



National Heritage Language Resource Center

# **Heritage Languages: at the crossroads of research and teaching**

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National Heritage Language Resource Center**

**ILR April 1, 2011**

# Demographics

## The American Community Survey 2005-2008:

- 20 % of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English at home

LANGUAGES	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS IN U.S.
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	35,468,501
<b>Chinese:</b>	<b>2,600,150</b>
Tagalog:	1,513,734
French ((incl. Patois, Cajun):	1,305,503
Vietnamese:	1,251,468
German:	1,109,216
<b>Korean:</b>	<b>1,039,021</b>
<b>Russian:</b>	<b>881,723</b>
<b>Arabic:</b>	<b>845,396</b>
Italian:	753,992
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole:	731,282
French Creole:	659,053
Polish:	593,598
<b>Hindi:</b>	<b>560,983</b>
Japanese:	445,471
<b>Persian:</b>	<b>396,769</b>

# Who is a heritage language learner?

- Narrow definition: those who have been exposed to a particular language in childhood but did not learn it to full capacity because another language became dominant. **FUNCTIONAL PROFICIENCY**
- Broad definition: those who have been raised with a *strong cultural connection* to a particular language, usually through family interaction. **CULTURAL AFFINITY**

Source: Polinsky and Kagan 2007

## Another way to look at HL

- ...heritage speakers are early bilinguals who learned the second (majority) language in childhood, either simultaneously with the heritage language, or after a short period of predominant exposure to and use of the minority language at home. ...the heritage language becomes, structurally and functionally, the weaker language. (The NHLRC White Paper)



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## HLL VS FLL

- HLL's knowledge of the language begins in the home
- FLL's knowledge typically begins in the classroom

UCLA Heritage Language Research Priorities Conference, 2000

# MYTHS

## HL SPEAKERS ARE

- native speakers (Myth 1)
- same as L2 learners (Myth 2)

<i>Language Input</i>	<i>Native Speakers</i>	<i>HL Speakers</i>	<i>FL Learners</i>
<b>Family</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Community</b>	✓	✓(-)	
<b>Full educational system</b>	✓		
<b>FL classroom</b>		✓	✓





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## HLLs are not NS or FLLs

- But the glass is half-full
- A typical HLL may be ILR 1-2 (without or with minimal literacy)
- A typical FLL graduates at 1/1+ after 3-4 years of language study

**“I am like Swiss cheese”**



## What do we need to do

- to get HLLs to ILR 3 or above?
  - Linguistic proficiency
  - Cultural competency
  - Motivation

## Basic facts

- Even 1.5-generation speakers display noticeable features of language attrition.
- Most non-English-speaking immigrants to the U. S. typically lose their home (heritage) language within **two (?)** generations.

## WHY?

1. Insufficient input to develop the full L1 system
2. Insufficient output (What do you talk about at home?)
3. An immigrant language = language in contact
4. Peculiarities of the baseline (home) language
5. Lack of motivation tied to...
6. Language attitudes in the society

**1999**

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Heritage Languages in America, Long Beach, CA:

- **HLs as a national resource**
- **Is there any research data?**

## UCLA Research Priorities Conference

- **The main question:** “What are the major substantive issues and pressing research gaps in heritage language education?”

## **Heritage Language Journal**

- **online, blind-refereed journal**
- **linguistics & applied linguistics psychology  
sociology language education language policy  
other relevant fields**
- **special issues (Chinese, Korean, Russian,  
identity, Spanish –Spring '11)**
- **proceedings of 2010 conference**





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**2006**

- **National Heritage Language Resource Center** -- funded by the Title VI U.S. Department of Education (2006-2010; **refunded** 2010-2014)
- **One of 15 NLRCs**
- **The only one dedicated to heritage languages**

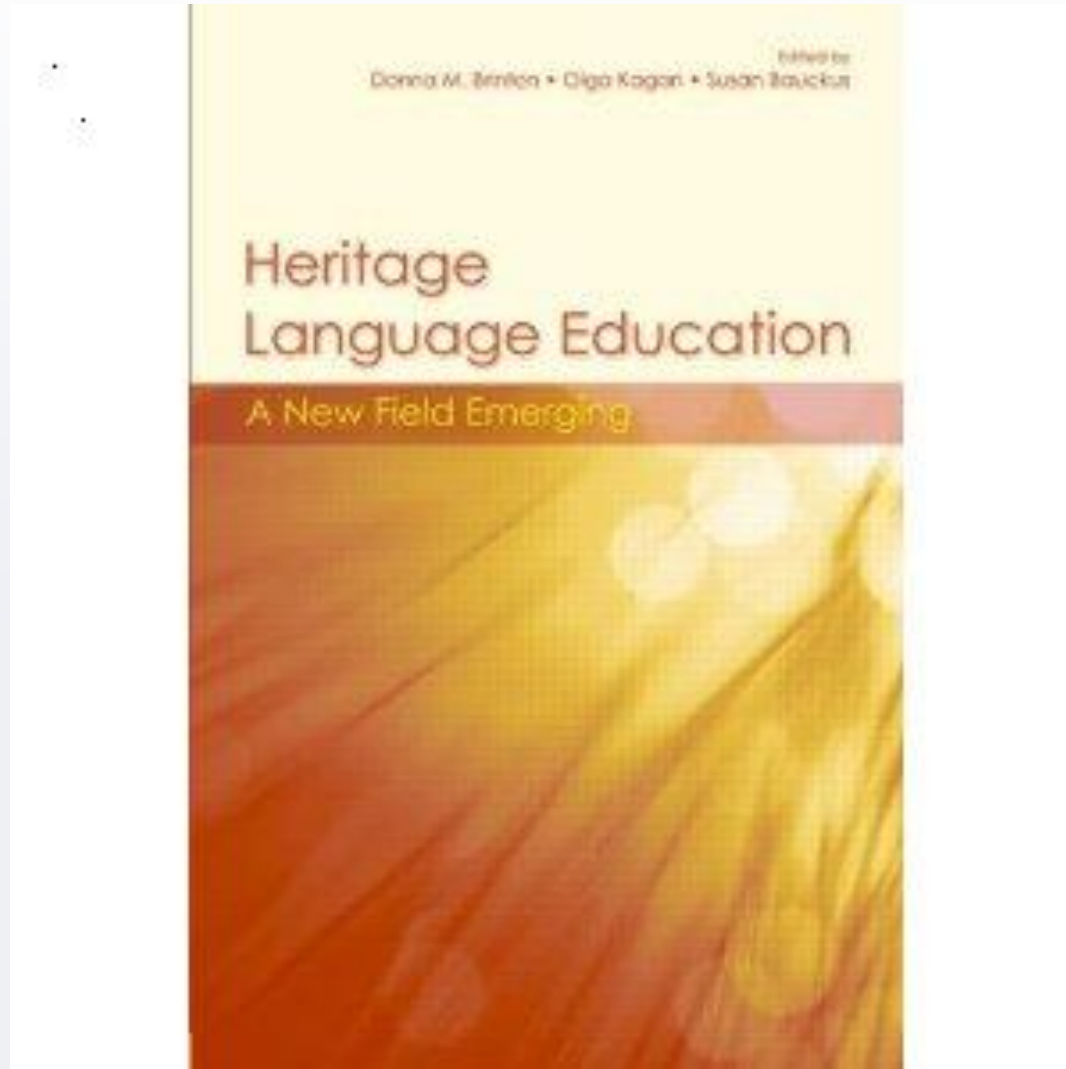


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## The Center's Mission

- **Research into heritage language acquisition**
- **Innovative teaching practices and professional development**
- **Design of HL specific**
  - **instructional materials**
  - **assessment instruments**

2008



## From a review

- Although any one of the chapters in this volume can be read alone, when perused from cover to cover the book invites one to ponder the similarities and differences between the situations of various heritage languages and their learners...

L. Callahan, Linguist List 19.3345, Nov 3, 2008

# NHLRC Research Agenda

- **Surveys of HL learners**
  - NHLRC 2009 survey
- **Surveys of programs**
  - CAL – K-12
  - NHLRC – post-secondary
- **Investigations of HS' linguistic competencies**
- **Assessment projects**
  - With ACTFL
  - With CAL

# Training and dissemination

- **Training:**

- Summer Research Institutes

- **5<sup>th</sup> Institute Summer 2011, UCLA**

- The Institute aims to support a principal NHLRC mission: the development of a research base for heritage language education and to connect research findings with pedagogical approaches.

# The White Paper

## Prolegomena to Heritage Linguistics

*E. Benmamoun, S. Montrul, M. Polinsky*

- <http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/pdf/HL-whitepaper.pdf> (NHLRC website)

# The White Paper

- What happens when access to input and opportunities to use the native language are less than optimal during language development?

**Linguistic analysis of heritage speakers' needs**



# STARTALK/NHLRC Teacher Workshops

- The workshops address topics such as selecting appropriate materials and assessment tools for heritage learners.
- Its goal is to bring research findings and best practices to practitioners



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**2010-2011**

- **Online NHLRC/STARTALK Workshop**

## Lessons

★ [Show All](#) | ★ [Close All](#)

### Teaching Heritage Language Learners: Profiles and Definitions

- ★ [Lesson 1. Who is a Heritage Language Speaker?](#)
- ★ [Lesson 2. Heritage Language Learners' Motivation](#)
- ★ [Lesson 3. Teaching Implications for Heritage Language Learners](#)
- ★ [Lesson 4. Connecting Heritage Learners to Their Communities Through The 'Macro Approach'](#)



### Strategies for Heritage Language Learners: Differentiated Instruction

- ★ [Lesson 5. Why do We Need Differentiated Instruction for Heritage Language Learners?](#)
- ★ [Lesson 6. Know Your Students](#)
- ★ [Lesson 7. Grouping Strategies for Differentiated Instruction](#)
- ★ [Lesson 8. Assessment Strategies for Differentiated Instruction](#)



You need to [sign up](#) for an account and [log in](#) to view lessons.

# Conferences

- **First International conference on Heritage/Community Languages, February 2010**
- **Second conference – planned for 2013**

# February Conference: Who Attended

- 350 people
- 23% graduate students
- 23% teachers/instructors
- 18% both researchers and teachers/instructors
- 9% as a combination of researchers, teachers, and administrators.
- The rest indicated other multiple roles.

## Participants' fields

- 15% *Education*
- 10% *Linguistics*
- Other fields: *Curriculum, Education Policy, Instruction, and Teacher Training, Language Policy, and Administration*

## U.S. and Foreign

- ***65% from the USA.***
- ***The foreign participants come from:***

**Australia / Bangladesh / Brazil / Canada / Finland /  
France / Hong Kong / India / Israel / Japan / China  
Nepal / New Zealand / Saudi Arabia / Sweden /  
Taiwan / Tanzania / United Kingdom**



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## Languages

- 41 languages
- From Amharic to Yiddish





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- **CURRENT ASSESSMENT PROJECTS**

# NHLRC/ACTFL: HL OPI Project

- Collect samples of HL OPIs
- Describe varieties of oral proficiency profiles of heritage speakers by level and linguistic biographies.

## NHLRC/ACTFL (cont.)

- Annotate descriptors in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking*
- Inform
  - OPI tester training
  - instructional practices

# **Assessment Project #2: NHLRC/CAL:**

## **The purpose of this project**

- **conduct a preliminary needs assessment**
- **analyze suitable instruments**
- **lay the groundwork for the proposed  
2010-2012 NHLRC/CAL mini-conference**
- **Produce a white paper on HLL assessment**



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- **Ongoing research**

# Research instruments

- Surveys, interviews
- Oral Proficiency Interviews
- “Frog story” type narratives
- Cloze tests (written and oral)
- Grammaticality judgments
- Eye movement research
- Surveys and self-assessments are part of each project

Baseline: Comparison to NS/L2s

# NHLRC Survey: Heritage Language Learners

- **An on-line survey**
- **1,800 responses**
- **22 languages**
- **Survey Report**

**<http://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu>**

- For analysis, see M. Carreira & O. Kagan (2011)

**The Results of the National Heritage Language Survey: Implications for Teaching, Curriculum Design, and Professional Development, Foreign Language Annals, 44 (1)**

## HL Generations

- Second generation – born in U.S. to at least one immigrant parent
- 1.5 generation – born abroad but arrived by age 12 and grew up in U.S.

P. Kasinitz et al. Inheriting the city: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age, Russel Sage, 2008



## Sequential/Simultaneous

Sequential bilingual: grew up hearing and speaking HL *only* until starting school

Simultaneous bilingual: grew up with two languages

# An example: Russian HLLs

**GROUP 1: completed/almost completed  
high school in the former S.U. *Native speakers***

**GROUP 2: attended/completed junior high**

**GROUP 3: attended/completed elem. school**

**GROUP 4: emigrated at a pre-school age or born  
outside of the former S.U.**

## **HLL: A generic profile**

- **Second or 1.5 generation**
- **Sequential bilingual (till age 5)**
- **Continues using HL in limited ways**
- **HL specific motivations**

## Age Factor

**77%**

**U.S.-born + arrivals before age of 5**

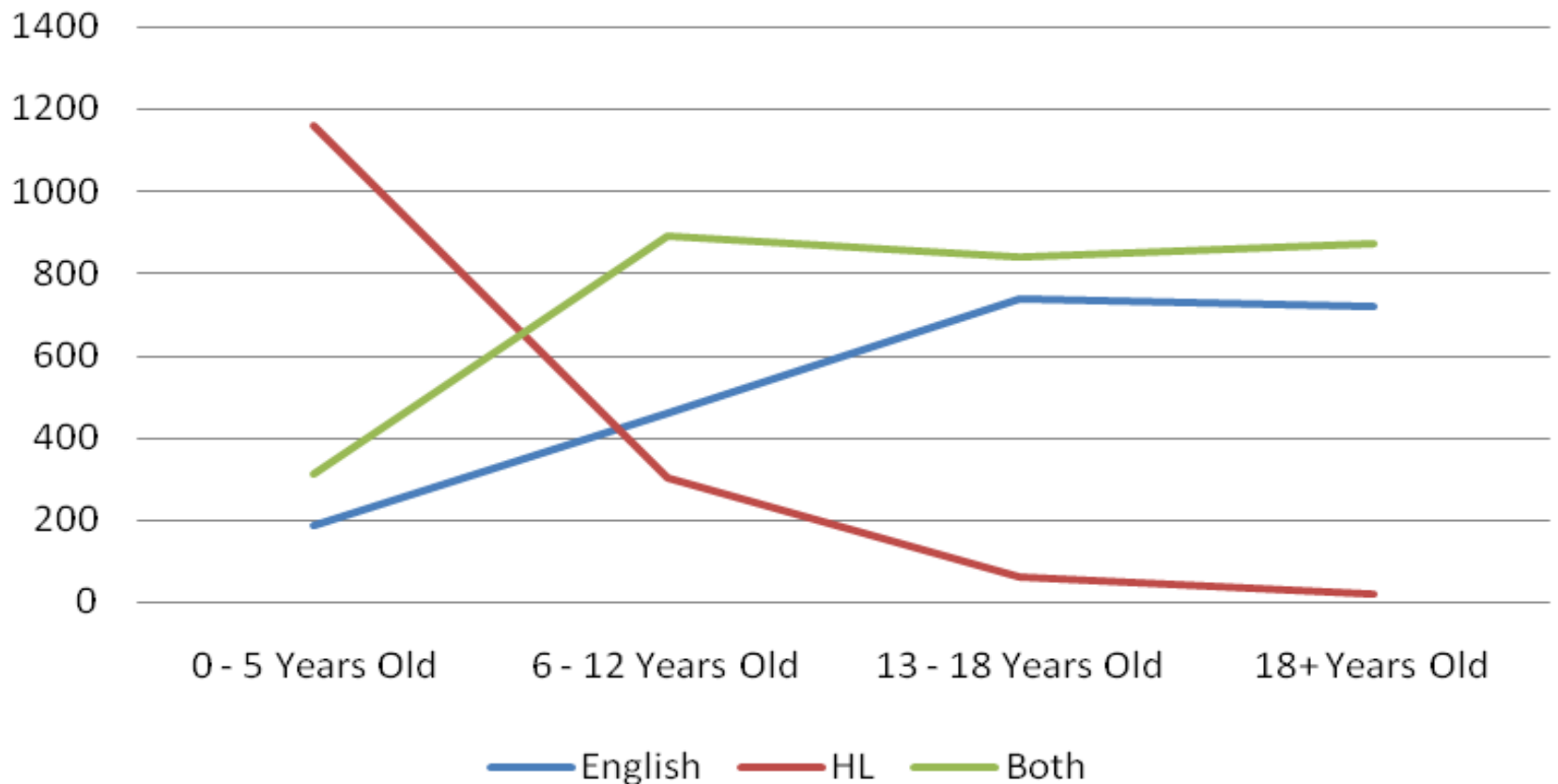
**Most are sequential bilinguals**

## Sequential HLLs

- The first language I learned was Vietnamese. As I entered Kindergarten, I did not know any English...
- I always am very happy that I know my language but I remember growing up I had people look at me funny because I didn't speak English.

NHLRC Survey (2009)

## What language did you use most at the following periods in your life?

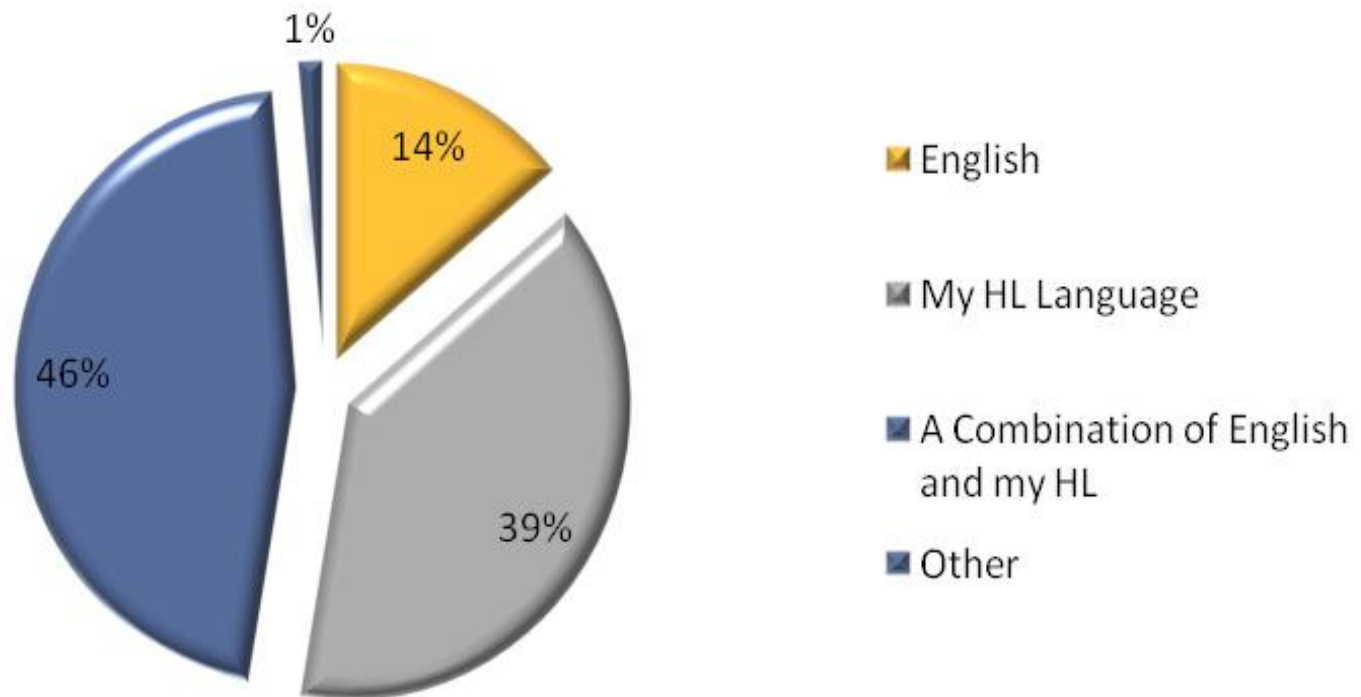


## Language exposure

- The earlier exposure to majority language, the weaker the heritage language

(Montrul 2008: tense and aspect in Spanish)

## What language (s) do you speak at home with you parents/family?





## Limitations

- Growing up speaking my HL at home has provided me with sufficient vocabulary to carry on conversations with my parents, but I have not learned how to speak formally to those outside the home.

(NHLRC Survey 2009)

# Impact on family relationships

- At home, often times there is miscommunication. I get easily frustrated when I cannot get across a very simple point with my parents. This will lead to arguments over really stupid things. In a way, it has been a barrier between my parents and me and making us grow apart somewhat.

(NHLRC Survey 2009)

# Tagalog course helps family relationship

- Because of Tagalog, my dad and I have grown way closer and him and I can joke around in Tagalog. Language is helpful when I'm speaking to my Lola (grandmother); she is getting very old, and chooses who and what to respond to - but she always and quickly responds to me when I speak Tagalog with her. It has been great and my family & relatives in the Philippines are amused by it as well.

(NHLRC 2009)



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# Self-assessment

- How reliable is self-assessment?

### *Respondents' Self-Assessment of HL Knowledge in Four Skills*

<b>Skill</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Native-like</b>
Listening	0.5% (8)	4.2% (65)	27.5% (424)	31.0% (478)	<b>36.8% (568)</b>
Speaking	1.0% (15)	16.8% (259)	<b>37.8% (582)</b>	24.3% (374)	20.1% (310)
Reading	4.0% (61)	28.8% (444)	<b>39.6% (611)</b>	15.4% (237)	12.2% (188)
Writing	4.8% (74)	<b>40.3% (620)</b>	36.2% (557)	11.3% (174)	7.5% (115)

## *Respondents' Ratings of their Abilities in English by Skill*

	<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Native-like</b>
<b>Listening</b>	0.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (75)	18.5% (285)	<b>76.5% (1179)</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	0.1% (2)	0.2% (3)	7.8% (120)	19.5% (301)	<b>72.3% (1114)</b>
<b>Reading</b>	0.1% (2)	0.5% (8)	8.2% (126)	20.8% (321)	<b>70.3% (1083)</b>
<b>Writing</b>	0.1% (1)	1.1% (17)	12.7% (195)	21.3% (327)	<b>64.9% (998)</b>

***Aural proficiency (the average of listening and speaking scores)***

<b>Native-advanced</b>			<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Low</b>	
Spanish	Russian	Persian	Korean			
		Vietnamese				
		Mandarin Cantonese				
		Tagalog				

*Literacy skills (the average of reading and writing scores)*

<b>Native-advanced</b>		<b>Intermediate</b>			<b>Low</b>
	<b>Spanish</b>		<b>Russian</b>	<b>Korean</b>	
				<b>Vietnamese</b>	
				<b>Persian</b>	
				<b>Tagalog</b>	
				<b>Mandarin and Cantonese</b>	





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***Respondents' Attitudes Towards their Heritage Languages***

1.	It's an important part of who I am	85.2%
2.	I find it useful	88.5%
3.	It has made school more enjoyable	46.4%
4.	It has helped me make more friends	51.6%
5.	It's a valuable skill	88.9%
6.	It's a necessary skills	70.7%
7.	At times I feel embarrassed	30.0%
8.	It's been a barrier to learning English	7.3%
9.	It has made school more challenging	18.9%
10.	It has made school less enjoyable	2.4%
11.	It has made it more difficult to make friends	2.4%



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## HL Specific Motivation

- To communicate with family in the U.S.
- To learn about cultural/linguistic roots
- To communicate with family in the HL country
- For future career
  - To satisfy language requirement



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Top four priorities for their HL (1= first priority, 2= second priority, etc.)

	For a career or job	To connect with cultural and linguistic roots	To communicate with family and friends in the U.S.	To fulfill a language requirement	To communicate with family and friends abroad
Spanish	1	2	3	4	
Mandarin, Cantonese	1	2	3	4	
Russian		2	1	4	3
Korean		3	2	1	4
Tagalog		2	3	1	4
Vietnamese		2	3	1	4
Persian		1	2	4	3

## Job related motivation

- ...for my future career, I intend on dealing with overseas, and Chinese/Mandarin is a great necessity in the coming decade.

(NHLRC Survey 2009)



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## Connecting with family

Knowledge of my heritage language has helped me outside of school in that **I've been able to communicate and connect with my family and the greater Ethiopian community.**

**Without this language, I would never have had conversations with my grandmother, and would have never learned anything about her... (Dutch)**

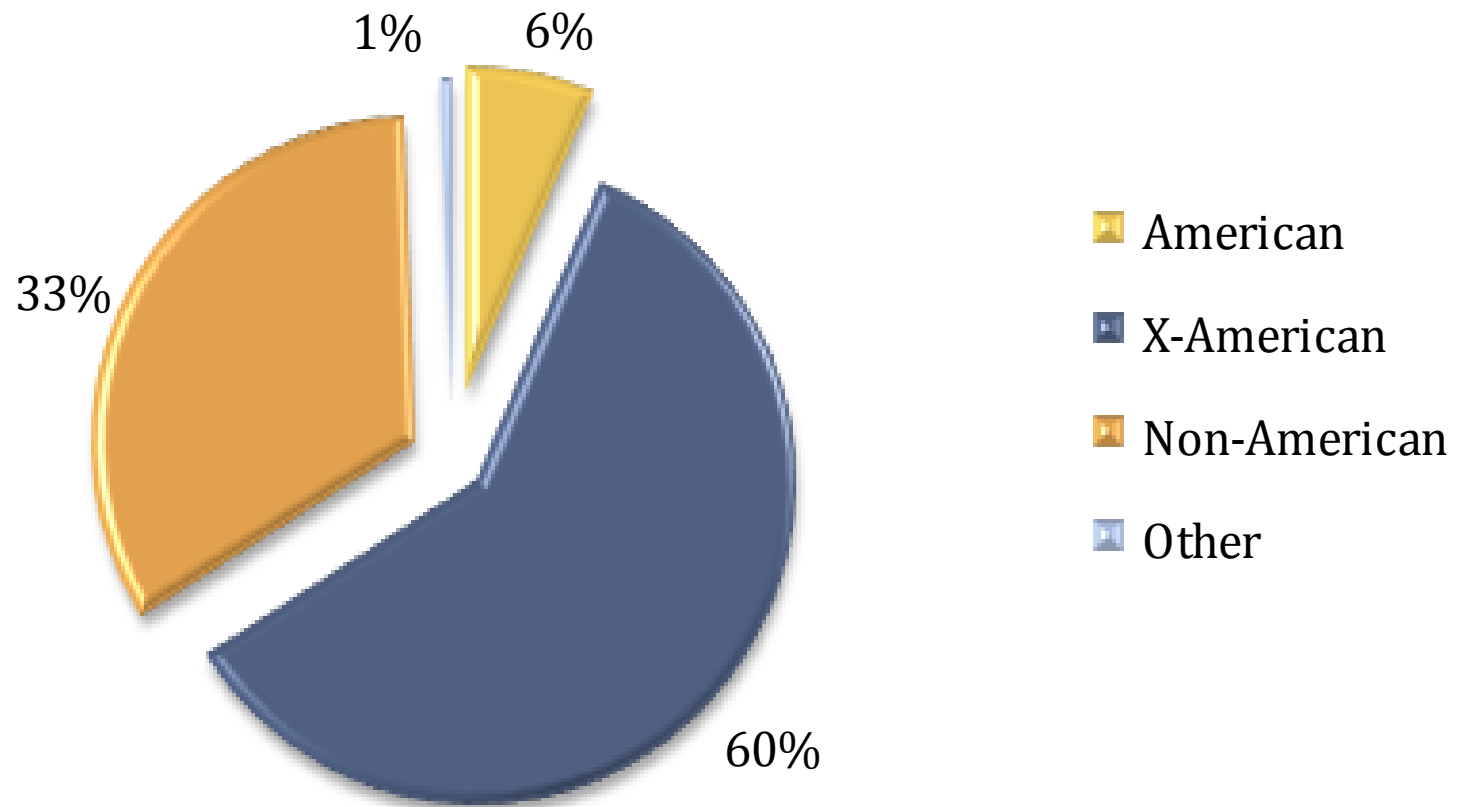
**(NHLRC Survey 2009)**

# IDENTITY

**Ethnic identity is meaningful only in situations in which two or more ethnic groups are in contact over a period of time.**

Jean S. Phinney “Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research” *Psychological Bulletin*, 1990,V. 108, N 3, pp. 499-514

## How do you self-identify?



## Identity: 85%

“It’s an important part of who I am”,

- i.e. HLLs positively identify with the home language/culture



## **HLL: A generic profile**

- **TO RECAP**
  - **Second or 1.5 generation**
  - **Sequential bilingual**
  - **Limited use of HL**
  - **HL specific motivations**
  - **Dual identities**

## The Survey

- Determines
  - Self-rating
  - Language use
  - Attitudes, motivation & identity
- BUT NOT **their linguistic ability**

# Research findings: theoretical linguistics

- “[l]oss of language specific morphosyntactic structures... is a hallmark of a ‘heritage language’” (Bar-Shalom & Zaretsky )
- Lexical access (correlates with difficulties with grammar) (Polinsky; O’Grady)
- Speech rate (correlation of two gender system in Russian with lower speech rate – Polinsky)

# Incomplete Grammar

- ... an individual's grammar is incomplete when it is not age-appropriate as compared with the grammar of monolingual speakers of the same age, cognitive development, and social group.
- **incomplete L1 acquisition in heritage speakers is ...selective and localized.**

(Montrul 2008)

# Grammar

- **some areas of grammatical knowledge appear to be more susceptible to incomplete development than others.**

**Montrul et al. (2008)**

**Curriculum implication: focus on certain grammatical areas**

# Language Specific Features

**Differential Object Marking in Spanish**  
**Montrul (2004,2008)**

**Gender in Russian**  
**Polinsky (2008)**

**Inflected infinitives in Brazilian Portuguese**  
**Rothman (2007)**

**Cohesive devices in Russian**  
**Friedman and Kagan (2008)**

**Polinsky: HL grammar similar to Creole grammar**

## Significant Vocabulary deficiencies

- Vocabulary is emerging as the best indicator of HLLs' overall proficiency
  - Polinsky (1995, 1997, 2000) - Russian
  - Kanno et al.( 2008) - Japanese
- **Curriculum implication: focus on expanding vocabulary**

## HL and L2 learners

- Heritage speakers straddle the boundaries between first and second language acquisition (NHLRC White Paper)

**But the 'holes in the cheese' are different**

**HLL specific curricula**



## Psycholinguistic Factors

**Relearning even something that seems to have been completely forgotten takes much less time than learning for the first time.**

**If childhood heritage language speakers seem to have forgotten their childhood language ... they may still be able to access it once again if they try to relearn the language.**

**T. Au Salvaging Heritage Language in D. Brinton, O. Kagan, S. Bauckus (ed.) *Heritage Language Education: A new field emerging*. Routledge, 2008**

## HL Curriculum

- The main objective: to help learners RELEARN/RETRIEVE the language and EXPAND
- The foundation: to know HLLs strengths and weaknesses, build on the strengths, and deal with the weaknesses squarely

# Rethinking the curriculum

- Stressing vocabulary development
- Targeting certain grammatical areas
- Understanding the differences between HL baseline language and Full L1
- Being cognizant of relearning effect
- Rejecting a *deficiency model*

# Macro Approaches

- **Content/theme-based**
- **Community-based/Ethnographic approach**
- **Project-based**

# Community-based curriculum

- HL learners come to the classroom from the community with their language and cultural knowledge being rooted in the community. They need to continue to be able to function in the community while also enhancing their academic and linguistic skills.
- Carreira & Kagan 2011

# HL-based Activities in the Past 6 Months

- 90% - spoke on the phone
- 76% - listened to music
- 69% -watched TV or DVDs
- **30 % community events**

**(NHLRC Survey 2009)**

# Conditions of Success

1. **Setting HL specific goals**
2. **Time on task**
3. **Macro-approach based curriculum**
4. **Motivating HL speakers**
5. **Instructor training**

**Building on linguistic and socio-linguistic research**

# The Five “FROM-TO” Principles

- aural > to reading
- spoken > to written
- home-based register > general/academic
- everyday activities > in-class activities
- motivation & identity > content



# Research Agendas

- 1999 – Is there any research?
- 2000 – What are research needs?
- 2011 – **What is the impact of current research developments on the practice of teaching?**

# Conclusions

- **NHLRC is connecting HL research and the practice of teaching...**
- **We can recommend HL appropriate curriculum to practitioners**
- **But questions remain**

## Questions 2011

- *What are the psychological factors that impede or promote HL learning?*
- *What kind of assessment is needed?*
- *How reliable is self-assessment?*
- *What kind of direct instruction in HL facilitates learning or relearning the language to HIGH levels of proficiency?*

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**Thank you**  
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# Additional slides

# From Aural to Reading

- **Using listening comprehension as a springboard:**
  - audiobooks;
  - delayed reading;
  - reading and listening at the same time.
  - discussion of audio text;
  - vocabulary based on audio texts;
  - delaying written work

## From Spoken to Written

- **THE TRANSITION TO BILITERACY: FROM SPOKEN TO WRITTEN DISCOURSE**

**Starting with composing written forms of conversational discourse**

- J. Chevalier Heritage Language Literacy: Theory and Practice, *Heritage Language Journal*, # 2, 2004
- <http://www.heritagelanguages.org/>



# From Home-based to Academic Register

- Sociolinguistic approach: students as ethnographers
- Recording and analyzing oral production at home/in the community
- Explaining the differences between registers: pronunciation/grammar/vocabulary
- Explaining the differences between dialects/regional varieties, etc.

# From Everyday to Classroom Activities

- **HL-based Activities in the past 6 months**
  - 90% - spoke on the phone
  - 76% - listened to music
  - 69% - watched TV or DVDs
  - 30 % community events

**(NHLRC Survey 2009)**

# From Motivation to Content

## Motivation

1. Communicating with family
1. Interest in cultural and linguistic roots
2. Dual identity

## Content

1. Cultural themes; history of im/migration
2. History of the country; language structure
3. Creating a bicultural individual