Navigating Concrete Spaces Through Abstract Means: The Role of Heritage Speakers' Perceptions of their Language Practices in the Formation and Negotiation of their Identities

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Abstract

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This project explores the connection between language and identity in heritage speakers—particularly as it pertains to their language practices and how they engage in these practices to navigate spaces and build a sense of identity. Data was gathered by interviewing six adult heritage speakers in four different countries—China, Panama, Kenya, and the United States. The findings suggest that heritage speakers engage in translanguaging practices to navigate spaces and negotiate their identity in different contexts. These identities are not fixed but fluid and shifting across settings, built not only on individuals' choices but also on the social perceptions ascribed to them. Given the impact that social reactions to heritage speakers' languages have on their identity formation, I propose that in order to ensure a more equitable and culturally sustaining education for students, educators need to first gain awareness of their position towards students' languages and then move towards embracing these languages in the classroom. One way in which they can do this is by adopting the position of learners of their student's languages and cultures.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Purpose

Having been raised in a Chinese home in rural Panama afforded me experiences that sparked a profound interest in the intersections of language and identity. My parents never failed to remind me that I needed to *speak* Chinese because I *was* Chinese. To them, language equated with identity, and perhaps in a deeply personal way as they occasionally bemoaned the fact that in China, they had a wealth of relationships but in Panama, they were "deaf, mute, and illiterate." The purpose of this study is to explore the connection between language and identity among heritage speakers. More specifically, this study hopes to provide insight into how heritage speakers perceive their use of language—with a particular focus on translanguaging practices—and how these perceptions correlate with their sense of belonging in various contexts such as the home, school, neighborhood, workplace, and/or locality. Do heritage speakers feel more welcomed in contexts where they can translanguage—i.e. engage in discourse practices that involve the full language repertoire of bilingual/multilingual speakers (Garcia, 2009)? Is language inextricably linked to who they are and if so, how? How do heritage speakers use their languages to navigate spaces and develop a sense of belonging? How might excluding heritage speakers' home languages affect their sense of belonging in a given space? By comparing and contrasting the experiences of participants from different countries, I also hope to explore the patterns and variations in heritage speakers' experiences and language ideologies transnationally.

Rationale

Grosjean (1997) held the idea that "any bilingual is never two monolinguals in one person" (cited in Garcia & Beardsmore, 2009, p. 48), from which we draw the assumption that bilingual/multilingual speakers—rather than having a separate linguistic repertoire for each language—possess a single linguistic repertoire that involves all of their languages (García &

Wei, 2014). Yet bilingual speakers have often had to function as two monolinguals; they have traditionally been asked to leave one of their languages out in order to conform to dominant monoglossic language ideologies that uphold monolingualism as the norm (Flores & Rosa, 2015). According to a study released in 2015 by the United States Census Bureau, 60,361,574 people in the United States speak a language other than English at home. That is roughly 20% of the population. Yet, schools have traditionally adopted an exclusive approach to students' linguistic capital. Students are often asked to speak only English at school, preventing them from practicing and incorporating their home languages when communicating both in speaking and in writing. If in fact language is inextricably linked to identity and bilingual speakers have unique language practices that differ from those of monolinguals, then it follows that excluding one of their languages not only limits bilingual speakers' ability to communicate but excludes the speakers themselves. Preventing heritage speakers from bringing their home languages into the classroom has major implications on their sense of belonging. Gaining a deeper understanding of the language practices of heritage speakers and how these aid in identity formation by influencing their sense of belonging—which is the goal of this study—will shine light into the effects of monoglossic ideologies in schools and the need to shift towards a model of schooling that values bilingual language practices, which will hopefully contribute to the common goal of a more culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) and equitable education.

Literature Review

Speaker identity

The connection between language and identity has been studied and proposed by many researchers. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) wrote, "So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can

take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 59). More than a mere tool for communication, language has been found to be, again and again, heavily intertwined with a person's identity (Kallifatides, 1993; Brownell, 2017).

In considering the connection of language and identity, it is necessary to consider the role that social factors play in shaping the identity that speakers build around that language. More than simply the linguistic properties of the language itself, the context—that positions a speaker's language(s) in a frame of power and impotence, privilege and disadvantage—plays a key role in shaping speaker identities around these languages as well. In the field of second language acquisition, Norton (2010) distinguishes between instrumental motivation and investment in language learning. Particularly, while instrumental motivation "[conceives] of the language learner as having a unitary, fixed and ahistorical 'personality'," the concept of investment "conceives the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction" (cited in Hornberger & McKay, 2010, p. 354). Context plays an important role in how a speaker behaves and sees himself when speaking a language. In fact, sometimes changing the context can change the speaker's position towards the language and how it relates to him or her. In the case of Malik, an African American and Puerto Rican fourth grade student (Brownell, 2017), for example, we can differentiate two contexts: school and home. And in each of these contexts, Malik's behavior and perception of himself as a Spanish speaker differs. At school, Malik refuses to speak Spanish and tends to shy away from any association with it. At home, however, Malik speaks it more freely. This is because at school, Malik experiences fear of ridicule but not at home. The societal pressures and discriminatory perceptions present at school are not present at home. Context repositions language to assume a different status and a different identity. In the same line of thought, a

Spanish speaker speaking Spanish in the United States may have a very different sense of identity than that of a Spanish speaker using Spanish in a Spanish-speaking country. This is due to differences in the power dynamics of the language relative to other languages in those particular contexts. Similarly, a bilingual speaker of Parisian French and English may have a very different experience from that of a bilingual speaker of Swahili and English—even when both are speaking English in the U.S.—because their native languages are positioned/perceived very differently in American society.

The heritage speaker

Researchers have ascribed meanings to the term heritage speaker that range from narrow to broad. But before defining a heritage speaker, one must define the concept of heritage language. According to Montrul (2016), "the term heritage language is hardly neutral because it has sociopolitical connotations related to the distinction between majority and minority languages" (Montrul, 2016, p. 13). Majority languages "typically (but not always) have official status and recognition, are used in the media, and are the language of government administration and education" (Montrul, 2016, p. 14). Minority languages, however, "are the languages of ethnolinguistic minority groups, and may or may not have co-official status" (Montrul, 2016, p.14). Furthermore, the distinction between majority languages and minority languages "is not inherent to any language but is determined by the local context" (Montrul, 2016, p. 14). For example, Arabic is a majority language in Palestine, but a minority language in the United States. Currently, a heritage language in the United States is defined as a language other than English spoken by immigrants and their children (Valdés, 2001). A heritage speaker in the United States is, therefore, an individual belonging to minority language groups who grows up in a home where the heritage language is spoken and who exhibits a certain level of linguistic competence

in it—such as the ability to speak it or understand it (Valdés, 2001). Although many heritage speakers display a higher proficiency level in the majority language as compared to the heritage language; sometimes the opposite is true. In China, for example, the official language is Putonghua—a variety of Mandarin—but over a hundred languages are spoken locally. Thus, many Chinese individuals who did not attend university or who have low levels of schooling have higher proficiency in their heritage language and lower proficiency in the majority language (Montrul, 2016). For this project, I have decided to adopt Valdés's (2001) definition of heritage speaker in the United States and have adapted it to define heritage speakers in the other countries included in this study—namely, a heritage speaker in Panama is someone who grew up speaking a language other than Spanish at home; a heritage speaker in China is someone who grew up speaking a language other than Mandarin at home; and a heritage speaker in Kenya is someone who grew up speaking a language other than Swahili at home.

Heritage speakers do not only have a connection to their heritage language by means of linguistic exposure but also by means of their cultural identity (Montrul, 2016) and, often, racial identity. This makes them especially vulnerable to the effects of language attitudes around them because their connection to the language is greatly personal. In this way, their experiences would differ from that of a bilingual who acquires a second language in school or other means purely based on interest or vision of an imagined community, such as that of the workplace (Norton, 2010).

Translanguaging

The concept of translanguaging—which includes but also goes beyond code-switching—refers to the system of practices by which bilingual speakers communicate using their full linguistic repertoire (García & Beardsmore, 2009). This may include practices like mixing

languages or talking in one language and writing in another. In his article on the translanguaging practices of multilingual Chinese youth in Britain, Li Wei (2010) shines light on how Chinese youth in Britain use translanguaging practices to construct their social identities. Wei found that Chinese youth use their languages to develop and maintain a sense of belonging, which in turn informs their identities. Code-mixing Mandarin and English, for example, allows them to access a particular group of friends who share that ability and thus allows them to build their identities around it. The youth's translanguaging abilities also give them an opportunity to express linguistically how they feel internally in terms of their hybrid cultural identities. One of the youths in the article shares, "not mixed people, but mix, y'know, not Chinese not English. We are here in England, but we are Chinese, but we are not in China. You know [what] I mean?" (Wei, 2010, p. 1230). For these youths, neither Chinese culture alone nor British culture alone can fully describe them because to an extent they are a mix of both. Similarly, neither Mandarin alone nor English alone can fully describe them, so a mix of both offers a much more accurate representation of who they are.

Methodology

Participants

For the purposes of this project, I interviewed six participants—all of whom are adult heritage speakers who grew up speaking or hearing a language at home that was different from the dominant language spoken in society. All of the participants interviewed can at least understand their heritage language, and the majority speaks it, although their proficiency levels vary as does their country of origin. I knew each of the participants personally before the interview and selected them based on their backgrounds and countries of origin. I have changed all names for pseudonyms chosen by the participants unless asked to do otherwise.

Jay

Jay is a 32-year-old male speaker of Cantonese, Hakka, Mandarin, and English. He was born in Guangdong, China, and lived in the same city all his life. He describes the place as a little town that was not as prosperous as the big city of Guangzhou, but over the years it has experienced some progress and is now in equal standing with Guangzhou. Jay's mother is of full Hakka heritage while his father is half Hakka and half Cantonese, yet both parents speak Hakka, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Jay did not perceive any cultural differences between how things functioned at home vs. in the larger society, but he did note cultural differences between the older generation and the younger generation in China. He gives the example of how a young man who has long hair or dyes his hair would be perceived. While the younger generation would find him very normal, the older generation would perceive him as "not a good man." Jay's situation is slightly different from that of the other interviewees in this study because his home language (Cantonese) is a language of great prominence in the region of China in which he grew up. The majority speaks it and understands it, although it is not the language of instruction at school, government affairs, or official documents; the official language is Mandarin.

Tasnim

Tasnim is a 25-year-old heritage speaker of Arabic who grew up in Panama, where the dominant language is Spanish. Her parents immigrated from Palestine and speak Arabic and Spanish. Growing up, Tasnim spoke Arabic at home, Spanish in the greater community, and English at school. Both she and her siblings attended an English-Spanish bilingual school throughout elementary and middle school where the primary language of instruction was English. One cultural difference Tasnim remembers between how things worked at home vs. in the larger society growing up is that she was not allowed to date anyone, although dating was

common among people her age in Panama. While she describes the experience as difficult at first, she explains that eventually she got used to it and people got used to her, her religion, her culture, and her way of dressing. She lived in Panama for 17 years and finished high school in Palestine before moving to New Jersey with her husband, where she currently lives.

Hannah

Hannah is a 25-year-old heritage speaker of Hakka. She was born in Panama but, as an infant, was sent to China to be raised by her grandparents until the age of five. When she entered first grade in Panama at age six, she spoke no Spanish. She remembers not being able to understand her teacher and classmates but eventually acquired the language with relative ease. For Hannah, Spanish was the language of school and the larger society while Hakka remained the language widely spoken at home. Her parents are Chinese immigrants from the southeastern region of mainland China and speak Hakka, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish. In addition to Hakka and Spanish, Hannah speaks Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. She learned Mandarin and English largely through media and on various trips to China and the United States. Today, she uses these languages when playing online games or when speaking to relatives in the United States.

Jenny

Jenny is a 24-year-old speaker of Mandarin and English. She was born in Los Angeles, California and lived there her entire life. Her parents immigrated from Taiwan in their thirties to pursue higher education and have lived in the United States ever since. They spoke Mandarin at home, and Jenny was exposed to it growing up, but her parents were “lenient and flexible” when teaching her because they worried that teaching her two languages would confuse her as they believed it confused Jenny’s older sister. Jenny’s parents wanted to ensure that Jenny had good

reading and writing in English because "they envisioned that having stronger English skills would translate into better career and future plans rather than Mandarin in their eyes." Jenny is currently working towards a doctoral degree in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Mia

Mia is a 25-year-old female speaker of Vietnamese and English who was born in Sacramento, California and was raised by a single mother in a low-income community. Since her mother speaks very little English, Vietnamese was her primary language growing up and she did not start speaking English until she started pre-school. Growing up, people bullied her and made fun of her for her language, and she describes this experience as having shaped her identity today—"'til this day, the fact that they did that made me who I am. It makes me stronger. Now I don't let them do that. I've become very confrontational and I will speak my mind." She completed her bachelor's degree in Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is now working at a dialysis clinic in Sacramento.

Teresa

Teresa is a 24-year-old female speaker of Swahili, English, and Kinyarwanda. The seventh of ten children, Teresa was the first of her siblings to be born in Kenya after her parents moved there from Rwanda at the height of the Rwandan genocide. She spent the next thirteen years in Kenya before immigrating to the United States with her family. When Teresa was little, her parents spoke Kinyarwanda at home because they did not speak Swahili (the official language of Kenya) when they first moved to Kenya. However, as Swahili became the dominant language of their children, Teresa's parents also began to use it more at home. Today, they use a mixture of both. Growing up, Teresa spoke Swahili with her friends and siblings, a mixture of

Kinyarwanda and Swahili with her parents and relatives, and English at school. Although Swahili is the official language of instruction in Kenya, Teresa attended a private school where English was the primary language of instruction. At her school, all courses were taught in English except for a Swahili composition class that all students were required to take. Currently, Teresa attends graduate school at the University of Washington in Seattle in hopes of becoming a certified physical therapist.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which were deemed ideal as they allow for comparison among participants while also giving them the space to speak of their distinct experiences. The interview protocol consisted of 24 questions divided into three main sections—demographics, language use, and identity. Each interview began with a general question asking participants to talk a little about themselves, including where and how they grew up. Additional probing questions were used where needed. Interviews lasting from an hour and a half to two hours were conducted over video conferencing calls—through Zoom—in Cantonese, English, and Spanish, according to the participant's level of comfort with the language.

Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded for salient themes. A qualitative analysis of the data was conducted to draw connections between language use and sense of belonging or identity negotiation. Beginning with each participant's personal experiences and descriptions, I highlighted connections between their perceptions of their language use and their sense of belonging in various spaces. Then I compared different participants' experiences to

uncover patterns or variations in heritage speakers' experiences in the four countries represented. Finally, I reported the findings and discuss their implications for the field of education.

Results

Definitions

As part of the interview protocol, each participant was asked to define the concepts of language and identity. Most participants defined language as a tool for communicating with others or a means of expressing oneself. Some participants also mentioned the connection that language has to particular cultures and traditions. Participants defined identity in terms of the elements that make each person who they are, such as their worldview, values, culture, race, education, and place of origin. Some, like Hannah, believe that individuals have full agency to define their identity: "[identity is] *algo proprio, algo que no está disque definido por la sociedad*" [something of your own, something that's not defined by society]. Others, like Mia, highlight the role that society plays in shaping these identities, "[identity involves] how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you."

Language Use

All the participants interviewed report engaging in translanguaging practices. These practices include code-switching and responding in a language different from the language in which the original message was given. Some participants even engaged in code-switching during the interview. For example, speaking about society's perception of her ability to speak three languages, Tasnim said:

> Bueno, aquí en los Estados Unidos, um, eh, no sé, lo perciben como yo, como persona algo muy uh. *It's something so lucky to have*. Cómo, cómo lo expreso. Que me, yo soy una persona muy afortunada de tener tantos idiomas. Lo perciben como algo que, algo de

> agradecer, que dar gracias por… Yo tengo que agradecer por esos idiomas que tengo, *'cause I'm bilingual*, así le dicen.
>
> Well, here in the United States, um, eh, I don't know, they perceive it like I, like a person, something very uh. It's something so lucky to have. How, how to express it. That me, I am very fortunate to have so many languages. They perceive it as something that, that I should be thankful for… I have to be thankful for the languages that I have, 'cause I'm bilingual, that's what they say.

Similarly, Jay, speaking of the generational differences between his parents' generation and his generation in China, code-switched in the following way:

> 染发好简单，佢如果一个人染咗发嘅话，如果爸爸妈妈个辈人呢佢就会觉得係: *not a good people, not a good man*。嗰我哋会认为佢染咗发或者将啲头发留长头发，我哋会觉得都无乜嘢，呢个好正常。
>
> Dying one's hair, very simple. If someone dyes their hair, if it's our parents' generation, they will think that this person is *not a good people, not a good man*. But from our perspective, if a man dyes his hair or grows out his hair, we will not think much of it, that's very common.

Participants also reported responding in a different language—usually the dominant language—to family members, relatives, or friends who spoke to them in the heritage language. This happened most often when they had a difficult time conveying meaning in the heritage language though they could understand what was said. Jenny, for example, shared her experience communicating with her Taiwanese parents growing up and described it this way:

> [It] was kind of a weird Chinglish that my family and I did where they would speak to me in Mandarin and I would try my best to reply back in Mandarin, but a good majority of the time as a kid, I just full on English back to them, and we would talk in a language, and then I reply back in a different language.

Usually, participants engaged in translanguaging practices only with people who share their languages. Out of all the participants interviewed, only those with whom I had other languages in common engaged in code-switching during the interview. Those with whom I did

not have other languages in common did not code-switch naturally, although they did use words in their other languages to illustrate their thoughts followed by an explanation of the meaning of the word or phrase. For example, when speaking of the association that English had in Kenya, Teresa used a word in Swahili and followed it with a description of its meaning:

> It was seen as a language where um… This word, it's called *maringo*, but it's like um, how do I say it in English… It's kind of association of like boastfulness, people who spoke English back in Kenya. Yeah, like "I know-it-all" kind of thing.

Participants reported translanguaging for four main reasons—to communicate when proficiency in one language was limited, to convey particular meaning not conveyable in another language, to be better understood by others, and to *not* be understood by others. Most participants reported translanguaging in order to communicate when they could not remember certain words or did not know how to say something in the heritage language. For example, Tasnim explained that she mixes her languages, "*porque se me olvida una palabra*" [because I forget a word]. Similarly, Hannah explained that she code-switches in her conversations with her parents when there are words that she does not know in the heritage language:

> Por ejemplo, cuando hablo con mis papás a veces les hablo en chino, pero la palabra que no sé en chino se lo digo en español. Y la verdad no sé si ellos me entienden también o no [risa]. Por ejemplo, hoy le expliqué disque 'oh, los trabajadores son de la minería', pero yo no sé cómo se dice minería en chino, así que se lo dije 'minería' en español. No sé si me entendieron.
>
> For example, with my parents I speak in Chinese, but the word that I don't know in Chinese, I say it to them in Spanish. To be honest, I don't know if they understand me or not [laughter]. For example, today I explained to them that the workers are from the mining sector, but I don't know how to say 'mining' in Chinese, so I said it in Spanish. I don't know if they understood me.

When proficiency in the heritage language is very limited, participants often opt to reply in the dominant language though addressed in the heritage language. For example, in the case of

Teresa, who understands Kinyarwanda but has a small lexicon in the language, she often responds to family and relatives in Swahili when addressed in Kinyarwanda:

> Especially with the, with my, my parents' friends 'cause they knew I wasn't able to speak in Kinyarwanda, so they would like speak to me in Kinyarwanda, and I'll speak it in Swahili or say 'Oh, yeah, hi!' or 'I'm doing good,' and I'll say those few word in Kinyarwanda, and then I would switch over.

Participants also reported engaging in translanguaging practices to convey meaning that is not easily conveyable in another language or that does not have the same feel in another language. For example, in describing his code-switching practices with his friends, Jay said:

> 有时讲紧广东话又会捞埋个啲英文，係啊，好经常㗎，我哋经常就係 *wow, cool*。但係广东话“点样表达呢”，哗好嘢啊嗷啰。但是好似 *wow, cool* 犀利好多嗷样。
>
> Sometimes when I speak Cantonese, I will mix in some English. Yeah, we very often use 'wow', 'cool'. But how does one express that in Cantonese? Well, it's just [the Cantonese words for wow, yeah]. But 'wow', 'cool' seem a lot more intense.

Similarly, Hannah chooses to use specific Hakka phrases with her Chinese-Panamanian friends in order to express particular meaning that either has no equivalent in Spanish or does not have the same feel in Spanish: "*pero a veces con mis amigos también hablamos en chino… Namás sabes, como que 'yen von lo' [phonetic perception] [risa] cosas así [risa]. Cosas así como 'ngi hau chun o'*" [but sometimes with my friends, we also speak in Chinese… Only, you know, like '*yen von lo*' [laughter], things like that [laughter]. Things like '*ngi hau chun o*']. '*Yen von lo'* is a Hakka interjection typically used to express surprise or sorrow in light of an unexpected negative circumstance, and I cannot think of a Spanish equivalent for the phrase that would fully convey its meaning. '*Ngi hau chun o*', on the other hand, means quite simply "you are very foolish," which is easily translatable to Spanish as "*eres muy tonto/a*." However, even

though the linguistic meaning remains the same, the social meaning does not, i.e. the first carries an aspect of relational comfort and friendly humiliation that the latter does not.

A third reason participants reported engaging in translanguaging practices was to be understood better by others, especially when there was a proficiency difference between interlocutors. Referring to his code-switching during the interview, Jay explained:

> 而家全世界都越来越多嘅 *communication*，唧係话好似我而家讲嘢嘟...（笑）。我呢个係为咗令你更加明白多啲，我先会转换一个...（笑)。
>
> Now throughout the world, there's more and more communication. Like look at the way I'm talking now. [laughter] The reason why I do it [code-switch] is for you to be able to understand me better.

Although Jay is fully capable of expressing his intended message in Cantonese, he knows that my Cantonese proficiency is limited and that if he were to speak fully in Cantonese, I would not be able to understand him completely. Hence, he chooses to translanguage, saying key words and phrases in English, so that I will be able to understand him better.

Lastly, participants reported translanguaging in order to *not* be understood by others. Whenever they wanted to communicate a message to a specific person or group of people but did not want everyone else to understand what they were saying, they would switch to another language. Tasnim described it this way:

> Pero a veces, por ejemplo, si estoy con alguien que sepa los idiomas que yo sé, a veces mezclo pa' que ella me entienda y la otra persona no me entienda. Por ejemplo, estamos dos árabes y una latina, me entiendes, entonces le hablo a la árabe en inglés pero también le quiero decir algo en árabe para que la latina no me entienda. Así es mezclar, me entiendes, para decir algo que nadie te entienda.
>
> But sometimes, for example, if I'm with someone who knows the languages that I know, sometimes I mix [languages] so that she'll understand me but the other person won't. For example, if there are two Arabs and a Latina, I'll talk to the Arab in English but I might also tell her something in Arabic so that the Latina won't understand me. That's how I mix, you know, to say something that nobody will understand.

Hannah shared that this practice of speaking in another language to create incomprehension is sometimes received negatively in Panama:

> Por ejemplo, hay gente que se molesta cuando hay chinos hablando en chino como que 'no, o sea, tú 'tas en, en Panamá, háblame de español'. Y tú estás como 'si no estoy hablando contigo; estoy hablando con esta persona por qué tengo que hablarte a ti… Y si tú no entiendes no es mi problema', cosas así.
>
> For example, there are people who are bothered when there are Chinese people speaking Chinese, like 'no, you're in Panama, speak to me in Spanish.' And you're like, 'I'm not speaking to you; I'm speaking to this other person, why do I have to talk to you? And if you don't understand, that's not my problem.'

Hannah shines light into the expectation that some people in Panama have that because they are in Panama, and Spanish is the official language, everyone must conform and speak only in Spanish. This experience is echoed by Mia, who senses a similar attitude in the United States: "[there are] racist people over there; they be like, 'speak English; we're in America.'"

Another key finding is the way in which schools respond to incomprehension and students' translanguaging practices. Tasnim shared that she used to speak Spanish to her daughter, but when her daughter started going to school in New Jersey, her daughter would mix in Spanish when talking to her teacher: "A mi hija se le enrredó mucho la lengua. Le decía a la maestra, 'I want to go to the baño'. Le decía la maestra, '¿qué es el baño?'" [My daughter got her languages mixed up. She would tell the teacher, 'I want to go to the *baño*'. And the teacher would respond, 'what is the *baño*?']. This was seen as problematic, and at the teacher's recommendation, Tasnim stopped speaking Spanish to her daughter.

Language Perceptions

During the interview, participants were asked to describe their perceptions of the speakers of each of the languages that they speak; their responses are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Language and Speaker Perceptions

Language	Key Words	Instances
English	universal	"El inglés, un idioma reconocido que todo el mundo lo habla, donde vayas, en cualquier lado del mundo puedes, porque todo el mundo te va a entender." [English is a well-known language that everyone speaks. [You can go] everywhere in the world because everyone will understand you] (Tasnim).
	calm, soft-spoken, elegant/sophisticated,	English speakers are calm, soft-spoken, and more elegant/sophisticated (Jay).
	the rich, boastfulness, know-it-all	"English, I'm just like, 'this is just the language I need to speak' [laughter]. It doesn't have any like deep… Since I was forced to speak it growing up in Kenya as I was in private school… But the association that English had in Kenya was [that] only the rich people who were able to afford things were able to speak in uh, in English. It was seen as a language where um… This word, it's called 'maringo', but it's like um, how do I say it in English… It's kind of association of like boastfulness, people who spoke English back in Kenya. Yeah, like I know-it-all kind of thing… That's how English was associated with back then; now I think it's different because everyone is speaking English" (Teresa).
	Serious, norm-abiding, "completely opposite to the people who speak Spanish,"	"El inglés lo veo como más serio, como más estricto. Como si tú le hablas mal es como faltarle el respeto a esa persona. Así, como que tienes que decirle disque 'hi', saludarlo y como decirle disque… Tienes que seguir como una orden… Es como que totalmente opuesto a las personas que hablan español. Es como que más serios" [I see English as more serious, stricter. Like if you speak badly, it's like disrespecting the person. Like, you have to say 'hi', greet them and tell them… You have to follow a certain norm… It's like completely opposite to the people who speak Spanish. It's like more serious] (Hannah).
	"your average American" or Caucasian male	"The first thing that comes to mind when I think of a speaker of English, um, I guess tends to be just your average American or I guess, um. Ok, kind of just, um Caucasian male" (Jenny).
	primary language in America	"For Americans, it's normal 'cause English is the primary language" (Mia).

Spanish	Relaxed, extroverted, spontaneous, not very political compared to other languages, calm	"El hablante que habla español es como más relajado, como extrovertido, espontáneo, una persona así como que 'o qué xopá,'o sea, como que la gente dice así disque, no es bien político comparado con otros idiomas. Es como más relajada, calmada." [The speaker who speaks Spanish is like more relaxed, more extroverted, spontaneous, like a person who like 'oh qué xopá'. I mean, like people who are not very political compared to other languages. It's like more relaxed, calm] (Hannah).
	the language of Latin America, friendly	"Bueno, normalmente el español más es Latinoamérica, pero desde que llegué a los Estados Unidos, aquí es muy fluente aquí y más en mi parte, New Jersey… Y el español me ayuda mucho; soy muy friendly, amigable." [Well, normally, Spanish is more Latin America, but since I came to the United States, Spanish is very [widely spoken] here, especially in my area in New Jersey… And Spanish helps me a lot; I'm very friendly] (Tasnim).
Mandarin	Perceived as having an accent that distinguishes Chinese speakers from China from Chinese speakers from outside, political, serious	"Ellos hablan bien fluido y hablan disque súper rápido… Y ellos tienen como un acento que como cuando lo hablan, no sé, tiene como mandarín de verdad, pero si lo habla otras personas no es mandarín… Tú notas cuando lo habla un chino de China comparado con un chino de afuera… Pienso que las personas que hablan mandarín dan miedo… Porque como China tiene disque políticas bien estrictas, cuando uno habla mandarín es como alguien que 'si haces algo malo te voy a llevar preso'" [they speak fluently and speak super fast. And they have an accent that when they speak, I don't know, it's like real Mandarin. You can tell when it's spoken by a Chinese from China compared to a Chinese from outside… I think that people who speak Mandarin are scary… Because since China has very strict politics, when one speaks Mandarin, it's like 'if you do something wrong, I'll jail you'] (Hannah).
	Older generation, escaping revolutions and wars, current international students	"The speaker of Mandarin, I guess kind of two ideas… images pop into my head. I think one of them is more of kind of like my parents' generation, like a lot of the immigrants who came here 10 plus years ago from the revolutions and the wars, and they were fleeing that, and that generation that's now in the United States… I guess the second speaker is more of the large body of international students that I've been meeting and seeing. And they come from a totally different historical context as well" (Jenny).
	Fast-paced, talkative people, people from out of town	Mandarin speakers speak very fast, faster than Cantonese people. They seem to be people who like to talk a lot. Also, I may perceive them as people from another province (Jay)
Cantonese	cultured, Hong Kong, nice, hospitable, family-oriented	"Yo creo que cantonés es como la versión culta del español, pero en chino… Las personas que yo conocí que en Hong Kong eran súper amigables comparados con los de China, los que yo he visto… Siento que son más cool… Son como más hogareños… Son como más de familia" [I think that Cantonese is like the cultured version of Spanish

		but in Chinese… The people I met in Hong Kong were super friendly compared to those of China, at least from what I've seen. I feel like they're more cool… They're more hospitable… They're more family-oriented] (Hannah).
	varies depending on the person speaking it, great lexical breadth	Each person's way of speaking Cantonese is different. For example, when you go out to get groceries at the market, the person speaking to you will speak Cantonese very differently from a news reporter on TV. Cantonese has a lot more words and expressions for expressing oneself, more than Hakka and Mandarin (Jay).
Hakka	Thought it was widely spoken in China, but after visiting, realized that it is more like a dialect of Chinese, more of the fields, loud	"Yo pensaba que el hakka era un idioma que se hablaba mucho en China, hasta que fui y entendí que el hakka era como un dialecto… Yo creo que los que hablan hakka sí son bien bulleros… Porque los otros idiomas son como gente más silenciosa… Son gente como más bulleros, como más del campo" [I thought that Hakka was a language that was widely spoken in China until I went [to China], and I understood that Hakka is more like a dialect… I think that those who speak Hakka are very loud… Because other languages are quieter… They're like louder people, more of the fields] (Hannah).
	Expressive, loud, and emotive	My impression of the Hakka speakers I've encountered is that they are very expressive/emotive (Jay).
Swahili	chill, language of immediate connection	"It's a chill language for me; it's like a way where I can like laugh with people, especially when I meet other Kenyans or when I meet people who speak Swahili, especially here in, in America where there's not a lot of people. It's like a place where I feel like a type of bondedness with people who speak Swahili 'cause then it's like 'man, I don't get to have this all day, like, around me… I feel like a sense of closeness and bondness" (Teresa).
Kinyarwanda	Language signifying kinship ties	"They're part if our family somewhere" (Teresa).
Arabic	Serious and strong	"Yo digo que el árabe es muy fuerte. Es un idioma fuerte… El árabe es un idioma serio… Cuando ya tú ves un árabe ¿qué vas a pensar? De una vez uno piensa que el idioma árabe es muy pesado, muy serio" [I say that Arabic is very strong. It's a very strong language… Arabic is a serious language… When you see an Arabic person, what will you think? Right away one thinks that the Arabic language is very heavy, very serious] (Tasnim).
Vietnamese	Perception of the Vietnamese speaker as a foreigner	"So this is kind of like double standards in a way… If I see a Vietnamese speaker, I'm like, 'ok, they're Vietnamese,' you know like, like depending on like how they speak too, uh, you can tell like oh ok, they're not maybe from here, like in a way, that's why I say double standard like oh… English is not their primary, you know… It's different. It's not saying that they're a foreigner in a way, but like oh ok, they're not familiar… Depends on what you're saying though. If I see a Vietnamese speaker in America, then I'll say, ok you know, they're a foreigner, but if I see a Vietnamese speaker in Vietnam, I'm

		like ok, this is the culture; it's regular; I'm a foreigner; I'm the foreigner" (Mia).

Hybrid Identities and Sense of Belonging

Another theme that emerged in the interviews with the participants is their hybrid identities as heritage speakers. A pattern among participants was their inability to identify fully with their heritage country and culture. Reflecting about her visits to relatives in Taiwan, Jenny says: "when I visit my relatives in Taiwan, I do feel different. Um, I definitely do feel like I stick out like a sore thumb 'cause I'm the American kid when I travel back to my relatives." This sentiment is echoed by Mia and Hannah, who also feel slightly out of place or foreign when they visit their countries of heritage. Yet, most participants did not feel like they were fully represented by their local cultures either.

> Interviewer: *¿tú te consideras más panameña o más china?* [do you consider yourself more Panamanian or more Chinese?]
>
> Hannah: *Ambos, no me podría definir en uno solo… Si tú me dieras a escoger entre uno de los dos, no podría escoger uno de los dos. La gente disque ¿tú eres china o panameña? Es 'china-panameña', no puedo decir disque china o panameña porque ambos son como parte mí* [Both, I wouldn't be able to define myself in just one… If I had to choose one of the two, I wouldn't be able to choose one. People ask me, 'are you Chinese or Panamanian?' It's 'Chinese-Panamanian;' I can't say Chinese or Panamanian because both are part of me].

In the case of Tasnim, this hybrid identity takes on a more compartmentalized form; namely, she appears to hold a certain identity externally but is someone very different internally. She explained that even though her external features show her Palestinian and Muslim identity, internally, she feels more Latina.

> Yo soy por fuera alguien; mi figura es algo, pero no muestra quien soy yo por dentro. Por ejemplo, parezco árabe… Por fuera soy alguien que si alguien me ve, no se va a acercar a mí, pero cuando me llega a conocer, soy otra persona muy, muy diferente. Cuando me

> escuchas hablar español… Si tú no me conocerías ni sabes que soy yo ni sabes que hablo español y con la forma de mi vestimenta, te vas a asombrar… Si estoy hablando árabe no vas a querer acercarte, te va a dar miedo.
>
> I am someone on the outside; my appearance is something, but it doesn't show who I am inside. For example, I look Arab… On the outside I am someone that if someone sees me, they won't want to approach me, but when they get to know me, I'm someone very, very different. When you hear me speaking Spanish… If you didn't know me or knew that I speak Spanish, and with my way of dress, you would be shocked… If I'm speaking Arabic, you wouldn't want to approach me; you would be scared.

Apart from their countries of heritage, other contexts in which participants said they did not feel like they belong was in homogeneous non-minority groups. Mia describes it in the following way:

> I don't know what context, but when you're with the minority group, a group of minorities, full of minorities, you feel, ok you don't feel different. You don't feel like the odd one out, ok. So in that context, you feel like, ok, you all have something similar. You guys all share similarities, like something similar, you know... But if I were to go to like a white store like Whole Foods, Sprouts, like, you, like you'll get looks, like it makes you feel uncomfortable. When you only see pretend like, you know, like, when you feel like you're the one standing out the most or the one getting looks, different looks.

Similarly, speaking of her experiences entering graduate school, Jenny shares:

> The most I've ever really felt out of place, um, was surprisingly entering graduate school at UCLA, when it was a very different population of people or types of people than it was in undergrad for us. I felt undergrad was very diverse and a lot of people with similar backgrounds to me that I could find, but when I entered graduate school, I felt like I did not belong in the room per se… So I think a good number of them, 'cause I happen to be in a STEM field, while it's not as bad as engineering or physics, there's still a good number of guys to girls… And a lot of them just happen to be white males in their 20s or so, and I think just kinda culturally or socially it's very different, and there's many factors that feel different, even though I'm a fluent English speaker, I still don't quite feel like I can get along with them, which is odd. But I feel like it's more due to other, just a variety of factors… They just come from a different family background or um, they had family members in STEM or people who pursued higher degrees, so they're more accustomed to that environment whereas I felt like an outsider coming in.

Lastly, Tasnim offers a perspective of her experience in Panama vs. the United States in terms of people's acceptance of her.

> A mí me gustaría cualquier lugar, pero desde que me mudé aquí a los Estados Unidos, la vida es diferente y más para las personas como yo, la gente musulmana. Eh, mi vida era diferente en Panamá. Allá siento que todo el mundo te, te respeta como sea, si eres chino, árabe, te respetan. Aquí, tienen una figura de la persona árabe que dan miedo. Tienen a la persona árabe que, que… Aquí, bueno, sí respetan, pero a mí personalmente me daría miedo estar alrededor de gente americana americana, ¿me entiendes? Americano, americano, la gente gringa porque yo siento que hay rencor hacia los árabes, entonces me daría miedo. Nunca sentí *the way I feel* aquí en Estados Unidos, nunca, nunca. Y siempre se lo digo a la gente aquí que yo vivía una vida muy libre en Panamá, aquí me da miedo, me daba miedo, pero ahora no, gracias a Dios.
>
> I would enjoy any place, but since I moved to the United States, life is different and more for people like me, Muslim people. My life was different in Panama. There everyone respects you the way you are, whether you're Chinese or Arab, people respect you. Here, they have an image of the Arab as someone who is scary… Here, well, they do respect you, but I personally would be scared of being around American American people, you know, an American American, white people, because I feel like there is resentment towards Arabs, so I would be scared. I never felt the way I feel here in the United States, never, never. And I always tell people here that I lived a very free life in Panama; here, I'm scared; I used to be scared, but not anymore, thanks God.

Although many participants felt like they did not belong with the homogeneous dominant group, they felt like they belonged with other minority groups, regardless of race or ethnicity. They felt a sense of kinship, understanding, and shared experience with them, even if language was a barrier. Mia shared that being with a homogeneous group of Chinese people vs. a homogeneous group of white people would feel different even though both groups are homogeneous and do not represent her heritage culture. Jenny, too, shares:

> I can definitely really identify a lot with like first and second generation immigrant students and colleagues, um, from any ethnicity. I think, I've always noticed that we've gotten along better or we just have a lot more just in common with just how we grew up here, and just similar experiences and stories even if like their parents immigrated from Russia… Even though it's a totally different country, it's like very similar experiences…

> Or their family recently came from Mexico, I feel like I share a lot more with them, just in terms of how we grew up.

Discussion

The findings suggest a correlation between heritage speakers' perceptions of their language practices and their identity formation/negotiation. Translanguaging is a practice that heritage speakers engage in naturally and often, and through it, they navigate space, develop a sense of belonging and form/negotiate their identities. In this section, I discuss what the findings mean in relation to the research question.

Using Language to Navigate Spaces

A theme that emerged in the data was how heritage speakers used language to navigate spaces. This entering and exiting of spaces is enabled by translanguaging practices. One way in which heritage speakers do this is by translanguaging in order to aid comprehension or to create incomprehension. When speakers translanguage to aid comprehension, they welcome their interlocutors into their space by granting them full access into the interactional space; when they translanguage to create incomprehension, they deny certain listeners access into that space. This directly impacts speakers' identity formation as through it, they define and rehearse the spaces in which they belong or do not belong. This is particularly true when speakers translanguage between the dominant language and their heritage language. Using their heritage language helps them establish group membership with their heritage community, building a sense of belonging and identification with the group. When Hannah inserts Chinese phrases into her conversations with her Chinese-Panamanian friends, she establishes group membership with them—they share a commonality that separates them from others around them.

Sometimes members of the majority group in society oppose these practices on the grounds that there is an official language that must be spoken by all. While this fear of exclusion

is understandable, it is also biased and unfair. When heritage speakers translanguage in their heritage language, they create spaces that are only accessible to particular groups belonging to those spaces. Their linguistic ability and group membership enable them to do so. Members of the majority group by default do not belong in these spaces. The majority group's response of hindering the creation of these spaces (by asking heritage speakers to not translanguage) or forcing oneself into these spaces (by asking heritage speakers to communicate their messages in the dominant language so that everyone can understand, even when the message is neither directed at them nor related to them), disempowers heritage speakers and, in a veiled way, engage in acts of oppression towards heritage communities.

Language Perceptions and Identity Negotiations

From the participants' perceptions of each of their languages, one notable theme is the dominance of English as a vessel of status and power. This is not only apparent in their perceptions of the language and its speakers but also in their lived experiences. All the participants in this project, regardless of their country of origin or current country of residence, possess at least conversational proficiency in English. All participants received English instruction at school from an early age either through mainstream or private schooling. Even though for some participants English was neither spoken in the community nor necessary in everyday affairs growing up, its presence was nonetheless palpable and far from neutral. In some places, such as Kenya, the ability to speak English is not only seen as a useful skill but also as a marker of socioeconomic status—only the rich could afford schools in which English was the main language of instruction. In that case, by speaking English speakers assume a position among the privileged as a marker of who they are. In other places, such as Panama and China, English is the universal language, the language with which one may enter any part of the world,

and the language that affords speakers a voice in foreign territory. Being able to speak it affords speakers in these countries a global identity as well, of someone who has access. In this way, English seems to have a place everywhere in the world—or at least possesses authority to impose its presence anywhere in the world. It can access most places without belonging to them. This is contrasted with most of the other languages represented in this study—Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Kinyarwanda, and Swahili—which are seen as belonging to a particular country or region and easily excluded. For example, speaking of her perception of Vietnamese speakers, Mia says:

> "So this is kind of like double standards in a way… If I see a Vietnamese speaker, I'm like, "ok, they're Vietnamese," you know like, like depending on like how they speak too, uh, you can tell like oh ok, they're not maybe from here, like in a way, that's why I say double standard like oh… English is not their primary, you know… It's different. It's not saying that they're a foreigner in a way, but like oh ok, they're not familiar… Depends on what you're saying though. If I see a Vietnamese speaker in America, then I'll say, ok you know, they're a foreigner, but if I see a Vietnamese speaker in Vietnam, I'm like ok, this is the culture; it's regular; I'm a foreigner; I'm the foreigner" (Mia).

Mia views Vietnamese as the language of Vietnam and as "foreign" to the United States despite herself being a U.S.-born speaker of the language. This reveals the lack of legitimacy that heritage languages have in the U.S., which could contribute to a sense of exclusion for heritage speakers. Heritage speakers speaking their heritage languages may be considered foreign despite being born and raised in the country.

A notable use of language emerged in the interview with Tasnim. In reflecting about her identity, she says the following:

> Yo siento que… Como hablo español y soy árabe, eh, mi identidad cambia a ser más amigable, más cerca… que uno se puede acercar a mí a hablarme. Porque si uno sabe que yo hablo español, se acercan a mí y me hablan. Pero si soy una árabe en una comunidad latina o americana, todo el mundo piensa que la árabe es seria, no habla con nadie, pero cuando me ven hablando español, *oh I'm already friendly*. ¿Me entiendes? Entonces la

> gente… Sí, creo que el idioma te cambia tu identidad. Muy cierto, sí… Sí, sí, porque yo lo veo, cuando yo… Nadie me escucha hablando español, nadie se acerca. Pero si me abro expresamente en español, yo veo que la gente me habla y me sonríe. No sé por qué, pero por eso me gusta el español, me ayuda [risa].
>
> I feel like… Since I speak Spanish and I'm Arab, uh, my identity changes to be friendlier, closer… Like someone can approach me and talk to me. Because if someone knows that I speak Spanish, they approach me and talk to me. But if I'm an Arab in a Latin community or American community, everyone things that the Arab is serious, doesn't talk to anybody, but when they see me speaking Spanish, oh I'm already friendly. You know? So people… Yeah, I think that language changes your identity. Very true, yes. Yes, yes, because I see, when I… When no one hears me speaking Spanish, no one approaches me. But if I express myself in Spanish, I see that people talk to me and smile at me. I don't know why, but that's why I like Spanish; it helps me [laughter].

Here Tasnim uses language to negotiate her identity. Even though her ethnic identity attributes certain qualities to her based on the way she is perceived by others, she is able to negotiate her identity through language. Specifically, by speaking Spanish, she adds a new layer to her identity, a layer of friendliness—as Spanish is perceived as a friendlier language. Furthermore, Tasnim explains that her area in New Jersey, where she now lives with her husband, "está lleno de gente latina" [is full of Latinos]. Therefore, by speaking Spanish, Tasnim negotiates her identity by bringing forth a commonality that she has with the community she hopes to approach and negotiating her belonging to the group.

Implications

One of the implications of these findings in the context of education is the need to recognize and embrace heritage students' complex hybrid identities. Although it may be tempting to ask students to represent their heritage cultures in the classroom or expect them to possess extensive knowledge of their heritage countries, this could generate a sense of shame as students may not feel like they identify with their heritage cultures or countries fully.

Furthermore, it may lead them to feel like they do not belong with the dominant culture because they are only ascribed the heritage culture. There is also a need to embrace heritage students' translanguaging practices. Asking students to keep their languages separate perpetuates the idea that their languages—and perhaps cultures—are incompatible with one another and must be kept separate, which may lead to a negative perception of their hybrid identities. By allowing students to speak of their hybrid cultures and to use their hybrid linguistic practices, educators can foster in heritage students a sense of belonging in a legitimate hybrid culture rather than a sense of not belonging anywhere.

Also, educators and school administrators could support students and engage in culturally sustaining pedagogy by taking the position of learner in the classroom. Traditionally, schools have asked students to leave their languages and cultures outside the classroom—as in the case of Tasnim's daughter—so that people around them will be able to relate with them and understand them better. However, this robs heritage students of their home languages and cultures, which are a big part of their identities. Students are often asked to conform to the monolingual structure of classrooms. Instead of asking students to adapt to schools, why not have schools adapt to the linguistic and cultural diversity of students? In the case of Tasnim's daughter, for example, an alternative response from her teacher could have been to find out what "baño" meant instead of asking her not to use it simply because she could not understand it. Perhaps the entire class could have looked it up together; they would have learned something new. Removing the incomprehensible is not the only way to achieve understanding.

Heritage speakers hold the power to create exclusive spaces; their linguistic prowess enables them to do so. It is important for all of us—but especially for members of the majority group or dominant group in society (because their social membership positions them in a place

of power)—to consider their response to this practice and examine the implications of their rejection of it. Although not always intended that way, rejecting the incomprehension caused by heritage speakers' languages could perpetuate the cloud of oppression that has historically excluded minorities through control. I propose that, as a society, we move towards a tolerance of incomprehension and allow ourselves to stand in the position of outsider when we encounter spaces into which we do not belong instead of forcing ourselves in.

Limitations

Given that this project considers the experiences of only six participants—and only one to two from each country—the patterns discussed here cannot be said to be representative of most heritage speakers in these countries. Furthermore, each speaker's background and current situation is different; therefore, the patterns that emerged from the comparisons among participants could be due to other factors not accounted for in the analysis of the data. Lastly, since the conclusions drawn are based solely on data collected from interviews, which only reveal the thoughts, actions, and experiences that participants are aware of and are willing to share, further collection of data through observations or other methods may provide greater insight into the issue as they allow one to see those experiences and practices in which the speakers engage subconsciously.

Conclusion

Translanguaging is a central part of heritage speakers' language practices, and these practices play an important role in not only enabling communication but also aiding heritage speakers in the formation and negotiation of their identities. These identities—which are fluid and hybrid, changing across settings and across time—are both chosen by the participants and

ascribed by others. Because heritage speakers' language practices, especially translanguaging practices serve such an important purpose in identity formation and negotiation, limiting these practices also hinder these processes. Additionally, excluding these practices from the classroom excludes heritage students themselves as their languages and language practices are key components of who they are. Because of this, one way in which educators and school administrators can engage in more culturally sustaining education is by adopting the position of learners rather than policing students' practices to conform to a general standard. For example, instead of asking students to leave their languages out on the grounds of its causing confusion or incomprehension, which disempowers their languages/cultures and communicates to them that only English has the power to exclude—we can welcome their languages, show interest in learning them, and perhaps also learn to live with some incomprehension.

In future studies, it would be interesting to conduct observations of heritage speakers in addition to interviews in order to shine light into possible language practices that speakers are not aware of but provide great insight into how they perform their identities nonetheless. Also, it would be interesting to compare and contrast the experiences of heritage speakers of various ages in order to see how their language perceptions develop and what the process of their identity formation looks like. Perhaps it would be insightful to compare how heritage speakers and second language learners differ in the way in which language informs their identities. Lastly, it might be interesting to interview monolingual speakers on their language perceptions, language practices, and identity formation process and compare how these differ from those of heritage speakers.

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Appendix I

Interview Protocol

Preamble

Hi _____, thanks for agreeing to do this interview. I know you're busy and have other responsibilities, so I really appreciate your giving me your time.
I'm working on completing my master's program this spring, and my thesis centers around the connection between language and identity. Particularly, I am very curious to learn more about how heritage speakers—i.e. bilingual/multilingual speakers who grew up speaking or hearing a language at home that was different from the dominant language spoken in society—use their languages. I want to know more about the various language practices they engage in and how these could be linked to their perceived identity/identities.
Before we start, is it ok if I record our conversation?

Demographics

1. Tell me a little about yourself including how and where you grew up.

Follow up questions if they haven't answered them:

- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up and what was that experience like?
- Were there differences in how things worked at home vs. in school and the larger society growing up?
- How did you navigate these differences? Can you give me an example of that?

Extra probing questions:

- Tell me more about that.
- What was that like?
- Can you give me an example?

Language Practices

I understand that you speak various languages, so I have a couple of questions about that to try to understand when, how, and with whom you use them.

1. First, how would you define a language?
2. What languages do you speak/know?
3. Where did you learn each of these languages?
4. How would you describe your proficiency level in each of these languages?
5. Please describe with whom and where you use each language.
6. What languages are spoken by your family?

7. What languages are spoken in the community (neighborhood, school, etc.)?
8. Do you ever use two or more languages at the same time (i.e. translanguage)?
    - With whom and where did you do it in the past? With whom and where do you do it now?
    - Can you provide any examples?
9. Do you feel like this practice (translanguaging) is welcomed? Why or why not?
    - Can you provide any examples?
10. In what language do you feel like you can express yourself most fully?
11. What do you think would change if you could only speak this language?
12. How do you view each of your languages?
13. How do you think society views each of your languages?

Identity Development

Researchers have proposed the idea that there is a close link between language and speaker identity/identities. In other words, a person's language or languages are deeply connected to who they are. The following questions are related to the topic of identity and the role that language plays in that.

1. First, would you agree with the idea that language is closely linked to identity?
2. How would you define the concept of identity?
3. How would you describe a speaker of X language?
4. Do these descriptions match how you see yourself?
5. Which are the contexts/places where you feel like you belong? With which people?
6. Are there any contexts/places where you feel like you do not belong? With which people? Why?
7. Do you feel you have different identities with different people and in different places?
8. Which identities are the most important to you and why?
9. What events do you see as having shaped your own identity/identities?
10. Which language do you think is most representative of your identity/identities? Or how has language/have languages played a role in these identities?

Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to add about yourself?
2. Do you have any questions for me?

Again, thank you so much for participating in this interview. I really appreciate your time. I learned a lot from our conversation today, and I can't wait to see the patterns that will surface from this study.

Appendix II

During the interview, speakers were asked to define the concepts of language and identity. The following table summarizes the definitions offered by each participant.

Table 2. Participants' Definitions of Language and Identity

Participant	Definition of Language	Definition of Identity
Jay	Language is a communication tool between people to express one's views and thoughts. It's also a tool to express our affections and emotions.	The things that represent a person such as the color of their skin or other features that reveal where the person is from. Apart from the physical, external features, there's also the aspect of their worldviews, the way they see the world. This is connected to how they grew up and how they were taught growing up.
Tasnim	"La forma de expresarse que la gente te entienda, un idioma de comunicarse con diferentes personas." [A way of expressing yourself that is understood by others, a language for communicating with different people].	"Lo que muestra qué es el ser humano, qué es cada persona. Lo que, no sé. Cada persona, cada ser humano tiene una identidad diferente al otro, pero al final somos todos humanos, por eso lo que nos hace diferente, nuestra identidad." [What shows who is a human being, who is each person, I don't know. Each person, each human being has an identity that's different from another's, yet in the end, we're all humans; that's what makes us different, our identity].
Hannah	"Un modo de comunicarse. Por, o sea no, por ejemplo, lengua no solamente es disque lengua de habla; también es disque lengua de señas. Así es como la gente se comunica." [A means of communication. For example, a language is not only spoken language; there's also sign language. That's how a person communicates].	"Algo proprio, algo que no está disque definido por la sociedad. O sea, tú puedes ser… O sea, la sociedad dice que tú tienes que ser así y así, disque tienes que estudiar en una universidad, disque graduarte de una universidad pa' poder ser exitoso en la vida. Pero es disque no es así, es como que tú por ser quien eres tú puedes esforzarte y hacer lo que tú quieras." [Something of your own, something that's not defined by society. That is, you can be... That is, society tells you that you need to be like this and that, like you need to go to college and graduate from college in order to be successful in life. But that's not the case. You can make an effort and do anything you want].
Jenny	"Language would be just any way individuals can communicate to one another. Um, and I guess it just has its own certain rules and structure and patterns."	"I think the identity kind of stems from like your beliefs, your morals, how you conduct yourself, mm, how you view the world. Mm, and I think a good part of it stems from your cultural background and culture influences."

Mia	"A form of communication between people who share the same culture. Even though that's not always true because people can come from different cultures and still share the same language. Some people learn it because they want to/they like it."	"It's how you define yourself… It's you, you are the key. How you see yourself, like uh, what you identify yourself as, how you see yourself or how you… I would say how you want to present your, represent… It's like a representation of yourself… How you perceive yourself and how others perceive you."
Teresa	"Language… In a broader sense of what a language is, it's like what the majority of people speak, but it could also translate to what people grew up with. So, for example, in my family, our language is pretty unique to the culture, the tradition, so I think language could be a variety of like speaking, tradition, culture that essentially is mixed up in all, so that we can all communicate, understand one another."	"I think identity comes with a lot of, kind of the things of language, kind of what I said earlier, like where you're from, your values, your culture, um, are all tied in to who you are… I would define it, now that I think about it, pretty similarly to language of like things that you speak, 'cause then that's tied into who you are as well. You know, how you identify as. Location, can be your identity… Education too."