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Literacy intervention for adolescents: A review of Spanish language heritage instruction

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LITERACY INTERVENTION FOR ADOLESCENTS:
A REVIEW OF SPANISH HERITAGE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

by

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To my students -

Who inspire and challenge me to discover something new every day

To my family and friends –

Who lovingly, patiently, listen to every dream I dream,

And remind me when I forget

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Why would I want to study Spanish?" questioned 10th grader Gilberto, when asked if he would consider taking a Spanish heritage language class. "How could that possibly help me when I'm so far behind in English?" Ninth grader Alejandra laughed at the same question and replied, "That would be a waste of my time. And my dad wouldn't want me to anyway."

What these two students have in common, besides being in my high school English language classes and their lack of interest in a Spanish heritage class where native Spanish speakers gain Spanish literacy skills, is that they have received instruction in English in the same public school district in Minnesota since kindergarten. Their academic progress has been slow, requiring them to receive English Language service in high school. Per their scores on the WIDA English Language test, ACCESS (WIDA 2014), their language skills, specifically in reading and writing, need further development before they would reach the level of proficiency to be exited from the program. Gilberto and Alejandra represent a growing group of English Learners (EL) in the United States, the long-term English learner. Menken and Kleyn (2010) define long-term English language learners (LTELLs) as students who have attended schools in the USA for seven or more years and still require language support services.

During the past 8 years of my teaching career I continued to observe the academic paths of the Spanish-speaking EL students in our program, both the success and failures. At both the district and building levels, we continued to adjust our EL programming to create supports for the students in the content areas partnered with after-school supports or alternative programming. And still, a pattern emerged among the Spanish-speaking students who had participated in EL service the longest; some of the LTELLs were not successfully completing high school, or if they did, they were not fully prepared for higher education. While there are many outside variables that impact all student success, I knew I needed to look closer at what was happening in school and what was missing or hindering the EL students' success.

To understand why the categorization of long-term ELs is important, we can look to the work of Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) and Freeman et.al (2002) (as cited in Menken, Kleyn, & Chae 2012), who have identified three main groups of immigrant students at the secondary level:

1. Newly arrived with adequate schooling.
2. Newly arrived with limited/interrupted formal schooling (also known as *students with interrupted formal education* [SIFE]).
3. LTELLs: long-term English language learners

The first group of students would include students who had arrived in the United States within the last 5 years and bring with them a solid literacy foundation in their native language due to the schooling they received in their home country. Typically,

these students perform poorly on standardized tests and in their classes simply due to their initial lack of English skills. However, due to a foundation in academics and literacy in their native language, they are typically able to acquire academic English and enter mainstream classrooms in a relatively short period of time (Callahan, 2006; Menken, Kleyn & Chae, 2012).

The second group, students who have recently arrived with limited or interrupted formal schooling, faces a very different experience in school. Due to many variables ranging from living in a war-torn country or living in a refugee camp to not having the access to or funding to attend school, these students arrive in US schools having very limited or even non-existent literacy in their native language, resulting in academic achievement in the United States in English which is far below their secondary grade level (Freeman et al., 2002; Klein & Martohardjono, 2008; Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000; Menken, Kleyn & Chae, 2012).

LTELLs are the third group of emergent bilinguals. The primary distinction for this group is that they are not new arrivals with the expected language challenges and learning curve. These students have been in the United States for 7 or more years, and many were even born in the US (Freeman et al., 2002; Freeman, Freeman, & Meruri, 2003; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2007; Menken, et al., 2012; Ruiz de Velaso & Fix, 2000). By the time they reach the secondary level they are often orally proficient, even native-like in their speech (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000). Yet what makes these students stand out is their low levels of academic literacy in both English and their native language (Menken & Kleyn, 2010). With reading and writing skills below grade level, they

struggle in the academic secondary courses, unable to meet the literacy demands across content areas (Menken, et al., 2012; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Olsen, 2010; Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000). The low academic performance and failure rates impact individual and group identity as well as educational and economic options for the future.

There are many possible variables that cause students to become LTELLS. One variable which several researchers point to is *subtractive instruction*, where the native language is not fully developed in school and is replaced by English-only instruction (Garcia, 2010; Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999; Randoff, 2013; Cervantes, 2010; Lambert & Taylor, 1996). Subtractive instruction, as described by Valenzuela (1999), is an educational framework in which emerging bilinguals only develop English skills. Valenzuela notes that this form of instruction fails to build upon their native language and cultural resources, or to develop their native language literacy skills. Valenzuela states, "ESL youth, for example, are regarded as 'limited English proficient' rather than as 'Spanish dominant' or as potentially bilingual. Their fluency in Spanish is construed as a 'barrier' that needs to be overcome" (p.173).

The undermining impact this has on emerging bilinguals is exemplified in Cummins' (2000) findings on the connection between literacy skills in the native or home language, L1, transferring to the target language, L2. Cummins demonstrates that without a solid foundation of literacy in the native language, a student will struggle to make linguistic and academic progress in the target language. What my students Gilberto and Alejandra don't understand is that if they had strong literacy skills in their L1

Spanish, their comprehension and academic progress in L2 English would likely be greater.

As Menken and Kleyn (2010) point out, the low academic performance, low self-esteem, and even high incidence of high school drop-out rate for long-term ELs are consequences worth finding a solution. Since Gilberto and Alejandra cannot go back to their primary years, is it still possible for these LTELLs to gain literacy skills in their L1 Spanish? Will gaining Spanish literacy skills at this point in their language development make a difference in their overall academics in L2 English?

Developing and maintaining a heritage or native language is not a new idea in the United States. As each new wave of immigrants arrived in North America, many communities desired to pass on their language and culture from one generation to the next, and created programs or schools to meet their specific needs. In a report from the Center for Applied Linguistics, Kelleher (2010) noted that heritage language programs varied greatly in organization, focus of instruction, materials and methods used, staff qualifications, and funding sources. As community-based schools or programs rather than part of the public education system (Fishman, 2001), there are similarities among these programs in that the families, community leaders, churches, or civic organizations could guide the instructional focus as they saw fit (Kelleher, 2010).

In contrast, at the public K-12 level support for heritage language programs has faced many challenges. In the realm of national identity, "English-only" policies have often been a part of the United States' educational agenda (Salazar, 2009). Examples of

these policies abound, from the eradication of Native American languages and peoples in early US history to the most recent No Child Left Behind (2002) policy, which severely limited funding for bilingual education to focus on English language acquisition (Tsai, 2011). At the same time, there are school districts that fund immersion programs and dual language programs, in which heritage language speakers may participate (Wang & Green, 2001; Peyton, Lewelling, & Winke, 2001). If Alejandra and Gilberto had the community support and an opportunity to take a course of Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS), how might their academic careers change?

The systematic literature review presented here will explore the impact of Spanish heritage language instruction on literacy skills in adolescents. My guiding questions are as follows.

- Overarching question: What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle school or high school?
- Two more specific questions: What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist?
- Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English?

By reviewing studies that examine different aspects of Spanish heritage language instruction, I hope to better understand the scope of impact it may have on strengthening the L1 literacy skills of adolescent LTELLs in order to propose and support alternative academic programming.

The methodology for this research will be a systematic review of literature regarding Spanish heritage language instruction. Studies will be sought out in select databases using specific keywords, all of which will be detailed in the Methodology chapter. These studies will be mapped out and categorized in order to determine the most relevant studies to be used for yet another in-depth study (Gough, 2007). From this final collection of studies, I will organize the data by themes to summarize what is currently available for educators to build upon (Thomas & Harden, 2005).

This chapter introduces long-term English language learners as a unique set of learners in our country. Across the United States these LTELLs struggle with low academic performance, which has great implications on their educational and economic options for the future. The time for effective interventions and alternative programming is upon us. Spanish heritage instruction may hold the linguistic, cultural, and academic structures to meet these needs.

The literature review in Chapter Two presents the background of research regarding bilingualism, long-term ELs, subtractive and additive instruction, and heritage language instruction. The methodology in Chapter Three explains how the systematic review of research will be carried out. The findings of the systematic review are summarized in Chapter Four, and the final Chapter discusses the findings. At that point I also propose further questions for research and suggestions for Spanish heritage instruction at the secondary level.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review presents bilingualism, long-term English learners, and the subtractive educational context in which they are often developed. Then heritage language programming is described in form and function to lay the groundwork for the guiding questions of *what does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle or high school? What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist? Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English? What do those findings suggest for further research and investigation?*

While the topic of bilingualism is broad and diverse, it is the context for the design of English language instruction provided to immigrant students in the USA. It is out of this context that label long-term English learner emerges for the students who remain in EL services for seven years or more. These students are the focus of my study and the ones for whom I'd like to find alternative interventions. I take time to review the topic of subtractive instruction to distinguish how it impacts the students' learning and to identify a potential counter-measure, heritage language instruction.

Bilingualism

The U.S. Census Bureau report on English-Speaking Ability of Foreign Born Population in 2012 stated that of the 41 million persons age 5 or older, approximately 85% spoke a language other than English at home. And of those 85%, 55% spoke English "very well," 19.3 % "not well," and 9.6% said "not at all." Many citizens and residents see the acquisition of English language skills in the U.S. as an obligation or duty. One way to view these findings is with the lens of Figueroa's (1994) and Valdez' (2005) discussion of *circumstantial bilingualism* vs. *elective bilingualism*. When the circumstances of life require that an individual "use and acquire two or more languages in order to meet their everyday communicative needs," Valdez asserted the choice for bilingualism runs along survival veins (2005, p. 411). In contrast, elective bilinguals are individuals who choose to learn a second language in the classroom setting, and have to search out opportunities in which to use the new language skills they have acquired. While neither is intrinsically better or worse than the other, the motivation and challenges are different depending upon the situation, and often yield different levels of language acquisition.

Dynamic bilingualism

As an expanded view of bilingualism, Garcia (2009) and as explained in Bartlet and Garcia (2011, p.123) has proposed that bilingualism is not *linear,* as in traditional second language acquisition models, but rather it is *dynamic* "in that there are not two

separate autonomous languages but rather language practices that are complex and interrelated." Bartlett and Garcia provide a further example:

> Bilingualism does not result in either the two balanced wheels of a bicycle (as the additive bilingual model purports) or the single wheel of a unicycle (as the subtractive bilingual model suggests). Instead, bilingualism is like an all-terrain-vehicle with individuals using it to adapt to both the ridges and craters of communication in uneven terrains (2011, p. 123).

Adding further dimension to this model, Garcia (2010) discusses *recursive dynamic bilingualism*, enveloping those students who have experienced language loss and who then attend bilingual schools. In this context, Garcia states the focus is on recovering the missing linguistic pieces of their L1, as in "reach(ing) back in order to move forward" (2010, p. 42).

Adding to the challenge of learning a new language is the prevailing opinion that the ultimate measure of bilingual success is the ability to use the newly acquired language as proficiently as a monolingual native speaker. According to Bartlett and Garcia (2011), most ESL and transitional bilingual education models are designed to move students into the mainstream classes once a certain level of native English language proficiency has been attained. The focus is on developing English skills rather than fully developing both the native and English languages.

Subtractive and additive instruction

In his description of linear bilingualism in Quebec, Lambert (1975) introduced the terms additive and subtractive, which Bartlett and Garcia describe as "where a second language is merely added or a first one is subtracted" (2011, p. 123). In her book *Subtractive Schooling*, Valenzuela (1999, p. 3) views subtractive instruction as a larger framework, which "divest(s) these youth of important social and cultural resources, leaving them progressively vulnerable to academic failure." Menken and Kleyn (2010) address subtractive instruction where "the native languages have not been fully developed in school and instead have been largely replaced by English." As described in Bartlett and Garcia (2011, p. 14) "with subtractive models, as the second language is added, the first language begins to shrink, leading to language shift. Subtractive models can be rendered thus: $L1 + L2 - L1 = L2$."

On the other hand, additive bilingualism is when the second language is taught in addition to continued instruction in the student's home language (Garcia & Kleifgen 2010). The end goal of additive bilingual instruction is "that the student would have two complete language systems, as in $L1 + L2 = L1 + L2$" (Bartlett and Garcia, p. 14, 2011). Bartlett and Garcia further expand the idea of additive schooling as "an approach that builds on and extends the social, cultural, and linguistic assets brought by multilingual, diverse student populations, and aims to prepare bicultural and bilingual students to negotiate their complex worlds. (pp 21-22)

Long-term English language learners

Menken and Kleyn (2010) define long-term English language learners (LTELLs) as "students who have attended schools in the USA for seven or more years and still require language support service" (p. 399). Menken, Kleyn & Chae (2012) found that of all the emergent bilinguals in secondary public schools, LTELLs comprised "approximately one-third of New York City and Chicago's enrollment, 23% in Colorado, and 59% of 40 school districts of California (Olsen, 2010)" (p. 122). These large numbers are a signal that current instructional models for ELs are insufficient to meet their differing educational needs.

Due to the large numbers of LTELLs and their puzzling lack of academic success, several researchers have begun to take a closer look at the variables that seem to impact these students. In their studies of bilingual Spanish speakers receiving English only instruction, Silva-Corvalan (1994) and Montrul (2005) found these students had incomplete L1 acquisition and language loss. Without instruction in Spanish, Silva-Corvalan argues, the children would not completely acquire their L1 linguistic system. Baker (2011) found that native language literacy skills could not be transferred to the target language if the native language had not developed adequately. Attrition of L1 was the impact of L2 acquisition in Montrul's studies (2005). There are other variables, such as socio-economic status, high mobility, and self-efficacy, which have an impact on a student's long-term participation in English language programming; however, while important to the larger picture, they are outside the scope of this research.

Cummins (2000) and Thomas & Collier (2004) both reinforce the connection between established literacy skills in L1 as the greatest predictor for literacy and academic achievement in L2. Additionally, Goldenberg (2014) highlighted five independent meta-analyses (August & Shanahan, 2006; Greene, 1997; Rolstad et al., 2005; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Willig, 1985), which distinguished that learning to read in the child's home language promotes reading achievement in an additional language. Menken, Kleyn & Chae (2012) conclude their research with a call for high school programming which includes both "explicit academic language and literacy instruction across all areas" (p. 136). The research points to the literacy gap as a strong influence upon LTELLs' academic performance.

<div align="center">Heritage language instruction</div>

Heritage language instruction, in its simplest form, is instruction of an individual's heritage language. Valdes (2000) defines heritage language learners as students who are "raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or merely understand the heritage language, and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language." While being exposed to one language in the home, these students have received their instruction and literacy skills in English only, and a frequent outcome is that they are not literate in both languages (Correa, 2011).

Heritage Language instruction is distinct from foreign language (FL) instruction, as Carreira (2007) explains, in that it "does not follow a delineated progression of courses that begin at zero and go through a well-defined academic experience." HL instruction is

flexible to respond to the wide range of academic experience, which the students may or may not have had with their heritage language. HL learners have learned the target language in a natural setting, yet may have less experience with literacy skills, such as reading, writing, and metalinguistic knowledge (Correa, 2011; Montrul et al., 2008).

The key instructional component of heritage language is that lessons are provided to develop and expand a student's home or first language, as described by Kelleher (2010) in a briefing on heritage language programs from the Center for Applied Linguistics database. From that point, however, the format, frequency, and opportunities available to students are vastly different. Some heritage language instruction is provided through a religious institution in support of both religious and cultural beliefs (Kelleher, 2010). Another common form is a Saturday school hosted by the cultural or linguistic community in a semi-public context (Fishman, 2001). While there are many different languages and several additional formats of heritage language programming, this study will focus on those classes provided through public education in the middle and secondary schools for Spanish speakers.

The existing research on Spanish heritage language instruction, or by another name, Spanish for Native Speakers, includes a wide range of themes, from student identity and motivation (Gonzalez, 2011; Seiden, 2008; Vargas, 2011; Leeman, Rabin, & Roman-Mendoza, 2011), to different aspects of grammar instruction (Montrul, 2004, 2006; Paredes, 2011; Bolger & Zapata, 2011; Martinez 2009), to general program development and curriculum (Montrul, 2011; Potowski & Carreira, 2004; Woodard 2014;

Edstrom 2006; Cabrero 2012; Correa 2011), to educational policy (Liang, 2012; Valdez, Fishman, & Perez, 2008; Wright 2007; Valdez, 2005).

While research in the field of Spanish heritage language continues to expand, most studies have focused on the elementary levels of early language development, or at the adult or college level where students elect to take heritage language classes. There is a great need for research to inform and refine heritage language instruction in the public secondary schools where adolescents face increasing academic challenges and decisions that impact their imminent future. This systematic review will take an in-depth look at the existing research on Spanish heritage language program development and curriculum in order to address the guiding questions:

- What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle school or high school?
- What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist?
- Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English?
- What does the above suggest for further research and investigation?

In summary, I have conducted a literature review on bilingualism and LTELLs. The subtractive and additive instructional models have been reviewed, noting their role in providing the evidence of literacy instruction for L1 supporting L2 literacy success or not. And finally, the focus on Spanish heritage language instruction as a possible literacy

intervention for the LTELLs at the secondary level has been discussed. The next chapter

will explore the methodology I propose for a systematic review on heritage language

instruction programs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The methodology for this systematic literature review, the criteria selected for the research, and the procedures used are included in the following paragraphs. This systematic review addresses the following guiding research questions: What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle school or high school? What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist? Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English? What does the above suggest for further research and investigation?

A systematic review, as described by Gough (2007), is a process to gather a variety of types of evidence into a format that creates a state of the science. According to Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen, and Antes (2003) there are five steps to framing the research question for a systematic review: Step 1: Framing questions for a review, Step 2: Identifying relevant work, Step 3: Assessing the quality of studies, Step 4: Summarizing the evidence, Step 5: Interpreting the findings. While similar in the overall flow of a research review, Gough (2007) recommends further systematic mapping and description of the studies that have met the inclusion criteria before beginning to assess the quality and relevance of the select data. With this additional step, he asserts that the research findings will be more reliable and relevant.

Research Criteria

I began this systematic literature review by collecting a broad base of the research regarding heritage language instruction. In order to determine the scope of allowable studies, I used a mapping exercise with the following criteria:

- Adolescents

- Heritage language instruction

- Spanish language literacy

Additionally, in order to be considered relevant to the mapping exercise a study had to

- Include Spanish language

- Be peer-reviewed

- Be published in English

Next, the following databases were searched:

- Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA)

- Communication and Mass Media Complete (EBSCO)

- ERIC (CSA Illumina) Educational Resources Information Center

- Education Full Text

Using keywords (always paired with Spanish heritage instruction)

- Long-term English language learners

- Emergent bilinguals

- Generation 1.5

- English language learners

- Secondary school

- Literacy

- Subtractive schooling

- Additive schooling

- Heritage speakers

- Programming

- Grammar

Systematic Research Procedure

The search in the four databases using various combinations of the aforementioned keywords yielded 231 articles. These articles were then analyzed to determine themes or general categories, which emerged as (1) grammar and language use, (2) student identity/attitudes/opinions/motivation, and (3) heritage language programming which included program development, curriculum, and instructional practices. There was also a miscellaneous category for the remainder of articles, which did not fit into the other categories.

In reflecting on which category might best answer my research questions, I selected the category of heritage language programming with the focus on program development, curriculum, and instructional practices. This category held 77 articles.

The next step was to apply additional filters to these 77 articles. First I reviewed each article to identify additional keywords listed in the abstract to determine the relevance of the particular research in the article. From that point I then eliminated articles if they were not published in English, if they were published prior to the year

2000, and if the setting of the study did not include the middle or high school samples. After applying those filters, the sample size was 18 articles. Of these final 18 articles I specifically looked at the methodology and research questions of each study to have a clear picture of the context of the research and the actual research questions. Four additional articles were eliminated because one was simply a general summary of Spanish for Native Speakers rather than actual research, and three were focused on emerging bilinguals but not specifically applied to Spanish for Native Speakers. The final selection included 14 articles for the in-depth review.

Once the final selection of articles was made, I conducted an in-depth review to assess and then thematically synthesize the findings in light of the guiding questions (Thomas & Harden, 2008). These findings are presented in following chapter.

In summary, the methodology for this research was a systematic review of literature regarding Spanish heritage language instruction. Studies were found in select databases using the set criteria and keywords. These studies were mapped out and analyzed in order to determine the most relevant studies to be used for further in-depth study. The findings are reported and synthesized in Chapter Four and examined with the guiding questions in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

As the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. continues to grow, many educators are looking for instructional programming to support and maximize these linguistically diverse students' skills. Spanish heritage language instruction is one type of programming which offers literacy skills and cultural enrichment for individuals who have not had literacy instruction in Spanish. Considering the wide range of educational settings across the U.S., the greatly varying student needs and backgrounds, and even polarized societal opinions about such programming, I intended to discover what current research has found about Spanish heritage language programming.

The results presented below attempt to answer the following questions:

- What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle school or high school?

- What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist?

- Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English?

- What does the above suggest for further research and investigation?

Analysis of Results

This chapter is a report of the data and the four ways the researcher analyzed the data. After the initial mapping exercise of the databases using the selected criteria and filters, fourteen articles were chosen for in-depth analysis. The first approach examined the overall data from the fourteen studies. The second approach identified any themes that emerged in the findings. The third approach identified any findings that directly answered the research questions. The final approach analyzed the recommendations the researchers themselves provided. Table 1 shows a summary list of the final fourteen.

Table 1: *Mapping Exercise Results*

Year of study	Location of study	Type of study	Researcher	Background
2003	NE	Case study	Hargesheimer	Case study Nebraska high school
2005	general	Meta-analysis	Slavin, Cheung	Meta-analysis of bilingual and immersion
2007	CA	Description/ Journal article	Carreira	Recommendations for Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) teachers
2008	CA	Survey	Valdes, Fishman Chavez, Perez	Teacher survey of high school and college instructional practices
2009	NE	Description/ Journal article	Bloom, Chambers	High school and university collaborative projects for SNS
2009	GA	Case study	Harklau	Longitudinal case study of 2 SNS students
2010	UT	Survey	Bateman, Wilkinson	Survey of teacher perception of SNS
2010	CO	Case study	Salazar	Case study – elementary to middle school literacy gains
2010	CA	Action research	Sharp	SNS & Advance Placement writing instruction using debate
2011	AZ	Qualitative and Quantitative	Cervantes-Kelly	High school and university translation and interpretation trial
2011	VA	Discourse Analysis	Kibler	Discourse analysis of teacher and students
2012	MD	Ethnographic Action research	Cabrero	SNS using culturally relevant literature
2013	CA	Qualitative and Quantitative	Gomez	Teacher development model and reflection
2013	NC	Qualitative and Quantitative	Randolph	Teacher perception of SNS

When considering the variable of location, four studies came out of California alone, two studies out of the Southwest (UT, AZ), and three out of West Central U.S. (CO, NE-two). The next location cluster was in the Southeastern U.S., Georgia and North Carolina, which is the newest region for migration and concentration of Spanish-

speaking individuals. And the final location cluster was in the Northeast USA, Maryland and Virginia, both historical places for immigration.

Table 1 shows a wide variety of methodology used in the data. There were three case studies and three mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative) studies. There were two surveys and two descriptive journal articles. The single meta-analysis, discourse analysis, ethnographic action research, and action research all provided another perspective on Spanish heritage language instruction. This range of methodology offers a broad picture and many perspectives of current Spanish heritage language practice.

<u>Emerging Themes</u>

The second approach to analyzing the final fourteen addressed emerging themes. Two distinct themes arose from the data: 1) instructional methodology used or analyzed, and 2) focus of the classroom. Within the first theme of instructional methodology used or analyzed, there were two further subgroups: 1) methodology which focused on what the students were doing and 2) methodology which impacted what the teacher was doing. The second theme pertained to whether the classroom instructional focus was on language or culture.

<u>Instructional methodology: student focus.</u>

In the theme of instructional methodology used or analyzed, one subgroup was student focus. Bloom and Chambers (2009); Cabrero (2012); Carriera (2007); Cervantes-Kelly (2011); Kibler (2011); Sharp (2010); and Valdez, Fishman, Chavez, and Perez (2008) each presented examples of student-focused instruction that yielded positive results for Spanish heritage instruction. Most of these classrooms used interactive,

collaborative projects, while other examples included in-class debates, peer-edits, and research projects. The following will be a brief review of the positive findings from each study.

Cervantes-Kelly (2011) found that having the students work collaboratively on their Spanish lessons to give each other feedback not only increased their metalinguistic awareness, but also encouraged a sense of belonging by providing a broad level of support when dealing with prejudice. In the survey of Spanish teachers in California, Valdez, et al. (2008) found 90% of teachers used projects that included a collaborative writing process for editing. Sharp (2010) observed that through the use of in-class debates and peer evaluations "students developed their ideas more fully through elaboration and created a more effective argument which included a rebuttal" (p. 40). In 2011, Kibler performed a discourse analysis between the teacher and students as they worked on literacy development. The analysis showed the best results from rephrasing strategies, summarizing student responses, suggestive tags ("right?"), and use of native language for comprehension check.

Cabrero (2012) focused on finding and using culturally relevant literature to engage the students in their learning. The content readings centered on characters who had borderland experiences similar to the population of students in the classroom. Through this exploration of identity and literacy, the students reported an increased desire to read and to be bilingual.   In the same vein, Carreira (2007) outlined recommendations for SNS teachers and emphasized the key efforts to foster biliteracy and biculturalism. This, Carreira found, is best accomplished with a curriculum designed to expand

bilingual range, support the transfer of literacy skills, foster linguistic awareness, and promote learner independence overall.

The final study by Bloom and Chambers (2009) has a student focus in that the course was designed as a dual enrollment course, concurrently at the local high school and university. The Spanish course included collaborative research on culturally relevant topics and supported new experiences for students to view themselves as college students.

Instructional methodology: teacher focus.

Within the theme instructional methodology used or analyzed, the second theme showed a focus on the teacher and what the teacher would do to support the heritage learner. Bateman and Wilkenson (2010); Bloom and Chambers (2009); Cervantes-Kelly (2011); Gomez (2013); Hargesheimer (2003); Randolph (2013); Salazar (2010); and Valdez, et al. (2008) highlighted a range of modifications made by the teacher that supported the Spanish heritage students. The following is a brief review of the modifications made by the teachers.

The first example is a case study by Gomez (2013), which focused on teacher development for ESL and Spanish students. The study demonstrated that while each teacher had had similar training, each teacher arrived at different places professionally. Additionally, even though each teacher had different levels of classes, over time they found that a focus on academic language was key for student learning across the content areas.

Randolph (2013) reviewed the practices of five teachers in one high school in North Carolina and found the teachers emphasized classroom interaction strategies in the form of contextualized clues, and targeted and modified feedback. One example of modified feedback was to ask the heritage learners to create a personal list of frequently misspelled words found in their own assignments, such that they could review and focus on their specific needs. In the 2003 case study of an SNS class in Nebraska, Hargesheimer reported positive results using a modified instructional approach through language arts rather than the foreign language approach, all the while incorporating translation and interpretation skills.

The case study by Salazar (2010) highlighted the positive academic gains made by students due to the organizational design. The new principal instituted Spanish instruction for kindergarten through grade five, and hired teachers and support staff who represented the local dialect. By creating a school culture where linguistic diversity was the norm and by developing literacy skills in both Spanish and English, the students made literacy gains such that the achievement gap between native and non-native English speakers, as measured by the state tests, was nonexistent until the later middle school years.

There were two authors whose research findings applied to both the student and teacher focus: Cabrero (2012) and Kibler (2011). Cabrero's research findings pointed to assuring that each lesson that was created by the teacher was linguistically appropriate for the students, that the lesson was designed within Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development. Kibler's study showed an emphasis on strategies the teacher would use to

negotiate meaning in the classroom, or to use clarification requests, or check for both confirmation and comprehension as effective ways to support the HL's growth.

Focus of the classroom: language.

The second theme, focus of the classroom, had two distinct subgroups, a focus on language or a focus on culture. In classrooms that focused on language, the examples included a range of activities or strategies. Valdes, et al. (2008) reported from a survey of SNS teachers in California that many teachers focused classroom instruction on identifying and correcting Anglicisms, or words and phrases that are peculiar to British English, archaisms, which are words that are very old, and other dialectical or non-standard forms. Randolph (2013) reported several teachers in North Carolina still placed a focus on the form of words rather than function of words, which had limited results. Kibler (2011) observed teachers emphasizing in-class negotiation of meaning as a way to scaffold comprehension and clarification of language. Even though this method would seem obvious and familiar to many teachers, Kibler also reported that the negotiation between student and teacher was quite limited. Most often the teacher directly reinforced the idea he or she wanted the student to understand rather than fully negotiating or constructing an understanding together.

Focus of the classroom: culture.

In classrooms that had a cultural focus, Cabrero (2012) highlighted the successes that came with finding culturally relevant literature and creating culturally responsive lessons. Cervantes-Kelly (2011) reported that using collaborative work and creating a classroom environment where the student felt supported and cared for had the greatest

impact on overall student success. Carriera (2007) reported the SNS classes fostered biliteracy and biculturalism both in the SNS classes as well as in the content classes, which then fostered greater independence. In her longitudinal case study of two high school heritage speakers in Georgia, Harklau (2009) reflected the students' struggles with the local power relations in the school, which included struggles with the teachers, as well as the larger community and societal attitudes. Initially the SNS classes were supportive and welcoming, but over time the students expressed their dislike and even opposition to the SNS class. These negative outcomes will be discussed further in the next section.

Salazar (2010) and Cervantes-Kelly (2011) had examples that applied to both the language and cultural focus. In Salazar's 2010 case study in Colorado the participants had been required to participate in Spanish instruction for grades K-5, and the resulting literacy skills transfer was still evident in the middle school performance. The positive, natural environment where Spanish was both taught and welcomed demonstrated the connection between culture and identity and the impact it has on student academic success. Cervantes-Kelly (2011) reported on a specially designed SNS class for interpretation skills and careers, which focused on content while incorporating language instruction. The collaboration required for the lessons built upon the students' cultural values and again demonstrated the connection between culture, identity and academic success.

Review.

In review, two distinct themes arose from the data: 1) instructional methodology used or analyzed, and 2) focus of the classroom. Within the first theme of instructional methodology used or analyzed, there were two further subgroups: 1) methodology that focused on what the students were doing, and 2) methodology that impacted what the teacher was doing. The second major theme, focus of the classroom, highlighted the curricular focus on language or on culture. Even though the initial data represented a broad spectrum of studies, the themes that emerged can give a general picture of what is happening in the Spanish for Native Speaker classroom.

Research Question Analysis

The third approach to analysis looked directly at the research questions to find any connections or answers. This discussion will begin in reverse, with the third research question: Does current research show a correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English? Out of the fourteen articles reviewed, none used inferential statistics in their research, so no correlation can be claimed. However, several articles included descriptive statistics, which indicated a distinct relationship between instruction in L1 Spanish and improved L2 English. Valdez, Fishman, Chavez and Perez (2008) reported from the survey of Utah SNS teachers and students that 57% of students were satisfied with the overall improvement of their Spanish vocabulary skills. Salazar (2010) demonstrated that one district in Colorado, through requiring literacy instruction in Spanish for all students in a K-5 school, was able to eliminate the achievement gap between native English speakers and native Spanish speakers, per state test scores for 3

years in upper elementary. This early academic success even transferred into the students' middle school scores. Cervantes-Kelly (2011) found heritage learners made statistical gains in a pre- and post-test of English academic vocabulary after translation and interpretation instruction. Additionally, the students in the study reported that their newly acquired academic skills transferred to other content, as was supported by their grades. Carriera (2007) reported one strategic benefit of the SNS classes was that the coursework fostered the students' positive association and identification with biliteracy and biculturalism.

  The second research question was: What is working or not working to develop L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs that exist? I'll begin with what emerged as working in the current programs. First, Sharp (2010) noted that through the use of in-class debates and peer evaluations, student self-efficacy grew in Spanish writing and the students developed their ideas more fully through elaboration and created a more effective argument with rebuttal. Salazar (2010) declared that the Spanish literacy skills partnered with cultural representation on staff increased student identity and self-respect. The next example, from Cervantes-Kelly (2011), is that student self-perception shifted to proud and capable after they had developed advanced skills in Spanish and English through a course on translation and interpretation. Additionally, their new language skills provided a broader understanding for dealing with prejudice. An outcome from Cabrero's (2012) study was the students' desire to read increased and they desired to be bilingual. Bloom and Chambers (2009) witnessed the students as highly engaged in their Spanish

heritage class with the culturally relevant topics and new experiences connecting them to the university.

The following examples demonstrate further progress for SNS programming beyond the student level. Carriera (2007) identified that the Spanish heritage programming socialized the Latino families to the American education system. Through professional development and instructional focus on academic language, Gomez (2013) reported the teachers grew to value, understand, and incorporate academic language into their SNS courses.

Of the research reviewed there were several articles that noted aspects of Spanish heritage instruction that was not working well. Randolff (2013) indicated that the Spanish heritage learners had not been academically successful in the SNS classes due to overall societal pressures outside of school. The teachers' efforts to reach out to struggling heritage learners had not been effective to overcome the challenges of lack of student motivation or failure to engage with the lesson. The teachers also reported their own challenges of limited time and resources to create effective lessons which differentiate for mixed ability classrooms. Kibler (2011) observed that in the use of classroom oral strategies there was a lack of teacher-student negotiation of meaning. Students' limited response was based in lack of confidence and limited prior knowledge. Through the longitudinal case study, Harklau (2009) noted that the students had initially enjoyed the Spanish heritage language classes, but over time this changed to a strong dislike and opposition due to stigma and disagreement over the values and enforcement of standardized linguistic forms in Spanish. Bloom and Chambers (2009) noted that the

Spanish heritage students participating in the dual enrollment course (high school and university) need further writing support to make the desired gains, as well as time management skills. Finally, student identification for participation in the Spanish heritage courses was problematic in Bateman and Wilkinson's (2010) report. They believed the challenge for the students was not linguistic, but rather academic, social, and political.

The overarching research question asked: What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle or high school? As the research itself is vast and varied, so too are the results. There were some general themes, which emerged, yet there are no consistent trends that could be applied to other settings as guidelines or recommendation.

<u>Recommendation Themes</u>

The final analysis approach was to look for themes in the recommendations for future programming. There were five distinct themes in the recommendations they offered: what teachers need, what students need, programming needs, recommendations for student language, and recommendations for culture and identity.

Bateman and Wilkenson (2010), Harklau (2009), and Randolph (2013) all recommended that teachers receive training specific to a course in Spanish heritage language. The authors observed the need for additional differentiation strategies and support for mixed class dynamics. The discovery of effective instructional methods specific to SNS, support for challenging student interactions, support for collaborative planning, increased instructional resources, and ongoing professional development were further suggested needs.

In order to better support students in the Spanish heritage courses, Hargesheimer (2003), in her case study, suggested that language not be the topic of instruction, but rather content with a focus on language. By building background knowledge students would be able to negotiate meaning better and produce more. In her journal article, Carreira (2007) suggested that student growth would be greater if teachers expand student bilingual range, develop literacy skills that would transfer, and foster linguistic awareness. Promoting learner independence and scaffolding student identity exploration students would engage with the lessons in a holistic way, per Cabrero (2012). And finally, in their journal article, Bloom and Chambers (2009) recommended using collaborative work partnered with culturally relevant topics is needed to guide students.

In the area of programming needs, Bateman and Wilkinson (2010), Bloom and Chambers (2009), Cabrero (2012), and Harklau (2009) recommended using culturally relevant curriculum, such as literature that reflected the lives of the students or topics of study that the students were directly dealing with in their individual lives. In Cabrero (2012) the use of borderland literature is an example of literature that reflects the voices and experiences of students in the classroom. Cervantes-Kelly (2011) suggested it be organized cyclically, reviewing and expanding key concepts in sequential units, rather than once and moving on. Randolph (2013), in his mixed methods study, and Valdez, et al. (2008) in their survey, identified that the Spanish heritage courses need to be clearly defined, evaluated and articulated. This would include student evaluation and assessment. Assuring for a range of leveled courses would provide added continuity for the students.

The researchers offered several suggestions for student language development. In her mixed methods study Gomez (2013) recommended that academic language should be taught across the content levels. Additionally, in order to expand the bilingual range, transfer literacy skills and foster linguistic awareness, Carreira (2007) recommended that the focus should be on the content while highlighting the linguistic needs in that content.

The final recommendation concerns student culture and identity. Bateman and Wilkinson (2010), Bloom and Chambers (2009), Cabrero (2012), and Harrklau (2009) all highlight the use of culturally relevant curriculum. Students need to explore their identity and may need scaffolding for this. The use of collaborative work for any topic supports their engagement and even fosters learner independence.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In conclusion, this chapter reported the findings of the fourteen articles that were selected for in depth review. Four different approaches were applied to analyze the data. The first approach directly examined the year of publication, location of the study, and type of study collected in the in depth review. The second approach found themes in methodology and classroom focus. The third approach looked at the data as it applied directly to the research questions. And the final approach analyzed and found themes in the researchers' recommendations for future programming improvements. The following chapter will be a discussion of the findings in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One day this spring I found a former EL student in the hallway and asked her how her classes were going. She answered, "I don't know, Ms. Palms, when I first started the SNS class, I really hated it because everyone was arguing about different Spanish words, and what was right or wrong. But now, now what I'm learning in Spanish class is actually helping me understand English better." This was music to my ears, and evidence to share with teachers and administration that their efforts to provide L1 Spanish literacy instruction has made a positive difference.

My research questions arose from small, individual victories such as this student's experience. This systematic literature review explores the impact of Spanish heritage language instruction on the development of literacy skills in adolescent students. The research explores the following:

- Overarching question: What does current research show regarding Spanish heritage language classes in middle school or high school?
- What is working or not working in the development of L1 Spanish literacy skills in the heritage language programs?
- Does current research show the correlation between increased L1 Spanish and improved L2 English?

- What does the above suggest for further research and investigation?

The intent of reviewing studies that examine different aspects of Spanish heritage language instruction is to better understand the impact of strengthening the L1 literacy skills of adolescent LTELLs.

Overall, while the current data does show general connections between Spanish language skills instruction for adolescent native Spanish speakers in their academic development and success using English, the data does not show repeatable, consistent methodologies that produce increased literacy skills in L1 with a transfer to L2. However, the data shows that teachers and school districts around the United States are willing to explore different programming and methodologies to address the literacy and academic needs of their native Spanish speakers. Several colleges and high schools have already created partnerships for literacy and developed a desire as well as a vision for students wanting to use Spanish as a valuable skill in their educational goals.

Of the SNS programs reviewed, what is not working is limited teacher preparation and support, at both the teacher training level, as well as at the program administration level. Several studies reported on teachers' concerns with calibrating student placement into either SNS or mainstream Spanish courses. This is likely due to the localized, rather than standardized, nature of the various Spanish heritage programs. Additionally, starting new programs includes creating new curriculum and possible trainings that may or may not happen due to time and funding constraints.

At the same time, Harklau found an advantage to the flexibility allowed in localized programming (Harklau, 2009). During adolescence, discovering individual

identity is a dominant piece of student development. It stands to reason that word use, lexicon, and identification with a particular dialect of Spanish could serve as point of or connection or contention. Harklau's study provides an example of students disempowered by the enforcement of standardized Spanish forms. This could be viewed through the lens of history in how mainstream society has handled variations in English, AAVE, and other English dialects. Localized programming can allow for respectful negotiation between dialects.

An additional limitation found in the research for the SNS programing was, as with any student, that the challenges outside of school play a major role as to their ability to focus and engage with school curriculums. Other concerns facing the native Spanish speakers include social, academic, and political, all of which influence the development of personal identity, which has a distinct impact on student investment into developing their heritage language skills. The long-term English language learners across the nation face many challenges and make many choices during adolescence, which can have a profound impact on their futures. If students were empowered by their linguistic and cultural diversity, they could also claim their personal power and pull forward into a life that they desire to live.

The very uniqueness of this stage of adolescent development is that the research parameters for this study were set to exclude elementary and post-secondary studies. Much research has been conducted at both of those levels, as elementary education directly relates to language and human development, and post-secondary education embraces student self-selection and choice. However, this parameter itself was a

limitation as it significantly narrowed the sample of eligible studies. Carreira's (2007) study was included because the study extended from the elementary into the middle school years, and coincidentally, it showed the closest relationship between increasing literacy in L1 that impacts literacy L2. I recommend that further longitudinal studies be conducted to fill this gap in the data, especially since we have so many communities around the United States where this could be accomplished.

A general, yet powerful, relationship between L1 instruction and academic gains in L2 was established in several studies when using culturally responsive literature and engaging content that connects students with a vision of potential careers where their language skills are honored and needed. The ethnographic action research conducted by Cabrero (2012) and mixed method research Cerantes-Kelly (2011) would be studies to replicate to expand the base of research and establish similar measurements for heritage language instruction.

As an EL teacher in a district where nearly 10 percent of students in our district list Spanish as their home language, where over half the students in our EL program are Spanish speakers, and where over half of all secondary EL students are long-term EL students (J. Smith, personal communication, May 12, 2015), I am concerned and invested in finding alternative programming to support the students in our classrooms. Partnered with these statistics is the irony that our district has a Spanish immersion program for grades K-8. However, the district policy is to discourage native Spanish speaking families from enrolling in the immersion program, emphasizing the need to learn English as soon as possible, therefore, English only instruction. This practice goes against proven

research for literacy instruction and second language acquisition. Additionally, for those families who still choose to enroll, several have found it frustrating as the programming is designed as a foreign language experience rather than an inclusive linguistic and cultural community.

My recommendation is for school districts to continue expanding Spanish heritage language instruction using culturally responsive literature for academic engagement, and to continue developing creative combinations or collaborations for student instruction and interaction with career pathways. A key resource available for programming development of heritage language programs is the National Heritage Language Resource Center (http://nhlrc.ucla.ed/u/nhlrc).   In further support of Spanish literacy development and respect for dialectical variation, the WIDA consortium (https://www.wida.us/standards/sld.aspx) continues to develop instructional supports and assessment for Spanish language development.

Throughout this research project I have been inspired and grateful to the teachers and administrators in my school district for their willingness to begin a SNS program at both the middle and high school. While they have faced many of the same challenges I read about in the research, their commitment to what would be best for the students remains evident. To further support their efforts I will share select research studies with my SNS and ESL colleagues and program administrators.

As an English as a Second Language teacher, I always had long-term English learners in my classrooms. While I could share my beliefs and values of biliteracy with my students, and I could create lessons in which they discovered and were empowered by

these values, the greater inspiration has been witnessing the general shift in my students' confidence and ownership of their academics once they were enrolled in the SNS classes at our school. It is for all the Alejandras and Gilbertos in the world that I will continue to advocate for any heritage language programing wherever I teach. Additionally, as a result of this research process, my understanding of professional collaboration has deepened, not only from the examples of collaboration within the different research studies, but also from wide range of professionals I personally called upon at different stages of the research process; I have a new level of appreciation for their efforts.

In conclusion, this systematic literature review of Spanish heritage language instruction for adolescents has brought forth a broad, general picture of the diverse programming offered throughout America. From this research, however, there were only a few individual programs that measured the academic growth of LTELLs' in both Spanish and English. Further research in the field of heritage language instruction as a method for increased English language acquisition will find the appropriate literacy interventions for the LTELLs around the nation.

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