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Advanced Foreign Language Learning: A Challenge to College Programs

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Heritage Language Speakers and Upper-Division Language Instruction: Findings from a Spanish Linguistics Program

Daniel J. Villa

Abstract

Teaching upper-division courses in Spanish linguistics presents a two-pronged dilemma: students entering the courses (1) have had little literacy education in the target language in general and (2) have had little or no familiarity with the science of linguistics in particular. In confronting this situation, the article describes how one collegiate program was able to use to advantage the particular knowledge bases, linguistic and otherwise, that heritage speakers of Spanish can bring to upper division courses in Spanish linguistics. It examines the theoretical underpinnings of heritage language pedagogy, explores applications to the teaching of heritage students in upper division courses, describes the program design of a linguistics program that explicitly draws on heritage students' abilities, and highlights some consequences of the chosen program design. The article also discusses the concept of literacy, particularly how writing in Spanish plays a role in students' ability to develop a critical approach to studying Spanish linguistics.

Introduction

Upper-division Spanish language classes present specific challenges in that the emphasis is on the study of a particular subject matter (often literature, culture, or linguistics), as opposed to the acquisition of the language used for instruction. Students in such classes generally are expected to be able to comprehend, speak, read, and write in a fashion that permits them to concentrate on the topic at hand. However, the many students whose only exposure to the second language has been four semesters of lower division language classes generally do not develop such abilities in that short period of time and face the difficulties of trying to acquire the language while also working on content matter. Further, the question of content matter presents formidable challenges in and of itself, especially in the area of linguistics.

In an article on the status of physical sciences instruction in the United States, David Goodstein likens the pedagogy in that area to a mining operation. He writes:

A ... realistic way of looking at American science education, as it is now and has long been, is, I suggest, to view it as a mining-and-sorting operation designed to discover and rescue diamonds in the rough, ones capable of being cleaned and cut and polished into glittering gems, just like us, the existing scientists.

Meanwhile, all the other human rocks and stones are indifferently tossed aside in the course of the operation. Thus, science education at all levels is largely a dreary business, a burden to student and teacher alike— until the happy moment arrives when a teacher-miner finds a potential peer, a real, if not yet gleaming, gem (1995, p. 56).

I have taught a variety of Spanish linguistics courses at New Mexico State University (NMSU), an institution with a significant number of Spanish heritage speakers. NMSU is a “minority majority” university, with minority students actually making up the majority of the student body; as a result, approximately 90 percent of enrollments in the upper division courses in Spanish linguistics consists of students who have had some exposure to Spanish at home and in the community. In working with this student population, I wonder if the mining metaphor introduced above might be applicable to the teaching of linguistics as well. Regarding materials, for example, the few introductory texts in Spanish I have found dive straight into phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics, among other areas, apparently ignoring the fact that students for the most part have had no exposure to this science in their primary and secondary education. Furthermore, there appears to be relatively little discussion in the literature on integrating recent research on pedagogical theory and practice into introducing students to linguistics, particularly in Spanish. As a result, students may be discouraged at the outset of their contact with linguistic studies from further work in this area, with negative consequences for linguistics programs in general and Spanish linguistics programs in particular.

The teaching of Spanish linguistics, then, presents a two-pronged dilemma: one, students' lack of the literacies necessary for success in upper division courses and two, the lack of appropriate materials, curriculum, and pedagogy for Spanish linguistics (I address the notion of “literacy” below). However, the difficulties of developing language use and advancing studies in Spanish linguistics are not insurmountable. In this essay, I present one program's strategies for resolving such issues (to the extent that they can be solved), with the goal of increasing student interest (and enrollment) in upper-division Spanish linguistic studies through a student-centered approach to teaching that benefits from the communicative capabilities heritage Spanish speakers bring to the classroom. At the same time, non-heritage speakers may benefit from the strategies described below; I address this issue in the section titled “Developing Literacies”.

Theoretical Bases

The pedagogical theories that underlie teaching establish an important starting point in dealing with the issues presented above. In the field of Spanish heritage language instruction, Paulo Freire's work in pedagogy provides a solid footing for a philosophy of language teaching. While Freire's impact on this field has received considerable attention (e.g., Faltis and DeVillar 1993; Villa 1996, 1997), I reexamine it because previous interpretations, particularly those relying on Spanish (1986) and English (1997) translations, have over time introduced readings not found in the original Portuguese text (1970). In particular, I will revisit here a central concept of Freirian pedagogy, that of the “banking” system of instruction.

Regarding how a pedagogical system may conceive learners, one approach is to consider them empty receptacles to be filled with unprocessed knowledge. In discussing this type of system, Freire employs a “container metaphor” to refer to learners (for a detailed discussion of the use of metaphors in everyday communication, see Lakoff and

Johnson 1980) and identifies the entire approach as a “banking” means of teaching. In such a “bank metaphor”, the bank/learner may be thought of as vault or piggybank containing money/knowledge. Just like the vault/piggybank never receives interest, students do not benefit from the knowledge they store, even though they may be able to categorize or order it. Moreover, students represent a public excluded from activities such as the setting of interest rates, the approval of credit cards or loans, the distribution of profits, and the determination of equitable uses of capital. The result is a system in which a few, the “bankers/teachers” control resources/knowledge in a fashion which is manipulated for the benefit of the bank/school system, not for the general public or even the depositors/scholars, those who create knowledge. Learners may acquire something by engaging in, say, rote memorization, but in such a process they are not actively engaged in the *creation* of knowledge, which is the aim of a student-centered educational system.

Another crucial point Freire makes has implications for the heritage speaker situation in the United States and, in particular, the language varieties heritage Spanish speakers bring to the classroom. By and large, Spanish heritage speakers employ a kind of rural, working class or “campesino” Spanish, often with a number of recent borrowings from English thrown in. Some scholars consider this “low” Spanish, unsuited for academic purposes. For example, Valdés and Geoffrion-Vinci (1998) write

As might be expected given our previous discussion of class-based language differences, we conjecture that the linguistic repertoires of most ordinary Mexicans who emigrate to the United States are generally made up of mid to low registers of Spanish. This is important to our understanding of the Spanish spoken by Chicano bilingual students, because it is these registers that serve as the models of language as students acquire Spanish in their families and communities (p. 477).

In another instance, Varela (2000: p. 173) states, “La mayoría [de préstamos] pertenece a un bajo nivel de hablantes con poca cultura que no hablan bien ni el inglés ni el español” (The majority [of loanwords] belongs to a low class of speakers with little culture who speak neither English nor Spanish well). Regarding these types of attitudes toward U.S. Spanish, Freire asserts:

Human existence **cannot be silent** To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in **silence**, but in **word**, in work, in action-reflection. But while to **say** the true word—which is work, which is praxis—is to transform the world, **saying** that word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone (Freire [1970] 1997, p. 69; bolding added).

Heritage language instruction can look to Freire as an inspiration as it seeks to create an enabling linguistic reality for its learners through a vocal, oral process of saying things. To suggest to students that the way they speak is somehow “incorrect” or “not good enough” is to silence them, to deny them full participation in the educational dynamic. To not only “permit” students to speak in their own voices, but also to encourage them to use those voices, engages them more fully in the learning process. Such an approach recognizes in a very real way how heritage learners, myself included, speak their Spanish, how they, quite literally, name their world. It also reflects the linguistic reality that the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic structures the heritage speakers bring to the classroom consist of the usual and expected variations

found within the wide range of societally embedded possibilities in what Otheguy (1991) refers to as “General Spanish”.

More specifically, heritage Spanish represents what Gee (1998) calls a “primary discourse”, the oral mode of a language as used by members of a certain linguistic group. Regarding English, and referring to Labov’s work, he notes that “So-called ‘Black Vernacular English’ is, on structural grounds, only trivially different from standard English by the norms of linguists accustomed to dialect differences around the world. ... [t]hese children [who speak it] use language, behavior, values and beliefs to give a different shape to their experience” (1998, p. 56). Heritage Spanish can also be viewed in this light; how students speak does not present an issue due to the trivial differences between their variety of Spanish and others. True, their heritage language gives a different shape to their academic and non-academic experience, to borrow Gee’s words, but as I have pointed out elsewhere (Villa 1996) it also serves as an excellent bridge to developing secondary discourses, those presented in academic settings. Heritage Spanish serves them well in academia, and will continue to do so after graduation. I return to this point below.

Program Goals

A general aim of the Spanish program at NMSU focuses on creating a greater understanding of the multicultural and increasingly international world we inhabit. While the official program description does not detail this general goal, faculty members have published programmatic goals in professional venues (see e.g., Rodríguez Pino and Villa 1994; Villa 1996, 1997, 2002). Among these is the fostering of what Heath terms “literate behaviors”; she writes:

... being literate goes beyond having literacy skills that enable one to disconnect from the interpretation or production of a text as a whole, discrete elements, such as letters, graphemes, words, grammar rules, main ideas, and topic sentences. The sense of being literate derives from the ability to exhibit literate behaviors. Through these, individuals can compare, sequence, argue with, interpret and create extended chunks of spoken and written language in response to a written text in which communication, reflection, and interpretation are grounded (1991, p. 3).

This definition of literacy underscores the importance of the review of Freirean theory presented above. While terminology certainly differs, the overarching goal of engaging students in a critical pedagogy, or in developing literacy, remains the same. Communication, reflection, and interpretation represent central abilities a Freirean pedagogy aims to cultivate. We present students with written as well as oral texts for them to compare, sequence, argue with, and interpret, to use Heath’s words, in order that they create extended chunks of spoken and written language.

Concretely, this means engaging students in a pedagogical interaction which will benefit them both professionally and in their personal lives. Regarding the former, I have written elsewhere (Villa 2000) that the single largest Spanish-speaking market in the world for U.S. goods and services lies within the borders of this nation. A recent article in the Spanish newspaper *El País* asserts that the buying power of U.S. citizens of Spanish-speaking descent is roughly equivalent to Spain’s gross domestic product (Comas 2003). The majority of our heritage language students therefore will find employment in this economy. We work toward fostering the Spanish language literacies that will serve them

in the various fields they will enter by focusing on the literacies that will (re)connect them with their heritage language communities, while extending the discourse capacities they will employ in public realms. Indeed, we consider this affective dimension to be the link to their ability to develop the professional voice they will employ in the future.

In the following section I aim to give a broad picture of the steps we have taken to modify the linguistics program following the tenets above. Brief sketches of particular courses, including their goals, give an idea of its curricular flow.

General Considerations for the Curriculum

A central concern of our curriculum is that students should become knowledgeable about a wide range of aspects pertaining to language use, particularly in areas where such knowledge can enlighten their own language use in a bilingual, even multilingual, environment. Therefore, a key instructional strategy is to provide them with the conceptual tools and the metalanguage that can facilitate discussion about language use in society. In my courses I give no tests in order to determine if the students have memorized those terms, and students always have access to articles, their notes, or to handouts that might enable them to carry out course assignments that involve the use of the metalanguage.

We have considered carefully the order in which we present concepts inasmuch as the vast majority of learners entering upper-division Spanish linguistics courses have no background in the study of that science, neither in Spanish nor in English. Again, most “introductory” linguistics textbooks launch into detailed discussion of areas like phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, creating a mind-boggling array of heretofore unknown concepts. By contrast, our introductory classes examine the social dimensions of language by employing previous studies that students have carried out in culture and society and relating such concepts to their own linguistic reality. Not only does this avoid losing students early on, it enables us to introduce the theoretical concepts and metalanguage needed for advanced studies in linguistics in a fashion that students can own because the issues that are highlighted relate to their situation as heritage speakers who, more often than not, constitute the first generation to attend college.

Example: An Introductory Course, “Spanglish”

To exemplify the above points, let me describe an introductory linguistics course, “Spanglish,” which studies a variety of the linguistic dynamics of contact between Spanish and English. Virtually all students are familiar with the term “Spanglish” and inhabit the physical, social, and linguistic environments studied in this course. Many students consider what they speak a broken mishmash of two languages that only serves for talking with friends out on the street and, more important, a Spanish not valued in society. By contrast, the metalanguage used to identify phenomena, such as codeswitching, domain, loanword, register and lexical variation, (respectively *cambio de código*, *dominio*, *préstamo*, *registro*, and *variación léxica*), can lead to a less judgmental understanding of the issues at hand by identifying and acknowledging communicative realities that lead to language use in line with what these students experience day in and day out. In other words, the “broken mishmash” is now interpreted and viewed through the lens of societal and linguistic principles and theories that offer a context for understanding the relation between language and society and its consequences for language use and identity creation.

The research area of language loss forms another important component of this introductory course. Some heritage language students enter the upper-division linguistics courses fluent in Spanish. However, many others have experienced language loss: they

understand the language but have extremely limited productive capabilities (for research on the loss of Spanish in the United States, see e.g., Bills 1989; Bills et al. 1995, 2000; López 1978; Pease-Álvarez 1993; Rivera-Mills, 2001; Solé 1990; and Veltman 1988). This may well carry a stigma of the “what, you’re (Mexican, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Hispanic, Latino, fill in the blank) and you don’t speak Spanish?!” type. The study of language loss strives to illustrate that (1) this area is of vital interest in linguistic studies and has produced a body of research literature dedicated to it, (2) such loss represents an unfortunate reality of Spanish/English contact in the United States, and does not imply some sort of moral failure, and (3) such loss need not be permanent inasmuch as individuals can reacquire their heritage language and learn to communicate in Spanish with family and community, in professional settings, as well as in the classroom.

In sum, the introductory courses, including Spanglish, aim to introduce a scientific study of language by connecting it with the reality of the linguistic environment students inhabit. We accomplish this by embedding formal features of language and language study within the students’ communicative realities. This approach readily enables us to include “traditional” topics such as the history of the language, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, thereby laying the foundation for advanced upper-division courses where students will formalize their knowledge of linguistic concepts and meta-language and will tackle the more technical aspects of linguistics.

Curricular Progression

As noted above, a detailed description of the entire upper division linguistics curriculum falls well outside the scope of this article. However, in order to convey an idea of the flow of the courses, I briefly describe the goals of the courses regularly offered in our linguistics curriculum.

Introductory courses (300 level) introduce students to linguistic metalanguage and theory within their thematic foci:

- *Introduction to Spanish Linguistics*: An overview of the variety of topics studied in detail in NMSU’s Spanish linguistics program, focusing on sociolinguistic studies of language.
- *Spanish in Social Contexts*: The study of language use as related to social class, gender, generation, geographic region, and economic factors, among other variables.
- *Spanglish: Spanish/English Contact in the United States*: An introduction to such concepts as code-switching, lexical borrowing, bilingualism, and language loss, as related to students’ linguistic reality in a bilingual region.

Advanced courses (400 level):

- *Topics in Applied Spanish Linguistics*: A course designed to examine various fields of linguistic studies on a rotating basis, focusing more closely on the “nuts and bolts” of the science of linguistics. Recent topics include phonology, demography of Spanish speakers in the United States and globally, linguistic research methodology, and language change.
- *Spanish on the U.S.-Mexico Border*: A study of the intense zone of contact between Spanish and English in an area that extends some 40 miles to the north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Both sociolinguistic and linguistic analyses

are employed, to understand better both the social dynamics of this contact region and the structural impact on Spanish that language contact creates.

- *History of the Spanish Language*: An examination of the development of Spanish from spoken Latin, studying not only phonological changes but also morphological, syntactic, and semantic developments.
- *Structure of Spanish*: Focus on such issues as Spanish phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, among other topics. This course might be considered the “traditional” approach to teaching linguistics in that an important goal is to present linguists’ tools of the trade.
- *Spanish in the Southwest/United States*: A study of the dynamics of the Spanish speaking communities in the United States, both in immediate geographic regions as well as across the country. Demographic data from the latest U.S. Census, articles from popular sources, both print and electronic, and academic publications on the dynamics of lexical creation and semantic extension constitute the materials chosen for the class.

These courses represent a solid core of linguistics studies aimed at developing students’ oral and written literacies in the study of their mother tongue. Because we are not training a cadre of future linguists but students who will enter careers in the legal system, in education, community service, marketing, or business administration, the program primarily aims to meet their needs. To them, the study of linguistics represents a means of better understanding the linguistic challenges they all will face in their future careers and that society in general must confront. If in the process a student decides to become a professional linguist, we would naturally be gratified.

Developing Literacies

Up to this point this essay has been focused on programmatic issues. I would like now to examine how the heritage language learners themselves stand to benefit from such a program. A common question that arises when working with heritage language speakers is “Well, if we’re not going to teach them how to speak Spanish, what will we teach them?” As noted above, not all heritage language students enter upper-division courses with a firm grasp of the spoken language. For those students, the classes represent a chance to develop their spoken Spanish in an environment that supports the variety or varieties of Spanish they have been exposed to. There is no discontinuity between in-class Spanish and the community’s variety. While we may study differences between certain regions or certain registers of the language, no one particular variety is imposed as the “standard”. I do not discourage the use of English for those students who are in the process of re-acquiring Spanish as it would inhibit their full participation in the course, with the distinct possibility of discouraging them from further studies in upper-division Spanish linguistics. However, the spoken language is modeled both by the instructor and more fluent students, resulting in the creation of a language-rich environment that exposes less fluent students to heritage Spanish as used for academic purposes.

Writing represents one area in which virtually all learners have little previous education, regardless of their control of spoken Spanish. This results from the fact that the majority of bilingual programs to date have focused on how to integrate Spanish speakers into mainstream English language instruction, with no emphasis on developing or maintaining the mother tongue. (Dual language programs represent a notable exception

to this tendency.) In order to develop literacy in this area, I emphasize the use of writing in all upper-division courses.

At the 300-level, students compose all their topical analyses in short, five-hundred word essays distributed over the duration of the semester. These are not “think pieces”, but rather represent the integration of theory into the students’ linguistic reality. For example, after in-class discussions on the concept of prototypical categorization, students apply this to some “real world” category, demonstrating through the written word their grasp of this particular topic. At the end of a 300-level course, a student will have completed fifteen to twenty pages of revised text. This serves as a preparation for 400-level courses, in which students complete more traditional research papers of a similar length, plus bibliography and other end materials. However, at the advanced levels I follow the same approach to writing: text produced in short segments over an entire semester. I assign writing in “chunks”, as Heath (1991) calls them, for two reasons. One is that the amount of writing required represents an achievable task, one that appears to produce little negative affective reactions on the learners’ part. The second is that having short texts turned in on a regular basis allows the instructor to return feedback on the writing in a timely fashion, on form but particularly on content.

Perhaps the most important aspect in the approach toward upper-division classes outlined in this essay is the development of critical thinking, or again, literacy, in Heath’s terms. In working toward a more profound grasp of linguistics, I ask students to consider both their attitudes as well as those of others toward the students’ heritage language varieties. Classes in the structure of the language attempt to detail the linguistic complexity of students’ heritage Spanish, those in sociolinguistics explore the impact of society on language use. All courses strive toward providing the means for students to critically examine their linguistic environments, why it is other Spanish speakers may criticize the way they speak, why it is that certain organizations, such as U.S. English (<http://www.us-english.org>), seek to establish English as the only official language of this nation’s government at the expense of their heritage variety. At the same time, we also study nascent positive changes in the social and economic status of Spanish, both on the world stage and in the United States (Villa 2000; Comas 2003).

The written form of the language creates an environment conducive to this critical reflection. In analyzing text such as that found at the U.S. English site, writers can revise their own writing until they are satisfied with its content. In doing so, they “compare, sequence, argue with, interpret and create extended chunks of . . . written language in response to a written text in which communication, reflection, and interpretation are grounded,” as Heath (1991, p. 3) suggests. If the spoken language presents communicative challenges to some students, the written form represents an opportunity to use the heritage tongue in an iterative manner, returning to the same chunk of writing a number of times, which encourages the development of both literacy and writing techniques.

In closing this section, I note that the program does not exclude students who have learned Spanish as a second language in the classroom. The in-class dialogues expose second language learners to authentic language use, and the cooperative, interactive nature with heritage speakers supports second language acquisition. It may be the case that, given these students’ intense initial exposure to the written form of the language, they can help more orally fluent Spanish speakers with the details of writing techniques, such as orthography and the use of written diacritics.

Respecting all students’ right to participate in in-class dialogues, even using English, also supports second language learners in upper-division classes. The development of critical thought is not, of course, dependent on the particular language one speaks. If a

student's oral literacy in Spanish does not permit him or her to create an extended chunk of oral text in the classroom, the ability to participate in in-class dialogues through the language available to him or her encourages working toward an understanding of the topic at hand, whatever it might be. At the same time, such students are exposed to the target language as modeled by the instructor and more fluent students, which extends to them the opportunity to participate in a language-rich environment that can support their acquisition of verbal literacy, particularly in a variety or varieties of Spanish common to one of the largest Spanish speaking countries in the world, the United States.

Finally, because non-heritage language students have also successfully completed their studies in Spanish linguistics at NMSU (graduating with a degree in Spanish), it may well be the case that the curriculum design and pedagogical methods chosen support both the second language learner as well as the heritage language student. The benefits of such an encompassing approach will become clearer in the future as language programs begin to reassess and modify their curriculum in Spanish linguistics.

Outcomes Assessment

Precisely what students carry with them from this linguistics program is difficult to measure. At this point the Spanish linguistics program has not carried out formal language-focused outcomes assessments, such as those detailed in Byrnes (2002). Regarding benefits to the program, I mention the following forms of evidence for what I claim above. First, enrollments in upper-division linguistics courses are strong. Over the last decade, not a single Spanish linguistics course has been cancelled due to lack of enrollment. This includes even the advanced upper-division classes that involve working with advanced linguistic concepts. Last summer, for example, a class on the structure of Spanish, covering phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, capped at thirty students, had a total enrollment of thirty-five students. Second, a high level of interest is helpful when the department wishes to implement new courses (e.g., Spanglish), leading to a more dynamic curriculum that meets students' instructional needs beyond "traditional" core courses. Third, the number of majors in the department has grown over the last eight years or so, from around 40 to about 200 majors or double majors, a trend undoubtedly supported by the strong interest in the Spanish linguistics program. In these times of ever-increasing tightening of educational budgets, this type of growth justifies a program's substantial continued funding.

The development of a well-defined, overarching coordinated set of outcome assessments for students enrolled in the program described here remains a task to be addressed. Currently students are assessed by individual instructors based on criteria such as the ability to demonstrate the grasp of key concepts as expressed in written texts. However, post-graduation outcome assessment is beginning to take shape, suggested by an unsolicited e-mail I received from a former student. He wrote:

... I was a student of yours back in the mid nineties (at NMSU) (I can't remember exactly which year.) Anyhow... I graduated with a BA degree majoring in Government (1995) and have now been working with the State of New Mexico (District Attorney's) for approximately four years. During this time I have used my Spanish speaking background to explain the justice system to non-English speaking people. After taking your class, I realized how important it is to speak and write formal Spanish and understand the language better.

Not only did this former student find that his language studies serve him on the job, he has received promotions and salary increases due to his (heritage language) bilingualism. Other former students report similar experiences. A successful local podiatrist reports that his heritage Spanish is especially useful in dealing with his patients, many of whom are much more comfortable speaking Spanish than English; a schoolteacher notes that her heritage language forms an important affective bond between her and her seventh grade students. While these individuals have identified an instrumental dimension to their heritage language, others find different values for their Spanish. Two engineers rarely employ Spanish on the job. But one does unpaid community service work, going to public schools to give presentations on his discipline and his company, and for both Spanish remains an important tie to families, friends, and their communities, demonstrating a high affective as opposed to instrumental value.

Conclusion

I hold that the Spanish language variety a student brings to the academic study of the language serves that student well both in academia and in the community (Villa 1996, 1997, 2002). Regarding heritage language students' ability to succeed in advanced courses in a challenging academic field of studies, linguistics, I hope to have suggested this can indeed be the case, particularly when heritage language programs see themselves as dynamic and able to change to support their students. Byrnes (2002) underscores the necessity of such fundamental programmatic changes in general when she writes, "The ability of an entire educational unit to change its practices is urgently called for as US collegiate FL [foreign language] programs are challenged to reshape their educational contexts" (419). The same applies to heritage language programs. Demographic trends as recorded by the U.S. Census over the last thirty years clearly indicate that collegiate programs will serve an increasing number of Spanish heritage language students throughout this century. Moreover, the heritage language population is by no means homogeneous; if those of Mexican descent remain a majority, increasing numbers are of Central American or Caribbean ancestry.

For that reason, programmatic changes based on sound pedagogical theory and empirical research will remain an important part in the continued development of upper-division language curricula in general, and for Spanish linguistics in particular. A Freirean pedagogical approach is well-suited for devising both curricula and pedagogies for this population. Attention to students' educational backgrounds remains especially important in designing a linguistics curriculum and can strengthen a linguistics program's presence in a language department. Finally, much greater attention needs to be paid to developing outcomes assessments for the field in general if heritage language programs are to gain the kind of public recognition they deserve.

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