

Instructor perception of Spanish heritage speakers' pronunciation and effect on classroom
experience

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Abstract

Classroom practices for Spanish heritage speakers have improved in recent years, but more research is still necessary to ensure the success of this large group of students. This study, grounded in Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory, Labov's (1966), sociolinguistic theory, and Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, investigates the classroom experiences of Spanish heritage speakers and identifies areas in which language ideologies held by instructors may affect teaching, especially regarding pronunciation. The research focused on the extent to which instructors are aware of features of speech common in heritage speakers and how this affects their teaching, especially in terms of the type of oral feedback they provide to students and spoken explicit explanation (or lack thereof) of pronunciation. Students and instructors from universities in Kansas that offer Spanish heritage courses responded to a questionnaire about their experiences with Spanish and in Spanish classrooms. The students recorded two speech samples, and the instructors listened to them to determine whether they were recorded by Spanish heritage speakers or second language learners. The instructors were able to identify second language learners more accurately. Additionally, the majority of student responses reflected positive attitudes towards their classroom experiences, indicating that, although there is a broad range of heritage speakers and instructors cannot always accurately identify them, the effects on classroom practices are not particularly strong in Kansas universities.

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Introduction

Context

Classroom practices for Spanish heritage speakers have evolved recently, but improvement is necessary to assure quality education for these students. Valdés (2001) describes heritage speakers as having had exposure to the heritage language in the context of the home, who are bilingual to some extent. Hornberger and Wang (2008) define heritage speakers as “individuals who have familial or ancestral ties to a particular language that is not English and who exert their agency in determining whether or not they are heritage language learners (HLLs) of that heritage language (HL) and heritage culture (HC).” The present study refers to students with ties to Spanish in Kansas universities. According to Beaudrie and Marrero-Rivera (2024), the number of HL programs has increased significantly, but they face challenges: low enrollment, lack of funding and trained instructors, and little support. Therefore, factors that may shape Spanish HL classrooms must be discussed. Johnson et. al (2024) claim that many instructors are challenging prescriptive language ideologies, or the idea that everyone must speak one “standard” variety, in their HL classrooms. However, to increase the effectiveness of Spanish HL classes, determining the approaches taken by instructors and how these affect classroom experiences is critical.

Problem Statement

The increase in availability of HL Spanish classes is encouraging, but does not solve many challenges faced by heritage speakers. This study aims to investigate the experiences of Spanish heritage speakers in the classroom and identify the perspectives of language instructors,

especially regarding pronunciation, as this feature is underrepresented in the literature, to better understand the impact these perspectives may have on heritage speakers' learning

Background

Introduction

Several attempts have been made to describe heritage speakers and their experiences in language learning environments, with definitions describing all heritage speakers as well as some that are specific to Spanish. Definitions pertaining to all heritage speakers include ideas such as bilingualism as a gradient (Ortega, 2020), simultaneous, sequential, and late-onset bilingualism (Montrul, 2002), and speakers who have connections to the heritage language through family or ancestors and “exert their agency in determining whether or not they are heritage language learners,” allowing for varying degrees of language proficiency within the category of heritage speakers (Hornberger and Wang, 2008). Based on Montrul (2002), the majority of heritage speakers are sequential bilinguals, as they begin learning the heritage language at home, then begin to learn English when they start school in kindergarten. More recently, Montrul (2023) classifies heritage languages as those that are acquired as one of a speaker’s first languages with reduced exposure and are used by a sociopolitical minority. The most prominent definition, and the one followed in the present study, describes heritage speakers as students who have had some level of exposure to the heritage language in their home context and are to some degree, bilingual in English and the heritage language (Valdés, 2001). The literature is becoming more expansive, but there is still progress needed in the development of classes for heritage speakers and in understanding how their experiences are impacted by direct oral feedback from instructors. The present study contributes to this area by examining in detail what heritage speakers experience in classroom settings and how the varying degrees of proficiency they may have are interpreted by instructors.

Paradigm and Theories

Vygotsky's (1987) sociocultural theory claims that language is a tool for mediation, through which humans interact with the world around them. Tools are passed down through generations, which makes this especially relevant in the domain of heritage language, as heritage speakers often learn the language from their parents or grandparents and later use it to interact with the world they find themselves in, whether that is at home, in the classroom, or in day-to-day life. Finding ways to use language as a meaning-making tool is an important aspect of sociocultural theory, and heritage speakers must negotiate meaning in this way in multiple languages.

Labov's (1966) sociolinguistic theory indicates that bias is often associated with accents or differences in pronunciation that are seen as less prestigious, or as used by people in a lower socioeconomic class. He also describes "sociolinguistics markers," or aspects of speech that, while associated with varying levels of prestige, are often used within specific communities (Labov, 1966). Heritage speakers participate in their own communities by using the Spanish that they know, and it is, at times, stigmatized both within and outside of classrooms. Parodi (2008) describes the stigma surrounding Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish, which is common among heritage speakers in Southern California and is surrounded by stigma that makes heritage speakers feel uncomfortable with the language they tend to produce. Labov's theory is applicable to this situation, in which the speech of heritage speakers is stigmatized based on their pronunciation, possibly due to variations in the prestige (or lack thereof) associated with their speech.

Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis indicates that high-anxiety situations can make it significantly more difficult for students to acquire a second language, even when plenty

of comprehensible input is provided. Because the speech of heritage speakers is so often stigmatized, they tend to come into the classroom with higher levels of anxiety, so it is important for instructors to recognize this and work to create an environment in which this anxiety can be alleviated so that students can learn more effectively. While this applies to all types of students, it is especially relevant for heritage speakers, who have often been told at home or in previous classrooms that their Spanish is incorrect.

Vygotsky (1978), Labov (1966), and Krashen (1982) provide a framework through which the experiences of heritage speakers can be examined. By describing examples of how language is often perceived and how students are affected by this perception, these three theories make it clear that it is necessary to examine the perception of speech produced by various groups of students in order to understand how biases affect the experiences of language students, especially heritage speakers.

Spanish Heritage Speakers

In this study, the focus is on Spanish heritage speakers. The most prevalent definitions of Spanish heritage speakers include association with the heritage language in the context of the home, with varying levels of proficiency (Valdés, 2000), while others focus on connection to the language either through recent ancestors or through exposure during childhood in community contexts. Other studies categorize heritage speakers in groups based on generation, such as Aalberse et al. (2019), who state that second generation immigrants and later tend to adopt the language of the country they have moved to. Many Spanish heritage speakers fall into varying categories, making it especially important to ensure that their specific classroom needs are met.

Spanish Heritage Speaker Language Use/Ideologies

Spanish heritage speakers often already have an advanced understanding of the language. They can understand different accents, a fairly wide vocabulary (though lexical gaps are present in all domains), strong reading comprehension, and high sociolinguistic competence in informal contexts (Parodi, 2008). They tend to struggle in formal sociolinguistic contexts, writing, and some aspects of grammar due to exposure to the language in the home setting rather than in a monolingual setting. Parodi also describes several specific features of heritage speaker speech, such as use of the morpheme *—s* at the end of the second-person preterit, contraction of articles before vowels, lexical archaisms (such as *haiga* in place of *haya* and *mesmo* in place of *misimo*). These speech features are often stigmatized, which leads to insecurity in the classroom and makes it difficult for heritage speakers to learn effectively.

There is debate surrounding the use of “standard” Spanish versus the language used in the home and informal domains. Valdés et al. (2008) found that most of the members of one Spanish department saw standard Spanish as “specialized” and used for a specific purpose, while only a few participants believed it to be “correct” or “error-free.” The varying ideas surrounding Spanish use seem to point towards a more sociolinguistic and descriptivist view of Spanish as a heritage language.

Spanish Heritage Speakers in the Classroom

There are a wide variety of opportunities for heritage speakers in the classroom, and significant research has been conducted on the effect of different types of interactions. Driver (2024) examined the effect of using vocabulary that carries strong emotions on the length of time heritage speakers and second language learners retain information. Heritage speakers reacted with anecdotes about things that they had personally experienced in relation to the texts, while

second language learners tended towards anecdotes about their friends or family. Emotional responses lasted longer after reading negative and neutral texts (or texts that describe events that often either are associated with negative emotions or do not typically evoke strong emotions), indicating that these may be more useful in activities meant for vocabulary development.

Additionally, the differences in reactions from heritage speakers and second language learners indicate that the use of emotional materials during class is likely to have a stronger effect on heritage speakers. When heritage speakers later responded to the texts, “even those who were reminded by the neutral text of the challenges they met during their own language learning endeavors noted the overall benefit and positive outcome of the experience” (Driver, 2024). This indicates that the use of materials that have neutral or negative emotions associated with them impacts learning in both positive and negative ways.

The type of feedback provided to heritage speakers also impacts how effectively they are able to learn. Potowski (2002) explores the impact of feedback on heritage speakers, determining that they can be more personally affected by corrections because their language use is so tightly tied into identity and personal history. Cuenca and Bowles (2022) examined two groups of speakers, one of which they provided with explicit grammatical information, then structured input and corrective feedback after each item. The other group received “input flood treatment” in which they were given a written story followed by questions and no feedback. Explicit feedback allowed students to retain the information more consistently over time, but the effect of feedback also varied between heritage speakers and second language learners. This indicates that further research is needed to examine more types of feedback and instruction and acknowledge the emotional impact that the feedback may have on heritage

speakers. The present study addresses this issue by examining whether heritage speakers receive explicit feedback in the classroom and how they have been affected by it.

Program Availability for Heritage Speakers

While some universities offer classes specifically for heritage speakers, they are still uncommon in the United States, and there is evidence that heritage speakers can greatly benefit from having classes geared towards their specific language needs. Johnson et al. (2024) conducted research in Iowa universities with Hispanic populations of more than 10% of students, demonstrating that it is important to examine the state of heritage language instruction in the Midwest and Great Plains regions of the United States. They found that there are still very few heritage speaker courses offered in Iowa, and many heritage speakers are required to attend language classes that are meant for second language (L2) learners who have not had previous exposure to the language. Because heritage speakers' "unique multilingual needs" are often ignored in training for instructors, they are often required to attend L2 classes, which creates an environment in which they are not as well supported as they should be (Johnson et al., 2024). Kansas is underrepresented in the literature, even though the Hispanic population in Kansas was around 13% in 2020, but up to 65% in some counties (America Counts Staff). Therefore, it is necessary to continue to explore the experiences of heritage speakers in Kansas. Although the number of heritage speaker-specific courses is increasing, they often lack the necessary budgetary resources or support from other faculty to continue effectively (Beaudrie and Marrero-Rivera, 2024).

Gap in Research

While language features of heritage speakers and some of their experiences in the classroom have been studied (Parodi, 2008; Potowski, 2002; Cuenca and Bowles, 2022), it is still

necessary to determine how instructors interpret heritage speaker language, as well as how possible bias from these instructors affects classroom experiences. It is also still necessary to examine whether heritage speakers' anxiety in the language classroom is aggravated by instructor behavior. Since the extent of anxiety in the classroom has such a large effect on learning (Krashen, 1982), it is important to determine whether additional stress is being experienced by students due to biases from instructors that cause them to feel even more insecure. Research currently does not address feedback based mainly on the pronunciation of heritage speakers, which is often stigmatized (Parodi, 2008). The present study examines the classroom experiences of both heritage speakers and second language learners to determine whether they are exposed to different levels of feedback based on pronunciation and explore the ways they react to it. The study responds to the following research questions:

1. To what extent are Spanish L2 and HL instructors aware of differences in heritage speaker pronunciation?
2. How are classroom practices for heritage speakers (specifically, types of feedback provided and explicit discussion of pronunciation) affected by instructors' language ideologies and approaches?

Methodology

Participants

Students

In order to have a representative sample, the researcher hoped to recruit one class of 10-15 Spanish heritage speakers from each university selected (Kansas State University, University of Kansas, Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, and Wichita State University). A total of 68 Spanish second language learners responded to the questionnaire ($N_1 = 68$), along with 21 heritage speakers ($N_2 = 21$), and four students of unclear status, whose responses did not provide enough detail to determine whether they were heritage speakers or second language learners ($N_3 = 4$). All of the student respondents attended Kansas State University. Recruitment of students consisted in:

1. Examining websites of universities in Kansas to determine whether Spanish heritage programs were offered
2. Emails to instructors at each selected university, requesting that the instructors provide information about the study to eligible students (Appendix J, L)
3. Classroom visits in 1/5 of the universities.

Classroom visits were conducted in only one university for two main reasons. First, this encouraged a greater number of students to respond, allowing for a more representative sample. Second, the time constraints of the project did not allow for travel to additional campuses.

In order to participate, students were required to be either heritage speakers of Spanish or learning Spanish as a second language and be currently enrolled in one of the five selected universities. Both heritage speakers and second language learners were encouraged to respond to the study in order to allow a comparison between the two groups. This helped develop a greater

understanding of how the feedback received in the classroom affects heritage speakers in relation to how it affects second language learners and brought to light differences in how each type of student reacts to feedback. This was also intended to help determine whether there are discrepancies in how heritage speakers and second language learners are treated by instructors, as this could indicate areas in which instruction for heritage speakers could be improved.

Instructors

The researcher hoped to recruit a total of 15 instructors in order to create a representative sample of at least one Spanish heritage instructor and one Spanish as a second language instructor from each selected university. In total, 10 instructors responded to the questionnaire (N=10). Out of these, 8 instructors were from Kansas State University, and two were from other universities in Kansas. Recruitment of instructors consisted of:

1. Examining the websites of the selected universities to determine who teaches Spanish heritage classes and Spanish as a second language classes
2. Emails to instructors of Spanish classes, focusing on instructors of Spanish heritage classes (Appendix K)
3. Emails to language program coordinators or other faculty who could assist in communicating with instructors, in cases in which the instructors for each course were not listed.

In order to participate, instructors were required to be currently employed to teach Spanish at one of the five selected universities.

To participate in the study, both students and instructors clicked on a link to the questionnaire provided in the invitation email. The questionnaire consisted of the informed consent form (Appendix A, Appendix B) and three sections.

Instruments

Student Questionnaire

In the student questionnaire (Appendix C), section one focused on information about the participant (which university they attend or teach at, what languages they speak at home and outside the home, etc.) in order to determine which participants were heritage speakers and which participants were learning Spanish as a second language without prior exposure to the language. Montrul (2023) describes heritage speakers as “second-generation immigrant children or children of immigrants who were exposed to the heritage language from birth as a first language (sequential bilinguals) or together with the majority language (simultaneous bilinguals).” The information collected in this section of the questionnaire helped to determine whether students were raised by monolingual English-speaking parents or in an environment that created interaction between the two languages, which also helped identify sequential bilinguals (likely heritage speakers) and late-onset bilinguals (likely second language learners) from the participants who responded to the questionnaire

Section two focused on classroom experiences, drawing on times students felt supported and/or discriminated against in Spanish classrooms and times that they noticed corrections based on pronunciation. The goal of this section was to determine whether students were often corrected on their pronunciation, whether this had a positive or negative effect, and whether heritage speakers were corrected more often due to bias from their instructors. Xue and Noels (2024) describe accent anxiety in additional language speakers, which, based on responses from participants, they claimed may often come from interactions in classrooms or other social settings. Because of this, it is important to understand the way heritage speakers are given feedback and are interacted with in the classroom.

Section three requested that student participants upload two short speech samples (Appendix D). Solon et al. (2022) indicate that elicited imitation tasks are limited in their ability to accurately gauge the proficiency levels of heritage speakers. The present study focuses more on the pronunciation features of heritage speakers and their experiences, but this example demonstrates that there is a need for varying types of tasks to more fully describe the speech and pronunciation of heritage speakers. The collection of speech samples adds to the growing knowledge of heritage speaker abilities.

Speech Sample Materials

The first speech sample was a paragraph that the students were asked to read aloud (Appendix E). This paragraph was about reguetón, a well-known genre of music that is most often produced in Spanish. The paragraph included the names of several countries, as well as the names of two artists. This was chosen in order to examine how heritage speakers and second language learners would pronounce each of these items and to determine whether these items were a factor in how instructors perceived the speech of the students.

The second speech sample requested that student participants record themselves describing an image. The image chosen was “The Bedroom” by Vincent van Gogh, which includes several elements that students with even a beginner-level proficiency have the necessary vocabulary to discuss (Appendix F). The description of an image was requested in order to solicit more spontaneous speech from the student participants so that it would be clearer whether there are large differences in the speech of heritage speakers and second language learners when they are required to create their own use of the language rather than read a passage.

Instructor Questionnaire

The instructor questionnaire (Appendix G) focused on how the instructor felt they had interacted with students in the classroom. Section one requested the same information as the student questionnaire from an instructor standpoint, such as which university the instructors were a part of, what level they taught or had taught before, and what languages they mainly spoke in and outside of the home as a child and which ones they use now. This section was intended to help understand whether instructors who are heritage speakers, first-language Spanish speakers, and first-language English speakers may interact with and provide feedback to students in different ways.

Section two of the instructor questionnaire, as seen in Appendix G, requested information about whether the instructor provides direct feedback on pronunciation in class, what they have noticed about student attitudes in class, and what they have noticed in interactions between peers after corrections in pronunciation or due to other factors. This section also requested information about when instructors feel that they have supported or discriminated against students in their classroom. Questions in this section included:

- Have you ever given students feedback on their pronunciation in class?
- Have you noticed changes in your students' attitudes in class after you provided feedback on their pronunciation?
- Do you feel that you have treated students differently based on differences in the way they pronounce certain sounds?
- How has this affected your teaching?

Section three of the instructor questionnaire requested that participants listen to six short recordings (Appendix H, I). To determine which recordings would be assigned to each

participant, every student participant was assigned a random number from 100-159. The first speech samples, in which the students read a paragraph, were assigned the letter A, and the second, in which they described an image, were assigned the letter B. All speech samples with their randomized names were then placed in a folder to which instructor participants were given access. Each instructor was randomly assigned three samples from the A category and three samples from the B category to ensure that the process was not biased towards any individual speech samples. After listening to each sample, instructor participants were asked to determine whether they thought the sample was from a heritage speaker or a second language learner. At the end of this questionnaire, instructors were asked if there were any specific patterns they listened for to help them make decisions while rating the sample, and if so, what those patterns were.

Data Analysis

Student Responses

To determine which participants were heritage speakers and which were second language learners, the data was analyzed in a similar fashion to Henshaw (2022), in which heritage speakers from varying backgrounds were included. In Henshaw's study, the educational background, contexts in which each language was spoken, and family background were considered to determine which students were heritage/native speakers and which were second language learners. Henshaw (2022) examined the attitudes of heritage speakers regarding mixed classrooms, or classes that are geared towards second language learners but include heritage speakers. Henshaw utilized a ten-question questionnaire to collect information from student participants, then compiled the data to better understand attitudes related to mixed classrooms. In the present study, students who had been enrolled in

heritage Spanish classes and/or who considered Spanish or both Spanish and English to be their first language, who began speaking both languages at the same time, who began speaking Spanish after English but before five years old (when students typically attend kindergarten), or who explicitly mentioned in their responses that they were heritage speakers, were categorized as heritage speakers. Participants who began learning Spanish later in life and did not indicate any familial ties to the language were considered second language learners. While the term “native speaker” is commonly used in distinguishing type of speakers, it was not included in this study because “the traditional dichotomy, ‘native’ versus ‘non-native speaker’ has to be rejected because of the inherent ideological assumptions about the superiority of the former and the inferiority of the latter” (Dewaele, 2017). While some heritage speakers could be considered “native speakers” because Spanish was the first language they learned, there is much variation in their proficiency levels, which could lead to assumptions about what type of speaker each student is and biases related to perception of superiority/inferiority. For the purposes of this study, the focus remained on heritage speakers because it took place in the multilingual context of Spanish language classrooms.

Responses were compared to measure the experiences students had in Spanish classrooms and examine whether heritage speakers had more difficulty or indicated that they were more deeply affected by feedback in their Spanish classes. Closely reading these responses and comparing responses from heritage speakers and second language learners helped to develop clear patterns in the way students received feedback in the classroom and reacted to it. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. First, student responses were compiled to determine how many of each type of student (heritage speakers and second language learners) had received feedback on their pronunciation in classes, how many of each believed

that feedback on pronunciation is important, and how many felt that they had been treated differently in classrooms based on their pronunciation versus based on other reasons. Additionally, the results were analyzed to find patterns in the qualitative responses, in which students provided information about how they felt when feedback was given, how they felt they had been treated differently, and how they felt that their learning was affected by these experiences. Patterns in the words the students used and whether these words tend to have positive or negative associations were examined to create an understanding of the way student participants interacted with their classroom environments. For example, descriptions including words such as “embarrassed,” “stupid,” or “terrible” were categorized as negative, while descriptions including words such as “helpful,” “confident,” or “happy” were categorized as positive.

Instructor Responses

The results from the instructor questionnaire were analyzed in a similar fashion, focused more specifically on the types of feedback instructors tend to give students. These results were also used to extract both quantitative and qualitative data. Results from questions that allowed only a “Yes,” “No,” or “Unsure” response were used to determine how many instructors provide explicit feedback on pronunciation, how many think that feedback on pronunciation is important, and how many had noticed students treating their peers differently in Spanish classrooms based on pronunciation versus other factors. Responses to questions that allowed short answers were compiled to find patterns in the types of feedback that instructors mentioned using, the reasons that they provide these types of feedback, and how they react to pronunciation during class. These patterns were determined based on recurring words that were used by multiple

instructors, as well as words that have significant positive or negative emotional values associated with them.

The results from the final section of the instructor questionnaire, in which they were asked to rate student speech samples, were first used quantitatively to determine how many of the samples were accurately identified as either heritage speakers or second language learners. The remainder of the results from the section were in the form of short answers, which were examined for recurring words to determine whether there are common features instructors tend to associate with heritage speakers.

Results

Perception of Feedback

Students

The majority of student respondents were late-onset bilinguals who began learning Spanish in high school or later. Many of the heritage speakers who responded were sequential bilinguals who began learning and speaking Spanish at home, then spoke English after beginning kindergarten. There were also a few cases of simultaneous bilinguals, who were exposed to both Spanish and English at home from birth. Based on responses to the questionnaire, most participants have received feedback on their pronunciation during classes (See Tables 1 and 2). Table 1 shows that across all years of undergraduate education, students received feedback related to their pronunciation, and Table 2 indicates that heritage speakers and second language learners all received feedback on their pronunciation in class.

Year	Feedback received	No feedback
Freshman	22	3
Sophomore	25	6
Junior	21	4
Senior	6	1

Table 1: Pronunciation feedback received by students based on grade level.

Student	Feedback received	No feedback
Heritage speaker	17	4
Second language learner	58	10
Unclear	2	2

Table 2: Pronunciation feedback received by student based on type of student

Out of 21 heritage speakers, 19 responded to the question, “How did you feel when an instructor gave you feedback on your pronunciation in class?” (N=19). Heritage speakers

had mainly positive reactions to the feedback received. Two heritage speakers used words such as “embarrassed” or “stupid” in their responses when asked how they felt after receiving feedback, while the remainder stated that they were “grateful,” that the feedback was “helpful,” or that their instructors complimented their pronunciation. When asked how their learning was impacted by receiving feedback, 20 out of the 21 heritage speakers responded (N=20), and some stated that “[it] improved my Spanish,” “I was more mindful,” and that it “allowed me to fix my mistake.”

Second language learners presented varied responses to the same question. Out of the 68 second language learners who participated, 61 responded to this question (N=61), and their responses fell into three categories. The first category of these responses included comments with a negative reaction, stating that the participants felt “apathetic,” “like I have some sort of speech impediment ‘cause I was terrible at speaking it but great at writing and somewhat decent at reading,” and “I feel so stupid.” The second group of responses included comments that indicated that the feedback was uncomfortable, but helpful. This included comments such as, “I felt the need to improve but it was helpful” and “I felt a little thrown as I try my hardest to do things correctly but ultimately take the feedback and apply it.” The third category of comments from second language learners indicated the positive experiences they have had while receiving feedback. For example, “It made me more confident in the use of that word in the future,” “I felt like she cared about my success and growth,” and “I was happy because it showed they cared and wanted me to be better.”

In terms of how learning was affected by feedback, 60 second language learners responded (N=60) and tended towards positive interpretations of the feedback they received, shown by responses such as, “It encouraged me to take criticisms in order to improve

my abilities,” “It helped me understand how Spanish pronunciations worked, and I could apply it to other words and phrases,” and “My learning was encouraged, because although I felt embarrassed by my instructor's feedback, my teacher explained to me that it was natural and that I am doing a great job.” Some responses, however, demonstrated a negative interpretation of the feedback received, such as, “It makes me not want to attend class and not want to learn” and “Sometimes I feel like I won’t be able to get it right or become bilingual.”

While a range of emotions associated with feedback was present, there seemed to be fewer neutral responses among heritage speakers. Strong emotions were present both among heritage speakers and second language learners, indicating that the feedback provided in the classroom does have a significant impact on learning.

Opinions about whether it is important for instructors to give feedback on pronunciation in the language classroom were consistent across types of students, though heritage speakers seemed more confident in their responses on this topic. Of the heritage speakers, 20 (95%) claimed that feedback on pronunciation was important, while 1 (4.7%) claimed that they were unsure. Of the second language learners, 59 (87%) believed that feedback on pronunciation was important, 1 (1.5%) believed that it was not, and 8 (11.8%) were unsure. Because a higher percentage of heritage speakers responded that feedback on pronunciation is important, it can be hypothesized that they either hold themselves to a higher standard or are more concerned about how their pronunciation may be perceived by their conversation partners.

Instructors

Instructors who responded to the questionnaire demonstrated consistent ideas about the purpose of feedback. Out of the 10 professors who responded to the survey (N = 10), 8 responded that they have given students feedback on their pronunciation during class (n = 8).

However, four of the 10 instructors stated that they do not give explicit feedback on pronunciation (n = 4). Reasoning for this included responses with a negative view of explicit feedback on pronunciation, such as, “more recently I've come to view that as overly prescriptivist,”

I believe it to be possibly harmful and/or embarrassing to students [...] Production is more important than correctness or perfect pronunciation and learning a language is about trust and making mistakes
and
in my experience, heritage language learners tend to have a negative perspective of their linguistic knowledge and performance. For this reason, I [would] rather avoid taking the risk of making them feel incapable to speak their own dialect.

Four instructors claimed that they typically do not provide explicit feedback on pronunciation, but they do if it impedes comprehension. One of these instructors said that “I believe that if it allows students to communicate effectively is not necessary to "correct".” Two instructors' responses indicated that they do provide explicit feedback on pronunciation. For one of these, “it depends on the activity,” and the other stated that “it is needed so they can use it for improving their learning.”

Two instructors stated that they believe it is important to provide feedback on pronunciation during class. Three instructors responded that they are unsure whether it is helpful, and five instructors responded that it is not helpful to do so. It is important to note that while the instructors from Kansas State University (where all of the student responses came from) de-prioritized feedback on pronunciation, the two instructors who were not from Kansas State put more emphasis on it. Therefore, there was a clear gap in importance placed on pronunciation

feedback between universities, which indicates that heritage speakers may have had very different experiences in the classroom, even in the same state.

Perception of Treatment in the Classroom

Students

Both heritage speakers and second language learners generally claimed that they were not treated differently by their peers based on the way they pronounced things. However, about 10.3% of second language learners and 9.5% of heritage speakers stated that they felt that they were treated differently by their peers based on their pronunciation. Most participants, except for one heritage speaker, stated that the different treatment they experienced did *not* seem to be brought on by pronunciation-related feedback that had been presented to them by their instructors. The student participants were affected by this in a wide variety of ways. One heritage speaker stated that they were affected positively, while the other stated, “Not particularly positively or negatively. It just felt like classmates were pretty willing to approach me with questions or would want to have me as their partner/groupmate.”

The responses from second language learners (N =12) were more varied, citing specific moments of class as “embarrassing,” “awkward,” and creating “judgment.” For example, one participant said, “Sometimes I don't want to say anything because I don't want to say something wrong.” However, other students described their classroom environments as “fair” and “safe,” and said that they felt “unashamed” to participate in class.

Most student participants did not believe that instructors had treated them or other students differently based on pronunciation, though, as seen in Table 3, some students did respond that they were treated differently for other reasons. Only three heritage speakers and two

second language learners claimed that their instructors have treated them or their peers differently because of their pronunciation.

Student	Treated differently based on pronunciation	Treated differently based on other factors
Heritage	3	2
Second Language learner	2	6
Unclear	0	1

Table 3: Student perception of treatment by instructors based on pronunciation versus other factors

When asked how being treated differently affected their time in the classroom, five heritage speakers responded (N=5). Three listed positive examples relating to fair treatment, such as feeling “more independent” and “improving” during their classes because they felt that they were treated the same as other students. There were also some less positive moments in which “teachers didn’t feel like they needed to give me feedback or include me.” One response stated, “Sometimes, it felt like my teacher used me as a crutch and expected me to be the one to answer or give insights, because I’m a heritage speaker, and she is not.”

Several second language learners commented on their interactions in class and listed a wide range of experiences (N=15). Their positive responses included ideas such as, “It makes the class feel more welcoming,” “I enjoy class and can tell that my instructor enjoys connecting and talking with all students,” and “It has made for a very welcoming learning environment.” Negative responses from second language learners included, “I am hesitant to answer in class now,” and “I do not want to come to class at all.” However, the majority of responses were neutral or focused on how being treated similarly has affected them. For example, one student stated, “I feel every instructor I have ever had, both college and high-school levels, have treated me equally and never affected my interest in Spanish.” As most of the

responses were neutral or positive, it is clear that the majority of student participants had experienced classroom environments in which they felt comfortable.

Four instructors noticed that their students have, at times, treated their peers differently in ways that seemed to be because of their pronunciation, while five instructors stated that their students have treated their peers differently for other reasons. One instructor provided an example of different treatment among students, stating that they noticed that when some students produced different pronunciation, the other students would switch to English, rather than continuing to speak to them in Spanish. Instructors who noticed differences in how the students treated each other listed several solutions they implemented throughout their time teaching, such as a welcome message “reminding students that we are in a community of learners,” discussing the learning objectives and highlighting “communicative and intercultural competence over accuracy and 'native-like' use of the language,” and offering explicit feedback (when necessary) to students in one-on-one or small group settings, but never in front of the entire class.

Instructors

Two instructors stated that they felt they had treated students differently because of the students' pronunciation. One stated that student pronunciation influences the instructor to try to speak more clearly. The other stated:

I associate more target pronunciation with more advanced proficiency [...] I am more likely to use more advanced grammar structures when communicating with the student [...] I am likely to ask them more complex questions.

Instructors who felt that they have not treated students differently because of pronunciation described “embracing” differences in pronunciation, providing “contextualized

examples of words that could convey a different meaning based on their pronunciation.”

However, one instructor who stated that they do not treat students differently based on pronunciation described the current situation of online classes:

This has not been an issue in my in-person classes. However, I have noticed that online courses where students have less auditory input there are increasing issues with pronunciation. In the past few years, it has gotten to the point that some students' mispronunciation has resulted in the inability to understand them. In those cases, I have provided online resources for them to work on hearing Spanish words spoken by speakers from Spanish-speaking countries around the world.

When asked about whether they treat students differently based on their pronunciation of specific sounds, one instructor stated that they sometimes associate errors in sounds such as /j/ and /ll/ with a lower proficiency level if a student continues to produce them in Spanish 3 or more advanced classes. The remainder of instructors claimed that they do not treat students differently based on the way they pronounce specific sounds.

Three instructors responded that they have treated students differently from their peers for reasons other than pronunciation. One stated, “I try to respond to students as individuals - so in that way, I treat them all differently based on their interests, linguistic needs, and personality.” Another said that they provided resources when needed. One instructor also said that they may provide additional feedback to students who are excelling, such as drawing attention to errors that less advanced students may not be ready to understand. One instructor mentioned students who may be in distress for reasons unrelated to class, and said that they reach out to them privately, ensuring that the student is connected with helpful resources. The same instructor stated, “Equity is about providing resources to those in need, not treating everyone the

"same." I have an equity mindset with teaching." Additionally, one instructor who claimed that they do not treat students differently stated that they encourage students to visit during office hours to work on topics they may be struggling with.

Eight instructors responded that they have never discriminated against a student because of their pronunciation. One responded that they rarely discriminated against students, and one responded that they sometimes did. The instructor who said that they rarely discriminated against students based on pronunciation stated that they worked hard to avoid discriminating against students, and that they were not aware of any specific instances. The instructor who said that they sometimes discriminated against students stated that at times, they spoke too quickly for the students to understand, and that they did not always realize it. One instructor who responded that they never discriminated against students mentioned that they had seen other instructors "discriminate openly against students who speak different variations of the language." While the majority of these responses indicated that the instructors do not actively discriminate against students because of their pronunciation or accents, there were still some responses that are consistent with Labov's (1966) sociocultural theory, making it clear that even though the Spanish programs seem to be leaning towards a more sociolinguistic view of language, there are still instances in which biases related to accent or pronunciation are present, which can lead to stigma surrounding use of the heritage language.

Nine instructors responded that they always supported and encouraged students in Spanish classrooms. One instructor responded that they often supported and encouraged students. All instructors provided examples of times they have supported or encouraged students, with five of them focused on encouraging their students, two who focused on communication, and one who focused on emphasizing that mistakes are part of the learning process.

Instructor Rating of Speech Samples

Instructors rated 54 recordings ($N = 54$). Of those recordings, 13 were heritage speakers ($n_1 = 13$), 39 were second language learners ($n_2 = 39$), and two were unclear based on responses to the questionnaire. Out of the 39 second language learners, 34 were identified accurately by instructors. Of the 13 heritage speakers, 8 were identified accurately. Of the two students for which background was unclear, one was identified as a heritage speaker, and the other was identified as a second language learner. Table 4 shows how many speech samples were accurately identified.

Type of Sample	Correctly Identified	Incorrectly Identified
Heritage speaker ($n_1=13$)	8	5
Second language learner ($n_2=39$)	34	5
Unclear	unknown	unknown

Table 4: Instructor Identification of Speech Sample

All instructors indicated that they listened for specific patterns in the recordings to determine whether the student was a heritage speaker or second language learner. They were able to list multiple patterns. Table 5 shows the frequency at which each type of feedback was mentioned.

Pattern	Frequency
English Influence on Spanish Speech	3
Pronunciation of Vowels	2
Pronunciation of consonants: /r/ and /rr/ sounds; [z] in /s/ and /z/; /g/; /v/	4
Entire words or phrases	2
Grammar	1
Intonation	1

Table 5: Patterns in speech identified by instructors in student recordings

Three instructors mentioned listening for influence of English on speech produced in Spanish to make their decisions. Two instructors referred to the pronunciation of vowels. Four

instructors described the pronunciation of consonants, such as producing /r/ versus /rr/, the use of [z] when there is an /s/ or a /z/ in a word, and pronouncing /g/ and /v/ more closely to the way they are produced in English. Two instructors based their responses on entire words or phrases, such as the pronunciation of proper nouns or the inclusion of phrases that are common in Mexico. Finally, one instructor listed intonation, especially at the end of words, as a reason for their decisions.

Discussion

To investigate the experiences of Spanish heritage speakers and the effect of language ideologies instructors hold on the feedback instructors provide based on pronunciation, several elements were examined. These elements were: a) the experiences heritage speakers and second language learners have had in Spanish classrooms, b) the perception held by instructors of heritage speaker and second language learner speech, c) the ability of instructors to identify heritage speakers, and d) specific features that instructors associate with heritage speakers.

In the present study, only universities in Kansas that offer heritage Spanish courses were included. Of the 32 public higher education institutions in Kansas, only 5 advertise Spanish heritage courses on their websites. This is consistent with Johnson et al. (2024), as it provides another example of a state in the Midwest/Great Plains region that has very few options for Spanish heritage speakers in college. This further legitimizes Kansas as a location for research focused on Spanish as a heritage language and the necessity of understanding how heritage speakers may be affected by being required to take courses in Spanish as a second language.

This study found that while heritage speakers can be negatively affected by the way they are treated in the classroom, it is nearly equally, or perhaps even more common, for second language learners to be affected in similar ways. In fact, second language learners often responded more negatively to feedback that they received in class. This seems to disagree with the findings of Potowski (2002), as in the present study, the heritage speaker participants were not significantly more affected than the second language learners. Although heritage speakers were affected by feedback from instructors, many responses leaned positively, and many students felt that they benefitted from the feedback instead of feeling stigmatized. . The

lack of clear differences in how heritage speakers and second language learners respond to feedback demonstrates a need for further examination of the way feedback affects students, both in second language classrooms and heritage speakers. However, these results do point to one particular difference. The few negative responses reflected feelings of being used by instructors or not receiving as much help or feedback due to instructors thinking that the heritage speakers did not need as much assistance, rather than stemming from feeling judged more harshly. The lack of feedback that occurs for heritage speakers indicates that in some cases, instructors may hold biases that cause them to believe that heritage speakers do not need as much feedback as second language learners do. When this happens, heritage speakers who want to receive the same treatment as their second language learner peers are not provided enough information to build their language skills to the extent that they would like.

Heritage speakers who received explicit feedback on their pronunciation often felt that it positively affected their classroom experience. This seems to align with Cuenca and Bowles (2022), in which explicit feedback helped students retain information more consistently over time. It also seems to be a change in how students react to feedback, based on the theoretical framework of this study, as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis indicates that feedback needs to be presented carefully in order to avoid raising the affective filter, which could make it more difficult for students to fully participate in class. The heritage speakers in this study had mainly positive reactions to feedback, and it did not seem to impact their affective filters. It is notable that from the second language learners, although many were still not negatively impacted, there were some responses in which the affective filter was high, leading to the students not wanting to even attend class anymore. These responses were only present in second language learners. It

is also important to note that out of the ten instructors who responded to the present study, four stated that they do not provide explicit feedback on pronunciation during class, and four only do so if the student's pronunciation impedes understanding. This discrepancy in the feedback provided versus the feedback students understood that they were receiving during class indicates that either instructors provide more feedback than they intend to, or students notice recasts and other less-direct forms of feedback in more direct ways.

The heritage speakers described various domains in which they use both Spanish and English. Vgotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory discusses language as tools that are passed down through generations. Although this study did not directly examine the generations related to when students and/or their families arrived in the United States, many of them did mention speaking Spanish with their families at home or while speaking with older relatives. Even in situations in which the student participants use English in school, many of them received Spanish as a tool that was passed down from their families, which they are now working to build onto in their classes. Spanish and English are both used as tools in different contexts for the heritage speakers who responded to the questionnaire.

The instructors who responded to the survey almost all indicated that they prioritize supporting and encouraging students in their classrooms, focusing on equity and responding to students' needs. One even mentioned "embracing" differences in pronunciation. These responses demonstrate that in the Spanish language programs in the selected universities, instructors hold more descriptive language ideologies, which is consistent with the findings of Valdés et al. (2008), in which one Spanish department was found to utilize a more sociolinguistic language ideology in its instruction. This points towards a growing trend across the

United States, showing that many Spanish language programs are using this type of language ideology in place of a “standard” form of language or prescriptive ideologies.

When asked to rate whether speech samples came from Spanish heritage speakers or second language learners, instructors were able to correctly identify 87% of samples from second language learners, and only 61% of samples from heritage speakers.

This demonstrates that although instructors may expect heritage speakers to sound a certain way, students’ backgrounds are often not clear based only on pronunciation. It is important to acknowledge this in creating Spanish heritage programs, as this further exemplifies the wide range of skills and abilities that are not always obvious.

In the present study, instructors stated that while listening to speech samples, they listened specifically for the pronunciation of certain sounds (both consonants and vowels), the influence of English on the production of Spanish, grammar, intonation, and the pronunciation of certain words or phrases. According to Parodi (2008), certain features such as the addition of -s to the second person preterit form of verbs and the use of archaic language such as *haiga* instead of *haya* are common among Spanish heritage speakers in Southern California. None of the instructors who participated in the present study mentioned listening to features that Parodi described. Based on this, there is either a large difference in the features of heritage speakers’ speech in Southern California and in Kansas, or these particular features are less noticeable or less well-known by instructors.

Conclusion

One major limitation of the present study is that although students were recruited from five universities in Kansas, responses were only received from students at one university. Because responses only reflect the experiences of students at one university, it is possible that it is not an accurate representation of the way students experience Spanish classes across Kansas. This is likely because classroom visits were conducted only at Kansas State University, which encouraged students to participate more than an email from their professor might have. Therefore, future research is necessary to determine whether students are exposed to the same type of feedback across the state and to examine in further depth the way they interact with this feedback, as well as to explore whether instructors in other universities also utilize descriptive language ideologies. In order to ensure that responses are gathered from elsewhere in the future, it would be helpful to dedicate time to travel to each included university to conduct additional classroom visits. Then, students in all five of the selected universities would be more directly made aware of the project, hopefully making them more willing to participate.

Another limitation of the present study is that the questionnaires did not request information about the students' birthplace or that of their parents and grandparents. While this would have been helpful to determine whether students were heritage speakers or second language learners, it was not included in the questionnaire in order to avoid collecting too much identifying information about students. The present study instead allowed students to respond in short-answer form to the question, "Where are you from?" This gave students the opportunity to provide more information if they chose to do so but did not require it. This also affected the ability to determine whether students were sequential or simultaneous bilinguals,

following the ideas of Montrul (2002), as there was less information readily available about how each student began to learn each language. Although the present study did request information about which language was spoken in the context of the home and outside the home when each participant was younger and in the present, as well as what age they were when they began to learn each language, additional information would be useful to be more certain about which students are simultaneous or sequential bilinguals. Further research that examines the same research questions, but collects information that allows the researcher to determine which generation heritage speakers are, would be helpful in finding out whether heritage speakers are more or less likely to receive feedback based on how recently their family arrived in the United States.

Additionally, there were discrepancies in how instructors perceived the feedback they gave and how students described receiving feedback. It is possible that students were referencing high school classes or courses they took at previous universities; however, it is necessary to explore whether students are having unexpected reactions to the types of feedback that are being provided. Therefore, future research is needed to create a fuller understanding of the ways students react to various types of feedback in heritage Spanish classrooms. While many responses in the present study described recasts and feedback that encourages students, it would be helpful to be aware of additional types of feedback that students are receiving in Spanish classrooms across Kansas, as well as the emotional reactions that each type may invoke. Future studies could focus on asking students if they have received various types of feedback (with examples) to determine how students interpret it and how they notice it occurring. This would help to find out whether the students interpret feedback in the same way

as instructors, and whether they also feel that they are being supported to the extent that their instructors aim to support them.

While this study determined that at Kansas State University, Spanish heritage speakers tend to react more positively to feedback on their pronunciation, and second language learners tended to have more students who perceived feedback negatively, it is important to determine whether this is true across the rest of the state. Instructors who responded claimed that they focus on encouraging students, which reflects a descriptive language ideology. While they do identify some features of speech that may indicate that someone is a heritage speaker, they may not be aware of the full range of the students who may be heritage speakers. Because of this, it is possible that biases about who can be a heritage speaker may influence how instructors provide feedback to their students, whether it is in the form of being more open to varying pronunciations or in the form of being harsher on students who they believe are heritage speakers. It is important to continue research that will improve classroom experiences and ensure that both Spanish heritage speakers and second language learners are receiving language education that is beneficial to them.

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Appendix A - Informed Consent – Students

PROJECT TITLE

Instructor Perception of Spanish Heritage Speakers' Pronunciation and Effect of Bias on Classroom Experience

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE

09/25/2025

PROJECT ID NUMBER

IRB-13185

PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE

09/24/2028

LENGTH OF STUDY

Two semesters (Fall 2025-Spring 2026)

TIME COMMITMENT

30-45 minutes for completing a questionnaire, 5-10 minutes for recording two short audio clips

PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Camille Meritan

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Bethany Reinsch

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS

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PROJECT SPONSOR

N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This is a research study. This study seeks to understand how students with significant connections to the Spanish language (parents or grandparents from a Spanish-speaking country or speaking Spanish at home) who now study it in Kansas universities are affected by biases about their pronunciation held by instructors. This study will analyze recordings from students to explore whether instructors are forming opinions based on patterns they expect to hear in speech from heritage speakers. Investigating biases held by instructors and how they impact the way they interact with learners may improve the quality of education students receive. It will also provide a deeper understanding of how the experiences students have in the classroom are shaped by the way instructors perceive students' speech.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire with information about yourself and your experiences in Spanish classrooms. You may answer short-response questions in Spanish or English, depending on which you feel most comfortable with. You will then be recorded reading a short text in Spanish, then describing an image in Spanish.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED

There are minimal risks involved in participating in this study. Some participants may feel discomfort while answering portions of the questionnaire related to classroom experience, as this could invoke reminders of uncomfortable moments in the classroom. You may choose not to answer any question and may choose to stop at any time without penalty.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED

There is no direct compensation provided for participation in this study; however, the research being conducted will contribute to growing knowledge of the current state of language education for Spanish heritage speakers and participants may gain a better understanding of the way their classroom interactions have been shaped by biases towards or against various students.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Audio recordings of speech samples and electronic or printed transcripts will be stored in encrypted files or on a flash drive in a secure, locked location of Eisenhower Hall at Kansas State University for the duration of this study. These items will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

Questionnaire responses will be collected anonymously through Microsoft Forms and names will not be collected. The name of the institution that participants study at will be requested in order to avoid having instructors listen to audio samples from their own students. This information will be collected with the questionnaire through Microsoft Forms and will be stored in encrypted files. Participants will be assigned an identification number for anonymity. Any identifying information provided by participants will be censored from the final findings and from any presentation of findings. The information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY

OCCURS? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:		
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:		DATE:
WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (PROJECT STAFF)		DATE:

Appendix B - Informed Consent – Instructors

PROJECT TITLE

Instructor Perception of Spanish Heritage Speakers' Pronunciation and Effect of Bias on Classroom Experience

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE

09/25/2025

PROJECT ID NUMBER

IRB-13185

PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE

09/24/2028

LENGTH OF STUDY

Two semesters (Fall 2025-Spring 2026)

TIME COMMITMENT

30-45 minutes for completing a questionnaire, 5-10 minutes for listening to and rating six 30-second audio clips

PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Camille Meritan

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Bethany Reinsch

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS

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IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION

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PROJECT SPONSOR

N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This is a research study. This study seeks to understand how students with significant connections to the Spanish language (parents or grandparents from a Spanish-speaking country or speaking Spanish at home) who now study it in Kansas universities are affected by biases about their pronunciation held by instructors. This study will analyze recordings from students to explore whether instructors are forming opinions based on patterns they expect to hear in speech from heritage speakers. Investigating biases held by instructors and how they impact the way they interact with learners may improve the quality of education students receive. It will also provide a deeper understanding of how the experiences students have in the classroom are shaped by the way instructors perceive students' speech.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire with information about yourself. Then, you will listen to several recordings and indicate whether you think the speaker is a Spanish heritage speaker (someone who has significant connections to the Spanish language and learned it at home, either alongside or before English) or a second language learner (someone studying Spanish as a second language).

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED

There are minimal risks involved in participating in this study. Some participants may feel discomfort while answering portions of the questionnaire related to classroom experience, as this could invoke reminders of uncomfortable moments in the classroom. You may choose not to answer any question and may choose to stop at any time without penalty.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED

There is no direct compensation provided for participation in this study; however, the research being conducted will contribute to growing knowledge of the current state of language education for Spanish heritage speakers and participants may gain a better understanding of the way their classroom interactions have been shaped by biases towards or against various students.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Audio recordings of speech samples and electronic or printed transcripts will be stored in encrypted files or on a flash drive in a secure, locked location of Eisenhower Hall at Kansas State University for the duration of this study. These items will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

Questionnaire responses will be collected anonymously through Microsoft Forms and names will not be collected. The name of the institution that participants study at will be requested in order to avoid having instructors listen to audio samples from their own students. This information will be collected with the questionnaire through Microsoft Forms and will be stored in encrypted files. Participants will be assigned an identification number for anonymity. Any identifying information provided by participants will be censored from the final findings and from any presentation of findings. The information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described,

and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant).

PARTICIPANT NAME:

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**PARTICIPANT
SIGNATURE:**

--

DATE:

--

**WITNESS TO
SIGNATURE: (PROJECT
STAFF)**

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DATE:

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Appendix C - Questionnaire – Spanish speakers (HL and L2)

INTRODUCTION:

This study seeks to understand how students with significant connections to the Spanish language who now study it in Kansas universities are affected by biases about their pronunciation held by instructors. This study will analyze recordings from students to explore whether instructors are forming opinions based on certain things that they hear. Investigating biases held by instructors and how they impact the way they interact with learners may improve the quality of education students receive.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire providing some information about yourself and your experiences in Spanish classrooms, then record yourself reading a short story and describing an image.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

1. Are you a current college/university student in Kansas?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Which college/university are you enrolled in?
 - a. Emporia State University
 - b. Fort Hays State University
 - c. Kansas State University
 - d. University of Kansas
 - e. Wichita State University
3. Which year of college/university are you currently in?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate Level
4. Are you currently enrolled in college-level Spanish classes?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Are you or have you been enrolled in a course specifically for heritage speakers (students who have significant connections to the Spanish language and/or speak it at home)?
 - a. Yes, I am currently enrolled in a class specifically for heritage speakers.
 - b. Yes, I have previously been enrolled in a class specifically for heritage speakers.

- c. No, I have never been enrolled in a class meant specifically for heritage speakers.

6. Where are you from?

Free response

7. What do you consider your first language?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Spanish and English
- d. Other: _____

8. What language did you typically speak at home growing up?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Spanish and English
- d. Other: _____

9. What language did you typically speak outside the home growing up?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Spanish and English
- d. Other: _____

10. What language do you typically speak at home now?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Spanish and English
- d. Other: _____

11. What language do you typically speak outside the home now?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Spanish and English
- d. Other: _____

12. How old were you when you first began to speak or study English?

Free response

13. How old were you when you first began to speak or study Spanish?

Free response

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

14. Has a Spanish instructor ever given you feedback on your pronunciation in class?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. How did you feel when an instructor gave you feedback on your pronunciation in class?

Free response

16. How was your learning affected by the feedback provided by your instructor?

Free response

17. Have you ever felt that your Spanish instructor treated you differently from your peers based on the way you pronounced things?

- a. Yes
- b. No

18. How was your learning affected by this experience?

Free response

19. Have you ever felt that your Spanish instructor treated you differently than your peers for other reasons? If yes, please explain.

- a. Yes: _____
- b. No

20. How was your learning affected by this experience?

Free response

21. Do you think it is helpful for instructors to correct pronunciation during class?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

22. Have you ever felt that your peers treated you differently because of your pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

23. Have you ever felt like your peers treated you differently for other reasons?

- a. Yes
- b. No

24. If your peers have treated you differently, did it seem to be brought on by the way you were given feedback by your instructor?

- a. Yes
- b. No

25. How was your learning affected by this experience?

Free response

26. Do you feel that your instructor has treated you or other students differently based on differences in the way you pronounce certain sounds?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27. How has this affected your time in the classroom?

Free response

28. Do you think that most Spanish instructors treat all of their students the same, regardless of pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29. Do you think that most instructors treat students differently based on differences in pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

30. How often have you felt discriminated against in Spanish classrooms because of the way you pronounce certain words or sounds?

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always

31. How often have you felt supported and encouraged in Spanish classrooms?

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always

32. Please provide an example of a time you felt supported in a Spanish classroom.

Free response

33. Please provide an example of a time you felt discriminated against in a Spanish classroom.

Free response

34. Please provide any further information or comments that you would like to share.

Free response

This is the end of the questionnaire portion. Now, you will be asked to record yourself reading a short story and describing an image. Instructions will be provided on the next page.

Appendix D - Instructions for Recording Speech Sample

In the following steps, you will be asked to make two short recordings. In the first, you will read an excerpt from a short article. Please read aloud as you would if you were asked to read something aloud during a class. The recording should be approximately one minute long.

For the second recording, you will be asked to describe an image that will be shown on your screen. You may describe any part(s) of the image you want to, and you should focus on things that are visible in the image. Please continue to speak in the same way you would in a classroom setting. This recording may be up to one minute long.

To record, click on the link, then click on the red microphone button to begin recording. If the website asks for permission to access your microphone, click “Allow.” Click the save button when you are finished. The recording will automatically download to your device, then you will upload it to the questionnaire.

Link to Voice Recorder: <https://online-voice-recorder.com/>

Appendix E - Text for Speech Sample 1 (excerpt

from *Reguetón*, from hablacultura.com)

El reguetón nació en Puerto Rico, pero su creador fue Michael Ellis, el productor musical panameño que popularizó el reggae en español a nivel internacional.

Durante los años ochenta y noventa la influencia del reggae jamaicano se apoderó de los países del Caribe: de la República Dominicana, Cuba, Colombia y Venezuela. Estos países siempre han recibido mucha música de África y la han asumido como suya. La historia del término reguetón se desarrolla en Puerto Rico. Allí se realizaban permanentemente fiestas con música reggae los fines de semana, los puertorriqueños se reunían en parques y bailaban al compás de esta música jamaicana elegida por un DJ. A esos bailes les llamaron reguetón porque era como una maratón de reggae.

El cantante Daddy Yankee viene precisamente de Puerto Rico, el país de origen del reguetón. Este artista comenzó comercializando su música en casetes en plena calle, él mismo.

[end of text]

English Translation:

Reggaeton was born in Puerto Rico, but its creator was Michael Ellis, the Panamanian music producer who popularized reggae in Spanish at the international level.

During the eighties and nineties, the influence of Jamaican reggae took over the Caribbean countries: the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Colombia, and Venezuela. These countries have always received a lot of music from Africa and have taken on many of its qualities. The history of the term “reggaeton” developed in Puerto Rico. There, reggae music festivals were permanently held on weekends, where Puerto Ricans met in parks and danced with the beat of this Jamaican music chosen by the DJ. These dances were called reggaeton because they were like a marathon of reggae.

The singer Daddy Yankee came from Puerto Rico, the country of origin of reggaeton. This artist began selling his music in the middle of the street himself.

Appendix F - Image for Speech Sample 2

Please describe this image in as much detail as possible. This should be completed in Spanish.

Por favor, describa esta imagen con tan detalle posible. Esta tarea se debe completar en español.



Appendix G - Questionnaire – Instructors

This study seeks to understand how students with significant connections to the Spanish language who now study it in Kansas universities are affected by biases about their pronunciation held by instructors. This study will analyze recordings from students to explore whether instructors are forming opinions based on certain things that they hear. Investigating biases held by instructors and how they impact the way they interact with learners may improve the quality of education students receive.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire providing some information about yourself, then listen to six speech samples and indicate the type of student you believe each sample is from.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

1. Are you a current college/university Spanish instructor in Kansas?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What college/university do you teach at?
 - a. Emporia State University
 - b. Fort Hays State University
 - c. Kansas State University
 - d. University of Kansas
 - e. Wichita State University
3. What level of Spanish classes do you teach? (select all that apply)
 - a. Introductory/Beginner Level Courses (example: Spanish 1-4)
 - b. Intermediate Level Courses
 - c. Advanced Courses
 - d. Graduate-Level Courses
4. Have you taught classes specifically created for heritage speakers?
 - a. Yes, I teach heritage language classes now
 - b. Yes, I have taught heritage language classes previously
 - c. No, I have never taught heritage language classes
5. Where are you from?

Free response

6. What do you consider your first language?
 - a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish and English
 - d. Other: _____
7. What language did you typically speak at home growing up?

- a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish and English
 - d. Other: _____
8. What language did you typically speak outside the home growing up?
- a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish and English
 - d. Other: _____
9. What language do you typically speak at home now?
- a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish and English
 - d. Other: _____
10. What language do you typically speak outside the home now?
- a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. Spanish and English
 - d. Other: _____
11. How old were you when you first began to speak or study English?
- Free response*
12. How old were you when you first began to speak or study Spanish?
- Free response*

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

13. When teaching Spanish, do you provide direct feedback on students' pronunciation during class? Why or why not?
- Free response*
14. Have you ever given students feedback on their pronunciation in class?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
15. Have you noticed changes in your students' attitudes in class after you provided feedback on their pronunciation?
- Free response*
16. Have you ever felt that you treated students differently from their peers based on the way they pronounced things?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
17. How did your teaching change based on students' pronunciation?
- Free response*

18. Have you ever felt that you treated students differently than their peers for other reasons? If yes, please explain.

- a. Yes: _____
- b. No

19. How did your teaching change based on these other reasons?

Free response

20. Do you think it is helpful for instructors to correct pronunciation during class?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

21. Have you ever felt that your students' peers treated them differently because of their pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. Have you ever felt like your students' peers treated them differently for other reasons?

- a. Yes
- b. No

23. If your students' peers have treated them differently, did it seem to be brought on by the way you provided feedback?

- a. Yes
- b. No

24. How did your teaching change in response to this?

Free response

25. Do you feel that you have treated students differently based on differences in the way they pronounce certain sounds?

- a. Yes
- b. No

26. How has this affected your teaching?

Free response

27. Do you think that most Spanish instructors treat all of their students the same, regardless of pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

28. Do you think that most instructors treat students differently based on differences in pronunciation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29. How often have you felt that you discriminated against students in Spanish classrooms because of the way they pronounce certain words or sounds?

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always

30. How often have you felt that you supported and encouraged students in Spanish classrooms?

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Always

31. Please provide an example of a time you felt that you supported a student in a Spanish classroom.

Free response

32. Please provide an example of a time you felt that you discriminated against a student in a Spanish classroom.

Free response

33. Please provide any further information or comments that you would like to share.

Free response

This is the end of the initial questionnaire. You will be given instructions for how to listen to and rate recordings on the next page.

Appendix H - Instructions for Listening to/Rating Recordings

On the following page, you will listen to and rate six recordings. Each recording is no more than thirty seconds long. Click the play button to listen to the first recording, then click the button indicating whether you believe it is from a heritage speaker (someone whose parents or grandparents are from a Spanish-speaking country or who grew up using Spanish at home) or from a second language learner (someone who is learning Spanish as their second language). You may click the play button to repeat the recording as many times as you need to. Once you have made your decision, click the “Next” button to proceed. When you have indicated your responses for all six recordings, you will be asked to describe any patterns that you listened for and/or noticed that helped you make your decisions.

Appendix I - Speech Sample Associations

Now, you will be asked to listen to six short excerpts of recordings (three recordings of students reading a text, and three recordings of students describing an image) and indicate whether you think the speaker is a heritage speaker or is learning Spanish as a second language. Each audio clip will be no more than thirty seconds long.

1. [recording 1]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

2. [recording 2]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

3. [recording 3]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

4. [recording 4]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

5. [recording 5]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

6. [recording 6]

What type of student is this?

- a. Heritage speaker
- b. Second language learner

7. While listening to the recordings, are there specific patterns you listened for and/or noticed that helped you determine whether the speaker was a heritage speaker or second language learner?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. If so, what patterns did you notice and/or listen for?

Free response

Appendix J - Initial Recruitment Email for Instructors

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study on Spanish Language Classroom Experiences

Dear [Instructor],

My name is Bethany Reinsch and I am a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Kansas State University. I am conducting a research study to better understand the speech of Spanish heritage speakers and second-language speakers and their classroom experiences in Kansas.

I am reaching out to you because of your teaching position at a Kansas college or university that offers Spanish heritage language classes. I am currently recruiting Spanish-speaking students and would like to request that you forward the attached email to your students enrolled in your Spanish heritage class, as well as your Spanish as a second language classes. Both Spanish heritage speakers and students who are learning Spanish as a second language are welcome.

I would also like you to participate! I will later be seeking instructors of Spanish classes in Kansas for more information. The instructor portion of the study consists of completing a questionnaire, which will request some information about you and your teaching experiences, as well as listening to six short recordings and identifying which are heritage speakers. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

If you are interested in participating, please use the link below to learn more about the study and access the informed consent form and provide contact information so that I can contact you when the instructor portion of the study begins.

[link to questionnaire]

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to:

Primary Investigator: Dr. Camille Meritan, Teaching Assistant Professor, 005 Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, cmeritan@ksu.edu

Responsible Graduate Student: Bethany Reinsch, Graduate Teaching Assistant, 011B Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, blreinsch@ksu.edu
Your time and knowledge are both highly valued, so thank you for considering participating in this project!

Thank you,
Bethany Reinsch
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Spanish

Appendix K - Recruitment Email for Instructors

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study on Spanish Language Classroom Experiences

Dear [Instructor],

My name is Bethany Reinsch and I am a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Kansas State University. I am conducting a research study to better understand the way instructors perceive the pronunciation of Spanish language speakers and how this impacts the students' classroom experiences.

I am reaching out to you because you previously indicated that you would be interested in participating in the instructor portion of this study.

The study consists of completing a questionnaire, which will request some information about you and your teaching experiences, as well as listening to six short recordings and identifying which are heritage speakers. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. If you are interested in participating, please use the link below to learn more about the study and access the questionnaire:

[link to questionnaire]

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to:

Primary Investigator: Dr. Camille Meritan, Teaching Assistant Professor, 005 Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, cmeritan@ksu.edu

Responsible Graduate Student: Bethany Reinsch, Graduate Teaching Assistant, 011B Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, blreinsch@ksu.edu

Your contribution is greatly appreciated, and we thank you for your time!

Thank you,
Bethany Reinsch
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Spanish
Department of Modern Languages

Appendix L - Recruitment Email for Students

(to be attached to email for instructors with request to forward to their students)

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study on Spanish Language Classroom Experiences

Dear Student,

My name is Bethany Reinsch and I am a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Kansas State University. I am conducting a research study to better understand the way instructors perceive the pronunciation of Spanish language speakers and how this impacts the students' classroom experiences.

I am reaching out to you because you are a student at a Kansas college or university that offers Spanish language classes.

The study consists of completing a questionnaire, which will request some information about you and your learning experiences, as well as recording two short speech samples (one reading a short text and one describing an image). The questionnaire with recordings should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

If you are interested in participating, please use the link below to learn more about the study and access the informed consent form and questionnaire:

Link to questionnaire: [link to questionnaire]

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to:

Primary Investigator:

Dr. Camille Meritan, Teaching Assistant Professor, 005 Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, cmeritan@ksu.edu

Responsible Graduate Student:

Bethany Reinsch, Graduate Teaching Assistant, 011B Eisenhower Hall, 1013 Mid-Campus Drive North, Manhattan, KS 66506, blreinsch@ksu.edu

Thank you,
Bethany Reinsch
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Spanish
Department of Modern Languages