

Winter 3-28-2018

The Influence of the Heritage Language on the Cultural Integration of Second-Generation Hispanic Adolescents: A Phenomenological Study

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Camille Schuler

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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The Influence of the Heritage Language on the Cultural Integration of Second-Generation
Hispanic Adolescents: A Phenomenological Study

Camille Schuler

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Teacher Leadership

Barbara Weschke, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Maggie Broderick, Ph.D., Content Specialist

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Concordia University–Portland

2018

Abstract

This qualitative study explored the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of 10 second-generation Hispanic adolescents, ages 15–19. Data were collected using in-depth interviews that asked participants to share their experiences with their heritage language, and in what situations they found themselves feeling more Hispanic, more American, and more bicultural, when speaking their heritage language. Participants also shared the formal course of language study they chose, such as Spanish, Heritage Spanish, and AP Spanish Language, why they chose it, and how that choice influenced their perceptions of the heritage language and their cultural integration. Berry's (2005) Acculturation Theory was the conceptual framework used for the study. The factors influencing experiences with the heritage language and subsequent attitudes of cultural integration were as follows: changes to the participants' heritage fluency after starting English Language Learner programs and the range of parental responses to these changes; participants' opportunities to use their bilingual skills to help others in school and at work; host and heritage peer perspectives of the heritage language, and the development of their heritage fluency and literacy through their language course selection. Acculturative attitudes of marginalization and assimilation developed when experiences with the heritage language were perceived as negative, and attitudes of cultural integration, or biculturalism, developed when experiences with the heritage language were perceived as positive.

Keywords: heritage, language, acculturation, integration, English Language Learners, Heritage Spanish, AP Spanish

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the participants in this study who willingly shared their experiences with me, including the struggles they have had to endure and the challenges they have had to overcome. The time you spent with me, and the stories you told, have added a richness and depth to my own life experiences, and I am confident they will enhance the lives of others as well. Your words are the hallmark of this thesis. Therefore, it is my hope that yours will be the collective voice necessary to bring about greater opportunities for all second-generation Hispanic youth, seeking to live lives of meaning and purpose as they invest their minds, their hearts, and their souls into improving both their heritage and their host communities.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank my husband, Fritz Schuler, who has been my greatest support throughout this process. Your continual encouragement of my capabilities, and your willingness to sacrifice your own needs in order to accommodate mine, is a testimony to your unconditional love for me and the shared enthusiasm you have for my efforts and accomplishments. Moreover, your tireless commitment to excellence in every task you undertake has been my constant source of inspiration to do all things well, to the best of my ability, and to the glory of God, in whose image we are made.

To my children, Isabelle and Daniel, and my son-in-law, Nicholas: Watching how you love Christ, his church, your community of friends, and others, and how you creatively explore and develop your God-given gifts and talents, has been a constant source of joy for me and a reflection of my efforts in this thesis. Thank you for praying for me, for being my biggest fans, and for always telling me how much I inspire you. I hope that my academic pursuits, especially as I continue them this late in life, will encourage you to be lifelong learners and to see this as one way I have chosen to love God with all of my mind.

To my good friend, Dr. Michael Arthur: Thank you for blazing this trail for me and for your constant encouragement throughout the last four years. From the moment you first suggested I undertake this effort, you have been available to answer any and all questions, to constantly inspire me, and to offer support when I needed it most. We have come a long way from our days as Concordia Masters candidates, and I look forward to seeing how God will continue the good work he has begun in us.

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conscientious researcher, a clearer thinker, a more concise writer, and a better teacher. Thank you for believing in me and giving me a glimpse of my future as I pursue my passions.

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To my mother, Dr. Nancy Detjen: Your commitment to your own education – your doctorate, and your second Masters degree with a career change at 57 years old – has inspired me to keep my mind sharp, to love learning, and to use my education to help others. Thank you for not only telling me I could be and do whatever I dreamed, but for living it out.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The rise of the Hispanic population in the United States, prior to the year 2000, occurred primarily because of the increase of immigrants from Latin American countries, especially Mexico (Krogstad, 2016; Krogstad, Passel & Cohn, 2016). Although immigration began to decline after 2000, nevertheless, the Hispanic population in the U.S. continued to grow. This development is due, primarily, to the steady increase in children born to immigrant parents (Cohn, 2015; Krogstad & Lopez, 2014;). As a result of this burgeoning demographic, U.S. schools have been presented with ongoing and unique challenges as they try to meet the academic needs of these second-generation Hispanic youth who are growing up immersed in two cultures simultaneously.

Distinct from their first-generation, and often undocumented parents, these children are U.S. citizens, often referred to in education and health journals as second-generation Hispanic Americans. They are born in the United States, and at least one of their parents is foreign-born (Cohn, 2015; Kelleher, 2010; Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). This bicultural population has been credited with numerous benefits such as U.S. citizenship, bilingualism, and greater college potential than the youths who immigrated with their parents (Krogstad, Stepler & Lopez, 2015; Lilley, 2013). Born in America, these second-generation children begin their public schooling with access to an English-speaking education from their earliest years. Despite the impediments that may inhibit their parents' language acquisition, many of these children grow up to be more fluent and literate in English than Spanish (Skuzza, 2007; Young & Vrogistinos, 2010). Many become their parents' language brokers: liaisons between school and home (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2015). Some also are able to enjoy a higher standard of living than their parents: the result of better wages, job prospects, and the increasing need for bicultural, bilingual and biliterate employees (Cohn, 2015; Llopis, 2013; Krogstad, 2016; Lilley, 2013).

Although numerous factors still exist that impede their academic advantages and obstruct educational opportunities (Cohn, 2015; Lichter & Sanders, 2015; Webley, 2011), second-generation students are responding positively to the wide array of programs and courses school districts are implementing to further enhance their education (Arreguin, 2015; Borrero, 2011). These include programs such as middle and high schools that have partnered with universities to enhance summer and year-round academic enrichment for Hispanic youth, scholarship opportunities for Hispanic students interested in careers in education and medicine, and Heritage Spanish courses offered during high school to improve students' academic fluency and literacy in their heritage language (Kaufman, 2016; Redden 2006; Schhneider, Martinez & Ownes, 2006). This research study is designed specifically to investigate the latter: the ways in which experiences with the heritage language influence second-generation Hispanic American adolescents and their bicultural identity.

Background, Context, History and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Hispanic children born in the U.S. typically enter formal schooling without many of the advantages available to English-speaking students (Reeves & Joo, 2015; Skuza, 2007). Since 25% of all children born in the U.S. are Hispanic, they are often born into poverty and experience ongoing social disadvantages as well (Krogstad, 2016; Lichter & Sanders, 2015). This is true whether these children are born in metropolitan cities or rural communities. Growing up in public schools, these students frequently discover that many of the schools they attend are not equipped to compensate for some of the disparities they experience. For instance, most immigrant parents do not have the social capital to navigate the U.S. educational system (Roche et al., 2015; Schhneider et al, 2006). They likely do not understand which classes may be best for their child nor can they suggest one academic track over another that may improve their children's' secondary and post-secondary options. Because many of the parents themselves do not speak English, they cannot help

their children with homework or navigate school communication and correspondence (Schneider, et al., 2006; Skuza, 2007).

Despite their inaccessibility to the system, these parents, and their children, still have high academic hopes, even though they may never see their aspirations materialize (Cohn, 2015; Lilley, 2013). For most Hispanic high school students, this can be the case, especially for children whose parents never attended college (Parry, 2010). In fact, many of their parents have completed less than nine years of education, giving their children an additional disadvantage in academic language and literacy (Nunez, Cuccaro-Alamin, & Carroll, 1998; Schneider, et al., 2006; Seitz de Martinez, 2015). Not surprisingly then, Hispanic students remain among the least educated demographic in the U.S., falling six percent below blacks in post-secondary degrees (Krogstad & Stepler, et al., 2016; Lichter & Sanders, 2015; Young & Vrogistinos, 2010). With these statistics, Hispanic students need supports that can help them overcome the challenges inherent in their culture that they bring into the school and classroom.

One common conceptual framework used in research on heritage cultures living in and among a host culture is Berry's acculturation model (Berry, 1992, 2005, 2009; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Skuza 2007). Individuals from heritage cultures often find themselves holding on to cultural norms while simultaneously adapting to the cultural norms of the host culture; this process encompasses all areas of adjustment, including societal, educational, and linguistic (Kuo, 2014; Mejía, 2001, 2007). This process is called acculturation (Berry, 2005, 2009; Davis & Engel, 2011). By examining and understanding the influences on acculturation experiences, researchers can offer insight into supports for Hispanic students so they might attain higher levels of achievement in school and society and have more opportunities to adopt acculturation attitudes of integration: the sense of belonging to both heritage and host culture equally. This study used Berry's (2005) model to investigate the influences of language on the acculturation of second-

generation Hispanic adolescents, more specifically, how experiences with their heritage language influenced the ways in which they integrated into both of their cultures.

Statement of the Problem

Although much of the overall data do not subdivide Hispanic groups, research revealed that Mexican Americans, who make up the largest subgroup of Hispanics, have the lowest rates of educational success (Benner, 2011; Cohn, 2015). This disparity in performance contributes to what has been called the achievement gap, among which Hispanic youth make up a significant percentage (Calero, Dalley, Fernandez, Davenport-Dalley, Morote, & Tatum, 2014; Webley 2011). Like most Hispanics, these second-generation students possess qualities unique to their culture, such as the value they place on family, teacher support, and community identity (Cohn, 2015; Nell, 2010; Parry, 2010; Snyder-Hogan, 2010). Furthermore, like all youth in general, these students typically find themselves in peer groups, which can influence the trajectory of their social and academic choices.

These choices can affect their futures, positively or negatively, including social and academic performance during school, graduation from high school, post-secondary education and options, and their bicultural identity (Benner, 2011; Sallee & Tierney, 2007). Hispanic adolescents, in particular, are also susceptible to the influences of their peers as they struggle to find acceptance within the normative academic aspirations of high school (Benner, 2011; Patten, 2016). Overall, these students experience the combination of family pressure, whether through lack of support or unfamiliarity with the system, the need to navigate the nuances of academic life on their own, and the powerful impact of peers from both cultures, all influencing the way students self-identify (Ahani, 2016; Kapke, 2015; Kuo, 2014).

While this range of influences affects the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, the level of command they require of their heritage and host languages presents

distinctive challenges to these adolescents as they need both in order to flourish in the two worlds they occupy (Roche, et al., 2015; Schhneider, et al., 2006; Shiu, Kettler & Johnsen, 2009). The ability to use their dual language fluency, literacy and cultural capital can lead to cultural integration. This latter term is frequently noted as the ability of individuals in a heritage culture to adapt to and adopt qualities and characteristics of a host culture without giving up the qualities and characteristics of their own culture. (Berry, 2005; Kuo, 2014; Mejía, 2007; Skuza, 2007).

Cultural integration of this sort may happen naturally, but often occurs through the availability of support systems offered in communities, governments, and schools to advance and enhance the ideology and the practice of biculturalism, bilingualism, and biliteracy (McDaniel, 2013). In acculturation theory, obstacles to cultural integration may include cultural assimilation or separation, the shedding of, and distancing oneself from, the heritage culture, respectively (Berry, 2005). A fourth option, cultural marginalization, is the rejection of both cultures. These four acculturative attitudes of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, can share the same influences: family, peers, school, and language, all leading to ways in which students may self-identify. (Berry, 2005; Redden, 2006; Skuza, 2007). When these influences emerge, unique to second-generation Hispanic and American identities, acculturation attitudes and behaviors begin to materialize. Naturally, as these students develop acculturative strategies while navigating between and among their heritage and host culture, they also develop opinions and make choices grounded in self-perception, which, in turn, influence how they acculturatively identify. In light of the four components of acculturation, and the many influences on acculturative attitudes and behaviors, this proposed study focused primarily on second-generation Hispanic adolescents' experiences with their Spanish heritage language and the influence of these experiences on the participants' cultural integration

Purpose of the Proposed Study

An exploration of the relationship between the heritage language and the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents might provide a deeper understanding of what these students need in order to gain a stronger sense of bicultural identity. When individuals from one culture encounter and then settle in another culture, they begin the process of acculturation (Berry, 2005; 2009; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Skuza 2007). During this time, they are often consciously or subconsciously investigating the aspects of how their own heritage culture fits in with the host culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006; Chirkov, 2009). The purpose of this study was to give a voice to the participants as they described the details of the ways in which experiences with their heritage language influenced cultural integration, including their nuanced experiences of whether or not they chose to pursue a formal study of their language, and how they saw that choice influencing their perspective on being bicultural (Medina, Guzmán, & Wong-Radcliffe, 2015; Pandey, 2014). Data from studies on acculturation verified that those who see themselves as bicultural, equally and fully heritage and host – or in this case culturally integrated – experience a healthier perspective of self and surroundings (Berry, 2005, 2009; Kuo, 2014; Mejía, 2006; Skuza, 2007). Other acculturation strategies in Berry's (2005) model include assimilation, separation, and marginalization; however, the intent of this study focused primarily on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents and their experiences with their heritage language as a means of integration. The study's objective included further insights into the acculturative phenomenon present in the relationship between heritage language and cultural integration, including the choice of whether or not students chose to pursue a formal study of their language. The results of this phenomenon can offer educators and administrators a greater awareness of ways to improve these students' integration into school and society through educational practices, programs and policies.

Research Questions

Since it is not known if the heritage language, including the choice of whether or not to pursue a formal study of the language, influences the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, this study was primarily concerned with the following research questions:

RQ1. In what ways do second-generation Hispanic adolescents feel that their experiences with their heritage language influence their cultural integration?

RQ2. In what ways do parents and peers influence Hispanic adolescents' perspective of their heritage language and cultural integration?

RQ3. In what ways does the school, and its heritage language course offerings, influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

Using a phenomenological approach, I conducted interviews allowing second-generation Hispanic students to share their lived experiences regarding their heritage language and its influence on their perspective and understanding of cultural integration. Included in the interviews was an investigation of possible influences on participants' experiences with their heritage language and cultural integration including parents, peers, and the school's heritage language course offerings.

For this study Giorgi's (1985, 2009) descriptive phenomenological method was employed as a means of exploring the extent of the research questions. Giorgi's main premise is the bracketing of researchers' assumptions to ensure that all efforts are made to keep the participants' interviews authentically theirs so the emerging phenomena can be objectively assessed. Because Giorgi did not believe it was appropriate to conduct additional clarifying interviews, students participating in this research were interviewed once. Giorgi posited that the posturing attitude of the phenomenological researcher provides results that "reflect a careful description of precisely the features of the experienced phenomenon as they present themselves to the consciousness of the

researcher" (Giorgi, 2009, pp. 130–131). Overall, the objective of this phenomenological research was to give voice to second-generation Hispanic youth and validate the patterns that emerged from their experiences with their heritage language.

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Proposed Study

Since 1980, Hispanic students have continued to make academic gains and experience educational successes (Calero, et al., 2013; Tienda, 2006). Second-generation Hispanic youth are more likely to be successful, go to college, and earn higher wages than their parents (Cohn, 2015). When comparing starting points, these children tend to improve more than children from other ethnicities (Llopis, 2013; Krogstad, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). Despite the gains made during childhood, the overall percentage of success still remains low. While second-generation Hispanics earn a median income higher than first-generation Hispanics, they still earn less than second-generation Blacks and Asians (Reeves & Joo, 2015). The same is true with educational attainment, college completion, and the percentage of those in professional and managerial careers (Reeves & Joo, 2015).

While research relating to the academic and professional gains and achievements of second-generation Hispanics is hopeful, and while second-generation Hispanic youth continue to make significant strides in education, persistence in closing the wide achievement gap that still exists remains an uphill battle. With the enrollment of second-generation Hispanic children steadily increasing in public schools throughout the country, research on how to understand their acculturation experiences can provide insight for administrators, educators, and policy makers on how to best educate and serve this growing demographic, making them better prepared and well-suited for the best post-secondary opportunities available to them.

Definition of Terms

First-generation. This term is defined as anyone born outside of the United States who has immigrated into the country and resides as a legal citizen, permanent resident, or undocumented citizen. (Cohn, 2015; Krogstad, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2015;). The term is also used interchangeably with “immigrant” and “foreign-born.”

Second-generation. This term is defined as anyone born in the United States to at least one first-generation immigrant parent (Cohn, 2015; Llopis, 2013; Krogstad, 2016; Mejía, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2015).

Hispanic American. This term is defined as individuals born in the United States to at least one parent of Hispanic descent.

Hispanic adolescent. This term is defined as any Hispanic who is under the age of 18. The term is used with *second-generation Hispanic youth*. *Youth* and *students* were used interchangeably with *adolescent*. When necessary for distinction, the prefix first-generation or second-generation preceded the term.

Heritage student. This term is defined as an individual who is proficient in, or who is culturally connected, to a heritage language (Kapke, 2015; Kelleher, 2010). It is an unhyphenated common noun used interchangeably with *heritage speaker*, *Heritage Language Learner*, and *Spanish Heritage student*. The term can also be defined as a student, raised in a non-English speaking home, who either speaks the language, understands the language, or who is to any degree bilingual in the heritage language (Kelleher, 2010; Krogstad, 2016; Valdés, 2000a, 2000b,). For this study, the term added the designation of second-generation, born in this country to at least one immigrant parent. Individuals can still be designated as heritage *students* if they speak little to no Spanish. They would not be considered heritage *speakers*, however, since they do not speak the language (Kagan, 2017; Kelleher, 2010; Mejía, 2001, 2007).

Heritage Spanish. This term is defined as a course offering in educational institutes where Spanish is spoken fluently to bilingual heritage speakers. Taught in middle school, high school and college, Heritage Spanish often has prerequisites which are a high level of heritage fluency and basic Spanish literacy skills (Beaudrie, 2011; Potowski & Carreira 2010; Zamora, 2013). First year curriculum helps students develop literacy skills in reading and writing and make some improvements to fluency depending on the level of the student when entering the class (Beaudrie, 2011; Fishman, 2001; Valdés, 2000a, 2001). Second year curriculum, where available, further develops the literacy skills from low intermediate to high intermediate. In some schools, the second year of Heritage Spanish prepares students for the demands of AP Spanish Language and Culture, and for some schools the second year of Heritage Spanish is the AP Spanish Language course (Beaudrie, 2011). The single capitalized term Heritage may substitute for the term Heritage Spanish. (Beaudrie, 2011; Potowski & Carreira; Zamora, 2013).

Spanish. This term is defined as a foreign language course, or a Spanish acquisition course. Enrollment typically includes any student who wants to learn Spanish, including heritage students who may not speak Spanish fluently and who may not know how to read and write in their heritage language.

Native speaker. This term is defined as an individual born in his or her country of origin who learned Spanish there. Native speakers may have little to no accent when speaking their heritage language depending on their age when immigrating (Grosjean, 2013).

Heritage speaker. This term is defined as an individual born in the United States who speaks Spanish and learned it at home while growing up in the U.S.

Biculturalism. This term is defined as a cultural proficiency in both the heritage and host cultures (Ahani, 2016). While Krogstad and Gonzalez-Barrera (2015) suggested that Hispanic children born in the United States to first-generation immigrants are most likely to be bilingual,

this does not assume these second-generation Hispanic youth have acquired a facility with both cultures (Ahani, 2016; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009).

Cultural integration. This term is defined as attitudes, behaviors, or strategies that individuals demonstrate to identify themselves with both their heritage and host cultures. Easily adapting to both, feeling comfortable with both, and having a command of both languages, they feel that they can live successfully in both cultures (Berry, 2005; Mayhew, 2013; Mrak, 2011). The term is synonymous with *biculturalism* and designated in Berry's (2005) studies as simply *integration*. In this study, integration was used interchangeably with cultural integration, the latter term emphasizing that integration includes a facility with both cultures (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014).

Biliteracy. This term is defined as a student's proficiency in the academic reading and writing of two languages (Carlisle, 2015; Mitchell, 2015).

Hispanic. This term is defined as an individual who identifies with any of the three largest groupings of Latino-Americans, which are Mexican-Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans and Cuban Americans (Cabassa, 2003; Calero, Dalley, Fernandez, Davenport-Dalley, Morote & Tatum, 2014; Price, 2010;). All of the participants in this study were Mexican-Americans, but in this study were referred to either as Hispanics, Hispanic adolescents, heritage students, or heritage speakers.

Latino/a. This term is defined as an individual whose origins are from countries including Spanish-speaking countries of Latin and South America including the three largest groupings mentioned above (Johnson, 2000; Price, 2010). In this study, both terms are used depending on the context.

Code switching. This term is defined as the English words a Spanish speaker will insert intentionally or unintentionally into a sentence when speaking Spanish (Price, 2010).

Code mixing. This term is defined as the merging of two words from each language to create a new word found in neither of the language's lexicons. The more common term for this is *Spanglish*. Both code switching and code mixing are practices that have become common for heritage speakers when they are speaking to their heritage peers (Price, 2010; Stavans, 2003).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

The assumptions underlying this study included the belief that research participants will share authentic acculturation experiences with their heritage language openly and honestly without embellishment. This includes believing that the participants will be describing their experiences as they are not as the participants hope they could be (Giorgi, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). An additional assumption was that the participants would be willing contributors to the research.

Participant parameters were used as delimitations to this study (Maxwell, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The research participants were among those students born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent from a Latin American country and who have lived in the U.S. all of their lives. This eliminates the additional complexities faced by first-generation immigrant children.

Selecting 10 participants, ages 15-19, provided another delimitation. Younger participants were still becoming familiar with high school and may not have had as much experience developing their heritage language while older participants had more years to develop their bilingual and biliteracy skills. Nevertheless, all participants were able to provide the self-reflection necessary to make this study on acculturation valid and valuable. Even the younger participants had begun to think about their futures and some had already made plans to that end. The purpose of the study was to seek to understand and improve Hispanic adolescent identity, and with the age group of the study, the sharing was rich enough to accomplish the study's purpose and provide credible information for administrators whose goal is the same.

Limitations included the smaller number of participants from only one high school that might not have been representative of a larger population among a school district, community, or state. Other limitations included my interviews of students who knew me or had heard of me. While the students I interviewed were fluent in English, I gave them the option of having their parents at the interviews, even if their parents were not fluent, since I wanted to give students a chance to have a support person present if they needed one (Llopis, 2013; Fishman, 2001; Mrak, 2011; Roche, et al., 2015). Had the participant preferred, a Latino outreach coordinator was ready to be available to help with clarification of obscure English words or concepts if that had been necessary. Students chose to be interviewed in English without parents or an interpreter.

The political climate presented another unique limitation that might have influenced the participants' answers. A study such as this might have had a different outcome had it been conducted before the heightened fears and prejudices that arose from the 2016 election (Bernal, 2017). Moreover, the potential deportation of some students' parents might have influenced their perspective of their heritage language and cultural integration (Bernal, 2017; Guadalupe, 2016). Aside from brief references to changes over the last couple of years, no direct references were made that seemed to influence the outcome of the interviews.

Finally, as an advocate for increasing academic opportunities and courses offered in high school to second-generation students, I have had a desire to support and encourage all members of this community of students. Having established supportive academic pathways for Heritage Spanish students to become academically biliterate, bilingual, and bicultural, I needed to limit myself through bracketing out my assumptions, biases and expectations in order to present interview interpretations, and data outcome, true to the participants' explicit words (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009). All of these limitations were addressed; I remained aware of their existence and desired to present as authentic a study as possible.

Summary

The current rise in Hispanic enrollment is due primarily to an increase in U.S. born children to immigrant parents (Krogstad & Lopez, 2014). This trend requires schools and districts to consider how their curriculum and courses are assisting this demographic of students to be successful in the classroom and beyond high school. Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. The research also included questions about students' choices of whether or not they had pursued any formal study of their heritage language and how that choice influenced their cultural integration as well. Since high school curriculum can be based on how best to serve particular demographics of students, any study on the relationship between course outcomes and integration would be able to help schools identify where and how to use their resources.

The study used Berry's acculturation theory as a conceptual framework (Berry, 2005, 2009), focusing on the strategy of cultural integration. Through individual interviews, the research design examined the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, ages 15-19, born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent, and how their experiences with the heritage language influenced their cultural integration. Participants were selected among students who designated themselves as ethnically Hispanic. Counselors and Heritage Spanish teachers who knew that students were second-generation also helped in the process of suggesting names for the 10 participants.

Overall, the research of Hispanic adolescents does not often distinguish between immigrants and American-born Hispanics (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). Participants may collectively include immigrants and third-generation Hispanics together with second-generation individuals (Friesen, 2015; Mejía, 2001, 2007, Skuza, 2007). Studies also may investigate

acculturation among immigrants only, especially those conducted in the area of mental health (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007). In addition, investigations on acculturation often look at all of the acculturative attitudes and behaviors in a single study: integration, assimilation, marginalization and separation (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Kuo, 2014; Skuza, 2007). Finally, research includes the influences on acculturation that range from familial to social aspects with few including a focus on the influence of the heritage language (Mejía, 2001, 2007; Pandey, 2014, Schwartz & Unger, 2017). As a result, this phenomenological study presented a unique opportunity to interview 10 second-generation Hispanic adolescents about their experiences with their heritage language, including how experiences with their heritage language were influenced by the combination of parents, peers, and course offerings in their language, and then subsequently how those experiences culminated to influence their cultural integration.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

During the last two decades of the 20th century, Hispanics were the fastest growing ethnicity in America (Krogstad, 2016). The years between 2000-2014, however, saw decreasing trends in the percentage of Hispanic immigrants, causing their level of immigration to slow down and stabilize (Krogstad, 2016). Ironically, the Hispanic population in America continued to rise at the same time the immigration numbers were decreasing (Stepler and Lopez, 2016). While it may seem that the increased numbers of Hispanics still come from immigration, the rising percentage of this ethnic group is now due more to the percentage of children born to immigrants (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera 2015; Stepler and Lopez, 2016). Altogether, the combination of rapid rates of immigration during the late 1900s, lower but still steady rates of growth in the early 2000s, and the increasing birth rates of children currently born to Hispanic immigrants that have settled in this country, has put the Latino population at 57,000,000, about 18% of the United States population (Krogstad, 2016).

Of these factors, the increase of Hispanic births has caused a shift in the particular Hispanic demographic. These children grow up speaking Spanish in the home, typically because their immigrant parents only speak their heritage language (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, et al., 2015). When the children begin their public schooling, they start to acquire the host language through time spent in the classroom, interactions with host peers, and more formally, through programs for English Language Learners (ELL). During this course, children are taught English language and literacy skills to help them achieve success in the classroom (Stepler and Lopez, 2016). Once they have become proficient, they exit the program. In the case of the participants in this study, that took anywhere from two to six years. As a result of exposure to both their heritage and host language, children become fluent in both, resulting in bilingualism. Moreover, and most often at school, Hispanic youth learn and absorb the nuances of the host culture. They begin to adapt to and

assume the host culture's qualities, attitudes, practices, and characteristics in varying degrees (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015; Manning, 2004). Their ability to navigate the dominant culture adds to their bilingual abilities, allowing them to develop a bicultural competence as well.

As an advantage, growing up bilingual allows these youth to have the skills and abilities to participate in school alongside English-speaking peers and under the tutelage of English-speaking teachers (Kapke, 2015). Standard American class settings help them learn the formalized language of the host culture, unlike the informal heritage language they may hear, learn, and speak at home (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). Many even take heritage language classes at school, called Heritage Spanish, to further academic literacy in their heritage language, making them biliterate as well as bilingual (Manning, 2004; Saxton, 2015).

In addition, these students become language brokers between their school and their families (Roche, et al., 2015). Children interpret and translate for their parents' school correspondence, class schedules, website information and other forms of written and verbal communication (Roche, et al., 2015). Growing up bicultural and bilingual, they experience the advantages of understanding and negotiating the nuances of both heritage and host culture, becoming proficient in both (Schwartz, & Unger, 2010; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008). Moreover, another added advantage to being bilingual and bicultural is derived from the studies and statistics that applaud the acquisition of a second language and its culture, claiming that it increases intelligence and opportunity (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Muñoz, 2014). These are many of the advantages that exist for bilingual and bicultural students.

While most would consider being bilingual and bicultural advantageous for these Hispanic youth, these abilities have their drawbacks. Consequently, the bilingualism and biculturalism of these youth have come through the channels of being born to Hispanic immigrants. Their heritage adds a stigma to what would otherwise be considered a strength (Ahani, 2016; Schhneider, et al.,

2006). The disadvantages for these youth include the initial struggles young children face when learning a new language at school since they do not have the language support at home. This lack of support becomes more prominent if schools are not able to compensate for these disparities (Sanchez, 2016; Schhneider, et al., 2006).

For Hispanic youth, these disparities may hinder learning at school because there is no one at home who can read to them in English or review their homework (Rafieyan, Orang, Bijami, Nejad & Eng, 2013; Roche, et al., 2015). Unlike a native English speaker who is learning Spanish as an elective, native and Heritage Spanish speakers must learn English to function in all classes. The disadvantages extend to gifted Latino youth, students who are often “overlooked and underserved,” since their lack of English fluency hides their intelligence and intellectual capabilities (Sanchez, 2016). Possibly, the most significant disadvantage occurs when the dominant culture perpetuates a negative view of the non-dominant culture (Bernal, 2017; Berry, 2005). Although only one of the drawbacks, the prejudices of the dominant culture have the power to undermine the positive aspects of bilingual and bicultural competence experienced by these heritage youth (Berry, 2005; Sanchez, 2016). Altogether, Hispanic students who have the apparent advantages of being bilingual and bicultural may experience them as disadvantages, simultaneously helpful and harmful.

The subsequent attitudes and behaviors of Hispanic adolescents toward these perceptions, also considered the response of any two cultures that meet and must negotiate with each other in some way, is known as acculturation (Berry 2005, 2009; Berry, Poortinga, Brueggelman, Chasiotis & Sam, 2011; Skuza, 2007). When measured, acculturation experiences can reveal the perceptions of self and others among Spanish Heritage youth as they respond to overt and covert host culture perspectives, an important investigation considering the potential increase of this particular demographic (Krogstad, 2016; Melendez, 2015). Although cultural encounters and integration

have taken place throughout history, Redfield, Linton & Herskovits (1936) developed an acculturation outline strategizing and systemizing the process (Berry, 2005; Yu & Wang, 2011). This system, in its original presentation, suggested the idea of a unidimensional continuum assessing the degree to which individuals shed aspects of their own culture in order to adopt elements of the host culture. The idea of shedding one's heritage culture, on one end of the spectrum, or refusing to shed it, on the other end, posited that the more one assumed qualities of the host culture, the less they would possess of the heritage culture. The term unidimensional then indicates only one dimension exists by which to measure an individual's acculturation process (Berry, 1992, 2005; Mejía, 2001; Skuza, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2011).

Berry (1992, 2005) used this unidimensional concept as a starting point and developed four factors of acculturation that went beyond it, identifying what he called bidimensional acculturation. Unlike the former term, the latter references the multi-faceted nuances that arise when cultures meet, and the term also accommodates a category for individuals who can live comfortably in both cultures simultaneously without needing to give up one in order to gain the other; for Berry, this attitude is called integration (Berry, et al. 2006; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014).

Globally, the research on acculturation continues to gain popularity as more diverse cultures merge, whether through one people group entering the country of another such as historical imperialism, or immigrating to a country and settling in it, such as immigration (Berry, et al., 2006; Cohn, 2015). Uniquely, Spanish Heritage youth in the United States enter the acculturation equation through birth into the established culture. While numerous instruments have been developed to study the acculturation process quantitatively (Davis & Engel, 2011), advocates of qualitative studies have "called for more widespread use of qualitative methods to understand the process of acculturation from an interpretative paradigm" (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014, p. 1). As a result, this study seeks to offer a perspective of the acculturation experience of Spanish

Heritage students through a qualitative lens, focusing on Berry's (2005) integration stage of acculturation from a bidimensional perspective.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the acculturation experience of integration, namely the cultural integration, of Spanish Heritage students at a Pacific Northwestern high school and how they experienced their heritage language in relation to cultural integration. For the purposes of this study, cultural integration was defined as Berry (2005) defines integration; in its simplest terms, integration is the ability to live successfully in two cultures (Berry, 2005; Kuo, 2014; Skuza, 2007). Second-generation Hispanic adolescents were those born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent and whose home language was Spanish (Kelleher, 2010; Valdés, 2001). Furthermore, these students identified themselves as bilingual, speaking Spanish fluently as their primary language at home and English fluently as their primary language at school. For the purpose of this study, the participants had varying degrees of competency in their heritage language. Some were enrolled in a Spanish Heritage class to gain or further their academic literacy in Spanish; others were in a Spanish acquisition language class with native English speakers learning Spanish as a foreign language. Other participants chose not to pursue academic literacy in their heritage language and instead chose to study a language foreign to them. The common connection of the students was that they considered themselves bilingual, able to speak both languages fluently, and bicultural, integrating a variety of attributes into their lives that characterized both their heritage and host cultures. (Smokowski, Rose & Bacallao, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

The framework used for exploring the research questions in this study was taken from Berry's (2005) bidimensional, fourfold model of acculturation. As the "leading acculturation theorist for more than three decades" (Ward & Kus, 2010, p. 472), Berry defined acculturation, in its most current and contemporary form, as "the dual process of cultural and psychological change

that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p. 698). Building upon Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits’ (1936) seminal work in acculturation, Berry (2005) posited the idea that for the individual member of a group, acculturation becomes an ongoing progression of development through constant interaction among host and heritage groups, and the acculturative process includes the changes that take place for each of the groups, both collectively and individually (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Ward, 2012). In other words, when contact occurs between two groups, initially, and over time, acculturation theorists, such as Berry (1970, 2001), asserted that change happens not only in the non-dominant group but also in the dominant group as well. From the earliest studies forward, the study of acculturation has been focused on the response to both of these changes: the influence of the dominant, or host culture, on the heritage culture at large, and simultaneously, the heritage culture’s influence on the host’s culture. Additionally, acculturation includes the consequential influences of these greater cultures on the individuals within each (Berry, 2006; Chirkov, 2009; Friesen, 2015).

Historically, acculturation was a common occurrence with colonialism and imperialism, dominating the ways in which one culture enters, overtakes and settles into another (Berry, 1970, 2005; Berry, Phinney, et al., 2006). The other common pattern of acculturation happens when immigrants enter receiving countries (Berry, 2001; Chun, Balls-Organita & Marin, 2003; Kapke, 2015). In any culturally diverse society, dominant and non-dominant groups will experience ongoing encounters and naturally occurring responses, both negative and positive. While cross-cultural psychologists prefer to restrict each culture’s responses to their own era, along with demographic and geographical boundaries (Chirkov, 2009), enough similarities exist among many of the attitudes and behaviors immigrants adopt, along with those adopted by the national society, to conclude that all acculturating societies often share the same nature of the issues that arise

during acculturation (Berry, 2005).

Two types of acculturation emerged out of this arena of interest. The first is cultural acculturation, centering on cultural changes that identify how an entire group adjusts and alters its own customs, dynamics, economics and politics as it experiences first-hand contact with either culture (Berry, Phinney, et al., 2006; Mayhew, 2013). The second is psychological acculturation, referring to how the individual changes or acculturates, influenced by either the non-dominant or dominant culture, as well as the constantly changing culture with which the individual identifies and to which the individual connects (Berry, 2005; Kuo, 2014). The variation in which individuals participate in both cultures, along with the psychological dynamics that make up the differences between responses at any given time in the acculturation process, requires the two types to be separated and analyzed distinctly (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002; Kapke, 2015). Although this study will focus on the acculturation experiences of the individual within the non-dominant or heritage group, studies must be conducted with an understanding of the broader cultures in which the individuals experience contact (Berry, Phinney, et al., 2006).

Since the society of origin and the society of settlement have distinguishing characteristics and attitudes toward each other, understanding the view of immigration and pluralism from the settlement society's perspective impacts the observations made about the individuals in the origin society (Kapke, 2015). When cultural pluralism is welcomed, the support of diversity as a community response creates a positive ideology among the society of settlement and generates a proactive interaction between the two cultures (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry, Poortinga, et al. 2011). When cultural pluralism is viewed negatively with an underlying attitude to limit or eliminate diversity, policies will emerge to create segregation and marginalization among the societies of origin (Bernal, 2017; Berry, 2005; Chirkov, 2009). Even among societies of settlement where multiculturalism may be widely accepted, specific racial cultures may not experience being

welcomed or accepted (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2004). Consequently, in response to attitudinal resentment, groups and individuals in the society of origin experience verbal displays of hostility, rejection, and prejudice, aspects that project the potential for poor long-term adaptation (Berry & Kalin, 1995).

To explain the juxtaposing patterns that occur when host and heritage cultures meet, Berry (1970, 2009; Kuo, 2014) categorized four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, segregation and marginalization (Berry, 2005; Schwartz & Unger, 2018; Ward & Kus, 2012). Two overall categorical identifications are sometimes referenced as cultural maintenance and contact participation (Berry, 2001). Also called the “maintenance of heritage culture and identity,” and “relationships sought among groups,” respectively, these identifications are outlined in Fig. 2.1, showing the varied spectrums of acculturation for the individual and larger society (Berry, 2005, p. 705).

In assimilation, as shown in Fig. 2.1, the individual rejects, sheds or moves away from maintenance of the heritage culture and seeks relationships among the host culture, staying in the upper right quadrant. Here, the individual aligns only with the host culture. Assimilation can occur in situations where an individual may view the heritage culture as a hindrance to advancement in the host culture, when the stronger social influence of the host culture causes embarrassment about the heritage culture, or when the parents believe greater opportunities will be available for the children the more they shed the heritage culture and embrace the host (Kuo, 2014; Mejía, 2007; Schhneider, et al., 2006; Skuza, 2007).

As a contrast to assimilation, separation signifies the maintenance of the heritage culture and the relationship sought among the host culture is minimized (Mayhew, 2013). Assimilation and separation appear as opposites when viewed on a unidimensional continuum, but Berry’s model honors the complexities of both, realizing that an individual does not have to choose one

over the other. Creating two other categories of comparison, Berry observed attitudes of marginalization and integration occurring as opposites, the former when no interest is shown in either culture, and the latter when the individual lives successfully in both cultures (Berry, 2005; Schwartz & Unger, 2010). When viewed through a bidimensional lens, Berry allowed for those same nuances as assimilation and separation, making acculturation behaviors multi-faceted rather than measured along a continuum. Ideally, in regard to the overall effect on the individual psychologically, integration is the condition that most lowers stress levels, improves attitudes and provides psychological outcomes that secure a stronger sense of identity and sociocultural outcomes that encourage the same (Mayhew, 2013; Schwartz & Unger, 2010; Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007).

The Acculturation Model, created by Berry (2005) and depicted in Table 1, shows that integration occurs when the individual feels a positive connection to the heritage culture and host culture simultaneously. Assimilation occurs when the individual feels a strong connection to the host culture but not to the heritage. By contrast, individuals who adopt attitudes of separation feel closely connected to the heritage culture but not the host. Finally, marginalization occurs when the individual does not feel connected to either culture. (Berry, 2005).

Table 1

Acculturation Model

Host Culture Identity	Heritage Culture Identity	
	High	Low
Positive	Integration	Assimilation
Negative	Separation	Marginalization

Berry's (2005) acculturation theory is frequently referenced as the framework for acculturative research (Berry et al. 2011; Kapke, 2015; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Mayhew,

2013; Mejía, 2001; Skuza, 2007). Therefore, this study was grounded in the theoretical framework of Berry's (2005) acculturation model. Hispanic youth offer a significant insight into how their self-perception shapes their perceived place in the arena of both their heritage and host cultures. Consequently, student interviews were conducted to produce or "inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings" (Creswell, 2003, p. 9) as acculturative behaviors and attitudes emerged from those interviews. Ultimately, the objective of this study was to consider the acculturative attitude of integration among second-generation Hispanic adolescents and their integration experiences in relationship to their heritage language, and to observe recognizable patterns of meaning as they became apparent. From these patterns, it was determined second-generation Hispanic adolescents' experiences with their heritage language did influence their attitudes toward and away from cultural integration, and further study should be conducted in order to offer these youth ongoing assistance in the acculturation process of integration.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

Acculturation, heritage language, and second-generation Hispanic adolescents. As second-generation Hispanic adolescents navigate their way through acculturative change, qualitative research based on phenomenology can explore and explain how these youth experience the relationship between their heritage language and cultural integration (Berry, 2005, 2009; Mejía, 2001; Pandey, 2014). Born into the country of their host culture and the family of their heritage culture, Hispanic youth often demonstrate proficiency in English reading, writing and speaking in school, and are often fluent in Spanish, their primary language at home (Kelleher, 2010; Lilley, 2013). With these common characteristics, the participants in this research provided insight into their integration experiences as they were given an opportunity to express their voices and perspectives, experientially living out the integration component of the acculturation process as bicultural and bilingual (Berry, Poortinga, et al, 2011; Borrero, 2011).

Acculturation studies, such as this one, provide lenses through which to examine the psychological and cultural effects taking place when two cultures meet (Berry 2005). In the case of Hispanic adolescents, these studies play an important role. Acculturation can be explored as a result of one culture immigrating to another (Roche, et al., 2015). It can also be studied by looking at what happens to the next generation of those who have immigrated and settled into the host culture, in other words, the children born into those families. Their acculturation patterns are unique, since many times their parents have negotiated the host culture and assumed some of the cultural traits (Smokowski, Rose et al., 2008). Although this may seem to be an advantage to the acculturation process, moving closer toward the psychological stability of integration (Berry et al. 2011), individuals within the heritage culture will have unique acculturation experiences depending on their perception of the world and the way they see themselves operating within that world (Cherkov, 2009).

For Hispanic adolescents, one of the complex components of their self-perception is the double-edged sword of their bilingual skills. Commonly, individuals who desire to learn a second language, and study the language enough to become fluent in it, are seen as “smart” and “competent,” and these designations typically make an individual gain a certain amount of self-assurance (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Merritt, 2013; Muñoz, 2014). For bilingual Hispanic adolescents, rather than seeing themselves as smart and competent, many lack confidence or self-esteem from possessing the very skills and abilities that should make them feel otherwise (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kuo, 2014; Sanchez, 2016). This perspective contributes to their acculturation attitude and can cause these adolescents to move away from integration (Berry, Phinney, et al., 2006). When heritage individuals become aware of public negative outlook on their culture, they may be drawn to assimilate into the dominant culture, wanting to reject their home culture and retain only the host culture (Berry, 2005). The opposite may also be true; they may separate themselves from the

host culture, due to certain psychological barriers (Manning, 2004). Therefore, although heritage youth may be fluent in both their heritage and the host language, they are not, by default, considered integrated, (Berry, et al, 2006; Kapke, 2015; Manning, 2004).

Consequently, the goal of this study was to examine the acculturation attitudes and behaviors second-generation Hispanic adolescents developed due to their lived experiences in relation to their heritage language. From the results of this study and the voices of these students, the information was then assessed for commonalities, themes, patterns and phenomena that addressed the “universal essence . . . incorporating ‘what’ they have experienced and ‘how’ they experienced it” (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). The phenomena that emerged through the voices of the students led to an interpretation that uniquely valued and validated the lived acculturation experiences of these Spanish Heritage youth.

The purpose of conducting this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the relationship between the heritage language and the cultural integration experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. The participants in this research were between the ages of 15-19, born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent, and spoke Spanish fluently in the home and English fluently at school. Some were enrolled in Heritage Spanish classes in order to gain a greater proficiency of academic literacy in their heritage language, some in Spanish, and others chose not to pursue any further academic proficiency in their heritage language, instead choosing to study a language foreign to them. Only through the interviews and data interpretations and analysis did patterns and themes emerge regarding how these students acculturated based on their experiences with their heritage language.

Cultural integration. In general terms, an individual who is bicultural presents a level of adeptness and aptitude for one’s own heritage culture as well as the host culture in which the individual lives (Schwartz & Unger, 2010). Students may be culturally integrated for a variety of

reasons. Individuals may have the ability to speak both heritage and host languages; they may have friends from both cultures and watch television or read in both languages (Cabassa, 2003; Schwartz & Unger, 2010). The research available suggests that culturally integrated individuals have the most constructive and healthiest psychosocial attitudes, behaviors and strategies, most particularly among adolescent immigrants (Coatsworth, Maldonado-Molina, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2005; David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009). Therefore, these bicultural individuals tend to display a higher self-esteem, attitudes that show better adjustment to both cultures, lower significance of depression, and improved prosocial behaviors (Chen, Benet-Martinez, & Bond, 2008; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010; Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Jarvis, 2007).

Ideally, some researchers believe that the melding of heritage and host culture into a personalized mix of the two shows the truest form of biculturalism, where the individual picks and chooses appealing aspects from each culture and synthesizes them to the extent that the blend cannot be identified as one or the other but as a new creation of the two; this, however, is called syncretism (Olague, 2003; Price, 2010). Spanglish is an example of syncretism, also called code-mixing: words from two languages that have been merged to form a new word that was not a part of either culture or language (Olague, 2003).

For the purposes of this study, the idea of syncretism is only partially consistent with Berry's (2005) acculturative concept of integration, the conceptual framework for this study. He deemed integration as the way in which an individual occupies both cultures, living comfortably according to each of the cultures' own written or unwritten attitudes, norms and mores and even adopting values from each culture the individual considers important (Berry, 2005; Kapke, 2015; Skuza, 2007;). The individual is able to resolve and integrate opposing and conflicting norms,

customs, or values from each culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009).

For this study, cultural integration was assigned as the broader definition of an individual's ability to possess a dexterity of movement between cultures shown at the very least by linguistic fluency, familiarity with and enjoyment of such things as heritage and host culture food, television, movies, literature, interests and music, while also having friends from both cultures, being willing to date someone outside the individual's culture and holding values from, and distinctive to, each culture (Dixon, 2008; Kapke, 2015; Kuo, 2014).

The heritage language, bilingualism, and biliteracy. Among second-generation Hispanic adolescents, a spectrum of linguistic fluency exists in the heritage language (Fishman, 2001; Mejía, 2001; Sanchez, 2016; Webley, 2013). Most Hispanic adolescents are bilingual, fluent in both their heritage and host languages, learning the former in the home from at least one immigrant parent and the latter in school. The degree of difference in heritage language abilities range from those who speak enough informal Spanish to communicate with their families to those who are biliterate, possessing the ability to read, write, and speak, formally and academically (Abdul-alim, 2014; Borg, Combs, Onwuegbuzie & Bustamante, 2011; Shiu, et al., 2009). Students who are bilingual have advantages such as being a liaison between their families and schools and finding jobs that require bilingual skills (Roche, et al., 2015). Students who are biliterate have significantly greater advantages (Pandey, 2014; Shiu, et al., 2006;). These include advantages such as easier access to honors and Advanced Placement courses in high school, a better preparedness for college and post-secondary options, and more career opportunities where employers may need translators and interpreters for analyzing and explaining formal documents or communicating complex legal language (Abdul-alim, 2014; Jara, 2013; Roche, et al., 2015; Schhneider, et al., 2006; Schwartz & Unger, 2010). Regardless of where Hispanic adolescents' linguistic skills fall on the spectrum of

bilingualism or biliteracy, they all have experiences with their heritage language (Fishman, 2001; Saxton, 2015). While these experiences can be one of many components constituting cultural integration, they were the singular area of focus for the purpose of this study in examining the influence of the heritage language on cultural integration.

Review of Methodological Issues

Quantitative studies and acculturation. A variety of acculturation measures have been developed for specific groups of ethnicities, many of which have been designed for quantitative research (Davis & Engel, 2011; Schwartz & Unger, 2017). At times, the creation of some of these measures occurred predominantly as a response to clinicians who needed a more accurate assessment of the ethnic patients they were treating (Berry, 2001; Dixon, 2008; Kapke, 2015). As a result, the myriad assessments of acculturation gave rise to numerous ways in which to understand where on the acculturation scale a particular individual, or group, tested. Acculturation measures, designed to test those in the non-dominant culture, have been adapted at times for those interested in assessing the views of those in the dominant culture (Dixon, 2008). This addresses Berry's (2005) assertion that as two cultures meet, both change in some way. Measuring the changes quantitatively, through the form of extensive questionnaires, researchers provided valuable information in helping to recognize behavioral issues taking place in both the guest and host cultures. Clinically speaking, these measures determine acculturative patterns, stress, and perspectives, and the results have shown a direct connection to the mental health of non-dominant ethnicities (Castillo, Lopez-Arenas & Saldivar, 2010; Dixon, 2008; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010). These measures have also become relevant for determining the acculturation patterns for Spanish Heritage youth (Davis & Engel, 2011, Friesen, 2015).

Accordingly, the bidimensional, quantitative assessments provided insight into cultural domains and the four quadrants of Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, Phinney, et al., 2006;

Rafieyan, 2013). Many of these questionnaires included questions about both heritage and host cultures, allowing for two independent cultural scores. The acculturation measures, also called scales, gave ample opportunity for the health and education industry to assess Hispanic acculturation patterns and scores quantitatively, although fewer scales had been used to explore the relationship between acculturation and education (Kapke, 2015; Lopez, Ehly, & Garcia-Vasquez, 2002; Schwartz & Unger 2010). Moreover, the realm of education has used unidimensional scales more frequently, limiting questions to a linear determination or two acculturative patterns, typically assimilation and separation (Kim, 2013). With the increase of U.S. born children to Latino immigrants, bidimensional questionnaires appeared to be more relevant in quantitatively determining acculturation patterns on a larger scale (Kim, 2013, Kuo, 2014).

Qualitative studies and acculturation. Although predominant as a measure of acculturation, quantitative scales tend to suggest a possible disconnect from human experience (Skruza, 2007). For this reason, qualitative approaches to acculturation have the ability give a human voice to the acculturation experience (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Skruza 2007). Qualitative studies, particularly phenomenological approaches, allow researchers to “describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon,” distilling the individual and shared experiences to a common essence (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Even though qualitative studies capture the subjects’ experiences of acculturation, more qualitative research is necessary exploring individuals’ experiences as they engage with the process of acculturative change (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014)

Unlike the predominant positivist emphasis, the focus of which identifies and determines the universal laws that govern the acculturation process through quantitative measures (Howitt, 2010), the interpretivist approach seeks to understand the humanistic underpinnings of acculturation (Berry, 2009). In the field of health research and psychology, qualitative researchers

have presented an increase of studies in which the exploration of experience provides a closer look into the lives of immigrant adolescents (Chirkov, 2009). In an extensive study conducted by qualitative research methodologies, Kennedy and MacNeela (2014) gathered and assessed 11 key acculturative studies on immigrant adolescents from the ages of 10-20. They qualified the studies based on publication in peer-reviewed journals in the English language and excluded opinion papers and literature reviews. They analyzed the rigor of the studies, the transparency of the methodologies and the accuracy of how the data were collected and analyzed. They also used several frameworks to examine differing approaches to the variety of qualitative research methods used (Kennedy and MacNeela, 2014).

Of the 11 studies, four examined the acculturation experiences of Asian immigrant adolescents who had settled in New Zealand, Canada, and southeastern and northeastern parts of the United States. One study examined Somalian immigrant adolescents in Boston and cities in Maine and another studied Ethiopians in Israel. Finally, Kennedy and MacNeela (2014) included five studies on immigrant adolescents to various parts of the United States from Mexico (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Mendez, Bauman, Guillory, 2012; Skuza; 2007; Williams, Alvarez, & Hauck, 2002). The studies were conducted between 2002-2012 and each used a different aspect of qualitative research including Grounded Theory, Content Analysis, Interpretive Methodology, Phenomenology, Cross-Case Synthesis, and Multiple-Case Narrative Research. In order to best synthesize the 11 research studies, the researchers employed a meta-ethnographic design, stating “meta-ethnography offers a systematic approach to synthesizing findings from different empirical studies” (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young, & Sutton, 2005; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014, p. 128;). Overall, the total participants included 141 adolescents: 54% female, 42% male and 4% unknown. All research conducted focused on the lived experiences of the acculturating immigrant youth.

From the studies, four main themes emerged. First, the primary features of the studies included the acculturation process as it applied to family, school and peers and the ways in which each changed as a result of their immigration. The adolescents all seemed to make sense of their experiences by referencing past experiences to interpret present ones (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). The first theme common to all participants was the change of the family context and the adolescents' roles within the family. Second were school experiences and conflicting perceptions and feelings of exclusion (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Mendez, et al., 2012; Skuza; 2007; Williams, et al., 2002). Next were the distances created between the immigrant adolescents and the host-culture peers with questions arising about how to negotiate group boundaries and accumulate social and cultural capital; oftentimes these barriers were created as well by the dominant culture's perspective in the school (Berry, et al., 2006). The fourth, and final, theme was the position the adolescents took in identifying themselves in terms of their past. The key to the meta-ethnographic synthesis of these studies was the common conceptual framework (Berry, 1992, 2005) and the emerging patterns of acculturation connecting international immigrant adolescents around the world (Berry, 2001; Mayhew, 2013). Each of these four themes, or variations of them, emerged, to some extent as well, from this qualitative study.

While Kennedy and MacNeela (2014) synthesized 11 cross-cultural global studies, other individual qualitative studies have been conducted specifically on Latino adolescents as well. Roche et al. (2015) researched the history of language brokering that influences the parent-child relationships, especially in navigating relationships between home and school. Smokowski, Rose and Bacallao (2008), whose studies from 2007-2009 were included in the comprehensive 11-study list, also qualitatively researched cultural involvement among Latino families and the acculturation gap that influences family dynamics, which can lead to conflict between parent and adolescent. Additionally, research on the role of acculturative stress among Mexican American youth

(Manning, 2004) and perceptions of competence and self-worth among Latino youth revealed through acculturation risk factors (Kapke, 2015) were just a few of the studies concerned with the acculturation experiences that address the adolescent Latino population more specifically. Findings among the studies included the influences on acculturative attitudes and behaviors that originated from such areas as family perception toward the host culture (Manning, 2004; Smokowski, et al., 2008), outward expressions of discrimination and prejudice toward Hispanics from the host culture (Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory 2012; Schhneider, et al., 2006), and the positive and negative experiences of peers in the heritage culture (Smokowski, 2008; Tienda, 2006; Valdés, 2001;). While these qualitative studies have been conducted on a variety of components influencing acculturation, few have separated out heritage language as its own study (Mejía, 2001, 2007; Shiu, et al., 2009), and even fewer have narrowed the research to just the role and relationship of the heritage language to the specific acculturative attitude of integration (Sanchez, 2016; Seitz de Martinez, 2015).

Quantitative vs. qualitative. In examining the extensive quantitative instruments developed for acculturation among Hispanics and comparing them to the qualitative methodological studies of the international immigrant adolescents, the two methodologies provided different insights and results. The quantitative instruments measured facts about the social phenomena and depended upon a measurable reality (Adams & Lawrence, 2015). In addition, acculturation was measured through numerical comparisons and inferences based on data and statistics, which were then reported through properly selected analyses (McLeod, 2008).

Qualitative studies, on the other hand, analyzed the themes and descriptions that emerged from the informants in their own language and from their own perspectives (Creswell, 2013). They provided the lived experiences of human behavior and assumed a reality that was both dynamic and flexible. While positivism was associated with quantitative results, empirical evidence and

strict cause-and-effect outcomes, interpretivism explored the qualitative and humanistic approaches to social science where individuals experienced objective reality from their own perspectives and worldviews (Creswell, 2013). For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research methodology, featuring a phenomenological approach, was used to explore the themes that emerged from the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents and their heritage language regarding its influence on their cultural integration. Included in this study were students' experiences as they improved the academic literacy of their heritage language and how the choice to do so also influenced cultural integration. The outcomes and implications that emerged from this study contribute to the research that continues to be conducted on the ever-increasing population of Hispanic adolescents and how to offer more support towards integration during their formative school years.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Hispanic immigration to the United States is declining at the same time United States-born Hispanics are on the rise (Krogstad, 2016). Recent reports indicated that 73% of these children, ages 5 and older, are now speaking English proficiently even though Spanish is the primary language spoken in their home (Krogstad, Stepler & Lopez, 2015). This means that the increase in the Hispanic population since 2000 is now largely due to the births of children rather than the arrival of immigrants (Krogstad & Lopez, 2014) With this shift, more second-generation Hispanic children are learning English at an early age and are able to have a command of both Spanish and English, their heritage and host languages, respectively. (Roche, et al., 2015). Additionally, by attending school, these children become literate in English, learning to read and write in the national language from an early age (Krogstad, 2016).

Oftentimes, these children gain significant literate and academic advantages in English, their host language. As they grow up, these students tend to maintain only a speaking fluency in

Spanish, their heritage language. The ramifications of this trend suggest that as these students progress from elementary school to high school, they will be able to employ their English speaking, reading, and writing skills at school while still maintaining at least an oral fluency of Spanish at home. As a result, Spanish-speaking English learners are categorized as Spanish Heritage students, or heritage speakers, because they are connected in some way, closely or loosely, to a Spanish heritage in the home (Kelleher, 2010; Valdés, 2000a). Furthermore, the description of heritage speakers, also called heritage language learners, can be expanded to include those who are “raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or merely understand the heritage language and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (Roche, et al., 2015; Valdés, 2001, p. 38). The term heritage can be used broadly to apply to any country of origin, but for the purposes of this study, heritage as the modifier for language, speaker, or student, always referred to Spanish.

Taking all of this into account, the unique perspective of Spanish Heritage speakers, no matter which way they are defined, is that they have already experienced an integration process into the host culture by being naturally born citizens of the United States, maintaining the dominant language and culture and employing English as their primary language at school (Berry, 1992; Borrero, 2011). Additionally, they often speak the latter much more fluently than their heritage language, and some even become “language brokers,” the linguistic liaisons between school teachers and administrators and their parents (Roche, et al., 2015). These students, raised with this diverse cultural and linguistic heritage, make up the broad range of second-generation Hispanic adolescents acclimating to their school and academic environments across the United States.

Berry’s (2005) acculturation theory explores the convergence of guest and host cultures when they meet and what happens to each as a result of their encounter over time. Berry defined

acculturation, in its most current and contemporary form, as “the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p. 698). At first, unidimensional acculturation was the predominant means of study, seen more as a move on a spectrum away or toward one’s heritage culture. Later, bi-dimensional acculturation emerged, and measures along with it, that could examine four categories of acculturative strategies: integration, assimilation, marginalization and separation (Berry, Poortinga, Bruegelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011; Mayhew, 2013).

Second-generation Hispanic adolescents possess varying degrees of fluency and literacy within their heritage language (Mejía, 2001; Sanchez, 2016; Webley, 2013). The difference in heritage language abilities range from those who are minimally bilingual, able to speak informally with their families to those who are biliterate, able to read, write and speak academically (Borg, et al., 2011; Shiu, et al., 2009). While bilingual students have certain advantages during their school years, biliterate students seem to have advantages that can assist them beyond high school, making them more college and career-ready (Conley, 2010; Pandey, 2014; Shiu, et al., 2009).

Quantitative instruments and qualitative studies exist that have been used in-acculturative studies over the years in order to assess the ways in which varying ethnicities respond when a guest culture encounters a host culture (Davis & Engel 2011; Kennedy and MacNeela 2014). Each of these methodologies resulted in findings helpful to the mental health field (Castillo, Lopez-Arenas & Saldivar, 2010; Dixon, 2008). Since acculturation affects the psychological experiences of individuals in heritage and host cultures, practitioners can better assess patients through quantitative instruments that offer statistically-measured evidence (Adams & Lawrence, 2015). When educators access these instruments, they may also be able to assess methods for aiding the cultural integration of Hispanic adolescents. Qualitative acculturative studies can offer another

aspect of insight into the influence of the heritage language on cultural integration as themes emerge from the individual voices of students during interviews (Creswell, 2013).

Critique of Previous Research

Much of acculturative research exists within the realm of quantitative studies (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). While the outcomes of these studies produce necessary statistical data for particular types of cultural knowledge and insight, they do not offer a means by which the diasyncratic voices of acculturating youth can be heard (Chirkov, 2009; Creswell, 2013). This makes qualitative studies equally significant in the research of acculturative experiences. The significant place of qualitative research can provide an opportunity for second-generation Hispanic adolescents to share their voices about their experiences with their heritage language and its influence on cultural integration.

The uniqueness of the Spanish Heritage student lends credence to a study that would be conducted for this specific group of adolescents (Borrero, 2011). Identified in a variety of ways from those who are fluent in their heritage language to those who are simply culturally connected in some way to Spanish, heritage language learners experience degrees of cultural integration because of their dual identity as Hispanic Americans. (Calero, et al., 2014; Kelleher, 2010). They are learners of their own heritage language when they study that language to gain greater proficiency. For this reason, schools across the country, including the school where the research participants attended, have Heritage Spanish classes to build academic literacy skills (Beaudrie, 2011). Not only do Spanish literacy skills improve the overall command of the heritage language, they also serve as building blocks for the host language (Beaudrie, 2011; Pandey, 2014). Thus, the preservation and pursuit of the heritage language constitutes a role in acculturation strategies. Hispanic adolescents fluent in Spanish but choosing not to pursue a formal study of their language

still have acculturative experiences. As a result, studies such as this can explore the relationship between the different attitudes toward the heritage language and cultural integration.

Studies focused on second-generation Hispanic adolescents, as opposed to all Hispanic adolescents, while not entirely missing from the research, have been conducted quantitatively and qualitatively (Davis & Engel, 2011; Kennedy & MacNeela). Studies of Hispanic students have been conducted that concentrate on children who have immigrated to the United States with their families, and who are directly affected by the immigration experience (Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). They also include research on the influence of families, peers, and school on the acculturation experiences and self-identity of Hispanic adolescents. Both methodologies have been used to examine more specific outcomes, such as the relationship between acculturative stress and the achievement gap, college aspirations, and self-perceptions (Borrero, 2011; Castillo, et al., 2010; Kim, 2013). No research was found that singled out and specifically addressed the narrower focus of the influence of the heritage language only on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents in the United States.

Overall, the gap in the research points to a need for more qualitative, phenomenological studies on the influence of the heritage language on cultural integration for second-generation Hispanic adolescents. This particular niche of students contributes to the rising Hispanic population resulting from children born in the United States to immigrant parents who speak Spanish in the home. While some may be literate in their heritage language and others only fluent, the common link for this study was the shared bilingual and bicultural competence, fluency in their heritage and host language, and the ability to share their experiences of how their heritage language influenced, or did not influence, their cultural integration: their ability to live comfortably and successfully in both cultures (Berry, 2005; Schwartz & Unger, 2010, 2017).

Chapter 2 Summary

Summarizing the research findings and the critique of the previous research, the increase in U.S.-born Hispanic children has caused a direct increase in second-generation Hispanic adolescents (Krogstad, 2016; Melendez, 2015). Children born to at least one immigrant parent, and raised in Spanish-speaking families, are often called heritage speakers, Spanish-speaking English learners, heritage language learners or Spanish heritage speakers (Kelleher 2010; Valdés, 2001). These youth are fluent in their home language and also fluent, and sometimes literate, in their national language (Biechler, 2015; Roche et al., 2015;). Additionally, they are adept at managing and understanding the intricacies of both cultures, making these students bilingual and bicultural (Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Biliterate adolescents are those proficient in academic reading, writing and speaking of their heritage language. While native English-speaking students who intentionally pursue the acquisition of a foreign language are considered smart, competent, and advanced, giving them an increased confidence and sense of self-esteem (Merritt, 2013), bilingual heritage students may not be seen as smart or competent even though they have accomplished the same level of proficiency in two languages as a native-English speaker (Kagan, 2017; Sanchez, 2016). Moreover, these Hispanic adolescents may lack a sense of confidence or self-esteem resulting from their bilingual skills and abilities, the very skills and abilities that should make them feel otherwise. Sometimes, this is due to family perspectives, peer influence or a negative perception held by the host culture toward the immigrant culture (Bernal, 2017; Berry, 2005).

When second-generation adolescents sense a negative perspective of their culture, they may feel the need to assimilate, desiring to shed their home culture and maintain only the host culture (Berry, et al., 2006). Another possible outcome is a form of separation, resisting the need to

acclimate to the host culture altogether. Therefore, simply because these students are fluent in both languages, they are not, by default, considered culturally integrated (Berry, Poortinga, et al., 2011).

In light of the literature available, and through individual interviews, this phenomenological study focused on the ways in which second-generation Hispanic adolescents' experiences with the heritage language influenced their cultural integration. Since cultural integration has been shown to cause the least amount of acculturative stress and the strongest sense of self-identity (Kim, 2013; Manning, 2004; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010), the outcomes of the study contribute to the efforts of educators, administrators and school districts that desire to help Hispanic adolescents experience more opportunities for cultural integration and, thus, gain greater advantages for post-secondary success.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This phenomenological study investigated the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. Through individual interviews, the emphasis of the research examined the lived experiences of these participants, 15-19 years of age, born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent. Specifically, the study explored Hispanic adolescents' relationships to their heritage language, including whether or not they chose to pursue a formal study of their language, and how this influenced their cultural integration. As the conceptual framework for this study, Berry's (2005, 2009) acculturation theory identified four quadrants of acculturation strategies. By naming these strategies, Berry designated a way to categorize how individuals, living in a dualistic or plural society, experience both cultural and psychological change as they come into continual contact with other cultures (Berry, 2009; Friesen 2015).

These adaptations take place over long periods of time: years, decades, even generations, thus, generating the focus of this study on second-generation adolescents instead of immigrant adolescents. By the time these children are born, their immigrant parents, having established themselves in the host culture, have often already assumed acculturative attitudes and behaviors, passing these on to their children. As a conceptual framework, Berry's acculturation theory served as a viable and valid structure for this study (Berry; 2005; Dixon, 2008; Kuo 2014; Skuza, 2007). By narrowing the focus to the singular acculturative strategy of integration, namely cultural integration, this study was able to provide a closer investigation of its relationship to the singular cultural component of the heritage language. A qualitative study such as this supports those who advocate for a "critical psychology of acculturation" (Chirkov, 2009). Furthermore, the inclusion of a phenomenological approach to this qualitative study highlighted the common connections of

lived experiences (Creswell, 2013) and underscored the emphasis on the cultural integration phenomenon of second-generation Hispanic youth.

Research Questions

Since it was not known if experiences with the heritage language, including the choice of whether or not to pursue a formal study of the language, influenced the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, this study was primarily concerned with the following research questions:

RQ1. In what ways do second-generation Hispanic adolescents feel that their experiences with their heritage language influence their cultural integration?

RQ2. In what ways do parents and peers influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

RQ3. In what ways does the school, and its heritage language course offerings, influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

Purpose and Design of the Proposed Study

This purpose of this qualitative study was to give the participants a voice and validate the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents and the ways in which their heritage language influenced their cultural integration. By collecting data through interviews of students willing to share their detailed perspectives on life as Spanish heritage students, this study may now serve as a springboard for how schools might help second-generation Hispanic students pursue integration: the acculturative attitude which has been known to reduce stress and achieve better adaptations to both host and heritage cultures than separation or marginalization (Berry, 2005, 2009; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010; Seitz de Martinez, 2015).

Phenomenological inquiry. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have been conducted on acculturation (Amor, 2015; Davis & Engel, 2011; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). While the former provided statistical insight into standardized laws undergirding the experiences of acculturation, the latter brought with it personal perspectives that allowed an opportunity for openness and engagement (Chirkov, 2009; Creswell, 2013). In a phenomenological study of acculturation, individuals are able to express their unique understanding of the two worlds they occupy, sometimes called a subjective perspective. The researcher then sorts, categorizes and interprets their common experiences, or phenomena, sometimes called the objective perspective. Together the two create what Creswell calls a “subjective-objective” view of experience (Creswell, 2013,).

In qualitative research, the best opportunity for a subjective-objective outcome can take place when an authentic setting provides an opportunity for real and organic conversations between the researcher and those participants under study (Creswell, 2013). Close and careful analysis of the data collected provides insight into the stories and perspectives of acculturating adolescents. Berry’s acculturation theory and framework is critical to any study of acculturation, particularly a phenomenological one, since acculturation is a common experience, or phenomenon, when individuals within two cultures live together, inhabiting each other’s spaces, schools, communities and nations (Friesen, 2015; Skuza, 2007). Together, Berry’s theory, qualitative research, and a phenomenological approach, will serve to give meaning to the acculturation experiences of second-generation Hispanic youth.

The phenomenological perspective, therefore, allowed the participants in this study the opportunity to describe their experiences with cultural integration in their own voices. Phenomenology concerns itself with the participants’ perspectives, creating the need for the researcher to take him- or herself out of the research (Broomé, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Skuza, 2007).

This is called bracketing and is critical to the authenticity of the participants' experience. Ideally, the researcher's bracketing produces the ability to focus only on what has been recorded and does not allow personal knowledge or background to be mingled with the assessment of the subjects' experiences.

Along with bracketing, an interpretivist approach supports authenticity. Interviews, such as the ones that were conducted in this study, lead the researcher to interpret the subjective meanings of the participants as they express their unique perceptions of their world. Unlike positivist orientations that have tended to dominate past acculturation research and sought to standardize general laws regarding acculturation, interpretivism gives the research a lens through which to understand the world of the participants from their perspective (Berry, 2009; Howitt, 2010; Kennedy and MacNeela, 2014). This approach fits with the nature of qualitative research where data are collected in a natural and authentic venue, taking into consideration the humanness of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

Interpretivism, and its role in qualitative research, also adds meaning to the phenomenological approach to research, suggesting that authentic consideration of experiences happens through subjective, everyday experiences that are both real and actual (Dahlberg, Drew & Nyström, 2001; Husserl, 1970; Kapke, 2015; Skuza, 2003). The ways in which these experiences are perceived and interpreted are unique to each individual's human experience, past and present. The ultimate goal of a phenomenological approach to research should illuminate daily attitudes, actions, and behaviors that deepen our understanding of what it means to be human (Dahlberg et al, 2001). Moreover, the phenomenon of the collected experiences under examination must be allowed to emerge naturally and authentically. In order to do this, the researcher must remain unhindered by prior assumptions, perceptions, and conceptions. Therefore, the researcher is as much of a participant in the authenticity of phenomenological study as the subjects, but more as an

observer searching for, and uncovering, the common essence, patterns, and themes of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Skuza 2003).

The main objective for this study was to conduct qualitative research on particular phenomenon relating to the acculturation experiences of second-generation Hispanic youth. With Berry's (2005) acculturation theory as my framework, I examined the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. Through in-depth interviews, I investigated the meanings, themes, and patterns that emerged from the lived experiences shared by second-generation Hispanic adolescents as they considered their relationship to their heritage language and its influence on their cultural integration.

Contribution to the literature. Most qualitative acculturative studies conducted for Hispanic youth in the United States have researched either Hispanic immigrant youth, a combination of first, second, and third, generation Hispanic youth, or a combination of immigrant youth from several countries (Amor, 2015; Friesen, 2015; Kennedy and MacNeela, 2014; Kuo, 2014; Skuza, 2003, 2007). Qualitative, acculturative studies, specifically focused on second-generation Hispanic youth, have been conducted in other countries such as Australia and Canada (Ahani, 2016; Mejía, 2001, 2007). While some researchers investigate one component of influence on acculturation, such as family, peer pressure, or academic performance (Benner, 2011; Berry, 1970; Cabassa 2003, Mendez et al, 2012), others will include the collective influences on acculturative attitudes (Nell, 2010; Schhneider, 2006; Skuza, 2007; Ward & Kus, 2012).

In addition, acculturation studies often investigate how individuals identify themselves across the spectrum of the attitudes – integration, assimilation, marginalization and separation – more often than singling them out (Amor, 2015; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Most recently, Biechler (2015) researched second-generation Hispanics born after 1965 in a study on assimilation theory. In it she referenced several books, studies, and articles

on second-generation Hispanics, and their potential for upward mobility, along with their assimilation into the American mainstream. She suggested that the parent-child relationship and socioeconomic status are the main contributors to second-generation adaptation patterns and academic success. Since Biechler's (2015) study focused on assimilation, her reference to Berry (2005, 2009) included a brief definition of his bidimensional model that helped in measuring acculturation. She also attributed much of her discussion about acculturation to Portes and Zhou (1993) who developed the segmented assimilation theory, which describes patterns of adaptation among immigrants. While her study focused on one acculturative strategy of assimilation, other studies have investigated the singular influence of language on acculturation (Mejía, 2001, 2007; Mrak, 2011; Roche, et al., 2015). In view of the studies that have investigated the broad spectrum of influences on acculturation in general, this study contributed research to the existing gap of qualitative, phenomenological literature on the specific component of the heritage language and its influence on the singular acculturative attitude of cultural integration for second-generation Hispanic adolescents.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The participants in this study attended a public high school in the Pacific Northwest where the Hispanic population was 26.7% of the total enrollment of approximately 1,800 students (Startclass, 2016). The school's Hispanic population percentage included immigrant children (first generation), children of migrant workers, second- and third-generation Hispanic youth, and those who designated themselves as Hispanic, even though English may be spoken in the home. At this high school, students were required to take two years of a foreign language. Hispanic students had the opportunity to take a foreign language, such as French or German. They could also take Spanish, which is a Spanish language acquisition class for native-English speakers. Typically, a heritage student would choose Spanish if they spoke more English in the home than Spanish, or if

they lacked basic literacy skills in their heritage language. Hispanic students also had the opportunity to take Heritage Spanish, a course taught in Spanish, designed for heritage speakers, in which students, fluent in Spanish, and with basic Spanish literacy skills, can improve their academic reading, writing, and speaking skills in Spanish. In addition, students in the course study cultural traditions from Latin and South American countries to help them understand the roots of their heritage.

In the fall of 2016, the high school started AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers (AP Spanish). The benefits for the heritage students taking this course included instruction in Spanish at an advanced and academic level of fluency and an opportunity to take a college-level course they might not take otherwise as it is taught completely in Spanish. AP Spanish can serve as a gateway for these heritage students to take other AP courses in the school (Shiu et al., 2009; Torres, 2010; Arreguin, 2015). AP Spanish also provides the potential for college credits, decreasing the college opportunity gap for second-generation Hispanic students, or at the very least, exposing them to the rigors of AP coursework, which has shown to promote academic self-confidence and a college mindset (Conley, 2010; Keng & Dodd, 2010; Borg et al., 2011; Arreguin, 2015).

Participants. A purposeful sample of 10 second-generation Hispanic participants were selected, all born in the United States to at least one first-generation immigrant parent, who spoke Spanish in the home and English at school. Being bicultural and bilingual, the participants provided a unique perspective on how the heritage language influenced their attitude of cultural integration. These students were able to “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 156).

The ages of the participants ranged from 15-19 years old. These students were preferred since they have had time to acculturate out of middle school, into and through high school, and

were making progress toward their post-secondary options or had at least begun to think about them (Dix, 2016). In addition, as “target informers,” these students were selected based on their ability to offer meaning for a study on the phenomenon of the ways in which the heritage language influences cultural integration (Creswell, 2013). All students, regardless of age, were given parental forms to sign, and they participated in one interview in which both parent and participant knew the details of the interview process, the value of their participation in this research, and my commitment to the confidentiality of the participants. During the interviews, the students had opportunities to share their lived experiences in relation to the influence of their heritage language on their cultural integration.

Instrumentation

Since the researcher is considered a key instrument in the research study, I collected the data by interviewing each of the participants individually (Creswell, 2013). The questions were open-ended, designed to provide opportunities for participants to share detailed descriptions and narratives. In addition, I transcribed the interviews verbatim and then read and reread the transcripts, and replayed the interviews, making detailed notes, memos, and charts of the emerging themes, patterns and meanings. From there, I synthesized my findings into a consistent whole in order to objectively provide a composite sketch of the participants’ experiences with their heritage language and the ways in which those experiences influenced their attitudes of cultural integration (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

As an interviewer, I presented the main research questions by creating a casual and conversational environment for the subjects. Since the questions were open-ended, students were provided the interview questions ahead of time to give some thought to their answers. I allotted a specified amount of time for each question in order to provide a structure that kept the interview well paced and ensured that we finished without having to rush through the written questions or

the follow-up questions that might naturally have arisen from the interview. Most of them lasted between 35 and 50 minutes.

In order to create a rapport with the subjects, I asked the questions in such a way as to encourage students to open up to me, trust me, and be honest in their descriptions of their thoughts and feelings about their heritage language and their acculturation experiences. Throughout interviews in phenomenological studies, the researcher should be adept at understanding the experiences shared by the participant, able to interpret his or her words in order to create a sense of meaning and purpose during and after the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Revell, 2013). As a high school teacher, I have developed these very qualities necessary to understand the experiences of high school students, to make students feel comfortable with me and able to be honest, one of the skills necessary in good interviewing (Revell, 2013).

As well as needing good interview skills, I ensured that the research questions were the foundation of the discussion upon which the research problem could be thoroughly assessed (Creswell, 2013). Because the questions were open-ended, students were free to offer their insight and thoughts on the influences of their host and heritage cultures. During conversations, my follow-up questions were asked in response to the comments made by the participants. Again, my experience teaching and talking with high school students allowed me to listen carefully and respond with ideas that could help me further explore the themes of the research questions. Since checking for understanding and clarity is a best practice teaching strategy (Aguilar, 2010), and one I employ regularly in my classroom, I was confident of my ability to seek clarification from the participants and to help them expand on their answers. If the interview started to go off-topic, the same strategies I used in the classroom to bring a conversation back to the main topic were used in the interview. As the key instrument in this qualitative research process, I had the skills and

experience to generate an authentic conversation with the participants and to make certain the research problems were addressed, examined and interpreted.

Data Collection

Creswell (2013) suggested that data analysis begin with the specific, what he termed “narrow units” and then head into a broader perspective of meaning (p. 79). After this, the process continues where the researcher summarizes and synthesizes the details into the “what” and the “how,” specifically, in the case of this study, the experiences with cultural integration shared by the participants and the way in which the participants felt influenced by the heritage language and choices of whether or not to pursue further academic fluency and literacy. The essential component of this interview process was to explore how second-generation Hispanic adolescents’ experiences with their heritage language influenced their cultural integration; this meaning was the *sine qua non* of the research process and the highlight of the phenomena that emerged through the shared experiences of those participating in the interviews (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Sam & Berry, 2006).

Individual interviews. For individual interviews, Creswell (2013) suggested the ideal setting for collecting data should be a place that participants are familiar with and where they feel most comfortable. As a result, the individuals were interviewed at school, an environment in which they felt most at ease. In order to ensure their comfort, students had their choice of being interviewed either in the media center or my classroom. Eight chose my classroom, and two chose the media center.

In order to conduct a meaningful interview, it was important to authenticate the voices of the participants through conversational partnership (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This required hearing the data, as well as balancing the relationship between interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Ideally, the meaning of students’ lived experiences came directly from the

stories they told and the way they chose to answer the questions. Ultimately, as the researcher, I was still in charge of the research, the interpretation and extrapolations (Creswell, 2013).

Therefore, it was up to me as the interviewer to phrase and deliver the questions in order to elicit from the participants honesty and completeness. Although the focus of the research questions was the influence of the heritage language on cultural integration, I decided that the term cultural integration would most likely seem abstract. Rather than compromise the integrity of the interview by explaining the terms, I worded the interview questions so that they were easily understood and accessible, giving the participant the best opportunity to be clear and straightforward as they shared their narratives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The sample for this research included 10 second-generation Hispanic adolescents ages 15-19. Phenomenological research provides substantial insight into the phenomenon with a small sample size, since it allows for an in-depth understanding of the participants' experience (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Researchers can gain an understanding of the meaning of the individual experiences derived from the interviews, including the nuances of the phenomenon, instead of having to seek large numbers of participants to make generalizations about the scope of acculturation. Therefore, smaller numbers from five-25 participants are often recommended for researchers (Kvale, et al., 2009; Polkinghorne, 1989). The individuals selected had a variety of experiences with their heritage language and cultural integration and provided a diverse perspective for this study. Each participant was offered the option of having one or both parents present, or another preferred relative; however, participants chose to be interviewed alone. A structured interview was conducted of open-ended questions. After asking the opening question on the participants' experiences as a Hispanic American, I asked questions specific to experiences with their heritage language. These included their perspectives and feelings about their heritage language, along with questions about the influence of their parents and peers. Additionally, I asked

the participants about their choice of language study and the influence that choice has had on their perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration.

As the researcher, I was responsible to ensure that the participants had enough time to share freely and deeply about their experiences during the interviews. Also, I safeguarded the time allotted so sufficient data could be collected to address the study's purpose. Furthermore, since I was familiar with the nature of the questions and their relationship to the heritage language and cultural integration, I had a set of potential follow-up prompts and also used my position as a researcher to adapt those prompts to the participants' answers depending on the direction of the interview; therefore, the follow-up prompts served more as potential suggestions rather than absolutes.

Interview question prompts. For these interviews, I created a structured format that allowed me to anticipate potential follow-up questions and to gather deeper understanding from both the participant and the interviewer (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In this manner, I had the potential to gain rich and robust insight into the participants' perspectives on their experiences with their heritage language and cultural integration. In this research, these second-generation Hispanics had an opportunity to vocalize their viewpoints, and were able to significantly contribute to the acculturation studies of this burgeoning demographic.

An open-ended question began the interview: Tell me about your experiences as a Hispanic American. From there, I included probing questions to assist students in sharing more details about their experience (Appendix A). I anticipated that participants might not be familiar with the term cultural integration, so I asked them to speak about being Hispanic American, a term which identified the participant as belonging to two cultures.

Once the subjects shared their bicultural experiences, I continued with questions that focused on their experiences with the heritage language, their perceptions of it, those who

influenced their perceptions, and their feelings about their heritage language. As a high school teacher, I have experience asking questions to get the most in-depth responses possible from students, and sometimes that happens when questions are asked in different ways with a focus on experiences, perceptions, or feelings. For students, these correlate to the domains of events, thoughts, and feelings. Each of these questions, worded slightly differently, allowed students to access several domains and provided richer, thicker, and more in-depth responses (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Further questions were included about the students' choice of which language to study, who or what influenced that choice, and how that choice had influenced their heritage language and their attitudes about cultural integration. I finished the interviews by encouraging participants to share any other thoughts or ideas they had about their experiences with their heritage language and their experiences as Hispanic Americans.

The interview questions (Appendix A), written both in English and Spanish, were offered to the students at the beginning of the interview, though all chose to read the copy in English. Students were made aware that their interviews would be recorded, that I would be transcribing them and interpreting information from the interviews, and that their identities would remain anonymous. They had 10-15 minutes to look through the questions, allowing them time to become familiar with the questions, to more fully understand the purpose and scope of the study, and to have an opportunity to be more thoughtful and thorough in their responses. I informed them that these questions would serve as a potential guideline to our interview to keep us on track, but that they, and I, would have the freedom to follow the direction of their personal sharing as it emerged. The students were fluent in Spanish and English. Therefore, I gave the opportunity for them to answer the questions in Spanish and told them I could have our Latino outreach coordinator there as an interpreter should they feel more comfortable answering questions about higher-order,

abstract issues in Spanish. They were all comfortable speaking English, and they all acknowledged that I was using an audio recorder to record the entire conversation.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to make sense of, and draw effective results from, qualitative research, data analysis procedures are used to organize, categorize, and manage information. During this process, the researcher examines general units of information containing patterns and codes that once grouped, present a common theme or idea (Creswell, 2013). From there, these collective ideas and representative units are reduced and reproduced into figures, text, or tabular data. Therefore, once the interviews were completed, I transcribed the audio-recording, using an alphanumeric coding system to protect the participants' identities. By transcribing the interviews myself and not hiring that process out to a transcription company, I had a better chance of understanding the interview as a whole while I was transcribing the individual statements. In addition, I would record the time stamp on particular meaning statements, and bracket time slots for each of the questions so I could return to the recording where I wanted. For this reason, transcribing the interviews myself allowed me the opportunity to keep replaying significant portions, making notes if I discovered something new. I also added my own notations to assist me in the later challenge of coding and reducing the data while finding the emerging themes and patterns and maintaining the rich and substantial evidence provided by the data (Thapa, 2016). During the transcription, I also noted any pauses or change in voice tone or inflection associated with phrases, comments and statements. After transcribing the interviews the first time, I went back through them a second time to check for accuracy. I read through the data several times to obtain a feel for the information that was shared and then reflected on the interviews by journaling in order to assess the quality of the interviews and to consider the aspects of the experience as it was shared as well as to derive meaning from the participant's experiences with cultural integration. Creswell (2013) suggested coding by recording

significant statements, and tabulating the meaning from the statements separately, so I paid attention to my annotations during the interviews and the transcription process in order code and record significant statements. I implemented a system of classifying, coding, charting, and organizing the themes that emerged, and continued to check the parts of the text against the whole.

While I categorized and coded, the contrasts, comparisons, and commonalities began to emerge as themes and patterns and started to establish the foundation of the study. Themes, in qualitative study, are considered theoretical concepts that, while abstract in nature, bring meaning and focus to a particular experience and the variety of ways in which they manifest themselves (Thapa, 2016). The themes that emerged from the data collection unified the collective experiences into a meaningful whole. As the information was collected and the themes identified and analyzed, I interpreted meanings from the shared experiences of the study participants, working to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the participants' voices (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Identification of Attributes

Giorgi's (1985) method of phenomenological analysis was used for this acculturative study. Giorgi posited that research must rely completely on the researcher. He did not believe it was proper to revisit the participants for clarification, verification, or validation of information (Giorgi, 1985; Thapa, 2016). After modifying Husserl's method (1970), Giorgi (2009) developed steps of qualitatively interpreting the lived experiences of participants. The first step is for researchers to take a phenomenological position or attitude toward the data and bracket themselves out of any subjective interpretation (Broomé, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009). In this way, the researcher is able to objectively portray the participants' perspectives. Therefore, during the interpretation and analysis of the students' data, I purposefully worked to remove my cultural and experiential assumptions to see the data as it appeared in its categorical structure. The second step was to read and reread the written transcripts in order to get an overall sense of the whole. Avoiding critical

reflection, the researcher must withhold judgment and assume a posture that can understand the natural and naïve description of the participants' everyday experiences (Broomé, 2011; Giorgi, 2009;). As these participants shared their experiences with their language and its influence on their cultural integration, I followed this directive and maintained a conscientious awareness of objectivity as I read their full transcripts to get an overall picture of their lived experiences.

Giorgi's (2009) method of analysis continues with the third step, consisting of locating "meaning units" that can be seen either as shifts within the text or specific markers that appear at particular times and moments during the participants' sharing; Creswell (2013) considers these significant statements, carrying weight and insight into the subjects' meaning. Through subsequent readings, and following this process, it became easier to recognize and log the benchmarks and places where participants revealed moments of significance, meaning units, commonalities, and patterns of thinking and acting. Following the fourth step I took the data and the "meaning units" and put them into a third-person narrative. The language of third-person allowed me as the researcher to remain detached and maintain a phenomenological attitude so as not to be drawn into the world of the participant but rather observe, examine and report on it from an objective distance (Broomé, 2011).

In the final step I synthesized the findings, themes, patterns, and narratives into a consistent whole that described how the participants were not only individuals but also members of a greater narrative. During this step, the researcher must find the place, continuity, and essence of the phenomenon. As I did this, the composite description of second-generation Hispanic adolescents presented an entire picture of the underlying structure and the multiple overlays that made up each individual's acculturative attitude that had been influenced by their experiences with their heritage language. In addition, the individuals became a part of the narrative whole within the context of all

the participants' lived experiences with their heritage language and the way in which those experiences influenced their cultural integration (Broomé, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009).

Limitations of the Research Design

One of the limitations of phenomenological research is that a small group of individual participants is not able to express the views or experiences of an entire national demographic of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. Nevertheless, since phenomenology offers a way of examining lived experiences through the lens of research participants, it also proposes that knowledge can be gained from a small group of contributors, the value of which contributes to the existing literature (Creswell, 2013). When the lived experiences are generalized to the group participants through the composite description, "internal generalizability" is established and the trustworthiness of the findings confirmed (Maxwell, 2005). Another benefit of the small group of selected individuals is that the researcher is able to fully invest in the study through multi-layered, in-depth interviews. If the data collection demonstrates thick and rich responses, and if the research can be duplicated to produce similar results when repeated, then external generalizability becomes possible: the reasonable extending of the conclusion beyond the boundaries of the setting (Maxwell, 2005) For this research, the open-ended interview questions produced answers that contained a richness and believability for the research. Since the goal of the research was to determine if experiences with the heritage language influenced the bicultural identity of the second-generation Hispanic participants, the responses to the questions, and the common themes and patterns that emerged, validated both the internal and external generalizability of the study.

An additional limitation included my role as an educator in the school where the interviews were conducted, and as a teacher among the staff. Those I interviewed came from a pool of students, some who were current students of mine, some who were former, and some who did not know me at all. Nevertheless, since I did not speak Spanish, and did not teach any of the Spanish

classes at my school, nor did I teach these students in that content area, I was able to remain objective as a researcher, since the study was concerned with their heritage language and their language courses of study.

Although the participants were fluent in English, one of the limitations I anticipated was students' limited English proficiency when it came to abstract concepts or ideas such as cultural integration. Therefore, when students struggled to find a word or phrase in English that best described their lived experiences, it was important for me to have a way for students to remain authentic in their sharing. I allowed the students the choice of having our Latino outreach coordinator present, even though it was possible that a second person might have clarified a question, which would have influenced the participant to answer in a particular way. By giving students the prompts at the beginning of the interview, they were able to share any questions they may have had about terms. Moreover, I worded the interview questions so they would be as accessible as possible. Finally, if there had been a way to describe an experience they could only have accessed in Spanish, recording the interviews gave me the opportunity to replay them with the help of a Spanish-speaking colleague at school, whose identity would have also remained confidential.

With any study that includes immigrants or their children, the political climate can present a limitation and bias of the students to their understanding of what it means to participate in the host culture. The political environment resulting from the 2016 presidential election has caused more Hispanics to learn English (Flores, 2017) and could have possibly shifted participants' attitudes about their experiences with their heritage and cultural integration. Consequently, the interviews did not include any reference to political settings. Two participants spoke of their experiences within the context of the political climate in relation to attitudes of the host culture, however, the discussion was contained within the context of the study so that the information

served as a vehicle to understand the influences of the heritage language on the participants' cultural integration.

A final limitation was the bias I brought to the study as the researcher. My interest in this study was to provide a voice to second-generation Hispanic adolescents as they share their lived experiences with their heritage language and its influence on cultural integration. Having participated in establishing academic tracks at the school for Heritage Spanish students to improve their biliteracy, I was familiar with some of the barriers to learning. In addition, the extensive research on the learning gap and the growing population of this demographic could have created a certain partiality. Therefore, I increased the credibility of the research by bracketing my personal experiences and knowledge (Creswell, 2013), checking my understanding but still maintaining an honest and authentic curiosity that engaged the participants and made them willing to share as openly as possible.

Validation

Credibility. Qualitative research requires the researcher to establish and maintain trust and credibility throughout the research process (Creswell, 2013). Member checking and triangulation provide the means for strategically enhancing credibility. By accessing a variety of “sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251), the researcher can confirm that all components of the phenomenon under investigation have been explored in a valid, reliable and ethical way (Skuza, 2003, 2007). This does not mean that one component of the investigation is weaker than another; rather, member checking and triangulation mean that consistency and understanding occur with greater integrity when multiple sources are accessed.

Dependability. In this study, dependability occurred through member checking after the interviews were completed and transcribed. Participants approved the accuracy of the

transcriptions and assured me they were consistent with their interviews. Along with member checking, triangulation occurred through course selection, further securing the credibility of the research. The study was limited to second-generation Hispanic adolescents, but within that demographic were different academic choices students had made about their heritage language. Some students chose to take Heritage Spanish to improve their biliteracy. Once completed, students had the option to take AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers. The four participants, who went on to take the AP course, either had a desire to become academically literate and fluent in their heritage language or developed that desire while taking Heritage Spanish. In addition, these students also had a tendency to be college-oriented, whether they began high school with that mindset or, again, developed it along the way.

Another group of participants were not on a Spanish pathway to AP but had taken Heritage Spanish either to gain basic literacy in their own language or because they were placed in the class by their counselor. Several participants took Spanish, either placed in it by a counselor or by self-selecting the course. Some wanted to improve their fluency and literacy but felt Heritage Spanish would have been too advanced; these participants chose to take Spanish as a foreign language as opposed to Spanish as a heritage language (Merritt, 2013; Redden, 2006). Some were placed in it by a counselor but immediately transferred out, finding it too easy. One participant, having heard that Heritage Spanish was quite challenging, selected Spanish as a course that could help him maintain his GPA while also hoping to make a few improvements to his fluency and literacy. The last two students that completed the study's triangulation included those participants who chose not to take any Spanish. Comfortable with their current level of literacy and fluency in their heritage language, they did not feel the need to improve it. These students took French. With the differences in language course study choices, the universal essence distilled from their individual interviews was unique to their lived experiences, lending further credibility to the research.

Ultimately, the individual experiences of second-generation Hispanic youth from these different academic emphases were juxtaposed against the phenomenological “description of the universal essence” (Creswell, 2013; Skuza, 2007). The comparison of course selection for triangulation, along with the member checking of transcriptions, established the credibility of this study.

Expected Findings

School districts, administrators and educators are constantly searching for ways to improve the learning opportunities for Hispanic youth and close the ever-widening achievement gaps (Amor, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Kuo, 2014; Shiu, et al., 2009). The influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of Hispanic youth can shed light on how students understand and interpret their place in both their heritage and host culture (Amor, 2015; Skuza, 2007). The students shared their experiences with their heritage language, their individual choices of whether or not to pursue a formal study of their heritage language, and the heritage language’s influence on their cultural integration. In sharing their perspectives, they identified the ways in which their heritage language influenced the degrees to which they did or did not feel comfortable in and with their host and heritage cultures, often influenced by their experiences with their heritage language. Their unique voices, voluntarily shared in this study, contribute to the literature on this topic.

For this study, one of the main assumptions was that students had a variety of acculturation experiences that influence how they identified themselves. As a result, the expected findings of this research proposal were that those Hispanic adolescents who have a greater academic proficiency in their heritage language would also have a stronger sense of cultural integration. Ironically, this would mean that the more academically advanced they were in their heritage language, the more comfortable they would feel in the host culture. Even with these expectations, however, individuals still have strong influences in their lives that shape the way they see

themselves and the world (Kapke, 2015; Medina et al., 2015). When it comes to cultural integration, heritage language and the variation of academic fluency and literacy may have little to do with Hispanic adolescents' perspective of what it means to successfully live in both their heritage or host culture (Rafieyan et al., 2013). It was these experiences that this study sought to investigate, with the expectation that the research would offer insight into the ongoing study of the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. This concluded study can now provide school districts ways in which to utilize their resources as efficiently as possible to support these students and equip them for success, both during their high school years and beyond (Ahani, 2016; Berry, 2009).

Ethical Issues

When human beings are involved in any research study, ethical procedures must be emphasized and upheld, especially with children under the age of 18. As part of the steps of accountability, two administrators at the targeted high school and one at the school district were contacted for approval: the principal and the assistant principal in charge of the Spanish Heritage program at the high school and the superintendent at the district. I received approval from the Institutional Review Board, and the administrators gave their approval to interview 10 of our second-generation Hispanic students. Numeric codes were assigned to participants to protect their identity and to ensure anonymity. Since the qualitative research process can encounter potential ethical issues, it is critical for the researcher to be aware of the ethical implications at each stage of the research process, especially the interviews and the interpretation of the participants' sharing (Creswell, 2003).

Ten second-generation Hispanic adolescents, ages 15-19, participated in this research. Once I identified the potential candidates, I personally invited them by sharing the research and giving them a consent form. Their parents signed the form that included full disclosure of the

interview process and its purpose. English and Spanish consent forms were available. Individuals were able to decline, even at the last minute, without any consequences. Risks to participants were typical of those normally encountered during regular classroom engagement. Since no grade was attached to the interview or the quality of the sharing, participants were free from stress that would add undue pressure to perform. Questions did not create any discomfort or uneasiness. Also, I reminded the participants that they could withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence.

All information has been kept confidential. If a participant shared something that required me to assume my role as a mandatory reporter, I would have stopped the interview and informed them of my responsibility. Personal information was not used outside of the study except for purposes of this research and did not disclose information that could identify the participant. I was the only person to hear the interview from the recording, and if parents had chosen to participate and needed a translator, our outreach coordinators would also have provided accountability. If I had not gotten enough participants, the Latino outreach coordinators would have been willing to help me gather names. I did use snowballing to ask participants to refer candidates. I also asked the Heritage Spanish teacher at another high school in the district to assist me in finding candidates when it looked like I might have needed additional participants. Nevertheless, all 10 participants were enrolled in the school where I teach.

As mentioned in the design limitations, I was a teacher at the high school where the research took place. In this case, I was more aware of moderate potential biases toward the study, outcomes and participants. Therefore, I constantly revisited answers for clarification in my transcriptions in order to maintain strict adherence to what the participant explicitly said in order to avoid assumptions and interpretations of what might be implied. Moreover, I conscientiously continued to bracket, or set aside, all biases, prejudgments and preconceived notions about the

phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Dahlberg et al., 2001). Researchers who successfully bracket, or suspend, their beliefs and understandings are better able to participate in the authentic engagement of the individual's experiences (Skuzza, 2003; van Manen, 1990).

Chapter 3 Summary

This qualitative phenomenological research explored the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. In addition, the interview examined the influences on these participants' choices to pursue any formal study of their heritage language and how their lived experiences with their heritage language influenced the way in which they identified as a member of their heritage and host culture. Throughout the research process, I gave close and constant consideration to the biases I needed to bracket during the interview, the transcription, the coding, the analysis and the interpretation of the data. In addition, the research was designed to explore the themes and patterns that emerged from among the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, their heritage language and its influence on their cultural integration.

The population of Hispanic youth born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent continues to rise, and this population now exceeds that of immigrants (Krogstad, 2016; Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). For this reason, the study of acculturation, and more specifically, the acculturative attitude of cultural integration, provides a critical contribution to the future of these individuals and the schools, educators, administrators and districts that seek to improve the cultural integration of their Hispanic adolescent population. Consequently, the increased population of this demographic influences an increase in the achievement gap of Hispanic adolescents, making improvements to their integration significant (Ahani, 2016; Biechler, 2015; Borrero, 2011; Parry, 2010; Sanchez, 2016). The goal of this study was to discover the common phenomena that emerged as these adolescents experienced their last years before entering adulthood. An additional

goal was to understand the relationship between the heritage language and cultural integration, and to this end, those goals were actualized.

Since the beginning of my research, I had been an advocate for advancing academic opportunities for the Hispanic youth at our high school, particularly Heritage speakers whose primary language in the home was Spanish. Typically, these Heritage speakers were not immigrants themselves, but were born in the United States to immigrant parents. They were all on the acculturation spectrum between marginalization and integration (Berry, 2005; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014), depending on who and what was their greatest influence. This research sought to identify the particular influence of the heritage language and the ways in which it influenced the bicultural self-identity of second-generation Hispanic adolescents as they moved toward or away from cultural integration. Aware of my biases, I was better able to learn from the participants' experiences, and I gave them a voice that could contribute to the literature in order to minimize the achievement gap and improve the educational opportunities for this growing demographic.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The qualitative research for this study examined the ways in which second-generation Hispanic adolescents' lived experiences with their heritage language influenced their cultural integration: the degree to which they were able to live comfortably in both their heritage and host cultures (Ahani, 2016; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Berry, 2009). In-depth participant interviews were designed to address the main research questions of this phenomenological study:

RQ1. In what ways do second-generation Hispanic adolescents feel that their experience with their heritage language influences their cultural integration?

RQ2. In what ways do parents and peers influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

RQ3. In what ways does the school, and its heritage language course offerings, influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

Qualitative data, when organized into units and patterns, offer meaning to narrative experiences and the various ways in which that meaning manifests itself (Creswell, 2013; Thapa, 2016). This chapter offers qualitative data that include the identification and organization of themes that emerged during the process of data analysis, which help to provide a broader understanding of the ways in which a heritage language influences cultural integration. This chapter presents detailed descriptions of the participants' verbatim interviews, including rich, in-depth experiences describing childhood memories, familial history, parental influence, social interactions with peers and adults from both heritage and host cultures, and choices of language study.

From these qualitative data, I identified and organized the emerging themes to find the common phenomenon unique to this particular demographic and research focus. In order to address the research questions for the study, I designed the interview questions, so the abstract

terms of cultural integration would be clarified through common terms, Hispanic American and bicultural. For the purposes of this study, the term cultural integration is synonymous with Berry's (2005) acculturative attitude of *integration*, and also synonymous with the term biculturalism (Berry, 2005, 2009; Kuo, 2014). These terms define the individual who lives comfortably in two cultures: feeling that they have adapted to elements of their host culture while also incorporating elements of the host culture into their heritage one. Other terms used in the data analysis include *assimilation*, where an individual sheds elements of the heritage culture to take on more aspects of the host culture, *separation*, where an individual pulls away from the host culture and retreats into the heritage culture, and *marginalization* where individuals feel isolated from both cultures, or intentionally withdraw from both (Ahani, 2016; Berry, 2009; Friesen, 2015; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014).

Students who considered themselves as bicultural, or culturally integrated in terms of this research, saw themselves adapting to the specific qualities and attributes of both cultures, being able to live comfortably within both cultures, deriving meaning from both, and then comfortably taking elements from both to accommodate them in their everyday lives, whether linguistically, experientially, or socially (Berry, 2005; Mayhew, 2013; Mrak, 2011). While this did not happen in all areas of their lives, nor was it consistent throughout each day, the goal of the research was to determine if students experienced these moments and whether or not those experiences with their heritage language influenced these moments. Therefore, the research questions were designed to determine if the experiences with, and perspectives of, the heritage language had the potential to influence Hispanic adolescents' attitudes of cultural integration. Therefore, the interview questions were aligned with the research questions and worded in a way that provided multiple opportunities for students to access a variety of experiences in order for the researcher to use a broad range of data to fully address the research questions.

Description of the Sample

The research population for this study, and the sample of participants, included 10 15-19 year-old second-generation Hispanic adolescents. The purposeful sample of participants for this study was selected from heritage students who met the requirements of the study: born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent, who spoke some Spanish in the home. The idea behind purposeful sampling in qualitative research includes choosing individuals who are able to purposefully contribute to the “understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 158). The participants’ experiences with their heritage language gave them an opportunity to respond to the interview questions thoughtfully and thoroughly, and therefore contribute to the research purposefully.

To gather the population sample, I gained permission to access the enrollment and demographic system at the school the students attend. The system provided a Hispanic designation for students on their demographic page but did not detail any distinction between students who are U.S. citizens and those who are not. Neither was there information about whether a student was designated Hispanic as first, second or third generation. My original plan was to email families, whose students met the requirements, to share the research, electronically attach consent forms, and then follow up with phone calls. When I discovered that the specific designation of U.S. citizen did not appear on the system, I chose to ask the counselors and Spanish Heritage teachers at the site to help me identify students who would meet the conditions for this phenomenological study. I provided them the list of participant requirements, and they agreed to professionally and prudently identify participants in their classes. While they were finding participants, I too was seeking out potential candidates. Although qualitative research may use as few as five participants, I determined that 10 would provide a greater variety of experiences (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1989).

Over a two-month period, 16 consent forms were given out, but only five students returned them. I began my interviews while also searching for other participants. Research question three focused on the students' course offering of languages they chose to study, although taking a language was not a participant requirement. Nevertheless, after interviewing two students who had taken French, I made sure the balance of the participants had other experiences with language course offerings in Spanish or Heritage Spanish. In the end, the sample consisted of 10 second-generation Heritage students, five male and five female, who met the requirements but who had varied experiences with the course offerings they had chosen for language study.

Research Methodology and Analysis

This phenomenological study researched second-generation Hispanic adolescents and their experiences with their heritage language, their perspectives on their heritage language, the choices they made of whether or not to pursue a formal study of their language, the factors that influenced them, and the influence that experiences with their heritage language had on their cultural integration. A phenomenological methodology was the most appropriate and relevant approach since a small group of participants can provide a significant contribution to the existing literature as they are afforded more time for longer narratives (Creswell, p. 155). The participants' stories supplied the research with multi-layered descriptions, allowing for the collection of thick, rich data, as students shared their lived experiences with their heritage language (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The data collection made the emergence, organization, and analysis of themes and patterns within the phenomenon clear and accessible (Creswell, 2013).

With such detailed, and sometimes lengthy, narratives, I made every effort to let the students' authentic voices be heard throughout the research study and allowed the detailed descriptions of their experiences to dictate my data analysis and the themes I detected from their sharing (Broomé, 2011; Giorgi, 2009). I read and reread the interviews that I had transcribed in

order to gather a true understanding of the entire experience each participant shared and to ensure that I had bracketed myself out to gain an objective assessment of the data (Giorgi, 2009). I also would replay the recording, listening to the students' voices to hear their tone or inflection in order to ensure the authenticity of their meaning when interpreting the words they were speaking to describe their experiences (Giorgi, 2009; Weis & Fine, 2000). From here I synthesized my findings into a consistent whole in order to objectively provide a composite sketch of second-generation Hispanic adolescents and the influence of their heritage language on their cultural integration (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

The conceptual framework that guided my research came from Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, 2009, Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). Heritage individuals living in host cultures find that they are constantly adjusting to the spoken and unspoken norms and mores that govern the social, academic, and familial aspects of their experiences (Berry, Phinny, Sam & Vedder, 2006, Biechler, 2015). To the end that individuals seek to understand how to live in each, or both, of these cultures, Berry's theory offers a categorization of four acculturation attitudes: assimilation, marginalization, separation, and integration.

Of the four categories listed above, this study focused on the latter, the experience of integration, and the term was used in this study synonymously with the terms cultural integration, and biculturalism. The study drew conclusions about attitudes of cultural integration through the ways in which adolescents' experiences with their heritage language specifically influenced their abilities to integrate into both cultures and adapt elements of both cultures to fit into their lives. Berry (2009) referred to this as living successfully in two cultures. Although integration was the focus of the study, the experiences shared by the participants through their in-depth interviews offered a range of acculturative attitudes that stemmed from their experiences with their heritage

language, which allowed themes to emerge portraying nuanced and complex points of view (Creswell, 2013).

For the transcription process, I reviewed the interviews and transcribed the recordings verbatim, listening and rereading for accuracy in my transcription, grasping the whole before sectioning it into parts (Creswell, 2013). I followed Creswell's data-analysis process moving from narrower, more significant statements to broader applications and then filled in with detailed descriptions. As I followed this procedure diligently, I referred to transcripts, summaries, and notes, observing themes as they emerged from the data. Giorgi's (2009) phenomenological method of analysis guided my analytical steps of the emerging themes.

During my data analysis, I strove to bracket myself out of the interviews to maintain the authenticity of the participants' voices and transformed the meaning units into consistent thematic structures derived from the shared experiences (Applebaum, 2011; Giorgi, 1985). Some themes are common to studies of acculturation such as family support (Davis & Engel, 2011; Friesen, 2015), lack of family support (Friesen, 2015), language barriers (Skuzza, 2007), students serving as language brokers (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, et al., 2015) and the relationship between acculturation strategies and biculturalism (Ahani, 2016). Beyond the expected research, four primary themes emerged unique to the lived experiences of the 10 second-generation Hispanic adolescents that participated in this study.

Summary of the Findings

In this phenomenological study, 10 second-generation Hispanic adolescents were interviewed. All were born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent and spoke Spanish in the home as the primary language. Raised in the public school-system, all students grew up learning English in school. An unexpected finding was that all were placed in ELL programs when

they entered school, and all exited the program within two to six years of starting. Therefore, the participants were all bicultural and bilingual.

Analysis of the participants' lived experiences showed that students did not always experience these qualities as beneficial, feeling self-conscious about losing some of their heritage fluency when starting school, especially when family and friends would comment about their changes in accent and grammar. Host cultures added to these feelings when offering negative comments to participants as they spoke their heritage language in public. The data analysis revealed that parents were often the main influence of the students' perspectives of their heritage language, with peers influencing them as well. Moreover, when participants had opportunities to help others who were less fluent, they had greater appreciation for their heritage language. Findings also showed that students who were fluent and somewhat literate in their heritage language found more fulfillment taking Heritage Spanish or a foreign language rather than Spanish. Students who took AP Spanish felt heritage students should try to get to this level of Spanish because of its rigor, its emphasis on heritage literacy, and the confidence the increased skills instill by AP students being eligible for post-secondary opportunities that require bilingual and biliteracy skills.

Overall, each of these findings revealed that negative experiences with the heritage language tended to lead participants toward separation and marginalization. Positive experiences, and opportunities to use their heritage language to help others, tended to lead participants toward cultural integration. Overwhelmingly, participants acknowledged that despite challenging experiences with their heritage language in their younger years, they were currently appreciative of being bicultural and bilingual and saw it as an advantage for future career opportunities.

Presentation of the Data and Results

The interview questions for this research consisted of five main questions, some with follow up questions that sought to provide opportunities for enhanced participant sharing and for my greater understanding of the participants' lived experiences. The following research questions informed the nature and direction of the interview questions.

RQ1. In what ways do second-generation Hispanic adolescents feel that their experiences with their heritage language influence their cultural integration?

RQ2. In what ways do parents and peers influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

RQ3. In what ways does the school, and its heritage language course offerings, influence Hispanic adolescents' perspective of their heritage language and cultural integration?

With Berry's (2005, 2009) conceptual framework of acculturation in mind, the goal of my analysis was to seek to understand the lived experiences of second-generation Hispanic adolescents, and how their experiences with their heritage language influenced their cultural integration.

The in-depth interviews began with the participants responding to an open-ended question that asked, "Tell me about your experiences as a Hispanic American." Reference to the heritage language was purposefully absent from this question, leaving students to answer the question as broadly as they wanted. These answers provided the basis for the students' general sense of their bicultural identity, and the ways in which they saw themselves feeling more Hispanic, more American, or both; references to the latter demonstrated attitudes and behaviors of integration.

Ten out of 10 participants referenced their heritage language when answering questions about their experiences as Hispanic Americans, even though references to the heritage language were absent from the question. Seven of the 10 described childhood experiences; six of 10 shared

unexpected responses of teasing and criticism from individuals within the heritage community in response to the participants' diminishing fluency in the heritage language as they started to learn English. Included in each of the participant profiles are answers to the interview questions specific to the heritage language. These subsequent questions focused on the students' experiences with, perceptions of, and feelings about the heritage language along with a question about their choice of language study and the influence of that course of study on their heritage language and cultural integration. Each profile contains a combination of those answers pertinent to the students' overall experiences.

Berry's (2009) conceptual framework of acculturation theory undergirded the research, and the presentation of the data through the participant profiles provided the basis for the results and data analysis, keeping the acculturative attitude of cultural integration in the foreground. From the analysis, four core themes emerged on the ways in which experiences with the heritage language influenced cultural integration. The themes of heritage fluency, self-assurance, the role of peers, and language course selection will be discussed after the presentation of the participants' profiles. Overall, after having the opportunity to reflect on a wide range of experiences regarding their heritage language, and regardless of whether their first shared experiences were less than positive, all 10 participants eventually shared their gratitude for being bicultural and bilingual, and in some cases biliterate, knowing that their fluency with their heritage language will serve them well as they enter the post-secondary stage of their lives.

Student One. The first participant was the youngest female in the study and, when asked about her experiences as a Hispanic American, recalled her experiences as a child. When starting her English Language Learner (ELL) classes in school, ELL teachers told her she would be able to speak both English and Spanish equally well. Beginning in kindergarten, she remembered speaking English at school then going home and forgetting Spanish. Then she would speak

Spanish at home and have trouble with English when she arrived back at school. As she learned English, her accent in Spanish became stronger, and she sensed a growing distance from her Hispanic community, while still trying to fit in at school.

I felt like I fit into a little domain that nobody else fit into . . . I was in my own little world because no one really understood me. Wherever I went, they were like full Mexican or full American, but if I tried to be accepted, I couldn't feel accepted from either side.

As Student One continued to share, she felt that the lack of acceptance from both cultures came from the way she spoke. Further reflection from questions specifically related to her heritage language revealed that her friends in both cultures would tease her, which made her self-conscious of both of her languages.

Some friends are like it sounds really weird. And I never really thought of it, but I started to think of it and when I was speaking one language I thought some of those words are really weird. And when I would speak my other language, I would think that's weird too compared to English. So I actually started to hear myself how I sounded as I would speak each of my languages and it started to sound weird.

Once in high school, Student One had teachers who gave her opportunities to help her Hispanic classmates, and she noticed a shift in her perspective about her language and her sense of belonging. As she started regularly helping other students, and watching them learn the content as a result of her assistance, she started to realize that her Spanish was not unusual; instead it was useful even if it was not perfect.

Student Two. Student Two, a 19-year old female, expressed feeling a disconnection between her two worlds when she was growing up. She liked being Mexican and she enjoyed speaking her language, but learning English at a young age made it hard to stay as fluent as she wanted. She shared that she took Spanish 3, 4, and 5 in high school, but it still had not helped her

feel more connected to purely Mexican communities, a community to whom she has always wanted to feel a part.

For me, it's been challenging, and if you talk to other people like me, it's the same thing. You hear it very often, and it's how I feel. If I go to Mexico right now, I wouldn't fit in because I would be considered too white. But here, with the people here, I wouldn't fit in because I'm too Mexican. And I can't really fit in anywhere . . . I'm more Mexican when it comes to my personality, but it sucks because when I try to have friendships with full Mexicans, they don't really accept me well because I'm too white.

With the next interview question, she was asked her to tell about her experiences with her heritage language. She clarified that being "too white" was because of her accent, her lack of a broader Spanish vocabulary, her use of Spanglish when trying to find words in Spanish, and her grammar, shown in the way she sometimes rearranged word order. While speaking Spanglish was fun for her with her other second-generation peers, it hindered her acceptance into the Mexican community. As native Spanish speakers, they did not understand her Spanglish.

When prompted to answer question three on her feelings about her heritage language, Student Two described it as a beautiful language.

As challenging as it is to speak both languages, it truly is beautiful and you shouldn't be ashamed of who you are. In the future, it'll help not only you but your future families. I've never been ashamed of who I am, even if I don't fit in here or Mexico, but speaking both languages has brought me challenges but beautiful things from both of them.

It was during this question that she started to share more positive experiences. She was finally starting to recognize the benefits of being bilingual and acknowledged that it has helped her with job opportunities and to feel more confident as someone who has been educated in two languages.

Student Three. When answering the open-ended opening question, Student Three, a 17-year old female, had experienced being bullied from both cultures. This participant described how she had always wanted to fit into both cultures and feeling like she should because of being Hispanic American. She shared the difficulties she has had over the years.

In all honesty, my experience has been rough. I've been made fun of and bullied from both sides 'cause I was raised speaking more English than Spanish, so I really didn't fit in. I was at a Mexican school in California for a while, and they were calling me a "wetta," a 'wanna be' Mexican. But then when we moved to Oregon, I was more part of the American culture here, but I didn't really fit in here either.

During the rest of her interview, Student Three would discuss how her experience has changed in high school, that most of her friends now are American, even though she still identifies with the Hispanic culture. She has enjoyed her experience in Spanish 5 because even though she is fluent, she did not know how to read and write; "I didn't even know the alphabet."

It was when she started to tutor other students her junior year that she could see her Spanish put to good use. As someone who gets satisfaction from helping others, Student Three found tutoring the answer to her prior conflicts about her language and the insecurity she had when speaking it. She shared that speaking Spanglish helped her too when speaking to other second-generation peers. Despite the challenges she shared initially, her responses became more positive as she spoke of her experiences with her language during her later years in high school.

Student Four. When Student Four was a small child, his experiences included having people telling him to go back to Mexico when he was out in public, speaking Spanish. In the grocery store, he remembered being embarrassed to speak to his mother in Spanish. She would ask him a question, and in order to blend in, he would answer her in English even though she wouldn't understand.

Growing up, I only heard Spanish. Pablo esta. Pablo esta. I'm a Hispanic American, which means I'm coming from a family that we're, we're gonna have troubles, we're gonna have, we're gonna be talked down to because we're from a different race.

Student Four recalled working very hard in his ELL class as a young boy because he wanted to hurry up and learn English. He made a friend in second grade that helped him learn "handy English phrases." And he made sure never to speak Spanish when he was out in public.

A later interview question asked him to share his feelings about his heritage language. He described his experiences changing when he took a Heritage Spanish class in eighth grade. It was hard, and it made him question his legitimacy as a heritage speaker: "If my language is this hard, and if the other students in my class are so much more fluent, am I really a heritage speaker, or am I more American than I thought?" As the class progressed, he learned to read and write; he became more fluent, and as a result more confident with his language and himself.

With this confidence, Student Four decided to learn another language when he entered high school and took French. He found his Spanish, and the literary skills he had gained in Heritage Spanish to be valuable to him in comprehending the French language, with many of the similarities of root words and word order. Taking French made him appreciate his Spanish and become more confident in its beauty and usefulness. Referencing his childhood memories, he stated, "These days, if people heard me speaking Spanish, and they would tell me to go back to Mexico, I would speak Spanish on purpose to make them mad."

Singing in the church choir and taking Mariachi in school also helped him to feel connect to his parents, his heritage language, and his culture, helping to remember happier times.

So I come home and tell my dad in Spanish that I'm a Mariachi. And he asked me, "What songs are you playing." And the first song I told him we were singing was De Colores, the Colors. And literally his eyes came with tears. And my mom came from the kitchen and

they started singing this song, and I'm just looking at them saying how do you know them? And the more I came home with the guitar and played the songs, the more I felt connected to my background. That was when my dad was still with us.

Although Student Four began his interview sharing negative experiences about his heritage language, now, in high school, he proudly speaks Spanish and feels confident of his accomplishments with his language and his education. He was hired at his job for being bilingual, another reason that makes him thankful for his language. When wrapping up the interview, I asked if he had anything else he wanted to share. With a big smile on his face, he proudly declared the fullness of his identity.

All of this together and my singing and how a normal kid who only speaks Spanish and now I'm taking an AP English Literature class and fluent in Spanish and speak French. I'm proud to say that I'm that kid. I'm that kid who only spoke Spanish and had such a hard time with English. And now I'm fluent in Spanish and English and French and I'm in AP English Literature. I'm that kid.

Student Five. Student Five was a 17-year old male from a big family, who began answering the opening question recounting experiences being denied service in a restaurant. Immediately after that, however, he included a positive experience.

You know, sitting down in public spaces speaking Spanish and having other people look at you all weird and stuff and you can be judged for the language you speak. And I've also had a lot of positive experiences too. Meeting a lot of people that come from Mexico and things that they did big down there and stuff like that makes me glad I can speak Spanish too. It's cool being able to talk two languages.

Student Five shared another answer that was unique to his experience. Growing up, when he was criticized by individuals in the heritage community for his poor Spanish, he would stop

speaking Spanish and work only on improving his English. At one point, he had a chance to meet people from Mexico whom he admired; then he stopped trying to improve his English and started working to improve his Spanish. He was the only student who described his experiences in this way, a participant whose acculturative attitudes and behavior supported the theory of unidimensional acculturation (Berry, 2005; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014), where an individual describes an experience of moving back and forth between the heritage and host culture.

Student Six. A 17-year old quiet female, Student Six shared an awareness at an early age that learning English was going to present a challenge. Like the other participants, she began school speaking Spanish but was put into an ELL program. Unlike others, she did not find that it changed her Spanish much.

Spanish is my first language, so when I went to kindergarten, I knew it was going to be pretty hard. And I had some struggles learning it, but I learned English starting in kindergarten. It didn't make Spanish harder at home to speak.

Student Six had an uncommon home life. Her parents read to her every night in both English and Spanish, though neither had more than an seventh grade education. Nevertheless, they both could read and write, and made sure to teach Student Six how to read and write in Spanish. Although they spoke English at work, they always spoke Spanish at home because they never wanted her to lose it. As a result, she began high school fluent and literate in her heritage language, which motivated her to learn a new language.

I took French, and I found similarities to Spanish and English. It was two languages that helped me learn another language. I was already growing up speaking Spanish, and I would know how to read it, speak it, and write it, and I learned English as well. And I wanted to take a shot at learning to speak French. And I knew a lot about my cultural background, so I wanted to learn about another culture.

Student Six would be one of two students who learned how to read and write in their heritage language from their parents, neither set of whom received more than a seventh grade education.

Student Seven. Student Seven was an 18-year old male who has taken Spanish 3 and 5, Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish, but began by talking about not knowing where he fit in.

It's been pretty tough because I know that sometimes, when I'm with my family, I'm too American for them, because they only speak Spanish, but when I'm outside my house I feel more Mexican. I feel like I stand out because I speak two languages. Or just the fact that I'm Mexican. Too American to be Mexican. Too Mexican to be American.

After his father left, Student Seven became his mother's language broker (Roche, et al., 2015), helping her in every aspect of their life, including finding a new place to rent, transferring all the bills into their name, and talking to utility companies on the phone. She depends on him, and yet, his mother always made sure learning English was his priority.

I feel like my mom wanted to rip the Spanish from me so I could integrate easier in school.

I was actually embarrassed about speaking Spanish in elementary school. And I pretended I didn't know it. And no one ever questioned it because I didn't have an accent. I learned English in 3 months when I was 5; after about 6 months I was translating for my mom.

Which honestly has been a huge part of my life.

Student Seven shared a time in his young life when it was getting harder for him to go to school. His mother was sending money back to Mexico for his sisters and he wanted to quit school and go to work to help her.

I remember saying to my mom, I don't want to go there. I feel so different and she said, "mi'ijo, you have to go. I work. You study. That's how it's gonna go for the next few years."

Student Seven's attitude about his languages would change in high school once he started taking Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish Language for Heritage Speakers. In particular, AP Spanish would help him get to the point where he could translate medical issues for his mother when visiting the doctor and make him see how valuable both languages were to him. His mother's issues inspired him to pursue a career in nursing after experiencing how few bilingual translators there were in his mom's doctor's office and how few bilingual nurses were available to assist the Hispanic community. Taking AP Spanish would also help him to pass a rigorous state exam and earn the State of Oregon's Biliteracy Seal, a graduation certificate that certifies a student's proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in two languages. This certificate would get him a job at a medical office, the very one that had no translators when he went in to get help for his mother.

Student Eight. Student Eight, an 18-year old male, shared that growing up, he would hear the terms Latino American or Hispanic American, and he didn't know how to identify himself.

What's my race? What's my ethnicity? It never really clicked with me. Growing up, I felt like there was this big question mark about me. Growing up, Spanish was my first language.

And since my accent was so thick, I had to take ELL for five years, six years.

With most of his peers taking 2-3 years to exit out of ELL, he acknowledged that his struggle with English took a little longer. The extended time in Spanish, and the teasing he would receive from his parents and his heritage community created an insecurity when speaking his heritage language. Throughout the interview, he often referenced his "bad Spanish."

Now I have a high lexile score. And all through high school, I've taken AP English, and so it's crazy to look back and just see that I went from knowing no English to now forgetting my Spanish. Now my Spanish isn't the best. Because now I have an accent when I speak

Spanish, and I have a lot of grammatical errors when I speak it. When I look back, I have a big question mark.

For Student Eight, helping others has provided an answer to that question mark. While some older Spanish-speaking customers who come into his work may comment on his accent and correct him, many others are appreciative of his help. In these moments, Student Eight most appreciates how his bilingual skills can best be used, and this knowledge has given him a boost in confidence. “But now I know who I am. I’m a second-generation Latino, my family is from Mexico, and now I just want to learn everything I can and enrich my culture.

Student Nine. Beginning with an observation that her generation experiences a certain amount of discrimination for their differences in color, race, and language, Student Nine moved quickly on to the positive aspects of being bilingual and bicultural.

I love being a Hispanic American because it’s my culture, and I am born in another country that’s very different from my parents, and it’s just pretty amazing like experiencing the differences and then growing up in two different cultures. Being Hispanic and knowing English you get to understand way more about what’s good for your future because if you know two languages, it could help a lot.

Student Nine shared that she spent three years in ELL, but during that time her parents were simultaneously teaching her how to read and write in Spanish. This set of parents also did not have more than a seventh grade education. Their patience in continuing to help her with her Spanish fluency and literacy while she was learning English helped her to always look at the benefits of being bilingual. Lacking any negative experience beyond being teased in Mexico for her Spanish, she continued to share her experiences taking Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish.

As a freshman, I started in Spanish 3, but that was not a good fit. I could already read and write a little, and I was pretty fluent. I was glad I was put into heritage and being around a

lot of Latinos and a class where you can actually talk Spanish. This year in AP it's more of a struggle because it's hard. I really enjoy that class though because I get to talk about my culture and other countries that speak Spanish, and I get to hear all the different dialects, and it makes me feel more Hispanic. So I feel it's a great experience to be around people who speak your same language.

Of the 10 students, her personal experiences of being Hispanic American included a confident and optimistic perspective of both of her cultures throughout the interview, often referencing the benefits of being bicultural and bilingual.

Student Ten. Student Ten began the answer to the opening question by recounting the struggles he had learning English. He felt insecure and lacked confidence because he always felt like he was behind everyone else, and this created some insecurity. His sharing changed quickly to a positive perspective as he stated the benefits of knowing two languages.

Now I actually understand English and I know how to read and do all that stuff like that. Since I'm older, it's turned around. Now that I know two languages, I'm ahead of other people. And I used to be behind. But that's how I feel. These are the two main languages so you benefit if you speak both of them.

Like Student Nine, he was "misplaced" in Spanish 3 as a freshman. Once in Heritage Spanish, he quickly improved his literacy skills. Now that he is in AP Spanish, he feels much more challenged but also more Hispanic, stating, "The more I learn Spanish, the more Hispanic I feel." At the same time, he shared that he continues to gain confidence as a Hispanic American.

Most people have one or the other, either Hispanic or American, but I feel like my knowledge is greater. I learn both and I experience both at the same time. They can only just learn about what it's like to be from another culture. But as I learn it, I'm a part of both

cultures. Someone can learn to read and write in another language but it will never be theirs.

I get to learn both and experience both as a person from that culture.

Core Themes and Initial Findings

At the core of this study was finding the common lived experiences among second-generation Hispanic adolescents and the influence of their language on cultural integration. Despite some of the negative experiences with their heritage language that occurred during their childhood, all participants eventually expressed the benefits of being bicultural and bilingual and a deep appreciation for their heritage culture and especially for their heritage language. An unexpected finding was that the more confident students were with their heritage language fluency, the more closely connected they felt to their heritage culture and, simultaneously, the more integrated into both cultures as they experienced how their fluency could help others and be beneficial for their future.

As I followed the process of data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009), notable themes emerged that I had seen in previous research, such as the influence of family support (Davis & Engel, 2011; Friesen, 2015), lack of family support (Friesen, 2015), language barriers (Skuzza, 2007), students serving as language brokers (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, et al., 2015) and the relationship between acculturation strategies and biculturalism (Ahani, 2016). From the data analysis for this research, four major themes emerged that provided a distinct perspective on the extent to which experiences with the heritage language influence the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. These themes included (1) changes to heritage fluency, (2) self-assurance and the heritage language, (3) peers as access to cultural integration, and (4) language course placement.

Theme 1: Changes to heritage fluency. The first core theme that emerged from the in-depth interviews was a change in students' fluency when speaking their heritage language once

they started to learn English. Students assumed that their Spanish would remain the same as they were simultaneously learning English. With their fluency changing, heritage students experienced increased comments and sometimes criticism from their native-speaking family members and friends. Many students felt a sense of shame elicited by the nature of the corrections, causing them to feel closed off from their heritage community. With students sensing an obvious separation between themselves and their English-speaking communities at school, an acculturative attitude of marginalization developed (Berry, 2009). When learning English, rather than moving closer to cultural integration, participants moved away from it. The subthemes fundamental to heritage fluency include (a) unexpected responses to shifts in heritage fluency when learning English; (b) emerging insecurities with diminishing fluency (c) host culture responses to the heritage language (d) lacking a sense of belonging (e) the power of positive correction.

Subtheme 1: Linguistic shifts in heritage fluency when learning English and unexpected responses from parents and members of the heritage community. In this first subtheme, 6 of the 10 participants discussed the unexpected responses they experienced as their heritage fluency began to diminish. According to the participants who shared this phenomenon, three shifts in their fluency occurred over time, beginning when they started ELL classes upon entering kindergarten in public school. Most prominently, their heritage accent changed. They noticed that they would start to pronounce words differently. Student Three shared, “At home, since I couldn’t pronounce words right, and I couldn’t find the right words, I would be made fun of. So I never participated in adult conversations.” Student Seven offered a similar experience: “I have an accent in Spanish, so that’s why I feel so different.” Student Eight remembers reading the Bible with the family at night, and “when it would come to me, he would tell me to read better and that my Spanish was horrible, which I already knew.”

Not only the accent, but changes in word order and lack of heritage vocabulary hindered their fluency. Student Two, trying to speak Spanish to her family, would sometimes subconsciously code-switch while communicating with her family by including English words in a sentence. Other times she would code-mix, combining a Spanish and English word to make a new word. This latter use of Spanglish, and the former code-switching would accomplish little since the heritage family and community did not have access to English words. These experiences happened during their years taking ELL classes in school, during a time when learning a second language under different circumstances would be lauded instead of laughed at (Merritt, 2013). Rather than being encouraged for their efforts to learn English, having never spoken it before entering public school, these seven students experienced teasing, mocking, and at times, critical comments from their own families, native-speaking friends, and members of the heritage community for the changes in their heritage fluency.

Subtheme 2: Emerging insecurities with diminishing fluency. Naturally, the participants became more insecure as they heard and recognized the changes in their heritage language. They expressed feelings of shame and embarrassment, making them uncomfortable to speak Spanish at home or in their community. Student Five, whose family wanted him to learn English but still speak Spanish remembered, “During that time I didn’t want to talk Spanish. I really didn’t want to sound dumb speaking Spanish in front of others. So I mostly wanted to talk English.” Student Eight’s responses were similar: “My dad would make comments about it. And I would hear my other Spanish-speaking friends who could speak better than me, and they would make fun of me, so I avoided speaking Spanish as much as possible.”

Student Two had experienced the same name calling as Student Three. Although she wanted to feel connected to her heritage community, “family members from Mexico would tell me I’m straight up ‘wetta’ (wanna’ be) cause I’m not really Mexican cause I can’t speak it right.”

Responses even caused hindrances in speech at times. Student Eight shared, “When I speak Spanish, sometimes I stutter because I feel so much pressure to speak correctly. A woman I didn’t even know once told me, ‘Tu tienes una cara de nopal.’ You have the face of a cactus. That means, you look Spanish; why don’t you speak it?”

Subtheme 3: Negative host culture responses to the heritage language. Along with feeling embarrassed about speaking their language in front of their own families and in their own communities, 6 of the 10 participants expressed similar feelings when speaking their language in public or around English speakers. Student Two recounted two recent experiences, one in a grocery store when shopping with her mother who was trying to translate something for the elderly grandmother. “A woman walked by and said, ‘It’s America. Speak English.’” She recalled another time sitting outside in a public area, speaking Spanish on the phone, “and someone was like, ‘English, do you not speak English?’ And it feels like you’re not welcome anywhere.”

Students Four, Six and Seven recalled similar experiences in grocery stores, having people tell them the same thing. Student Four added, “I used to not feel comfortable speaking Spanish in public. I used to feel unsafe because people would threaten us. I was scared to go to supermarkets.” Student Nine, the only participant who spoke positively when answering the open-ended question described a recent incident: “I was at Target two weeks ago with my dad, and we were speaking Spanish, and a woman kept glaring at us the whole time. She wouldn’t look away while we were talking.”

Subtheme 4: Heritage criticism of shifts in fluency and host criticism of the heritage language led to marginalization: Lacking a sense of belonging to either culture. As a result of the negative responses from both their heritage and host cultures, these students, at times, have experienced that speaking their heritage language made them disconnected from both their heritage and their host cultures. As Student One stated, “I couldn’t feel accepted from either side.”

Statements regarding a lack of belonging to either culture continued to emerge with Student Two's comment, "So I'm kind of in my unknown group in both cultures because I really don't know where I fit in." Student Eight's continued the theme, "There's this big question mark about me," and Student Three added, "After fifth grade, I was upset with my race, with my own people, because I spoke more English than Spanish." Student Seven's summation seems fitting: "Too American to be Mexican. Too Mexican to be American."

Subtheme 5: Parents who accepted and assisted with shifts in fluency led to integration:

A sense of belonging to both cultures. From the data collection, two participants had a positive outlook about their heritage language, even when they were teased for their lack of proper Spanish, both by family members here and family and friends in Mexico. The difference between these participants and the others was in the nature of the "teasing." Student Nine said that her parents had a supportive manner when correcting her Spanish, and would regularly reassure her about the benefits of their bicultural identity and being able to speak two languages. She continued, "When I'm in Mexico I have an accent so people laugh and tease me, but it's fun." Both Student Six and Student Nine said their parents consistently complimented them on their progress of learning English while still speaking Spanish, and their corrections did not carry any tone of criticism.

When Student Six experienced criticism from individuals in the host culture, "my mom would say, 'you've got to learn to accept what other people say and who they are. It's ok to be different if you speak a different language. She said don't let it get to you; don't let it get to you. Continue being who you are.'"

Theme 2: Self-assurance and the heritage language. While Theme 1 highlighted the shifts in heritage fluency that led to some participants' insecurities, a second core theme addressed the ways in which the heritage language, spoken with an accent or not, led students to feelings of self-assurance. From the in-depth interviews, nine out of 10 students shared an increased sense of

personal worth and satisfaction when using their heritage language to help others. Participants who began the interview recalling discouraging or disheartening memories about their heritage language eventually shifted the nature of their sharing when asked to share their perceptions of and feelings about their language. Inevitably, the participants turned the discussion to some aspect of helping others, whether at school, at home, or at work, and this changed the tone of their feelings about their heritage language and themselves. The subthemes that emerged when exploring the phenomenon of self-assurance and the heritage language included (a) helping Spanish-speaking peers at school, (b) helping customers at work, (c) future opportunities to help others, and (d) beauty and the heritage language.

Subtheme 1: Helping Spanish-speaking peers at school. Five of the 10 participants spoke of opportunities they have had to help their peers at school. Student One, a freshman who was insecure about her heritage fluency, shared that early in the school year, her math teacher called upon her to assist some of the Spanish-speaking peers in her class. At first nervous about how she would be received, she discovered that her Spanish was good enough to explain the content to her peers and they were grateful for her bilingual abilities. Student Two has found that using her bilingual skills to help her siblings with their homework has increased her appreciation for her heritage language. Student Six sat next to two first-generation students who look to her for help in English. By encouraging them with the challenging skills of close-reading and well-organized writing, she has found confirmation that she wants to help others in the future. Student Nine was an office aide in middle school, so at a younger age, she realized the value of her heritage language.

For Student Three, volunteering to tutor ELL students dramatically changed her perspective of her language and her past: “When I’m tutoring, the students I help hardly speak any English. When I say something wrong, the kids laugh at me, so then I laugh along, and I get it, so I’m kind of in the middle. So before, I used to be hurt and now I’m embracing the whole

experience and laugh about it.” Growing up, Student Three had been disheartened when laughed at by her “own race and people.” As a tutor, she started to understand that it is not always malicious and is now able to laugh at herself. After being valued for her heritage language, even with all of its verbal imperfections, she changed her mind about not wanting to study Spanish “Wanting to study Spanish came from helping Spanish students learn English. By doing that, by sharing my knowledge, I feel like I’m contributing to society and culture.” Student Three wanted to be an architect. But after tutoring, she stated, “I knew that that’s what I wanted to do; that’s what I really like to do: help others in my community.”

Subtheme 2: Helping customers at work. Students who have opportunities to use their heritage language at work found the same sense of self-assurance as those who helped their peers at school. Student Six shared that she is valued at her work in the law office. “Every day I go into work and they are so glad to see me. Spanish-speaking clients have called and I need to call them back. At the end of every day, they tell me how important I am to them.” Student Eight loved helping those who appreciate his skills and knows that he wants to improve his Spanish so he can contribute to his heritage community.

Student Four was hired because he was bilingual. Student Eight enjoyed helping his customers when they drive through the coffee stand where he works. Student Eight shared that he feels valued being the only one who can help Spanish-speaking customers, “I work fast food. And I’m the only one who speaks two languages, so my coworkers will call me back from the back and I’ll talk to customers.” As the only Spanish speaker at his stand, when a car of Spanish-speaking peers pulls up to order their coffee drinks, the employees would ask him to wait on them. “I admit I am intimidated by adults and always worry about the correctness of my Spanish. But when I talk to my peers, especially peers that need my help with something, I really appreciate my ability to

speak Spanish.” Although he did not help peers at school, helping peers outside of school at his work made him thankful for his heritage language.

Subtheme 3: Future opportunities to help. Five of the 10 participants spoke about their futures and the benefits they saw to being bilingual as a means of continuing to help others. Mentioned earlier, tutoring others caused Student Three to appreciate her bilingual skills, and now wants to minor in Spanish to help others in her community. Student Six was looking forward to being a pharmacist, motivated by the bilingual pharmacist who translates the prescription instructions to her mom. Student Nine, who was a premature baby, wants to be a neo-natal nurse, noting that from her experience in her heritage community, there are not enough Spanish-speaking nurses. These participants, and the others who want to use their heritage language to help their heritage community, saw their language as a benefit to themselves and others, and have a sense of self-assurance, knowing that they will be able to make a difference in both their heritage and host cultures. Student Seven, who earlier in the interview said he did not feel a sense of belonging to either culture, said of his heritage language when asked how he felt about it, “I really like speaking it. It makes me happy and excited because for me, speaking Spanish means I’m going to be able to help people.”

Subtheme 4: The beauty of the heritage language. Theme 2 is titled “Self-Assurance and the Heritage Language.” While the first three subthemes addressed helping others, this fourth theme, though purely aesthetic, provided an opportunity to elaborate on what six out of 10 students shared when asked to share feelings about their heritage language. “It’s beautiful,” is how they responded. Student Seven said, “I have no idea how to explain my language. I think it’s beautiful. I really like how smooth it sounds. English sounds so choppy. And I like speaking Spanish more than English. I just really like Spanish.” Student Eight, who tried to avoid speaking Spanish when growing up, said, “Our language is so beautiful. And when I hear all the different dialects, I think

Spanish is a very beautiful language.” Student Three mentioned, “I’ll be tutoring a student in Spanish, and all of sudden, I’ll hear us talking and think to myself, what a beautiful language.” Student Four, the participant who did not want anyone hearing him speak Spanish when he was younger, stated that now, “I love speaking Spanish. Everything sounds better in Spanish for me.”

Theme 3: Peers and the heritage language. Experiences with peers have already been shared in regards to participant experiences, both positive and negative: Spanish-speaking peers who needed help in school, those who were customers at work, and native-speaking peers spoke better Spanish and thus teased the participants for their accents or lack of fluency. As a core theme, however, both host and heritage peers played a significant role in encouraging students to appreciate their bicultural identity and bilingual skills, leading to two subthemes: (a) host peers and the heritage language, and (b) heritage peers and the heritage language.

Subtheme 1: Host peers and the heritage language. Four of the 10 participants mentioned that having American friends who accept them as they are has helped them appreciate their heritage language. Student Three had mostly American friends and shared her prior hesitance to say anything in Spanish around them. “I used to be embarrassed to speak Spanish. But now I’ll say something in front of my American friends. And they’ll say, ‘Oh say that again. It sounds so pretty.’” Student Six shared, “Growing up, I’ve had a bunch of friends that are non-Hispanic. And they’re very accepting of me being Hispanic. I think it’s pretty cool and it makes me feel proud because I can speak two different languages whenever I want.” Equally comfortable with her American friends, Student Nine stated, “I have a lot of Hispanic friends and a lot of white friends. We are very different from other cultures. I have a lot of white friends that want to know how to say things in Spanish. And some of my friends really wish they could speak two languages, and they think it’s pretty great that I can speak two languages.” When admired by their American

friends for speaking two languages, the participants increased their appreciation for their heritage language, making them feel proud to be bicultural and bilingual.

Subtheme 2: Heritage peers, code switching, and code mixing. While 10 out of 10 participants eventually shared the value they saw in their heritage language despite negative experiences when they were younger, six of 10 talked about their ability to mix words from both languages within sentences, and mix a Spanish word together with an English word called code-mixing, or in the students vernacular, Spanglish. Each of the participants who shared this phenomenon did so with vibrancy in their voice and their body language. Student Eight recalls working with his heritage coworkers at the bank.

We're all 2nd generation, so we lack that Spanish that's really good, so we all help each other, so when we help each other it's kind of comical, and we can't come up with a word and we mix our Spanish and English together to figure out how to communicate. And we tease each other, but it's a safe community and it's fine.

Participants had similar stories of knowing enough of both languages, but not being able to find the exact word they wanted in the moment. Student Six shared that she enjoyed having heritage friends.

I feel happy when I speak my language . . . I like the part of it we can go back and forth in English and Spanish. So we do speak a lot of English and Spanish mixed, we speak Spanglish, but um, yeah. We kind of throw it all together.

Student Two appreciates the uniqueness of being heritage speakers, and said that Spanglish is fun, a language that only those who are bilingual can manage or understand.

There's a language we call Spanglish, and that's when I feel we're bringing both together. And even if I'm not completely speaking Spanish, I'm still feeling American because I'm

putting English in it. When I can relate to someone else who I know is from both cultures, that's when I can bring them together.

Student One seemed to enjoy this question the most. Her enthusiasm and excitement talking about this skill showed in her hands as she was emoting and speaking about her friends borrowing from both languages, and through her wording, she expressed the equal fervor with which the other participants spoke.

In English, I'm kind of like oh what was that word again? And then in Spanish, I'll Spanglish it up so it's like both languages colliding with each other. Usually when it's a hard complex sentence in Spanish or if it's a hard complex sentence in English, I'll like mix them up and that's where I'll get both of my cultures interacting with each other.

Theme 4: Language course selection. The fourth, and final, question specific to the heritage language asked participants to share the language course they chose to study. This interview question aligned with research question which focused on the influence of language course selection on experiences with the heritage language. By sharing their choices of whether or not to pursue a formal study of their heritage language, students were able to discuss who was the most influential in making that choice, what was the ultimate motivation for their decisions, and what recommendations they would make to other heritage students.

In this study, Spanish refers to Spanish acquisition for native-English speakers. Spanish 4/5 is a combined class of fourth and fifth year Spanish students. Heritage Spanish refers to a course where all verbal and written instruction is in Spanish; it assumes students are fluent and have some basic literacy skills. In the course, students strengthen their reading and writing skills, improve their Spanish vocabulary acquisition, learn to speak more formally, and study Spanish cultures around the world. AP Spanish for this school refers to AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage speakers and is the next step for heritage speakers who want to study Spanish at a

college-level. Subthemes for this Theme 4 include (a) French, (b) Spanish, (c) Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish.

Subtheme 1: French. Three of the participants chose to study French, much for the same reason. All felt confident enough in their heritage skills to try another language. Student Eight, the least confident, had always been embarrassed about speaking his heritage language. Taking Heritage Spanish at his middle school in eighth grade, and working at a Mexican restaurant during that time, he improved his Spanish enough to try another language in high school.

Students Four and Six took French, since they too were confident of their fluency. Student Four had taken Heritage Spanish in middle school, and Student Six was also confident of her literacy, having been taught to read and write at home by her parents. All three students expressed a love of French and a sense of pride in having studied three languages. Recounted in more detail in their individual profiles, these students' experiences with French allowed them to appreciate their heritage language by seeing its usefulness in helping them to understand a third language. When asked about recommendations, they all felt that students who were confident with their fluency, and who had some literacy, would be successful in French.

Subtheme 2: Spanish. Six of 10 participants took Spanish or, at least, started Spanish. Because they were already fluent, they were placed in Spanish 3. At this higher level, two of the six students liked Spanish and appreciated what they were learning, even though they realized they could have been learning more in a Heritage Spanish class. For Student Two, 3 years of Spanish was easy, and although she did not improve her fluency, she saw some improvement in her literacy. Nervous that Heritage would be too hard, she was satisfied with what she learned in her 3 years of Spanish.

Student Three was moved to Spanish 4 her junior year after a difficult sophomore year in Heritage Spanish. The class had been too fast-paced, her classmates were much more fluent, and

she was not literate in Spanish, so was behind most of the year. In Spanish 4, her confidence improved because she was more fluent than her native English-speaking peers in the class. The slower pace allowed her to build her literacy skills. She enjoyed when her peers complimented her on her Spanish and told her how lucky she was to be fluent. She always returned the compliment by saying they can read and write a lot better than she can, so they should be proud of that. She also found that she, and the few other heritage peers in the class, would laugh at the students and their accents. Reminded of the way she had been laughed at, she came to realize again that it was all in fun. None of the students took offense, and she learned, as she had from the students she tutored, that when someone laughs at an accent, it does not mean to be an insult.

Placed in Spanish 4/5 his sophomore year while simultaneously taking French, Student Eight stated his experience in Spanish made him feel like he did not know Spanish. The students could barely speak it and he thought, “Wow, am I this bad that I don’t know Spanish and have to be in with this group? I definitely felt like an American being in that class.”

Student Five took Spanish his sophomore year and learned quite a bit under a Spanish-speaking teacher, even though she often had to slow down for the other students. Instead of moving to Heritage Spanish next, he chose to continue in Spanish 4 and 5 under an English-speaking teacher. He spoke honestly.

I was too lazy to do all the work for Heritage. I wanted the easy A. I have not improved as much as I thought I would. I mean I was expecting my grammar and stuff to get a lot better. I still see that I’ve improved but not as much as I thought I would.

Students Nine and Ten were placed in Spanish 3 as freshman and requested a transfer to Heritage Spanish after a few weeks, realizing that they were both too fluent and literate for the class. Student Seven took Spanish 3 freshman year, and Spanish 4 junior year, with a year of Heritage in between and found them all to be too easy. Since he had been helping his mom with

her daily living activities from the time he was 5-years old, such as calling landlords, negotiating power bills, and translating for her doctors' appointments, he was already fairly literate in Spanish (Roche et al., 2015). Not until AP Spanish would he find a Spanish course that would truly challenge him.

Subtheme 3: Heritage Spanish. Students who enroll in Heritage Spanish know that while the pace of the course may be slow, the fluency of instruction will be fast. Therefore, students who take Heritage Spanish should speak only Spanish in the home and should have basic literacy skills. As mentioned above, when Student Three took Heritage Spanish, she found it daunting. Despite the teacher's praises of her efforts in reading and writing, she found the other students' fluency intimidating and her basic literacy skills lacking. Therefore, a class like Heritage Spanish was a better fit for students like Student Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten, however, Student Seven still found it too easy.

Students Eight, Nine and Ten enjoyed the fluency of their fellow students and the improvement in their literacy skills. Student Nine shared that unlike her few weeks in Spanish 3, "I was glad I was put into heritage and being around a lot of Latinos and a class where you can actually talk Spanish." Even though other students in the class spoke better Spanish, the participants knew they would gain the literacy skills they wanted in order to go forward into AP Spanish. These three students also had other benefits that made the class the proper fit for them. Student Eight had taken Heritage Spanish in eighth grade, and Students Nine and Ten were both taught to read and write by their parents so they all in with literacy skills.

One of the components of Heritage Spanish is the study of other cultures. Students shared that they enjoyed learning about other cultures, having never studied them before. This was an element that made the class more enjoyable for them and increased their interest in their heritage language and culture. With the challenging curriculum and the increased cultural awareness and

appreciation, all three students did well, with Students Nine and Ten sharing that they were able to get As without too much extra work.

Subtheme 4: AP Spanish language and culture for heritage speakers. Getting easy As changed with AP Spanish Language and Culture. All the students were surprised at how much more challenging it was than Heritage Spanish. The level of rigor was higher than they had expected, along with the demand for excellence in academic writing. Since the AP Spanish Language exam includes a speaking component, the students also had to learn to speak formally and with academic fluency. For Students Nine and Ten, once they began the AP course, they soon realized the difference in rigor. Student Ten shared, “AP is a whole ‘nother level. That one’s more challenging. Last year I got straight As and this year I got 2 Bs. I’m ready to take this on. The expectations are higher in AP and I have to work.” Student Nine’s experience was similar, but worth the Bs, since she liked knowing that she was being prepared for her future career as a bilingual neo-natal nurse.

The true benefit of AP Spanish for heritage students came with the testimony of Student Seven. For the first time in all of the easy Spanish classes he had taken, including Heritage Spanish, Student Seven found AP Spanish to be the only Spanish class that had demanded more of him and pushed him to excel. He could not just read a story quickly and pass a test. He had to read to comprehend, “to read like in a normal English class.”

I could do ok in the class but I never knew if I could pass the tests if I didn’t actually do the work. It actually pushed me to read and write and to work. I even wanted to drop because it was so hard. But then the teacher told me about the Biliteracy Seal, and that was something I really wanted. So I stayed. For my ego. And I’m very happy because I passed the exam and earned the seal, and it got me the job I have now.

More importantly, Student Seven shared an element of his experience that demonstrated in a poignant way what it was like for a heritage student to finally be in an advanced course that met him at his intellectual capacity. He also discovered that he could be successful while being academically challenged because he did not also have to struggle to comprehend English, as he had to in his other classes.

When I took [AP Spanish], I realized for the first time, this must be what it's like to speak English and learn English and really understand what the teacher is saying. For the first time, I felt like an American in a classroom, being pushed in my own language. For a student who has struggled all of his life to find a way to live successfully in both cultures AP Spanish was the course that made him finally feel culturally integrated, not through friends, not through work, and not through helping others, but through the academic and intellectual pursuit of his heritage language.

Research Questions

RQ1. In what ways do second-generation Hispanic adolescents feel that their experience with their heritage language influences their cultural integration?

This phenomenological study revealed findings relative to the ways in which lived experiences with the heritage language influenced the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. From the data collection of in-depth interviews, experiences of the participants collectively demonstrated that when students were entering public school around the age of five, and had only spoken Spanish in the home until that point, entrance into ELL programs, and daily immersion in the English language through instruction and social interaction, altered the fluency of their heritage language. This alteration was noticeable enough for students to receive comments, correction, teasing and sometimes criticism from family, friends, and members of their

Hispanic community. These responses often caused insecurities, making the participants feel apprehensive and hesitant to speak Spanish for fear of making mistakes.

These experiences were compounded by experiences when speaking their heritage language in public, where members of the host culture would glare at them or criticize them publicly for speaking Spanish. From these two places of criticism, particularly taking place during young and impressionable ages, participants grew up lacking a sense of belonging to either culture. In this way, their bicultural identity was in jeopardy, as they did not feel a part of either their host or their heritage culture. Their bilingual skills were equally in danger, since many chose not to participate in adult conversation at home, a place where they could best develop greater fluency in their heritage language. Consequently, the acculturative attitudes of marginalization were present as these second-generation Hispanic adolescents were moving away from cultural integration due to the negative influences of their heritage language brought about by members of their host culture, but also significantly by members of their heritage culture.

Adolescents who received positive reinforcement for learning a new language, and whose parents continued to speak Spanish to them at home, reading with them regularly and offering positive redirection when receiving negative comments from the host cultures, seemed better able to accept their changes in fluency. Despite their years in ELL, the constant reinforcement at home helped these participants with their transitions as they exited the program and entered the classroom full time. Comfortable with the natural progression of both their heritage and host languages, these students advanced toward attitudes of cultural integration.

RQ2. In what ways do parents and peers influence Hispanic adolescents' perspective of their heritage language and cultural integration?

Parental influence was discussed in Research Question 1 in both positive and negative ways as influencing adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration.

Parental influence continued to address this research question, as parents were seen as the main encouragers of the students speaking Spanish, implied through the parental requirements that participants speak Spanish in the home, even in homes where parents could speak English. By doing so, parents were the primary motivators to preserve the heritage language and cultural component of the students' biculturalism and bilingualism. Speaking Spanish in the home helped students select their language course of study, particularly in those homes where parents helped their children read and write in Spanish, giving them the ability to possibly be more successful in a foreign language or Heritage Spanish.

In the research, participants who could help Spanish-speaking peers struggling with their homework found an increased appreciation of their heritage language. Tutoring helped participants value their own skills in speaking their heritage language. For one participant, tutoring helped to redeem past painful experiences of being teased. Participants also found that having friends from the host culture gave them the opportunity to enjoy being able to speak two languages. These friends were often complimenting the participants on the beauty of their language or telling the participants how lucky they were to be bilingual. Compliments such as these boosted the participants' self-confidence and increased appreciation for their bicultural identity, their bilingual skills and their heritage language.

Spanglish, the combination of Spanish and English spoken among friends from their heritage culture, provided participants with a fun outlet that showed them how adept they were at borrowing from both languages to create a new one, a skill that only bilingual students can execute. Instead of becoming frustrated that they could not access a word or phrase in their two languages, they felt proud to have an effortless command of both languages that allowed them to communicate fluently with each other, making them feel integrated into both cultures.

RQ3. In what ways does the school, and its heritage language course offerings, influence Hispanic adolescents' perspectives of their heritage language and cultural integration?

The research showed that two of the participants took French, confident enough in their Heritage skills to try a new language. They reported the benefit of their heritage language as they sometimes used it to assist them in finding words in French or understanding aspects of its language. Beyond this, taking French did not seem to enhance or influence their perspective of their heritage language. Mostly, it gave them a connection to the American experience of what it is like to study a foreign language. It also gave them confidence to say that they were trilingual.

Other participants experienced being placed in classes by their counselors that were not the best fit. One student was placed in Heritage who was eventually better served in Spanish. Three participants were placed in Spanish who were better served in Heritage. Heritage students who took Spanish for three years did not feel that they had improved their fluency much, nor their literacy, although two students did find improvements in some basic language skills. Spanish was frustrating at times for heritage speakers because of its slow pace and lack of potential improvement in fluency and vocabulary acquisition. One student admitted learning more in one year of Heritage Spanish than two advanced years of Spanish. Some students in Spanish felt less Hispanic after hearing their peers speak Spanish at such a basic level. Some students felt more Hispanic because they were more fluent than their peers in the class.

The school's course offerings made it possible for Heritage speakers to improve their heritage literacy and fluency by offering Heritage Spanish classes that had increasing levels of rigor with each year. Several heritage students found Heritage Spanish easy, but when moving into AP Spanish, discovered that college-level Spanish was much more demanding. When heritage participants were learning the nuances of their language that would make them more fluent, expand their vocabulary, and increase their skills, they became confident in their own language,

making them feel more Hispanic, connected more to their heritage language and culture. Experiencing what it was like to sit in an AP course, participants noted positive feelings, challenged to learn the academic aspects of their heritage language but in a way where they did not have to contend with a lack of comprehension. This lived experience provided them a true rigor, pushing them academically in their heritage language, so they thought, as one student suggested, “this is what it’s like to be an American and learn English.”

Chapter 4 Summary

This phenomenological study was designed to examine the ways in which second-generation Hispanic adolescents’ experiences with their heritage language influenced their cultural integration. Ten participants were selected, ages 15-19, born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent. These participants spoke Spanish in the home, and they claimed Spanish as their first and primary language. Through the research, it was discovered that they all entered public school speaking only Spanish and were placed in an ELL program until which time they could exit, anywhere between 2-6 years, having learned enough of the fundamentals of the English language to have the potential for succeeding in school.

Through in-depth interviews, participants provided rich, thick descriptive detail of their lived experiences with their heritage language. Participants shared negative experiences with their heritage language that moved them away from feelings of cultural integration and positive experiences that correlated with a move toward cultural integration. After close and careful data analysis, in which I bracketed myself out of the data, I transformed meaning units into thematic structures (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009). This process allowed me to discover and organize the emerging themes and, from there, the common phenomenon that would substantiate the study and reveal the participants’ acculturative attitudes and behaviors as they found themselves being influenced by their experiences with their heritage language.

Overall, the design of the research showed that second-generation Hispanic participants' experiences with their heritage language most likely influenced attitudes of cultural integration. When the experiences were negative from their heritage community, and they simultaneously were unable to feel connected to their host community, participants were more likely to move away from integration and adopt an attitude of marginalization, feeling like they did not belong to either culture. When the experiences were positive from their heritage and host communities, they were more likely to move toward, and adopt, the acculturative attitude and behavior of integration. In one case, a participant noted that he shed his heritage language when he was embarrassed about sounding incompetent in Spanish and adopted an attitude of assimilation, avoiding Spanish altogether and improving his English. But then, when he found greater benefits within his heritage culture, he decreased his efforts to improve his English and increased his efforts to learn Spanish. He became more competent in his heritage language and adopted an attitude of separation.

Ten out of 10 students mentioned experiences with their heritage language when asked to tell about their experiences as Hispanic Americans, suggesting that most likely, narratives of bicultural experience will include the influence of the heritage language. Participants reported that their identities as either Hispanic or American, or both, were more closely linked to their heritage language than expected. Ultimately, when given the time to discuss the myriad experiences with their heritage language, the participants concluded that the benefits of speaking their heritage language, and of being bilingual, outweighed the challenges they faced in earlier years. They also acknowledged the ways in which speaking their heritage language would serve them positively in the future.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. In this chapter, I summarize and discuss the results of the study and examine them in relation to the way they address each of the research questions. Following this is a discussion of the results in relation to the existing literature. From there, I present the limitations of the study and the implications of the results for practice, policy, and theory, and then I will provide recommendations for further research. The chapter concludes with a description of my experience with this qualitative research project.

Summary of the Results

Data analysis of the research revealed four major themes that contributed to the results of the study, and synthesis of themes provided answers to the research questions. The four themes were changes in heritage fluency, self-assurance and the heritage language, peers and the heritage language, and language course selection, each of which is discussed in detail in the next section. These themes provided evidence that addressed the research questions, which will be summarized here. Details of the themes will be discussed in the next section.

From in-depth interviews, participants reported that negative experiences with their heritage language had stronger tendencies to discourage them away from cultural integration and towards marginalization as they were growing up. These feelings came as a result, more often, from their heritage community when critical comments were made about the changes to their heritage fluency. In some cases, participants tended toward assimilation, wanting to shed their heritage language altogether and simply learn and speak only English. Positive experiences with their heritage language, from both host and heritage communities, strongly tended to encourage students to adopt an attitude of cultural integration (Parry, 2010; Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Participants stated that their parents wanted them to keep speaking their heritage language and to learn English. Nevertheless, participants reported that experiences of utilizing their bilingual skills to assist others at school, work, and home, along with positive comments from their host peers about their bilingual skills, had the greatest tendency to encourage feelings of cultural integration and a desire to maintain their language (Medina, Guzmán, & Wong-Radcliffe, 2015; Snyder-Hogan, 2010)

Regarding language course selection, participants noted that placement in Spanish tended to help heritage students who spoke some Spanish in the home and had few literacy skills, but would most likely will not improve fluency. Participants who took French noted that their heritage language tended to be useful in helping them with vocabulary and sentence structure. Though it did not improve heritage fluency or literacy, studying a foreign language led to identification with the American culture, since many schools require students to study a foreign language for two years as a graduation requirement. Studying French also gave these participants the confidence that comes with knowing three languages.

Participants who took Heritage Spanish reported that those who were not as fluent and did not have basic literacy skills would most likely feel unsuccessful in a Heritage class. Based on their experiences, a less fluent and literate student would tend to have feelings of insecurity about their heritage language. These insecurities might possibly move them away from attitudes of integration. Participants suggested that feelings of assimilation would likely develop when students experienced the differences in their lack of fluency. In this way, the heritage language could cause a student to feel more American than Hispanic, distanced from the other heritage students in the class because of their lack of skills. On the other hand, participants suggested that those who took Heritage Spanish and spoke mostly Spanish in the home, who also had basic literacy skills, tended to experience improvements in literacy and some improvement in fluency. Participants who had

this experience in Heritage Spanish reported that they felt more Hispanic: more closely connected to their heritage culture.

Participants who took AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers reported a more challenging curriculum than what they experienced in Heritage Spanish with noticeably greater gains in academic fluency and literacy. They also noted stronger tendencies toward cultural integration, feeling more Hispanic as their fluency and literacy improved, and feeling more American from having access to the rigor of the content without having to struggle with issues of English comprehension. Students also mentioned feeling more prepared for future career opportunities as they were becoming more proficient in fluency and literacy: speaking, listening, reading and writing. All participants who took Heritage Spanish strongly recommended students continue on to AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers.

Discussion of the Results

This phenomenological study was designed to examine the ways in which second-generation Hispanic adolescents' experiences with their heritage language influenced their cultural integration. Ten participants were selected, ages 15-19, born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent, making them second-generation Hispanic adolescents. These participants spoke mostly Spanish in the home, and they claimed Spanish as their first language, even though English might be their primary language now. Through the research, it was discovered that they shared another common phenomenon: all entered public school speaking only Spanish and were placed in an English Language Learner's (ELL) program until such time they could exit, having learned enough of the fundamentals of the English language to have the potential for succeeding in school. The amount of time spent in the ELL program ranged from 2-6 years.

This research was grounded in Berry's (2009) acculturation theory, and more specifically the acculturative attitudes and behaviors of cultural integration, as the lens through which to

examine the participants' experiences with their heritage language. With a view on cultural integration, I noted significant statements during the in-depth interviews that revealed moments when participants admitted their experiences with their heritage language made them feel integrated into both cultures, Hispanic and American (Kapke, 2015; Lilley, 2013; Lopez, Ehly, & Garcia-Vasquez, 2002). Also important to the study were experiences that led away from integration into attitudes of separation, assimilation and marginalization (Berry, 2005; Sallee & Tierney). All four acculturative attitudes were present at some point during the interviews as participants recounted positive and negative experiences with their heritage language.

The in-depth interviews produced rich and detailed narratives, as students reflected on their experiences with their heritage language and how those experiences influenced their attitudes about what it means for them to be bicultural. Participants considered their heritage language in relation to aspects of their home, school, and work lives. With questions about course study, they discussed its influences on their heritage language development, and made recommendations for future heritage speakers. From the research, four themes emerged unique to this study, which indicated that the second-generation Hispanic participants' attitudes of cultural integration were influenced by the nature of their experiences with their heritage language.

Theme 1: Changes to heritage fluency. This first core theme can be summed up in Student Two's comments on her feelings about her heritage language, "People assume oh if you speak Spanish you're ok, you feel confident, everything's fine, but it's not fine. We panic too." This participant explained that she would panic and have anxiety when she would speak Spanish to friends and family members and know she would be corrected. She added, "That's when I feel extremely American, because you can see you're not fluent like them and you're different in a way." Knowing that they were changing and becoming different from their family and members of their Hispanic community began for all ten participants when they entered public school and were

placed in an English Language Learners (ELL) program. This is when they started to experience noticeable changes to their heritage fluency.

Subtheme 1: Linguistic shifts in heritage fluency when learning English and unexpected responses from parents and members of the heritage community. Born into Spanish-speaking homes with Spanish as their first language, all 10 participants entered kindergarten knowing no English. Placed in ELL classes, they began to notice shifts over time in their heritage language. The more they became fluent in English, the more trouble they had remaining fluent in Spanish. They started to develop an accent in their own language. They could hear their fluency mistakes before they spoke them but did not have the knowledge to fix them. In addition, they started to have trouble accessing vocabulary in Spanish with their minds immersed in English all day. With the syntax of English sentences often contrary to that of Spanish, participants noted they would mix up their words when speaking Spanish, struggling with grammar and the placement of subjects and verbs.

While all 10 participants shared some aspect of their childhood experiences learning English, six of the 10 students spoke specifically about the negative reactions they were receiving at home and from members of their Hispanic community as a result of these changes to their heritage fluency. Their parents, younger siblings, native-speaking friends, neighbors, or members of their Hispanic community would tease them when they “messed up.” Participants might be laughed at, corrected and sometimes criticized. Student Eight would become so nervous when he had to speak Spanish to an adult that he would stutter, aware of all the imperfections in his Spanish. Some students who had trouble remembering words in Spanish would create a word by combining English and Spanish together, or use English and Spanish words in the same sentence, a skill that demonstrates a sophisticated proficiency of both languages (Price, 2010). Unfortunately, members of the Hispanic community would not recognize this as a skill and, instead, would tease, correct

and criticize more. Ironically, these were the same parents and people who were encouraging their children to learn English while requiring them to speak Spanish at home but were unaware that changes to the heritage language would occur when learning a new language at such a young age. Even though adults meant no harm, these injurious responses to shifts in the participants' heritage fluency shaped the already insecure and vulnerable students in the early formative stages of their bicultural identity. It is important to note that aside from Student Eight, the participants reported being raised in caring and supportive homes. Therefore, despite the otherwise welcoming environment in their homes, the students were still remembering negative experiences that shaped their memories about their heritage language.

Subtheme 2: Emerging insecurities with diminishing fluency. As the participants continued to develop their English skills, and the comments from their heritage community persisted, they noted that feelings of insecurity began to emerge. They were still fluent in Spanish, but the language and grammatical errors became more noticeable as they got older. This caused feelings of helplessness as the English language was becoming embedded in their minds along with their Spanish. Expecting to improve equally in both, having been told that by their ELL teachers, they could see that the increase of fluency in the host language led to a decrease of fluency in the heritage language, along with an equally diminishing self-confidence.

These participants had their own responses to the shifts in their heritage language and the negative responses from their family and community, such as the helplessness, anxiety, and embarrassment already mentioned. The mounting insecurities also manifested themselves when participants would be invited to join in on adult conversations, either around the family table at home or at events where members of the Hispanic community would gather. Participants would often excuse themselves from family or group discussions to avoid potential comments or mocking. Ironically, it is in these adult conversations that they would have had the very opportunities that

would have helped them maintain and develop their heritage fluency (Medina, et al, 2015; Nell, 2010). Unaware of the changes, and unprepared for the responses from their heritage community, participants stated they continued to have this attitude through most of their elementary and middle school years.

Subtheme 3: Negative host culture responses to the heritage language. Comments from members of the host culture were also disconcerting. Participants recollected individuals telling them, “It’s America. Speak English,” or “Learn the Language,” or “Go back to Mexico. These comments were unsettling, even though Students Two and Five shared that they were somewhat expected, having heard them growing up (Bernal, 2017; Guadalupe, 2016). The participants shared stories of reproach in grocery stores, parking lots, discount stores, and other public places, recalling feelings of fear and nervousness. Student Two reported that once when she heard someone say, “It’s America. Go back to your damn country,” she was shocked and afraid, not having experienced that level of harshness or the ease with which the individual spoke such callous words. Student Two continued, “it feels like you’re not welcome somewhere. So it’s really uncomfortable because you’re not accepted for who you are.”

Although participants did not share negative responses from classmates as they were growing up, they felt different because of their time in ELL classes, naturally separated from the mainstream classes for portions of the day. Participants reported hearing their accents when speaking English, hearing the differences between the ways in which they were pronouncing words and forming sentences compared to their classmates. Student Five wanted to hide any trace of his Spanish so worked hard to practice his English, “I didn’t want others to think I didn’t know English.” Student Seven recalled, “I was actually embarrassed about speaking Spanish in elementary school. And I pretended I didn’t know. And no one ever questioned it. Because I didn’t

have an [English] accent.” Other participants recounted similar experiences, exerting efforts to learn English so they did not sound different from their peers.

The natural conflict of host and heritage cultures often occurs in moments and years like these, where young individuals in the heritage culture continue to have to establish their identity as a credible member of the host culture (Beaudrie, 2011; Calero, et al., 2014). Experiences with the heritage language did influence the negotiation of identity in the minds of these young children. Growing up, they knew their accent when speaking English betrayed a full and credible participation as a host member (Berry, Poortinga, Bruefelmans, Chasiotis & Sam, 2011). In addition, negative responses from host individuals in public, and outside of school, seemed to influence participants’ experiences in school where they otherwise may have experienced no negative responses. This is because they tended to project the attitudes of individuals in the host culture onto the elementary school classmates surrounding them at school (Dixon, 2008; Kapke, 2015).

Subtheme 4: Heritage criticism of shifts in fluency and host criticism of the heritage language led to marginalization: Lacking a sense of belonging to either culture. While participants noted feelings of distress from individuals in both their heritage and host communities, criticism from the heritage community seemed to exact the greatest acculturative influence away from cultural integration into feelings of marginalization. In order to underscore the uniqueness of the participants’ developing attitudes, it is important to review what was mentioned earlier in Subtheme 1: participants were being raised in homes where they reported their parent, or parents, as supportive, caring and loving. The participants did not have hostile relationships with their parents or with friends and members from their Hispanic community. This made the participants’ attitude of marginalization unique. Since it was specifically influenced by the verbal response to

the heritage language and not any kind of verbal rejection of the child, the children took those critical responses and applied them to their cultural identity.

These participants used acculturative language as they relayed their experiences (Berry, 2009; Kapke, 2015). Struggling to hold on to their Spanish and not knowing enough English to feel confident at school, they talked about “not feeling a part of any culture,” of “struggling to belong,” “embarrassed about speaking either language,” and “not knowing where they fit in.” Student One’s response best summarized this attitude: “I couldn’t feel accepted from either side.” These responses describe Berry’s (2009) acculturative attitudes of marginalization: unable or unwilling to participate in, or feel accepted by, their host or heritage communities. Behaviors of marginalization that resulted from the attitudes of these participants were the ways in which they withdrew from both of their societies, unwilling to participate in either. Therefore, attitudes and behaviors of marginalization were present in the lives of these six participants. Although four of the participants remembered this happening as they were growing up, two participants recalled more recent negative experiences with their language. They expressed the same sense of being unable to feel fully accepted in the Hispanic community unless their Spanish was perfect.

Besides feelings of marginalization occurring in supportive family homes, what made this more of an unexpected finding was that participants began with this sharing when answering the opening question about their experiences being Hispanic American. In other words, the question about experiences with the heritage language had not yet been asked. Therefore, participants chose to describe their experiences of insecurities with their heritage language when asked only to report about experiences being Hispanic American. This suggested a possible correlation between the participants’ bicultural identity and the influences of their heritage language fluency on that identity. Since participants already felt disconnected from their host community at school due to struggles with the host language, and public comments of rebuke, they tended towards feelings of

separation: an acculturative move back in to the heritage culture. However, when the heritage culture appeared to reject them for their diminishing fluency in the heritage language, they had no other culture to turn to. Therefore, participants tended to adopt acculturative attitudes of marginalization, lacking a sense of belonging to either culture, when they felt a sense of rejection from their own community.

Subtheme 5: Parents who accepted and assisted with shifts in fluency led to integration:

A sense of belonging to both cultures. Only two participants offered ways in which the responses from their heritage community helped them as they were learning English. Their experiences provided significant insight into ways that the heritage community might be able to assist with potentially helping to transform their children's feelings of marginalization into feelings of integration. In the case of this study, all parents had no more than a seventh grade education but knew enough to be somewhat literate in their own language. They could not help their children with English, however, the parents who read to their children in Spanish and worked with them on basic writing skills in Spanish, were able to help their children continue to work on their heritage fluency while the children were simultaneously learning English. Student Six shared her experience of being read to every night in Spanish, while Student Ten recounted his experience with writing.

In Mexico there's a lot of illiterate people, they both know how to read and write and the farthest they went in Mexico was to the 8th grade. And one day out of curiosity, I don't know how we got to that point, I asked them how to write in Spanish. And we went from there.

Although Student Ten stated that he struggled with English when he was younger, he did not experience the correction or criticism in the same way as the other students did. His parents told him that knowing two languages would always be beneficial for him, but unlike some of the

other parents, their words of encouragement were consistent with the way they supported the development of his heritage fluency. Overall, these two participants' experiences demonstrated that separation, staying connected to only the heritage culture, is preferred over marginalization, until the individual can become comfortable with the host culture.

Theme 2: Self-assurance and the heritage language. As participants continued to recount their experiences with their heritage language, a common theme emerged that validated their bicultural identity. Nine out of 10 participants noted that opportunities to help other Spanish speakers gave them a sense of self-worth and satisfaction. Even though they had recounted difficult experiences with their language when younger that had made them feel marginalized, they shared with equal commitment the ways in which using their bilingual skills makes them value their heritage language. Participants reported feeling a greater sense of purpose when helping others, which corresponded to studies on mental health that presented the influence that giving to, or serving others, has on one's overall well-being (Carter, 2010; Ward, 2014; Wenner, 2007). With this in mind, the subthemes of helping peers, helping customers at work, and even thinking about helping others in the future, emerged as motivators for self-confidence. In addition, the theme of self-assurance also emerged when students were asked to share their thoughts and feelings about their heritage language, with six of 10 declaring it a beautiful language, one they "love" to speak and to hear spoken

Subtheme 1: Helping Spanish-speaking peers at school. During participants' early years, school was a place that could produce insecurities and fears, especially as they were learning to navigate the English language and culture. For five of the 10 participants, knowing that their bilingual skills could help improve the situation of a Spanish-speaking peer brought great personal satisfaction. Their ability to successfully translate for their peers, so the students they helped could have success in school, gave meaning to the purpose and worth of their heritage language.

For Student Three, being mocked for her language by family and friends in her Hispanic community caused feelings of marginalization while growing up, but she had two opportunities for growth; the first was tutoring students in the ELL program. Although she had felt insecure about her fluency and literacy skills after a disappointing experience taking Heritage Spanish, she saw that she could still help those students who spoke less English than she did. Additionally, she gained a great advantage in overcoming her insecurities from the past. She reported that when she tutored she hardly spoke any English, so the students would laugh at her Spanish accent and her misuse of words, reminding her of experiences when she was younger and when she had taken Heritage Spanish. Similarly, she would laugh at the mistakes they made when speaking English. Because of their close tutorial relationship, however, she realized there was no malcontent on her part or theirs, and she learned to laugh at herself. It was in these interchanges where those she tutored helped her to rethink and redeem her experiences with her childhood.

The second opportunity for this participant came when she took Spanish. During her year in Heritage Spanish, when she would answer questions in class, her classmates would laugh at her making her feel insecure about her fluency errors. But the following year, when taking Spanish with native-English speakers, she laughed at her classmates' struggling fluency. In that class, she reassured them that she could help them with their fluency, and they could help her with her literacy. At this point in her narrative, Student Three admitted, "We all laugh, and I laugh, and I get it . . . So before, I used to be hurt and now I'm embracing the whole experience and laugh about it."

For participants who helped their Spanish-speaking peers, views about their heritage language improved, confidence in their bilingual and biliteracy skills developed, and the significant benefits to the social emotional wellbeing of the participants underlined the benefits of their experiences (Carter, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2008). The school environment that for many

years felt foreign to these participants began to feel increasingly more familiar as they naturally integrated by helping others succeed.

Subtheme 2: Helping customers at work. The same acculturative attitude and benefits that came from experiences with helping their peers were duplicated when helping customers at work. Participants reported feelings of significance when others valued their skills, whether they were hired for their bilingual skills, or whether their employers were asking them to use their bilingual skills on the job. All of the participants felt appreciated when asked to help Spanish-speaking customers. Five of the students were the only bilingual workers at their jobs, making them feel invaluable. Co-workers and adults alike relied on these participants to assist Spanish-speaking customers, and the feelings of being needed by both cultures secured in them a sense of belonging to both cultures. Student Five, who fluctuated along the unidimensional scale between assimilation and separation, found it “cool” as his fast food co-workers relied upon him to help their Hispanic customers. When considering this aspect of his abilities, he added, “Now I think speaking two languages is powerful.” At the law firm where she was hired to do simple clerical work, Student Six reported being greeted every day with Hispanic clients to call on and regular verbal appreciation for her skills and abilities that added value to the office environment.

Student Seven struggled with a sense of belonging when younger. He found a new sense of self-worth, though, when he sought employment from, and was hired almost immediately by, the doctor’s office where he had been a language broker (Roche, et al., 2015) for his ailing mother. The doctor acknowledged his facility with translating medical conditions, questions, and recommendations, a skill he attributed to his challenging but rewarding year in AP Spanish. He saw his hard work from that year pay off with a job that would help him start his career. Not only that, but the doctor needed proof of his bilingual and biliterate proficiency. By providing his State of Oregon Biliteracy Certificate and Seal, Student Seven had official proof of his accomplishment

and a sense of self-assurance that he could help other members of the Hispanic community as they sought medical advice and attention.

Student Eight, who fought against insecurities about his language from a history with a father who criticized his speech, found value in using his Spanish to translate for others at both of his jobs. He shared, however, that his insecurities would surface when native speakers, mostly middle aged and elderly, would criticize his Spanish while he was trying to assist them with transactions. He added that the honorable part of Hispanic pride is a close connection to the language and culture. In his experience, what offset this sense of good pride was the tendency for customers to belittle and shame him when “they thought I should have spoken Spanish perfectly, but I didn’t.” On the other hand, all of the opportunities to help those who were appreciative and who benefitted from his bilingual skills and knowledge gave him confidence and increasing opportunities to feel valued and important.

Similar to feelings of self-assurance, and the social-emotional benefit that came for some participants with helping peers, participants who could help customers at work increased their sense of self-esteem. The more these participants had positive experiences with their heritage language, the more connected they felt to their heritage culture and the more needed they felt by their host culture. Sharing experiences at their workplace provided more opportunities to round out their perceptions about their heritage language during the interviews and recover from some of the negative experiences they had recounted earlier in their interviews. Overall, feelings of cultural integration emerged with narratives that referenced the appreciation from the host culture for their bilingual skills and abilities.

Subtheme 3: Future opportunities to help. A shift in their sense of cultural integration occurred as well when participants spoke about future opportunities to help others. Having helped peers in the classroom, tutored ELL students, and attended to the needs of customers and clients at

work, these participants had glimpse into the possibilities for their futures. Students became interested in careers in education when working at school, and in the medical field when hearing about the lack of bilingual doctors and nurses from members of the Hispanic community. The potent combination of helping others at school and work, and recognizing a need for more bilingual professionals in a variety of industries, motivated the participants to think positively about their futures and the way they would be needed by their host and heritage cultures.

Participants like Student Nine heard of the lack of bilingual neo-natal nurses and became set on studying diligently in AP Spanish so that she could go to college to become a nurse, noting, “I want to be there to help them because Hispanics don’t understand English.” Student Seven knew that he wanted to be a nurse when he began to help his mother with her doctor’s appointments. He became keenly aware that the doctors’ offices he visited were lacking bilingual nurses, so he began planning for his future as a nurse. Student Six went with her mother to the pharmacist whenever she needed a prescription filled. She would watch and listen as the bilingual pharmacist explained all of the detailed instructions that accompanied her mother’s prescription, fascinated by the facility of language the pharmacist possessed. These trips have inspired her to become a pharmacist so that she can help members of her Hispanic community get the medical attention they need.

Nine of the ten participants heard regularly, from family or neighbors, of the shortage of bilingual professionals in the Hispanic community. They recounted these experiences, where they saw an explicit need for their heritage language. Recognizing this occupational gap has motivated participants to place themselves in positions of being ready for post-secondary options. Participants who began their interview recounting negative experiences with their heritage language and acculturative attitudes of marginalization expressed more hope as they saw the potential opportunities for using their heritage language to serve their community. By creating a

vision of greater cultural integration for their futures, the participants were able to look forward to living in both cultures comfortably and successfully (Ahani, 2016; Berry, 2009; Kagan, 2017).

Subtheme 4: The beauty of the heritage language. Participant responses to their perceptions of, and feelings about, their heritage language included an aesthetic value to the nature of their language. While this deviates from the prior three subthemes of helping others, it fits within the core theme of self-assurance. Six of 10 participants stated that the Spanish language is beautiful. They love to speak it and to hear it spoken. Student Four, who did not want to speak any Spanish growing up and pretended not to know or understand it when out in public, noted, “I love speaking Spanish. Everything sounds better in Spanish for me.” Student Seven could not explain why English to him sounded “choppy” and Spanish sounded so smooth. Nor could Student Three, who sometimes heard herself speaking Spanish while tutoring. In these moments, she would think, “What a beautiful language.”

The students could not explain the aesthetic value because they did not understand the study of linguistics, or the relationship among cadence, inflection and the vowel-to-consonant ratio that makes Spanish one of the top three romance languages (McWhorter, 2011, Comparative grammar of the romance languages, 2018). However, knowing that this beautiful language was their heritage language made participants feel particularly proud and connected to their heritage culture. Positive experiences with the heritage culture, whether through helping others, thinking of their future potential, or through the appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of their language, tended to lead participants toward an acculturative attitude of separation. Although the domain of separation carries with it a negative connotation, for the students, the ability to see something beautiful about their heritage language made them feel connected to their heritage culture, something that secured their identity and self-assurance. These positive experiences with their heritage language, though categorized as separated, still brought students closer to integration,

since half of the key component of integration is feeling connected to, comfortable, and safe within one's own culture (Berry, 2009; Friesen, 2015).

Theme 3: Peers and the heritage language. In studies on acculturation, peers have a particular power when it comes to their influence of attitudes and behaviors (Berry, 2005; Friesen, 2015; Kaufman, 2016). Participants in this study reported having friends in both cultures, some having too many American friends and wanting more Hispanic friends, as in the case of Student Four and Student Two. For participants whose balance of friends came from both cultures, they noted benefits that encouraged their experiences with their heritage language. Relationships with host peers, and the encouragement participants felt with their English fluency gave them confidence. Relationships with heritage peers who had similar experiences growing up with changes to their language fluency also encouraged the study's participants, particularly regarding their facility with code switching, incorporating English and Spanish words together in a sentence, and code mixing, what has been termed Spanglish, putting two parts of a word together from both languages to create a new word.

Subtheme 1: Host peers and the heritage language. Studies of Hispanic adolescents who have culturally integrated include evidence of their abilities to have friend groups from both their heritage and host culture (Ahani, 2016; Amor, 2015; Rafieyan, 2013). While this is true for the participants in this study, the focus of this study was on the influence of the heritage language on cultural integration. For participants, the fluency with their host language gave them a sense of pride that they could have a group of American friends with whom they speak English, being accepted by them as equally as the way in which their host peers accept their host friends. While this has been seen in other studies (Mejía, 2001, Mrak, 2011), for the purposes of this study, the participants' heritage language also played a part in their attitudes of cultural integration. Four of the participants shared that their American friends complimented them often on their heritage

language. They complimented the beauty of the language and the benefits of being able to speak two languages.

American friends would ask participants to say something in Spanish, or repeat something they had said to a friend passing by, in order to simply hear the language. Student Three noted saying something in Spanish, and her American friends would tell her to say it again, “It sounds so pretty.” For a student who struggled with her own insecurities about her lack of fluency, having host peers compliment her use of her heritage language made her smile and laugh and share how good she felt when her friends would say that. Moreover, American friends pointed out the benefits of speaking two languages. According to Student Six, her friends wished that they could speak two languages and thought it was “pretty great” that she could. Studies show that students who are bilingual are considered to have greater advantages of those who are not, and are even considered to have improved their intelligence by the acquisition of a second language (Kaufman, 2016; Merritt, 2013). Host culture students are lauded for these achievements, while heritage students are often overlooked for what they have accomplished (Sanchez, 2016). For these participants, recognition of their achievements provided the praise they needed to feel both confident and culturally integrated.

Subtheme 2: Heritage peers, code switching, and code mixing. The power of having access to two languages, particularly for the participants in this study, allowed them to have fun when speaking their heritage language to their heritage peers. As reported earlier in this study under Theme 1, native Spanish speakers are distinct from heritage Spanish speakers. The former grew up in their country of origin, learning and speaking their native language there, while the latter grew up in their country of settlement, learning and speaking their heritage language in the United States. The differences are most apparent when heritage speakers begin to experience shifts

in their fluency, which can bring derogatory remarks from their Hispanic community and native speakers as reported.

Shifts in fluency do not happen as regularly to native speakers who have immigrated here, unless they immigrated prior to the age of seven (Krogstad, 2016; Mayhew, 2013; Mrak, 2011). Therefore, close bonds can be created among heritage peers who have shared the same experiences: U.S. citizens, speaking Spanish until starting school, being placed in ELL classes, experiencing changes in fluency, and growing up sometimes with feelings of marginalization (Berry, 2009; Mejía, 2007; Nell, 2010). These bonds emerged most notably when participants spoke of the fun they have speaking to their peers, and accessing both languages to fill in for words they do not know or cannot think of in the moment. When speaking this way to their immigrant parents who do not speak English fluently or well, or other members of their Hispanic community, they may receive criticism, but when they speak in this code to their heritage peers, they feel a sense of empowerment and enjoyment.

Eventually, 10 of 10 participants reported the value of their heritage language and their appreciation for being bilingual. Six of 10, however, spoke specifically of the ways in which they borrow from both languages to help in their communication with their heritage peers. Two methods that make up the communication among heritage community members are code switching and code mixing. Code switching is described as a linguistic activity that takes place during conversation where speakers borrow from their host and heritage languages to manufacture meaning (Price, 2010; Zentella, 1997). This occurs when speakers use words from both languages interchangeably within sentences: “Tengo que ir al bus stop para pick up mi hija,” translates to “I need to go to the bus stop to pick up my daughter” (Tree, 2014). Because of the familiarity with both languages, both parties understand the whole meaning of the idea presented. This typically occurs with Spanish as the core language and English interspersed where needed. This skill also

requires a high level of linguistic fluency, since speakers are engaging in conversation and simply include a word without pausing to reflect on which word to use (Price, 2010; Zentella, 1997). This skill of code switching that happened naturally for these participants indicated a higher-order, cognitive thinking skill none of them seemed aware of possessing; it was simply a necessary skill used in order to keep conversation going.

Code mixing is the linguistic term synonymous with what has come to be known as “Spanglish,” a term that even made it as the title of drama-comedy in 2004 (Brooks, 2004). Different from code switching, code mixing is the ability to take two words from the host and heritage language and put them together to create a new word that does not exist in the current lexicon of either language (Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2003; Zentella, 1997). Examples of this includes words such as *machear*, meaning in Spanglish to match, instead of the Spanish word, *combinar*; *el parking* for parking lot instead of *el estacionamiento*, and *¿Estás ready?* For Are you ready? Instead of the Spanish alternative, *¿Estás listo* (28 Spanglish words, 2008)

More than code switching, participants reported that speaking Spanglish made them feel the most skilled with both languages and proved to be most entertaining for them as well. Student Eight noted that when using Spanglish, “It’s kind of comical . . . and we teach each other, but it’s a safe community, and it’s fine.” The teasing of each other for Student Eight did not carry with it the same negative criticism he received when speaking in a similar way as young boy. Student Nine noted, “Spanglish just comes out. It’s not a set word and I don’t plan for it. But some words are Spanglish here and everyone just knows what you mean, but in Mexico, they don’t know what you’re talking about.” Significant to integration, Student Two recounted, “That’s when I feel we’re bringing both together,” adding that speaking Spanglish made her feel American because she was creating new words to relate to another heritage peer, who understood that word, having never heard it before.

When speaking of her utilizing both languages to her advantage, Student One demonstrated what Price (2010) particularly noted about Spanish being the root language and English, the borrowed one. She commented while laughing and energetically gesticulating, “In English, I’m kind of like oh what was that word again? And then in Spanish, I’ll Spanglish it up so it’s like both languages colliding with each other.” A naturally occurring phenomenon when two languages come into contact, or “collide,” Spanglish promotes the acculturative attitude and behavior of cultural integration; as Student One continued, “I’ll mix them up, and that’s where I’ll get both of my cultures interacting with each other.” With a combination of code switching and code mixing, use of the heritage language underscores an effective tool in fostering cultural integration.

Theme 4: Language course selection. A significant component to this research included the ways in which formal language study influenced the participants’ experiences with their heritage language. This phenomenological study intended to explore how experiences from taking a language course would influence integration, and whether students saw themselves moving closer to this acculturative domain or further away from it. For the school these students attended, Spanish is a foreign language acquisition class for native-English speakers. Heritage Spanish is for heritage speakers who are fluent in Spanish and have basic Spanish literacy skills who want to become more literate. During the course of this study, the school was in its second year of offering AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers, where the content is equivalent to an undergraduate 2nd-year Spanish course. This decision was made by the school to introduce heritage students to the rigor of a college-level course, one in which they would not also have to negotiate the demands of English comprehension. Prerequisites were Heritage Spanish or for students who had not taken Heritage, demonstration of appropriate fluency and literacy skills. This study included two students who took three years of French and two students who took three years

of Spanish. The other six took different combinations of Heritage Spanish, Spanish, and AP Spanish as they were negotiating which course was the best fit for their fluency and literacy levels.

Subtheme 1: French. While not intended as part of this study, two participants shared that instead of choosing to study Spanish and improve their fluency and literacy skills, they chose French. Each discussed similar reasons. Student Four had taken Heritage Spanish in middle school, and having gained the literacy skills he wanted, he thought taking French in high school would bring about a sense of confidence when he could tell people that he was trilingual. Student Eight was confident with his Spanish since he had started working in a Mexican restaurant in 8th grade along with taking Heritage Spanish then as well. He took French for two years. Student Six had gained her literacy skills from her parents who read to her and taught her to write. So all three students selected French already confident of their heritage language abilities. They all were grateful for their decision, having loved learning the French language. All shared an equal appreciation for their heritage language as well, since their fluency and literacy skills helped them to learn French. These three did not attribute any improvement in their heritage language skills as a result of taking French, but only saw the ways it could assist them, and then recognized that like French, their language is equally beautiful.

Subtheme 2: Spanish. Overall, the participants reported two types of experiences with Spanish. For Student Three, Spanish was a place where she felt most confident. Hearing the other students' strong English accents and mispronunciation made her feel better about her own fluency. Students would compliment her on her fluency, and she needed that to feel more closely connected to her heritage culture. With lower literacy skills, she needed the slower pace. The other seven participants who took Spanish, whether for 1 month, 1 year or 3 years, reported that they did not improve their fluency and experienced minimal improvements to their literacy. All students noted they understood the need for the pace of the class. One student preferred the Hispanic teacher he

had one year since she spoke so quickly, but he admitted that she would often have to backtrack, since his classmates could not follow her. Only in that class, though, did he feel closer to his own culture. In the end, all of the participants who took Spanish reported feeling more Hispanic, especially since they were much more fluent and literate than their classmates. Only Student Eight felt more American, thinking he had been placed in Spanish 4 because his Spanish was as bad as the other students’.

Subtheme 3: Heritage Spanish. Participants who took Heritage Spanish had a range of experiences. Student Three, who felt Spanish was a better fit, took Heritage the prior year and described its level of rigor was beyond her capabilities. Feeling less fluent and literate made her feel more American. The other three participants who took Heritage Spanish all reported it as easy. They also shared that they knew how to read and write before taking the class. All noted that they got As without having to work very hard, even though there were books to read and paragraphs to write. For them, a little effort was all it took to be successful. While this was not true for other friends who took the class, it happened to be a shared common phenomenon for these three students. All three students had developed literacy skills in the home, which they reported made the class easier for them. Nevertheless, they also admitted that though easy, they still made improvements to their literacy skills. As a note, Heritage Spanish was a 1-year course at the time these students had taken it. Now, it is offered for 2 years so greater gains in literacy and academic fluency can be made. The 2nd year, called AP Spanish Prep, is specifically designed to prepare students for the rigor of AP Spanish Language.

Subtheme 4: AP Spanish language and culture. Students Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten all continued on to AP Spanish. Student Eight noted that after a discouraging year in Spanish 4, feeling more American because his classmates’ Spanish was “so bad” and having concluded that his Spanish must be “this bad” too, he had a significantly different experience with AP Spanish.

Looking around at the students in his class, he finally started to feel excited about learning Spanish. In particular, two girls were in the class whose Spanish he knew was markedly more advanced than his.

One girl in my class worked with me at the bank. And I knew her Spanish was really good, and thought, ‘hey, ‘she’s in this class too.’ And then I knew another girl in the class whose Spanish was better than both of ours and thought, ‘hey, she’s in this class too.’ That was nice having the motivation. Spanish 4 made me feel like I didn’t know Spanish, but AP made me feel better about myself.

For this participant, being in Spanish, where his fluency was better than his classmates, made him feel more American, while being in AP Spanish, where his classmates’ Spanish was better than his, made him feel more Hispanic. He knew that AP Spanish was where he belonged because if the peers who were better than he wanted to improve, then so did he.

Students Seven, Nine, and Ten all spoke of the academic challenges they faced when taking AP Spanish because Heritage Spanish had been so easy for them. No longer could they just do the minimum amount of homework and earn As. They reported having to work and struggle, and experienced what it was like to take a class that demanded them to push their skills in every area of their heritage language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Knowing that they were improving academically more than they had before, they were willing to work hard and still accept a B. They started to notice and appreciate the complexities of their heritage language. They also all expressed a satisfaction with the rigor, recognizing a correlation with the improvements to their fluency and literacy.

For Student Seven, an additional motivation to stay in AP Spanish, when it became tempting to drop because of its academic demands, was the potential to earn the State of Oregon Biliteracy Seal. This seal and certificate are awarded to students who demonstrate proficiency in a

second language, measured in a variety of ways, one of which is a score of 4 on the AP Spanish Language exam or passing scores on the equally rigorous Standards Based Measure of Proficiency exam (STAMP) (Mitchell, 2015; Saxton, 2015). At this school, students who earned the seal were honored at graduation with special cords designating this esteemed accomplishment. For Student Seven, earning this award for the effort he exerted in becoming proficient in all areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing of his heritage language gave him a rich and rewarding sense of pride and satisfaction that kept him enrolled in the class and eventually made him feel more confident to attend college and envision his future career as a nurse.

When asked if they felt more Hispanic or American taking AP Spanish, the participants admitted feeling more Hispanic and more connected to their heritage language. In AP Spanish, the participants all reported recognizing accents among their peers from different states in Mexico. For instance, one participant from the state of Nayarit noted having a different accent from a student from the state of Michoacán. Although students had been in Heritage Spanish the year before, it was not until AP Spanish, where they studied the different states in Mexico, and the different Spanish cultures around the world, that they distinctly noticed the differences within their heritage language. Following up on this, Student Seven said that he never thought he might become friends with other students from a different state than his. Student Eight said he loved hearing all of the different dialects from his country. Earlier in the interviews, these participants, along with others in the study, noted that they felt more American when hearing their own accents as they spoke their heritage language. They could hear that they were not as fluent as their parents or other native-speakers from their Hispanic community. However, in AP Spanish, the diversity of the dialectic accents among their classmates made them less aware of their own accents and more aware that their heritage language connected them to the broader Spanish-speaking community around the world.

Although they claimed to feel more Hispanic after being in AP Spanish, all four students saw themselves living out a future that could contribute to the English-speaking community as a result of taking this course. Pushing themselves to hone their bilingual and biliteracy skills in AP Spanish had increased their confidence more than any other class they had taken. While heritage students had seen their bilingual skills as being potentially helpful to them in the future, the participants who took AP Spanish Language reported explicitly feeling more prepared for using their biliteracy skills after high school. Thinking about their post-secondary options, they all felt confident that their skills would secure them higher-level job opportunities, which would allow them to help their Hispanic community as well as their host community. Through AP Spanish Language, the participants reported themselves feeling more Hispanic, but because they envisioned themselves connected to both cultures, serving both cultures, and necessary to both cultures, they demonstrated attitudes of integration (Amor, 2015).

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

The conceptual framework used for this phenomenological study drew from Berry's (2009) acculturation theory, where four domains of acculturation help to define the attitudes and behaviors heritage individuals adopt when living within a host culture. The attitudes are the perceptions and feelings about where they fit into their and the host cultures, and the behaviors are the resultant actions taken in response to those perceptions (Berry, 2009; Davis & Engel; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Skuza 2007). This framework was explained in detail in Chapters 1 and 2, and the theory embodies four categories: separation, marginalization, assimilation, and integration (Ahani, 2016; Berry, 2005). This study focused on the acculturative category of integration, where individuals in the heritage culture live in such a way that they feel connected to both their heritage and host culture. The research further narrowed the field of acculturative study to explore how

second-generation Hispanic adolescents' experiences with the heritage language influence cultural integration.

Hispanic adolescents born in the United States to immigrant parents have a unique opportunity to participate in two cultures simultaneously. The literature showed, however, that this demographic tends to have low rates of academic success leading to an achievement gap, which may often come from having to negotiate their way between and among their two cultures (Calero, Dalley, Fernandez, Davenport-Dalley, Morote, & Tatum, 2014; Cohn, 2015). The literature revealed that these adolescents are influenced by a number of factors including their parents, their peer groups, and the school environment, which collectively influenced their self-identity (Amor, 2015; Benner, 2011; Sallee & Tierney, 2007). The particular nature of the self-identity that correlates to this group of adolescents includes having to identify themselves in terms of the two cultures they occupy, namely the Hispanic culture and the American (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009).

As these adolescents navigate their way through the social norms and customs of both cultures, they move among the four acculturative domains, depending on several factors. These include the age of the adolescents, their comfort level at the school where they are learning the new host language, time spent in the classroom with host and heritage peers, and their comfort level at home where they typically maintain their heritage language and interact with the elements of their heritage culture (Ahani, 2016; Friesen, 2015). Acculturation studies on Hispanic American adolescents tended to view all of the acculturation patterns instead of singling one out (Ahani, 2016; Amor, 2015; Berry, 1970, 2009; Cabassa, 2003; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014). Additionally, acculturation studies of Hispanic youth referred to influences such as parents, peers, length of time in the host culture, educational competence, poverty, and gender, or at times, a combination of

influences (Castillo, Lopez-Arena & Saldivar, 2010; Davis & Engel, 2011; Kapke, 2015; Kim, 2013; Lopez, et al., 2002).

The purpose of this study was to narrow the parameters to the influence of the heritage language on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic students. The literature that was found with parameters similar to this research was a mixed-methods study conducted in Australia and the ways in which language influences the identity of first- and second-generation Hispanic Australians (Mejía, 2001). Although the title of the study was “Language and Identity: The Second generation of Hispanic Adolescents in Brisbane,” the participants were a combination of 105 first- and second-generation Latino adolescents, born not only in Australia, but also in countries such as El Salvador, Chile, Guatemala, Peru, and Argentina. The study focused on length of time in the host country and its influence on the use of language and acculturation. While this study provided the impetus for mine, it differed most significantly in its participants and the interview questions that sought to explore elements such as how often and in what situations a participant spoke their heritage language, whether they wanted to preserve it, and how useful it might be for their children. I am grateful to Dr. Mejía for securing the release of her study to me, and saw numerous implications for my own research with its focus in similar ways on the influence of the heritage language on acculturation, but with the distinction of limiting the parameters to a strictly qualitative study of second-generation-only Hispanic American adolescents, and including the influence of the formal study of the heritage language on integration.

The significant difference between Mejía’s study (2001) and this one is that Mejía reported “language does not determine identity, but does provide a way to express it, and that culture is a salient predictor of ethnic identity” (p. ix). Though my findings agreed that experiences with the heritage language do provide ways to express identity, the results of this study concluded that experiences with the heritage language do more than just give individuals a way to express their

identity. From this research, experiences with the heritage language tend to significantly influence identity. This is because in acculturation theory, how an individual acculturates correlates with how individuals identify themselves, notably, the cultures with which they most and least identify (Berry, 2005, 2009; Berry et al., 2011; Biechler, 2015). The results of this study concluded that positive experiences with the heritage language are more likely to influence attitudes of integration, feeling connected to and identified with both the heritage and the host culture, and negative experiences with the heritage language are more likely to influence attitudes of marginalization, feeling disconnected from both cultures, and as a result, unable to identify with either. Attitudes of assimilation also occurred with negative experiences with the heritage language, with participants wanting to shed their heritage language and identify with the host language.

In the next section, I provide a brief summary of the formative literature that helped structure the development of this study and its methodology. The conclusions presented were found to be among the most common when researching the primary influences on the acculturation of second-generation Hispanic adolescents along with the formal study of their language and its influence.

Variety of influences on cultural integration. Literature shows that influences to second-generation Hispanic attitudes of cultural integration can come from a variety of influences such as the age of the child when exploring acculturative attitudes, family support or lack of it, negative and positive peer influence, language barriers, ways in which students serve as language brokers for their parents, and the influence of school counselors and teachers. These perspectives were borne out in existing literature from other research (Ahani, 2016; Davis & Engel, 2011; Friesen, 2015; Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, et al., 2015; Skuza, 2007). The nuances, norms, and mores of both the heritage and host cultures can change while adolescents are growing up. Furthermore, Berry's (2009) acculturation theory provided the conceptual framework for this study. As a result,

data were readily accessible that indicated adolescents who adopt an acculturative attitude of integration will be more successful in school and experience less stress overall (Ahani, 2016; Amor, 2015; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry, 2005; Biechler, 2015; Chirkov, 2009; Kapke, 2015; Lilley, 2013; Mejía, 2001; Sam & Berry, 2006). Therefore, a study on the influence of language explores one of many influences present in the lives of acculturating Hispanic adolescents.

Perceptions of the host culture. Acculturation experiences often include perceptions of the host culture by the family, parents, and influential members of the Hispanic community to which the adolescents belong. When heritage individuals experience spoken or unspoken feelings of discrimination and prejudice by those in the heritage culture, as seen through the news media or through personal encounters, they tend to adopt attitudes of separation and the possibility of cultural integration is minimized (Manning, 2004; Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory 2012; Schneider, et al., 2006; Smokowski, et al., 2008). Cultural integration includes the ability of individuals to live comfortably within their heritage and host cultures, adapting to elements of both and bringing elements of both cultures to bear upon everyday choices. Therefore, feelings of exclusion from the host culture are directly opposed to the attitudes and behaviors necessary to overcome stereotypes (Bernal, 2017; Berry, 2005; Biechler, 2015). With the increased stress of political decisions regarding immigration, and the stress that accompanies the way in which those decisions could immediately impact second-generation adolescents, host culture attitudes and behaviors tend to present an ongoing and underlying threat to attitudes of integration (Chirkov, 2009; Cohn, 2015). This can occur with individuals wanting to withdraw from the host culture altogether, but it can also happen with individuals being embarrassed about their culture, shedding evidences of it and working to fully assimilate into the host culture. Whichever attitude, all hinder the potential for integration (Berry, et al., 2006; Kapke, 2015).

Bilingual Hispanics and heritage Spanish classes more common. While a broad range of fluency exists among second-generation Hispanic adolescents, most have bilingual skills (Fishman, 2001; Mejía, 2001; Sanchez, 2016; Webley, 2013). The immigrant parents of second-generation Hispanics often have little more than a seventh grade education (Amor, 2015; Krogstad, 2016), indicating that their children who grow up speaking Spanish in the home most likely will speak a less formal Spanish than someone with a more advanced education (Borrero, 2011; Calero, et al., 2014). In addition, code switching and code mixing have increased in use and popularity (Morales, 2002; Price, 2010; Stavans, 2003). For many, the idea of adding English into the Spanish language had negative connotations, with immigrant parents wanting their children to keep their Spanish pure. More current responses have seen this as the ability for Hispanic individuals to keep from having to fully assimilate into the host culture and instead, use the language of the culture to benefit them (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015; Price, 2010; Zentella, 1997).

Biliteracy only through formal education. Biliteracy is the ability to read and write in two languages proficiently. For the Hispanic adolescent, the only way to learn this skill is through a formal pursuit of the language (Merritt, 2013; Sanchez, 2016). There are two courses of study that can assist the heritage student with biliteracy: Spanish or Heritage Spanish. The other option is for heritage speakers to learn to read and write from their parents. Not having much formal education themselves, parents are often unaware of the positive gains this practice could provide (Mrak, 2011; Roche, et al., 2015). The existing literature also revealed that biliterate students may have more advantages beyond high school; this may be due to their biliteracy skills, or it may also suggest that those who have studied their language already have a college and career-readiness mindset (Conley, 2010; Pandey, 2014; Shiu, et al., 2009). Heritage Spanish course offerings are becoming more common across the country with the increase of the second-generation Hispanic population (Beaudrie, 2011; Valdés, 2000a, 2001), adding to their increased biliteracy. Unlike ELL

classes for native speakers and heritage speakers who are in class to improve their English fluency, Heritage Spanish classes are elective, designed for students who have chosen to improve their fluency and literacy in their heritage language. When classes are only offered for 1 year, those who are already fairly literate learn less than those who are only basically literate (Fishman, 2001; Kaufman, 2016; Muñoz, 2014; Reeves & Joo, 2015; Torres, 2010).

AP Spanish Language and Culture is a college-level class designed for any student who desires to improve his [or her] academic bilingual and biliteracy skills. The first advantage for the heritage student taking an AP Spanish Language class is the potential for earning college credits and thus increasing the potential for college enrollment and decreasing the achievement gap among heritage students (Conley, 2010; Keng & Dodd, 2010). The added benefit of AP Spanish Language, if a student can take the course earlier than senior year, is that it can serve as a gateway for heritage students to take other AP classes, thus further increasing their college potential (Arreguin, 2015; Shiu et al., 2009; Torres, 2010).

Regarding other benefits, the available literature reports improvements in self-confidence from success in AP courses, including AP Spanish Language and Culture. At the same time, existing research suggests that American students who learn a foreign language are often recognized for the increases in intellect while heritage students are not equally recognized for their skills of being bilingual (Arreguin, 2015; Bhattacharjee, 2015; Borg, et al., 2011; Borrero, 2011; Calero, 2014; Jara, 2013; Merritt, 2013; Muñoz, 2014; Sanchez, 2016). For this reason, research on the influence of how the formal study of a heritage language can in turn influence cultural integration has the possibility of providing important data on further minimizing the achievement gap of Hispanic adolescents.

Limitations

This phenomenological study revealed rich data collection and analysis of the ways in which experiences with their heritage language influence second-generation Hispanic adolescents' cultural integration. It also revealed some unavoidable limitations. An initial limitation to the study could be seen in the number of students interviewed. Polkinghorne (1989) suggested that between five and 25 individuals could provide the best research for qualitative studies of participants who have experienced the same phenomenon. Ten students were on the lower end of this population. Since over 100 students were enrolled in Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish at the high school, and since there are second-generation Hispanic students who have chosen not to pursue a formal study of their language or to study any foreign language at all, having more participants would have provided a broader perspective of how these adolescents' experiences with their heritage language influence their integration.

The second limitation of the study was interviewing students at a high school where purposeful decisions have been made by the administration to support the heritage student population in the formal study of their language. The course offerings include Heritage Spanish, AP Prep Heritage Spanish, and AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers. Experiences with the heritage language at this school may have more positive influence on cultural integration because of these options, and students without this type of support through the course offerings available may have a different perception of their language and less of an opportunity to experience integration.

The third limitation occurred when discussing language course selection. The question did not include asking about how information was disseminated to the participants about how they were placed in their particular courses or what they were told about the content and accessibility of the Heritage courses. The interview question was open-ended about how the school and its course

offerings influence integration. Another core or follow-up question could have been to ask what they had been told about the course, what their expectations were going into it, who recommended it, how they knew if they would be successful or not, and what criteria were used to place them in their particular courses.

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The implications from the results of this phenomenological study may provide opportunities for positive social change at the administrative, educational, curricular, community, organizational, and state levels, with a final implication for acculturative theory. This study concluded that for second-generation Hispanic adolescents, their experiences with their heritage language tended to influence their cultural integration, also called their bicultural identity, where participants identified themselves at certain times and in certain situations to be either or both Hispanic and American. Positive experiences with their heritage language generated attitudes that moved them toward integration, and negative experiences with their heritage language, particularly from their heritage community, generated attitudes that moved them away from cultural integration, most often toward marginalization, unable to feel identified with either culture. Negative experiences with their heritage language from the host culture, in some cases, caused participants to adopt attitudes of separation in some situations and assimilation with others. In cases of language course study, negative experiences in Spanish and Heritage Spanish language courses caused students to identify themselves as more American. Positive experiences in these courses caused students to identify themselves as more Hispanic, while simultaneously expressing themselves in terms of bicultural language, seeing themselves fitting into both Hispanic and American cultures with the improvement of their biliteracy, specifically from their course studies in AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers.

Administrative. Implications of the results begin at the administrative level where administrators would use the outcomes of this phenomenological study to provide opportunities for Hispanic families to understand the changes in fluency that can occur when their children start school, are enrolled in ELL programs, and begin to be immersed in the English language. Schools provide the best opportunity for Hispanic families to learn about these changes. Therefore, the implications for administrators to facilitate familial improvements include implications at the educational level as well, with school and district administrators instituting practices and policies to assist with this change in perspective.

First, at the elementary level, administrators would have ELL teachers, specialists, and Latino outreach coordinators at schools and districts, working together to host education nights where Hispanic families and students can learn about the changes that may occur to their children's heritage language fluency as they enter school and their ELL programs. At these meetings, parents could be informed that teasing or critical comments of their children's changing fluency may generate insecurities. Older students could have opportunities to share their experiences in their own voices, and also offer positive ways to respond to those changes and offer correction in appropriate ways, since most students want to maintain their fluency. Students, or ELL specialists, could explain how reading to their children in Spanish, even simple books, might help students maintain their fluency. Parents could also be informed of research on improvements to the brain, memory and increased cognitive capabilities when learning two languages (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

In the meantime, administrators would encourage ELL teachers to continue to reassure students that they will be bilingual but to expect naturally occurring changes to fluency. Students, their parents, and their Hispanic community should be informed that being bilingual does not mean being perfectly fluent; it means being able to communicate fluently in a second language. Also

included in parents' information could be research on the benefits of code switching and code mixing demonstrated by students' command of both languages, which allows them to better communicate with their peers (Stavans, 2003; Price, 2010). Research suggests that while these two skills are slowly being received more positively in traditional Hispanic communities, the range of responses also can include rejection and apprehension, parents worried that the intrusion of English into the language may indicate the loss of the heritage language (Toribio, 2002; Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2003; Price, 2010). Reassurance to the contrary should also be provided. In these ways, administrators would implement school policies and practices of hosting regular meetings with families of heritage students to influence positive change for Hispanic students and their families.

Educational. While the above practices can help to improve familial change, the administrative implications continue at the educational level for program considerations. Since participants noted increased attitudes of integration when helping others, counselors and administrators could create programs for volunteer opportunities where heritage speakers could help and tutor their peers. This could happen in several ways with bilingual heritage speakers helping to tutor ELL students more formally during an ELL class, or by teachers of any subject encouraging bilingual and biliterate students to help their peers. Another option is to provide formal after-school opportunities for middle school heritage students to tutor elementary students, and high school heritage students to tutor middle school students. Reports suggest that one way to understand a subject more thoroughly is to have the opportunity to teach it to someone else (Cortese, 2005; Paul, 2011). By using their skills to help their less fluent peers, or to return to the places where they had previously gone to school to help younger students, heritage students will not only gain self-assurance in their abilities to communicate effectively in both languages, but also develop feelings of confidence in their bicultural identity, leading to attitudes of integration.

Curricular. At the curricular level, another implication is for school administrators to consider offering two years of Heritage Spanish where heritage students could further improve their fluency and literacy skills. After one year of Heritage, participants acknowledged that the more fluent and literate they were at the beginning of class, the less they improved, compared to their peers who could neither read nor write in Spanish and needed the year to gain the same basic skills. Therefore, a second year of Heritage Spanish would be beneficial to the former group of students. With placement tests, heritage students could test into the second level. This level could also be designed as an AP Spanish preparation class, preparing students for the demands of an AP Spanish Language course.

The curricular implications continue with school administrators contributing to the reduction of the achievement gap by offering a next step after Heritage Spanish, which would be AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers. While this course is taught in many high schools across the country, designating the course specifically for heritage speakers can promote college and career readiness and cultural integration as heritage students sit under a teacher's faster paced instruction equal to the fluency of everyone in the class. Furthermore, heritage students receive the benefits of studying their cultures while gaining academic fluency and literacy skills to meet the challenge and rigor of the AP course content and the AP exam (Borg, et. al., 2011). Since participants reported feelings and thoughts about the beauty of their language, an emphasis on what makes Spanish one of the top three romance languages could be implemented into the cultural portion of the AP Spanish Language curriculum. Students could learn about the heritage language's aesthetic value and the relationship among cadence, inflection and the vowel-to-consonant ratio that make it sound so beautiful (Comparative grammar of the romance languages, 2018; McWhorter, 2011).

An additional benefit for some heritage students is that this may be the first academically rigorous course they will be exposed to where they will not have to navigate through the nuances of the English language in order to fully comprehend content (Shiu, Kettler, & Johnsen, 2009). Student Seven reflected this when he stated his experience with AP Spanish.

When I took [AP Spanish], I realized for the first time, this must be what it's like to speak English and learn English and really understand what the teacher is saying. For the first time, I felt like an American in a classroom, being pushed in my own language.

This statement underscored a way in which experiences with the heritage language through AP Spanish can influence cultural integration. Since many heritage students, even with an advanced level of English fluency, still must negotiate the English language in every class they take, barriers to learning obscure the recognition of their potential capabilities and their attitudes of full integration (Sanchez, 2016). The enthusiasm expressed by this participant, who did not have to navigate the challenges of his host language, validated his experience of what it was like to be academically challenged and to experience what his American peers do when they take advanced placement classes in English. Implications with attitudes of integration could also inform the College Board if they chose to present the benefits of designating AP Spanish Language classes for heritage speakers only, although research would be needed to juxtapose how acculturative attitudes are formed among heritage students who share a class with native English-speakers. Cultural integration attitudes of AP Spanish students included reports of participants feeling more Hispanic, more confident with and connected to their language and culture, and more assured of being able to offer better professional help to the Hispanic community in the future. Reports of feeling more American included confidence in contributing to the U.S. workforce with their bilingual and biliteracy skills and more prepared for college and better able to envision greater career opportunities.

To summarize the curricular implications, the leap from a basic Heritage Spanish class to AP Spanish can create learning gaps that might hinder students' success. Therefore, ideally, a second year of Heritage Spanish could be implemented as an AP Prep course for AP Spanish, similar to what the College Board recommends for AP English courses. Significant to the results of this study were the recommendations participants made to their heritage peers. They recommended that heritage students who speak English in the home and have minimal literacy skills should take Spanish. For heritage students who speak Spanish in the home and have basic literacy skills, the participants wholeheartedly recommended Heritage Spanish and then AP Spanish Language as the best way to become academically bilingual and biliterate and to feel prepared for college and future career opportunities. Although the first three implications are somewhat distinct – administrative, educational and curricular – the desire and the ability to implement these changes rest primarily with school and district administrators who want to see improvements in integration, bicultural identity, and academics, for these second-generation Hispanic adolescents.

Community. As clarified in the definition of terms from Chapter 1, Hispanic often refers specifically to the three largest groupings of Latino-Americans, which are Mexican-Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans and Cuban Americans. The term Latinos can refer synonymously to these groupings. More commonly, when used, it assumes the larger populations of individuals from other Spanish-speaking countries of Latin and South America (Johnson, 2000; Price, 2010). Therefore the terms are used both synonymously and separately, depending on the context. With this clarification, the implications of the results of this phenomenological study continue at the community level. Due to the interest of participants in future careers in industries such as health care, education, banking and small business ownership, and the participants' desire to explore how their bicultural, bilingual, and biliterate skills will help them succeed, this research can also effect positive social change for the Hispanic and Latino community.

Latino professional groups in the participants' communities will be pleased to know what students are learning and how they are gaining the bicultural, bilingual, and for some, the biliteracy skills to be successful in their futures. One of the ways for the Latino community to support these students is to consider inviting them to their meetings to give a talk to the professionals about their heritage language, and the ways in which their heritage language is influencing their cultural integration at school and at their workplaces. In addition, the Latino community could host a career night, once or twice a year, where business professionals, such as attorneys, law enforcement officers, small business owners, bankers, and so on, could be available for students' questions about the details of their careers and how their bilingual skills have helped them to be successful. These professionals could also develop a relationship with the schools and host a career fair there, with breakout sessions for how to interview for jobs, how to fill out a bilingual resumé, and how to search online for companies looking for bilingual and biliterate employees.

Organizational. Several participants spoke of the lack of bilingual healthcare professionals they experienced on visits to hospitals with their family members; therefore, the implications of the results on an organizational level includes informing bilingual nurses and doctors at local hospitals to invite students to the site to introduce them to the inner workings of the hospital from the perspective of bilingual practitioners. Students could be made aware of the myriad of different services within the health care industries besides nurses and doctors such as CNAs, EMTs, radiologists, phlebotomists, and administrative positions as well. Having recently attended a presentation from English-speaking students in a nursing program, I was keenly aware of how quickly they were speaking, the complicated terms they were using, and the confusing abbreviations. For the three of the 13 who were Hispanic, they would have benefited much more from hearing this talk in their language until which time their fluency would be adept enough to comprehend the technical language in English. Bilingual nurses and doctors could also come to the

schools to give presentations, and speak to Heritage or AP Spanish classes, or even to Hispanic community meetings at the school where parents could be made aware of the potential career opportunities and thus continue to encourage their students' academic progress.

State. At the state level, the Oregon Department of Education should continue promoting the Biliteracy Seal and also recommending to schools that recognition for this academic achievement be presented during the graduation ceremony. These participants had not anticipated receiving any academic accolades since they continued to have to negotiate the English language during classroom instruction in all subject areas throughout high school. Graduation ceremonies recognize students who take multiple AP classes, something more difficult for these participants to achieve. Therefore, to receive recognition for earning the Biliteracy Seal and Certificate, and the extra honor of taking pride in their own language, these students have another opportunity to create a positive experience with their heritage language that influences their integration.

While multiple ways of earning the seal exist, the state could encourage high schools to consider implementing Heritage Spanish classes with a focus on preparing students for the STAMP exam. Or they could recommend other ways of demonstrating proficiency, such as implementing an AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers course, where heritage students could prepare for, and receive the benefits of, taking and passing an Advanced Placement course while also earning the Biliteracy Seal. (Carlisle, 2015; Saxton, 2015). The state should also make efforts to disseminate information to businesses, encouraging them to ask for evidence of the seal as a means of measuring bilingual and biliterate proficiency. The offer of a biliteracy seal is becoming more popular around the country, so the more businesses that request it, and the more states that provide this opportunity, the more effective they can be in minimizing the achievement gap for this growing demographic (Arreguin, 2015; Calero, et al., 2014; Sanchez, 2016; Shiu, et al., 2009).

Acculturative theory. The final implication is at the research level for acculturation theorists. In order to achieve cultural integration, individuals must be connected to and live comfortably in both their heritage and host cultures, adapting to the host culture while also preserving the heritage (Berry, 2005, 2009). This acculturative attitude has been considered to be the one which provides the least amount of acculturative stress and the greatest benefit to mental, emotional and social well-being (Chirkov, 2009; Chun, Balls-Organista & Marin, 2003; Kapke, 2015; Kim, 2013). The term assimilation is also often considered to be a positive strategy and spoken of in positive ways in the media and public discourse (Cohn, 2015; Emamzadeh, 2018; Krogstad & Gonzalez, 2015; Krogstad, Stepler & Lopez, 2015).

As a researcher, I heard this term used over the last 2 years of my research as beneficial to heritage students, and always in the context of a positive description. Some individuals used it mistakenly, thinking it was synonymous with integration. But the term is not. Assimilation, defined in its traditional sense, should not be considered positive under all, or even most, circumstances because it does not lend itself to integration. The positive aspects of assimilation into the American culture can include listening to American music, eating American food, and adapting to American social customs and ideas about such things as education, success, and changing one's socio-economic status (Cohn, 2015; Emamzadeh, 2018).

The term assimilation, however, is consistently defined by acculturation theorists as those heritage individuals who “do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures . . . prefe[ring] to shed their heritage culture and become absorbed into the dominant society” (Berry, 2005). Integration is only possible if assimilation occurs without the shedding of the heritage culture and with the desire to maintain their heritage identity, but since these qualities are diametrically opposed to the definition of assimilation, clarity should be provided that the two terms are not synonymous, with the term assimilation having far greater

negative connotations that it assumes. Therefore, the first implication for acculturative theorists would be to expand the traditional definition of assimilation by adding qualifiers. In addition, any individuals distancing themselves from their countries, traditions and cultures of origin, are willingly surrendering something of their inherent identity, which often leads to attitudes of acculturative stress; something of this nature should be included in reference to the term (Kuo, 2014; Manning, 2004).

In addition to this implication, the term separation is often seen as negative, defined as individuals who “place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wishing to avoid interaction [with those of the host culture]” (Berry, 2005). Again, media and public discourse confirm the negative connotation of this term, assuming that it is a negative strategy to remove oneself from the host culture and retreat to the heritage culture. Two problems exist with this idea. The first concerns those individuals, similar to the participants, who must find shelter in their heritage culture while they are young until which time they can properly integrate. Separation as a negative term in its traditional definition does not accommodate the positive aspects of maintaining the heritage culture, nor does it consider the importance of these stages in the move toward integration. Without close connections to the heritage culture, one will never be able to be integrated.

The other limitation with the term separation is that it limits the description of those individuals, similar to the participants in this study, who began to love and value their heritage language and culture as their bilingual and biliteracy skills improved. They considered themselves more Hispanic, feeling more connected to their heritage culture. If the only acculturative term available to categorize these individuals is separation, then the term becomes associated with the active desire to retreat from the host culture, something these participants were not doing. While they designated themselves as feeling more Hispanic with their increased skills, their language was

much more integrative. Therefore, additional qualifiers should be added to the term separation to allow for individuals, like these participants, who are learning to accept themselves as Hispanic, especially during in earlier years assimilation was their goal as they desired to shed their heritage culture altogether. In these later teen years, as these students were feeling more Hispanic, they were expressing themselves in more positive terms. And yet separation, with its negative connotations, was the only term available under which to categorize this attitude.

Overall, the implications for acculturative theorists could include providing more language for researchers to access the potential levels and combinations of possibilities within and across the two domains: assimilation and separation. In the literature researched for the purposes of this study, the researchers incorporated nuanced language to describe all of the meanings of participants' lived experiences, the themes that emerged and the acculturative phenomenon the participants shared. Yet at the conclusion of the studies, as in this one, researchers were still limited to defining the participants' experiences in terms of the traditional four domains. Integration and marginalization were much easier to use as categories, since they were more clearly positive overall and negative overall, respectively. It is only with the other two domains that researchers, as shown in this study, did could not quite categorize the true nature of the participants' acculturative experiences with the limitations of the traditional terms and definitions (Ahani, 2016; Kapke, 2015; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014; Kuo, 2014; Mejía, 2001, 2007; Mendez, 2012; Nell, 2010; Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Recommendations for Further Research

Acculturation theorists have, at times, posited that Berry's (1980) attitude of marginalization tends to be more improbable than the other three (Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010). They suggest that it is unlikely that an individual would be able to "develop a cultural sense of self without drawing on either the heritage or receiving cultural

contexts,” making the attitude and behavior of marginalization “viable only for the small segment of migrants who reject (or feel rejected by) both their heritage and receiving cultures” (Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010, p. 239). Moreover, the three categories of integration, separation, and assimilation are often well represented in sample studies, more so than marginalization (Berry, 1980; Schwartz, Unger, et al., 2010). Nevertheless, while only 10 participants were interviewed for this study, eight reported attitudes of marginalization when reflecting on experiences with their heritage language. In addition, this phenomenological study did not include migrants but second-generation Hispanic adolescents, of whom theorists might assume attitudes of marginalization to be even more rare. For this reason, more studies should be conducted around the phenomenon of how the heritage language influences cultural integration. While qualitative studies on acculturation among Hispanic adolescents have become more prevalent in the last two decades (Davis & Engel, 2011; Kennedy & MacNeela, 2014), additional studies might also further help to reduce the achievement gap between heritage students and their American counterparts (Webley, 2013; Zamora, 2013). Since few studies have singled out language and its acculturative influence on identity (Mejía, 2001, 2007), more phenomenological research is needed to see in what ways second-generation Hispanic adolescents’ experiences with the heritage language influence cultural integration.

Further studies could also be conducted using similar research questions in schools where the administration has not provided as many academic supports for heritage students through course offerings. Although research is readily available about the benefits that AP courses have in reducing the achievement gap for those Hispanic adolescents that take the classes, more research is required on the benefits of AP Spanish Language and Culture for heritage students. Research could be conducted on ways in which the heritage language’s influence on cultural integration changes for heritage students if native-English speakers were in the AP Spanish class, or how it would

change for Heritage Spanish students who did not go on to take AP Spanish. Finally, further research may or may not confirm the unexpected findings of the cultural integration attitudes shared by the students in the curricular implications. These answers might also be helpful for developing course curriculum.

Conclusion

This doctoral research proved successful in the following ways in which it answered the research questions. First, it demonstrated that positive experiences with their heritage language tend to influence second-generation Hispanic adolescents toward cultural integration and negative experiences tend to influence them away from cultural integration toward feelings of marginalization, especially when their family and friends within the heritage community generate the negative experiences. It also showed that negative experiences with the heritage language by individuals in the host community might also lead to separation and assimilation. It highlighted the ways in which parents encourage their perspectives of their heritage language, negatively by discouraging responses to changes in influence and positively by encouraging them to maintain their heritage language, and in many cases reminding them of the benefits of being bilingual.

This doctoral study also answered the research questions by presenting the ways in which host peers influenced the perspectives of the heritage language through complimenting heritage speakers' bilingual skills and the beauty of the language, promoting feelings of integration. Heritage peers influenced perspectives of the heritage language through code-switching and code mixing, leading to feelings of integration due to the facility with both languages. Finally, the research showed how heritage course offerings, including Heritage Spanish and AP Spanish Language and Culture for Heritage Speakers, positively influenced the perspectives of the heritage language for second-generation Hispanic adolescents as they improve their bilingual and biliteracy skills. This improvement made them feel more confidently connected to their culture while at the

same time allowing them to feel more prepared for a future in which they could positively influence both their host and heritage communities, therefore, leading them to feelings of cultural integration.

The methodology of the research considered the meaning of the lived experiences of the participants, and the common phenomenon was identified through the themes that emerged (Creswell, 2013). This study was unique as it focused on the heritage language as the only influence on the cultural integration of second-generation Hispanic adolescents. In addition, school and district administrators have a credible resource with which to support these heritage students, their families, and the Hispanic communities, to promote attitudes of cultural integration through practices and programs. They also are able to use this research as a credible resource with which to make suggestions for course offerings in the future, recommend courses to other schools in the district, and influence other districts in the state of Oregon that have as their goal the academic support of Hispanic adolescents and further reduction of the achievement gap for this demographic. Communities, organizations, and state departments of education have an opportunity to consider ways of improving what they are already doing well. And finally, acculturation theorists may consider creating a wider variety of categorization within each of the four acculturative domains for those who are navigating their way through the subtleties of their heritage and host cultures.

The participants of this research study were all grateful for the range of perspectives they were able to offer on their heritage language, a language they value, love, enjoy, and one in which they take much pride, despite the negative and challenging experiences they may have had in their younger years. They all appreciated being able to recount how beneficial their bicultural, bilingual, and for many, their biliterate skills are to them now and will be in the future, and the ways in which they will be able to serve both their heritage and host cultures through these skills, a sign that though they are on different journeys, they are all on the path toward cultural integration.

For me, I was humbled to have the opportunity to speak with 10 outstanding young individuals, whose intellect and insight had often been obscured by the challenges they have had overcoming the barriers of the English language in order to be successful during their years in school. I found these young men and women to be brave and courageous, with authentic senses of humor, and the desire to work hard to uphold the honor of the heritage culture they love, to remain faithful to its beauty and traditions, while also learning to enjoy and embrace the uniqueness of their host culture. Early on, America established itself as a country of many cultures. These participants reminded me of how enriching it is to live in a country that has cultural diversity as one of its founding attributes. One of the participants summed it up best when she offered her insight, and I conclude this research with her words.

My view of what it means to be American is all these cultures that have come together, so because I bring my culture to the table, I think I'm being just as American as someone who is only American, or maybe even more, because I'm one of the cultures that is making America who it really is.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

An open-ended question will begin the interview:

Tell me about your experiences as a Hispanic American.

Probing questions will include:

- Could you tell me more about that experience?
- Could you provide an example?
- What were you feeling at the time?

Questions pertinent to the focus on heritage language include:

1. Tell me about your experiences with your heritage language.
2. Tell me about your perceptions of your heritage language? Who or what most influenced your perceptions of your heritage language?
3. What are the feelings you have as a Hispanic American when you are speaking your heritage language? *In what ways does speaking your heritage language make you feel more Hispanic? More American?*
4. Have you chosen to pursue a more formal study of your heritage language? Why or why not? Please share who or what most influenced your choice.
5. Is there anything else you would like to add, either about the influences on how you think about your heritage language or about your experiences as a Hispanic American?

Probing questions:

- In what ways has your family influenced your choice of whether or not to pursue a more formal study of your heritage language? Your peers? Your school?
- In what ways do you think studying your heritage language has influenced how you feel as a Hispanic? As an American?
- What advice would you give to someone who asked if they should study their heritage language or not?

Appendix B: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

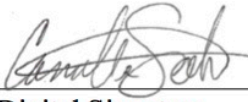
“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*



Digital Signature

Camille Schuler

Name (Typed)

June 7, 2018

Date