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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Reflexivity and Local Meaning-Making: A Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy
(CriSoLL) Approach to Authentic Materials in Higher Education Spanish Language
Instruction

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Spanish

by

Melissa Venegas

June 2024

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Claudia Holguín Mendoza, Chairperson

Dr. Alice Y. Lee

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2024

The Dissertation of Melissa Venegas is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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For my students.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reflexivity and Local Meaning-Making: A Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) Approach to Authentic Materials in Higher Education Spanish Language Instruction

by

Melissa Venegas

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Spanish
University of California, Riverside, June 2024
Dr. Claudia Holguín Mendoza, Chairperson

This research investigated how a Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) approach to authentic materials supports student literacy in a mixed Spanish heritage language (SHL) and additional language (L2) Spanish intermediate course at the university level. Using a qualitative approach (Cho, 2018; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021) and action research methods (Kemmis et al., 2014; Pine, 2008) exploring the attitudinal stances of students, the investigation examined a CriSoLL theoretical and pedagogical approach to authentic materials, using my own and already existent CriSoLL-based content of authentic materials designed to focus on Spanish in Southern California. Data was collected using (a) a language background questionnaire, (b) a one-on-one semi-structured interview with students, (c) an analysis of selected written and oral student assignments and assessments, (d) surveys at the beginning and end of the quarter, and (e) a researcher journal. Results showed that students became more critically aware of local stylistic language practices and their symbolic meaning, thus reporting a

greater sense of pride and agency in their linguistic choices. By analyzing examples of U.S. Spanish and language ideologies learned in class, students' responses to the assignments and surveys showed an increased critical literacy development of the linguistic dynamics of their local environments, which inspired students to want to take action towards sociolinguistic justice in their local communities. This research brings attention to the types of raciolinguistic ideologies involved in what is considered "authentic" language in Spanish language instruction and considers alternative approaches to critical language instruction inspired by notions of Indigenous relationality (Wilson, 2008).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My Journey as a Critical Language Educator in the University Setting

“Do people in Mexico wear shoes?” asked my second-grade student, looking up at me with curiosity and anticipation for the new *Día de los Muertos*—Day of the Dead—unit we were about to start. It was the first week at my new position as Spanish teacher at a Montessori school in the small suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, near where I was born and raised, and I wanted to gauge what students knew about Mexico. I was surprised to see that my students conceived of Mexico as a faraway place with people so different from them that they questioned whether Mexicans used shoes. It became apparent to me that I would need to take a different pedagogical approach to prepare students for interacting outside the classroom, and it eventually led to my research on the ways language programs can better develop students’ intercultural communication skills.

Throughout my career as a Spanish PK-20 educator, I have noticed that Spanish classes focus on teaching grammar and communication skills, while critical thinking and developing intercultural competence are often secondary. This was my experience as a Spanish student—after four years of Spanish in high school, a degree in Spanish, plus a Spanish teaching certificate—I knew a lot of words and how to structure sentences, but I knew very little about Spanish-speaking communities, particularly those in the U.S. Also, growing up and studying in a predominantly white school district that seemed to ignore issues of race and racism, I felt unprepared as a Spanish teacher to stand in front of a classroom and teach about communities with whom I had very little knowledge or contact.

Therefore, I sought out opportunities to educate myself and form connections, both locally and abroad, and I recognized the need for Spanish classes to engage in more meaningful and thought-provoking lessons. I applied this knowledge to my Montessori students by finding ways to connect them with the local Spanish-speaking community. We visited local businesses displaying altars for Día de los Muertos, spoke with employees about how they celebrate the day, and bought supplies from them to create our own altars. This project paved the way for more local collaborations and strengthened my commitment to emphasizing community-based practices and forms of language within the Spanish classroom.

This experience with Montessori students inspired me to pursue graduate study in Spanish language education to investigate ways to incorporate the local community into instruction. Then, as a Teaching Assistant in a Ph.D. program in Southern California teaching Spanish language courses, I again struggled to find ways to incorporate students' identities and the local community while maintaining the established textbook and assessments. The textbook primarily spoke of life outside of the U.S.—and the vocabulary in the textbook was very different from the local Southern California Spanish varieties my Spanish heritage language (SHL) and L2 (additional language) students were familiar with from living in the region. Also, having come from the Midwest, I was largely unaware of the varieties of Spanish spoken in Southern California. Therefore, this experience was the impetus for me to explore, together with students, ways to learn about local language practices of Spanish bilinguals of Southern California while reflecting on my own practices as an instructor. This dissertation will describe this process of critical

reflexivity where I investigate ways to create a classroom where students feel they belong, where U.S. and local Spanish varieties are at the forefront, and where students develop critical awareness of language ideologies.

My Learning Trajectory

During my first years in the role of Teaching Assistant in a Southern California Hispanic Serving Institution, I noticed that students would sometimes use vocabulary to which I had not been exposed as a Spanish second language learner. For example, a student once turned in a composition where he had used the word “apá,” a shortened form of the word for father, “papá.” I had heard the word in conversation, but I assumed it was “informal” and did not belong in an academic assignment. I wrote “papá” above the word to gently remind the student of what I considered to be the “proper” word. He questioned why I had corrected that word because it was his way of addressing his father. I replied that it was not technically “incorrect” but that he should use the more “formal” version “papá” for academic writing. Since then, I have been thinking about this event—why is it that Spanish courses ask students to write and speak in a way that is different from their knowledge and experience? What drove me to correct my student’s use of “apá,” a word so common in real-world conversation, yet absent from Spanish textbooks?

My training in critical literacy had prepared me to encourage my students to challenge stereotypes and essentializations, but I was not prepared to handle student responses that used language forms that differed from the established curriculum. I questioned my role as a Spanish educator and how I represented Spanish language users in my classes—as much as I had studied critical pedagogy and socially just education in

my M.Ed coursework, I had not fully questioned what Spanish(es) I chose to incorporate into my teaching (or not incorporate) and the implications of those decisions. I had not considered how I would address students' unique linguistic experiences and competencies that they brought to the classroom and what I would do when the textbook and materials were not compatible with students' backgrounds, identities, and learning goals. I came to realize that, as an educator teaching language, it is my responsibility to represent, honor, even problematize U.S. Spanish language forms—not only because these are the varieties that students actually encounter in their everyday lives, but more importantly, the identities and experiences of U.S. Spanish users have been severely underrepresented in Spanish curricula and U.S. regional varieties of Spanish are routinely delegitimized (Burns, 2018).

Racial Justice and Language Education

Several scholars and educators have called for action to be taken in terms of racial justice in the fields of Linguistics¹ (e.g., Charity Hudley et al., 2020; Leonard, 2020) and language learning (e.g., Von Esch et al., 2020; Cho, 2018; Rosa & Flores, 2017). This action is more important than ever because, in this presumed postracial society, “race has been remapped from biology onto language” (Zentella, 2016b, p. 328, see also Urciuoli, 1996), and racism continues to be manifested and justified through the policing of language practices. Yet, linguistic profiling, a form of discrimination, is not yet well

¹ Following Leonard (2020), I capitalize Linguistics “to refer to the named discipline, which has a particular history and focus.” Linguistics with a lowercase *l* is used “to refer to the scientific study of language in its broadest possible sense. This distinction is important for identifying and responding to racism, which is manifested in disciplinary norms of Linguistics but not inherent to linguistics” (p. e281).

understood (Baugh, 2019). As Baugh (2019) notes, the covert and overt ways that racism is justified through language is an area that deserves more study and public awareness.

Consequently, language teaching is “in dire need of an explicit exploration of race” (Kubota & Lin, 2006, p. 472) and programs are considering different approaches that reflect more equitable teaching practices. Spanish programs in particular are faced with confronting the racialized ideologies embedded in their choice of which language varieties to teach in the classroom. Many Linguistics scholars and educators have called for a focus on the language practices of actual speakers in U.S. communities (Flores & Rosa, 2023; García & Alonso, 2021; Hermes, 2016; Leeman, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014; Schwartz, 2023). This dissertation is a response to that call.

Therefore, throughout my doctoral research, I explored various critical approaches where students learn *about* all different varieties of language and how they are connected to power. These approaches better position students to make their own linguistic decisions so they may critically use whichever variety they choose in the given context. With content-based instruction, students learn sociolinguistic tools to analyze language ideologies related to Spanish in the U.S. I began designing materials within these approaches to take the focus off evaluating students’ language “proficiency” and instead emphasize their ability to apply concepts and form thoughts and opinions in the target language. By learning about the entire linguistic landscape of Spanish in the U.S. and Spanish in their local contexts, students are more prepared to interact in their environments and SHL students are positioned as experts. In order to accomplish this, I

had to completely restructure the course assignments and assessments and totally rethink how I approach language instruction.

Developing these types of materials for the Spanish classroom took years of study, collaboration, coursework, working groups, student feedback, mentorship, and the development of lesson/unit plans that were workshopped with colleagues and piloted in classrooms. Through taking graduate seminars in raciolinguistics, critical pedagogies, and critical sociolinguistics, I became aware of dominant language ideologies and what these meant for the Spanish language classroom. With working groups organized by Dr. Claudia Holguín Mendoza at the LatCrit Sociocultural Linguistics Lab at the University of California, Riverside, along with other critical educators and scholars throughout the nation, we unpacked practices such as appropriateness-based approaches, or the idea that one must learn what language is “appropriate” according to a given situation and the perceived need for formality or informality (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Through Freire’s (1970) concept of praxis, which is the process of action and reflection which results in transformation, we examined our practices as educators and how to best structure our activities so that students would not only be successful in our courses but would also develop critical language awareness² (Fairclough, 1995) to understand the language hierarchies of the many variants of Spanish. This information helps support students in making their own informed linguistic decisions.

² An approach that emphasizes the sociopolitical aspects of language. It examines the relationship between language conventions and power.

Throughout this process, we found it deeply problematic that many students' home or community varieties of U.S. Spanish were not considered appropriate for the Spanish classroom, leaving SHL students with feelings of linguistic insecurity (Beaudrie et al., 2019; Randolph, 2017). I thought about the students I taught in Southern California and the vast linguistic resources they brought to the classroom, which I had corrected because I thought they were not “proper” Spanish as reflected by the textbook and program. Despite the calls for the legitimization of U.S. Spanish in academia and in teaching (Leeman, 2014; Villa, 2002), university Spanish textbooks still emphasize standardized Spanish and devalue U.S. varieties of Spanish (Al Masaeed, 2014). Therefore, for the new course I designed (the process of which I will describe here), I chose to forego the textbook and use open-source lessons created by critical colleagues with the *Pedagogías Críticas* project (Holguín Mendoza et al., n.d.). I also designed my own lessons around Spanish in Southern California and the Chicana history of our institution.

Critical sociolinguistic approaches allowed the students and I to learn about the various ideologies relating to Spanish in the U.S. With these approaches, students feel more comfortable interacting in their local communities, and they understand the complex sociopolitical aspects of speaking Spanish in the U.S. Also, collaboration was a key aspect of this approach—I was no expert on local Spanish varieties in Southern California—but I was interested in subverting teacher/learner hierarchies since these bring with them certain power dynamics related to “expert” and “other” (Delgado Bernal,

1998; Villenas, 1996). I wanted to learn from and with my students as we investigated Spanish in our local context.

To gather students' thoughts, reactions, and experiences regarding previous Spanish courses and this course on Spanish in the U.S, I designed a qualitative study that is described here. The process of designing this course and the classroom research that accompanied it necessitated critical reflexivity, described by Esposito and Evans-Winters (2021) as "an intersectional methodological tool [that] entails revealing how the researcher's tastes, values, and belief system shape their choice of research question, theoretical assumptions, research site, relationship to research participants, and interpretation and analysis" (p. 17). This reflexivity examines the researcher's relationship to power and "goes beyond being aware of one's feelings, movies, and assumptions, to also critically reflect on all of these and how they guide research outcomes" (Leonard 2021a, p. 27). Throughout this process of designing classroom activities and the methods used to gather data, I was in constant conversation with myself, mentors, and colleagues, reflecting on my practices as an educator and researcher related to my position of privilege. As instructors, we are given some degree of autonomy in choosing materials and how they are presented, as well as criteria for evaluation. For example, in my interaction with my student regarding "apá," my position of power gave me the authority to delegitimize my student's language choice. Therefore, I committed myself to continually reflect on my actions going forward and to collaborate with my students to investigate Spanish in the U.S. for this course.

Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL)

This dissertation will describe my process in this personal journey of reflexivity as I strove to find the best classroom practices to serve my students. I chose to design the class material according to the Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) approach because it is a type of critical literacy for language learning that examines the study of language using several elements such as racial literacy and the interplay of language and power (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). The following two research questions guide my study:

- 1) What role do authentic materials play on student development of their critical awareness and literacy when employing Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL)?
- 2) Within this approach, what role do classroom practices play in students' attitudes and perceptions towards learning Spanish?

I chose to focus on authentic materials (texts created for real-life use rather than classroom use—e.g., magazines, literature, and news stories in the target language) because I noticed that many of the activities related to these materials were surface-level and did not question the implicit biases, stereotypes, or implications of the material. Further, the majority of “authentic” materials for Spanish education I have encountered reflect varieties of Spanish from outside the U.S. Even though these materials are supposedly representative of “realistic” communication, I do not find them to reflect the “realistic” communication in Spanish that occurs in the U.S. and thus, I wanted to see what kinds of student engagement emerged from authentic materials in U.S. Spanish. Therefore, in this dissertation I will describe this process in which I came to problematize the “authentic” label—I realized that the supposed “authenticity” of the material is

irrelevant. What mattered to the students and me was our critical engagement with the material, and in doing so, each of us were able to authenticate (or not) the material according to our individual identities and experiences. As a result, students demonstrated a stronger engagement in the course material and in their local communities, and they became more invested in sociolinguistic justice.

Structure of the Dissertation

In the following section, I will present some dominant language ideologies related to Spanish departments in higher education and I describe authentic materials in-depth, including the research regarding their use in language classrooms. In Chapter 2 I provide information regarding Spanish in the U.S., including the debate surrounding the label “Spanglish,” the historical and current discrimination of U.S. Spanish speakers, and attitudes and perspectives of U.S. Spanish language varieties. Chapter 3 consists of an explanation of the CriSoLL framework (Holguín Mendoza, 2022; Holguín Mendoza & Taylor, 2021, Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024; see also Boyero Agudo, 2023; Mendoza Casanova, 2023) and a discussion of “communicative competence” and Indigenous relationality (Wilson, 2008). Chapter 4 describes the methodology in this qualitative, teacher action research study and my procedures for the research. The fifth chapter presents the analysis of how students developed knowledge of CriSoLL throughout the course. In Chapter 6 I relate students’ comments on their previous learning experiences and their wellbeing within the classroom. Chapter 7 is dedicated to describing how students participated in local meaning-making through their final projects. The last chapter is a brief conclusion with pedagogical implications of the

research. Following the conclusion, I have provided several appendices with the lesson plans I created. This section is perhaps the most important to me. I hope that educators will use these materials and/or adapt them to meet the needs of their students, thereby introducing concepts not currently present in many Spanish higher education textbooks.

The State of Spanish Departments in Higher Education in the U.S.

In 1971, when I started teaching High School English to Chicano students, I tried to supplement the required texts with works by Chicanos, only to be reprimanded and forbidden to do so by the principal. He claimed that I was supposed to teach “American” and English literature. At the risk of being fired, I swore my students to secrecy and slipped in Chicano short stories, poems, a play. In graduate school, while working toward a Ph.D., I had to “argue” with one advisor after the other, semester after semester, before I was allowed to make Chicano literature an area of focus.

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*

Because “educational institutions are the premier site where dominant ideologies about language appropriateness and standardness are socialized into speakers” (Beaudrie et al., 2019, p. 1; see also Valdés et al., 2003; Leeman, 2012), we must take into account the prevalent language ideologies embedded in Spanish departments in higher education in the U.S. if we are to design curricula that equips students with critical language skills. Language ideologies have been defined as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein, 1979, p. 193) and as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine, 1989, p. 255). Woolard (1998) defines language ideologies as “[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (p. 3). In the following section I will elaborate on some of the dominant language

ideologies present in Spanish departments and in curricula development in order to provide crucial context regarding the current state of Spanish language education in higher education in the U.S.

Fuller and Leeman (2020) note that “linguistic and social practices do not merely reflect social norms but also perpetuate and shape them” (p. 65). Therefore, language ideologies are reflections of ideas about language and language users, but they can also have real-world consequences. This section provides not only important background for the current issues in the field and where educators could focus their attention to better serve students, but it also sheds light on how certain ideologies have potentially impacted curricular and classroom practices.

Becoming aware of the dominant language ideologies within Spanish departments might help us to make better informed departmental and curricular decisions.

Departments are not immune to the ideologies in larger society in reference to language and race, such as the concept of the “standard,” and “deficit” perceptions, just to name a few. However, a deeper awareness of how these ideologies apply to departments’ teaching and administrative practices can help us to consider alternative approaches with student wellbeing in mind. As Train (2007) states:

While education in general and language education in particular represent a set of realities imbued with multiple currents and constellations of ideology, a critical awareness of the intersection of ideology, language, and education offers an avenue for recognizing, confronting, and questioning the ideologized realities of teaching and learning in given contexts, and for working toward change in those areas where the consequences have been most dire. (p. 211)

This critical awareness, when followed by reflection, provides an avenue to rethink the structure of our programs and courses and make more informed decisions regarding teaching the specific set of students at our institutions.

By considering these ideologies in the context of the Spanish program where I did this study, I have reflected on the various ways they have influenced the curriculum and classroom practices. These ideologies have helped me to understand the approaches used in Spanish language higher education classrooms. By educating myself on these dominant ideologies, I have designed lessons that engage students in conversations about them while unpacking what they mean for the students' particular contexts and experiences in Spanish classes. This information, along with the study's findings of the attitudes and perspectives of students regarding classroom practices, helped me design activities that were relevant to students' lives while engaging them in critical analyses of language hierarchies. With these lessons and class discussions, students gained knowledge that informed their linguistic decision-making, thus opening up the possibility for more agency in their linguistic choices.

U.S. as a Monolingual Nation

Valdés et al. (2003) examined language ideologies in a U.S. university Spanish department and found that these spaces hold beliefs about bilingualism and monolingualism that reflect dominant ideologies from the U.S. and the Spanish-speaking world. They trace notions of one united nationalism as the root cause for monolingual ideals. That is, one nation-one language is a means to promote nationalistic thinking so as to uphold the status quo (see also Ros i Solé, 2013). In the one nation-one language

ideology, language serves as a source of identity for the nation. In fact, there is an expectation that one must speak the national language if they are to belong, and those who speak other languages are excluded from this belonging. In the U.S. context, speakers of other languages could potentially be seen as outsiders or a threat to nationalistic ideals (Anderson, 1991; see also Del Valle & Arnoux, 2010).

This process in which language (or a linguistic feature, variety, or practice) signals certain social meanings is called indexicality. The process of indexicality or, “the property of sign vehicle signaling contextual ‘existence’ of an entity” (Silverstein, 1976, p. 29), within the one nation-one language ideology, could point to the idea of “foreignness” when the non-dominant language is utilized. Therefore, because language often indexes certain ethnic or cultural groups, the idea of which languages belong within a nation cannot be separated from the idea of which kinds of people belong in a nation (Fuller & Leeman, 2020). When English monolingualism is valued and the speaking of other languages indexes “outsider” status, Spanish-speaking Latinx students may feel alienated. Spanish labeled as a “foreign” language reinforces this idea, despite the long history of Spanish in what is now the U.S. (Lozano, 2018; see also Alonso, 2007; Herlihy-Mera, 2022; Stavans, 2005).

Monolingual comparisons. SHL students are students who have a historical or personal connection with Spanish (Fishman, 2001) and/or come from homes where Spanish is used and can speak or at least understand Spanish (Valdés, 2000a; Valdés, 2000b). SHL students are disadvantaged by dominant paradigms in research and teaching that view monolingualism as the norm and bilingualism as deviating from that norm. The

diverse linguistic realities and complexities of U.S. bilinguals are erased when compared to this “monolingual standard” (Higby et al., 2023). Related to this standard is the “idealized native speaker” concept, which is “associated with other social privileges and typically characterized as monolingual (‘uncontaminated’ by bilingualism and language contact) of a standardized language variety, formally educated, and white” (Higby et al., 2023, p. 5). This framing, which is not reflective of reality, views bilinguals as deficient, and represents a “monolingual bias” in language research (Cheng et al., 2021). The monolingual bias is essentialist, binary, and vague and only serves to perpetuate linguistic homogeneity (Cheng et al., 2021). In fact, Cheng et al. (2021) find the term “native speaker” so harmful that they urge psycholinguistics researchers to avoid it altogether.

An additional problematic comparison is that of U.S. Spanish heritage learners with Spanish speakers who grew up in other Spanish-speaking countries. Because of this idea of the idealized “native speaker,” oftentimes U.S. heritage bilinguals are excluded from the “native speaker” category despite having learned Spanish from birth as a first language and continuing to use the language (Kramsch, 1997; Train, 2007). Spanish heritage speakers are expected to possess similar patterns to those of speakers who grew up in a community where Spanish is the dominant language (Leeman, 2005; Villa, 2002). This favoring of the Spanish varieties from other countries shows up in Spanish curricula and textbooks (Al Masaeed, 2014; Higby et al., 2023). When U.S. Spanish is devalued in programs, U.S. students who come to the classroom with only the knowledge of Spanish from their homes and/or communities are automatically at a disadvantage. Not only are their realities and identities not reflected in the curriculum, but their linguistic resources

can be seen as illegitimate unless they acquire the “standard” Spanish that nobody actually speaks in real life. Further, Spanish L2 learners are taught a “standard” version of Spanish that does not reflect the linguistic practices of actual bilingual Latinx communities in the U.S., which are the communities where most students will be interacting in Spanish. Not placing U.S. Spanish varieties as a priority in Spanish language curricula is a symptom of a larger problem in certain Spanish departments—the preference for admitting graduate students from Spain or Latin America vs Euro-Americans or U.S. Latinxs (Valdés et al., 2003), negative opinions regarding the Spanish of U.S. Latinxs (Valdés et al., 2003; Zentella, 1995), and the underrepresentation of Latinx, Chicanx, and borderlands cultures, literatures, and languages of the U.S. in curricula (Alvarez, 2013).

Eurocentric Ideologies and Preference for Peninsular Variety of Spanish

Certain terms (and their connotations) in academia go unchallenged, thus potentially perpetuating damaging ideologies. For example, the notions of “universal” or “objective” knowledge have most often been associated with historically dominant Eurocentric cultural and knowledge production (Ayban, 2016). Specifically, university research that employs concepts of “universal” and/or “objective” knowledge in Eurocentric frameworks promotes colonialism and is not culturally inclusive (Mellow, 2015). Language education is complicit because “a great deal of language teaching and learning in the global context has been shaped by the violent, strategically maneuvered, and racist practices of colonial expansion, especially European imperialism, white

supremacy, settler colonialism, chattel slavery, and in more recent years by the legacies of these projects” (Von Esch et al., 2020, p. 391).

An example of a colonizing practice in language education is the preference for the Peninsular (Spain) variety of Spanish in many classrooms and departments while SHL students who speak U.S. and “non standardized” Latin-American varieties of Spanish are seen as deficient (Leeman, 2014). This thinking is demonstrated in Ros i Solé’s (2013) evaluation of *Aula Internacional*, a Spanish textbook. Using content analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and critical literacy, the researcher found a bias in the textbook towards Spanish peninsular voice which presented Spain as more cosmopolitan and internationally minded. Although the textbook was published in Spain, it was meant for a wider audience, and it introduced students to topics specific to Spain and Latin America. Nevertheless, the author states that in the book, “whereas peninsular Spanish stands for modernity, rationality and the world of work, Latin America is associated with more exotic and backward practices” (Ros i Solé, 2013, p. 175). This was seen in the topics chosen for presentation—Latin America was related to tradition, art, and religion, while Spain was associated with more complex topics such as social issues and politics. Preference for Spain is also seen among the specialties of the professors in departments—in one survey, for example, many Spanish departments did not have a single Mexican specialist, while 97.7% of departments had multiple professors who studied Spain (Herlihy-Mera, 2022).

Furthermore, Peninsular Spanish is perceived by some Spanish departments as more “esthetically pleasing,” thus its justification for use in the classroom (Beaudrie et

al., 2019; see also Leeman, 2012). The Real Academia Española, the Spanish language “authority” from Spain, also continues to promote Eurocentric language identities on a global scale (Zentella, 2017; see also Mar-Molinero & Paffey, 2011). Due to these dominant ideologies of the superiority of Peninsular Spanish, many SHL students come to Spanish classes with insecurities regarding their language varieties and perceptions of inferiority in terms of their linguistic proficiency (Beaudrie et al., 2019; Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003; Valdés et al., 2003). Departments reinforce the dominance of Peninsular Spanish through the text selections for curricula—Spain and Latin American texts remain prominent in many departments, and U.S. Latinx texts are notably absent (Alvarez, 2013). As Alvarez (2013) details, “it was not until I was in my next to last semester as a [Spanish] Ph.D. student that I even came to know that Latin@ writers from the United States even existed” (pp. 133-134).

Commodification and Instrumentality of Spanish

Instrumentalism is the idea that underscores the potential value of a language as a tool, rather than acknowledging languages as valuable in their own right. Similarly, commodification places an economic value on a language, reflecting how its use could be “bought” or “sold” (Duchêne & Heller, 2011). As an example, Leeman and Martínez (2007) examined language ideologies present in the prefaces and introductions of university SHL textbooks published from 1970 to 2000. They found that with each time period studied, textbooks served a specific political purpose of the time. While textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s stressed community knowledge, more recent textbooks intended to train SHL students for employment since they possessed the bilingual skills

to reach more customers. Spanish departments wanted to capitalize on this trend and their enrollment went up once Spanish was seen as a desirable skill for employability (Leeman & Martínez, 2007) and was portrayed as a “useful” language, whereas “other European languages have more frequently been framed as prestigious vessels of high culture and literature” (Fuller & Leeman, 2020, p. 84).

Oftentimes Spanish language programs in the U.S. are presented as a tool for upper- or middle-class whites to enjoy study or travel abroad experiences or to gain social or economic capital (Del Valle, 2014; Mar-Molinero & Paffey, 2011). For example, bilingual education during the Civil Rights Movement was a means for cultural and linguistic maintenance but has now been commodified within liberal multiculturalism as a unique learning experience (Flores, 2016). This language as a “skill” for the job market can also be seen in Mena and Garcia’s (2020) analysis of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley’s discourse regarding their “bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate” campus that offers a wide array of bilingual classes and classes in Spanish. Their public advertisements reflect a commodification of “the Spanish language, bilingualism, and Mexican American heritage into neoliberal ‘skills’ and ‘diversity’ discourses, which reimagine so-called ‘soft skills’ (all forms of sociality including language competence) as a resource readily exchangeable in the marketplace” (Mena & García, 2020, p. 2).

Standardized Language Ideologies

The “ideology of standardization” (Milroy & Milroy, 1991) promotes a uniform standardized language that is supposed to allow for clear and efficient communication within a community. Lippi-Green (2011) defines standard language ideology as a “bias

toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (p. 67). The author describes standard language ideology as “idealized” because it is a construct, and no language is homogenous. Milroy and Milroy (1991) stress the fact that standardization is a *process*—one that dates back to history but that still continues—rather than a *variety* because the language undergoes prescription. That is, only one way of using the language comes to be considered correct and this “correct” form continues to be promoted as the prestige variety. Therefore, certain ways of speaking and writing *become* the “standard” and are seen as superior to other ways of speaking and writing because they have undergone the process of standardization (Train, 2003).

The validity of the “standard” is often unquestioned—the historical processes of how it came to be dominant and the ways it perpetuates social inequality tend to be made invisible (Woolard, 2005) in an ideological process known as erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000). As Train (2003) states, “[s]tandard languages represent and construct a worldview of language, culture, and society in which variation is problematic” (p. 7). The problematic nature of variation within this idea is perpetuated not only in individuals and collective society, but also in policies that directly affect educational institutions (Train, 2003).

The taking for granted of the “standard” as superior, while erasing the ways it reflects and reproduces social inequality, is constantly reinforced in the educational system (Lippi-Green, 2011). Further, when the “standard” is positioned as neutral and

available to everyone, the assumption is that it is the individual's "choice" to use it or not, and those who do not are judged (Fuller & Leeman, 2020). There are two reasons why this assumption is flawed. Firstly, language and identity are deeply intertwined, with identity being both relational and cultural (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), and one's linguistic practices are a reflection of the communities they inhabit (Lippi-Green, 2011) and are not a simple matter of choice. Second, this assumption places the responsibility on individuals to gain access to more social capital through the use of standardized language (Rosa & Flores, 2017). However, individual language practices are not the reason the inequality exists—it is the language hierarchy itself and the values placed on the different varieties that create these beliefs, an idea I will discuss further in the section on raciolinguistic ideologies later in this chapter.

Standardization of Spanish. In modern times, "power comes through persuasion" rather than force (Amorós-Negre, 2016, p. 39). In order to communicate within a unified community, language becomes a tool that can serve to maintain political, social, and economic power. Since "[s]tandardization is the process of language-making by which elite norms have come to define over time what constitutes 'the language' of the nation, the empire, its citizens, and its schools" (Train, 2003, p. 6) certain varieties are given prestige. The prestige varieties of Castilian Spanish (*castellano*) were codified in certain documents such as dictionaries, rules for orthography, etc. and formed a universal language of a kingdom which would later be the Spanish Empire (Train, 2007). These documented historical events led to the codification and standardization of Castilian Spanish as emblematic of a monolingual state-nation (Villa, 2002). Dating back to the

reign of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, the grammar manual by Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (“Grammar of Castilian Spanish”) helped to cement Castilian as the language of power of the elites in the peninsula. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Castilian grew in power as the Spanish Empire expanded across the globe as the peninsula gained economic success from the silver imports and cultural success from Golden Age literature. The language was internationally prestigious because learning and speaking Spanish became commonplace for diplomats and educated individuals serving in other countries (Amorós-Negre, 2016). Later, under Philip V’s reign, the Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española or RAE) was created—an institution that aimed to promote a monoglossic Spain and maintain the purity of the Spanish language. This organization, and the continued standardization of Castilian Spanish, helped to centralize power in Spain after the Spanish crown was turned over to the Bourbons and the nation began to receive more influence from France’s political culture (Del Valle, 2014).

Thus, “the linguistic history of, first, Spain, second, the Spanish Empire and, finally, the (postcolonial) panhispanic community, is told as a steady march toward the development of a minimally variable educated register and the creation of a single literary standard” (Del Valle, 2014, p. 361). This mission continued in 1770 when Charles III passed a Royal Charter that declared only Spanish to be used in Hispanic America and the Philippines, with the goal of eradicating the other languages in those regions (Amorós-Negre, 2016). It wasn’t until 2004 that *The New Pan-Hispanic Language Policy* from the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) and the Association of

Academies of the Spanish Language (ASALE in Spanish—the RAE’s subsidiary academies in the Americas) launched a “language for everyone” campaign with new dictionaries and grammar manuals that reflected a “deterritorialised” model of Spanish for the entire global Spanish speaking community (Amorós-Negre, 2016, p. 38). However, Del Valle (2014) observes that Spain has adopted this panhispanic viewpoint as another way to maintain linguistic hegemony and a continued presence in Latin America without being overtly neocolonial. Further, Spain created the Instituto Cervantes in 1991 in order to maintain Spanish in the international linguistic market by “selling the linguistic commodity known as Spanish” (Del Valle, 2014, p. 363; see also Mar-Moliner, 2000; Train, 2007). The RAE continues to assert its global influence over the Spanish language today, as exemplified in the following passage:

[I]n spite of the fact that academic institutions themselves insist that the Spanish language standardization model is currently pluricentric, the real goal of the Academy is the formation and standardization not of several exemplary varieties or standards, but of a single unitary model that brings together the centripetal linguistic forces. (Amorós-Negre, 2016, p. 39)

These “centripetal linguistic forces” regarding the value of so-called “standard” varieties continue to make their way into Spanish language curricula. Take for example the controversy surrounding inclusive language in Spanish (the -os ending as representative of all gender expressions, regardless if there is one single male in a group of females), which the RAE deems “unnecessary” despite the growing number of scholars and activists who encourage its use in the classroom (Zentella, 2017; see also Parra & Serafini, 2021). The RAE continues to “foment invidious distinctions and linguistic

insecurity” (Zentella, 2017, p. 26) that have devastating effects on the education of SHL learners in the U.S.

Standardization of Spanish in Spanish Heritage Language Education. Spanish language education serves the political purpose of social stratification which can be seen in the discourse surrounding standardized varieties in SHL education. For example, one of the early goals of heritage language education was to eliminate the home and community varieties of Spanish the students brought with them due to them being overly regional, marginalized, or containing too many English loanwords (Del Valle, 2014). SHL students’ home and community varieties of language were seen as deficient and therefore, must be replaced with more standardized varieties (Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 2011), an approach known as “the replacement paradigm” (Del Valle, 2014, p. 366). Some other previous approaches to SHL teaching were the “comprehensive” ones that presented students with both spoken and written materials in “standard” Spanish as an attempt to get them to acquire the standard through writing, reading, and speaking about the materials (e.g., Villa, 1996, 2002).

Factors such as the Civil Rights Movement and advances in social dialectology brought about more awareness of diverse ethnic identities and the ways they are racialized and marginalized, thus emphasizing the need for eliminating linguistic hierarchies related to U.S. Spanish (Del Valle, 2014). These insights led to new conceptualizations in heritage language education—even though teaching the standard was still the main goal, programs recognized that they could accept their students’ home

varieties by teaching them what they considered the appropriate contexts in which to use the home varieties (Del Valle, 2014; Flores & Rosa, 2015).

All of the SHL approaches mentioned above rely on the assumption that a singular “standard” exists. As Villa (1996) notes, the vast diversity of the Spanish language could perhaps produce some standardized forms, but this variation cannot be simplified into one representative standard form that exists in the world. There is also confusion as to the relationship between written and spoken forms, and the 22 Academies in the Americas (subsidiaries of the RAE) tend to use written forms as their point of reference for the examination of spoken forms. The mere fact that such a large number of Academies exist for this task points to the problematic and complicated nature of establishing one variety of Spanish as the written and/or spoken standard (Villa, 2002).

Despite the limitations of defining one “standard” Spanish, in the case of many current SHL courses, students are expected to acquire standardized or prestige varieties as a way of improving social mobility by learning the “codes of power” (Delpit, 1991) or gaining linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Some scholars and educators argue that denying access to standardized varieties might hinder students’ success in academia given the gate-keeping function of standardized language (Pennycook, 2001; Rickford, 2012). The assumption is that “changing speakers’ language, that is, ‘sanitizing’ it, will change their social status, thereby advancing their educational possibilities and by extension their social and economic opportunities. However, this reflects no particular linguistic reality” (Villa, 2002, p. 228). Instead, the focus should be on eliminating the barriers that oppressive systems have placed in the way of success (Flores & Rosa, 2015;

Rosa & Flores, 2017). Also, critical educators stress that the acquisition of standardized varieties should not be the main pedagogical focus, and students should be given the agency to make their own linguistic choices (e.g., Train, 2003; Leeman, 2005). As

Leeman (2018) states,

promoting standard varieties without asking learners to consider the ideologies that privilege those varieties, the connections of such ideologies to ideologies of class, race and nation, or the ways that ideologies are resisted or subverted, can inadvertently end up reifying and reproducing them. (p. 350)

By promoting standardized varieties, the implication is that students' home or community varieties are inferior (Villa, 1996), when in fact, there are many instances in one's personal or professional life where community languages are the social convention and therefore are valued and needed (Villa, 1996).

Appropriateness Paradigm

In an effort to acknowledge the legitimacy of all language varieties (Valdés, 1981) and promote linguistic diversity, many SHL programs have switched from a subtractive approach (i.e., erase the students' home variety and replace it with standardized varieties) to additive ones that seek to expand students' linguistic repertoires (Beaudrie et al., 2014). Crucial to this approach is the concept of "appropriateness," which acknowledges all varieties as valid, but recognizes the specific "formal" contexts in which certain non-standardized and racialized varieties should be used or avoided (see Flores & Rosa, 2015; Leeman, 2018; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017). For example, this discourse states that non-standard varieties are "appropriate" for use in certain settings, such as with friends or family. In professional or academic settings, on the other hand, only a "standard" variety would be acceptable (Leeman, 2018). In a well-

known example, Potowski (2010) following Zentella uses the analogy of clothing to describe how language is sociopragmatic and context dependent. She notes that a tie would not be appropriate for a beach and a swimsuit would not be appropriate for a wedding. In this scenario, neither the tie nor the swimsuit is inherently “wrong,” but they would be perceived by others as “strange” when used in the wrong context. Moreover, the guide “How to raise a bilingual child” written by Zentella for bilingual families in New York and adapted by Tseng (2017) for the state of Virginia, is meant to empower families to encourage bilingualism, yet it reflects the appropriateness paradigm:

If you want your children to speak Spanish and English fluently, you should make sure they participate in both formal and informal activities (like church services, parties, picnics), and also make them aware of the many different ways people speak. Point out the situations in which Spanish, English or Spanglish is appropriate. Just as they learn which clothes are best for a wedding or playground, they would learn what kind of Spanish or English is spoken in different settings and activities. *As long as children get practice in more formal styles of Spanish, and when to speak what language to whom—and how—code switching can benefit your children’s bilingualism, and add to their pride in a rich and unique heritage* [emphasis added]. (Tseng, 2017, p. 8)

As the guide recommends, these scholars and educators assume that there are only certain settings where it is “appropriate” to speak English, Spanish, or Spanglish without considering conventional social pragmatic variation among different communities of Spanish speakers. Despite what is known about contact languages and the natural and inevitable adapting and borrowing that occurs, Tseng (2017) notes that this “Spanglish” may or may not be appropriate for all situations, and children should learn the difference. Not only that, but the author also proclaims that codeswitching, another common practice for many bilinguals in the US, should be qualified by a more “formal” practice in Spanish.

Instead, viewing codeswitching as a stylistic practice in which language users employ the full capacity of their linguistic registers acknowledges students' agency and communicative skills. As Holguín Mendoza (2022) notes, "the persistence of conceiving bilingual practices, including codeswitching, as informal no longer applies if these practices are not perceived and understood by educators as separate codes but, instead, in terms of natural stylistic communicative practices in all their vast complexity" (p. 155). Critics of appropriateness approaches argue that equating standard varieties with "formality" relegates all other varieties as "informal," thus inferior, and further reinforces the superiority of the standard (Leeman, 2018).

The appropriateness model also raises questions of who deems what is appropriate or not, since this is not universally agreed-upon and depends highly on the subjectivities of the speakers and the interactional contexts (Leeman, 2018). In this same vein, some instructors might not share the same definition of "appropriate" as their students, given the various cultural and community-based beliefs of the students in the classroom. Within the appropriateness approach, the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the students are erased, thus promoting linguistic hierarchies by "relegating students' own varieties of Spanish, and hence a good deal of their authentic selves, to informal contexts" (Holguín Mendoza, 2022, p. 149). Therefore, critical approaches call for the recognition that students already possess sociopragmatic awareness and that what is considered "appropriate" is a construct that is highly context dependent. As a result, it is recommended to shift instruction to other goals that do not

put the pressure on the speaker to change their practices (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Raciolinguistic Ideologies

The appropriateness model has been criticized by scholars pointing out the raciolinguistic ideologies that support it (e.g., Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Instead, many scholars support a critical approach that questions structures of racial oppression and inequality and advocates for the dismantling of linguistic hierarchies (Alim, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Flores & Rosa (2015) stress the importance of recognizing how certain individuals are racialized even when using “standard” or “appropriate” speech. Alim (2016) clarifies that the study of raciolinguistic ideologies entails the analysis of “language and race together rather than as discrete and unconnected social processes and employing the diverse methods of linguistics to raise critical questions about the relations between language, race, and power” (p. 5). Rosa and Flores (2017) have defined a raciolinguistic perspective as one that “theorizes the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and race” (p. 621). They emphasize the need to see the categories of “race” and “language” not as distinct and unrelated, but instead to investigate “how and why these categories have been co-naturalized, and to imagine their denaturalization as part of a broader structural project of contesting white supremacy” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 621).

The study of raciolinguistic ideologies takes into account both critical language research and critical race scholarship in order to question institutional hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy (Alim, 2016). Another major component of a

raciolinguistic perspective is the examination of “deficit” perspectives of racialized speakers. For example, Flores and Rosa (2015) question why L2 learners of English in the United States are seen as deficient when making grammatical “mistakes” in English, while white learners of additional languages are allowed considerable room for these “errors” while learning a language. In fact, these white learners are often praised for any sort of additional language ability (Aparicio, 1998).

Previous research of this “deficit” paradigm includes Hill (1998, 2008), who studied “White public space” (Page & Thomas, 1994), a

morally significant set of contexts that are the most important sites of the practices of racializing hegemony, in which Whites are invisibly normal, and in which racialized populations are visibly marginal and the objects of monitoring ranging from individual judgment to Official English legislation. (p. 682)

Building off the work of Urciuoli (1996) with Puerto Rican bilingual communities in New York City, Hill (1998) analyzed how Puerto Ricans in “White public space” were self-conscious of their “Spanish” accents in English, but white people were allowed heavy English accents while speaking Spanish.

When racialized L2 students of English are seen as “deficient” when producing “accented” or “non-standard” language, this places the burden on the student to do more work to be considered viable for academic or professional success. Moreover, no matter how accurately the student reproduces standardized language, there is still a visual element of discrimination, because listeners not only hear language, but they see race in the speaker (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Therefore, appropriateness models of language instruction will never actually benefit racialized students because they will continue to be

perceived as “deficient” even when producing normative language. Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that instead the focus should turn to the “white listening subject”³ who hears non-standardized speech as “deficient.” In this vein, a raciolinguistic perspective calls for critical analysis of race and language in order to deconstruct sociolinguistic hierarchies. The overall goal is not to add to or subtract from students’ linguistic repertoires, but to encourage students to question arbitrary categories such as “standard” language and then to exercise agency by choosing the language varieties they wish to use depending on the context. Hence, when there is a greater awareness of how language ideologies lead to discriminatory practices, we can begin to critique these systems so as to dismantle them.

In summary, there are various dominant language ideologies at play in university Spanish departments in the U.S., many of which are never explicitly discussed in the classroom or during programming decisions. While subtractive and appropriateness approaches impose certain varieties on students, critical approaches criticize the category of “appropriate” as well as the structural processes related to the racialization of languages. A raciolinguistic perspective calls for critical approaches to language instruction with the goal of ultimately dismantling oppressive systems. Authentic materials are one avenue for discussing language ideologies in Spanish classrooms while

³ “White listening subject” is based on Inoue’s (2003) theorization of the *listening subject*. These *listening subjects* perceive accent, for example, in some groups and not others (despite the fact that everyone has an accent). The white listening subject is not defined simply as any white individual. It is defined as an abstract entity that both whites, non-whites, and machines can inhabit. For example, as a response to the supposed “word gap” of low-income children in the U.S., machines were placed in homes to count the number of words spoken to children within the household. The recordings were used to intervene in the ways families (mainly low-income families of color) interact with their children (Rosa and Flores, 2017).

critiquing these systems. The background and research regarding authentic materials will be discussed in the next section.

Authentic Materials for Language Learning

In the field of language instruction, there is no single, agreed-upon definition of authentic material since it varies widely in the research. For example, Morrow (1997) defines authentic material as “a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (p. 13). Similarly, McDonough et al. (2013) define authenticity as “a term that loosely implies as close an approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom, in the selection both of language material and of the activities and methods used for practice in the classroom” (p. 27). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the institution that sets learning objectives for world language courses nationwide, defines authentic texts on their website as those “written by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group” (Galloway, 1998, p. 133).

For the purposes of this study, I view authentic resources as any classroom material that was created for outside the classroom, that is, for real-life functions rather than pedagogical ones. Further, I use the terms “authentic material,” “authentic resources,” and “authentic texts” interchangeably. It must be noted, however, that when I refer to “authentic texts,” I define the term “text” broadly—referring to any object that has meaning—such as street signs, images, or videos. I utilize the definition provided by Robinson and Robinson (2003), which defines text as a “vehicle through which

individuals communicate with one another using the codes and conventions of society” (p. 3).

Moreover, I am more concerned with the type of student engagement that emerges from the use of the materials than I am about the “authenticity” of the language of the materials. Given the discussions of idealized “native speaker” in the previous chapter, it is problematic to determine what is “authentic” language and what is not, and it would be impossible without specific criteria. Nor is there a need for criteria— instructors choose materials that they believe will meet the needs of their students in that current moment. However, it is an issue when students’ only examples of “authentic” texts are those that reflect varieties used outside the U.S. and the underlying ideologies of the materials go undiscussed. Therefore, I argue for the use of critical methods to address the stereotypes, biases, and language varieties that are present in the material. As I will show, analyzing examples of locally based language using critical sociolinguistics will give students the opportunity to authenticate (or not) the materials for themselves and their own contexts.

Background

The use of authentic materials for language learning has been documented as early as ninth century England where long stretches of text in Latin were used for “holistic, reading for meaning” exercises (Mishan, 2005, p. 3). One thousand years later, Henry Sweet, a teacher and writer, considered to be one of the first linguists, used authentic texts in his writings, even favoring them over contrived materials (Gilmore, 2007). The twentieth century saw the biggest boom in authentic materials which

accompanied an unprecedented interest and development in the field of second language learning (Mishan, 2005, p. ix). The invention of new methods such as the Audiolingual or Direct method led to a “cult of materials” where the “authority of the approach resided in the materials themselves, not in the lessons given by the teacher using them” (Howatt, 1984, p. 267). By the 1960s, a more naturalistic approach that emphasized communication was prominent. This approach included a component of authenticity, where the language used in the classroom was chosen to emulate real-life speaking and focused heavily on exchanging meaning in communication rather than learning specific language forms (Mishan, 2005). This Communicative Language Teaching approach paved the way for the current use of authentic texts in language learning (Mishan, 2005; see also Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Richards, 2006).

The Communicative Language Teaching approach led to some debate in the definition of “authenticity” (Mishan, 2005) which was complicated by the sociocultural emphasis in language learning in the 1980s. Kramsch et al. (2000) describe authentic texts as those used by “native speakers in culturally authentic contexts of use” (p. 72). This definition was later disputed and criticized for viewing culture as essentially “realia” (Mishan, 2005). The 1990s saw new debates in authenticity such as the perspective put forth by Taylor (1994) which states, “some writers ... think of authenticity as essentially residing in a text while others think of authenticity as being, in some sense, conferred on a text by virtue of the use to which it is put by particular people in particular situations” (para. 9). This logic is applicable to the language classroom given that some scholars/educators believe that the *task* associated with the material is what authenticates

the text. For example, Van Lier (1996, as cited in Mishan, 2005) claims “authenticity whichs the result of acts of authentication, by students and their teacher” (p. 128).

Similarly, MacDonald et al. (2006) argue that any material is considered authentic if the activity associated with the text produces successful pedagogical outcomes.

On the other hand, Widdowson (1998) believes authenticity to be impossible in the language classroom. He argues that the use of authentic texts in language learning is a contradiction since language can no longer be authentic once taken out of its original context. According to Widdowson (1998), the discourse in a text is representative of the community from which it emerged. This discourse community cannot be reproduced in the classroom since it emerged from a specific context from which the students are not aware. He instead is a proponent of contrived language in the classroom, curated for the specific community and context in which the students are situated. According to him, only under these conditions can resources be authenticated, through collaboration within the community during the learning process (Widdowson, 1998).

Currently, authentic materials are considered essential for language instruction since they serve as a model for realistic communication (Zyzik & Polio, 2017; ACTFL, n.d.-a). Instructors believe their use improves language acquisition due to the fact that students receive input from authentic resources that motivates them to be autonomous learners (Zyzik & Polio, 2017). These materials can also be used to raise consciousness surrounding different issues and perspectives related to the target culture. Therefore, authentic texts may provide different perspectives that some textbook activities might lack (Mishan, 2005).

Classroom Research on Authentic Materials

Empirical research on the effectiveness of authentic resources in higher education language learning is limited. There have been only a few notable studies addressing the use of authentic texts in the language classroom. One in particular by Gilmore (2011) measured communicative competence in Japanese university students learning English. The control group received textbook input and the experimental group received authentic input. There were eight instruments measuring various competencies involved in communication: a listening test, a discourse completion task, a pronunciation test, a C-test, a vocabulary test, a grammar test, an oral interview, and one student-student role play. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in five of these eight tests, thus indicating that authentic materials were more effective than textbooks for developing communicative competence.

Similarly, Rodgers (2015) measured evidence of incidental language learning in upper division literature and cultural studies courses in Spanish and in French. The researcher interviewed instructors regarding their methodologies and observed the courses, which were solely focused on content and not language forms. Using a cloze passage and samples of student writing and speaking, the researcher found that some incidental language learning occurred in students' writing (Rodgers, 2015). Their speaking skills, however, did not show major improvements, potentially because the instructors tended to do most of the speaking during class time. According to the researcher, the results suggest that some attention to language forms might be necessary to accompany instruction using authentic materials (Rodgers, 2015).

In Weyers's (1999) study of two lower-division Spanish courses, a control group was given the established curriculum (using the Communicative method) while the experimental group received lessons accompanying episodes from an authentic *telenovela* (soap opera). Students were given a listening comprehension test and an oral production test. Results showed that the experimental group had significant gains in listening comprehension and oral production when compared to the control group (Weyers, 1999). Students in the experimental group also expressed more confidence in listening to "native speaker" speech. Although these results seem to support the use of authentic texts for developing communicative competence, it must be noted that the researcher needed to use many scaffolding techniques such as summaries, comprehension questions, and graphic organizers in order to guide viewings of the *telenovela* (Weyers, 1999). Therefore, authentic texts require scaffolding for students to activate their prior knowledge and to organize and comprehend input in the target language (Zyzik & Polio, 2017).

Lastly, Maxim (2002) presented a 142-page authentic romance novel to undergraduate students in a beginner German class in lieu of the readings from the course textbook. The control group received standard instruction from the curriculum which included all of the textbook readings. The experimental group performed just as well as the control group on three departmental exams (despite not having received the standard instruction) and they performed just as well on written posttest exercises based on reading comprehension and vocabulary. The data indicate that: (a) beginner language

students are capable of reading authentic literature and (b) authentic materials do not “distract” from the skills and objectives of typical language curricula (Maxim, 2002).

Research in Second Language Acquisition Supports Authentic Materials

Research in second language acquisition (SLA) supports the use of authentic texts, especially given the fact that there is a push from some instructors to employ a proficiency-based approach rather than a grammar-intensive one. Many researchers (Heining-Boynton, 2010; Smith & Morales, 2013; Van Patten et al., 2019) have pointed out that grammar-intensive programs are ineffective and incompatible with the way human brains process language. For example, at the beginner level, learners require a heavy emphasis on content (vocabulary such as nouns and verbs) that relate to real-world information relevant to the students’ lives rather than complex grammar rules that human brains simply cannot internalize until more advanced levels are reached (Smith & Morales, 2013). In Spanish, this is evident with adjectives—they must agree with the nouns they are modifying in both gender and number—and this is typically taught at beginner level, despite the fact that research shows that even advanced students continue to struggle with this concept. Instructors must be aware, then, that their assessments should be adjusted so as not to penalize beginner learners for making agreement mistakes when the brain cannot handle such a task when first learning a language (Smith & Morales, 2013).

In fact, Spanish curricula in many programs in higher education in the U.S. are in need of more realistic standards and assessments that align with research in SLA. The Foreign Service Institute reported that even under ideal conditions, it takes at least 720

hours to achieve a superior level of proficiency when learning an additional language (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982). Therefore, language learning is time-intensive, and students must feel motivated to continue the endeavor beyond the classroom rather than feel defeated because of an unrealistic curriculum. Unfortunately, it seems this is currently the case—although enrollment for beginner level undergraduate Spanish classes remains steady, students in general are not continuing to intermediate or advanced classes (Heining-Boynton, 2010). Many of these students' reasons are that they feel still unable to communicate in Spanish (Heining-Boynton, 2010). The decades-old grammar approaches that introduce all the Spanish tenses in the first two years are ineffective for both student retention and for learning to speak the language in real-life contexts. Therefore, authentic resources, when paired with realistic activities, are one possible strategy to improve student motivation and success in Spanish courses.

VanPatten et al. (2019) demonstrate how SLA research provides no clear link between instruction and the order of acquisition. This means that instructors, no matter how great their efforts, simply cannot manipulate the order in which certain language forms are acquired—it will always follow a predetermined pattern. Further, there is no actual evidence that explicit grammar instruction makes any difference in the long term. Part of the reason for this lack of evidence is simply logistical—time constraints do not allow for multiple-year studies, and it would be difficult to separate what additional information enhanced participants' language abilities after instruction and what long-term learning was due to instructor-led activities. However, students need input and interaction in the target language, similar to the way L1s (first language learners) acquire language

(VanPatten et al., 2019). Authentic materials are a useful resource to provide students with this input that is applicable to real life.

While authentic materials have promising potential for language learning, it is important not to use the material in a way that essentially turns it back into a grammar exercise. It has already been established that explicit grammar instruction has not proven to be effective. Students need social interaction, and they need to feel like the information is relevant to their lives in order for learning to occur (Heining-Boynton, 2010).

Therefore, pairing authentic materials with grammar drills will not facilitate learning.

Concerns with Choosing Authentic Materials

Additionally, while the research in SLA supports authentic texts, instructors must exercise caution with how they choose authentic materials and how they engage with them in the classroom. MacDonald et al. (2006) claim that “texts which are regarded as authentic are also texts which originate from hegemonic cultures” (p. 254). For example, English language materials often originate from the U.S. or Britain and contain standardized language while leaving out “non-native” English. The implication is that students should aim to perform like an idealized “native speaker,” ignoring the fact that there are many other ways humans communicate and negotiate meaning without having to learn certain grammatical structures (MacDonald et al., 2006).

MacDonald et al. (2006) also acknowledge learner agency in interpreting authentic texts. They state that learners have the right to their own interpretations and that students can bring their own cultural frames of reference into their analyses. Simonsen

(2019) also supports this view, claiming that students should be given the freedom to authenticate resources themselves in their specific learning contexts.

To summarize the various stances taken so far regarding authentic materials, there are two important factors when utilizing authentic resources in the classroom. First, these materials contain certain cultural information, biases, or stereotypes of which students may or may not be aware. Therefore, it is important to provide some context for the resource and ask questions such as: Who made this material? For what audience? For what purpose? This process is important to avoid reinforcing biases and stereotypes. Second, there is an element of student agency when interacting with authentic materials. Students may have differing interpretations of the texts, given that they have unique subjectivities and cultural frames of reference. Moreover, considering that SLA research calls for meaningful exercises rather than grammar drills, an ideal approach to authentic resources is one that critically examines the text while also allowing for students to authenticate the material themselves by giving it meaning that is specific to their classroom context and their identities.

Chapter 2: Spanish in the U.S.

This section summarizes some of the findings of linguists regarding the sociocultural and linguistic dynamics of the U.S. Spanish bilingual context that involves continuous contact with English. The field of language contact examines these and related phenomena in terms of how languages influence each other in moments of contact. This constant contact of the various Spanish varieties in the U.S., as well as the contact of U.S. Spanish with English, has led to “wide-ranging patterns of bilingualism and complex sociolinguistic patterns of language use” (Carter & Callesano, 2018, p. 66). Hence, no single label can encompass all of the varieties and identities of Spanish and its users in the U.S. Due to the incredible diversity of Spanish(es) in the U.S., it is difficult and counterproductive to generalize and speak of only one Spanish in the U.S. The region is home to many Spanish speakers from South America, Central America, and others, each of which offers their own set of linguistic peculiarities and perceptions. Further, the degree to which English has influenced the lexicon of Spanish in the U.S. varies among communities (Carter & Varra, 2023). A detailed description of the many varieties of Spanish within the U.S. is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and the act of categorizing in itself is a violent endeavor. As Train (2020) explains:

[T]he reduction of complex and diverse human lives to named biopolitical categories of experience do not necessarily value or benefit every individual and family who compose those groups and can serve to further contribute to the racist and nativist stereotypes and agendas directed against them. Not all human beings fit easily into the groups assigned to or even constructed by themselves in the confines of dominant regimes within and between nations. (p. 279)

The category of “Spanish in the U.S.,” then, cannot account for the multitude of identities and experiences, nor is there a monolithic group that encompasses the label “Spanish-speaking communities” in the U.S. The dangers of this label are that a wide range of identity characteristics such as race and ethnicity are erased and collapsed into one supposed homogenous group (Sánchez-Martín & Gonzales, 2022).

For example, within the U.S., Indigenous Latinxs and their educational needs have been long ignored and have been absent from the discourse surrounding Latinx communities (Barillas Chón et al., 2021). Barillas Chón (2010) describes this phenomenon as “presently absent” (p. 313) and this term can be applied to Afro-Latinxs and Afrodescendants as well, whose identities are also invisibilized, including in most Spanish language textbooks (Padilla & Vana, 2022). Hence, “the fact that Afro-Indigenous Latinx peoples experience indigeneity through multiple frames including race, colonization, and land displacement...challenge[s] notions of a pan-Latinx-Indigenous identity” (Barillas Chón et al., 2021, p. 136). Nevertheless, this false notion of a pan-Latinx-Indigenous identity shows up in school settings where anyone identifying as Latinx is assumed to have learned Spanish as their first language (Barillas Chón et al., 2021). The study conducted by Campbell-Montalvo (2019) provides the best example of how schools in central Florida constructed racial and linguistic representations of Indigenous Latinx students and their families during school registration dialogues between Indigenous parents, teachers, and administrators. This study highlights the misrepresentation of the linguistic backgrounds of Indigenous Latinx students. The researchers discovered that information about students speaking an Indigenous language

at home was removed from their children's school records even after they came forward with it. Instead, the schools assumed the students knew Spanish and documented this as their language or documented the Indigenous language and then ignored that information all together (Campbell-Montalvo, 2019).

To reference Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S., then, Sánchez-Martín and Gonzales (2022) recommend a deep investigation into how “Spanish positionalality” (p. 72) plays a role in marginalization. In other words, one must take into account the fact that Spanish itself is a colonial language and not everyone who is from a Spanish-speaking country or area speaks it—as one example, for many second- and third-generation immigrants, the history of violent policies and practices has directly or effectively banned communities from using their native tongues in public. Therefore, a “Spanish positionalality” allows for a broader view of the colonial relationships with the Spanish language and current manifestations of that coloniality (Sánchez-Martín & Gonzales, 2022). Within such a view, the labels of “Spanish in the U.S.” or “Spanish-speaking communities” warrant a deep analysis and unpacking of which I do not have the space here. Nevertheless, I want to reiterate that when these terms are used in this dissertation, it is not meant to ignore or erase the vast array of experiences and identities associated with U.S. Spanish-speaking Latinxs, and instead, I wish to draw attention to the complex historical and current colonial systems that continue to marginalize language communities.

Spanish in the U.S.: Contact Languages and the Spanglish Debate

The majority of Spanish speakers in the U.S. are bilingual (Carter & Varra, 2023), and since English and Spanish have been in contact with each other, there is plenty of research in contact languages and characteristics of Spanish in contact with English. There are four prominent types of language mixing that are relevant to Spanish in the U.S. that I will mention here: lexical borrowings, adapted borrowings, loan translations and calques, and codeswitching. Firstly, the Spanish language has borrowed words during its entire history, for example, first from Arabic, Italian, and Greek, among others, and then from many Indigenous languages in Latin America (Lipski, 2008). When a word is taken from another language, this is called a borrowing. Therefore, examples of English borrowings in Spanish would be *cocktail*, *whiskey*, and *sport* (Lipski, 2008). There are also a number of adapted borrowings, or words that have been borrowed and then adapted to be compatible with the other language's structure, such as *lonche* (lunch), *forma* (a form to be filled out), and *puchar* (to push). When a phrase or idiomatic expression is translated literally from one language to another, this is called a calque. For example, the English phrase "to call someone back" in Spanish would be *llamar de regreso*, but with the phrase being so common in English, it has been translated literally to *llamar para atrás*. Lastly, codeswitching, or using two different languages within the same conversation, is common in U.S. Spanish speakers. Despite outcry from language purists about "sticking to one language" within a conversation, "[w]hen two languages come into contact in a situation of stable bilingualism, both borrowing and codeswitching are normal events" (Lipski, 2008, p. 230). There are many motivations for codeswitching,

such as to display community membership (Zentella, 1997) or as Zentella (1990) noted, in New York, Spanish speakers sometimes default to certain English terms so as to avoid confusion when interacting with someone who speaks a different variety of Spanish. Lastly, it is important to note that codeswitching is “governed by a complex set of syntactic and pragmatic restrictions” (Lipski, 2008, p. 231). For example, switches typically occur at the start of new clauses rather than within clauses, but single-word switches are also very typical (Carter & Varra, 2023).

While research in contact languages makes it clear that certain phenomena such as borrowings or calques are a normal and natural consequence of contact (Lipski, 2008), Spanish in the U.S. remains stigmatized (García, 1993; Rosa & Flores, 2017). As a result of the contact between English and Spanish, the Spanish spoken in the U.S. has long been depicted as a “hybrid” language, thus the term “Spanglish” (Otheguy & Stern, 2010). “Spanglish” can be thought of as a label that some speakers use as a symbol of identity and pride, but it is also a label that marginalizes because of the deeply ingrained ideologies of linguistic purity and long history of English-only policies in the U.S. One label could not possibly encompass the complexity of multilingual practices and the variety of linguistic styles within U.S. Spanish speaking communities; thus, there is a debate on the concept and its operationalization within U.S. Spanish-speaking communities. I mention this debate here since I used the term in class to deconstruct ideologies about linguistic purity and the racialization of speakers, and because it serves as a source of pride and belonging for some students’ identity constructions. This term Spanglish first appeared in 1948 in a Puerto Rican newspaper article, “*Teoría del*

Espanglish” (‘The Spanglish Theory’) (Zentella, 2016, p. 12), depicted in a negative light, evoking

the notion that Spanglish consists of mixing parts of English and Spanish words, that it is a new language, that it reflects confusion and ambivalence, and that it represents a death knell for Spanish via the takeover of the island and the replacement of its language. (Zentella, 2016, p. 12)

There is no universally accepted definition of Spanglish (Lipski, 2008). Attempts at definitions of Spanglish include Stavans’s (2003), which refers to Spanglish as “the verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations” (p. 5). Spanglish has also been characterized in a number of different ways, such as an interlanguage, a Creole language, or an anglicized version of Spanish (Ardila, 2005). Nevertheless, Spanglish cannot be classified as a “partial” or “reduced” language—it is considered a complete language variety that deserves academic attention (Lipski, 2008). It is governed by rules and it reflects complex skills on the part of the user (Silva-Corvalán & Potowski, 2009).

Some believe the term “Spanglish” itself could be seen as misleading and offensive. For instance, Otheguy and Stern (2010) make four claims regarding the term Spanglish: 1) Spanish language varieties in the U.S. are not all that different from the varieties of Latin America, 2) the term “Spanglish” implies the mixing of Spanish and English is more prominent than it may be, 3) the term suggests that the most important feature of the language is its hybrid nature, and 4) it unnecessarily separates U.S. Spanish speakers from those of the rest of the Spanish-speaking world (Otheguy & Stern, 2010). For Otheguy and Stern (2010) the term “Spanish in the United States” is preferable rather than “Spanglish.”

Roberto González Echevarría (1997), well known professor and critic of Latin American Literature, refers to Spanglish as “an invasion of Spanish by English” (para. 1) and as “the language of poor Hispanics, many barely literate in either language” (para. 2). In 2014, the Spanish Royal Academy (*Real Academia Española*, or RAE) added the term Spanglish (*espanglish*) to their official dictionary (*Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*), along with a description calling it a “deformed” mixing of Spanish and English. It later eliminated the word “deformed,” but only after public outcry (Zentella, 2016).

On the other hand, Zentella (2016) claims that avoiding the term “Spanglish” and replacing it with “Spanish in the U.S.,” or something along those lines, only appeases linguistic purists and denies the discrimination that U.S. Spanish speakers face. In other words, collapsing Spanglish into “Spanish in the U.S.” ignores the oppressive systems that have pathologized language mixing in the first place, and acknowledging Spanglish for what it is can help to interrupt the dominant ideologies that equate one nation with one national language. As Zentella (2016) explains:

The label itself forces us to confront the way language is used as a smokescreen to impose national and cultural boundaries and to disguise racial and ethnic prejudices; it invites us to discuss the specific sociohistoric, cultural, economic, and racial contexts that give rise to Spanglish. (p. 29)

Similarly, Urciuoli (2013) states that Spanglish cannot be reduced to a mere list of language forms and, instead, must be viewed as indexical—that is, the meaning of Spanglish lies in what the social practices of Spanglish index in terms of identity.

Therefore, for some, the term Spanglish is being taken with pride (Zentella, 1997) and many have embraced their identities as speakers of both Spanish and Spanglish

(Zentella, 2016). Zentella (2016) maintains that “among the most misrecognized linguistic skills of Latin@s is Spanglish, partly due to the proliferation of confusing definitions of the term” (p. 15). Therefore, because of the inaccurate definitions, the linguistic dexterity of Spanglish speakers becomes overshadowed and linguistic discrimination ensues (Zentella, 2016). Disparaging Spanglish also disparages the speakers who claim ownership of the term (Urciuoli, 2013). In the end, Zentella (2016) reminds us that the debate should be informed by the actual speakers’ opinions. The researcher polled 115 U.S. Spanish speakers in a convenience sample and 71% approved of the term (Zentella, 2016, p. 30).

In terms of this present research, I used the label in two ways: first, as a tool for studying Spanish in the U.S. in terms of its critical historical context, racial relations, linguistic style, and symbolic power of identity. This included framing the discussion of Spanglish using critical language awareness by examining the ideologies related to Spanglish, such as the fact that Spanglish is not the same as Mock Spanish. The second purpose I had for the use of Spanglish was to empower students since we unpacked concepts such as cultural authenticity.

Translanguaging

Recent research has highlighted the importance of fostering a climate where students utilize their entire linguistic repertoires and maintain their cultural and linguistic identities. This creates a favorable climate where the usage of students’ first language can be seen as a beneficial aspect for learning a new language (García & Li, 2014; Hall & Cook, 2012; Lado & Del Valle, 2022). However, much of the research of using “own-

language” in the “new-language” classroom has not yet reached university level instruction (Lado & Del Valle, 2022, p. 3). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) continues to recommend that at least 90% of the instruction take place in the target language (ACTFL, n.d.-a). Many programs follow this advice, even though research on the amount of non-target language that can be used in the classroom—specifically, if using more than 10% of it hinders language acquisition—does not appear to exist (Lado & Del Valle, 2022, p. 3). For this reason, educators should not feel discouraged to incorporate the first or shared language for certain concepts as they feel appropriate (Pascual y Cabo & Prada, 2018).

In fact, students should be encouraged to employ their full linguistic repertoire since named languages are solely “sociopolitical categorizations” (García et al., 2021, p. 217), and the notion of languages as bounded and separate is a colonial one that was used to tie groups to their languages in order to justify the superiority of European subjects and the genocide of colonized people (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Scholars have recognized this and advocated for translanguaging (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014), which entails a “complex discursive practice” where every student’s language use contributes to their development of communication while meanwhile giving “voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality” (García & Li, 2014, p. 121). Hence, translanguaging entails when students employ all of their linguistic resources “without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 281).

Thus, translanguaging is a theoretical lens that sees bilinguals and multilinguals as not containing two or more autonomous language systems; rather, translanguaging sees every language user as having a single linguistic repertoire from which they construct meaning and navigate specific communicative circumstances (Vogel & García, 2017, p. 1). This concept was relevant to our course and our study of Spanish in the U.S. since translanguaging promotes the dynamic language practices that have historically been marginalized (García & Li, 2014), thus providing students with new theoretical frameworks for studying language. Also, students are often employing their bilingual sociolinguistic practices in the classroom (García & Kleyn, 2016; Lewis et al., 2012), so introducing them to this concept may give students a sense of pride in their linguistic abilities.

Language and Race

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Spanish language was used as a mechanism for Spain to maintain control of their empire. As early as 1492, the Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija stated, “language has always been the companion of empire.” With the European colonial development of modernity, the category of racial Other was created as a counterpart to the “European bourgeois subject” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 623). These categories justified the continued domination and racialization of non-Europeans, including their language practices. As Rosa and Flores (2017) state, “In conjunction with the production of race, nation-state/colonial governmentality imposed ideologies of separate and bounded languages of colonized populations” (p. 623). The view of languages as bounded and separate objects allowed for them to be linked with

certain racial groups, namely Indigenous groups. Moreover, Indigenous populations were viewed as subhuman and their languages described as “animal-like” (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 624), thus again justifying their continued domination and the perceived superiority of European epistemologies. These raciolinguistic configurations continue today, as does the continued exploitation of racialized subjects (Quijano, 2000; Robinson, 1983).

Historical and Current Discrimination of the Spanish Language and Speakers in the U.S.

In the context of the U.S., “English as a sign of whiteness is intertwined with U.S. histories of territorial conquest, white settler colonialism, slavery and black suppression, and exploited migrant labor” (Urciuoli et al., 2022, p. 4). Despite the fact that the Spanish colonizers had actually settled in what is now the U.S. before the English colonized the area—thus, Spanish was spoken in the region before English—Spanish is still framed as an “immigrant” or “foreign” language (Schwartz, 2023). Knowing the history of Spanish in the U.S. is essential for a comprehensive understanding of U.S. history, as well as current linguistic and sociopolitical struggles of Spanish speakers since these are deeply ingrained in this history.

As early as the 17th century, when the British colonized what is now referred to as North America, Spanish was only acknowledged as a language of exchange for affluent Spanish traders and their colonies, and thereafter for the study of Spanish literature (García & Alonso, 2021). *A Short Introduction to the Spanish Language*, the first official Spanish textbook in the United States, was published in 1751 by Garret Noel for use by

American merchants traveling to Spain and “the Indies” (García, 1993). When a professorship of French and Spanish was created at Harvard University in 1816 to teach literary texts from Spain, Spanish language education entered the U.S. educational system (García & Alonso, 2021). However, “by othering Spanish and bounding it solely to written texts of Spain, the language of former Mexican citizens in the Southwest was effectively erased” (García & Alonso, 2021, p. 116). Thus, the beginnings of formal Spanish instruction already favored Peninsular Spanish forms and devalued local U.S. varieties.

The historical context of the racialization of Spanish in the U.S. was associated with the political dominance of Mexican and Puerto Rican populations in the territory now known as the U.S. (Urciuoli et al., 2022). Two important events led to the racialization of Puerto Rican and Mexican populations as “non-white”: the end of the Spanish-American war when the U.S. took over Puerto Rico, and the end of the Mexican-American war when the U.S. took land from Mexico (Urciuoli et al., 2022).

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the Mexicans residing in the Southwest were legally considered “white” citizens, except for the Native American Pueblo community (also Mexican citizens) who were excluded from citizenship (García & Alonso, 2021). The “treaty citizens” were socially, culturally, phenotypically, and linguistically distinct and were considered second-class citizens (Lozano, 2018). Thus, “[r]ace, but also language, was used to classify people in the territory, creating the raciolinguistic hierarchies that are prevalent today” (García & Alonso, 2020, p. 116). During this period there was segregation, with inferior schools and houses for the treaty

citizens (Gómez, 2007), and they were described as speaking Spanish but not speaking it “properly” (García & Alonso, 2021). Many times treaty citizens were not allowed to vote (Gómez, 2007). Further, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were subjected to mob violence and thousands were lynched nationwide during the years 1848 to 1928 (Carrigan & Webb, 2013). From 1910 to 1920, several thousand ethnic Mexicans on the Texas-Mexico border were slaughtered by a local law enforcement group, the Texas Rangers (Refusing to Forget, 2022).

Even though the Spanish language still had legislative and public use in the southwest, in the early twentieth century this shifted when dominant ideas of being “American” included using only the English language (Lozano, 2018). Again, the Spanish of the treaty citizens was explained as a “language of uneducated people and having nothing to do with Spanish as written in literary works and spoken by elite merchants” (García & Alonso, 2021, p. 116). Fifty years later, in 1898, the landscape of Spanish in the U.S. transformed when the U.S. acquired the territories of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam, and made Cuba a protectorate. An English-only policy was instituted in Puerto Rico due to the “impure” Spanish that was spoken on the island (Zentella, 1995). In 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted citizenship and the group the American Association of Teachers of Spanish (AATSP) was created. The organization claimed Spanish was a foreign language representing those from Spain, thus again demeaning U.S. Spanish speakers (García & Alonso, 2021). In 1921, English became the official language of instruction in schools in New Mexico, replacing Spanish (García & Alonso, 2021).

By the 1940s Spanish went from being a regional language to one with great political significance (Lozano, 2018). Spanish was the most learned non-English language, as the Anglo population wanted to participate in economic and political opportunities in Latin America (Lozano, 2018). However, the instruction of Spanish in the 1940s and beyond remained an effort in learning a “foreign” language—thus erasing the linguistic heritage of U.S. Spanish speakers (García & Alonso, 2021). In 1942 the Bracero Program brought temporary workers to the U.S. from Mexico for much-needed agricultural help, yet their Spanish was devalued as that of “illegals” and farmworkers (García & Alonso, 2021, p. 117). Interestingly, the journal *Hispania* (a publication of the AATSP) in 1956 first recognized the potential for bilingual Mexican Americans to be Spanish teachers—previously this was a role performed mainly by bilingual white Anglos or foreign-born Spanish speakers (García & Alonso, 2021).

Recent Discrimination of Spanish Users

Regarding more contemporary discourse attached to Latinx populations in the U.S., Santa Ana (2002) describes various metaphors. He uses current theory in cognitive metaphors and analyses of how the periodical *The Los Angeles Times* discusses Latinx issues. These images of Latinx political issues are constructed using metaphors such as the “nation as body,” in which Latinx immigrants are a pathology. Within the “nation as city” metaphor, immigrants were depicted as threats such as “floodwaters.” For example, in the Proposition 187 campaign in 1994, the newspaper utilized phrases such as “the immigrant tide” was coming in, or “the flood of legal and illegal immigrants streaming into the country” (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 264). These metaphors continue and are effective,

given their use by politicians—take for example the analysis from *The Guardian* that found that Donald Trump used the term immigrant “invasion” in 2,000 ads just on Facebook alone (Wong, 2019). Metaphors such as these permeate the collective consciousness and influence how the public perceives Latinx immigrants (Santa Ana, 2002).

Currently, the Spanish language and its speakers continue to be vilified and portrayed as anti-American (Urciuoli, 2011). Several examples in recent years highlight this trend—for example, the two women detained in Montana in 2018 by a Border Patrol officer simply for speaking Spanish, because it was not commonly heard in that region (Waller, 2020). Take for instance also Trump’s 2016 Mock Spanish comment of Mexican immigrants as “bad hombres,” as a subtle way to conjure up the tendency to criminalize Mexican men (Schwartz, 2016) since “in contemporary public discourse, ‘illegal aliens’ has largely become code for ‘Mexicans’” (Fuller & Leeman, 2020, p. 97). Trump further reinforced the separation of Latinxs from the U.S. belonging in his 2019 question during a rally in New Mexico: “Who do you like more—the country or the Hispanics?” (Baker, 2019). These ideologies have dire consequences—for example, the white nationalist who in 2019 killed 23 people in an El Paso Wal-Mart in response to the Mexican presence in the area (Lee & Weber, 2023).

Mock Spanish is another racializing discourse that continues to degrade U.S. Spanish. Mock Spanish is when a white-identified non-Latinx person jokingly mocks the Spanish language in an unfavorable way. Hill (1998) defines Mock Spanish using four different categories:

1. Use of positive or neutral Spanish words in humorous or negative senses (e.g., *macho*)
2. Words borrowed from Spanish for obscene purposes (e.g., *Casa de pee-pee*)
3. Elements of Spanish morphology borrowed to create jocular or pejorative forms (e.g., *el cheap-o*)
4. 4. Hyperanglicized pronunciations and orthographies (e.g., *Grassy-ass*).
(Hill, 1998, pp. 682-683)

In the first example, words such as *macho* have been taken from Spanish and have transformed meaning in a negative way—the “macho” male being referred to is hypermasculine and perhaps toxic, but in Spanish it literally means “male.” Second, words that have been transformed for obscene purposes count as Mock Spanish because of the vulgarization that accompanies this process—for example, *casa de pee-pee*, a sign in an Arizona bathroom—represents an offensive borrowing of the Spanish language. Thirdly, Mock Spanish disfigures words to create the Spanish “equivalent” of English words. *El cheap-o* or *no problem-o* fit into this category. Lastly, white speakers make fun of Spanish by mispronouncing words in an exaggerated way such as “grassy-ass” to say *gracias* (Hill, 1998, 2008).

Hill (1998) introduced Mock Spanish as “covert racist discourse” because it uses indirect indexicality (Ochs, 1990), a process by which the discourse does not directly indicate racist or offensive ideas, but it subtly refers to them without actually acknowledging them within the communicative act. Therefore, Mock Spanish refers to the elusive ways the language is used to ridicule or discriminate against Spanish speakers. It is racist discourse because the person using it does not connect it to the larger history of colonization and linguistic profiling, and in fact, they view their usage of it as funny or parodic (see also Kroskrity, 2020, 2021). Examples such as *hasta la vista, baby* or *no*

problem-o in *Terminator 2* are problematic because of the context of the scene in the movie where a white boy from “the streets” teaches Schwarzenegger these phrases to be able to talk like the “people,” and these words are grouped together with other insults (Hill, 1998, p. 683). The implication is that white speakers draw from racist depictions of Spanish speakers when using these terms and they promote offensive stereotypes in White public space (Hill, 2008). This othering further reinforces white hegemony and allows for white people to deform Spanish in a “lighthearted” way yet judge Spanish speakers for their “improper” English.

Another way white learners of Spanish have contributed to the othering of racialized Spanish speakers is described in Schwartz’s (2014) study of how white monolingual university students position themselves relationally with Spanish-speaking communities. He found that “unlike language maintained within classroom walls (represented possessively as ‘us’) Spanish spoken away from academic spaces (‘them’, respectively) is regarded as dangerous and disorderly” (Schwartz, 2014, p. 163). Further, this othering creates a perceived social distance between language learners and heritage speakers of that language. The students in this study invoked images of Spanish speakers as gang members or criminals. They also believed that the Spanish spoken outside of the classroom context was different and they questioned whether it was “proper” or not. Regarding the students’ motivation to learn Spanish, some expressed a desire to understand other people’s conversations and to know if they were being talked about. This need to access “their” conversations indicates a feeling of being left out, an uncomfortableness due to their English privilege of being able to comprehend most

conversations in public. Therefore, their motivation in taking a Spanish class is partially due to their need to reclaim privilege by being privy to others' conversations in Spanish (Schwartz, 2014). The author stresses that the students seem to have good intentions and appear to not be consciously aware of the problematic nature of their ideologies (Schwartz, 2014), which further reinforces the “subtle,” yet harmful ways covert racist discourse enters our classrooms.

The above examples are important to point out since there are direct consequences of these ideologies—for example, bilingualism is less valued monetarily in the job market for U.S. Latinxs than for their monolingual counterparts (Subtirelu, 2017). Since “the ‘normal’ state of belonging in U.S. society privileges European, especially Northern and Western, ‘heritage,’” (Urciuoli et al., 2022, p. 5), those who most often fit this category belong as “white,” and the “non-white” category is maintained to justify the appropriation of their labor, land, and resources (Urciuoli et al., 2022). Therefore, Spanish speakers are portrayed as foreign and dangerous (Santa Ana, 2002). These issues deserve to be discussed and addressed in language classes so students are given a comprehensive understanding of language, or, in other words, the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein, 1985, p. 257).

Language Attitudes Regarding U.S. Spanish Speakers

Ideologies regarding who is a “legitimate” user of a language variety underpin individual and societal attitudes toward U.S. Spanish, and these views are framed by deficit perspectives. Deficit models of language production and acquisition have shaped linguistic ideologies about “correctness,” how certain people should use language in

certain situations, and how racial and geographic borders construct ethnic and national identities (Leeman, 2012). Hegemonic norms can be internalized by marginalized individuals as well, effectively stigmatizing them and their communication styles. Therefore, an understanding of the ways in which broader societal ideologies influence people's belief systems—both individually and within groups that share comparable social identities or experiences—can be gained from evaluating linguistic attitudes.

There are some general observations regarding perceptions of certain varieties of Spanish in the U.S. For example, studies on attitudes and perceptions of Spanish dialects by linguists have shown time and time again that Caribbean dialects are seen more negatively than non-Caribbean dialects (García et al., 1988; Alfaraz, 2002; Otheguy et al., 2007). Crucially, after emigrating to the U.S., speakers of Caribbean variants frequently perpetuate stigmatizing sentiments about their own languages and share these perceptions (Duany, 1998). In a controlled experiment, Suárez Büdenbender (2013) discovered that Puerto Ricans could distinguish between Puerto Rican and Dominican Spanish and could recognize dialect to infer information about a speaker's socioeconomic status and level of education. Essentially, prejudices and preconceived notions about the Spanish language are not just discursive; rather, they are intricately entwined with the ideas that speakers have about one another and themselves. In another example, in a perceptual dialectology experiment, Miami residents ranked local Peninsular Spanish speakers higher than local Cuban and Colombian speakers in terms of competence (Carter & Callesano, 2018).

U.S. Spanish varieties are generally viewed less favorably than their Latin American and Spanish counterparts. Spanish speakers in Latin America and Spain have long held unfavorable opinions of both adapted and unadapted English lexical borrowings in Spanish, owing to Spanish contact with English in the United States (Moreno de Alba, 2003). Zentella (1995) notes a “chiquitafication,” or a belittling of the Spanish of U.S. Latinxs in public discourse which devalues the linguistic and cultural diversity of U.S. Latinx communities and looks down upon the non-Castillian varieties of Spanish, including the denigration of “Spanglish.” Second-generation bilinguals are seen as “corrupting Spanish and English” (Zentella, 1995, p. 10, emphasis in original), which has led to them being described as “semilingual” or “alingual” (Zentella, 1995, p. 10). These ideologies of “languagelessness” imply that some bilinguals are not competent in any language (Rosa, 2016). Further elucidating this point is Urciuoli’s (1996) analysis of the linguistic practices of Puerto Ricans in New York City in which she states that “the influence of Spanish on English is racialized whenever an accent, ‘bad’ grammar, or ‘mixing’ are equated with bad habits, laziness, and speech that is somehow not language” (p. 35).

Interestingly, the perceived linguistic landscape might have an effect on how people view languages in their specific context. Dailey et al. (2004) studied 190 Anglo and Hispanic teenagers using the verbal-guise technique in which they listened to and assessed a series of speakers with Anglo and Hispanic accents reading a radio announcement. All aspects of evaluations of Anglo-accented speakers were positive, albeit attenuated for Hispanic raters. To ascertain its significance in forecasting language

attitudes, the raters' reported linguistic environment was also investigated. The linguistic landscape had a significant impact on Hispanic ratings, but it had no effect on Anglo raters. To this end, the Hispanic participants rated the Anglo-accented speakers less favorably when they perceived their own linguistic landscape to contain more Spanish. The reverse was also true—when the Hispanic participants perceived their linguistic landscape to be more English-dominant, they rated the Anglo-accented speakers more favorably (Dailey et al., 2004). Therefore, it is clear for this group that having one's language practices reflected in the local linguistic landscape affects individuals' language attitudes, and perhaps could lead to maintaining language inside one's own group.

In terms of the Spanish on the Mexico/U.S. border, it has been characterized as a zone of “linguistic terrorism” where borderland languages and identities face discrimination (Christoffersen, 2019). The borderland region has also been described as “what seems to be a basically homogenous dialect area...interrupted by heterogeneous perceptions of dialect” (Martínez, 2003, p. 39). Studies of perceptions of border Spanish have indicated that negative attitudes arise regarding the use of English or codeswitching within conversations involving monolingual Spanish speakers (Galindo, 1996). Galindo's (1996) study of women on the Mexico/U.S. border, in Laredo, Texas showed that speakers experience discrimination from Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Anglos on both sides of the border. Not only that—but the women have internalized these ideologies and were critical of their own speech practices. Within education specifically, English was valued at the expense of Spanish (Galindo, 1996).

In De La Zerda Flores & Hopper's (1975) verbal guise study investigating evaluations of Spanish and English, participants from San Antonio were given samples of standard Spanish, Tex-Mex, Mexican Spanish-accented English, and standard English. They were then asked to make inferences on personality characteristics based on the speech samples. The "nonstandard" varieties (Tex-Mex and accented English) were viewed as less favorable than the "standard" varieties, except for among Chicana-identifying participants, a finding also confirmed by Ryan and Carranza (1977) in which Chicana-identifying respondents rated Spanish more favorably than English.

De La Zerda Flores & Hopper (1975) also found that the group with the lower income was less tolerant of the "nonstandard" varieties, and the higher income group tolerated more "nonstandard" features. However, none of the groups reacted in a negative way to the standardized Spanish variety. Forty years later, the results regarding negative opinions of codeswitching were confirmed again in Rangel et al.'s (2015) study. The researchers used a matched-guise test with three attribute dimensions (solidarity, status, and personal appeal) to examine language attitudes regarding English, Spanish, and codeswitching in two border cities in Texas: Laredo and Edinburg. They discovered that opinions in the two cities did not significantly differ overall. Codeswitching, as expected, scored lowest across the board. However, the results differed from those of De La Zerda Flores & Hopper (1975) in that Spanish scored highest for solidarity and English and Spanish were tied for status.

One of the most reliable indicators of negative views toward Spanish speakers is the employment of English forms and/or switching between Spanish and English during

interactions with monolingual Spanish speakers, according to earlier perception studies conducted along the U.S.-Mexico border (Hidalgo, 1988). For example, Hidalgo (1988) found that in the border town of Juarez, Mexico, respondents wanted to remain linguistically loyal to Mexican Spanish and thus rejected codeswitching since it was seen as a threat to their linguistic and cultural maintenance. When asked about the Spanish of nearby El Paso, Texas, the vast majority of participants thought the Spanish from Juarez was more correct than that of El Paso and that El Paso Spanish speakers should speak more like Juarez Spanish speakers. In short, the Juarez residents viewed the El Paso variety negatively in terms of beauty, pleasantness, and correctness, and also claimed it lacked communicative value (Hidalgo, 1988).

More recently, Martínez's (2003) Dialect Perception Survey in Reynosa, Mexico, a town on the Mexico/Texas border, used verbal scales to study pleasantness as well as likeness by asking participants to name the nearby dialects they thought sounded similar to their own. Noteworthy in this study is the conclusion that a regionally based identity construct lowers the assumption of national boundaries and prioritizes the assumption of physical distance, whereas a nationally based identity construct tends to favor the assumption of national boundaries as the strongest attribute of a dialect area. Although some Reynosa respondents thought the national border was the most important factor in determining dialect perception, others thought physical distance was a more important factor, which lessened the influence of the national border. Further, younger generations' responses in particular showed more favorable opinions of local Spanish and were more likely to liken their variety to that of MacAllen, a nearby border town in Texas. These

results demonstrate a potential burgeoning shift in perceptions wherein community language use transcends national and geographic borders (Martínez, 2003).

Mejías and Anderson (1988) and Mejías et al. (2003) used a questionnaire to study the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) Mexican-American professionals' and students' opinions about the Spanish language, primarily among lawyers and doctors. As of right now, this is the first and only longitudinal study on attitudes in Texas. The authors of the first study discovered that rather than using Spanish for emotive or instrumental purposes, students utilized it more commonly for communication purposes—that is, to attain social aims. The researchers also discovered that professional women utilized Spanish for sentimental purposes, whereas men perceived their language use more as a tool. Lastly, participants whose families had been in the country for many generations thought the Spanish language was important, whereas those who had recently arrived did not. The study was repeated in 2003 with the expectation that sentiments would alter, particularly among students. The outcomes were very comparable, though, even after a 20-year lapse. Although the primary reason for students to use Spanish was still communication, there was a small increase in the dimension of language loyalty. The results of Mejías et al. (2003) further imply that, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley region of Texas, the conservation of Spanish is strongly encouraged by elements like the region's proximity to Mexico and the steady stream of Spanish-speaking immigrants, even though there are indications of a possible transition to English.

Velázquez (2009) investigated language attitudes and language maintenance among a group of individuals from El Paso, Texas, a border community where Spanish is

widely spoken in public, using a qualitative methodology. Five middle-class families with parents who identified as Hispanic and who were fluent in either Chicano or Mexican Spanish were watched and interviewed by the author. Velázquez (2009) discovered that these parents felt that standard English and standard Mexican Spanish did not match the dialects used in El Paso. Like Galindo's (1996) subjects, they also thought that speaking English fluently was essential to both class mobility and the avoidance of discrimination (Velázquez, 2009).

These studies shed light on language attitudes within Spanish-speaking communities, demonstrating the ideologies of linguistic purity that pervade perceptions regarding U.S. Spanish speakers (see Licata, 2023). National and geographic borders seem to also enforce linguistic borders wherein practices such as codeswitching are seen negatively and as a threat to cultural and national unity. Bilinguals experience racialized and classist discrimination from monolingual English and Spanish speakers both in the United States and abroad, despite the country's constant increase in the number of Spanish speakers. These attitudes and ideologies are important to mention in the context of this dissertation because the students—particularly Spanish heritage students—grapple with these ideas in their daily lives, potentially impacting their own education as they strive to claim and reclaim their languages within this context.

Chapter 3: CriSoLL and Indigenous Relationality

Given the information presented in chapters one and two regarding the historical discrimination of Spanish speakers, as well as the attitudes and ideologies that view practices such as codeswitching unfavorably, educators are urged to address instruction differently to account for these internalized ideas that students bring with them to the classroom. If we are to truly create inclusive spaces for our students, we must confront the issues that currently plague U.S. Spanish-speaking communities so students are more aware of them, can deconstruct them, and then make their own decisions going forward in the real world. For example, having classroom discussions of practices such as translanguaging that view the reasons speakers use translanguaging and the different attitudes regarding it could have a number of effects: it could affirm students' current practice of translanguaging and instill them with more pride in doing so; it could affect students' reactions to others' translanguaging by knowing the certain reasons speakers use it, and it could create a classroom space where students feel more comfortable communicating as their authentic selves knowing that translanguaging is welcomed. These types of discussions that focus on actual practices of bilingual communities in the U.S. help to counter the deficiency views of U.S. Spanish speakers (García & Alonso, 2021).

The theoretical framework for this study is Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL), which centers the above issues and more, giving students a more complete picture of the sociolinguistic practices of actual Spanish speakers and the historical context that led to the creation and perpetuation of language hierarchies. I chose

this research-based framework on critical literacy because it offers a systematic way of addressing the necessary elements involved in examining complex language practices of multilingual communities. The four elements of CriSoLL described in this chapter provide a well-rounded understanding of language dynamics both historically and currently. I also chose CriSoLL because of my previous teaching experience, particularly in Montessori education, where I observed how students learned in more “natural” ways informed by the real world and their own positionalities and interests. By examining local language practices using CriSoLL, instruction was relevant to students’ lives and also engaged them in critical discussions of the complex topics of the course.

I will also describe how implementing CriSoLL requires a reformulation of assessment practices in which linguistic proficiency cannot be the singular goal. Instead, other theorizations such as Indigenous relationality allow us to see the possibilities of a language program in which student and community needs and goals are centered.

Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL)

The components of CriSoLL guide the theoretical rationale for this study and the design of the didactic materials employed. The “critical” aspect comes from critical pedagogy, which is a teaching philosophy that views instruction as a political act and encourages students to think critically about the world and take action towards social change (Smith & Seal, 2021). Paulo Freire’s (1970) seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* led to him being widely regarded as the originator of critical pedagogy. Freire’s work facilitating L1 (first language) literacy development in Brazil led to several realizations about educational systems. Firstly, he critiqued what is known as the *banking*

system of education in which students are considered “empty vessels” that need to be filled by knowledge. He recognized students as active agents in the educational process and strove to create critical consciousness (*conscientização*) in his students to empower them to make changes in Brazilian society. Not only was Freire successful in developing students’ reading and writing skills, but he also awoke a critical consciousness that positioned students as change-makers in Brazil (Freire, 1970).

Critical pedagogy is incorporated into CriSoLL, a framework for plurilingual and heritage language education, as well as other language education contexts (Holguín Mendoza, 2022; Holguín Mendoza & Taylor, 2021; Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). CriSoLL offers a comprehensive and systematic approach to instruction that helps students to understand the sociopolitical forces entangled with linguistic differences and hierarchies (Holguín Mendoza & Taylor, 2021). This includes having knowledge of oppressive systems in order to dismantle them. The components of CriSoLL recognize that tools for critical metalinguistic awareness and reflection on how language is used for discrimination and marginalization ought to be integrated in language learning contexts (Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018).

CriSoLL was developed by a team led by Claudia Holguín Mendoza and was the result of more than a decade of collaborative work proposing new theoretical approaches and pedagogical applications for the creation and development of language courses in higher education institutions in the U.S. for both L2 (additional language) and SHL (Spanish heritage language) students (Holguín Mendoza, 2018, 2022; Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018; Holguín Mendoza & Taylor, 2021; Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez Walker,

2024; see also Boyero Agudo, 2023; Mendoza Casanova, 2023). Holguín Mendoza (2018, 2022) explains the experience and evolution of this critical framework which helps us understand the path towards critical literacy. To this end, Holguín Mendoza (2018, 2022) describes the many workshops and meetings the team of scholars and educators had when developing CriSoLL—through these conversations, instructors realized the ways they were promoting hegemonic ideologies toward their students, and therefore, the team had to dedicate significant time and effort to discussing and unpacking their own sociolinguistic ideologies as part of their training (Holguín Mendoza, 2018, 2022). Thus, this continual self-reflection is a fundamental aspect of the CriSoLL framework (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024).

A CriSoLL approach “focuses on the development of critical knowledge and critical literacy regarding how our communication mediates our social lives and our identity performances and how we conceptualize our social worlds” (Holguín Mendoza & Taylor, 2021, p. 224). Such knowledge allows students to “negotiate their own processes of identity formation” (p. 224) as well as develop knowledge regarding social meanings of linguistic practices, which, in turn, leads them to make informed decisions about their own language practices based on what they know about linguistic hierarchies and larger hegemonic structures in society. CriSoLL better equips students to critically discern which varieties they use in which contexts rather than the instructor dictating which varieties are “appropriate.” There are four principles to CriSoLL: 1) critical language awareness (CLA); 2) stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language; 3) literacy regarding social dynamics, particularly racial relations; and 4)

critical historicity (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024), all of which will be further discussed in the following sections.

Critical Language Awareness (CLA)

Critical language awareness (CLA) originated from the interconnected efforts of critical pedagogy (e.g., Freire, 1970) and critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1992). CLA (Fairclough, 1995, Leeman, 2005) has been portrayed as “the pedagogical wing of critical discourse analysis” (Pennycook 2001, p. 94) and has been defined as “the understanding of how language is imbued with social meaning and power relations” (Leeman, 2018, p. 345). It can also be described as an “approach to language and literacy education that focuses on the intersections of language, identity, power, and privilege, with the goal of promoting self-reflection, social justice, and rhetorical agency” (Shapiro, 2022, p. 4). CLA in the classroom might examine topics such as linguistic variation, linguistic discrimination, and the role of language in identity performance and enactment, among others (Leeman, 2014). It could also include unpacking discourses such as those related to race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability (Leeman, 2014). CLA stands in contrast to appropriateness-based approaches because it calls for students to be critical of language ideologies regarding social hierarchies and power. Unlike prescriptivist pedagogies, which aim to “correct” or “improve” the heritage learner’s language practices, CLA places a strong emphasis on the learner’s variety and informs students of the social and political roles of linguistic variation (Correa, 2016). CLA promotes teacher and student agency, as well as for students to

“become more conscious of their communicative behavior and the ways by which they can transform the conditions under which they live” (Alim, 2005, p. 28).

CLA supports deconstructing the social meanings implicit in linguistic forms as well as in discourse itself. Take for example the Spanish word *haiga*, which is another way of saying *haya*, meaning “there is” in English, but employed in the subjunctive. *Haiga* is often stigmatized or seen as “incorrect,” but in actuality it is not technically incorrect—the /g/ was left over from when Latin developed into Spanish (Johnson & Barnes, 2013). Currently *haya* is the prescriptively preferred form, even though *haiga* continues to be widely utilized. CLA allows us to see the raciolinguistic ideologies implicit in these attitudes regarding certain language forms and to deconstruct them.

CLA has been used and promoted in the Spanish language learning context, especially in Spanish as a heritage language courses (Beaudrie et al., 2019; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman, 2018). It is an excellent starting point for evaluating ideologies in language and discourse, but students and educators need to also critically engage in self-reflection in order to continue the path of critical consciousness beyond the classroom. Indeed,

[c]ritical analyses must be able to expose subtle assumptions and contradictions in discourse and subvert the apparent significance of privileged identities when they are amplified by minimizing other identities because of a desire for inclusion and belonging to normalcy (e.g., discourses of ‘reverse racism’). (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024, p. 82)

Therefore, a constant process of critical self-awareness and knowledge of intersectional racial relations is crucial to support the development of critical consciousness, of our critical awareness of the intricacies of how inequality operates, and how we all participate

in the existent structures of oppression (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). Sometimes as educators we remain unaware of how our own positionalities interact with those of our students, in addition to the various competing ideologies of the materials we dissect in class. Self-reflexivity needs to be brought to the forefront in our own conceptions of identity formation, but also in our pedagogical practice so that micro- and local-level factors are considered when investigating these unequal power dynamics (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024).

In this same vein, Chicana feminist epistemologies (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Anzaldúa, 1987) have noted that negotiating multiple subjectivities within one classroom requires a “full awareness of the present moment” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 549) in order to address the conflicts of power among diverse identities. Border/transformativa pedagogies suggest strategies for implementing a practice that attempts to dismantle dualistic thinking that involves both teachers and students, with the goal of critically examining oppressive structures (Elenes, 2001), with critical reflexivity being an important and constant element.

However, this self-reflexivity is not inherently built into CLA. Thus, self-reflexivity, in addition to the other elements of CriSoLL (stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language; literacy regarding social dynamics, particularly racial relations; and critical historicity), allow for a more systematic way to examine language practices, taking into account the many social, historical, and stylistic elements. For example, a CLA lesson might look at the form *haiga* and the various attitudes that speakers have regarding the term, the reason why speakers use it or not, and the ways it

has been stigmatized. This is all valid and important information for students to be aware of, but there are subtle nuances that might go unnoticed if not taking into account the various positionalities at play and the racialized ideologies regarding the use of *haiga*. For example, a Latinx university professor of Spanish using *haiga* in the classroom could be perceived differently than a Latinx farmworker using *haiga* with co-workers. There are a number of possible sociopragmatic interpretations according to who is involved in the interactional exchange—the speakers in this scenario could be viewed as racialized and through a deficiency lens, or perhaps the use of *haiga* could go completely unnoticed if it is incorporated into the language practices of a specific community. As a result, there needs to be a more complex set of discussions involved when employing CLA, and the CriSoLL framework offers an approach in which these types of critical metalinguistic reflections can be incorporated in a systematic way so that educators can guide students to achieve a more well-rounded understanding of language and power (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). As Holguín Mendoza (2022) observes:

[S]tudents can develop a broader, more transcultural communicative competence if and when they are encouraged to discern the social meanings of linguistic styles and to articulate how their own linguistic decisions shape and are shaped by social values that either perpetuate or resist oppressive structures. (pp. 162-163)

Consequently, CLA alone as it was originally proposed (Fairclough 1995), does not offer a complete framework for examining all aspects of language and power such as the larger oppressive structures that Holguín Mendoza (2022) pointed out above. I will explain these other elements in the sections below.

Stylistic Language Practices and the Symbolic Power of Language

As a result, another required element of instruction as put forth by CriSoLL is the discussion of stylistic practices (Eckert, 2019) and the symbolic power of language (Kramersch, 2020). This includes the ability to articulate and defend stylistic choices, for example, how certain forms of language index different social meanings in terms of identity formations and stance (Irvine, 2001; Jaffe, 2007; Kramersch, 2020; Silverstein, 1976). Sociolinguistic approaches that focus on the comprehension of the social meaning of linguistic variation and its relationship with linguistic style, social identities, and social practice are essential for academics and educators to consider. By viewing variation as stylistic, teachers can include in their class discussions in-depth examinations of “conventionalized personae,” or stereotypical social figures that are unique to particular times and places (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024, p. 85, see Eckert, 2019). Thus, the focus on *actual* linguistic practices within their different contexts, indexing various intersectional identities, allows students to develop a more well-rounded, critical understanding of sociolinguistic variation in the real world. This understanding informs students’ decision-making in their interactions in different contexts.

According to Bourdieu (1991), “symbolic power” is the “invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it, or even that they themselves exercise it” (p. 164). Kramersch (2020) further expounded on this idea, noting that people influence and dominate others through these kinds of symbolic exchanges. Thus, symbolic power involves the “social symbolic aspects of language, those that have to do not just with the capacity to make yourself

understood but with the capacity to make yourself listened to, taken seriously, respected and valued” (Kramersch, 2020, p. 11). As a result, language has the ability to shape social reality, and speakers of a given language participate in the power structures that language and the institutions of that community create and maintain (Kramersch, 2020).

Literacy Regarding Social Dynamics, Particularly Racial Relations

The third element of CriSoLL is the study of hierarchical social relations, particularly intersectional racial literacy. Because U.S. Latinxs have historically been colonized by both Spanish and English, the language practices of U.S. Latinxs must be framed within this history (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). Racism in the U.S. cannot be fully explored using CLA alone—there must be an understanding of the complex social relations that involve intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) of the multiple aspects of Latinx identities and how certain language practices have been constructed as deficient (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). In this light, approaches such as Critical Race Theory (e.g., Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) or Latina/o Critical Race Theory (e.g., Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) provide the tools to more deeply analyze the social dynamics of racial relations in the U.S. context as well as our own positionalities. In the classroom, this examination involves using antiracist pedagogy to support students in analyzing verbally or in writing the racial, gender, and class antagonisms that only become understandable when social structures are viewed intersectionally. Students also analyze raciolinguistic ideologies particular to their own context while at the same time acquiring racial literacy to be able to go beyond

performative allyship, developing capacities to discuss and interrupt racial prejudices (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024).

Critical Historicity

Also supporting students and educators in their linguistic decision-making is the development of historical knowledge about the sociopolitical events and forces in which social hierarchies and linguistic practices develop. By utilizing this “critical historicity,” students are better positioned to understand their own identity constructions in their local and global contexts (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). Following Hartog (2015), Train (2020) explains:

The concept of ‘regimes of historicity’ names the discursively shaped experience of time and temporality that constitute our culturally and historically shifting relationships of past-present-future.... In addition to indexing regimes of language invention, shifting regimes of historicity enter into the public and professional landscape of language, learning and education.... Understanding the regime/s of historicity that shape our world, then, involves critical engagement with the ways in which our understandings and articulations of the past may limit or enable our understandings not only of the past, but also of the present and future. (p. 260)

In other words, awareness of “past-present-future” dynamics related to language informs and shapes how teachers teach and learners learn. Through critical antiracist approaches such as CriSoLL, we can enact a change in these historical regimes that have created and legitimized certain raciolinguistic ideologies.

For example, historically and currently researchers have extracted information by taking advantage of Indigenous communities through treating languages as objects (Leonard, 2017) removed from their human contexts, such as in discourses of language “mining” by researchers (Davis, 2017), as well as the othering of Indigenous groups by

exploiting them for “science’s” sake (Leonard, 2020, see also Leonard, 2017). As Davis (2017) asserts:

This literal and metaphorical extraction from context is itself a colonial enterprise and often a cornerstone of Western science—one that removes people from homelands, loots objects from graves in the name of science and education, and disassociates products from those who labour to produce them. In other words, it celebrates the *empire* in *empirical*. (Davis, 2017, p. 40)

Thus, removing examples of language use from the historical and sociopolitical context from which they emerged is a colonial endeavor that also obscures the processes of racialization associated with the formation of language and social hierarchies. Hence, language instruction must be situated within this historical context.

An example of critical historicity in action is Lee’s (2017) case study of a high school English Teacher who used an authentic resource, the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to engage in classroom discussions to build students’ sociopolitical consciousness. The instructor used the historical context of the novel to initiate discussions involving the historical roots of racism and white supremacy in the U.S. in order to help students connect this knowledge to their own current sociopolitical contexts. By providing this historical context, students were able to reflect on how family, social class, race, and gender influence identity. It was only through this examination of history that students were able to understand the meaning of the novel and the meaning of current issues of race and racism in the U.S., and to connect this history to their current realities (Lee, 2017).

CriSoLL Can-Dos

In order to reflect the four elements of CriSoLL, assessments involving project-based or task-based learning, for instance, which practice the application of concepts and critical reflection of material, would be preferable and would take the onus off of students having to conform to normative language practices in order to succeed in language classes. CriSoLL includes this type of assessment in the form of student self-assessment which are “Can-Do” statements that have been adapted from the original “Can-Dos” put forth by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, n.d.-b), but instead reflect content-based objectives (Holguín Mendoza, 2022). The Can-Do rubric was created to take into account the elements of CriSoLL and reflect the topics included in classroom materials, but also the profound connections and understandings that are fostered with students in the classroom (Holguín Mendoza, 2022). The Can-Dos were meant to promote student agency in evaluating their own critical literacy development (Holguín Mendoza, 2022). An example of a CriSoLL Can-Do is the following: “I can identify implicit language ideologies in cultural products and practices” (Holguín Mendoza, 2022, p. 146).

The Can-Do rubric reflects the five goals of sociolinguistic justice set forth by Bucholtz et al. (2014) in their community-based program, School Kids Investigating Language in Life and Society (SKILLS). A goal of SKILLS, and of CriSoLL, is to promote sociolinguistic justice in our schools and communities, defined as “self-determination for linguistically subordinated individuals and groups in sociopolitical struggles over language” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 145). The researchers defined

sociolinguistic justice according to five goals: linguistic valorization, linguistic legitimation, linguistic inheritance, linguistic access, and linguistic expertise (Bucholtz et al., 2014).

The first goal, linguistic valorization, entails “promote[ing] awareness and appreciation of linguistic variation and language diversity of all kinds, including understanding of the systematicity, complexity, and cultural value of one’s own and others’ ways of using language” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 146). The second, linguistic legitimation, serves the goal of advancing the legitimacy of “one’s own and others’ full linguistic repertoires for symbolic and/or communicative use in a wide range of social spheres, including not only the intimate and informal settings of home and community but also formal, public, and institutional settings” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 146). Linguistic inheritance, the third goal, involves “learn[ing] and/or learn[ing] about the languages, dialects, and styles associated with one’s own background and to support others’ knowledge and learning of their respective heritage varieties, to the extent each individual chooses” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 147). Linguistic access, on the other hand, means “learn[ing] and/or learn[ing] about the languages, dialects, and styles of sociopolitical power and to support others’ knowledge and learning of these varieties, to the extent each individual chooses” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 148). Lastly, linguistic expertise is a goal to “promote recognition of all language users as linguistic experts capable of contributing to linguistic and cultural knowledge, and to promote acknowledgment of those contributions, to the extent each individual chooses” (Bucholtz et al., 2014, p. 148). These five goals were successfully implemented into Bucholtz et

al.'s (2014) SKILLS program, empowering young students to be agents of change in their communities. Thus, they can serve as a guide for other educators who are implementing sociolinguistic justice into their curricula. I will describe in Chapter 7 how the students in our course conceived of sociolinguistic justice when exploring their local linguistic landscapes.

Problematizing Linguistic Competence⁴

Prioritizing sociolinguistic justice, along with shifting our pedagogical objectives using these four components of CriSoLL, requires new ways of evaluating students in order to foster critical literacy and agency to navigate the real world. This demands a reconceptualization of assessment practices in language education where linguistic competence is not the main goal. Linguistic competence is a racialized notion in which whiteness is overly represented (Flores & Rosa, 2023), and thus is not a suitable goal for language instruction. In their act of “undoing competence,” Flores and Rosa (2023) seek to question the validity of universalizing language theories by analyzing their origins in European colonial ideologies, which have established normative white linguistic perspectives and epistemologies as the norm. Thus, they suggest that

the apparent progressivism of linguistic competence, and, crucially, the subsequent and purportedly even more inclusive concept of communicative competence, is rooted in the same genre of the human that structures the world language classroom...[as representing] a genre of the human that is overrepresented as white and positions Blackness as an abject Other. (Flores & Rosa, 2023, pp. 269-270)

⁴ This section is partly based on earlier collaborative work (Venegas & Leonard, 2023)

The language teaching approaches inspired by the notion of communicative competence carry appropriateness perspectives at their core and ignore the processes of racialization of speakers wherein the ideal speaker-listener is framed as white and monolingual (Flores & Rosa, 2023). In a commentary on Flores and Rosa's (2023) article, Venegas and Leonard (2023) note that such a configuration "elevate[s] some people to a fully human status while diminishing the humanity of racialized Others" (p. 335).

As such, scholars studying raciolinguistic ideologies in language teaching have recently called for abandoning the concept of "linguistic competence" (Flores & Rosa, 2023). This entails a shift from assessing communicative ability to examining the personal importance of students' language practices and their relationships with language within their communities. As Flores and Rosa (2023) argue:

[W]e seek to consider the possibilities for applied linguistics that emerge when scholars refuse competence as an aspirational outcome and instead reframe pedagogical, curricular, and broader educational goals that presume and sustain the fundamental legitimacy of the cultural and linguistic practices of racialized students and communities. (p. 270)

Thus, Flores and Rosa (2023) imagine new possibilities for language learning where communities and learners define for themselves what their language learning goals are. This type of programming has been prominent in the field of Indigenous language reclamation. For example, the Hawaiian proficiency scale ANA 'ŌLELO was created by and for Native Hawaiians based on community and cultural values of "competence" in maintaining the Native Hawaiian language and culture, such as the ability to perform protocol, a daily tradition central to the community (Kahakalau, 2017). This example where a community defined for themselves their goals and intended outcomes of

language learning can serve as inspiration for how language educators determine evaluations and assessments of students that are not solely based on linguistic competence.

Indigenous Relationality

Indigenous notions of relationality, or the idea that “everything is interrelated, and by extension, interdependent” (Venegas & Leonard, 2023 p. 333), can provide important context for imagining an approach to language learning that is not centered only on communicative competence. Indigenous relationality has been explored recently in the field of Spanish language pedagogy as a way of centering Blackness and Indigeneity in antiracist Spanish instruction (Sánchez-Martín & Gonzales, 2022). Leonard (2021a), in describing “*r*-words to guide Indigenous research” (i.e., reverence, respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, rights, among others) emphasized relationality (i.e., relational accountability) as an important element in Indigenous language reclamation. Indigenous language reclamation is a “decolonial intervention” (Leonard, 2019) that emphasizes the act of claiming or re-claiming community language practices and challenges “extinction” paradigms where languages are seen as no longer existing because, according to Western views of language, there is a lack of living speakers. Indigenous language reclamation acknowledges the cultural ties to language that never actually go “extinct” and remain relevant for communities, despite there being a certain number of “fluent” speakers in existence. It also acknowledges the capacity to reclaim language from historical documents, and in ways the community see fit, which may or may not include “proficiency” as the goal. As Leonard (2021a) states:

Understanding the needs and contributions of ‘language learners,’ for example, does not just stem from general principles of language acquisition (though expertise in the associated research can be very helpful), but rather evokes much wider questions of how community knowledge is meant to be transmitted, which in turn reflects the norms of other social positions and the status awarded to each. (p. 26)

As such, “effective Indigenous language reclamation strategies center communities’ histories, needs, values, and intellectual tools” (Chew et al., 2023, p. 770). Relationality, then, is a way of recognizing relationships and maintaining accountability in these relationships.

In his book *Research Is Ceremony*, Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson describes “relational accountability” as central to an Indigenous research paradigm. In order to orient to the world—to build knowledge through relational accountability—we must cultivate a set of deferential and reciprocal behaviors toward other agents and beings. By employing the relational accountability framework, then, language learning becomes an exercise in relationship-building—between the person and the language, the land, the nonhuman relatives, to name just a few (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous relationality acknowledges the importance of Indigenous epistemologies in shaping education, learning, and teaching, and it maintains that recovering knowledge and epistemologies within Indigenous communities is a tactic for achieving sovereignty and self-determination. Therefore, “An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational and shared with all creation” (McCarty et al., 2022, p. 425, see also Wilson, 2001).

Similarly, Henne-Ochoa et al. (2020) propose a “language-as-a-process-of-sustaining-relationality ideology” (p. 483), wherein language learning emphasizes social

interaction and relationships through interaction—language is thus a process or a verb rather than an object or noun. The importance of relational reciprocity in Indigenous conceptions of language is significant to this understanding; ethical relationships with people and the natural environment are fundamental to how and why languages are taught in context throughout generations (Henne-Ochoa et al., 2020). This crucial context regarding Indigenous relationality allows us to see the possibilities of a language program that is defined by community/learners’ needs and does not necessarily place the sole emphasis on linguistic “proficiency.”

Chapter 4: Research Design

This research investigated how a Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) approach to authentic materials supports student literacy in a mixed Spanish heritage language (SHL) and second language (L2) Spanish intermediate course at the university level. Using a qualitative approach (Cho, 2018; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021) and action research methods (Kemmis et al., 2014; Pine, 2008) to exploring the attitudinal stances of students (e.g., Jaffe, 2007, Boyero Agudo, 2023; Holguín Mendoza, 2022; Showstack, 2016), the investigation examined a CriSoLL approach to authentic materials, using my own and already existent CriSoLL-based content of authentic materials designed to focus on Spanish in Southern California. Qualitative methods (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021) were crucial to this study for meaning-making and interpreting what was happening from the students' perspectives as I disrupted the “traditional” Spanish curriculum. Students' narratives (in the form of written work, class activities, and informal interviews) tell how the instructional intervention impacted their learning. The following research questions guide the study:

- 1) What role do authentic materials play on student development of their critical awareness and literacy when employing Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL)?
- 2) Within this approach, what role do classroom practices play in students' attitudes and perceptions towards learning Spanish?

While undertaking this research, I grappled with how to design the study to center student voices and experiences while also improving my practice as an educator. I took this responsibility seriously while also attempting to develop a curriculum that supports other educators at my institution, as well as other settings, that centers locally based

language forms to incorporate and legitimize the knowledge that students bring to the classroom. The focus on locally based language practices was important for resisting the hegemonic ideologies associated with the prominence of non-U.S. varieties of Spanish in textbooks and curricula (Al Masaeed, 2014; Higby et al., 2023). Also, because “[r]esearchers working within marginalized communities have a duty to materially benefit those with whom they research, and to deconstruct the dominance of Whiteness” (Lee, 2021, p. 97; see also Lee & Lee, 2021), I was committed to addressing how the racialization of U.S. Spanish speakers impacts the choice of “authentic” materials for Spanish language classrooms.

My Positionality

The methodology for this study has been shaped by my positionality and my previous teaching experience (described in detail in Chapter 1) as a practitioner wanting to see a change in the field. I have experienced the struggle of trying to find materials that do justice to multilingual communities while also incorporating the local community and students’ positionalities. This is the reason I was drawn to CriSoLL and the team of scholars and educators with whom I collaborated in my journey of becoming a critical language educator.

Regarding my own positionality within this research, one issue I continue to grapple with is: What role does my white, non-Latinx identity play in the development of this dissertation? I was not raised in a multilingual household or community, and my school district growing up was predominantly white. In this sense, I might be considered an “outsider” in terms of group membership, and I have not felt what it is like to be

racialized or have experienced linguistic discrimination. I am also a white settler on stolen land (Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano), and my ancestors and I have profited from settler colonialism. I want to proceed with caution and sensitivity by continually reflecting on these and other aspects related to how I approach my research and teaching, my hope being to be an ally to linguistically marginalized populations.

My Process Designing the Research

It was difficult designing a study that did not center on measuring students' linguistic competence since so many of the Spanish textbooks and curricula I have used in my teaching career are solely based on acquiring this skill, and "cultural" topics are often secondary and present many essentializations and generalizations. Instead, I was engaging in complex topics having to do with dominant language ideologies and the symbolic power of language. I struggled not only with designing lessons centered around these topics, but also with ways to elicit students' feedback on the activities and viewing "data" in a holistic way by considering students' diverse identities and experiences. Another very important factor in the study design was creating a safe and inclusive environment for students where they feel welcome and that they belong. I believe this environment is crucial for developing their critical skills and knowledge about critical historicity, race relations, stylistic sociolinguistics, and the symbolic power of language as elaborated by CriSoLL (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024; see Kramersch, 2020).

Taking into account the CriSoLL framework in language instruction, as well as the incorporation of authentic materials, I designed activities that involved students'

critical discernment of the symbolic power of language within their environments. By expanding my notion of authentic materials to include local examples of Spanish (or lack thereof) that students gathered themselves, the students became the authority in deciding what examples to use, and they negotiated the materials' authenticity based on their own relationship to that material and their experience in the community.

For this study I drew inspiration from Chicana feminist ethnographer Michelle Téllez (2005) who proposes a “Chicana scholar/activist paradigm that erases the imposed dichotomies between community/academia, activism/scholarship, and subject/researcher” (p. 47). Téllez’s (2005) ethnographic work breaks down barriers between academia and the community, and it calls for all academic work to be tied to community action. For this reason, I incorporate principles of teacher action research (Kemmis et al., 2014; Pine, 2008) to negotiate meaning alongside all those involved in the research process, as well as open, transparent communication throughout the study. As Kemmis et al. (2014) state, “practitioners are the greatest resource of all for changing educational practice, and ... therefore, teachers’ research is the most potent force for changing educational practice” (p. 25).

Teacher Action Research

Much of the research in second language acquisition is quantitative even though “good teacher research is framed within the qualitative paradigm” (Bell, 1997, p. 4). Further, there is a large gap between research and practice in the language learning field and “educational research has had little impact on changing schools or improving student learning because of its disconnection from practice” (Pine, 2008, p. 3). More empirical

studies by educators are needed, and action research is a means to that end. Action Research (AR) is now commonly used in language teaching for professional development and experimenting with different practices (Edwards & Burns, 2016; Judah & Richardson, 2006; Koutselini, 2008; Ravitch & Worth, 2007), as well as for professional development for beginning teachers (Ado, 2013; Kardos & Johnson, 2007).

It was only until the 1980s that AR became widespread in language teaching, but it existed in education long before that (Burns, 2005). AR emerged as a counterpart to quantitative research to account for real-world contexts and more contribution from research participants (Burns, 2005), and a concern for social justice was the basis of its emergence (Pine, 2008). Action research has been described as “a process of concurrently inquiring about problems and taking action to solve them” (Pine, 2008, p. 30), “a means towards creating meaning and understanding in problematic social situations and improving the quality of human interactions and practices within those situations” (Burns, 2005, p. 57), and as “a self-reflective form of inquiry undertaken by participants in social or educational situations to improve their practices or understanding of these practices” (Bell & Aldridge, 2014, p. 13). It is a research paradigm that encompasses several research methodologies and types of investigation (Pine, 2008), also described as a “family” of practices (Kane & Chimwayange, 2013). AR is undertaken in numerous disciplinary fields such as applied linguistics, health care, business management, community activism, among many others (Burns, 2005). In education, action research can lead to the school as a locale for “knowledge democracy” where educators are

empowered to investigate and improve their practices, and an environment of inquiry that permeates all levels of knowledge-seeking (Pine, 2008).

The “action” of AR in education is the intervention, which is a reaction to a problem, issue, or question (Burns, 2005). Its purpose could be to try out new teaching or learning strategies, implement a new curriculum, or experiment with a new classroom management technique, among others (Burns, 2005). Kochendorfer (1997), as cited in Pine (2008), identified seven different types of classroom action research from the literature: “changes in classroom practice, effects of program restructuring, new understandings of students, understanding of self as teacher, new professional relationships with colleagues and students, teaching a new process to the students, and seeking a quantifiable answer” (p. 32).

The sequence of AR is first to set the purpose, and then the researcher collects data systematically according to the research design (using different methods such as surveys, observations, interviews, etc.) and analyzes that data. The reflection after analysis will inform the action going forward and whether or not more interventions are needed. There have been many iterations of the original structure set by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist who likely originated the name of AR (Burns, 2005), but the most widely known is that of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which involves four phases: plan, action, observation, and reflection—but critics say these steps are too rigid and systematic, and in practice AR is much messier (Burns, 2005). In newer editions of their book, Kemmis et al. (2014) have emphasized the “spiral” and self-reflective aspects to these steps, and their ongoing nature. Therefore, action research is “a process in which

study and inquiry lead to actions that make a difference in teaching and learning, that bridge doing (practice), learning (study), and reflection (inquiry)” (Pine, 2008, p. 31). Henning et al. (2009) describes the process as having four steps: plan, collect data, analyze, and reflect.

Teacher action research (TAR)—the research undertaken to improve one’s practice—is most commonly associated with PK-12 efforts (Souto-Manning, 2012). Teacher action research offers many benefits to instructors by empowering them to solve problems for themselves and to feel more comfortable trying new techniques (Carr & Kemmis, 1983), thus increasing their confidence in teaching and feeling more connected to their students (Edwards & Burns, 2016). Studies show that educators who participate in action research report feeling more effective and are therefore more eager to find answers to challenging problems in the classroom (Holly et al., 2005; Stringer, 1999). According to Reeves (2008), educators who conduct research in the classroom have the potential to impact the effectiveness of their colleagues and administrators. Their actions may inspire others to look for and partake in related professional development opportunities in order to enhance their own practices (Bell & Aldridge, 2014).

For example, Meyers (1985) investigated how K-12 teachers do classroom research in order to study student writing. The researcher described many of the effects on the educators, such as they began to merge research and practice, which streamlined their process of doing the research. One educator found they shifted from evaluating to documenting, which created a more positive outlook of their students’ work. The researcher also found that some instructors became more student-led, becoming aware of

the strengths students brought with them to the classroom and then building upon those strengths (Meyers, 1985).

This present study was informed by Lankshear and Knobel's (2004) view that action research involves having instructors participate in the study process in order to improve instruction and learning through their professional expertise. I was thus compelled to methodically examine my own instruction by eliciting student feedback on my teaching practices. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effective use of feedback by teachers to enhance the learning environment according to students' perspectives (Aldridge & Fraser, 2008; Aldridge et al., 2004; Fraser & Fisher, 1986; Thorpe et al., 1994; Yarrow et al., 1997). Previous research on learning environments has been characterized by its attempt to offer a way of gathering students' opinions about their classroom and how useful they feel it is for their education. For example, Fraser and Fisher (1986) demonstrated how instructors successfully used student perception data to elicit feedback about their teaching practices.

Furthermore, earlier research has shown that the learning environment can significantly predict students' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs (Dorman, 2001; Fraser, 2007, 2012; Walker, 2006), despite the fact that these affective outcomes are frequently disregarded in favor of cognitive outcomes, which are usually shown through student achievement data. Students' attitudes toward their education and self-efficacy beliefs may have significant effects on enhancing learning environments and academic success (Lorsbach & Jinks, 1999), considering the strong relationship that exists between the

learning environment and the affective results of students (Telli et al., 2006; Zandvliet & Fraser, 2004, 2005).

Bell and Aldridge (2014) studied TAR in Western Australia with a qualitative sample of 45 teachers who did TAR in their classrooms based on students' perceptions of themselves and the learning environment. In order to find out how these teachers used the student feedback as part of the action research process, data from these teachers—including entries in reflective diaries, written reports, conversations, and forum participation—was analyzed. The researchers used this data, along with other teacher evaluation information, to investigate the effectiveness of TAR in teacher professional development. The results showed that teachers successfully implemented student feedback as a basis for how they sought to improve their classrooms. Not surprisingly, the findings imply that teachers are likely to alter the learning environment in a way that students find more agreeable when they consider the input from students (Bell & Aldridge, 2014). As a result, for this study students' responses regarding their attitudes and perceptions of the CriSoLL approach seemed to be useful for reflection purposes in terms of how I might adapt my teaching practices to better suit my students, and their responses served as a guide to my reflection on my teaching practices.

Therefore, teacher action research was an important component to reflectively evaluate my own teaching while I also pilot new techniques for me to approach authentic materials. Within this approach, I chose a qualitative research design because it accounts for the unique identities and contexts of the research. Mishler (1979) argues that traditional research methods in education ignore the participants' contexts in an attempt

to universalize the results. This strips participants of their humanity and individual agency, and it is well known that behavior is highly context dependent (Mishler, 1979). As a result, I wanted to be able to contextualize all of my own reflective actions and student input according to our unique positionalities and our geographic location.

Setting

Spanish Language Education at the University of California, Riverside

The University of California, Riverside is a public research institution (R1) in Southern California, in a suburban location about 50 miles east of Los Angeles. It has been named the “No. 1 university in the United States for social mobility three years in a row” according to U.S. News & World Report (University of California, Riverside, n.d.). In Fall 2020, there were over 26,000 students enrolled. The racial make-up of the students was as follows: 38.7% Hispanic or Latino, 30.8% Asian, 12.9% White, 5.5% Two or More Races, 7.5% International, 3.0% Black or African-American, 1.5% Unknown, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American or Alaskan Native (University of California, Riverside, n.d.).

In 2008, UCR was the first UC campus to receive the title of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) (University of California, Riverside, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion., n.d.). As Mahmoud (2021) describes in *The Highlander*, the university’s newspaper:

Hispanic-Serving Institutions are defined under Title V of the U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Act as an institution of higher education with a full-time equivalent undergraduate student enrollment that is at least 25% Hispanic. HSI’s must have an enrollment of students in need where at least 50% of an institution’s students received financial assistance under the Federal Pell

Grant, the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study or the Federal Perkins Loan Programs. (para. 2)

Additionally, the university is “No. 1 for Hispanic enrollment among selective universities,” according to the Urban Institute and “No. 2 in the country for financial aid,” according to Business Insider (University of California, Riverside, n.d.). UCR’s HSI status and reputation for social mobility attract first-generation and Latinx students who appreciate the support and sense of community that UCR offers.

Hispanic Studies Department at UCR

The Hispanic Studies Department at UCR is part of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS). The department consists of ten ladder-rank faculty members, one cooperating faculty, and six lecturers. At the time the study took place, during the Spring quarter of 2022, there were two interim co-chairs of the department: a scholar of the literatures and cultures of the medieval Iberian Peninsula and a scholar who studies European Philosophy, Philosophy of Art, Decolonial and Latin American studies, among other topics. Of the eleven faculty, eight focus their scholarship on literature, philosophy, and cultural and media studies, and three are scholars of Spanish linguistics.

The department offers three tracks for the Spanish BA degree: literature, linguistics, and cultural studies. In order to advance to the upper-level courses in literature, linguistics, and cultural studies, students must meet a language requirement, either by completing six quarters of Spanish language courses or by taking a placement exam (University of California, Riverside, Department of Hispanic Studies, n.d.). Thus, the language program within Hispanic Studies includes six courses: Spanish levels 1 through 6. All Spanish language courses within this basic language program are taught by

graduate student Teaching Assistants and lecturers. Since UCR has a quarter system, courses are ten weeks long with an additional week for finals. Spanish classes 1 through 4 meet four days a week for 50 minutes each and Spanish 5 and 6 classes meet two days a week for 100 minutes.

There are several sections of Spanish 1 through 4 courses offered each quarter, including summers, with a maximum of 20 students in each class, and a potential to add five more from the waitlist. Spanish 5 and 6, however, were previously offered every quarter, but that has since changed to twice a year (Linda Lemus, personal correspondence).

Speaking more broadly in terms of other majors, to obtain a BA or BS in a major in the CHASS college at UCR, a language requirement must be met. Depending on the major, students must complete between three and six quarters of a language. Most majors require three or four quarters, while programs such as Comparative Literatures, Global Studies, and Linguistics, among others, require six quarters. Many students choose Spanish to fulfill their language requirement given the relevance of the language to the area.

Prior to the year 2020, the coordinator of the Spanish program was a lecturer and previous UCR Psychology graduate student from Spain who was hired due to her higher-ranked Teaching Assistant evaluations when she taught Spanish courses in the department. In the year 2020, a new coordinator was hired, as an Assistant Professor of Teaching, with a background in Spanish Second Language Acquisition. During the transition, the Coronavirus pandemic occurred, and courses were taking place online, so a

new temporary curriculum was implemented. Therefore, in the Winter quarter of 2021, the department began using the McGraw Hill suite of products, including the *Conéctate* textbook for Spanish 1 through 3, and the *Punto y Aparte* book for Spanish 4 through 6. The textbooks included an online component where students could access an E-book and complete all assignments. During the Winter 2021 and Summer 2021 terms, all Spanish courses were offered online synchronously. During Fall 2021 and Winter 2022, courses were offered in hybrid form, with two in-person classes per week and two online synchronous classes per week (except for Spanish 5 and 6 which only meet two days a week, so one class was online and the other was in-person). In Spring 2022 (the quarter when the study took place), all classes taught by Teaching Assistants were offered 100% in-person, and a select few taught by lecturers had online options.

Participants

Out of the fifteen students enrolled in the Spanish 6 course for this study, seven self-selected to participate in the investigation. One participant had a family issue and stopped attending class in week four, so therefore, the data for that participant was incomplete and was removed from the study. Five of these remaining six participants had taken Spanish 5 the previous quarter together, and one Spanish heritage language (SHL) learner had taken the placement exam and was placed in Spanish 6. It is worth noting that there is a national issue involving effective methods of assessing heritage language students' proficiency (Kondo-Brown, 2021), and therefore, many times students are misplaced in lower-level courses.

See the following table for demographic information regarding the participants from their language background questionnaires⁵ (See Appendix A for questionnaire). The section following the table describes the participants in more detail.

	Spanish HL or L2	Age	Languages exposed at birth	Gender	Race
Sofia	L2	21	Georgian, Russian, English	Female	White
Emilio	HL	21	English, Spanish	Male	Other: Hispanic
Trey	HL	19	Spanish, English	Male	Other: Hispanic
Maya	L2	20	Tamil, English at age 1	Female	South Asian
Dalia	HL	19	English, Spanish	Female	White: Hispanic
Alexa	L2	19	English, Tagalog	Female	Mixed race

Sofia

A self-described lover of languages, Sofia is a 21-year-old female originally from the country of Georgia. She identifies as white. Her current occupation is undergraduate student; her mother holds an MD degree, and her father an MA. Georgian was the first language she was exposed to, and she speaks it with her parents and grandmother.

⁵ All names are pseudonyms

Impressively, she also speaks Russian, English, German, and Spanish, and is competent in all of them. However, she claims Spanish is the only language she willingly chose to learn. She spent most of her life in Georgia, up until she was almost nineteen. She then moved to the U.S. and continues to live here.

Sofia's language history is rich and exciting. She learned Georgian naturally from the home and community, and then as a child, she was also exposed to Russian due to Georgia's previous affiliation with the Soviet Union. Her parents and grandparents had learned Russian as a second language, and they incorporated it with her so that she would learn. She then learned English and German from school, starting around first grade. As a young child, Sofia was motivated to learn Spanish. Some of her first exposure was with *telenovelas* (soap operas)—they were dubbed in Georgian or Russian, but the dubbing quality was so bad that she could still hear the Spanish in the background. Also, the songs and titles were always in Spanish, so she picked up some of the language from that. She also listened to music in Spanish and played Duolingo as a teenager. Then, during her first year of college in Georgia, she decided to minor in Spanish. As a nineteen-year-old, after moving to Southern California, she found herself immersed in Spanish from her friends and neighbors, which further increased her desire to learn Spanish.

Emilio

Emilio is a 21-year-old male who identifies as Hispanic/Latinx. He works as a dog walker and bartender. His mom is from Chile and his dad is from Puerto Rico and they are both dentists. He grew up in the Sacramento area of California and moved to Southern California at age twenty. Both of his parents spoke English and Spanish with

him in the household growing up, but he rates his English speaking, reading, writing, and understanding proficiency as much higher than that of his Spanish. He expressed that it was difficult to learn Spanish growing up—despite his parents speaking to him in Spanish, he would usually respond in English.

Currently he still feels he struggles with his Spanish, saying he feels shy and nervous when speaking it. Yet he feels the pressure to speak Spanish from his family, and for that reason Spanish represents an “identity crisis” for him. However, he takes a lot of pride in being Puerto Rican, claiming that for this reason Spanish plays an important part in his identity. He says he was/is not a language broker for his family nor his friends/classmates. Language brokering has been defined as “an informal translation experience in which bilingual children of immigrants and refugees serve as cultural and linguistic intermediaries (e.g., language brokers) for their family and community members” (López, 2020, p. 2). In the beginning of the course, he was asked in his language background questionnaire if codeswitching between English and Spanish in the same conversation bothers him and he replied, “I am not sure why that would bother someone. I grew up with Spanish-English bilinguals.”

Trey

Trey is a 19-year-old male who identifies as Hispanic/Latinx. He is a barista and COVID test specialist and he holds an associate’s degree. He was born in Southern California. His mother and father were both born in Mexico and speak Spanish with him, sometimes English. He was exposed to both English and Spanish since birth and he learned both languages at home, in his community, church, media, high school, and

college. When Trey entered elementary school and thus spent more time outside the family home, he heard English more frequently than Spanish. As he grew older, he noted that he heard less and less Spanish in the home. He was not exposed to Spanish in elementary and middle school classes.

Trey reports to be a language broker for family members. Thus, Trey spoke of helping his mother and strangers navigate situations in various locales such as stores. When he worked in fast food, Spanish helped him to communicate with customers who did not speak English. He also claims to frequently codeswitch and use more than one language in a conversation. He stated that codeswitching is important to his identity.

Maya

Maya is a 20-year-old female of South Asian descent. Her parents were both born in India and are bilingual in Tamil and English. Her father is a software engineer, and her mother works in quality assurance. She was born in New Jersey but moved to India at age five, where she remained for six years. She then moved back to the United States with her family and remains in the U.S. today. Given her parents' linguistic background, she was first exposed to Tamil and then English. She still speaks both currently, often codeswitching in conversations, and she claims this codeswitching is important to her identity.

Maya was first exposed to Spanish on a regular basis in sixth grade when she moved to California. Since she heard it so often around her, she thought it would be useful to learn. She decided to take Spanish classes in middle school and has continued ever since. Since high school, she has been a volunteer in hospitals, and speaking to

patients in Spanish has helped her improve her oral communication skills. This experience motivated her to choose the medical field as a career.

Therefore, Maya's primary motivation for taking Spanish classes is so that she can converse with patients in her future career as a physician. She claims this is her "dream career" and she is highly motivated to do whatever it takes to become the best physician possible. She has noted through her volunteer experience that patients are more at ease when they can speak to doctors directly in Spanish rather than having to use an interpreter. As a result, she decided to minor in Spanish and focus on becoming fully fluent in Spanish so that she can take excellent care of her future patients.

Dalia

Dalia is a 19-year-old female who identifies as white Hispanic/Latinx. She has lived her entire life in Southern California. Her mother is a stay-at-home mom, and her father works in construction. Dalia is a first-generation college student and also works as a tutor and barista. She reports being a language broker for her parents. Her parents are Hispanic/Latinx and were both born in Mexico. Her mother spoke English and Spanish in the household, while her dad only spoke Spanish at home; therefore, she was exposed to both Spanish and English since birth. She also heard Spanish in her community, church, and media, but she was not exposed to it in elementary or middle school.

She was exposed to Spanish again in high school and college. Consequently, she heard more Spanish as a young child, but that switched when she was around 10 years old when she spent more time away from the family home and thus heard more English. She claimed this caused her to "forget" some of her Spanish. She lived in a big family

home with about 12 other people: her parents, grandparents, cousins, and aunts. She only spoke Spanish with her parents and grandparents, and she spoke English with the rest of the family living in the home.

Alexa

Alexa is a 19-year-old female who self identifies as mixed race. Her parents' occupations are sales representative and mechanic. Her mom identifies as white, and her dad is Filipino. She was exposed to English at birth, as well as Tagalog from her grandparents who were born in the Philippines and lived with her as a child. Her grandparents also speak Ilocano, but not with Alexa. She can speak, read, write, and understand English proficiently, but is only somewhat proficient in speaking and understanding Tagalog—she cannot read or write it.

Somewhere around the age of seven to ten she was exposed to Spanish and would later learn to read it. She enjoyed hearing Spanish in her community and at school during middle school and would use apps such as Duolingo to help her learn. In high school she took her first Spanish class where she claims to have learned a lot of grammar rules, but not enough on how to speak Spanish. Indeed, her goals during the course were to focus on communicating in Spanish—she entered the class with a desire to apply her Spanish speaking skills to her environment, as she would like to be able to communicate with her Spanish-speaking friends and their families.

Course Design

The class met in-person, twice weekly (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 4 PM to 5:50 PM. The study took place during the entire Spring quarter of 2022 (March 29—June

7). All the data was collected with explicit permission from the participants and following the University of California, Riverside institutional review protocol number HS 21-231.

Since the current Spanish 6 course the program offers is based on the McGraw Hill textbook *Punto y Aparte*, and is not based on a critical pedagogical approach, with the approval of the language coordinator of my department, I decided to redesign the focus of the course using different material. Therefore, the content of the course was designed around open-access materials created by a team of researchers and educators based in critical pedagogies (Holguín Mendoza, 2022; Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018; Holguín Mendoza et al., 2022). These materials, which feature critical methods to teaching content-based Spanish at the university level, are currently being used in Spanish programs across the U.S. I included a unit on Spanish in the U.S. that Holguín Mendoza et al. (2022) had created, as well as a couple lessons from the *Acceso* program (Open Language Resource Center, n.d.), an open-access project from the University of Kansas that features lessons for higher education Spanish courses with cultural content. My contribution, which was about 50% of the course, centered on the study of Spanish in the U.S., as well as a linguistic landscape project.

The first week of the quarter I spoke with students regarding the study, and I gave them time to think about whether or not they wanted to participate. I distributed the consent form during week two, and they also filled out the first instrument, the pre-project survey during class that week (see Appendix B). The following week participants completed the language background questionnaire during class, included in Appendix A. Mid-quarter I invited students to do optional, one-on-one interviews with me, and three

accepted. We did them during week five of the quarter. The last day of class included a time for participants to answer some concluding questions in the post-project survey.

For the first few weeks of the quarter, I utilized mainly CriSoLL-based materials (Holguín Mendoza et al., n.d.) and *Acceso* (Open Language Resource Center, n.d.) to introduce the critical study of sociolinguistics. This included reflections on the historical context and demographics of Spanish speakers in the U.S. These lessons also incorporated new vocabulary—terminology relevant to the field of language contact studies (e.g., borrowings/loanwords, adapted borrowings, semantic extensions, codeswitching, calques, and translanguaging). The CriSoLL-based materials included reading assignments from several chapters of Janet M. Fuller and Jennifer Leeman’s (2020) book, *Speaking Spanish in the U.S.: The Sociopolitics of Language*. Using these readings, I introduced the concept of language ideology, as well as a few examples that we explored more in-depth throughout the rest of the quarter. Some of these important concepts to the critical study of sociolinguistics include: *standard language ideology*, *one nation-one language ideology*, *monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies*, *language commodification and instrumentality*, and *differential bilingualism*. I will elaborate on the ways in which I incorporated these concepts within my lesson plans.

As a class we studied several examples of authentic materials related to speaking Spanish in the U.S., such as news stories, videos about Spanglish, and popular music, and we analyzed these sources to deconstruct the language ideologies we learned. Finally, students applied their knowledge of language ideologies to their own surroundings by doing linguistic landscape projects (Leeman & Modan, 2009; see also Serafini,

Forthcoming) (see the following section for more explanation). We first did a linguistic landscape of the campus during class where students took photographs of examples of Spanish (or lack thereof) and returned to class to analyze their examples in order to deconstruct the social meanings and language ideologies that these language uses in their campus community entailed. For the final project, students did their own more elaborated linguistic landscape of the communities where they reside (see Appendix C).

Linguistic Landscape

The concept of linguistic landscape or “linguistic cityscape” (Gorter, 2006) originated in the language planning field in Belgium and Quebec for the purpose of demarcating the linguistic boundaries of public signs in a region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). And so, “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). The examples found in a region can paint a picture of the linguistic diversity present and can provide sociolinguistic insight on the populations. Moreover, an analysis of the linguistic landscape offers a snapshot of the power dynamics at play in the community, thus giving an idea of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the languages in the area (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

The linguistic landscape is a relatively new but useful tool used by sociolinguists and applied linguists to study the linguistic diversity in a region, or a particular focus such as language mixing and language contact, among others (Gorter, 2006). Used as a classroom project, the linguistic landscape can serve many purposes. Sayer (2010) for

example, studied the use of English in Oaxaca, Mexico, and through a relatively straightforward process of capturing photos and a qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 2006), the author investigated the social meaning of the examples. He found that English served many purposes and meanings, such as “English is advanced and sophisticated” and “English is fashion” (Sayer, 2010, p. 147). Such a project could be easily adapted to use in the classroom with the students as the role of language researcher (Sayer, 2010).

I used Leeman and Modan’s (2009) conceptualization of linguistic landscape for this study. The authors stress that most linguistic landscape research is quantitative and used for language planning and policy as well as to investigate concerns with language vitality. However, these purposes do not take into account the context of the messages involved with the linguistic representations and thus, “[do] not address the other complex social and political histories and environmental (regional and urban) planning policies that have shaped language in the built environment” (Leeman & Modan, 2009, p. 332). As a result of their interdisciplinary approach to studying “commodified language” in Washington D.C.’s Chinatown, they suggest a rewriting of the linguistic landscape framework so that the landscape is seen as ideologically motivated and viewed subjectively (Leeman & Modan, 2009). The authors took into account the historical context, cultural geography theories of landscape, and symbolic economies research to argue that Chinatown was effectively a commodity marketed for consumption (Leeman & Modan, 2009). Similar to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), the authors argue that the linguistic landscape should be interpreted in terms of the symbolic functions of language that enable individuals to use language to index facets of their identity—therefore, physical

environments become social spaces where certain power dynamics interplay (Leeman & Modan, 2009).

A pedagogical application of this framework is seen in Elola and Prada's (2020) study investigating students' critical awareness of local U.S. Spanish for an advanced Spanish university course. SHL and L2 students in West Texas documented examples of signs in a specified region and also did interviews with community members. The signs were categorized into their specific purposes and analyzed sociolinguistically. This particular study served as inspiration for my students' linguistic landscape project—I used some of their student questions from the activity for my introduction to the linguistic landscape project, as well as in the instructions for my class's final project. See the full instructions for the final project in Appendix C.

I chose the linguistic landscape project as the focus of my course because it allows for students to engage with authentic language that is relevant to them. In this way, the authentic materials come from their own local environments, and they are able to choose their own examples of authentic materials rather than their instructor providing them. It gives the students the opportunity to apply sociolinguistic concepts to their environments so they better understand the complex dynamics of language practices in their communities. Focusing on local language “reformulates traditional understandings of Spanish as a foreign language into Spanish as a *local* language in US context” (Elola & Prada, 2021, p. 225).

Sample of Course Activities

The beginning of the course marked an opportunity to practice reflection since we would be using this skill throughout the quarter. It was also the time to establish community and connection among the class. Each of us completed a “Where I’m from” poem from the I Am From Project, an initiative created by writers and educators Julie Landsman and George Ella Lyon as a creative outlet for students to write and share their ideas of “home” and to appreciate the diversity of experiences (Landsman, n.d.). By describing their ideas of where they are from using the five senses, as well as memories from their childhood (or one particular experience of their choosing), students were reminded of the power of place and the images it can invoke. Sharing their poems was optional, but some chose to do so, and those who did found some commonalities, which strengthened our sense of community and belonging. This activity also showed students that their experiences are central to our learning community and set the stage for our later exploration of place in the linguistic landscape project. It also demarcated the classroom as a translanguaging space—they used their entire linguistic repertoires to express themselves freely.

Then, drawing from CriSoLL’s principle of critical historicity, I used a lesson from Holguín Mendoza et al. (n.d.) exploring the various experiences of bilingual people of Latinx heritage in the U.S. from a critical historical and sociolinguistic perspective. Using the lesson, we learned more about the erased history of the Southern California area, specifically the profound Latinx, Indigenous, and Black influence—for example, the fact that the city of Los Angeles was founded by 11 families from Mexico, half of them

Black (Rasmussen, 1995). This information is explained in the video of an artist talk from photographer Tomas van Houtryve (2019). The photographer discussed the erased history of what is now the southwest U.S., which includes a very prevalent Latinx influence over the “Wild West” cowboy culture—for example, the word “buckaroo” came from the Spanish word for cowboy, *vaquero*. We also read an article, “The (Pre)History of Literary Spanglish: Testimonies of the Californio Dialect” (Lamar Prieto, 2014) discussing “Spanglish” from historical documents in California in the 1800s. The mention of this erased and little-known history was important for setting the context for future discussions regarding the long history of discrimination of Latinx communities, and for establishing that “Spanglish” is not a recent phenomenon. This activity not only provided vital historical context for the study of U.S. Spanish, but it allowed students to make connections to the history of Spanish in the region. For example, because some students reported using “Spanglish,” they felt validated knowing that it is a natural occurrence that has had a long history in the region. This content also informed our subsequent discussion on whether or not Spanish is a “foreign” language in the U.S.—after reading several articles regarding the history of Spanish in the U.S. and seeing past and present examples of linguistic discrimination, the class had a lively debate on whether or not they felt the U.S. should be considered a Spanish-speaking country.

In the following weeks, we focused on some basic concepts of sociolinguistics such as stylistic variation. Using Holguín Mendoza et al.’s (n.d.) lesson on the word “ahorita” (which could mean now, right now, right this instant, or later), we discussed the various ways we use the word or have heard the word used. In a dynamic discussion,

students came to the conclusion that the meaning of the word depended on the speaker, the type of interaction, and the tone of voice. For example, if their mother were to use the word in an angry tone, they would immediately comply with whatever request was being made.

This activity served as scaffolding for future discussions regarding terms such as “pocho/a/e,” which is a derogatory term that refers to someone of Mexican or Mexican-American descent who is perceived to be lacking in fluency in Spanish or of Mexican culture. The term “pocho/a” is a pejorative term used by “*mexicanos* for *mexicano americanos* who are Americanized or ‘gringoized’ and who use *pochismos*” (Galindo, 1996, p. 10). According to Galindo (1996), in the context of the Mexico/Texas border, the negative connotation with mixing Spanish and English among Spanish-speaking Texans might be due to the fact that living near the border causes them to be more aware of the mixing. Therefore, speakers might try to avoid such mixing so they are not labeled as *pochos* (Galindo, 1996). Having had discussions about sociolinguistics and stylistic variation—informed by our historical study of Spanish in Southern California—students were able to problematize the term as well as understand the nuance involved in the concept. We examined the term through various lenses—for example, within Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) chapter “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” we saw how the author used the term, contextualized within a discussion of “linguistic terrorism” as described by Anzaldúa (1987). Lastly, we saw a contemporary example of singer and actress Becky G who has reclaimed the term and harnesses her “pocha power” as a sense of pride (*Entertainment Tonight*, n.d.) (See Appendix H for full lesson). By using the principles of

CriSoLL to problematize and reflect on this one term, students gained a comprehensive understanding of the concept as reflecting bilingual sociolinguistic practices which would inform their future conversations regarding the topic and would empower them to make their own linguistic decisions regarding the term.

Midway through the quarter the topic of *language ideology* was introduced with many examples and opportunities for students to investigate each of the five ideologies we studied (*one nation-one language, standard language ideology, differential bilingualism, monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies, language commodification and instrumentality*). After centering discussions on language ideologies, I introduced the linguistic landscape project since students would be analyzing their examples of Spanish and deconstructing these types of ideologies. I did this first by introducing the concept of linguistic landscape along with explanatory videos. I then gave them several relevant local examples, one of them being the symbol of the town where our university is located (See Appendix I for full lesson). This symbol, found all over town on buildings, mailboxes, cars, etc. is a combination of a mission bell and a cross used by Central American and Navajo populations to pray for rain (City of Riverside, n.d.). This is quite an interesting combination, given that the mission bell was historically used to call Native Americans to work and prayer—the bell was rung to tell them to wake up, eat, and get back to work (Ramirez & Lopez, 2020). The bell is symbolic of a violent colonial period marked by genocide and complete loss of control for the Native populations in which all of their forms of existence were attacked. In 1769, the Spanish military, led by Spanish Franciscan missionary Junípero Serra, began an effort to establish missions in Southern

California in order to convert Indigenous populations to Christianity and to exploit Indigenous populations by forcing them to build the missions. The period was marked by mass death, torture, rape, and epistemological violence (Ramirez & Lopez, 2020). Yet, there is a widespread “mission myth” that this time was peaceful and tranquil, erasing the colonial violence and Indigenous resistance that occurred (Welizarowicz, 2016). Many Indigenous groups oppose the mission bell because it is “a settler colonial and racist symbol that glorifies the killing, dehumanization, forced labor and imprisonment of their ancestors” (Ramirez & Lopez, 2020, p. 94). In fact, after outcry from Indigenous community members, the University of Santa Cruz decided to remove a metal mission bell installation from their campus (Ramirez & Lopez, 2020).

We saw other local examples as well, such as the enormous art installation that was recently placed on campus. The piece reads “Change things” or “Things change” depending on where you read it from. It was placed in a prominent position on campus, with the bright yellow being seen from passing cars on the street. The artist, Roy McMakin from San Diego, has no affiliation with the university (Ghori, 2020). This example, along with the city’s bell/cross symbol, served as examples for students and me to analyze. We discussed the social meanings and particular messages behind these symbols and how their ubiquity and large presence affect our everyday lives. For example, we reflected on the significance of the artist’s identity—would it have had a different effect if the art was made by UCR students? And how did this artist’s positionality affect his perception of reality, his possible political views, and ultimately his artistic representation of this particular moment in time? This lesson showed students

that we sometimes take public images and language for granted, and that examination of the history and significance of symbols is sometimes warranted. This inspired them to investigate more symbolic representations, including those incorporating language elements in their own local contexts in the linguistic landscape project.

At a later date, the students went outside during class time to find examples of Spanish on campus. They brought their photos back to class to analyze the language ideologies we had explored in class. This served as “practice” for later linguistic landscape activities, and they formulated important questions such as “Where is all the Spanish in the Spanish department?” It seems the one nation-one language ideology was present in our own department, with English being represented over Spanish (see Appendix I for full lesson). During the last week of the course, we did an activity concerning community language practices and the Chicax history of our institution (see Appendix K). I will elaborate on all of these reflections in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected using (a) a language background questionnaire, (b) a one-on-one semi-structured interview with students in the middle of the term (see Appendix D), (c) an analysis of selected written and oral student assignments and assessments (a list is included in Appendix J), (d) surveys at the beginning and end of the quarter (see Appendix B), and (e) the researcher journal. After all data was collected, participants were assigned pseudonyms.

Language Background Questionnaire

A brief language background questionnaire was given at the beginning of the study (during class time) to collect demographic information. The language background questionnaire consisted of 38 questions that included demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnic and racial affiliation, as well as family history and language practices (see Appendix A).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted mid-way through the study, during week five, and were informal and semi-structured so that students would feel comfortable. They were conducted either on Zoom or in my Teaching Assistant office at the Department of Hispanic Studies at UCR, based on student preference. At this point I asked for volunteers from the six participants to meet with me outside of class for about 15 to 20 minutes to discuss their experiences with previous Spanish classes. Since the interviews took place during their free time, they were optional, and three students volunteered. I offered another round of interviews at the end of the quarter which were also optional. However, no participants volunteered, likely because it was the end of the school year and they were overwhelmed with finals.

The purpose of the interviews was to get to know students' language backgrounds and interests for the course, as well as their previous experiences in Spanish classes and motivations for taking Spanish. These interviews were also for the purpose of establishing personal relationships with students. The interviews were conducted in English, per students' requests. The questions are listed below:

- Why are you learning Spanish?
- What has been your experience learning Spanish so far (both inside and outside the classroom)?
- What topics are you interested in learning in Spanish class?
- What have your Spanish classes taught you about the Spanish-speaking world (culture, politics, history, etc.)?
- Do you plan to continue taking Spanish classes at the university? Explain.

Of the three students I interviewed, two students gave permission to audio record. For these interviews I audio recorded using the Voice Memos function of my personal cell phone and later transcribed the audio using Otter.ai software (2022). For the other student, I took extensive ethnographic notes of the conversation we had and analyzed them using Dedoose (Version 9.0.107; 2021) in descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2021).

Student Assignments

I gathered and reviewed all assignments from students and selected three to be coded for analysis⁶. I omitted the other assignments from coding because they were scaffolding work designed to help students along the way to get to their final products. For example, the sociolinguistic history essay was omitted since students later did a video version of this assignment with more detailed narratives. The linguistic landscape essay and group project were also “preparation” assignments for the final project. For this reason, with both the sociolinguistic history essay and the linguistic landscape essay and group project, there was a lot of repetitive information, and I did not want to get a disproportionate representation of codes since students were building upon their previous

⁶ The assignments chosen for coding were coded using descriptive and in vivo coding (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021; Saldaña, 2021).

work. Moreover, the final product was the culmination of all of their work on that particular assignment. However, I used all assignments in my qualitative assessment of students' individual progress in the course in developing CriSoLL.

Transcription Process. For audio in English (interviews), I used the otter.ai (2022) website to transcribe and for the Spanish, I used Microsoft Word dictation⁷⁸

Weekly FlipGrid Submissions. Students' weekly FlipGrid (now called Flip) submissions were videos where students responded to prompts based on the readings for the week. There were eight submissions in total. As an example, for week five, students read the text "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and were asked the following questions:

1. ¿Qué piensas que significa 'linguistic terrorism' (terrorismo lingüístico) en referencia a Chicano Spanish?
 2. Menciona 2-3 ejemplos de terrorismo lingüístico que menciona Anzaldúa de su vida personal.
-
1. *What do you think that 'linguistic terrorism' means in reference to Chicano Spanish?*
 2. *Mention 2-3 examples of linguistic terrorism that Anzaldúa mentions from her personal life.*

Students then responded orally by uploading a video to Flip, a type of discussion board where the rest of the class can also see the responses and reply. This exercise was designed to support students to form thoughts and opinions and express them orally in

⁷ The otter.ai does not offer transcription services in Spanish.

⁸ Not surprisingly, Microsoft Word does not have a database for many of the words and phrases from students' local Southern California varieties of Spanish. Therefore, I had to carefully follow along and correct the transcription as needed. Because this task required so much careful attention, I went back and double-checked everything once more.

Spanish. The questions were critical, necessitating an understanding that goes beyond surface-level⁹.

Sociolinguistic History Assignments. As an at-home activity, students were asked to write their sociolinguistic histories, an activity adapted from Holguín Mendoza et al. (n.d) that involves students' reflection on their experiences with language throughout their lives (see Appendix E). They were given several questions of which they chose two or three to answer. The topics had to do with when and how they learned the languages they speak, how these languages relate to their identit(ies), and if they had experienced sociolinguistic discrimination. They later made their essays into video format where they narrated slides with images and recorded themselves telling their sociolinguistic histories. See Appendix F for assignment parameters.

The videos were uploaded to FlipGrid (now Flip) and students viewed and commented on four classmates' videos. I selected the video for coding because the essay was a scaffolding exercise to get their thoughts on paper, and then they expanded these thoughts and used images to narrate their stories, providing a much richer context. Since the video was an expansion of the essay, it was not necessary to code the essay because it would have been repeated information.

Linguistic Landscape Projects. To provide adequate scaffolding for the final project, the linguistic landscape (Leeman & Modan, 2009) included three components: an initial essay, a group presentation, and a final project. The first essay, an activity from the

⁹ Since their responses were oral, they were transcribed using Microsoft Word and then input into Dedoose (2021) where they were coded.

CriSoLL pedagogical project (Boyero Agudo & Rajan, 2020, see Appendix G), was an analysis of the language representations students found in their communities. They could use their own photos and/or pictures from websites in the community. They responded to prompts assessing whether or not those representations of language were inclusive of the community's population, according to students' opinions based on their experiences as members of that community.

Then students were then given an assignment to go into their neighborhoods where they live and take eight to ten photos of examples of Spanish—or lack of Spanish in important places—and bring the photos to class. They worked in groups, combining their photos, to find patterns in the images to paint a broad picture of the Southern California linguistic landscape. They presented their preliminary findings during an in-class group oral presentation. After this presentation, students completed the final project where they analyzed their own eight to ten photos using the five language ideologies learned in class. The final project also included a reflection component where they reflected on their learning throughout the course.

Similar to the sociolinguistic history assignment, I chose to code only the final project because the initial essay was a practice. Also, since students worked in groups for the group presentation, I did not collect data since the groups included both participants and non-participants.

Pre- and Post-Project Surveys

Student feedback was elicited at the beginning of the course and at the end.

Students were given questions to answer in written form during class time. The pre-survey questions were the following:

1. What do you know about the types of Spanish spoken in Southern California? What would you like to know?
2. What would an ideal Spanish class look like for you? What topics would be discussed? What kinds of activities would you like to see? Any other input you would give Spanish programs in general?

The post-survey questions were:

1. Given all that we have learned throughout the quarter regarding SoCal Spanish, how do you think this information can apply to your own speech practices? You wrote a sociolinguistic history at the beginning of the quarter detailing your past language experiences and how they influenced you, but knowing what you know now, has anything changed? How do you think this class will influence your future language practices and how you think of language?
2. What would an ideal Spanish class look like for you? What topics would be discussed? What kinds of activities would you like to see? Any other input you would give Spanish programs in general?

Researcher Journal

Following Pine (2008), observations consisted of my ethnographic notes of class sessions and detailed descriptions of student contributions to in-class discussions. Within a day of each class session, I documented my notes, to the best of my recollection, in a Google Doc. I included informal, in-class conversations as well as those conversations that took place before or after class. These informal conversations were helpful in the data analysis since they shed some light on student perceptions of the Spanish program at UCR and their other non-academic-related experiences both inside and outside of the university. I paid special attention to students' reflections of language attitudes and

ideologies, and their critical opinions of materials viewed in class. I also documented any student interventions that responded to the research questions regarding the development of CriSoLL. A difficulty in documenting these interactions was paying attention to students' nonverbal communication such as body language and gestures. In qualitative research, it has been shown that researchers pay little attention to participants' nonverbal communication (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Therefore, there were likely many instances of nonverbal communication that I missed. Since I was also teaching a class and was involved in the activities and focused on student learning, it was a challenge to remember interventions beyond the verbal ones.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis is not an objective procedure (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021). Throughout the process, my analysis was informed by my critical lens as a teacher and researcher, my positionality, and the study's goal, which was the role of CriSoLL-based instruction in the development of student learning and the students' impressions of this approach. Since "as in common in qualitative research, there are no hard-and-fast rules about how best to analyze your data" (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021, p. 112), it was a long process of organizing the data to reflect students' voices.

After organizing all of the data and transcribing the audio, I began coding¹⁰. A code in qualitative research is usually a "word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of

¹⁰ The coding process took place in the software Dedoose Version 9.0.17, which allowed me to keep track of my codes and organize them.

language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 4). Thus, as I read through the entire set of data, I assigned codes to the passages using descriptive and in vivo coding. Descriptive coding “assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun, the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 362).

Descriptive coding involves going line-by-line or every few lines and assigning a word or phrase that best summarizes the main point or topic of that line or lines (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021). In vivo coding, on the other hand, involves assigning a word or phrase to a line or lines of data, but using instead the participant’s own words from the passage (Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2021). This system is used to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 365). I did three cycles of coding total.

I coded the data according to the four components of CriSoLL (critical language awareness; stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language; literacy regarding social dynamics and racial relations; and critical historicity). I discuss these results in Chapter 5. Then, the local and relational elements of a CriSoLL approach directed data analysis to emphasize the study of students’ attitudes and viewpoints regarding the course in order to create codes and themes and the connections between them. After my coding was complete, I was able to view the codes assigned, which reflected the most salient topics students discussed. From these codes, I created two themes: student wellbeing and local meaning-making, which will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively. I used the themes that emerged from the data’s recurring patterns to reflect on the extent of my role as the instructor. The data collection and analysis were based on a cyclical process of identifying issues at a research site and

advocating for action to change circumstances, all within the context of teacher action research. The following chapters will feature the study's findings from this process.

Chapter 5: Students' CriSoLL Development

One of this project's main inquiries focused on the role of Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) in student learning. Since CriSoLL was the theoretical framework for this study, in sorting through students' assignments, responses to surveys, and interviews, I coded the data according to evidence relating to the four elements of CriSoLL: critical language awareness (CLA); stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language; literacy regarding social dynamics, particularly racial relations; and critical historicity and I describe these findings here.

I begin with an excerpt from Alexa who explains how current approaches to language instruction at our institution are not working for her. She says:

An ideal class would include a lot more oral [emphasis in original] communication w/ others; there is so much emphasis on writing that I feel like even after six classes of Spanish my speaking is still deficient. I feel like there should be 2 diff categories of Spanish classes; learning the Spanish lang. and learning abt Spanish itself. I feel like Spanish classes don't allow us to speak in Spanish regularly even though that's why some ppl are in it. (Alexa, post-project survey, week 10)

In this excerpt, Alexa explains how the Spanish classes at our institution are not meeting her needs. As a student she has noticed that the classes do not prepare her for communicating orally with others. For the most part, the instructional objectives do not align with her goals, and she would like more opportunities to speak so she can improve her communication—for her, writing is not her main concern with learning Spanish, despite this being the main way learning is evaluated in our program. She suggests two vital (albeit separate) approaches to language instruction: one that is more communicative-based and one that stresses the need to learn “about” the Spanish

language, meaning the history, stylistic variation, the sociopolitical aspects of speaking Spanish, among others. In this chapter I address the second suggestion by Alexa—the learning “about” the Spanish language, through CriSoLL, and I will demonstrate how students developed a deeper understanding of each of the four elements of CriSoLL in relation to U.S. and local community language practices. Students also developed their sociolinguistic skills to articulate better their ideas regarding their acquired knowledge in these abstract concepts.

Critical Language Awareness (CLA)

Through my analysis of students’ work and participation I was able to observe a clear development of their critical language awareness (CLA) through activities and readings related to the historic and current discrimination of U.S. Spanish speakers. For example, in one activity during week five, the class read Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” and unpacked the notion of linguistic terrorism in relation to U.S. Spanish. We looked at current and historical examples of linguistic discrimination such as the *Mendez v. Westminster* case¹¹ (school segregation of Mexican students). Before our in-class discussion, students completed a homework assignment where they uploaded a video on Flip (previously named Flipgrid, a platform to share videos) describing what they interpreted “linguistic terrorism” to mean after reading the text.

¹¹ According to the Library of Congress Research Guides (Thurber, n.d.), “*Mendez et al v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al* (1946) is an historic court case on racial segregation in the California public school system. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it was unconstitutional and unlawful to forcibly segregate Mexican-American students by focusing on Mexican ancestry, skin color, and the Spanish language. This case forged a foundation upholding the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, thereby strengthening the landmark Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which found racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional” (para. 1).

Trey was particularly fascinated by the idea of linguistic terrorism, defining it in his Flip video by explaining¹²:

[L]inguistic terrorism para los chicanos o chicanas...es la pena—the shame, o el estima baja. So, low self-esteem con el relación de la lengua que hablan, so, en este ejemplo, español...Y otras personas te miran o te hacen diminish...y te hacen perceive mal.... El terrorismo lingüística es para poner un lengua abajo y como casi cancelar la lengua para decir que no es bien valorada la lengua o no hablas la lengua bien. (Trey, Flip video, week 5)

[L]inguistic terrorism for Chicanos or Chicanas... is the sorrow—the shame, or low esteem. So, low self-esteem with the relationship of the language they speak, so, in this example, Spanish ... And other people look at you or diminish you ... and they perceive you negatively Linguistic terrorism is to put a language down and almost cancel the language to say that the language is not well valued or you do not speak the language well. (Trey, Flip video, week 5)

Here Trey uses his entire linguistic repertoire to explain linguistic terrorism with various descriptors: “shame,” “low self-esteem,” “diminish,” and “perceive badly.” Interestingly, he related this concept to cancel culture¹³, saying linguistic terrorism involves “canceling” a language by erasing it and ignoring its importance. In this way, he understands linguistic terrorism as setting a language aside to be an outcast of sorts, ignored and snubbed by larger society, similar to the ways border language patterns have been met with negative attitudes for their perceived lack of “purity” (Christoffersen, 2019).

¹² All of the students’ responses in Spanish were translated by me to English. However, this was a difficult task because students were using their full linguistic repertoires and making certain stylistic choices that I was not able to portray in the English version.

¹³ Cancel culture has become a widely used term, but there has been some debate on what it actually means. It often means slightly different things for different people, however, “the one common theme everyone seems to agree on is that cancel culture involves taking a public stance against an individual or institution for actions considered objectionable or offensive” (Dudenhoefer, 2020).

Further, Trey's CLA development throughout the course, supported by CriSoLL, contextualized his understanding of language and power within Spanish-speaking communities. In his sociolinguistic history essay during week three he explains how knowing Spanish has helped him throughout his life:

Crescendo bilingüe *me ha ayudado* [emphasis added] inmensamente en variadas situaciones. Por ejemplo cuando fui a México pude hablar con mi familia en México que nomas saben hablar español. El español también *me ayudó* [emphasis added] a comunicar con gente en las tiendas de México o en los Estados Unidos. Mucha gente en California nomas puede hablar español y puedo traducir para gente a vez y cuando y esto *me ha ayudado* [emphasis added] a traducir para mi mama que no sabe tanto inglés. En el trabajo específicamente el español *me ha ayudado* [emphasis added] a tomar órdenes de clientes o pacientes. Sin español no supiera qué hacer en estas situaciones. (Trey, sociolinguistic history essay, week 3)

*Growing up bilingual **has helped me** [emphasis added] immensely in various situations. For example, when I went to Mexico I was able to talk to my family in Mexico who only know how to speak Spanish. Spanish also **helped me** [emphasis added] communicate with people in stores in Mexico or in the United States. Many people in California can only speak Spanish and I can translate for people from time to time and this has **helped me** [emphasis added] translate for my mother who doesn't know as much English. At work, specifically, Spanish has **helped me** [emphasis added] take orders from clients or patients. Without Spanish I wouldn't know what to do in these situations. (Trey, sociolinguistic history essay, week 3)*

In this passage I highlight with italics the way Trey explains how the various ways Spanish has helped *him*, his mother, and clients. He demarcates Spanish as a commodity, a linguistic tool that has helped him navigate his professional and personal life and help others. He states several times how knowing Spanish helped *him* with various tasks, always emphasizing his own point of view. Throughout the course of the study, however, his viewpoint expanded to include the various language ideologies he learned:

Conectando [las discusiones sobre Spanglish en la clase] con mi comunidad yo también miro español hablado un montón aquí donde vivo. Las ideologías de

lengua también representan la gente que conozco en la comunidad...Esto me ha ayudado porque puedo como un individual conocer que miro bueno malo en mí, en mi familia, y en mi comunidad y conectar esto con las ideologías que aprendí en clase y saber cómo ayudar a otros. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Connecting [discussions about Spanglish in class] with my community I also see Spanish spoken a lot here where I live. Language ideologies also represent the people I know in the community....This has helped me because I can as an individual know what is good and bad in myself, in my family, and in my community and connect this with the ideologies that I learned in class and knowing how to help others. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

His perspective shifted slightly—he still mentions how the knowledge helped *him*, but he frames this entire section according to how the *ideologies* he learned will inform his interactions *within his community*. Instead of the fully instrumental view he adapted just eight weeks prior, he now seeks to operationalize the linguistic ideologies associated with his CLA development of the complex dynamics of language and power in his community to better understand how his community is affected by these ideologies, i.e., how they “represent the people he knows in the community,” as he says. The CLA reflections of the course, such as the activities with linguistic discrimination, provided him with new concepts that helped guide his interpretation and articulation of his environment.

The CLA aspects of the course also facilitated Sofia’s interpretation of linguistic and social hierarchies. In her linguistic landscape project during week 11 she noted:

[C]reo que es muy relevante para observar las dinámicas entre lenguajes y como lo utilizamos. Además, la relación entre instituciones y lenguajes que son aceptables y pensamos porque algunos idiomas estaban aceptable para la academia y otros no son aceptables. También, es fundamental qué nosotros entendimos como jerarquía de lenguajes funciona. Después qué nosotros sabemos todos los dinámicos e ideologías, nosotros podemos crear un espacio inclusivo para todos y mejorar nuestra actitud sobre la lengua. (Sofia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

I think it is very relevant to observe the dynamics between languages and how we use them. Furthermore, the relationship between institutions and languages that are acceptable and why we think some languages were acceptable for academia and others are not acceptable. Also, it is fundamental that we understood how language hierarchies work. After we know all the dynamics and ideologies, we can create an inclusive space for everyone and improve our attitude about the language. (Sofia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Her mention of how certain languages are “acceptable” or not within academic spaces reflects a reading and subsequent class discussion on U.S. Latinx scholar Stephanie Alvarez’s (2013) article, “Evaluating the role of the Spanish department in the education of U.S. Latin@ students: Un testimonio” as well as an activity in week ten regarding community-based language forms in schools (see Appendix K). Her takeaway was that these language hierarchies, which relate to social hierarchies, deserve more attention and investigation. With more awareness, Sofia claims that individuals not only reflect on their attitudes regarding language, but we can also create more “inclusive spaces.” Her focus on CLA allowed her to visualize a dismantling of these hierarchies for a more linguistically just world. The CriSoLL components of the course facilitated this observation, which she likely would not have made in the context of a “traditional” Spanish class following only a textbook.

Stylistic Language Practices and the Symbolic Power of Language

The CriSoLL aspects of the course that involved stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language included discussions of the various social meanings related to Spanish in the U.S. and their indexical meanings. In one specific example, we

unpacked various indexical meanings of the term “pocho/a¹⁴” (described in detail in Chapter 4). These discussions informed the way Dalia viewed stylistic variation, and one of the biggest transformations in terms of language attitudes happened with her. In one example, she explains some traits of local California Spanish. In her Flip video response from week four from our reading, the chapter entitled “The Spanish Language in California” from the book *Developing Minority Language Resources: The Case of Spanish in California* by Guadalupe Valdés, Joshua A. Fishman, Rebecca Chávez, and William Pérez (2006), Dalia states:

Dos rasgos de español de California son: que aquí hay palabras, dichos, y también el uso de unos verbos que el español de aquí prestó de los Estados Unidos, so si lo dices en otros lugares que nomás hablan español no te van a entender, y también el uso de Spanglish y broken Spanish es usado la mayoría aquí en vez del español legítimo. (Dalia, Flip video, week 4)

Two features of California Spanish are: that here there are words, sayings, and also the use of some verbs that the Spanish here borrowed from the United States, so if you say it in other places that only speak Spanish they will not understand you, and also the use of Spanglish and broken Spanish is mostly used here instead of legitimate Spanish. (Dalia, Flip video, week 4)

Even though her response is informed by the reading, she points out how the Spanish in California “borrowed” certain linguistic forms from the “United States.” By saying that it is “borrowed” she is saying it did not reflect linguistic innovation on the part of the Spanish-speaking community. The characteristics were somehow separate, already existing somewhere in the U.S., and then incorporated into the language of the local California community. She then states that “broken” Spanish is used in California as

¹⁴ a derogatory term that refers to someone of Mexican or Mexican-American descent who is perceived to be lacking in fluency in Spanish or of Mexican culture

opposed to “legitimate” Spanish. The reading mentions these terms referring to how the press reports on bilingual communication, by saying that the press, when “attempting to speak positively of the contact variety of Spanish known as *Spanglish*, describe it as a creative hodgepodge and a broken mix of English and Spanish, rather than a legitimate variety” (Valdés et al., 2006, p. 48). Even though the chapter criticizes the portrayal of Spanglish as “broken” and reframes it as “legitimate,” Dalia seems to have internalized this dichotomy and clearly separates Spanglish and “broken” Spanish from “legitimate” Spanish. It is possible that she misinterpreted the reading, but, regardless, the way she references U.S. Spanish varieties changed throughout the quarter as she grappled with these concepts. After reading Anzaldúa (1987) in a later assignment, another Flip video from week five, Dalia discusses the concept of linguistic terrorism:

En referencia a Chicano Spanish yo creo que terrorismo lingüístico significa que básicamente no más hay una manera correcta de hablar español y hay muchas otras diferentes maneras que también puedes hablar español, pero esos son considerados ilegítimos. So, como en el Chicano Spanish hay como de Tejas, de Arizona, de California, todas son diferentes, pero si lo hablas en otros lugares, no te van a entender muy bien y so, no los estás usando correctamente. So por eso es terrorismo lingüístico porque en vez de hablarlo como a la manera correcta de español estás hablando en una diferente manera. (Dalia, Flip video, week 5)

In reference to Chicano Spanish I believe that linguistic terrorism means that basically there is no one correct way to speak Spanish and there are many other different ways that you can also speak Spanish, but those are considered illegitimate. So, like in Chicano Spanish there are [varieties] from Texas, from Arizona, from California, they are all different but if you speak it in other places, they will not understand you very well and so, you are not using them correctly. So that's why it's linguistic terrorism because instead of speaking the correct way of Spanish you're speaking it in a different way. (Dalia, Flip video, week 5)

Here she presents similar views of “correct” vs. “incorrect” Spanish, and she claims that only one form is considered the correct one and all of the others are illegitimate. Because

different ways of speaking exist in different regions, if they are not the “one” correct version that everyone understands, they are wrong, in her opinion. Nevertheless, she seems to acknowledge here the issues associated with this thinking by linking it to the practice of linguistic terrorism, which she says is the mindset that only one version of a language is correct. I believe this week’s response demonstrates how she is reflecting and negotiating these concepts, possibly for the first time, and she is refining her thinking as she moves along in the course.

As we explored language ideologies and characteristics of contact languages, Dalia’s perspective began to change, as she demonstrates here at the end of the quarter in her linguistic landscape project:

Lo que aprendí sobre el español en los Estados Unidos es que el español no es perfecto pero también no hay una forma correcta de hablar el español. Aunque hay algunas palabras y dichos que solamente pertenece al español de los Estados Unidos y que México no lo entendería si lo decimos allá, todavía es nuestro español y no nos debemos sentir como que no podemos hablar español solamente porque es un poco diferente, todos lo hablamos diferente y todo es correcto porque así nos comunicamos. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

What I learned about Spanish in the United States is that Spanish is not perfect but there is also no one correct way to speak Spanish. Although there are some words and sayings that only belong to the Spanish of the United States and that in Mexico they would not understand if we said it there, it is still our Spanish and we should not feel like we can’t speak Spanish just because it is a little different, we all speak differently and everything is correct because that is how we communicate. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

By the end of the quarter, she fully embraced her Spanish and rejected the idea of linguistic shame, describing how linguistic diversity should be celebrated and that any form of communication is valid. What I want to point out is her progress from the initial mindset of “broken” vs. “legitimate” Spanish—the way she talked about linguistic

variation began to change and, in the end, she acknowledges that innovation is normal, and all communication forms are accurate. In this way, she developed her critical awareness of some of the language ideologies behind the stigma of bilingual practices in the U.S. through the lessons from the class. She reflected that U.S. Spanish and all of its characteristics (such as English borrowings) are natural occurrences of languages in contact.

The excerpts clearly show how Dalia developed critical language awareness and then, throughout the course, she became aware of linguistic ideologies and was able to apply them to her own circumstances. It is important to note that with the development of CriSoLL, it is not that each element is developed discretely or separately, but rather all the elements are intertwined. Additionally, it is important to provide the proper time and space for students to reflect deeply enough in order to develop not only critical language awareness, but also symbolic competence. In this case, Dalia first developed critical language awareness and then she reflected on a more nuanced understanding of “‘symbolic power,’ a power to influence other peoples’ understandings of the world, [which] often goes to the people who possess linguistic capital in a particular market” (Showstack, 2012, p. 6; see also Bourdieu, 1995). Understanding symbolic power entails developing competency in which students are better able to comprehend and analyze social meanings indexed by linguistic forms and in discourse (Kramsch, 2000). In Dalia’s example, she described U.S. Spanish first in simplistic and essentialized terms, as either “broken” or “legitimate.” After reading Anzaldúa (1987), she recognized the symbolic power of only considering one version of Spanish as the “correct” version.

Finally, after all of our readings and activities, she not only located herself in the community, taking ownership of her varieties (“our Spanish”) but she asserted her agency in discerning that all varieties of language are valid. As Bucholtz and Hall (2004) explain, individuals create perceptions of legitimacy and empowerment in the identities they create for themselves and others by drawing on differing viewpoints about what is worthwhile; in other terms, “identities are forged in action rather than fixed in categories” (p. 376) and thus change based on circumstance. Dalia recognized this more fluid definition of identity through acknowledging stylistic variation—that communication takes place in many different ways (“they are all correct because that is how people communicate”), all of which are viable because speakers constantly adapt their language use based on the situation.

In another example, Maya also further developed her understanding of stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language. Firstly, she describes her own linguistic identity as one characterized by stylistic practices:

[D]espués de tomar este clase de español 6 me da cuenta de que soy una mezcla de Tamil, English y español. La lengua es un gran parte de mi, de mi identidad, y ese identidad cambia dependiente en con quién estoy hablando y dónde estoy. Por ejemplo, cuando estoy en India mi Tamil es más fluidez a qué cuando estoy en, aquí en casa o con mis amigas. También me di cuenta de que todas las personas tienen identidades diferentes porque tienen experiencias diferentes que- ¿cómo se dice? -shape cada persona en una manera muy única. (Maya, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

[A]fter taking this Spanish 6 class I realize that I am a mix of Tamil, English and Spanish. Language is a big part of my identity and that identity changes depending on who I am talking to and where I am. For example, when I am in India my Tamil is more fluent than when I am in, here at home or with my friends. I also realized that all people have different identities because they have different experiences that—how do you say?—shape each person in a very unique way. (Maya, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

See also Figure 1 for a still from Maya’s sociolinguistic history video that accompanied this comment:

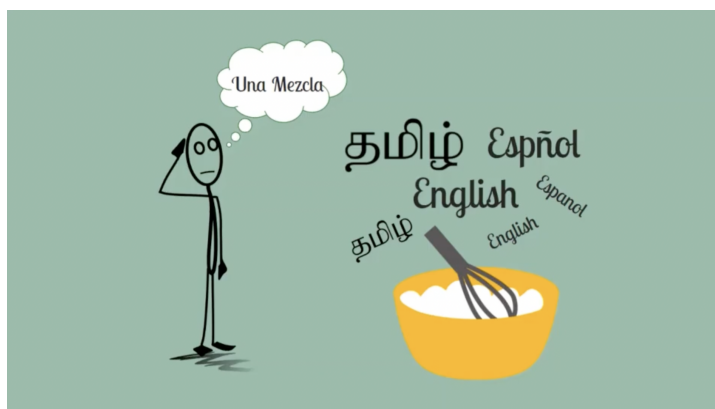


Figure 1: Maya’s artistic representation of her linguistic identity from her sociolinguistic history video, week 5

This assignment came after class discussions and readings such as the chapter “Language and Identity” from Fuller and Leeman’s (2020) book *Speaking Spanish in the U.S.: The Sociopolitics of Language*. In it, the authors talk about identity as performance and the linguistic construction of social identities. This made Maya think about her various identities and how they interconnect. She realized how she constructs her identity differently according to different interactions, and she concludes that her identities are a “mix” of the different languages she speaks—and these categories are not fixed—she provides a visual of a bowl with a whisk, representative of various ingredients that have all come together as one singular identity. Her different languages are all part of her identity, and she now realizes these are fluid and changing, and hers and others’ experiences have made them unique.

Maya was also able to recognize symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2009, 2011) in her linguistic landscape. Gyogi (2020) explains that, “While communicative competence focuses on acquiring language skills, symbolic competence emphasises acquiring the ability to critically examine and reflect on the symbolic values of language and understand how people draw on various discourse worlds when making meanings” (p. 291). Maya noticed in her linguistic landscape project that local Latina business owners resisted the “one nation-one language” ideology and symbolically represented Spanish and English as equally important. Maya explains:

Fui a unos de mis cafés favoritos que se llama Mundial para buscar el Español en la comunidad afuera de la universidad. Las señales en el baño con instrucciones de lavar la mano estaban en inglés y español. El inglés estaba en el superior, y la traducción al español está debajo de lo. Lo que stood out to me era que el font size para las dos versiones era el mismo cuando generalmente, las palabras que se translate están en un font mucho más pequeño. Éste ejemplo no sigue el “one-nation-one [language] ideology” y representa la identidad de las dueñas, quiénes son Latinxs, y como a ellxs y los customers, el inglés es tan importante como el español. (Maya, linguistic landscape, week 11)

I went to one of my favorite cafes called Mundial to look for Spanish in the community outside the university. Signs in the bathroom with hand-washing instructions were in English and Spanish. The English was at the top, and the Spanish translation is below it. What stood out to me was that the font size for both versions was the same when generally, the words being translated are in a much smaller font. This example does not follow the “one-nation-one [language] ideology” and represents the identity of the owners, who are Latinxs, and like them and the customers, English is as important as Spanish. (Maya, linguistic landscape, week 11)



Figure 2: Maya's picture depicting equal font size of Spanish and English

In this excerpt, Maya explains how the café chose to use bilingual signs in which Spanish and English were the same font size, showing equal treatment. Maya utilizes translanguaging by leveraging her entire linguistic repertoire (e.g., “lo que stood out to me era”). Since the structure of the course was that of a translanguaging space where students were free to express themselves however they felt comfortable in the moment, Maya was able to give a sophisticated explanation of her experience by using all of her available linguistic resources. She also presented a complex analysis of her example, describing how different font size can symbolize domination of one language variety over another, whereas fonts of the same size give equal importance to both languages. She expands her analysis by explaining how the owners of this business chose equal font sizes as a way to demonstrate to their customers that Spanish is just as important as English. This is also seen in the menu, which uses English and Spanish, and the food choices that celebrate Latin American cuisine.

Literacy Regarding Social Dynamics and Racial Relations

Our class discussions pertaining to social dynamics and racial relations included conversations on the different ways Spanish varieties are stigmatized. We often related this to our study of language ideologies. For example, when discussing the standard language ideology, we saw a Pero Like (2019) video where a white-presenting dialect coach teaches a Dominican actor how to speak “neutral” Spanish. This was a clear example of the standard language ideology and the racialization of Dominican Spanish, a Caribbean region with a large African-descendant population (see Zentella, 2001).

Sofia noticed certain language hierarchies, that in reality correspond to social hierarchies. Responding in a video on Flip to a reading explaining various language ideologies in Fuller and Leeman’s (2020) book, Sofia noted that some languages such as French are more “bougie¹⁵” and acceptable than others, in both academia and society in general. She expressed the following:

[Q]uiero que todos observan los lenguajes y como son aceptable en los ambientes académicos y society- cuál son como menor lenguajes como otras...por ejemplo alemán o francés eran más like “bougie”... más que español, even though both of them are, all of them are, European languages. (Sofia, Flip video, week 6)

I want everyone to observe languages and how they are acceptable in academic environments and society—which are considered “lesser” languages than others ... for example German or French were more like “bougie”... more than Spanish, even though both of them are, all of them are, European languages. (Sofia, Flip video, week 6)

Her example clearly demonstrates ideologies of whiteness and how Spanish is racialized.

As Rosa (2019) highlights, processes of racialization render speakers to “look like a

¹⁵ Bougie is short for bourgeois, meaning “wealthy” or “fancy,” but sometimes has a connotation pointing to arrogance, pretension.

language” and “sound like a race.” Thus, Sofia is calling attention to how Eurocentric ideologies position European languages as more prestigious and “bougie,” equating Europe as superior. She points out that Spanish is another European language, yet it is not considered “bougie” in the U.S. context where Spanish speakers are more often associated with Central and South American racialized populations.

Emilio was also interested in racial relations, particularly the ones present in his neighborhood. He very much enjoyed the social justice orientation of the topics of the course, and this was all cemented for him when he ventured out in his neighborhood to capture examples of Spanish there. What drew his attention were the various names of streets and buildings, as well as architecture, which reflected the Spanish missionary period of the town. He was offended that the downtown space honored mostly the “colonizers” from Spain and did not feature enough Indigenous and/or more contemporary Latinx representations. See Figure 3 for an example Emilio found of a building named after a colonizer, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo.



Figure 3: Emilio’s example of the downtown space glorifying Spanish colonizers

Emilio talked enthusiastically about his linguistic landscape assignment, noting the hierarchy of ethnic and linguistic representation in the city. He observed how the city had Anglo-Saxon and European architecture, which represented the “colonizers.” He analyzed in detail a local popular hotel with attractions such as restaurants, museums, and tourist activities, which was named after the California missions. He says:

[E]l nombre, “The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa” demuestra el contexto de colonización española. De esta manera es evidente que las personas de descendencia europea tiene la más influencia en la construcción de la ciudad, y por eso son la más representadas....La representación del lenguaje en una comunidad refleja las condiciones sociopolíticas de los grupos. Los blancos que tenían una hegemonía histórica en los estados unidos están representados en los edificios del estado y la mayoría de los edificios que se construyeron en una forma anglo-saxon. (Emilio, linguistic landscape, week 11)

[T]he name, “The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa” demonstrates the context of Spanish colonization. In this way it is evident that people of European descent have the most influence in the construction of the city, and that is why they are the most represented....The representation of language in a community reflects the sociopolitical conditions of the groups. Whites who had historical hegemony in the United States are represented in government buildings and most buildings that were built in an Anglo-Saxon way. (Emilio, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Here Emilio connects the Spanish colonization of the town and the racial domination of the Anglo-Saxon population with the raciolinguistic configuration of the downtown, where a popular and prominent building carries a name that pays tribute to the California missions. As discussed earlier, the mission period was a brutal colonial era which resulted in Native American communities losing all control over their way of life and experiencing genocide. Emilio recognizes the Spanish colonization in the local landscape, but also the “Anglo-Saxon” domination of the architecture and language—in a later section of the same paper he notes the symbolic prominence of English in the area, despite the many Spanish speakers in the region. He was able to apply the readings,

assignments, and discussions in class regarding racial relations to his own surroundings and connect this understanding to larger systems of oppression within the United States. This example also demonstrates how the four CriSoLL elements are interrelated and often overlap, thus, the historical context helped Emilio better understand the symbolic representations in his environment.

Critical Historicity

Vinall (2012) asserts that approaches to teaching history in world language classrooms must not be simply facts, figures, and dichotomous viewpoints, but instead should invoke a critical reflexivity of *how* histories were constructed and for what purpose. Students then can become “agents of history” by reflecting on their relationship to these constructions (Vinall, 2012, p. 111). This is the approach I took to examining the historical context of Spanish in the U.S. for this course. Our study of U.S. Spanish adopted the stance that the majority of U.S. history instruction downplays the importance of Native Americans, enslaved Africans, and other European colonists and instead credits the country’s expansion to the westward migration of English colonial settlers and their successors (Taylor, 2002).

We focused most of our attention on the history of the southwest and the various relations and events that ensued after the U.S. took over what used to be Mexico. This critical historicity informed how students understood the historical and current discrimination of Spanish speakers. Trey, for example, noted in a Flip video responding to a reading on the history of Spanish in the U.S. from Fuller and Leeman’s (2020) book:

[N]o es justo que dicen que los mexicanos cruzan la frontera para llegar aquí porque siempre estuvimos aquí y por eso la frontera cruzó al mexicanos porque

sacó muchos y llegaron donde ellos estaban viviendo, so por eso [la frase] “no crucé la frontera, la frontera me cruzó a mí” es algo muy válido y algo que pone los mexicanos en luz mala cuando los llaman ilegales y todo eso. (Trey, Flip video, week 2)

[I]t is not fair that they say that Mexicans cross the border to get here because we have always been here and that is why the border crossed the Mexicans because it removed many of them and they arrived where they [the Mexicans] were already living, so that is why [the phrase] “I did not cross the border the border crossed me” is something very valid and something that puts Mexicans in a bad light when they are called illegals and all that. (Trey, Flip video, week 2)

Trey gives his opinion on the popular phrase “I didn’t cross the border—the border crossed me” by analyzing the historical and current framing of Mexican immigrants as “illegal.” He notes the hypocrisy of this framing since, as he says, “we were always here,” but the region was taken over by the United States after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. In a class discussion, the majority of students reported that they had not learned about the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in high school, and it was not until coming to the University of California, Riverside, taking courses in Ethnic Studies, that they began to be more critical of how U.S. history is presented in schools.

This historical context was essential for our later discussions regarding the discrimination of U.S. Spanish. We saw many examples of this history such as the various laws and policies that hindered or prohibited access to Spanish (e.g., Proposition 63 in 1986 which declared English the official language in California). In his assignments, Trey noted the overall hegemony of English in the region now known as California after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and his awareness of the historical context relating to Southern California Spanish grew:

[E]n el principio los mexicanos y la lengua español dominaba en California pero cuando más y más americanos blancos venían a California pusieron muchas leyes

y políticas escolares para enseñar su dominación y la dominación de inglés de los mexicanos que vivían aquí en California. (Trey, Flip video, week 4)

[I]n the beginning the Mexicans and the Spanish language dominated in California but when more and more white Americans came to California they put many laws and school policies in place to show their dominance and the domination of English towards the Mexicans who lived here in California. (Trey, Flip video, week 4)

He went on to explain how the segregation of Mexican students was justified by the parents of white students because they were afraid their children would fall behind since they shared the classroom with Mexican students who were perceived as not as proficient in English. He then connected this historical discrimination with more current examples such as the various propositions in California restricting bilingual education (Proposition 227, 1998) and restricting services and education for unauthorized immigrants (Proposition 187, 1994). He also told me in an interview (week five) that he was fascinated by the *Mendez v. Westminster* case and surprised that he had never heard of it. He was so excited to learn about this particular example that he went home and told his mother about it. In the same interview he expressed that he was learning such interesting events in class that he could talk about with other people—not just his mother—because the topics were relevant to his life and this geographic area. He mentioned how he was more engaged in this particular Spanish course as opposed to his previous ones because we had activities that represented him and his life. Hence, by contextualizing our study of U.S. Spanish with the history of Spanish in the southwest, and also reflecting on the various ways that history has been skewed or erased, students developed a more complete picture of the current issues facing U.S. Spanish users today and possible historical reasons for these occurrences, which helped them to be more engaged in the material.

The CriSoLL discussions of critical historicity of Spanish in the U.S. enabled Maya to draw connections between the class material and her own past-present-future experiences within “regimes of historicity” (Train, 2020) and her education. Maya connected her experience in high school history classes with the Alvarez (2013) reading regarding the education of U.S. Latinx students in Spanish departments. After explaining the author’s argument, which was to include more U.S. Latinx literature in Spanish departments, Maya shared a connection she made with the article and her own life:

[E]n mi vida un ejemplo es historia- la clases de historia. Es como español en qué cuando tomé las clases de historia en la escuela secundaria, solamente habían sobre la historia de los blancos aunque hay- había mucha influence de otros países como México y los inmigrantes que estaba un gran parte de la desarrollo de Estados Unidos, y debemos tomar clases en Latin American Studies, Chicano Studies, y de cada variedad para obtener una BA en español que en realidad tiene un valor. (Maya, Flip video, week 8)

[I]n my life an example is history—history classes. It’s like Spanish in that when I took history classes in high school, they only taught about the history of white people although there was a lot of influence from other countries like Mexico and immigrants who were a big part of the development of the United States, and we must take classes in Latin American Studies, Chicano Studies, and every variety to obtain a BA in Spanish that actually has value. (Maya, Flip video, week 8)

Maya compares the author’s point about Spanish programs incorporating more U.S. Latinx topics into their curricula with her own experience of history classes only representing one viewpoint—that of the “white” population. She is realizing that her education left out important contributions from other people, just like some Spanish programs that leave out Chicanx Studies and Latin American studies for students obtaining a bachelor’s in Spanish (Alvarez, 2013). Maya is considering how her own past-present-future has affected her educational experiences, and this awareness led her to

appreciate critical historicity even more, as she describes in her post-project survey when she was asked about what an ideal Spanish class looks like for her:

An ideal Spanish class would incorporate history and cultural studies in addition to practicing speaking, just like this Spanish class. In the future, I would like to see more reading in Spanish, Spanglish, Español de Chicanos, etc. to get a better understanding of the varieties and be more familiar with them. Just like this class, I hope to see more Spanish classes emphasize the quality of thought more than execution in terms of speaking and writing. (Maya, post-project survey, week 10)

Since the class encouraged her to think more deeply about topics such as how history is constructed and whose viewpoints are represented or not, she was motivated to learn more about the topics we discussed. The course made her realize the many varieties of Spanish and the diverse experiences of Spanish-speaking communities, and she seeks to examine these within the historical context of Spanish. Further, she appreciated the content-based approach to our course which allowed her to reflect on relevant topics and learn much more about varieties of Spanish in relation to the four elements of CriSoLL.

Concluding Remarks

While these four elements of CriSoLL are interrelated and often overlap, by incorporating them all, students were able to see the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein, 1985) regarding Spanish in Southern California. Our examinations of critical historicity in relation to the history of Spanish in Southern California informed our discussions around current linguistic discrimination facing Spanish speakers in the area and the linguistic hierarchies that have been created as a result of this history. By attending also to the need to be cognizant of social and racial relations, students gained a complex understanding of linguistic and racial hegemony. And finally, the activities surrounding stylistic variation and the symbolic power of language aided students in understanding

different ways to think about the linguistic variation of Spanish in the U.S. As the students mentioned in their comments, the structure of the course was beneficial for them since they felt the learning was more relevant to their lives. This led them to want to take action towards sociolinguistic justice in their communities, as we saw with Emilio, who became very invested in his linguistic landscape project while uncovering the unequal representation of the various ethnic groups in the landscape.

Finally, learning about students' unique experiences and goals in life helped me as an educator to better meet their learning and personal needs, and it will be vital information for my future courses knowing how students perceived our course and Spanish courses in general. This information will assist me in creating inclusive spaces for my students where they feel acknowledged and cared for as learners and human beings. In the following chapter, I elaborate more on the concept of inclusive spaces in Spanish classes.

Chapter 6: Students' Wellbeing in Spanish Courses

There is currently a “Latino education crisis” (Martínez & Train, 2020) in which there is a lack of attention to Latinx lived experiences in schools related to “language-ness” (p. 2)—the ways language interacts with barriers to equity or equality. Within Spanish programs, “academic tradition and professors situate ‘the Spanish language’ as ‘elsewhere,’ distanced geographically, historically, culturally and linguistically in the literature of Spain or Latin America, and indifferent or even less than respectful toward the lived language experience of most Latinxs” (Martínez & Train, 2020, p. 14). Accordingly, in this section I will describe how this “Latino education crisis” was reflected in students’ experiences in Spanish classes, particularly heritage students, as reported by the participants.

I frame this discussion around two concepts, “abyssal thinking” (García et al., 2021) and “linguistic terrorism” (Anzaldúa, 1987). García et al. (2021) describe language learning education and its scholarship as framed by “abyssal thinking,” a term described by Portuguese philosopher Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) as a colonial frame of reference wherein only dominant ideologies representing “civil society” are considered legitimate and all other knowledges—those belonging to colonized populations— are erased and placed in the “existential abyss” (García et al., 2021, p. 204). Within the concept of “abyssal thinking” Western modernity maintains a clear distinction, a hegemonic line where “the other side” has “no real knowledge; there are beliefs, opinions, intuitive or subjective understandings, which, at most, may become objects or raw materials for scientific inquiry” (Santos, 2007, p. 47). These colonial logics of who is

a “valid” language user frame standardized language as a homogenous and idealized form of communication to which all should aspire (Flores & Rosa, 2017; Lippi-Green, 2011; Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 2011). Dynamic language users are marginalized when standardized language ideologies are used to define what is considered acceptable language in academic contexts, and this leads to an institutional rejection of their entire linguistic and, consequently, intellectual potential (Licata et al., 2023).

Anzaldúa (1987) used the term “linguistic terrorism” to describe the discrimination that speakers face in the U.S./Mexico borderlands based on their language practices. In this context, local language varieties of Chicano Spanish are routinely delegitimized (Anzaldúa, 1987). For example, Anzaldúa (1987) describes how she was penalized by English users for speaking Spanish in public school and made to attend speech lessons in order to get rid of her accent when she went to college. She also talks about how her Chicano Spanish was called “deficient” by Spanish speakers, who saw it as a departure from accepted academic norms. This linguistic terrorism and language policing continues today (Christoffersen, 2019).

I will discuss how school practices reflected “abyssal thinking” (García et al., 2021) and “linguistic terrorism” (Anzaldúa, 1987) in relation to heritage students’ language competencies, and resulted in students’ internalizing ideologies of linguistic “purity” and legitimacy. Then I analyze the comments of both L2 (additional language) and SHL (Spanish heritage language) students regarding their socioaffective needs in classrooms, particularly related to grading and evaluation. I will demonstrate how more “traditional” methods of instruction and evaluation were not compatible with students’

goals and identities, and therefore, students feel safer and more comfortable in a classroom environment that does not “correct” them or focus on their “mistakes” and instead values and centers the assets they bring with them to the classroom. Lastly, I advocate for a critical translanguaging space for Spanish instruction, given that, in this course, students were able to express complex ideas and felt more comfortable using this format.

Abyssal Thinking and Deficit Perspectives—Spanish Heritage Learners Negotiating Authenticity

As a result of “abyssal thinking,” described above, “racialized bilingual students are continuously positioned by society and categorized in schools as deficient in language, despite the students’ own understandings about their linguistic abilities” (García et al., 2021, p. 205, see also Licata, 2023). The following excerpt from Dalia exemplifies how her middle school institution perceived her language abilities from a deficit perspective:

Dos idiomas que escuchaba en mi vecindario era inglés y español. Era un vecindario donde la mayoría de la comunidad era hispanohablante. Creciendo todo mi alrededor, incluyendo mis vecinos, siempre me decían que tengo que hablar español y que también era importante porque me ayudaría en el futuro y porque el lenguaje es de dónde viene mi familia y que era parte de mi cultura. Durante la escuela entre media [middle school] estaba en ELD [English Language Development] pero no podía entender por qué porque en esa escuela solamente había estudiantes hispanohablantes y de Latinoamérica. No tenían clases de español, pero todavía tenían un programa que supuestamente tenían que ir los estudiantes, pero no hablaban inglés muy bien. (Dalia, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

Two languages I heard in my neighborhood were English and Spanish. It was a neighborhood where the majority of the community was Spanish speaking. Growing up, everyone around me, including my neighbors, always told me that I have to speak Spanish and that it was also important because it would help me in

the future and because the language is where my family comes from and that it was part of my culture. During middle school I was in ELD [English Language Development], but I couldn't understand why because in that school there were only Spanish-speaking and Latin American students. They didn't have Spanish classes but they still had a program that students were supposed to go to, but they didn't speak English very well. (Dalia, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

Here Dalia explains how her community context growing up was mostly Spanish speaking. Her community valued Spanish highly and wanted her to maintain her cultural ties to the community through communication in Spanish. Despite this, the local school only placed value on the acquisition of English—they offered her English Language Development classes and not Spanish classes, even though, according to Dalia, the students were primarily Spanish speakers. This decision by the school represents “abyssal thinking” and the subtractive approaches to language education wherein students’ home and community languages are devalued and effectively replaced with English (Flores & Rosa, 2015). These approaches fail to give multilingual students enough chances to completely hone their literacy abilities in their home languages, despite evidence showing a link between these kinds of opportunities and successful academic performance (Menken & Kleyn, 2010).

Dalia was also confused as to why she was chosen to be placed in the English Development (ELD) Program when she had plenty of English exposure growing up. She was classified as “deficient” in her English skills—a decision that confounded her. Instead of being recognized for her vast linguistic repertoire, she was judged solely on the basis of her English proficiency and was placed in a remedial class to “fix” her. These assimilationist approaches seek to erase students’ home language (in this case Spanish—there were no Spanish classes offered) and replace with a standardized form (English),

despite the research that illustrates the value of bilingual education that acknowledges and builds on students' linguistic identities and experiences (Cummins, 2000).

Indeed, Dalia's linguistic realities were completely disregarded in favor of developing her English competency, under the guise of helping her succeed academically. As García (2014) notes:

Latino students' bilingual language practices at home are much more complex than those in U.S. monolingual schools; and yet these practices are stigmatized and ignored by schools, intent on teaching "English," separately from language practices associated with "Spanish," and intent on teaching "Spanish," separately from "academic English." (p. 70)

Therefore, in this case, the school acted as "white listening subject" (Flores & Rosa, 2015) by automatically racializing her as a low proficiency English speaker, interpreting her identity as a bilingual U.S. Spanish/English speaker as not suitable for the academic environment and emphasizing the acquisition of English-only for her success in school. The white listening subject perceives racialized bilingual students' speech practices as deficient, whereas a white student with English as their first language learning a second would be praised for this achievement (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

As a result of this placement in the ELD program in middle school, Dalia felt less confident in her Spanish and consequently felt ashamed speaking with neighbors. Upon entering high school she explains that:

Me salí del programa [ELD] al fin y entré a la preparatoria y decidí que tenía que tomar clases en español para poder hablarlo y no tener vergüenza cuando esté hablando con mis vecinos. Y tendría que también hablar en spanglish porque no podía encontrar la palabra correcta para decirles en español. Tomé un examen en español y en vez de tomar la clase de AP Spanish para que podía demostrar que sí podía hablar español y que sí era mexicana. Pasé el examen y agarré mi Seal of Biliteracy en la preparatoria. Aunque sí podía lograrlo sentía que todavía no podía hablar muy bien y decidí que tenía que subir a un nivel más alto. Decidí que

debería de agarrar un minor en español en la universidad para que podía ser más fuerte en español, y aunque no hable español muy bien siento que es parte quien yo soy y que lo debo de tratar a mejorar. (Dalia, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

I finally left the [ELD] program and entered high school and decided that I had to take classes in Spanish so I could speak it and not be embarrassed when I'm talking to my neighbors. And I would also have to speak in Spanglish because I couldn't find the right word to say to them in Spanish. I took an exam in Spanish and instead of taking the AP Spanish class so I could prove that I could speak Spanish and that I was indeed Mexican. I passed the exam and earned my Seal of Biliteracy in high school. Although I could achieve it, I felt that I still couldn't speak very well and I decided that I had to go to a higher level. I decided that I should take a minor in Spanish at the university so that I could become stronger in Spanish, and even though I don't speak Spanish very well I feel that it is part of who I am and that I should try to improve. (Dalia, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

Having exited the ELD program where her connection to Spanish was severed and English was promoted, she formed ideologies surrounding linguistic purity related to Spanglish—she states she could not find the “correct” word in Spanish to use with her neighbors, so she had to resort to Spanglish, which she interprets as negative. She makes a clear distinction between Spanish and Spanglish, dismissing the latter as “incorrect.” Her comment illustrates the Eurocentric colonial notion of languages as pure, separate, and bounded, and associated with certain racial groups (Rosa & Flores, 2017). This colonial project allowed race and language to co-naturalize and justify the assertion of dominance of European subjects over Indigenous ones—Indigenous populations and their languages were seen as subhuman and in need of saving (Rosa & Flores, 2017). These ideologies continue today—viewing languages as distinct cognitive processes enables a perspective of multilinguals as “semilingual” (Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986), meaning they are viewed as having not achieved native-like proficiency in any language (García et

al., 2021). Dalia had internalized this ideology the school had placed upon her—instead of looking to her community for more exposure to Spanish, she considered her Spanish/Spanglish “deficient” and thus she felt she needed to take Spanish classes in a formal school setting.

Following this trajectory, she looked to the school to validate her linguistic abilities and her ethnic identity—she found it necessary to take a test to “prove” that she could speak Spanish and that she was, indeed Mexican—she says that speaking Spanish is “a part of who I am.” Given that “ethnic identity is intrinsically linked to language” (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2016, p. 208), there is a strong link between students’ experiences and perceptions of their language abilities and how they view themselves. This is apparent in this passage from Dalia where she explains that she earned a Seal of Biliteracy, an award given to students who have obtained proficiency in two languages by the end of high school. However, this official recognition was not enough, and she decided she felt she needed to achieve a higher level of oral proficiency.

Here Dalia also equates being Mexican with being able to speak Spanish—an ideology of cultural authenticity (Shenk, 2007) wherein ethnic identity alone does not equate membership in the group—she has to “prove” that she is Mexican through earning the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) associated with speaking “proper” Spanish, “proven” by passing the Advanced Placement Spanish test. As Coupland (2003) asserts, there is “a convincing case to be made that language is every bit as much a means of achieving authenticity as it is a means to discrediting it. Specific ways of speaking and patterns of discursive representation can achieve the quality of experience that we define

as authentic” (p. 417). In this example with Dalia, she seeks to be perceived by others and as herself as authentically Mexican, which for her is indexed by speaking Spanish—not Spanglish. I argue that her experience with the ELD program shaped her linguistic identity and her ideas of an “authentic” speaker as one who speaks a “pure” language, given the school’s emphasis on acquiring academic English in the program and the devaluing of her community Spanish knowledge.

However, despite her many accomplishments in formal schooling with Spanish, the internalized ideologies of linguistic purity prevailed, and she yet again claims she needs a minor in order to become stronger in Spanish since she still does not speak it “well.” This sort of linguistic insecurity is confirmed in Tseng’s (2021) study of second- and third-generation Latinx bilinguals: “In the data, imposed deficit identities derived from ideologies of language purity, proficiency, and individual agency misunderstood and stigmatized later-generation heritage speakers, leading to language insecurity and avoidance despite shared positive attitudes toward Spanish maintenance” (p. 128). Despite Dalia’s insecurities of speaking Spanish “well” it is the personal connection to the language that motivated her to continue learning and improving throughout her college career.

Trey also experienced a similar experience where he was placed in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, but for him it was in elementary school. He details:

Cuando estaba empezando la escuela en elementary me ponieron en ESL, English as Second Language, y de ahí no me sentí bien porque me sentí como si ponieron en una clase especial y me hizo sentir como, más como, un menso. No me gustaba y por este razón pujé español y casi no quería hablar español, y para que me quiten de la clase. Es algo que no debía de ser pero eso pasó y mi español bajó y mi inglés pues subió. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

When I was starting school in elementary they put me in ESL, English as Second Language, and from there I didn't feel good because I felt like they put me in a special class and it made me feel like, more like, a moron. I didn't like it and for this reason I pushed away Spanish and I almost didn't want to speak Spanish, so they would remove me from the class. It's something that shouldn't have been but that happened and my Spanish went down and my English went up. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

In this case, Trey describes feeling as if he were “menso” or a moron, because he felt he was in a “special” class for students who could not handle the regular day-to-day classroom with the rest of his peers. Because the school, acting as white listening subject (Rosa & Flores, 2017), evaluated his linguistic capabilities only in terms of what he could do in English, they decided he was in need of remediation and had to be placed in a different class to develop adequate academic expression in English. Heritage learners’ perceptions of linguistic insecurity have been documented by Martínez and Petrucci (2004) who found that institutional practices indeed affect learners’ self-esteem.

In another example of abyssal thinking and linguistic terrorism, Trey discusses a harmful label that was given to him. He describes:

[P]orque no sé español perfectamente y creciendo con mi familia mexicana ... [me] ponieron de no sabo kid ... que no sabe cómo hablar perfectamente ... pero yo quiero sacarme de eso y se burlan de mí, pero está bien. Ahora solamente quiero aprender español, quiero subir mi nivel de español con mi inglés, y subir para arriba. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

[B]ecause I don't know Spanish perfectly and growing up with my Mexican family ... [they] called me a no sabo kid ... who doesn't know how to speak perfectly ... but I want to get rid of that and they make fun of me but it's okay. Now I just want to learn Spanish, I want to raise my level of Spanish with my English and continue onward. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

He details how he does not speak Spanish “perfectly,” reflecting the deficit perspectives that were placed on him, and the insecurities that arose from them—feelings that are

common among Spanish heritage learners (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2016). This might be due to their formal education being mainly in English and their internalization of U.S. Spanish as lacking prestige (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2016).

Trey's view of his Spanish ability as less than perfect was likely related to the label of "no sabo kid" he was given, an offensive term used to describe someone of Hispanic/Latinx descent who is perceived to lack some fluency in Spanish. The "no sabo" ("I don't know") is a literal conjugation of the verb *saber*, to know, whereas the accepted conjugation is "*No sé*." It is an irregular verb which breaks the pattern because most verbs conjugated in the first-person present tense end in /o/. The "correct" conjugation of "I don't know" in Spanish would be "*No sé*" but applying the typical rule of most verbs in the *yo* form (first person singular) with the /o/ ending results in "*No sabo*." Therefore, "*no sabo*" correctly applies the rule of the /o/ ending, but it just does not recognize the *saber* verb as irregular in the present tense form. The implication is that the "no sabo kids" do not know enough about the grammatical rules of Spanish because of their "Americanized" identities and thus, make this "mistake" of saying "*No sabo*" instead of "*No sé*". The term has become popular on social media during recent years, with the hashtag #nosabokids serving as a tool for building virtual communities through shared experiences with the label (Callesano, 2022).

In Trey's case, the "no sabo" label clearly demonstrates "linguistic terrorism" by other Spanish speakers through both raciolinguistic ideologies and the standard language ideology. He was mocked and ridiculed for his assumed lack of proficiency—an "imposed deficit" (Tseng, 2021, p. 127) on second and third generations of Latinx

bilinguals that Tseng (2021) contends in a study on linguistic insecurity involving second- and third-generation Latinx students. This “imposed deficit” has a detrimental impact on their “linguistic self-identities and self-esteem” (Tseng, 2021, p. 131). Further, when shame is connected to language, it is also connected to race and ethnicity, which raises questions about authenticity as well as linguistic insecurity (Rosa, 2019; Lawrence & Clemons, 2022).

Trey elaborates on his experience being labeled as a “no sabo” kid, but he is ready to “move beyond” that label and he wishes to improve his Spanish so he can succeed in his life. In this instance he asserts his agency by rejecting the label and refusing to let it deter him from progressing in life. Trey felt comfortable expressing this sentiment because we had previous discussions about language attitudes regarding U.S. Spanish speakers and we had contextualized these discussions with historical context, including the long history of English contact with the Spanish of California and the discriminatory English-only practices and policies that led many second- and third-generation immigrants to be literally or effectively prohibited from speaking Spanish. Trey understood this complex history and that this label was no longer a true reflection of his identity, thus the desire to redefine his own identity.

Finally, Emilio also expressed insecurities and uncertainties with his own identity and language forms. He describes his struggle in the following passage:

Pienso que inglés solamente es el idioma de donde nací, pero español tiene más importancia que el inglés para mi identidad porque mi familia es de Puerto Rico y tengo mucho orgullo en este. Porque no hablo español con fluidez mi familia me presiona mucho para aprenderlo. El estrés de la presión de mi familia para aprender español me pone nervioso para hablar porque necesito hablar sin error. Hablando español siempre ha sido un conflicto mental de mi identidad. Creo que

mi personalidad cambia depende de cuáles idiomas está hablando. Tengo mucho más confianza cuando hablo en inglés y puedo expresar mis ideas mucho mejor en inglés...Pero cuando está hablando en español soy tímido y nervioso para expresar mis ideas- siempre mezclo los idiomas cuando hablo en español pero casi nunca uso palabras de español cuando estoy hablando inglés. Uso inglés en mi español porque mi vocabulario es limitado y tropiezo con mis palabras. (Emilio, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

I think that English is only the language where I was born, but Spanish is more important than English to my identity because my family is from Puerto Rico, and I have a lot of pride in that. Because I don't speak Spanish fluently, my family puts a lot of pressure on me to learn it. The stress of my family's pressure to learn Spanish makes me nervous to speak because I need to speak without error. Speaking Spanish has always been a mental conflict of my identity. I think my personality changes depending on what languages I'm speaking. I am much more confident when I speak in English and I can express my ideas much better in English....But when I am speaking in Spanish I am shy and nervous to express my ideas—I always mix languages when I speak in Spanish but I almost never use Spanish words when I am speaking English. I use English in my Spanish because my vocabulary is limited and I stumble over my words. (Emilio, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

Just as with Dalia, Emilio has internalized ideologies regarding linguistic purity—he states how he is forced to mix English words into his Spanish vocabulary because he “stumbles over his words” due to his limited vocabulary in Spanish, a practice he does not do in English. He desires to be the confident speaker in Spanish like he is in English, which partially stems from his family’s pressure to speak Spanish.

Again, we see how Emilio feels pressure to represent his Latinx familial identity through his “fluent” use of the Spanish language, conflating an “authentic” identity with language proficiency (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Urciuoli, 2008) and acknowledging the right to claim his identity through his nationality (Parmegiani, 2010). He says he becomes nervous because he is expected to speak “without error.” For Emilio, there is a more pronounced struggle compared to Dalia and Trey, the other Spanish heritage learners who

participated in the study. He described earlier in this assignment how his parents often spoke to him in Spanish, but he found it too difficult to speak and he would respond in English. In class I noticed he struggled much more with expressing his thoughts in Spanish, compared to Dalia and Trey. He characterizes this struggle as a type of identity crisis because he has such a profound connection to the Spanish language through his family. He says he does not identify as much with English because it was “just the language of the place where he was born,” meaning that he recognizes the hegemony of English in the U.S. and conflates this with the idea that only one language can represent a nation, the one nation-one language ideology (Parmegiani, 2010). In this sense, English is regarded as essential to U.S. national identity and cohesion. The idea that the United States is and has always been a (monolingual) English-speaking country is widely accepted, however it is not supported by historical evidence and is predicated on the erasure of both current and historical multilingualism in the U.S. and the English colonies (see Lozano, 2018; Lepore, 2002). Thus, Emilio grapples with the idea that his English is “stronger” than his Spanish, even though he feels more of a connection to Spanish.

These examples highlight the many experiences and ideologies that Spanish heritage speakers bring with them to the classroom and negotiate on a daily basis. In many of these instances, the school policies and practices imposed deficiency perspectives on students, which were a direct reason for their severed connections with their home and community language practices. As was shown, there were deep connections with family and community identity that inform how students view their language learning. All of the heritage students in this study had feelings of linguistic

insecurity and struggled with feeling “authentically” Latinx because of these inner conflicts. As Tseng (2021) found in her study of heritage students:

The strong indexical relationship between home language and ethnocultural identity, coupled with the belief that ‘speaking a language’ entails native-like proficiency, made Spanish a potent site of Latino identity gatekeeping. It thus not only undermined second-generation speakers’ identities as competent Spanish speakers but also led to questioning of later generations’ authenticity and group membership. (p. 129)

This quote resonates with the experiences described by Dalia, Trey, and Emilio, who noted the conflicting nature of language and identity, which is mediated by society. They grappled with the idea of authentically belonging to Spanish-speaking communities because of their perceived language deficiencies. For this reason, we unpacked notions such as “no sabo kid” and “pocho/a” and highlighted speakers’ agency in reclaiming these labels (e.g., the video described earlier from Entertainment Tonight where actress/singer Becky G talks about reclaiming the term ‘pocha’ and harnessing her ‘pocha power’). As Bucholtz and Hall (2004) state, “Where authenticity has been tied to essentialism through the notion that some identities are more ‘real’ than others, authentication highlights the agentic processes whereby claims to realness are asserted” (p. 385). Thus, authentication is a “tactic of intersubjectivity” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 382) whereby identity is constructed and reconstructed within relationships and “often involves the rewriting of linguistic and cultural history” (p. 385). Accordingly, it is our responsibility as educators to create spaces where students can reflect, engage with, negotiate, and problematize concepts related to identity and exercise their agency in authenticating what they consider to be “real” for themselves.

It is apparent that for Trey, Dalia, and Emilio, abyssal thinking and linguistic terrorism affected their identity constructions and how they viewed language learning. Thus, their responses deserved a section of their own. I must also note that the deeply ingrained ideologies the students speak of here necessitate different approaches to instruction that center students' knowledge and experiences. For these students at least, Spanish class had meaning that went beyond just learning to communicate with others. However, communicative approaches to language learning, which focus on interaction and developing linguistic proficiency focused on the four skills, that is speaking, reading, writing, and listening in the target language, are currently the dominant L2 (additional language) approaches worldwide (Alamri, 2018). Even though the field of Spanish language pedagogy has made significant strides in our comprehension of the problems and obstacles that heritage language learners face (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012; Beaudrie & Loza, 2022; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman et al., 2011; Valdés, 1997), when heritage students are in mixed classrooms, they often experience alienation and anxiety with L2 approaches since they are not necessarily compatible with their needs (Bayona & García-Martin, 2022).

Centering Students' Wellbeing and Experiences in the Curriculum

The "affective turn" in the humanities and social sciences has advocated for increased attention to how emotional and embodied aspects of identity affect people's life experiences (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Bucholtz et al. (2018) define affect as "the simultaneously cognitive, perceptual, and emotional experience of embodied encounter with the material world" (p. 3). Further, Zembylas (2010) observes

that there is still much work to be completed in terms of “the emotional aspects of racialization and ethnicization in schools” (p. 254). Accordingly, given also the previous section detailing the practices of linguistic terrorism and the abyssal thinking regarding U.S. Spanish speakers and the subsequent discrimination heritage students face, there is an urgent need to attend to students’ social and emotional needs before considering any other learning goals or objectives. Dalia reminds us of this fact in the following passage:

[Los instructores] podrían incorporar la experiencia de lengua de los estudiantes en la clase porque lo primero que [los estudiantes] deben de hacer es entender su propia experiencia de lengua. No importa en qué nivel habla español, cada estudiante latino carga mucha baggage lingüística que debe de desempacar y estar en términos con él para que pueda ser la más exitosa estudiante posible. (Dalia, Flip video, week 8)

[Instructors] could incorporate students’ language experiences into the class because the first thing [students] need to do is understand their own language experiences. No matter at what level he/she speaks Spanish, every Latino student carries a lot of linguistic baggage that he/she must unpack and reckon with so that she can be the most successful student possible. (Dalia, Flip video, week 8)

Dalia’s response above asks instructors to focus on students’ experiences and “linguistic baggage” in order for them to succeed in the class. As Sánchez Muñoz (2016) asserts, “The main goal of a heritage language class should be to help speakers develop linguistic awareness and increased confidence while validating their own vernacular variety” (p. 205), and this should be applied to the mixed classroom as well.

Indigenous scholars have long acknowledged the importance of healing in language learning where community needs and epistemologies play a dominant role in all efforts to define program objectives when reclaiming and (re)learning language (Leonard, 2017; McKenzie, 2022). In some instances, Indigenous communities have created their own language proficiency measures that are specific to their culture and language without

being constrained by the proficiency standards of colonizing languages (e.g., Kahakalau, 2017). It makes sense, then, that the learning community have a say in how learning takes place and how goals and objectives are achieved. As such, as an educator working on improving my practice, I sought the feedback of students regarding their learning experiences to inform my own pedagogical practice going forward, and I will share these insights here.

Grading and Evaluation in Spanish Language Courses: Students' Perspectives

In the pre- and post-project surveys, I asked students the following: “What would an ideal Spanish class look like for you? What topics would be discussed? What kinds of activities would you like to see? Any other input you would give Spanish programs in general?” Not surprisingly, students had a lot to say about the grading and evaluation practices in Spanish courses, and I will highlight a few main ideas here. Firstly, most of the students' comments were suggestions to instructors to employ approaches and practices that are not grammar focused. Alexa stated, for example, that her ideal Spanish class would include more than just grammar. She expands on this idea by stating she prefers “interactive Spanish conversations, how to break down the main ideas of a conversation, more vocab, less focus on 100% grammar and more on general ideas” (Alexa, pre-project survey, week 1). As stated previously, Alexa's goals in Spanish language learning were focused on communication and it seems she only wanted enough grammar knowledge in order to communicate with others. Similarly, Sofia feels that she wants support in communicating in Spanish, specifically with individuals in her local environment:

For me, the ideal class is interactive and immersive [emphasis in original]. I think it should reflect the communities that we'll be interacting with. Also, formal/academic Spanish creates good base for language learning, it's not enough to be able to communicate in Spanish with locals. (Sofia, pre-project survey, week 1)

She distinguishes between “formal/academic” Spanish and communicating within the local community, implying that Spanish programs often teach the former without respect to the latter. Indeed, Sofia has picked up on the fact that Spanish L2 textbooks often leave out local U.S. varieties of Spanish (Al Masaeed, 2014) and favor Peninsular Spanish varieties over Latin American ones. For example, Mason and Nicely (2009) studied 37 Spanish language textbooks and found that only 16% of them made any reference to *vos*, a form of address used in some areas of Central America and South America, whereas most Spanish textbooks explicitly mention and teach *vosotros*, a form of address used mainly in Spain. It stands to reason, then, that for students using these textbooks, the Peninsular varieties become perceived as the “prestige” or “universal” language forms.

When Sofia notes how “academic” Spanish is different from the Spanish spoken by “locals,” she likely means that the Spanish in textbooks does not represent the varieties she has encountered in the real world. But it is crucial to point out that there are many interpretations of what constitutes “academic” language (Flores, 2020; Valdés, 2004). “Academic” language invokes the idea of an idealized language user whose language practices are “unmarked,” thus not subject to racialization (Urciuoli, 2011). The logic behind the idealized language user is based on colonial frameworks, which are inextricably linked to conceptions of race; hence, the idealized speaker's proximity and

assimilation to whiteness are fundamental characteristics (Rosa & Flores, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2023).

Given what has been discussed about Spanish textbooks, it is no surprise, then, that Dalia specifically requested that Spanish courses refrain from using them:

An ideal Spanish [class] to me would look like a place where you can talk and not get critiqued for grammar mistakes but also go over some common mistakes so we can improve without stressing over needing to perfect the grammar for a grade.... Some activities I'd like to see are just staying away from textbooks which makes it harder. (Dalia, pre-project survey, week 1)

In this passage Dalia signals the need for Spanish class to be a comfortable and safe environment where students are not afraid of making “mistakes” and are not being called out on them.

In general, students felt that the grading in their previous Spanish courses did not align with their identities, experiences, and goals for learning. Sofia, for example, mentioned previously that she was interested in improving her ability to communicate with “locals,” yet, she noted in her previous language learning experience that as her oral communication improved, she was able to say more, and thus, her “mistakes” increased:

When you look at like years before when I was in high school, and I was like the good student, and I had like no mistakes on my tests. I had a harder time speaking it. I was fine speaking it, but I was not fluent. I couldn't think in the language fast enough. And when I—right now, when I'm actually speaking the language and think in the language fast enough, I make more mistakes grammar wise. That's just how it goes. (Sofia, interview, week 5)

Thus, for her it did not make sense to use written assessments because they did not actually reflect her oral skills. Not only that, but she did not consider it fair for her instructors to judge her oral skills based on the number of “mistakes” because, with more ability to produce oral language came more opportunity to make “mistakes.”

Similarly, Dalia, as a heritage learner, did not have her assets acknowledged in the Spanish classroom, and instead, in her high school career she was penalized for not knowing where to place the written accent marks in words, as she explains:

Creciendo solo tenía que hablar español y aprender a hablar español, pero no tanto en escribirlo. So la primera vez que tenía que escribir en español era en high school, en sophomore year, y luego cuando aprendí de los tildes nomás era como por un día solamente y luego la maestra nomás expectó que ya sabíamos cómo usar los tildes. Y sé que también muchos de mis amigos que también son latinos también tienen ese problema que no saben cómo incorporar los tildes porque nunca en verdad han tenido que escribir en español, solo hablarlo. (Dalia, Flip video, week 8)

Growing up I only had to speak Spanish and learn to speak Spanish but not so much to write it. The first time I had to write in Spanish was in high school, in sophomore year, and then when I learned the accent marks it was only for like one day and then the teacher just expected that we already knew how to use the accent marks. And I know that many of my friends who are also Latino also have that problem where they don't know how to incorporate accent marks because they have never really had to write in Spanish, only speak it. (Dalia, Flip video, week 8)

Her Latinx friends also struggled with having to learn some of the written conventions of Spanish because they did not have a need to write Spanish growing up. Also, as mentioned in the previous section, Dalia was placed in an English Language Development class in middle school—the school was only concerned with developing her English language literacy, not her home and community language literacy (Spanish). As a result, Dalia did not have a need to learn written accent marks in Spanish, yet, upon starting Spanish classes in high school, she was automatically at a disadvantage because of the class structure in which the instructor evaluated students' written proficiency.

Trey had a similar experience where his reality speaking Spanish at home and in his community was not represented in the classroom. Trey did not consent to being audio

recorded, so I will paraphrase what he related to me in our interview during week five. He stated that he took Spanish 4, 5, and now 6 at our institution, but he did not speak much in class because grammar was the main focus. He struggled because he was not able to make the connection between the grammatical aspects of the course since he learned Spanish by speaking it with his parents. He said he was able to communicate in Spanish, but he just did not know the grammar rules. As an example, in high school when he took his first Spanish test he did really badly because he was not able to apply the grammar rules properly. His concern was not with these grammatical aspects—he just wanted to know enough to be able to improve his communication in Spanish.

The common theme here is that students want a space that is accepting and inclusive where they are not being graded on grammar or “mistakes.” Further, emphasizing grammatical accuracy assumes a single standard, which is a mistake since it turns what is actually an abstract idea into something that seems to reflect reality (Ducar, 2009) (see Chapter 1 for a more in-depth description of standardized language as an abstract construct). The promotion of standardized language and monoglossic ideologies produce a culture that values monolingualism. As a result, in educational contexts, what constitutes “standardized language” is restricted, marginalizing dynamic language users by institutionally undervaluing their whole spectrum of linguistic and intellectual abilities (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Monoglossic language ideologies have a significant impact on language instruction in multilingual situations because they give rise to the presumption that any deviation from the norm in bilinguals’ linguistic repertoires is stigmatized.

Monoglossic language ideologies provide power to legitimized, standardized language and devalue all other linguistic innovations (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1995).

Additionally, Spanish heritage language textbooks continue to promote appropriateness approaches (see Chapter 1 for an explanation of appropriateness approaches) and lack in-depth discussions of language variation (Ducar, 2009). In fact, they actively encourage students to abandon their home and community varieties in favor of standardized ones—for example, in Ducar’s (2009) study of heritage language textbooks, the researcher found a footnote cautioning students against adding the /s/ on the end of the second person past tense singular verbs (e.g., *dijistes*), a common usage worldwide, but a practice that is stigmatized. The author notes that

this de-contextualized reprimand does not begin to explain the wide-spread sociolinguistic reality of this phenomenon. Nor does it explain to students why such a usage is stigmatized in certain realms. In fact, it even discourages students from continuing to use this form within the home context. According to the text, “*dijistes*” should not be used, period. (Ducar, 2009, p. 358)

Another way the heritage language textbooks in Ducar’s (2009) study devalued students’ home and community varieties was through various written exercises that asked students to “translate” a regional variety into a standardized or “formal” one. These types of practices clearly contradict critical approaches such as CriSoLL that seek to develop students’ critical awareness of linguistic hierarchies (Leeman, 2005).

The passages from students in this section point to a need for greater emphasis on students’ identities, experiences, and feelings in terms of language classroom practices. Feeling comfortable in the language classroom is a required prerequisite for acquisition according to the affective filter hypothesis. Krashen (1982) elaborated on the affective

filter, a concept originally proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), which states that classrooms that promote low affective filters—or low anxiety among the students—are optimal for language acquisition. Factors such as low motivation, low self-esteem, and high anxiety can hinder a student’s ability to acquire language, despite receiving input that is comprehensible (Krashen, 1982). In short, students have more success learning a language when the process is enjoyable and fun, and when they have confidence in themselves (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

The grammatical exercises that “test” students on their linguistic “abilities” are not a safe option for students and are often not compatible with their experiences and goals, creating unnecessary anxiety and fear of failure. As Chew et al. (2023) explain within the context of Indigenous language pedagogies taught as a classroom subject:

Power dynamics within the classroom may perpetuate a colonial structure by centering authoritative expertise in a credentialed instructor, who transmits legitimated knowledge to the learners. In turn, learners’ progress is evaluated through Western forms of assessment using milestones associated with expected and established norms of Second Language Acquisition. Studying a heritage language through this model can be problematic: academic evaluation includes the possibility of “failure”; institutional educational contexts may evoke painful intergenerational histories related to boarding schools or residential schools; and imposing a “student” identity often fails to capture the range of roles, relationships, and knowledges that learners actually have or seek to develop. (p. 771)

The students’ perspectives in this section echo many of the points that Chew et al. (2023) bring up. The idea of the credentialed instructor who determines “legitimate” knowledge within the classroom, for example, is present in Dalia and Trey’s passages about how their instructors assessed them according to the correct placement of written accent marks or the successful application of grammar rules. Both Dalia and Trey brought their entire

life's experience communicating successfully in Spanish, yet they were only evaluated in terms of their supposed "deficits" in producing written language. And the idea of trauma related to "intergenerational histories" is also relevant—as discussed in Chapter 2, and earlier in this chapter, there has been a long history of negative attitudes and perceptions of U.S. Spanish and linguistic terrorism that pathologizes contact varieties on the Mexico/U.S. border (Christoffersen, 2019). Spanish classes only reinforce this linguistic terrorism when students are penalized for "mistakes" and their experiences and assets go unrecognized. L2s also suffer when there is an overreliance on grammatical "correctness" and prescriptivist approaches because these erase community connections to the language, which Sofia, for example, noted as important to her learning. Nor do grammar-focused approaches help L2s learn language—the L2s in this study also reported negative attitudes toward these approaches, and the students are interested in incorporating different topics into Spanish instruction that pique their interest.

Consequently, traditional models of language learning which evaluate certain "performances" or "standards" are not always compatible with SHL and L2s learners' relational connections to the language and personal goals for learning, which may or may not prioritize learning specific language "skills." Grading for these skills, then, erases the many other community connections and capacities that emerge when a relational viewpoint is engaged. In the context of this study, because this class was designed in such a way that students were not graded on their speaking "skills," but instead on their ability to form opinions and express them, and apply the content learned, students freely expressed themselves in whichever manner they preferred, which took the pressure off of

having to conform to the instructor's or program's idea of "competence" in terms of linguistic ability. Nevertheless, in our class, which was neither grammar- nor communicative-based, students still developed vocabulary and strengthened their communicative skills, as evidenced by their elaborate responses explaining complex topics from the class. Therefore, I argue for Spanish language classes to focus on content-based approaches using CriSoLL and to promote translanguaging rather than centering a performance of "linguistic competence." I will describe this further in the following section.

Translanguaging

The discussion in the previous section pointed out the many ways students' perspectives of Spanish classes can inform our practices as educators in terms of evaluations and assessments. All participants noted their dissatisfaction with grammar-based approaches that penalize students for "mistakes." They reiterated that they want to be comfortable expressing themselves without the fear of being corrected. The participants also observed that Spanish textbooks did not represent their identities and were largely incompatible with their learning goals. Also, as mentioned previously, Spanish textbooks erase and delegitimize U.S. varieties of Spanish (Al Masaeed, 2014) and often favor Peninsular Spanish forms over Latin American ones (see Potvin, 2022).

For these reasons, educators could instead consider content-based approaches such as CriSoLL that prioritize language learning via subject matter, rather than solely focusing on "language" learning itself (e.g., Brinton et al., 1989; Otto, 2018; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). Content-based approaches "allow students to explore as little or as much

as they choose of their heritage language without penalization of their linguistic competence” (Holguín Mendoza, 2022, p. 141, see also Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018). These approaches may help to alleviate learners’ anxieties involved in being graded based on form since they are developing language skills and vocabulary through content-based activities. This meaningful use of language is different from the study of language itself; students learn how to navigate and analyze materials in order to develop broad perspectives on academic as well as extracurricular content and experiences (Davies et al., 2011). Ideally, content-based instruction should be engaging and based on students’ interests (Dueñas, 2004). This allows instructors to cater the subject matter according to what is relevant for that particular group of learners. As Sofia states:

Ideal Spanish class for me consists of spanish language literature, mixed with little bit of grammar, topics of my interest, news and relevant issues, sociolinguistics and learning about latinx cultures and the history of spanish language in the USA. I think it is important to develop the vocabulary of the students. Preferably readings that are both in spanish and english so that the students can fully understand the topics and the spanish version will give them tools to articulate and express their ideas. Also, I believe that tailoring classes around the students interests and relevant/popular topics will help students feel more confident about their skills and spanish and it will also spike their interests in the class. (Sofia, post-project survey, week 10)

Here Sofia echoes the need to engage students’ interests in Spanish class, but she also points to the need for content-based instruction employing various topics such as literature and sociolinguistics. She has suggested that instructors provide readings in both Spanish and English so students can fully comprehend the content but then can learn to communicate these ideas in Spanish. Her comment brings up a very important point about the use of the target language—many educators avoid presenting complex topics in beginner level courses because they perceive it to be too challenging due to students’

limited ability to actively participate in discussions using the target language. This perspective is grounded in the monolingual assumption, which asserts that all activities in the classroom should be conducted exclusively in the target language. It is influenced by prevailing biases and myths in language teaching, which prioritize monolingual native speakers as the ideal model for language learners (Hall & Cook, 2012).

Sofia's passage above shows how she still holds grammar and "correctness" to be important in her learning, even at the end of the quarter. It is important to note that profound ideological shifts tend to take time and effort—in just a ten-week quarter, only so much can be accomplished. Thus, our goals as educators should be to help students reflect on their ideologies and provide tools and concepts that foster this reflection, but it is ultimately up to them to continue the work beyond the classroom if they so choose to.

In our course, I introduced the concept of translanguaging using a lesson from the *Pedagogías Críticas* website (Holguín Mendoza et al., n.d.), and we discussed the idea of translanguaging in class. When trying to define translanguaging in our own words, Alexa offered a profound observation on how she views translanguaging. She said translanguaging is like water. Water is unified but separate at the same time. There are rivers, lakes, streams, and they all flow together into one large body of water, so there is a constant exchange (Alexa, paraphrased by me in researcher journal, class discussion, week 4). Using her metaphor, one's linguistic repertoire is "whole"—water cannot be separated or taken apart, yet there are other "sections" ("rivers, lakes, streams") that still belong to the whole and are in relation to it and exchange constantly within that whole. I appreciate Alexa's insight because water is in constant movement, fluid, dynamic, and

always changing. I took a dynamic approach to this class wherein I encouraged translanguaging and there was no pressure to use language in any certain way in class. A translanguaging approach can help students feel empowered with their language abilities by viewing themselves as “whole” rather than promoting the “conceptualization of the two languages of bilinguals (which for us includes multilinguals) as clearly distinct systems normally deployed separately, but occasionally deployed in close, alternating succession under a practice known as code switching” (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 282). Relating translanguaging to students’ experience, Trey, for example, struggles when having to speak Spanish as a named language, as he describes below:

Cuando estoy hablando con gente que habla español, tengo que hablar español, me siento más, no me siento tan cómodo. Me siento más tímido, y eso se puede notar porque no estoy tan, no estoy tan seguro en mi español. So, eso es lo que pasa en mi personalidad. Pero cuando hablo con mis amigos en inglés, so Spanglish, me siento mucho más confidente, hablo más y...me siento más bien porque sé que no estoy haciendo tantos errores. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

When I’m talking to people who speak Spanish, I have to speak Spanish, I feel more, I don’t feel as comfortable. I feel more shy, and you can tell that because I’m not so, I’m not so confident in my Spanish. So, that’s what’s going on in my personality. But when I talk to my friends in English, so Spanglish, I feel much more confident, I talk more and ... I feel better because I know I’m not making as many mistakes. (Trey, sociolinguistic history video, week 5)

While he is still concerned with linguistic “purity” as he describes regarding his fear of making “mistakes,” he recognizes that with his friends he can employ a translanguaging practice, which for him is Spanglish, or the full use of his linguistic knowledge. He describes feeling “confident” when speaking Spanglish, but “shy” when speaking Spanish with Spanish speakers.

Trey's confidence when employing translanguaging was also apparent in his assignments. For example, in the weekly video discussions on Flip—an entirely oral assignment—students responded to discussion questions I posed related to the weekly readings. The Flip website allows students to upload videos in which the instructor and classmates can view and reply. Each week had a time limit of five minutes. Most students spoke between one minute and three minutes, but Trey was frequently cut off by the website due to the five-minute limit. He also spoke rather quickly compared to the other students, so he contributed quite a lot of content to the discussion each week. In our one-on-one interview, Trey mentioned the Flip activities and discussions with peers are helping to broaden his vocabulary. Thus, the translanguaging approach to the class helped him feel more relaxed when he was able to express himself openly.

Students were able to express complex thoughts by calling upon all of their linguistic resources when completing assignments. Take Sofia, for example, who harnessed her entire linguistic repertoire to explain the concept of Mock Spanish:

For Mock Spanish, bueno, Mock Spanish no es español real. Es una, como, whitewashed—well it's not even whitewashed— es un ficción Spanish y usa este cuando with post cards and gift cards basically. Los carteles tienen word play so tienen como palabras en español, pero no es palabras en español; es como palabras en inglés pero, they sound like Spanish words. (Sofia, Flip video, week 3)

For Mock Spanish, well, Mock Spanish is not real Spanish. It's a, like, whitewashed—well it's not even whitewashed—it's a fictionalized Spanish and uses this when with post cards and gift cards basically. The cards have word play so they sound like Spanish words but they are not Spanish words, they are like English words but they sound like Spanish words. (Sofia, Flip video, week 3)



Figure 4: Sofia's photo representing Mock Spanish

I share this example to underscore how students in the class used a translanguaging approach to leverage their entire repertoire when dealing with the often complex concepts of the course. Sofia was able to articulate a stance on Mock Spanish by employing all of her linguistic resources, which she would later develop further for the second essay when she found an example of Mock Spanish in her neighborhood (see Figure 4). Connecting her earlier view of Mock Spanish as “whitewashed,” she observed that a local restaurant named one of their taco dishes “Gringo style.” In her opinion, because this is not a type of dish the local Mexican community uses, it is thus an appropriation and a mocking of the Mexican community. I believe the discussions surrounding translanguaging and the other CriSoLL elements helped her deeply analyze these connections with Mock Spanish and the local community. Therefore, since “bilingual people language with a unitary, not dual, repertoire from which they draw features that are useful for the communicative act

in which they are engaged” (García et al., 2021, p. 208), Sofia was able to explain a complicated topic, Mock Spanish, and what it entails.

Consequently, in our course students were not graded on their linguistic abilities, but instead on the content of their work and how they applied the concepts of the class. This created a more comfortable learning environment for students. Both L2 and heritage students benefited from employing their full linguistic repertoires. In addition to promoting a translanguaging space, we also investigated the linguistic landscape in Southern California. In the next chapter I will discuss this local focus further.

Chapter 7: Moving Towards Locally Based Language Instruction

The previous chapter situated the socioaffective needs of students as the foundation for the content-based, Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) approach that utilized translanguaging. Still, though, I was interested in seeing the role of authentic texts on student learning when I incorporated local language practices. I repeat, this research responds to the call from academics and educators to incorporate locally based language practices into language instruction (e.g., Flores & Rosa, 2023; Hermes, 2016; Leeman, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014) in order to counteract the positioning of Spanish as a “foreign” language (e.g., Martínez & Train, 2020; Schwartz, 2023). Critical approaches to language instruction should take into account the sociocultural context in which the students are situated (Leeman, 2014; Leeman & Serafini, 2016). As such, this linguistic landscape project situated the local community as the primary center for meaning-making on the part of the students.

Therefore, in this section I demonstrate how students engaged in local meaning-making which was personal and relational to each student. Through the tools of the course, students gained new perspectives of their local environments and were able to develop symbolic competence associated with the local language practices. This deeper awareness motivated them to reflect on sociolinguistic justice for their communities, and they were inspired to take action to improve their local environments.

Considering the trajectory of each of the students as they built upon their knowledge throughout the course and the way CriSoLL supported them in developing critical literacy surrounding the multifaceted nature of multilingual communities’

linguistic practices in the U.S., a local-based investigation seemed fitting for a final project since they would be able to apply their learning to their local contexts. The linguistic landscape project (see Appendix C) helped students not only feel like their identities and experiences were important to the goals of the class, but it also taught them new ways of relating the CriSoLL lessons to their immediate realities and to view real-world examples of the concepts we discussed. As Dalia illustrates:

El proyecto del paisaje lingüístico me ayudó a entender las prácticas lingüísticas más grandes asociadas con el español en los Estados Unidos en diferentes maneras. Porque aprendí cómo incorporar lo que aprendí en la clase de español en mi vecindario, ahora sin darme cuenta pienso en las diferentes ideologías que pueden estar inculcadas en diferentes lugares que visito y no solamente en mi vecindario. Unas actividades que me representan como individuo y eran importantes a mi eran las que hicimos mientras aprendiendo de Spanglish, el significado de que es siendo pocha, y las actividades que nos enseñaba la historia de hispanohablantes en los Estados Unidos porque todo era nuevo y estaba muy sorprendida que no sabía nada de ese tema y que no nos enseñaban tanto en la secundaria. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

The linguistic landscape project helped me understand the larger linguistic practices associated with Spanish in the United States in different ways. Because I learned how to incorporate what I learned in Spanish class in my neighborhood, I now without realizing it think about the different ideologies that may be instilled in different places I visit and not just in my neighborhood. Some activities that represent me as an individual and were important to me were the ones we did while learning Spanglish, the meaning of being pocha, and the activities that taught us the history of Spanish speakers in the United States because everything was new and I was very surprised that I didn't know anything about that topic and that they didn't teach us that much in high school. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

In this example Dalia employs relationality and connects many important notions from the class to herself, her community, and larger ideologies and history connected to Spanish in the U.S. As she says, all of this information was new to her—she had not seen her reality reflected in her previous Spanish courses, despite this region of the country

having such a large population of Spanish speakers. In Spanish heritage language education in particular, more attention is being paid to the importance of identity in recent years (Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Leeman, 2015; Showstack, 2012), as well as how language is constructed locally (Pennycook, 2001). Dalia's experience of not seeing her reality reflected in Spanish curricula further highlights this need for place-based instruction that centers students' realities and relational connections. And critical approaches have proven to facilitate learners' knowledge of Spanish's local usage, thus enforcing Spanish as a local rather than "foreign" language (Lado & Quijano, 2020).

Dalia also mentioned how she identified herself in certain class topics such as the meaning of "pocha," Spanglish, and the history of Spanish in the U.S. That is, she saw her identity reflected in the curriculum, and then was able to apply these language ideologies to her neighborhood and the rest of the outside world. Norton (2013) defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 45). Dalia has reflected on all of these elements in the quote above—she now has a multilayered awareness of Spanish in the U.S. in general, a nuanced understanding of related concepts such as "pocha," and a future in which she notices language ideologies within the places she visits.

In another example, Trey's awareness of language practices and associated attitudes grew considerably:

Reflejando en lo que aprendí en este curso en comparación con mis otras clases de español me ha sentido y ha conectado mucho con las actividades porque son ejemplos de español en los Estados Unidos y en California. Actividades de Spanglish por ejemplo me ha representado mucho porque es algo que yo uso para

comunicarme cada día es un forma de lengua que es muy natural en California. La actividad me hizo sentir mejor y no ver el Spanglish como algo malo. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Reflecting on what I learned in this course compared to my other Spanish classes, I felt and connected a lot with the activities because they are examples of Spanish in the United States and in California. Spanglish activities, for example, have represented me a lot because it is something that I use to communicate every day, it is a form of language that is very natural in California. The activity made me feel better and not see Spanglish as something bad. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

He again mentions how he saw his identity reflected in the curriculum, but he hints at previous ideologies he held, those being that Spanglish is “bad.” This passage corroborates recent research highlighting that students come to the classroom with already ingrained language ideologies, but the classroom can provide a productive space for them to engage in reflection of these beliefs (Gasca Jiménez & Andrada-Rafael, 2021; Lado & Quijano, 2020; Leeman & Serafini, 2021). Because CriSoLL gave Trey the space to reflect on his own relationality in regards to Spanish in Southern California and Spanglish, his attitudinal stance of these practices has changed, and he states that he will now see himself, his family, and his community in a more positive way.

Spanish as a Local Language

All of the participants noted in one way or another the importance and relevance of centering locally based Spanish in the curriculum. Alexa, for example, mentioned that:

This class has made me more aware of the local [emphasis in original] Spanish around me as opposed to the Spanish from other countries; I have learned more about the hispanic roots of California and US as a whole. I learned something that relates to me and not just a foreign country. (Alexa, post-project survey, week 10)

Here she explains how content based solely on nations other than the U.S. is not relevant to her life. Trey had a similar sentiment, which he expressed to me in our interview

during week five. He did not consent to being audio recorded on his consent form, so I will paraphrase what he stated from my notes. He described his previous Spanish textbooks which featured plenty of information about other countries, but he did not absorb the information. In our course, he said the information is sticking with him more because it is relevant. In other Spanish courses, he questioned whether or not he would ever apply the knowledge, for example, he said, “What if I never go to Colombia?” He interrogated why he needed to learn all of this information when he is not surrounded by it in his day-to-day life.

Again, Trey and Alexa underscore the fact that Spanish classes that only portray the realities of Spanish language users who reside outside of the U.S. erase and devalue the existence of U.S. speakers. Licata et al. (2023) note that, as a result of this erasure, “Spanish sociolinguistic competence develops in elitist contexts, like study abroad, which is inaccessible to many language learners, ignoring local varieties and the development of communicative ability with local communities” (p. 6). Within this conceptualization, Spanish instruction is framed as a tourist activity (Kubota, 2004) for the purpose of traveling or studying abroad, with language positioned as an “asset” or “resource,” obscuring the processes of racialization of the language and its speakers (Mena & García, 2020). Furthermore, Spanish framed as a “language elsewhere” (Martínez & Train, 2020; Mena & García, 2020) removes the historical, social, and political identities and realities of speakers and emphasizes an “idealized native speaker” who is monolingual, white, and invokes an abstracted standardized language (Higby et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2021). It begs the question: Why do we promote study abroad trips for language learners, yet not

encourage them to explore language in their own local context? In this sense, a focus on local language practices centers actual speakers and their language contexts (see Flores & Rosa, 2023; Hermes, 2016; Leeman, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014, Schwartz, 2023).

It is apparent from the above comments that students are invested in learning about the multitude of ways Spanish is mobilized within local U.S. communities.

However, this entails a shift in how we approach instruction, as Maya details:

El cambio empieza con el cambio en el sistema de educación que está basado en un sistema muy antiguo. La mejor parte de las clases es para asimilar a los estudiantes a una forma de hablar y escribir que se siente es “pura”, pero en realidad, [hablantes de español] no usan lengua como eso. Por ejemplo, el español que yo aprendí en la escuela secundaria es muy diferente al Español que usan en California. Aunque aprendí la gramática que es muy importante, parece como necesito aprender el Español una vez más desde el comienzo para conversar como las personas en la comunidad conversan. (Maya, essay 2, week 7)

The change begins with a change in the education system which is based on a very old system. The major part of the classes is to assimilate students into a way of speaking and writing that feels “pure,” but in reality, [Spanish speakers] don’t use language like that. For example, the Spanish I learned in high school is very different from the Spanish they use in California. Although I learned the grammar which is very important, it seems like I need to learn Spanish again from the beginning to converse like people in the community converse. (Maya, essay 2, week 7)

Maya, as an L2 (additional language) student, considers what a change in the educational system might look like. Our class gave her the opportunity to reflect on her previous Spanish learning experiences, and she feels she might need to “start all over,” erasing the information she learned previously, in order to instead focus on the ways actual people in her community use language. The CriSoLL-based instruction benefitted her as an L2 to make important realizations regarding her language learning process. In this vein, García and Alonso (2021) propose a reflection on

what it would mean if instead of starting with Spanish as a language that is taught as an autonomous entity, we would start with the complex languaging of the people who speak Spanish in the U.S. To integrate visions of Spanish language education, we would need to reconstitute what we have learned to call Spanish in schools, focusing instead on teaching the ways in which the many and different U.S. Latinx perform language, as well as the sociohistorical and sociopolitical reasons for the ways in which Spanish is taught. (p. 115)

The authors' "reconstitution" of what Spanish education entails includes interrogating and problematizing the complex and dynamic language practices of actual language users. This gives students the opportunity to reflect on the many political and historical motivations for constructing certain approaches to Spanish education. Maya's observation aligns with García and Alonso's (2021) proposal in that she recognizes the ideologies of linguistic "purity" and standardization and calls for new approaches that do not "assimilate" students, but instead encourage critical awareness of local language practices. For our course, I was inspired by García and Alonso's (2021) call for examining the actual linguistic practices of U.S. Spanish languagers, and accordingly, I designed the linguistic landscape project.

Local Meaning-Making, Students Authenticating Materials, and Sociolinguistic Justice

By incorporating linguistic landscape research into language instruction, I observed that students in my class were able to engage with the "real world" (see Cenoz and Gorter, 2008; Chesnut et al., 2013; Elola & Prada, 2020; Malinowski, 2015; Rowland, 2013; Sayer, 2009). Because this course took a relational approach, situating ourselves in our own local context, students engaged in their own processes of meaning-making, discovering about themselves, their positions in their communities, and the

linguistic representation in those communities. In this way, they analyzed the linguistic ideologies we learned in class, but also learned to “read” their environments informed by the historical and sociopolitical forces that shaped them (Leeman & Modan, 2009).

What I began to notice with students’ responses was that with a CriSoLL approach, the students were able to negotiate meaning of the materials together through class discussions and activities. Because of this dialogue, and the critical skills they gained through CriSoLL, they began to “authenticate” the materials themselves. They did this through identifying themselves with the material, or conversely, distancing themselves from the material if it did not represent them personally. Although according to Cenoz and Gorter (2008) “the linguistic landscape is authentic, contextualized input which is part of the social context” (p. 274), I considered that the examples students would find might not be necessarily “authentic” for their particular identities and experiences in their communities, thus, the students interpreted their examples from their own point of reference, but informed by the material we saw in class. In this way, students located their own examples of “materials” in their local environments, and then engaged in “authenticating” them in a very personal way specific to their identities and those of their communities. This process looked different for each student.

Through this process of contesting the “authenticity” of the materials, students unpacked certain biases, stereotypes, and connotations of materials. Had it not been for the conversations in class and the critical skills they gained from CriSoLL, they would have run the risk of internalizing the biases and stereotypes of the material. Not only that, but each student independently brought up issues of sociolinguistic justice within their

communities, despite this topic not being an explicit objective of the class, per se. Sociolinguistic justice¹⁶, as defined by Bucholtz et al. (2014) includes four goals: linguistic valorization, linguistic legitimation, linguistic inheritance, linguistic access, and linguistic expertise¹⁷. The systematization of the CriSoLL approach and the sociolinguistic topics related to Spanish in the U.S. gave students the tools to interpret their environments in new ways, which motivated them to want to take action in response to the injustices we learned about and that they noticed in their linguistic landscape projects (see Appendix C for assignment).

For example, Sofia explained the importance of knowing about the dynamics of local language practices so that the linguistic representations in the community could be inclusive of all the residents:

Es importante que tengan un espacio que sea inclusivo para todos en la comunidad. El ambiente tiene que representar a la gente que lo crea. Además, el lenguaje que está presente en nuestra comunidad, como los carteles, arte y otros tipos de expresiones, están incluidos de todos los géneros, razas, etnicidades, edades y orientación sexual. Analizar el lenguaje en nuestra comunidad es fundamental para ver estos dinámicos. (Sofia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

It is important that they have a space that is inclusive for everyone in the community. The environment has to represent the people who it is made up of. Additionally, the language that is present in our community, such as signs, art, and other types of expression, includes all genders, races, ethnicities, ages, and sexual orientations. Analyzing the language in our community is essential to see these dynamics. (Sofia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Here Sofia shows a concern for linguistic access for the community. Through the many examples she found of Spanish in her community, she realized the importance of

¹⁶ See Chapter 5 for the definition of sociolinguistic justice.

¹⁷ See Chapter 5 for a more detailed definition of each element of sociolinguistic justice.

inclusivity within the local landscape—she has pinpointed language as a fundamental aspect of this representation, and her work in the linguistic landscape project, a culmination of our study regarding language ideologies, has made this connection apparent. Not only that, but she observed that other factors such as gender, race, and ethnicity are indeed related to this representation. In fact, other students had similar observations, even though this aspect was not part of the assignment. For example, Emilio recognized a symbolic representation of treatment of Indigenous populations in the city from the placement of a mural:

[E]ntre los edificios hay murales bonitos que representan a los indígenas. Pero, estos murales bonitos están a callejones, y abajo de los pasos de superiores donde están las personas sin hogar...Entonces, el grupo que tiene peores condiciones, los indígenas que está representada entre los edificios, y abajo de los pasos superiores. (Emilio, linguistic landscape, week 11)

[A]mong the buildings there are beautiful murals that represent the Indigenous people. But, these beautiful murals are in alleys, and below the overpasses where the people without houses are.... So, the group that has the worst conditions, the Indigenous people, is represented between the buildings, and below the overpasses. (Emilio, linguistic landscape, week 11)



Figure 5: Emilio's photo of a mural depicting Indigenous populations, mural by Pável Acevedo, downtown Riverside

His criticism of the placement of the mural depicting Indigenous populations (see Figure 5) was that it was tucked away in an area of the city that was less prominent,

where people without permanent homes tend to sleep, and thus was given the “worst conditions” of all the ethnic groups’ representations he found. He interpreted this as symbolic of the viewpoint that the city government holds for Indigenous people. He evokes the historical and current invisibilization of certain ethnic groups in the landscape.

Maya also detected an unequal representation of certain groups in her findings, namely, that there was no indication of linguistic diversity of the many Spanishes in her community:

Lo que yo observe es que la mayoría del español que usan en la comunidad son en español neutral. Aunque hay mucha variedad de español [entre las personas en la comunidad], especialmente español de Chicax que se desarrolló aquí en el sur de los EE.UU., no podía encontrar lo...Las identidades de la comunidad no están reflejadas en los restaurantes, las señales públicas, los pósteres. Se crea una fachada de que todas las personas son Americanas y que la cultura es whitewashed.¹⁸ (Maya, linguistic landscape, week 11)

What I observed is that most of the Spanish found in the community is in neutral Spanish. Although there is a lot of variety of Spanish [among people in the community], especially Chicax Spanish that developed here in the southern US, I couldn't find it....The identities of the community are not reflected in the restaurants, public signs, posters. It creates a facade that all people are Americans and that the culture is whitewashed. (Maya, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Although in this passage Maya equates all “Americans” as white, she claims the local linguistic landscape is “whitewashed,” meaning non-white groups’ contributions and realities have been erased and the linguistic practices of the Spanish-speaking members

¹⁸ The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d) defines whitewashed as, “To distort (history, literature, a narrative) to exclude non-white people; to eschew or erase the representation or depiction of non-white people in (history); to represent (a non-white person) as white. In later use *spec.*: to cast a white performer in a non-white role in (a film, television programme, etc.).”

of the community have been collapsed into just one “neutral” variety of Spanish. She points out issues of linguistic access and linguistic inheritance for the community members who use a variety of styles. Her knowledge of stylistic variation that we analyzed using the CriSoLL approach facilitated her discernment that there are many ways languagers perform language, and these were not represented in the community, despite this area having a large population of Latinx residents, being close to the border with Mexico, and belonging to Mexico in the past. As Bourdieu (1977) argues, “a language is worth what those who speak it are worth” (p. 652), and Maya noticed the discrimination of Spanish speakers that we talked about in class reflected in her local linguistic landscape. The locally based and relational elements of the curriculum, as well as the CriSoLL focus, opened up the possibility for Maya (and the rest of the students) to create meaning and new interpretations of their environments, which inspired them to become invested in sociolinguistic justice.

Dalia saw an issue of sociolinguistic justice, specifically linguistic access and linguistic inheritance, related to how important signs in her community were only in English, which did not represent her understanding of the people who live in her community. In seeing many signs in English in her vicinity, she considered the point of view of the people in her community who did not speak or read English and how this might impact their daily lives:

Tomé unas fotografías cuando salí a caminar alrededor de mi comunidad que pueden representar mucho más de primera vista. Caminando alrededor, me encontré muchos anuncios de reglas que tienen que ser seguidas....Luego empecé a pensar de las personas en mi comunidad que no saben cómo hablar en inglés y mucho menos leer en inglés. Esto es una gran representación de la ideología de

una nación, una lengua...Las imágenes no representan a mi familia o mi grupo cercano porque aunque yo pueda hablar inglés, mis padres y algunos de mis tíos y tías no saben hablar y mucho menos leer en inglés...Tampoco representan a mi comunidad o la comunidad hispanohablante porque en sí mi comunidad casi solo es hispanohablante y es un poco sorprendente que aunque sean casi todos hispanohablantes, que no haya anuncios o letreros en español solo inglés. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

I took some photographs when I went for a walk around my community that can represent much more at first glance. Walking around, I came across many signs for rules that have to be followed....Then I started thinking about the people in my community who don't know how to speak in English, much less read in English. This is a great representation of the ideology of one nation, one language....The images do not represent my family or my close group because although I can speak English, my parents and some of my uncles and aunts do not know how to speak, much less read, in English....They also do not represent my community or the Spanish-speaking community because my community is almost only Spanish-speaking and it is a little surprising that although they are almost all Spanish-speaking, there are no advertisements or signs in Spanish only English. (Dalia, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Not only did Dalia reflect on the one nation-one language ideology in her own local context, but she developed a concern for her fellow community members who are not given linguistic access to important materials such as traffic signs in the neighborhood. She engaged in a process of authenticating the examples of language she found in terms of her family and community and made important realizations about sociolinguistic justice—that for a community with such a large presence of Spanish speakers, there should be more linguistic resources that represent those realities.

Trey, on the other hand, lives in an area bordering the city where the university is located, which also has a large population of Spanish speakers. In Trey's authentication process, however, he found there to be sufficient representation of the linguistic diversity within his community:

Después de analizar mi paisaje lingüístico de mi comunidad y aprendiendo de español en los estados unidos y en california específicamente yo se que tengo mucho de españoles en mi comunidad. En mi comunidad yo encontré mucho español y mucho representando los hispanohablantes que son dominantes en esta área. Usando las ideologías lingüísticas yo aprendí que mi comunidad tiene varios de estos idiomas. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

After analyzing my linguistic landscape of my community and learning about Spanish in the United States and in California specifically, I know that I have a lot of Spanishes in my community. In my community I found a lot of Spanish and a lot representing the Spanish speakers who are dominant in this area. Using linguistic ideologies I learned that my community has several of these languages. (Trey, linguistic landscape, week 11)

He emphasizes many times the various Spanish varieties he encountered, and how he felt the linguistic landscape, for the most part, was indicative of what he knew of the community. He recognized the many stylistic practices of the community by indicating Spanish in the plural, thus demarcating the appropriate representation of linguistic access and inheritance. I want to reiterate here that what was most important in this assignment was that students were able to interpret their environments and authenticate materials for themselves and their own understandings of their communities that they brought with them to the classroom. The concepts learned in class, such as the deconstruction of language ideologies, were tools that aided in their analyses, but their positions as experts of their own communities were always at the forefront. Their identities and experiences within their communities were assets that they already possessed, and we simply expanded their awareness through a systematic study of language phenomena in the local linguistic landscape.

Lastly, Alexa also experienced a shift in her perception of languages in her vicinity. She determined that the linguistic landscape project helped her appreciate the diversity surrounding her:

Reflexionado sobre mi experiencia en mi clase de español y el proceso de escribiendo este ensayo, yo creo que yo aprendí mucho. Yo creo que esta clase ha cambiado como yo pensar y ver los idiomas en mi vida. Yo creo que me ha abierto mis ojos a la importancia de los lenguajes de mi comunidad, especialmente español y otros lenguajes que los personas usan en sus vidas....Yo creo que esta experiencia ha ayudado entender el poder de los idiomas y la importancia de representación de otros lenguajes....Yo creo que esta experiencia ha cambiado el camino que yo interactúo con los idiomas de mi comunidad y me ha hecho agradecer la diversidad cerca me. (Alexa, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Reflecting on my experience in my Spanish class and the process of writing this essay, I believe that I learned a lot. I believe that this class has changed how I think and view languages in my life. I believe that it has opened my eyes to the importance of the languages of my community, especially Spanish and other languages that people use in their lives....I believe that this experience has helped me understand the power of languages and the importance of representation of other languages....I believe that this experience has changed the way I interact with the languages of my community and has made me appreciate the diversity around me. (Alexa, linguistic landscape, week 11)

Here Alexa clearly demonstrates linguistic valorization involving her newfound appreciation of the linguistic diversity in her community. Alexa’s process of applying an analysis based on deconstructing the linguistic ideologies learned in class to her surroundings made her “open her eyes” to the “power of languages,” which supported her in realizing the importance of representation. As a result, her viewpoint of the interactions of languages in her vicinity has changed—she has reflected on her own relationality within her community’s language practices. Elola and Prada (2020), who used a similar critical approach to the linguistic landscape with a mixed university

Spanish class, noted how, “For some participants, (particularly L2 learners), investigating the LL [linguistic landscape] served as a means to discover a reality that, while local, remained hidden to them” (p. 243). This explanation relates to Alexa, who, despite having lived her entire life in Southern California, developed new ways of “reading” her environment and reflecting on her relationship with the Spanish-speaking community.

In students’ excursions to document the examples they chose for their linguistic landscape projects, each student undertook a process of “authenticating” the linguistic representations based on their relational idea of the residents of that community. Some students, such as Sofia, extended this analysis beyond language—according to her, not only is it important that communities represent all linguistic varieties present, but there also needs to be representation of other forms of identification such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. Students also made other observations that went beyond the assignment, noting for example the lack of Indigenous representation in the community. It became apparent that students were invested in improving their communities, which was facilitated by the critical analyses of language that they practiced in class with CriSoLL. This led to a better understanding of their community and their place in it. By going outside of the classroom, they applied the linguistic ideologies they learned in class to our local linguistic landscape, and through that process, they came to important realizations involving what is considered “authentic” for them and for their communities. In analyzing their examples, they explored their own relationality to the local community, and they became invested in sociolinguistic justice.

Student Agency

Following Bucholtz et al. (2018), I view agency as social and relational, and as a way of “act[ing] upon the world” (p. 4). The authors define agency as residing “not in individuals but in actions; it is interactional and hence both linguistic and material; and it is inherently political” (p. 4). They note the relationship of agency to affect, thus referring to these two as what they call “‘affective agency’¹⁹,’ by which we mean the mobilization of social action in and/or through embodied cognition, emotion, and perception” (p. 4). In this section, I will demonstrate how the course facilitated student agency related to their linguistic practices and also enacted the goals of sociolinguistic justice as defined by Bucholtz et al. (2014).

Firstly, Trey felt more confident in his Spanglish after learning about the historical background of Spanish and of contact language phenomena as well as reading about Chicano Spanish and literature through the CriSoLL concept of critical historicity.

He stated:

I think learning about SoCal Spanish will affect my speech practices now learning more of chicanx/latinx culture, it will change the way I speak spanish and Spanglish as well as empower my spanglish. In the future this class will be a reminder of how I look at spanish and other languages now knowing language ideologies and how present they are today. (Trey, post-project survey, week 10)

This passage demonstrates how the course fostered Trey’s sense of linguistic valorization and linguistic legitimation. He shows here how the course strengthened his agency to choose what variety he uses by “affecting his speech practices,” and he has developed more pride in his linguistic choices, exemplified with his feeling of being “empowered”

¹⁹ First coined by Susan McManus (2011, 2013), scholar of feminism, for the political theory field.

with his Spanglish. These results are similar to the ones from Holguín Mendoza et al.'s (2018) study of a critical, content-based course they developed for a mixed classroom. The authors state how “the success of the project is that it not only empowers students to continue studying Spanish (the linguistic goal), but also motivates them to become interested in the interdisciplinary connections that exist between the study of languages and other fields of study (the content goal)” (p. 369; translated verbatim by me from the original Spanish work). In Trey's example, he expresses a future desire to continue studying Spanish (“it will change the way I speak spanish and Spanglish as well as empower my spanglish”) and a desire to connect that understanding interdisciplinarily (“knowing language ideologies and how present they are today”).

Similarly, Emilio has found a new dedication to studying language perceptions and linguistic terrorism. Additionally, Emilio's renewed confidence in his Spanish skills helped him to accept his California Spanish and view it in a positive light, as he states in his post-project survey:

I think this information helps me to embrace the speech practices and styles, especially Spanish, that I've adopted from living in this area, and in California in general. . . .[E]mbracing the “flaws” of my Spanish and understanding my Spanish speaking has helped to encourage me to speak more and has helped me to make tons of progress. I think this class will help me to understand the different perceptions of language and better recognize malpractices like linguistic terrorism. (Emilio, post-project survey, week 10)

In this excerpt, Emilio expresses his acceptance of his “flaws,” which I interpret to mean the insecurities involved with attempting to be an “authentic” language user that he described at the beginning of the course. Having explored the various aspects of Spanish in the U.S. using the CriSoLL elements, Emilio gained a new sense of belonging to the

local area, which helped him open up to speak more Spanish confidently in his daily life, a sign of linguistic legitimation. This passage also expresses linguistic expertise since he acknowledges his capabilities and the importance of the local Spanish varieties.

Academically, Emilio became more engaged with the material as the quarter went on, participating more and more in class discussions. His participation and questions in class showed a passion for sociolinguistic justice and a desire to learn more about issues of linguistic representation in his community. He was so excited about his final paper that he even asked me if I knew anywhere he could submit his essay for publication.

Finally, Sofia asserted her agency and interest in sociolinguistic justice with a newfound confidence in her ability to express her opinions:

I believe this class made me think about language more critically than before and showed me patterns that are hard to unsee now. In addition, this class helped me develop critical thinking skills in Spanish. Past classes only asked questions that could easily be found in the text. Developing your own arguments in the language you're learning is important and it will allow you to be more confident and free while practicing the language. (Sofia, post-project survey, week 10).

Sofia's perspective of language has changed ("showed me patterns that are hard to unsee now") and she now views languages more critically. This project not only strengthened students' confidence and pride in their language choices, but it also opened up new ways of viewing the world and their local environments, thus igniting a passion for sociolinguistic justice.

Similar to the results of the critical approach to the linguistic landscape from Elola and Prada (2020) within a mixed university Spanish class, both SHL (Spanish heritage language) and L2 (additional language learner) students benefited from the

instructional approach by seeing their environments in new ways. Not only that, but the CriSoLL elements supported students in developing reflexivity regarding their positions in their communities and larger society, which led to them developing their own sense of agency and sociolinguistic justice. Reflexivity in this context can be described as “the opportunity to locate one’s self-position and make sense of one’s personal experiences in society” (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). Through the focus on CriSoLL to analyze their local communities, students indeed reflected on their position in society, and this resulted in their motivation to become agents of change in their local communities.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Language is one of the ways in which White supremacy remains largely unchallenged in the context of U.S. ethnically and racially diverse Spanish-speaking communities.

(Sánchez-Martín & Gonzales, 2022, p. 74)

While standard or prestige variety acquisition has been the main focus of many traditional Spanish language teaching models, there are pedagogical alternatives that support the development of critical literacy wherein students analyze language ideologies and power dynamics (e.g., Beaudrie & Loza, 2022; Boyero Agudo, 2023; Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Licata et al., 2023; Martínez & Train, 2020). Furthermore, scholars and educators have called for language learning approaches that focus on locally based language practices (e.g., Flores & Rosa, 2023; Hermes, 2016; Leeman, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014) as a way of resisting the view of Spanish as a “foreign” language (e.g., Martínez & Train, 2020; Schwartz, 2023) and drawing attention to the actual language practices of multilingual communities in the U.S. (e.g., García & Alonso, 2021). By employing the four elements of Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy (CriSoLL) (critical language awareness; stylistic language practices and the symbolic power of language; literacy regarding social dynamics and racial relations; and critical historicity), with a focus on authentic materials portraying local language practices of Southern California, this qualitative teacher action research has responded to the call for action in terms of racial and sociolinguistic justice in Linguistics (Charity Hudley et al., 2020; Leonard, 2020) and language learning (Von Esch et al., 2020; Cho, 2018; Rosa & Flores, 2017, Baker-Bell, 2020).

The first research question looked at the role of authentic materials on student learning when employing CriSoLL. I found that the CriSoLL approach was a systematic way to cover the necessary angles when examining language dynamics. CriSoLL provided the comprehensive context that supported students in seeing the “total linguistic fact” (Silverstein, 1985) and their own relationality with the local linguistic community. CriSoLL’s effectiveness in this study for developing critical language awareness and critical literacy in a mixed classroom corroborates with the recommendation of many scholars and educators for the centering of critical approaches in language teaching (e.g., Alim, 2005; Beaudrie & Loza, 2022; Cho, 2018; Correa, 2016; Beaudrie et al., 2019; Del Valle, 2014; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018; Kubota, 2004; Leeman, 2005, 2014, 2018; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Magro, 2016; Martínez, 2003a; Villa, 2003).

Accordingly, the CriSoLL focus gave students the necessary tools and spaces to negotiate the “authentic” component of the materials. According to Freire (1970), learning is based on the learner’s identities, experiences in the world, and their questions and aspirations for the future, and this study reinforced this personal connection and autonomy when navigating our own linguistic realities. With this in mind, my view of authentic materials has changed—I have realized that the “authenticity” of a resource is less important than the critical engagement that the students and I do with the material. As Shenk (2007) notes, “More recently scholars have moved away from essentializing their own beliefs about authenticity and toward recognizing speakers’ authenticating practices, focusing on authenticity as an ideology that is central to speakers” (p. 195).

Thus, by using “authentic” materials that reflected U.S. and Southern California local varieties, which included students’ examples in their linguistic landscapes, the class and I were able to authenticate the materials for ourselves. To the best of their abilities, the students commented on the linguistic aspects of the materials, explaining if they were relevant to their communities and experiences. As a class, we became more critically aware of local stylistic language practices and their symbolic meaning. Also, by analyzing examples of U.S. Spanish using the language ideologies we learned in class, students’ responses to the assignments and surveys showed a change in their attitudinal stances reflecting a change in their awareness of the linguistic dynamics of their local environments. Because of these new perspectives students gained, they felt empowered to take action in their communities towards sociolinguistic justice.

Further, this study brought attention to the raciolinguistic ideologies involved in choosing “authentic” materials for the Spanish-language higher education class. Given the fact that so little U.S. Spanish is represented in Spanish textbooks (Al Masaeed, 2014), authentic materials are vital resources for educators to incorporate more examples of locally based language. However, one must be cautious in what materials are chosen to be “authentic” since one could easily exclude certain forms for being considered “nonstandard” stigmatized forms (e.g., *haiga*, see Martínez, 2003). If we are to truly respond to the call from scholars and educators to incorporate local, community language forms (e.g., García & Alonso, 2021; Martínez & Train, 2020; Schwartz, 2023), and work towards sociolinguistic justice for multilingual communities in the U.S., we must incorporate the actual varieties found within these communities in the curriculum and not

relegate them solely to so-called “informal” contexts. But that alone is not sufficient—there needs to be deep discussions that deconstruct the ideologies associated with why certain varieties are marginalized. Examining the local language examples without the necessary context regarding the historical, social, and political factors related to language hierarchies will inevitably fall short if the students are not introduced to frameworks such as CriSoLL to analyze language patterns themselves in a comprehensive way, situated in historical and current raciolinguistic ideologies indicative of larger structures of oppression in society.

The tendency for language instructors to want to provide solely these types of “authentic” representations through linguistic landscape projects reflects a very narrow and limited view of the relationship between language and other social practices. However, an Indigenous relational epistemology (Hermes et al., 2012) stresses the various interconnections in one’s interactions rather than viewing language as a separate, disembodied entity. Davis (2017) conceptualizes this separation as “linguistic extraction,” or the “defining, analysing, and representing languages and people connected to them separately from the complex socio-historical, political, and deeply personal contexts in which they actually occur” (p. 40). I argue, then, that using an activity such a linguistic landscape project as a way to expose students to “authentic” or “real world” examples of language use, without comprehensive discussions of the four elements of CriSoLL and the inclusion of a means for students to analyze the examples (e.g., linguistic ideologies within particular contexts) is indeed a type of linguistic extraction.

Therefore, engaging a CriSoLL approach to instruction and to authentic materials involves a content-based or project-based focus, and requires the deep analysis that accompanies the situating of language practices within social and racial hierarchies. However, shifting our ways of teaching language away from the dominant focus on form approaches entails a “reconstitution” (García & Alonso, 2021; Valdés, 2017) of Spanish language education, where the emphasis is placed on conveying the various ways in which diverse U.S. Latinx communities use language, along with the sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors that influence the teaching of Spanish (García & Alonso, 2021). Within this framing, the development of language proficiency and communicative competence cannot be the unitary goal, an idea I will discuss further in the next section.

Returning to my second research question which looked at students’ attitudes and perceptions towards learning Spanish with the CriSoLL approach, I received many student responses. I explained these in detail in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, but they can be succinctly summarized in three main ideas: 1) students want to study in a relaxed environment where they can feel comfortable and that they belong in the classroom, 2) they want to be able to apply their learning to their local context, and 3) they enjoy learning and demonstrate engagement when the curriculum incorporates ways they can take action towards sociolinguistic justice. That being so, it is our responsibility as educators to create that safe space where students feel they have a community of respect and collaboration. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the heritage students in this study struggled considerably in their previous Spanish classes and in their lives due to feelings of linguistic insecurity in Spanish. Unfortunately, many of their instructors only

reinforced these feelings by marking down their grade for not knowing certain grammar rules or where to place a written accent mark. Their identities and assets were absent from the curriculum, and this was not an environment conducive to their learning and growth as human beings. Further, the institution of the school, acting as white listening subject, played a role in two Spanish heritage language (SHL) students' feelings of linguistic insecurity in Spanish by evaluating their academic competency only through their English skills. In these cases, the students were not given the opportunity to develop their literacy in Spanish, and in fact, one student decided to stop speaking Spanish, thus severing the tie with his home and community language. The L2s (additional language learners) also expressed their dissatisfaction with certain Spanish classroom practices and disdain for grammar-based approaches. They did not want to be corrected for their "mistakes" in the classroom; they wanted content-based instruction that incorporated topics such as history of Spanish in the U.S. and sociolinguistics to give them a broad understanding of Spanish language practices in the U.S.

For this course, I achieved a more inclusive and comfortable space through community-building activities and specific assignments centered on students' experiences. I recommend that community-building exercises extend beyond the first day of class and should be implemented throughout the course. This could be as simple as a game of human bingo (e.g., find someone who plays a musical instrument) or a warm-up question when they walk in (ask a classmate what their favorite restaurant is and why and then share recommendations with the group). This establishes connection and community so students feel comfortable sharing their experiences in the reflection assignments. As

described in Chapter 6, students experienced anxiety in terms of being corrected, and heritage students in particular brought with them linguistic insecurities from the “abyssal thinking” (García et al., 2021) and “linguistic terrorism” (Anzaldúa, 1987) they experienced both within and outside classroom walls. Educators, then, should be mindful of these past traumas and attempt to not re-ignite them. In a response from Hermes (2016) regarding teaching Ojibwe language classes, the author mentions specific strategies to address historical and intergenerational trauma evoked from the long history of linguistic genocide in Indigenous communities. The author explains that

[t]he starting places for learning to teach and reclaim indigenous languages, Ojibwe in my case, are intentionally working against re-stimulating the pain of boarding schools. In recognition of and contradiction to this, I use humor, games, singing, and movement to teach Ojibwe. This helps break down the barrier that is created by the fear of failing. (Hermes, 2016, p. 574)

This “fear of failing” was a very real concern for both SHL and L2 students in this study, but the fear was more salient among heritage students who carried with them familial pressures, previous and current deficit ideologies, and discourses of “authentication” in terms of their ethnic and linguistic identities (see Chapter 6). When working through these emotions, and also learning about complex topics such as linguistic discrimination in class, students could also use more “lighthearted” and ludic activities to reinforce the “safe” space while still making learning enjoyable.

Likewise, students’ comments regarding their ideal Spanish classes (see Chapter 6) underscored the need to rethink grading practices so they do not feel nervous about losing points due to “mistakes” in their speaking or writing. This type of grading practice based on points and percentages may not adequately assess learning and may even have a

negative impact on students' drive to learn, according to research (Cain et al., 2022). The CriSoLL Can-Dos, however, reflect a type of student self-assessment wherein learners are empowered to evaluate their own progress while developing their metacognitive skills (Holguín Mendoza & Sánchez-Walker, 2024). Further, there have been efforts such as ungrading (Blum, 2020) to redesign grading schemes, and there are many ways to utilize ungrading in the classroom to different degrees, such as scaffolding assignments using completion grades or providing ample feedback through various drafts, and then only grading the final result after students have had many chances to incorporate the instructor feedback. In terms of correcting students' "mistakes," instructors might consider refraining from correcting students in class, instead giving mini lessons per students' requests.

Relational Approaches

During the academic year 2019-2020 at our institution, Latinx/Chicanx students comprised just under 40% of the population, most of them Spanish heritage speakers (Holguín Mendoza et al., 2022). Yet, of the students who graduated that year, only 1% of them were Spanish majors (Holguín Mendoza et al., 2022). Furthermore, the most recent Modern Language Association (MLA) report noted a 16% drop in enrollment for languages other than English (Lusin et al., 2023, p. 5). Spanish enrollment dropped by 18% (Lusin et al., 2023, p. 5). However, some programs have had success despite the overall downward trend in enrollment nationwide, and one of the elements of success for these courses was the application of students' learning to real-world situations. For example, the report found that "providing opportunities to interact with local

communities motivates students and improves their language skills” (Lusin et al., 2023, p. 3; see also Holguín Mendoza, 2018). Thus, it is crucial to explore alternative approaches that better suit students’ needs while also addressing and unpacking the complex ideologies associated with language stigmatization.

As discussed in Chapter 3, “communicative competence” is not appropriate as the one and only goal for language instruction because it is a concept that ignores the processes of racialization of speakers and overrepresents the human as white (Flores & Rosa, 2023). The idea of competence has frequently been assumed to be a universal human ability, all the while perpetuating the view of certain students as “linguistically inferior” (Flores & Rosa, 2023, p. 273). In other words, “[applied linguistics’] continued reliance on competence equated with normative whiteness as a universalizing human capacity has deceptively reproduced the stigmatization of racialized language practices and populations” (Flores & Rosa, 2023, p. 274).

This crucial observation highlights how language instruction has the possibility to be framed by other concepts such as relational accountability. Within this theorization, students’ personal goals and connections to languages and communities are at the forefront. In this way, “Rather than a cognitive system of rules for making ‘good’ sentences, language can be viewed as a right, a connection to ancestors, a means for expressing cultural truths, a way to speak and listen to land, and a tool for communicating with loved ones” (Chew et al., 2023, p. 769). This relational conceptualization aligns with the call by other scholars and educators to value and center the languages and knowledge systems that are prevalent in students’ families and communities (e.g., de los Ríos, 2019,

2022; Flores & Rosa, 2023; García et al., 2021; González et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). In this particular course, students' identities and experiences were viewed as assets, and students demonstrated a development in their vocabulary related to how they articulate the language practices in their local environments.

A relational approach intrinsically places students' identities and experiences at the forefront, thereby attending more to their socioaffective needs. A focus on students' wellbeing was a major theme in this research and is an area that deserves more attention in language curricula. However, feeling comfortable and represented in the classroom is not enough—students need to develop critical consciousness and literacy regarding language practices and how certain varieties become stigmatized. Imagine, for example, Trey's experience being labeled as a “no sabo” kid in the context of a Spanish course taught solely from a textbook that did not include U.S. Spanish or any of the CriSoLL elements.

Therefore, knowledge-building must also be situated relationally within the local context (see Chapter 7). Flores and Rosa (2023) assert that “a locally crafted approach [to language instruction] would begin with, build on, and extend the linguistic aspirations, goals, and practices of US Latinxs” (p. 288). Indeed, the locally based approach is an excellent starting point, and the CriSoLL elements contribute the proper context to understand dominant ideologies related to language and social hierarchies and to develop critical literacy. But, in recognizing Spanish as a local rather than “foreign” language, it is crucial to interrogate the larger social forces that placed Spanish as “foreign” to begin with, despite the long history of Spanish in this region (Lozano, 2018). In engaging with

the local linguistic landscape, informed by the CriSoLL elements, students discovered that there is no validity to the claim of Spanish as a “foreign” language since they were all able to find and analyze examples of Spanish in their local context. Not only that, but they “authenticated” the examples according to their own experiences in their communities, drawing connections between local language practices and dominant language ideologies. Additionally, the course structure provided them the opportunity to reassess the ideologies they already held and form new perspectives of language, themselves, their communities, and even their language learning process. This experience inspired them to reflect on sociolinguistic justice and ways they can promote sociolinguistic justice in their own communities.

Future Explorations

As I have shown, linguistic landscape projects offer many opportunities for relational learning when employed with CriSoLL. There are several more possible approaches to the linguistic landscape that I did not have time for in our ten-week course; however, it would be enriching to include more readings and lessons regarding raciolinguistic ideologies (e.g., Rosa & Flores, 2017) and intersectionality (e.g., Crenshaw, 1991) and explore connections between languages and (dis)ability, gender, sexuality, among others. Another possible exploration that is more inclusive of the visually impaired is a “linguistic soundscape” project (Scarvaglieri et al., 2013) which explores the sounds of language (i.e., what languages are used and for what purpose) in urban areas. Similarly, students may opt to interview community members such as Latinx business owners in order to hear their stories, backgrounds, and processes of getting their

businesses established in the community. Fostering these community connections and building new relationships can make learning more meaningful, and instructors should adapt the project to fit their contexts and their students' particular needs and interests.

Chew et al. (2023) explain, “[T]o be sustainable, language learning and teaching must nurture wellbeing and joy through pedagogies that are embodied, relational, and connected to what matters to people” (p. 782). There is much more to be explored in terms of offering a space where our students can receive the dignity they deserve while also learning new ways to interpret their realities. The “spiral” and self-reflective nature of action research is ongoing and never complete. Thus, my learning journey does not stop here—this is but one example of the constant process of critical reflection necessary to examine my own perspectives and practices as an educator committed to sociolinguistic justice.

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Appendix A

Language Background Questionnaire

Adapted from Holguin Mendoza, Higby, Venegas, & Boyero Agudo, In Press

Name: _____

Demographic information

Age (in years)

Gender

- Female
 - Male
 - Other/Non-binary
 - Do not wish to disclose
-

Are you Hispanic/Latinx?

- Yes
- No

How do you identify racially? Select all that apply.

- Indigenous
- Black or African American
- East Asian
- Southeast Asian
- South Asian
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Mixed race
- Other. Please specify:

- Decline to answer



Family background

Please provide the information below regarding the following family members when you were growing up (e.g., mother, father):

	Role (mother, father, aunt, grandmother, etc.)	Language(s) they use to speak to you	Language(s) you use to speak to them	Country of birth
Primary caretaker				
Secondary caretaker				
Other caretaker (if applicable)				

Education & Occupation

Please list the highest level of education completed for each of the following people (elementary school, middle school, high school, GED, trade school (auto repair cosmetology), associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral or advanced degree, other):

	You	Your spouse	Primary caretaker	Secondary caretaker
Education				

Please list each person's primary occupation(s):

	Your spouse	Primary caretaker	Secondary caretaker	You
Occupation				

Immigration and travel

Please indicate the countries or regions outside of Southern California where you have lived, studied, or traveled to for more than 1 month, your length of stay (cumulative if multiple visits), your age(s) when traveling there.

Country or region	Length of stay (cumulative)	Your age(s) at the time of travel

You or your immediate family (e.g., your parents, siblings) may have moved to the U.S. from another country. Even if you never lived there, we would consider the place where your family moved from to be your "country of heritage." What is your country of heritage?

- The United States
- Another country (please name):

Please specify how often you visit your country of heritage.

- 3 or more times a year
 - Twice a year
 - Once a year
 - Once every 2-3 years
 - Once every 3-5 years
 - Less than once every 5 years
 - I have never visited my country of heritage
-

General linguistic background

Please list the names of all of the languages that you know. Enter them in chronological order (language 1 is the first language you learned, language 2 is the second language you learned, etc). If you speak fewer than 5 languages, leave blank the fields that do not apply.

	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	Language 4	Language 5
Name					

Please specify your **current level** of proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding speech in each language using the following options (please write the name of each language you know in the first column):

- 0. None
- 1. Very low
- 2. Low
- 3. Fair
- 4. Slightly less than adequate
- 5. Adequate
- 6. Slightly more than adequate
- 7. Good
- 8. Very good
- 9. Excellent
- 10. Native-like

Name of language	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Understanding

Using the same 0-10 scale as the previous question above, please specify your **highest level** of proficiency you have achieved in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding speech in each language (please write the name of each language you know in the first column):

Name of language	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Understanding

For each language, enter an age for each statement. If you never learned to read in one of your languages, enter NA. Please write the name of each language you know in the first column.

Name of language	Age when you were first exposed to this language	Age when you began reading in this language

Please check the places where you learned each language you know. Check all that apply. Please write the name of each language you know in the first column.

Name of language	Home or family	Community	Church	Media (movies or music)	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	Language school

In the first two columns, tell us what languages you primarily heard and used throughout different stages of your life (across all contexts: home, school, etc). In the second two columns, estimate what percent of time English and Spanish was used (by different people) in your home.

	Language you HEARD the most	Language you SPOKE the most	Percent of time Spanish was used in your home	Percent of time English was used in your home	Where you lived (city, country)
Birth to 5 years old					
5-10 years old					
10-15 years old					
15 years old to present					

Did you take Spanish language classes in high school or college?

- No, I have not taken any Spanish language classes.
- Yes, I took Spanish foreign language classes for LESS THAN 1 year.
- Yes, I took Spanish foreign language classes for 1 year or more.
- Yes, I took Spanish classes for heritage/native Spanish speakers for LESS THAN 1 year.
- Yes, I took Spanish classes for heritage/native Spanish speakers 1 year or more.
- Other (specify) _____

Some people grow up in households where they act as language brokers. Language brokers are bilingual children of immigrants who often help other members of the family and/or friends to communicate by translating.

Were/are you a language broker for your family members?

- Yes
- No

Were/are you a language broker for your friends/classmates?

- Yes
- No

I am interested in the language(s) you may have heard frequently in your community, but outside of your home, regardless of whether you actually know the language(s). For

example, when you are visiting local stores, businesses, and places of entertainment, what languages(s) are usually spoken?

Community language(s) while you were growing up

Community language(s) in your current community

Interactional context and literacy

How often do you use your languages in these contexts? Please use the following options (please write the name of each language you know in the first column):

1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Sometimes
4. Never
5. Not applicable

Name of language	With friends	With family	At church	At work	At school

How often do you do the following activities in each of the languages you know? Please write the name of each language you know in the first column and use the following options:

1. Every day
2. Several times a week
3. A few times a month
4. A few times a year
5. Less than once a year
6. Never

Name of language	Watching TV/Movies	Reading for pleasure	Messaging (texting, online)	Using social media	Writing e-mails or papers

Reading habits

How often do you read materials in Spanish (including books, articles, etc.)?

- Every day
 - A few times a week
 - A few times a month
 - A few times a year
 - I never read in Spanish
-

How often do you read materials in English (including books, articles, etc.)?

- Every day
 - A few times a week
 - A few times a month
 - A few times a year
 - I never read in English
-

What types of materials have you read in Spanish?

- Books/novels
 - Comic books
 - Magazine/newspaper articles
 - Academic/school materials
 - Blog posts
 - Other (specify)
-

What types of materials have you read in English?

- Books/novels
 - Comic books
 - Magazine/newspaper articles
 - Academic/school materials
 - Blog posts
 - Other (specify)
-

Code-switching

Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages during a conversation.

An example would be something like this: "I was walking to class, y me encontré that cute guy from class, so I smiled at him."

Assess the degree to which following statements are representative of your code switching language experience across different contexts. Select one choice for each statement

	Select one								
	1 - Never	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 - Always
When I talk to certain people, I use more than one language with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to switch languages during a conversation (for example, I switch from English to Spanish and vice versa).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I mix languages within one word (e.g., I blend a Spanish and English word into one).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>I do not realize when I switch the language during a conversation or when I mix the two languages. I only realize it if I am informed by another person in the conversation.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>When I switch languages, I do it consciously.</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Does it bother you when you hear other Spanish-English bilinguals mixing the languages in the same conversation or in the same sentence?

- Yes, it bothers me.
- No, it doesn't bother me.

Explain how you chose your answer to the last question.

Do you think that code-switching is important for your identity?

Language learning

How good do you think you are at language learning in the following contexts?

	1 - Really Poor	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Really Good
Conversational skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading and writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning new words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning slang words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning to pronounce words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning the grammatical rules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Cultural affiliation

Please name the cultures with which you identify. On a scale from zero to ten, please rate the extent to which you identify with each culture. (Examples of possible cultures are American, Hispanic, Chicano, Jewish, etc.)

Name of culture (please write)	0 – No identification	1 --Low identification	2	3 – Moderate identification	4	5 – High identification
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Language emotionality

What language do you prefer to use when you...

- are feeling tired? _____
- are very angry? _____
- are incredibly happy?

- do simple arithmetic (counting, adding, etc.)?

- are thinking? _____
- write yourself a note?

Is it important to you to maintain your Spanish skills?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Why?

Speaking:

Select the choice which most closely approximates your ability to accomplish the following.

	Spanish					English				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy
I can give a short speech for a family party, etc.										
I can speak of my expectations or experiences at job interviews (e.g. working hours, work experience, etc.)										
I can describe my present job, studies, or other activities accurately and in detail.										
I can give a formal 10-minute presentation in class or at work.										
I can state a position on a controversial topic (birth control, environmental pollution) and support it with examples and reasons.										

Listening:

Select the choice which most closely approximates your ability to accomplish the following.

	Spanish					English				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy
When given instructions from teachers and other people, I can understand what is required of me.										
I can understand news broadcasts on the radio.										
I can understand the content of TV shows and movies.										
I can follow group discussions when I participate in meetings at work or school.										
I can understand the general content of speeches given on themes I am concerned about.										

Reading:

Select the choice which most closely approximates your ability to accomplish the following.

	Spanish					English				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy
I can understand the main storyline of written short stories.										
I can understand the main ideas of academic/technical texts on topics I am concerned about.										
I can read popular novels, newspapers or magazines without using a dictionary.										
I can read novels, understanding the feelings of the characters and the story line.										
I can understand the main points of articles on politics, economics, etc. in newspapers or on websites.										

Writing:

Select the choice which most closely approximates your ability to accomplish the following.

	Spanish					English				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy	Very difficult	Difficult	Somewhat difficult	Easy	Very easy
I can write letters and e-mails to apologize or express appreciation to people.										
I can briefly write about familiar topics such as my family and town.										
I can write about my events I have experienced and my impressions about them.										
I can write a summary of the story line of a book I have read or a movie I have seen recently.										
I can write an academic essay of at least 10 pages.										

Do you have any feedback for us or comments on any of your answers?

Thank you!!!

Appendix B
Pre- and Post-Project Survey

To complete at the **beginning** of the study:

1. What do you know about the types of Spanish spoken in Southern California? What would you like to know?

2. What would an ideal Spanish class look like for you? What topics would be discussed? What kinds of activities would you like to see? Any other input you would give Spanish programs in general?

To complete at the **end** of the study:

1. Given all that we have learned throughout the quarter regarding SoCal Spanish, how do you think this information can apply to your own speech practices? You wrote a sociolinguistic history at the beginning of the quarter detailing your past language experiences and how they have influenced you, but knowing what you know now, has anything changed? How do you think this class will influence your future language practices and how you think of language?

2. What would an ideal Spanish class look like for you? What topics would be discussed? What kinds of activities would you like to see? Any other input you would give Spanish programs in general?

Appendix C

Linguistic Landscape Project



Final project: Linguistic landscape

Due June 7 11:59 PM on Canvas

What varieties of Spanish do you see in your community? What does this mean for you and the people who live there? Let's investigate! Our final project is a linguistic landscape of the neighborhoods where we live or spend a lot of our time. You will choose an area you would like to study, whether it be the neighborhood where you live, a place where you work, or the area you spend most of your time. There are 3 steps to this project:

Step 1

Take a tour of this area, walking around and capturing images of examples of Spanish (or important signs that LACK Spanish!). These can be signs, restaurants, murals, buildings, graffiti, or anything you find relevant for analysis. Take 8-10 photos (due Thurs. May 26).

Step 2: Group presentation (10% of final grade)

In week 9 during class, you will work in groups to analyze your photos. Each person should share their 8-10 photos with the group. However, your group may choose to only analyze some of the photos (the group must analyze at least 5). Your group will analyze the photos, noting their purpose, function, and any common patterns among the photos. Try to classify them based on their function, and analyze them as a group by answering the following questions:

1. Surface level: What language is represented (standard Spanish, Spanglish)? What colors are there? What is the design? What types of imagery? Who made the signs? Who are they for?
2. Function: What is the function of the signs? Are they informational? To attract possible clients? To introduce a service? Educational?
3. Meaning: What is the sociolinguistic significance of the signs? If they are in Spanish, is the Spanish inclusive of the community varieties? If in Spanglish, why is that relevant for the community? If there is English and Spanish, are they both the same size? Is one above the other? What do the images or colors represent?
4. Critical level: Is a certain language or community NOT represented? Why or why not? What does this mean for the communities who live there? Considering that over 25% of California residents speak Spanish, and 39% of L.A. county residents speak Spanish at home, how is that reflected in the linguistic landscapes of your neighborhoods?
5. Organize these preliminary findings in a PowerPoint which your group will present to the class during week 10.

Appendix C

Linguistic Landscape Project



Final project: Linguistic landscape

Due June 7 11:59 PM on Canvas

Step 3: Individual report (20% of final grade) (4-5 pages, double-spaced, 1,000 words minimum)

What do the images represent for you and your community? You will synthesize your findings in a written report. You should include the following information:

1. Short introduction: Explain the process of developing the project from the early stages. Include the focus of your paper (what are the main points you are making?), problems you encountered and how you solved them, and lay out the structure of your paper.
2. Include the pictures you took. Describe them and how they represent the area of analysis you explored. Find patterns. Do the images represent you as an individual? Does they represent your family, friends, or immediate circle? Do you think they represent the community? The Spanish-speaking community?
3. Make sure to connect your arguments and descriptions with the readings and discussions from class. Connect your analysis to 2-3 language ideologies or concepts we studied in class. Remember to explain the language ideology or concept and cite the source.
4. Reflect on this entire process, including the linguistic landscape and what you learned about Spanish in the U.S./SoCal. How did the linguistic landscape project help you understand the larger language practices associated with Spanish in the U.S.?
5. Reflect on your learning experiences. Think about your experiences in this Spanish class and your previous ones. What types of instruction or activities represent you as an individual?
6. Provide a brief conclusion with the main take-aways from your experience working with the local linguistic landscape.
7. You may choose to do an essay or other creative format (oral presentation of at least 5 minutes, picture book, blog/vlog, news story, or another format of your choosing). Just make sure to include all of the required information above. If you choose to use a format other than the essay, please contact me for approval prior to starting the project so I can give you more guidance as far as the format and how to turn it in.

*Activity adapted from I. Elola and J. Prada "Developing Critical Sociolinguistic Awareness Through Linguistic Landscapes in a Mixed Classroom: The Case of Spanish in Texas"

Appendix D

Interview Questions

The following are interview questions I will ask each student in a one-on-one interview in my private office. The interviews will take place at the beginning and at the end of the term. They will be audio recorded and then promptly transcribed using pseudonyms. After transcription, the recordings will subsequently be destroyed. Although these questions are pre-prepared, I would like the interview to resemble an informal conversation, with the main goal of assessing students' prior experiences with Spanish classes and why they are learning the language. Secondly, I would like to assess their motivation to continue learning Spanish, both before the study period and after.

- Why are you learning Spanish?
- What has been your experience learning Spanish so far (both inside and outside the classroom)?
- What topics are you interested in learning in Spanish class?
- What have your Spanish classes taught you about the Spanish-speaking world (culture, politics, history, etc.)?
- Do you plan to continue taking Spanish classes at the university? Explain.

Appendix E

Sociolinguistic History Essay

REDACCIÓN 1

Mi historia sociolingüística

Due Thursday, April 14 by 11:59 PM

Turn in on Canvas (see rubric on Canvas assignment)

Use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, 1-inch margins

Escribe un ensayo breve (2-3 páginas double-spaced), en relación con tus propias experiencias hablando uno o más idiomas en tu vida. Puedes seguir algunas o todas las preguntas a continuación para organizar las ideas de las que deseas hablar en tu redacción.

¿Qué idiomas hablas?

¿Cuándo aprendiste a hablar el/los idioma(s) que usas?

¿Hablas un dialecto en particular o una variedad de un idioma?

¿Cuáles idiomas escuchaste o escuchas en tu vecindario?

¿Qué significa para vos este idioma o idiomas?

¿Cuáles crees que son algunas de las ventajas de ser bilingüe o multilingüe?

¿Crees que hay otras ventajas de hablar más de un idioma además de las ventajas económicas?

¿Qué palabras o frases son especialmente importantes para ti, por tu identidad sociolingüística (región, género, grupo social, generación, etc.)?

¿Crees que tu personalidad cambia según los idiomas que utilizas?

¿Crees que puedes usar un idioma mejor que el otro? ¿Depende del contexto?

¿Mezcla idiomas? ¿En qué contextos? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

¿Crees que los lenguajes que usas se afectan entre sí?

¿Cómo ha cambiado tu identidad sociolingüística después de aprender un idioma o idiomas en la escuela (incluida la universidad)?

¿Has sentido discriminación sociolingüística por las lenguas o variedades de lengua que utilizas?

¿Dónde y cuándo has sufrido discriminación sociolingüística?

¿Lo has experimentado en la escuela?

¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de los idiomas que usas? ¿Tienes un poema, canción o literatura favorita?

*Actividad adoptada de Claudia Holguín Mendoza



Appendix F

Sociolinguistic History Video



My sociolinguistic history video

DUE THURS. APR 28 BY 11:59 PM ON FLIPGRID
3-5 MINUTES

We will be making a video version of redacción 1: my sociolinguistic history. You may choose to focus your video on your Spanish/Spanglish journey. You may add in additional information that wasn't originally in your sociolinguistic history, but this is not required. In your video, you should include images and/or video. These can be stock images you find online or personal photos. You should add in your narration as you show the images/videos. You may use Spanish/Spanglish. There are several ways to do this: you can use a video editing software such as iMovie or you can create a PowerPoint presentation with the images and start your own Zoom meeting, adding in your voice narration as you share your screen and record.

Here is an example of Stephanie Alvarez's Spanglish story:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BWkpj7sabk.

You will submit your video to FlipGrid [here](#). The video is worth 10% of your final grade. You will then view 4 of your classmates' videos and leave comments on them (minimum one minute each). You can comment on what you found interesting, things you have in common, or anything else that is relevant to their video. Please submit your comments Thursday, May 5 by 11:59 PM. The comments are worth 5% of your final grade.



Appendix G

Essay 2

REDACCIÓN 2

MI COMUNIDAD [VA A SER] PLURICULTURAL

DUE THURSDAY, MAY 12 BY 11:59 PM
TURN IN ON CANVAS (SEE RUBRIC ON CANVAS)
USE 12 PT FONT, TIMES NEW ROMAN, 1-INCH MARGINS
3-4 PAGES, DOUBLE SPACED PLUS IMAGES (MINIMUM 800 WORDS)

Vamos a investigar las imágenes que encontramos en nuestras comunidades. Vas a buscar ejemplos de español que encontrás en la comunidad donde vivís. Prestá atención a la lengua y las imágenes asociadas. Pueden ser carteles (signs) en los parques, centros comerciales, centros de salud, bancos, restaurantes, supermercados, escuelas, bibliotecas, etc. También podés utilizar páginas web de la comunidad como los sitios oficiales (ex: <https://riversideca.gov/>) o de apoyo a la comunidad como para los hospitales, las escuelas, las tiendas de ropa, etc. Hay que elegir **3-5 ejemplos** para analizar (hay que incluir las imágenes en el documento):

Vas a observar cada mínimo detalle, anotarlo y analizarlo. Podés fijarte en lo siguiente:

- ¿Qué lenguas encontramos en sus textos/ anuncios escritos?
- ¿Reconocen algunas palabras o frases como de alguna variedad lingüística en particular? Por ejemplo, ¿están presentes frases o palabras mexicanas, colombianas, españolas, puertorriqueñas, o que son en general de los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Qué tipos de imágenes encontramos? ¿Hay gente de regiones y etnicidades diversas? ¿Hay el mismo número de mujeres que de hombres? ¿Hay visibilidad de género, por ejemplo de identidades de comunidades LGTBQ+?
- ¿Hay un equilibrio en la representación de las lenguas y variedades lingüísticas utilizadas?
- ¿Creen que todo el mundo podría entender la información expuesta y sentirse identificadxs con las personas de las imágenes?

Después de analizar las imágenes, y basado en tu experiencia en la comunidad, vas a pensar en algunas recomendaciones para ser un lugar más inclusivo sociolingüísticamente. Hay que contestar las siguientes preguntas

- ¿Qué quieren cambiar/mejorar y cómo?
- ¿Cuál es el objetivo de ese cambio?
- ¿Qué lengua(s) y qué variedad(es) van a usar que atiendan mejor a las necesidades propias de la comunidad?
- ¿Qué imágenes van a integrar que sean más representativas de las comunidades?
- ¿Cómo todos estos cambios están mejorando la situación actual?

*Actividad adoptada de Julia Oliver Rajan & Lara Boyero Agudo from [Plurilingual & Pluriculturales](#)

Appendix H
Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

“How to Tame a Wild Tongue”²⁰

Linguistic identities and borderlands



Photo by [Max Böhme](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Actividad 1 | Chicana y Mestizaje

¿Qué significa “chicano,” “chicana” o “chicana” para vos? Si no conocés la palabra, buscá información en el internet y escribirlo aquí.

¿Qué significa la palabra “mestizo” o “mestiza” para vos?

Ahora vas a leer la primera página de “Como domar una lengua salvaje” de Gloria Anzaldúa (hasta donde dice “Vencer la tradición del silencio”):

Vamos a hacer algunas predicciones. Qué pensás: ¿De qué se trata el text

²⁰ Activity created in collaboration with Elena Cardona

Appendix H

Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

Actividad 2 | Preguntas de comprensión

Ahora vas a leer el texto completo: Gloria Anzaldúa “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”
Mientras estás repasando el texto, vas a contestar las siguientes preguntas:

¿Qué es el español chicano según Anzaldúa?

¿Cuáles son algunos de los rasgos del español chicano? Menciona por lo menos 3.

Anzaldúa explica cómo lxs chicanxs viven en los “borderlands” (frontera) en términos de lugar (la frontera de EEUU con MX, por ejemplo), pero también en términos de lengua, cultura, y raza. Menciona 3 o 4 ejemplos que Anzaldúa nos da de cómo lxs chicanxs viven en los “borderlands” o en el intermedio (in-between).

Appendix H

Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

Vocabulario del texto. Intentá de emparejar (match) la frase de la primera columna con la definición en la segunda columna. Después veremos los enlaces en la tabla que son ejemplos de los conceptos.

<p>Mestizo _____</p>	<p>1. Una palabra peyorativa para describir a unx expatriadx mexicanx o una persona de ascendencia mexicana que habla el español de los Estados Unidos, o que la gente percibe que tiene “acento” por el contacto con el inglés, y que se percibe como que no tiene conocimiento de la cultura mexicana.</p>
<p>Pocho/pocha _____</p>	<p>2. Un género de música que comenzó en el sur de Texas y la frontera mexicana durante el conflicto inicial entre lxs chicanxs y anglosajones. Suelen ser sobre héroes mexicanos que luchan valientemente contra los opresores anglosajones. La canción de Pancho Villa, "La cucaracha", es la más famosa.</p>
<p>Pachuco o caló _____</p>	<p>3. Una persona de herencia étnica y racial mixta, especialmente una de ascendencia española e indígena.</p>
<p>Corrido _____</p>	<p>4. Un antiguo partido político hispano centrado en el nacionalismo chicano (mexicano-estadounidense). Fue creado en 1970 y se hizo prominente en todo Texas y el sur de California. Se inició para combatir la desigualdad y la insatisfacción con el Partido Demócrata, que por lo general era apoyado por votantes mexicano-estadounidenses.</p>
<p>La raza unida party _____</p>	<p>5. El lenguaje de los zoot suiters, es un lenguaje de rebeldía, tanto contra el español estándar como el inglés estándar. Es un lenguaje de solidaridad grupal y étnica. Las personas que no pertenecen a la cultura les es difícil entenderlo. Se compone de palabras de herencia romaní (caló de España), lengua vernacular mexicana y vernacular del inglés chicanos (un sociolecto). Muchas de estas formas lingüísticas han sido reapropiadas más recientemente por jóvenes de clase alta en México, como la palabra "simón" [yes, sure] “tacuche” [zoot suit coat] “carnal” [bro, pal] y "vato".</p>

Appendix H

Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

Actividad 3 | Preguntas de reflexión

Después de leer, vas a contestar las siguientes preguntas:
¿Te gustó el texto? ¿Por qué?

¿Qué características te llamaron la atención?

Vocabulario ¿Qué palabras desconocidas o nuevas encontraste? (menciona 2 o 3)

Sobre Forma – Estructura: ¿Qué tipo de texto es: un cuento, un poema, un ensayo?

El Tema: ¿De qué trata el texto? ¿Por qué se llama “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”?

Según Anzaldúa, lxs chicanxs hablan muchas lenguas. Ve la lista en la p. 36.
¿Cuáles lenguas hablás vos?

¿Cuál es la pregunta central/mensaje principal que plantea este texto?

¿Cómo desarrolla la autora esta pregunta central? (¿usa ejemplos? ¿información autobiográfica? etc.—e.g. how does she develop her argument? What evidence does she use to support her argument?)

Appendix H

Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

En la p. 36 Anzaldúa habla del terrorismo lingüístico (linguistic terrorism). ¿Qué pensás que significa el terrorismo lingüístico?

¿Podrías pensar en más ejemplos del terrorismo lingüístico de tu vida? (por ejemplo, si vos o tus amigxs o familiares tuvieron experiencias con el terrorismo lingüístico, o si has visto o has leído sobre eventos en las noticias)

Pensando en los eventos en California que leímos la semana pasada en el capítulo de "The Spanish Language in California" (p. ejem. las diferentes leyes, políticas escolares, o el Proposition 63), ¿pensás que estos eventos son ejemplos del terrorismo lingüístico? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

Actividad 4 | Compartir interpretaciones

1. **Vas a leer las siguientes citas del texto y elegir una (la que más te llama la atención).**
2. **Vas a hacer una discusión con tus compañerxs** sobre la cita que elegiste.
3. En grupos, van discutir las siguientes preguntas:
 - a. **Explicar en tus propias palabras tu interpretación de la cita (¿qué significa? ¿qué está diciendo Anzaldúa aquí?).**
 - b. **¿Estás de acuerdo con lo que dice la cita? ¿Por qué o por qué no?**
4. **Completá la tabla al final con tus respuestas y las de tus compañerxs (por lo menos 2 otras personas).**

Cita #1:

“Atacar la forma de expresión de una persona con una intención de censura constituye una violación de la Primera Enmienda constitucional de los Estados Unidos. *El anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua*. Las lenguas salvajes no se las puede domesticar, sólo se las puede cortar” (p. 2).

Appendix H
Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

Cita #2:

“La primera vez que escuché a dos mujeres, una puertorriqueña y una cubana, decir la palabra *nosotras*, me quedé *shockeada*. No sabía que existía esa palabra. Las Chicanas usan *nosotros* tanto si somos hombres como si somos mujeres. Se nos roba nuestro ser femenino por el masculino plural. El lenguaje es un discurso masculino” (p. 3).

Cita #3:

“Así que, si de verdad quieres hacerme daño, habla mal de mi idioma. La identidad étnica es como una segunda piel de la identidad lingüística—yo soy mi lengua—. Hasta que pueda enorgullecerme de mi idioma, no puedo enorgullecerme de mí misma” (p.8).

Cita # (put the number of the quote you chose here)	Yo	Compañerx #1	Compañerx #2
¿Qué significa la cita?			
¿Estás de acuerdo con lo que dice la cita? ¿Por qué o por qué no?			

Appendix H

Gloria Anzaldúa Activity

Actividad 5 | Actividad de extensión

Anzaldúa nos dice:

“Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex, and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.” (pgs. 39-40)

Si la gente no tiene la libertad de hablar su(s) variedad(es) preferida(s) en la escuela, ¿Qué implicaciones tiene para la enseñanza/la academia?

Por ejemplo, si la lengua y la identidad son tan unidas, y si las escuelas no consideran el español Chicano como legítimo, ¿qué consecuencias hay para los alumnos que identifican como Chicano y hablan español Chicano?

Vamos a ver un video de un caso de segregación de escuela, Mendez v. Westminster:
<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/osi04.soc.ush.civil.mendez/mendez-v-westminster-desegregating-californias-schools/>

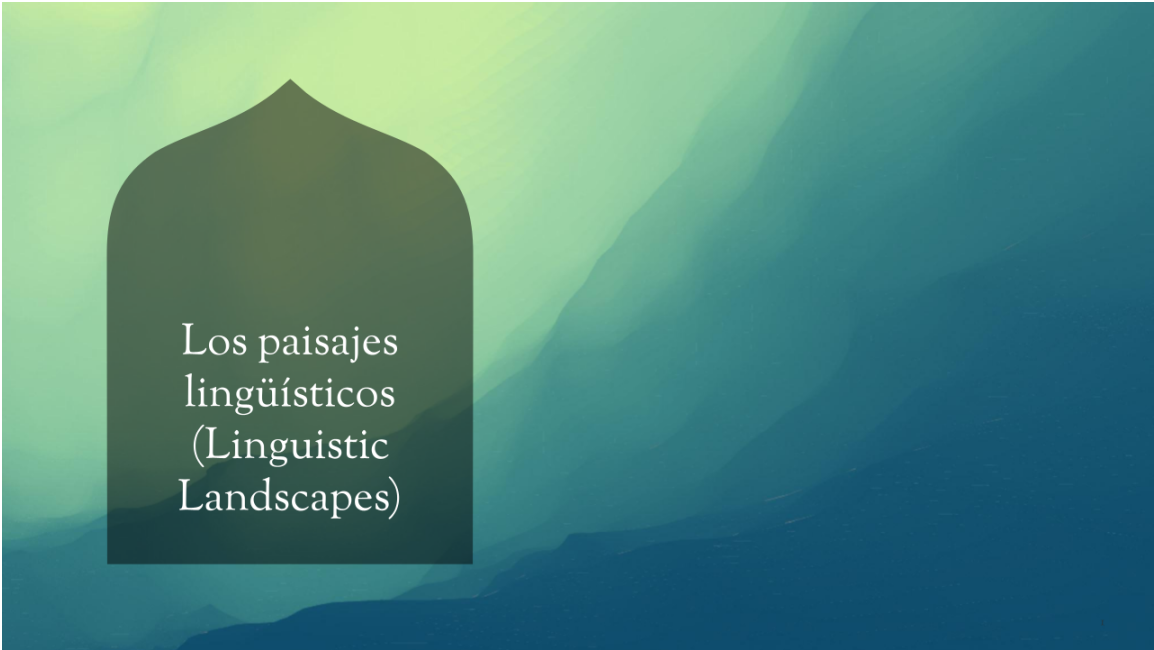
¿Dirías que el caso de Mendez es un ejemplo de terrorismo lingüístico?

¿Dirías que todavía existe segregación en las escuelas hoy en día?

Tomando en cuenta la historia del español en California, el texto de Anzaldúa, y el caso de Mendez v. Westminster, ¿qué sugerencias tenés para los programas de español? ¿Deben de enseñar el español Chicano en las clases de español? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

Appendix I

Linguistic Landscape Class Activity



Los paisajes lingüísticos (Linguistic Landscapes)

Preguntas de discusión

Hablen en grupos pequeños sobre estas preguntas:

- ¿Por qué crees que podés encontrar carteles bilingües (o carteles en español) en California? (Pensá en lugares oficiales como un hospital o espacios públicos como una tienda o un mercado)
- ¿Cómo/de qué manera los carteles representan a las comunidades donde están ubicados?
- ¿Te representan a vos como individuo? ¿Representan a tu familia y a tus amigxs? ¿Crees que tener este tipo de carteles promueve un sentido de comunidad?

* Adapted from I. Elola and J. Prada "Developing Critical Sociolinguistic Awareness Through Linguistic Landscape in a Mixed Classroom: The Case of Spanish in Texas"

2

Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

What are linguistic landscapes?

- “The term linguistic landscape refers to the use of language in the built environment, including signs, business names, window displays, advertisements and graffiti – in short, all public, visible use of language” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 166)
- “The presence, representation, meanings and interpretation of languages displayed in public places” (Shohamy & Ben Rafael, 2015, p.1).
- [M]ore recently researchers have stressed that linguistic landscapes do not necessarily reflect actual language use in the community; instead they are influenced by the social status and perceived value of particular ways of using language” (Fuller & Leeman, 2020, p. 166)
- [L]inguistic landscapes, like other representations of language, including the language use in television, film and newspapers we have discussed in this chapter, rely on and reproduce ideologies about language(s) and their speakers” (Fuller & Leeman, 2020, p. 166)

Ejemplos del texto (Fuller & Leeman)

- Language policies and packaging at Lowe’s targeted towards Latinx homebuyers
- Use of minoritized languages to make a place feel more “authentic”
- Research by Fuller (2016) in Chicago
 - Use of Spanish aimed at community needs such as immigration lawyer, check cashing, government-subsidized daycare, jobs as dishwashers
 - These signs constructed the Spanish-speaking community as “poor immigrants” such as the bank that says it accepts identification cards ‘de tu país’ (‘from your country’) – and clearly that country is not the US.
- On the other hand, the absence of Spanish signage can imply disregard for Spanish-speakers and trigger negative emotions
 - [T]he Spanish-speaking youth in Hidalgo County, Texas, expressed disapproval about the English dominance in signs in healthcare facilities, and they interpreted this as an indication that they were not as appreciated as English-speakers.
- Some bilingual signs position Spanish-speakers as belonging in US society and as members of the middle class.

Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

Birkbeck Explains: What is linguistic landscape?

• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPjzL4pNug>



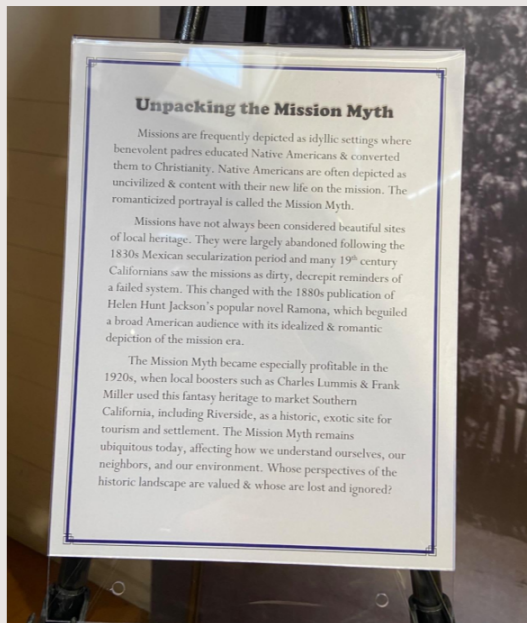
5

• The unique City Raincross Symbol is derived from combining a replica of the mass bell used by Father Junipero Serra, missionary priest and founder of the California Missions, and the cross to which the Navajo and Central American Indians prayed for rain. Called the "Raincross" symbol, it was designed for the Mission Inn and given to the city by Frank Miller. The Raincross symbol has been identified with Riverside since 1907. Variations of the symbol are used extensively throughout Riverside in architecture, street signs and lighting standards, and is used on the City flag. (City of Riverside [website](#))

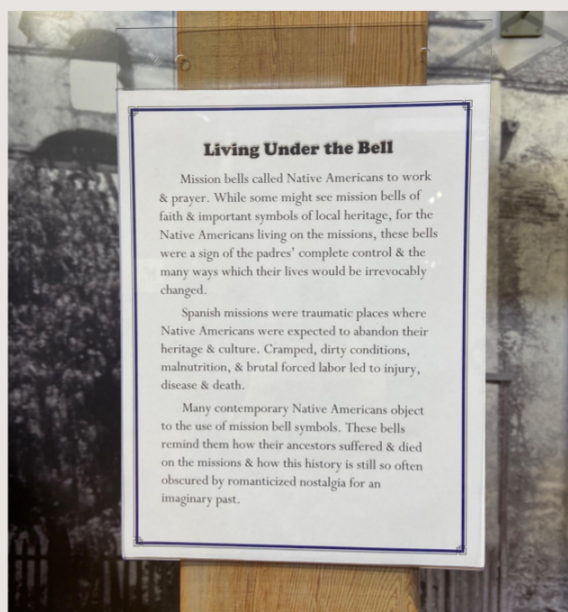


6

Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity



7



8

Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

Questions to ask about LL

- Surface: What language is represented (standard Spanish, Spanglish)? What colors are there? What is the design? What types of imagery? Who made the sign? Who is it for?
- Function: What is the function of the sign? Is it informational? To attract possible clients? To introduce a service? Educational?
- Meaning: What is the sociolinguistic significance of the sign? If it is in Spanish, is the Spanish inclusive of the community varieties? If in Spanglish, why is that relevant for the community? If there is English and Spanish, are they both the same size? Is one above the other? What do the images or colors represent?
- Critical level: Is a certain language or community NOT represented? Why or why not? What does this mean for the communities who live there? Why is this example important for the communities? Considering that over 25% of California residents speak Spanish, and 39% of L.A. county residents speak Spanish at home, how is that reflected in the LL of your neighborhood?

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Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

Análisis



- 1. Superficie: Es amarillo con las palabras en inglés, "Change things" or "Things change". Es una escultura enorme y prominente, que se ubica a la entrada de la universidad. No hay imágenes, sino palabras, y algunas forman un círculo en el medio. El artista es Roy McMakin, de San Diego.
- 2. Función: Sirve como una obra de arte y no es informativo. Creo que sirve para llamar la atención de lxs estudiantes y de la comunidad, y mostrar que esta institución tiene como misión hacer cambios sociales. Dice Chancellor Kim Wilcox, "I want you to come in and be in the sculpture," he said. "That for me really defines the space. It isn't something you stand back and look at, but it's something you walk into, that you come into, that you sit in." McMakin dice que la instalación refleja "issues of utility and design intersecting with art."
- 3. Nivel crítico: El arte es de un artista que pasa como persona blanca que no es estudiante de UCR, ni tiene afiliación. Para mí, esta persona no representa bien lxs estudiantes de UCR. Está en inglés, lo cual me parece un poco desubicado porque tenemos tanta diversidad lingüística en esta universidad, y UCR es un Hispanic Serving Institution. Creo que sería más impactante esta instalación si fuera de un estudiante o si tuviera otras lenguas o identidades representadas.

11

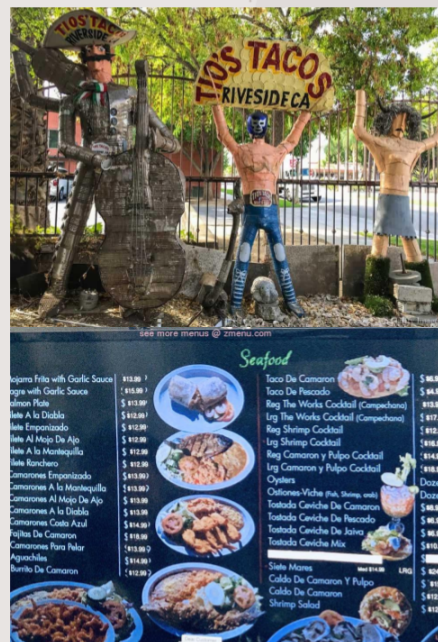
- Superficie: ¿Qué idioma se representa (español estándar, Spanglish)? ¿Qué colores hay? ¿Cuál es el diseño? ¿Qué tipos de imágenes? ¿Quién hizo el cartel? ¿Para quién?
- Función: ¿Cuál es la función del cartel? ¿Es informativo? ¿Para captar posibles clientes? ¿Para introducir un servicio? ¿Educativo?
- Significado: ¿Cuál es el significado sociolingüístico del cartel? Si está en español, ¿el español incluye las variedades de la comunidad? Si está en Spanglish, ¿por qué es relevante para la comunidad? Si hay inglés y español, ¿son ambos del mismo tamaño? ¿Está uno por encima del otro? ¿Qué representan las imágenes o los colores?
- Nivel crítico: ¿Hay un idioma o comunidad que NO está representado? ¿Por qué o por qué no? ¿Qué significa esto para las comunidades que viven allí? ¿Por qué es importante este ejemplo para las comunidades? Teniendo en cuenta que más del 25 % de los residentes de California hablan español y el 39 % de los residentes del condado de Los Ángeles hablan español en casa, ¿cómo se refleja eso en el paisaje lingüístico de tu vecindario?



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Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

- Superficie: ¿Qué idioma se representa (español estándar, Spanglish)? ¿Qué colores hay? ¿Cuál es el diseño? ¿Qué tipos de imágenes? ¿Quién hizo el cartel? ¿Para quién?
- Función: ¿Cuál es la función del cartel? ¿Es informativo? ¿Para captar posibles clientes? ¿Para introducir un servicio? ¿Educativo?
- Significado: ¿Cuál es el significado sociolingüístico del cartel? Si está en español, ¿el español incluye las variedades de la comunidad? Si está en Spanglish, ¿por qué es relevante para la comunidad? Si hay inglés y español, ¿son ambos del mismo tamaño? ¿Está uno por encima del otro? ¿Qué representan las imágenes o los colores?
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¡A escribir!

- ¿Has visto carteles bilingües (inglés y español) en tu comunidad? ¿Dónde has visto estos carteles?
- ¿Has visto carteles en español en tu comunidad? ¿Dónde has visto esos carteles?



Students, write your response!

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Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

Salimos del salón y sacamos fotos...

- Tienen 30 minutos para hacer un "tour" de UCR, individualmente o en grupos pequeños
- Find examples of language (conceived broadly) at UCR
 - Sign (traffic sign, welcome sign, billboard)
 - Graffiti
 - Mural/artwork
 - Business sign
 - Building
- You might want to visit the 2nd floor of HMNSS (the building closest to Sproul) where the Spanish department is located. See what examples you can find there, keeping in mind the reading this week about Chicanx and Latinx representation in Spanish departments
- Sacar videos (mínimo 2)
- Volver a la clase y subir los videos en Flip

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Upload your video on Flip



Students browse: flip.com/c21c034c

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Appendix I Linguistic Landscape Class Activity

Volviendo a clase

- Van a trabajar en grupos pequeños para analizar las fotos usando las mismas preguntas que usarán para la presentación final (see next slide)
- Cada grupo presentará sus resultados del análisis (un resumen de 2 o 3 minutos sobre las respuestas a las preguntas)
- Pueden usar los slides de esta presentación si quieren

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- Superficie: ¿Qué idioma se representa (español estándar, Spanglish)? ¿Qué colores hay? ¿Cuál es el diseño? ¿Qué tipos de imágenes? ¿Quién hizo el cartel? ¿Para quién?
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Photos from lesson:

City of Riverside: <https://x.com/riversidecagov>

Unpacking the Mission Myth: taken by Melissa Venegas at California Citrus State Historic Park

Living under the Bell: Taken by Melissa Venegas at California Citrus State Historic Park

Things change: <https://www.highlandernews.org/37721/construction-on-new-art-sculpture-is-completed/>

Roy McMakin: <https://www.sandiegohomegarden.com/2013/11/13/get-over-it-san-diego/>

Neighborhood watch: <https://champaignil.gov/neighborhood-services/neighborhood-coordination/neighborhood-watch/>

Tios Tacos: <https://travelnotesandbeyond.com/tios-tacos-a-monumental-fantasy-made-real/>

Tios Tacos menú: <https://restaurantguru.com/Tios-Tacos-Riverside-2/menu>

Appendix J

List of Assignments Selected for Coding

Assignment	Selected for coding
Weekly FlipGrid submissions	X
Sociolinguistic history essay	
Sociolinguistic history video	X
Linguistic landscape essay	
Linguistic landscape group presentation	
Linguistic landscape final project	X

Appendix K
Week 10 Activity

Semana 10: La historia Chicax y la educación



Mural by local artist Chano Gonzalez, located in UCR Chicano Student Programs

Actividad 1: El léxico del sur de California

¿Has escuchado estas expresiones antes? ¿Y en la escuela/las clases de español? ¿Podés pensar en más ejemplos de expresiones? Llena la tabla mientras ves el video.

Ahora vemos un video que explica las expresiones:

Eva Longoria and Michael Peña Teach You Mexican Slang | Vanity Fair

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kc-mbe02tc>

Appendix K
Week 10 Activity

Palabra	Significado	He escuchado la palabra	He escuchado la palabra en la escuela/las clases de español
Neta			
No manches			
¡Órale!			
¡Aguas!			
Chicano			
Pedo			
Chamba			
Fresa			
Gacho			
Chanclas			
Chido			
Naco			
Cholo			
Metiche			
Tocayo			
Vieja			
Padre			
Chela			
Crudo			
Chorro			
¡Hijole!			
¡Oye!			
Güey			

Appendix K Week 10 Activity

¿Pensás que los departamentos de español deben incluir el vocabulario de la comunidad? Sí o no y por qué.

En tu experiencia, ¿las clases de español incluyen suficiente información sobre las comunidades hispanohablantes en EEUU? ¿Y la historia o las contribuciones de lxs Chicax? ¿u otras comunidades con herencia de Latinoamérica?

Actividad 2: Lxs chicanxs en UCR

Paso 1. La historia chicanx en UCR

¿Qué sabés de la historia Chicax en UCR?

¿Qué sabés de CSP (Chicano Student Programs)? ¿Has ido a sus eventos?

¿Sabés quién es Carlos Córdés? ¿Eugene Cota-Robles? ¿Tomás Rivera?

Buscamos las respuestas explorando este artículo y los videos: <https://news.ucr.edu/ucr-magazine/winter-2022/they-planted-seeds-we-grew-roots>

CSP promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KIcoxPU7MI&t=97s>

Mentoring is at the heart of Chicano Student Programs' success
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsKKT0YcgjU>

¿Qué otras cosas importantes o interesantes viste en el artículo y los videos?

¿Por qué es importante tener programas como CSP en UCR?

Paso 2. Reflexión.

Imaginá una educación que incluya a todxs lxs estudiantes y sus diversas identidades. ¿Cómo se ve y cómo se siente este tipo de educación? ¿Por qué es importante tener una educación así?