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University Students' Experiences in Spanish Heritage Language Programs in the Midwest

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Abstract

Historically, Spanish heritage language (SHL) scholarship has had connections to communities with established Spanish-speaking populations (Rivera-Mills, 2012). Regional SHL course offerings expanded in tandem with increases in Spanish-speaking populations, and little is known about students' experiences in these new and emerging SHL programs. This study investigated the experiences of college students enrolled in SHL courses in the Midwest. Findings suggested a disconnect between the self-reported, sociolinguistic needs of students and the curriculum presented in their SHL classes. For example, some participants believed a link to future careers was missing from the SHL curriculum. Pedagogical implications and future research are discussed.

Keywords*: heritage language learners (HLLs), Spanish, curriculum, student-centered perspectives, phenomenography*

Background

Heritage language learners (HLLs) have "a personal, emotional connection to a language other than English… there is a link to that language that is important" (Webb, 2003). As such, students enrolled in heritage language (HL) courses bring with them a gamut of experiences, skills and knowledge of the HL that is often linked to notions of family, friends, community(ies), identity and culture(s) for these students (García, 2005). This unique connection to the target language (Spanish, in this study) stands in contradistinction to the experiences of traditional second language (L2) learners since these students are often introduced to a L2 via formal classroom instruction. For most L2 students, their journey begins in the classroom where they can develop an appreciation for an L2 that fosters an integrative approach to language learning (Noels, 2001). However, HL students' bilingual trajectory begins at home where the language (e.g., Spanish, French, etc.) functions as a mode of communication among family members. Hence, it seems critical that educators and researchers listen to and document the voices of students enrolled in HL courses as their prior experiences with the language might inform HL curriculum and pedagogy in innovative ways.

Research in the field of HL education is not a new area of research in the United States (U.S.); however, the term *heritage language* and its importance in research, policy and practice only began to gain traction in the 1990s in the U.S. (García, 2005; Hornberger & Wang, 2008) when discussions about school-based language policies

and practices became a part of national discourse. Kondo-Brown (2003) noted there has not been sufficient research on the efficacy of the majority of HL programs at the university-level. Furthermore, as qualitative studies in HL education have not deeply explored the perspectives of students enrolled in HL programs (classes designed for students who were exposed to a HL in the home), researchers have called for an expansion in this area of HL studies in the U.S. (Alarcón, 2010; Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relaño-Pastor, 2009; Ducar, 2008; Valdés, 2001; Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2008).

Moreover, current research has not adequately explored Spanish heritage language (SHL) programs in certain areas of the U.S. (Potowski, 2016). In the fall of 2010, Beaudrie (2012) distributed an online survey with the goal of creating profiles of SHL programs in the U.S. at universities with at least five percent Hispanic/Latinx enrollment. The Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Nebraska, and Wisconsin) had 20 programs which were 37% of the 169 identified SHL programs. Fourteen of the 20 programs in the Midwest were in Illinois, which was one of the ten states with the highest number of SHL programs (Beaudrie, 2012). If you remove Illinois and its 26 universities that met Beaudrie's criteria, the other nine states in the Midwest had six SHL programs across 28 universities. Few studies have focused on college-aged HLLs of Spanish residing in different communities in the Midwest (see exceptions Velázquez, 2015; Velázquez, Garrido, & Millán, 2014). None of the participants in this current study were students in Illinois, while several participants were students at universities that did not offer SHL courses when data from Beaudrie's (2012) study was published. Perspectives from students enrolled in new and emerging SHL programs in the Midwest could provide insight into the regional needs of HLLs of Spanish.

The present study is phenomenographic in nature as it used a second-order approach to research (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 1988; Orgill, 2007). First-order (etic) approaches, by design, focus on the point of view of the researcher, while a second-order, or emic, perspective strives to focus on the participants. For phenomenographic research, this experiential or second-order perspective seeks to "characterize how something is apprehended, thought about, or perceived" (Marton, 1988, p. 181). A second-order approach encourages the study of how a group of people experiences a phenomenon (Orgill, 2007). Thus, the purpose of this study, which was part of a larger research project, was to examine a specific phenomenon: the experiences of bilingual speakers of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging post-secondary SHL classes in the Midwest, an under-researched region in SHL studies.

Literature Review

This research aimed to fill a gap in the literature by examining the lived experiences of bilingual users of Spanish enrolled in post-secondary SHL courses. Specifically, the researcher consulted and included the voices of five students in the Midwest as they represent HLLs of Spanish that have not frequently been included in contributions to the body of knowledge on SHL in the U.S. The perspectives of students enrolled in new and emerging SHL programs in the Midwest, and other similar geographic regions that do not have long-standing Spanish-speaking populations, are of importance as the aforementioned programs are a growing norm in the U.S. (Beaudrie, 2012; Potowski, 2016). These students' self-reported needs could influence SHL curriculum and pedagogy in the participants' institutions and across similar contexts.

Exclusion and Inclusion in Research

Historically, the research dedicated to SHL education has not investigated or accounted for students' perspectives on, evaluations of and experiences in SHL programs. As detailed in this section, the implementation of HL programs tends to privilege course design while making little or no mention of the students enrolled in HL programs and their language needs, backgrounds and individual linguistic profiles. The beneficial and productive ways in which HL students' classroom language development experiences can inform program design (or modification) are often not addressed.

First, Potowski (2002) conducted a questionnaire and focus group-based case study with the goal of understanding the choices 25 Spanish-speaking students made about course selection and their classroom experiences in 100- and 200-level Spanish world language classes. Potowski (2002) noted the emergence of three themes. The first theme described students' negative self-evaluation of their Spanish as most of them had received little to no formal schooling in Spanish (p. 37). The second theme focused on bilingual students' comparisons to their L2 classmates in which the participants recognized advantages and disadvantages associated with being a heritage speaker of Spanish (p. 38). The third theme that emerged labeled teaching assistants as language authorities who taught *proper* Spanish and provided corrective feedback on the bilingual students' work that was deemed problematic (pp. 38-39). The researcher concluded her study with recommendations for Spanish language instructors and departments based on the insight provided by the Spanish-speaking participants.

For her study, Alarcón (2010) used survey research to learn about the "language behaviors and attitudes" (p. 272) as well as backgrounds of five HLLs enrolled in an advanced SHL course. The participants' responses yielded a profile of advanced Spanish-speaking students (p. 278), demonstrated similarities and differences between advanced and lower-level Spanish-speaking bilingual students (pp. 278-80), and provided suggestions for pedagogy for courses designed for Spanish-speaking students (p. 280-81). Alarcón's research provided us with a greater comprehension of the affordances of reaching out to HLLs of Spanish that researchers and educators seek to better understand.

Felix (2009) utilized a phenomenographic approach to investigate participants' lives in the U.S. as a heritage speaker of Spanish; she also delved into participants' experiences in Spanish world language classes (p. 147). Felix (2009) collected data via a questionnaire, and then she conducted focus group interviews (p. 148). The researcher's analysis of the data produced two thematic headings for her question about life in the U.S. as a heritage speaker of Spanish (p. 149) and three thematic headings for her research question concerned with HLLs enrolled in Spanish world language courses (p. 154). Students' reasons for taking Spanish classes were both economic (advancement in the workplace) and personal (reconnect with family and culture) (Felix, 2009, p. 155). In the classroom, HLLs were sometimes viewed as experts in the Spanish language and hence, they become "instructors" in their classes while their literacy needs were ignored (Felix, 2009, p. 161). Some Spanish-speaking students felt empowered by the task of increasing literacy skills in a language with which they were already familiar; other students expressed feelings of shame and inadequacy when confronted with the preconceptions of their instructors and classmates. The

author argued that HLLs' participation in world language classes has the potential to inhibit the expansion of literacy skills in Spanish when they are limited by activities not designed for HLLs (p. 161). Felix (2009) called for more SHL studies that research the regional needs of HLLs of Spanish in order to contribute to the realization of appropriate approaches for the teaching and learning of SHL. Finally, this study of experiential knowledge incorporated voices that, historically, have been ignored. Felix recognized the importance of eliminating mismatches between the goals of an HL program and the goals/needs of the students served by the HL program.

Classes Designed for Heritage Language Learners

The limited research that has investigated Spanish-speaking students' experiences in and their understandings of HL classrooms demonstrates that Spanish-speakers are uniquely positioned in HL classrooms to provide insights about the value, effectiveness and responsiveness of curriculum materials, approaches and practices. Prior research has not adequately accounted for the ways in which bilingual students' experiences in HL courses could inform curriculum and pedagogy in HL programs in the U.S. This section gives attention to Spanish-speaking students enrolled in SHL classes and the pedagogical implications of their experiences in these particular types of courses.

The impetus for Ducar's (2008) study with 150 Spanish-speaking students was her observation of the influential nature of school on language attitudes (p. 416). The results of the study focused on the importance of keeping students' goals in mind when designing curriculum for SHL programs (p. 422); thus, Ducar called for the inclusion of student voices in "the debate surrounding the use and teaching of language in the Spanish heritage language classroom" (p. 425). As such, it is fundamental that the goals of a SHL program align with the goals of its students.

For their case study, Schwarzer and Petrón (2005) interviewed three HLLs of Spanish in order to learn about the reality of these students' study of SHL. Through emergent thematic analysis, the researchers detailed the four themes as expressed by the participants: 1) critique of Spanish classes; 2) self-assessment of their proficiency in Spanish; 3) familial reasons for studying Spanish; and, 4) cultural ties as a motivator for studying Spanish (p. 571). The authors then proposed a framework with the goal of providing an outline of what is possible in a university-level HL course based on students' needs and the researchers' knowledge as language educators (p. 574).

Few studies have explored HLLs' preferences for instructors in their SHL courses. Therefore, Beaudrie (2009) conducted research with 213 students enrolled in a large SHL program in order to determine if "the purported superiority of the native speaker in the language classroom" (p. 95), as reported in prior research, held true for the SHL classroom. The results indicated students prefer that native speakers of Spanish teach their SHL classes (p. 99). However, being a good teacher trumped other defining characteristics of SHL instructors (p. 104). This feedback highlighted the importance of pedagogical training for instructors of all backgrounds (p. 103). Ultimately, by listening to the voices of students enrolled in SHL programs, researchers and educators can gain insight into their classroom experiences with instructors from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, comprehending these experiences can help guide teacher training for instructors of SHL courses.

Leeman, Rabin and Román-Mendoza (2011) documented that "the best educational programs recognize and value students' home identities, building on their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge" (p. 484). Hence, incorporating students' cultural knowledge into the curriculum helps "raise cultural awareness and self-reflection among students" as noted by Beaudrie, Ducar and Relaño-Pastor (2009, p. 166). In their study, Beaudrie et al. (2009) investigated students' understandings of cultural awareness and the impact of instruction on the cultural identity of bilingual speakers of Spanish. The authors found that cultural knowledge (self-cultural, intracultural and inter-cultural) were all taught in the classes surveyed (p. 165). Beaudrie et al. (2009) also noted that students acknowledged the importance of both "big C" and "little C" cultural knowledge. These results led to pedagogical suggestions for the SHL program in which the student-participants were enrolled. The researchers believed the inclusion of student voices was of great importance when deciding on pedagogy for SHL courses (p. 170), which, they stated, can be accomplished by "giving students' voices a forum in which they can be heard" (p. 172).

As the above cited research indicates, the field of SHL has not adequately explored the in-class experience of HLLs in post-secondary settings. Potowski (2002) and Felix (2009) consulted HLLs that had been enrolled in Spanish world language classes, while Alarcón's (2010) research focused on students in a SHL course. All three studies highlighted the ways in which including students' voices can impact language program design; however, there was no detailed discussion of participants' reflections on their classroom-based experiences with Spanish as a HL. The studies summarized in the second half of this literature review all underline the importance of seeking and responding to HLLs' concerns about SHL curriculum. The four research projects were also all conducted in universities in the Southwest, a region with an established Spanish-speaking population that pre-dates the creation of the U.S. The present study aims to expand knowledge in SHL studies that draw on students' reflections on their experience in post-secondary SHL classes. There is lack of understanding of the ways in which SHL curriculum aligns with students' self-reported needs, and this is most prevalent in new and emerging SHL programs in regions with a growing Spanish-speaking population.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of students enrolled in linguistically heterogeneous SHL courses across the Midwest. In this context, students' linguistic repertoires in Spanish can vary greatly. The following research questions shaped the study:

1. What are the different ways in which bilingual speakers of Spanish experience the linguistically diverse Spanish heritage language classroom?
2. How are students' self-reported language development needs addressed in their SHL classes?

Methods

Participants and Research Site

Participants in this study were five HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new or recently established college-level SHL courses in the Midwest. The participants' post-secondary institutions all offered no more than two SHL courses. This figure is the norm of newer programs nationwide (Beaudrie, 2012), and these programs tend to serve students with linguistically heterogenous backgrounds (Beaudrie, 2012; Ducar, 2008; Stafford, 2013). As previously mentioned, none of the participants were students in the state of Illinois, the Midwestern outlier in Beaudrie's (2012) study that profiled SHL programs in the U.S. The student body at the participants' universities had a Hispanic/Latinx population between six and 12 percent. At least three of the universities represented in the current study did not have SHL classes when Beaudrie (2012) collected data in the fall of 2010. Table 1 provides profiles of the participants (all names are pseudonyms):

Table 1

Participants' Backgrounds

Name	Major	SHL Variety	Year
Ana	Undecided/Business	Argentine	Freshman
Bianca	Criminal Justice	Mexican	Junior
Lupe	Psychology	Southern Mexican	Senior
Rosa	Physiology	U.S. Mexican	Sophomore
Sara	Criminal Justice	Mexican	Sophomore

Participants self-reported their SHL variety in the online questionnaire where they responded to demographic questions, or they commented on their HL during their interview. Lupe, for example, when describing the linguistic diversity present in her SHL class said: "There were some people whose parents were from northern Mexico, and they speak Spanish differently than we do in southern Mexico." The SHL varieties of participants were also linked to the racial/ethnic group with which they identified. This study did not specifically explore participants' identities nor affiliations with a particular variety of Spanish; however, future research on classroom-based experiences of HLLs could examine this area of interest.

Procedures and Data Collection

The five participants had previously responded to an online questionnaire as part of a larger study during which they indicated their willingness to be interviewed. The researcher contacted participants via email to schedule semi-structured one-on-one interviews that were, following the IRB requirement, mediated through a secure online meeting space that allowed for the audio recording of each interview. Participants' names and places of study were anonymized during the data collection process, and the audio recordings were saved on a secure server. Interviews lasted 50-90 minutes.

An analysis of responses to the previously mentioned open-ended questionnaire aided in the generation of eight themes (see Appendix A) that were explored during the semi-structured one-on-one interviews. This study used phenomenographic interviewing that encouraged the participants to produce "rich, evocative, metaphoric accounts" (Cousin, 2009, p. 194) that captured their experience of a phenomenon, the linguistically diverse SHL classroom in the Midwest. In accordance with phenomenographic modes of research, personal interviews allowed participants to verbalize their experience so that outsiders (researchers, educators) could gain access to the life-worlds of the participants (Felix, 2009). The interviews between the investigator and the participants were dialogic in nature (Bowden, 2000) that established a "conversational partnership" (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000, p. 302) in which the interviewer encouraged the participant to reflect on her/his experience with the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began at the conclusion of an interview. During each interview, the researcher took notes and audio recorded the interviews. The audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher with the goal of becoming thoroughly familiar with the data by listening to the interviews multiple times while transcribing. The researcher identified emergent themes in the data both within and across interviews through memo writing (Maxwell, 2005), note taking, and reflecting on participants' similar and dissimilar experiences in their SHL classes. As an aim of phenomenography is to yield an account of reality as described by a group of people (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 1988; Prosser, 2000), data analysis sought to treat the data set (the five interviews) as one unified depiction of the SHL classroom space as experienced by HLLs of Spanish in a post-secondary setting. The participants' collective understanding provided insight into what students experience in the SHL classroom in a particular context.

The findings represented an outcome space that was comprised of related categories of description (Marton & Pang, 2008). The categories of description conveyed "a distinctively different way of experiencing or seeing the phenomenon," (Marton & Pang, 2008, p. 536) and these descriptions were based on a second-order approach to qualitative research that regards participants' accounts of their lived experiences with and understandings of a particular phenomenon as the central source of data. Thus, an inductive approach to data analysis was employed that afforded the researcher an investigative lens that aimed to give primacy to the views of the participants instead of the interpretations of the researcher.

As mentioned earlier, second-order research focuses on the ways in which a group experiences a phenomenon (Orgill, 2007); however, the research process cannot occur in a vacuum. The researcher's understanding of the data is inevitably influenced by prior experiences and knowledge of the topic. Hence, a combination of etic (outsider) and emic (insider) knowledge can yield a better account of the data collected (Duff, 2002; Heath & Street, 2008). Schweber (2006) provides a comprehensive commentary on the contextualized nature of insider/outsider status and the implications of such a status for qualitative research.

The researcher is a L2 learner of Spanish who first became interested in Spanish as a HL while teaching Spanish for the first time as a graduate student at a large research university in the South. Teaching 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-generation HLLs of Spanish in traditional L2 classes helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic needs of a heterogeneous population of students, and the ways in which these needs were (not) being met in class. Furthermore, several of the researcher's fellow teaching assistants were HLLs of Spanish who graciously shared their bilingual/bicultural experiences during formal and informal interactions. These professional and personal experiences contributed to the researcher's interest in the field of Heritage Language Education. Moreover, these experiences have shaped the researcher's perspectives on Spanish as a HL in the U.S.

Findings

(Dis)connections

Data from the semi-structured interviews revealed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections that highlighted the ways in which participants' needs are/are not met in their SHL courses. This outcome space consisted of three categories of description: 1) the positioning of Spanish as a key to success, 2) the importance of learning grammar, and 3) the teaching of the four language domains (Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading). For each category of description, summaries of interviewees' responses are followed by an analysis.

Spanish: A requirement for success

> Ana
> I think I took it because I felt that I may potentially go for a minor in a language since it would probably be useful to be able to have proof of being bilingual on a résumé and in my future career…. Its focus was business focused, to ensure you could use it in the workforce.
>
> Bianca
> I was losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class to kinda perfect it and get back the grammar skills that I needed to get better at it….
>
> Lupe
> I graduate this spring, and I needed to finish my foreign language credits. I wanted to take American Sign Language…. I tested out of a bunch of Spanish classes, and they told me to enroll in this one. I think it was the first time it was offered…. Now, I could see myself pursing that [Spanish] more than the psychology major…. I would really like to find a way to put them two of them together.
>
> Rosa
> Well, the first reason [why I decided to enroll in this course] was to start a minor in Spanish. The second reason was just to see how much practice I would need to actually get a job in the real world working, showing that I'm, you know, proficiently bilingual on a résumé.

> Sara
> My first reason [for taking this class] is that my major had a foreign language requirement, and I knew that I would probably just want to take a Spanish class. My advisor told me they were offering this new class, so I told her it would be interesting because I speak Spanish and the class was supposed to be specifically for Spanish speakers, so I decided to sign up for it.

When asked to explain their reasons for enrolling in a SHL course, the participants answered with similar responses. At the time of the interview, Ana had not officially declared a major. However, she stated that she was interested in pursuing a business degree with a possible focus on finance. Ana was considering a minor in Spanish while enrolled in her SHL course as "it would probably be useful… to have proof of being bilingual on a résumé." Ana also indicated an interest in working abroad and working with people; therefore, she thought Spanish could be of relevance for a future career.

Like Ana, Bianca was considering a minor in Spanish. Bianca, a criminal justice major, had already fulfilled her university's language requirement by taking two French classes. Bianca expressed "I kinda grew up speaking the language, and over the years I lost it…. I only spoke English, so I was kinda losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class…." During the interview, Bianca mentioned that she wanted to perfect her Spanish and recoup grammatical skills that she had lost.

Lupe, a psychology major, enrolled in her SHL course because "I graduate this spring, and I needed to finish my foreign language credits." Lupe took a placement test that allowed her to receive retroactive credits for less advanced Spanish courses, which qualified her for a minor in Spanish. Lupe's advisor suggested that she begin her study of Spanish in the SHL course (Spanish for Heritage Speakers: Grammar and Composition) which was being offered for the first time. While taking the SHL course, Lupe learned about the department's Certificate in Translating and Interpreting. Lupe decided to pursue this certificate as she only needed to take two more classes to earn the certificate and doing so would still allow her to graduate next semester.

Rosa was a physiology major with a minor in Spanish for the health sciences. Her SHL class was a literary analysis course that allowed Rosa to begin meeting the requirements for the minor in Spanish. Rosa had taken Spanish in high school, and she recalled not being required to speak in Spanish often. Rosa also wanted to determine how much practice she needed to "get a job in the real world." Rosa wanted her SHL class, and ultimately the minor in Spanish, to serve as proof of proficiency in Spanish on her résumé. Like Ana, Rosa wanted to formally document her bilingualism.

Sara was a criminal justice major which is an area of study that "[had] a foreign language requirement" at her university. Sara was interested in taking a Spanish class, and her advisor suggested that she take the SHL course (Spanish Grammar for Heritage Language Learners) that was being offered for the first time. Sara was interested in taking the SHL class because it was designed for speakers of Spanish.

We need to know grammar

Ana

The class was just more for people who already knew the language, and it focused more on the needs of someone who is actually bilingual. Like, it focused on how to use accents which is something that I've always struggled with, and apparently, I wasn't the only one.

Bianca

One of the main reasons [for taking the SHL class] was that it was for heritage speakers. I kinda grew up speaking the language, and over the years, I lost it in middle school and high school. It [the school system] was monolingual. I only spoke English so, I was losing how to speak the language, my original language, so I kinda wanted to take advantage of the class to kinda perfect it and get back the grammar skills that I needed to get better at it…. The class did help me a lot with my grammar, with my writing skills, my oral skills in the language, so there was a lot that I learned. There were many things that I wasn't aware of before about the language which now I know, and it really helped me a lot actually…. The grammar was really important. It was really difficult sometimes because some rules can get confusing. I know there are a lot of rules that kind of make it tricky and just complex for us to remember. I would ask her about either writing certain words or putting an accent on certain words. I would definitely raise my hand in the middle of class and just ask her and she would fully explain the rules of it, how it works.

Lupe

I thought that it [the SHL class] would really focus on like grammar and pretty much grammar. That was all that I really thought I would get out of it. I didn't really know what to expect because I'd never heard of a Spanish heritage speakers class before. The name of the class was Spanish for Heritage Speakers: Grammar and Composition, so that's pretty much what you expect it to have. The main focus was definitely composition and grammar. [The professor] focused on things like accent marks…. I can hear these accents, and I can hear, you know, the meaning, but not the rules behind it. The teacher was obviously teaching us that…. I didn't even know that I could hear the tonic accent. But I didn't know the rules at all.

Rosa

Accents. We spent so long on accents that I feel like at the end we were more rushed to learn about the subjunctive and all types of verb conjugations. We could have spent a little bit more time on that…. We just spent a lot of time on accents. …this class taught me a lot…. I think [the professor] just taught me everything over again because previous Spanish classes didn't make sure that I was understanding everything…. Especially verb conjugations and stuff like that. She made sure that like we understood that to the best of our abilities.

> Sara
> I was pretty sure that they would teach grammar and just things that I didn't learn at home. So, I don't know how to write with accent marks and all that. I was expecting that they would focus a lot on that because as a heritage speaker, I assume a lot of other students don't learn that at home…. Yes, I can recall most of our quizzes always had something to do with grammar, and the terms they use like the *pretérito* and using the accent marks. She always had that on the quizzes…. For the curriculum, I would definitely keep the teaching of [and] focusing on the grammar and the accent marks.…

As further evidence of (dis)connections in the outcome space, this data illustrated that participants' course expectations often predicted the study of grammar. Participants mentioned key words such as grammar, rules, accents, and verb conjugations that support an approach to SHL instruction that gives preference to the teaching of grammar. Teaching grammar and raising metalinguistic awareness are not intrinsically inappropriate practices for the SHL classroom (Fairclough, 2005). However, based on participants' perceptions of their SHL classes, it is valid to question the ways in which these features of the language are handled in the linguistically heterogenous SHL classes represented in this study.

When asked what they expected to study in their SHL classes, both Sara and Lupe began their responses by mentioning grammar. For example, Sara anticipated that her professor would teach grammar "and just things that I didn't learn at home." Lupe even pointed out that name of her SHL course contained the word "grammar." The rules of grammar were "difficult," "confusing," and "tricky" for Bianca. Furthermore, all five participants mentioned the study and use of written diacritics as a topic in their SHL courses. Written accent marks were viewed as problematic for most of the participants. Ana shared that she had always struggled with the use of written accent marks, while Lupe noted that she did not know the rules that govern the placement of written accent marks. Sara's in-class assessments tested students' knowledge of written accent marks. Rosa, like the other participants, discussed accent marks; however, she felt that her SHL class dedicated too much time to this topic. Thus, students, according to Rosa, were not able to practice other aspects of the language such as learning about the subjunctive mood.

An imbalanced representation of the four language domains

Speaking

> Ana
> The majority of what we did for speaking was in the class in Spanish: the conversations we would have would all be in Spanish…. It was more of just a matter of practice rather than specific tasks. You had one oral presentation which we had to do in a group, but aside from that, it was mostly just in-class practice.

> Bianca
> I personally went out of my way to ask the professor about certain things because I know that my speaking skills and writing skills aren't

as perfect as when compared to the professor. We gave presentations…. We did talk about different things from Hispanic culture.

Lupe
Well, we could only speak in Spanish in our class. If [the professor] heard us speaking in English, she'd say 'Spanish only please.' Because we would start working in groups, and then we would get really comfortable with each other and then just switch to English out of habit. We would speak in Spanish, and she would ask us 'Do you think this sounds right?' She would tell us 'You know that's actually not right. So, this is how we conjugate it' and then we would all practice that together. Also, I think providing those services in the classroom everybody had to speak in Spanish there to the teachers and the students.

Rosa
We had a presentation. I had to be 10 minutes total, five minutes per person. It was a partner presentation. [The presentation] wasn't as much of a challenge as I thought it would be in the beginning of the semester when I looked at the syllabus. It was still kind of a challenge because I wasn't super comfortable with speaking for long periods of time in front of the whole class…in Spanish.

Sara
I don't think we really focused much on speaking except for the fact that we were only allowed to speak Spanish in class. Um, [the professor] kind of explained how we're taught at home to pronounce certain words but grammatically it's incorrect but, I don't, from what I recall, we really did not spend that much time on the speaking aspect of Spanish.

Writing

Ana
Once a week we would have to write a short maybe one-page essay. Throughout the semester we had three large essays about four pages that were basically just extended versions of the short ones. The essays were just good practice to see if I could hold up on the writing portion which is definitely a good way of measuring.

Bianca
[The class] did help me a lot with my grammar, with my writing skills, my oral skills in the language… I would ask her about either writing certain words or putting an accent on certain words.

Lupe
I learned a lot…. I wish I could have had more time to develop [my writing in Spanish] instead of starting now. [The professor] would take sentences from things that we had written. [The anonymous] examples from people in the classroom were things that weren't necessarily written correctly or the right word wasn't used or the right

conjugation wasn't used. I didn't see that so much as negative. I saw that as a positive because she always built on it. She wouldn't necessarily say 'No that's wrong.' [Instead,] she would ask 'What's a better way to say this?' So, I guess that I wasn't calling it a negative and I always saw that as her building on what we already know.… I mean she called [some of the writing assignments] 'tickets in or out the door.' It wasn't every single class that she would assign those writing prompts. It would be probably like every other class sometimes, and sometimes she would go two weeks without doing one. We also had papers due every three weeks almost. So, there was constantly material to write. I think she really, at the end of the semester, wanted us to write another paper. But I think she realized that maybe she had assigned too many and canceled that last one.

Rosa

We wrote essays and our homework: we would answer questions. We would read a story out of the book, and then we'd have reading comprehension questions. The most challenging one was probably the in-class essay because you had to do your pre-writing before class, but you couldn't bring a really solid essay. You had to bring a little outline… so you didn't get to use all the tools you needed like a dictionary or Google Translate [when writing in class]. You didn't have that so, that one was probably the most challenging one for me.

Sara

Writing was very big in the class. We had five or six papers that we had to write completely in Spanish on varying topics. They were all three- to five-pages long. We always did writing exercises in class, or our homework [focused on] writing. [The professor] would take out some of the stuff from our papers that we turned in and use them as examples on quizzes, or we would go over it in class and she would help us correct that.

Listening

Ana

The professor would occasionally play some audio…in either English or Spanish. We had to shorthand what the recording was saying in the other language to practice…switching between languages. I thought [that activity] was interesting. I didn't have many problems with it since that's how I speak with a lot of my family. I thought it was a very clever way of testing that sort of knowledge.

Bianca

Um, let me think, there weren't really activities that would help us um... Well, yeah, we would actually hear some audio. I remember this one specific audio we listened to.… This poet recited one of his poems in Spanish. So that helped a lot. I think he was Cuban, and we were mostly Mexican, but it did actually help us with understanding more.

It gave us a better sense of it. I think that was the main listening activity that we did. Other than that, we would learn from her, the professor. [Because] she was from *País* (the professor's home country), she kind of had a little [bit of an] accent, but it still helped us because she is perfect in that way. Fluent in the language, I should say. We would actually learn from her, just by listening to her speak every day. And then it would help us.

Lupe
I think in terms of listening, I guess listening to [the professor] and listening to everybody else in class…. I think the biggest one would be that interview. Then the transcribing of that. I had to listen to the words and make sure I transcribed them correctly and got the right word for the right meaning. And just having to listen to it, that was pretty big. That was a lot. [The professor] played a three-minute news clip once. I can't think of something else that involved our listening skills, aside from just general instruction.

Rosa
We listened to TED talks, and we watched a couple of videos on the disappearances in South America and stuff like that. Then after we listened, we would have quizzes on what we listened to. [The professor] checked our comprehension there.

Sara
I think the big assignment that we had for listening was the interview…. We had to actually forward that interview and turn it into [the professor]. And we also had to do the transcript, and we had to write exactly what we heard, how we heard [the interviewee] speaking and how we heard ourselves speaking in Spanish and kind of explain why we think [the interviewee] spoke that way.

Reading

Ana
About once a week, as a class, we would read aloud something from the textbook. The textbook contained a bunch of short writings and snippets from books or essays. Sometimes after reading, there would be snippets that we would discuss in class because we would later have to write something on what we read…but that was about it.

Bianca
Reading. [The professor] actually helped us improve a lot. I know there were many, many readings that were assigned to us which were kind of lengthy too but [it] was nice because we were able to practice [reading]. We had some for homework, but then during class time we would also have some readings to go over, to hear one another pronouncing each word so we can learn from it and then any error we would make the professor corrected it on the spot saying: 'You

know this is how you pronounce it' or 'This isn't how you pronounce it.' Little things like that would help us. We would actually talk about some of the readings…they were either poems or a biography about an author….

Lupe
We read a lot, but the main focus was definitely composition and grammar. [The professor] would assign articles, and we would have to read something for each class: it met twice a week. There's also a class that I took this semester called 'Advanced Spanish Literature.' I focused more on reading skills in that class than I did in this one, but that class isn't for heritage speakers.

Rosa
[The professor] liked a lot of poetry. We did read a lot of poems and short stories. One of the topics that I liked was a short story about Africanism, Afro-Latino people. That's not a topic that you see usually in Spanish classes. [The reading assignments] weren't just boring poems. They have meaning. I felt like she cares a lot for this course.

Sara
From the textbook, [the professor] would assign some of the readings, and we would just have to answer comprehensive questions. I think most of our reading assignments came from the textbook or she would post some outside sources on our course website, and we would have to read and discuss it in class. Most of the readings never showed up on the quiz because the quizzes [tested] grammar. Our homework assignments were based on the readings, and we got points for discussion in class, but [the readings] were never on the quiz.

Table 2

Perceived Priorities of SHL Class

Name	Speaking	Writing	Listening	Reading
Ana	—	+	—	—
Bianca	+	+	—	+
Lupe	+	+	+	—
Rosa	—	+	—	+
Sara	—	+	+	—

Key: + higher priority / — lower priority

As the participants' perspectives indicated, their SHL classes featured an imbalance in the treatment of the four language domains (see Table 2). It is clear from the participants' observations of and reflections on their experience in a SHL class that writing was heavily favored as the language domain that was most frequently practiced and assessed. Research has shown that writing in the HL is a skill that requires attention in the SHL classroom (Acevedo, 2003; Colombi, 2000; Villa, 2004).

Nonetheless, the other three language domains should not be shortchanged as the acquisition of academic Spanish, a frequent goal of SHL programs (Acevedo, 2003) "is a lengthy process… that will extend over several semesters" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 137). As described earlier, the participants' SHL classes were part of a one- or two-semester HL sequence. Some of the participants are pursuing or considering a minor in Spanish and therefore, they will have opportunities to continue expanding their competency in the four language domains. Students who do not match this profile are, subsequently, being exposed to extensive practice in just one or two language domains.

Starting with Ana, the honing of speaking skills primarily revolved around the speaking that occurred during class as their conversations were entirely in Spanish. They had to use the language regularly: "it was a matter of practice rather than specific tasks." Ana had to give one presentation in a small group during the semester. In essence, speaking in Spanish was a byproduct of enrollment in a SHL class. Ana did not seem to place much value on what students produced orally in class. Initially, she linked writing to explicit grammar instruction: "About once a week we would have a worksheet that had a bunch of instructions on a specific thing, like how to use the subjunctive. It specifically focused on how to use one aspect of the language and then we would practice it." Ana liked the worksheets because they "laid out a step-by-step way on how to use certain things." She often referred to these worksheets during the semester when completing writing assignments for the course. Later, Ana talked about how the students had to write a one-page essay once a week in Spanish. During the semester, she wrote three large essays that were about four pages long. Ana considered the essays good practice that allowed her to determine her ability to write completely in Spanish, yet practicing speaking in Spanish was perceived to be less valuable.

One or two times during the semester, Ana's professor played an audio file in either English or Spanish. Students were required to create a shorthand summary of what was said in the other language. For Ana, this activity provided the class with practice switching between two languages. This listening activity was "interesting" to Ana, and she did not find it difficult because "that's how I speak with a lot of my family." Ana, however, thought it was a good way to test this particular area of proficiency. To practice reading, students would read aloud a passage from the textbook about once a week, and the level of difficulty increased as the semester progressed. Sometimes Ana's class would discuss the post-reading questions from the textbook as a class because they were sometimes required to write "something based on what we read."

Bianca began her reflection on the language domains by sharing that her speaking and writing skills were not as perfect as the professor's, therefore, she "personally went out of her way to ask the professor about certain things." Bianca's questions focused on grammar (how to spell a word, where to use an accent mark). Bianca said that she and her classmates were comfortable with raising their hand during class and asking the professor for an explanation of a particular rule. The professor would answer, and this was helpful to everyone according to Bianca. This participant's feedback on the speaking domain was limited; however, Bianca did remember classmates presenting on muralism and how this art form demonstrated "how Hispanics express themselves through art throughout a city." When talking about writing, Bianca, like Ana, made a connection to grammar and knowing grammar rules: "The grammar was really important [for writing]. It was really difficult sometimes

because some rules can get confusing." Bianca also spoke about complex rules and having to remember them.

At first, Bianca recalled that her class listened to a few audio files during the semester. Once, they listened to an audio file of a poet recite one of his poems in Spanish. This activity was helpful to Bianca as the poet was Cuban, and "we were mostly Mexican," and this difference pushed students to practice their listening skills. Bianca believed that most of their practice came from listening to the professor who was from País. Bianca noted that "she had a little [bit of an] accent, but it still helped us because she is perfect in that way. Fluent in the language…." Bianca proposed that the class still benefited from listening to the professor (despite her accent) as listening to the her speak was viewed as a form of learning for Bianca.

Bianca believed her professor helped the class improve their ability to read in Spanish. For Bianca, some of the readings were lengthy; however, she considered this a positive as it provided the class with practice. Most assigned reading was done for homework; however, they read out loud during class sometimes "to hear one another pronouncing each word so we can learn from it and any error we would make, the professor would correct it on the spot, saying: 'You know this is how you pronounce it' or 'This isn't how you pronounce it.'" This feedback was perceived as "little things like that would help us." Bianca claimed that she and her classmates "were comfortable with it; we were comfortable enough to make those mistakes because we knew we would learn and that it would help us eventually." As a class, they discussed reading assignments (poetry, for example) and "videos of different aspects of culture." Some of the different themes that the class read about and discussed were "immigration, police brutality and things like that make us who we are," and we explored "what our stories tell." These textual and visual readings allowed Bianca's class to expand their focus beyond "grammar and oral skills." Thus, they were able to discuss the culture(s) of speakers of Spanish in the U.S.

Lupe spoke at length about the requirement to only speak in Spanish in her HL class. The professor would remind students of this rule if she heard them speaking in English "because we would start working in groups, and then we would get really comfortable with each other and then just switch to English out of habit." Lupe also described the type of feedback provided when students were speaking with one another during pair/group work: "We would speak in Spanish, and she would ask us 'Do you think this sounds right?' '*Haiga*,' words like that, that are kind of nonsense words. She would tell us 'You know that's actually not right. So, this is how we conjugate it' and then we would all practice that together." Here, this classroom practice was an example of an innovative way of focusing students' attention on academic varieties of Spanish without delving into explicit grammar instruction. This approach could also be used as a way to teach language functions that correspond to certain contexts (i.e., professional). Hence, SHL pedagogy would respond to student-reported needs and help diminish current trends of (dis)connections. Lupe also believed that providing services in Spanish in a local school was a great way to practice speaking Spanish: "Everybody had to speak in Spanish there to the teachers and the students." Some of her classmates did more than the 10 hours of service-learning required for the course: "a lot of people really enjoyed that aspect of it [the class]," and someone even did 30 hours.

Lupe began her reflection on writing by quantifying her classroom experience: "I learned a lot." Lupe's professor would anonymize students' work and then share examples of "things that weren't necessarily written correctly or the right word wasn't used or the right conjugation wasn't used." For Lupe, this approach was viewed positively "because she always built on it." Instead of describing students' language as "wrong," the professor would ask "What's a better way to say this?" Lupe reiterated that her professor's approach to analyzing writing built on what she and her classmates already knew in their HL. Writing prompts were used as "tickets in or out the door" and students turned in formal papers approximately every three weeks. Ultimately, Lupe liked the amount of writing she completed in her SHL course because she felt that she learned best by writing. However, Lupe recounted "I don't know if others in my class felt the same. I heard a lot of moaning and groaning about how much writing we had to do [laughing]."

Lupe identified listening to the professor and her classmates as sources for practicing listening skills in Spanish in her HL class. For Lupe, the interview assignment was the most important task that tested and advanced her listening skills. While transcribing, Lupe had to "listen to the words and make sure I transcribed them correctly and got the right word for the right meaning." No films were shown in Lupe's class; however, the professor did show a three-minute news clip once. Lupe recalled reading "a lot," but in her reflection on reading, she circled back to the primary focus of her SHL class: composition and grammar. When her professor gave reading assignments, articles, for example, she would give students a list of words "she knew we wouldn't know." Lupe and her classmates were then required to define the list of words based on their understanding of the reading assignment. Interestingly, Lupe was also enrolled in "Advanced Spanish Literature" at the time of the interview. She stated that the literature class "focused more on reading skills" than her SHL class. Lupe seemed to have compartmentalized what was appropriate as an area of study in different language courses. In this vein, the SHL class was not the best context for expanding one's reading proficiency in the HL.

When the semester began, Rosa observed that she would have to give a presentation at the end of the semester in her SHL course. Students worked in pairs to present for 10 minutes. Rosa realized the presentation "wasn't as much of a challenge as I thought it would be." However, "it was still kind of a challenge because I wasn't super comfortable with speaking for long periods of time in front of the whole class…in Spanish." For Rosa, the most difficult writing assignment was an in-class essay. Students were required to complete a pre-writing exercise at home that they could then bring to class; however, they were not allowed to bring a "really solid essay" to class on the day of the in-class writing assignment. They could bring their outline, but "you didn't get to use all the tools you needed like a dictionary or Google Translate [when writing in class]."

Rosa's class listened to TED talks and watched a few videos on topics such as "the disappearances in South America." After these interpretive activities, the professor gave the students a listening comprehension quiz. The reading assignments (often poems and short stories) focused on topics that Rosa found to be of relevance. For example, the class read a short story "about Africanism, Afro-Latino people" and Rosa enjoyed the short story as "that's not a topic that you see usually in Spanish

classes." The poetry that Rosa read was deemed to be interesting as the poems "have meaning." Rosa linked the reading selections to her perception that the professor cared about students' learning and their success in the SHL course: "she wanted us to do very well, but at the same time learn."

Finally, Sara could not recall specific instances in which her class honed their speaking skills. She did, however, point out that they "were only allowed to speak Spanish in class." Also, her professor explained that "how we're taught at home to pronounce certain words [is] grammatically incorrect." As a reminder, this research did not include classroom observations nor interviews with course instructors, and therefore, the researcher cannot confirm or deny what a professor did/did not say to students. However, it is crucial that researchers give full consideration to students' perceptions of what instructors do and say in the HL classroom as educators' words and actions can have an impact on students' views of their HL. Like Ana, Bianca, and Lupe, advancing one's speaking proficiency in the HL was seen as incidental to Sara. She did not hold in high esteem speaking in Spanish in class even though she, and other participants, discussed, at later points in their interviews, the benefits of having been enrolled in a SHL course. These benefits included, for some, being more comfortable with speaking in Spanish for extended periods of time. Ultimately, the onus is on educators to make clear the role of oral communication so that learners perceive, at the start of their language study, the pedagogical relevance of speaking in the HL in class, which should be supplemented by assignments that necessitate students' use of oral language in the local community.

Sara asserted that writing was an important element of her SHL course. The students wrote five-six papers in Spanish. The topics varied, and the length of each paper ranged from three-five pages each. This example was another imbalance among the four language domains in Sara's SHL class. Writing, as recounted by other participants too, was given precedence in the SHL curriculum. Sara also completed some writing exercises in class, and her homework was tied to building/increasing proficiency in writing. The professor would use anonymized excerpts from students' papers as examples on quizzes, or they worked in small groups to correct the mistakes. Sara correlated her interview project with listening practice as students "had to do the transcript, and we had to write exactly what we heard, how we heard [the interviewee] speaking and how we heard ourselves speaking in Spanish and kind of explain why we think [the interviewee] spoke that way." Like Lupe, Sara focused on the iterative process of transcription as a form of advancing one's interpretive competency in the HL.

In Sara's class, the professor assigned readings from the textbook, or she posted assignments to the course website. Students answered comprehension questions, and then discussed the readings in class. Sara shared that "most of the readings never showed up on the quiz because the quizzes [tested] grammar. Our homework assignments were based on the readings, and we got points for discussion in class, but [the readings] were never on the quiz." This stance points to a disconnect between Sara's expectations and her professor's use of reading materials. Sara seemed to discount the importance of reading activities as she was not assessed, in a traditional sense, on the content of what she read.

As a reminder, the data in this phenomenographic study revealed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections to participants' needs. Table 3 (below) summarizes the key findings for the three categories of description (COD) in the outcome space which were: *Spanish: A requirement for success* (COD 1), *We need to know grammar* (COD 2), and *An imbalanced representation of the four language domains* (COD 3).

Table 3

Key Findings

	COD 1	COD 2	COD 3
Connections	Participants wanted formal recognition of bilingualism for future careers (e.g., minor in Spanish).	Curriculum addressed HLLs' linguistic insecurities (e.g., using diacritics).	Curriculum addressed a documented concern of HLLs: Writing in the HL.
Disconnections	Curriculum had few links to the use of the HL in professional settings.	Emphasis on form, not function that promoted a deficit framing of the HL (a focus on what students do not know).	Imbalanced treatment of the other three language domains (especially Reading, another documented area of concern).

Discussion

Spanish: A requirement for success

The concept of requirement thus shaped participants' reasons for enrolling in a SHL course, whether it be a requirement for success at the university or a requirement for success in a future career. Indeed, Carreira and Kagan's (2011) analysis of the National Heritage Language Resource Center's (NHLRC) national heritage language survey identified professional reasons and fulfilling a language requirement as two of the top four motivators that encouraged students to study their heritage language. According to the NHLRC survey, the other top two motivators for studying a HL were exploring linguistic and cultural roots and communicating with family and friends in the U.S. (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). In this study, to be sure, the five interviewees expressed extrinsic motivations for studying Spanish. Participants' responses concentrated on the potential career benefits of studying Spanish and being able to use it in a professional setting, and the "proving" of such ability, associated with taking a SHL class and obtaining a minor or other type of credential (i.e. a certificate) in the language. This trend mirrored the results of the Spanish-speaking sub-group of HLLs in the NHLRC survey as 71.1% of the respondents indicated that "they were studying their HL with a future career or job in mind" (Carreira & Kagan, 2011, p. 51). This professional motivation outranked personal goals for studying one's HL.

Second language learners who enroll in a language course as true beginners are not likely to do so for professional reasons as the completion of a beginning two- or three-semester language sequence is minimally meaningful for a résumé, as students at this stage in language acquisition have not gained a high level of communicative competency. However, both L2 learners and HLLs can enroll in language courses in order to meet a language requirement. The clear difference between these two groups is that HLLs have a familial connection to the language that has influenced their prior exposure to and use of the heritage language. In this study, motivations for enrolling in the SHL course were quite similar among the participants. These factors provided a clearer understanding of why students enrolled in SHL courses. As such, it is important that educators keep in mind that the active use of Spanish ranked highly in what students wanted to get out of their SHL class. The burden is on us to help students comprehend that their SHL course will be much more than just meeting a requirement. More immediate ties to professional uses of the HL can help counter the current disconnection identified by participants.

We need to know grammar

As some of the participants revealed, and as seen is previous research (Carreira & Kagan, 2011), professional reasons are a strong motivation for Spanish-speakers who decide study their HL. The data in this category of description uncovered a division between the sociolinguistic needs of the participants and the curriculum presented in their SHL courses. Practicing grammar and increasing HLLs' metalinguistic knowledge can be a gateway that leads to a deeper understanding of the HL. A privileging of student-centered perceptions calls for a reorientation of the teaching of grammar in SHL classes that are similar to the ones represented in this research. Approaches to second language instruction place function, and not form, at the center of language teaching and learning (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). HL instruction can, and should, do the same. Sara, for example, appreciated a focus on grammar in her SHL course. Overall, however, a grammar and rules-based SHL curriculum does not align with the participants' current and future uses of the Spanish language. Developing deep metalinguistic knowledge, of course, can be beneficial to future language educators. That said, it is difficult to imagine a situation in which a student majoring in physiology or criminal justice, like some of the participants in this study, will need to explain, in detail, a specific grammatical structure present in the Spanish language.

Thus, SHL pedagogy should reorient the foci of SHL courses as knowing grammar in and of itself does not convey what students can do with their HLs. Applying the National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSFL)-American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Can-Do Statements (2017) to HL instructional contexts seems appropriate as these statements frame interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication in terms of what students can do with a language. The Can-Do Statements (2017) also describe learners' intercultural communication competencies which is of particular relevance for HLLs' in-class explorations of the culture(s) represented by their HL. Moreover, a focus on grammar also serves as a reminder of what HLLs "lack" in their use of the HL in specific contexts. As Burgo (2015) signaled, educators need to know their bilingual students and "not confuse a lack of metalinguistic knowledge with linguistic limitations" (p. 223).

An imbalanced representation of the four language domains

This last category of description was best described by the imbalance between the four language domains in participants' SHL classes. Participants did not perceive balanced, structured practice in the four skill areas. The data suggested the participants' classes were too heavily focused on writing. Previous research has explored the role of writing in the SHL classroom (Acevedo, 2003) as students are likely to have had limited experiences with writing for academic purposes before enrolling in a HL course (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Writing and reading were the skills that HLLs self-assessed as least native-like (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Participants' reflections indicate that HL curriculum needs to strike more of a balance in the way the four language domains are practiced in order to support HLLs' language development. This balance is of particular importance for students enrolled in new and emerging programs as students might have fewer opportunities to take HL courses that are designed to target their specific sociolinguistic needs.

Participants, across the SHL courses represented in this study, provided evidence of interactions with the four language domains. Writing, as previously noted, was understood as the area that required the most practice. Sometimes, writing in the HL meant practicing orthographic norms in the HL (e.g., spelling, the use of diacritics) for participants. Both Ana and Rosa talked about approaches to writing that allowed for revisions (a focus on the process). Ana mentioned that her smaller writing assignments led to longer essays that were "extended versions of the short ones." Rosa also hinted at a more innovative approach to teaching writing as she was required to complete pre-writing exercises, and she used an outline for the in-class writing assignment. Sara and Lupe both highlighted the amount of writing they had to complete in their SHL classes.

Speaking in the HL with the course instructor and classmates was the most common description for this skill area. Meaningful oral communication in the HL has to offer students something more than what the participants described. Interpersonal communication in pairs and small groups is beneficial to HLLs as, if they plan to use Spanish in a career, they will most likely need to engage in this mode of communication. Several participants, however, mentioned participating in the presentational mode of communication by giving an end-of-semester presentation to their classmates which is also of relevance in professional contexts. Guided participation in local Spanish-speaking communities, like the projects described by Lupe and Sara, afford new opportunities for HLLs to use their HL in innovative ways.

The SHL classes in this study tend to be characterized by linguistic heterogeneity among the student population (Beaudrie, 2012). Therefore, this resource should be tapped into more frequently in SHL courses. An increased exposure to different varieties of Spanish, both in and outside the classroom, could be of benefit to HLLs as students and as future users of Spanish in professional settings. Take, for example, the activity Ana described. In her SHL class, the professor played audio files that actively encouraged translanguaging practices (García, 2013) that placed value on students' linguistic repertoires as HLLs had to use both Spanish and English. For Ana, this in-class activity was reminiscent of the ways in which she communicates with her family. This activity and other forms of focused practice in the interpretive

mode, in class and as homework, could help build learners' confidence and ability to interact with multilingual speakers of Spanish from backgrounds that differ from their own. Furthermore, additional experience in this domain in professional contexts (e.g., internships, service-learning assignments, etc.) can reinforce this skill that is often-overlooked in the classroom as it is valuable when using Spanish in the workplace.

Sometimes practicing reading skills was confused with practicing pronunciation in the HL (Ana and Bianca). Bianca defined these "reading" activities as times during which the class could learn from each other's mispronounced words. Neither student explicitly mentioned that the "reading" activities were inappropriate for their level of study; however, it has been documented that these types of "read aloud" activities tend to infantilize HLLs (Edstrom, 2007). Lupe, Rosa and Sara described this receptive skill as an aspect of their SHL classes that focused on textbook-based reading assignments or supplemental reading such as articles, poems, and short stories.

In sum, a salient takeaway from the categories of description was participants' focus on using Spanish in professional settings upon graduation. Participants' career-oriented motivations influenced their enrollment in a SHL course; therefore, future uses of Spanish in the workplace should have a role in SHL curriculum for adult HLLs. For HL programs, and especially so for new and emerging programs, it is important that decision-makers get to know the students (Burgo, 2015) enrolled in the program so that students' needs can be appropriately identified and met through the HL course offering(s).

Pedagogical Implications

To reconcile some of the concerns expressed by participants in this study, SHL education should look to further incorporate Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), experiential learning, and differentiated instruction (DI) into the curriculum. First, IPAs (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2013) have the potential to address participants' concerns about the presentation of the four language domains in their SHL classes. IPAs are inter-related tasks designed to assess the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) in authentic contexts (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). IPAs encourage a more balanced approach to language teaching and evaluation. In a HL class, IPAs could be situated in both informal (family, friends) and formal contexts (the workplace) that allow HLLs to practice different registers. Furthermore, grammar in the SHL classroom should serve as a link to the ways in which students will use the Spanish language in certain formal settings. Thus, priority should be placed on understanding language functions and not studying isolated language forms. IPAs have the capacity to impact in-class activities in a way that is beneficial and relevant for HLLs and their self-reported needs.

A greater incorporation of experiential learning into SHL curriculum can help expand students' views of their HL. Experiences using Spanish that link community and classroom are advantageous for HLLs (Carreira & Kagan, 2011) as they can tap into and build on students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Various forms of experiential learning such as volunteering, job shadowing, service-learning assignments, etc. provide students with opportunities to use their HLs in new contexts. This community-based approach gets students involved with

local Spanish speakers, it combats feelings of not belonging (Pak, 2018), and it also supports the career-centered motivations that encourage students to study their HL.

HL scholar María Carreira has been an advocate for the implementation of DI into mixed HL-L2 classes and HL classes (see Carreira, 2007; Carreira, 2012; Carreira, 2016; Carreira, 2018; Carreira & Hitchins Chik, 2018; Carreira & Kagan, 2011). DI in the HL classroom centers "on expanding HL learners' functional skills and linguistic repertories, attending to their aspirations and relational needs" (Carreira, 2018, p. 6). As such, DI is of particular relevance for the linguistically diverse SHL classes in which this study's participants were enrolled. Carreira and Kagan (2011) suggested that HL educators incorporate practices that are common in multilevel English as a Second Language and elementary classrooms such as "grouping students to promote engagement, using portfolios to assess learning, and offering independent studies to learners who want to pursue a topic outside of course offerings" (p. 58). For HL students in contexts similar to the one represented in this study, DI could provide greater exposure to the ways in which Spanish is used in professional settings. Participants had notions of the benefits of expanding their linguistic repertories in Spanish for career-oriented goals. The HL classroom, through DI, could help further foster students' appreciation for their HL and deepen their understanding of its importance in the workforce post-graduation.

Limitations and Future Research

First, this study sought to learn from a specific group of students: HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging linguistically diverse post-secondary SHL programs in the Midwest. Due to the specificity described, the findings based on students' perspectives cannot and do not aspire to be characteristic of all students' experiences enrolled in similar courses in similar settings. However, the findings from this study could inform and deepen our understanding of similar HL learning contexts in the U.S.

Future research focusing on student-centered experiences could include focus groups with students enrolled in the same HL class. Moreover, future research could video record focus group meetings as the collection of video recordings that use a sociocritical frame could add an extra dimension of analysis (Tochon, 1999). A goal of phenomenography is to discover new understandings (Marton, 1988), and video study groups with a sociocritical lens can assist participants in critically reflecting on their experiences by engaging them in dialogues that raise awareness of pertinent issues and these mutually-constructed analyses can inspire change (Tochon, 1999).

Conclusion

This phenomenography aimed to uncover the ways in which bilingual speakers of Spanish experience linguistically diverse SHL classes across an under-researched region. Findings detailed an outcome space characterized by (dis)connections that consisted of three categories of description which were *Spanish: A requirement for success*, *We need to know grammar*, and *An imbalanced representation of the four language domains*. Participants provided insight into the reasons that motivated them to study their HL. These motivations mirrored the patterns reported by HLLs of

Spanish on a national survey (Carreira & Kagan, 2011); however, the SHL classes did not adequately address and incorporate students' career-oriented aspirations into the curriculum. Furthermore, grammar took center stage in the second descriptive category. Participants seemingly internalized the expectation that studying grammar was the key to unlocking their HL so that they could gain a deeper understanding of the language. Finally, expanding proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading the HL were not given equal treatment. Participants' classroom-based experiences in their HL contributed to an understanding that placed writing in Spanish as the primary language domain that participants needed to practice. Future research in this area could be enhanced by the use of a sociocritical lens during focus group meetings. HLLs bring a unique connection to the language of study, and as such, students' perspectives should guide a bottom-up approach to HL curriculum design.

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Appendix A

Themes that will be explored during semi-structured interviews:

1. Reasons for taking a Spanish heritage language class.
2. Course expectations.
    a. Classroom environment.
3. Studying with other bilingual students.
4. Alignment of student needs with course curriculum.
5. Teaching and learning of Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading skills.
6. Student's academic language experiences in Spanish heritage language class.
    a. Positive and negative examples.
7. Language variety presented in class.
8. Best and worst aspects of course.
    a. Things you would do differently.
    b. Things you would keep the same.