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PASS ON YOUR *HERITAGE LANGUAGES*

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Abstract

Language professionals and policymakers are increasingly aware of the potential value of heritage languages as a resource to the nation. A people's relationship to their heritage is the same as the relationship of a child to its mother. The ethnic identity and commitment of Heritage Language Learners play salient roles in Heritage Language learning process. The mutually constitutive effect amongst Heritage Language Learner's ethnic identity, commitment, and Heritage Language proficiency has been well documented in social psychological and poststructuralist literatures. Both social psychological and poststructural schools offer meaningful insights into particular contexts but receive critiques from other contexts. This article explores complex positioning of heritage language learners amid several intersecting discourses, including those around globalization, identity development and language policies. This is a brief discussion of my ethnographic study of the dynamics of heritage language education which are able to construct, negotiate, and make sense of multiple selves across various socio-cultural contexts (school, family, community, and media). My findings illuminate that learning is not just for cultural retention or for ethnic pride. It also serves as an instrumental investment that allows having practical images, expectations, and self-actualizations that extend beyond temporal spatial limits. Thus, heritage language education involves multiple figured worlds, within which individuals' identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically. As such, bilingualism for these immigrant children is not only a matter of ideologies in the Diaspora, but also a social practice of the imagination in global cultural processes. In sum, this article connects issues of identities, pedagogies and policies in relational terms, demonstrating the importance of heritage language studies and applied linguistics

Key words: heritage language, identity, ideology, practice, Diaspora

1. Introduction

Our language is like a pearl inside a shell. The shell is like the people that carry the language. If our language is taken away, then that would be like a pearl that is gone. We would be like an empty oyster shell. Many people would agree that language is an essential part of, and intrinsically linked to, indigenous peoples' ways of life, culture and identities. Languages embody many indigenous values and concepts and contain indigenous peoples' histories and development. They are fundamental markers of indigenous peoples' distinctiveness and cohesiveness as peoples. A language enshrines a whole culture, and that it provides unique strategies for allowing people to adapt to their environment (natural, material, social, super-natural), which are closely linked to their own way of understanding - cognition and categorization- their environment. Language is uniquely weaved through cultural activity and behavior and through manufactured things, values, attitudes, meanings, images, accumulated knowledge and experience. With a whole culture and its details enshrined, each language may represent a people much better than perhaps any (non-linguistic) cultural world heritage site, hence, the urgency of documenting near-extinct languages. Passing down a language to children is a priceless gift, but it's also an exhausting challenge for parents.

What are a "heritage language" and a "heritage language speaker/learner"? Valdés (2001) and Lacorte and Canabal (2003) point out that "heritage language speaker" is a relatively new term. Other terms that have been put forth include home background speaker native speaker , quasi-native speaker , bilingual speaker, semi-lingual speaker, residual speaker(Draper & Hicks 2000; Valdés 1997), ancestral language, allochthonous language, home language, language of origin, immigrant minority language, community language, LOTE (Language Other Than English) (Van Deusen-Scholl 2003), and false beginners (González-Pino 2000). Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) notes that despite the fact that the terms heritage language, heritage language speaker, and heritage language learner are gaining currency, "the concept remains ill-defined and is sensitive to a variety of interpretations within social, political, regional, and national contexts" (212). However, heritage language acquisition is neither first language acquisition nor second language acquisition. Heritage language learning includes learning indigenous language, native culture, and establishment of social/cultural identity. Heritage language learning is not only the responsibility of immigrant parents, but also it is language teachers' undertaking to make great efforts to promote the acquisition/learning of heritage language among young children.

Increasingly, cultural groups are realizing the need to ensure the transmission of their linguistic heritage to the youngest members of their communities. Heritage language speakers constitute a unique cultural and linguistic resource in the United States while also presenting particular challenges for language educators and language programs. Heritage language schools were established in the United States by ethnic groups to support the learning of their languages and cultures, and they continue to be a vibrant force for preserving and developing the linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge of ethnic communities. Establishing and maintaining effective community-based programs involves a great deal of work, support, and

dedication on the part of community members, cultural and religious centers, and educational organizations. Program staff often faces overwhelming challenges to keep their classes going. However, the challenges like raising public awareness, cultivating broad-based support, improving articulation with other groups and institutions, creating and improving curriculum and materials, recruiting and developing effective teachers, and fostering support among parents and elders to community members and parents seeking to maintain and enhance heritage languages can be insurmountable.

In the last few decades, research on teaching heritage language (HL) learners has expanded enormously and encouraged language professionals to work toward responsible curriculum development for this specific type of learners. Even though various research studies have underscored the effectiveness of bilingual education, it is still often the object of criticism and disdain. This is due in part to its focus on language, which is a subject that is dear to all of us, bound up with individual and group identity, status, intellect, culture, nationalism, and freedom. Indeed, language in general and bilingual education in particular, gets to the heart of issues of heritage, culture, assimilation, and quality of life. In light of the present (negative) political climate for bilingual education policy in the United States, this article focuses on a defense of the policy that centers on the relationship bilingual education has with students' sense of identity and their freedom to pursue the good life.

As individuals, each day we are more experienced and knowledgeable than we were the day before. Similarly, culture is ever changing. Languages, values, religious beliefs, and customs rub up against each other, dominate and accommodate, blend together, and evolve into new hybrids. Most specifically, I propose that if we view the development of self-determination as a central aim of a good and just education, then bilingual education is required because it plays a crucial part in both fostering heritage language (HL) students' authentic cultural identities and expanding their social "contexts of choice". The argument herein will be based on the notion that one's cultural identity has three main facets: (a) racial and ethnic heritage, including bicultural and multicultural heritages, (b) connection to one's cultural community, and (c) a sense that one's race and culture have worth and deserve respect. Self-identification and identity development are continuous processes, and, as such, identities are fluid, not static; open, not monolithic; and multiple and contingent, rather than unalterable essences. With a secure sense of identity and a favorable context from which to make life decisions, heritage language students are better able to avoid the high "opportunity costs", and they have the best chance of achieving self-determination, or so I will argue.

2. Language Specific Focus

Why is language so essential to humanity, and how has it affected human history so profoundly? Language is far more than words. Language is the all-encompassing symbol of a way of life. A key to a culture. Communication is the gateway to understanding and to successful living among people of different cultures The history of the world's languages is largely a story of loss and decline. At around 8000 BC, linguists estimate that upwards of

20,000 languages may have been in existence. Today the number stands at 7000 and is declining rapidly. The world's linguistic and cultural diversity is endangered by the forces of globalisation, which work to homogenise and standardise even as they segregate and marginalise. Globalization has led not only to geopolitical changes, but also to geocultural ones which have affected the sociolinguistic patterns of language in society, including the advent of super-diverse patterns of multilingualism and the emergence of new multimodal forms of communication (Blommaert, 2010). The impact of the current process of globalization on the indigenous languages is becoming pervasive, and some global institutions such as UNESCO, the UN ,etc., are alarmed at the pace of absorption and elimination of ways of life that erase cultures, languages and indigenous worldviews all around the world. Although the United States has been dubbed "the graveyard of languages" for its lack of heritage language support, today's children's futures need not be so bleak. Given the right encouragement, immigrant families can pass on the best of both worlds to their children: a home language in addition to the community language. Not much linguistic research has gone into third generation in regards to language, and not much is said about them trying to maintain their 'cultural heritage' bilingual abilities, because by the third generation people are assumed to be predominantly English speaking.

Languages are like flowers—beautiful, colorful, whole, and grounded in native soil. And a manicured garden had to be planned, cutting back the growth of those languages that spread quickly, like weeds, threatening the existence of flowers that were less dominant. To maintain the color in the garden, some plants had to be trimmed and pruned, others transplanted artificially, yet others extirpated. When a language is lost because all speakers die, it is understandable .But wiping off of an entire community is painful. Languages are disappearing at an alarming pace, so much so that in Pagel's prediction only 10% of the current 6-7000 world's heritage languages will survive by 2050 AD. Technology and tot-lot meetups have made preserving language more possible than ever before, but ultimately, it still boils down to this: consistent, engaging, face-to-face interaction with family and peers. To pull this off effectively, you have to find contexts for your kids where the child must - and that's the key word, 'must' - use the heritage language. That's easier said than done, even for the most committed parents. With the increased mobility of today's world, trans-border migration has become a common phenomenon. Immigrants bring their heritage languages and cultures to the host countries. The issue of heritage language maintenance becomes more and more significant. However, the issue has not received much research attention until recently and various research questions remain unanswered.

Linguistic diversity, a phenomenon that has existed since the beginning of its history and has become a highly contentious issue in recent decades. As a result of the continuous controversies over English-only/Official vs. bilingual education/bilingualism, languages are perhaps not our most powerful instruments for preserving and developing heritage and culture. For those of us committed to the goal of preserving our rich linguistic heritage, the times are at once troubling and hopeful. Grassroots efforts are quietly underway in ethnic communities, schools, colleges to preserve what language educators call *heritage language*.

When a language is lost, culture and heritage are also largely lost. Languages symbolise identities and are used to signal identities by those who speak them. Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and the planet. What is especially heartening is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development, in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, but also in attaining quality education for all and strengthening cooperation, in building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and in mobilizing political will for applying the benefits of science and technology to sustainable development.

Despite the recent increase in xenophobic panic and "English only" movements, heritage language (HL) learning is a significant social, political, and economic issue in North America. HL learning has emerged as a separate area within second language acquisition research on the grounds that HL learners differ from foreign language (FL) learners both linguistically and social-psychologically. Still, not all HL learners are the same – they may have different knowledge of the language, different motivations and attitudes toward it, or different goals they wish to attain through learning the language. Till recent years, the term heritage language was used broadly to refer to nonsocietal and nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities. Those members of linguistic minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of their minority languages have been referred to as heritage language students. Today, colleges are tailoring new programs for these students. Heritage language classes in particular have bloomed across and focus exclusively on terms for heritage speakers. Harvard University has also added a heritage Spanish class this fall. Other popular heritage language programs include Russian, Chinese and Korean. However, recognition of the immense linguistic diversity challenges language educators at least on two levels. On the one hand are immediate questions of language teaching and learning. The presence in our foreign'' language classrooms of students with some proficiency in and a personal connection to the target language compels us to reconsider the process of language acquisition, and which pedagogical approaches best support it (Valde´s 2005). On the other hand are ideological questions. If we concede that the mainstream debate about bilingual education has fossilized around the racialized extremes of Spanish vs. English and immersion vs. bilingual methods (Crawford 2007; Hornberger 2006), then closer study of heritage language education can help us to break through those constrictions and reframe our advocacy for linguistic pluralism.

The study of heritage languages is a relatively new field in linguistics and it is unfortunate that at the dawn of twenty-first century, the world's linguistic and cultural diversity is under assault by the forces of globalisation—cultural, economic and political forces that work to standardise and homogenise, even as they stratify and marginalise.. Many recent studies treat the "heritage language learner" as an objective category. However, it is a social construct, whose meaning is contested by researchers, school administrators and the students themselves. In the transnational flow of wealth, technology and information, the currency of

'world' languages is enormously inflated, while that of local languages is flattened and devalued. Pattanayak (2000) writes,' By luring people to opt for globalisation without enabling them to communicate with the local and the proximate, globalisation is an agent of cultural destruction' (p. 47). These pressures seriously threaten minority linguistic, cultural, and educational rights. Our languages are in the penultimate moment of their existence in the world'. They are vulnerable because they exist in the macrocosm of the English language and its awesome ability to displace and eliminate other languages. (p. xiv)

As awareness of the unique abilities and needs of heritage language learners has grown, so too has recent research deepened our understanding of the dynamic between language policy and heritage language education (HLE). Today, we encounter a formidable list of terms often positioned as synonymous with heritage aboriginal, ancestral, autochthonous, (ex-) colonial, community, critical, diasporic, endoglossic, ethnic, foreign, geopolitical, home, immigrant, indigenous, language other than English, local, migrant, minority, mother tongue, refugee, regional and strategic. While heritage language development for young children remains an under-researched but emergent area of early bilingual research, several bodies of literature including language studies, literacy and learning studies, and ethnic studies address various facets of heritage language acquisition and maintenance. Scholars in language education have called for a research agenda that examines how heritage language (HL) learners re-learn their family language since their experience learning the heritage language differs from that of second language (L2) learners.

With the increasing flows of people, ideas, images, and technologies within and across national, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries, there has been a continuing debate on the concept of ethnicity, one of the most important aspects of identity. Since the 1960s, anthropologists and other social scientists have generally used the term ethnicity to refer to an individual's cultural heritage, which is separate from one's physical characteristics. In particular, there are both objective and subjective aspects of ethnicity. The objective aspect of ethnicity is the observable culture and shared symbols of a particular group. It may involve a specific language or religious tradition that is maintained by the group, or it may be particular clothing, hairstyles, preferences in food, or other conspicuous characteristics. The subjective aspect of ethnicity involves the internal beliefs of the people regarding their shared ancestry. It entails a "we-feeling", and a sense of community or oneness, or a distinction between one's own "in-group" versus "out-group". This subjective identification of individuals with an ideology of a shared history, unique past, and symbolic attachment with a homeland is often the most important expression of ethnicity (Smith, 1986). Anthropologists have employed a number of different theoretical strategies to study ethnic groups and processes of ethnic identification.

Little bear is among a small but growing group of committed and informed language educators working to reverse language loss. It is a race against time (Sims, 2001a), for, as Littlebear (1996) observes, Indigenous people have nowhere to turn but their own communities to replenish the pool of heritage language speakers. Increasingly, Native

speakers are primarily the elderly. 'When an indigenous group stops speaking its language, the language disappears from the face of the earth', writes linguist Leanne Hinton (2001, p. 3). When even one language falls silent, the world loses an irredeemable repository of human knowledge. Nettle and Romaine (2000) observe that every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture it has been a vehicle to. It is a loss to every one of us if a fraction of that diversity disappears when there is something that can have been done to prevent it (p. 14). More fundamentally, language loss and revitalisation are human rights issues. Through our mother tongue, we come to know, represent, name, and act upon the world. Humans do not naturally or easily relinquish this birthright. Rather, the loss of a language reflects the exercise of power by the dominant over the disenfranchised, and is concretely experienced 'in the concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community' (Fishman, 1991, p. 4). Thus, efforts to revitalise Indigenous languages cannot be divorced from larger struggles for democracy, social justice, and self-determination (see May, 2001).

There has been extensive research on the language development and academic achievement of majority language students in bilingual education programs since this has been a prominent issue in the minds of theoreticians, educators, policy-makers, and parents alike. Bilingual education for majority language students is varied and complex as each community adopts different programmatic models and pedagogical strategies to suit its unique needs, resources, and goals. Therefore, it is an issue that has sparked tremendous interest and debate among policymakers, researchers and parents (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Bailey, 2007; Cummins, 1993; Gersten et al., 2007). One hotly debated issue centers on whether bilingualism is additive or subtractive. Here researchers and educators ask whether literacy instruction should be provided using an additive approach, whereby children's first languages are valued and maintained as they acquire an additional language (Cummins, 1983; Lee & Oxelson, 2006), or within a subtractive framework, in which children acquire the dominant language of the community in a learning setting in which they often lose or fail to develop proficiency in their home language (Wong-Fillmore, 2000). For example, English-only instruction may reflect a subtractive framework. Advocates of English-only instruction have expressed concerns that bilingual instruction would limit instructional time in English, thereby impeding English reading and language development (Genesee, 1987; Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996). In contrast, proponents of additive approaches, such as bilingual education, believe that bilingualism itself does not interfere with literacy development in either language (Yeung, Marsh, & Suliman, 2000). Instead, bilingual instruction may facilitate reading development in the dominant language of the community (see Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Slavin & Cheung, 2005).

According to many reports in the media, the war between English-only advocates and supporters of bilingual education is a war between rational people who think children should acquire English and irrational fanatics who think children should be prevented from learning English. Articles have proclaimed that bilingual education simply doesn't work, that children in bilingual programs do not learn English. Bilingual education is counterintuitive. Most people wonder: How could teaching students in their native tongue help them learn English?

Many assume the idea of bilingual education is to go easy on limited-English-proficient (LEP) children, to postpone the pain and confusion of acquiring a new language. They wonder if it wouldn't be better to teach the students English quickly - through "total immersion" - so they can get on with their schooling. Won't it lessen their motivation to learn by prolonging reliance on the first language? So many immigrants have acquired English successfully; the argument goes, without any special help: Why should today's immigrant children be different? Moreover, it is popularly assumed that immigrants are resisting English language acquisition, and are holding tight onto their first language and culture.

An important question is: What tests or other sources of evidence are used to determine whether a form of bilingual education is successful? Should the sole outcome be competence in one or two languages? What aspects of language should be assessed? Should science and social studies be included? Should the measure of success be pe3rformance across the whole curriculum? How important is it to include non-cognitive outcomes such as self-esteem, moral development, school attendance, social and emotional adjustments, integration in to society and gaining employment? What are the long term effects bilingual schooling? The questions indicate there will be debates and disputes over what are the valuable outcomes of schooling. Research on the effectiveness of bilingual education has varied in the choice of measure of outcome. Reviews od heritage language education and developmental maintenance education in the US and Canada found positive results.

Heritage language speakers represent a vital resource to our commercial, educational, and cultural communities. Heritage language speakers constitute a unique cultural and linguistic resource while also presenting particular challenges for language educators and language programs. Heritage language schools were established in the United States by ethnic groups to support the learning of their languages and cultures, and they continue to be a vibrant force for preserving and developing the linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge of ethnic communities. Establishing and maintaining effective community-based programs involves a great deal of work, support, and dedication on the part of community members, cultural and religious centers, and educational organizations. Program staff often faces overwhelming challenges to keep their classes going. However, the challenges like raising public awareness, cultivating broad-based support, improving articulation with other groups and institutions, creating and improving curriculum and materials, recruiting and developing effective teachers, and fostering support among parents and elders to community members and parents seeking to maintain and enhance heritage languages can be insurmountable.
In the last few decades, research on teaching heritage language (HL) learners has expanded enormously and encouraged language professionals to work toward responsible curriculum development for this specific type of learners. Even though various research studies have underscored the effectiveness of bilingual education, it is still often the object of criticism and disdain. This is due in part to its focus on language, which is a subject that is dear to all of us, bound up with individual and group identity, status, intellect, culture, nationalism, and

freedom. Indeed, language in general and bilingual education in particular, get to the heart of issues of heritage, culture, assimilation, and quality of life. In light of the present (negative) political climate for bilingual education policy in the United States, this article focuses on a defense of the policy that centers on the relationship bilingual education has with students' sense of identity and their freedom to pursue the good life.

Despite a history of polylingualism in the United States, bilingual education was not endorsed as national policy until 1968. Since then, however, bilingual education and its various implications have been hotly debated. The controversy, then, concerns three main factors: (a) how learning should occur, (b) what place a student's heritage language should have in the process, and (c) whether or not efforts should be made to preserve aspects of native culture. Proponents of bilingual education generally maintain that public schools have a responsibility to aid heritage language students in learning English, while at the same time—and this is a key point—help students to advance their learning in the academic subject areas while sustaining their cultural identities as well. By using heritage languages for instructional purposes, students receive the best start in their overall learning and academic achievement. It is most important, the argument goes, first to support students' learning in the content areas, and second, to teach them English. On the other side of the debate, critics of bilingual education contend that learning English should be students' central activity in such a way that the heritage language is either barely used as a language of instruction or not at all. In addition, critics reject the importance of preserving students' cultural identities.

3. Maintaining Linguistic and Cultural Distinctiveness

The linguistic distinctiveness of a particular ethnic group is a basic component of its members' personal identity; thus, ethnicity and language become associated in the thinking of those inside and outside the group. Three questions based on these assumptions are currently being studied: (1) Do beliefs about a particular ethnolinguistic group affect the efficiency of learning that group's language? (2) Is there any basis to the belief that in becoming bilingual or bicultural cognitive powers are dulled and identities are diluted? (3) Should minority groups try to maintain their ethnolinguistic identities and heritage in the North American setting? As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations. Most people think that immigrants resist giving up their heritage or family language. Just the opposite is true: Heritage languages are lost rapidly, victims of language shift, a powerful process that favors the language of the new country over the language of the family. This article argues that heritage language development, in addition to full development of the language of the country, is an excellent investment, both for the individual and for society. Heritage language development can lead to academic and economic benefits, can be an important part of identity formation, and enables the heritage

language speaker to profit from deeper contact with family, community and the country of origin.

Indigenous language revitalisation confronts not only a colonial legacy of linguicide, genocide, and cultural displacement, but mounting pressures for standardisation. Those pressures are manifest in externally imposed 'accountability' regimes—high-stakes testing, reductionist reading programmes, and English-only policies such as those recently passed in California and Arizona. These pressures come at a time when the USA is experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift stemming from the 'new immigration'—those who have immigrated to the USA since national origin quotas were abolished in 1965. Unlike earlier waves of immigration, which originated in Europe and were largely White, recent immigrants come primarily from Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean (Qin-Hilliard *et al.*, 2001). People of colour now comprise 28% of the nation's population, with the numbers expected to grow to 38% in 2024, and 47% in 2050 (Banks, 2001, p. ix).

In the context of these demographic transformations and the larger forces of globalisation, we are witnessing increasing intolerance for linguistic and cultural diversity. Nowhere is this more evident than in US schools. In school districts across the country, working-class students, students of colour, and English language learners are simultaneously being deskilled in one-size-fits-all, phonics-based reading programmes, and constructed as deficient for their low performance on English standardised tests (Gutie´rrez, 2001). There is nothing neutral about these processes. Masquerading as an instrument of equality—as reflected, for example, in the current US policy of 'leaving no child behind' [6]—the pressures for standardisation are, in fact, creating a new polarisation between those with and without access to opportunity and resources.

Can Indigenous cultural and linguistic distinctiveness be maintained in the face of these homogenising yet stratifying forces? I believe the answer is a qualified but optimistic 'yes'. Achieving this will require sustained community-based consciousness-raising, much like that described for the immersion programmes examined here, and committed efforts by those who, like the Navajo parents at Fort Defiance, are determined to 'buck the tide' of linguistic and cultural repression (Arviso & Holm, 2001, p. 211). Happily, there is evidence that these instances of community-based resistance are not isolated cases. In the summer of 1988, Native American educators from throughout the USA came together to draft the resolution that would become the 1990/1992 Native American Languages Act, the only federal legislation that explicitly vows to protect and promote Indigenous languages. Although meagrely funded, this legislation has spurred some of the boldest efforts in heritage language recovery to date, as well as having solidified a national network of Indigenous language activists (for examples, see Hinton & Hale, 2001; McCarty *et al.*, 1999).

Language—humankind's indispensable meaning-making tool—*can* be an instrument of cultural and linguistic oppression. But this 'tool of tools' (Gutie´rrez, 2001, p. 567) can also be a vehicle for advancing human rights and minority-community empowerment. The programmes discussed here illustrate the ways in which Indigenous communities have been able to protect and promote their distinctive diversity in homogenising times. Their efforts point the way out of the either-or dichotomies of reductionist, English-only pedagogies, toward a vision of democracy in which individuals and communities create and recreate themselves through multiple languages. Rooted in principles of social justice, this vision holds the promise of creating a more critically democratic, linguistically and culturally rich society for us all.

4. The role of language in ethnic identification

Although in many cases language and ethnic identity are strongly intertwined , there is no necessary or categorical relationship between them. People can in other words, perceive themselves as members of one and the same ethnic group without sharing a common language, or, on the other hand , use the same language across ethnic boundaries. However, as many scholars have argued, language is not indispensable but very important and useful for ethnic identification (Heller, 1994; Smolicz, 1992). The central question is to what extent and how HL facilitates positive ethnic identification. Based on the six case studies, I interpret the role of heritage language in ethnic identification in three ways. Firstly, language per se is a part of culture. By studying the words and linguistic structures of a language, learners also acquire the socio-cultural information underlying the language system, which in turn, helps them to develop a deep emotional attachment to the shared heritage. For example, my case study suggests that learning and use of Hindi idiomatic expressions functions as an important means to facilitate these adolescents' language proficiency and cultural competence. (Lei, 2012a). My observations of the focal informants in and out of the classroom as well as interviews with them and their parents and teachers suggest that idiomatic expressions provide an interesting lens to examine language both as a target of socialization and as a tool for socialization (He, 2000; He, 2003; He, 2004). Hindi idiomatic expressions contain a lot of culture-specific meanings and are windows to look into the Indian past, which enhance ethnic pride. They also best demonstrate the indexical relationship between linguistic forms and socio-cultural contexts (Ochs, 1990).

Secondly, heritage language is one of the major features of ethnic or ethnolinguistic group membership and that ethnic identity is most powerfully expressed through the ethnic group language and provides important access to participation in ethnic activities and formation of group boundaries (Heller, 1994). It is through participating in and being exposed to various ethnic activities that children develop a strong sense of being a community, and the shared experience entails a "we-feeling". According to interviews with informants, their parents, and teachers, five out of six informants keep close contacts with friends and relatives in India to maintain their Hindi language proficiency and socio-cultural knowledge.

5. Educational Planning for Heritage Languages

Although growing research has been and is currently conducted to advance our understanding of HL learners (e.g., their motivation, their lived experience, their language uses, etc.), there is still a paucity in research-based instructional methods and curricula that address their special needs and enhance their linguistic and cultural knowledge in their respective HLs. As a parameter for the heritage language learner, Kagan and Dillon (2009) coined the term global knowledge in reference to the macro-instructional approaches that take into account heritage language learners' (HLLs) general but "imperfect and incomplete knowledge of the heritage language" (p. 164).

Kagan, O. & Dillon, K. (2009). The professional development of teachers of heritage language learners: A matrix. In M. Anderson & A. Lazaraton (Eds.), Bridging context, making connections: Selected Papers from the Fifth International Conference on Language Teacher Education (pp. 155-175). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.

The expansion or enrichment of heritage language bilingual education has grown exponentially and policy makers, researchers, and language activists have also drawn attention to the need for pedagogically sound heritage language programmes that have grown in popularity, size and number. US based researchers maintain that heritage languages are worth preserving not only because they serve as a rich emotional, communicative and cultural resource but because they can help solve growing national problem- need for citizens who are proficient in languages other than English. There are three shared challenges which require the most effort and planning to overcome. These include : (1) the development of appropriate pedagogical approaches and academic material; (2) moving beyond controvercy concerning the dialect or variety to be used in instructions and (3) addressing conflicting language ideologies within the community and gaining widespread, committed support from parents, students, teachers and other community members.

Heritage language education efforts are shaped by a host of historical, political, and economic factors: the past experience of heritage language communities, the impact of government policies on heritage language preservation, and professional opportunities available to those with heritage language proficiency Referring first to the issue of pedagogy and materials, it is clear that planners face special challenge in this arena. As Compton(2001) notes "improving the quality and scope of the curricula and materials used in heritage language schools and classes has been of great concern to heritage language educators. One major challenge is reinventing instruction so that it moves beyond traditional, teacher-centred foreign language pedagogy. Second shared challenge to heritage language initiatives is to adequately address the sticky issues surrounding the selection of an instructional variety when there are multiple dialects or varieties of the threatened heritage language And third challenge is addressing complicated, potentially conflicting language ideologies within the

community and garnering widespread local support. Resistance to use of the heritage language in schools can be found on many fronts.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the symbiosis of HL learning and ethnic identification and I suggest that both the primordial and circumstantial aspects of ethnicity co-exist among immigrant children. All of them consider HL education as an ideological investment; i.e. learning could facilitate positive ethnic identification. This is mainly achieved through the INLC which serves as a bridge between psychological and sociological factors. In other words, various aspirations, attitudes, feelings, and ideas toward heritage language and culture within ideological investment influence these immigrant children's learning in various contexts (educational support, interpersonal contact, and media-based), which helps to establish ethnic belongingness; on the other hand, their strong ethnic identifications incline them to make instrumental investment in certain phenomenological experience within the INLC, which in turn facilitates their learning and use of language.

In conclusion, this paper is of significant interest to researchers who are interested in sociolinguistics, ethnic studies, and second language acquisition research, because it addresses the multiple, fluid, and dynamic nature of ethnicity along with heritage language learning. However, there are still some important questions that need to be further addressed in future studies. How do other aspects of identity emerge with ethnic self along spatial and temporal dimensions of HL education? What other social factors (such as social class and gender) may affect HL learning and ethnic identification? To what extent does the Indian Diaspora differ from other ethnic groups in terms of their attitudes towards heritage language and culture? In answering these questions, heritage language education, which differs significantly from first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition (Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Li & Duff, 2008; Wen, 2011), opens up possibilities for us to re-examine the interrelationship between language, ethnicity, identity, and power within the era of globalization.

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