the Spanish language as their heritage language while learning their grade level academic contents. The focal students' learning of Spanish as their heritage language is investigated using the framework of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of child development. Learning is defined as the process of meaning making, which involves both internal and social activities. Language, a semiotic tool, plays a critical role of mediating meaning in the learning process. Conversation Analysis was implemented for the close analysis of conversations carried out by the focal students interacting with their classmates and teacher during Spanish instructional time. The analysis of classroom interactions revealed how the students were able to develop their development of meanings of certain words and concepts through meaningful interactions. This study tries to shed light on what it means for these Nuevomexicano students to learn their heritage language, which for these students, is more than an individual goal. It means connecting ties to their family members, opening opportunities to connect with people from Mexico---new members of their community---and breaking the cycle that leads to loss of heritage languages in this country.

Foreign language anxiety in heritage students of Spanish: To be (anxious) or not to be (anxious)? That is the question

Tallon, M.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2006

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate if heritage students of Spanish experience foreign language anxiety and, if so, what levels of anxiety and what types of anxiety they experience. Furthermore, the study attempted to examine how this anxiety is correlated with the anxiety reported in the literature for other language students as well as with the heritage students' own self-assessed proficiency in Spanish. The data were collected through quantitative methods (anxiety scales) and qualitative methods (open-ended questions and telephone interviews). A total of 413 students (209 heritage students and 204 non-heritage students) participated in this study. In general, the mean anxiety scores for the heritage students were lower than the mean anxiety scores for the non-heritage students on all anxiety scales, although there were a few instances when the heritage students actually had higher anxiety scores. In addition, the heritage

students in this study reported lower levels of anxiety than other college-level students whose anxiety levels had also been measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. In most cases, there was a strong, negative correlation between the students' self-assessed language proficiency and their reported levels of anxiety, indicating that as the students' self-assessed proficiency increased their levels of anxiety decreased. The study also sought to examine how the various anxieties, as measured by four different anxiety scales, related to each other. Results showed a strong, positive correlation between all four anxiety scales, indicating that the anxiety scales are related in terms of measuring anxiety related to the language learning process, but that they do in fact measure different types of language-specific anxieties. The qualitative portion of the study sought to investigate how heritage students of Spanish described their feelings of anxiety about learning Spanish in the foreign language classroom. Analysis of the qualitative data revealed several sources of anxiety inside the classroom as well as outside the classroom. The heritage students also mentioned areas where they did not feel anxious inside the classroom, and they listed several goals for using Spanish in the future.

Latino culture and identity in Spanish textbooks for heritage language learners

Thomas, P.

Emory University, 2008

Abstract

The presence of a large Latino diasporic community in the United States has been well documented. Students who speak and learn Spanish as a heritage language form a growing segment of school language programs. Heritage Spanish students are of Hispanic or Latino background, have been raised primarily in the United States and educated in English-language schools, and have some amount of exposure to Latino culture and to the Spanish language through their families or communities but perhaps limited formal or sustained instruction in the language. These students bring a unique set of skills, needs, and interests to the classroom. Heritage Spanish education has become firmly established as a discipline just within the last 30 years and formally articulating programs within schools and universities is still an emergent initiative in many regions of the country. As such, instructional materials specially designed for heritage language learners have only recently begun to be published on a wide scale, and formal analyses of the content of heritage Spanish textbooks have been limited to date.

The focus of this study was the ways in which Spanish textbooks for heritage learners address culture and identity issues. I addressed the following questions through a qualitative content analysis of four high school and college texts: (1) How is the audience for these textbooks defined and described? (2) What do the authors articulate as cultural goals in the use of these texts? (3) What do the authors identify as characteristics and symbols of Latino identity? (4) Which Latino groups, themes, and cultural or historical events are emphasized in the textbook content and how are they depicted?

The analysis revealed that heritage students are defined in the textbooks in terms of cultural background, educational background, and Spanish competence. Instructors and parents are recognized as part of the audience in addition to students. The main cultural goals in the texts are

identity development, exposure to arts and humanities, and development of a full bilingual, bicultural communicative range. Latino identity is characterized by choice of identity label, Spanish usage, affiliation with a Latino/Spanish-speaking community, political engagement, ethnicity, and, to some extent, race. All textbooks provide an overview of the Latino presence in the United States; Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans are the ethnic groups covered in greatest detail. Although described in considerable historical context, their stories and communities are presented in isolation of each other.

Important themes receiving limited attention in the texts include bilingual education, Latino themed artistic movements, and the education of English monolingual Latino students and Latin American immigrant students with low Spanish literacy. Analyzing textbooks for heritage Spanish speakers offers Latino studies scholars new insights into the socialization of Latino youth and provides educators with guidance in designing appropriate curriculum and pedagogy. The findings also suggest how heritage Spanish education relates to larger issues of social and economic power and quality education for Latino students.

Heritage language learners' perceptions of taking Spanish language classes: Investigating perceptions of skill-specific anxieties, self-efficacies, and ethnic identity

Torres, K. M.

The Florida State University, 2011

Abstract

This mixed-methods study investigated heritage language and foreign language learning students' skill-specific (i.e., speaking listening, reading, and writing) language learning anxieties and self-efficacies associated with Spanish language learning. Additionally, this study investigated the extent to which heritage language learners perceive Spanish as part of their ethnic identity and how their perceptions of ethnic identity impact their skill-specific anxieties and self-efficacies toward learning the Spanish language. A total of 315 participants completed the quantitative portion of this study and 11 participants volunteered to take part in a semi-structured interview session. Findings from this study revealed significant differences between heritage language learners' and foreign language learners' ratings of listening anxiety and writing anxiety and for all skill-specific language learning self-efficacies. Significant differences were also found among groups of heritage language learners in relation to their ratings of Hispanic heritage ethnic identity, skill-specific anxieties (except for writing anxiety), and all skill-specific self-efficacies. Furthermore, heritage language learners' Spanish language learning experiences were impacted by their backgrounds (e.g., family lineage, generation of heritage language learner), formal educational experiences, levels of motivation, and their low levels of Spanish language abilities.

Empowering the invisible child: A Narrative Case Study of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program

Torrez, J.

The University of New Mexico, 2008

Abstract

This Narrative Case Study examines the curriculum of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program (NMMP), specifically focusing on the program's guidelines, attitudes, and implications of language instruction. Furthermore, this research focuses on the implications of the NMMP's services and curriculum for the migrant community. Through interviews with students, administration (on both the local and federal levels), as well as migrant agricultural laborers, the findings reveal the need for simultaneous heritage language (HL) and English language instruction. Parents, students, and staff emphasized the significance of HL in community maintenance and an individual's relationship to the community, while underscoring the importance of English language development for the student's academic achievement. As such, the migrant community stressed the need to concurrently maintain and develop both languages. However they also suggested the NMMP enlist qualified Latina/o teachers who have a deep connection to the farmworker community and maintain a commitment to student academic success. All participants agreed that poor communication and an undeveloped purpose prohibited the NMMP from truly becoming a successful learning environment.

Parental perceptions on maintaining heritage languages of CLD students

Yan, R. L.

University of Northern Iowa, 2002

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out what the parents of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students thought about heritage language use in bilingual education and what they perceived quality schools to be. A qualitative approach was used with a survey as the research instrument. Data were gathered from four language schools at five sites: Arabic-, Chinese-, Hebrew-, and Spanish-language schools in three Midwestern cities. The survey data showed the following results: (1) The oral heritage language was used by the majority of CLD students' parents at home except by the parents from the Hebrew language group, (b) the CLD students' held positive attitudes toward heritage language learning, and (c) the CLD students' parents believed that ideal quality schools for their children were bilingual schools or those that provided instruction with extra heritage language teaching. The interview data showed that the main reasons for CLD students' parents to maintain their children's heritage language learning were as follows: (1) to maintain cultural and religious heritage; (2) to strengthen family ties and moral values; (3) to keep connections to their own cultural and language communities; and (4) to promote bilingual skills for better job opportunities. This qualitative inquiry into the perceptions of CLD students' parents provides important resources for schools to develop an improved school educational model to meet the diverse needs of CLD students.

Who is the self that teaches? A perspective of faculty as they learn to teach Spanish as a heritage language

Zimmerman, N. S.

The Pennsylvania State University, 2011

Abstract

Having orally proficient Spanish speaking heritage learners in a class alongside monolingual English speakers who are learning Spanish as a second language is quite the challenge: the heritage learners' ability to converse can be intimidating to the non heritage learner, but at the same time, the non heritage learner's ability to grasp the grammar has the same effect on the native Spanish speaker. Knowing how to teach Spanish as a heritage language is quite different from teaching Spanish as a second language or foreign language, yet those of us in the field frequently find ourselves struggling to find approaches that truly meet the needs of the heritage learners. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of university faculty who are in the process or have learned how to teach Spanish effectively to those students who wish to re/connect and maintain the language of their heritage. In order to hear their stories and understand how they have evolved into teachers of Spanish as a heritage language without formal training, I utilized narrative inquiry. Ten university faculty members who are or have been directly engaged in teaching Spanish to heritage learners were interviewed. Their stories remain intact, and I analyzed the data with three distinct lenses. To understand how their experiences in their community of practice impacted their teaching, I utilized experiential learning theory/situative cognition. To comprehend the manner with which university instructors learn to teach, specifically Spanish as heritage language, I considered the scholarship of teaching and learning. To search for the pedagogies that appear to best meet the needs of these learners, I investigated culturally responsive teaching/whole person pedagogy.

Throughout these narratives, participants described their teaching that in part subscribed to culturally responsive teaching and whole person pedagogy with commonalities discovered in experience, wholeness, community and co-construction. Their experiences teaching within a community of Spanish speaking heritage learners contributed to their practice, and they in turn contribute to the practice by participating in the scholarship of teaching and learning. They learn through experiences within the community of practice that in effect teaches them. As these practitioners share and write about their practice, the scholarship of teaching and learning that addresses teaching Spanish as a heritage language grows, and the cycle of learning how to teach is maintained.