

Article

Understanding Heritage Language Learners' Critical Language Awareness (CLA) in Mixed Language Programs

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Abstract: Despite the prevalence of mixed language programs across the United States, their impact on the unique socio-affective needs of heritage language (HL) students has not been researched sufficiently. Therefore, the present study examines HL learners' critical language awareness (CLA) in a mixed Spanish undergraduate program at a small private university in the eastern United States. Sixteen HL learners enrolled in different Spanish upper-level courses participated in the study. Respondents completed an existing questionnaire to measure CLA, which includes 19 Likert-type items addressing different areas, such as language variation, language ideologies, bilingualism, and language maintenance. Overall, the results show that learners in the mixed language program under study have "somewhat high" and "high" levels of CLA. The increased levels of CLA in learners who had completed three courses or more in the program, coupled with their strong motivation, suggests that this program contributes positively toward HL students' CLA. However, respondents' answers also reveal standard language ideologies, as well as the personal avoidance of code-switching. Based on these findings, two areas that could benefit from a wider representation in the curriculum of mixed language programs are discussed: language ideologies and plurilingual language practices.

Keywords: critical language awareness; language attitudes; mixed language program; standard language ideology; code-switching; language variation; plurilingualism



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1. Introduction

The field of heritage language (HL) education is a relatively new area of inquiry, which has grown considerably in the last few years in the United States as a result of the number of HL speakers who seek to further explore and develop their cultural and linguistic heritage. Research has shown that HL speakers' most common motivations for studying their HL are to reconnect with their cultural heritage and to create connections with other members of the community (Beaudrie et al. 2009; Carreira and Kagan 2011; Beaudrie 2020). According to the latest data of the Pew Research Center (2018), Spanish is the most commonly spoken non-English language in the United States, followed by Chinese, including Mandarin and Cantonese, Hindi, Filipino or Tagalog, Vietnamese, French, Dravidian, and Arabic.

Carreira's (2014, 2017) national survey of 294 college-level language programs showed that there are HL programs available in many of these minority languages across the United States. At the time the survey results were published, HL programs were available in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Farsi, Hindi/Urdu, and Arabic. However, Carreira (2017) identified notable differences related to what types of programs were offered for each of these languages. For instance, while approximately 80% of the Spanish programs surveyed offered HL courses, just over 50% of the Chinese programs and only 25% of Hindi/Urdu programs had similar course offerings. Spanish is the heritage language with the highest rates of program availability and the one that is most diverse in terms of course offerings. Programs created specifically for Spanish HL learners have been continuously implemented in the United States over the last two decades (Beaudrie 2012;

Carreira 2017; Potowski 2018), and it is expected that the demand for Spanish HL courses will continue as the Hispanic student population continues to grow in higher education contexts (Beaudrie 2020).

Two widely-recognized goals of HL programs are the promotion of positive attitudes and the maintenance of heritage languages (e.g., Valdés and Parra 2018; Beaudrie et al. 2014; Beaudrie 2020). The impact that these HL programs have, however, is an important area that remains to be explored more thoroughly. In fact, many HL practitioners and researchers question their real impact on language maintenance. Some scholars warn that heritage speakers' experiences are not always recognized in HL programs due to a prioritization of standard language practices (e.g., Beaudrie 2015; Bernal-Enríquez and Hernández-Chávez 2003; Pascual y Cabo and Prada 2018; Torres et al. 2018; Beaudrie et al. 2020; Beaudrie 2020). The underscoring of standard language practices fails to address the unique socio-affective needs of HL students, including negative attitudes toward their language varieties (Beaudrie and Ducar 2005; Martínez 2003) and linguistic insecurity (Tseng 2020), among others.

1.1. Institutionalization of Spanish Heritage Language Programs

The increasing number of HL learners in the United States has resulted in postsecondary educational institutions placing greater focus on these students' needs. Colleges and universities across the country are developing and implementing language tracks tailored to better fulfill these students' learning goals, which often differ from second language learners'. As Carreira (2017, p. 347) describes, "HL-specific instruction or pedagogy, which, broadly speaking, is an approach to language teaching premised on the idea that heritage language learners' (HLLs) linguistic and socio-affective needs are different from those of second language learners (L2Ls) and warrant specialized instructional attention".

Despite the fact that the numbers of HL courses and programs are steadily increasing in the U.S., there is still a lack of "uniformity" with regards to teacher education and curriculum design across institutions. Similarly, there seems to be a lack of consensus when it comes to comparing elementary, intermediate, or advanced levels, given the different placement policies set in place, which makes it even harder to compare HL programs (Beaudrie 2011).

Moreover, most institutions still do not offer HL-specific courses or tracks and, as a result, mixed courses are the most common instructional context for HL learners in the United States (Carreira and Chik 2018). Mixed instructional contexts, however, can be problematic for HL learners, as research shows that they typically focus exclusively on L2 learners' experiences and needs. In light of this situation, researchers should focus on the systematic exploration of mixed classes, as well as on the development of pedagogical practices and materials that also allow for the recognition of HL learners' experiences and needs in this instructional context.

1.2. Previous Research in Mixed HL/L2 Teaching Contexts

Previous research in mixed HL/L2 teaching contexts has focused primarily on student motivation (e.g., O'Rourke and Zhou 2018) and HL/L2 interactions (e.g., Bowles et al. 2014; Torres 2020), and only recently on student attitudes, language ideologies, and identities (Leeman and Serafini 2020; Vana 2020). O'Rourke and Zhou's (2018) research suggests that HL learners are less motivated to study their language(s) and less likely to believe in the academic and professional opportunities of studying a language. Similarly, Bowles et al.'s (2014) study shows that HL and L2 learners alike saw their interactions as more beneficial for L2 learners' development, which further suggests that mixed educational contexts are not ideal for HL learners. Vana's (2020) research offers a detailed account of the language attitudes of HL and L2 students to Spanish and its varieties. Overall, this study shows that standard language ideologies are very common in both groups of students.

Leeman and Serafini's (2020) study is the first one that, in addition to examining learners' perceptions of mixed HL/L2 classes, focuses on the connections between mixed classes and language ideologies and learner identities. In this study, both groups of participants referred to the differences between HL and L2 students. For example, L2 students were perceived as having more metalinguistic knowledge and HL students as generally being more fluent and accurate. According to Leeman and Serafini (2020, p. 7), these comments, apparently descriptive in nature, "revealed different values assigned to different types of linguistic and cultural knowledge" and, in multiple instances, reproduced standard language ideologies in both groups of learners. When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of mixed classes, students were in agreement that L2 learners benefit from interacting with HL learners in class. In addition, HL learners thought of themselves as helpful to L2 learners and tended to portray their linguistic knowledge as superior. However, although L2 learners discussed their grammatical knowledge of the language as beneficial for HL learners, the latter group did not share this view. This is not a new phenomenon, as other researchers (e.g., Blake and Zyzik 2003) have also noted this trend where HL learners serve as resources for their peers, but do not perceive significant linguistic benefits from their interactions with L2 learners in mixed classes.

According to Leeman and Serafini (2020), in contrast with previous research on linguistic insecurity among HL learners, the HL students in their study "often asserted their linguistic and cultural authority and expertise. Rather than accepting ascribed identities and discourses that portray them as linguistically deficient, they frequently constructed themselves as models and guides for their less adept L2 peers" (11). This finding is very significant as it shows that HL learners can resist and overcome standard language ideologies in this instructional context. Nevertheless, more research is needed to understand how mixed HL/L2 classes shape HL students' language ideologies and language use. In the same way, it would be beneficial to move beyond classes to explore the impact of mixed HL/L2 language programs. While HL programs tend to attend HL learners' various needs through critical pedagogical approaches, mixed HL/L2 programs are known for following traditional L2-oriented pedagogies. In the following section, the proliferation of critical pedagogical approaches in Spanish HL education is explored in order to illustrate their importance, particularly for the recognition of students' language practices and the exploration of language ideologies.

1.3. Rise of Critical Approaches in Spanish Heritage Language Pedagogy

In the last few years, it has become apparent that HL education has been strongly influenced by a standard language ideology that excludes and devalues heritage varieties by placing standard varieties at the center of instruction and failing to recognize HL speakers' varieties and language practices (e.g., Martínez 2003; Leeman 2005, 2012, 2018; Leeman et al. 2011; Leeman and Serafini 2016; Mendoza 2018; Pascual y Cabo and Prada 2018). While research has suggested that in some contexts HL students can resist, at least partially, the standard language ideology that has traditionally shaped HL education (e.g., Leeman and Serafini 2020), a number of authors continue to highlight the profound impact of this ideology on students' identity construction and language use. Holguín Mendoza (2018), for instance, emphasizes that traditional HL pedagogies have resulted in the alienation and disempowerment of HL speakers. Similarly, Tseng (2020) discusses the internalized linguistic insecurity that many HL speakers experience as a result of language purity ideologies and explains that, in many cases, linguistic insecurity leads to the avoidance of HL use. Additionally, Pascual y Cabo and Prada (2018) criticize the monolingual lens that most HL programs in the U.S. have adopted. According to these authors: "Pursuing the promotion of bilingualism without offering students the tools to understand the processes at work in becoming and being bilingual contributes to perpetuating the myths, folk attitudes, ideologies, and expectations concerning bilingualism" (Pascual y Cabo and Prada 2018, p. 538). Furthermore, Leeman et al. (2011) explained that, in addition to often leading to the marginalization of students' language varieties and practices, dominant monolingual

ideologies result in the erasure of their multilingual identities and experiences, and add that they reinforce linguistic discrimination and reduce learners' "chances of attaining educational and societal success" (482).

It is well known in the field that the first HL approaches that were put forward in the 1970s relied on deficit-based approaches (Martínez and Schwartz 2012) that strongly stigmatized the language of the students, favored exclusively the teaching of standard(ized) language varieties, and sought to suppress or eliminate the linguistic varieties of the students (Valdés 1978; Beaudrie 2015). Although HL pedagogies have since moved away from deficit-based approaches, HL education continues to adopt approaches that fail to recognize students' varieties and linguistic practices. In other words, while students' varieties and linguistic practices are not actively discriminated in the classroom, they continue to be treated as peripheral.

Recently, a number of researchers and practitioners have called for sociolinguistically informed approaches that focus on the recognition of language diversity (e.g., Villa 1996; Bernal-Enríquez and Hernández-Chávez 2003; Wilson and Pascual y Cabo 2019). Bernal-Enríquez and Hernández-Chávez (2003) observe that teaching standard varieties does not meet the affective needs of HL students. They emphasize the pedagogical value of students' varieties and maintain that it is only through the use of their varieties that their language practices can be legitimated. Similarly, Wilson and Pascual y Cabo (2019) stress that the appreciation and promotion of students' linguistic diversity, in addition to contributing to their linguistic needs, allows for the validation of their linguistic experiences and the creation of spaces in which their socio-affective needs can be addressed.

In addition to promoting the recognition of language diversity, socio-linguistically informed approaches focus on the development of a critical language awareness (CLA) (e.g., Martínez 2003; Leeman 2005, 2012, 2018; Correa 2011, 2016; Leeman and Serafini 2016; Parra 2016; Mendoza 2018; Leeman 2018; Beaudrie et al. 2020). Leeman and Serafini (2016, p. 12) define CLA as the ability to examine "how ideologies, politics, and social hierarchies are embodied, reproduced and naturalized through language". They explain that the examination of language variation, as well as the mechanisms by which some varieties are stigmatized and subordinated, is a central component of CLA, and underline that the ultimate goal of CLA approaches is "for students to actively engage in questioning dominant language ideologies" (63). To do so, among many strategies, they propose helping students recognize variation "as an inherent characteristic of language" (67) through the study of how language varies across time, space, social groups and contexts. Additionally, they suggest the use of blogs, wikis, or similar tools to collaboratively collect, share, and discuss examples of language ideologies in mainstream media. Further, Beaudrie et al. (2020) describe that, in addition to being inclusive and respectful of language variation and diversity, CLA approaches have a positive impact on learners' linguistic self-confidence in their HL varieties by placing them at the center of instruction. In the same vein, Martínez (2003) emphasizes the importance of dialect awareness for HL learners, and proposes a critical classroom-based model that goes beyond a formal understanding of dialects and language variation to include the functions of dialects, the distribution of dialects, and the evaluation of dialects. Leeman's (2005) proposal focuses on the importance of students' agency. In addition to exploring and questioning assumptions about language variation, Leeman explains the need to empower students to make their own linguistic decisions. For example, she recommends that students explore the effect of their linguistic decisions on dominant norms. In addition, she promotes the exploration of the creative potential of students' language practices.

In regard to the acknowledgement of HL students' language practices, some researchers have recently advocated for the explicit recognition and integration of students' language mediation practices (e.g., Angelelli 2010, Colina and Lafford 2017; Gasca Jiménez

2019, forthcoming, forthcoming). Relying on research on language brokering¹ (e.g., McQuillan and Tse 1995; Tse 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Orellana et al. 2003a, 2003b; Valdés 2003; Weisskirch 2007; Katz 2010; López et al. 2019), these researchers argue that language brokering is a very common communicative activity in immigrant communities, which should be considered part of the unique linguistic practices of HL speakers. Additionally, (Gasca Jiménez, forthcoming) argues for the specialization of HL speaker's mediation skills in the context of HL education, and offers pedagogical suggestions to do so. This author underscores the different roles of mediation as a plurilingual language practice, a pedagogical activity, and a professional skill.

Regarding CLA pedagogical proposals, Leeman (2018) notes that, in addition to focusing on central themes such as dialect awareness or language ideologies, educators should prioritize students' linguistic and life experiences "to promote students' critical consciousness of their own circumstances and the relation of those circumstances to broader issues" (353). In order to promote the adoption of CLA approaches, Beaudrie et al. (2020, p. 5) propose the following instructional goals for HL education:

- Students will be able to see language variation as natural and recognize the intrinsic value of their own variety and all others;
- Students will be able to develop a consciousness of the political, social, and economic power structures that underlie language use and the distribution of the so-called prestige and nonprestigious varieties;
- Students will be able to uncover dominant language ideologies that hide in daily monolingual/bilingual practices;
- Students will be empowered to exercise agency in making their own decision about language use and bilingualism.

Additionally, Beaudrie et al. (2020) showed qualitatively that CLA approaches can have a positive impact on CLA development. They evaluated the impact of a critical-oriented curriculum on the CLA development of 19 heritage learners enrolled in a Spanish heritage course for intermediate-level learners at a large university in the U.S. Southwest. The curriculum addressed four main areas: language variation and diversity; language ideologies and linguistic prejudice; Spanish in the United States and bilingualism; and language maintenance. The pretest and posttest results show that the curriculum had a positive impact on the improvement of students' CLA. The authors note that, in addition to becoming more aware of the equal value of all variants and more appreciative of language diversity, students became more tolerant of bilingual varieties. However, they also note that approximately a quarter of the students did not show any CLA gains at the end of the semester. They attribute this lack of improvement to the fact that they already had high levels of CLA at the beginning of the semester. They also explain that it may be tied to "deep-seated ideologies" (17) that can hardly be changed in just one semester of instruction. In order to further promote language diversity, they propose assignments that allow students to develop their home varieties, such as interpreting assignments that take advantage of students' language brokering experiences.

Correa (2016) offers a number of pedagogical suggestions for the implementation of CLA-oriented approaches, which align with the instructional goals proposed by Beaudrie et al. (2020). For example, she encourages the use of informal surveys and diagnostic assessments throughout the course to learn about students' sociolinguistic backgrounds, language practices, linguistic profiles, and personal interests. She also stresses the importance of selecting materials that are authentic, as well as culturally and linguistically relevant. For the selection of authentic materials, she recommends using materials that come from a variety of places, including the community where most of the students are from. She explains that linguistically diverse materials that represent different varieties and

¹ For the purposes of this paper, we adopt the following definition for language brokering: "The global practice whereby children in immigrant communities are called upon by family members to serve as linguistic and cultural intermediaries by translating and interpreting" (López et al. 2019, p. 481).

registers are crucial, because they allow students to recognize their culture(s) as worthy of study and increase their ability to communicate with speakers of other varieties, which, in turn, expands their intercultural and linguistic competence. Similarly, Holguín [Mendoza \(2018\)](#) details the creation and implementation of a CLA-centered curriculum. As a first step, she encourages the creation of a strong group of educators who are willing to engage in “a continuous process of self-reflection and pedagogical revision” (68). Next, Holguín [Mendoza \(2018\)](#) emphasized the need to build a coherent curriculum that normalizes bilingualism and focuses systematically on language awareness of sociolinguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic variation. Regarding the development of critical socio-pragmatic language awareness, Holguín [Mendoza \(2018\)](#) promotes students’ agency. Students are ultimately responsible for making their own informed decisions about their language practices and use.

In a service-learning context, [Leeman et al. \(2011\)](#) explain the importance of creating structured contexts outside the classroom in which HL speakers are positioned as “language experts”. According to these authors, critical service-learning programs promote student engagement and promote agency against subordinating ideologies that devalue students’ language and language experiences. Similarly, Lowther [Pereira \(2015, 2018\)](#) underscores that, by establishing diverse community partnerships and creating service-learning opportunities in multiple fields such as education, law or healthcare, educators can successfully respond to and foster students’ professional interests. In addition, Lowther [Pereira’s \(2015\)](#) study demonstrates that service-learning contributes positively toward HL learners’ awareness of Latinx sociolinguistic and sociopolitical issues, as well as the construction of positive identities. Lowther [Pereira \(2015\)](#) describes the impact on CLA development of an advanced Spanish HL course which promotes engagement with the local Latinx community. The course offered different types of service-learning experiences, such as tutoring Latinx school children, giving presentations on local community services and resources, and providing interpreting and translation services. It should be noted that these service-learning experiences were fully integrated into all course assignments and projects. For instance, students kept a journal of written reflections about their experiences with the local community and, at the end of the semester, completed a portfolio that included all their service-learning activities. Additionally, students were given the opportunity to regularly share their experiences with their peers in class. At the end of the course, most students reported feeling a stronger sense of belonging to the local Latinx community. Additionally, a qualitative analysis of students’ reflections showed increased language awareness, gained mainly, according to the author, from exposure to language variation in a diverse ethnic, sociolinguistic, and geographic local community.

Consistent with CLA approaches to HL education, we conceptualize HL learners as plurilingual speakers, rather than bilingual or multilingual speakers ([Gasca Jiménez, forthcoming](#)). The terms multilingualism and plurilingualism “connote different ways of perceiving the relationship between languages in a society and individual repertoire” ([Canagarajah and Liyanage 2012](#), p. 50). While a bilingual/multilingual perspective focuses on the addition of one language to another, a plurilingual one underlines the integration of languages and assumes that plurilingual speakers have an integrated, holistic language repertoire ([Piccardo et al. 2019](#)). Plurilingual speakers, as opposed to bilingual/multilingual speakers, do not keep languages separated, they build up “a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” ([Council of Europe 2001](#), p. 4). Additionally, plurilingual speakers may not have equal or advanced proficiency in all the languages, but they use all their languages and competences to communicate.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

In spite of the number of HL programs available today in the United States, research at the program level is scarce. In fact, the impact of HL programs on linguistic and socio-affective development remains to be explored comprehensively. The same can be said about

the impact of mixed HL/L2 language programs, with research suggesting that HL learners' language experiences and socio-affective needs are ignored in this educational context due to the prevalence of traditional L2-oriented pedagogical approaches that do not purposely focus on the development of a critical language awareness. This is problematic since traditional L2-oriented approaches, as opposed to CLA approaches, neglect HL varieties and overlook language practices that deviate from the standard norm. CLA principles are crucial in allowing HL students to make their own linguistic choices.

The present study contributes to filling this gap by examining HL learners' CLA in a mixed Spanish undergraduate program at a small private university in the eastern United States, in order to understand the impact of mixed programs on CLA development. To do so, we rely on the questionnaire developed by [Beaudrie et al. \(2019, 2020\)](#) to measure CLA. Additionally, this study identifies sociolinguistic areas that should be further explored in mixed language programs to promote CLA development.

This analysis will ultimately help rethink some areas of the current Spanish curriculum so that students become more aware of, and learn to value, language diversity. The research questions that guided the study are the following:

1. What are HL students' levels of CLA in a mixed language program?
2. What is the impact of a mixed Spanish language program on HL students' levels of CLA?
3. What sociolinguistic areas should be more represented in a mixed language program to increase HL students' levels of CLA?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

The questionnaire was distributed to an initial pool of 30 participants, of which 16 responded and completed the questionnaire in its entirety. Most respondents (14/16) were HL undergraduate students majoring or minoring in Spanish at a small private university on the United States East Coast and two were recent graduates. At the time the study was conducted, 4 (25%) respondents had declared Spanish as their major, and 4 other respondents (25%) had declared it as their minor. The remaining 8 were either undecided but leaning towards declaring a Spanish major or minor, or were about to declare their major or minor. In the meantime, they were completing courses that counted towards one or the other. Most respondents had also declared other majors or minors, such as nursing, international studies, political science, accounting, education, or psychology, in most cases double majoring or minoring with Spanish. It is important to note that when this questionnaire was distributed, none of the respondents had taken a newly developed advanced-level language course designed specifically for Spanish HL students, which was offered for the first time in the Fall semester of 2020.

While most of them (11/16) considered themselves HL speakers (see comments 1–2 below), others questioned their HL identity, often referring to changing patterns of language use and proficiency levels (see comments 3–4 below). It should be noted that those who do not self-identify as HL speakers show traits of language insecurity. Consistent with our definition of HL speakers as plurilingual speakers (see Section 1.3), participants SHL5² and SHL14 were included as participants of the study.

1. Yes, [I identify myself as a heritage speaker of Spanish]. I have been speaking Spanish since before I learned English. I went to a school where I was taught to speak, listen, read, and write in both languages. I carried through this kind of learning until 11th grade. I've continued with Spanish in college by majoring in it. (SHL2)
2. Yes, [I identify myself as a heritage speaker of Spanish], because I grew up speaking Spanish and I still continue to speak Spanish every day at home. Even though between my siblings and I we mostly speak English, but around my parents and family we switch to Spanish. (SHL6)

² SHL stands for Spanish heritage learner and the number serves as an anonymous participant identifier.

3. No, I don't identify myself as a heritage speaker because after the age of 5 most of my speaking was done in English. My Spanish communication skills have weakened over the years. (SHL5)
4. I do not identify myself as a heritage speaker of Spanish. When I think of "heritage speaker", I think of a person who was born in a Spanish speaking country and has surrounded by the Spanish language only. I was born in the United States and both Spanish and English have been a part of how I communicate with others. Although I was surrounded by the Spanish language my whole life, I do sometimes forget some vocabulary, and my pronunciation isn't too good. I sometimes even mess up the pronunciation in the English language as well. (SHL14)

Age, gender, origin, age of arrival (when applicable), academic standing, and language experiences are summarized in Table 1. Overall, most respondents had been born in the U.S. or migrated to the U.S. at a young age (mean: 5.21) from Latin American countries, including Chile, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are two participants who arrived between the ages of 11 and 15 and who were just starting the program when the study was conducted. Most respondents indicated starting to learn Spanish and English before they were 5 years old. Regarding patterns of language use, most respondents indicated speaking mostly Spanish before age 5, and increasingly speaking both Spanish and English after then. About their education, most respondents reported taking Spanish classes in middle school (mean: 2 years) and high school (mean: 2.69 years).

Respondents rated their language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) in both English and Spanish (see Tables 2 and 3). In general, the ratings revealed a more advanced proficiency in English in all four skills, and especially in listening, reading, and writing, with all self-ratings being at the advanced or native-like levels. In Spanish, participants' ratings are more spread across all proficiency levels, but self-ratings seem to be higher (at the native-like or advanced levels) for receptive skills, that is, listening and reading, than for productive abilities: speaking or writing.

Although research has shown that language brokering is a common language practice among Spanish HL learners in the U.S. (e.g., Tse 1995a; Valdés 2003; Orellana et al. 2003a; Gasca Jiménez 2019), research studies do not typically report on students' language brokering experiences when discussing their linguistic profiles. Because the study of CLA involves the exploration of the language practices of HL learners, the respondents of this study were asked to report about their language brokering experiences. Twelve respondents (75%) indicated what they translated for their families while growing up, whereas the remaining 4 (25%) did not. Of those, 12.8 (66.6%) answered they started translating when they were 6–12 years old, and 4 (33.3%) when they were 13–18. When asked about how often they translated for their families growing up, 5 respondents (41.67%) responded a few times a week, 2 (16.67%) a few times a month, and 5 (41.67%) did it every day. About translating nowadays, 2 (16.67%) keep translating a few times a week, 6 (50%) a few times a month, 1 (8.33%) a few times a year, and 3 (25%) keep translating for their families every day.

In sum, the students in the sample are motivated students who have decided to study Spanish. They have productive and receptive skills in the HL, as well as previous educational experience with the HL, and use English and Spanish regularly. Students were split into two groups depending on the number of courses they had completed before taking part in the study. While participants in Group 1 had completed zero, one, or two classes (11 respondents), participants in Group 2 had completed 3 or more (5 respondents).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Age	17–19 years	62.50%
	20–22 years	37.50%
Gender	Female	62.50%
	Male	37.50%
Academic Standing	Freshman	37.50%
	Sophomore	31.25%
	Senior	18.75%
	Graduate	12.50%
Country of origin	United States	56.25%
	Latin America	43.75%
Age of arrival to the U.S.	Less than 1 year	6.25%
	1–5 years	25%
	6–10 years	-
	11–15 years	12.50%
	Not applicable	56.25%
Age of acquisition (English)	0–5 years	87.50%
	6–12 years	12.50%
Age of acquisition (Spanish)	0–5 years	87.50%
	6–12 years	12.50%
Language use (0–5 years)	Spanish	68.75%
	English	12.50%
	Both	18.75%
Language use (6–12 years)	Spanish	12.50%
	English	43.75%
	Both	43.75%
Language use (12–18 years)	Spanish	-
	English	37.50%
	Both	62.50%
Language use (at present)	Spanish	-
	English	37.50%
	Both	62.50%
Years of instruction in middle school (Spanish)	0–1	31.25%
	2–3	68.75%
Years of instruction in high school (Spanish)	0–1	25%
	2–4	75%

Table 2. Respondents' Proficiency Self-Ratings in Spanish.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Native-like	62.50%	33.33%	37.5%	25%
Advanced	18.75%	46.66%	31.25%	25%
Intermediate	12.50%	20%	31.25%	31.25%
Low	6.25%	-	-	18.75%

Table 3. Respondents' Proficiency Self-Ratings in English.

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Native-like	93.75%	75%	87.5%	75%
Advanced	6.25%	25%	6.25%	25%
Intermediate	-	-	6.25%	-
Low	-	-	-	-

2.2. Educational Context

The mixed language program under study is offered at a small, private liberal arts university in the eastern United States. The student body is predominantly white, with minority students representing approximately 15% of currently enrolled students. This is relevant to understanding why the present study was conducted with mixed classes composed of both L2 and HL learners, since there is not a specific track for HL learners at this university. Additionally, it is important to study mixed classes since research indicates that in a mixed class environment more attention is given to L2 learners than to HL learners (Carreira 2017). The Spanish major and minor offered at this institution comprise a wide array of courses, which cover a variety of topics, such as theoretical and applied linguistics, peninsular and Latin American literature and cinema, and Spanish for the professions. Students need to complete 10 of these courses to complete the major, and 5 to complete the minor. Three of these courses are required for all students: “Topics in Language and Culture”, “Analysis and Interpretation of Hispanic Literature”, and a capstone seminar course where students need to conduct an in-depth research project. The “Topics in Language and Culture” course is the first one students need to complete before taking any other courses counting towards the major or minor. This course provides students with a thorough review of all grammar and vocabulary seen in lower-level language courses, so that they are better prepared to successfully complete the remaining upper-level courses in the different subject areas. Recently, a different version of this course was created to satisfy the needs of the growing population of heritage speakers in the program. It is also important to note that this Spanish program, similarly to other Spanish programs across the country, has predominantly had a focus on Peninsular and Latin American literature. However, in recent years, new courses on different areas of linguistics (e.g., “Introduction to Spanish Linguistics” and “Bilingualism in the Spanish-Speaking World”) and translation studies (e.g., “Translation Theory and Practice: Spanish and English”) have been created and added to the Spanish curriculum. A short-term goal is to create additional courses in these areas so that offerings in this area become as numerous as they are in the area of literature. Although in its current form the program does not systematically integrate a CLA approach, the courses in the areas of linguistics and translation studies do focus on language ideologies, language diversity, bilingualism, and Spanish in the US.

2.3. Procedure

The survey was distributed via Google Forms in June 2020. It included a comprehensive background questionnaire and the CLA questionnaire developed by Beaudrie et al. (2019, 2020). Respondents were presented an overview of the research project and were told that their participation was completely voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time. They were also instructed that their responses would be anonymous, and that they would not receive any type of compensation (monetary, etc.) for their participation. The researchers presented all questions in both Spanish and English, so that limited proficiency in one of the languages would not affect the responses provided if only presented in one language. The items from Beaudrie et al.’s (2019, 2020) CLA questionnaire were translated into Spanish.

Once respondents had completed both questionnaires, the researchers proceeded to analyze their responses. Given that one of the goals of the present study was to account for the evolution of CLA as students advance through the program, they were split into two groups depending on the number of courses completed before participating in the study: Group 1 had completed zero, one, or two classes (11 respondents), and Group 2 had completed 3 or more (5 respondents). It is important to note that no explicit pedagogical intervention was implemented to promote CLA development in any of the courses offered in the program at the time the study was conducted. Instead, the present research accounts for any potential changes in CLA as participants are exposed to different course contents, differing in themes and levels of difficulty, and teaching approaches in a mixed instructional context before implementing, in a systematic way, any CLA-oriented pedagogies. Thus,

no CLA evolution was necessarily expected to happen. However, CLA-related areas which tend to be overlooked in this instructional context were expected to be identified. Finally, it should be clarified that, while the program in its current form still places a heavy emphasis on Latin American and Peninsular literature, more courses on linguistics, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics are being developed. The authors plan to implement the pedagogical implications offered at the end of the manuscript during the implementation and articulation of these courses.

2.4. Measures

The comprehensive background questionnaire consisted of 40 questions that collected respondents' biodata (e.g., age, gender) and other relevant background information (e.g., academic standing, age of acquisition, language skills). The critical language awareness questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of 19 questions, which addressed language variation, language prejudice, and language ideologies (items 1 to 8); bilingualism, Spanglish, and code-switching (items 9 to 16); and language maintenance (items 17 to 19). Following Beaudrie et al. (2019, 2020), all items were rated using a Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree or very unlikely) to 6 (strongly agree or very likely). With regards to its reliability, Beaudrie et al. (2019) indicated that "the questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71, which is an acceptable value. In addition, after a series of statistical analysis to investigate how well the instrument met the criteria of reliability and validity, it was found that the 19-item instrument had adequate psychometric properties in the context of Spanish HL education in the southwestern U.S.". In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire for our sample, a Cronbach's alpha was run. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained, which indicates a good internal consistency (Mellinger and Hanson 2017).

3. Results

On average, both groups of students showed a somewhat high/high level of CLA. The mean score for Group 1 is 4.5/6, and for Group 2 is 4.9/6 (see Table 4). A Mann–Whitney test³ indicated that differences between groups were not statistically significant, $U = 18.000$, $z = -1.086$, $p = 0.320$. For Group 1 the highest scored section was Part 3 ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.89$), whereas for Group 2 it was Part 1 ($M = 5.1$, $SD = 0.77$). The fact that students in Group 1 scored high in Part 3, which focuses on the maintenance and promotion of U.S. Spanish, seems to suggest that this group of HL learners start the program with a strong motivation to use, expand, and maintain their heritage language.

Table 4. Critical Language Awareness (CLA) Questionnaire Results ($N = 16$).

Parts	Group 1		Group 2		Difference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
Part 1: Language variation, linguistic diversity, English and language ideologies	4.4	0.77	5.1	0.77	0.70
Part 2: Spanish in the U.S., bilingualism, and code-switching	4.6	1.15	4.8	0.98	0.20
Part 3: Language maintenance	4.8	0.42	4.9	0.31	0.10
Total	4.5	0.89	4.9	0.80	0.40

The overall results indicate that students in both groups have positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity, bilingualism, and, more specifically, U.S. Spanish. Table 5 presents a number of the items used in the instrument. For example, both groups disagree with the idea that immigrants should abandon their heritage language and culture in order to assimilate to the dominant language and culture (G1: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 0.79$; G2: $M = 5.6$,

³ Because of the unbalanced design of the study, i.e., the different numbers of subjects in each group, a non-parametric test was used.

$SD = 0.55$. See item 6 on Table 5). Similarly, they disagree with the exclusive use of English in the public sphere (G1: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.98$; G2: $M = 6$, $SD = 0$. See item 7 on Table 5). This disagreement is particularly strong in Group 2. Furthermore, they oppose the idea that growing up bilingual, in this case speaking both English and Spanish, confuses children (G1: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.79$; G2: $M = 6$, $SD = 0$. See item 8 on Table 5), with Group 2 also disagreeing strongly with this item.

Table 5. Mean Results for Selected CLA Questionnaire Items.

Items	Group 1		Group 2		Both Groups	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
6. In my opinion, it's more important for immigrants to learn English and adopt the American culture than to keep their own language and culture.	5.3	0.79	5.6	0.55	5.4	1.09
7. In my opinion, families can speak Spanish among themselves at home but when in public they should speak English to each other.	4.8	1.98	6	-	5.4	1.64
8. I believe growing up with both Spanish and English confuses children.	4.8	0.79	6	-	5.4	1.56
9. If I were to give a professional presentation, I would try to avoid working with a partner who has a strong foreign accent in English.	5.3	1.13	5.6	0.55	5.4	1.20
10. I believe people who speak Spanglish should switch to just Spanish or English.	5.3	0.95	5	1.41	5.1	1.17
11. I don't like it when people say "parquear" instead of "estacionar".	5.3	0.53	5.4	0.89	5.3	1.08
12. I don't like it when people code-switch because it is not a proper way of speaking a language.	5	0.9	4.8	1.10	4.9	1
18. After college, I would commit to reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Spanish every day to continue developing my language.	5.2	0.79	4.8	1.79	5	1.18
19. I would speak to Hispanic students at my university about the benefits of keeping Spanish alive in the U.S.	4.9	1.15	5.2	1.79	5.1	1.46

Moreover, both groups show very positive attitudes toward bilingualism in general, and bilingual practices in particular. For instance, both groups indicated that they would feel comfortable working with a partner who had a strong foreign accent in English in a professional context (G1: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 1.13$; G2: $M = 5.6$, $SD = 0.55$. See item 9 on Table 5). Likewise, both groups indicated feeling comfortable when other speakers use Spanglish (G1: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 0.95$; G2: $M = 5$, $SD = 1.41$. See item 10 on Table 5); employ linguistic forms attributed to U.S. Spanish (G1: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 0.53$; G2: $M = 5.4$, $SD = 0.89$. See item 11 on Table 5); and code-switch (G1: $M = 5$, $SD = 0.9$; G2: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.10$. See item 12 on Table 5).

In addition to valuing linguistic diversity and having positive attitudes towards bilingualism and Spanish in the United States, both groups of respondents showed a strong commitment to the maintenance of their heritage language. They indicated that they would continue studying Spanish on their own (G1: $M = 5.2$, $SD = 0.79$; G2: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.79$. See item 18 on Table 5) and that they would be willing to discuss the benefits of keeping Spanish alive in the U.S. with other HL students (G1: $M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.15$; G2: $M = 5.2$, $SD = 1.79$. See item 19 on Table 5).

However, a closer look at the answers to individual questions from both groups reveals standard language ideologies, as well as the personal avoidance of plurilingual language practices such as code-switching. Some students seem to believe that Spanish spoken in Spain is superior to other Spanish varieties (G1: $M = 3.3$, $SD = 1.15$; G2: $M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.48$).

See item 1 on Table 6). Similarly, students in Group 1 seemed to favor standard language forms (G1: $M = 3.3$, $SD = 1.50$. See item 2 on Table 6). Perhaps most notoriously, students in both groups indicated that they would avoid code-switching as much as possible (G1: $M = 2.1$, $SD = 1.07$; G2: $M = 2.8$, $SD = 2.17$. G1: $M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.53$; G2: $M = 4$, $SD = 0.71$. See items 15 and 16 on Table 6), despite showing positive attitudes toward code-switching when performed by others (G1: $M = 5.3$, $SD = 0.95$; G2: $M = 5$, $SD = 1.41$. G1: $M = 5$, $SD = 0.9$; G2: $M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.10$. See items 10 and 12 on Table 5). It is interesting to note that, while respondents seemed to reject code-switching, they showed very positive attitudes toward language brokering in the background questionnaire. Overall, they indicated that they are proud of helping their families by language brokering for them, and stated that translating and interpreting is part of their experiences as bilingual speakers. Both code-switching and language brokering are considered plurilingual language practices.

Table 6. Mean Results for Selected CLA Questionnaire Items.

Items	Group 1		Group 2		Both Groups	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. People from Spain speak the purest form of Spanish.	3.3	1.15	3.8	1.48	3.5	1.26
2. In my opinion, people should use standard Spanish to communicate all the time.	3.3	1.50	4.6	1.14	3.9	1.49
15. I would try to avoid mixing Spanish and English in the same conversation as much as I can.	2.1	1.07	2.8	2.17	2.4	1.35
16. I would not code-switch in front of my teachers because they may think I am less intelligent.	3.8	1.53	4	0.71	3.9	1.15

The increased levels of CLA in Group 2 (see Table 4) suggest that the mixed language program under study has a positive impact on the development of CLA in HL students. The greatest development of CLA is in the area of language variation, linguistic diversity, and language ideologies. Students in Group 2, unlike most students in Group 1, disagree with the generalized use of standard language forms in communication (G2: $M = 4.6$, $SD = 1.14$. See item 2 on Table 7). Similarly, all of the respondents in Group 2 opposed the exclusion of the use of heritage languages in public contexts (G2: $M = 6$, $SD = 0$. See item 7 on Table 7), and believed in the benefits of growing up in bilingual contexts (G2: $M = 6$, $SD = 0$. See item 8 on Table 7).

Table 7. Mean Results for Selected CLA Questionnaire Items.

Items	Group 1		Group 2		Difference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
2. In my opinion, people should use standard Spanish to communicate all the time.	3.3	1.50	4.6	1.14	1.3
7. In my opinion, families can speak Spanish among themselves at home but when in public they should speak English to each other.	4.8	1.98	6	-	1.2
8. I believe growing up with both Spanish and English confuses children.	4.8	0.79	6	-	1.2

Despite improvements in their attitudes toward non-standard language forms, the public use of heritage languages, and bilingualism, students in Group 2 continue to show the effects of standard language ideologies. Their answers suggest that most of them believe that Spanish from Spain is somehow “superior” to other varieties (G2: $M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.48$. See item 1 on Table 8). This is not surprising given the marked preference that this variety has traditionally had in Spanish language education in general. In addition,

their answers indicate that they would continue to avoid code-switching (G2: $M = 2.8$, $SD = 2.17$. See item 15 on Table 8).

Table 8. Mean Results for Selected CLA Questionnaire Items.

Items	Group 1		Group 2		Difference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
1. People from Spain speak the purest form of Spanish.	3.3	1.15	3.8	1.48	0.50
15. I would try to avoid mixing Spanish and English in the same conversation as much as I can.	2.1	1.07	2.8	2.17	0.70

In sum, data trends suggest that the students in the mixed language program under study have somewhat high/high levels of CLA. The increased levels of CLA in Group 2, i.e., students who had completed three courses or more in the program, suggest that this program contributes positively toward HL students' CLA development. However, two areas which would benefit from a closer examination in the program were identified: language ideologies and plurilingual language practices. Overall, the respondents showed a preference for standard language varieties and a personal rejection of the use of certain plurilingual language practices. In the next section, ideas for the development of positive attitudes toward non-standard language varieties and the normalization of plurilingual language practices in mixed language programs will be explored.

4. Discussion

To our knowledge, this is one of the first studies to look quantitatively at the development of Spanish HL learners' CLA in a mixed language context. The overall CLA levels are similar to the results of [Beaudrie et al.'s \(2020\)](#) study. Nevertheless, it should be noted that their study design was different: it was a within-subjects longitudinal study. It should also be acknowledged that the geographical areas of both studies differ considerably. The availability of HL programs on the East Coast is much lower than in the Southwest. While language programs with an HL track offering different levels of instruction are fairly common in the Southwest, this is not the case on the East Coast, where language programs, if offering HL-specific instruction, typically offer an advanced course, which assumes productive skills in the language. The HL learner populations of both studies are also different. While the majority of participants in [Beaudrie et al.'s \(2020\)](#) study were of Mexican descent, the origins of the respondents in our study were very diverse: Spain, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Syria.

In [Beaudrie et al.'s \(2020\)](#) study, the participants showed a somewhat high and high level of CLA (4.6/6) at the beginning of the course, and an almost high level (4.9/6) at the end of it. Most (74%) students showed an increase in their CLA levels. Additionally, the authors note that learners' attitudes toward code-switching and their personal way of speaking improved, as evidenced by students' qualitative responses. Similarly, the respondents of our study showed a somewhat high/high level of CLA (G1 = 4.5/6; G2 = 4.9/6) at the time the study was conducted. However, these CLA levels could be explained, at least partially, by the linguistic profiles and motivations of the students in the sample. All students had been placed directly into advanced-level language courses, used both Spanish and English regularly, and most reported speaking Spanish and translating and interpreting for their families regularly. In other words, the sample of the present study includes strong bilinguals with a commitment to their HL language and culture. Their commitment to language maintenance is reflected in their answers to the background questionnaire. When asked about why they decided to study Spanish, students referred to their professional careers (see 1 and 2 below) and their personal connection to the language (see 3, 4 and 5 below):

1. I was an International Studies major before I was a Spanish major and I decided I wanted to incorporate my Spanish into my college and future career. (SHL2)
2. I love the language and loved learning it in high school. As a future health care professional, I know it will aid me in communicating with my patients and providing culturally competent care. (SHL4)
3. I decided to study Spanish before Fairfield to enhance my grammar skills and stay on top of the language since English started to become more prevalent in my household. (SHL7)
4. I want to keep learning more about my native language and enhance my skills. (SHL8)
5. I fell in love with the language and wanted to be able to communicate with more people. (SHL10)

Some courses, particularly those with CLA components, may also have contributed to the CLA levels identified in our study. Therefore, it would seem that the somewhat high and high levels of CLA identified by the current study can be explained by an interaction between starting attitudes and coursework.

Another notable difference between our study and [Beaudrie et al.'s \(2020\)](#) is that the HL learners in our study tended to favor standard language varieties and avoided mixing English and Spanish, which may be a result of the strong impact of language ideologies in educational contexts. Likewise, unlike [Leeman and Serafini's \(2020\)](#) HL students who often resisted standard language ideologies by asserting their linguistic and cultural authority and expertise, the students in our study predominantly accepted generalized notions of the "superiority" of some varieties and language practices over others.

Mixed language programs typically favor the needs of second language students over those of HL students. [Carreira \(2017\)](#) indicated that mixed classes tend to function as traditional L2 classes even when the majority of students are HL learners, and emphasized that most mixed classes rely on pedagogical materials specifically designed for L2 learners. In the present study, this is reflected by the prevalence of standard language ideologies in the respondents, and by their personal avoidance of plurilingual language practices. Traditional L2 classes are known for favoring target language-only practices, prohibiting plurilingual language practices such as code-switching and focusing heavily on standard language forms. Some authors have attributed these practices to a monolingual bias that has significantly shaped the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (e.g., [Cook and Wei 2016](#); [Ortega 2014, 2019](#)). [Ortega \(2019\)](#) explains that SLA relies on monolingual first language acquisition as a reference, and that it assumes that learning a language from birth results in a superior linguistic competence. She also refers to generally unquestioned purist and standard language ideologies in the field, and warns about their negative impact on plurilingual speakers.

Based on the results described in the previous section, there are two areas that could benefit from a wider representation in the curriculum of mixed language programs: language ideologies and plurilingual language practices. Mixed language programs should find spaces for the examination of these topics, not only in upper-division courses but in lower-division language courses as well. In what follows we outline some general considerations for the study of these two areas. Despite our focus on language ideologies and plurilingual language practices, it should be emphasized that CLA connects with many other areas, such as language variation and language maintenance.

4.1. Language Ideologies

While language ideologies are a common topic of discussion in HL-specific courses and programs, in mixed language programs they are typically only discussed in upper-division courses with a sociolinguistic orientation. Based on the findings of this study, it may be advisable to introduce language ideologies early on in the curriculum, ideally in language-oriented courses. Following [Fuller and Leeman \(2020, p. 64\)](#), the definitions of language ideologies employed should emphasize that they are cultural representations that go beyond individual opinions. It can be helpful for students to learn that language

ideologies are shaped by linguistic and social factors, such as race and socioeconomical status. Equally important is encouraging them to examine how language ideologies are naturalized and popularized. One approach to helping students understand how language ideologies are widespread is by having them analyze in what contexts ethno-racial classifications, such as Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx, are typically employed. Students could also reflect about the role of Mock Spanish (e.g., Hill 2007) in the generalization of negative ideologies around Spanish and Spanish-speakers. Fuller and Leeman (2020, p. 141) define Mock Spanish as “saying things that sound like Spanish but with no real attempt to actually speak Spanish”. They explain that it is a way of racializing language used by people who do not speak the language in an attempt to underestimate Spanish-speakers.

After discussing Mock Spanish, students could be introduced to the related concept of Inverted Spanglish (Rosa 2016). Inverted Spanglish refers to the language practice of U.S. Latinxs of combining Spanish linguistic forms and English pronunciation to produce ethnolinguistic identities. As opposed to Mock Spanish, it signals familiarity with both English and Spanish, but does not explicitly critique nor embrace English-only ideologies. An example of Inverted Spanglish is to use hyper-anglicized pronunciations of common Spanish words (see Rosa 2016 for more examples). In Rosa’s words (2016, p. 66), “U.S. Latinas/os not only navigate but also transform linguistic boundaries”. Students should definitely be exposed to ethnolinguistic analyses such as Rosa’s (2016) so as to better understand the complexity and diversity of plurilingual speakers’ language practices.

A related notion to which students may be introduced when discussing negative language ideologies is language prejudice. In general terms, language prejudice can be defined as an adverse pre-judgment against the characteristics of a language and its speakers (Lippi-Green 2002). Lippi-Green (2002, p. 289) explains that language is often used as a discriminatory trait and warns that we are “much less conscious and much less concerned about it”. Because language variation is often the source of language prejudice, students could be encouraged to reflect about the relationship between the two. In particular, students could analyze how false assumptions about language, e.g., certain language varieties are better than others, are often used “to justify judgments that have more to do with race, national origin, regional affiliation, ethnicity, and religion than with human language and communication” (Lippi-Green 2002, p. 292). Similarly, they could focus on the role language prejudice plays in the construction of language ideologies.

Additionally, given students’ unquestioned acceptance of standard language forms, it would be particularly valuable for students in mixed language programs to engage in an examination of standard language ideologies (e.g., Lippi-Green 1994, 2002), which can be defined as “a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, non-varying spoken language”. (Lippi-Green 1994, p. 289). Students should be challenged to think about who decides what a standard language form is. Similarly, it may prove useful to have them reflect on the impact of standard language ideologies on their own language learning process. Other related language ideologies students could analyze are the one nation/one language ideology, the English-only ideology, and the monoglossic ideology of language (Fuller and Leeman 2020). Monoglossic ideologies assume that languages are independent and have clear boundaries between them. They are also known for promoting monolingualism as the norm (García and Torres-Guevara 2010). The exploration of monoglossic ideologies is particularly relevant to laying the foundation for the exploration of the negative ideologies associated with plurilingual language practices. Likewise, students may learn about raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017), which refer to the stigmatization of the language practices of racialized populations “regardless of the extent to which these practices might seem to correspond to standardized norms”. (Rosa and Flores 2017, p. 623).

4.2. Plurilingual Language Practices

Plurilingual language practices, i.e., language practices employed by plurilingual speakers that rely on an integrated, holistic language repertoire, are rarely discussed outside courses with sociolinguistic components. However, similar to language ideolo-

gies, they could be investigated throughout the curriculum in such a way that students normalize and promote their use. Some examples of plurilingual language practices are code-switching and language brokering. Interestingly, the students in the current sample showed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward language brokering, but seemed to reject code-switching as a personal language practice.

To promote the development of positive attitudes toward code-switching and plurilingual language practices in general, students should first realize that, nowadays, plurilingual societies are the norm rather than the exception. For example, students could be asked to look for and analyze data related to the most commonly spoken languages in the United States. Similarly, they could be asked to present the latest data on the Latinx community available on the Pew Research Center's website. It may be helpful to encourage students to adopt a realistic view of what it means to be a speaker of multiple languages. To achieve this, conceptualizations of speakers of multiple languages as plurilingual speakers could be promoted. First, students could be introduced to the concept of plurilingualism, which refers to "the intrinsic capacity of all speakers to use and learn, alone or through teaching, more than one language", and "to the ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for distinct purposes" (Council of Europe 2000, p. 168). Second, students could be asked to compare the concept of plurilingual competence (e.g., Canagarajah and Liyanage 2012; Piccardo et al. 2019) to more traditional views of language competence. A crucial point to make is that plurilinguals have "a single, inter-related, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks" (Council of Europe 2018, p. 28), such as switching from one language (or language variety) to another, and mediating between individuals who are unable to do so on their own due to a lack of common language. Once the concepts of plurilingualism, plurilingual speaker, and plurilingual competence are presented, students could be encouraged to identify plurilingual language practices, such as code-switching and language brokering. For example, students could be asked to document examples of code-switching in their communities and analyze them with their peers. Because code-switching is often used as a communicative strategy, students should be encouraged to identify its communicative functions. Similarly, students could be encouraged to reflect on their own use of code-switching: When do they use it? For what purpose? Are they aware of their use? Students could also be given the opportunity to describe and talk about their own past and current language brokering experiences through autobiographic projects. Studying both practices, i.e., code-switching and language brokering, side to side may have a positive impact on their understanding of code-switching.

In addition to encouraging the reflection about personal language practices, it is important to promote students' agency outside the classroom, which is a known challenge for critical pedagogical approaches (Leeman et al. 2011). To do so, partnerships could be developed with community associations in need of translators and/or interpreters (for recommendations about building community partnerships and service-learning opportunities see, for instance, Leeman et al. 2011; Martínez and Schwartz 2012; Lowther Pereira 2018). For example, similar to Lowther Pereira's (2015) use of journals in a service-learning context, students could be asked to keep a journal wherein they document their language practices, including their use of code-switching and their role as language brokers.

In addition to discussing plurilingualism explicitly in mixed language programs, it would be extremely beneficial if these programs adopted a plurilingual perspective that embraces, normalizes, and promotes students' diverse language practices. In order to do so, instructors could act as plurilingual models for their students (Haukås 2016) and create plurilingual classroom spaces where the use diverse language practices is encouraged. Through the exposure to plurilingual language practices in an educational setting, it is likely that HL students' attitudes toward these practices will improve. Similarly, the explicit discussion of these practices could benefit L2 learners as well, since, in most cases, the latter outnumber HL learners in mixed classes, and fostering a better and more inclusive

communication between these two groups is key for the success of all students in a Spanish program.

4.3. Future Curricular Plan and Limitations

Several CLA scholars have underscored the importance of having practitioners reflect on their own understandings of the complex relationship between language and bilingualism in order to be prepared “to address students’ skepticism and commonsense ideologies that are perceived as truths throughout their entire lives” (Beaudrie et al. 2020, p. 17). Therefore, our first short-term goal is to offer specialized workshops in SHL pedagogy and CLA to the faculty members in our program. Ensuring that all faculty members have training in CLA will facilitate the purposeful integration of a CLA approach throughout the program. Next, we will revisit existing courses to increase their impact on students’ CLA. For example, particular attention will be paid to the treatment of language variation in lower-level language classes, as textbooks for these courses are known for normalizing and promoting “standard” varieties. Introductory modules on language variation will be designed and integrated into elementary-level Spanish courses to help students identify and embrace language diversity in general, and Spanish language diversity in particular. In addition, intermediate- and advanced-level Spanish language students will be encouraged to document and reflect upon the Spanish varieties spoken around them in their communities through sociolinguistic projects, such as linguistic landscapes (Prada and Turnbull 2018). Additionally, the existing CLA modules in linguistic and translation courses will be revisited to allow for a more systematic articulation between them. Similarly, the treatment of language diversity in existing literature courses will be analyzed, and spaces for the exploration of language ideologies will also be identified.

Moreover, we will continue to offer regularly the only HL-specific language course in the program and, if presented with the opportunity for implementing an HL track in the future, we will strive to offer different levels of instruction so that receptive HL learners also have the opportunity to study their heritage language. Similarly to Holguín Mendoza’s (2018) proposal, we would implement CLA pedagogies throughout the program, not just in specific courses. In this vein, we would actively promote plurilingual language practices and intentionally foster their language mediation skills.

Likewise, we will implement a recently approved upper-division sociolinguistics course titled “Languages and identities: Sociolinguistic approaches to Spanish in the U.S.”. This course offers an introduction to sociolinguistics with a focus on U.S. Spanish. Particular emphasis is placed on the social and political issues that impact the use and representation of Spanish. A remarkable aspect of this course is that it integrates a service learning component with the coursework. During the second half of the semester, after having explored language variation in detail, students work on authentic translation tasks for the community. They translate from English into Spanish materials that are not currently available in Spanish to the Spanish-speaking community, and are encouraged to reflect on their role as mediators. During the completion of these translation tasks, they need to pay particular attention to the characteristics of the target Spanish audience and make linguistic decisions accordingly. Rather than favoring certain translation choices over others, students are asked to defend and justify their choices, which allows them to exercise agency in making their own decisions about language use.

Finally, we will incorporate a similar service learning component into the existing introductory translation course. There are a number of local organizations with whom we have occasionally collaborated; however, we plan on establishing more formal partnerships to ensure academic continuity. Following the best practices in the field (e.g., Abbott and Martínez 2018), we will make sure community partners are informed about the characteristics of HL students so that they can make the most of their strengths and offer them as much guidance as needed. Likewise, we will promote community partners’ participation in course design and assessment as much as possible.

Regarding the limitations of the study, it should be noted that the limited number of participants does not allow for generalizations. Rather, the present findings should be interpreted as potential trends that could be confirmed in future studies with a greater number of participants. Along these lines, the analyses performed and their findings should be interpreted with care, given the unequal group sizes and, particularly, the size of Group 2. Similarly, it will prove useful to follow a longitudinal design to analyze more successfully the impact of the mixed language program, so that the same student can be compared at two different points in time. Additionally, this study examined mixed classes, but only focused on HL learners due to time constraints. For future research, it would be interesting to also account for any CLA evolution in L2 learners as well, so that a comparison between both groups of learners could be established. Thus, the future directions include increasing the pool of participants, having more equal group sizes, collecting longitudinal data, and including L2 learners' CLA evolution, which would yield more robust findings.

5. Conclusions

To conclude, this study offers a first look at Spanish HL learners' CLA in a mixed language program. All in all, the results suggest that the program under study, coupled with learners' strong motivation to maintain and enhance their HL skills, does not lead to lower CLA levels. In fact, learners showed increasingly positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity, bilingualism, and, more specifically, U.S. Spanish as they advanced through the program. However, other relevant areas, such as code-switching and the acceptance of non-standard language forms, did not appear to evolve in the same manner, as students' views of these areas remained unchanged at the end of the program. Addressing language ideologies and plurilingual language practices more explicitly in the different courses of the program might help improve students' attitudes toward the use of code-switching and non-standard language forms. In sum, the findings of this preliminary study have contributed to shedding some light in the area of CLA development, where research is scant. Although the findings are not conclusive, they can guide Spanish programs in the U.S. (administrators and practitioners alike) with regards to better understanding the socio-affective needs of HL learners enrolled in mixed language programs.

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Appendix A

Likert-type scale questionnaire (adapted from [Beaudrie et al. 2019, 2020](#)).

Following [Beaudrie et al. \(2019, 2020\)](#) all items were scored 1–6, with 6 indicating strongly agree/very likely. In the case of “reversed scoring” (indicated with * below), strongly agree/very likely is scored as 1 and strongly disagree/very unlikely is 6.

Part 1: Language variation, linguistic diversity, English and language ideologies

1. People from Spain speak the purest form of Spanish./La gente de España habla la forma más pura del español.*
2. In my opinion, people should use standard Spanish to communicate all the time./En mi opinión, la gente debería usar el español estándar para comunicarse todo el tiempo.*
3. I believe Spanish-speaking Hispanics in the U.S. don't speak correct Spanish./Creo que los hispanos que hablan español en los EE. UU. no hablan un español correcto.*
4. I feel speaking Spanish is less prestigious than speaking other foreign languages such as French./Creo que hablar español es menos prestigioso que hablar otras lenguas extranjeras como el francés.*
5. In my opinion, speaking English is an essential element of being American./En mi opinión, hablar inglés es un elemento esencial para ser americano./En mi opinión, es más importante que los inmigrantes aprendan inglés y adopten la cultura americana que mantener su propio idioma y cultura.*
6. In my opinion, it's more important for immigrants to learn English and adopt the American culture than to keep their own language and culture./En mi opinión, es más importante que los inmigrantes aprendan inglés y adopten la cultura americana que mantener su propio idioma y cultura.*
7. In my opinion, families can speak Spanish among themselves at home but when in public they should speak English to each other./En mi opinión, las familias pueden hablar español entre sí en casa, pero cuando están en público deben hablar en inglés entre sí.*
8. I believe growing up with both Spanish and English confuses children./Creo que crecer con español e inglés confunde a los niños.*

Part 2: Spanish in the U.S., bilingualism, and code-switching

9. If I were to give a professional presentation, I would try to avoid working with a partner who has a strong foreign accent in English./Si yo tuviera que dar una presentación profesional, trataría de evitar trabajar con un compañero/ una compañera que tuviera un fuerte acento extranjero en inglés.*
10. I believe people who speak Spanglish should switch to just Spanish or English./Creo que la gente que habla Spanglish debería cambiar a sólo español o inglés.*
11. I don't like it when people say “parquear” instead of “estacionar”./No me gusta cuando la gente dice “parquear” en lugar de “estacionar”.*
12. I don't like it when people code-switch because it is not a proper way of speaking a language./No me gusta cuando la gente cambia de código porque no es una forma adecuada de hablar una lengua.*
13. I believe Spanglish should not be allowed in Spanish classes./Creo que el Spanglish no debería estar permitido en las clases de español.*
14. I would tease a friend when speaking Spanish if they forget or invent words./Me burlaría de un amigo o de una amiga al hablar en español si olvidara o inventara palabras.*
15. I would try to avoid mixing Spanish and English in the same conversation as much as I can./Intentaría evitar mezclar el español y el inglés en la misma conversación tanto como pudiera.*
16. I would not code-switch in front of my teachers because they may think I am less intelligent./No cambiaría de código delante de mis profesores porque podrían pensar que soy menos inteligente.*

Part 3: Language maintenance

- 17 I would be willing to join a club who meets every week to discuss how to maintain Spanish within the family and community./Estaría dispuesto/a a unirme a un club que se reuniera cada semana para debatir sobre cómo mantener el español en la familia y en la comunidad.
- 18 After college, I would commit to reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Spanish every day to continue developing my language./Después de la universidad, me comprometería a leer, escribir, hablar y escuchar en español todos los días para seguir desarrollando mi lengua.
- 19 I would speak to Hispanic students at my university about the benefits of keeping Spanish alive in the U.S./Hablaría con los estudiantes hispanos de mi universidad sobre los beneficios de mantener vivo el español en los EE. UU.

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