Spanish for Heritage Language Learners in Chicana/o Studies

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By

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ABSTRACT

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Spanish has become the second most frequent language spoken in California; however, this language is progressively lost among second and third generations and even first generation Latinas/os and Chicanas/os. Therefore, the goal of this research study is to analyze in what ways, if any, a HL class in Chicana/o studies (Spanish for Chicanas/os 101) contributes to the development of the HL students’ ethnic identity and deepened their understanding of language ideologies. Seventeen participants who were enrolled in the only HL course in Chicana/o Studies in all 23 California State Universities (Spanish for Chicanas/os 101) were interviewed in two different occasions. The data was transcribed and coded. The results of the study show that the participants learned more about their ethnic identity and their HL. Specially, the participants strengthened the connection between their HL and their ethnic identity and became closer to both the language and culture. It also influenced them to value and recognize the significance of being bilingual. Furthermore, by getting closer to the linguistic and cultural heritage, many of the participants were able to acknowledge the values of Spanish beyond the economic benefits, such as the importance of their HL to communicate with their loved ones and to interact with members of their community. Additionally, attaching a non-utilitarian value to their HL exposed participants to a new world with new perspectives; such as, discovering hidden passions (e.g. becoming a song writer), being more open minded, informing the community about health issues, or volunteering in Spanish speaking communities. In addition, this HL class in Chicana/o Studies further developed the students' linguistic capital, and transformed them into agents of HL maintenance (Yosso, 2005 & Freire, 2000). This research study emphasizes the importance of implementing more classes such as Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 that bring together the objectives of two disciplines, Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics, that commit to validate students’ culture, expand students’ heritage language, promote language maintenance, and challenge language ideologies. This is significant as it highlights the need for collaboration among disciplines and the importance of interdisciplinary approaches.
Chapter One: Introduction

Melissa was about 17 years old when I first met her. She was a student in one of my Supplemental Instruction classes for incoming freshmen at California State University, Northridge. While we were working on her essay related to language ideologies and their impact on non-English languages in the U.S., she shared with me that she was no longer able to communicate with her mother in Spanish. Melissa stated, “I have to ask my sister to translate every time I speak with my mom.” Unfortunately, Melissa’s situation of not being able to communicate with her mom or other family members because of the loss of her home language is not unique. Spanish is a very widely spoken language in the U.S., so why is it that many young Latinas/os and Chicanas/os are progressively losing their fluency when speaking Spanish? Even though the Spanish speaking community continues to grow? What are we not doing as a society to encourage home language maintenance? What can we do to provide resources and encourage home language maintenance?

According to the U.S. Census, from 2000 to 2010, the Latina/o community increased by 43%, reaching a total of 50.5 million members residing in the U.S. (2010 U.S. Census). In addition to the growth of the Latina/o population, the Spanish speaking community also increased to 37 million speakers (Lipski, 2013, p. 107). In California, in particular, Spanish continues to be the second most frequently spoken language after English; Los Angeles is one of the cities with the highest concentrations of Latinas/os and Chicanas/os and in the U.S., with 4.2 million. Accordingly in California, there is a high presence of Spanish in public places, as well as in social media and advertising (Roca & Colombi, 2003).
With the growth of Spanish speakers in the community, there is also a growth of the number of Spanish speakers in educational settings (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). For example, López Morales (2005) argues that 60% of the students in the U.S. universities who take foreign language classes choose Spanish over other languages, which reveals the important presence Spanish has acquired in the past few decades. (cited in Díaz-Campos, 2014). In addition, Spanish has become the most popular non-English language taught in secondary and post-secondary schools in the U.S. (Macías, 2014). For this reason, López Morales (2005) claims that Spanish should no longer be considered a foreign language; instead it should be referred to as a language of the U.S. whose speakers continue to grow. Spanish, moreover, must be recognized as the second national language of the U.S. (Macías, 2014). It is estimated that by 2030 there will be 535 million Spanish speakers in this country and by 2050 there will be more Spanish speakers in the U.S. than in any other country (as cited in Díaz-Campus, 2014, p. 215). Even though Spanish is the second most common language spoken in California, it is also a language that is commonly loss by the time it reaches the second or third generation of Latinas/os and Chicanas/os. Many of these second and third generation students and even some first generation students, who were brought by their parents to the U.S, are children of Mexicans, Central Americans, and South Americans. Many of these second, third, and some first generation children progressively lose their Spanish and adopt English as their dominant language (Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Zentella, 1997). According to Potowski and Rothman (2011), despite the high number of Spanish speakers in some of the U.S states, the social weakness of Spanish in the U.S hinders the maintenance of this language from generation to generation were by the third generation Spanish is more likely to be loss.
For example, in a study conducted by Porcel (2006) he found that of the participants born in the U.S., 72% stated that they grew up listening to Spanish at home. And of these participants who grew up listening to Spanish at home, 89% claimed that their dominant language and their language of preference was English (cited in Díaz-Campos, 2014, p. 221). There are many factors that contribute to progressive loss of Spanish and these will be discussed later in the thesis.

Although the linguistic history and ability of each Latina/o and Chicana/o Spanish speaker is different, for the purpose of this study, I will use the term Heritage Language (henceforth HL) to refer to this group of speakers of Spanish, a growing group within the Spanish speaking population with different levels of proficiency. A HL speaker is someone who was born or raised and educated in the U.S and who is exposed to a non-English language at home (Valdés, 2001). Moreover, HL speakers of Spanish acquire the language through natural interactions and the exposure to the language through family and community; few of these HL speakers learned their language in academic settings. Often when HL speakers take Spanish classes in high school or college, many educators mistakenly consider these students as proficient native speakers. However, even though HL speakers may have conversational proficiency and understating in the language (fluency), many may need academic skills writing and reading (literacy) in Spanish. These HL speakers cannot be treated as though they are academically prepared to perform as native speakers of Spanish, even though Spanish may have been their first language. In schools where no HL classes are offered, many HL speakers end up in Spanish courses designed for students who are learning Spanish as a foreign language. In these classes, the abilities that HL speakers bring from their lived experiences with
Spanish are not taken into consideration; instead, HL speakers lose valuable academic class time because they are not given the opportunity to develop grammar awareness, reading comprehension, and academic discourse skills (Roca & Colombi, 2003, p. 30). The increasing number of HL speakers has led to a need to implement language classes for these students where they will be given the tools to develop literacy skills in Spanish such as academic writing and reading and an awareness of their HL. In addition, some classes for HL speakers are designed to also allow the student to acquire formal registers both in writing and in speaking. At the same time, some of these HL classes incorporate information about the students’ cultural identity and about the Spanish in the U.S. and its history in order to encourage students to learn to value the variety of Spanish they speak and they bring from home. These classes also help students overcome the potential insecurities and shame they have about their Spanish as a result of the stigmatization of the variety they speak (Potowski, 2005 cited in Díaz-Campos, 2014, p. 255; Parodi, 2008).

Thus, Valdés (1995) argues that educators must use a HL approach in their pedagogy in order to address the needs of HL speakers whose life experiences contribute to their language skills in Spanish and whose skills then might necessarily differ from second language learners. This is because Spanish second language learners on many occasions are only familiar with the standard variety of Spanish since their exposure to the language occurs mainly in academic settings. On the other hand, many HL speakers learn Spanish because it is their first language and their home and community experiences contribute to the development of a stronger base and conversational proficiency in their HL, which is likely different than the Spanish variety used in
academic settings.

Cook (1992) frowns on the native/nonnative dichotomy used to assess second language competency. The same reluctance to use the dichotomy should be shown towards HL speakers. Educators, then, must recognize that Spanish HL speakers possess a multi-competent ability with the languages (Spanish and English) they speak. More importantly, the conversational skills that HL speakers bring from their life experiences should be recognized and appreciated in educational settings because language is a crucial vehicle to education. As Darder (2012) affirms, it is impossible to look at education or society without acknowledging that language is at the core of everything because it is the essential factor that allows everyone to communicate, to produce and have dialogues, and to acquire knowledge (p.105).

Furthermore, language is not only the core vehicle by which we can communicate; it is also a key component that contributes to the construction of an ethnic identity (Potowski, 2012; Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013). Identity can be described as the compilation of aspects and characteristics that define who we are. In particular, identity is dynamic and multifaceted; for example, a person can have a gender identity, social class identity, sexual identity, language identity, culture identity, and more. These identities intersect in order to define a person. In fact, language is an essential aspect that is interconnected to all other aspects of a person’s identity. Speaking Spanish is often recognized as an important trait in “performing” belongingness in the Chicana/o and Latino/a community (Potowski, 2012, p. 180). The interconnection between ethnic identity and Spanish, then, is used in popular culture to address and connect with the Latina/o and Chicana/o community. President Obama exemplified this interconnection in
the recent commercial that extends an invitation to the Latina/o and Chicana/o community to register for health insurance under Obama Care (The White House). He was able to send a message that reflected that he cared for this community by making the effort to use some words in Spanish. Even though he is not a Spanish speaker, it can be assumed that he saw the need to include Spanish words in his presentation, so as to communicate directly with the community. Another example of the important role that Spanish plays in the construction of a Latina/o and Chicana/o identity can be found in communities that are predominately Latino/a and Chicana/o. In these communities, Spanish is present in businesses such as restaurants, laundromats, supermarkets, etc. These examples demonstrate that Spanish is an important trait of this community (Parodi, 2008).

However, it is important to mention that not all Latinas/os and Chicanas/os speak Spanish, nor do all Latinas/os and Chicanas/os consider that they have to speak the language in order to be part of the Latina/o and Chicana/o ethnic group (Roca & Colombi, 2003; Potowski, 2012, p.188). Many of these Latinas/os and Chicanas/os lose their HL progressively from generation to generation and adopt a preference for English. In many cases, they lose the language because some Latina/o and Chicana/o parents and their children do not see an importance to retaining it. The lack of importance may be explained in the fact that Spanish is often marginalized and treated as an inferior language due to language ideologies that create language hierarchies (Roca & Colombi, 2003; Lynch, 2003; Parodi, 2008; Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013). Zentella (2002) also argues that these language ideologies lead many Latinas/os and Chicanas/os to “leave Spanish behind” and to “strive to acquire a variety of English that does not identify them as
Latin@” because they want to be accepted as “real Americans” (p. 322). On the other hand, there are other Chicanas/os and Latinas/os who have constructed creative ways of speaking their variety of Spanish such as Chicano English and Chicano Spanish as a representation of their bilingual identity (Peñalosa, 1980).

The HL speakers who consider Spanish to be a vital aspect for the construction of their bilingual and ethnic identity use this connection as a motivation to take classes that will allow them to maintain and learn new skills in Spanish. This is highlighted in studies that have been conducted in HL classes which confirm that one of the reasons HL speakers take these courses is their desire and motivation to develop skills and proficiency in Spanish because they consider this language to be part of their ethnic identity. In addition, students reflect that HL classes are a source to help them stay connected with their community (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013; Leeman, Rabin & Roman-Mendoza, 2011). For this reason, this thesis research points to the interconnection between language and identity. As Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) asserts, “ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity-I am my language” (p. 81). Our language is part of who we are, it is part of what represents our ethnic identity. Sánchez-Muñoz (2013) also affirms that “la lengua se considera el cordón umbilical entre la cultura y las tradiciones ancestrales y la identidad personal y social de los hablantes” (language is considered the umbilical cord between the culture and traditions and the personal and social identity of the speaker) (p. 230). Therefore, it is fundamental to recognize the importance language has on the development of a person’s identity because this understanding can lead to language equality in educational institutions with the implementation of more HL classes and the deconstruction of social language ideologies.
The importance of acknowledging such interconnections between Spanish and the Latina/o and Chicana/o community can also contribute to the deconstruction of the stigmatization of Spanish and its speakers. This stigma built from the language ideologies constructed by the U.S.’s monolingual society who asserts that promoting bilingualism in the education system is a threat to the nation (Potowski, 2013). The opt for a monolingual society and the rejection of bilingualism appreciation is echoed by a few Presidents of the U.S. President Roosevelt, for example, declared in his speech in 1907 that in the United States there is room for only one flag, the American Flag, and there is room for only one language, the English language. In addition, President Ronald Reagan stated in one of this speeches that Bilingual Education is “un-American (Sánchez, 1983). Ironically, Spanish is reserve as a resource exclusively for those in power positions and while it is consider unpatriotic to use Spanish as a “symbol of a positive Latino ethnic identity” (García, 1993, p. 72). Therefore, speaking Spanish in the U.S is seen as a problem that needs immediate remediation (García, 1993). In addition, the anti-bilingual beliefs have lead to the social construction of a hierarchy among languages, one in which English is the language with the most prestige and value, while the rest share a pyramid-like categorization. This then affects many HL speakers’ motivation and appreciation of their HL. Also, the language ideologies attached to Spanish and its negative characterization has led to the marginalization of this language that has negated the historic role it has had in the country (Díaz-Campos, 2014, p. 251).

An example of these language ideologies is California Proposition 227, “English for the Children,” passed in 1997, banning bilingual education (Roca & Colombi, 2003). Proposition 227 was sponsored by Ron Unz, the foremost anti-bilingual advocate, who
argued that bilingual education “destroyed the lives of millions upon millions of students” even though he did not conduct a research study to prove his point (Hartman, 2003, p. 192). This proposition and other anti-bilingual laws were adopted during the English-Only Movement in the 1990s, which made home language maintenance a bigger challenge. Furthermore, the implementation of Proposition 227 and other anti-bilingual laws reflected the anti-immigrants sentiments among voters but it also reinforced the language ideologies that English should be the only language used in academic settings (Crawford, 1997). These language ideologies, unfortunately, contribute to HL loss.

Because of these obstacles, for many HL speakers, retaining their HL represents a form of self-empowerment and pride. Additionally to promoting Spanish maintenance and pride, many HL classes promote students’ metalinguistic awareness and the opportunity to master other variants of Spanish (Carreira, 2012, p. 226). Retaining a HL will not only help the speaker keep a close connection with their ethnic community and identity, but it will also open many doors of opportunities that will allow the student to excel academically as a competent bilingual. This is because having “positive feelings about [their] heritage language and culture can contribute to Spanish language maintenance and also to academic success.” (Carreira, 2007, cited in Leeman, Rabin & Román-Mendoza, 2011, p. 484).

1.1 Purpose and Significance

Although many studies have looked at the outcomes of HL maintenance, the relation between HL and identity, and the impact of HL courses in Foreign Language and Linguistic disciplines; and other studies have looked at the outcomes of Chicana/o Studies class, not much research has analyzed the potential impact of implementing HL
language classes in Ethnic Studies Disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies. In addition, not many research has studied the outcomes of bring together two disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education).

On one of the main goals of Chicana/o Studies is to analyze and educate about the Chicana/o community experience within history, politics, social issues, culture, arts, and education. RiVera Furumoto (2008) found that students who take classes in Chicana/o Studies benefit in numerous ways. For example, the students, who participated in the study conducted by RiVera Furumoto (2008), declared that their experience in these classes influenced them to become critical thinkers, which is a skill they used not only in Chicana/o Studies classes but also in other classes and in their community. Furthermore, their exposure to Chicana/o Studies allowed them to socially construct their own identity and to develop a critical consciousness of what is happening in their communities and in society. These students affirmed that these courses sparked a “commitment and desire to help others in their community” (RiVera Furumoto, 2008). Students in Chicana/o Studies benefited because Ethnic Studies Disciplines provided students a curriculum centered in their everyday reality and an education that is relevant, meaningful, and affirming of their identities (Sleeter, 2011, p. 1). Similarly, HL also plays a crucial role in affirming their identities given that Spanish, in most cases, is part of their everyday reality. Therefore, language, specifically Spanish HL in Chicana/o Studies, can also contribute to a better understanding of the experience of Chicanas/os in the U.S, and can provide students the opportunity to gain new skills in their HL and strengthen an ethnic identity given that many Chicanas/os and Latinas/os consider Spanish to be a key aspect of their ethnic identity and an access to their connection with their community.
In order to analyze if there were more Chicana/o Studies that had implemented HL classes in its discipline other than the one studied in this thesis, a preliminary study was conducted. It was found that of the 23 California State Universities, 21 offer minors, majors and Master’s degrees in Chicana/o Studies, Mexican Studies, and/or Latino Studies. Ten of these 21 institutions require their students to show proof of their Spanish language proficiency; in order to meet this requirement, students have to either take a Spanish test to be exempt or take a few Spanish classes. However, even in programs with a language requirement, students only have the option of taking Spanish as a foreign language in Modern & Classical Language and Foreign Language Departments. In this preliminary study, it was found that as of 2014, in the California State University (CSU) system, there is only one Chicana/o Studies department that has implemented a HL course. California State University, Northridge (CSUN) offers HL classes in its department even though the department does not have a language requirement. In a previous study conducted by Sánchez-Muñoz (2013), who was also the instructor of the HL course in Chicana/o Studies, she found that the students enrolled in CHS in order to learn more about the history and the culture of their community; and because maintaining and learning new skills in their HL was key for strengthening their ethnic identity.

This thesis, then, analyzes data collected from the HL class in the Chicana/o Studies Department offered in Fall 2014 (Spanish for Chicanos, CHS 101). This CHS 101 class offered at CSU, Northridge is the only class of this kind to be offered in the CSU campuses. The potential outcomes of HL classes in Chicana/o Studies can open doors for more Spanish HL courses to be implemented in the Departments of Chicana/o Studies at other CSU campuses.
1.2 Research Questions

Given that HL classes focus on providing students in Linguistic Disciplines the opportunity to gain new skills in the language that in most cases they already speak at home, and given that for many Chicana/o Studies’ one main focus is ethnic identity pride and the empowerment of students by providing them an education that is relevant to their everyday realities, then, it is important to analyze how students can also benefit from taking a class that bridges these two disciplines.

The main questions this thesis tries to answer are 1) In what way, if any, might a HL course in CHS impact the development of the ethnic identity of the participating HL students? And 2) In what ways, if any, might a HL course in CHS deepen the students’ understanding of language ideologies?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In order to ground and narrow the focus of my thesis, I will use Tara Yosso’s (2005) conceptualization of community cultural wealth within Critical Race Theory that challenge the traditional interpretations of cultural capital that students of color bring to the classroom as a deficit. Instead of applying a deficit thinking of the culture Latina/o and Chicana/o students bring to the classroom, their lived experiences and culture must be used to nurture and empower these students. In particular, it must be acknowledged that Latina/o and Chicana/o students bring aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, resistant capital and linguistic capital into the classroom. These capitals define the community cultural wealth which are an “array of knowledge, skills, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppressors” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).
As it is explained by Yosso (2005), *aspirational capital* alludes to the resiliency to stay hopeful about being able to accomplish one’s dreams regardless of the adversaries faced in life even when the dream does not seem tangible. This can be seen in the persistence and willingness of many young Chicanas/os to continue their higher education even though students like themselves experience the lowest education outcomes when compared to other student from other cultures and ethnicities (cited in Yosso, 2005, p. 78). *Familial capital* recognizes the knowledge students bring from home that were learned and nurtured by the relationships with their immediate and extended family and fostered also by their community. For example, they learn lessons on “caring, coping, and providing (*educación*) that inform [the student of color on] emotional, moral, educational, and occupational consciousness” (cited in Yosso, 2005, p. 79). In addition, the students also bring to classroom the lessons learned about the essence of creating and keeping a healthy relation with the community and its resources. *Social capital* can be understood as the networking with people in the community and its resources, which will provide the tools and support to navigate through established systems such as higher educational institutions. Yosso (2005) explains that this networking can be seen when a student receives help filling out a scholarship or a college application in order to pursue a higher education; this networking not only helps students with the process to get into institutions of higher education but also reassures the student that they are not alone in the process to achieve their academic goals. Similarly, *Navigational capital* highlights the skills and agency student of color have gained in order to maneuver through social institutions that are not designed to accommodate or be inclusive of students who do not fit the “norm” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).
Resistant capital acknowledges the agency and resiliency of students of color to challenge inequality and their determination to deconstruct structures that oppressed them such as patriarchy, capitalism, and sexism. Linguistic capital is the main concept guiding this thesis. Linguistic capital validates the language skills students bring from home such as being bilingual and “emphasizes the connection between racialized cultural history and language” (cited in Yosso, 2005, p. 78). In addition, it recognizes the multiple skills students of color were exposed to in their family and in their community such as storytelling. Specifically, listening to the elders when they share their oral histories, which allow the student to develop skills of memorization, attention to detail, creative ways to tell a story and much more. The famous dichos (proverbs) are also part of this linguistic capital, which become unforgettable life lessons. These six capitals that students of color bring into the classroom cannot be seen as independent from each other, rather as interconnected capitals that reinforce one another (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).

Chicana/o Studies successfully includes these foundational aspects (aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic) in its discipline in order to acknowledge these capitals that Chicanas/os and Latinas/os bring to the classroom. I claim that it will be beneficial to students to have a greater opportunity to develop stronger linguistic capital. More specifically, not only by acknowledging the bilingual skills they already bring to the classroom, but by also providing them with the tools to reinforce their linguistic capital by expanding their knowledge and maintaining their Spanish Heritage Language. This can be possible by the implementation of course that addresses both the students’ cultural and linguistic capitals.
Another groundbreaking work that will guide my thesis is the work of Paulo Freire and the deconstruction of the banking methods implemented in schools. Freire challenges the notion that schools and educators have all the knowledge and students simply sit and take in the information as passive learners. Thus, the deconstruction of the banking method is vital in transforming students into agents of their own education. Agents who discover that education must become “the practice of freedom,” which is guided by the conscientização of these students who “unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation” (Freire, 2000). This is possible through the implementation of critical pedagogy. This work of transforming students into agents who develop critical consciousness is essential in providing the tools to these students to critique the stigmatization of Spanish built from the devaluation of the language through language ideologies. This potentially will lead students’ into active roles in maintaining their Spanish beyond a heritage language class.

Therefore, this thesis argues that classes such as Spanish for Chicanas/os a HL classes in Chicana/o Studies can contribute to students’ linguistic capital and agency for HL maintenance. This thesis is composed of five chapters. Chapter Two: Literature Review, in particular, is divided in four sections. Section 2.1 of this literature review will provide a historical context to highlight the social factors that contribute to the stigmatization and devaluation of Spanish. It will also expose how language ideologies contribute to the stratification of English and other non-English languages. Specifically, of how within this hierarchy, Spanish is label as an “inferior” language that should not be use to teach in public schools. And how Spanish HL attrition is more than just an individual choice, it is an influence grounded in language ideologies that have led to the
development of anti-bilingual laws and proposition that hinder Spanish HL maintenance.

Section 2.2 emphasizes the importance of Chicana/o Studies, its history and its impact on students. Moreover, it highlights how Chicana/o Studies creates counter spaces to encourage students to challenge the social injustices happening in their community and to deconstruct language ideologies. Additionally it motivates students to become socially conscious, critical thinkers, and agents who use their culture, language, and history as a source of strength and not as a deficit in their education. Section 2.3 explains the history of the implementation of HL course in Spanish departments. Specifically, it emphasizes some of the skills that HL speakers bring to the classroom, which must be used as a resource and not as something that needs to be fix by the instructor. Furthermore, section 2.3 describes the positive outcomes of HL courses and its impact on the students. The research summarized in this section, also points out that the best HL pedagogy must not only center the students’ Spanish variety but it must also center their culture, given that HL is intertwined with ethnic identity (Bucholtz 1999; Garcia 2000; Valdés 2000; Zavala 2000; Zentella 2002 cited in Sánchez-Muñoz 2013; Potowski 2012. At the same time, HL pedagogy must commit to address the social and political issues that contribute to HL loss. Sections 2.4 calls attention to the arguments of why it will be essential to bring together Chicana/o Studies and HL and how this can be possible. Secondly, this section reviews some empirical studies that point out the outcomes of bringing together Chicana/o Studies and HL.

Chapter Three focuses on explaining the methodology used to collect the data and the steps taken to analyze the 34 interviews conducted. In addition, chapter four includes the research findings of the data. There are four themes that were created from the data
collected to answer the research questions posted in this thesis. Chapter Five includes some concluding remarks and directions for further research.

Now let us return to Melissa’s story mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Melissa might have lost her proficiency and possibly her confidence to speak Spanish and this is what perhaps contributed to her “inability” to communicate with her mother in Spanish. However, through the essay she was writing in her Chicana/o Studies course she gained knowledge of the language ideologies that lead to language loss; consequently she became conscious that she or her mother are not at fault for her language attrition. Now that Melissa became aware of these issues affecting her language maintenance, I wonder how can she and other students, like herself, benefit not only from becoming aware of the issues related to Spanish, but to also become agents of the maintenance of Spanish in disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies where there is already a high amount of students who would be considered HL speakers.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Parodi (2008) demonstrates in her study how there are many students like Melissa, mentioned in the introduction, who might not be as comfortable when speaking Spanish or who have progressively lost their Spanish, even though Spanish might have been their first language. Specifically, Parodi (2008) explains that the negative attitudes many Heritage Language (HL) speakers confront by Spanish monolingual communities might discourage them from speaking Spanish but, at the same time, it might also motivate them to enroll in Spanish classes (p. 200). Valdés (1981, 1996) further demonstrates that by the mid-seventies there was an increase in the number of HL speakers attending higher education institutions who were interested in taking Spanish courses in high school and college. In fact, from 1976 to 2004 the Latinas/os and Chicanas/os in higher educational institutions, in the U.S., increased from 350,000 to 1,666,700, a 372 percent increased (NCES 2007 cited in Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 2011, pp. 600-601). The high enrollment of Latinas/os and Chicanas/os led to the need to create and implement adequate Spanish courses for Spanish bilinguals (now referred to as HL speakers) because it became apparent that these students needed a different type of instruction than the approach used for Spanish second language learners.

Initially, many Spanish language departments did not acknowledge the presence of Spanish HL speakers and as a result many of these students enrolled in introductory Spanish classes that were designed for second language learners. And even when some of the classes were implemented to meet the needs of HL speakers, the methodologies used in these classes reflected a deficiency perspective regarding the quality and type of Spanish these students spoke (Valdés, 1996). For example, the instructors of these classes
failed to acknowledge that these students acquired the core of the language, regardless of its proficiency, in their everyday settings such as their home or in their communities. In addition, many instructors in these Spanish courses also failed to value and appreciate the “intuition or subconscious knowledge of the language” (Spanish) these students brought to the classroom (Parodi, 2008, p. 201). Instead, the instructors of Spanish criticized the variant of Spanish spoken by these students (Valdés, 1981). Consequently, the Spanish these students brought to the class was targeted as “bad” and it was treated as a Spanish that needed to be remediated. In other words, the approach leading these classes was the eradication of students’ non-standard dialect in order to correct and have them acquire the “right” type of Spanish (Valdés, 1981, 1996).

Valdés (1981) is one of the language-teaching specialists who first shed light on the problem of using the eradication approach to teach Spanish to students who already spoke or were exposed to this language at home. She urged instructors to develop a pedagogical theory and adequate approaches for Spanish-speaking students who enroll in Spanish language programs, one that focused in expanding the linguistic repertoires of the speaker by acquiring other Spanish varieties and registers (Valdés, 1978). In a recent study Carreira (2011), shows that those negative attitudes towards HL speakers’ vernacular varieties have not changed much. Carreira compared the language ideology beliefs between secondary and post-secondary Spanish departments. She found that many college-level professors tend to promote more linguistic purity among their HL speakers (p. 60). As a result, the pedagogical approaches the professors use reject the students’ home language as a valid Spanish, and instead impose Spanish national language ideologies in language classes that eventually lead to the silencing of HL speakers.
In order to counterattack such approaches, it is necessary to understand that the role of the instructor in these classes is crucial in addressing the students’ insecurities and stigmas attached to the Spanish they speak. Also, it is important that the instructors of classes for Spanish speakers are genuinely interested in addressing the linguistic needs of these students, and commit to move away from treating and thinking that these students have a deficient language and culture (Sánchez, 1981, p. 92; Carreira, 2011). Furthermore, Carreira (2011) urges that the acknowledgment of U.S. Spanish varieties in the classroom and its inclusion in the pedagogies is a strategy to challenge language ideologies. The work of Valdés’ (1981) has been vital in the creation of Heritage Language (HL) classes that move away from targeting student’s home language as “bad.” These HL classes were at first referred to as Spanish for Native Speakers. And Valdés (1981, 2006) suggested that these classes’ curriculum must be guided by two fundamental principles: 1) the understanding that power can be assigned to a language must be central to the student’s HL growth, and 2) HL must be developed in the social situation in how it is used in society. This can be possible by helping students become aware of the Spanish variety they speak in order to further develop their skills in:

- listening, observing, and speaking;
- basic reading skills;
- language through experiences with books;
- spelling abilities;
- competence and creativeness in oral and written communication;
- effective skills in the use of language and the daily affairs of life;
- habitual and intelligent skills in the use of mass modes of communication;
- and competence use of language and reading for vocational purposes (Valdés 1981, p. 11).

Therefore, HL classes are about valuing, bringing awareness and respecting each student’s right to their language—the Spanish variety they speak at home because maintaining a HL is a human right (Macías, 2014).
Thus, another goal of this thesis is to obtain a better understanding of Latino/a and Chicana/o college students’ experiences taking HL classes offered in a Chicana/o Studies Department. The following literature review will explain what social factors lead to Spanish loss and attrition for HL speakers, and how U.S. society has contributed to the loss of heritage languages such as Spanish and to its stigmatization. In particular, section 2.1: “Language Ideologies” contextualizes this thesis by explaining the history of Spanish in the U.S. and the outcomes of language ideologies that have not only impacted non-English languages but also the speakers. Section 2.2: “Chicana/o Power: The value of Ethnic Studies and its ties to Ethnic Identity” highlights the resiliency of the Chicana/o and Latina/o students in higher education and the benefits of Chicana/o Studies. In addition, this part alludes to the importance that disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies have in creating counter-spaces to challenge social injustice and in constructing environments where students can grow academically and personally. In particular, how Chicanas/os and Latinas/os learn to value their ethnicity and appreciate their community including their HL, Spanish. Section 2.3: “Heritage Language Skills, Research, and Pedagogy” explains the history of the implementation of HL courses in Modern/Foreign Language Departments. Furthermore, this section emphasizes the skills HL speakers bring to the classroom and the importance to use the skills, that the speakers already have with their Spanish variety, as a resource that must be centered in HL pedagogy. Section 2.3 also summarizes some of the positive outcomes of HL classes, and proposes that the best HL pedagogy must include and address the students’ culture and the social and political issues that can lead to HL loss. The purpose of both section 2.2 and section 2.3 is to present an overview of each discipline and their own impact to Chicanas/o and
Latinas/o students who are HL speakers. Even though Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education) are divided into two different sections, this provides an overview of the similarities of these two disciplines and how the coming together and collaboration between disciplines is possible. This specifically can be seen in Section 2.4: “The Coming Together of Two Disciplines: Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education) that points to the importance of an interdisciplinary collaboration between Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education) in order to provide students the opportunity to develop their linguistic capital and their agency for HL maintenance.

2.1 Language Ideologies

“Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war”
-Ray Gwyn Smith (cited in Anzaldúa, 2007)

The 1960s and 1970s marked a new era for the Chicana/o community. There was a climate of struggle for human rights in the agricultural fields; in the cities, the fight extended to equal access to higher education, for a representation of the community in the materials used in educational settings, and for a reclaiming of an identity that valued the culture and the language that represented this community. As stated by Rivera-Mills (2012), the Chicana/o Movement of the 1960s brought about awareness that the Spanish language was an “important element of community identity and social activity”(p. 23) and with this, it reclaimed the right to feel proud to speak Spanish. García (1993) attests that in the 60s and 70s many Latino/a educators advocated for Latinas/os and Chicanas/os to be taught their historical and cultural experiences and literacy in Spanish. Even though the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 protected the right of Spanish speakers to
maintain their language in the territories that were forcibly taken from Mexico such as Arizona and California. Spanish speakers were still attacked or punished for using it and many felt ashamed of speaking it because their language was targeted as “un American” (Gándara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gómez, & Hopkins, 2010; Flores & Murillo, 2001; Crawford, 1998). As Flores and Murillo (2001) claim, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was another broken promise by the U.S. Therefore, instead of respecting the right to speak Spanish, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in California were discouraged from using Spanish in public due to the continuous attacks of anti-bilingual laws and propositions that constructed a social hierarchy among languages. Spanish has always been represented as inferior when compared to English, which not only devalues Spanish but also attaches a stigma to the speakers of the language (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Flores & Murillo, 2001). As a result, regardless of the growing numbers of Spanish speakers, “non-English language loss among [second and third generation Latinas/os and Chicanas/os] is accelerating and actually acquiring English at a more rapid rate than previous generations” (Tienda & Mitchel, 2006 cited in Gándara et al., 2010, p. 21). Moreover, a study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center in 2002 shows that four percent of second generation Latinas/os and Chicanas/os indicated to be Spanish-dominant versus 72% first generation Latinas/os who reported to be Spanish-dominant. For this reason, the U.S. is considered “a graveyard for [non-English] languages” because instead of promoting HL maintenance it makes it a challenge to retain it (Rumbaut, Massey, & Bean, 2006, p. 448 cited in Gándara et al., 2010, p. 22).

However, the Chicana/o Movement has assisted in reclaiming and recognizing the value of Spanish and promoting Spanish maintenance. This fight for language
maintenance continues today as Spanish faces many obstacles particularly in educational settings. For example, 28 states of the U.S. passed English-Only laws by 2007. And three states approved legislation that prohibited the use of Spanish and other non-English languages in public schools. For instance, Proposition 227 dismantled California’s bilingual education in 1998. By 2001, the Bilingual Education Act, which supported the use of Spanish and home languages when teaching non-English Speakers was revoked and replaced by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This new legislation, NCLB, included Title III named Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students that mandated the exclusive use of English in public education (García, 2011, p. 677). Laws such as Proposition 227 and NCLB hindered and continue to hinder the maintenance of non-English languages in the U.S. Gándara and Hopkins (2010) assert that these restrictive language policies were approved by “voters in California [and other states…are] manifestations of the neoliberalism, conservatism, and xenophobia that gripped the country in the early 2000s and that are still powerful and intractable forces in the United States”(2010, p. xiv). The question that must be asked is whether Spanish will continue to be perceived as inferior as the Spanish speaking community grows (and it is expected that by the year 2050 the Latino community will be 30% of the U.S. total population according to Beaudrie and Fairclough (2012).

It is important to recognize that the main factors that impact whether Spanish will continue to be seen as an “inferior” language are the ideologies that are attached to a non-English language such as Spanish. Kroskrity (2004) and Woolard (1998) contend that “language ideologies consist of values and belief systems regarding language generally, specific languages or language varieties, or particular language practices and ways of
using language.” More specifically, these language ideologies are linked to social, political, or economic interests of particular groups of people (cited in Leeman 2012, pp. 43-44). In addition, language ideologies are in reality a reflection of the negative attitude and discrimination of those in power in the U.S. and the founders and organizers of these anti-bilingual laws are people who have expressed hostility towards the Latina/o and Chicana/o community (Crawford, 1992). Therefore, the base of these laws are insecurities, prejudice, and fear that lead these individuals to believe that if non-English speakers are allowed a smooth transition to learn a language (English) it would eventually encourage them to seize political control in the U.S. (Crawford, 1992). These sentiments were spread throughout the nation in messages such as “give up your culture and adopt American ways, or go back from where you came. Speak English or you will be unwelcome here,” which echoed among some society’s residents (Crawford, 1992). These types of feelings are what gave birth to the English-Only Movement, which “gained momentum in the 1990s and was supported by 80 percent of the body of politics” (Hartman, 2003, p.187). Consequently, many anti-bilingualism initiatives were developed in the U.S., in particular in California, one of the states with the largest Latina/o and Chicana/o population. The English-Only Movement argued that it was necessary to make English the official language of the nation and in order to achieve this, the “English-Only Legislation pragmatically and symbolically elevated English to a high status position while relegating other languages like Spanish-and their speakers-to lower status positions” (Barker et al, 2001, p.5). The English-Only Movement, then, became a Hispanophobia Movement where the millions of Spanish speakers became the principal target (Zentella, 1997).
California is a perfect example of how these sentiments have manifested in numerous attacks on non-English languages, like Spanish. Proposition 63 passed in 1986, which declared English as the official language of the state (Macias, 2014). In 1998, Proposition 227’s goal was to ban bilingual education in elementary schools and to require public schools in California to use English only in educational settings because it was believed that the “minorities were gaining an advantage [from using their home language] and that bilingual education was a form of discrimination against Europeans” (Proposition 227-The Anti-Bilingual Education Initiative of 1996). As a result of these beliefs, the initiative drafted by Ron Unz was approved. The initiative’s logo, “English for the Children” led many voters to believe that students would benefit from this proposition—of course, who would not want their children to learn English? Proposition 227 also painted the perfect picture of how the proposal could provide the path for students to reach the “American Dream” and how this approach of English–Only teaching could address the high rates of students who do not continue onto higher education.

Furthermore, the supporters of bilingual education reinforced their position by arguing that “exposing children to their first language in the educational environment limits their exposure to English, delays the acquisition of English, and hinders academic achievements. [They also argued that] bilingual education was ineffective and a waste of resources” and presented bilingual education as a failure (Proposition 227-The Anti-Bilingual Education Initiative of 1996; Gándara & Orfield, 2010 219). With such arguments, Proposition 227 passed with a percentage of 61.28 in favor of the proposition. The Latina/o and Chicana/o community voted with a 37% in favor and 63% against it.
The Latina/o and Chicana/o community was evidently in favor of their children learning English; however, the agenda behind Proposition 227 was not only to learn English, but also to contribute to the loss of Spanish. Proposition 227 dismantled bilingual education primarily in public elementary schools because it was believed that it handicapped the children. Instead of allowing students to transition into learning English, children who did not know English or who were not proficient in English academic standards were placed in a 10-month intensive English immersion program with absolutely no instruction in their home language. In fact, the teachers were prohibited by law to assist any student in their home language and if they did, the instructor could be sued for being out of compliance with the new law (Proposition 227-The Anti-Bilingual Education Initiative of 1996; Gándara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gómez & Hopkins, 2010, p. 27).

On the other hand, Proposition 227 gave the option to parents to place their children in a bilingual education track once they filled out a written waiver, and many schools that were against Proposition 227 used this to their advantage. Schools organized informational sessions, waiver-writing workshops, and translated the workshops in Spanish. They even called the parents to encourage them to sign the waiver in order to maintain bilingual education at their schools. Unfortunately, many other schools agreed to fully implement English-Only language programs regardless of this option and as a result there was a dramatic drop in the number of students who received a bilingual education (García & Curry-Rodríguez 2000; Gándara, 2000, p. 4).

It is important to note that Ron Unz was not a linguist nor did he ever conduct research on the benefits of bilingual education. Regardless of his lack of knowledge of the best pedagogy to learn a language, as of 1998, many students were expected to learn a
new language by being completely immersed in classes with English-Only instruction. This Proposition failed to realize how these students would be affected mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and academically. The students and their outcomes were never a priority; the debate of Proposition 227 was fueled by the fear that English was in danger of being replaced by Spanish and that the Latina/o and Chicana/o community was going to take over the country (Zentella, 1997, p. 68; Hartman, 2003). This fear led to trauma, confusion, alienation, and marginalization in educational settings for Latina/o and Chicana/o students in the immersion programs. During the 10-month immersion period when the students were expected to learn English after Proposition 227 passed, many students attended classes day after day without understanding one word the teacher was saying and some teachers felt their hands were tied because they could not do much to help the second language learners in their classes. Figure 1 provides a visual of the confusion and the experiences many English learners went through after the implementation of Proposition 227.

Figure (1). The struggles of English learners after Proposition 227 (reagandc.wordpress.com)

After the 10-year mark of the implementation of Proposition 227, many educators have strongly stated that this approach was not working. In addition, in a two-day
conference on Prop 227 in the San Diego County Office of Education in San Diego, it was presented that “students in bilingual education programs generally acquire more English than children in all English programs” (Sifuentes, 2008). Gándara and Hopkins (2010) state that one of the outcomes of Proposition 227 was the “increased educational inequality for English language learners (p. xv). Also, these policies have “directly affect[ed] the work of teachers and their ability or inability to adapt their instruction within the narrow parameters of an English-Only regime, which in turn directly affects the quality of instruction that [English learners] students receive” (Jong, Arias & Sánchez, 2010 as cited in Gándara & Orfield, 2010, p. 221). Gándara (2000) and García and Curry-Rodríguez (2000) examined the impact of the implementation of Proposition 227 and found that there was a lot of confusion as to how to comply with the new law because there was no guidance from the government (p. 5). This confusion affected schools with English-Only classes as well as those schools who fought to continue to offer bilingual education, which was possible with the written waivers signed by the parents. (Gándara, 2000, p. 7) As one of the teachers claimed:

I feel like the children are forced into silence [...] I don't think they're receiving an equal opportunity, equal education in the sense that they're really not learning to read. They're learning to decode. But, their decoding skills are coming along nicely, but the problem is that second language acquisition, it takes time. And you know the district expects us to move these children from ELD [English Language Development] level I to ELD level 4 in a matter of one year (Gándara, 2000, p. 7).

This study concludes that Proposition 227 was far from helping students, on the contrary, this new pedagogy moved away from helping students develop broader literacy skills. Also because of this new law, there was a high demand for teachers who were certified to teach English learners in English, and at the end many teachers were hired with minimal preparation.
After Proposition 227, many new laws emerged that “significantly abolished most efforts of bilingual education and [substituted and increased the amount of] funding for English language acquisition efforts” (Proposition 227-The Anti-Bilingual Education Initiative of 1996). It is important to understand that anti-bilingual laws and propositions such as Proposition 227 are the result of ideologies born from the fear that immigrants will take over the U.S., which explains why many of these laws and propositions are sponsored by conservative and anti-immigrant groups (Barker et al., 2001, p. 17). In fact, Wiley and Wright assert that these xenophobic sentiments are similar to assimilation efforts of the early 20th century. (Wiley & Wright, 2004 cited in Gándara et al, 2010, pp. 25-26). These ideologies are not only attached to non-English languages, but they also reinforce the socially constructed hierarchy among languages and the constant attacks to any language that is not English. As Huddy and Sears (1995) argue, the attacks on non-English languages spoken at home such as Spanish are a form of discrimination and should be regarded as the “new racism,” given these anti-bilingual laws and propositions are implicit examples of such racism (cited in Barker et al, 2001). The language ideologies reflected in Proposition 227 impacted all English language learners and HL speakers academically and socially.

Spanish is more than just a language that is spoken by the community, Spanish is “considered a deeply meaningful part of their social and personal identity” (Johnson, 2000 cited in Barker et al, 2001,p. 13). Spanish is not just a tool for communication; it is part of the community. For this reason, this attack on Spanish and its maintenance is also a threat to the speakers’ identity (Martínez, 2003) and can impact whether the community promotes, maintains, or loses their distinctive language or culture especially if language
ideologies are attached to the language the student brings from home. Also, the subordination of home languages by language ideologies can also shape and determine the social, educational, and economic opportunities the Latina/o and Chicana/o community will receive here in the U.S. (Gándara & et al., 2010, p. 22).

Given these points, Anzaldúa (2007) and Santa Ana (2004) affirm that antibilingual laws and propositions are a form of linguistic discrimination and “linguistic terrorism” that do not only lead to the loss of Spanish but also contribute to distancing Spanish speakers from their communities by muting and taming their tongue. As a result of this “linguistic discrimination,” schools fail to acknowledge the multilingual richness students bring to the classroom that could be used as a resource to help students in their academic progress. Instead of nurturing and maintaining students’ home language, these students progressively lose the language because they feel ashamed of their Spanish, which contributes to a communication breakdown among family members as well as to a “decreased identification with their [home language] and heritage culture” (Potowski, 2012, p. 188). It is fundamental, then, to create spaces where such language ideologies are deconstructed and challenged especially in educational settings such as Chicana/o Studies and Ethnic Studies Disciplines. These language ideologies, as Garcia (1993) affirms, can only be dismantled by strengthening the value of U.S Spanish and cultivating the culture, tradition, and literature of its speakers; Chicana/o Studies can be this space where students like Melissa are given the tools to reclaim their language and the security to speak Spanish with their loved ones.
2.2 Chicana/o Power: The Value of Ethnic Studies and its Ties to Ethnic Identity

“Once social change begins, it cannot be reserved. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.”

-César Chávez

The 1960s was an era of struggle for Civil Rights where the Chicana/o community reclaimed dignity and demanded better treatment in a society that was their home. This was a movement where Spanish acquired a stronger symbolism associated with ethnic identity. This movement also provided the foundation to transform curriculum and pedagogy that would acknowledge the presence of the diverse student population in schools (Sleeter, 2013). The youth in East Los Angeles, for example, fought for a better education that would prepare them for higher education and gave them the knowledge to achieve their academic dreams. These young Chicanas/o were inspired by the United Farmworkers Movement led by Larry Itliong, Dolores Huerta, and Cesar Chavez in Delano, California, where after five years of struggle the farmworkers won the right for better job conditions, better pay, and the right to be part of a union. The struggle and lucha of the farmworkers provided these youth with the tools to stand up and fight against the prejudice and discrimination they were facing in their schools in East Los Angeles. These empowered young Chicanas/os demanded culturally relevant material and courses, the implementation of bilingual programs, quality education, college readiness tracks, and more. In 1968, four thousand students at five East Los Angeles high schools walked out of their classes to make their voice heard (Chicano! PBS Documentary, 1996). This was just the beginning of the demand for a better education for
all Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in the U.S.—an education that acknowledged their culture and appreciated their value as human beings.

At San Fernando State Valley College, now known as California State University, Northridge (CSUN), the students mobilized about many issues happening in their communities such as the disproportionate number of people of color being drafted into the Vietnam War and the high number of them dying on the battle ground without being acknowledged. The need to be in solidarity with the Civil Rights Movement echoed on the CSUN campus and brought many students together. The issues that got students together to change the history of CSUN was the fight against racism on campus, equal access to education, and the demand for more students of color to be recruited to attend CSUN. At that time (around 1967) there were only 23 blacks and 7 Mexicans at this institution. These students became activists who demanded ethnic studies programs that would offer culturally relevant material for students of color. It is through the leadership, activism, and power of the Black Student Union and the United Mexican American Students (which later became MECHA) that the number of students of color accepted to CSUN increased. Also, the Educational Opportunity Program was strengthened which was vital for equal access for these students to become part of CSUN. The determination of these activists lead to the establishment of Ethnic Studies Departments, which provided and continues to provide students the tools and support to transition to and graduate from CSUN. (Storm at Valley State (1985); Unrest: The Development of the CSUN Chicana/o Studies Departments (2008).

It is now about 47 years since the creation and the establishment of Chicana/o Studies at CSUN. Even though the discipline as a whole has faced many obstacles and
challenges in the trenches of academia, Ethnic Studies departments have spread throughout the U.S. The Department of Chicana/o at CSUN is now the largest department in the nation (Acuña, 2011). In addition, disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies continue to be one of the few spaces where students’ academic abilities and culture are validated and is also one of the few disciplines that is committed to counterattacking the stereotypes imposed on the students’ communities (Rendón, 1994 cited in Núñez, 2011, p. 641).

These spaces such as Ethnic Studies are crucial because Chicanas/os’ and Latinas/os’ education continue to be a target for assimilation and bilingualism restrictions (Darder & Torres, 2014). Students of color have become the largest “minority” enrolled in postsecondary education but the lowest to complete their degree. The campus climate at these institutions of higher education impact students’ academic performances, confidence in the colleges and universities they enroll in (cited in Núñez, 2011; Darder & Torres, 2014). Pérez et al (2006) reveal that throughout the educational pipeline for Latinas; For every 100 Latinas in elementary, only 54 will graduate from high school and of the Latinas who enrolled in a four year institutions only 11 will complete their degree. Of these students only 4 will obtain a Master’s Degree and out of the 4, 1 Latina will receive a doctorate. These numbers demonstrate that most schools continue to fail to provide Chicanas/os and Latinas/os an education with adequate resources to prevent students from falling through the cracks of the educational pipeline. As Valencia (2011) declares, this failure is largely “shaped by educational inequality” which he affirms is a form of oppression (p. 3). As a result of these inequalities, the number of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os who graduate from high school and college continue to be disproportionately
lower than other ethnic groups. The Chicana/o and Latina/o community in the sixties fought for a better education and this is a battle that continues to be relevant many years after. Thus, it is essential that Chicana/os and Latinas/os persevere in the fight for the support and legitimacy of Ethnic Studies and Chicana/o Studies in academia (as cited in Núñez, 2011, p. 640).

Chicana/o Studies is necessary because it “improves the learning environment for students of color [by] limiting feelings of prejudice and experiences of discrimination in college” (Núñez, 2011, p. 640). In addition, courses in this discipline are where students’ culture and history are a source of strength and not a deficit. At the same time, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os become agents of their own histories and their own theories (Rodríguez, Mosque, Nava & Conchas, 2013, p. 419). For example, in a qualitative study, Dr. RiVera Furumoto interviewed fifteen students who were majoring in Chicana/o Studies at CSUN. The goal was to investigate the impact this discipline had on the participants. In the in-depth interviews, Chicana/o students revealed that the classes they took in the department gave them the tools to develop critical thinking skills that they applied not only in Chicana/o classes but also in other classes in different disciplines. Moreover, the participants declared that they became agents of their education, agents who were also committed to fight for social change in their communities. Students asserted that Chicana/o Studies is a discipline where they build strong relationships with faculty who make them feel like familia (family). The social consciousness, critical thinking, and the sense of family constructed in Chicana/o Studies has influenced these students to feel proud, connected to their community, and to feel that they belong in academia. As a result of this connection and their sense of belonging, their

Similarly, Sleeter (2011) reviewed a study conducted by Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee in 2008 in which they surveyed 185 Latina/o eighth graders who ranged from recent immigrants to second and third generations. In the study it was found that students who identified little with their ethnic identity tended to achieve poorly academically. On the other hand, the students who had a closer connection with their ethnic identity had the highest grades (Sleeter, 2011, p. 8). The researchers concluded that in disciplines like Ethnic Studies and Chicana/o Studies, students see the depth and richness of their own culture and identity, which leads to affirming, claiming, and developing their ethnic identity. This is fundamental because a strong connection with one’s own ethnic identity can possibly impact students’ academic achievement (Sleeter, 2011).

Furthermore, Chicana/o Studies gives students the tools to “navigate racially hostile systems” (Sleeter, 2011, p. 14). An example of this is the Mexican American Studies (MAS) at a high school in Tucson Unified School District. The Mexican American Studies was structured through a social studies curriculum that was based on the Critically Compassionate Intellectualism Model Transformative Education in order to provide students with classes that are culturally and historically relevant to their everyday experiences. Specifically this model is divided in three complementary sections that include curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parent interactions. First, a curriculum that focuses on developing classes that are academically rigorous, based on critical and social justice centered; second, a pedagogy that includes community service, is based in
critical pedagogy and promotes critical consciousness; and third reinforces the importance of including parents in their children’s education and the importance of having strong parent-teacher-student relations (Romero, Arce & Cammarota, 2009, p. 220).

This curriculum has a major impact on the students, for example, out of 17 students who were on the verge of dropping out of high school, 15 students completed and graduated with their high school diploma. The students who participated in the program claimed that these classes motivated them to stay in school and go to college. In addition, it was found that the students in this program had a higher passing rate on state standardized tests than the students who were not part of the program. In conclusion, the students who participated in MAS “moved towards stronger academic identities and higher degrees of academic proficiency [because of] the construction and reconstruction of consciousness” and of their ethnic identity (Romero, 2008a cited in Romero et al, 2009, p. 231). The education students received in MAS not only exposed them to the injustices in their community and in their school, but it also motivated students to commit to “the dismantling of society’s structure of inequality” (Romero et al, 2009, p. 231). It is important to mention that regardless of such successful outcomes of MAS, this Ethnic Studies program became a target for the conservative and nativists politicians in Arizona who argued that this latter program promoted hate and planned a conspiracy to take over the state and overthrow the U.S. government (Ochoa O’Leary et al, 2012; for a detailed explanation of the student and community activism and of the firestorm that has happened in Arizona see Santa Ana and González de Bustamante (2012) Arizona Firestorm). In the study conducted by Ochoa O’Leary et al (2012) it was laid out that
such arguments and attacks to dismantle Ethnic Studies were solemnly based on anti-immigrant sentiments. They further declare that the participants who enrolled in MAS classes reported not only to have equal or higher rates in standardized tests in reading and writing, but also in math even though the MAS track did not offer any math classes (p. 107). Correspondingly, programs such as MAS are needed because it reduces the “achievement gap among all low-income students” (Ochoa O’Leary et al, 2012, p.112).

Also, Chicana/o Studies forms counter-spaces that contribute to the transition of first generation students of color to college and the university (Darder & Torres, 2014). Providing resources and creating a welcoming environment for these students is essential because it is at this stage of transition where students of color are more likely to be pushed-out of college (Núñez, 2011). Núñez (2011) argues that second year students also run the risk of not continuing their education; and for this reason she conducted a study where she interviewed sophomores in an introductory Chicano Studies course at a public research university (p. 644). She surveyed thirty-seven first generation students and interviewed nineteen of these Chicanas/os. Some participants emphasized that in the introductory class they became aware of their cultural heritage, which motivated them to embrace and feel proud of it. In this class, students not only learned about their history and culture, but also learned about themselves as individuals and about their ancestors. This knowledge planted a seed of curiosity to learn more about their family’s background (Núñez, 2011, p. 647). Chicana/o Studies is a place where students become active learners who for the first time are able to connect their academic life with their families’ experiences because this discipline represents the “first place their culture is reflected in the university” (p. 649). The participants in this research stated that they were able to
relate to the faculty because some of them were from the same cultural background and because they were able to communicate with them in Spanish, which “constituted an important dimension of difference from the dominant university culture” (Núñez, 2011, p. 647). Chicana/o Studies, then, is a discipline where students are exposed to the social injustices in their communities and are given the tools to fight such inequalities by first learning about who they are and reaffirming that they too belong in higher educational institutions.

Furthermore, in her thesis research, Claudia Salcedo (2013) elaborates on the impact Chicana/o Studies has in the retention of Chicanas/os Students at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). She interviewed six Chicanas/os who had already graduated from CSUN within a five-year timeframe. The participants affirmed that what contributed to their perseverance in their path to graduation was the mentorship and genuine help they received from the professors in Chicana/o Studies. These professors motivated the participants to go to graduate schools too. Another significant contribution to the students’ education is the critical pedagogy that was utilized in the classes which was crucial in students developing critical thinking skills and a social consciousness (p. 65). Also, the participants declared that Chicana/o Studies gave them a sense of purpose and it helped them solidify their role as students. They furthered stated that their participation in service learning motivated them to finish their education in order make a positive impact in their communities. In particular, Chicana/o studies inspired them to give back to their communities. These different factors contributed to the retention of students at this institution.
Chicana/o Studies can be considered a transformative discipline; transformative in the sense that students become active learners or a *momachtiani* (nahuatl word that means to enable oneself to learn) as CSUN Professor, Fermin Herrera, would say and refers to someone who is active in their own learning process. These *momachtianimeh* (plural) who are motivated to excel in and out of the classroom, and who are given the tools to not only reaffirm their self and their belongingness in the academia, but who are also provided the tools to create change in their society.

It was in a Chicana/o Studies class where Melissa learned about language ideologies and where she learned about herself and the importance of bilingualism. In this class she became aware of the history of these ideologies and how they influenced her lack of confidence in speaking Spanish with her mother. This knowledge added to her linguistic capital, but would she have benefited from also taking a Heritage Language class (Linguistics) in Chicana/o Studies or from a class that brought together both disciplines?

This thesis claims that is important not only to decimate language ideologies in disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies where students learn about many aspects related to their culture and identity; but it is also vital that Heritage Language classes address the problem of language ideologies while providing the students the skills to expand their HL language abilities. Once again, together both programs (Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education)) can provide an education that contributes to Chicanas/os and Latinas/os linguistic capital and motivates them to become agents of HL maintenance.
2.3 Heritage Language Skills, Research, and Pedagogy

Let us return to Melissa’s story in which she mentioned that every time she wanted to speak to her mother, she had to ask her sister to translate for her because she did not feel capable of speaking Spanish. Many questions can emerge from this experience such as: why? did she speak Spanish to her mother when she was younger? why does her sister speak Spanish and Melissa does not? Is it because she is just not confident? Is she afraid to be laughed at when she speaks Spanish? While this thesis might not answer all these questions, it is nevertheless clear what many researchers have already claimed: that language loss/attrition affects most U.S. Spanish speakers and there are many factors that contribute to this loss. One of these factors is the shift towards English as the dominant language among second and third generation Latinas/o and Chicanas/os. It is important to understand, however, that the intention of the following section is not to claim that all HL speakers are the same; rather their skills are within a Spanish proficiency continuum. The goals of this section are to provide examples that will help understand the different characteristics that most HL speakers share; to inform of the potential benefits and outcomes of HL classes as well as the pedagogical approaches that have emerged in Spanish HL education; and finally to review studies that suggest adequate HL pedagogies that may allow the coming together of Chicana/o Studies and Linguistic (Heritage Language Education).

2.3.1 What are the Characteristics that Heritage Language Speakers Bring to the Classroom?

In 1994, Silva-Corvalán argued that HL loss does not only occur among second and third generation of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os but it is also possible within the first generation. For example, while the oldest sibling may have acquired Spanish at home and
may have a good competence in this language, it is likely that his/her younger sibling acquires both English and Spanish at the same time while growing up, but they might have shifted towards a preference for English as their language of communication faster than the older sibling. It is this shift towards English that contribute to HL attrition. However, the language contact between Spanish and English can also contribute to HL maintenance because its linguistic creations are part of the characteristics that make up HL speakers’ Spanish variety. For example, Silva-Corvalán (1994) analyzed the conversations of Mexican-American bilinguals who she recorded from 1983-1985. In this research, she found that HL students develop strategies “aimed at lightening the cognitive load of having to remember and use two different linguistic systems” (Silva-Corvalán, 1994, p. 207). Both languages, Spanish and English, come into contact with each other; thus, there is an influence that results in new characteristics in both languages. Silva-Corvalán also claims that HL speakers use (in most occasions unconsciously) the following strategies to facilitate their Spanish maintenance:

- Simplification of grammatical categories and lexical oppositions;
- Overgeneralization of forms, frequently following a regularizing pattern;
- Development of periphrastic constructions, either to achieve paradigmatic regularity or to replace less semantically transparent bound morphemes; and direct and indirect transfer of forms from the super-ordinate language; and code-switching (Silva-Corvalán, 1994, p.207).

An example of simplification of the verb system is when HL speakers use the indicative instead of subjective as in: “No te creo que viene (Indicative) mañana/ I don’t believe you that he’s coming tomorrow” instead of “No te creo que venga (subjuntivo) mañana/ I don’t believe you that he may come tomorrow.” This demonstrates the impact of language contact of English and Spanish because the HL speaker uses the English form when he/she speaks in Spanish, as it is shown in the previous example. It is important to
mention that many HL speaker who substitutes the indicative for the subjective is not because of a lack of understanding of the subjective, but because this is as result of the influence of the contact of Spanish and English (Silva-Corvalán, 1994, p. 23).

It has been claimed in the linguistics literature that minorities language speakers tend to lose the capacity to switch linguistic registers as the domains of use are reduced (Dorian, 1994; Finegan & Biber, 2001). However, Spanish speakers in many areas of the U.S. have been able to maintain their non-dominant heritage language in different situations beyond the home environment. For instance, Sánchez-Muñoz (2009) states that HL speakers are not mono-stylistic; but rather, they use different styles of Spanish in order to adapt their oral production in different registers such as academic presentations, interviews, and casual conversations. For example, HL speakers produce many lexical transfers from English including borrowings, lexical-creations, and code-switching. A semantic loan is an example of borrowings: it is a word that transfers both its form and meaning from one language to another, such as the word *troca* from English ‘truck.’ Lexical-creations is another form of lexical transfers that includes single words that transfer both form and meaning from English, but this word is not frequently used among HL speakers, as opposed to loans (e.g. *troca* is commonly used by almost all Latinas/os and Chicanas/os). Additionally, code-switches are single or multiple words that keep the English phonology and alternates from Spanish to English or vice versa either between sentences or within a sentence, as in the following example: “voy a ir a comprar *ice-cream* y un cono (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2009). In this sentence, the speaker code-switches within the sentence from Spanish to English and then again to Spanish. It is not accurate to assume that HL speakers code-switch because their Spanish is “incomplete” and they
have to use English to “complete it.” Actually, HL speakers code-switch for numerous reasons such as the fact that some English words do not have a single word translation into Spanish or the HL speaker opts to code-switch even if he/she knows the words in Spanish (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2010). In this same study, Sánchez-Muñoz (2010) collected data from Mexican-Americans in Spanish language courses in three different occasions and three different settings: oral classroom presentations, interviews, and casual conversations. She found that during casual conversations between friends, HL speakers produce the highest percentage of English code-switching. However, these HL speakers produce more lexical creations in classroom presentations than in casual conversations (p. 344). Sánchez-Muñoz (2010) also concluded that HL speakers use more English fillers like “you know,” “I don’t know,” and “I mean” in casual conversations and interviews, than in academic presentations. As a result, she confirmed that code-switching is less frequent in academic registers such as classroom presentations than in interviews and casual conversations (p. 349). This demonstrates that many HL speakers show variation in Spanish and they are able to recognize and adapt to different registers. Given all these examples, it is erroneous to target Chicana/o and Latina/o speakers’ HL as “underdeveloped” or “bad” because some HL speakers actually bring to the classroom a linguistically diverse repertoire (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2010).

In another study, Zentella (1997) analyzed the bilingual and multilingual experiences of Puerto Ricans in *El bloque*, a low-income community in Harlem, New York. In particular, she studied the different varieties second generation Puerto Rican children acquired in this neighborhood from 1979-1989. Zentella draws attention to the fact that these children learned to negotiate their linguistic diversity that surrounded
them, which was part of their everyday lives. These HL speakers learned to accommodate their variety depending on whom they were speaking to and where they were speaking. In their everyday settings, for example, there was a high percentage of code-switching happening within different Spanish varieties and between Spanish and English. Zentella (1997) concluded that this code-switching is a big factor that is attached to the children’s identity as members of a bilingual community. Thus, it is important that educators in Spanish classes acknowledge the linguistic diversity HL speakers bring to the classroom instead of labeling their code-switching as evidence that they are not competent in Spanish or in English. This deficit thinking hinders educators from recognizing the linguistic richness HL possess with the ability to code-switch, which many HL speakers embrace and use with pride (Zentella, 1997).

2.3.2 The Outcomes of Heritage Language Education

The development of HL classes is essential in creating a space where HL abilities are enhanced rather than hindered. Furthermore, HL classes must move away from the foreign language approach used to teach second language learners of Spanish. As Valdés (1981) argues that when HL speakers are placed in foreign language classes they are not given the opportunity to develop their receptive skills and are given limited opportunities to develop their writing and reading skills. For that reason, HL educators must be specifically trained and equipped to work with HL speakers—students who cannot be categorized as second language learners neither of Spanish nor as monolingual Spanish speakers. HL classes must be designed to provide the opportunity for HL speakers to develop their language in numerous ways such as in building on their listening and speaking skills in a variety of subjects that they generally have only discussed in English
In addition, Sánchez (1981) points out that the goal of HL courses’ must be relevant to students’ objectives and to their life in the Chicana/o community (p. 94). Thus, an appropriate HL pedagogy can strengthen Chicanas/os and Latinas/os confidence and competence in Spanish. As many educators and HL researchers have confirmed and agreed with Valdés (1981) that “providing [HL speakers] solid skills in reading, writing, oral expression, and a broad range of positive experiences in using the language [can expand the students’ Spanish varieties and can also retain] the language itself for another generation” (p. 14).

However, given the constant attack on home languages such as Spanish, maintaining a HL is an immense challenge. The language ideologies attached to Spanish can lead to the progressive loss and devaluation of this HL. The devaluation of HL speakers’ mother tongue is also a devaluation of their culture, given that language is part of a person’s identity (Bucholtz 1999; Garcia 2000; Valdés 2000; Zavala 2000; Zentella 2002 cited in Sánchez-Muñoz 2013; Potowski 2012). Consequently, when HL speakers are discouraged from speaking their first language or their family’s language, they are prone to also lose a connection to their ethnic culture. This is because HL loss leads to linguistic insecurity that is linked to the fear of losing connection to their community (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013, p. 230). Furthermore, the HL loss by elementary and secondary education may also affect the students’ psychological health and their linguistic and ethnic identity (Carreira 2007; Leeman et al., 2011; Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013, p 218). Therefore, it is essential that HL pedagogy acknowledges the connection between language and ethnic identity in order to counterattack the devaluation of Spanish. It is because of the devaluation of Spanish that Darder (2012) calls for a break from “a
traditional American pedagogy” as it only silences the voices of “bicultural students” (HL speakers) who are relegated to positions of powerlessness in the U.S. society and where their HL is stripped away (p 21). For these reasons, it is crucial to use the skills HL students bring to the classroom as a resource and not as a problem.

Acknowledging students’ HL varieties will not only benefit them in their social life and in the community but it will also contribute to their well-being (Parodi, 2008). For example, Sánchez-Muñoz (2013) investigated the link between self-esteem and HL instruction. In order to investigate this relation, she analyzed the outcomes of a Spanish course for HL speakers. The researcher measured the linguistic confidence and linguistic and ethnic identity of 24 young Latinos/as who were between 18 and 22 years of age. In order to do this, Sánchez-Muñoz, conducted a pre and post survey. The results showed that students were motivated to take this course because they considered Spanish to be a fundamental characteristic of who they are. Students also expressed a desire to improve their Spanish and develop their abilities in writing, reading, and speaking. In the pre survey, students declared insecurity with their Spanish reading and writing skills. However, by the end of the semester these students declared to have a higher confidence writing, reading, and understanding Spanish. Similarly, the rate of students’ who declared a higher confidence when speaking Spanish increased from 3.1 to 3.6 by the end of the semester (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2013). Spanish HL instruction, therefore, plays an important role in “validating students’ sense of cultural identity and making positive connections between their variety of Spanish and their sense of ethnolinguistic identity” (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012, p.13). HL classes allow students to reclaim the importance of maintaining their HL and discovering the potential they have to actively develop their
skills in Spanish.

For instance, Leeman, Rabin, and Román-Mendoza (2011) conducted a research on the self-driven motivation for students to retain their HL. The researchers analyzed how the impact of agency motivated high schools students to participate in after-school programs, in which they would conduct several workshops for elementary students, predominantly in Spanish. Even though each participant spoke different varieties of Spanish, students were responsible to facilitate workshops using critical pedagogy approaches they had learned in their class. The use of critical pedagogy is important because it “can empower students within a language classroom, by dismantling the oppressive structure outside the classroom walls” that attack HL maintenance (cited in Leeman, Rabin & Román-Mendoza, 2011, p. 485). Zentella (1997) also states that critical pedagogy challenges traditional student/teacher power relations and gives students a voice in questioning their own reality. As a result, the participants in the study were active in retaining their HL, and they also acted as activist role models who transmitted a sense of pride to be HL speakers to the younger students. Spanish, the participants stated, gave them the ability to connect with the Spanish speaking community. For many of the participants, retaining their HL represented a form of self-empowerment and pride. This self-empowerment benefited many of the participants in their academics because the appreciation of their culture allowed them to be more confident in developing strong academic skills. Their self-empowerment also encouraged the participants to look for the resources that would help them attend a higher education institution. Therefore, HL maintenances would not only help the speaker keep a close connection with their ethnic community and identity but it would also benefit them academically (Leeman, Rabin &
Heritage Language Pedagogy

Consequently, using critical pedagogy as an approach in HL classes can motivate students to become HL experts and agents who promote Spanish maintenance awareness among their peers and community (Leeman, Rabin & Román-Mendoza, 2011, p. 485). It is important that HL speakers become linguistically resilient in HL maintenance and that these type of courses stay rooted in addressing issues of the Chicana/o and Latina/o community. HL classes must center the students’ identity and variety in the pedagogy. Spanish maintenance must not be promoted as “a commodity for economic competitiveness in a globalized world” (Leeman & Martínez, 2007, p. 37). In other words, the discourse about Spanish must encourage sociopolitical discussion regarding deconstruction of linguistic hierarchies and language ideologies and its connection to the Chicana/o community. It is important to move away from the discourse that Spanish is only valuable as a world language and as a job skill because this will only push the students’ lived experiences with Spanish to the margins instead of being at the center of HL pedagogy (Leeman & Martínez, 2007, p. 56). Therefore, it is crucial that educators and HL speakers challenge the commodity of Spanish in such courses because this type of focus can lead to an eradication pedagogy that was first challenged by Valdés (1981) and that labeled HL varieties as a “bad” Spanish that needed to be fixed.

In fact, Beaudrie (2015) in an analysis of 62 Spanish HL syllabi that she collected from public and private universities in 15 different states through the U.S.; she found that there are now 5 different pedagogical approaches used in HL courses that address HL speakers’ language variation. As of 2012, there were 169 Spanish HL programs offered
in four-year universities in the U.S. (Beaudrie, 2012). Unfortunately, many Spanish HL courses’ goals continue to be the teaching of standard Spanish only. This type of pedagogy however limits HL learning within a standard and non-standard dichotomy. Until today there are programs that may not be fully equipped to provide successful learning opportunities for Spanish HL speakers (Beaudrie, 2015, p. 6). For example, it was found that of the syllabi analyzed, 55% of the HL programs continue to use an eradication and expansion approach. The eradication approach focuses in eliminating English influences in the Spanish of HL speakers; and the expansion approach commits to teach HL speakers the oral and written standard variety “thereby implicitly silencing the students’ varieties” (Beaudrie, 2015, p. 9). Consequently, Beaudrie (2015) argues that HL programs must center sociolinguistics within HL pedagogy. HL courses must promote the development of a wide range of linguistic repertoires that HL student can access for any type of communication (Beaudrie, 2015, p. 13). I argue that the only pedagogy approach that can make this possible is the one presented and used by Leeman (2005, 2011), critical language approach (rooted in critical pedagogy) which concentrates in “developing dialectal appreciation and understanding of linguistic differences but also [in] making students aware of the social and political dimensions of language variation” (Beaudrie, 2015, p. 4). Beaudrie (2015) found that of the syllabi analyzed only one HL class used critical language approach. However, it is necessary that more HL programs incorporate this approach as their curriculum because this approach can be the bridge that brings together the collaboration of Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education). Critical language approach breaks way from HL being “ideologically and bureaucratically separated from” Chicana/o Studies (Leeman &
Martínez, 2007, p. 53).

2.4 The Coming Together of Two Disciplines: Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education)

“I now realize I am a person, an educated person.”
“We were blind, now our eyes have been opened”
“Before this, words meant nothing to me; now they speak to me and I can make them speak.”
-Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Section 2.1 of this literature review provided a historical context to highlight the social factors that contribute to the stigmatization and devaluation of Spanish. It also exposed how language ideologies contribute to the stratification of English and other non-English languages. In particular, of how within this hierarchy, Spanish is labeled as an “inferior” language that should not be used to teach in public schools. However, the devaluation and stigmatization of Spanish was created by those in power in this society who fear that the Latina/o and Chicana/o community will overthrow the government if bilingual education and Spanish maintenance is encouraged in public schools (Zentella, 1997, p. 68; Hartman, 2003). Hence, Spanish HL attrition is more than just an individual choice, it is an influence grounded in language ideologies that have led to the development of anti-bilingual laws and propositions that hinder Spanish HL maintenance.

Section 2.2 of this review of the literature emphasized the importance of Chicana/o Studies, its history, and its impact on students. The literature reviewed also showed how Chicana/o Studies can create counter-spaces to encourage students to challenge the social injustices happening in their community and to deconstruct language ideologies. Additionally, Chicana/o Studies motivates students to become socially conscious, critical thinkers, and agents who use their culture and history as a source of strength and not as a
deficit in their education. Finally, section 2.3 explained the history of the implementation of HL courses in Spanish departments. Specifically, it emphasized some of the skills that HL speakers bring to the classroom, which must be used as a tool and resource. Furthermore, section 2.3 described the positive outcomes of HL courses and its impact on the students. The research summarized in this section, also pointed out that the best HL pedagogy must not only center the students’ Spanish variety but it must also center their culture, and acknowledge the interconnection between HL and ethnic identity (Bucholtz 1999; Garcia 2000; Valdés 2000; Zavala 2000; Zentella 2002 cited in Sánchez-Muñoz 2013; Potowski 2012). At the same time, HL pedagogy must commit to address the social and political issues that contribute to HL loss. After reviewing the literature and the various arguments in favor of Ethnic Studies (Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education), the final section of this chapter aims to first highlight why it will be essential to bring together Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education and how this can be possible. Secondly, this section reviews some empirical studies that point out the outcomes of bringing together Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education.

2.4.1 Why and How to Combine Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education?

The statement “education is not neutral it is a political act” has been ingrained in my mind since the first time I heard Professor Darder (2015) speak at a presentation. She mentioned that as educators we must realize the power of language and culture and how they are intertwined. Education is also an instrument where students can discover “how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire, 2000, p. 34). It is essential that the language and culture students of color bring to the classroom are acknowledged and placed in the center of pedagogical practices in order to engage students in their learning
process (Darder, 2015). In addition, acknowledging the language and culture that the students bring to the classroom is a political act that is humanizing and empowering. For this reason, the coming together of two disciplines: Chicana/o Studies and Linguistic in its study of Heritage Language Education can take students to a new awareness of self and to a new sense of dignity (Freire, 2000, p. 33). This is the core of the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis. Namely, the importance of incorporating the linguistic aspect of ethnic students’ experiences in courses that bring together both disciplines may contribute to students’ linguistic capital and thus to their agency towards HL maintenance.

How, then, can courses in disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education) construct a bridge that connects both fields? Both disciplines, for instance, affirm that language ideologies attached to HL are detrimental not only to the language, but also at the individual and the community level. This is because, as mentioned in the other sections of this literature review, HL plays a big role in the development of an ethnic identity, so the attacks on HL minimizes the possibility of language maintenance. As it was discussed in Section 2.3, most of the HL courses in the nation are offered as Spanish classes in the Modern/Foreign Language Departments where language ideologies are not often discussed. However, it is fundamental to not only deconstruct language ideologies that stigmatize U.S Spanish, but it is also necessary that students explore language and “its sociopolitical implications in the production of knowledge, culture, and identities” (Fairclough, 1992, 2001; Giroux, 1991 cited in Leeman 2005). This might be possible with the construction of a bridge that brings together Chicana/o Studies and Linguistic (Heritage Language Education).
Rosaura Sánchez (1981) is one of the first scholars to recognize the importance of bringing together the focus of each discipline by advocating that HL language instructors must recognize the historical and socio-economic context of the Latina/o and Chicana/o community in the U.S. Moreover, she argues that HL instructors must be socially acquainted with the struggles that their Latina/o and Chicana/o students face in U.S. society. This knowledge is vital for the development of activities that will be relevant to the students’ everyday experiences and will prepare the instructor to be aware of the sociopolitical values attached to the students’ linguistic varieties. Sánchez (1981) suggests that HL courses must incorporate readings that deal with all aspects of the Latina/o and Chicana/o community such as history, education, culture, and other topics even if the readings are in English. Then, HL students must write a report of the reading in Spanish and then facilitate a discussion about the readings in Spanish. These readings, in addition to being socially and politically productive, would also elicit different discussions and enrich the students’ vocabulary.

She also recommends that HL classes include presentations and newsletter writing that reinforce students’ writing skills in Spanish. The newsletters should focus on topics that are relevant to the Chicana/o and Latina/o community and should be distributed in the community in order to inform and encourage them to act upon resolving the problem that is affecting their community. Another focus of the class should be in understanding the social stratification among languages and to understand that, linguistically, no language is superior to any other language. It is important that HL classes develop activities that will promote HL students’ skills students can apply in their everyday life. These are just some examples of how Sánchez (1981) was able to bring together the
focus of HL classes and the focus of Chicana/o classes in order to provide HL speakers with knowledge of both disciplines.

Another example is that of Sergio D. Elizondo (1981), whose groundbreaking work was one of the first to encourage the use of Chicano literature in Spanish language classes. He argues that the Chicana/o history and culture must play an essential role in HL classes. Given that there were no classes that incorporated the latter topics in HL classes, he designed a course that focused on Spanish as a Heritage Language and also included the culture and history of this ethnic group. There were also no classes in Chicana/o Studies where Spanish maintenance was one of the main objectives. Therefore, Elizondo (1981) designed the Introducción a estudios chicanos class, which was offered as a general education course in the Department of Foreign Languages at New Mexico State University. Elizondo (1981) states that this course was a popular class among HL speakers where about 30 to 50 students enrolled each semester.

The lack of material available was one of the biggest obstacles when organizing this course. Textbooks and readings in Spanish that discussed the topics of culture and history about the Chicana/o community were rarely available. As a consequence, the readings were done in English but everything else was in Spanish. The course focused on teaching and practicing all aspects of the HL such as readings, analyzing, and writing and creating a space to speak Spanish, which was one of the main goals. Elizondo (1981) explains that this course had to move away from following a traditional language class because in order to meet its objective its design had to be flexible in order to use different teaching approaches. For example, in order to teach about the culture, Elizondo (1981) used films and filmstrips to show the students about some aspects of Chicana/o history
rather than focusing solely on the traditional use of books. Elizondo (1981) highlights that courses like the one he designed are vital to recognize that HL classes are as important as Chicana/o classes and that their coming together will encourage students to not only practice their HL but to also learn about their culture and language.

Jennifer Leeman (2005), in her article “Engaging Critical Pedagogy: Spanish for Native Speakers,” expounds the importance of implementing a critical language pedagogy in HL classes. This critical pedagogy must include interdisciplinary perspectives from fields like literature, anthropology, journalism, and cultural studies (Leeman, 2005, p. 36). She challenged the Appropriateness-based approach used in HL classes at the time of her article. She argued that this approach was problematic because even though it recognized the different Spanish varieties it disregarded the linguistic subordination because it continued to promote the hierarchy between varieties (Leeman, 2005, p. 38).

2.4.2. The Outcomes of Bringing Together Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics (Heritage Language Education)

Centering the students’ HL in the teaching practices will solidify their language. The critical language pedagogy, mentioned above, is an approach that commits to center students’ language varieties in the curriculum (Leeman, 2005). This approach also focuses on Latina/os’ and Chicana/o’s language, social, and political issues, in order to encourages them to become “critical social actors” in legitimizing their U.S. Spanish varieties (Leeman, 2005). Martinez (2003) further argues that it is fundamental for students to understand “language variation, subordination, and discrimination because this can [be transform into a] renewed pride and interest in” their HL (p. 47). Thus, critical language pedagogy is an example of how to bring together Chicana/o Studies and
In the article “Politics of Language, Identity and Spanish Heritage Learners,” Maria Dolores Gonzales (2012) explains that:

a large number of heritage learners are enrolling in Spanish, but they are not enrolling in Chicano Studies classes nor do not take Chicano literature classes. As a result, there is little opportunity in mainstream course in the university for the students to be exposed to the historical and socio-political themes and theories necessary to achieve critical consciousness which link them to their own history and ethnic identity (p. 153).

For this reason, she designed a class (Freshman Learning Community class) that incorporated Chicano Literature (Gonzales, 2012, p. 152). The goal of the class was to analyze how the linguistic motivation and awareness of HL speakers were affected after the implementation of socio-historical content. Gonzales (2012) claims that using Chicano Literature allowed students to “discover their voices by validating their history, culture, and language” (p. 152). The class was taught in English and it was connected to a Spanish HL class, both classes collaborated with each other in order to enhance HL students’ knowledge of their language and about historical and socio-political issues. Specifically, one of objectives of the class focused on “facilitating a better understanding of how the colonization of the Southwest contributed to the stigmatization of Spanish. Another of the class objectives was the empowering of the students in order to “enhance their self-image, self-esteem, and desire to become literate in Spanish” (Gonzales, 2012, p. 155).

The impact of the class was measured by conducting two surveys of the 18 students who participated in the class. The first survey finding indicated that implementing Chicano literature allowed students to understand how language choice is affected by political and economic factors (Gonzales, 2012). The results of the second
survey can be summarized by the following responses from students: “It makes Spanish enjoyable for the first time ever;” “I used to think that there was a correct way to speak Spanish, but now I feel proud of my Spanish and want to study it further;” “I am more motivated to learn español,” “These topics made me want to study Spanish even more” (Gonzales, 2012, p.160). These statements demonstrate that the integration of Chicana/o Studies in HL classes is vital in addressing the “ politicizing” of education. How else, as Gonzales (2012) declares, “can students value their language if they are not given their own real linguistic history?” (p.162).

The study by Sánchez-Muñoz (2013) also supports the importance of the coming together of Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education. Sánchez-Muñoz designed the first class for HL speakers in Chicana/o Studies at a California State University, Chicana/o Studies 101. Specifically, this class was designed to:

address language learning for heritage speakers and provide such training through a variety of activities that focus on the development of speaking, reading, and writing skills. This course aims to also help students attain a greater awareness of the history and importance of Hispanic and Latino communities in the U.S. Diverse sociolinguistic aspects of the language are explored including language maintenance, loss, dialect diversity, the academic variety and bidialectalism. The class is conducted in Spanish and includes various projects based on community work (Sánchez-Muñoz 2008, Spanish for Chicanos/as 101 cited in Sánchez-Muñoz 2013, pp. 222-223).

Chicana/o Studies 101 centers the students’ variety of Spanish as a valuable resource to guide the class. In 2013, Sánchez-Muñoz analyzed the relationship between the personal and collective identity of young Latinas/os and the usage of Spanish as a HL. In particular, she investigated their level of linguistic confidence. Similar to Leeman (2005), Sánchez-Muñoz (2013) also affirms that the best HL program is the one that is designed using critical pedagogy, which understands the complex relationship between HL and
sociopolitical structures directly affecting the HL (p. 221). In addition, critical pedagogy in Chicana/o Studies 101 allows students to discover that they have the potential to challenge the hierarchical prestige assigned to different languages and which devalues their HL.

This thesis contributes to the analysis of the outcomes of bringing together Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education. In particular, the two questions that guide this study are 1) In what way, if any, might a HL course in Chicana/o Studies impact the development of the ethnic identity of the participating HL students? And 2) In what ways, if any, might a HL course in Chicana/o Studies deepen the students’ understanding of language ideologies?
Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to study the outcomes of bringing together Chicana/o Studies and Heritage Language Education. In order to understand the outcomes of incorporating the linguistic component to an ethnic studies curriculum, this thesis analyzes the experience of Latina/o and Chicana/o students taking a Heritage Language class in a Chicana/o Studies Department.

The methodology employed follows a qualitative research model. The primary data collection consisted of two sets of one-on-one semi-structured interviews that took place in the middle and end of the semester. Interviews were chosen as a method for data collection because this setting can provide a comfortable space where participants can reflect on their experiences by formatting the interviews as a conversation with open-ended questions (Rodríguez, 2010). Also, interviews provide greater depth (McMillan, 2004). This is because interviews allow the researcher to provide any further information and/or clarify any question if needed by the participants. Furthermore, these face-to-face interactions also provide the researcher an opportunity to ask follow up questions or ask for clarifications (McMillan, 2004).

Interviews were chosen over other qualitative methods (case studies, ethnographic studies, and observations) because they are the most effective for the purpose of this research—namely, to have participants reflect on experiences in Chicana/o Studies 101. All interviews were recorded with an audio recorder, transcribed, and analyzed by the researcher.
3.1 Course Description

Chicana/o Studies 101 is a course available and open to any CSUN student as it can count towards completing the general education requirements for an undergraduate degree. According to the course syllabus, Chicana/o Studies 101 is designed to address language learning of HL speakers by providing them a variety of activities that will further develop students’ speaking, reading, and writing skills. The course is designed to also help students “attain a greater awareness of the history, character, and importance of Hispanic and Latino communities in the U.S.” (Spanish for Chicanas/os’syllabus). Furthermore, the goals and objectives of this class include: to practice reading, oral pronunciation, academic writing skills in Spanish; discuss characteristics of U.S Spanish and Latino culture; and demonstrate critical thinking in the production of oral and writing texts.

3.2 Participants

After an informative presentation about the current study in the Chicana/o Studies 101 class, 17 students who were at least 18 years of age or older volunteered to participate in this research of 24 students enrolled in the course. The 17 participants major ranged from different disciplines with Psychology being the most common. In addition, the class level varied from incoming freshman to graduating seniors. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 35. In order to be part of this qualitative study the participants were also required to self-identify as Latina/Latino, Chicana/Chicano or with any other term used to refer to this community. In addition, the participants must have been raised in an environment where they were exposed to Spanish from an early age. Most of the participants were born or raised in the U.S. and are from Mexican or
Salvadorian descent. A small number of the participants were born in different states of Mexico but were brought to the U.S at an early age. Also, the majority of the participants declared that the primary language to communicate with at least one of their parents was Spanish. Furthermore, all the participants’ characteristics match the definition of a Spanish HL speaker: someone who was born or raised and educated in the U.S and who is exposed to a non-English language at home (Valdés, 2001). Table 1 provides a list of the HL speakers who participated in this research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico, arrived to US at the age of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perla</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico, arrived to US at the age of 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazmin</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlota</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathie</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alondra</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caro</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico, arrived to US at the age of 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>U.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzette</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mexico, arrived to US at the age of 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1). List of the participants’ pseudonym and demographic information

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

Prior to collecting any data, the participants were asked to fill out a consent form. At the same time, the students were given a package that informed them in detail about their rights and other information regarding the procedure and confidentiality of the
research. The rights of participants are protected as human subjects by IRB that was approved by the Graduate Studies office at California State University, Northridge.

The data collected from the participants was kept anonymous and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. The participants were asked to fill-out a demographic survey and language use survey (Appendix A). The language survey, in particular, addressed questions regarding their first language and the languages they speak, if they had taken Spanish classes before, and whether they use Spanish, English or both with their parents/guardians, grandparents, siblings, friends, and extended family. This information allowed the researcher to ensure the homogeneity of the participants, which was vital for the reliability and validity of this research study. Then, the participants were contacted via email to schedule the first interview at their best availability. The location of the first interview varied from a reserved study room on the library, a faculty’s office space, and an empty classroom on campus. For the second set of interviews, the researcher made arrangements with a student organization at CSUN to reserve their office space to conduct the interviews.

The first set of interviews focused on understanding the experiences of the participants in their everyday settings with Spanish and their perspective about Spanish. For example, some of the questions asked included: How did you learn Spanish? What has been your experience with Spanish? In what setting do you use it the most? In a typical day of your life, what would you say is the percentage of the amount of Spanish that you use?

Given that much of the literature states that heritage language and ethnic identity are intertwined, it is important to ask the participants questions about their understanding
of the role of language in the formation and performance of their ethnic identity. In addition, the participants were also asked questions regarding their perspective on Spanish maintenance and/or loss (Appendix B). The time frame of this first session of interviews varied from 20 to 30 minutes.

The questions in the second set of interviews addressed the experiences of the participants specifically in the Chicana/o 101 class. Some of the questions that were asked in this second interview included: What has been your experience in CHS101? And what would you say was the most impactful learning experience? (Appendix C). This second session of interviews took from 12 to 25 minutes.

The 17 participants were interviewed on two different occasions for several reasons. First, dividing the set of questions into two interviews minimized the possibility of fatigue that long interviews can cause. In addition, two separate interviews provided the opportunity to collect data regarding the participants’ different experience with Spanish, one in their everyday life (interview 1) as well as in the class setting (interview 2). Also, having two separate interviews allowed the researcher to first collect data regarding the participants’ perspective regarding Spanish and its maintenance; and then the second interview addressed any potential changes in the participant’s perspective regarding Spanish and its maintenance as a result of the class.

Thus, a total of 34 interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were transferred to the software Nvivo, which facilitates the creation of a matrix. Once the data was in this software, it was interpreted and analyzed and the common topics and patterns were organized into codes (McMillan, 2004). Coding allowed the researcher to compare the responses in order to find commonalities among them. To reduce any bias
and to increase the validity of the study, the researcher used her detailed notes taken during the interviews to interpret the data and create codes. The codes are categorized in to the themes that guide the findings of this research study and the arguments to answer the research questions. A detailed explanation of the research findings is provided in Chapter Four.

3.4 Ethics

The privacy and well-being of the participants were a priority when conducting the interviews. The setting of each interview was carefully chosen in order to provide the participants with privacy. All identifiable information that could be linked to the participants in their responses was changed or removed. In addition, the audio-recordings, transcriptions, and notes taken during the interview are securely stored in my password-protected laptop. Any identifiable information that can link the participant with his/her pseudonym is kept separate from the data collected. Although there are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life such as fatigue, boredom, and shyness, participants were allowed to take breaks (if needed) during each interview to prevent any discomfort. The participants were also provided the contact information of the University Counseling Service at California, State University, Northridge in case of any discomfort.

Furthermore, the participants were also informed about their right to withdraw or terminate their participation in the study at any time. Additionally, in case of any concerns or complaints about the research study, the researcher, or questions about their rights, the participants were given the contact information of the Research and Sponsored Projects office at California State University, Northridge.
Chapter Four: Research Findings and Discussion

This chapter is divided in three sections. The first section (4.1) provides an insight on the participants’ language background in order to have a better understanding of their everyday experience with Spanish. The second section (4.2) focuses on the results of the study, which is composed of the analysis that addresses the two research questions proposed in this thesis. The third section (4.3) covers the discussion of the analysis as well as the significance of the results.

4.1 Participants’ Language Background

In this section, we discuss the results of the language backgrounds of the participants. As discussed in the methodology, the speakers were interviewed in two different occasions. In the first interview, the participants were asked to share how they learned Spanish, the percentage of Spanish they thought they used on a daily basis, whether they thought speaking Spanish was important for them and finally, to share why they decided to take this HL class in Chicana/o Studies.

4.1.1 Language Acquisition and Use

The 17 participants in this study are very diverse and unique, and at the same time they have many similar experiences with their Heritage Language (HL). In particular, the participants shared many similarities in the first interview, when they were asked to explain how they learned Spanish and to provide an approximate percentage of the Spanish they use in their everyday life. All the participants shared that they learned Spanish at home while growing-up, as it was the language of their parents and/or grandparents. A few of the participants not only learned Spanish at home, but also acquired the language because they were born in a Spanish speaking country and lived there for a few years until their parents
decided to migrate to the U.S. Others shared that their parents wanted them to learn Spanish first because they knew that once they entered school they would have to learn English. However, participants asserted that their usage of Spanish decreased as they progressively used more English. For others, Spanish was the only language permitted at home during family interactions as in Alondra’s case:

[…] My mom always told us that she thought it was disrespectful for her kids to be sitting around the table and talking a language that she did not understand, and she was like “if you are going to be talking in front of a lot people, it is kind of disrespectful for us your parents to not understand what you are saying, so in this house since we only speak Spanish then you can only Speak Spanish. You all can speak English among yourselves, but when it is a family matter, Spanish is the language so we all can communicate equally and know;” so it could be like a neutral communication like the family, so that really worked out-Alondra

Alondra’s mother requirement to speak only Spanish at home helped Alondra maintain her HL, and it also encouraged Alondra and her siblings to use Spanish in their face-to-face and virtual conversations as she mentions in the following quote:

I use it [Spanish] with my siblings, I guess that even though we all speak English fluently and stuff, even now in group messages with my sisters and my brother we will talk Spanish, it is just natural to me, I don’t have to think about what I am going to write, just like say what I have to say, it comes naturally to me-Alondra

This expectation allowed Alondra and her siblings to build a stronger relationship as they communicate in Spanish as a way to solidify their sibling bond.

Angela, another participant, explained that although she mostly speaks Spanish at home with her family, she also uses this language in her community and at work. She declared that she is proud that she can speak Spanish because this is a skill that is valuable in her community:

I work at [a] store on Cesar Chavez, so it is like in East LA and everyone mostly speaks Spanish, so I speak it there all the time [follow-up question: the fact that you live in a community that speaks Spanish, how is that experience?] it kind of makes me more proud […] that I am Mexican and Latina because everyone there
embraces it, it is not just like “oh its cool you are bilingual” but it is welcome, so I like it—Angela

The value given to bilingualism in Angela’s community is essential for her HL maintenance. However, it is crucial that the community not only appreciates bilingualism but also values the diverse skills HL speakers have in Spanish. This value and appreciation might increase the number of HL speakers who are not afraid to speak Spanish in public settings and with other people besides family members. This appreciation could potentially augment the percentage of HL use in speakers’ everyday life. Eleven of the 17 participants declared to use Spanish about 50% almost every day and mainly with their family members and specifically with their parents. Some of the participants said their Spanish percentage varied from day to day; for example, the highest percentage was 90% for one of the participants and the lowest was a 10% Spanish use every day by another participant. The above information provides an insight at the background of the participants in regards to how they learned the language and their own reflection of the percentage of Spanish they use on a daily basis. Specifically, it is important to note that Spanish is a venue to establish community relations, to unify families, and to stay connected to their ethnic culture.

4.1.2 Value Assigned to Spanish as a HL and Motivation to take Spanish for Chicanos 101

In addition to the background information provided above, it is important to also examine the cultural and non-utilitarian value these HL speakers attached to their Spanish, which led them to take Spanish for Chicanos 101.

When the participants were asked about the importance of speaking Spanish they declared that this language was essential for communication with their family including
their parents and grandparents. Speaking this language gave them access to enjoy Spanish
music and listen to comedy in Spanish, and many showed pride in being able to speak
Spanish and to be bilingual. This is because being an HL speaker expanded their
opportunities and knowledge; such as traveling to other Spanish speaking countries,
getting better jobs for being bilinguals, and gaining new knowledge by having access to
two languages that will allow for new ways of thinking about the two different cultures.

This is exemplified in Andrea’s comment:

I think it is [important] because, um, it [Spanish] is a great tool to have in life if
you really want to be bilingual. What better thing than knowing two languages?,
you should not be restricted to certain things, you have less restrictions [by
knowing two languages] you can listen to Spanish music, you can go to Spanish
restaurants […] I think it is important to have options you know to be able to
speak English, Spanish to be able to eat English food, to be able to eat Spanish
food you know to have basically best of both worlds. To be able to go visit your
family in Mexico and see how different it is in Mexico than how it is here [in the
U.S.] I mean si yo no sabía español yo nunca me hubiera divertido [en México].
(If I did not know Spanish, I would not have had fun in Mexico). Tengo amigos
en México, y si no hablara español entonces no tuviera la libertad de tener
opciones like hablar español y hacer cosas mexicanas comparada a cosas
americanas (I have friends in Mexico and if I had not knew Spanish, I would not
have had the liberty to have options like speaking in Spanish and doing Mexican
things compared to things I would do in the Americana culture)-Andrea

Speaking Spanish for Andrea is a great tool in order to experience the culture, music,
food, and to interact with Mexicans in their home country and, at the same time be able to
compare these aspects and traits of her hybrid identity. As she mentions, with these two
languages she has the best of both worlds. Speaking Spanish is vital in defining their
ethnic identity as it was explained by many of the participants. They furthered claimed
that Spanish is part of who they are and it is a cultural trait they want to pass down to
their future children, which will connect them to their ethnic culture.
While some of the participants believe that speaking Spanish plays a big role in their ethnic identity, they also shared that in general, speaking Spanish is not necessarily a cultural trait for being Chicana/o Latino/a. This is due in part to the more common English speaking scenarios carried-out with their friends, who either do not speak Spanish because it was a language that for different reasons was not maintained within their friends’ families, or for personal choice. The participants further explained that a Latina/o and Chicana/o could identify with the culture even though they do not speak Spanish because they might be familiar with the history and some of the cultural traits. However, when they specifically referred to their own situation, they explained that speaking Spanish does give them an advantage to converse with their family members. For example, Grace shared that in family reunions she would notice that her cousins were timid in approaching their grandparents because they did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish and preferred to avoid the interaction. Grace shared that seeing this made her appreciate that her parents taught her Spanish since she was a baby, and that even though she might not be “perfect” at speaking it she can still have a conversation with her grandparents who are Spanish monolinguals. Furthermore, speaking Spanish benefits the HL speakers in this study when they participate in certain traditions such as Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), quinceañeras (fifteen years celebration) or even when they hear or say jokes that cannot be easily translated and transferred to an English only community. In addition, speaking Spanish, many participants claimed, keeps the culture alive, and it would contribute to its maintenance among future generations as it is seen in Suzette’s comment:
Si es importante porque, um, as the years go by sí se pierde el español. Es mejor enseñarle a tus hijos para que todavía tengas esa cultura viva en tu familia y no que se vaya desapareciendo de poquito a poquito—Suzette

Yes, it is important because, um, as the years go by Spanish is loss. It is best to teach your kids [Spanish] in order to keep the culture alive in your family and prevent from the language disappearing little by little—Suzette

Moreover, Perla affirms that Spanish as a Heritage Language reinforces cultural roots as it strengthens the bond with the ethnic community and is a bridge that connects the speaker to her ethnic identity.

These values that the participants assigned to their HL are projected in their motivation to enroll in the HL class in Chicana/o Studies. As stated before, Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 is a lower division class open to any CSUN student that counts towards meeting some of the general education unit requirements. Regardless of benefiting from taking this class to complete their elective units, participants shared that one of the reasons they decided to take the class is to create a stronger relationship with their family. Pablo, for example, stated that he was taking the class not only to be more confident with speaking and writing Spanish, which would help him in the future for his job; but also because he wanted to be a confident speaker as it would help him strengthen his relationship with his family and learn more about his culture:

[I am taking this class] so I can talk to my family and so it can benefit me when I work when I am older, so I can work with other people […] so that I can have a better relationship with them, and I can learn more about my culture since I live here (U.S.) and I really don’t go to Mexico that often, so that way it can benefit me”—Pablo

Paco, another participant, also mentioned that his desire to be more confident in Spanish and to expand his HL skills to be able to communicate with the Spanish speaking community is what motivated him to take this class:
Explicitly, being more confident when speaking Spanish would help him inform the community about important health issues such as diabetes, and it can allow him to feel more comfortable when volunteering in Spanish speaking communities.

Another reason that motivated the students to take the class is because it relates to their culture. For instance, Eduardo shared that what motivated him to take this course is the fact that it would address the Chicana/o culture, which he thought would benefit him more than any other Spanish course offered in the Foreign Language Department, because the latter tends to focus on acquiring the standard aspects of the language and teaches Spanish as a FL (Foreign Language) for non-Spanish speakers rather than a HL (Heritage Language):

Initially it was part of my GE, but there was a variety of Spanish classes, but then Spanish for Chicanos, so “ok I am Chicano” so it must benefit me the most than just other regular class, so that is why I took it-Eduardo

Eduardo’s response highlights the need for Spanish courses that relate to the students’ culture, in particular to the Chicanas/os’ and Latina/o culture in the U.S.

The participants also pointed out that they wanted to take this class to expand their Spanish HL skills; and other participants saw this class as a second opportunity to have a better experience in language classes and as a chance to break away from the fear of taking Spanish courses. Expanding her HL skills was important for Perla because at her job she is expected to translate documents from English to Spanish. Even though, she does not feel confident translating the documents, she still has to do it because it is expected from her. To meet this expectation she has to ask her mother and cousin in Mexico to revise her work
since the documents she translates are essential for the communication between teachers and parents:

In my job I work in [XXX] so there is a lot of time that when we need things translated to Spanish [...] for our teachers, [in order] to communicate with the parents of their students. [That task] always falls upon me and I don’t feel confident in my skills. [...] but they [teachers] bring me the English one and I work in translating them [in Spanish]. It’s a collaboration because I translate them and I have my mom review them and then I will sent it to my cousin in Mexico and I will be like “can you proof [read] this and make sure it is accurate because it is something that is going to be disseminated across schools- Perla

This is an expectation that many HL speakers face in their jobs or in their everyday life since often as Latinos/as and Chicanas/os they are assumed to be able to perform as translators/interpreters. The pressure can be stressful, and it can lead many HL speakers to give up using the HL if it is targeted as “bad” or “deficient” as a result of not meeting this expectation. Adequate HL courses are critical in order to address this degrading and deficit perspective attached to the Spanish variety of many HL speakers.

Kathie saw this class as an opportunity to give Spanish courses a second chance given that her experiences in Spanish courses in high school had not been positive:

[…+] me gustó porque era una clase donde el lenguaje iba a ser fluent in Spanish, so era muy interesante porque cuando tomé Spanish en high school, no me hallé. También, entonces quería tratarlo otra vez porque estaba muy confundida con los acentos, con las tildes, y era muy difícil y dije pues a ver, hay que tratarlo otra vez. Sé que hablo español, pero no soy perfecta en ello-Kathie

I like it because it was a class where the language spoken was going to be fluent in Spanish, so it was interesting because when I took Spanish in high school, I was not comfortable. Also, I wanted to give it (taking Spanish courses) another try because I was confused with the accents, with the accent marks, they were very difficult and I was like well let’s see, let’s try it once again. I know that I speak Spanish, but I am not perfect at it-Kathie

In a follow-up question, Kathie mentioned how in her first semester in high school she was placed in Spanish as second/foreign language course, which she described as being really
easy because she was already familiar with the material covered in class. The second semester, she enrolled in Spanish for native speakers, which she found to be difficult because she did not have the level expected of her. She also explained that the teacher assumed that the Latino/a students would arrive to the course already knowing how to read, write, and speak Spanish proficiently. Kathie’s reflection on her Spanish courses in high school emphasizes the importance of HL classes where students are encouraged to appreciate the Spanish variety they bring from home. These courses are not nourished by ideologies of a standard variation that set native-like Spanish as the norm. This latter mentality projected in non-HL classes and in the monolingual Spanish community is what discourages many HL speakers to take Spanish classes, and sometimes even speaking the language in public. Angela’s response exemplifies how many HL speakers prefer to take courses of Spanish as a foreign/second language:

I was going to take this class before [Spanish for Chicanos 101] but then I learned that before, when I was going to take it, they told me that it was only taught in Spanish and everything was in Spanish so it kind of freaked me out. So I was like “no, I am not ready,” then I took a Spanish course this semester and the professor told me that I couldn’t be in her class because my Spanish was so advanced for it, [for Spanish 101 for beginners]. So I went to my advisor because she kicked all of us out. She asked us [the professor of the Spanish class for second language learners] “oh cómo te llamas.” (Oh, what’s your name?) and if we answered she told us that we couldn’t be in that class because we know Spanish; and it made me feel a little worried because my funds [financial aid] actually depends on my units, so this class was the only one that was open and my advisor told me that it was a really good class.”-Angela

Although Angela originally enrolled in Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 because she needed the units to receive her financial aid, she claims that this class motivated her to take more Spanish and Chicana/o Studies courses. Furthermore, she stated to enjoy the class and, most importantly, she overcame the fear to take formal classes in her HL.
The experiences mentioned above relate to the various ways in which participants learned Spanish and the reasons why they think speaking it is important. These experiences provide us with a better understanding of what influenced the students to enroll in Spanish for Chicanas/os 101. All this information is essential for reinforcing the analysis that is presented in the results and analysis sections that follow.

4.2 Results

The linguistic background of the participants allows us to appreciate the cultural values HL speakers had already attached to their Spanish Heritage Language. Specifically, these cultural and non-utilitarian values highlight the students’ appreciation of the interconnection of Spanish and ethnic identity and their understanding of the impact language ideologies have on their HL. Therefore, the goal of this research study is to analyze in what ways, if any, a HL class in Chicana/o studies (Spanish for Chicanas/os 101) contributed to the development of the students’ ethnic identity and deepened their understanding of language ideologies. Table 2 below provides a visual of the four themes created from the data analyzed to address each research question.
### Research Questions

1. In what way, if any, might a HL course in Chicana/o Studies impact the development of the ethnic identity of the participating HL students?

2. In what ways, if any, might a HL course in Chicana/o Studies deepen the students’ understanding of language ideologies?

### Table (2). Research questions and themes extracted from the data collection

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4.2.1 Theme One: Spanish Heritage Language Intertwined with Ethnic Identity

Many of the participants already considered Spanish HL to play a central role in their ethnic identity. Nevertheless, this HL course in Chicana/o Studies still impacted the development of the participants’ ethnic identity by facilitating a deeper understanding of Latina/o cultures and languages in the U.S., Mexico, and other Spanish speaking countries. This served to reinforce their ethnic pride, strengthening their connection with their loved ones, and more. Perla, for instance, provides an insight of the course designed by explaining that the class was like a puzzle. Each piece was important for the impact of the course because the puzzle not only focused on the language, but also on the culture and the family history of each of the participants. It was enjoyable to share one’s history and experiences while at the same time getting to learn more about the family and experiences of the rest of the classmates. Amanda agrees that the class provided a
positive outcome because it combined the cultural as well as linguistic aspects of Spanish. The cultural aspects of the course were revealing and rewarding because students got to learn about their own family history and culture:

The class [helped] you to identify yourself more, more than just saying oh yeah I am Mexican you know, you start knowing more about your culture [and now] I know more about my family and my roots - Amanda

Kathie, also specified that this class helped her identify herself with being Latina because she realized her appreciation for her Mexican culture since the course opened her eyes to see the power of writing in Spanish, which she discovered while writing a poem for one of the assignments. Similar to the previous experience, David confirmed that this class gave him the confidence to understand that Spanish is part of who he is. Moreover, he stated that after taking the class he was proud to speak Spanish, which in turn reinforced his pride to be Chicano:

Esta clase, CHS 101 […] me dio esa seguridad y me hizo entender que el español es parte es de mí y ahora ya me siento más orgulloso de hablar el español, y pues me hace sentir un Chicano, un Latino orgulloso en este país - David

This CHS 101 class gave me confidence and made me understand that Spanish is part of me, and now I feel prouder speaking Spanish, and it makes me feel a proud Chicano, a Latino in this country - David

Suzette also claimed to feel closer to her culture because she felt more confident speaking Spanish, as it also allowed her to communicate more with her Latina/o community. Carlota reflected on the fact that while she was always able to speak Spanish, she had never taken in consideration the significance of being bilingual, but by taking this class she realized the value of possessing this skill. For Grace, this HL class helped her to discover the interconnection of language and identity. The class actually became a crucial
tool for embracing her ethnic identity since she would not identify herself with the Latina/o culture prior to taking the class:

[…] when people would asked me “what it is your race?” I always joke around and told them “I am American” and then they would ask “where are your parents from?” and I would say, “Mexico” and they would say “then, you are Mexican” and I would say “no because I have never been to Mexico, I am not really attached to the culture, I am more American and I have only lived here” […] but this class […] has helped me realize that (Spanish) is part of my identity, it is my [part of my] culture. [Spanish] is something that is part of the Latino culture, it is something you use on the daily basis so it has helped me with my identity—Grace

In addition to this class being beneficial in gaining confidence and feeling more connected to their ethnic group, the participants also declared gaining knowledge about their own culture and other Spanish speaking countries. Angela, for example shared that:

Yo nomás sabia poquito de mi cultura, pero además aprendí de Cuba y de la República Dominicana. Yo no sabia muchas cosas de Cuba y de Trujillo, y todo eso. Yo no sabia la historia de la República Dominicana y aprendí mucho-Angela

I only knew a little about my culture, but I learned about Cuba and the Dominican Republic. I did not know many things about Cuba and Trujillo and all that. I did not know much about the Dominican Republic’s history, but I learned a lot.-Angela

In another question, Angela elaborated that she learned a lot about her family’s place of origin, Mexico, through reading Frida Kahlo’s life story because she was able to get a perspective of how Mexico was when she (Frida Kahlo) was alive. Through this class assignment, she felt more attached to her roots and her identity. She shared that in a previous class, she had to go to a Latin American Art museum where she first saw the paintings of Frida. Angela explained that in her visit to the museum she became aware of her work, but in the HL class she actually got to learn about Frida’s life, struggles, and accomplishments. In the same way, this class allowed Eduardo to learn the different Spanish language variations that are spoken throughout the Spanish speaking countries
like Europe, Central and South American and the Caribbean. The students learned that some words and pronunciations are different, but all these are mutually intelligible as they stem from the same language.

Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 not only reinforced the students’ cultural knowledge, but it also deepened the students’ connection to their own ethnic identity and promoted an awareness of the culture. For participants like Carolina, a family tree assignment in class helped her develop a sense of belonging as she shared that she always felt out of place in both the mainstream U.S. culture and the Mexican culture. Carolina struggled with not being considered Mexican because she speaks English and is not familiar with Mexican traditions. She expressed this as a continued struggle to find where she belongs. But taking this class made her come to the conclusion that she is both cultures (Mexican and U.S.) and that she must embrace them, as they are part of who she is:

She [the Professor] made us go to our family tree and see where we come from […] the history behind yourself […] I often found myself like I don’t fit in my American [culture] because I am not accepted because of my skin color because of my roots and I am not necessarily consider Mexican because I speak English and I don’t know certain traditions so I was always like “where do I fit in?” It was just a constant confusion like where do I belong and this I feel like [this class has] helped find myself, “oh you are part of this like, you are like American but you are Mexican or Hispanic […] this helped a lot with my identity –Carolina

The significance of designing classes that are relevant to the students’ culture is not only reflected on the examples mentioned above, but in reassigning the value of their HL beyond a utilitarian value. In other words, the value of maintaining a HL is more than being financially beneficial or for opportunities in the job market, but also in acquiring life skills beyond “correct” Spanish grammar. Theme two showcases the importance of Spanish beyond utilitarian values, an aspect of language and culture that tends to be ignored by mainstream social values.
4.2.2 Theme Two: Beyond the Utilitarian Value

Caro and many of the participants claimed that the confidence gained from taking a HL class was vital for their communication with members of their community. For example, in the significant interactions they had at church, supermarkets, public transportation and other settings with people who mostly speak Spanish. For Caro, being able to feel confident speaking Spanish is a way to feel proud of her Mexican heritage. Suzette confesses that before taking this class she had not paid attention to the importance of speaking Spanish; however, by taking this class she developed another perspective to approach the world. Moreover, Suzette shared that by maintaining her HL she was able to understand the struggles and cultures of the Mexican community, various Latina/o communities, and other communities who live in the U.S. Furthermore, having these two perspectives allowed her to be open-minded and to see how these various cultures relate in many aspects, rather than believing that they are completely incompatible.

The non-utilitarian value of HL maintenance for Paco means a process in which he transformed his passion for music into becoming a Spanish songwriter. His transformation began while writing a poem for one of the class assignments. As he explained, an idea just popped into his mind to make the poem more vivid, to hook the reader and have him/her feel as they were part of the poem. His poem was actually chosen as one of the best poems in the class. It was through the process of writing the poem that he unveiled a new world, one where he discovered his pleasure for writing music in Spanish, as he narrates below:

So I didn’t know how to start this one, then all of a sudden I got this idea that just popped in my head and I just started writing it and I got all of these ideas to make it seemed more lively [so the reader can] keep on reading it and feel the
experience. I was really surprised when I was chosen as one of the top people for the poem, not chosen but voted as a top poems, so yeah, that was really exciting to see […] Its funny because I have actually started writing music in Spanish so it definitely opened a new world of, I love music so, um, being able to, um, write in, um… I just learned that I really enjoy writing music specially in Spanish because, you know Spanish sounds a lot more, the words for me sound like they have more meaning and sound a lot more stronger in Spanish in compared to English, it definitely has opened a new world in my passion for me in music where I am able to now write songs in Spanish because as I have said earlier, some words just sound a lot better in Spanish than in English. Because they carry so many emotions [so you started writing more in Spanish?] I have, actually I have, so in a couple of years you will hear my songs in the radio-Paco

Eduardo projected his confidence by using more Spanish in his life, with friends, and by talking more in Spanish with his parents. He shared that on a recent trip to Texas his family noticed and acknowledged that he was using more Spanish. In addition, he stated that he was able to keep longer conversations and understand more about what they were saying. He explained that besides the confidence, the new words that he had learned in class helped him interact with his family a lot better. Eduardo mentioned that before taking the HL class, he would just reply with an inarticulate “yeah, yeah” during conversations, but now he was able to have a back and forth meaningful conversation. In addition, he states that before taking the class he would approximately use: “90% English and 10% Spanish throughout my day and now it is like 60% English and 40%.”(Eduardo)

The increase in confidence when speaking Spanish opened many doors of new opportunities for many of the participants. For example, linguistic confidence gave them the courage to not be afraid to use their HL in public settings or to interact with people they know but would be afraid to speak to because of the fear to “messing the language up” and not be understood. For Carlota and Paco, having Spanish-speaking confidence was helpful when informing the community about certain health issues and translating for Spanish speaking parents at the school. Therefore, gaining confidence is a valuable factor
that leads to developing many skills and overcoming the fear of using the HL in settings outside the home. However, Grace never thought that gaining confidence in her HL would be something she would learn in the class, as she shared in the interview when she was asked about the most impactful learning experience in the Spanish HL class:

[...]to be able to talk in public and stuff and to start a conversation but I think like in general having confidence like I didn’t think that was going to be something that I learned in class that that was something that you learned but on your own but I think taking the class has helped so much in having confidence like she [the professor] said “it is already there, you know how to speak” it is just that having confidence is so much more helpful and it is really important so I think that is what has impacted me so and now I am thinking like “oh wow just having confidence now I can actually talk to people”-Grace

Having confidence when speaking Spanish can be the gate to develop other skills such as becoming a songwriter, being more culturally sensitive, and also being able to converse more with family and with community members. Additionally, the participants also obtained skills that expand their HL knowledge. For example, the participants commented on their increased awareness of their quotidian Spanish usage, particularly in learning new vocabulary and paying close attention to the words they use in a conversation. This allowed them to use words in the right context and to amplify their understanding of conversation they would normally disregard. Kathie, shared that before, she would just use Spanish words in her conversations without necessary knowing its meaning. She used them based on how other people would produce them in conversations, but now she looks up the definition of the words, thus expanding her vocabulary.

As it can be appreciated from students’ quotes shared so far, the skills the participants acquired in class transcend employment marketability. These HL skills are
valuable for the participants’ everyday experiences, whether that be in interactions with family or in public settings. The non-utilitarian value attached to Spanish is essential in learning new HL skills in and developing confidence and more importantly in reclaiming the right to use and maintain Spanish as part of one’s own heritage. Reclaiming the right of HL maintenance is essential because it is part of who they are, it is a language that allows them to create stronger bonds with their family members and challenge the stigma the U.S. has attached to a crucial part of their identity. An example of how the participants challenged the stigma attached to an HL variety can be seen in Suzette’s statement. She shared that when she was younger she used to write letters to her grandmother, but she stopped because she was afraid that her grandmother would not be able to understand her. This is because, while growing up and interacting with Spanish speakers, she was occasionally told that they did not understand what she was saying and accused her of making up words. Now, after taking this class, she decided to recover the habit of writing letters to her grandmother, and she did so once again. In addition, Alondra considers that this HL class in Chicana/o Studies sparked her curiosity and it prompt her to start reading more in Spanish about the issues happening in Mexico and other Spanish speaking countries. Thus, she can stay informed and learn more about these countries and continue to develop her HL. In this last example, we can clearly see that Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 not only encouraged HL maintenance, but it also transformed HL speakers into active agents who continue learning about the language and the culture beyond the classroom.

2) In what ways, if any, might a HL course in Chicana/o Studies deepen the students’ understanding of language ideologies?

4.2.3 Theme Three: Awareness of Pervasive Language Ideologies
The participants from this study are not excluded from experiencing the language ideologies forced in our society from Spanish and English monolingual ideas. The language ideologies are evident at private conversations, in public spaces, while taking public transportation, and even in language classes, where in many occasions the speakers’ HL is targeted as bad or deficient and is stigmatized, which is a form of discrimination towards HL speakers.

For example, Amanda shared that when she was learning English in pre-school she would get in trouble for speaking Spanish. One of her teachers even told her that she was in “America” that she was not allowed to speak in Spanish. Even though, Amanda was really young when she was punished for speaking Spanish, that experience marked her until the present moment, as she still restrains herself from using Spanish in any setting other than at home where it is safe for her to speak Spanish. However, language ideologies are also present in Spanish speaking countries, where HL speakers are also discriminated against for not performing as native speakers as it is seen in two of the participants: Carolina and Jazmin. While living in Mexico and attending school there for a year or so, Carolina and Jazmin were negatively judged by Mexican monolinguals for speaking a (U.S.) HL variety. Carolina described her experience as horrible because they expected her to understand everything and perform as if she had always received formal education in Spanish. Jazmin was laughed at for speaking “mocho” Spanish. Paradoxically, even though Jazmin’s Spanish skills improved, once she returned to the U.S. she was not allowed to speak Spanish at her new school.

Another participant Andrea explained that when she was in middle school a lady asked her for directions in Spanish in the metro. Andrea tried to explain as best as she
could in Spanish because she knew exactly how to get to that location, but the lady looked confused at what Andrea was saying and decided to ignore her. Andrea stated that this experience confused her because she was willing to take the lady to her destination. This experience is profound as that person, just as many others in the U.S. and elsewhere assume that a person must speak the language that “matches” the (physical) looks. This false expectation leads HL speakers to feel shame and guilt, just as Andrea felt for not being able to give directions in Spanish. This experience made Andrea question her ethnic identity; and ponder how she could be Mexican if she cannot speak Spanish. Yet, this motivated her to take Spanish college courses while she was still in high school. However, she enrolled in beginning Spanish for second language learners (as a FL not HL), which was not adequate and did not meet her needs. Angela also had a similar experience but in her Spanish course, the teacher expected her to perform as a native speaker of Spanish. In another case, Carlota was laughed at in her Spanish course in high school whenever she made a mistake. Her teacher even nagged her by asking “didn’t you grow up speaking Spanish?” Carlota felt embarrassed, but she understood that it was not her fault that she had never taken any formal classes in Spanish. However, there are many HL speakers who do not share Carlota’s awareness, and many of them end-up being discouraged from taking any Spanish language class. These attitudes can negatively impact their emotional filter, and discourage them from speaking Spanish making them believe they do not even know the language they grew up with.

Not only are HL speakers dissuaded from speaking Spanish in school settings where an English-only policy is practiced (as in Amanda’s example above), but also HL speakers often face being judged when going abroad to Spanish speaking countries as
well as by older Spanish speakers in the U.S. They also have to confront these language ideologies reflected in Spanish courses that students like Angela and Carlota decided to take to gain new skills in their Heritage Language. Instead of valuing the linguistic capital the students bring to the class; non-HL courses (i.e. Spanish as a Second or Foreign Language) expect students to be native-like and shame students away from Spanish. How could it be possible to maintain any HL without challenging and deconstructing language ideologies, which precisely are the primary contributor to language loss?

Awareness about language hierarchies and ideologies is the first step in order to understand and challenge linguistic profiling and reclaim the HL through maintenance. This is seen in Eduardo’s experiences where he explained that before taking this HL course, he felt ashamed of speaking Spanish or translating for his mother in public settings. Thanks to the HL class, he now understands that speaking Spanish is part of who he is. Realizing and understanding the important role language plays on one’s ethnic identity lead many of the participants to ask why their HL is targeted as deficient and why it is not promoted in primary and secondary education. “It is as if they want to take away a piece of my identity,” explained Amanda, when she reflected on how bilingualism is not promoted in educational settings. She claimed that not promoting bilingualism is a modern form of assimilation, practiced by forcing someone to speak only English:

I think [implementing Spanish courses] is important in elementary schools and middle schools because it is part of your identity and part of who you are. Now that I am older I see that and I feel like they were trying to take that piece of my identity away, you know. Although I was born here it kind of has to do with assimilating you like “You are in American and you need to learn English.” You know-[like they say] “English needs to be the only language taught in schools”
but many people have said that this is a melting pot and we have people from different types of culture and it should be something that is embraced and not something that is seen as negative—Amanda

Amanda’s point about losing part of herself is at the core of why bilingualism is not promoted. Although the U.S. is a diverse society, it carries out a hidden agenda to promote assimilation to a mainstream White culture with English as its official language. Assimilation strategies are implemented in school settings via language ideologies and these are ingrained in many HL speakers as they end up believing that their language is not important or that maintaining it is inconsequential. This is evident when HL speakers decide to take other language classes such as French and Italian because these languages are assigned more social prestige. Andrea confessed that when she was choosing her classes for high school during her eighth grade, she decided not to take any Spanish courses because they were not interesting and instead she enrolled in a French course. Andrea continued taking French courses for three years. However, she later discovered the importance of speaking Spanish and decided to enroll in Spanish courses at a community college when she was still a senior in high school. Perla also shared that many of her Latina/o friends decided to enroll their children in Japanese language courses instead of courses that will help them maintain their Spanish. Not only is Spanish not promoted in schools settings, but it is also stigmatized and not preferred over other “prestigious” languages as we can see in the previous examples. As it is seen in chapter two of this thesis (literature review), the creation of language hierarchies and the stigmatization on non-English languages are in reality the response to irrational fears by the mainstream population. Fears of English losing ground are projected in the creation of hierarchies where certain languages (e.g. French) are “better” than others (e.g. Spanish).
The fact that Spanish is considered an inferior language is directly related to generational language loss among Latina/o and Chicana/o (Sánchez-Muñoz 2013).

Paradoxically, despite these ideologies devaluing Spanish as a language, Latinos/Latinas and Chicanas/os who do not speak it are blamed or targeted as traitors to the culture, as Caro explained. It is a dilemma that many HL speakers have to confront in schools, in their families, and in society at large. We live in a contradiction as Carlota points out: at school bilingualism is not promoted but as soon as one walks in certain communities, everything may be both in English and Spanish. In addition, when applying for a job opening to work with a Spanish-speaking community, often one of the qualifications is to be bilingual; this is, by the way, highly promoted as a capitalist asset for Anglos in the U.S. What are heritage speakers supposed to do? How can many U.S. Latinos/Chicanos explain that they do indeed speak Spanish and yet they are not confident when speaking it in public, or when writing, or translating? Kathie asks herself, “how can employers and the society expect U.S. Latinas/os and Chicanas/os speakers to do all these tasks in a HL when education is almost exclusively in English? For this same reason, Carlota said in the interview that it is a shame that language courses are not taught in primary schools because it would be easier to continue learning more of your first language and learn a new language at an early age. Moreover, Kathie emphasized that schools must take action by offering HL classes for promoting Spanish maintenance.

4.2.4 Theme Four: Deconstructing Language Ideologies by Advocating for HL Maintenance

Awareness of language ideologies affecting Spanish has promoted many HL speakers in this class to become advocates for HL maintenance. This does not only
contribute to the retention of the language, but it also contributes to the deconstruction of the stigmas attached to their Spanish HL.

There are many strategies that participants adopted to maintain their HL, such as reading more in Spanish, learning more vocabulary, and speaking more Spanish in public settings. In addition to assuring the continuation and extension of their own HL skills beyond the classroom, many participants are committed to teach Spanish to future generations in order for them to stay connected to their roots and culture. Furthermore, these participants plan to teach their children to appreciate Spanish at a young age and plan on speaking Spanish to their children from birth so it will be easier for them to acquire the language. Alondra for example, claims that “when I have kids I will definitely go out of my way to make [learning Spanish] an extracurricular at home.” Eduardo in the same way, plans to talk to his future kids in Spanish so:

[They] could go through what I went through and see how it was […]cuz Spanish throughout the generations dies out and I don’t want it to die out: I want it to keep going for my kids and my future-Eduardo

Eduardo brings to light one of the main reasons why HL maintenance is vital; Spanish is progressively being lost from generation to generation. Many of the participants shared that their younger siblings spoke less Spanish than them and used English instead as their dominant language. Future generations speak less and less Spanish. However, HL maintenance is crucial at many levels; such as communicating with grandparents and other family members who are Spanish monolinguals. Specially, HL maintenance is important to stay connected to their culture. For example, Pablo explained that he wants his future children to speak Spanish because:

I want them to not forget where they came, where their family comes from, and who they are because I mean they are going to have Mexican blood in them and I
want them to know who they are and learn about the history of their people –

Pablo

In order to deconstruct the language ideologies that are attached to Spanish, Heritage Languages should be given the same value as English, Paco claims. This value should be projected as a social trait to promote appreciation of culture and diversity. The value of Spanish varieties must also be promoted in Latina/o and Chicana/o communities because it is an important aspect of the culture. As David believes, Spanish is the future of the U.S.:

Porque es un beneficio no solo para que te comuniques pero también estamos en un tiempo donde el español aquí en los Estados Unidos es una lengua más conocida y se usa más frecuentemente, y tal vez algún día puede ser la segunda lengua oficial de Estados Unidos-David

Because it is not only beneficial for communicating, but also because we are in times where Spanish, here in the United States, is a language that is gaining recognition and is more frequently used; then maybe, one day it can become the second official language of the United States-David

For this reason, all varieties of Spanish should be valued even within the Spanish speaking monolingual community so that the variety HL speakers’ use is not stigmatized. As mentioned in Chapter One, the U.S. Spanish speaking community continues to grow every year but, as it grows, the language is progressively lost within generations and even within the first generation, Spanish is not retained. Until the different HL varieties are appreciated, and there is a decrease of HL loss, Spanish will not be officially recognized as the second language of the U.S. For now, it is fundamental to recognize that HL maintenance is a personal advantage as Carlos elaborates:

[speaking Spanish] makes us stronger as a person, as an individual, you are bilingual so that not only helps by knowing more about two language but you also have more resources–Carlos
Therefore, advocating for HL maintenance is one strategy to deconstruct language ideologies. Additionally, HL speakers must commit to continue to expand their knowledge of and in Spanish and continue to acknowledge the important role HL plays on the connection to an ethnic identity. Furthermore, we must teach Spanish to future generations, and we must also value the HL varieties spoken in the U.S.

HL maintenance is a mission of an entire community and society that must begin at home; and then it must continue in HL speakers’ entire educational journey and be promoted in society. This will happen when we begin to acknowledge the interconnection of HL and ethnic identity and the need to deconstruct language ideologies. Traditional second language pedagogy has proven to be insufficient in stopping language loss in HL speakers, thus it is important to institutionally validate the Spanish students speak in order to fight against language loss occurring mainly amongst second and third generations of Latinos/as and Chicanas/os. To aid in such an effort, this thesis maintains that HL courses bringing together Ethnic Studies and Linguistics is a crucial attempt to set the foundation to fulfill this mission. The results of the study show that the participants in Spanish for Chicanas/os 101, a HL course in Chicana/o Studies, learned more about their ethnic identity and their HL. Specially, the participants strengthened the connection between their HL and their ethnic identity and became closer to both the language and culture, by learning about their family history, gaining confidence to use Spanish in public settings, acquiring new skills in their HL. It also influenced them to value and recognize the significance of being bilingual. Furthermore, by getting closer to the linguistic and cultural heritage, many of the participants were able to acknowledge the values of Spanish beyond the economic benefits, such as the importance of their HL to
communicate with their loved ones and to interact with members of their community. Additionally, attaching a non-utilitarian value to their HL exposed participants to a new world with new perspectives; such as, discovering hidden passions (e.g. becoming a songwriter), being more open minded, informing the community about health issues, or volunteering in Spanish speaking communities.

The stronger connection of the HL speakers to their culture and language also contributed to the participants’ deeper understanding of the pervasive language ideologies in their society. First, by recognizing that the experiences they encounter in society, in work settings, and in Spanish language classes where their HL is targeted as deficient, are examples of how language ideologies are at work to stigmatize Spanish. Furthermore, the participants’ awareness of language ideologies led them to challenge these purist and discriminatory language ideologies. They also felt the power to reclaim HL maintenance by becoming agents who will promote HL pride in future generations and who will continue to expand their knowledge and skills in Spanish beyond the classroom.

4.3 Discussion

The findings confirm the importance of implementing HL courses that are relevant to the students’ everyday life, culture, and ethnic identity. As Leeman (2005) and Sánchez (1981) claim, HL pedagogy must include and address the students’ culture and the social and political issues that can lead to HL loss. In analyzing the findings, bringing together Chicana/o Studies and HL education in a class such as Spanish for Chicanas/os 101, benefits the students not only in cultivating the value of their culture and maintaining their HL, but also in discovering their own power to challenge language ideologies.
As Carreira (2011) and Beaudrie (2015) demonstrate, there are many HL and non-HL courses that continue to promote linguistic purity among HL speakers, and, as a result, target the students’ Spanish variety as a deficient. The participants in this study are not excluded from society’s beliefs and prior to taking this HL class, many were afraid to speak Spanish in public in order to avoid being judged. This same fear is what discouraged them from taking any Spanish course in Foreign Language Departments. However, for participants like Eduardo, the motivation to take this particular language class in Chicana/o Studies was the fact that it related to his culture. As it was highlighted in the work of RiVera Furumoto (2014), Núñez (2011), and Garcia (1993), Chicana/o Studies courses create counter-spaces where students’ culture and history are a source of strength and not a deficit. By cultivating students’ culture and traditions their sense of belonging in society and in academia are validated. In addition, disciplines such as Chicana/o Studies are one of the few spaces in academia where social injustices are highlighted. These objectives that Chicana/o Studies Departments emphasize are essential in dismantling language ideologies that stigmatize non-English languages, which in turn are placed in a pyramid-like hierarchy in which Spanish is at the bottom. Language ideologies are reinforced by the English-Only Movement and by anti-bilingual laws, which is another assimilation strategy implemented by the government to target the Latina/o and Chicana/o population (Zentella, 1997). Therefore, it is fundamental to challenge these language ideologies and reclaim HL maintenance by designing Heritage Language classes that value, bring awareness, and respect each student’s right to their language. As Macías (2014) affirms, HL maintenance is a human right. Moreover, Spanish plays a central role in an ethnic identity; the significance of this intertwined
relationship is highlighted in the non-utilitarian values presented in this study. These include the creation of stronger relationships with family members, gaining confidence in the HL to communicate beyond the family sphere, and more.

Furthermore, several studies have found that students, who are closer to their HL and ethnic culture have higher academic achievement, a higher self-esteem, and an increased sense of well-being (Sleeter 201; Sánchez-Muñoz 2013; Parodi 2008). In the this master thesis, it is revealed that a HL class offered in Chicana/o Studies allowed students to gain confidence in their HL, which helped to reinvigorate the relationship with parents and grandparents. Additionally, students learned about the depth and richness of their own culture. As many researchers have claimed (Bucholtz 1999; Garcia 2000; Valdés 2000; Zavala 2000; Zentella 2002 cited in Sánchez-Muñoz 2013; Potowski 2012), language is part of who we are; it is part of our ethnic identity. Thus, students’ HL and culture must be centered in the pedagogy of the class. A solid HL course is one that uses critical pedagogy and promotes an understanding of the complex relationship between language and sociopolitical structures (Leeman, 2005).

Hence, the findings affirm why HL classes must highlight the non-utilitarian value of the language. As Leeman and Martínez (2007) assert, HL maintenance must be promoted beyond the commodity of economic benefit. Promoting life values beyond capitalistic ventures helps HL speakers like the participants in this study to become confident in their HL. New avenues and vistas open up, such as becoming a poet or a song-writer; volunteering at Spanish-speaking communities; reading foreign books, texting in Spanish; accessing research in Spanish of the students’ field of study; majoring in Spanish. All these contribute to HL maintenance.
Thus, HL classes in Chicana/o Studies further develop the linguistic capital of the students and transform them into agents of HL maintenance (Yosso, 2005 & Freire, 2000). Spanish for Chicanas/os is a space that demonstrates how “education is also an instrument where students can discover ‘how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire, 2000, p. 34). This research study emphasizes the importance of implementing more classes such as Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 that bring together the objectives of two disciplines, Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics, that commit to validate students’ culture, expand students’ heritage language, promote language maintenance, and challenge language ideologies. This is significant as it highlights the need for collaboration among disciplines and the importance of interdisciplinary approaches. Finally, it is a loud call for action to continue working on the maintenance of Spanish among future generations.
5.1 Summary of the Main Findings

One of the participants in the study described Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 as a puzzle where each part is essential for the learning of the students. This analogy accurately represents the design of the class. A vital piece of this puzzle is the focus on expanding the knowledge of the participants’ HL. Another piece is the learning process of the class, which was carried out through the incorporation of the ethnic culture of the students and of other Spanish speaking countries. These pieces were put together by the, readings, activities, and assignments of the course. In the interviews, the participants emphasize certain assignments as pivotal for the impact of the class, for example, a name assignment in which students had to investigate their given name. For many participants, this was a revealing moment because they had never asked their parents why they had chosen that specific name. Also, students claimed having learned about their culture and family history through an interview they had to conduct with a family member. A participant shared that this particular assignment, brought her closer to her mother because before she had never dared to ask her (mother) about a personal struggle she went through. However, she saw the interview assignment as an opportunity to ask. The family tree assignment was very meaningful for all students because they had to “dig-out” the history and story of each family member. In addition, the participants were required to present their family tree in class, which gave them the opportunity to practice oral skills while validating the students’ history. This also served as a bonding experience among HL speakers as they got to know each other better. Another assignment that is important to mention is one in which the participants were required to describe their
identity in a poem. It is in this process of writing the poem where many of the participants discovered their passion for writing in Spanish (for example, Paco decided to become a song writer). Therefore, each assignment played a crucial piece in building this puzzle.

Returning to the focus of this study, the research questions of this thesis asked whether a HL class in Chicana/o Studies impacted the participants’ ethnic identity and whether it deepened the students’ understanding of the existing language ideologies projected and reinforced in our society. Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 did contribute to the development of the ethnic identity of the participants by strengthening their connection and relation with their culture. Specifically, participants learned about their own ethnic culture and about the culture and history of other Spanish speaking countries. Additionally, all participants stated that they felt more confident writing and speaking. They also gained the confidence to use their HL more, not only with their family members, but also in public settings. The knowledge gained in class led to a deeper understanding of pervasive language ideologies that harm Heritage Languages and to recognize the importance of HL maintenance.

5.2 Significance of Study

The findings are consistent with previous research studies that stressed the importance of incorporating culturally relevant material and discussing social injustices that happen in society, such as those that result from discriminatory language ideologies (Sánchez, 1981; Leeman & Martínez, 2007; RiVera Furumoto, 2008). Classes such as Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 contribute to the linguistic capital of the participants and at the same time inspire students to become agents and advocates of HL maintenance.
More importantly, the significance of the agency students developed in this class goes beyond the individual benefit; students do indeed reclaim the rightful use of their heritage language and advocate for its maintenance in and outside the home environment. This agency is a crucial tool to decrease (and hopefully halt) the progressive loss of Spanish in the U.S., mainly among members of the second and third generation. Essentially, classes that combine pedagogical strategies from both Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics, and in addition are designed with a critical pedagogy, will lead to the breakdown of pervasive discriminatory language ideologies implemented in this society for many years. Having more interdisciplinary courses such as Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 could result in a positive domino effect for minority languages and cultures. First, this course validates speakers’ HL variety and culture. Second, it addresses the social issues that form language ideologies, thus promoting awareness about linguistic profiling and discrimination and providing tools to fight against those. Third, it creates a space for HL speakers to become agents of change by advocating language maintenance. Finally, speakers reclaim their right to use the heritage language beyond the capitalistic utilitarian value assigned to second/foreign languages.

Education is undoubtedly a vital venue to create changes in society; for example in the sixties students fought and won the right to implement Ethnic Studies. It is therefore important to promote academic spaces that address the language together with other aspects of the culture of the Latina/o and Chicana/o community. This can have a pivotal impact on how U.S. Spanish is viewed and used in the near future. Darder (2015) and Freire (2000) state that education is not neutral, but rather, it is a political act. Then,
classes like Spanish for Chicanas/os 101 are political acts that can contribute to a future where Spanish in the U.S is validated and its maintenance is promoted in public schools.

5.3 Limitations and Direction for Further Research

The results of this thesis, although significant, are not a complete representation of all HL speakers in the U.S. given that the data was only collected from one single Heritage Language class in one Chicana/o Studies Department in California. In addition, only 17 of the 24 students enrolled in the class volunteered to take part in the study. The other 7 HL speakers who did not volunteer to participate in the study might have yielded different outcomes from the class. Although qualitative studies are prone to data contamination by bias (McMillan, 2004), the researcher attempted to minimize this by using the notes taken during the interview in order to have accurate information when transcribing and coding.

There are many directions to further this study, in particular the investigation of how disciplines like Chicana/o Studies and Linguistics can collaborate in creating courses that combine both approaches. Particularly, it would be interesting to conduct a study that examines HL courses in Foreign Language Departments in order to compare and contrast how each department (Foreign Language Department and Chicana/o Studies) addresses and promotes HL maintenance. Moreover, the current study only focused in the language ideologies in California, yet it would be important to investigate how language ideologies are represented in other States. Beyond this thesis, the researcher’s main interest is to expand the current study and investigate possible lesson plans that can be implemented either in Chicana/o courses or HL courses. This can help HL instructors by providing practical ideas that incorporate the linguistic and ethnic aspects in one course and serve as
a model of how different fields of study can collaborate. In addition, it would be important to provide lesson plans to address the different levels of proficiency that HL speakers bring to the classroom.

To conclude, this current study is a small step but nevertheless an important one in addressing the necessity of maintaining heritage languages among minority communities and the role that interdisciplinary collaborations in educational settings can have in moving toward that goal. Speakers such as Melissa, whom we mentioned at the beginning of thesis, deserve the right to maintain, use, and pass on their language to future generations.
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Appendix A

Demographic and Language Use Survey
Spanish Heritage Language Learners in Chicana/o Studies

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this project. Please fill out these two surveys to the best knowledge. If you any questions or concerns do not hesitate to ask 😊

Demographics

1) Name__________________________________________________________

2) Age___________________ 3) Class level _____________________________

4) Gender (Please circle your choice): Female Male

5) CSUN email:_____________________________________________________

6) What is your major?_____________________________________________
Appendix A

Language Use Survey

1) Place of birth

**If your place of birth is not the United States, please also answer the following questions:

a) at what age did you immigrated to the United States?__________________________

b) Did you attend school in your home country (the place you were born)? If yes, for how many years?______________________________________________

c) until what level of education (e.g., primaria, secundaria, prepa)?___________________________________________________________

2) Place of birth of your parents/guardians?____________________________________

3) Place of birth of your grandparents?________________________________________

4 a) Have you taken a Spanish course before (besides CHS 101)? If yes, what classes and where (e.g. HS, College,)___________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

b) For how many semesters or years?__________________________________________

5) What is your first language?_____________________________________________

6) What languages do you speak?____________________________________________

7) Did you learn to read in your Heritage Language? Did you learn to write in your Heritage Language?________________________________________________

8) Have you visited your country of heritage? If yes, how many times or how often do you visit your country of heritage?___________________________________

Please specify what language do you use the most with the following people? (If you use two or more languages with the same person, use a + or – to state which language you use the most or the least) (e.g. parents/guardians: English+/Spanish-)
Parents/guardians:________________________________________________________

Grandparents:___________________________________________________________

Siblings:________________________________________________________________

Friends:_________________________________________________________________

Extended family (e.g. cousins):______________________________________________

!Muchas Gracias por tu participación!
Appendix B

First Interview Session

Personal Questions:

1) What made you take this course?

2) How did you learn Spanish? (e.g. did you learned at home because your parents/guardians speak Spanish?)

3) What was your experience with Spanish? In what settings do you use Spanish the most?

5) Is speaking Spanish something important for you, why or why not?

6) a) Have you taken Spanish courses before CHS 101? If yes, where and for how many years?

   b) If you did take Spanish course before CHS 101, what subjects did you learned in class?

7) In a regular day in your life, what would you say is the percentage of the amount of Spanish you use?

General Questions:

1) What is the role of language in ethnic identity?

2) Is language a component for the development of an ethnic identity?

3) Is speaking Spanish a cultural trait for being Latina/Latino or Chicana/Chicano?

4) Would you recommend for the Latina/o Youth to maintain and learn new skill in their Heritage Language?

5) What is your perspective in regards to Spanish maintenance and Spanish use in academic settings and public settings?
Appendix C

Second Interview Session

1) What has been your experience in CHS101?

2) What is your most impactful learning experience in this class?

3) How has this class (CHS 101) impacted your daily use of Spanish?

4) In a regular day in your life, what would you say is the percentage of the amount of Spanish you use?

5) How has your perspective change in regards to Spanish maintenance and Spanish use in academic settings and public settings?

6) Are you taking any actions outside of this class to help you maintain and develop new skills in yours Spanish? What do you plan to do?

7) Would you encourage the use of Spanish among the youth, younger siblings (if applicable), or younger members of your community? Why or why not?

8) In your opinion, what have you improved the most in Spanish?