

# **Perspectives on Heritage Language in the U.S. and Student Language Choices**

By

Alexa Papadimatos

A Master's Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Education  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)  
Department of language, Learning and Leadership  
State University of New York at Fredonia  
Fredonia, New York

May 2018

State University of New York at Fredonia  
Department of Language Learning and Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/CAPSTONE PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled PERSPECTIVES ON HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN THE U.S. and STUDENT LANGUAGE CHOICE by ALEXA PAPADIMATOS, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



Anna Thibodeau, PhD.  
Master's Capstone Advisor  
EDU 690 Course Instructor  
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

May 18, 2018  
Date



Cindy Bjrd, PhD.  
Department Chair  
Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

May 18, 2018  
Date



Dean Christine Givner, PhD.  
College of Education  
State University of New York at Fredonia

6/4/18  
Date

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine what specific factors influence student linguistic choices and how those choices affect the rate of heritage/home language attrition and its subsequent maintenance. A qualitative research design consisting of interviews was used to examine how heritage language speaking college students felt about their heritage language proficiency, family connections and experiences in American public schools. The languages reflected in this research include Spanish, Haitian Creole, Romanian and Italian. The participants in this study are all students of a four-year comprehensive public university, but have grown up in areas all across New York state. The key objective for this research was to explore how the perceived attitudes of teachers, parents and members from the same minority language groups as the participants, affected the participants' own view of their home language and if the participants felt that maintaining their home languages was important. All of the participants noted that maintaining their heritage/ home language was an integral part in their success in social, economic and political contexts. This research concludes with recommendations on how school administrations and individual school teachers can come to better serve their heritage language speaking students, by checking their own assumptions about minority language communities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction  | 1  |
| Problem  | 1  |
| Purpose  | 1  |
| Significance   | 1  |
| Definitions and Labels   | 2  |
| Subtractive terms  | 3  |
| Additive view of home language                                   | 3  |
| Setting the linguistic landscape                                 | 5  |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review                                     | 7  |
| Heritage Language as A Skill                                     | 7  |
| Benefits of Bilingualism   | 7  |
| Heritage Language in Institutionalized Education                 | 9  |
| Early research on bilinguals                                     | 10 |
| Monolingual Sentiments by U.S. Educators                         | 10 |
| Teachers' language ideologies                                    | 11 |
| Subtractive Pedagogies and Practices                             | 11 |
| The ESL teacher's role   | 15 |
| Effect of language hierarchy on students                         | 16 |
| Bilingual programs in the U.S.                                   | 17 |
| Pressure on Emergent Bilinguals in school                        | 18 |
| Teachers with Additive Views of Home Languages                   | 19 |
| Familial Supports in Linguistic Choices                          | 20 |
| Subtractive practices by parents                                 | 22 |
| Heritage language schools and services                           | 23 |
| Limitations of heritage language schooling                       | 24 |
| Parents and public schools                                       | 24 |
| Parental Additive Language Practices                             | 25 |
| Community efforts to boost minority/heritage language prestige   | 25 |
| Cultural customs and passing on the home language                | 26 |
| Admittance to cultural centers for language support              | 26 |
| Heritage Language Speaking Community and Motivation              | 28 |
| Motivation to speak the heritage language                        | 29 |
| Self-Identity  | 30 |
| When Heritage Language Speakers do not use the minority language | 30 |
| Linguistic choices later in life                                 | 31 |
| Heritage language speakers' language coping mechanisms in school | 32 |
| Limitations in the Field of Heritage Language Research           | 32 |
| Concluding available research                                    | 33 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter 3: Methodology  | 35 |
| Step One-Choose a Research Topic  | 35 |
| Step Two- Conduct a Literature Review   | 35 |
| Step Three- Identifying Participants  | 36 |
| Step Four- Justification for a Qualitative Research Design  | 37 |
| Step Five- Select a Framework   | 37 |
| Step Six- Formulate Questions   | 38 |
| Step Seven- Interview Protocol  | 41 |
| Time and location   | 42 |
| Step Eight: Human Subjects Approval   | 42 |
| Step Nine: Conduct Interviews   | 42 |
| Step Ten: Organize transcribed data   | 43 |
| Step Eleven: Analyze the Data   | 43 |
| Step Twelve Limitations   | 43 |
| Chapter 4: Results  | 45 |
| Parameter Number 1: Describing the Intersection of Language, Identity and Culture   | 46 |
| Question 4: How do you feel about your connection to your heritage culture and your American culture ?                                    | 46 |
| Question 5: Do you interact with your language community?   | 47 |
| Question 8: Did you formally learn your home language and if so what kind of program was it?  | 49 |
| Parameter Number 2: First Language Loss due to Second Language Acquisition  | 50 |
| Question 2: What was your first language? Or Are you simultaneous bilingual?  | 50 |
| Parameter Number 3: Affects of Language Loss in Participation in Education, Economic and Social Communities                               | 51 |
| Question 10: Do you think maintaining your home language and if so, how would you use it ?  | 51 |
| Question 6: How long have you lived in the United States and when did you start school at an American education institution?              | 53 |
| Question 11: Were you provided any ESL, Speech, or Special education services during your time as a student in an American public school? | 54 |
| Question 12: Did your teachers in American school have any positive or negative comments about your potential bilingual capabilities?     | 55 |
| Parameter Number 4: Individual Perceptions on Communicative Adaptation in deficit situations  | 57 |
| Question 1: How well do you know your home language and are you comfortable using it?   | 57 |
| Question 7: Have you ever travelled to your home country and how was your experience communicating?                                       | 58 |
| Question 14: Do you feel judged by people who are fluent in your home language when you communicate to them in it?                        | 60 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Question 15: Do you use some form of adaptation of your home language in casual conversation? .....        | 61 |
| Parameter Number 5: Consequences of First language loss with regards to family and Social Contexts.....    | 62 |
| Question 9: Have you felt in recent years that your losing your home language and is this important? ..... | 63 |
| Question 3: What language are you most likely to speak to your family members in? .....                    | 64 |
| Question 13: How do you think your parents feel about your home language proficiency? .....                | 66 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion.....   | 68 |
| Intersecting language, identity and culture.....   | 68 |
| First language loss at it relates to second language acquisition.....                                      | 69 |
| Affects of HL loss pertaining to participation in institutional and social communities...                  | 70 |
| Positive experiences with teachers.....  | 70 |
| Perception on heritage on heritage language adaptations.....   | 71 |
| Consequences experienced by those who have lost their HL.....  | 72 |
| Implications and recommendations for teachers.....   | 73 |
| Limitations.....   | 74 |
| References.....  | 75 |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States is a nation comprised of diverse peoples who bring with them, their various cultures and home languages. Depending on the political climate, our shared linguistic and ethnic diversity is either spun into a positive asset or as a major contributor to our loss of national unity. According to the 2013 U.S. Census, the number of people speaking a language other than English at home is estimated to be around 60 million, making up 21% of the U.S. population (Mori & Calder, 2015).

Furthermore, 13% of the United States population is foreign born and over 188 languages are spoken by them (Choi, 2013). With regards to education, 20% of students are entering the mainstream general education system speaking a language other than English, and this number is predicted to double by 2030 (Choi, 2013). Clearly there is a growing need to work with heritage/home language speakers in the United States; as they can be a huge source of human capital for the progress of the nation.

**Problem.** In the United States school system, heritage language speaking students are often faced with the dilemma of either acquiring English to gain academic and social acceptance into the dominant language community at the expense of their first language or be ostracized by their teachers and peers for continued reliance on the heritage language.

**Purpose.** This study seeks to answer the question: What specific factors influence student linguistic choices and how do these choices affect the rate of heritage language attrition and its subsequent maintenance? This study will allow the researcher to learn how the experiences and interactions with parents, teachers and peers has impacted the use of heritage/ home language for college-age students.

**Significance.** There are many different factors that lead to heritage language speaking students choosing English over their first language. Regardless, losing one's home/ heritage language can have negative impacts on a person's familial relationships, academic performance in school and overall self-image (Suarez, 2002). At this point, very little published discourse is available in the professional literature regarding the wide variation in heritage language attrition with regard to sub-groups among the typically studied and the affect of language loss in the speakers themselves (Choi, 2013).

Studying the ways in which teacher, parental and peer perspectives can affect heritage language use and maintenance can provide policy makers and teachers with more positive practices to incorporate into the classroom, and to bring out a multicultural and inclusive environment that can benefit all students.

### **Definitions and Labels**

Understanding what the heritage language label means is an important first step in understanding the current state of affairs in our domestic language policies. According to Wiley (2005), the heritage language label refers to any immigrant, refugee or indigenous language spoken by a minority subset of the general language population. Despite the seeming straightforwardness of this definition, the heritage language label itself has in some cases posed a problematic tone because it implies that a heritage language is simply an association to the past and tradition as opposed to a useful communication tool in the modern day (Baker & Jones 1998, Suarez, 2002).

McGinnis' (1996) study on teaching ethnic Chinese heritage language speakers, further subdivided students by distinguishing their varied abilities in the home language, dubbing those with a lack of fundamental communication skills in the home language as 'true beginners', those

with good receptive language skills, but lacking expressive language abilities of reading and writing as ‘semi-native’ and those with proficient skills in all aspects of the home language as ‘true-native’.

**Subtractive terms.** Kouritzin (1999) described first language loss as a process restricted to minority language speakers who are set in a submersion-like environment, in which dominating language acquisition supersedes the maintenance and the development of the minority/home/heritage language. Furthermore, related terms like language shift, subtractive bilingualism and language death are all more or less interchangeable and play a key role in understanding the ways in which students in America are dealing with the effects of the inescapable and intersectional power of the dominant language on their home language use and proficiency (Kouritzin,1999). Language shift is a process in which a person comes to change indefinitely; the language they use for daily communication and in practical application. Cha & Goldenberg (2015) describe subtractive bilingualism as a zero-sum relationship in that, language competence in one language decreases competence in another. Subtractive bilingualism plays into language shift when it is used as a teaching method where a school’s main focus is to bring about proficiency in the target language, with little regard for the development of any other language that students may be coming into school with. Subtractive bilingualism is often considered an end to justifying the means, where everything is done for the sake of achieving the standard dominant language. Language death comes from the culmination of subtractive language policies and rigid linguistic hegemony rendering only the dominant language as the viable tool for communication within the total linguistic landscape (Suarez, 2002).

**Additive view of home language.** It is also important to understand that in real life, languages do not exist in a vacuum. In practical terms, languages are not neatly separated from

one another; therefore, initial language acquisition among heritage language speakers is a rather fluid process. In fact, another more additive or positive term for heritage language speakers refers to them as simultaneous bilinguals or emergent bilinguals (Wiley, 2005; Mahoney, 2017). Before, we can assess the linguistic choices of heritage/home language speaking students, we should come to understand that bilingualism is far more complex than the popular monolingual view may lead one to believe. We should understand that for these students, their different linguistic repertoires are weaved together and suit the communicative requirements of their day to day life (Wiley, 2005). Linguistic choice in language-contact situations can be affected by: stigmatization, modernization, occupational and educational mobility, established ethnic identity along with socially situated group membership for the specific minority language.

Heritage language speakers may also be considered multilingual, which we can interpret, as a process in which one does not view their separate languages as distinct; but, instead consider all of their language ability as a large collective vocabulary (“Language Matters”, 2015). When looking at an individual through a lens of multilingualism, both the home/minority language and the dominant languages work together as linguistic resources to be used as the speaker sees fit in the daily demands of communication.

In current professional parlance, use of the heritage language label can imply that a language is not actively spoken in the home, while the home language label suggests a current, daily use of the language, within the private sector. In other cases, the heritage language label can accurately describe a person’s connection to the minority language as distant and a language they are not likely to use in most scenarios. For the purposes of this study, however, the author will use home/ heritage and minority language interchangeably for the sake of continuity and to keep in tune with the current literature on the topic. Furthermore, this study seeks to specifically

better understand the ways students coming from homes of first generation immigrants use their language, as opposed to students coming from homes where both parents and grandparents only speak the dominant language; but are aware of their specific heritage countries, and languages that their ancestors used to speak, for example.

### Positive Labels vs. Negative Labels

| <u>Additive Terms</u>   | <u>Subtractive Terms</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| -Community Language     | - Minority Language      |
| -Simultaneous Bilingual | - Semi-Lingual           |
| -Emergent Bilingual     | - Non-Non                |
| - Multilingual          | - Language Shift         |
| - Linguistic Resource   | - Language Death         |
| - Code-switching        | - Linguistic Hegemony    |

Fig. 1. The language used to identify and categorize heritage/home language speakers has major implications for the maintenance and status of heritage/home languages.

**Setting the linguistic landscape.** A final definition to keep in mind in relation to perspectives on linguistic choice and the key focus of this study, is the term language ideology. In general, one may define an ideology as a system of beliefs held as truth, usually at the unconscious level and rooted within one's social position (Palmer, 2011). Ideologies do not directly need to be stated, in fact, they are usually held in secrecy because they are subject to the hegemonic view of the dominant culture; leading to a distortion of reality and favoring of particular groups. However, despite the implicit nature of ideologies especially in terms of language, a person's perspective can be revealed through their practices (Palmer, 2011). Language ideologies establish connections between language and types of people, and can

implicate consequences for how people are identified, valued and treated (Gallo et al., 2014). In other words, people are often times characterized by their language, so someone who uses a particular marked dialect or an accented version of the dominant language, for example, may be seen as unsophisticated and in need of “fixing” (Gallo et al., 2014).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Heritage Language as A Skill**

A Heritage language is more than a form of structured rule-governed communication, it is a symbolic representation of one's culture, identity, family union and connection to specific ethnic groups or heritage communities (Choi, 2013, Wong & Xiao, 2010). The ability to speak a heritage language allows one to retain a strong bond with family members both domestically and abroad. Furthermore, languages themselves are repositories of history and provide us with a more diverse and complete collective human knowledge (LaRotonda, 2015). Each language carries with it, unique methods of expressing concepts, values, ideals and cultural customs ranging from many different aspects of life like specific medicinal or religious practices ("Language Matters", 2015). These unique ways of being, are passed down from one generation to the next through oral tradition; which is both intimate and fragile (Crystal, 2000; "Language Matters", 2015).

#### **Benefits of Bilingualism**

When looking at heritage language as a practical skill, students with bilingual backgrounds tend to have higher cognitive abilities in metalinguistic awareness and mental flexibility in comparison to their monolingual counterparts (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Ricciardelli, 1992). Bilingual students outrank monolingual peers by 2 to 3 years in metalinguistic awareness because their bilingual abilities impart a certain sensitivity to the nuances and objective properties of language (Diaz, 1984). Diaz (1984) noted that the bilingual participants in his study, tended to easily separate a word from its form, and instead focus on the words semantic properties while monolingual participants tended to focus in on surface phonetic dimensions. Bilingual children may be better at attenuating to differences in language due to the need to

distinguish between separate language systems and develop an adaptability to linguistic feedback from the environment (Diaz, 1984).

A 2017 study conducted in New Zealand, showed that Persian-speaking simultaneous bilingual students displayed the widest range of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in comparison to their monolingual peers (Gharibi & Boers, 2017). A similar study conducted on bilingual Italian-English children, found that participants who were proficient in both English and Italian scored better than their Monolingual-English peers in measures of creativity and metalinguistic awareness (Diaz, 1984).

Diaz' (1984) study on the benefits of bilingualism found various ways in which bilingualism expanded intelligence. For example, he noted that bilingual students did particularly better than monolinguals on nonverbal tests involving mental manipulation and reorganization of visual symbols; due to subjects' more diversified pattern of analogical reasoning and accurate spatial relationship tracking. Diaz (1984) hypothesized that the positive correlation between childhood bilingualism and capacity to reason by analogy is a basis for an increase in intelligence.

By learning a second language a bilingual child is exposed to the perception and awareness of a different culture, and this knowledge is a catalyst that propels cognitive development out of the egocentric phase, allowing children the ability to see things from multiple perspectives aside from their own self-centered or egocentric view (Diaz, 1984). Furthermore, bilingual people tend to be good at coordinating their environments by quickly adapting to changes in communication; which can be displayed objectively through appropriate code-switching (Diaz, 1984). In other words, a bilingual child becomes a fast problem solver by

reading the linguistic situation they find themselves in, and manipulating the language they choose to communicate in with their interlocutor(s).

Another benefit of bilingualism noted by Carrera's 2004 study on heritage language learners and pedagogy, found that heritage language learning is a great way for students to fulfill not only their linguistic needs, being that language learning is additive, therefore generalized across languages, but also fulfill their identity needs as well (Carrera, 2004; Wong & Xiao, 2010).

### **Heritage language in Institutionalized Education**

The history of heritage language education in the U.S. has in many ways come to pass in waves of progression and regression based on the social climate. Originally, with the first Western-European settlers landing in what was the 13 colonies; private heritage-language schools, particularly German-schools were a common trend. This land built up by the hands of immigrants, called for a sense of pride within one's own not-so-distant heritage, so language schools were not seen as problematic.

However, during the 1880s the U.S. government began to favor policies of isolationism and looked inward to destroy the language systems among ethnic minorities. In particular, the Native-American population received the brunt of the hostile racial and ethnic cleansing measures carried out by the government to stifle home language use, through the opening of American assimilationist boarding schools (Wiley, 2005). Children were taken from parents and their communities, forced to cut their hair and change their identities, so as to come to assimilate and reject their own heritage by the end of their boarding school experience (Wiley, 2005).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “immigrant language restrictionism” was used to bar European language speakers from opening up language schools (Wiley, 2005). This was in response to the negative view of Germany during World War I.

**Early research on bilinguals.** Early research conducted on bilinguals often painted participants in a bad light. Researchers would compare groups of working-class immigrant children living in deprived neighborhoods with native English speakers from middle class backgrounds. The resulting findings, brought about the perception that bilingualism was a deficit needing to be fixed. Diaz (1984) noted that older studies before the 1960s tended to ignore a child’s actual bilingualism; so instead of measuring some parameter of language like fluency, researchers made assumptions about a child’s bilingualism based on their parents’ origins or the last name of the child.

With each passing decade, tensions toward various ethnic groups spread causing fear and intolerance toward marginalized groups and the languages that represent them. In the current day, there is very limited funding on the government’s part to back bilingual and transitional language programs in public schools, likely stemming from the fact that, “There is no right to language preservation in the United States.” (Wiley, 2005). The lack of any legislation with regards to home languages is a strong symbolic indicator of how little value is placed on bilingual ability in popular and political American culture.

### **Monolingual Sentiments by U.S. Educators**

In the monolingual-centric U.S. public school setting, English is the prerequisite for academic and communal success (Yilmaz, 2016). Over the years, funding and resources towards acknowledging heritage/home languages has been drastically cut, and in certain states like Arizona, legislation has been passed, forbidding the use of any language other than English in

the classroom (Suarez, 2002). Angela Valenzuela (2008) once characterized the state of American schools as “less about instilling youth with global competencies and more about subtracting their languages, cultures and community-based identities, much to their academic detriment.”

**Teachers’ language ideologies.** In teaching it is important to note the difference between beliefs and knowledge, wherein beliefs are formulated based on an individual’s personal evaluation and judgment which is a more or less subjective conjecture (Palmer, 2011). Teachers tend to draw from prior experience, so in a strong way teachers’ ideologies about language and teaching are “co-constructed” through interactions tinted by school, district and state policy contexts (Palmer, 2011). Teachers’ unspoken assumptions about language can have a big impact on the types of learning opportunities made available to their linguistically diverse students (Palmer, 2011). The school setting serves as one domain for language ideologies and the ways in which teachers and students perceive each other and interact, which has major implications for linguistic choice, that can lead to homogeneity or contestation of dominant norms (Gallo et al., 2014).

### **Subtractive Pedagogies and Practices**

A sizeable number of mainstream teachers regard heritage language as neither a linguistic resource to build off of nor as a uniquely advantageous asset. In fact, teachers often exemplify subtractive attitudes toward heritage language; marking it as either a barrier that obscures a students’ path to speedy English language acquisition or as an inferior and inflexible form of communication; therefore, only meant to be used in the private sector (Yilmaz, 2016). Many well-meaning educators insist that parents only speak English in the home due to the,

“permeation of popular myths that have associated bilingualism with linguistic delay and confusion.” (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Francis, 2005).

However, much research suggests that the language faculty of the mind is aptly equipped to process input from at least two primary languages simultaneously with normal outcomes for child cognitive and academic function (Francis, 2005). Francis (2005) actually found that prohibition of home language use in school is what usually lead to children engaging in behaviors that inhibited the use of normal age-appropriate verbal expression, which resulted in an impacted grammar mechanism for the heritage language; which further stunted a balanced bilingualism. On the other hand, much evidence shows that instructional use of the home language at school promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, even making a positive contribution to academic English development, especially in reading (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015).

It is important to address the impact of teachers’ long-standing belief, that speaking the heritage language in the home is detrimental to students; because there is little longitudinal evidence to support this belief. Cha and Goldenberg’s (2015) study on young children’s oral proficiency in Spanish and English found that English input from non-native speakers in the home did not contribute to an increase in English vocabulary.

Furthermore, the benefits that children coming from predominantly English speaking homes drastically decreased by the time the students reached the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, while the students coming from Spanish-dominant homes enjoyed a more balanced bilingualism for both languages (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). These findings may be explained if one considers language input from the students’ environment as a whole. For example, the English that students do not get in the home is made up for in school, with peers and from exposure to the media (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). Pinning blame on parental language use is further disproven by Cha and

Goldenberg's study (2015) which actually found that maternal use of Spanish did not negatively impact their children's developing English vocabulary; because of the interconnected nature of input and development in language. In plain terms, language proficiency in one language moderates the transfer of linguistic skills to all other learned languages (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). This concept is not new, and relates back to the linguistic interdependence hypothesis in which it is posited, that certain metalinguistic skills such as phonological awareness, and oral and reading comprehension are universal and therefore, transfer over to any language (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015).

Teachers' negative attitudes not only lead heritage language speaking students to feel ashamed of their first language, but their monolingual peers are also reinforced to view heritage language speaking students as 'other' and deserving of the isolation that heritage language students often face in the secluded ESL classroom (Suarez, 2002; Yilmaz, 2016).

At large, American school teachers feel that heritage language maintenance is the job of parents, often leaning on the claim that they do not have enough time in their classrooms to promote the heritage language, or are in agreement that a cultural celebration day, for example, is enough to promote multiculturalism in their classrooms (Lee & Oxelson, 2006).

For most mainstream school teachers and their administrators, the goal remains the same: 'to provide ESL students with opportunities to become functional in regular English speaking classes within three years.' The overall objective is to teach students how to read, speak and write in English in order to get students up to speed in their content classes (Suarez, 2002).

Lee and Oxelson's (2006) study showed that teachers attitudes greatly affected student attitudes. Teachers who had training in ESL or were bilingual themselves were more likely to exemplify additive attitudes toward heritage language, and therefore, used teaching practices that affirmed

the student's home culture and the subsequent maintenance of the heritage language (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Some teachers use their bilingual capabilities to position themselves as cultural insiders. By allowing students to speak on their experiences or using culturally relevant assessments that reaffirm students' cultural identity, teachers can help engage with their linguistically diverse students (Worthy & et al., 2003).

Gallo et al. (2014) study on the relationship between teacher and student language ideology found that when teachers believed English was a commodity that students either had or lacked, they tended to obscure the partial English proficiency of their emergent bilingual students. This led to students feeling that speaking English in a close-knit setting was an act of arrogance, due to its prestigious representation; further dividing students from their teachers whom they felt they could not relate to (Gallo et al., 2014). Gallo et al. (2014) also found that teachers who held a deficient view of their emergent bilingual students tended to conflate their needs with that of students with learning disabilities leading them to have lower expectations compared to their mainstream peers. Gallo et al. (2014) observed that ELL students would internalize their teachers low regard for their abilities, leading them to deliberately fake incompetence in order to get out of trying seriously on assessments and daily activities. By students trying to cope with their imposed subjugation, they further reinforced the subtractive linguistic hierarchy of the school, which placed them at the bottom (Gallo et al., 2014).

The same research study conducted by Gallo et al. found that teachers, who by contrast, held more additive views of their emergent bilingual students, referred to students as bilinguals-in-the-making, noting the fact, that the home language could be used as a resource and was just as important as English (Gallo et al., 2014). This type of view was reflected in the open classroom interaction between the teacher and students, where strong collaborative efforts were

met on both sides, positively impacting student reading and listening comprehension in English (Gallo et al., 2014). The strong permeation of teacher linguistic beliefs was accurately perceived by students and had both negative and positive implications for how students fared and succeeded in the school setting.

In Garza & Crawford's (2005) study on one elementary school's attempt to integrate ELLs into a predominantly all-white affluent setting, found that multicultural education was appropriated as a 'hegemonic device' that more or less secured a continued position of power and leadership for the dominant societal framework. This led to heavy implications in basing a student's success on their ability to acculturate. The researchers noted how colorblind racism in school was shown by the administrators' indirect ideology that pinned linguistically diverse people as coming from a backward culture needing direct reform (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

**The ESL teacher's role.** Some ways in which subtractive bilingualism takes place in school includes the direct devaluing of language specialists compared to general education teachers (Garza & Crawford, 2005). In one study it was found that ESL teachers were positioned as adjunct instructors providing ELLs with supplemental instruction, and leaving many ESL teachers to feel as though they were the general education teacher's assistant or translator meant to take ELLs away in order to fix them (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

General education teachers were displayed to hold subtractive views of their ELL students by relying heavily on ESL pull-outs in order to get their students up to grade-level (Garza & Crawford, 2005). The heavy reliance on pull-out classes is an ineffective method for teaching ELLs because most sessions only last from 30-40 minutes per day. Instead, it is a better use of time to work towards a full collaborative and integrative effort between general education teachers and ESL teachers (Garza and Crawford, 2005). General education teachers should

provide students with core content while ESL teachers should use their language expertise to work on making important academic terminology accessible and using the home language to bridge gaps in communication and comprehension. However, Garza & Crawford (2015) observed that during push-in classes, ESL teachers were left out of lesson planning before class and instead given informal objectives during class time from the general education teacher.

Ultimately, the lower status of linguistically diverse students is often extended to the teachers meant to identify and serve them. Their devaluing is reflected even in their pay which is incommensurate to the large number of students they often work with in comparison to their general education counterparts (Garza & Crawford, 2005). Furthermore, ESL teachers are often left without a classroom to call their own, and this lack of prestige at even a base-level, is clearly visible to ELL students which, in turn, lead them to internalize their ESL teachers' lack of status as tied to their own low status in the school hierarchy (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

**Effect of language hierarchy on students.** Linguistically diverse students are directly exposed to the subtractive nature of their classrooms in ways that often times, leave them feeling inept. For example, students who answer questions correctly but in their home language may be completely ignored by their teachers, giving students the impression that in the whole-group setting, using English is the only “correct” language (Garza & Crawford, 2005). Students come to internalize the prevailing and explicit power differential and subsequently come to censure their own home-language use; even going so far as to discipline each other (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

Furthermore, in some cases, children with apparent bilingual competencies are used by their general education teachers as translators, donning them with the heavy responsibility of peer-tutoring the students who still rely on the home language. The home language dominant

students can come to favor communicating through their peers as opposed to dealing with the stress of directly communicating with their teachers, further stunting English development, which is one of the key responsibilities of the teacher (Garza & Crawford).

Instead of using students' home language as a bilingual resource, students come to believe that using their home language outside of the home is wrong. In the long run, bilingual students begin to feel most comfortable thinking about the world through an English-dominant lens, in which English use is normal and anything else, is not. At that point the child's process of acculturation is complete (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

### **Bilingual programs in the U.S.**

Even in U.S. bilingual programs, there still exists a heavy favor for English learning over maintaining any other language. Deborah Palmer (2011), described U.S. bilingual programs as operating to "help children overcome their bilingualism 'problem' to transform into monolingual English speaking Americans." According to the U.S. government, Transitional Bilingual Education must be provided if a district serves 20 or more students at a grade level speaking a home language other than English (Palmer, 2011). While most states allow for more additive forms of language teaching like dual-immersion programs, only Transitional Bilingual education programs are required by law (Palmer, 2011). In regards to linguistic hegemony in schools, the connection between transitional bilingual education and subtractive bilingualism are deeply connected.

The goal of Transitional Bilingual education programs is to assist ELLs learn English through the support of their home language in core content (Palmer, 2011). Children are expected to transition to English-only instruction while leaving the home language behind. The home language is only regarded as a compensatory support, clearly marking English as the

dominant and legitimate language (Palmer, 2011). Some teachers feel that is easier to conduct lesson completely in English, because writing another lesson plan involving the home language or finding instructional materials in the home language was too difficult or time consuming (Worthy et al., 2003).

Palmer's (2011) study on the language ideologies of teachers in transitional bilingual programs in Texas, found that most teachers tended to believe that proficiency in English equated to general intelligence, while a lack of English equated to academic weakness and low intelligence. Furthermore, in practice, teachers tended to keep the Spanish-dominant students grouped together, giving students the implied impression that they were part of the 'stupid' group (Palmer, 2011).

Another subtractive practice that teachers exhibited was when referring to their students, teachers referred to them, in terms of language deficiencies (Palmer, 2011). This position reduces a student's potential as a bilingual speaker and misconstrues an emerging bilingual child's natural learning process, which usually consists of errors that are quickly self-corrected; similar to that of monolingual language development in children of the same age (Palmer, 2011). Lastly, Palmer (2011) noted that teachers always mentioned Spanish in terms of need, while English was linked to readiness, implying that teachers felt an immense pressure placed on their shoulders, to wean students off of Spanish as quickly as possible in order to join an English-only class room by 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Pressure on Emergent Bilinguals in school.** In terms of language acquisition, it takes a person anywhere from 3-5 years to gain language proficiency, so the rush to get children achieving a total native-like demand of English is not necessarily a simple or realistic task (Saville-Troike, 2005). Furthermore, with the current fascination for giving students standardized

norm-referenced tests, emergent bilinguals are set up for failure when scores are directly compared to Native-English speaking students (Mahoney, 2017). When norming groups leave out children from minority language backgrounds, the teachers working with disenfranchised students are penalized for it (Ravitch, 2013). More and more, teachers might avoid teaching emerging bilingual students for fear of losing their job, or impacting their teaching by using test-taking strategies as opposed to real content learning and authentic problem solving (Ravitch, 2013).

### **Teachers with Additive Views of Home languages**

Keh & Stoessel's (2017) study on older heritage language speakers found that participants were greatly affected by their experiences in school in how they ended up perceiving their home language. For example, one participant noted that one of her general education teachers among all others viewed her ability to speak German as special and worth sharing. The participant recalled how proud she felt singing a song in German in front of her monolingual peers (Keh & Stoessel, 2017). Furthermore, teachers who allow students to use the home language in class fostered better outcomes for their bilingual students by giving them the chance to exercise their language use through "co-ethnic friendships." (Keh & Stoessel, 2017).

A teacher does not need to know a language in order to promote it; they can simply implement additive language strategies in the classroom. Such strategies may include, for example, acknowledging the benefits of bilingualism and allowing students to teach the entire class about certain practices from their home country. In this way the teacher not only bolsters the heritage language students' confidence but he/she can also help classmates become more culturally-fluid and tolerant to representations beyond the norm (Sneddon, 1993).

Sneddon's (1993) study on using additive practices in schools, noted, that adding afterschool programs and Saturday mother-child styled programs helped increase student confidence in school while reducing playground bullying. Furthermore, teachers who allowed students to do home language read-alouds, 2 hours per week, helped students transfer literacy skills to English while increasing student concentration (Sneddon, 1993).

It is generally understood, that students who are proficient in their heritage/home language have better learning outcomes in not only their abstract cognitive flexibility and general academic achievement but also enjoy greater English language acquisition and literacy as well (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). There is still a long-standing perception that languages cannot coexist, however, time and time again there is little evidence to back this reductive position.

### **Familial Supports in Linguistic Choices**

Despite multilingualism being a vital factor for our economic competitiveness and national security, individual families are solely donned with the responsibility of promoting and maintaining the heritage language in their offspring (Mori & Calder, 2013). Parents play a major role in their children's heritage language maintenance or conversely their attrition rates, in specific and nuanced ways. As Suarez (2002) aptly put it, "It is within the daily lives of individuals and families where English hegemony is fought, and linguistic alternatives sought." Studies conducted by Brown (2011), Shin (2010) and Jeon (2008) support the notion that parental attitudes toward the heritage language, be it positive or negative, impacted their children's perspective on ethnic identity and heritage language use throughout their lives. Cha and Goldenberg (2015) found that parents usually exemplify time-on-task behaviors in which the language they use in the home, is the one they wish for their children to learn. The total amount of speech directed to children by parents contributes to child vocabulary

acquisition, while the frequency of parent speech style can also predict a child's speech patterns (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). Home language is not a unitary construct and therefore, implications surrounding each family member play an important role, which is referred to as the Interlocutor Effect (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015). At the same time, one must not ignore the context of the family dynamic which can be impacted by socioeconomic status, parental education, parental language proficiency in the first language, and time spent at home. Parents who make more, in terms of income, are more likely to speak with their children, provide them with linguistic resources like books, and are more likely to send children to preschool or head-start programs (Cha & Goldenberg, 2015).

**Parent experiences effect on language use.** Parents may be influenced by a perceived social dislocation due to the isolation from a large minority language community, causing them to seek out the attributes of the dominant language community to assimilate to and create a “better life” for their families (Fishman, 1991). One reason parents may stop heritage language use in the home, may be due to their own negative experience with language discrimination either in the work place or by members of the general public. Subsequently, these negative experiences have led them to exemplify behaviors valuing acculturation as a survival tool, while simultaneously devaluing heritage language use (Tuba Yilmaz, 2016).

Suarez' (2002) study on linguistic hegemony noted the complex ways in which people from minority language communities become agents in their own subjugation by the seemingly consensual censure by the dominant language community, to define and perpetuate a standard. The dominant community manufactures mass consent by relying on systematic and consistent persuasion through the media and powerful institutions; which work in synchrony to influence the population's belief on normalcy, especially regarding pragmatic human interaction (Suarez

2002). Some parents are unaware of how quickly their children can come to lose their heritage language, leading them to take no precautions to maintain their language at home (Worthy & et al., 2003).

Wiley (2000) noted that the results of successful linguistic hegemony often leads to language shift because the dominant language is posited as a useful tool for reaching a “single, collective cultural climate.” Minority language speaking parents tend to shift to the dominant language in these conditions because they understand the underlying hegemonic ideologies framing the incentives, opportunities, and discrimination explicitly and implicitly occurring within the social order (Suarez, 2002).

### **Subtractive Practices by Parents**

Parents can internalize the images in their community devaluing their language and come to be openly hostile towards members of their own heritage language community. Suarez' (2002) study found that some heritage language speaking parents regarded people from their home language communities as ignorant if they continued to use the home language. Their reasoning for these sentiments were based on the fact that the successful people in the general community were all monolingual English speaking people (Suarez, 2002). As a result, parents made the active choice to speak English to their children to avoid the humiliation their children might face when starting school. Parents want the best for their children; so they had to make the deliberate choice to speak English so as to compete with monolingual families, and in doing so, hoped to receive the same respect in community institutions (Suarez, 2002).

Some parents sequester the heritage language by either desperately following a teacher's advice to no longer speak the heritage language at home. Nesteruk's (2010) study on professional Eastern- European migrant couples' attitudes toward transmitting the heritage

language to their children, found that their willingness to foster learning was based on their own positive or negative experiences in the majority language community and their monetary capabilities to send their children to after-school heritage language programs.

### **Heritage Language Schools and Services**

Shwarts' (2008) study found that Russian speaking parents in Israel, believed that heritage language school programs helped fill the language role they could not provide in the home due to the struggles of dealing with new immigrant life.

Carreira and Rodriguez' (2011) study on Spanish heritage language schools in Los Angeles found that middle-class Latino parents were more likely to enroll their children into heritage language schools if the schools offered students with diplomas officially recognized in Spain, Argentina and other Latin countries or providing students with 40 hours of foreign language credits counted by California public schools. Parents were motivated to enroll their children into these language schools because they were given active roles on the governance of the schools through membership in the committees while their home language received a status boost by dominant language institutions (Carreira & Rodriguez, 2011). Parents helped create cultural celebration days or monthly field trips in conjunction with educators, helping to create a more open dynamic atmosphere within the minority language community (Carreira & Rodriguez, 2011).

Interestingly, some parents enrolled their children into these language programs for the express purpose of protecting their children's education, in case, down the line, moving back to the country of origin became a possibility (Carreira & Rodriguez, 2011).

Carreira and Rodriguez (2011) noted that some parents preferred to hire home tutors for heritage language learning as a more cost-effective and convenient alternative to a formal language school. Parents felt that the home stay tutor was an important part in helping their

children learn to appreciate Spanish in a more authentic way because a professional was interacting with them in their home (Carreira & Rodriguez, 2011).

**Limitations of heritage language schooling.** On the other hand, heritage language schools cannot be considered the sole solution to maintaining heritage language. Zhang's (2008) study found that Chinese parents felt dissatisfied with the heritage language programs in their community as the teaching style exemplified by heritage language instructors, did not match the more effective and motivational student-centered style often practiced by public school teachers in the U.S.

**Parents and public schools.** Many parents feel an overwhelming sense of losing their children to American cultural norms due to the promotion of language shift proliferated in public schools (Kim, 2011). Furthermore, some families do not have the option to travel back to the home country due to legal status or monetary constraints, therefore, speaking the home language can bring a sense of pain for the family (Worthy et al., 2003). Parents may grow to have a defeatist mentality regarding the heritage language and their own effectiveness in maintaining the heritage language in their children (Lee, 2013 & Donghui & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Additionally, many American teachers assert that parents of emergent bilingual children ought to be more involved with the public schools; but at the same time, alienate parents by giving them the impression that their first language is the reason for the child's stunted school performance in the first place. This clear and apparent disconnect among educational professionals towards parents, only serves to deepen feelings of mistrust and stifles any hope of meaningful collaboration (Valdes, 1996).

### **Parental Additive Language Practices**

Despite the strength of monolingual values in public schools, parents can reinforce the importance of the heritage language by enrolling their children into heritage language schools, or by exclusively using the heritage language while conversing with their children at home (Fang, 2015). Shin, (2010), Brown, (2011) and Hashimoto & Lee (2011) all found that parents who made the express effort to only speak the home language with their children were effective in maintaining it. Furthermore, Li, (1999) noted the importance of both parents displaying the effort to speak the heritage language in a process known as ‘family talk’ where children are involved in relevant and dynamic conversations and activities in the home language, boosting their practical use and motivation to speak the language.

**Community efforts to boost minority/heritage language prestige.** Borland’s (2008) study on heritage language revival through community identity building, found that initiatives to strengthen the Maltese community’s understanding and valuing of their culture and language was a successful tactic in combating language death. Maltese community advocates increased parental awareness on the changes that had taken place to their heritage language and how its status had deteriorated over the years (Borland, 2008).

By using a strategy known as ‘collaborative relations’, participants were empowered and allowed to explore their ethnic identity in a safe place with like-minded individuals (Borland, 2008). A forum was created in which Maltese advocates became the bridge to gap the stunted communication between the Maltese community and local Australian bureaucrats (Borland, 2008). Parents could speak with counselors and relieve some of their stresses and concerns while also making suggestions about the experiences of their children. The Maltese advocates were actually able to pass legislation to make Maltese an accredited subject for final high school

examinations and were able to work with the Maltese consulate to offer funding for after school heritage language programs and teacher sponsored trips to Malta (Borland, 2008).

Regardless of the success or failure of these types of community initiatives, it is important for parents to feel that there is an institution that can represent them and their concerns. When minority communities come together, their voices can be heard more readily by the powerful government leaders in their area. Relating to Baker's process for language revival, it is essential that the minority language is brought to the permanent institutions in order to become visible and gain the prestige needed to carry on. Initiatives to increase the visibility and status of minority languages could be modelled to work in the United States with similar success to countries like Britain and Canada (Baker, 2011).

**Cultural customs and passing on the home language.** Enrique (1989) noted that language and culture are strongly connected and parents who practiced cultural continuance within the family were able to maintain the home language. By getting children involved in cultural rituals such as preparing a holiday dinner, or learning to play a folk instrument, their children were more likely to regard the home language as useful and important, especially, when interacting with family members.

Gonzales (2015) noted how elder epistemologies can counteract the acculturation attributed to subtractive schooling through the informal education at home through grandmothers. Grandmothers are often times undervalued as educators in western society (Gonzales, 2015). However, children feel a strong connection to the real life stories and hands-on experiences shared by their grandmothers, as they provide a sense of 'cultural permanency' in the home reflected through rhythm, sights, sounds, and tastes (Gonzales, 2015). Gonzales (2015) argued that the teachings of a grandmother may be a heritage language speaking child's only

resource or 'formal' learning into the minority culture, wherein traditions are the curriculum. By sharing music, recipes, dances, and stories, heritage language speaking students can gain confidence in all parts of themselves and furthermore, build a 'critical consciousness' to counteract the perceptions of the dominant group (Gonzales, 2015).

**Admittance to cultural centers for language support.** Man Park's (2011) study on the role of ethnic religious community institutions, showed Korean heritage language speakers were more likely to maintain their language when they had the resources and opportunities to use it. The family is not the sole or sufficient source of support for heritage language speaking students if the overall goal is to transmit the heritage language. In other words, the pattern of losing one's heritage language is intensified if there is a lack of support within the community (Man Park, 2011).

Korean ethnic churches have served as the primary community institution in North America, that Korean immigrant parents can rely on. The churches function as a meeting place where practical help and chances to connect with other Korean speakers can proliferate (Man Park, 2011). Man Park (2011) found that parents who enrolled their children to church programs created positive gains in heritage language use. Second-generation Koreans 'competence in social interactions with speakers in the ethnic community were shown to improve due the students' general feelings of increased confidence in their abilities to speak Korean due to practice and a deeper understanding of their own cultural values and manners (Man Park, 2011).

To many Korean families, the church became a 'Mini-Korea', where authentic interactions took place with people of various ages and proficiency language levels. Many students felt that speaking Korean to people their own age was a lot more fun and motivating than speaking with their parents since they were able to talk about topics that interested them,

while picking up the up-to-date expressions used in Korea (Man Park, 2011). At the same time the status of adult Korean immigrants was elevated in the church, which created a more cohesive bond among youngsters and adults. Students learned new vocabulary from speaking with adults they looked up to, while adults felt more confidence in themselves by the opportunities afforded to them by the church. The churches provided various activities catered to student age and proficiency level, while making language learning fun and natural by providing students with Korean meals and traditional festivities (Man Park, 2011).

Furthermore, students found singing hymns in Korean a unique and positive experience for their language maintenance (Man Park, 2011). Man Park (2011) found that the more classes and events that parents signed their children up for, the better the heritage language outcomes were for them.

### **Heritage Language Speaking Community and Motivation**

With regards to heritage language speakers as individuals with their own agency, there are numerous reasons for either maintaining the home language or rejecting it on a personal basis. Weger- Guntharp's (2006) study found that heritage language learning provided students with an "emotional link to the past" especially after facing rather negative experiences of traveling back to the homeland and recognizing just how much language attrition had occurred in some participants, for example.

Furthermore, when interviewing students who were relearning their heritage language in the college setting, many noted a perceived implicit pull by parental wishes to broaden their home language use (Weger-Guntharp, 2006). Despite, students being old enough to make the decision to retake up the home language on their own; the connection of students to their parents was a key factor in their motivation to learn on their own terms (Weger-Guntharp, 2006).

**Motivation to speak the heritage language.** McKay and Wong (1996) and Norton (2000) summarized that the second language learning process is impacted by individual identities as well as social power and institutional relationships, especially the ‘imagined role that learners themselves assume or take into the community. Mori & Calder (2015) note that the desire to either speak the heritage language or reject it, stems from a person’s integrative and instrumental motivation. This general concept of instrumental and integrative motivation was originally coined by Gardner and Lambert in the early 1970s to describe home language speakers’ utilitarian purposes for maintaining their home language (Wong & Xiao, 2010).

Moreover, speakers look at the work needed to maintain proficiency in the home language as a long-term investment that can reap specific resources or rewards (Wong & Xiao, 2010; Weger-Guntharp, 2006). In other words, students tend to choose whether they engage with the heritage language based on environmental factors like public perception or the language’s perceived usefulness and relevance. For example, Japanese heritage language speakers were more likely to use their heritage language in the U.S. if they perceived their heritage language made them more profitable in the job market (Mori & Calder, 2015). A similar study conducted on Chinese-heritage language speakers, found that the emergence of China as major global economy, brought about a resurgence of positive perceived self-image among Chinese-Americans due to the press and esteem shown in dominant western media about their home country (Wong & Xiao, 2010).

On the other hand, studies like the one conducted by Francis (2005) on early language attrition found that indigenous language speakers who perceived the language as lacking in broad utility or had low prestige, caused middle childhood and adolescent speakers to shift their language quickly from an L1 to L2 (Francis, 2005).

### **Self-Identity**

Many studies have found that the ways in which heritage language speaking students self-identify can play a key role in determining the active use of the home language. Smith (1989) defined the intrinsic connectedness of self-identification to a heritage country with a shared genealogy and ethnicity, regardless, of language use or minority language group membership as creating a perception known as an ‘ethnic-core’. Heritage language speaking students who use hyphenated Heritage-American labels, like Chinese-American, were more likely to have high proficiency in both English and the home language due to their high self-esteem and feelings of strong identity and ownership with both of their cultures (Kiang, 2008).

**When heritage language speakers do not use the minority language.** Studies have shown that heritage language speaking youths of Hispanic and Asian descent were using English as their language of choice when communicating with friends and parents at exponentially high rates (Choi, 2013). The heritage language attrition rate was found to be so rapid, that in the span of 2 to 3 generations, heritage language use is almost completely eradicated, in what is referred to by linguistic researchers as the “generational status variable” (Choi, 2013). The negative implications for this phenomena are disheartening because they threaten to break the intricate bonds between family members that have been sustained for generations and deprive a large population of children a profound piece of their identity (Fang, 2013). Palmer (2011) noted that much of the effort we expend in communication is based on our “ability to maximize our linguistic capital.” To this effect, students have internalized the latent messages of the linguistic hegemony and have come to realize that if they already possess the dominant language they must act out in ways to maintain it and fight to keep the position of power it provides them over others (Palmer, 2011).

**Linguistic choices later in life.** Keh & Stoessel's (2017) study on the heritage language maintenance of 3 adult siblings found that a culmination of factors influenced which language a bilingual is most likely to use and self identify with. These factors included: language prestige, availability of educational materials, socioeconomic status, cultural identity and community views of one's linguistic group. Heritage language maintenance and language shift exist on a continuum, and speakers can change over time with the different phases of their lives (Keh & Stoessel, 2017). Among the 3 participants in Keh and Stoessel's study, all 3 noted that the language used among each other was more pivotal than the language use of their parents.

Additionally, language use in the home language was effected by lexical gaps requiring more effort on the part of the speaker to recall a word, leading to code-mixing in which English would be inserted into German utterances (Keh & Stoessel, 2017). Keh and Stoessel (2017), found that code-mixing helped in both the shift and the maintenance efforts of their participants. In both Kouritzin's (1999) and Keh & Stoessel's (2017) case studies on older heritage language speakers, a strong connection between older age and effort to maintain or come back to the heritage language was found. It seems as though, heritage language speakers go through major periods of mental strain where they may come to seek out the heritage language as a way of coming to terms with a part of their identity that they may have been neglecting or repressing (Kouritzin,1999; Keh & Stoessel, 2017).

Furthermore, at an older age, heritage language speakers do not have to deal with the the judgment of peers for heritage language use, and may have acquired the funds to travel to their respective home countries and reconnect with relatives or learn the home language formally in the college or university setting ( Keh & Stoessel, 2017).

**Heritage language speakers' language coping mechanisms in school.** Chavarria's (2017) study on how heritage language speaking students cope in schools with subtractive practices, found that students tended to: disengage from academic instruction, leave school all together, or conform to the oppressive conditions they experience.

However, she noted that with the help of open teachers, students could take an active role in their own agency in school by becoming "transformation mentors" (Chavarria, 2017). Students in her experiment were able to change their perceived low status in school by creating after-school clubs where they could speak their home languages freely, learn cultural songs and dances and even perform traditional acts in the school theatre (Chavarria, 2017). Chavarria (2017) found that students who were able to use their voice, could take part in a transformational resistance that held them shift in the school hierarchy from low cast, and turn them into proud and active members of the student body.

Overall there are many different ways in which perspectives of parents, educators and peers can shape the way heritage language speaking students choose to speak English over their home language. Chances are, there is no singular event causing a student to fully reject one language for another, but instead a process that takes place through interrelated events and interactions, leading to the swift change. In Kouritzin's (1999) emergent-theme analysis, *Face[t]s of First Language Loss*, language attrition is described in terms of a process that "does not take place within an individual but between individuals ...and so it appears smooth, painless, a seamless tapestry of changing colors."

### **Limitations in the Field of Heritage Language Research**

At this point, very little discourse is available regarding the wide variation in heritage language attrition, especially with regard to sub-groups among the typically studied, Hispanic

and Asian populations (Choi, 2013; Wong & Xiao, 2010; Borland, 2008). In some cases, sub-group language speakers, like those speaking, Cantonese, and Maltese, and other regional languages, can face double the language discrimination from their respective larger heritage language groups as well as the already established discrimination by the dominant language group (Borland, 2008).

In the past, linguistic researchers have either focused solely on research pertaining to acquiring a monolingual-like command of the English language, or have treated the loss of language as an entity separate from the individuals who speak it (Kouritzin, 1999). Due to this tunnel-like view on coexistence in language, there are striking deficiencies regarding data pertaining to the relationship between heritage language maintenance while acquiring the English language.

**Concluding available research.** Perspectives on heritage language are often times regarded in terms of sharp differences of opinion and barriers. However, the research shows that the sooner we accept that heritage language use is not necessarily an individual process but a societal one, the quicker we will be able to rectify the institutionalized factors that serve to debilitate multilingualism in the U.S. (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Wong and Xiao (2010) state that heritage language development depends on a person's ability to find 'continuity and coherence in multiple communicative and social worlds.'

Instead of regarding heritage language as an outdated artifact of far-off traditions, policy should reflect a shift toward regarding the heritage language community as an asset where speakers are provided pride and agency in their bilingualism. Teachers should use a whole-child approach when dealing with their heritage language students, by working to affirm their home culture, a key part of their identity. Furthermore, teachers should make the most of whatever level of

bilingual proficiency the student has in their linguistic repertoire and find a way to use and promote that skill within their classrooms. Suarez (2002) noted that proficiency in both the home language and English is a successful strategy for resisting the tendency for language loss.

Even still, towards the future, it may be more effective to work towards the tolerance of a corruption of the minority language, allowing for a smoother adaptation into the dominant language community (Kouritzin, 1999). An adaptation of the home language may also take away an un-needed pressure felt by heritage language speaking people to divide their languages into distinct categories. Likewise, language ideologies are not monolithic constructs and can be flexible, dynamic and contested (Gallo et al., 2014).

Regardless, educators can truly benefit from understanding how their own perceptions can have a lasting impact on their students, and that if not treated with care and understanding, may lead to a lifetime of students second-guessing themselves. An appreciation for a student's bilingual skills can greatly impact not only the use of their heritage language but also vastly improve their confidence and performance in school.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of heritage/home language speaking college-age students about how their experiences have led them to making language choices that either reinforce the home language or instead undermine its use. The researcher investigated student perceptions on language dominance, minority-language community prominence, interactions in English and home language and perceived school inclusion or exclusion.

#### **Step One: Choose a Research Topic**

As a heritage language speaker, the researcher has a deep connection and experience with heritage language loss on a first-hand basis. From the researcher's own experience, interest grew from why her own heritage/home language speaking skills had been deteriorating over the years. Upon taking courses related to linguistic hegemony and language loss, the researcher was able to find studies to answer her questions about the factors leading to her language attrition from formal and systematic research on the topic; that put into words her own feelings on the phenomena of heritage language loss and maintenance.

#### **Step Two: Conduct a Literature Review**

Initially the literature review writing process began in a prerequisite class on Sociolinguistics. A portion of the literature review was outlined in a research class using the research databases accessible through the Reed Library State University website ([www.fredonia.edu/library](http://www.fredonia.edu/library)). The databases used for researching purposes included: ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), PsychINFO, and 3 published books read from previous classes related to the topic of heritage/home language use and emergent bilingualism.

When checking for the quality of articles, the researcher limited applicable articles by choosing peer-reviewed and academic journals only. The researcher used on campus resources, namely the Interlibrary loan system to gain access to every article to ensure that the entire article could be analyzed.

Key terms used to find related studies included: “perspective on heritage language”, “subtractive bilingualism”, “language choice”, “teacher perspectives on heritage language maintenance”, “parental views on heritage language maintenance in their children”. The researcher found that many studies only focused on one particular heritage language speaking group, being Spanish speakers therefore, special attention was taken to ensure a fair number of studies exploring other heritage language speaking groups, was also analyzed to get a full scope of minority versus dominant language group dichotomy.

### **Step Three: Identifying Participants**

All SUNY Fredonia students over the age of 18 and speaking a heritage language were eligible for this study. The researcher went through the university’s Intercultural department to gain access to students that were members of cultural/ethnic group student associations. College-age students were deemed the best sample by the researcher, because they have had enough experience with using the home language while at the same time have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to take steps to maintain the home/heritage language based on the trajectory of their immanent professional lives. The researcher attended several cultural group leader meetings in order to promote the concept and significance of the study.

**Step Four: Justification for a Qualitative Research Design**

The objective of a qualitative study is to understand the complexity and meaning of a single phenomenon, requiring the researcher to consider the multitude of external forces shaping the phenomena (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). A qualitative study serves best, research problems that call for the exploration on how a process unfolds while accounting for the complexity of a phenomena (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). The literature review is used to prove the existence and importance of the research problem and informs the researcher's overall approach to data collection and compiling of evidence (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015).

A qualitative approach to researching, works particularly well in the case of this study due the open and general procedures involved that call for the exploration of participant viewpoints; allowing for data to emerge in a dynamic and open way (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015).

The specific method for data collection that was used is semi-structured interviews. Interviews provide the benefit of obtaining information pertaining to specific and detailed descriptions of past experiences, detailed perspectives of participants and their current attitudes (Gay et al., 2009).

**Step Five: Select Framework**

The framework used for this study was inspired Kouritzin (1999) Face[t]s of Language Loss, an emergent theme analysis on adult heritage language speakers of different ethnic and minority backgrounds in a case study of life histories. Emergent thematic coding is a qualitative data analysis approach where text in the form of interview transcripts, is read several times to identify themes that emerge from the data. By using using a narrative life-history approach to data collection, Kouritzin (1999) found that she was able to create a “polyphonous, performative and invitational experience.” In other words, by implementing an emergent theme analysis, one

can obtain a well-rounded picture of a subject's language history and the factors in the participant's life, responsible for his/her language choices. Overall, emergent theme analysis is a method that takes into account and acknowledges, that heritage/home language speakers and their language choices are intrinsically connected.

Kouritzin (1999) used five parameters while interviewing and coding her data:

- 1) Describing intersection of language, identity and culture
- 2) First language loss due to second language acquisition
- 3) Affects of language loss in participation in education, economic and social communities
- 4) Individual perceptions on communicative adaptation in deficit situations
- 5) Consequences of 1<sup>st</sup> languages loss with regards to family and social contexts

### **Step Six: Formulate Questions**

The objective of the interview process in an emergent theme analysis is to gain a narrative life history regarding the key phenomena. The questions were constructed to encourage participants to describe in earnest, their own thoughts about their proficiency in the home/heritage language and the experiences surrounding their language choices in a chronological way. To get the most pertinent information, the researcher used both open-ended (i.e. divergent) questions and closed (i.e. convergent) questions.

The questions were framed to encourage detailed responses to describe the key elements in the participant's experience regarding home language use throughout early years, factors effecting language attrition and language maintenance.

Firstly, the researcher introduced herself to each participant in the same way by defining the word heritage language speaker, to posture each participant with the same background knowledge about what the subsequent questions will be about. One aspect the researcher considered while creating questions was to ensure that the researcher avoided leading the conversation by asking too wordy of questions or rephrasing questions to lead to certain answers. Any kind of manipulation to the questions other than repeating, would go against the core principle of an emergent theme analysis in a life-history, as it is the participant's words that are vital.

The instrument itself included questions pertaining to basic demographic information like age, and country of origin and ethnicity. The questions regarding the key factors in language perception and experience were divided and asked chronologically from initial home language learning, use and community membership. The second half of the questions surrounded the participant's perceptions about whether their home language had attrited and who was responsible for it.

Here is a list of the questions asked and the opening script:

Hello, my name is Alexa Papadimatos and I am conducting a study on the experiences of home and heritage language speaking students here at Fredonia. Today, we are going to talk about your language history and your language use over the course of your life, so far, and your plans for the future.

Before starting the interview, I will define heritage and home language for you, in order to keep my findings as consistent and as accurate as possible across my participants. I will define a heritage and home language speaker as someone who grew up in a household speaking a language other than English or has acquired two languages simultaneously at an early age. A

heritage or home language speaker does not need to be completely fluent in either language or use each language with the same frequency. As long as you have some proficiency in your other language, you are, for all intents and purposes, a heritage/home language speaker. Any questions?

Here is the list of questions:

1. How well do you know your home language and are you comfortable using it?
2. What was your first language? OR Are you a simultaneous bilingual?
3. What language are you most likely to speak to your family members in and is the language you use different based on certain members?
4. How do you feel about your connection to your heritage culture and your American culture?
5. Do you interact with your language community (i.e. celebrate holidays, or religious occasions)?
6. How long have you lived in the United States and when did you start school at an American educational institution?
7. Have you ever travelled to your home country and how was your experience in communicating?
8. Did you formally learn your home language and, if so, what kind of program was it and how long did you partake in it?
9. Have you felt in recent years that you are losing your home language and is this important?
10. Do you think maintaining your home language is important and if so how would you use it?

11. Were you provided any ESL, Speech, or Special education services during your time as a student in an American public school?
12. Did your teachers in American school have any positive or negative comments about your potential bilingual capabilities?
13. How do you think your parents or immediate family members feel about your home language proficiency?
14. Do you feel judged by people who are fluent in your home language when you communicate to them in it?
15. Do you use some form of adaptation of your home language in casual conversations (i.e. Spanglish), if so with whom?

### **Step 7: Interview Protocol**

The researcher gathered data through formal, one on one, semi-structured interviews. For the purposes of transcribing responses, the conversations were recorded electronically. Participants were informed that their individual interviews were to be recorded. The researcher also made notes throughout the interview in order to keep track of new ideas or places to revisit at a later point during the coding phase.

A strong emphasis was placed on confidentiality of the participants for this study. No student names or identifiable information were taken and participants were notified in advance that their responses would remain completely confidential. Questions pertaining birthplace and nationality were used strictly for informative purposes. The data compiled into the final product of this study were edited with care to avoid revealing any identifiable information about individual participants. Participants were made aware that their participation was completely

voluntary and that their responses would be strictly used for the purposes of furthering research. Participants were in no way compensated for their participation in this study.

**Time and location.** The researcher estimated that each interview process would take about thirty minutes per participant. The researcher worked with the secretary and directors of the Intercultural Center to notify participants a week in advance regarding a date and time for their participation, with the participants' schedule in mind.

To maintain a professional and comfortable experience for the participants, the interviews were conducted in the University's private library study rooms, which were checked out before the appointed time.

### **Step Eight: Human Subjects Approval**

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of heritage language speaking students regarding their perceived language use and proficiency and their language choices through an interview process deemed benign to participants. The researcher received email confirmation from the Human Subjects administrator, that approval was granted on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### **Step Nine: Conduct Interviews**

The interviews were conducted and the data was collected in the third week of March and the second week of April, according to the aforementioned protocols regarding consent, confidentiality, scheduling and recording. The questions were limited to 15 relatively general, and of the open-ended variety; while expanding or rephrasing was limited. Furthermore, follow-up questions were only used as needed or for clarification on the part of the researcher. The researcher was careful to monitor her tone and demeanor to avoid steering participants into giving responses that may or not be in tune with their true experience.

The researcher took notes during the interview process as needed without disrupting the flow of natural conversation and maintaining rapport with participants.

### **Step 10: Organize Results**

After data was collected in March and April, the process of coding the data took place in the first week of May. In order to easily organize the data provided from the interviews the researcher transcribed the recordings via a word processing program saved into a Microsoft Word document. The researcher carefully listened to the recordings 3 times, in order to make accurate transcriptions, while conceptualizing themes from listening in, following Kouritzin's (1999) emergent-theme analysis model of coding data.

### **Step Eleven: Analyze the Data**

After the transcribing process was completed, the documents were analyzed to determine what relevant and recurring themes had emerged regarding the phenomena of heritage language use and linguistic choice. Related themes occurring in all participant interviews were coded together to create a compilation of several distinct themes.

Using both open and closed coding the researcher re-examined and reorganized data into most appropriate themes. Finally, most relevant quotes were used to help justify the findings and creation of themes.

### **Step Twelve: Limitations:**

The main limitation of this study was the prospect of a validity error due to purposeful sampling. This sample is too small and specific to make generalizations about the linguistic choices and experiences of all heritage language speaking students. Furthermore, the sample was

limited to college-age students and therefore, the lived experiences among these HL speakers cannot be considered a full or well rounded scope of the lived experiences of both older and younger heritage language speakers dealing with different social circumstances.

### Chapter 4: Results

The researcher interviewed a total of five SUNY Fredonia students coming from a wide array of linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Four out of the five participants were born in the United States. Their majors varied from higher education, communications, TESOL and Speech- Language Pathology.

All interviews took place during the months of March and April. After all the interviews were conducted, the researcher uploaded the interview recordings to her google drive. Afterwards, the researcher listened to the recordings of the interviews three times to get an accurate understanding of participant responses. Then she transcribed the responses of each participant. The responses are accurate but not word for word, aside from places that are indicated by direct quotations. All of the participants in this study have been given pseudonyms to protect their true identities.

Here is a chart describing the five participants with regard to country of origin, home language and gender:

Table 1

*Participants of the Study*

| <u>Participant</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Major</u>     | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Home Language</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Jay                | Male          | Communications   | United States            | Spanish              |
| Irena              | Female        | TESOL            | United States            | Spanish              |
| Charlotte          | Female        | Communications   | United States            | Haitian Creole       |
| Bethany            | Female        | Speech Pathology | Romania                  | Romanian             |
| Lisa               | Female        | Higher Education | United States            | Italian              |

**Parameter 1: Describing the intersection of language, identity and culture.****Question 4: How do you feel about your connection to your heritage culture and your American culture?**

All five of the participants seemed to share mixed feelings about exactly how they identify themselves. For example, both of the Puerto Rican participants Jay and Irena clearly stated they were proud of their Puerto Rican heritage and felt it to be an important part of their identity. Other participants especially Lisa and Charlotte who are less proficient in their home languages felt themselves to identify more as American. Interestingly, the one participant born in a different country, Bethany, seemed to be the quickest to pick an American identity with little hesitation, perhaps because she already feels confident in her Romanian roots.

The majority of participants felt that their identities were mixed between being not American enough at times but also not being completely confident in their heritage identities either. For example, Jay stated that he couldn't really relate to his white peers in school and Irena said that she often teetered between her Hispanic and American identities especially when people from the outside, would make judgments about how she carried herself.

Table 2

*How do you feel about your connection to your heritage culture and your American culture?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | I feel highly connected to Puerto Rico and I am proud of my heritage. I love to share different aspects about Puerto Rico with people. I grew up in a predominantly white area but in a Hispanic neighborhood. I couldn't really relate to the white kids at school because for one, I grew up listening to Spanish music, so I didn't get the references they used. I don't feel outside of American culture though, especially when I travel to Puerto Rico**. |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Irena     | I feel very proud of my Puerto Rican heritage, especially now after pursuing a career as a bilingual teacher. In terms of my American identity, I go back and forth and sometimes, I feel like I am neither. I sometimes get comments from other Puerto Ricans that I act “white”.   |
| Charlotte | I know that I am fully American but sometimes I feel a bit estranged, especially from of black culture. I don’t seem to fit the stereotypical norms associated with being black in the United States.  |
| Bethany   | While I was born in Romania, I don’t really remember much about it aside from special occasions. These days, I consider myself, mostly American.   |
| Lisa      | I consider myself both American and Italian albeit I do feel at times disconnected from my Italian identity since it has been 15 years since I have been there. In fact, I am travelling to Italy this month and I hope to reconnect. I have a lot of pride in my Italian side, I even sometimes blame my personality traits on the sole fact that I am Italian. |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question 5: Do you interact with your language community (i.e. celebrate holidays, or religious occasions)?**

All five participants claimed to interact with their heritage language communities to various degrees. Three of the participants; Jay, Irena and Lisa all noted that they participated regularly in heritage festivals and parades in their communities while growing up. All participants aside from Irena and Lisa attended church with people of their same linguistic and cultural backgrounds while growing up.

Lastly, three participants; Irena, Lisa and Charlotte, noted that while growing up their friend groups were comprised of people from the same home culture as themselves. Irena noted that her homogenous friend group helped counteract the isolation she felt in a school district where the white dominant culture reigned supreme. Her group of Puerto Rican friends offered a

safe haven where, Irena could be herself. These sentiments were shared by Charlotte and Lisa who said that their friend groups just seemed to form naturally from everyone being able to share the same background and experiences as members of the same home culture.

Table 3

*Do you interact with your language community (i.e. holidays/religious occasions)?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | I definitely interact with my language community. My father is a deacon, so I grew up going to church all in Spanish. When we moved to a white predominant area, we started going to a white church out of necessity. However, my father always made attempts to read books to me in Spanish and English at the local library. I attended all of the Puerto Rican festivals and parades. |
| Irena       | I did not attend church with Puerto Ricans. However, growing up, I did always attend the Puerto Rican parades, for example. Most of my friends at school were also Puerto Rican and we often used our cultural connection in a protective way to counteract the high number of white students at school, who were not always very accepting**.   |
| Charlotte   | I used to go to church with a lot of other Haitians. I grew up in a predominantly Haitian and Jamaican area of New York City, so naturally lot of my friends growing up were also Haitians.  |
| Bethany     | Mostly, my connection to my community came from church, or travelling back to Romania. I did not know many other Romanians in my area.   |
| Lee         | For me, there was no religious aspect when connecting to my home community but I did attend all of the Italian festivals and many of my friends in school were also Italian**.   |

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question 8: Did you formally learn your home language and if so what kind of program was it?**

Four out of the five participants claimed to have never formally studied their home languages, especially in the sense of an afterschool style program. Jay and Irena did both take Spanish in high school but when interviewed, they did not seem to consider those classes as formal. Lisa was the only participant to be enrolled in a private dual language Italian/ English program while growing up. Four of the five participants: Jay, Irena, Charlotte and Betty all said that the home language was taught to them by family members.

An interesting note by Jay, had to do with the types of lessons and teaching styles implemented by his Spanish teachers and how even to this day, still have a profound impact on him. For example, he said that teachers who tried to involve cultural and conversational aspects into their lessons, were the far superior teachers, in his view.

Table 4

*Did you formally learn your home language and if so, what kind of program was it?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | I never formally learned Spanish while growing up. My grandparents spoke a very ungrammatical and informal version Spanish. In fact, my maternal grandparents were scared to speak Spanish in white dominated Buffalo. It was my father who really made the effort to teach**. |
| Irena       | I had no formal Spanish education. I learned Spanish mostly from visiting my grandparents.   |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Charlotte | I have never formally studied creole, everything I have learned has come from my mother and my aunt. The creole that has stuck with me the most are either the names of individual objects or commands**. |
| Bethany   | I have never formally studied Romanian after leaving the country.   |
| Lisa      | I formally learned Italian from kindergarten to 8th grade in a private school with a dual language program.   |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

### **Parameter Number 2: First language loss due to second language acquisition.**

#### **Question Number 2: What was your first language? Or Are you simultaneous bilingual?**

Three out of the five participants, namely: Jay, Charlotte and Lisa said that their first language was English even though all three admitted to being exposed to the heritage language at an early age. In Charlotte's case she explained that since her parents and older siblings migrated from Haiti she used Creole often, and remembers times where she could only recall the name of objects by their Creole names.

Bethany was the only participant who claimed to start speaking the heritage language before any other language, because she spent the first five years of her life in Romania. Lastly, Irena was the only participant to say she was a simultaneous bilingual. When growing up, Irena found that speaking both of her languages helped her communicate better, since her mother was born in Connecticut and her grandparents only spoke Spanish.

Table 5

*What was your first language? Or Are you simultaneous bilingual?*

---

Participant

Summary of Statement

---

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Jay       | English was my more dominant language when growing up at home. My grandparents came to America from Puerto Rico but my parents were both born and educated in the United States**.                     |
| Irena     | I grew up simultaneous bilingual speaking both Spanish and English with family members.  |
| Charlotte | English was my first language but I used Creole with the majority of my family as my parents and older siblings migrated from Haiti. There were times were I knew a word in Creole but not in English. |
| Bethany   | My first language is Romanian since I was born there but moved the the United States when I was 6 years old.   |
| Lisa      | My first language was English but I was exposed to Italian before starting kindergarten.   |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

### **Parameter 3: Affects of language loss in participation in education, economic and social communities.**

#### **Question Number 10: Do you think maintaining your home language is important and if so how would you use it?**

All five participants felt that maintaining their home language was extremely important and a key aspect of their lives. Both Jay and Irena stated that their use of Spanish has helped them in their careers. As Jay noted, that by knowing Spanish he can maintain a close bond with his family members and culture while at the same time expanding his job marketability.

Charlotte and Lisa also mentioned how important maintain their home languages are in terms of being able to communicate and interact with their family members. Charlotte noted that

by maintaining her home language she would be able to show pride in her Haitian roots and avoid being “one of those people that ditches their culture.”

Table 6

*Do you think maintaining your home language is important and if so how would you use it?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | It is so important to know one’s home language. I want the ability to engage with my culture, family and community. Furthermore, I have watched how Spanish has been vital for the career prospects of my parents and for my own professional path. I would love to use my Spanish skills to help me get a job in communications. My family is very proud of my efforts to relearn Spanish**. |
| Irena       | Maintaining Spanish is very important for me since I am going to become a bilingual teacher. I use Spanish with my students daily and have already seen a major improvement in my proficiency. At the same time, my job made me realize how much I still have to learn  |
| Charlotte   | I think it is important for me to relearn Creole so I can make connections to my people and culture. I want to show pride in my Haitian roots and make my mother happy. I don’t want to be one of “those people who ditches their culture.” I would love to read Haitian folktales and poetry in the future as well.  |
| Bethany     | Maintaining Romanian is very important to me and I will definitely teach it to my children to keep my culture alive.  |
| Lisa        | It is very important to me. I want to maintain Italian so I can communicate with my cousins and use it as a resource when travelling or for my profession in higher education or use it to network.   |

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question Number 6: How long have you lived in the United States and when did you start school at an American educational institution?**

Four out of the five participants were born in the United States including: Jay, Irena, Charlotte, and Lisa. Jay, Irena and Charlotte; who were enrolled in American public schools across New York since they were of school age.

Bethany started American public school in first grade after coming to New York from Romania at 6 years old. She continued to be in public school until transferring into a private catholic high school. After kindergarten at a public school, Lisa transferred into a private dual English/ Italian school, where she stayed until she started high school at a public institution.

Table 7

*How long have you lived in the United States and when did you start school at an American educational institution?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | I have lived in the U.S. my whole life. I attended a catholic school with a sizeable Hispanic population. However, after first grade I transferred into a suburban public school. |
| Irena       | I was born in Dunkirk and attended public American schools.   |
| Charlotte   | I have lived in the U.S. my whole life and always attended public schools.  |
| Bethany     | I came to the U.S. at age six and attended a public American school until 5th grade, after which I transferred into a private school the rest of my grade school years.           |

Lee

I was born and raised in the U.S. In terms of schooling, after pre-K, I attended a private dual language Italian private school in NYC which was funded by the Italian government. I went to school with the children of Italian diplomats.

---

**Question Number 11: Were you provided any ESL, speech, or special education services during your time as a student in an American public school?**

Three of the four participants received speech services in grade school. One participant, Bethany, received ESL in her first year as a newly arrived immigrant to the United States. One other participant, Lisa, actually received language support in Italian at her private school but no services during her time in American public schools.

Table 8

*Were you provided any ESL, speech, or special education services during your time as a student in an American public school?*

---

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | I received some speech services for a slight lisp but no ESL.  |
| Irena       | I received speech services because I had trouble with the “s” and “z” sounds and would mix them up.                                |
| Charlotte   | I received speech services because I had a problem with the silent “th” sound.   |
| Bethany     | I received ESL services for one year in first grade but picked up English quickly. I did receive speech services for a short time. |
| Lisa        | I actually received extra language support for Italian in my dual language program.  |

---

**Question Number 12: Did your teachers in American school have any positive or negative comments about your potential bilingual capabilities?**

Unfortunately, four out of the five participants admitted to having their teachers be either indifferent or even display a negative attitude toward them. Jay mentioned that one time a substitute assumed he was the ELL in class when it was a Russian girl. The experience made him feel isolated and judged for being Hispanic in a predominately white school. Irena also mentioned that her teachers gave off an air that they would always pick the “white preppy kids” over the Hispanic students, which resulted in her feeling weary about stepping outside of the comfort zone of her largely Puerto Rican friend group. Charlotte noted that her teachers in New City pretty much ignored the entire Haitian population in school, which led her to believe that Americans as a whole did not care for Haiti until the earthquake hit. Bethany also felt that her teachers were indifferent to her bilingualism and home culture.

Two participants, Jay and Lisa both noted some positive experiences in American school that they felt really impacted their perception about being accepted by the dominant school culture. For example, Jay mentioned that his first grade teacher allowed him to read a Spanish book to his classmates and he still remembers the experience fondly. As he states, “I just remember feeling so happy to bring my Spanish culture to school. It bridged academics with my upbringing and so I could compare worlds, which made me a better student I think.”

Lisa also mentioned feeling special when her French teacher would connect French to Italian for her during class. The teacher showed Lisa the “flexibility of language” by connecting different languages together.

Table 9

*Did your teachers in American school have any positive or negative comments about your potential bilingual capabilities?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | In first grade, I remember I had a teacher who recognized different cultures and one time she allowed me to read my class a story in Spanish from a book I had brought in. I just remember feeling so happy to bring my Spanish culture to school. It “bridged academics with my upbringing and so I could compare worlds, which made me a better student I think. “In terms of negative experiences, I remember once in 7th grade a math substitute teacher assumed I was an ELL when the ELL was a new girl from Russia. I felt that my Hispanic ethnicity was used as a way to categorize me even though I was the same as everyone else in my class**. |
| Irena       | I found that my American school teachers were either indifferent or openly hostile against Spanish speaking students. There was this unstated truth that the teachers would always favor the “preppy white kids” over us. This type of attitude made me weary about interacting with people who were not from my language community**.   |
| Charlotte   | My teachers pretty much ignored that they had creole speaking students and all of our lessons were very typical. “We were barely noticed and the one time America noticed us, was when we had that big earthquake.” I never had a harsh racism experience though.  |
| Bethany     | My teachers were pretty much indifferent to my Romanian language and were in fact more impressed and interested in how quickly I learned English. If anything some of my peers would just ask me to say something in Romanian for the novelty factor.  |

Lisa

I remember in high school that I took French and the teacher made an active effort to connect French to Italian since she had a good understanding of both languages. At the time I thought her teaching style was helpful for me and showed how languages could be connected and flexible.

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Parameter 4: Individual perceptions on communicative adaptation in deficit situations**

**Question Number 1: How well do you know your home language and are you comfortable using it?**

Three of the five participants felt comfortable using their home language, including: Jay, Irena, and Bethany. The two other participants, Charlotte and Lisa felt too uncomfortable to say they were confident and comfortable using their home languages. For example, Charlotte admitted she was only comfortable being spoken to in Creole, and if she were to respond it would be in English. Lisa on the other hand, said that she has lost a lot of her proficiency in Italian over the years so her confidence in speaking has been reduced.

Table 10

*How well do you know your home language and are you comfortable using it?*

---

Participant

Summary of Statement

---

Jay

I have an intermediate command of Spanish, in other words, I have a good grasp. I do occasionally mess up some conjugations but have recently improved\*.

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Irena     | When speaking in general, I am comfortable using both English and Spanish. However, in academic contexts I am more comfortable speaking in English. |
| Charlotte | I would say I am mostly only comfortable being spoken to in Creole. I know a few words but can understand a lot more**.                             |
| Bethany   | I would estimate that I'm 95% fluent in Romanian, But, I will say, that I have lost some of my language along the way.                              |
| Lisa      | I speak Italian fairly well, I was a lot more proficient when I was younger, however I have a better understanding as of late.                      |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

### **Question Number 7: Have you ever travelled to your home country and how was your experience in communicating?**

Four out of the five participants have been to their home countries multiple times, including: Jay, Irena, Bethany and Lisa. All of the participants admitted to feelings of apprehension about communicating in their home language while in the home country. For example, Jay mentioned that when he was younger he was so uncomfortable speaking Spanish to his relatives, that they would often times disengage from him by just letting him pick a television station to entertain himself with. Bethany also noted that despite her confidence in speaking Romanian, some of her cousins would tease her about sounding American. Lisa mentioned that having her father available as a language support made her feel a lot more comfortable speaking Italian with her relatives.

One of the most jarring and notable experiences comes from Charlotte who still to this day remembers the unpleasant experience she had while communicating with her relatives in

Haiti, even though she was only four years old. She remembers feeling very much judged by her relatives, who seemed very dismayed by her lack of Creole. However, what Charlotte found most reprehensible about her experience was how her relatives seemed to always blame her mother, for Charlotte's lack of proficiency in the home language.

Table 11

*Have you ever travelled to your home country and how was your experience in communicating?*

---

| Participant | Summary of Statement   |
|-------------|--|
| Jay         | I have been to Puerto Rico many times. For me the biggest connection there was always the music. There were times where my family would go every summer and travel to the rural areas to visit relatives. For the most part, I would speak to people there in English as I had low confidence in my speaking skills. I felt that so uncomfortable sometimes it would even be hard to understand my relatives, they would "just give my brother and I the T.V.". It was only recently after spending about four weeks studying abroad at the University of Puerto Rico in 2016, that I feel comfortable communicating in Spanish there. |
| Irena       | I have been to Puerto Rico 6 times. The first time I went communicating was a little jarring as my grandparents had a strict Spanish-only policy. After they died, communicating was even more difficult since I was missing that forced practice. But now I am confident I would have a better time communicating over here since I use Spanish everyday now.   |
| Charlotte   | I have been to Haiti once, when I was 4 years old. I found my experience to be pretty upsetting since I found many of my relatives to be judgmental of my lack of Creole speaking capabilities. Even worse, people would judge my mother for my  |

lack of creole. All I can think sometimes is “I am good student, that should be enough.”

Bethany

I have been to Romania 5 times and while I did find that sometimes people there would make fun of the way I spoke, for the most part everyone was very supportive especially my grandparents. It seems that a lot of the people there are in awe of America, so if anything I felt that I was admired when I visited. I will actually be going to Romania this summer.

Lisa

I have been to Italy a few times but the last time I went I was 12 years old. I had a good time communicating in Italy since I have many cousins around my age with similar interests. My father would also help me, so I felt pretty comfortable communicating. I will be going to Italy this summer.

**Question Number 14: Do you feel judged by people who are fluent in your home language when you communicate to them in it?**

All five of the participants have felt judged in a negative way by those who are fluent in their heritage language communities. For example, both Jay and Irena have been told by people from the same ethnic and language background that they act too “white”. Jay admitted that one of his fear is being seen as “not Hispanic enough” by the people in his community. Charlotte shared a similar sentiment in that she feels that no matter what she accomplishes it will never be good enough to her family members back in Haiti because she has forgotten how to speak creole.

Table 12

*Do you feel judged by people who are fluent in you home language when you communicate to them in it?*

Participant

Summary of Statement

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Jay       | I don't consider myself native or fluent because I still get tripped up when people speak in Spanish quickly. Since I learned Spanish very formally, I don't really know colloquial terminology. I'm scared of being seen as "not Hispanic enough." I have definitely been judged by strangers who have called me "gringo" for my overuse of English. Once I remember an estranged relative making a big fuss over the fact that my Spanish was so rudimentary**. |
| Irena     | I have definitely been judged by people in my language community. They have no qualms about pointing out when you make a mistake or, shaming you for not knowing as much as you used to.  |
| Charlotte | I feel super judged by people in my language community. The moment I say I don't speak it; people think I am pushing it away. Its as if no matter what I do, it won't ever be good enough if I can't even speak Creole.   |
| Bethany   | It depends on the person, but I have heard some Romanians say that I sound American.  |
| Lisa      | I do think that my cousins probably do judge my Italian but I have never received any openly negative or hostile comments about the way I speak.  |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question Number 15: Do you use some form of adaptation of your home language in casual conversations (i.e. Spanglish), if so with whom?**

All five of the participants stated that they used some form of adaptation of their home language. Jay, Irena, Bethany and Lee all admitted to code-switching freely with family members. Irena noted that she would consider herself as someone who uses "Spanglish" frequently and that in her day to day conversation, there is no a real pressure to speak Spanish, in a really formal or proper way.

Charlotte was the one participant who seemed weariest about speaking any her home language despite her frequent code-switching in the past. She admitted that she still loves to interact with Haitian people but would prefer to speak to them in English.

Table 13

*Do you use some form of adaptation of your home language in casual conversations, if so with whom?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | I definitely use an adaptation, mostly in the form of code-switching. I think in both of my languages now, so I might respond in Spanish before I would in English. I mostly make an active effort to use Spanish as much as I can**. |
| Irena       | I use Spanglish, for sure. But I also code-switch with my family all the time. We don't really try to speak either language in a perfect kind of way if we are just having day to day conversations.                                  |
| Charlotte   | I used to mix Creole and English all the time. But these days, I don't have many Haitian friends to practice with so I feel awkward speaking Creole. I really love meeting other Haitian people and feel comforted by their accents.  |
| Bethany     | I code-switch all of the time especially with my fiancée who is Russian so he cannot understand Romanian. My mother is often just as likely to code-switch when speaking to me as I am to do so with her**.                           |
| Lisa        | I do code-switch with my family a bit. I am more concerned with learning more about the dialects  |

spoken by my cousins since I learned textbook Italian in school.

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

### **Parameter 5: Consequences of 1<sup>st</sup> Language Loss with regards to Family and social contexts.**

#### **Question Number 9: Have you felt in recent years that you are losing your home language and is this important?**

All five participants have stated that at some point they have felt that they have lost their home language to some degree. For example, both Jay and Charlotte noted singular events that made them realize they had begun to attrite their respective home languages. Irena on the other hand, had gone her whole life being, for the most part, unaware of her language loss up until she started her graduate studies in SUNY Fredonia's TESOL program, where issues revolving around linguistic hegemony are at the forefront of the curriculum.

Interestingly, three of the participants: Jay, Bethany and Lisa all mentioned the language use of their family members changing as well. For example, Jay and Lisa both mentioned how their parents stopped conversing with them in the home language. Lisa proclaimed that her father's home language proficiency has also reduced over the years, even though he had a stronger foundation in Italian than she does. Bethany noted that while she only feels slightly less confident in her Romanian proficiency, she does find making an effort to chat with her cousins more taxing than it used to be.

Table 14

---

*Have you felt in recent years that you are losing your home language and is this important?*

---

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | At the age of ten, I started becoming cognizant of my language loss. At church I would notice that “I didn’t understand what the priest is saying.” I always knew the basics but my Spanish never evolved. This was especially the case after my parents stopped engaging with me in Spanish**. |
| Irena       | I never really consciously thought about my language loss since I was always okay with speaking English. I only started thinking about my language loss after getting into Fredonia’s TESOL program. I consider Spanish a resource and want to reinvigorate my proficiency skills**.            |
| Charlotte   | I would say I have lost my language for sure. After someone made fun of my American accent, I have been very self-conscious about my Creole. I know that if I relearned Creole, my family would be excited.   |
| Bethany     | I wouldn’t say that I lost my language, but I am not as confident, especially in my writing skills, I don’t message my cousins as much as I used to.  |
| Lisa        | I have definitely lost my language and I regret the fact that I didn’t practice more when I was younger and had the chance. Practicing Italian is a lot harder to do now with all my work responsibilities. I can tell that even my father has lost his Italian. We both have.                  |

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question Number 3: What language are you most likely to speak to your family members in and is the language you use different based on certain members?**

Three of the five participants, including: Jay, Irena and Bethany stated that the language they likely to speak in, is dependent on the specific family member. All three of them, were more likely to use the home language with their grandparents as opposed to their parents or siblings.

Jay noted that by speaking in Spanish to his grandmother he was showing her proper respect.

Irena and Bethany both made distinctions between the languages they are likely to use with each

parent, stating that with their mothers, they were more likely to use English and by contrast, more likely to use the home language when speaking to their fathers.

Charlotte and Lisa both stated that they were most likely to use English with all of their family members. However, Charlotte said that she has no problem with her family members speaking Creole to her.

Table 15

*What language are you most likely to speak to your family members in and is the language you use different based on certain members?*

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | The language I'm likely to use differs by family member. So I will use English when speaking with my parents and brother. My grandparents understand and can speak English so I used to mostly speak to them in English as well. However, recently I started speaking Spanish with my parents for practice and I also have been speaking in Spanish to my grandmother as a sign of respect. In fact, my grandmother is so unused to my speaking Spanish, she will code-switch in English, out of habit. |
| Irena       | The language I use definitely changes based on which family member I'm talking to. Back when my grandparents were alive, I used Spanish a lot more. Since they passed on, I started losing my Spanish. I have always been more inclined to speak to my mother in English and in Spanish with my father. However, the more frequent Spanish speaking is a newer development**.   |
| Charlotte   | I always use English when talking to family. My mother will code-switch between Creole and English with me. If I interject into a conversation that's going on, all in Creole, understand what the topic is about, my family members usually seemed surprised that I understood.  |
| Bethany     | The language I use does depend on the person I'm talking to. For example, I usually talk to my dad in Romanian and I will go back and forth in English and Romanian with my mom, depending on how I feel.   |

Lisa I am most likely to speak in English, especially because all the people who would speak to me in Italian, are from my father's side of the family, who all reside in Italy.

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

**Question Number 13: How do you think your parents or immediate family members feel about your home language proficiency?**

Of the five participants, three noted that their parents were very supportive of their efforts to relearn or maintain the home language. For example, Jay, Irena and Lisa stated that their parents were in full support of their exploration back into the home language. Furthermore, both Jay and Bethany noted that their parents were actually impressed by their level of proficiency in the home language.

Charlotte on the other hand, noted that she believes her parents believe her proficiency in the home language is subpar, making her feel a great pressure to try and relearn Creole. Her feelings of pressure have since increased since her sister has taken up relearning Creole, recently. None of the participants noted any openly hostile sentiments by their immediate family members. If the participants felt pressure or negatively about their language loss it was usually attributed to negative encounters with people from the same language community as themselves.

Table 16

*How do you think your parents or immediate family members feel about your home language proficiency?*

---

| Participant | Summary of Statement  |
|-------------|---|
| Jay         | My parents are really impressed by how much I try to engage with them in Spanish, and that I have really taken the initiative to incorporate Spanish and Puerto Rico into |

my college life. My grandmother is still getting used to my Spanish use and how formal my Spanish is compared to her informal style\*\*.

Irena

My mom thinks my proficiency in Spanish is great and is very supportive about speaking in Spanish to my kids. My father says that my Spanish still needs work and that I should take learning it very seriously.

Charlotte

My parents think that my proficiency is really bad. I feel more pressure to learn Creole especially since my sister is learning it right now.

Bethany

My parents are actually amazed by how much I have managed to retain even for leaving Romania at such a young age. I still read the Romanian newspaper to maintain my reading skills.

Lisa

My parents know that I am nervous about travelling to Italy next month. They gently nudge me to contact my relatives in Italy. Overall they are supportive of my attempts to maintain my Italian\*\*.

---

*Note. \*\* indicate an abbreviated transcription*

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Intersecting Language, Identity and Culture

All five of the participants shared mixed feelings about their identities. For example, both Irena and Jay displayed feelings, throughout the interview, about “not being Hispanic enough” or “acting too white.” These sentiments are reflected directly with the findings in Kouritzin’s (1999) study, where many participants felt at odds with both of their identities and spent much of their lives trying to find a balance between their two parts of themselves.

All of the participants interacted in some way with their heritage language communities. The most popular method of interacting with the heritage language community involved participation in cultural festivals and parades. However, the importance of attending church or other religious institutions, was not lost on the majority of the participants of this study. From these findings, it can be concluded that festivals and parades can be a great way in bringing people from the same linguistic background together while promoting the traditions of the home country. This concept is backed by Man Park’s (2011) study in which it was found that Korean churches played a key role in maintaining the heritage language, by bringing people from the same language community together to participate in various events.

Furthermore, three out of the five participants noted how their friend groups growing up, came from their same linguistic communities. The coming together of students from the same background, in an environment that mismatches the heritage language speaking students’ cultural, linguistic or ethnic background, can be considered a coping mechanism for dealing with linguistic hegemony. These findings relate to Chavarria’s (2017) study on how students coped with subtractive practices in school. If heritage language speaking students, are allowed and encouraged to associate with other students from the same background, they can then develop a

more positive view of their identity even if it is not an identity shared by the dominant group. By being confident in one's own self-identity, a healthier and productive school culture can flourish.

One last finding attributed to this study that relates to the intersection between language, identity and culture, has to do with whether or not HL students formally learned their home languages or not. Not surprisingly, only one of the five participants claimed to have formally learned their home language. Furthermore, none of the participants attended after-school style heritage language programs, perhaps denoting their status and popularity, or lack thereof. Zhang (2008) found that after school programs were perceived by parents, as being subpar with regard to overly teacher-centered instructional styles.

### **First Language Loss as it Relates to Second Language Acquisition**

Three of the five participants in this study stated that their first language was English, while the other two participants, claimed to either be simultaneous bilingual or spoke the heritage language before English. These findings contrast the overall perception of heritage language as being far removed from English or lacking it as shown in Palmer's (2011) study about the positive and negative language ideologies presented in school teachers and their perceptions' affect on HL students.

Many people in the dominant language community may wish to paint all HL speakers with the same stroke, however, within this category of students, resides a wide array of language proficiency levels. By working to better understand HL students, a more accurate perception can be fostered in school administrations and classrooms; which, can come in time, to better serve the needs of this diverse population of students, while providing visibility and agency that all students deserve.

**Affects of HL Loss Pertaining to Participation in Institutional and Social Communities**

One major finding pertaining to the participants' perception of their language loss, as it relates to their experiences in various communities; was that all five participants, noted the importance of maintaining their home language. The participants noted the importance of their heritage languages, as way to maintain close family bonds. The participants all seemed to link their home languages as being a vital part, in the continuation of their culture. These sentiments are reflected by the film "*Language Matters*" (2015), where it was noted that when a language dies, the connected culture dies as well, because there is no longer a vehicle, with which, to pass on the unique ways of being associated with the dying language.

In terms of the experiences noted by the participants in school, as relating to teacher perception in American public schools, the results showed that teachers had a lasting effect on the participants' self-image. For example, four of the five participants noted their teachers displayed either indifference or negative attitudes towards them. This led some participants to feeling invisible, which caused them to disengage. While others, like Irena, grew a fearful and distrusting view of the dominant language group. When an invisible wall is built, between teachers and students, a lack of collaboration between both parties is likely to arise, leading some HL students to rely on their peers for assistance, instead of their own teacher. However, teachers are the ones responsible for providing differentiated and accurate instruction to every student (Garza & Crawford, 2005).

**Positive experiences with teachers.** Two of the five participants did recall some positive experiences relating to their public school teachers. The participants' statements, reinstate the undeniable influence that teachers hold over their students; that teachers' views can truly impact students for the rest of their lives. The teachers described by Jay and Lisa, where the kind of

instructors able to help bridge the gap between the home culture and the dominant culture by making the participants feel that their HL status was important and worth sharing.

### **Perceptions on Heritage Language Adaptations**

Three of the five participants did claim to feel comfortable using their home languages. However, all five noted an apprehension about speaking the HL in their individual home countries with native speakers. Every participant, noted fears about being judged for their perceived deficiency in the home language, even if they have yet to experience a negative occurrence as of yet. Three of the five participants: Jay, Irena and Charlotte stated, that people from their same language communities had made negative or belittling remarks about their HL proficiency; in an attempt to shame them. These negative experiences can turn off heritage/home language speakers from interacting with their language community members because it may be easier to distance themselves, than have to deal with the harsh judgment of their peers.

Another important finding pertaining to the changing of the home language, presented in the data of this study, showed that all five participants noted using some form adaptation of the home language. Whether in the form of language blending or code-switching, all five participants felt that it was an important communicative adaptation, that made using the HL viable to them in daily conversation. Kouritzin (1999) noted that HL speakers would be more likely to maintain their home languages if they felt that it could suit their linguistic capabilities; even if it means using a version of the home language that is in some sense corrupted.

When it comes to maintaining a minority language in a linguistically hegemonic environment, blending the dominant and the minority language may be the best way to ensure HL speakers use their language without fear of being ostracized by their HL communities for the

sole reason of not living up to an arbitrarily, idealistic and formal version of the home language. There is no reason why languages cannot coexist, especially when the goal is to communicate effectively.

### **Consequences Experienced by Those Who have Lost their Home Language.**

One striking finding extracted from the data presented in this study, was that all five participants felt that, at some point, they have realized a loss in their heritage language proficiency.

Furthermore, all five participants noted, the various social and economic benefits they could potentially gain, from maintaining the home language. Some of the benefits noted by the participants included: better marketability in job searching, better communication with family members, and travelling opportunities. In fact, three of the of the five participants have noted an active attempt to engage with the home language, mostly for the purposes of travelling to the home country or for their professional endeavors.

In terms of the language that the participants were likely to use with their family, three of the five participants, stated that their language use depended on the particular family member. Also all five participants noted during their interviews, that their family members, namely their parents, were all in favor of the participants' attempts to either maintain or relearn the home language. Most of the participants noted how happy their parents would be if they decided to take up the task, of relearning the HL. There seemed to be an intrinsic pull on the part of the participants, to make their parents proud. Making their parents happy served as on of the major factors that the participants considered, when making the decision to maintain their home language. This sentiment was also noted in Weger-Guntharp's (2006) study, in which it was

found that regardless of age, HL speakers considered the wishes of their parents as an integral factor in their choice to take college courses in their heritage language.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Teachers.**

Based on the findings of this qualitative study, it can be concluded that the practices and perceptions of mainstream school teachers, have an important impact on how their heritage/home language speaking students come to view their own language capabilities and identities.

Teachers should use student-centered methods, that highlight the benefits of their students' bilingualism instead of ignoring that part of their students, because they cannot relate themselves. All students come to school with unique experiences and skills, and being able to make the most of that, should be one the teacher's key objectives. In the field of TESOL, this concept is referred to as Funds of Knowledge and is a practice that can apply to teachers of all subjects.

While singular culture days or festivals are a good place to start, in terms of creating an inclusive environment for HL speaking students, it is not enough. By shaping content to include the history and culture of heritage/home language speaking students; teachers can show their respect for their students and the students' backgrounds. If teachers show respect, especially as figures of power in the school setting, heritage language speaking students are more likely to become engaged in content and have the confidence needed to make academic risks that attribute to discovery making.

An easy way that teachers can involve the home language of the heritage language speaking students can be as simple as letting the HL student read a book or singing a song in the home language to their peers. The positive impact that this can have on the heritage language speaking student cannot be overstated, while also benefitting monolingual students as well.

Another example, could involve lessons relating to core content but using translated materials from the HL students' home country. While this strategy does not involve the use of the actual home language it does set the stage for inclusivity by showing a different narrative to what is always catered to in American schools. All students can come to reflect on their own political and social views and thus become more cognizant members of society.

### **Limitations**

While the researcher was able to interview participants from a wide variety of home language backgrounds; the population size of the participants for this study is too small to make any real generalizations from the findings. For example, a larger population size with a wider variety of HL speakers of different genders could help provide more accurate and profound themes in the data. There is a lack of data pertaining to the pressures faced by female and male HL speakers, that is often times ignored.

Furthermore, interviewing people from more diverse areas of New York may have provided more accurate information about the affect of individual perceptions of American school teachers and their impact on HL students. For example, interviewing a large population of students that either attended: city, suburb or rural schools could have provided important information about the way linguistic hegemony impacts communities with regards to the presence of large or small minority language groups within those communities. For example, knowing if communities with larger minority language groups, actually provide better services for HL students in school would be an important variable worth studying.

### References

- Baker, C., & Jones, S. P. (1998). *Encyclopedia of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Borland, H. (2008). Heritage languages and community identity building: The case of language of lesser status. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*.
- Brown, C. L. (2011). Maintaining heritage language: Perspectives of Korean parents. *Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 31-37. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ986889>
- Choi, E. (2013). Heritage language use among 10th-grade Asian and Hispanic students in the United States. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 15(1-2), 85+.
- Carreira, M. (2004). Seeking explanatory adequacy: A dual approach to understand the term heritage language learner. *Heritage Language Journal*, 2(1), 1-25.
- Carreira, M. & Rodriguez, R. (2011). Filling the void: Community Spanish language programs in Los Angeles serving to preserve the Language.
- Cha, K. & Goldenberg, C. (2015) The complex relationship between home language proficiency and kindergarten children's Spanish and English oral proficiencies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(4).

- Chavarria, K. (2017). Developing transformative space for student resistance: Latina/o students' interruption of subtractive schooling practices. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 11(1)
- Crystal, D. (2002). *Language death*. West Nyack, NY: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Diaz, M. R. (1984). The intellectual power of bilingualism. Southwest Hispanic research Institute.
- Donghui, Z., & Slaughter-Defoe, D. T. (2009). Language attitudes and heritage language maintenance among Chinese immigrant families in the USA. *Language, Culture & Curriculum*, 22(2), 77-93. doi:10.1080/07908310902935940
- Enrique, H. (1989). Retention of heritage through family ritual.
- Fang, J. Y. (2015). "To Cultivate Our Children to Be of East and West": Contesting ethnic heritage language in suburban Chinese schools. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 34(2), 54-82.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters
- Francis, N. (2005). Research findings on early 1<sup>st</sup> language attrition: Implications for the discussion on critical periods in language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 55(3), 491-531.

- Gharibi, K., & Boers, F. (2017). Influential factors in incomplete acquisition and attrition of young heritage speakers' vocabulary knowledge. *Language Acquisition*, 24(1), 52-69. doi:10.1080/10489223.2016.1187613
- Gallo, S., Link, H., Allard, E., Wortham, S., Mortimer, K. (2014). Conflicting ideologies of Mexican immigrant English across levels of schooling. *International Multilingual Research Journal*.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Garza, A. & Crawford, L. (2005). Hegemonic multiculturalism: English immersion ideology and subtractive schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(3).
- Gonzales, M.A. (2015). Abuelita Epistemologies: Counteracting subtractive schools in American education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 14(1), 40-54
- Jeon, M. (2008). Korean heritage language maintenance and language ideology. *Heritage Language Journal*, 6(2), 206-223. Available from <http://www.heritagelanguages.org>
- Hashimoto, K. & Lee, J. S. (2011). Heritage-language literacy practices: Case study of three Japanese American families. *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 34(2), 161-184. doi:10.1080/15235882.2011.597821
- Irish, J. (2014). Linguistic and cultural experiences of female Chinese international graduate students at State University at Fredonia. SUNY Fredonia.
- Keh, M. & Stoessel, S. (2017). How first is first? Revisiting language maintenance and shift and the meaning of L1/L2 in 3 case studies. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 11(2), 101-114

Kiang, L. (2008). Ethnic self-labeling in young American adults from Chinese backgrounds.

*Journal Of Youth & Adolescence*, 37(1), 97-111. doi:10.1007/s10964-007-9219-x

Kim, J. (2011). Korean immigrant mothers' perspectives: The meanings of a Korean heritage

language school for their children's American early schooling experiences. *Early*

*Childhood Education Journal*, 39(2), 133-141. doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0453-1

McKay, S.L., & Wong, S.L.C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and

agency in second-language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students.

*Harvard Educational Review*, 66(3), 577-608.

McGinnis, S. (1996). Teaching Chinese to the Chinese: The development of an assessment and

instructional model. In J.E. Liskin-Gasparro (Ed.), *Patterns and policies: The changing*

*demographics of foreign language instruction* (pp.107-121). Boston: Heinle & Heinle

Kouritzin, S. (1999). Face[t]s of first language loss. Retrieved April 26, 2017, from

<https://read.amazon.com>

LaRotonda, A. (2015) Attitudes of parents and children toward maintaining their heritage

language. SUNY Fredonia.

Lee, J. S., & Oxelson, E. (2006). "It's Not My Job": K-12 teacher attitudes toward students'

heritage language maintenance. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(2), 453-477.

doi:10.1080/15235882.2006.10162885

Lee, B. Y. (2013). Heritage language maintenance and cultural identity formation: the case of

Korean immigrant parents and their children in the USA. *Early Child Development &*

*Care*, 183(11), 1576-1588. doi:10.1080/03004430.2012.741125

Li, X. (1999). How can language minority parents help their children become bilingual in familial context? A case study of a language minority mother and her daughter. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 23(2-3), 211-224. Available from <http://brj.asu.edu/v2323>

Mori, Y., & Calder, T. M. (2015). The role of motivation and learner variables in L1 and L2 vocabulary development in Japanese heritage language speakers in the united states. *Foreign Language Annals*, 48(4), 730-754. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/flan.12159>

Nesteruk, O. (2010). Heritage language maintenance and loss among the children of Eastern European immigrants in the USA. *Journal Of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 31(3), 271-286. doi:10.1080/01434630903582722

Norton, B. (2000). Identity and language: Gender, ethnicity, and educational change. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 9-31.

Palmer, D. (2011) The discourse of transition: Teachers' language ideologies within transitional bilingual education programs

- Schwartz, M. (2008). Exploring the relationship between family language and heritage language knowledge among second generation Russian-Jewish immigrants in Israel. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(5), 400-418.  
doi:10.1080/01434630802147916
- Man Park, S. (2011). The role of ethnic religious community institutions in integrational transmission of Korean among immigrant students in Mortreal. *Language culture and curriculum*
- Ricciardelli, L. A. (1992). Bilingualism and cognitive development in relation to threshold theory. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 21, 301–316. 10.1007/BF01067515
- Shin, S. J. (2010). “What about me? I’m not like Chinese but I’m not like American”: Heritage-language learning and identity of mixed-heritage adults. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 9(3), 203-219. doi:10.1080/15348458.2010.486277
- Smith, A. D. (1989). The origins of nations. In V. P. Pecora (Eds.), *Nations and identities* (pp.333-354). Malden: Blackwell.
- Sneddon, R. (1993). Beyond the national curriculum: A community project to support bilingualism. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development*, 14(3), 237-245
- Suarez, D. (2002). The paradox of linguistic hegemony and the maintenance of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development*, 23(6), 512-530.
- Valdés, G. (2005). *Con respeto: bridging the distances between culturally diverse families and schools: an ethnographic portrait*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Valenzuela, A. (2008). Subtractive Schooling and Betrayal. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 21(4).
- Wiley, T. (2005). The Reemergence of Heritage and Community Language Policy in the U.S. National Spotlight. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(4), 594-601. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588630>
- Weger-Guntharp, H. (2006). Voices from the margin: Developing a profile of Chinese heritage language learners in the FL classroom. *Heritage Language Journal*, 4(1).
- Wong, K. and Xiao, Y. (2010). Diversity and difference: Identity of Chinese heritage language learners from dialect backgrounds.
- Worthy, J., Rodriguez-Galindo, A., Assaf, L., Martinez, L., Cuero, K. (2003). Fifth-grade bilingual students and precursors to subtractive schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 27(2), 275-293
- Yilmaz, T. (2016). The motivational factors of heritage language learning in immigrant bilingualism. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 6(3), 191-200.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2016.V6.642>