

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250062224>

Experiences of Spanish Heritage Speakers in University Foreign Language Courses and Implications for Teacher Training

Article · January 2002

DOI: 10.1632/adfl.33.3.35

CITATIONS

70

READS

491

1 author:



Kim Potowski

University of Illinois at Chicago

42 PUBLICATIONS 728 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Sociolinguistic approach to teaching Spanish grammar [View project](#)

Experiences of Spanish Heritage Speakers in University Foreign Language Courses and Implications for Teacher Training

Kim Potowski

ADFL Bulletin Vol. 33, No. 3 (Spring 2002), pp. 35–42

ISSN: 0148-7639

CrossRef DOI: 10.1632/adfl.33.3.35

Copyright © 2001 by The Association of Departments of Foreign Languages

All material published by the The Association of Departments of Foreign Languages in any medium is protected by copyright. Users may link to the ADFL Web page freely and may quote from ADFL publications as allowed by the doctrine of fair use. Written permission is required for any other reproduction of material from any ADFL publication.

Send requests for permission to reprint material to the ADFL permissions manager by mail (26 Broadway, New York, NY 10004-1789), e-mail (permissions@mla.org), or fax (646 458-0030).

Experiences of Spanish Heritage Speakers in University Foreign Language Courses and Implications for Teacher Training

Kim Potowski

MANY university Spanish departments have added heritage language courses to their offerings as a result of the continuing increase in the number of native Spanish-speaking¹ students in the United States. The need and rationale for such programs have been discussed at length in the Spanish for native speakers (SNS) literature (e.g., Valdés, Lozano, and García-Moya; Merino, Trueba, and Samaniego; Colombi and Alarcón). However, heritage students continue to take Spanish courses designed for foreign language learners. Approximately 68% of United States postsecondary institutions do not offer heritage language courses (González Pino and Pino), and even at those that do, bilingual students often enroll in language courses designed for learners of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) at the beginning levels. When heritage students are the majority, the class can become a de facto heritage course, but in many cases there is a mix of heritage and nonheritage learners. Additionally, heritage and SFL students are often in the same classrooms in advanced content courses taught in Spanish, such as grammar or composition.

Given these factors, teachers and administrators should understand how heritage students make course decisions (when they are permitted to do so); these students' experiences in courses designed for SFL students; and how instructors, often trained in SFL, perceive of and work with heritage students. For example, Barbara González Pino and Frank Pino used questionnaires over a period of two years to explore topics including the Spanish course selection decisions of bilingual students and the course experiences of both heritage speakers and true beginners. The study I present here examined course selection decisions and course experiences using a questionnaire and focus-group interviews with twenty-five heritage Spanish-speaking university students. It also sought to understand the concerns of Spanish instructors who were not trained in SNS but had heritage students in their classes. This ar-

tle reports on and interprets the experiences of the two groups—the heritage speakers and the instructors—and provides suggestions for teacher training and administrative policies.

Setting

The University of Illinois, Urbana (UIUC) is located in a university town two hours south of Chicago, with a population of 173,000 and a 1990 census-reported Hispanic population of 3,485. Of the approximately 27,500 undergraduates at UIUC, more than 5% are Hispanic.² Fifty-five percent of these 1,500 Hispanic students come from the Chicago area, which is the third largest Hispanic city in the United States (“Hispanic Population”). A recent report (Stevens and Gonzo) estimated that two-thirds of UIUC's Hispanic students spoke some Spanish at home. Only about half of them intended to use high school courses to fulfill their foreign language requirement, while 5% intended to take a proficiency exam to do so. At UIUC around 70% of all students fulfill their foreign language requirement on campus with Spanish courses. Given similar trends at other colleges and universities and the growth of the Hispanic community in the United States, Spanish departments will need to continue devoting attention to heritage Spanish-speaking students in order to better serve their needs.

The author is Visiting Lecturer of Spanish at the University of Illinois, Chicago. This article is based on her presentation at the 1999 MLA convention in Chicago, Illinois.

During the semester of this study, the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese at UIUC offered twenty-three 100- and 200-level Spanish courses, totaling close to 100 sections. The 100-level courses enrolled approximately 1,600 students per semester learning Spanish as a foreign language. Most of these students were fulfilling the three- or four-semester foreign language requirements maintained by the two largest campus colleges. A foreign language requirement was adopted by the remaining colleges in fall 2000, which increased enrollment in 100-level Spanish courses to more than 1,890 students.

The 200-level courses, which enrolled approximately 250 students per semester majoring or minoring in Spanish, were content courses addressing topics that ranged from linguistics to literature (but only grammar, composition, and conversation courses were covered in this study). While it may be argued that these are content courses and that there is therefore no need to separate students by language background, it is reasonable to postulate that bilingual students arrive with different strengths and different needs than SFL learners. It is worth noting that the majority of students who take these courses are SFL learners.

Almost all of these 100- and 200-level courses were taught by a group of approximately fifty teaching assistants (TAs) who were graduate students in either Spanish literature or linguistics. During the semester of this study, half of these TAs were nonnative speakers of Spanish, mostly from the United States. A quarter of the TAs came from Spain, and a quarter were from Latin America. Two TAs during the semester of this study were Latinas from the United States. All TAs were required to complete a seminar on theoretical and practical approaches to foreign language teaching and learning during their first semester on campus, which for literature students represented the only linguistically or pedagogically oriented course required in their graduate curriculum.

In addition to the 100-level courses designed for foreign language learners, the Spanish department offered a two-course series called Spanish for Heritage Speakers that typically enrolled between eight and fifteen students per semester. Descriptions of these courses as they appeared in campus course catalogs are as follows:

Spanish 125: Beginning Spanish for Heritage Speakers. A third-semester course designed for students whose home language is Spanish. Emphasis will be on the development of literacy and academic Spanish language skills. Prerequisite: consent of the instructor.

Spanish 127: Intermediate Spanish for Heritage Speakers. Prerequisite: SPAN 125 or consent of instructor. Designed for students whose home language is Spanish. Emphasis will be on the development of literacy and academic Spanish language skills.

Although heritage students were allowed to enroll in SFL courses, there was an incentive to take the heritage track because passing these two courses fulfilled a four-semester foreign language requirement.

Despite the existence of these two heritage speaker courses, instructor reports indicated that an average of thirty heritage speakers enrolled in 100-level SFL courses each semester. There were also an average of ninety heritage students per semester in 200-level grammar and composition courses. This study attempted to understand the choices and experiences of bilingual students in 100- and 200-level Spanish courses.

Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used to elicit bilingual students' and instructors' personal stories. The goal of case studies, particularly what Robert Stake calls instrumental case studies (88), is to illuminate what is common and what is particular about a given case, not necessarily to make generalizations or to compare it to other cases but rather to understand one case deeply in order to advance an understanding of some issue. Part of the great value of case studies comes from the participants' narratives. These provide a vicarious experience through which readers can experience and interpret the case, which "feed[s] into the most fundamental processes of awareness and understanding" (Stake 94). Through Stake's collective case-study approach, each student and TA could be considered a "case," but commonalities could also be identified.

Informal discussions with bilingual students before the study led to the formation of interview questions:

1. Why do you think so many bilingual Latinos on campus say, "My Spanish is bad"?
2. If you took a 100-level course, why didn't you take 125 or 127?
3. In any Spanish course on campus, did you ever feel that you had an advantage over people learning Spanish as a foreign language?
4. Did you ever feel you were at a disadvantage?
5. What kind of feedback have you gotten from TAs about your Spanish?
6. What advice would you give to a new TA who never had bilingual Spanish-speaking students in class before?

These questions were asked at four group interviews or focus groups (Morgan). Twenty-five bilingual students each participated once (table 1). All but one participant, a third-generation Mexican American, indicated that when they were children, Spanish was the primary language spoken at home.

The interviews were conducted by two researchers who were TAs in the Spanish department, Silvia Soloral from Madrid and me, a nonnative speaker from New York. Initial concerns about how open the students would be with us about their experiences were allayed by the frankness of their responses and because participation in the study was voluntary (most of the participants were our

Table 1
Bilingual Student Participants

Hispanic Origin		Place of Birth	
Mexican	17	Chicago	15
Puerto Rican	4	Mexico	4
Cuban	1	Puerto Rico	2
Guatemalan	1	Other United States	3
Ecuador	1	Guatemala	1
Third-generation Mexican	1		

former students or their friends). Students agreed to spend ninety minutes “talking about Latino issues.” We met in a public campus lounge, where students ate free pizza while filling out a questionnaire about their language backgrounds and the Spanish courses they had taken at the university. The language of interaction was English, typically the stronger language of most Hispanic students on campus. We then moved to circular couches placed around a small table with a microphone to conduct the group interview. Students were told that this was an informal discussion without fixed participation rules. The tapes were later transcribed and coded according to emergent themes (see Bogdan and Biklen).

After analyzing these transcripts, the questions for the subsequent TA interviews were developed. We recruited TAs by asking ten colleagues whether they had heritage students in their classes that semester and if they would participate in a thirty-minute interview about their experiences with these students. Seven TAs participated in interviews, which were also tape recorded, transcribed, and coded. The TAs’ linguistic origins were as follows: two came from South America, one from Puerto Rico, one from Spain, and three were non-Hispanic and from the United States. The questions asked of them were:

1. How would you define a native speaker of Spanish?
2. What strengths and weaknesses do you think your bilingual Spanish-speaking students have?
3. What pedagogy do you use that you think works best for them?
4. Have you ever noticed a negative reaction by a bilingual student to any feedback you’ve given or to any aspect of the class?
5. Does having a mixture of bilingual and anglophone students affect the class in any way?
6. What advice would you give to a new TA who never before had bilingual Spanish-speaking students in class?

Finally, after both sets of transcripts were analyzed, a questionnaire was developed to solicit information anonymously about bilingual students’ course selection decisions. These questionnaires were offered to all students identified as bilingual by 100-level SFL instructors. Here is an abbreviated version of this questionnaire:

- 1) When you enrolled in the 100-level course you are now in, did you know about the existence of SPAN 125/7, Spanish for Near-Native Speakers, which is being offered at 9:00 a.m.? ___ yes ___ no
- 2) If you did not know about SPAN 125/7, go to question #3. If you did know about SPAN 125/7: Why did you enroll in the 100-level course you are now in? Please check *all* that apply to you. ___ I didn’t think my Spanish was good enough for 125. ___ I thought I’d get a better grade in the course I’m in now. ___ My adviser told me not to go into 125/7. ___ I didn’t want to be separated out as a Latina/o. ___ I couldn’t fit it into my schedule. ___ I placed into something else and thought I couldn’t take 125/7. ___ Other. Please explain:
- 3) If you did not know about SPAN 125/7: Would you have enrolled in it if you had known about it? ___ yes ___ no. If not, why not? Please check *all* that apply to you. ___ I don’t think my Spanish is good enough for 125/7. ___ I’d get a better grade in the course I’m in now. ___ I don’t want to be separated out as a Latina/o. ___ I couldn’t fit it into my schedule. ___ Other. Please explain:

First, I present the student interview results and interpretations from which three major themes emerged. I then present the instructors’ comments. Finally, I discuss the implications for Spanish departments.

“I Learned Ghetto Spanish”: Perceptions of Good Spanish

Many participants classified their Spanish as bad because of their lack of formal schooling and literacy training in the language or the educational level and socioeconomic status of their families. One student said, “Where I grew up, they’re not really educated. So they’re not really being taught proper Spanish.” Another commented, “I’m Puerto Rican. I learned ghetto Spanish.” Some students seem to have internalized such language judgments based on messages from within their own communities: “I’ve always been taught that the way we Puerto Ricans and Mexicans speak has too much Spanglish and it’s not proper.”

Despite their negative evaluations of their Spanish, these bilingual students had highly developed awarenesses of the levels of language formality in English and Spanish and of the differences in vocabulary between Spanish varieties. Many indicated that their Spanish did not cover all the professional and educational functions they needed, most likely due to a lack of exposure to these varieties of Spanish in their communities. Peninsular Spanish emerged as a theme in all four focus groups, with some participants feeling that this variety was more proper than their own. Others expressed resentment because they felt they were being expected to conform to this variety, because their TA either was from Spain or

had learned a Peninsular variety of Spanish. Two Mexican American students said that their TAs from Spain often did not understand what they were saying, and vice versa. Another said she had never “related well” to any of her TAs until she had one who had lived in Mexico.

Instructors and students probably do not need to share the same Spanish variety for effective teaching and learning to take place (Bills 278), but these comments suggest that the classroom linguistic environment can affect bilingual students’ learning experiences.

“They Know All These Rules”: Comparisons with SFL Classmates

Most participants mentioned that they felt a distinct advantage over their SFL peers in oral fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. Some even made a joke of imitating the nonnative accents of their classmates. However, not all participants felt this pronunciation advantage. One student thought her accent was *too good*: “Everyone else was talking that way [Spanish with an English accent], so I wondered how should I talk?” For some heritage students, speaking Spanish that sounds “too nativelike” may cause discomfort in a SFL classroom where many students do not approximate a native Spanish phonological system. Some heritage speakers may react by masking their native pronunciation. In a different session, a young woman said that she was bothered by “Latinos that know how to speak Spanish and say [imitating English-accented Spanish], ‘Tengow kay hablahr uhsi’ [Tengo que hablar así].” Although there was a strong trend for these heritage students to consider their more fluent oral production and comprehension an advantage in campus Spanish classes, it is interesting to note these heterogeneous responses.

One young woman expressed a strong opinion dismissing any assumed advantage over SFL learners that she might have had in her 200-level Spanish conversation class:

My TA said, “All you native speakers have an advantage because you can talk a lot better.” He was white himself. He spoke pretty good Spanish but how can he sit there and tell me that? I mean if you’re at [the advanced] level, you should be able to speak like we do. I may have a cultural advantage, but that’s not my fault. They have an advantage to me in everything else. If I take Sociology 100 and they had it in high school, the professor is not going to say, “Well, we’re gonna go a little slower for you” or “You shouldn’t be graded the same way.”

This quote indicates a belief that at the 200-level, foreign language learners should be at the same level as the bilingual students, and if they are not, the bilingual students should not be accused of having an unfair advantage.

However, more disadvantages were mentioned by the participants than advantages in comparison with their SFL peers. Above all, these bilingual students felt that

nonnatives had a better understanding of grammar rules. One commented, “I’m bad with grammar and that’s the way they learned Spanish, like conjugating -er verbs and I’m like, it just sounds good. They know all these rules.” At both the 100- and the 200-levels, students are asked to produce forms and structures according to their linguistic names, and SFL students who learn these skills as they acquire Spanish may indeed have an advantage. Despite being native speakers of Spanish, the bilingual students often received lower grades in these Spanish classes than their SFL classmates. One said, “The ones who breeze through are nonnative speakers. I feel a little bit, I don’t want to say intimidated, but I feel upset. I’ve been speaking this language for God knows how long, but I can understand that they’ve been learning the correct way since they started studying Spanish.” These students may be wrong about the correctness of nonnative speakers’ Spanish, but they often see the grammatical knowledge of the nonnatives rewarded through higher grades.

Teachers’ higher expectations for correctness and fluency from heritage speakers have been discussed in the literature (Roca, “Realidad” 58). Across groups, several heritage students in this study were uncomfortable with their instructors’ higher expectations for them. Several students disliked having TAs call on them first to answer questions or asking them to offer their dialectal version of a vocabulary item. SFL classmates may also expect native speakers to have acquired the formal terminology along with the language, and bilingual students may feel inadequate when confronted with those expectations: “It’s upsetting because I think a lot of people think, ‘Oh, you’re a native speaker, you should know everything. Don’t you know what the *subjuntivo* is?’ And I had no idea what it was.” One young man said that being expected to know something that he did not prevented him from asking questions in class. These comments reflect classroom environments in which heritage students may fear being seen as incompetent, which could exacerbate their already low evaluations of their Spanish abilities.

“Just Because They Were TAs, I Thought Their Spanish Was Better than Mine”: The TA as Language Authority

Language teachers typically consider one of their tasks to be correcting students’ interlanguage systems. This corresponds to a view of the TA in a role as language authority, the one in the classroom who knows Spanish and teaches it to students who do not. With heritage students, this often manifests itself as a correction of nonstandard forms, which has been mentioned often in the SNS literature (e.g., Aparicio 223; Hidalgo, “Teaching” 89; Valdés 11).³ Some of these participants described capitulating to a TA’s assessment: “I used ‘haiga,’ and I was corrected. I thought that was not a word.” Another said, “I would be told, ‘You need to follow the grammar, you have to say

this or that.' And I got really self-conscious, constantly told 'You're wrong about what you're saying.'" A student who had been corrected by one of his TAs in his informal journal writing said, "I'd be like, I guess I'm wrong; I'd just have to swallow it." When asked why he thought he was wrong and the TA was right, he replied, "Because that's the way it said in the book, and that's the proper, the professional way to speak." Other students stated that they utilized TAs' suggestions only in the classroom, returning to their own ways of speaking once they left.

Despite the perception discussed earlier that these students consider their Spanish to be bad, they did not unanimously accept their TA's role as language authority. One Puerto Rican student stated, "Just because they were TAs, I thought their Spanish was better than mine, and it wasn't. All they did was study abroad in Spain and that's all they knew." According to one Mexican American student, "They would say, 'No, this is not right. This is the proper way.' How can you tell me that what I spoke for the past twenty years is wrong?" One student said she would accept correction from a Hispanic instructor but not from a non-Hispanic.

Students' reactions to corrective feedback may depend on their level of confidence in their Spanish language ability, their feelings about the particular ways in which instructors offer correction, and their beliefs about their instructors' right to correct them. The reactions suggest a need to examine instructors' attitudes and reactions toward bilingual students' speech varieties, which was attempted in the TA interviews.

Interviews with TAs

The TA interviews produced several interesting categories of data, but the most relevant to the present discussion were their perceptions of and reactions to heritage students' language. Guadalupe Valdés emphasizes that bilinguals are not imperfect speakers of Spanish who have fallen short of a monolingual norm but rather linguistically complex individuals who are fundamentally different from monolinguals (29). However, four of the seven TAs interviewed contrasted heritage students' Spanish extensively with a "standard" monolingual variety, citing their faulty spelling, grammar, and questionable vocabulary choices. For example, two TAs reported that their students used the indicative mood where the subjunctive was required, a debatable point given the changing nature of the mood system in United States Spanish (Silva-Corvalán). Others said that the English calque *te llamo pa'trás* and words like *haiga* were candidates for correction. Bilingual students' writing was deemed by several TAs as too informal, with missing accents, monosyllabic words, lack of clarity and conciseness, simple syntactic structures, and the use of terms such as *no más*. A different problem mentioned was the

students' difficulty identifying the names of linguistic terms. Like many instructors, they had more to say about heritage Spanish speakers' linguistic weaknesses than about their strengths or how to meet their needs.

Instructors' responses to heritage students' language were varied. Only written feedback was discussed, since none of the TAs said that they corrected oral production. Two TAs said that they did not actually correct these students' language but rather signaled that one form was fine when speaking but another was used in writing. One of them explained to the students the logic behind their usage, such as when they wrote *baser* for *va a ser*. Another TA decided by the end of the interview that explaining the difference between formal and informal language was a better approach than the strictly corrective one she had been using. Four TAs, including two native speakers and two nonnative speakers, engaged in more traditional correction. They usually circled the form or usage in question and offered their version of the correct form, which was sometimes a vocabulary item they had learned in Spain that is not used uniformly in Latin America or the United States. When in doubt as to the acceptability of a bilingual student's vocabulary item, these TAs referred to a dictionary or asked colleagues whether they had ever encountered the term. Only one TA described a dilemma of having to accept and respect all dialects while also being discriminating about whether a syntactic structure or vocabulary item was actually incorrect.

These findings bring up several issues for which Spanish departments need to develop a clear policy for TAs as well as professors. If bilingual students take courses not explicitly designed to address their linguistic needs, will instructors at least be required to develop an understanding and appreciation of United States varieties of Spanish? Will they accept the challenge of helping bilingual students develop a formal variety of Spanish? Which vocabulary items and grammatical structures require feedback at which course levels, and what should that feedback look like?

Despite the negative reactions to correction mentioned in the student focus group, none of the TAs interviewed had ever noticed a negative reaction from their heritage students. Perhaps these particular TAs had never caused negative reactions in their heritage students, or their students had not let their frustrations show, or the TAs had not noticed them. In any case, instructors may not be aware of the messages they are sending when they correct heritage Spanish-speaking students' language, a sensitivity that might be developed during TA training.

Questionnaire: Why Did Heritage Students Enroll in SFL Courses?

Finally, the results of the questionnaire designed to explore why approximately thirty bilingual students per semester enrolled in 100-level SFL courses revealed several

important findings (although only twelve questionnaires were returned). Six students did not know about the heritage course. Of these, four indicated that they would have taken the heritage course had they known about it. The two students who said they would not have taken the course indicated three different reasons: they did not consider themselves native speakers or thought that their Spanish was not good enough; they had a scheduling conflict; or they believed that they would get a better grade in the foreign language 100-level course. The desire for good grades has been mentioned in the SNS literature as an important motivating factor in course selection (Kondo).

Of the remaining six students who *did* know about the heritage course but elected to sign up for an SFL course, five indicated that they could not fit the course into their schedule. Three students indicated that they did not think their Spanish was good enough. Three said the placement test had placed them into a different course and they thought this excluded them from the heritage course. Two said they thought they would get a better grade in a foreign language course. One student wrote that he did not think the heritage course would fulfill the foreign language requirement.

While the numbers reported here are small and so cannot be generalized, some issues do seem to require attention. Bilingual students on the campus may not know about the heritage courses. Before this study, the director of Spanish basic language instruction had begun taking steps to better educate campus academic advisers, many of whom did not know about the heritage courses themselves. Additionally, all students who elect to take the placement exam now receive a notice informing them that a heritage course is available.

Implications

This study suggests that courses designed for foreign language learners and taught by instructors with no SNS training present at least two problems for heritage Spanish-speaking students: first, some students are uncomfortable with instructors' and classmates' expectations of what they should know about Spanish and feel inferior to SFL classmates who have been exposed to linguistic terminology and formal varieties of Spanish; second, some students interpret corrective feedback from their instructors as messages that their Spanish is substandard (which some of them unfortunately believed even before they entered the class). While nonnative Spanish students are undoubtedly corrected often by TAs, bilingual students experience "correction" differently because it is tied in with their personal and cultural history.

At the 100-level, bilingual students on the UIUC campus can theoretically avoid these problems by enrolling in a heritage speaker course, but not all of them do. At the 200-level, there are no such alternatives for

native-speaking Spanish majors and minors, and separating heritage and SFL students throughout major and minor course work seems an undesirable and impractical solution. UIUC had in fact designated one section of a popular 200-level composition course as a heritage section, but enrollment was insufficient to support its continuation. Since heritage students will likely continue to take courses designed for and mostly taken by foreign language learners in many university settings, we should focus on improving what occurs in these classrooms.

Although it is a valid goal to expose heritage students to a more formal variety of Spanish and expect it to be used in academic work, correction should not be the framework. Instead, Spanish departments need to give TAs guidelines on when and how to respond to heritage students' language. This suggests a need for instructor training in language awareness, called for by both Roca ("Retrospectives" 39) and Gutiérrez (34).

Increasing Instructor Awareness

A ninety-minute Spanish language awareness session dealing with issues of teaching heritage students was added to the required TA orientation schedule in fall 1999.⁴ The first point mentioned in the session was the existence of the heritage courses and the need for instructors to direct bilingual students to them. Since such students may choose to remain in SFL classes, the goal of the remainder of the session was to educate instructors about heritage language issues and enable them to create positive learning environments for bilingual students.

Many of the TAs from other countries were unlikely to be familiar with the context of Spanish in the United States and with the varieties of Spanish spoken here, so a sociolinguistic focus seemed appropriate. The session was divided into three topics: first, language variation and societal bilingualism in TAs' home countries; second, varieties of Spanish in the world and in the United States; and third, how best to respond to authentic oral and written Spanish language samples produced by UIUC heritage students.

Since teacher preservice can have a lasting influence on classroom practice only when it addresses the teachers' existing beliefs (Briscoe; Borg), each of the three topics was discussed in smaller groups, an arrangement that encouraged TAs to discuss their experiences and thoughts freely. A full description and evaluation of this session can be found in Potowski. When directive personnel changed, the session was unfortunately no longer included in orientation programs.

Administrative Suggestions

At the administrative level, Spanish departments should examine intake procedures of the beginning lan-

guage courses, which could include a language background questionnaire to round out the placement test. On the UIUC campus bilingual students cannot be forced to choose the heritage courses, but they should be enthusiastically guided to them at the 100-level. Such courses should be widely advertised on campus using a flyer containing the positive quotes from students who completed them. Such quotes were gathered in this study on a questionnaire given to students in Spanish for heritage speaker courses. They wrote animated, encouraging responses to questions such as “If you had a friend who knew as much Spanish as you but said she didn’t want to take Spanish for heritage speakers because it would be too hard, what would you tell her?” Certainly the heritage speaker courses themselves should be examined to ensure that they meet the language needs of bilingual students.

At the advanced levels, attention should be given to how best address the needs of students from different linguistic backgrounds. Peer tutoring may be a viable option, including both heritage speakers tutoring SFL learners (Quintanar-Sarellana, Huebner, and Jensen) and SFL learners tutoring heritage speakers about grammar terms. Finally, Spanish departments might consider examining whether the proportion of Latina and Latino graduate students and faculty members adequately meets the affective and linguistic needs of Hispanic students on campus.⁵

Valdés wrote that bilingual students do not belong in Spanish foreign language courses (8–10). The UIUC study shows that heritage students do take courses designed for foreign language learners of Spanish and this situation has been noted by researchers at other institutions as well. The experiences of the UIUC heritage speakers in both SFL and advanced content courses indicate that the classroom learning environment may benefit from a language education session for instructors in which particular attention is paid to ways of providing sensitive and useful feedback to bilingual students. UIUC attempted to address the issues presented by this study through a linguistic and cultural awareness-raising session, but continuation and evaluation of such initiatives are critical to their success. Some TA trainers who have carried out similar sessions have found them unsuccessful in changing TA attitudes (González), but the field of SNS will undoubtedly benefit from further research on instructor training (such as the courses and workshops offered at the University of Illinois, Chicago) as well as from research on the course options, choices, and experiences of heritage Spanish-speaking students.

Notes

¹The terms “native Spanish-speaking,” “bilingual,” and “heritage” will be used interchangeably to refer to persons living in the United States in homes where some Spanish is spoken.

²In this paper, the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably to refer to persons whose ethnic background is in a Spanish-speaking country.

³For discussions of the complex notions of standard and nonstandard Spanish and their implications for teaching, see Hidalgo (“Criteria” and “Emergence”) and Villa.

⁴The proposal to incorporate discussions of heritage-language issues into the required seminar on foreign language teaching was not accepted, perhaps because of the overall low numbers of heritage students enrolled in SFL courses at UIUC. However, many people move to teaching contexts different from the one in which they completed their graduate studies. Therefore, all graduate and undergraduate course work in foreign language teaching methodology should include discussion of heritage language speakers. In places with large Latino populations and sizable heritage-speaker programs, entire courses should be offered on heritage speakers, such as those at Arizona State University; California State University, Long Beach; Hunter College, City University of New York; New Mexico State University; and the University of Illinois, Chicago.

⁵I wish to thank Amanda Harris-Nolacea at UIUC for this suggestion.

Works Cited

- Aparicio, Frances. “La enseñanza del español para hispanohablantes y la pedagogía multicultural.” Colombi and Alarcón 222–32.
- Bills, Garland. “Language Shift, Linguistic Variation, and Teaching Spanish to Native Speakers in the United States.” Colombi and Alarcón 263–82.
- Bogden, Robert, and Sari Knopp Biklen. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Needham Heights: Allyn, 1992.
- Borg, Simon. “Teachers’ Pedagogical Systems and Grammar Teaching: A Qualitative Study.” *TESOL Quarterly* 32.1 (1998): 9–38.
- Briscoe, Carol. “The Dynamic Interaction among Beliefs, Role Metaphors, and Teaching Practices: A Case Study of Teacher Change.” *Science Education* 75 (1991): 185–99.
- Colombi, María Cecilia, and Frances Alarcón, eds. *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría*. Boston: Houghton, 1997.
- González, María Dolores. Personal communication. Oct. 1999.
- González Pino, Barbara, and Frank Pino. “Serving the Heritage Speaker across a Five-Year Program.” *ADFL Bulletin* 32.1 (2000): 27–35.
- Gutiérrez, John. “Teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language: A Case for Language Awareness.” *ADFL Bulletin* 29.1 (1997): 33–36.
- Hidalgo, Margarita. “Criterios normativos e ideología lingüística: Aceptación y rechazo del español de los Estados Unidos.” Colombi and Alarcón 109–20.
- . “The Emergence of Standard Spanish in the American Continent: Implications for Latin American Dialectology.” *Language Problems and Language Planning* 14.1 (1990): 47–63.
- . “The Teaching of Spanish to Bilingual Spanish Speakers: A ‘Problem’ of Inequality.” Merino, Trueba, and Samaniego 82–92.
- “Hispanic Population of the United States.” *U.S. Census Bureau*. 26 July 2001. 8 Nov. 2001 <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic.html>>, click on “Housing in Metropolitan Areas—Hispanic Origin Households.”
- Kondo, Kimi. “Motivating Bilingual and Semibilingual University Students of Japanese.” *Foreign Language Annals* 32.1 (1999): 77–88.

- Merino, Barbara, Henry Trueba, and Fabián Samaniego, eds. *Language and Culture in Learning: Teaching Spanish to Native Speakers of Spanish*. Washington: Falmer, 1993.
- Morgan, David. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.
- Potowski, Kim. "Educating Foreign Language Teachers to Work with Heritage Spanish Speakers." *Research and Practice in Language Teacher Education: Voices from the Field: Selected Papers from the First International Conference on Language Teacher Education*. Ed. Bill Johnston and Suzanne Irujo. CARLA Working Paper 19. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2001. 99–113. 23 Jan. 2002 <<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/working-papers.html>>.
- Quintanar-Sarellana, Rosalinda, Thom Huebner, and Anne Jensen. "La utilización de nuestros recursos lingüísticos: Los estudiantes hispanohablantes como tutores de español como idioma extranjero." Colombi and Alarcón 308–26.
- Roca, Ana. "La realidad en el aula: Logros y expectativas en la enseñanza del español para estudiantes bilingües." Colombi and Alarcón 55–64.
- . "Retrospectives, Advances, and Current Needs in the Teaching of Spanish to United States Hispanic Bilingual Students." *ADFL Bulletin* 29.1 (1997): 37–43.
- Silva-Corvalán, Carmen. "The Gradual Loss of Mood Distinction in Los Angeles Spanish." *Language Variation and Change* 6 (1995): 255–72.
- Stake, Robert. "Case Studies." *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln. London: Sage, 1998. 86–109.
- Stevens, G., and Susan Gonzo. "Report on the 1998 Survey of Incoming UIUC Freshmen: Race, Ethnicity, and Language." Office of the Provost, U of Illinois, Urbana, 1998.
- Valdés, Guadalupe. "The Teaching of Spanish to Heritage Spanish-Speaking Students: Outstanding Issues and Unanswered Questions." Colombi and Alarcón 8–44.
- Valdés, Guadalupe, Anthony Lozano, and Rodolfo García-Moya, eds. *Teaching Spanish to the Hispanic Bilingual: Issues, Aims, and Methods*. New York: Teachers Coll. P., 1981.
- Villa, Daniel. "Choosing a 'Standard' Variety of Spanish for the Instruction of Native Spanish Speakers in the U.S." *Foreign Language Annals* 29.2 (1996): 191–200.