

The Relationship between Second and Heritage Language Acquisition: Notes on Research and Theory Building

Andrew Lynch
University of Florida

ABSTRACT

This article presents questions and areas of inquiry that should be pursued in Heritage Language Acquisition based on what has been done in Second Language Acquisition. Linguistic, social and educational issues are highlighted, and important parallels are made between the two fields.

INTRODUCTION

For the great majority of heritage language (HL) bilinguals in the US context, acquisition of English continues fully beyond childhood, while acquisition of the HL is significantly curtailed or even stagnates toward the adolescent years. For some, acquisition beyond the linguistic stages naturally realized in childhood never occurs, and for others language attrition begins to happen (Merino 1983). By the time these bilinguals reach high school and college classrooms, acquisition of the HL has become more of a second language (L2) acquisition process than a first language (L1) acquisition process. By the adolescent years, a quite distinct array of social and cognitive factors determining language acquisition and use is at play. English has become the dominant language for most in social interactions with peers and siblings, and it is the language in which they have been conditioned to think and learn in school. Thus, the heritage speakers who arrive to secondary and postsecondary classrooms seem not entirely L1 speakers or L2 speakers of the language in question.

Valdés (1995) observed that Spanish for Native Speakers instruction in the US context “has developed multiple practices and pedagogies that are not directly based on coherent theories about the kinds of language learning with which they are concerned” (308). She urged that “it is time for teachers and applied linguists working in this area to examine their research and practice and to begin to frame the agenda that will guide them in the years to come” (321). I argue that the framing of a coherent agenda for research and theory building in the field of heritage language acquisition (HLA) depends in part upon the research and theory already existent in second language acquisition (SLA), a field that now spans nearly four decades.

Clearly, the general sorts of questions asked in SLA are questions that HLA researchers must be asking, and the research methodologies used to respond to those questions in SLA are methodologies that would lend themselves fruitfully to HLA endeavors.

The theories and methodologies that concern SLA are diverse: Chomskian generativism (universal grammar and parameter setting), Labovian sociolinguistics (variationism) , anthropological linguistics (communicative competence), sociology of language (domains and language use patterns), cognitivism (language processing), conversation analysis and discourse analysis (speech act theory, cross-cultural communication, code-switching), to mention some of the most widely used. Researchers of bilingualism regularly draw upon theoretical notions elaborated principally in SLA: simplification, overgeneralization, language transfer, and interlanguage (Selinker 1972, 1992). Pavlenko (2000) has posited L2 influence on L1 in late bilingualism through such processes as borrowing, convergence, shift, restructuring transfer, and L1 attrition and loss. Several language contact researchers have been explicit about the impact of L2 acquisition processes in the linguistic practices of bilingual speech communities (cf. Muysken 1984, Romaine 1995). Klee (1996), for example, demonstrated that L2 processes of simplification have influenced the evolution of the clitic pronoun system in the Spanish of the Peruvian Andes. She found that even Spanish-dominant professionals whose L1 is Spanish usually do not employ third-person feminine ('la', 'las') and plural ('los') direct object pronouns due to the pervasive influence of Spanish-Quechua interlanguage throughout the community which she studied. In the casual speech of the Andes, the masculine singular direct object pronoun ('lo') tends to be overgeneralized at the expense of other forms.

Research on bilingualism in Canada provides numerous examples of the mutual exchange of theory and methodology between SLA and language contact scholars. In Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, French-English bilingualism has been very successfully supported in the educational domain since the 1960s, principally through language immersion programs, and in Quebec, French has experienced tremendous revitalization since the "Quiet Revolution" (cf. Bourhis & Lopicq 1993). Canadian efforts to develop and maintain such high degrees of bilingualism in these regions have been characterized, since the 1960s, by the inseparable relationship and continuous dialogue among theoreticians and empirical researchers from SLA (those dealing with French L2 education of Anglophone children, principally in Ontario and Quebec) and from language contact (those dealing with sociolinguistic issues of French and English in Canada diachronically and synchronically, geographically and socially). In the national context of Canada, this exchange of theory and research has proven extremely fruitful; French-English bilingualism continues to expand at the same time that some immigrant languages are successfully maintained among successive

generations (Portuguese and Chinese in Toronto, for example). It is my belief that researchers and educators of heritage languages in the US—in particular those who deal with our nation’s *de facto* majority second language, Spanish—could learn important lessons from their Canadian counterparts, notwithstanding the differences of political backdrop between the two countries. One of those lessons is that SLA and bilingualism are necessarily connected to each other; their relationship is symbiotic. Neither in the Canadian nor the US context do fruitful research and theory building proceed in the direction of a multilingual nation until this relationship is recognized and willfully exploited.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to highlight the implications of research and theory in SLA for the growing field of HLA. Recognizing that there are many ways to approach such an exposition coherently and convincingly, I choose to organize the present discussion around four general questions highlighted by Ellis (1994) in the opening chapter of his exhaustive review of the field of SLA, titled *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Those questions are: 1) What do second language learners acquire?; 2) How do learners acquire a second language?; 3) What differences are there in the way in which individual learners acquire a second language?; and 4) What effects does instruction have on second language acquisition?. By taking each one of these questions and replacing “second” with “heritage” language acquisition, we may establish the basis for a quite reliable and necessary research agenda for HLA in the coming years. In the ensuing discussion, I briefly review some principal considerations and factors in research and theory in SLA relevant to each of these questions, and highlight the ways that these considerations relate to the field of HLA. Throughout the text, key words as topics of future investigation appear in bolded italics.

Questions 1 and 2: What do heritage language learners acquire? How do they acquire it?

Research on both L1 and L2 acquisition clearly indicates that the ***frequency of forms and structures in interaction*** is directly related to acquisition and production. The more frequent a form in discourse, the earlier it is acquired by child L1 learners and by adult L2 learners. For instance, in the Spanish verb system, present indicative, past indicative, and periphrastic future forms are the most frequent in everyday discourse, and they are also the first acquired by children (Serra, Serrat, Solé, Bel, & Aparici 2000). Less frequent forms like subjunctive, conditional and perfect tenses do not fully reach adult-like norms in the discourse of monolingual Spanish-speaking children until sometime after the age of 12 (Blake 1983). Thus, it seems no surprise that these are the same verb forms that Spanish L2 and HL learners have most problems with.

As work in sociolinguistics over the past four decades has indisputably demonstrated, human languages are characterized by a great degree of *variability* (Labov 1972, 1994, 2001). Languages vary at all linguistic levels—phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and pragmatics—and at the social level. Child L1 and adult L2 are much more variable than adult L1. Aspects of language that are variable in adult L1 generally correspond to late acquired aspects in child L1 acquisition as well as in adult L2 acquisition. The expression of hypotheticality is a good example from Spanish—one may speak hypothetically in semantically concrete terms by using present indicative verb forms, or in more abstract terms by using subjunctive and conditional forms. Child L1 learners, adult L2 learners and, to no surprise, HL learners generally prefer to use present indicative forms to speak hypothetically. The grammaticalization of more abstract notions corresponds, generally, to less frequently used variants and, thus, later acquired ones. Phonological and lexical variation corresponding to style or register shifts is also late acquired, and we find that HL learners generally have trouble realizing such shifts linguistically (Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci 1998). Tarone's (1983, 1988, 2000) work on stylistic and situational variation in SLA provides a solid framework for carrying out necessary parallel studies with HL learners.

Research in both L1 and L2 acquisition has convincingly shown that language acquisition follows particular *orders and stages* as it proceeds (see Ellis 1994 for an overview). Frequency and variability of forms and structures are clearly implicated in these orders. In Spanish, for example, the tendency of monolingual children is first to express the present perfect by using only the past participle with no auxiliary verb (“yo caído” [I fallen]), followed in the next stage by use of the participle with the overgeneralized third person singular form of the auxiliary (“yo ha caído” [I has fallen]), finally arriving at the normative “yo he caído” [I have fallen] or “me he caído” [*reflexive pronoun* I have fallen] in the latest stage (Serra et al. 2000). In L2 English, as another example, the acquisition of negation generally begins with external negation (“No you playing here”), followed in a subsequent stage by internal negation (“You no playing here” or “You not playing here”). Negative attachment to modal verbs comes as a third stage, as in “You can't play here”, and in the last stages of the acquisition of English negation, we find negative attachment to auxiliary verbs, as in “You don't play here” or “You didn't play here” (Ellis 1994). Since such orders are implicated in both L1 and L2 acquisition processes, they must also inevitably be implicated in HL acquisition processes. This is an area that must be empirically investigated in HLA.

Once children have had sufficient exposure to their native language and have begun to schematize it cognitively—and it is essential to remember that linguistic development and cognitive development go hand in hand for a growing child—then *overgeneralization and simplification in patterns of variability*

becomes apparent. Thus, Spanish-speaking children say such things as “yo he escrito” [I have written] (or “yo ha escrito” [I has written]), “ella ha roto el vaso” [she has broken the glass], “ella puso el libro en la mesa” [she putted the book on the table] (cf. Pinker 1999). The analogous forms “escrito” and “roto” are not infrequent among less educated monolingual adults throughout the Spanish-speaking world, and they are easily found on informal internet websites originating in Latin America. Likewise, it is not uncommon to hear monolingual Spanish speakers use the form “yo cabo” instead of the prescribed and quite irregular “yo quepo” [I fit] . It does not seem mere coincidence that HL speakers of Spanish often use these same analogous forms, and so do L2 learners. Such phenomena extend to other areas of the verb system as well—indicatives are used by both groups where subjunctives should be (*“Quiero que vengas a la fiesta” vs. “Quiero que vengas a la fiesta” [I want you to come to the party]; *“Lámame mañana cuando llegas al hotel” vs. “Lámame cuando llegues al hotel” [Call me when you arrive at the hotel]), imperfect indicative is used where the past subjunctive or conditional is prescribed and usually preferred by Spanish monolinguals and first generation bilinguals (“Si yo ganaba la lotería, me iba de viaje” vs. “Si yo ganara la lotería, me iría de viaje” [If I won the lottery, I would go on a trip]) (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994, Zentella 1997). Likewise, both groups of learners overgeneralize present tense forms in subordinate clauses prescriptively requiring past tense (*“Me dio el dinero para que yo pueda comprar los libros para mis clases el año pasado” vs. “Me dio el dinero para que yo pudiera comprar los libros para mis clases el año pasado” [S/he gave me the money so I could buy the books for my classes last year]), and tend to use the historical present with greater frequency than Spanish monolinguals in narratives. Andersen’s (1986, 1991) and Andersen & Shirai’s (1994) widely cited work dealing with the *aspect hypothesis* relates to similarities inherent in the past tense verb systems of L2 and HL learners of Spanish—preterite is used most frequently with verbs of achievement and accomplishment, and imperfect tends to be relegated to the expression of states and non-punctual, non-telic activities. Indeed, Silva-Corvalán (1994) found that preterite forms are never used with the state verbs ‘tener’ [to have], ‘ser’ [to be], ‘estar’ [to be] and ‘saber’ [to know] among some third-generation speakers of Mexican Spanish in Los Angeles.

Lexical extension is found among both L2 and HL learners. For example, in varieties of Spanish in which the verb “coger” is not taboo, e.g. Caribbean varieties, it seemingly is extended in colloquial registers by monolinguals and first generation bilinguals and in all registers by L2 and HL speakers, who would appear as though they were ignoring other possible lexical variants: “coger el bus” [to catch the bus], “coger un trabajo” [to get a job], “coger el teléfono” [to pick up the phone], “coger los libros” [to take the books], “coger una idea” [to get an idea], “coger una enfermedad” [to catch an illness], “cogerle a uno en el acto” [to catch

someone in the act], “cogerlo suave” [to take it easy], and so on. In curriculum meetings of Spanish language instructors, I have heard colleagues comment that they grow tired of evaluating compositions in which students “cogen todo” [everything]. The use of discourse markers is another good example of lexical extension among HL and L2 speakers of Spanish (cf. Sankoff, Thibault, Nagy, Blondeau, Fonollosa, & Gagnon 1997). Both groups tend to use with greater frequency those discourse markers in Spanish that have an exact syntactic equivalent in English—“bueno” [well], “entonces” and “pues” [then], “sabes” [you know], and “como” [like]. This extension of English-equivalent markers occurs at the expense of other common discourse markers in monolingual varieties of Spanish, such as “o sea”, “digo”, “digamos”, “así que”, “¿qué sé yo?”, and “este” or “esto”. The latter appear with low frequency, if at all, in the casual speech of both groups of learners. Interestingly, English “so” and “I mean”—which have no direct syntactic equivalents in Spanish—often appear spontaneously inserted into casual speech in Spanish among both HL and L2 learners. The tendency to use “so” and “I mean” in an otherwise entirely Spanish-language discourse is one that I have observed even among recently arrived Spanish-speaking immigrants in Miami who are only in very incipient stages of bilingualism. Based on language acquisition studies as well as language contact research, such lexical extension is an entirely natural—and expected—process among bilinguals, be they HL or L2 speakers.

The same is true of *syntactic calquing*: “tener un buen tiempo” (“to have a good time”), “te llamo para atrás” (“I’ll call you back”) and “dar [algo] para atrás” (“to give [something] back”) are often heard among HL speakers of Spanish and, to a lesser degree, among L2 learners as an extension of an existing parallel structure in Spanish (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994). *Word order transfer* from English into the target language is common as well. The types of word orders transferred from English that end up being erroneous and/or nonnative-like in the target language are often the same for L2 and HL learners. Word order transfer phenomena may be highly salient, as in the example *“Carlos es el chico que ella está saliendo con” [Carlos is the guy that she’s going out with] vs. “Carlos es el chico con quien ella está saliendo”. In other cases, word order transfer may be less salient, as in the example *“¿Cómo te gustó la película?” [How did you like the movie?] vs. the non-contact form “¿Te gustó la película?” (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994 for a discussion of this sort of example). Another much more subtle example is optional Subject-Verb or Verb-Subject order with single valency verbs in Spanish. In this case, frequency of usage is the only germane question since either of the two orders would be grammatically correct; what conditions the use of one or another in conversational Spanish are discourse pragmatic factors. Since Verb-Subject order does not usually occur in English, a lower frequency of this order is observed among Spanish HL speakers and among L2 speakers—even those who become highly proficient in the language—in comparison with monolingual usage.

Comparisons of all such syntactic phenomena among L2 and HL learners could provide important insights for linguistic theory and for pedagogical practices beneficial to both groups.

Question 3: What differences are there in the way in which individual learners acquire a heritage language?

The construct of the “native speaker” is a longstanding one in linguistics, despite the fact that no tangible linguistic descriptions of the “native speaker” or the “near-native speaker” exist to date (cf. Davies 1991, Valdés & Figueroa 1994). Indeed, SLA as a field offers us little concrete insight into such matters, since what it means for a L2 speaker to be linguistically proficient beyond the ACTFL Advanced level is quite ephemeral and practically unexplored (cf. Firth & Wagner 1997, Valdés 1998). Research on the linguistic proficiency of HL speakers would have important implications for the constructs of the “native” and “near-native” speaker.

Although the *critical period hypothesis* maintains that someone who begins to acquire a language after early childhood can never be considered a “native speaker”, many HL speakers in the US do not attain “native-like” ability despite having begun naturalistic acquisition of the language within the so-called critical period, i.e. from birth through the early school years. There would be extensive implications of a research agenda seeking to establish similarities between the language varieties used by HL speakers who fulfill the language-since-birth criterion and those varieties used by “near-native” L2 speakers who do not fulfill this biological criterion. Romaine (1995) affirms that “what is ‘critical’ about second language acquisition is not age so much as the circumstances in which it takes place” (240). I believe that comparisons dealing with the sorts of linguistic phenomena that I have highlighted in the previous section would offer strong support for Romaine’s contention, emphasizing the role of social factors in the ultimate attainment of linguistic abilities.

A number of important social variables have been explored over the years by researchers of SLA and bilingualism. *Speaker generation and birth order* have been found important in studies of Spanish language maintenance and use in the US. In broad terms, speakers of the second generation tend to possess higher degrees of linguistic proficiency than the third generation, and those of the third more so than the fourth generation (cf. Silva-Corvalán 1994, Zentella 1997). Additionally, first-born children tend to develop higher levels of HL proficiency than do second and third-born children in bilingual families (Lambert & Taylor 1996, Zentella 1997). Research on language shift in relation to *socioeconomic class* has yielded interesting and, in some instances, contradictory findings. Among Mexican-Americans in Texas, for example, Sánchez (1983) claimed that being a

member of a lower socioeconomic class entailed using more Spanish, principally for purposes of solidarity building. Chicanos who were upwardly mobile tended to abandon Spanish, such that the middle class was English-dominant because of an 'English=economic success in the US' ideology. However, Amastae (1982) found that middle-class Mexican-Americans in Texas tend to value and maintain Spanish language skill more so than those of the lower class, probably because they have attained equitable socioeconomic status and, from their viewpoint, Spanish language is not an obstacle to economic success. On the contrary, it is an aspect of their heritage and their identity that should be maintained. Considerations from the field of SLA have provided insights quite similar to those of Amastae. That is, a higher socioeconomic status produces a more positive outlook on being able to speak a L2, and results in more social and psychological value being placed on it. Lambert & Tucker's (1972) essays on the early success of French immersion programs in Canada in the 1960s observe that the demand for French language among Anglo-background children came from middle-class Anglophone families who placed great value on the potential bilingualism of their children (cf. Genesee 1988).

The intricate relationship between socioeconomic factors, *gender* and language maintenance was demonstrated by Klee (1987) in a study of Spanish in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Klee found that Mexican-American men tended to use significantly more Spanish in their everyday lives than did women. Klee explained that this pattern was probably owed to women's tendency to be employed in service and professional jobs where English was requisite, while men tended to hold more jobs not requiring them to speak English. Spanish seemed to function, according to Klee, "as the language used by males to establish a kind of masculine identity and to maintain a group solidarity," while English was characterized as a more "feminine language" (1987, 133). Solé (1978) observed the same tendency among Mexican-American college students. Solé suggested that this tendency may be owed to Mexican-American women's idea that through assimilation to Anglo culture, speaking English, they will have greater opportunities for socioeconomic success and personal realization vis-à-vis the limitations placed upon them by more traditional Mexican culture.

On the other hand, Zentella (1997) revealed in an ethnographic study of Puerto Ricans in New York that Spanish language use was associated more with female domains, and that females tended toward higher levels of maintenance and proficiency in Spanish than did males from the same neighborhood. She explained these tendencies in terms of social networks: "Girls were more likely than their brothers to be expected to do things and be with people that resulted in greater involvement with Spanish.... Boys, on the other hand, could spend much more time outside of the house and off the block, away from Spanish" (Zentella 1997, 51). In Florida, beyond the fact that the majority of those who enter university classrooms

to study Spanish as bilingual (or “native”) speakers are women, I have consistently observed through my research on language contact in Miami that males tend to voice more disdain for Spanish in everyday life than do their sisters and female cousins. Moreover, I have often heard second and third generation bilinguals say that they use more English with their fathers and more Spanish with their mothers, seemingly patterning in a fashion similar to the one observed by Zentella in New York. In SLA research, Ellis (1994) concludes that “female learners generally do better than male” and that they tend to have more positive attitudes toward second languages (202-203). He comments, however, that gender interacts fundamentally with other social variables, particularly social class.

Probably more important than speaker generation, social class or gender in language acquisition and use are *speaker social networks*, following Milroy’s (1980) original work on English language variation and change in Belfast and Woolard’s (1989, 1997) studies of Spanish-Catalan bilingualism in Barcelona. *How* we are identified sociologically—as a middle-aged Hispanic or Latina female of the upper middle socioeconomic class, for example—is less important than *with whom* we identify socially. All of this would invoke Schumann’s (1978) acculturation model as much as Giles and Byrne’s (1982) observations on in-group and out-group identity in the field of SLA. Their research suggests that the more L2 learners identify socially with speakers of the target language, the more proficient and native-like they will likely become. It must also be true that HL speakers with more dense social networks including active speakers of Spanish would fare better in terms of language acquisition and maintenance than those with less dense social networks in which Spanish is rarely used. Whether or not a heritage speaker can be sociologically identified as a second, third or fourth generation bilingual seems to be a consideration that falls secondary to the question of social networks. I believe that research on social networks in HLA would serve to explain why we sometimes find fourth generation heritage speakers who are much more proficient than third generation speakers, and third generation speakers who are superior to second generation speakers in terms of their linguistic abilities. In her work on Puerto Rican children in New York, Zentella (1997) pointed out that the presence of Spanish monolinguals in speaker social networks contributed importantly to the development and maintenance of Spanish among successive generations, and that such factors mitigated the impact of what she called the “gender-linked language socialization process” (51) mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Lambert’s (1960) study of *language attitudes* in Canada, using the matched guise technique, demonstrated how complex—and how deceptive—the issue of attitudes can be in the realms of language contact and language learning. Nonetheless, the hypothesis with respect to attitudes and learning is a simple one: positive attitudes toward the target language equate with greater probability of success in learning, while negative attitudes would have just the opposite effect. In

any case, degree of exposure to the language seems key to the issue of acquisition. It is not uncommon to find HL speakers who express rather negative attitudes toward their HL in the US context but who demonstrate high levels of proficiency, probably because the language is heard and used so much in their daily lives. On the other hand, there are those who avidly insist upon the importance of using and maintaining their HL, highlighting its cultural, social, economic and poetic value in spite of their halting HL fluency and their consistent use of English with parents, siblings and same-age peers who also know the language. The relationship between HL attitudes and actual language proficiency and use seems a bit of a labyrinth, one that must be carefully explored in the classroom and in research on HLA in the future.

There is a long line of research on *motivation* in SLA, developed principally by Gardner and his colleagues over the past several decades (e.g. Gardner & Lambert 1972; Gardner 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre 1991; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels 1998). In short, greater personal motivation—be it ‘instrumental’ or ‘integrative’—produces a greater likelihood of attaining high levels of L2 proficiency. The same is likely true in HLA, though the question of motivation in HL classrooms has gone unexplored to date.

Question 4: What effects does instruction have on heritage language acquisition?

Central issues that have been explored under the rubric of instruction in SLA are learner *aptitude*, *strategies*, and *pedagogical approach*. They are also issues that must be explored in-depth in HLA. The methodologies that SLA provides us for studying each of these areas are greatly amenable to research in HLA; in my estimation, they may be directly borrowed.

On the whole, students who tend to receive high grades in academic subjects other than language also tend to receive high grades in language courses, be they L1 or L2 courses. Good writers in L2 classrooms are generally also good writers in native English classrooms. Is the same true for HL learners? Do those HL learners who receive higher grades in school in general also perform better in HL classrooms? If so, why would this be true? Does a strong motivation to learn the language formally and develop academic register skills in the HL produce higher grades in HL classrooms? Does such motivation condition more rapid acquisition of formal language skills irrespective of classroom grades? We must explore such questions in the future to establish some connections between academic performance, formal register linguistic skills, and learner motivations in HLA, as has been done in the field of SLA.

In a now classic article in SLA titled “What the ‘good language learner’ can teach us”, Rubin (1975) identified “attention to form”, “willingness to sound

foolish” and “monitoring one’s own and other’s speech” as key strategies for success in the learning process. Rubin (1987) claims that learning strategies “contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly.” Chamot (1987) defines language learning strategies as “techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information” (cf. Cohen 1991). Bacon & Finnemann (1990) have cogently highlighted the important relationship between learners’ strategies and their attitudes and motivations in L2 instruction. I think that a series of parallel studies on strategies employed by the ‘good *heritage* language learner’ would be beneficial for us in the future.

Finally, with regard to pedagogical approach, most evidence from SLA studies linking instructional techniques to the development of productive ability indicates that *communicative, content-based approaches* are most successful (see Lee & VanPatten 1995 and Omaggio Hadley 2001 for definitions). For HL learners, this is even truer, since the nature of acquisition for them has been dialogic, discursive and absolutely contextual from the beginning. In his review of SLA research, Ellis (1994) concludes that: “The results to date suggest that middle-class children achieve higher levels of L2 proficiency and more positive attitudes than working-class children when the programme emphasizes formal language learning.... However, when the programme emphasizes communicative language skills, the social class of the learners has no effect” (206). These observations can be framed in terms of the conceptual distinction made by Cummins (1984) between BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency). Communicative approaches emphasize BICS, whereas formal, more grammar-oriented approaches emphasize CALP. Clearly, the advantage that HL learners bring to the classroom (if placed beside L2 learners) is related to BICS, and not CALP. It is therefore imperative that HL classrooms reflect communicative approaches. Krashen (2000) observed that:

Often, classes focus on conscious learning of grammatical rules that are late acquired. Some HL speakers may not have learned or acquired these items. Non-speakers of the HL who are good at grammar sometimes outperform HL speakers on grammar tests and get higher grades in the language class, even though the non-speaker of the HL may be incapable of communicating the simplest idea in the language while the HL speaker may be quite competent in everyday conversation. Such events could be psychologically devastating, a message to the HL speaker that he or she does not know his or her own language, while an outsider does. Even though the kind of knowledge the outsider has is not genuine, the HL speaker may not understand this, given the authority of the

classroom and the value the teacher places on conscious knowledge of grammar. (441)

Of course, Krashen's quote is not meant to suggest that all L2 learners are 'good' at grammar exercises and that all HL learners are 'bad' at them. Nor could we take it to mean that HL learners will necessarily be impeded by *some* grammar instruction and that L2 learners will always benefit from *all* grammar instruction. Rather, communicative approaches benefit both types of students, but particularly more so in the case of HL students because of their usually much more developed BICS.

Based on HL students' more developed BICS, and particularly for affective reasons, separate classrooms for HL and L2 learners are requisite, at least at what we term the 'beginning' and 'intermediate' levels. The necessity of segregated classrooms should not lead us to believe, however, that teachers are dealing with altogether different linguistic issues between the two groups (emphasis here on *linguistic*, since social issues are another important area of concern). Although there are veritable differences between many HL linguistic features and other L2 linguistic features, these must not blind us to the numerous similarities between the two groups, particularly at the morphological, syntactic, and lexical levels. There is no reason to believe that the principles and practices of communicative language teaching as put forth in SLA will not benefit HL learners; indeed, classroom experience has shown many of us that they are quite effective. However, to make substantive and supportable claims about which pedagogical approaches best serve HL learners, a great deal of research is still in order. The various pedagogical paradigms discussed in SLA need to be explored in HL classroom research. VanPatten's (1996) model of input processing and grammar instruction is one such paradigm that could yield interesting results. Kroll's (1990) and Hamp-Lyons' (1991) work may guide HL researchers in issues around writing development. Oxford's (1997) descriptions of cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction seem highly useful for the theoretical elaboration of HL pedagogy in general. At the same time, equal attention must be given to the adoption of L1 teaching techniques in HL classrooms, as Potowski (2002) has suggested. I agree with her idea that the most effective pedagogical approach to HL instruction would be one that integrates particular aspects of both L1 and L2 teaching methodologies.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, HL researchers and educators in the US have made important strides in identifying fundamental social, psychological and linguistic differences between what Valdés and Figueroa (1994) have termed

‘circumstantial’ bilinguals and ‘elective’ bilinguals. This line of *contrastive* research must continue into the future, and the findings gained from it must be strategically used to convince administrators and government authorities that HL learners require separate classrooms, ancillary materials, support organizations and specially trained teachers capable of meeting their educational demands (cf. Roca 1997). Parallel to such contrastive research endeavors, we must begin to undertake much needed *comparative* investigations between those students we would classify—on whichever grounds we ideologically and pedagogically so choose—as “heritage” language learners and those we label “second” or “foreign” language learners. Comparative research must begin to uncover similarities between the two types of learners, following objective, empirical methodologies. My reasoning behind this proposal is simple: to understand and explain fully the extent of the differences between these two groups, we must also understand and explain fully the similarities between them.

Irrespective of a contrastive or comparative research orientation, I argue that central research questions, methodologies, and theoretical constructs taken from the field of SLA will provide HLA researchers with a very apt and reliable starting point for developing their own theories and research agendas. Dialogue and exchange between the two fields will greatly benefit both, and perhaps even help to dissipate the separatist ideologies which prevent HL students from reaping the due benefits of “foreign” language resources in this country, e.g. the Federal Government’s Title VI initiative. As applied linguistics researchers and language educators, our endeavors oft end up being political in nature, and they may have important repercussions for decisions made by higher-ups who are less informed and/or less concerned than we are about multilingualism in the US context. As observed in the introduction, Canadian researchers and educators have been quite successful in recent decades in their efforts to interface L2 learning with bilingualism. In doing so, they have been able to carry out language planning and implement government policies strongly in favor of languages other than English at all educational levels and in many realms of public life. SLA research is necessarily implicated in research on bilingualism, and vice-versa. The field of SLA research and theory is necessarily part of the field of bilingualism, and vice-versa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is based on a talk presented as part of the panel “Professional Development of Heritage Language Teachers” at the Second National Conference on Heritage Languages in America, October 19, 2002, Tyson’s Corner, VA. My thanks to Cecilia Colombi and Ana Roca for their invitation to form part of the panel. I also extend thanks to Jennifer Leeman and Kim Potowski, and to three

anonymous reviewers of *Heritage Language Journal* for their close reading and valuable criticisms of an earlier version of this article.

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