

Foregrounding Indigenous Instructors' and Learners' Perspectives
in the field of Spanish as a Heritage Language

by

Valeria Alejandra Ochoa

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved July 2022 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Sara Beaudrie, Chair
Michael Gradoville
Brendan O'Connor

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2022

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the perspectives of six Indigenous learners and two instructors to analyze and reconceptualize pedagogical practices in the Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) classroom. Although there have been numerous proposals and perspectives that have successfully incorporated the sociopolitical realities of SHL learners, there is progress to be made to better understand the multifaceted identities of learners and instructors in the Latinx community. Thus, the perspectives of Indigenous learners and pedagogues are necessary to not only acknowledge but to meet the needs of a part of the Latinx community that is often erased by centering *mestizaje*. Thus, the present study utilizes Critical Latinx Indigeneities (CLI) as a framework to uncover salient themes in the individual *testimonios*, sharing circles, and written reflections of these eight Indigenous instructors and learners that have taken and/or taught an SHL course. The findings in this study indicated eight prominent themes: 1) dynamic identity development and identity negotiation, 2) connections between language and identity, 3) impacts of anti-Indigenous discrimination among Latinx people, 4) maneuvering language and identity in K-12 education, 5) implications of teachers' positionalities and practices, 6) discrepancies on knowledge and holders of knowledge, 7) inclusion of indigeneity in SHL courses, and 8) tensions between taking/teaching SHL courses and being Indigenous. Additionally, pedagogical suggestions and reflections are offered alongside a discussion on the concept of allyship. By foregrounding Indigenous Latinxs, I argue that decolonial theory and praxis, based on Indigenous ways of being and knowing, can lead to crucial advancements in SHL Education. By extending the theoretical

boundaries of critical pedagogies in SHL Education, we can begin to dismantle deficit-based orientations to researching and teaching SHL learners with dynamic and racially diverse identities. This study has the potential to make an invaluable contribution by disrupting ongoing settler colonial logics that persist in language education by offering pedagogical considerations from Indigenous instructors and learners that would result in an increasingly inclusive Spanish classroom in which Latinxs of varied backgrounds can thrive.

DEDICATION

Esta tesis se la dedico a todxs lxs latinxs en los EE. UU. que sienten que no tienen un lugar en este mundo, les recuerdo que tienen por lo menos una servidora aquí que les apoya y lxs quiere ver felices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Sara M. Beaudrie: Thank you for your support since day one, from the day you called to let me know I was accepted to the PhD program at ASU and that you were excited to work with me until now. Somehow, we have been able to successfully make it through this doctoral program together despite all the hurdles, including a global pandemic. I will never forget your teachings and advice through it all. I am thankful to have had you as my advisor, mentor, and supporter.

To Michael Gradoville: Thank you for teaching me all the important linguistics topics that every respectable linguist is supposed to know, even though I did not always want to learn them. In truth, I am very lucky for your patience with me and my sense of humor. You have always gone out of your way to make time for me and answer all my questions about Praat and the like, while always providing careful feedback, and for that I will always be thankful. I hope you never change.

To Brendan O'Connor: Thank you for teaching the class that changed my trajectory while at ASU, but more importantly, for helping me gain perspective on a lot of important topics. I must admit you are just an all-around thoughtful and kind professor and person. I really could not have done this dissertation without you and your expertise. Academia needs more profes like you.

To Sergio Loza: When Claudia Holguín Mendoza (shoutouts to Claudia!!) told me to go to ASU to learn from you and Sara, I never imagined that I would be meeting my number one academic supporter, mentor, takuache, bestie, brother, etc. I cannot begin to count the number of times you've talked me off a ledge by reminding me who I am. I am eternally

indebted to you for your patience, friendship, kindness, feedback, and just overall good times. You're my homie for life my dude, siempre cuentas conmigo.

To my family: My insanely wonderful husband Jordan Conner and my perrito Benicio, you two are my whole world and I know for a fact that the only reason I am able to do anything is because you two love me so damn much it keeps me going. To mi mami Lorena, mi pa Mario, mis abuelitas Valentina and Ramona, mis abuelitos Guillermo and Justo. Ustedes me han enseñado lo que la escuela nunca pudo, ser una persona humilde y con un corazón puro. To my aunts Ruby and Galilea, you two are my truest realest peeps and I'm so proud and honored to have grown up with you two. To my little siblings, Paolina, Mario, Abraham, and Rosita, your big sister will always be here for you. Finally, to every single member of the Ochoa family desde Etzatlán, Jalisco hasta Los Ángeles, California. Being a part of this family is one the best things this life has given me. My entire family is awesome, and they have taught me so much about so many parts of life. I love each of you with my whole being.

To all my previous educators, mentors, advisors: Thank you for everything.

To my friends and peers from undergrad until now: There's so many of you that have listened to me vent, bought me some food, gave me a hug, and/or offered me so many forms of support over the years that I cannot ever pay back. I just hope to be as good a friend and peer to you, as you have been to me. There's seriously too many to name but special shoutout to Janet, Juanito, Karen, Alfredo, Naveen, Román, Erin, Leslie, Diana, Nayibe, José, Laura, Angélica, Devon, Sam, Emma, Katie, and so many more. You all are the best.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	ix
TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS.....	x
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Rationale for the Study	6
1.2 Background for the Study	7
1.3 Research Questions.....	15
1.4 Chapter Summary	16
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	18
2.1 SHL Education Goals and Orientations	19
2.2 SHL Learners' Identities.....	29
2.3 Decolonial Perspectives in Higher Education and SHL Education	38
2.4 Positionality, Reflexivity, and Answerability in the Field of SHL.....	49
2.5 Theoretical Framework: Critical Latinx Indigeneities	53
2.6 Chapter Summary	68
METHODOLOGY	71
3.1 Participant Selection and Participants' Backgrounds	72
3.2 Data Collection Procedures and Analysis.....	85
3.3 Researcher Positionality.....	93
3.4 Chapter Summary	95

	Page
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	97
4.1 Main themes from the <i>testimonios</i>	99
4.1.1 Theme one: Dynamic identity development and identity negotiation	99
4.2.1 Theme two: Connections between language and identity.....	110
4.3.1 Theme three: Impacts of anti-Indigenous discrimination among Latinx people ...	123
4.4.1 Theme four: Maneuvering language and identity in K-12 education	132
4.5.1 Theme five: Implications of teachers’ positionalities and practices	144
4.6.1 Theme six: Discrepancies on knowledge and holders of knowledge	160
4.7.1 Theme seven: Inclusion of Indigeneity in SHL courses	167
4.8.1 Theme eight: Tensions between taking/teaching SHL courses and being Indigenous	178
4.2 Pedagogical implications: Reflections and Suggestions on Indigeneity in SHL Education	190
4.3 Considerations on Allyship, Answerability, and Positionality	199
4.4 Final Participant Takeaways	205
4.5 Chapter Summary	207
CONCLUSION.....	215
5.1 Summary of Findings.....	215
5.2 Pedagogical Implications	224
5.3 Study Limitations and Future Directions	232
5.4 Concluding Remarks.....	234

	Page
APPENDIX	
INSTRUCTOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS	261
STUDENT INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS	263
IRB APPROVAL.....	265

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1. Selected Participants	73

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

- Speaker self-repairs or restarts
- ... Items within the utterance have been redacted by the researcher
- “ ” Items within are quoted speech
- [*sic*] Sic erat scriptum (“thus it has been written”); transcribed

All other punctuation marks (periods, commas, question marks, exclamation points) are used as in “standard” writing.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Given that Spanish speakers had settled in the U.S. long before English speakers, it is unsurprising that educators eventually had to contend with Spanish heritage speakers in the classroom. The field of Spanish as a heritage language (SHL) was formally established in the 1970s once Valdés made a call to action to better serve these learners that already had connections to Spanish speaking communities. Though there were classes specifically established for heritage learners that were separate from second language (L2) learners since the 1930s, they were much different than the ones Valdés observed in the late 1970s (Valdés-Fallis, 1978). Valdés noticed a need to create a distinct field of research and pedagogy for these learners that had long been in the country but had not been properly served. As such, Valdés first proposed one of the most widely cited definitions of a heritage learner which is “a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (Valdés, 2000a, 2000b as cited in Valdés 2001, pg. 38). While there have been several proposed definitions and discussions on the term heritage in the field since (see Carreira, 2004; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Leeman, 2015), the reality is that this group is incredibly linguistically, racially, and culturally diverse. Therefore, it would be difficult to find a term that represents this group and is widely agreed upon. What educators and researchers do agree upon, however, is that the needs of these learners are

different than that of L2 learners as they already have previous experiences in and personal connections to the heritage language (Valdés, 2005).

In addition to the generations of Spanish speakers already living in the country, there have been multiple waves of incoming Spanish speakers from Latin American countries that also have different needs than that of L2 learners and need to be served in educational contexts. The continued trends of immigration have demonstrated that not only are children in the U.S. now more likely to be racial/ethnic minorities, but that these children would one day outnumber the majority (Hernández, 2004; Esterline & Batalova, 2022). As such, the field of SHL began to gain increasing relevance given the types of learners arriving to Spanish classrooms all over the country. Carreira and Kagan (2018) provide a historical overview of the field of heritage (including languages other than Spanish) as well as the developments thus far in research and pedagogy. They explain that a large part of the research has focused on HL learners' life experiences that impact their linguistic proficiency and the specific factors that point to certain strengths and weaknesses in the heritage language. Carreira and Kagan (2018) go on to describe some of the directions the field must take to better understand and serve these learners, such as: rethinking previously held assumptions, bridging divides between researchers and pedagogues, focusing more on classroom-based research, and reconceptualizing language teaching/learning. They close by considering some of the obstacles still present in the field such as gaining enrollment, institutional buy-in, teacher training, and generally gaining more recognition in the American education system.

Many of the suggestions and obstacles highlighted in Carreira and Kagan's (2018) article continue to be relevant today, though progress has been made since then in addressing the needs of 22% of the country's school-aged children that are HL speakers according to their estimate. Recent advancements in the field have delved into several important factors that impact SHL learners and the use of their language. There has been more classroom-centered research (Durán Urrea & Meiners, 2019; Leeman & Serafini, 2021; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2020), open-access pedagogical materials (COERLL, 2021; Foulis & Alex, 2021), critical orientations to language teaching (Beaudrie et al., 2019, 2021; Beaudrie & Vergara Wilson, 2021; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Leeman, 2018), studies of sociopolitical impacts on SHL use (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Sánchez Muñoz & Amezcua, 2019), studies of the performance and dynamism of identities (Tecedor et al., 2021), proposals of Spanish for specific purposes (Martínez, 2021; Showstack et al., 2021), studies of HL anxiety (Prada et al., 2020), studies of SHL students during study abroad (Quan et al., 2018; Leeman & Driver, 2021; Pozzi et al., 2021; Shively, 2018), and more. Additionally, there has also been more calls for focusing on diversity and social justice within the SHL learner/Latinx population (Holguín Mendoza, 2021; Ortega, 2020; Parra, 2020).

The field of Spanish as a heritage language (SHL) has been able to grow and gain recognition due in no small part to the fact that the Latinx population in the United States has now reached 62.1 million in 2020, up from 50.5 million just a decade before (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). Additionally, an estimated 39.1 million Latinxs in the U.S. report speaking Spanish at home, which is an increase from 24.6 million in 2000

(Krogstad & Noe-Bustamente, 2021). They also note that the number of Latinxs that identify as multiracial “has increased dramatically” for several reasons, with an increase from 3 million in 2010 to 20 million in 2020. While pedagogues have made incredible strides in better serving SHL learners, as Urrieta Jr. and Calderón (2019) note, the profound diversity of this long standing Latinx population in the U.S. is not often acknowledged, much less considered when discussing the experiences of Latinx people in higher education. In fact, it is not uncommon for people from different racial, economic, educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds to be painted as one homogenous group by using broad labels such as Asian, African, and more upon arriving in the U.S. When it comes to Latinxs, the erasure of Indigenous people as a significant portion of the largest minority group in the country can lead to social and institutional discrimination, particularly in education (see Blackwell et al., 2017).

Due to settler colonial tenets within foreign language education in the U.S. (see Macedo, 2019), it is important to consider if and how the field of SHL has acknowledged and met the needs of the Indigenous students that arrive in the classroom. While critical perspectives in the field have been crucial in advancing the discussion on how sociopolitical, historical, and racial factors impact how SHL learners have been framed in research and pedagogy, to continue to understand how factors beyond language itself impact SHL learners, the next consideration for the field is the ongoing settler colonial tenets of teaching Spanish in the U.S. This perspective is necessary in order to disrupt social, political, and linguistic hierarchies that have been deeply rooted in American history (see Quijano, 2000), and that have possibly been perpetuated in SHL education.

While in recent years social and racial justice initiatives have become increasingly popular in both the field of linguistics and the subfield of SHL, they cannot be fully realized without the inclusion of decolonial research and pedagogy (Patel, 2015). As such, the present study aims to center and reflect upon the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors in SHL classrooms. By centering the perspectives of these often-overlooked members of the Spanish-speaking population in the U.S., we can begin to develop decolonial pedagogical goals and practices that are informed by Indigenous instructors and learners themselves.

This qualitative study examines one-time individual interviews with SHL learners and instructors which all self-identify as Indigenous. These first individual interviews were then transcribed and analyzed for themes to provide participants an overview of topics and ideas discussed in the first interviews, to have the data undergo member-checking (Maxwell, 1996). These themes were shared during the second step involving two sharing circles, where the participants were divided into two separate groups to discuss the themes from the individual interviews and to contribute their own written reflections on these themes and discussions. These interviews and reflections were analyzed to consider the experiences of these Indigenous learners and instructors and how these experiences can shed light on our consideration of Indigeneity in SHL classrooms. These findings shed light on the meaningful advancements we have made in SHL education to consider SHL learners' complex identities, while also demonstrating the ways in which SHL education still may have room to grow.

1.1 Rationale for the Study

While SHL research and pedagogy has continued to explore the intersecting facets of the identities within the U.S. Latinx population, there remains a general lack of studies centering the needs and experiences of Indigenous peoples in SHL classrooms. While the perpetuation of colonial hegemony in education in the U.S. has been acknowledged and discussed in other academic disciplines, there is a need to consider if and how Indigenous Latinxs have been impacted by said hegemony in the field of SHL. As a basis for this study, I have identified the problem to be threefold. First, an apartheid of knowledge in academia leads to the disenfranchisement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in higher education (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) explain how Eurocentric epistemological perspectives are considered the one and only way of knowing and interpreting information in academia, which leads to a complete disregard of the experiential knowledge that BIPOC communities have to offer. Second, the colonial yoke of Europe has yet to be disrupted in the teaching of European languages in the U.S. (Macedo, 2019; Phillipson, 1992). Foreign language education in the U.S. has historically centered white, middle-class, Western ways of knowing in such a manner that has subordinated Indigenous and non-Indigenous Latinx language users through racialized and appropriateness-based discourse (Zimmerman, 2019). As such, it is necessary to see if and how this colonial yoke has impacted SHL education, especially since Indigenous people within the Latinx community are often disregarded in the first place.

Third, a lack of reflection on positionality and reflexivity in research and pedagogy allows non-community members to operate without a sense of answerability to the communities they claim to serve (Anthony Stevens, 2017; Berger, 2015; Patel, 2015). Given the complex nature of academics working with communities that have historically been taken advantage of for the sake of personal and professional gains of non-members, it is of utmost importance that researchers and pedagogues consider their positionality and relationship with the people they are benefitting from. Regardless of insider or outsider membership status, Berger (2015) describes the significance of not only being aware of one's social position, but the necessary process of reflexivity required of researchers. Although Berger's (2015) work focuses mainly on research, these practices would be crucial for a pedagogue as well, particularly when they are hoping to cultivate alliances within the community as a non-member (Anthony Stevens, 2017). These self-reflections are particularly useful to consider in relationships where power dynamics have not traditionally been considered equal, such as the relationship between teacher and student or researcher and participant.

1.2 Background for the Study

Spanish colonization in the Americas

The history of Spanish in the U.S. is one that spans more than five centuries, given that Juan Ponce de Leon arrived on the Florida peninsula in 1513 (Silva Corvalán, 2004). As Silva Corvalán explains, from the mid 1600s until the first half of the 19th century, Spanish was considered the language of prestige in regions that were considered to belong to the ever-expanding Spanish empire. It is important to note that at least 375

Indigenous languages, and by consequence, speakers of varied cultures and practices, were already living in the lands that were being colonized by the Spanish in what is now considered the United States of America (Taylor, 2002). Thus, since Christopher Columbus's arrival to the Caribbean in 1492, Spanish has been in contact with, and often violently supplanting, the Indigenous languages of numerous peoples transnationally. As such, given that Spanish was the *lingua franca* of the administrative and religious affairs of the empire, it is estimated that by the end of the 17th century, most Indigenous populations living within the settler colonies of Spain understood Spanish (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007).

Within the current geographic region of the United States, the territories that were ostensibly claimed by the Spanish empire such as Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, California, Utah, Oregon, Washington, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas. As Silva Corvalán (2004) notes, while the Spanish reached each of these states, Spain's colonial period lasted longest in New Mexico and Texas given that they had settled in these territories by 1536. They established settlements in Santa Fe (1598), El Paso (1659), San Antonio (1718), Colorado (1851), San Ignacio de Tubac (1752), San Diego (1769), and more (Silvia Corvalán, 2004, p. 207). As previously mentioned, across these lands there were, and continue to be, diverse populations of distinct Indigenous tribes that had never previously viewed themselves as belonging to a single categorical grouping (Taylor, 2002). As Quijano (2000) explains, contemporary ideas of race in the Americas did not previously exist before Spanish colonization, which led to the creation of identity labels of Indigenous,

Black, and Mestizo to group otherwise quite different peoples into one membership category. These labels would then enable the establishment of a hierarchical social system based on newly established racial classifications. As Quijano (2000) notes:

Insofar as the social relations that were being configured were relations of domination, such identities were considered constitutive of the hierarchies, places, and corresponding social roles, and consequently of the model of colonial domination that was being imposed. In other words, race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social classification. (p. 534)

Quijano goes on to detail how over time, phenotypic traits were also used to codify people into racial categories that for example, automatically classified darker skinned peoples into inferior positions to that of people with white skin. In this way, skin color became conflated with race and status which has permeated through economic, social, and institutional systems of the Americas until present day.

While the Spanish were able to establish a model of social stratification that benefited them as the ruling class, the Indigenous people that had not previously considered themselves as belonging to the same identity categories, often had contentious relationships with other Indigenous communities. These relations of domination put in place by the Spanish and the existing disjunctions between Indigenous communities resulted to be beneficial at times for the Spanish colonizers. As Fuller and Leeman (2020) detail, Hernán Cortés was able to recruit thousands of Indigenous soldiers to take over Tenochtitlan (currently Mexico City) in 1521, given that the Indigenous soldiers they had recruited were enemies of the Aztecs, and Tenochtitlan was the center of the Aztec

empire at the time. As such, there were instances where the pillaging, exploitation, and murder of Indigenous communities were carried out by the Spanish empire with the support of other Indigenous people. During this time, these so-called alliances between Spaniards and Indigenous peoples resulted in increased levels of bilingualism among these groups (Silva Corvalán, 2004). However, the Spaniards that did learn Indigenous languages were usually members of the Catholic clergy or military officials who were tasked with exploiting natives to become laborers, soldiers, and newly converted members of the Catholic church (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Taylor, 2002). In this way, language became a key factor in establishing and enforcing colonial systems that would ultimately lead to the displacement and genocide of Indigenous languages, cultures, and ultimately the people themselves (Hanks, 2010).

While Spanish remained the language of colonial rule and prestige for centuries in the Americas, Indigenous languages were violently eradicated as they were considered subhuman, illegitimate forms of communication according to the colonizers (Veronelli, 2015). As Veronelli (2015) explains, Spanish colonizers deemed their language as being a real, modern, and civilized language while the numerous Indigenous languages in the Americas were described as animal-like and lacking the grammatical-structures and complexity necessary to impart knowledge in the same ways as Spanish. By perpetuating these ideas, Veronelli (2015) explains, the Spanish colonizers used language as a factor that justified their ostensibly innate superiority, which helped defend their dehumanizing treatment of Indigenous peoples to the Spanish crown. As such, language, in addition to

race, became a way for the Spanish settlers to position themselves as inherently superior to the rest of the populations they encountered (Hanks, 2010; Quijano, 2000).

These conceptualizations of language, race, and ability to generate knowledge that could be classified as “modern” have had long standing impacts on language policies in the Americas. Even though Spanish rule eventually came to an end as Latin American countries began gaining their independence, many of these Latin American countries maintained colonial foundations within their educational, economic, and social systems which were considered superior and modernized in comparison to Indigenous ways of living (Quijano, 2000). In the case of Mexico, shortly after gaining independence from the Spanish in 1810, they lost a large portion of their land to the U.S. in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Silva Corvalán, 2004), and yet maintained Spanish-only policies and social hierarchies. It was not until the 1990s that major changes in the educational system in Mexico were implemented due to pressure from Zapatistas of mainly Indigenous communities pressured the Mexican government to establish bilingual schools in Spanish and Indigenous languages (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2007; Meek & Messing, 2007). As such, it has been less than three decades since these efforts have been made to support and/or revitalize Indigenous languages in Mexico, which the government had previously suppressed to maintain Spanish as the language of prestige in the country (Stavenhagen, 2002). Nonetheless, due to such long established socioeconomic, political, educational, cultural, and other systemic factors that have oppressed Indigenous communities, the process of centering and revitalizing Indigenous languages has been difficult (see Yoshioka, 2010).

Similar to Mexico, the sociopolitical, educational, and linguistic history of the U.S. has also sustained settler colonial logics and practices. As it pertains to Spanish speaking communities previously deemed Mexican citizens, these communities found themselves living in lands sold to the United States of America through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and later the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 (Fuller & Leeman, 2020). As such, they were now required to acquire yet another colonial language, English. Reyhner and Eder (2004) describe the cultural and linguistic genocide that Indigenous communities (of varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds) in the U.S. had to endure by being forced to assimilate into Eurocentric standards of education in boarding schools. As the authors explain, “the rapid erosion of traditional culture by immersing students in an all-English environment in boarding schools often led to cultural disintegration, not cultural replacement” (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 5). As Fuller and Leeman (2020) describe, nationalistic, monolingual, and English-only ideologies in the country aimed to position all non-English users as a threat to the supposed unity of the nation.

Consequently, these Eurocentric histories of colonialism and underlying ideologies have led to discriminatory political and educational policies that have continued to impact racialized populations in the U.S. Schmid (2000) meticulously provides an overview of the complex history of English Only movements in the U.S. that have often been fueled by xenophobic, nationalistic, anti-bilingual, and racist ideologies. Schmid explains that although the U.S. government has held a myriad of positions towards bilingualism, by 1923 various states passed anti-bilingual laws to prevent the teaching of German or any other non-English language during the first World War.

Though seemingly focusing on language, these laws were also established as a nationalistic response to immigrants and racialized peoples in the U.S. As Schmid (2000) explains,

The reconstitution of national identity was articulated through concepts of race, language, country of origin, and religion. The debate over immigration policy helped to expose the extent of anxiety over who was to be included in the nation. This started a process by which the federal government codified in immigration law racist and national discourse (p. 66).

By consistently positioning non-white and/or bi/multilingual populations as a threat to nationalism, and with the ongoing immigration of people from Latin America to the U.S., the so-called perception of a Latino threat was established and has thrived until today (Chávez, 2008; Quijano, 2000; Rumbaut, 2008).

Thus, the confluence of these anti-immigrant, anti-bilingual, and anti-Latino sentiments have been at the forefront of national laws and discourse, which have in turn led to drastic implications for bilingual education. Rosa and Flores (2017) proposed a raciolinguistic perspective based on settler colonial relationships between language and race that have been able to permeate the teaching of Spanish in the U.S., particularly when teaching bilinguals. In his book, Rosa (2019) investigates how the ethnoracial category Latinx is an identity that is perceived, constructed, and naturalized among bilinguals in a high school in Chicago (p. 4). More recently, García and colleagues (2021) explain how “abyssal thinking”, based on the work of de Sousa Santos (2007), has positioned racialized bilinguals’ as inferior to that of ostensibly civilized races and

language users. They explain how their orientations to teaching bilinguals are based in decolonial perspectives that focus on justice for minoritized language communities in the country but are particularly concerned with “the rights of racialized people to be educated on their own terms and on the basis of their own language practices” (García et al., 2021, p. 4).

Of particular interest to this study is how these conceptualizations of bilingual education for racialized bilinguals by García et al. (2021) require reflection on imperial powers and conflicts. Scholars from varied fields have investigated how the impact of international relationships between the U.S. and Latin American countries have had direct implications for the immigration patterns of Latin Americans (Domínguez, 2019; Sánchez & Kasun, 2012; Tienda & Sánchez, 2013). In terms of Indigenous communities, Gómez Cervantes (2021) highlights the myriad of factors based in settler colonial logics at play that have forced Indigenous people from Latin American countries to migrate to the U.S., given the role the U.S. has played in making survival difficult in various regions of Latin America. The author also explains the additional obstacles Indigenous migrants face in comparison to non-Indigenous Latin Americans, such as the lack of Indigenous language resources in the U.S. and the discrimination Indigenous people face transnationally. These issues have been raised by scholars in fields directly related to the field of Spanish as a heritage language (see Barillas Chón, 2017, 2019, 2022; Casanova, 2019; Casanova et al., 2016; Iturriaga Acevedo, 2020; Kovats Sánchez, 2019, 2020, 2021; among others), but have not yet been fully explored in SHL Education.

1.3 Research Questions

The present study aims to shed light on the perspectives of a traditionally underrepresented group of Spanish users in SHL Education, Indigenous instructors and learners, by addressing the following research questions:

1. What can the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors before and during their enrollment in SHL courses tell us about their identities and how they navigate educational spaces?
2. How, in the students' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. How do the experiences of Indigenous students reflect, or not, the consideration of decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom?
 - b. Do these students see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL pedagogy require modification?
3. How, in the instructors' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. Have these instructors ever had to modify any lessons, materials, or practices in the SHL classroom due to conflicts with their own Indigenous knowledge/perspectives?
 - b. Do these instructors see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL Education require modification?

While the findings of this study by no means aim to provide a generalized representation of all the perspectives of Indigenous instructors and learners in the field of SHL, they make an important contribution to the field given the lack of studies focused on foregrounding the experiences, identities, and knowledge of Indigenous people that enroll in or teach SHL courses.

1.4 Chapter Summary

This first chapter included an introduction to the field of SHL education and information on the presence of Latinxs in the U.S. It also contains the rationale for the present study, background historical information that informs this work, and the research questions guiding the study. In chapter two, an overview on previous studies that have focused on SHL education has been provided. This overview is particularly focused on the goals and orientations proposed by SHL pedagogues/researchers and the discussions that have shaped the way we think about SHL learners' identities. In addition, discussions which disentangle the conflation of critical and decolonial perspectives is included based on previous Indigenous scholarship, so that we may consider how these conversations have impacted higher education and language pedagogy, and by consequence, SHL education. Following these discussions is a section on concepts such as positionality, reflexivity, and allyship in research. The second chapter closes with a description of the theoretical framework utilized for this study, which is Critical Latinx Indigenities (CLI).

In chapter three, a detailed explanation of the methodology for this study is presented which includes the qualitative methods I have utilized to frame and analyze this research. Within the third chapter is also a full account of how participants were selected and their backgrounds, as well as an overview of the procedures taken to collect the data. The chapter concludes with an explanation of my own positionality and how it informs my work. The fourth chapter is an overview of the findings from the *testimonios*, sharing circles, and written reflections organized into the eight most prominent themes. Also included in this chapter are the pedagogical suggestions the participants explicitly detail

for SHL courses/programs, as well as their own understandings of allyship. Next, the final takeaways are provided from the participants that chose to comment on their participation in this study in their written reflection. The fourth chapter closes with a summary of the results and discussion. In chapter five, a concise overview of the responses to the research questions is provided, along with the implications of this work and how it aims to inform the field of SHL Education. Also provided in chapter five are pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and future directions, and finally, concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present chapter provides an overview of the most relevant literature on the topics that altogether serve to inform the present study. The strands of this literature review are the following 1) SHL Education Goals and Orientations, 2) SHL Learners' Identities, 3) Decolonial Perspectives in Higher Education and SHL Education, and 4) Positionality, Reflexivity, and Answerability in the Field of SHL. The first strand overviews the genesis of the field of SHL Education and the various goals, practices, and orientations that have been utilized and reimagined to meet the needs of SHL learners thus far (Beaudrie & Vergara Wilson, 2021; Beaudrie et al., 2014, 2021, among others). In the second strand, a more extensive discussion on the complex relationship between a heritage learner's language and their identity is provided. Also provided in this section is how the knowledge and output of minoritized scholars is devalued in academia and leads to an "apartheid of knowledge" (see Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002).

In the third strand, the incommensurability of critical and decolonial perspectives is explained, primarily based on the work of Tuck and Yang (2012). Also included in this strand are interdisciplinary perspectives on the need for a decolonial shift in linguistics and language teaching and learning (see Macedo, 2019). In addition to theoretical considerations, two proposals on decolonial pedagogy and how they have been implemented in at least two contexts in higher education are presented, one being with heritage language educators (Austin, 2019) and one in an education program (Louie et al., 2017). The fourth strand of this chapter focuses on questions of positionality and allyship

in research, especially as it pertains to minoritized language communities. Previous scholarship has focused on the impact a researchers' intersectional identity has on the work they do, and how processes of self-reflection as well as being answerable to the communities they work with is crucial (Berger, 2015; Patel, 2015). Questions of conducting research with Indigenous communities, especially as a non-Indigenous person, are also discussed within this section (Anthony Stevens, 2017; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Leonard, 2020).

This chapter also includes the theoretical framework, Critical Latinx Indigenities (CLI), as an interdisciplinary theory and point of practice to better understand the experiences of Indigenous instructors and learners in SHL Education. To open this section, a definition of CLI and tenets derived from this framework are presented based mainly on the work of Blackwell et al. (2017) and Calderón and Urrieta Jr. (2019). Next, an overview of previous studies that have utilized CLI in different fields is included to better understand this theoretical framework and to demonstrate how it is appropriate for the present study. Finally, additional information on the erasure of Indigenous Latinxs is provided to demonstrate the need for more scholarship on this important diasporic community in the U.S. The chapter concludes with a summary of the previous literature and theoretical framework along with a preview of the chapter that follows.

2.1 SHL Education Goals and Orientations

Even though Spanish users have been in the U.S. and in contact with Indigenous language users since 1513 due to the arrival of Spanish colonizers in Florida (Silva Corvalán, 2004), it was not until these linguistic communities were subjected to non-

Spanish speaking rule that educators had to starting finding solutions for learners of different linguistic backgrounds. This led to the genesis of what is now known as the field of Spanish as a heritage language. In the last half century, extensive developments have been made in addressing the needs of Spanish learners that arrive to the language classroom with linguistic and experiential knowledge due to historical, ancestral, cultural, and generally personal connections to the language (Beaudrie et al., 2014; Martínez, 2016). Given that the backgrounds and needs of these SHL learners are clearly distinct from that of second language learners, it was necessary to establish pedagogical principles to guide SHL instructors. The earliest and most referenced guidelines to date in the field according to Beaudrie et al. (2014) have been ones set forth by Valdés (1995, 2005) and Aparicio (1997). While the initial six goals were carefully detailed in Valdés's work at the turn of the 21st century, the seventh and final goal was also added during this time by Aparicio (1997) and is now referenced as a consolidated list. The initial seven goals are outlined in Beaudrie et al. (2014) as the following:

1. Language maintenance
2. Acquisition or development of a prestige language variety
3. Expansion of bilingual range
4. Transfer of literacy skills
5. Acquisition or development of academic skills in the heritage language.
6. Positive attitudes towards both the heritage language and various dialects of the language and its cultures
7. Acquisition or development of cultural awareness

While some of these goals appear to overlap, there has been a clear emphasis on certain goals over others. The goal that most SHL pedagogues agree upon as being the main priority of SHL pedagogy is language maintenance, while the rest of the goals have not been met with the same level of consensus among researchers and pedagogues in the field.

The goals that have received the most attention in terms of pedagogical proposals have been the ones mainly focused on linguistic and academic outcomes. Undoubtedly, the most contentious goal among SHL pedagogues has been the acquisition/development of a prestige or standard variety of Spanish. This goal presupposes that the language varieties SHL learners bring to the classroom are bound to include stigmatized features (Parodi, 2008; Villa, 1996). This expectation stems from the notion that SHL learners acquire their language skills from uneducated, rural, informal settings which do not align to the Eurocentric ideals of the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) (Zentella, 2017). In other words, in the eyes of certain pedagogues, an SHL learner is relegated to having a deficient or ostensibly incomplete knowledge of the language that must be “fixed” in the SHL classroom (see Pascual y Cabo & Rothman, 2012).

As such, many SHL programs in the U.S. have been found to prioritize students’ development of standard Spanish as their primary goal (Beaudrie, 2015; Valdés et al., 2006; Villa, 1996, Leeman, 2005). To shed light on how SHL course goals and objectives treat language variation, Beaudrie (2015) conducted a study to analyze 47 SHL syllabi from post-secondary institutions in the U.S. Upon completing a content analysis of the syllabi, five well-explained approaches were found and explained in detail, with each one

falling into two main categories, traditional and contemporary. Fortunately, Beaudrie (2015) found that eradication approaches which aimed to replace the SHL student's own variety with the standard are now almost nonexistent. Nonetheless, a traditional expansion approach is still the most popular (55%), with appreciation (30%), and appropriateness-based (13%) approaches being the following most popular approaches. It is apparent in Beaudrie's (2015) findings that even after the SHL goals were proposed, much progress is yet to be made even though many scholars in the field had long been calling for sociolinguistic-based approaches that center the SHL learner's own variety (Bernal-Enríquez & Hernández-Chávez, 2003; Martínez, 2003; Leeman, 2005; Villa, 2002).

Appropriateness-based models in SHL pedagogy have undoubtedly had an impact on how SHL learners' linguistic and literacy skills have been viewed and treated in the classroom. According to Leeman (2005), appropriateness-based models assert that all varieties of Spanish are valid, yet varieties are constrained to be used in only specific contexts where they are considered appropriate. In this view, SHL learners are expected to be taught when and how to use their own variety and the "standard" in order to know the "correct" time and place to use each variety. As Leeman (2005) and others have noted, this notion of appropriateness privileges a standard variety by creating linguistic and literary hierarchies based on oversimplified views of language variation and power dynamics between interlocutors. Additionally, and perhaps most crucially, this pedagogical approach disenfranchises the SHL learner by stripping them of their

autonomy and ability to critically evaluate their communicative interactions to make their own linguistic decisions.

The main factors that have been found to have led to monolingual, standard, Eurocentric skills in Spanish for SHL learners have been an amalgamation of denigrative language ideologies (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Leeman, 2012; Leeman & Martínez, 2007; Lippi-Green, 2011). Among the most detrimental language ideologies to infiltrate SHL pedagogy is the standard language ideology (Leeman, 2012). The standard language ideology assumes that there is a supposed neutral, correct, non-region-specific variety of language that is the ideal model of language users, though linguists assert such language varieties do not and cannot exist (Leeman, 2012; Milroy & Milroy, 1999). Meanwhile, monoglossic language ideologies frame monolingualism as a universal norm which frames bi/multilingualism as a cognitive deficiency and/or unpatriotic (García, 2009; Urciuoli, 1996; Villa, 1996). More recently discussed in relation to SHL learners are raciolinguistic ideologies, which Flores and Rosa (2015) describe as ideologies that “conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices” (p. 150). Fuller and Leeman (2020) dedicate an entire chapter in their recent book to thoroughly describe how each of these and other language ideologies have had a part to play in the consistent subordination of Latinx Spanish users in the U.S.

There have been numerous proposals by researchers and pedagogues in the field that aim to counteract the historically denigrative traditions of SHL Education. An emphasis on sociolinguistically-informed pedagogies has been formulated to counteract traditional approaches that do not validate the knowledge and experiences of SHL

learners. The field of sociolinguistics, particularly the third wave, has aimed to analyze the social factors that impact linguistic variation and how linguistic features indexicalize specific social identities (Eckert, 2018). Thus, this area of linguistics is well-suited for considering a more holistic view of the SHL learner and their linguistic production. As such, the most commonly found sociolinguistic/sociocultural approaches to language variation and literacy found in the SHL literature are critical and multiliteracy approaches (see Zimmerman, 2019).

As Beaudrie et al. (2014) explain, when it comes to literacy development in the SHL classroom, it is important to dispel preconceived notions about a learner's literacy in either Spanish or English. Due to students' wide range of educational experiences and practices, it is a disservice to assume that a student has, for example, high literacy skills in English and non-existent literacy skills in Spanish. Given that literacy skills and practices can be acquired in traditional (i.e., an educational institution) and non-traditional contexts (i.e., church, community centers, social media, etc.), each student will likely have varied levels of proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking that are specific to their own experiences. Therefore, it is important to first identify what skills each SHL learner already possesses, then build on that knowledge by choosing activities and materials that help learners either transfer or develop new skills. This pluralized and contextualized notion of literacy falls under the umbrella of multiliteracies approaches. According to Samaniego and Warner (2016), a multiliteracies approach "denotes both the variability and contingency of communication in contemporary globalized societies, which are characterized by the use of new technologies and

multimodal text production as well as shifting notions of discourse community and literacy practices” (p. 194). As such, this approach aims to reconceptualize traditional conceptualization of literacy, by doing away with traditional definitions and quantifications of what literacy means in education. Instead, this approach considers the full range of bilingual practices and experiences of SHL learners that are evolving with technological advancements and modes of communication.

Another frequently proposed pedagogical orientation in recent years in SHL Education have been critical approaches. As a stark contrast to previous pedagogical approaches that regarded the SHL learner as a mere passive recipient of knowledge, critical orientations view education as a reciprocal process, by which teachers and learners each play a crucial role in the co-construction of knowledge. Critical pedagogy was first proposed by Pablo Freire in the 1960s due to his observations of oppression in Brazil (Freire, 1967 as cited in Kincheloe, 2007). Freire’s work combined “liberation theological ethics and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in Germany with progressive impulses in education” (Kincheloe, 2007). As a lifelong scholar of critical pedagogy, Kincheloe (2007) describes critical pedagogy as a critical social theory, which is “concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourse, education, religion, and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (Beck-Gernsheim et al., 2003; Flecha et al., 2003; as cited in Kincheloe, 2007, p. 18). Due to its applicability to nearly any social system, it is unsurprising that critical pedagogy has been incorporated into various fields of research.

Critical pedagogies are well suited for examining the realities of SHL learners given their historically subordinated position in Spanish language education. Martínez (2003) was among the first to propose a critical approach to meeting the goals of SHL, particularly to examine the underlying factors that deem certain dialects more prestigious than others. In his proposal, Martínez explains how developing an SHL student's understanding of language variation, subordination, and discrimination can help them develop pride in their HL in a way that addresses the goals of SHL pedagogy. Rather than simply accept one variety as "correct" and another "incorrect", by using what Martínez termed critical dialectal awareness (CDA), learners could understand the value in their own varieties without diminishing or eradicating them. By taking this critical stance, SHL learners are able to actively question their relationship with the language instead of internalizing the ideas that it is simply an "inherited commodity" that does not truly belong to the current communities that employ it (Ducar, 2006, p. 138).

To expand on this critical framework, Leeman (2005) explicitly points to how the field's primary focus has relied heavily on learners' language production and development rather than the social, political, and ideological factors that interact with language. In her article, she reviews previous literature in the SHL field that incorporate critical components in order to amalgamate the proposals to reconceptualize the goals of SHL. Rather than continuing to principally focus on developing prestige varieties and linguistic proficiency, Leeman (2005) asserts that instructors in the field "should strive for students to critically understand their own linguistic experience and the role of language in their own lives, as well as in their own communities and the country in which

they live” (p. 43). This orientation clearly prioritizes the learner’s own agency and knowledge to navigate their daily lives rather than abiding by strict rules established by schooling. Since these initial proposals, many researchers and pedagogues have continued to publish on the incorporation of critical pedagogies into SHL education (Correa, 2011; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Holguín Mendoza et al., 2018; Leeman, 2011; Leeman & Martínez, 2007; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Lowther Pereira, 2015; Martínez & Schwartz, 2012; Parra, 2016b, Reznicek-Parrado, 2015; and more).

While the theoretical underpinnings of CLA instruction have been regarded as fundamental for the linguistic and affective development of SHL learners, it had until recently been difficult to measure the impact, or lack thereof, of CLA on SHL learners. To address this problem, Beaudrie et al. (2019) designed a questionnaire with adequate psychometric properties to measure the effects of CLA in SHL pedagogy. A total of 301 students enrolled in SHL courses at four public universities in the U.S. southwest took the 24-item CLA questionnaire. After undergoing extensive statistical analysis, the results demonstrated that the questionnaire exhibited sufficient reliability and validity in criteria for both research and educational purposes. In sum, Beaudrie et al. (2019) were able to design one of the first tools to determine the impact of CLA in HL research and pedagogy, which was an important milestone for the field.

Building upon their previous work, Beaudrie et al. (2021) published the design, implementation, and evaluation of a four-part module curriculum for developing CLA in SHL learners at the postsecondary level. The main components of the module include: 1) language variation and diversity, 2) language ideologies and linguistic prejudice, 3)

Spanish in the United States and bilingualism, 4) language maintenance. While language variation and diversity and language maintenance are two of the goals explicitly highlighted in the original seven goals of SHL pedagogy, the second and third components of their modules address aspects of the SHL learners' backgrounds that the original goals did not. Beaudrie et al. (2021) first explain the difficulty in implementing CLA curriculum in programs due to scarce availability of materials made for CLA instruction and the lack of instructors trained in sociolinguistics. Nonetheless, they build on previous CLA models by proposing four new instructional goals rooted in social justice which are (Beaudrie et al., 2021, p. 5):

- (1) Students will be able to see language variation as natural and recognize the intrinsic value of their own variety and all others.
- (2) Students will be able to develop a consciousness of the political, social, and economic power structures that underlie language use and the distribution of the so-called prestige and non-prestigious varieties.
- (3) Students will be able to uncover dominant language ideologies that hide in daily monolingual/bilingual practices.
- (4) Students will be empowered to exercise agency in making their own decision about language use and bilingualism.

As the authors explain, these goals seek to go beyond the previous emphasis of sociolinguistic knowledge in previous CLA proposals, to “orient students towards challenging the sociopolitical implications of language and society” (p. 5). Based on these tenets, Beaudrie and Vergara Wilson (2021) have proposed an additional goal to the original seven. This goal focuses on developing CLA in heritage language communities and incorporates the four tenets from Beaudrie et al. (2021, p. 5). In this way, the original seven goals can be viewed more carefully through a critical lens. It is evident then, that

current SHL pedagogues have sought to better contextualize the realities of SHL learners and their production to depart from solely linguistic considerations.

2.2 SHL Learners' Identities

One of the most discussed topics in the field of SHL is the complex relationship between language and identity. For users of Spanish that have grown up in the U.S. as a minoritized, and often racialized, person in a white dominant society, it is logically difficult for these users to understand their position among people of distinct races/ethnicities, cultures, educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, communities of practice, and more. Moreover, scholars have long highlighted the importance of considering linguistic identity when considering language users' employment and maintenance of their heritage language (Fishman, 1991, 2006; Hornberger & Wang, 2008). Rather than perpetuating essentialized perspectives on language and identity (see Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), identity among these users has been determined to be fluid in the sense that it relates to socially constructed and context-bound factors rather than being a fixed and/or inherent trait of a particular individual (He, 2010; Leeman & Driver, 2021). In other words, a heritage language user's identity is dynamic and negotiated depending on how they perceive themselves, how others perceive them, and the context in which they find themselves (Doerr & Lee, 2013; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Leeman, 2015). As such, the ways in which SHL users determine and perform their identities within the same contexts and often even with the same interlocutors has continued to be investigated in recent research (Leeman & Driver, 2021; Tecedor et al., 2021).

There are now many examples of complex negotiations of identity where language and social identity are inextricably bound, particularly when it comes to studies on bilinguals of English and Spanish. One interesting phenomenon that occurs with U.S. Latinxs populations is that Spanish competency is conflated with being authentically Latinx. In Shenk's (2007) study, the ideology of cultural authenticity becomes relevant for bilingual Mexican Americans attempting to negotiate their authentic Mexicanness. The three main discourse types utilized by the participants to ostensibly prove their authenticity included "purity of bloodline, purity of nationality, and Spanish linguistic fluency" (Shenk, 2007, p. 194). An interesting part of this discussion on Mexican authenticity relevant to intersections of identity and Indigeneity is the invocation of Aztec blood as a symbol of Mexican purity, which is commonly asserted by Chicanos regardless of having any evidence of Aztec ancestry (Shenk, 2007, p. 208). While this conflation of Mexicanness, Indigeneity, language, and authenticity is a complex and at times problematic conflation, these dimensions form part of the process of identity formation and negotiation for many U.S. Latinxs.

As questions of identity and language become increasingly investigated in the field of SHL, Leeman (2015) provides an overview of advancements made thus far on the relationship between Spanish and the identities of the students that arrive in heritage classes. Leeman (2015) opens the discussion by first pointing out that many researchers and pedagogues have long operated under the assumption that "heritage learners seek to (re)claim their ethnic identity through language study, reflecting the predominance of ideologies that conceive of ethnocultural identity as embodied in language" (p. 100).

Prior to discussing studies on identity in SHL, Leeman mentions the ongoing conversation on the implications and uses of terms such as “heritage language”, “heritage language education”, and “heritage language learner”. It is evident that there is still clearly a lack of consensus among scholars in the field or even the people they are referring to, particularly across languages. Fortunately, there have been a number of important studies over the years that have helped shed light on these questions.

One such study was carried out by Showstack (2012) that explores classroom discourse by learners in three SHL courses. Showstack aimed to investigate how learners utilized language to construct their cultural and linguistic identities, such as their evaluation of Spanish language skills, how they categorize other Hispanics based on their language skills, and how they determine their and others’ positions in said categories. Upon analyzing the Mexican student participants’ classroom discourse, Showstack found that they constructed their own identities and that of fellow Hispanics in a number of interesting ways. The first point mentioned in the findings is that learners used linguistic skills as cultural capital to either maintain a value-added or deficit-based view of bilingualism. Additionally, in line with the findings of Urciuoli (2008) and Achugar and Pessoa (2009), the participants in Showstack’s (2012) study “constructed essentialized social categories of different kinds of U.S. Hispanics by making assumptions and generalizations about language and identity” (p. 16). Nonetheless, some participants directly challenged these essentialized notions of language and identity. In sum, the study demonstrates how language ideologies and notions of identity are used in conjunction to create various discourses by these bilingual/bicultural Mexican participants in Texas.

To continue to understand the progress being made on identity and language users, Parra (2016a) details relevant research in linguistics and its subfields to then overview identity in SHL research. First, the article provides a succinct discussion on the concept of identity and how it has been approached in research across disciplines related to SHL. Based on the findings from sociolinguistics studies, Parra explains how language choice among multilinguals can be considered an “act of identity” (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985 as cited in Parra, 2016a), which are choices that “encode deep issues of power relations in regard to ethnicity, social class, gender, and race” (Parra, 2016a, p. 180). The author continues to discuss how scholarship in psychology, human development, philosophy, linguistics, ethnic studies, anthropology, and more have helped shed light on identity and the linguistic practices of SHL learners, particularly in higher education. She proposes two pedagogical frameworks based on Latino studies and global education in order “to provide students with new linguistic and cultural models, and expand discussion and reflections on ethnolinguistic identities, particularly in a global context” (Parra, 2016a, p. 196).

In the same year, Sánchez Muñoz (2017) describes how SHL learners often arrive in the classroom with low esteem about their linguistic abilities, which is linked to negative perceptions of U.S. Spanish users. Based on the work of Leeman (2005) and Villa (1996, 2002), scholars in the field of SHL have continuously found that the Spanish of U.S. bilinguals not only lacks prestige but is often viewed as a problem that needs to be “fixed”. Sánchez Muñoz investigated SHL students’ linguistic confidence and how it relates to notions of identity for the participants in her study. She found that as learners

perceived improvement in their skills, so too did their linguistic confidence improve, which the author argues may lead to continued maintenance and improvement of their Spanish skills. In other words, taking SHL courses was considered necessary for not only learners' skills but their linguistic self-esteem and views towards their heritage language.

Fuller and Leeman (2020) recently compiled the relevant works so far in the field of SHL in their book which helps scholars and instructors better understand the various factors that impact the realities of U.S. bilinguals. They dedicate chapter five to race, racialization and Latinx ethnoracial identity while chapter six discusses the relationship between language and identity. To properly cover these intersecting topics, the authors utilize historical, linguistic, political, sociological, anthropological, and more areas of scholarship that shed light on issues of identity for bilinguals in the U.S. These chapters provide the building blocks needed to understand these issues, and fortunately there have continued to be studies that narrow in on more specific contexts and types of interlocutors to shed light on questions of identity for SHL learners. Leeman and Driver (2021) examined how SHL learners' identities shift in the study abroad context, while Tecedor et al. (2020) have investigated how SHL learners negotiate their identities via video calls with a monolingual native in a Spanish dominant context and then with a local second language learner. While the performance or "act of identity" varies by individual, these types of studies help researchers and pedagogues understand the factors and behaviors that come into play when SHL users negotiate their identities.

In Parra's (2020) outline of current discussions on diversity in the field of SHL, there are a number of important considerations to reflect on and address for the field to

truly put the learners at the center of our research and pedagogy. First, Parra highlights the work of Leeman (2020) to underscore the fact that though language variation is addressed in SHL courses, the varieties mainly referred to are spoken by educated, socioeconomically privileged people of urban city capitals in Latin America rather than the stigmatized varieties spoken by the learners in the classroom. As such, varieties of Spanish with ties to African, Indigenous, Asian, and other minoritized peoples have continued to be viewed more negatively than the Spanish associated with white, educated, upper middle-class populations based in colonial city centers. As previously noted, U.S. Spanish is already valued negatively (see Leeman, 2005; Villa, 2002), thus with the added layer of being associated with African and/or Indigenous users can doubly jeopardize the value of a non-white Spanish user in the U.S. Consequently, given the colonial history of this language, there remains an erroneous assumption that Spanish is the only language heritage learners are connected to if they are Latinx. While linguists in the field often acknowledge the contact of Spanish with other languages in Latin America, it remains unclear how often the realities of language contact are considered in relation to learners' backgrounds in their actual SHL classroom.

Based on these considerations, Parra (2020) explains how the field of SHL must critically reflect on notions of diversity in order to better shape our pedagogy in the SHL classroom. By doing so, Parra (2020, p. 10-11) proposes three potential advancements:

1. Inform the design of learning environments to critically engage with narratives of colonialism in the Spanish-speaking world and in the United States
2. Allow for critical reflections around issues of belonging and membership to the Latinx and the Spanish-speaking community in the United States and as an international community

3. Facilitate discussions around issues of equity, inequality, and social justice that concern not only SHLLs, but also FLLs (Prada, forthcoming, Kramsch, 2014 as cited in Parra, 2020)

While Parra goes on to better explain notions of diversity in relation to language, culture, and identity within the classroom context, she presents a final reflection to close the article: to reflect on and improve our pedagogical approaches, we must first consider the inequalities within the U.S. Latinx experience and consider our own positionality, as noted in the work of Beaudrie et al. (2021). In other words, to be able to undergo the process of addressing notions of diversity, we must begin by reflecting on ourselves and our own position within this field before trying to meet the needs of this traditionally underrepresented group in academia.

Since questions of positionality in the field are now beginning to be highlighted in the field of SHL, it is important to note that higher education as whole continues to privilege the knowledge and contributions of the racial majority in the U.S., while devaluing faculty of color (peoples of Indigenous, African, Latinx, Asian descent). Without valuing the knowledge and production of traditionally underrepresented people in research and pedagogy, we continue to perpetuate what Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) call an apartheid of knowledge in academia. They begin their discussion by explaining the use of the term apartheid and how the history of the term in South Africa is relevant to the conversation of higher education in the U.S. The authors utilize a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens to explain “how an apartheid of knowledge marginalizes, discredits, and devalues the scholarship, epistemologies, and other cultural resources of faculty of color is embedded in higher education” (Delgado Bernal &

Villalpando, 2002, p. 169). Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) discuss how this apartheid exists by way of privileging Eurocentric epistemologies and by *de facto* racial segregation in higher education institutions.

The authors first open their analysis through investigation of quantitative data on national trends of faculty of color that are employed at different types of postsecondary institutions, hold varied academic ranks, and work in different departments. Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) draw from data since the 1970s that show that while faculty of color have increased in numbers in American institutions of higher education, it has only increased by 6% though the distribution of faculty of color varies greatly depending on the type of institution (p. 170). They found that private four-year institutions have the lowest number of faculty of color (8%), while larger less prestigious institutions have the highest numbers of faculty of color (12%) (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 170). In terms of academic rank, the authors found that few advancements have been made in nearly 25 years, and that faculty of color remain mostly represented in the least prestigious, lower-rank, non-tenure track positions. In terms of departmental variation, Delgado Bernal & Villalpando (2002) found that faculty of color are normally employed in departments with limited resources and less prestige, and “have a high concentration in the humanities, social sciences, and education for reasons related to opportunity structures and to personal choice” (p. 170-171). They also highlight how the scholarship of faculty of color in these departments is often undervalued due to being considered illegitimate, biased, or overly subjective (Turner & Myers, 2000; Turner et al., 1999 as cited in Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). In sum, the authors demonstrate

that since the early 1970s few changes have been made in terms of the *de facto* segregation that occurs between faculty of color and the white majority in postsecondary institutions in the U.S.

In the second part of their analysis, the authors explore how dominant Eurocentric epistemologies create important disparities for faculty of color. Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) explain how higher education has been founded on white privilege and “American democrat” notions which value meritocracy, objectivity, and individuality (p. 171). The authors explain how the focus on Eurocentric epistemologies and positivist traditions have directly and indirectly worked to not only ignore/discredit the knowledge and work of faculty of color but have also created low regard towards the social sciences where faculty of color are mainly represented. They also include the experiential knowledge of faculty of color by way of CRT storytelling in order to directly relate the realities of these faculty in a way that is often undervalued by academia. The article provides a rich analysis of these stories to better understand how the privileging of certain ways of knowing over others in academic function to keep faculty of color in subordinated, under-resourced positions in academia. The authors conclude that “until higher education fully recognizes and places greater value on our epistemologies and scholarship, the struggle over “legitimate knowledge” in academia will continue” (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 177). Considering the aforementioned scholarship, while critical approaches together with sociolinguistically-informed pedagogies have made progress towards incorporating sociopolitical, ideological, and

diversity-driven components to SHL Education, it is necessary to take another step forward by not only fostering critical perspectives but decolonial ones as well.

2.3 Decolonial Perspectives in Higher Education and SHL Education

It is important to note that a turn towards social and racial linguistic justice has taken hold in the field of linguistics (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2018a, 2018b; Craft et al., 2020), which has in turn been increasingly relevant in the field of SHL. However, as Patel (2015) explains, social justice initiatives are normally rooted in pragmatism, where hopeful allies seek concrete answers as a “way out” or a move towards innocence. In this way, educational researchers continue to frame communities they claim to be collaborating with in particularly denigrative terms in order to rationalize the need for intervention on behalf of researchers or educators for social justice. Nonetheless, this recreates the imbalance of power dynamics and settler colonial practices which is antithetical to truly just and decolonial efforts. Patel explains how acknowledgement of what needs to change in and of itself is powerful. While this discussion is multifaceted and requires careful processing, Patel (2015) concludes that “we have to pause, to suspend (Tuck, 2009), the use of social justice in educational research because it has become a vehicle for settler logics and heteropatriarchal racist capitalism” (p. 88).

As a response to Charity Hudley et al. (2020) and to the Linguistic Society of America’s Statement on Race (2019), Leonard (2020), an Indigenous linguist, provides insights from Native American Studies (NAS) to theorize race and racism in Linguistics. By building upon the scholarship of these two publications, Leonard expands on the implications of the foundations of the field of Linguistics and how to build tools towards

racial justice in the field. To begin, Leonard briefly describes the complexity of “Native American” as a racial category, including identity labels, racio-political statuses of Native Americans, tribal sovereignty, questions of blood quantum, tribal enrollment, and more. While scholars in NAS have taken different positions on these issues, much like scholars in all fields, Leonard (2020) maintains that linguists must remain critically aware of these issues and remember that Native American nations are political units (p. 284). By being conscious of these tenets, linguists can better respect the sovereignty of tribal nations in the U.S.

Upon discussing racialization and some of the tenets of NAS, Leonard discusses the ongoing colonial structures in Linguistics and Native American language work. An important point of departure for this issue is that Native Americans are traditionally underrepresented in the field, though even when there are Native linguists, they face the complex task of reconciling the knowledge of and responsibilities to their communities while working in academia. As Leonard (2020) explains, instead of attempting to socialize underrepresented scholars to colonial/racist practices, it is crucial that we identify and change those practices (p. 285). Though pedagogical resources based in NAS/decolonial scholarship would be important for the development of the field of Linguistics, Leonard explains that they must be carefully crafted in order to keep from perpetuating settler colonial logics. As a closing point, scholars and pedagogues must critically consider ones’ positionality and disciplinary norms in order to keep from perpetuating racist structures (Leonard, 2017, p. 61 as cited in Leonard, 2020). In sum, it is necessary to reflect on our positionality, practices, and pedagogies to disrupt damaging

practices that may in fact impact Indigenous learners that arrive in SHL classrooms in ways that are antithetical to decolonial, critical, and socially-just efforts.

It becomes evident then, that it is crucial to first understand how the frameworks in SHL have had a part to play in either maintaining or disrupting colonial logics. As has previously been noted, the field has normally centered the Spanish of upper middle class, educated, urban mestizx Latinxs from large urban cities in Latin America. We must re-examine the commonly recited idea that the U.S. is made up mainly of immigrants, and that Latinx populations specifically, have recently arrived and normally speak Spanish as their native, and often only, language (Blackwell et al., 2017). Even when it is acknowledged in SHL courses that Spanish speakers have been present in the Americas for centuries, there is a lack of discussion on the historical, sociopolitical, and/or linguistic ramifications of Spanish being in contact with Indigenous peoples and languages in SHL curricula. As Holley-Kline (2013) found in his analysis of historical representations of Latin American in Spanish textbooks, “how different nations, time periods, and concepts are excluded from historical representation, resulting in reductionist histories” and that the representations of the past were “marked by an exoticizing trend that distances the history of modern groups and makes them Others” (p. 237). According to this analysis of popularly used Spanish textbooks, Holley-Kline (2013) was about to demonstrate how Indigenous Latinxs are commonly represented as the exotic “others” that are mainly misrepresented as communities that existed in the past, rather than a large portion of modern Latin American populations. Although this study was conducted on entry-level textbooks that were likely geared toward teaching second

language learners, additional studies focused on SHL textbooks have found problematic language ideologies and representations of Latin American/Latinx populations (Al Masaeed, 2014; Burns & Waugh, 2018; Ducar, 2006; Leeman & Martínez, 2007). It is necessary then, to investigate whether SHL pedagogy has been able to fully acknowledge and incorporate accurate historical, linguistic, and sociopolitical representations that reflect the realities of past and modern Indigenous peoples that are also Spanish users.

In addition to the aforementioned perspectives in the field of SHL, to continue to fully acknowledge the backgrounds of our learners, we are obligated to consider the transition into decolonial perspectives in our research and pedagogy. An important point that must first be established is that critical and decolonial perspectives are not one and the same. In fact, critical scholars have long called for their disciplines to expand beyond the scope of Western knowledge. In his article, Kincheloe explains how Freire and Faundez (1989) considered Indigenous knowledge as “a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change” (Kincheloe, 2007, p. 17). It is apparent that critical scholars and pedagogues have long recognized the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and practices, which are in their nature decolonial, to further develop their pedagogies.

Fortunately, scholarship by and for Indigenous people has been widely available in academia for decades, therefore allowing pedagogues to consider the distinction between critical and decolonial perspectives. Tuck and Yang (2012), two Indigenous scholars, write about how the work of decolonization cannot be supplanted by other justice frameworks, and that the attempts to fit it into other critical or anti-racist

perspectives actually perpetuates “settler appropriation” (p. 3). Decolonial perspectives consist of not only reimagining the role of education, but to reconsider what counts as knowledge and expertise. As the authors express, there is an increase of decolonial language use in education and social science, without engaging with settler colonialism (see Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006 for further discussion), and/or Indigenous people including their struggles, their scholarship, and their sovereignty. Unlike other frameworks, decolonization is “accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity” rather than focusing on how to maintain non-Indigenous futurity (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). By using the language of decolonizing, the authors assert that decolonization in this sense becomes a metaphor that plays on harmful tropes.

To understand what decolonization means, Tuck and Yang (2012) first provide an overview of settler colonial relations, which include external and internal colonialism. Upon explaining how these relations exist in ways that impact Indigenous worlds and imperial nations, they detail the overlap that occurs by way of settler colonialism. As the authors explain, settler colonialism exists when there is “no spatial relation between metropole and colony” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Tuck and Yang (2012) explain that through settler colonial sovereignty, violent displacement of Indigenous populations occurs since land/water/air/subterranean earth are the main concern of settler colonialism (p. 5). They also explain how settler colonialism requires chattel slavery to extract free labor from dehumanized subjects since settlers view themselves as “having dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna, as the anthropocentric normal, and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species” (Tuck & Yang,

2012, p. 6). An important point the authors also detail is that settlers are not just white Europeans, since other people of color can also be settlers.

Given the goals and histories of settler colonialism, Tuck and Yang explain the ways in which settlers have attempted to move towards innocence, which is often accomplished by pretending to be Indigenous. They outline five main strategies settlers have used to move towards innocence, with a particularly important discussion on the differences between the work of Pablo Freire, Franz Fanon, and Audre Lorde. The juxtaposition of critical and decolonial work are thoroughly explained in their paper, with one of the underlying premises being that these perspectives are incommensurable, and that this incommensurability should be unsettling. These are just some of the crucial points highlighted in Tuck and Yang (2012), though the main points remain that decolonization is not a metaphor, does not answer to settlers nor settler futurity, is not merely a complementary perspective to criticality, and is not meant to move settlers towards innocence.

The need for decolonization in education as a whole has been recognized by scholars in higher education, but its particular application to foreign language education is crucial, due to the direct connection between language and colonial interests. In the introductory chapter to a volume dedicated to the discussion of decolonizing foreign language education, Macedo (2019) masterfully outlines the ways in which the colonial yoke of European languages in the U.S. has yet to be acknowledged, much less addressed, in language teaching. The failure to acknowledge the links between

colonization and language has allowed for the continued subordination of peoples and their languages. As Macedo (2019) explains,

To a large degree the intelligence of the colonized has been always measured by their ability to speak fluently the language of the colonizer while experiencing subordination in speaking their mother tongue, which has been defined by the colonizer as primitive, lacking a grammar, and unable to be written. Since language is a huge part of the culture of a people, by devaluing, disparaging, and engaging in practices of linguisticism, their cultures are also targeted for destruction due, so the colonizers claim, to their “savageness,” “primitiveness,” and “utter backwardness.” Subsequently the colonial policy of “cultural purity,” which also includes “language purity”—a form of white supremacy modeled on Western cultures’ supposed superiority—was to eradicate all vestiges of the subjugated and conquered cultures and their respective languages. (p. 15)

Given that in certain SHL classrooms it is traditionally important to maintain a standard, Eurocentric, so-called appropriate model of Spanish in SHL pedagogy, it is clear to see how linguistic hierarchies have been perpetuated by some in SHL Education by perpetuating the imbalances of power between the colonizers and colonized. In the case of SHL pedagogues that subscribe to such ideologies, the ostensibly uneducated, rural, unprofessional, non-academic and impure language varieties and cultures of SHL learners have to be corrected by way of Western notions of language, literacy, and cultures. While many orientations to SHL Education have sought to improve the imbalance of power and prestige between SHL learners’ Spanish and identities and that

of the academy, there is still a need to consider the foundations on which the notions of knowledge and research are rooted in higher education. Researchers and educators in the field must first reflect on our pedagogical goals and practices in order to analyze how they are either perpetuating or disrupting colonial interests.

In the same volume on decolonizing foreign language education, Kramersch (2019) reflects on the increasingly relevant impact of globalization and how it at times appears to be at odds with decolonial efforts in language education. Kramersch (2019) explains that,

Decolonizing foreign language education research would require a collective effort to question notions taken from one language into another, reconstruct their historical meanings, engage with other theories produced elsewhere without judging them less progressive, less relevant, or less important than those produced in the Anglo-American center (p. 65)

As Kramersch notes, to question these notions would in many ways require a disruption of the current status-quo of language education and research. Many other scholars and pedagogues have discussed the possibility and/or feasibility of decolonizing educational institutions founded in settler interests (Sium et al., 2012; Stein, 2017; Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2016) and fields of study such as Linguistics (Leonard, 2020). While it is not possible to draw a widely accepted conclusion to this issue, it is indefensibly necessary to re-examine and reconceptualize pre-determined assumptions about what researchers and pedagogues consider “valid” definitions of language, knowledge, histories, practices, theories, and more in order to incorporate practices that are not based on Eurocentric/Western epistemologies and traditions.

Focusing specifically on heritage education, Austin (2019) details the importance of decolonizing efforts, particularly when it comes to teacher training. The author recounts her own experiences with the Japanese language as a person living in the U.S., but then reiterates similar complications with Spanish. As Austin (2019) notes,

While I was not aware of the workings of colonial relations or formal theories of decolonization, despite being located in the US I experienced the impact and became aware of the privilege of a dominant group (Castilian Spanish). Hence in thinking about decolonizing heritage language, the field must address complex issues globally that have ignored the diversity that is integral to any heritage language group and exerted hegemonic influence beyond borders. In seeking to decolonize heritage language education, structures of dominance emerge from accepting power relations created through the very nature of defining language, literacies, and culture. (p. 144-145)

These points are incredibly important to reflect and build upon in SHL education, given that the field has to consider its impact on Indigenous futurity and not just the maintenance of a European language, particularly when it comes to teaching Indigenous students who are also heritage users of Spanish that arrive to the classroom.

Todd and Robert (2018) provide guidelines of what anti-colonial and decolonial curricula could look like in education. Prior to providing their examples, the authors first overview the hegemony of western knowledge and the hegemonic and oppressive nature of schooling in order to explain the importance of “rupturing these epistemic barriers” (Todd & Robert, 2018, p. 66) in order to allow for the incorporation of decolonial praxis.

They consider what remains to be achieved by incorporating decolonial curricula and what it may look like in a classroom. Finally, they briefly offer some ideas of decolonial activities though they mention that all guidelines should be based on the recommendations of local Indigenous populations to be context driven.

In an additional proposal for decolonizing methodologies in higher education classrooms, Louie et al. (2017) provide a case study of how they have Indigenized an education program in a Canadian university. The authors first highlight previous scholarship that details how the modern university has played an important role in the spread of empire and colonization, which has marginalized and devalued Indigenous ways of knowing and being as well as impeded their success in contemporary educational institutions (Louie et al., 2017, p. 17). As Indigenous faculty members of a Canadian university, they offer their insights given that “institutions of higher learning need to move away from the myopic lens used to view education and implement Indigenizing pedagogies in order to counteract the systemic monopolization of knowledge and communication” (Louie et al., 2017, p. 17). Prior to providing their approaches for incorporating decolonizing methodologies from Smith (2012) to their pedagogies, they briefly examine the monopoly of Western epistemologies in academia and how they relate to teaching and teacher evaluations. The authors then individually describe how they have put into practice some of the twenty-five principles outlined by Maori scholar Smith, which are the following (Smith, 2012 as cited in Louie et al., 2017, p. 21):

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Claiming, | 10. Reading, | 19. Networking, |
| 2. Testimonies, | 11. Writing, | 20. Naming, |
| 3. Storytelling, | 12. Representing, | 21. Protecting, |
| 4. Celebrating survival, | 13. Gendering, | 22. Creating, |
| 5. Remembering, | 14. Envisioning, | 23. Negotiating, |
| 6. Indigenizing, | 15. Reframing, | 24. Discovering, and |
| 7. Intervening, | 16. Restoring, | 25. Sharing. |
| 8. Revitalizing, | 17. Returning, | |
| 9. Connecting, | 18. Democratizing, | |

The authors incorporated these principles into their pedagogies in varied undergraduate and graduate-level education courses. The first section is by Anishinaabe educator Jacqueline Ottmann which focuses on the remembering, claiming, and connecting principles by Smith (2012). The next section is outlined by the Indigenous scholar Dustin Louie who is from the Nadleh Whut'en and Nee Tahi Buhn First Nations of northern British Columbia. In their section, they describe how they have incorporated the negotiating principle and how it is relevant to their own First Nation, though with an additional definition based on the *Balhats* (potlatch) system of their nation. The third section is by Métis scholar and educator Yvonne Poitras Pratt which focuses on the celebrating survival principle along with creating survivance. Finally, the last section is by a Métis woman, Aubrey Hanson, who utilized the storytelling principle in her classroom which coincides with her own experiences in her large family. To summarize, there have been important considerations for decolonizing courses, with a range of project types, regardless of course content (see Smith, 2012), yet there seems to be a gap in SHL pedagogy based in the U.S. that acknowledges, much less incorporates, these perspectives.

2.4 Positionality, Reflexivity, and Answerability in the Field of SHL

To create more accountability and self-reflection in SHL research and pedagogy, three crucial concepts must be normalized in the field. The first two main concepts are positionality and reflexivity. In her article, Berger (2015) describes the importance of the researcher's social role in terms of their own personal characteristics and a continual reflection of these researcher-based influences on research. To explain the idea of positionality, Berger (2015) highlights the findings from other qualitative researchers which have determined that "researcher's positioning include personal characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances, and emotional responses to participant" (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Finlay, 2000; Hamzeh & Oliver, 2010; Horsburgh, 2003; Kosygina, 2005; Padgett, 2008; Primeau, 2003; as cited in Berger, 2015, p. 221). While quantitative orientations to research tend to separate the researcher from the research, qualitative research acknowledges that all data is viewed through the researcher's own personal position at each stage of the research process. As such, Berger (2015) describes how a researcher's positionality can impact the research in three crucial ways which are explained as mainly being 1) access to the research "field"/participants of the study 2) the researcher-researched relationship and 3) the worldview and background of the researcher. These concepts are particularly important to consider for researchers and pedagogues that work with communities that they are not considered to be members of, as even the intention of working with this community can be shaped by the researcher/pedagogue's

understanding of the world. Additionally, regardless of positionality, particular communities that have historically been utilized for research purposes to unilaterally benefit the academe, may not welcome “outsiders” in the first place.

However, a researcher’s reflections on positionality should not end once a person agrees to participate in a study. Berger (2015) expands on the process of considering positionality during the research process by explaining the importance of reflexivity. Once again summarizing the conclusions of previous researchers, Berger defines reflexivity as “the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Pillow, 2003; Stronach et al., 2007; as cited in Berger, 2015, p. 221). Berger recounts how they employed this process of reflexivity in different types of research studies where the researcher and participant have shared experiences, researcher moves from outsider position to insider position during the study, and when the researcher shares no personal familiarity or experiences with the concepts being studied. These concepts are necessary for the sake of constantly self-checking while conducting research with communities traditionally taken advantage of for the personal and/or professional interests of researchers and pedagogues normally coming from positions of power.

The social positions, intentions, and end goals of a researcher are particularly crucial to consider when it comes to Indigenous communities. In the field of Linguistics in particular, there has been a historically problematic tradition of linguists eliciting data

from Indigenous (Leonard, 2017, 2020). This relationship has been strained for various reasons such as the fact that researchers that seek to work with Indigenous communities are normally not Indigenous, they do not often cater to the interest of the Indigenous community, their work does not tend to benefit the communities directly, the work can reinforce racial hierarchies, and other issues (see Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Leonard, 2020; Smith 2012). Given this long-standing tension between academia and Indigenous communities, there is understandable wariness on behalf of Indigenous people to participate in research. To address these problems, Anthony-Stevens (2017) provides her reflections as a non-Indigenous researcher on how to foster healthy relationships with Indigenous communities in ways that maintain Indigenous sovereignty throughout the research process and beyond. First, Anthony-Stevens (2017) outlines the difficulties that exist when trying to create bonds between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples that can honor the educational sovereignty of Indigenous communities, such as the inherent problem of meeting schooling with Indigenous sovereignty. Following this discussion, Anthony-Stevens considers the roles and responsibilities of a non-Indigenous researcher wishing to collaborate with Indigenous communities. She utilizes her own positionality and experiences to provide her own examples of allyship after detailing theoretical frameworks to consider questions of relationality and power. While there are many crucial points to consider from this paper, one of the main points Anthony-Stevens (2017) highlights is that for her, this concept of cultivating alliances comes from a Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies (CIRM) framework of “the four Rs: relationality, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity” (Brayboy et al., 2012, p. 436 as cited in Anthony

Stevens, 2017, p.85). This article provides a simultaneously personal yet academic analysis of the factors to consider to establish ethical relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborators.

Another concept that must be incorporated into the field of SHL is answerability. Patel (2015) remarks on many similar questions in terms of how research becomes relational. In other words, research in education and decolonization remains quite personal as it is a co-construction of relationships, knowledge, and more between researcher and researched. Patel discusses in great depth the implications of conducting research that either maintains harmful relationships between academia and communities or disrupts such traditions by consistently considering the researcher's role and responsibility. Thus, as a necessary component of building fruitful and ethical connections, the concept of answerability is crucial. While the terms accountability and responsibility might be useful for conceptualizing one's duty in conducting research, Patel (2015) instead utilizes the term answerability and defines it as "a construct and cognitive tool that can help educational researchers articulate explicitly how their work speaks to, with, and against other entities" (p. 73). In many ways, educational and linguistic scholarship has traditionally been considered impersonal, ideologically neutral, objective, non-harmful, etc. However, Patel calls attention to the fact that all researchers are operating within frameworks that are impacting other entities whether we are conscious of such implications or not. Failure to acknowledge this in SHL research has not only impacted the hierarchies of power between white and Latinx students, but between non-Indigenous and Indigenous students as well as evidenced in previously

noted research on Indigenous Latinxs in the U.S. (see Blackwell et al., 2017). In other words, our work as researchers and/or pedagogues is either helping or damaging existing entities, and as such, we must carefully consider how our work answers to specific groups, theoretical orientations, ideologies, and/or other interests. To conclude, answerability is a concept that must be adopted in the field of SHL, to protect the normally disenfranchised communities that SHL focuses on, and to foster a mutually beneficial, respectful, and balanced relationship between said communities and academia.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: Critical Latinx Indigenities

Decolonial perspectives in language education have been proposed to not only disrupt the ongoing hegemonic colonial structures of education, but to put an end to the ongoing erasure of Indigenous Latinx people both in the U.S. and Latin America. Previous critical frameworks such as Critical Race Theory/Raciolinguistics (Alim et al., 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015), Latinx Critical Race Theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002), Critical Poststructuralist Perspectives (García et al., 2017), Critical Ethnic Studies (Elia et al., 2016) and more have been used to address issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and language though many of these do not directly address questions of Indigeneity. When it comes to the education of bilingual Latinxs in the U.S., some of the aforementioned critical frameworks have mainly been utilized to present a dichotomy between racialized Latinx learners and white second language instructors/learners (see Lacorte & Magro, 2021). To focus more precisely on the intersections of Latinxs and Indigeneity, the theoretical framework of Critical Latinx Indigenities (CLI) has been proposed to acknowledge and meet the needs of a large

portion of the Latinx population that often gets overlooked. This CLI framework is defined as an “interdisciplinary analytic that reflects how indigeneity is defined and constructed across multiple countries and at times, across overlapping colonialities” (Blackwell et al., 2017, p. 126). Blackwell et al. (2017) utilize the CLI orientation to consider how Indigenous people from Latin America in the U.S. require scholars and activists to consider and reconceptualize “transnational meanings of race, place, and indigeneity” (Blackwell et al., 2017, p. 126). One consideration Blackwell et al. (2017) elucidate is the myth that the U.S. is a nation made of immigrants, logically including Latinxs, which effectively perpetuates the colonial discourse and logic that erases and eradicates the existence of Indigenous populations in the U.S. As Blackwell (2017) notes, CLI “works against the erasure of the Indigenous peoples and homelands that are transited and settled on” (p. 158). CLI requires the acknowledgement that im/migrants are arriving to Indigenous homelands and nations, which calls on non-Indigenous settlers to consider their roles and responsibilities as potential allies to Indigenous communities.

Another important consideration within CLI is the overwhelming amount of anti-Indigenous hatred present throughout Latin America that continues to be prevalent in the U.S. Latinx communities towards Indigenous migrants. Researchers invested in CLI aim to uncover the implications that these racial and linguistic hierarchies have had on Indigenous people as a result of settler colonialism transnationally. As Calderón and Urrieta (2019) explain, the continuous emphasis on *mestizaje*, the racial and cultural mixing of Indigenous and Spanish peoples, has had harmful effects on what it means to

be Indigenous by homogenizing populations to maintain the status quo, a mestizx identity, both in Latin American and in the U.S. As Kovats Sánchez (2021) explains,

Focusing on students with residual Indigenous roots, while very true for a subset of Latinxs, does not account for Indigenous students who maintain direct ties to their languages, cultures, and communities of origin. This identification is also historically tied to the concept of *mestizaje*—the racial mixture of Indigenous and Spanish heritages (Bartolomé, 2005; Bonfil Batalla, 1989; Gutiérrez, 1999; Lomnitz-Adler, 1992 as cited in Kovats Sánchez, 2021, p. 3).

By centering the distance connections certain Latinxs may have with Indigeneity while not acknowledging that there are many currently flourishing Indigenous communities in Latin America and in diasporic communities, we at best diminish and at worst erase the knowledge and needs of these Indigenous people. It is important to recognize as researchers and pedagogues within the fields that aim to serve Latinx students, that the lived realities of Indigenous Latinxs are not the same as Latinxs that do not identify as Indigenous.

As a starting point, Calderón and Urrieta (2019) call for pedagogues to engage with settler colonial logics to move towards decolonizing *Latinidad* and *mestizaje*. They consider the Indigenous erasure that occurs in “narratives, curriculum, identities, and racial projects that uphold settler colonial logics that fall under the rubric of Hispanic, Latina/o/x, and Chicana/o/x” (Calderón & Urrieta, 2019, p. 145). They discuss the prevalence of anti-Indigeneity by way of Latinx/Chicanx/Hispanic complicity, government-sponsored violence and policies against Indigenous populations throughout

Latin America and the U.S., erasure and/or misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in curricula, preservation of anti-Indigenous myths, and the problematic nature of *mestizaje* (see Cotera & Saldaña-Portillo, 2015) as *Latinidad*. Calderón and Urrieta Jr. (2019) describe each of these factors extensively, particularly highlighting their historical permanence transnationally since the arrival of Spanish colonizers until the present day. While the researchers recognize the efforts for inclusivity made through the use of terms like Latinx, they explain how such labels work towards creating a homogenous category used by governments to assuage whitestream imageries (see also Machado-Casas, 2012).

In the same vein, while the incorporation of Ethnic Studies into SHL Education has certainly helped to center the lived experiences of Latinxs in the U.S. (see Alvarez, 2013; Sánchez Muñoz, 2021), Calderón and Urrieta (2019) thoroughly underscore the disjunction that can often occur between Ethnic/Chicanx Studies and CLI. While often well intentioned, the impact of Chicanx scholarship has at times helped to erase the present Indigenous populations by valuing symbolic Indigeneity over lived Indigeneity. In other words, prioritizing the voices of mestizx Latinx people with distant, often unknown, Indigenous ancestry over modern autonomous Indigenous communities with longstanding Indigenous ways of knowing, languages, traditions, customs, and more. Calderón and Urrieta (2019) assert that by knowing the histories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Latinx peoples, our respective fields may be able to have “the difficult but necessary conversation about the erasure of indigeneity in curricula, identities, and racial projects that uphold settler colonial logics that fall under the rubric of Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicanx” (p. 12). The authors consider how CLI can work to inform Ethnic Studies

in education by undoing colonial unknowing, thereby leading to more educational equity. To conclude, Calderón and Urrieta (2019) explain the need for interdisciplinary examination of these complex questions in order to work towards Indigenous sovereignty and futurity.

There have since been several important publications that utilize CLI to shed light on the experiences Indigenous Latinxs face due to the prevalence of settler colonial logics in various facets of their lives in the U.S. These works have certainly been built upon the previous crucial findings of scholars interested in unpacking the intersections of Indigeneity and *Latinidad* in the U.S. (Alberto, 2017; Barajas, 2013; Casanova, 2012, 2019; Casanova et al., 2016; Cotera & Saldaña-Portillo, 2015; Cruz-Manjarrez, 2013; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Kearney, 2000; Kovats Sánchez, 2010, 2019; López & Irizarry, 2019; Machado-Casas, 2009, 2012; Morales, 2016; Ruiz & Barajas, 2012; Sánchez, 2018; Stephen, 2007; Urrieta, 2017; Urrieta & Martínez, 2011; among others). In a special issue on CLI and Education in the *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, a range of studies were published on topics such as mothering and language maintenance (Martínez & Mesinas, 2019), heritage language and dual education (Morales et al., 2019), understandings of power (Barillas Chón, 2019), and identity and schooling (Casanova, 2019; Vásquez, 2019). Also included in this special issue was an illuminating discussion by Urrieta and Calderón (2019) on the processes of settler colonialism that have continued to impact Indigenous people in Latin America and in Latinx communities in the U.S. They provide salient examples of myths that have been promoted by settler Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicax people that have aided in erasing

Indigenous peoples within these populations and how we can work to decolonize problematic concepts such as *Latinidad* and *mestizaje*.

In terms of the relevant studies from the aforementioned special issue, Barillas Chón (2019), a Maya scholar, explains how eight Indigenous youth from Guatemala and Mexico understand asymmetries of power and language hierarchies. Barillas Chón finds deep connections between language, labor, and race. As the author notes, the young Mam, K'iche', and Nahua participants in his study conveyed an understanding that there were divisions of labor based on race that corresponds to “the coloniality of power whereby Indigenous people occupy the lower ranks of the division of labor. For the youth, other forms of labor, that paid better and was less physically demanding, was reserved for Spanish speakers” (Barillas Chón, 2019, p. 25). Although the young participants were no longer relegated to doing *campesino* work or what was deemed a hard labor in the United States, Barillas Chón explains that these overlapping colonialities of language, race, and power continue to marginalize these Indigenous Latinxs as an already marginalized subset of Latinxs in the country. Barillas Chón (2019) encourages educators that work with Latinx people to consider the power dynamics between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Latinxs, including the assumption that Spanish is their “home language”. He concludes by offering careful considerations for educators aiming to support Indigenous learners as well as suggestions for efforts in continuing to combat the “multiple and overlapping colonialisms in the U.S.” (p. 37).

Many of the studies to date that have utilized CLI as a lens have been focused on young people before they go into higher education. Casanova (2019) interviewed 10

Yucatec-Maya youth in 5th and 8th grade. Casanova aimed to better understand how “familial, schooling, and community linguistic and cultural practices inform the Indigenous identities and collective resilience processes” of these students (Casanova, 2019, p. 43). The findings indicate that these Indigenous students were facing discrimination on behalf of non-Indigenous Latinxs at school, which resulted in certain Indigenous students being embarrassed to join Indigenous cultural organizations. While the implications of not joining such organizations have important consequences for building community and exploring their Indigeneity at school, Casanova notes that family and community involvement outside of school are also important (see Casanova et al., 2016 as cited in Casanova, 2019). The certain Yucatec Maya youth noted that their parents were often important fountains of knowledge and encouragement that have helped them recreate their Indigenous identities and get an education in the U.S. Though there were examples of students that shied away from their Indigenous identity, other participants were able to join organizations inside and outside of the school to discuss their cultures with others. In sum, the Yucatec Maya youth in Casanova’s study were able to demonstrate multifaceted forms of what she calls resilient Indigenous identities.

As a continuation of the conversation on the construction and negotiation of identity for Indigenous students, Kovats Sánchez (2021) investigated how Indigenous Mexican college students disrupted notions of *Latinidad* at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). This qualitative study was conducted by focusing on the *testimonios* of 10 Indigenous Mexicans who are of Ñuu Savi (Mixtec), Zapotec, and Nahuatl backgrounds attending institutions in California. To start, Kovas Sánchez explains what HSIs are and

the findings from previous studies on how HSIs impact Latinx students, as well as the students at these institutions that do not identify as Latinx. Then, the author unpacks the concepts of *mestizaje*, *Latinidad*, and Indigeneity and then delves into studies on diasporic Indigenous students in the U.S. As Kovats Sánchez (2021) notes, at the time of the article being published, a growing number of studies have focused on the experiences of Indigenous youth in the U.S., but even fewer have centered Indigenous students in higher education (Kovats Sánchez, 2019, 2020; Nicolás, 2012, 2017 as cited in Kovats Sánchez, 2021).

Drawing from a CLI framework along with “fugitive acts of learning” from Patel (2016, 2019), Kovats Sánchez divides her findings into two parts: 1) participants’ validating and racialized experiences at their respective HSIs and 2) their responses to their experiences through fugitive acts of learning (Kovats Sánchez, 2021, p. 5-6). Upon analyzing the testimonios, Kovats Sánchez found that participants relayed a mix of validating and invalidating experiences while taking courses at their institutions. On the one hand, students had the ability to engage with topics related to their Indigeneity in Anthropology, Chicanx and Latin American studies courses, but on the other hand they still experienced microaggressions and microinvalidations more often. The participants highlighted how even in the same courses they previously discussed as validating, they found Indigenous communities were discussed in problematic ways. There were also issues with how Indigenous people were presented in campus programming and institutional imagery, along with the way Latinx spaces on campus did not seemingly cater to Indigenous students. Students such as Vicki and María experienced

microaggressions and faced pushback from their institutions and peers for recognizing the distinction between current Indigenous people and their struggles versus their Mexican American/Chicanx peers. Despite these negative experiences, Kovats Sánchez (2021) found that these students also engaged in fugitive acts of learning. For example, Vicki educated fellow peers that were mestizo/non-Indigenous, Ocho Movimiento centered Indigenous Oaxacan migration stories in their research, María shared more about her Nahua heritage in her classes to combat pre-Columbian narratives about Indigenous communities, and Joy incorporated traditional Zapotec music into her senior recital as a music major. Kovats Sánchez (2021) concludes by reiterating that HSIs, and the educators/resources centers within these institutions, still have a responsibility to serve Indigenous students and can do so by enacting the suggestions she provides.

Nicolás (2021) continues these conversions by focusing on *comunalidad* or “community collectiveness” within a CLI framework. As a Zapotec researcher, Nicolás focuses on three generations of Zapotec people from San Jerónimo Zoochina in Oaxaca, Mexico currently living in Los Angeles, California due to waves of migration during the 1970s. In particular, she examines the ways in which Zoochinas and their children demonstrate *comunalidad* by participating in sociocultural practices, which enable these generations to question and even combat presupposed notions about their identities in the U.S. In this article, Nicolás (2021) highlights many geographic, demographic, historical, cultural and sociopolitical points related to identity, language, belonging, and discrimination from non-Indigenous Latinxs. An important point that Nicolás makes that is also relevant to the present study is that when it comes to being a Zoochina Zapotec in

diaspora, “Put simply, one’s Indigenous identity does not end when one leaves Zochina. It does not end with the loss of their Native language, blood quantum, or when one no longer wears traditional clothing.” (Nicolás, 2021, p. 53). Nicolás acknowledges that a more robust discussion on the intersections of language, identity, and belonging are needed for Indigenous people living in diaspora, which is one of the main purposes of the present study.

One of the more recent studies to focus on Indigenous Latinxs, but outside of the field of Education, was published by Gómez Cervantes (2021). Gómez Cervantes, a sociologist, was interested in investigating the relationship between race and language among Indigenous migrants of Mexican and Guatemalan origin. By employing a CLI lens, the author analyzed 34 interviews with Mixteco, Tlapaneco, Chuj, and K’iche’ Maya people along with ethnographic data to better understand how these migrants navigate questions of power and colonialism through language. To provide context for the study, Gómez Cervantes (2021) first details the ongoing settler colonial projects rooted in capitalism and neoliberalism which continue to force Indigenous people from Latin American countries to migrate to the U.S. One key point among these settler colonial projects is how language is still being utilized as a way of maintaining racial hierarchies (see Rosa & Flores, 2017 as cited in Gómez Cervantes, 2021). By consequence, Spanish, the language of settler colonialism in Latin America, is still being used as a source of linguistic capital as they serve as one of the dominant languages of institutions and the linguistic majority. As such, Gómez Cervantes explains how

Indigenous peoples' languages are devalued and delegitimized due to settler colonial logics rooted in white supremacy.

Next, Gómez Cervantes (2021) goes on to detail linguistic policies in Latin America and in the U.S. that have aimed to eliminate the languages of racialized people within these geographic regions to uphold systems of power that benefit the white settlers. The author makes an important point about the legacy of Spanish as a colonial language as it relates to Latinx people is that “Although Spanish is a vital aspect of the Hispanic and Latino identities and political mobilisation, Spanish reflects the paradoxes, settler violence, and racialisation of illegality in multiple colonial contexts.” (Gómez Cervantes, 2021, p. 5). In her findings, Gómez Cervantes (2021) highlights the multiple challenges Indigenous migrants face upon migrating to the U.S. including: dealing with the tension of using Spanish as linguistic capital to face institutional and social barriers, access to Spanish interpreters for legal and medical matters, and anti-Indigenous discrimination from Spanish speaking mestizxs and immigration officers. Gómez Cervantes (2021) describes how these issues are particularly delicate in the Kansas/the Midwest where this study took place and in detention centers. The article concludes with the fact that these racialized experiences as Indigenous people and their reliance on Spanish as the *lingua franca* for these migrants also puts them at jeopardy for being associated with illegality.

More recently, Barillas Chón (2022) utilized a CLI and raciolinguistics frameworks to analyze three recently arrived Indigenous migrant youths' experiences in urban schools in the U.S. These experiences are important to investigate because as

Barillas Chón asserts, “unlike non-Indigenous recently arrived migrants from Guatemala and Mexico, K’iche’, Mam, and Nahua youth learn codes of power under multiple colonial conditions in their countries and in the U.S.” (Barillas Chón, 2022, p. 4). Prior to explaining the codes of power that were highlighted among the three Indigenous students, Barillas Chón provides a concise overview of why he chose to focus on urban schools, as well as the sociopolitical realities Indigenous migrants face in Guatemala, Mexico, and the rest of Abya Yala (see Juncosa, 1987, p. 390 as cited in Barillas Chón, 2022). One of the many challenges mentioned within this discussion is that Indigenous migrants face racism and discrimination from other non-Indigenous Latinx people both in their countries of origin and in the U.S. Though the author mentions that previous studies have documented these racist experiences, for example the use of the pejorative term *indio* ostensibly indicate that an Indigenous person is inferior to a non-Indigenous Latinx person (Barillas Chón, 2019; Sánchez, 2018; Urrieta & Calderón, 2019; among others), there is still much work to be done to bring these heinous issues to light.

Upon analyzing the semi-structured interviews with the three Indigenous students, Barillas Chón (2022) was able to better understand the codes of power that came into play in these young peoples’ lives through racialized and languaged experiences. In the first subsection of the findings, the participants Juan, Tonio, and Alan explain how Spanish serves as a point of reference for identifying fellow Indigenous people. Their understanding of how Spanish serves as a racialization tool to other Indigenous language users that may have an accent in Spanish and can face discrimination based on that accent is complex and representative of their awareness of these imbalances in power. As such,

the author notes how these participants' decision to limit their use of their Indigenous languages in public corroborates what has been found in previous studies with other Indigenous people facing discrimination. However, although Spanish was a way these three participants could identify other Indigenous people, Barillas Chón (2022) clarifies that,

identifying someone as a potential Indigenous language speaker did not mean that the youth spoke to them in Mam, K'iche', or Náhuatl. Spanish continued being the language that mediated their interactions outside of their familial and community Indigenous languaged settings, unintentionally reinforcing it as the sanctioned language of power (p. 14)

As such, using Spanish as a form of subverting anti-Indigenous discrimination from non-Indigenous Spanish users on the one hand mitigates the harmful discourse and actions they may face, while on the other hand it continues to keep these power imbalances in place.

While Juan, Tonio, and Alan engaged in this system of identification and subversion prior to migrating to the U.S., these racialized language experiences traveled with them into the English dominant context as already established colonial codes of power. Nonetheless, they still unfortunately must deal with new overlapping codes and identity labels as they relate to U.S. based systems while still interweaving language and race in this process. Unfortunately, settler colonial pressures of learning Spanish in Mexico and Guatemala and then English in the U.S. caused their Indigenous languages to be put in what Barillas Chón (2022) calls a "liminal positioning" compared to Spanish

and English (p. 18). As such, the three participants reported having limited opportunities to maintain their Indigenous languages, which occurred in conjunction with the fact that family members supported the language shift from their own Indigenous languages to dominant colonial languages. It was also evident that Juan, Tonio, and Alan learned and utilized Spanish at school to thwart negative interactions with their peers. Barillas Chón (2022) concludes by offering educators and practitioners suggestions for disrupting the vicious cycle of participating in colonial cultures of power enabled by colonial codes of power. Finally, Barilla Chón (2022) reminds us that

How we come to know and understand Latinxs and their languages is intimately tied to the analytics we use to make sense of this racialized and languaged diverse demographic. *Critical Latinx Indigenities* highlights the importance of integrating the dynamic and intersecting histories of colonialism, racism, indigenities, language, and migration when analyzing Latinxs' experiences in their places of origin and in the U.S. (p. 22)

In other words, we must continue to reflect on how to better understand and relate to the Latinx experience by focusing less on the commonalities and more on the intersections of their identities that make this community so richly diverse.

Another example of Indigenous erasure by way of assuming all Latinxs use Spanish as their first language is highlighted in Campbell-Montalvo's (2020) study of Indigenous students in secondary schools in Florida. Although her study was not explicitly rooted in CLI but was still interested in many of the same issues, she found that due to raciolinguistic enregisterment, speakers of Indigenous languages of Mexico being

schooled in the K-12 system in Florida were incorrectly measured at a rate of 19 to one. In other words, out of 19 students whose family spoke an Indigenous language at home, only one would be documented. The author explains how the consequences of this linguistic re-formation can have extensive negative impacts on the educational experience of Indigenous Latinx students in the U.S. These alarming findings are not unique to the context of Campbell-Montalvo's (2020) study, given the continuous contact between Spanish and Indigenous languages that can result in misconceptions about the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Latinxs in the U.S.

While there is a long history of Indigenous Latinxs in the U.S., it is becoming increasingly relevant and important for pedagogues to incorporate this history and address the needs of this part of the Latinx population. González-Barrera (2021) from the Pew Research Center outlines that prior to COVID-19, Mexicans were entering the U.S. in larger numbers than in previous years. Among these are Mexican farmworkers who have secured visas at a 5% increase from the previous fiscal year, which is important given that many farmworkers are known to also utilize Indigenous languages. A report by Mines et al. (2010) on Mexican farmworkers in California details the history, languages, migration and settlement patterns, and more of these populations. In addition, an op-ed published in the *Washington Post* by Traux (2018) details the necessity of providing interpreters for Indigenous migrants as a lifesaving service, one that would have likely saved the life of seven-year-old Jakelin Caal seeking asylum from Guatemala. More recently, a news article published by Miller (2021) in the *Los Angeles Times* details the story of a Zapotec man named Gerardo Martínez who was killed by the police in Salinas,

California due in part to the assumption that he spoke Spanish. Though these are just a few of the various examples of Indigenous erasure within the Latinx community (see also Hernández-Cañuelas, 2021; Trevizo, 2015), it is clear that these issues can have serious implications and that progress must be made in order to disrupt the longstanding erasure of the lives and needs of Indigenous Latinxs in the United States.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the most relevant publications to the areas of pedagogical goals and practices in SHL Education, SHL learners' identities, decolonial perspectives in higher education and SHL Education, and an explanation of CLI, the theoretical framework being utilized for the present study. There are some key takeaways from the chapter that should be noted, as they serve to inform and demonstrate the need for the work within this dissertation. First, the advancements in SHL Education have been numerous and varied since its genesis in the 1970s. This is due in no small part to the many researchers and pedagogues invested in better serving the booming Latinx population in the U.S. Second, given the fluid and dynamic nature of SHL learners that arrive in SHL classrooms, it is important to consider how these learners negotiate and validate their identities. Since there are many complex overlaps between language and identity among minoritized language users in an English dominant context, experts in the field of SHL have proposed several considerations for the sake of fostering a more critical and inclusive field.

A third point within this chapter is the increasing calls for decolonial perspectives in fields such as Linguistics, Education, and SHL Education. While critical perspectives

and social justice-based initiatives have been making great strides in higher education, there are still foundational premises based in settler colonial logics that impact minoritized learners, educators, and researchers in academia. Decolonial scholarship thus far has presented crucial considerations for research and pedagogy, such as: critical and decolonial perspectives are not the same, decolonial scholarship is not a metaphor as it should be invested in Indigenous futurity, and the important role language plays in advancing settler colonial projects. While these are just a few of the many points for reflection presented by Indigenous scholars, they are especially relevant and important for the field of SHL and SHL Education. In addition to these considerations are issues related to a researcher's positionality, reflexivity, and capacity for allyship as highlighted in the fourth strand. In the final section is an overview of the CLI framework along with studies that have employed this framework. Previous studies using this theoretical framework have shed light on the consistent erasure of Indigenous Latinx experiences in research and pedagogy, even within fields that aim to serve Latinx people.

In conclusion, the aforementioned studies make it clear that it is of utmost importance to investigate the experiences Indigenous people from Latin America face in the U.S. This conversation is one that the field of SHL is seemingly starting to have, which is part of the ongoing ethical progress the field must strive towards in order to keep from perpetuating the idea of a homogenized, historically innocent, and monolithic Latinx culture in the U.S. It is important as SHL pedagogues to acknowledge the realities of racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity in the Latinx population in the U.S. beyond a theoretical sense, to cultivate more inclusive pedagogical goals and practices in the SHL

classroom that do not erase the multifaceted identities learners have in the Latinx community. These findings serve as the foundation for the present study and highlight the gap in the literature this study aims to address.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Upon completing an overview of the previous strands of research relevant to the present study and the theoretical framework in chapter two, the current chapter presents the methodology for the present study. The subsections within this chapter are the following: 1) participant selection and participants' background, 2) data collection procedures and materials, 3) data analysis, and 4) my own positionality. This qualitative study is founded in an interdisciplinary sense given that it incorporates a mix of approaches and perspectives from Linguistics, Bilingual Education, Chicana/Latina Studies, and Native American Studies through a Critical Latina Indigenities lens. The data collection process centered on semi-structured interviews which were later determined to be individual *testimonios* as well as sharing circles (see Tachine et al., 2016). The participants were also asked to write a reflection based on their participation in the sharing circles to better understand the ways in which they were reflecting on their participation in this process and their overall takeaways. The present study follows footsteps of Pérez Huber (2009) utilizing *testimonios* as both a method and a methodology, though with a CLI framework. This iterative process allowed me to continuously engage with the data and rework points of thematic analysis based on participants' member checking and written reflections. The specific procedures from participant selection to meeting scheduling are included in this chapter as well. The chapter concludes with detailed information about each Indigenous instructor and student

that shared in the construction of this study and then my own positionality and my intentions in doing this work.

3.1 Participant Selection and Participants' Backgrounds

To recruit participants for this study, a network sampling method was utilized. In other words, the first point of contact was current acquaintances that are known to have connections to Indigenous students and instructors that have taught or taken SHL courses. The study information and recruitment form approved by IRB was sent via email to the initial contacts to make the study tenets and participation process clear, and to make it easily distributable to other potential participants. Each participant was required to be at least 18 years of age and self-identify as Indigenous. Other than the participants' own self-reporting about their identity, no other requirements are elicited to be able to participate for several reasons. First, the study aims to center learners and teachers in the SHL classroom that have connections to Indigeneity that may or may not be typically acknowledged in an SHL course. The present study does not aim to create generalizations about Indigeneity nor delimit the complex process of who can, or even should, claim an Indigenous identity. Indigenous scholars have described the functions of research, particularly qualitative research, and how research between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can be complex and worth continuously reflecting on (see Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Smith, 2012). Rather, the participants in this study are people who have unquestionably claimed their Indigenous identity and felt comfortable sharing their personal and educational experiences as an Indigenous learner and/or teacher of Spanish as a heritage language.

During the recruitment stage of the study, a total of eight participants agreed to take part in the study, with two being Indigenous instructors and six being Indigenous students. In the following section, specific information about the participants' identity, experiences, education, and more are outlined. The participants were asked about their preferences in terms of anonymity and were able to choose the name they would be referred to as for the present study. This has been done as an effort to maintain participants' autonomy and respect their preferences in terms of how their information is disseminated (see Reyna Rivarola & López, 2021). Thus, some participants have permitted some levels of specificity about their lives that others have not. To be able to provide a holistic sense of the participants, the most pertinent information for each person is provided in order of their recruitment in Table 1.

Table 1.

Selected Participants

Participant	Indigenous background	Residence	Affiliated university and established SHL program	SHL courses taken and/or taught
Tsitsiki, Participant 1 (student)	P'urhépecha from Tarecuato, Michoacán in México	Born and raised in Modesto, California, visited Tarecuato once at 15 years old	Public university in Arizona with an established SHL program	Two advanced SHL courses in the SHL program at her institution
Gabriela, Participant 2 (instructor)	Pascua Yaqui from the borderlands of Arizona and Sonora, México	Born and raised in Nogales, Arizona, visited México often	Public university in Arizona with an established SHL program	Has taught SHL courses offered in the SHL program at her institution

Elsa, Participant 3 (student)	Mixtec from Buenavista, Oaxaca in México	Born in Buenavista, Oaxaca. Moved to West Coast of U.S. at 5 years of age, has been able to visit her community in Buenavista a few times since	Public university in the state of Washington with an established SHL program	Took all four SHL courses in the SHL program at her university
Mundo, Participant 4 (student)	Zapotec from Magdalena Apasco (mother's side) San Pablo Huixtepec (father's side) both in Oaxaca in México	Born in Mexico City, moved to Midwest region of U.S at six years old, has been able to visit his family's pueblos since	Private university in Connecticut without an established SHL program	Took a course designed for SHL learners at his university
Mónica, Participant 5 (student)	Zapotec from San Francisco Cajonos in Oaxaca in México	Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, has visited to her family's pueblo frequently her whole life	Public university in California without an established SHL program	Took a course designed for SHL learners at her university
Helen, Participant 6 (instructor)	P'urhépecha from Michoacán in México	Born and raised in Ohio but moved around and lived in Guerrero, México for a few years and visited often	Public university in Ohio with an established SHL program	Took and taught and continues to teach SHL courses at the same institution
Caro, Participant 7 (student)	Zapotec from San Francisco Cajonos (mother's side) and San Sebastián Abasolo (father's side) both in Oaxaca in México	Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, has been able to visit her family's pueblos frequently her whole life	Public university in California without an established SHL program	Took a course designed for SHL learners at her university

SKarina, Participant 8 (student)	Mixtec from San Juan Mixtepec in Oaxaca in México	Born in Oregon, moved around the U.S. but settled in Oregon, visited her pueblo since the age of two and frequently visited her whole life	Public university in Oregon with an established SHL program	Took all four SHL courses in the SHL program at her institution
--	--	---	---	---

Student Participants

Tsitsiki (Participant 1)

The first participant recruited for the study was a former student of the researcher that had mentioned her Indigeneity and the lands of her family in a class project for an SHL course. Once the researcher contacted the student it had been one year since that SHL class had ended. The participant quickly responded to an email by the researcher and set up their individual meeting within the week that lasted about an hour and a half. The participant, hereby referred to as Tsitsiki, identifies as P’urhépecha, also known as Tarascos, from the pueblo of Tarecuato in the highlands of Michoacán, México. Both of her parents and their families are from this pueblo and speak P’urhépecha, though the participant herself does not consider herself proficient in the language. She explains how when she was younger her community was known as Tarascos due to Spanish colonization, but around 15 years old she remembers her community began to make more efforts to call themselves P’urhépecha.

At the time of this interview, Tsitsiki was 24 years of age, did all her schooling in the U.S., and was about to finish her undergraduate degree at a public university in Arizona. As part of her degree in Spanish, the participant took two of the advanced SHL courses out of four offered in an established SHL program. However, she had previously taken a Spanish course at a community college with an African American instructor that discussed the shared histories of Latinx and African American people in the United States. Though she was born, raised, and educated in the U.S., her parents made sure she maintained a strong connection to their pueblo due to their family members still being in the pueblo. They tried to maintain the language with their daughter, but the participant explains that when she was younger, she explicitly asked her parents not to speak in P'urhépecha, which she regrets now as she cannot fully participate in conversations in P'urhépecha with her family and community members without having her sister as an interpreter. Tsitsiki describes the complicated relationship she has with her family and her family's community given her upbringing in the U.S. and her lack of proficiency in their native language. Another interesting point the participant shared is that she married someone from the same Indigenous community. She explains that her husband and his family use even more P'urhépecha than in her own family, which motivates her to continue to learn the language.

Elsa (Participant 3)

The second student recruited for this study was contacted through a mutual colleague and the interview lasted an hour and twenty-one minutes. She was born in Buenavista in Oaxaca, Mexico and spoke only Mixteco until the age of five when she

moved to the United States, when her family told her she had to learn Spanish and English. Elsa says she only understands Mixteco now and cannot speak it. Given her parents' highly transient life as agricultural field workers she moved around the west coast and Pacific Northwest until settling more permanently in Washington. Both her parents are from the same area in Oaxaca and everyone in her family except for her speaks Mixteco. Due to this, she says her entire family identifies as Indigenous on both sides.

Though Elsa moved around often, she ultimately did most of her schooling in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and attended a public university in the state of Washington where she has spent most of her life. She had considered joining the military but decided at the last moment to continue her education. During her undergraduate degree she started as a nursing major, then switched to business and finally decided on American Ethnic Studies. Though she switched majors often, she was able to take Spanish courses designed for SHL learners in an established program which she felt was important to improve her skills and keep using it since she was not around her family anymore. Elsa recalls her first SHL class being intermediate-level and the first class in a sequence of four available in the SHL program at her university. This student had participated in a panel about what it meant to be Indigenous in a program designed for SHL learners which was publicly posted on their Spanish program website.

Mundo (Participant 4)

Mundo was recruited after sending out the study information via social media. His individual interview was by far the longest of the participants, as it lasted around two

hours and thirteen minutes. He was born in Mexico City, though his family on both sides is originally from Oaxaca. He identifies as Zapotec due to his connections to his father's side of the family in San Pablo Huixtepec, though on his mother's side in Magdalena Apasco they have Mixtec heritage. At the age of six, Mundo moved with his family to the Midwest region of the U.S. and moved around as his father had different employment opportunities with large companies given his college education. While this participant did not have the opportunity to be in community with other Indigenous peoples where he grew up in the Midwest like many of the other participants, he was able to travel back to Mexico to mainly his father's pueblo very often growing up. He takes pride in learning about the state of Oaxaca and mentioned doing his own research with other Indigenous people of the area through phone or social media.

Mundo completed three years of schooling in Mexico prior to his move to the United States where he completed the rest of his schooling in predominantly white schools in the Midwest. He had taken Spanish in high school but did not like how it was taught as he noticed it was a very Eurocentric course. At the time of this study, he was in his third year of his undergraduate degree at a private university in Connecticut where there is not currently an established SHL program. However, Mundo did take one course designed for advanced SHL learners. This student recalls not knowing of more than two other students in the whole university who identify as Indigenous, though he was able to take a class on Indigeneity with a Navajo professor where he felt comfortable sharing that part of his identity unlike in the Spanish class he took.

Mónica (Participant 5)

Mónica was recruited via the social media call as well and her interview lasted an hour and twenty-five minutes. She was born and raised in Los Angeles, California to parents from the same Zapotec pueblo, San Francisco Cajonos in Oaxaca, Mexico. Mónica explains that though her parents remain undocumented, she began visiting her parents' pueblo at the age of seven and regularly returned to Mexico for long periods of time during school breaks her entire life. This participant described her strong connection to people from Oaxaca even when she was in California, as there is an extensive population of people from Oaxaca in her area to the point of it being called Oaxacalifornia. Mónica explains that her parents made sure she maintained the Zapotec part of her identity, which is why she frequently went back to their pueblo, got involved in *bandas* in Oaxacalifornia, and can understand the Zapotec language though she is not confident speaking it.

Given her close proximity to a prestigious private university, Mónica did all her schooling in Los Angeles with the intention to attend university. In high school she did not take Spanish as her teacher was not a native speaker and she did not feel she would learn much in the class. For college, she ultimately made the difficult decision to attend a public university in southern California that her parents were unable to visit as there was an immigration checkpoint on the way to the school. Nonetheless, she enjoyed her time at the public university and finally took her first Spanish course designed for SHL learners. Though there was not an established SHL program at the time the participant attended this university, she recalls being in class with many other Latinx people, mostly of Mexican origin. Mónica eventually decided to study abroad in Barcelona, Spain during

her undergraduate studies as she wanted to be adventurous and did not feel she would have traveled that far on her own.

Caro (Participant 7)

Caro was recruited via social media and mentioned being friends with another one of the participants in this study. The interview with this participant lasted an hour and twenty-five minutes. She was born and raised in Los Angeles, California and also mentioned being a part of the Oaxacalifornia community since both of her parents are from Oaxaca. Her mother is originally from San Francisco Cajonos while her father is from San Sebastián Abasolo, both pueblos in Oaxaca. Caro explains that from a young age she was always interested in meeting people from Oaxaca, and that her parents sent her to Oaxaca at a young age to attend a funeral and has been able to visit her family's pueblos often throughout her life. While both her parents speak Zapotec, she explains that they have regional differences given their varieties coming from different pueblos. She does not speak Zapoteco herself, and says this has to do with her mother not wanting to use a language people around her could not understand in the U.S.

Caro completed all her schooling in California and also grew up near the same prestigious private university as participant five. Given her proximity to the school she always envisioned attending that university but was ultimately rejected and ended up attending a public university in central California where her cousin also went to school. At the university she attended there is not an established SHL program, but she was placed into a course designed for bilingual users of Spanish. Her goal was to minor in Spanish, but she was deterred from this after taking three or four courses and feeling like

the courses were too difficult given the advanced vocabulary her professors would use. Nonetheless, Caro was able to finish her undergraduate degree despite this and now works with children in after-school programs.

Karina (Participant 8)

The final student participant happened to be a past student of mine that was informed of the study through the recruitment form that my former colleagues shared with her. Karina had taken an introduction to Spanish linguistics courses in Spanish with the researcher of this study three years prior to this study. This interview lasted an hour and forty-one minutes. She identifies as an Indigenous Latina, given her parents' being Mixtec from San Juan Mixtepec in Oaxaca. Both of her parents and her family on both sides speak Mixteco, but she considers herself a receptive bilingual. She first visited her family's pueblo at the age of two and mentioned that she had visited the pueblo every three years or so until the pandemic.

Karina moved often with her family thus she completed her schooling in various states such as Oregon, Arizona, Virginia, and Idaho. Although she spent time in various schools in four states, she spent most of her life in a rural area of Eastern Oregon where the population was mainly white though her high school class consisted of just 30 students. She eventually attended a public university in Oregon and took all four SHL courses offered in their SHL program. She enjoyed the courses so much that she completed her undergraduate degree in Spanish. Her love for Spanish, her pride in her Indigenous identity, and her interest in helping people from her community led her to now work with Indigenous immigrants in her rural hometown in Oregon. The immigrants

Karina advocates for normally require access to healthcare and interpreters, though they mainly come from Indigenous communities in Guatemala that this participant has been learning about.

Instructor Participants

Gabriela (Participant 2)

The first instructor participant was recruited due to being a colleague of a colleague. The individual interview lasted about an hour and forty-eight minutes. She began by describing her background and how she was born and raised on the border between the U.S and Mexico in Nogales, Arizona. Gabriela mentions loving the term *fronteriza* as she identifies strongly with this idea of being a border dweller. Her background is closely tied to this geographical region which is divided by national borders, as her mother is Mexican from Sonora and her father and his whole family is Pascua Yaqui. She describes that at some point in the past her great grandfather and his brother were required to get formally registered with the Pascua Yaqui tribe on the U.S. side of the border, but her own great grandfather did not register in the U.S. as he was governor of Sonora in Mexico at the time, so he had no interest in anything based in the U.S. However, her great uncle, her great grandfather's brother and all his descendants were able to formally register with the Pascua Yaqui tribe within the United States. Gabriela says that due to that severed connection she cannot register with the Pascua Yaqui tribe now as she is not a direct descendant of someone in the tribe though she maintains contact with her family members that were able to register, and they remind her she is still Yaqui. She highlights that the tribe members in the U.S. have been more

successful with maintaining their language than her Yaqui family still in current day Mexico, due to discrimination her family faced in Sonora. Therefore, her father and his side of the family was forced to assimilate to the dominant Mexican culture by only using Spanish and not maintaining their Yaqui culture, traditions, or language. Gabriela explains how this process continued in just the time of three generations as their move to the U.S. has now elicited another shift to assimilating to mainstream American culture and English.

At the time of the study, Gabriela had completed all her schooling in the U.S. and had earned her undergraduate and master's degree from a public university in Arizona. Her own identity as a Spanish heritage learner played a big role in her educational trajectory as she went into Spanish-based and pedagogy-based degrees. She realized while in an interpretation and translation program at a local community college that the program was not well structured and the instructors were, in her view, not fully bilingual. This made her get interested in becoming a Spanish teacher and learn about linguistics, which she pursued for her undergraduate and master's degree. She was able to teach SHL courses during her master's degree in Spanish Linguistics. She now serves as an assistant to the SHL program at the same public university in Arizona while completing a PhD in Teaching, Learning and Sociocultural studies in the Education department. She clearly had the opportunity to formally learn about SHL research and pedagogy during her studies and through her teaching opportunities during her time at the university. Due to this, Gabriela explains that through her training and personal experiences she hopes to

train pre-service teachers, specifically to prepare them to appropriately teach SHL learners.

Helen (Participant 6)

This second instructor was recruited through social media, though we had mutual friends and colleagues but did not formally know each other until the start of this study. The interview with this instructor lasted nearly two hours. Helen was born in Ohio and spent most of her life there but moved around the U.S. and spent a few years of her life at different ages living in Mexico. She identifies as P'urhépecha due to her mother's heritage being P'urhépecha from Michoacán though the participant would mainly visit Guerrero when visiting Mexico. This part of the participant's identity made a big difference in her life as her father is white and she has spent most of her life in a predominantly white community, but she is known for being one of the only minorities in her area and schools which heavily impacted how her peers treated her. This treatment is part of the reason she spent some years living in Mexico, as she wanted to escape the racism she faced at school.

Though most of her schooling occurred mainly in Ohio, due to her family's transient nature she started school in Texas since they constantly traveled between the U.S. and Mexico. She went to school in Mexico for what would have been ninth grade but had to repeat ninth grade when she returned to the United States. In the U.S. at many stages of her schooling Gabriela attempted to get into bilingual education or Spanish classes but was not fully successful until high school where she was also able to take college courses at the same time. This instructor ended up attending the same public

institution in Ohio for their entire college education, which includes two bachelor's degrees, a master's degree, and a PhD all in Spanish, except for one of her bachelor's degrees. During her studies she became an expert in Spanish linguistics and matters pertaining to being an SHL learner, such as herself. Helen taught and continues to teach classes designed for bilingual users of Spanish at the university level, though the content of the SHL courses ranges from Spanish for medical purposes to Latinx communications.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

To start the recruitment for the present study, a repetitive process of reaching out to personal acquaintances took place via email. Once a period of two months had passed with few participants recruited, the researcher chose to distribute the IRB approved social media scripts to academics and academic groups to create a snowball effect. By way of social media more participants were recruited and contacted via email to be sent the consent forms and answer any questions or concerns they may have about the study. Once the consent forms were signed, each participant was asked to provide meeting times to schedule the first interview over Zoom of at least one hour, though the participants were advised that the session can be as short or as long as they desire. Prior to starting the session and recording, the researcher went over the consent form once again with the participant and left time for any additional questions and requested permission to start the recording. Each individual interview lasted a minimum of one hour, though about half reached about two hours. During these interviews, the researcher was alone in a quiet space with a notebook to take notes during the session.

After conducting the first round of data collection of the Indigenous students and teachers, the individual interviews were analyzed, and important themes were determined prior to organizing two sharing circles. These two sharing circles were intended to consist of four people each (one instructor and three students). Unfortunately, one student participant per sharing circle was unable to attend (Tsitsiki and Elsa), though they were still sent the organized themes with data from the individual interviews to then write and submit their own reflection despite not having attended the sharing circles. At the start of these circles, the researcher reminded everyone of the purpose of this study, gratitude for their participation, and the expected procedures for the sharing circles. The themes and quotes from the first individual interviews were organized into reflections and were presented to participants via screen sharing on Zoom. The participants were encouraged to read the reflections out loud to discuss and jot down ideas for their own reflections individually during or after the meeting time, depending on their preference. This second session was scheduled to be at least an hour though the participants were reminded that the session could be shortened or extended depending on how much they would like to share and how comfortable they felt during these sharing circles. The two sharing circles lasted about an hour and fifty minutes each. Once these sharing circles were completed, I began the last stage of the analysis of the sharing circles and the written reflections elicited in the second half of the data collection process. This was an iterative process which required careful note taking at every stage and returning to each part of the participation process to verify themes and conclusions.

Semi-structured Interviews with Indigenous SHL Instructors and Students

As the first phase of the data collection process, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the instructor and student participants. Patton (2015) describes three types of interviews: 1) informal conversational interviews 2) the interview guide approach and 3) standardized open-ended interviews. As the most common interview style in qualitative studies, I employed the interview guide approach. As Rossman and Rallis (2017) explain, this type of interview style is designed to draw out a participant's worldview. As the researcher, I would be expected to present topics/categories to explore but would leave the door open for the participant to pursue other topics that they want to discuss. According to Rossman and Rallis (2017), "the researcher identifies a few broad topics (perhaps framed as questions) to help uncover the participant's meaning or perspective but otherwise respects how the participants frames and structures responses" (p. 155). Given the participant-driven nature of this interview style, the researcher is likely to speak less to favor more talk from the participant. By conducting this style of interview, a central tenet of qualitative research is maintained, which is that "the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it and not as the researcher views it. The researcher's role is to capture that unfolding." (Rossman & Rallis, 2017, p. 155). In Appendix A, I provide the key topics/potential questions for the instructors but generally followed the lead of the instructor about their backgrounds and their perspective on SHL Education rather than having a strict/standardized set of questions. A very similar set of key topics/potential questions are provided in Appendix B for the student interviews, though they are less focused on pedagogical practices and suggestions given their role as mainly students and

not SHL instructors. While the main method for this study can be described as a semi-structured interview per traditional research methods, the aim of the present study is to foster the use of decolonial research methods. As such, the intentions of the researcher for this data collection process from the onset of this study is to elicit *testimonios*, and in the second phase, utilize sharing circles and reflections to maintain Indigenous-based ways of generating, imparting, and understanding knowledge. These methodological approaches will be detailed in the following sections to describe their appropriateness for the present study.

Testimonios

One of the central methods of this study is *testimonios*, commonly used in oral cultures of Latin America. *Testimonios* are rooted in movements of resistance. This method is often employed alongside Chicana/Latina Feminist, Critical Race Theory, and Latino/a Critical Race Theory frameworks to uncover the experiences of groups that have historically been marginalized, oppressed, and/or altogether disregarded (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012; Pérez Huber, 2009; Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). In their article on *testimonios* as a genre, methodology, and pedagogical tool, Delgado Bernal et al. (2012) explain that,

Testimonio is and continues to be an approach that incorporates political, social, historical, and cultural histories that accompany one's life experiences as a means to bring about change through consciousness-raising. In bridging individuals with collective histories of oppression, a story of marginalization is re-centered to elicit social change (p. 364).

To distinguish this method from oral histories or autobiographies, typically elicited in interviews, Delgado Bernal et al. (2012) mention that “it involves the participant in a critical reflection of their personal experience within particular sociopolitical realities” (p. 364). By extension, Cueva (2013) describes testimonios as being a methodology rooted in social justice. For the sake of this dissertation, the participants were asked to reflect on their personal experiences in the U.S. as an Indigenous user of Spanish and later in the SHL classroom, and how these experiences are situated within the sociopolitical realities of their particular geographical regions, institutions, etc. As such, given the nature and intentions of this work, the data collection and analysis of these participants’ first interviews were regarded as *testimonios* rather than typical semi-structured interviews. This is because interviews in Linguistics/Sociolinguistics tend to be focused on finding and analyzing specific linguistic features elicited during discussions on usually broad topics and these interviews follow a set order and schedule (see Tagliamonte, 2006). Instead, as shown in Appendix A and Appendix B, a series of topics/categories are outlined, however, the *testimonio* remained largely led by the participant rather than the researcher and focused on the tenets outlined above by Delgado Bernal et al. (2012).

While there has been a growing use of *testimonios* as a method in varied fields of research, particularly for recounting the experiences of Chicanas/Latinas transnationally, this method has yet to gain popularity in the field of SHL even though the field is centered on precisely these types of learners. The employment of *testimonios* in SHL research and pedagogy is the logical addition to CLA frameworks which aim to engage learners with questions of language, power, and sociopolitical realities. Additionally, it

disrupts what Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) describe as an apartheid of knowledge, which presents dominant Eurocentric epistemologies of knowledge as the only legitimate and privileged forms of knowing that can garner prestige in academic settings meanwhile discrediting Black, Indigenous and Brown knowledge, interpretation, scholarship, etc. In using *testimonios* as a method, this study aims to legitimize Indigenous Latinx ways of knowing that reflect the embodied experiences of the students and instructors that are currently in SHL classrooms.

In terms of the specific orientation to *testimonios* that are utilized for this study, the analysis stemmed from a Critical Latinx Indigeneities framework. In particular, I have closely followed the methodological footsteps of Pérez Huber (2009), which utilized *testimonios* as a method as well as a methodology. Pérez Huber (2009) presents a three-step model for utilizing *testimonios* which are: (1) preliminary, (2) collaborative, and (3) final data analysis stages (p. 647). For the step of preliminary data analysis, upon transcribing the audio recordings of the *testimonios*, the Pérez Huber utilizes a critical race grounded theory approach by Malagón et al. (2009). In this phase of the data analysis, the researcher used a Latino/a Critical Race Theory lens, but in the present dissertation a CLI lens was utilized in order organize and underscore thematic categories that emerged from the data in order to explore the ways in which Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, discourse, and other factors impacted the participants' experiences in the SHL classroom. As Braun and Clarke (2012) explain, thematic analysis is

a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. Through focusing on meaning

across a data set, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences (p. 57).

For this study, the isolated thematic categories are then compiled to be used to create reflections in the collaborative phase of the process. In the collaborative phase, Pérez Huber (2009) utilizes focus groups to organize her participants into two groups of 6-8 people. In order to stay true to the decolonizing efforts of this dissertation and to center Indigenous methodological approaches, I employ the use of sharing circles as described by Tachine et al. (2016). The authors explain that sharing circles is a long-practiced form of sharing within Indigenous communities, yet they are “scarcely detailed in scholarly, peer-reviewed outlets” (Tachine et al., 2016, p. 278). In their article, Tachine et al. (2016) outline the distinctions between focus groups and sharing circles, the importance of sharing circles, and the successful outcomes they were able to achieve by utilizing an Indigenous methodology with Indigenous participants. They note that while sharing circles were founded in Indigenous communities, focus groups were created for market research interests and not used in the social sciences until the 1980s. As such, since my study is primarily focused on centering the experiences and ways of knowing of Indigenous Latinx students, it seems not only appropriate but necessary to make this slight adjustment to the process of analysis described by Pérez Huber (2009). Although, it is worth noting that this is not a slight against Pérez Huber’s (2009) of focus groups, since her study was not explicitly centered solely on Indigenous participants. During this collaboration stage, Pérez Huber (2009) gave each of her participants was given “a series of reflections to read aloud as a group and had individual time to respond in writing” and

then “engaged in a dialogue around the themes they would use to categorize this data, how and why they would use these themes, and how their own experiences agrees with or refutes the group’s findings” (p. 647).

To find a middle ground between these methods used by Pérez Huber (2009) and the sharing circles of Tachine et al. (2016), I will be sure to give the participants ample time to share their own experiences at any time throughout the process regardless of it is directly related to the reflection being shared. In other words, the reflections will serve as the “starting point” like the questions in Tachine et al. (2016), but the participants will not be expected to remain “on topic” at all times. Also, as Pérez Huber (2009) notes, the idea behind discussing the thematic categories in the reflections is not to come to a group consensus, instead it is to give them more time to reflect on their own experiences and discuss them with other Indigenous Latinxs that have taken SHL courses. Nonetheless, as Pérez Huber (2009) notes, this dialogic process allows for me to member-check (Maxwell, 1996) the ways I have categorized my data.

In the final stage, Pérez Huber (2009) ties together the first stages a bit more closely given their reflexive nature. As described in the initial stages,

Thematic categories were identified and brought to the group through a reflection exercise, where participants were able to reflect, discuss, and engage with each other (including myself) about how we could provide a clearer understanding of the categories that would represent their experiences as told through their *testimonios* (p. 648).

The researcher made sure to discuss the types of codes and coding schemes with the participants during the second stage as well. From there, the author explains that the actual reflections that were written in the second stage also required to be analyzed according to said codes and coding schemes. As Pérez Huber (2009) explains, “I regularly used concept mapping to explore the relationships between categories, and develop analytical codes that led to identifying larger theoretical connections, advancing the utility of LatCrit to help make sense of these experiences” (p. 648). I will follow this general methodological process, but with CLI as the theoretical framework and with room for adjustments to allow the data to speak for itself whenever necessary, as is expected in qualitative research. A CLI framework allows for “understanding the ways gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, class and other oppressions intersect with indigeneity and are produced over multiple colonial contexts, including within schools” (Blackwell et al., 2017 as cited in Urrieta & Calderón, 2019). In addition, the most relevant studies that have incorporated CLI that were utilized as a point of departure for the themes coded in the present study are Calderón and Urrieta (2019), Barillas Chón (2021), and Kovats Sánchez (2021).

3.3 Researcher Positionality

To engage in critical self-reflection, to honor the tenets proposed in this study, and to join the participants in this study in their vulnerability, I begin this section with my own positionality. I am a Mexican American first-generation college student born of two Mexican immigrants that met in California. Neither of my parents self-identify as Indigenous, yet my father and his thirteen siblings would often whisper of my maternal

grandma's ability to speak a language the rest of the family could not understand. As a little girl, I had little knowledge to understand how it was that for most of my maternal grandmother's life she was able to understand and speak a language as a woman born in Mexico that was not Spanish, and why she never imparted that language with the rest of her family until eventually claiming to forget the language completely. This added another layer to the complex ways in which certain cousins of mine born in the U.S. could not communicate in Spanish with our grandmother, given their English dominance. These linguistic factors and my identity formation as a Chicana born in California but raised in Las Vegas, Nevada led to my longstanding interest in learning more about bi/multilingualism, Indigeneity across borders, and the impact of settler colonialism on not only my own family but of the geographical contexts in which I have spent most of my life, the U.S. southwest and the states of Nayarit and Jalisco in Mexico. As I entered my language teaching M.A. program, I was able to learn more about fields and subfields of research relevant to my interests, such as heritage language research and pedagogy. That course was pivotal to my personal and academic growth as I began to learn about the concept of a heritage learner as it related to my own family, many other Latinx families, and local Indigenous communities in the Pacific Northwest and nation-wide. As my research and pedagogical interests were increasingly specific into the study of Spanish as a heritage language, I began to see how the field has historically aimed to center learners' identities and needs. Thus, my personal and academic background allowed me to question what types of language learners are foregrounded in the field, and by consequence, the learners that are not. While my own background as a Mexican

American, first-generation college student, and SHL learner allows me to enjoy certain in-group memberships with the participants of the present study, I do not self-identify as Indigenous nor am I conducting this research as a means of reclaiming an Indigenous identity. I recognized that I am a *mestiza* in the U.S. that did not grow up around, maintain a connection to, or until recently learn about the homelands, culture, language, or any other ways of being and knowing of the Huichol people in Nayarit that my grandmother knew. My intentions with this work are to take an interdisciplinary approach to centering and learning from Indigenous Spanish users that arrive to the SHL classroom in the United States. While the bulk of the conversations with the participants in this study are focused on their own backgrounds, experiences, and suggestions as Indigenous SHL teachers and students, I always make it clear that I am ready and happy to share anything about myself and/or my research that they would like to know at that time or in separate meetings. This is done in hopes of being held accountable as a non-Indigenous outsider and conducting research that is answerable to the Indigenous people this work aims to center and serve. In this way, through reflexivity and consistent dialogue with the communities this work is about and for, I can reflect on my roles and responsibilities as a researcher and as a person deeply beholden and devoted to these communities.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive explanation of each part of my methodological process in executing this study. The first section details how participants were selected and an overview of the backgrounds of each individual Indigenous student and instructor that shared their *testimonios* to make this study a reality. The second

section explains the steps of data collection and the methods utilized for collection and analysis. Finally, the third section describes my own positionality, how I came into this work, and my intentions behind doing this type of research. The following chapter provides the results of this methodological process which facilitate the impactful conversations that this study focuses on. In other words, the fourth chapter is a detailed analysis of the *testimonios*, sharing circles, and written reflections from the eight Indigenous instructors and students that graciously participated in this study. Chapter four also includes pedagogical suggestions provided by each participant and their reflections on allyship. Various participants also included their thoughts on what participating in this study was like for them, which is the final section of the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aims to center the experiences of Indigenous instructors and learners that have taken and/or taught an SHL course at a university. To do this, individual semi-structured interviews, analyzed as *testimonios*, sharing circles, and written reflections were utilized to begin to understand the perspectives of six students and two instructors. Given that *testimonios* are employed in this study as a method as well as a methodology (see Pérez Huber, 2009), each part of the data is viewed as a part of a bigger picture that was analyzed through a Critical Latinx Indigenities (see Blackwell et al., 2017) lens in an iterative manner. The research questions for the present study are the following:

1. What can the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors before and during their enrollment in SHL courses tell us about their identities and how they navigate educational spaces?
2. How, in the students' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. How do the experiences of Indigenous students reflect, or not, the consideration of decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom?
 - b. Do these students see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL pedagogy require modification?
3. How, in the instructors' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. Have these instructors ever had to modify any lessons, materials, or practices in the SHL classroom due to conflicts with their own Indigenous knowledge/perspectives?
 - b. Do these instructors see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL Education require modification?

Upon completing this analysis, the responses for the research questions were addressed.

The most salient themes and subthemes from the data that answer the first research question are provided in themes one through part of theme six. From themes six through eight, the responses to the second and third research questions are provided. The main themes found were:

- 1) dynamic identity development and identity negotiation
- 2) connections between language and identity
- 3) impacts of anti-Indigenous discrimination among Latinx people
- 4) maneuvering language and identity in K-12 education
- 5) implications of teachers' positionalities and practices
- 6) discrepancies on knowledge and holders of knowledge
- 7) inclusion of Indigeneity in SHL courses
- 8) tensions between taking/teaching SHL courses and being Indigenous

There are quotes that likely could belong in more than one theme, particularly when it comes to manners of language and identity at different points of the participants' lives, but they were organized into the themes that seemed most appropriate for the main point of their idea. Additionally, not every participant commented on each theme, thus there will not necessarily be a quote from each participant for each theme/subtheme. Another relevant point for these results is that the quotes which came from the spoken testimonios end in the participant number and time stamp while the written portions do not. In addition to the main themes which address the main research questions, pedagogical suggestions that some of the students and instructors proposed are outlined, which also respond to research questions 2b and 3b.

Following the eight themes that directly address the research questions are considerations on allyship by each of the eight participants, particularly for Latinx communities and educational spaces focused on teaching Spanish as a heritage language. The chapter concludes with some final reflections from the participants, which come directly from their written reflections, and a chapter summary. It is also important to note, that while each participant was able to provide their individual *testimonio*, two participants, Tsitsiki (p1) and Elsa (p3), were unable to attend the sharing circles due to unforeseen circumstances. Nonetheless, they were both sent the documents where the quotes from each participant were organized into themes to review each section and then provide their written reflections based on their impressions of these quotes and themes. Unfortunately, Tsitsiki (p1) was unable to complete her written reflection due to unexpected circumstances. However, Elsa (p3) was able to submit her written reflection which resulted in a total of seven written reflections after the sharing circles were completed. Thus, the sharing circles consisted of three people each, though each person provided their individual *testimonio* and was able to provide their written reflection based on the findings from the *testimonios*. It is also important to note that the participants were reminded on several occasions that they were free to respond in the language of their choosing, whether that meant trying to maintain strict linguistic boundaries between English, Spanish, and their Indigenous language or not.

4.1 Main themes from the *testimonios*

4.1.1 Theme one: Dynamic identity development and identity negotiation

To respond to the first research question and to get a sense of how each person in this study self-identifies, each of the individual conversations started with asking each person to tell me, the researcher, about themselves in a broad sense. This first question was framed broadly without further clarification so that each person could share what they felt was most relevant to their own identity. Interestingly, even though these participants had spent most of their lives away from their families' and ancestors' native lands, they each still made sure to carefully detail the lands that their identities continue to be rooted in. The consistent mention of place, land, and specific pueblos while participants talked about their identities was not surprising. As Wilson (2008) explains,

Identity for Indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors who have returned to the land and with future generations who will come into being on the land. Rather than viewing ourselves as being in relationship with other people or things, we are the relationships that we hold and are part of. (p. 80)

Thus, in excerpt 1, Tsitsiki (p1) succinctly provides her own identity terms, names her *pueblo*, and why she mentions her pueblo being Indigenous.

1. “Okay, so I identify myself as Mexican American ... I always say that I am from my famil's from Michoacán Tarecuato, Indigenous pueblo and- and that's where I- I feel like for me it's very important to identify that part of me, so I always make that reference.” [p149]

Among the eight participants, six were born in the United States while Elsa (p3) and Mundo (p4) were the only two of the participants that were not. They both highlighted within roughly the first minute of our conversations that they were born in Mexico, with Elsa (p3) being born in Oaxaca and Mundo in Mexico City, shown in excerpts 2 and 3.

2. “So I was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, in the- little in a little pueblo called Buenavista, Santa María” [p328]

3. “...we used to live in Mexico City, and that's where I was born. But both my parents, and I guess, yeah, most of my extended family's from Oaxaca. My grandparents, because of how they all met are- they're from different regions within the state. But the ones that I know best are within the Valley region. Specifically, on my mom's side, that would be Magdalena Apasco. And on my dad's side, that would be San Pablo, Huixtepec.” [p4124]

Most of the participants, five out of eight, have ties to Oaxaca. They each would first mention the state of Oaxaca without always saying they identify as Indigenous right away. Caro (p7) in excerpt 4 and Karina (p8) in excerpt 5 took this approach.

4. “but ever since we were little, like, I've always known that I was from Oaxaca. So like, that's where my family comes from.” [p738]
5. “Yeah, I am an indigenous Latina. My family is from Oaxaca, Mexico.” [p822]

As we continued to discuss their backgrounds and reflections on their identity, a few participants mentioned how they were aware of their Indigeneity but did not take much time to reflect on it carefully early on in life. As Karina (p8) notes,

6. “I always knew I was indigenous, but *no le di tanta importancia*. Because it was just normal to me. And I never encountered other people that were like- really talked about their Indigenous identity or anything, in that way.” [p82156]

As for the instructors, Gabriela (p2) and Helen (p6) were expectedly precise with the terms they utilized to identify themselves. In excerpt 7, Gabriela (p2) began by mentioning that she was born and raised on the border between Mexico and the U.S.

7. “yeah but border dweller I like the term *fronteriza* a lot, I like that identity term a lot.” [p248]

Meanwhile, Helen (p6) took an approach of starting with more broad terms she would use to identify herself to more narrow terms she utilizes.

8. “I'll go broadly, to more narrowly. So Latinx, to Latina to Chicana. Chicax to Chicana, to P'urhépecha” [p642]

Among the first few minutes of each one-on-one conversation, it is clear that most participants chose to start by mentioning the identity terms they tend to use, as well as the names of their Indigenous *pueblos*. They each eventually led into the specific Indigenous communities they belong to and shared much of the same information during the sharing circles. The first sharing circle consisted of Gabriela (p2), an instructor, Mundo (p4), and Mónica (p5). During their introductions, Gabriela mentioned that her maternal grandmother was also Indigenous in excerpt nine, which she had not initially shared during her individual *testimonio*.

9. “My mom identifies mostly as Mexican, but I know that on her mom's side, my grandma's side, we have some indigenous roots, and I think it's Mayo- I think it's the Mayo tribe, but they don't talk about it and my grandma's no longer here so I can't ask her. And on my dad's side, they are Yaqui. My grandpa is and they- my grandpa's brother is part of the Yaqui tribe here in the US but my grandpa, no, my grandpa's dad decided he didn't want to be part of it. Didn't want to register with the US government. So my side of the family was never part of that.” [p2749]

It seemed that during the sharing circles, participants were more willing to share the specifics of their *pueblo* names and particular Indigenous communities a bit sooner than in their individual interviews. Excerpt 10 demonstrates how participants like Mónica (p5) introduced themselves during the sharing circles.

10. “So my family, both my parents are from the same pueblo in Oaxaca. And that's where we come from, we're Zapotecos. So from the Zapotec region, and that's where- and I identify as Indigenous. And it's something that's very- been very much present my whole life, um all the traditions and the cultures that we grew up with.” [p5109]

In the second sharing circle, which consisted of Helen (p6), the second instructor, Caro (p7), and Karina (p8), we can see how Karina in excerpt 11 was immediately specific

about not only being from Oaxaca, but also mentions the specific pueblo and the fact that they are Mixtecos as well.

11. “My family is also from Oaxaca. My parents are from the same little town in Oaxaca. San Juan Mixtepec. We are Mixtecos.” [p8738]

Identity negotiation

There were many salient elements related to the participants’ identities and identity negotiation, and while the bulk of these pertained to language and schooling, many times their families had a lot to do with how they established and negotiated their identities. The participants’ families playing a major role in their identity formation/negotiation was also highlighted in previous studies (Casanova, 2019; Casanova et al., 2016; Mesinas & Pérez, 2016; among others). As shown in excerpt 12, Gabriela (p2), one of the instructors, describes how she was not even made aware of her indigeneity until she was in middle school given that members in her family made an effort to first assimilate into mainstream Mexican society and then mainstream society in the U.S.

12. “He was like- my grandpa was very intentional about like keeping the cultural away, like the language away from his children and from us ... all of their descendants kind of assimilated more into the hegemonic Mexican culture, ...it wasn't til like middle school or so, when I kind of started to piece things together, like hey are these our relatives, ... it was very like ehh, like ambivalent... are you telling me I have these roots and you never mentioned this and- and they were pretty uncomfortable honestly talking about it. And I became super like, oh I'm going to identify this way and that and they're like, no! Yeah it's- it's really sad. [p2526]

Despite her family’s pushback, Gabriela was hoping to reconnect formally with her tribe on the Arizona side, since her Yaqui tribe was politically divided by the U.S.-Mexico border. She spoke to her family members that were also interested in rejoining the tribe

and realized that due to her direct patrilineal line not maintaining their connection with the tribe, they were unable to register with the tribe at this point. As Gabriela (p2) notes,

- 13.** “they were more in the process of trying to figure out how to be registered with the tribe. And I- I talked to them about it and they're like yeah it's not possible, we tried, but I think they were more going- trying to find out that route.” [p2830]

However, she does have extended family members that were able to successfully register with the Yaqui tribe on the U.S. side. Gabriela describes conversations with a particular uncle that is an active registered member of the tribe about her continued desire to identify as Yaqui and taking pride in being Yaqui. In excerpt 14, in one of the conversations with her uncle, she explains how she received approval from her uncle to identify as an Indigenous student that completed a PhD despite being unable to formally register with the tribe in the U.S.

- 14.** “when I graduate I wanted my last name to be you know, on the degree and say like I'm an Indigenous student that got a PhD like I want to be super like proud of that, ... And I've talked to my- my uncle here who's- who's in the tribe and he's like no that's- he's like doesn't matter if you're not registered you- and you know it's part of your- even if I was like not exposed to it younger.” [p210547]

As we reviewed these excerpts during the first sharing circle, Gabriela reiterated how her immediate family members made it particularly difficult for her to confidently reconnect with her Indigenous identity.

- 15.** “I mean, I can relate to a lot of this, especially in negotiating identity because it's- it's this struggle of convincing yourself in your context that you are what you feel you are but then others giving their opinion. I know my family, they more- they ascribe more to the Mexican side and try to ignore the Indigenous side a lot.” [p2510]

It becomes evident that based on Gabriela's experience, certain members in her family are still trying to assimilate to specific racial identities that can allow them to take on an

ostensibly higher social status than they believe they can have by claiming an Indigenous identity. As Quijano (2000) explains, these colonial conceptualizations of racial identities have long been used as a form of social classification. Although Gabriela's family members share the same patrilineal lineages, some of them have chosen to maintain their Indigenous membership while others have chosen to claim an identity closer to Europeanness, and by extension, whiteness rather than Indigeneity as previous scholars have noted (Alberto, 2017; Rosa & Flores, 2017). In terms of the concept of dominant Mexican identity, Mónica (p5) explains how despite having a supportive family, she also struggled with facing the expectations of ostensibly typical Mexican culture in excerpt 16.

16. "I know growing up, was very hard to relate. Because the- I mean, LA is very diverse as it is, but predominantly very Mexican. And so even like, for stereotypical, like Mexican traditions, like I felt like at the same time, sometimes it was kind of awkward listening and comparing stories, because things that we experienced was not the norm. And so it was kind of difficult while growing up, but now it's something that I take really great pride in." [p5137]

This important point emerged early during Mónica's individual interview, though given her predominantly Mexican context growing up in Los Angeles, it is not an unusual situation. As Kovats Sánchez (2020) explains, "Mexican Indigenous students also develop their ethnic identities against the backdrop of an existing dominant Mexican mestizo identity" (p.31). Previous scholarship has noted that this awareness of navigating one's Indigenous identity among a dominant non-Indigenous Latinx population is a common reality Indigenous people face and negotiate, often before even reaching adulthood (Alberto, 2017; Barillas Chón, 2010, 2017, 2019, 2021; Casanova, 2019; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; González, 2019; Nicolás, 2020; among others). Fortunately,

during middle school in Los Angeles, Mónica (p5) was able to find friends from Oaxaca that she could relate to and did not make her question her own identity.

- 17.** “But it was- it was then that I found like a group of friends and we all were from Oaxaca, just like different pueblos. But I realize now that I got along with them, because when we shared family stories, we knew what we were talking about,” [p53007]

While in Los Angeles there is a large community of Oaxacans in an area referred to as *Oaxacalifornia* (see Rivera-Salgado, 1999), unfortunately, in the United States a common perception about Mexicans, even among Mexicans themselves, is that they are an ethnically homogeneous group (see Urrieta & Calderón, 2019). As such, Indigenous Mexicans, such as the ones in this study, face what Barillas-Chón (2022) calls overlapping and traveling colonial codes of power. These overlapping experiences of discrimination include anti-Indigenous discrimination that places Indigenous people, and their languages, in a subordinated position as opposed to people of European descent in Latin America continues to be an obstacle in the U.S. Due to the fact that these monolithic colonial codes of power continue to be rampant in the U.S., the participants in the second sharing circle explain that the way they identify themselves depends on their interlocutor, or in other words, who they are speaking to. Helen (p6), one of the instructors, highlights the differences between being introduced to a white person versus someone who is Latinx in excerpt 18.

- 18.** “So like, [laughs] a random white person gives that question. So what are you? [laughs] If I'm not going to be completely flippant and rude, like there's a power dynamic, like it's a boss or something, then I just say Latina, right? But if I met Caro (p7) or Karina (p8), and we were talking, I would share more in depth in more detail.” [p61415]

Once Helen mentioned this, Caro (p7) and Karina (p8) agreed with Helen's assessment and they both expanded on this by expressing how their identity formation has changed over time along with the identity terms they employ. In excerpt 19, Caro (p7) describes how she chooses to identify has evolved based on being more involved with her Indigenous community.

19. "But yeah, definitely, like, throughout the course of my life, I definitely went from identifying as Chicana. Because again, like, it was always kind of like, Oh well I'm from here. I was born in the US, but my parents are from Mexico. So that means I'm a Chicana, but you know, in reality, it's- I'm like more- I like to identify more specifically, now that I am more like involved, I guess, with the community. So now I say that I'm like, from Oaxaca, that my family's from a little town called San Francisco Cajonos. And it's in the Sierra, and we're- my dad's from the *valle*. So things like that. So definitely, I feel like it's been a little journey to get to, how I identify myself." [p71553]

Karina (p8) shares similar sentiments to Helen and Caro in excerpt 20, in that how she identifies depends on her interlocutor and on what she has learned as she grew older.

20. "And I have that similar experience too as when I was younger, I would just say, Oh, I'm M- Mexican. But as I grew older, like high school, and then college, I started saying that. And again, depending on who I'm talking to, as well, like if it's another person that identifies from a Spanish speaking country or Latinx, I will be more specific and say, *O, mi familia es de Oaxaca. Soy, you know, indígena*. But if it's someone who really doesn't know about Spanish speaking cultures, or any kind of Indigenous culture, then I- I'll just say that I'm Latina." [p81632]

Once Caro (p7) and Karina (p8) shared their perspectives, Helen (p6) made sure to assert that none of these identity terms were fully sufficient for how people like herself identify, but that being aware of that is what made her in some ways to not take these labels too seriously.

21. "So all of these terms, I find problematic, right? [laughs] They all have issues, every single one of them. But that's kind of why I like playing with them. Right?" [p61845]

These discussions on negotiating their identities based on their interlocutors is one found in previous studies where Indigenous people employed concealment practices (Barillas Chón, 2021; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; Machado Casas, 2012). Additionally, the idea that there can be one catch-all term to define the diverse realities of Latinx people in diaspora is one that Helen (p6) problematizes as well. These questions of identity labels and pan Hispanic/Latinx terminology has been highlighted in both SHL scholarship (Henderson et al. 2020; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Vergara Wilson & Martínez, 2011) and Critical Latinx Indigeneity scholarship (Blackwell et al., 2017; Kovats Sánchez, 2020; Urrieta & Calderón, 2019). For Indigenous Latinx people specifically, Urrieta and Calderón (2019) highlight how Hispanic/Latinx discourses in particular help support the concept of *mestizaje* and in turn, a “state eugenicist program of Indigenous erasure” (p. 146).

These distinctions between terms and their ramifications were not ones Elsa (p3) had encountered until starting university. Elsa (p3) was one of the participants that was regularly in contact with fellow Indigenous Latinx people in the United States, given that her parents worked in agriculture and her family would live in agricultural camps with other Indigenous workers. She mentions the backgrounds of the people and their languages that she was aware of at a young age in excerpt 22.

22. “actually, there was- there were a lot of people who spoke different languages there. There was like, Triqui. And I guess there's Mixteco *bajo* and Mixteco *alto*, which I didn't know. Um, what else? And I think that's all I remember for now but Triqui and Mixteco were one of the main ones.” [p31801]

In college, Elsa had an opportunity to talk to a fellow Indigenous student about how they identify. Elsa (p3) explained that because she felt that the other student was more

connected to her Indigeneity, since she would not use identity labels such as Hispanic or Latina.

- 23.** “ I mostly talked to one specific girl. And she- she was definitely more connected to her um, to like, being Indigenous, than I was, because I feel like she was very like, how do I explain it? Like, she does not take the- or consider herself as Hispanic or Latina. She just goes by Indigenous, and I feel like I felt like a little bit more, or I take in the labels of Hispanic and Latino.”

As evidenced in excerpt 23, Elsa believed that the way her Indigenous peer self-identified seemingly demonstrated a stronger connection to her Indigeneity than Elsa had to her own. Despite Elsa (p3) being one of the only participants to have been born in Oaxaca, learning Mixteco as a first language, growing up among various Indigenous people, and having other clear lifelong connections to her Indigeneity, she felt that identity labels were at least one important factor in determining how connected one is an Indigenous identity. While not all participants made such explicit assertions on identity labels, what remains evident among them is that utilizing certain identity terms or not is an agentic decision for these Indigenous participants, as Barillas Chón (2022) also demonstrated in his study. Additionally, as demonstrated in SHL scholarship (see Leeman, 2015; Tecedor et al., 2020), these participants’ identities appear to be dynamic and based on several factors rather than being static and based on one part of their identity. Furthermore, the concept of maintaining “fluid identities” is also relevant to their Indigeneity as Machado-Casas (2012) and Barillas Chón (2022) also denote. In other words, the multifaceted nature of these participants’ identities certainly appeared to lead to negotiating and maintaining dynamic rather than fixed identities. In addition, the participants normally described their identities and identity negotiation by focusing on transborder communities

and their transborder lives, as Stephen (2007) notes about Indigenous migrants, even though most of these participants were born and raised in the U.S.

4.2.1 Theme two: Connections between language and identity

All the participants, students and instructors alike, either grew up in multilingual homes, or had direct family members such as grandparents, that maintained the Indigenous language of their communities. In other words, Spanish was not necessarily considered the participants' default family language and/or the language of their daily home and community-based activities. At the same time, sometimes English would end up being the home language due to its prioritization over Spanish and/or their Indigenous language. However, the participants' multilingual realities growing up as Indigenous Mexicans were not ones that even some fellow Mexicans understood. As Fox (2006) explains,

Many of the indigenous Mexican activists in the US on the cutting edge are trilingual, and for some, Spanish is neither their first nor their second language. Yet in the US, most scholars, labor organizers, civil rights groups, cultural workers, and funding agencies treat Mexicans as ethnically homogeneous. (p. 39-40)

In excerpt 24, Tsitsiki (p1) explains how her own mother had to learn Spanish upon moving to the U.S. and how she was unable to communicate with her grandparents the first time she went back to her pueblo to meet them.

- 24.** “*mis abuelitos* when I went to go meet them I couldn't talk to them, because they didn't know Spanish like that's how that's how much you know the language and culture *todavía está ahí*, my mom said she learned to speak Spanish when she came here to the US, because she needed it to talk to other people yeah, so they basically learned Spanish.” [p1757]

Similar to Tsitsiki, during the second sharing circle, Karina (p8) describes growing up in a trilingual home in the U.S. and having access to her grandmother that would speak Mixteco with her growing up.

25. “But growing up, I grew up in a trilingual home, because both of my parents still maintain and speak their Mixteco language. Mainly- and it was interesting, I think the way that I was raised because my grandmother was also one of my primary caretakers so I spent a lot of time with her when my parents would be working and she would be the one to really use Mixteco with me as I was growing up.” [p8838]

As these multilingual home spaces were discussed, Caro (p7) reiterated the fact that Spanish is not the default language of Mexicans since she also grew up listening to her family’s language, Zapoteco.

26. “Spanish is definitely not the default. [laughs] Because, like I said, I grew up- well I grew up learning Spanish, but my parents and my- my grandmother, she speaks, Zapoteco. So like prior to our generation, it was mostly Zapoteco.” [p72403]

During a particularly unique experience in comparison to the rest of the participants, Elsa (p3) was invited to be a part of a panel on the experiences Indigenous Latinx people. One of the main points she combated during this panel was the idea that Spanish must be her mother tongue, which is noted in excerpt 27.

27. “So I got asked to speak on a panel. And I was like, I really don't like the idea of Spanish being my mother language. I feel like my mother language was taken away from me.” [p61008]

Language shift

While each of the participants were required to have taken and/or taught a Spanish class to participate, none of the participants felt they could confidently report being proficient in their Indigenous language. In some ways, these participants all have

two heritage languages based on Valdés’s original definition of what it means to be a heritage learner (see also Mulík et al., 2021). Yet, each of these participants have only had the opportunity to formally develop their linguistic repertoires in their colonial heritage language. As such, each participant described their relationship with their Indigenous languages and the reasons why they were unable to maintain them. In Mexico and in the U.S. during the early years of each participants’ life, they all reported prioritizing Spanish. As Barillas Chón (2022) notes,

Spanish and its accompanied racial logics are reproduced by mestizos in Abya Yala and then in the U.S. because it promises proximity to economic, political, and social power. The coloniality of power established a reinforcing and hierarchical relationship in Abya Yala between race, language, and systems of power. (p. 17)

However, as participants began schooling in the U.S. and integrating generally into mainstream U.S. society in varied states across the country, they began to place English as a main priority as well. Tsitsiki (p1) describes how she rejected learning P’urhépecha despite her parents’ best effort and how she now regrets that decision in excerpt 28.

- 28.** “I remember my parents they tried teaching me P’urhépecha... I'm so embarrassed to say this- um I used to tell them not to talk to me in P’urhépecha, and I really regret it now, ... I feel like that was my biggest mistake when I was little, not wanting to learn the language, just because it didn't sound like Spanish or English, so I went through that phase and where I didn't want anything to do with the language or anything like that.” [p1931]

Elsa (p3) describes a similar language shift in her life, as she moved from Oaxaca to the U.S. at five years old. However, in Elsa’s case, her family members encouraged her to acquire Spanish and English in excerpt 29.

- 29.** “I came to the United States when I was five years old. So I was pretty young, um so I have very little memory of that. But I did come in only speaking Mixteco. And it's a language that is spoken in Oaxaca, and which has been passed down

through generations, so that's really cool. But um, when I came here, I was told by like my *tíos* and like saying that, like, oh, you're in the United States, mostly, you have to learn Spanish and English. So that's when I started kind of gaining the language of Spanish and English and started forgetting about Mixteco. So now, I only like, understand some of it. Um, not completely but I'm able to make um, sentences from it. And, but also can't speak it. But so it kind of sucks because, like, I've lost communication with like my grandparents, because they only speak Mixteco.” [p3152]

Thus, most of the participants not only placed their Indigenous language in a liminal position as highlighted in Barillas Chón (2022), but Spanish was also often delimited as a lower priority language given that all of the participants spent most of their lives growing up in the U.S. Previous scholarship on this language shift has highlighted not only the perceived sociopolitical and economic benefits of acquiring the colonial languages of power, but also as potential “concealment practices” or the “*oculto*” (Barillas Chón, 2019, 2022; Machado-Casas, 2009). The concept of concealment practices is explained by Machado-Casas (2012) as being able to “ignore (*ocultar*) the complexities and localities of class types, ethnic politics, gender and the subjugation of indigenous populations who were forced to mix by colonizers” (Machado-Casas 2009, as cited in Machado-Casas, 2012, p. 6). In other words, there are practices Indigenous people can agentively partake in to conceal themselves within the Latinx diaspora in the U.S. One of these forms of concealment is through the maintenance of Spanish. There were instances the participants would describe where family members would step in if they noticed that the acquisition of English was leading to the complete neglect of Spanish. In excerpt 30, Tsitsiki (p1) describes her mother’s frustration with her children not being able to speak her Indigenous language and then seemingly losing their ability to communicate in Spanish.

- 30.** “yeah so my mom was like, I remember her telling us like she would say like, ya sería el colmo no, no aprendieron P’urhépecha, pero ahora español, like eso sería lo más bajo basically.” [p11726]

Interestingly, Tsitsiki (p1) mentions that she is one of the only people in her family that cannot speak P’urhépecha and even though she married into another family that also speaks P’urhépecha, her family members insist she does not really need to learn the language. On the other end of the spectrum, Helen (p6) explains in excerpts 31 and 32 that the language shift occurred with her maternal grandfather and that at this point, her mother does not speak P’urhépecha and neither does she.

- 31.** “So my mother doesn't speak it. My grandfather does. Um, and, yeah, and I don't. And so I was generally not around it.” [p6726]
- 32.** “Indigenous P’urhépecha, does not speak, P’urhépecha, she speaks Spanish, my grandfather does speak P’urhépecha. So it's kind of- I don't know, I knew that growing up, I probably only know like five words.” [p644]

In the case of Caro (p7), while both of her parents are Zapotec and each have their own variety of their language, her mother’s family encouraged the maintenance of their Zapotec variety while her father’s side of the family did not. Thus, the language shift among her parents was not the same and resulted in her parents mainly speaking Spanish at home. Caro (p7) provides further details in excerpt 33.

- 33.** “So they really can't understand each other if they were to speak their own languages. My dad actually doesn't speak it as much as my mom does. My mom is actually very fluent in her- um, Zapotec still, but my dad says he like, doesn't speak it. And so he, like growing up, he never really spoke it. And so I actually like my mom always grew up like, Oh don't speak a language that someone doesn't understand. So she never really taught Zapotec to my dad or like when we were around” [p7849]

Due to her household mainly using Spanish to communicate, Caro (p7) describes her linguistic skills in Zapotec as mainly receptive in excerpts 34 and 35. She had a similar

situation to Tsitsiki in that she retroactively wishes she had maintained her Indigenous language, and even questions her mother about it, but like Tsitsiki, she was resistant to learning their language.

- 34.** “I did learn Spanish as my first language. And then my grandma, she- my mom and my grandma, they speak Zapoteco and pretty much my whole family does, from my mom's side. And my parents are from Oaxaca. So my dad, he's from a different region as my mom so although his family does speak Zapoteco, or they understand it, he himself didn't really speak it. So growing up, they decided not to like speak it- speak Zapoteco as much. Because, you know, different regions typically have different dialects, almost like they don't really understand they may have some of the same words but it's like a completely different like structure that yeah, it's very hard to communicate. So then that's why they would not really speak it around us growing up.” [p7439]
- 35.** “ I don't speak it, and I kind of understand some words, but not really. And I always tell her, I'm like, I wish she would have like talked to us in it and she said I did, like I tried but like, you guys didn't like it. And I was like, well, I mean, you should have tried harder. [laughs] But, you know, like being kids like, you know, it gets frustrating when you don't understand. So I just- yeah, I always tell her that. I'm like, you should have talked to us, like when we were like babies.“ [p7924]

Like the previous participants, Karina (p8) also relates to being mostly receptive in her Indigenous language in excerpt 36.

- 36.** “I did- do not speak fluent Mixteco. I understand a lot of it. And like if someone's talking, or if two people are having a conversation in Mixteco, I can understand what they're saying and what their conversation is about. But I can't really speak back to them. I know enough to like, get by like go to the bathroom, get a drink of water, have some food, I'll survive. [laughs]” [p8910]

During the first sharing circle, upon reading the quotes about language shift, Mónica (p5) reflects on the shift from Zapoteco to Spanish and then Spanish to English within her own family as well in excerpt 37.

- 37.** “So I think we were teaching each other and so focused on Spanish and English, and that's kind of why we never transitioned into formally learning like Zapoteco.

So I like realized that until afterward, I was like, wow, that's really kind of how I grew up with- in terms of language” [p24001]

She notes that during her time in primary school her parents were so focused on trying to acquire English along with Spanish that unfortunately, Zapoteco took that marginal position that Barillas Chón (2022) describes with his participants. Mónica’s parents were not only trying to learn the new colonial language of the U.S. but were also trying to make sure they could support their daughter with her schooling. Caro (p7) mentions that her parents went through a similar process of trying to develop their English skills once Caro started school as well. Caro says that although her mother is now trilingual, Caro herself is mainly bilingual as she now speaks to her mother in mostly English, as noted in excerpt 38.

- 38.** “She speaks Spanish, English and Zapoteco very fluently, and I actually speak to her now in English. Like, for me, it's a little bit harder to talk to her in Spanish. Because I personally don't really speak that much Spanish anymore. But when I was younger, for sure, that was our first language, was Spanish. And then she wanted to learn more English and you know, growing up also like me learning a little bit more English. She would like practice with me. So we would just like speak to each other. Yeah, in English, mostly. But like when I was younger, it was mostly Spanish.” [p72556]

Starting school in the U.S. for all the participants was a pivotal moment for their language development and prioritization. As most parents pivoted to acquiring English for the sake of their children’s academic success and well-being in school, the specific situations and implications of these language shifts are detailed more under themes four and five. Nonetheless, in her written reflection, Caro (p7) continued to consider how language shift impacted her and family, as well as current revitalization efforts in her community. She writes:

One of the topics I enjoyed was talking about how family impacts language. It's something that I often talk about with my mom because it has truly made a big impact in my life, not knowing Zapoteco. I am not sure if I mentioned it during our meetings but there are many efforts being made in our communities to revitalize the zapotec language, including in our small town. My mom always told me that Zapoteco is mostly a spoken language and there's no true way of writing it, but there have been members of the community who have taken it upon themselves to learn the written language and teach the younger generation to read and write it. I think it's important to also talk about because there has been a decline in Zapoteco speakers within our pueblos and I do believe it comes from the stigma that indigeneity has, which is another topic that we also covered. (Caro, p7)

In sum, while Villa (2002) notes the “double jeopardy” that U.S. Spanish speakers face, it is evident that these participants face a triple jeopardy, at the very least, when it comes to their Indigenous languages. The linguistic subordination of Indigenous language to favor the maintenance of colonial languages for Indigenous Latinx people is well documented in previous scholarship (Rosa & Flores, 2017; Hanks, 2010; Macedo, 2019; Phillipson, 1992; Veronelli, 2015; among others). As Barillas Chón (2022) asserts, “An outcome of learning colonial codes of power is the liminal positioning of Indigenous languages” (p. 18). As such, each participant prioritized the colonial languages necessary to survive in their respective geographical spaces. In addition, as described in previous studies, family members played an important role in the participants’ linguistic development as demonstrated in previous studies (Casanova, 2019; Casanova et al., 2016; Mesinas & Pérez, 2016). Unfortunately, the family dynamic often led to the maintenance of Spanish over their Indigenous languages for each of these participants. Nonetheless, the reasons for prioritizing Spanish or English over their Indigenous languages are complex and can often be for protective purposes (Barillas Chón, 2022; Canizales & O’Connor, 2022; Machado-Casas 2009, 2012; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; among others).

As such, the process of maintaining certain languages over others extend to factors far beyond the individuals and their families themselves.

Language as essential for identity

The role of language in an SHL learner's identity has been investigated in previous scholarship (see Leeman, 2015), but there is less scholarship on people with more than one heritage language. In this study, each participant described the linguistic realities of their homes and communities, and there were instances where people explicitly mentioned that their Indigenous language is an essential part of their identity and Spanish is not. For most participants, their ties to their families and their communities were the most important part of their Indigenous identity. This perception was also highlighted by Sánchez López (2017) in that, "Indigeneity among Indigenous Mexicans is deeply rooted in the relationships with family and their communities of origin rather than their ability to speak, dress, or dance 'like an Indian'" (p. 245). However, many of them mentioned wanting to be able to speak their Indigenous language to better connect to their Indigeneity and communities. This is a commonly reported idea within SHL learners of just Spanish (see Leeman, 2015), thus it is not entirely surprising to find it among these SHL learners as well, though in relation to their Indigenous language.

In excerpt 39, Karina (p8) describes wanting to continue to develop her Mixteco skills to communicate with her family and community in Mexico, and how it is an important for her identity.

39. “Um, so I'm trying to learn as much as I can, every time I go back to Mexico, but so that's kind of one thing that I think is important about my identity is that I grew up listening to three different languages.” [p8127]

One of the participants that was most adamant about saying Spanish was not an essential part of their identity was Mundo (p4), as evidenced in excerpt 40.

40. “Spanish is not the inherent part of an identity of people that are from Latin America. That one I'm very confident in saying, and I think it is not for everyone. I don't think- I mean, maybe for most I don't think it is for me, necessarily. I don't think it is for me. But that's kind of what she was getting at, I suppose.” [p412108]

While Spanish is not an inherent part of his identity, Mundo also strongly believes it necessary to speak Zapotec to fully identify as Zapotec. He explains during the second sharing circle that although his family is Zapotec, his grandfather that has passed away was the last person to speak Zapotec which makes it difficult to feel confident in his Indigenous identity. This complex relationship Mundo (p4) has between his Indigenous language and identity is most evident in excerpts 41 and 42.

41. “we are Zapotec and we know we're Zapotec but since we don't speak the language, since my grandpa was the last one to speak the language and he passed away, it's kind of hard to like, say that, with confidence, at least that's how I see it. Because I think the language is such an important part in where we're, where we're from in Oaxaca.” [p41137]
42. “I think for me, maybe it's more so me like, okay, we're Zapotec. So why don't we speak the- Like, why don't we speak Zapotec? Like, we still live in the exact same pueblo. Why- why don't we speak the language? And so it's- I think it's, I don't know, I, I think I struggle with- because I feel like, at least, like, if I spoke Zapotec, like that would be like, undeniable, I am Zapotec, like, there is no room for questioning whether I live here, whether I live- wherever I were to live, or however far I were to be away from our pueblo” [p41552]

It is also important to note that in excerpt 40, Mundo (p4) explains that his living away from his *pueblo* is also a source of contention in how he defends his indigeneity.

Previous scholarship has clarified how place is an integral part of Indigenous peoples' identities (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). At the same time, Mundo recognizes that knowing his Indigenous language is not necessarily the only way he can connect to his Indigeneity, but that it is one of the most important factors in his view, as shown in excerpt 43.

43. "I see language as like this is- like, this would tie me the closest to that part of my culture, which is not necessarily the case, and I know that like, that's not all there is to it. Of course, there's also like, you know, you know, the, you know, the traditions that don't require language, or just the general being part and working within the community. But I'm just personally like, the way I think I see it, it's like language is like, such an important factor." [p41627]

Mónica (p5) expresses her own frustration with not being able to speak her parents' variety of Zapoteco, especially since they are from the same *pueblo*, speak it at home, and she would regularly visit her Zapotec pueblo growing up.

44. "both my parents are from the same pueblo, so even the- like Zapoteco varies from like, pueblo to pueblo, like the accent or like the dialect, but I think, both my parents being from the same one, you would assume that I would pick it up because it would be the same between them, and they speak it and they've spoken it like my whole child- like, since I was growing up. But they never took the time to sit and say you have to learn it. And so I never did. But I kind of picked it up just by listening to them, so I can understand it very fluently. But then when I go and I go to the pueblo, like once a year, like I want to speak it so bad, to connect to the people that are there, and I can't." [p51716]

After reading Tsitsiki's (p1) quote about regretting not learning her own Indigenous language (see excerpt 28 above), Mónica also relays her regrets about not fully valuing her Indigenous language. Like Mundo, Mónica views speaking Zapoteco as one of the strongest connections within her Zapotec community, as described in excerpt 45.

45. "that's like a regret that I have too like from the first quote is like- I- like my biggest mistake when I was little was like not wanting to learn the language. Like to me it was just always just there and not valued or put- put importance on and I

don't see the value of it until now. Because it is like somehow the strongest connection with the people that still live there, like all our family or all our, you know, fellow people from the community *pues*,” [p51829]

Based on these excerpts, it becomes clear that these participants are fully aware of the importance of language for identity, though the importance it holds seemed to vary among the participants. After finishing the sharing circles, most of the participants chose to focus at least one part of their written reflection on the theme of language and identity. In Mundo's (p4) reflection, he continues to reiterate the crucial connection between language and identity in his view. He explains:

The second thought that has stayed with me is how essential knowing one's own language is for identity. I personally value language as one of the most important signifiers of identity, and it was nice to hear this opinion was shared by others. In my case, I know that as I learn more Zapotec, it will inherently tie me closer to my hometown and the communities there. I rarely get to talk about this dilemma with other Zapotecs in the diaspora, so it was also really nice sharing this sentiment with someone else, even if we share very different migration stories.” (Mundo, p4)

Given that Mundo (p4) and Mónica (p5) were in the same sharing circle, it is understandable that she also reflected on their discussion on language and identity. In her written reflection she said:

I believe language is also a big factor I noticed. Even though we don't associate language with being a requirement on identifying as indigenous, I realized that some of us do tie it hand in hand in order to better communicate with our family and community. (Mónica, p5)

Interestingly, Mundo (p4) and Mónica (p5) both acknowledged that this discussion was particularly revelatory during their participation in this study, though they seemed to be left with different impressions. While Mundo (p4) believed that people agreed language is essential for a fully Indigenous identity, Mónica (p5) did not see it as a requirement but

recognized that people in her sharing circle did. On the other hand, Elsa (p3) was unable to attend a sharing circle but was impacted by this theme in particular. In her written reflection, she wrote:

As I was reading my response to this theme, I realized that one of the things I have always challenged myself with is my identity. I was born in Oaxaca, Mexico where there is a high percentage of indigenous communities. I know the people in my small community are indigenous because of their language, foods, cultures and traditions. But I have a hard time taking on this identity because I do not feel deserving of it. Although I could identify as indigenous because I was born in an indigneous family, I sometimes feel like I shouldn't since I've lost touch with the language. As I navigate through this journey of finding my identity and learning more about myself, I also continue to dig deeper into my families' stories. (Elsa, p3)

Similar to Elsa (p3), Karina (p8) reflects on her own difficulties with bridging the gap between her Indigeneity and her family's Indigenous language. She titled her section on this topic as "embarrassment/fear" and noted the following in her reflection:

After having this conversation I realized that my embarrassment came from fear. Fear of not knowing or caring about my indigenous roots/background as much as I should've when I was younger. I feared being made fun of because I wasn't good enough or indigenous enough like my family members who grew up speaking Mixteco and spent most of their life in Oaxaca. (Karina, p8)

All the excerpts above from the written reflections explain each of their own negotiations between their language and identities, especially focusing on their competency in their Indigenous languages. Thus far, the perspectives of the SHL students have been presented in this section. Meanwhile, Gabriela (p2), discusses the questions of language and identity for Spanish and Latinx people as an instructor of Spanish. She mentions the following in her written reflection:

I want to focus my reflection on the topic of language and identity. As a Spanish heritage language (SHL) instructor, I always tell my students that speaking Spanish is not a "requirement" to be able to identify yourself as

Latinx/Hispanic/etc. I also make it a point to emphasize that being a heritage learner of Spanish does not mean that you are (or should identify as) Latinx/Hispanic/etc. In the beginning of each semester, I like to discuss the origin of the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” and how they homogenize our cultural diversity, often to the benefit of U.S. hegemonic ideologies. I have found that this topic is very interesting to students and helps set the stage for more critical discussions later. I strongly feel that in SHL classrooms, it is vitally important that we study and discuss the relationships between language, identity (identity terms), notions of authenticity, and even gatekeeping (in and out of our communities). We need to reflect on the fact that sometimes the learning of a heritage language is not a simple matter of individual choice as it is inextricably linked to an array of incredibly complex social, cultural, and political issues. (Gabriela, p2)

In conclusion, each participants’ relationship to their Indigenous language and how they negotiated it as a part of their identities were based upon their own experiences and knowledge.

4.3.1 Theme three: Impacts of anti-Indigenous discrimination among Latinx people

Previous scholarship on Indigenous Mexicans has described the prevalence of anti-Indigenous discrimination from fellow Mexican/Latinx people (Barillas Chón, 2010; González, 2019; Kovats Sánchez, 2020; Sánchez, 2018; Stephen, 2007; among others).

Many of the student participants in this study also experienced moments where they faced anti-Indigenous discrimination from non-Indigenous Latinx peers, but also at times from their own families. In excerpt 46, Tsitsiki (p1) mentions that although she has always been aware of and proud of claiming her Indigeneity, that she did start experiencing anti-Indigenous discrimination at a young age from fellow Latinx people, usually other Mexicans.

- 46.** “I always.. brought up that I was Indigenous I never- *nunca lo negué, so, siempre, siempre, este decía eso y cuando decía eso, y cuando decía eso, escuchaba a otras personas*, you know that they looked down upon me, *decían: ¡O! ¡Eres una india!* So that’s- I feel like that’s where it came from like a lot of my f- friends,

you know, *así cuando fui a la escuela y es cuando ya empecé*, well, ¡no! ... but yeah I feel like that's where it comes from.” [p11057]

She shares that they would call her the pejorative term “*india*”, well documented as a denigrative insult towards Indigenous people from Latin America (Urrieta & Calderón, 2019). Unfortunately, Tsitsiki (p1) shares how this impacted her growing up given that her fellow non-Indigenous Latinx peers treated her as less than them due to her Indigeneity. She relays how she felt and how there was even a boy growing up that was advised not to be around her given her Indigenous background in excerpt 47.

47. “It was really difficult for me to have friends within the same community just because once I told them like, Oh, I have Indigenous roots I, you know, we speak I would tell them I speak Tarasco my family like, and I would take them around my family, they were like, oh, they talk weird or one time this boy, he said that basically his mom didn't want him like to hang around with me or be- *decía “no seas novia de esa, porque esa es una india”*, like, yeah so it was a lot of discrimination within like my own people I guess, you can say.” [p16939]

Sadly, this situation of being mistreated by fellow Mexicans, the community they are ostensibly a part of and grouped with in the U.S., was not uncommon for these participants. Elsa (p3) details in excerpts 48 and 49 how she was bullied by a Mexican boy for being Oaxacan and having features typically associated with being Oaxacan such as her height.

48. “I definitely remember being made fun of and be getting bullied, because I was a Oaxacan, and you know, dark skinned and like, they would s- not, like short, but like *chaparra*, I don't know [laughs] And I feel like I was also like, well, Oaxacans are known for that, you know, and, or like when people think of Oaxacan, they think of those features.” [p31404]
49. “the crazy part is that it was a boy who was Mexican, or um you know, Hispanic, Latino, like, it was the only difference was that like, we were from different parts of Mexico, but like, you know, I guess the difference is that I'm Indigenous and he wasn't” [p31434]

As remarked by Fox (2006), among Mexicans, “height became a widespread basis for contemptuous treatment, as summed up in the widespread derogatory diminutive ‘*oaxaquito*’. This specific term, by homogenizing Oaxaca’s ethnic differences, also racializes.” (p. 47). The association of certain features with Oaxaca, the state with the largest population of Indigenous inhabitants in Mexico, has served as a source of bullying for each of the Oaxacan participants in this study that lived among other Mexicans growing up.

Caro (p7) recognizes this a type of bullying she experienced growing up among Mexicans in Los Angeles in excerpt 50.

- 50.** “I think it wasn't really necessarily talked about. It was just the way that people like treated us, I guess, because I remember still, like I wouldn't call it- okay, maybe now I will kind of call it bullying but like I wouldn't- I don't remember taking it as personally, but people always used to call me like dark or like that I had like really hairy arms and that I was just like, you know, um, they wouldn't call me names, but like, they would always just make fun of like how dark I was. So I always knew that, like there was that stigma across as well with like, my brother and my cousins, because they're also really like, brown. So we just like, we- like for us, there's like no hiding, that we're like, from Oaxaca.” [p73752]

Like Elsa, Caro (p7) was targeted for her physical features that are phenotypically distinguishable from other Mexicans. In excerpt 51, Mónica (p5) shares how the very same Indigenous style she was bullied for growing up is now being celebrated by the same people that used to bully her.

- 51.** “I used to have, like, my hair is like pretty long now because it grew from the pandemic. But when I grew up, like my mom always used to do my hair, like in *trenzas* and stuff. And I used to get made fun of because sometimes I would wear like um, I would have my *trenzas*, and I wear my- wear my like, my *blusas típicas* that I would get sent from my *tías* in Oaxaca. And I would get called like *la India María*, which we know is like, something so derogatory to say to someone, it's meant to be a derogatory term. And so, like, I know, for a fact, those are the same

people that grew up now and they're so proud of like, their Mexican heritage, and wear the same *blusas* and don't know where like they originate from.” [p512048]

While Tsitsiki (p1) explained that the bullying she faced was due to her family speaking an Indigenous language, Elsa (p3), Caro (p7), and Mónica (p5) share some of the various aspects to their Indigenous Oaxacan identity that would be attacked such as their phenotypic characteristics, their hairstyles, and their clothing (Barillas Chón, 2010; Cruz-Manjarrez, 2013; Fox, 2006; González, 2019; Sánchez, 2018; Stephen, 2007). However, just because Tsitsiki (p1) solely shared moments she faced linguistic discrimination during these conversations, does not mean she did not also face discrimination for features other than language itself.

Nonetheless, Mónica (p5) graciously considers the perpetrators of these anti-Indigenous sentiments and shares some reflections on these moments during her sharing circle, as shown in excerpt 52.

52. “I don't necessarily, like, blame the people because it's kind of like, like I said, my experience was very in a- in the indigenous bubble growing up. And, you know, for people, it was quite the opposite, right, like the opposite spectrum that we've been saying that what they knew wasn't that and maybe later on in life, they come to learn to it and appreciate it and things like that.” [p53117]

Although Mundo (p4) also comes from an Indigenous community in Oaxaca but did not report facing anti-Indigenous discrimination, it is also important to note that Mundo grew up in majority white communities and went to majority white schools in the Midwest. Thus, the sheer lack of Latinx people, and the tendency to homogenize Latinxs in general, likely kept him from facing this type of bullying. Interestingly, the lack of diversity in Mundo's community and schools in the U.S. may have shielded him from facing intra-Mexican discrimination. In fact, the phenomenon of intra-Mexican anti-

Indigeneity, especially towards people from Oaxaca, is well known to the point that Fox (2006) asserts, “The now substantial literature on Oaxacan migrants shows that, for indigenous Mexicans, ‘racialization begins at home’ – that is, in Mexico and among other Mexicans in the US.” (p. 53).

Unfortunately, these types of comments for some did not stop upon reaching adulthood. During her sharing circle, Karina (p8) describes a recent interaction with a non-Indigenous Mexican co-worker in excerpt 53 that was talking about recently arrived Indigenous immigrants from Guatemala.

- 53.** “For me, it felt like it wasn't until I started talking more about my indigenous roots and background, that people would start making those kinds of comments like, even this actually happened not too long ago at work. We have a lot of clients at work that are from Guatemala and they're Indigenous too. And one of my- one of my coworkers was like, oh, like *son de esos como los Oaxaquitos*. And I was like uh, [nervous laugh] like, what did you just say? Like I didn't even know how to take that comment or what to really see back because I was so shocked like she knew I was- my family's from Oaxaca and like I'm Oaxacan too so it's like, it really took me back.” [p83957]

As evidenced in excerpt 53, despite knowing that Karina is from Oaxaca and has been vocal about her own Indigeneity, her co-worker still utilized a disparaging term towards Oaxacans while speaking with Karina about a separate group of Indigenous people.

When asked about her reaction to this blatant anti-Indigenous comment by her co-worker, Karina (p8) said,

- 54.** “I was so taken aback by that comment. I don't even remember what I responded to her. But- or I think I might have said like, Wait, what did you say? And I think she understood that, like I was offended, and she tried changing it. But yeah, it was just so shocking to me that she would even say that.” [p84017]

One of the most unfortunate points to this interaction with her Mexican coworker is that not only was this comment made to Karina and they continue to work together, but the

workplace itself is meant to be a safe space where recently arrived Indigenous people can get access to medical care. In other words, Karina and this coworker are supposed to be point people that serve these doubly minoritized people so that they can connect with interpreters of their languages which are particularly difficult to find.

As such, the workers are meant to provide a safe space for these recently arrived Indigenous immigrants from Guatemala, rather than being yet another anti-Indigenous Mexican that perpetuates these transnational codes of power. In her written reflection, Karina (p8) organized her thoughts along the themes already presented. In her section titled discrimination, Karina writes:

I had never talked too much about my indigenous background/roots growing up because in school, it wasn't ever something we as students cared to talk about. Once I started having more conversations about my indigneous background (during and post college) I started hearing more comments about Oaxacans that we we're "chaparritos, chatos, y morenos" or that "se nota los que son de Oaxaca y los que son indigenos".

Like Helen and Mundo, Karina grew up in a majority white context in which she mainly kept her racial/ethnic identity to herself. Nonetheless, as Karina (p8) learned more about her identity and became more vocal about it after starting higher education, she faced increasingly denigrative comments about her Oaxacan background, as evidenced by her written reflection.

Unfortunately, although college helped her create a stronger Indigenous identity as was found in Kovats Sánchez (2020), it also opened the door to more discrimination. This seemingly positive openness which often results in negative consequences is what Machado-Casas (2009) and Barillas Chón (2022) explain can be why Indigenous people choose to engage in concealment practices. As such, sometimes Indigenous people in the

participants' own schools or communities would attempt to move away from their Indigenous identities. There were instances that Caro (7) remembers when people around her would align more the parts of their identity that were not Oaxacan. She describes how her own family was always proud to be Oaxacan while she had peers that tried to escape the ostensible stigma of being Indigenous in excerpts 55 and 56 below.

55. “Like and I still remember like, some people would say they were like half from Oaxaca. So then be like, oh, but I'm not really like I'm not fully from Oaxaca. And so they kind of were like, pushing that side away. So I still remember there still being like, a lot of stigma around being like from Oaxaca, specifically. Because I think at that time, still, it was kind of like, oh, like, oh, you're like a, like an Indian or whatever. Like *indio*, basically.” [p73658]
56. “Like we were straight up- and we've always been like super, like vocal about it as well. So people would always just like, you know, kind of just be like, Okay, well, I'm half from Oaxaca, but like, my- my family's like from this other white, like state. I don't know. But I always felt like there was that like, oh, like a shame almost like to be from Oaxaca or to be from like an Indigenous community. But not with like, my family. Like, my- I think my mom has always like told us, like growing up she always said like, Oh yeah, yes, we're like, super indigenous. And yes, like, we should be proud of it. Because, you know, we're, you know, we're a community. There's nothing to be ashamed of. So and she always like, she's very, like empowering.” [p73833]

During the sharing circle, Caro (p7) expanded more on these situations of her peers seemingly denying their own Indigeneity, and even bullying Caro for hers, yet later reclaimed their Indigenous identity. She explains that as Oaxaca became more touristy and the idea of Indigeneity became trendier in her view, it made it possible for some people to feel comfortable enough to claim their Oaxacan roots.

57. “I do remember in high school, there was a l- like, now thinking about it, there was a lot of people that were like, halfway Oaxacan. And they never- like I never knew until like, later on in life, like, you know, of course, like, we would still follow each other on Instagram, Facebook, whatever. And I always thought it was so funny, because all of a sudden, people try to- like the same people that would bully and try to like, push aside that Oaxacan part of themselves, would be the

ones that like, try to be like, Yes, I'm from Oaxaca now. Because I feel like, it became very trendy. [laughs] To like, you know, just Oaxaca in general just became very, like, touristy and just people try to like, you know, I guess all of a sudden- which is great, like, of course, like, I'm happy that they're able to reconnect with their, you know, their identity, but at the same time, it was- it's just interesting to see how it was the same people that would try to push that aside. The bullies, I would say, [laughs] are the ones that are also like the ones hopping on the trends, just when it's like, you know, convenient in a way. But I don't know, it's kind of like my opinion, only because I felt like I've always tried to, like, be part of the community. And I've always been proud of it. But yeah, I've always been on the side of being bullied. [laugh]" [p74205]

This discussion on Indigeneity being more widely accepted was noted by Alberto (2017) in her *testimonio* on “coming out as Indian”. Alberto (2017) explains “Oaxacans, in particular, have gained national visibility as both as a significant Indigenous population in California and as proof of the heterogeneity of Latina/o populations” (p. 252). Thus, over the past two decades, many of the participants have lived experiences where their Indigeneity went from being viewed negatively to being viewed positively.

Despite Caro (p7) having to face these challenges of watching how her own bullies change their tune, Caro clarifies that there is real value in reclaiming an identity if it is for the sake of reconnecting with the culture and not as a fad. She clarifies this in excerpt 58 below.

58. “Yeah, but I definitely think there's a difference between like just trying to claim something for like, as a fashion fad, or anything like that, as opposed to actually really trying to reconnect and trying to, you know, understand the culture. And I definitely- I don't know, like, just as the personality that they were like, back in the day, it's really hard to kind of see or believe that they're actually trying to reconnect, as opposed to, you know, actually just following the trend, but I mean, of course, people change. So who knows?” [p74331]

Perhaps the most devastating instances of anti-Indigenous sentiment relayed in these conversations came from the participants' own family members trying to distance

themselves from their Indigeneity. Interestingly, both instructors, Gabriela (p2) and Helen (p6), were the sole participants that had encountered these issues in their families. Both of their families actively discouraged them from identifying as Indigenous.

Gabriela (p2) mentioned at various points in her *testimonio* and in the sharing circle that her family has attempted to claim that their last name which she says is “extremely Indigenous” is Greek to take on a European identity rather than an Indigenous Mexican one. She recounts their claims in excerpts 59 and 60 below.

59. “my last name cus like “oh that's so exotic” I'm like “no, no”. And they're like “Oh, is that Greek”? Is that and I've had family members pretend their last name is Greek, which is horrifying my last name, because I don't want to say- they don't want to admit right?” [p29957]
60. “my dad's side and his sisters like that generation like them specifically, who kept us away from the Yaqui culture. But I think it's interesting how not only did they want to distance- distance themselves from being Indigenous, but also from being Mexican. Like, why would- why in the world would you say that it's Greek? Like look at where we're at- not even Mexican. Like, they just wanted to get away from everything, I guess. Just, you know, Oh we're gonna pretend we're European or something weird.” [p23345]

In the second sharing circle, which did not include Gabriela (p2), Helen (p6) read and listened to the experiences of anti-Indigenous comments the others in the group had experienced from non-family members. She noted that her experience was different from that of the people in the second sharing circle, Caro (p7) and Karina (p8), who were both Oaxacans with supportive families that were proud to be Oaxacan. However, her experiences were similar to Gabriela’s (p2) in that her own family discouraged her from identifying as Indigenous, as evidenced in excerpts 61 and 62 below.

61. “But when I say the opposite- my mother who does dress in traditional clothing to like formal events and stuff right? P’urhépecha stuff and like talks about it gets really mad when I identify as Indigenous and she says you think you are but

you're white. [laughs] And her sister, my aunt, gets really mad when I try to talk to her about it.” [p64506]

62. “I didn't get it from school or from other people, but from my own family, that we should not try to hold on to that in some ways. Or at least I shouldn't.”

As evidenced in this section, many of these Indigenous Mexican participants continue to face anti-Indigenous discrimination, even though most of them were born in the U.S. and the discrimination often comes from fellow Mexicans.

Unfortunately, this intra-Mexican discrimination towards Indigenous people is not at all new or unusual. As Van Dijk (2005) details:

Racism directed against the indigenous peoples of Mexico has been a fact of their everyday lives since the conquista by Hernán Cortés nearly 500 years ago. Despite the numerous studies of indigenous peoples, however, systematic studies of racism remain rare, also because, here as elsewhere, racism is often denied or confounded with classism, or associated only with racism against black people. (p. 99)

In sum, the racism and discrimination these Indigenous participants face are in fact long standing transnational codes of power that have been institutionalized and socialized for centuries (Barillas Chón, 2022; Canizales & O'Connor, 2022; Delpit, 2006; Flores & Rosa, 2017; Kovats Sánchez, 2022; among others). Nonetheless, the prevalence of anti-Indigenous discrimination is not normally one of the topics discussed in SHL classrooms, as will be highlighted in themes seven and eight below.

4.4.1 Theme four: Maneuvering language and identity in K-12 education

While the main goal of this study was to focus on higher education, there were important experiences in the participants' lives during their kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) education that had to do with language and identity. The experiences these

participants faced certainly impacted their identity development and often these moments were tied to language and race. In addition, scholars that focus on Indigeneity and education have noted that schools have the capacity to function as sites that promote settler colonial interests (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Urrieta et al., 2019). As Urrieta et al. (2019) write:

Latinx im/migrant schooling experiences are thus enmeshed within multiple colonial formations, especially since schools as state institutions have been used to assimilate, Americanize, and implement cultural genocide (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Within these colonial entanglements, CLI encourages us to recognize that Latinx im/migrants are also intersectional, multiracial, multivocal, and multilingual, and that this diversity of experience cannot be collapsed into a generalized approach or pedagogy for working with Latinx im/migrant children and youth in schools. (p. 4)

Based on these points, it felt necessary to ask the participants to detail what their schooling experiences were like prior to going into higher education.

While the participants each grew up in various parts of the United States, they would either tend to live in a highly racially and linguistically diverse part of the country, or in parts of the country where the white population was the majority (by 90% or higher as reported by the participants). Therefore, while Mundo (p4), Helen (p6), and Karina (p8) spent most of their childhood and education in majority white spaces, the rest of the participants were normally around mostly other Latinx people. For example, Helen (p6),

one of the instructors, describes the demographics of the types of schools where she received most of her education in the Midwest in excerpt 63.

- 63.** “in the same school in the US, Midwest school, predominantly white school. And when I say predominately white, we were the only Latinos in the school, my siblings and I. And then in high school with 2000 students, there were- it was the same suburb, there were five Latino students. I was one, my sister and brother were two, and there were other two kids.” [p61143]

This description is quite similar to what Mundo (p4) describes growing up in the Midwest and to what Karina (p8) describes growing up mostly in a rural part of Oregon.

Meanwhile, the rest of the participants like Mónica (p5) and Caro (p6) grew up in Los Angeles or in other diverse areas where it was unusual to have white student peers.

Caro (p7) describes how growing up she recalls only had Latinx, Black, and Asian students at her schools in excerpt 64.

- 64.** “from what I remember, there was a couple of Black people, but for the most part, it's predominantly like, Latinx people. Yeah, for sure. I want to say also, there was like a few Asian, like, very, like maybe one or two Asian kids. But for the most part, it was all Latinos, even the teachers. The teachers, I think there was a few more Black teachers from what I remember, cus I think I had a couple Black teachers, and then maybe a couple white teachers as well. But for sure, no white people. I don't remember no- not one white person at my school.” [p72743]

It is not surprising then, that the participants that had other Spanish speakers around them felt they had more opportunities to practice and maintain at least their Spanish upon entering an English dominant educational system. However, being in a majority Latinx state did not necessarily work in the favor of the participants that grew up in California and Arizona. Both Mónica (p5) and Gabriela (p5) recall having to switch from bilingual education to English only programs during their schooling. Mónica (p5) shares her experience in California in excerpt 65.

- 65.** “I forgot what bill they passed that eliminated bilingual teaching in school. But when I was little, like we- it was just like that for everybody across the board. Like we had Spanish and English teaching.” [p54607]

The bill Mónica referenced was Proposition 227 which banned bilingual education in California since 1998 but was finally repealed in 2016 (see Martínez et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, Gabriela (p2), one of the instructors, shares her own experiences in Arizona with Proposition 203 in excerpt 66.

- 66.** “I was born in the early 90s, so all of my elementary school so Prop 203 hadn't passed yet so my schooling was bilingual, all- ... fourth grade in 2010 when Prop 203 passed and well banned bilingual education so then it transitioned from bilingual to English only I think when I entered fifth grade... I remember that change, I remember, you know, just school being completely in English and I almost failed fifth grade or something, because you know my academic English wasn't good enough and all these weird things. So most- so I did- I did get a taste of the last bilingual Ed in Arizona. [p21920]

As evidenced in Gabriela's situation in excerpt 66, the anti-bilingual education law in Arizona had serious consequences for her academic performance. Unlike California, Arizona has not yet repealed their anti-bilingual education law and in fact remains the only state in the country that has retained their proposition to outlaw bilingual education, despite various efforts being made to repeal it (see Cammarota & Aguilera, 2012; Cashman, 2006). These linguistic policies clearly had ramifications for how the participants were able to maintain any language other than English to be considered academically competent. Thus, the language policies of Arizona and California were impactful for at least one student and one instructor in this study.

Meanwhile, the other instructor Helen (p6), faced institutional challenges in attempting to receive a bilingual education. She describes how her father attempted to keep her in a lawful bilingual program during the short time they lived in Texas to

continue to develop her Spanish, and how ultimately, they were unsuccessful due to testing.

- 67.** “I did kindergarten in Texas, which that was interesting too. And I didn't think about it until I started teaching heritage language. I went to a kindergarten that had three kindergarten classes, English speaking kindergarten class, Spanish speaking, kindergarten class, and a bilingual one, and I was put in the English only one. Um, which I remember them giving me like a test to see if I was bilingual. Because my dad kept insisting I was, and they're like, No, she's not.” [p61002]

In other words, even when there was this bilingual program available, the assessment process of being considered bilingual stood in the way of Helen being admitted into a program that would have helped her maintain her Spanish. While there may be several reasons why the bilingual program would not admit her, the reality is that the consequences of this bureaucratic process ultimately led to her having low linguistic self-esteem in Spanish for most of her life. These educational hurdles and the repercussions of their experiences in K-12 schooling are detailed more fully in the following section.

Linguistic self-esteem

Almost every participant reported having low linguistic self-esteem in Spanish at some point in their lives, in addition to their low linguistic self-esteem in their Indigenous language. The prevalence of low linguistic self-esteem has unfortunately been commonly reported among SHL learners (Felix, 2009; Prada et al., 2020; Sánchez Muñoz, 2016), and also appears to be a source of contention for Indigenous heritage language speakers (Barillas Chón, 2010; Canizales & O'Connor, 2022; González, 2019; Stephen, 2007). However, it is important to point out that Mundo (p4) was the only participant who did

not report having a lack of confidence in Spanish, as shown in excerpt 68 below when explaining why he chose to take French instead of Spanish in high school.

- 68.** “So we were supposed to, we had to take one like language for the four years. And so the one that I chose was French. I didn't want to take Spanish because I felt pretty confident in my Spanish. I- yeah, I felt pretty confident. I figured this would be a waste of time.” [p42527]

There are some key elements about Mundo's life to consider to better understand why he was the only participant who held high linguistic confidence in Spanish. Mundo was born in Mexico, and had parents with college degrees acquired in Mexico, and his mother was even a substitute Spanish teacher at his high school for some time. These aspects of Mundo's life in conjunction with the fact that his parents would not correct his Spanish while he was growing up is likely what led him to understandably be less likely to have low linguistic self-esteem in comparison to the rest of the participants.

However, there were other participants that also relayed moments of high linguistic self-esteem, or at least enough confidence in their Spanish to not feel they needed to take Spanish classes in high school. Elsa (p3) recounted similar sentiments to Mundo and mentioned that the teacher of the class was also one of the reasons that she chose to take Spanish instead of French.

- 69.** “I feel like because I knew Spanish. So I found it like kind of pointless to take like, not in a bad way. But like, I just felt like, cus I would hear from other students like about the Spanish professors or teachers. And like, the homework that they have, and it was like really, like, simple and easy for me. So I felt like I wasn't gonna gain anything, anything from it. So I decided to take French.” [p32114]

Interestingly, during her individual *testimonio*, despite reporting seemingly high linguistic self-esteem in Spanish in this excerpt, after having taken Spanish classes in

college, she still said she felt she could not be the person to judge who has “good” or “bad” Spanish. When asked why she felt she could not be the judge, Elsa (p3) said,

- 70.** “Because, well, I feel like- [laughs] I wasn't expecting that response. [laughs] But I still have a lot to learn. So I feel like I'm not fully comprehensive in my own language.” [p34927]

Based on these excerpts, Elsa (p3) seemingly had varying of degrees of linguistic confidence in Spanish, depending on who she was talking about.

Mónica (p5) also displayed a bit of a mix and happened to take French instead of Spanish in high school as well. Mónica did clarify that this decision had mainly to do with the Spanish teacher (see more on this in excerpt 83 under theme five below). Furthermore, unlike any of the other participants, Caro (p5) decided to take the AP exam, despite having low linguistic self-esteem in Spanish most of her life and ended up getting a score of five. Yet, she has not kept up with her Spanish since taking it in school and now feels uncomfortable using it. Caro explains that although she did well on the AP exam and took Spanish in college, she still does not feel fully comfortable speaking Spanish in excerpt 71.

- 71.** “just being comfortable. Because right now I just feel like it's like, I have like an accent almost. So I just want to get back to the space where like, I feel comfortable, at least to just have a conversation with someone in Spanish. Of course, I will if I have to. But it's just a very uncomfortable like, you know, I feel very like weird about it, even though I shouldn't because again, it was my first language.” [p7647]

Helen (p6), one of the instructors, also relays having low linguistic self-esteem during most of her time in K-12 due to her inability to test into the bilingual education program in kindergarten and continuously receiving feedback from educators that she

was not proficient in Spanish. She highlights how she bought into these ideas about her Spanish during most of her education in excerpt 72.

72. “I mean, I believed them that I wasn't bilingual, right? I believed that my Spanish wasn't good. I believed that it was bad, right?” [p62123]

In the same vein, Gabriela (p2), the other instructor in this study, grew up in a Mexican dominant community in Arizona and recalled feeling like her Spanish was not “good” due to the comments she received from her family and teachers growing up. She explains how she felt in her high school Spanish class in excerpt 73 and how this began to change in college.

73. “such a big focus on the so-called standard right? Like the academic language. Like we were constantly being corrected on how we spoke like don't say “haiga” the typical, you know, just the typical you have to speak correctly attitude... just so normal because that's what I heard at home, too. So it's like, Oh okay, so this is normal like don't codeswitch don't make sure you use monolingual Spanish ... but I thought it was normal I thought yeah that's the way it is my Spanish is informal it's not very good and it wasn't really until college, where I thought wait, what is this? like when I started taking sociolinguistics classes and other things.” [p2219]

Although Gabriela grew up and went to school in a context where Mexicans were the majority, she recalls her Spanish classes in high school still focusing on Spanish from Spain and Spain-centered content.

74. “Peninsular centered. I mean, we were all Mexican of course, but we- we only read like Spanish novels from like I don't know, the 1800s Spanish novels and it was all about literature and analyzing the novels. We didn't talk about you know our culture, nothing, it was all about what do these books say about? You know that was- that was basically what it was. [p22005]

Unfortunately, Gabriela's experiences during her K-12 years demonstrated that her educators, and her own family members, held deficit-based perspectives and ideologies towards her Spanish and the Spanish of her Mexican American peers. For example, the

fronteriza Mexican variety of Spanish that Gabriela used was viewed negatively by her teachers, sometimes Mexicans themselves, but Spaniard varieties and cultures were centered within the Spanish courses.

Given that Gabriela (p2) continues to work with pre-service teachers at her university and has reason to believe that this focus on Spain, despite being in a Mexican majority context, has not changed since her own time taking Spanish in high school. These negative ideologies towards U.S. and Mexican Spanish are well documented in SHL research (see Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Román et al., 2019), though it was still disheartening to hear that it occurred in a Mexican dominant context and were often perpetuated by fellow Mexicans. For both the instructors Gabriela and Helen, it was not until they started college and took linguistics courses that they both said they realized that their own varieties of Spanish were valid. Even though Helen (p6) grew up in a white dominant context, she was still accustomed to hearing denigrative comments about her Spanish and had low linguistic self-confidence in Spanish for most of her life. In excerpt 75 below, Helen (p6) explains that it was not until graduate school that she made this realization.

75. “Also, it wasn't until grad school that I understood that my Spanish was valid. And it was through linguistics. And so I use that now to let people feel valid in their language. So I share my story when I teach. And I use linguistics as a way like, here's the scientific method that shows that you're valid, and you never actually needed it, this, but now you have it. And that we have different ways of knowing, that are also valid.” [p6218]

In their written-reflections, Elsa (p3) and Karina (p8) commented further on this theme of linguistic self-esteem. For Elsa (p3), she mentions how she perceives her parents' own proficiency in Spanish as directly impacting her own. She also reiterates

how starting college made her aware of content and vocabulary she was not familiar with previously. She notes in her written reflection,

Adding on to some of the quotes that were voiced by me, I grew up learning Spanish mainly from my parents' knowledge of it but they were never taught how to formally talk to others in a more professional setting. This is something that I continue to struggle with when speaking Spanish but I was not aware of this challenge until I got to college. I realized that I knew nothing about my language, the history of latin americans, or even knew about other cultures that were similar to mine. I remember one day, I got on the phone with one of my aunts from Mexico and I had used a word I learned from my Spanish professor in the sentence I said and she did not understand what I was talking about. So I came to understand that there are situations where I will not be able to include the new things I've learned but this brings on a challenge where I need to unlearn, learn, understand, and teach. (Elsa, p3)

As Elsa mentions in her written reflection, although she went ahead with taking a Spanish course in college to expand her linguistic repertoire, what she had learned in her class in fact impeded her ability to communicate with her aunt in Mexico. This is directly contradictory to the idea that has been promoted by language teachers that the content in the classroom should be communicative and help them out in the "real world" with monolingual speakers of the target/heritage language (Cook, 1983; Spada, 2017) and vocabulary words should be high frequency words (Nation, 2022; Schmitt, 2019). This is particularly troublesome given that for SHL learners many times one of their main goals is to communicate more effectively with their own family members (see Beaudrie et al., 2014). In Elsa's case, the Spanish she was learning was unintelligible for her Spanish-speaking aunt living in a Spanish dominant country. While many of the participants struggled with at times having low linguistic self-esteem and then high linguistic self-esteem, like Mundo, Karina (p8) also mainly had high linguistic self-esteem. In her

written reflection, she reflects on her own linguistic self-esteem after considering the quotes in the sharing circle. She writes,

Growing up I was told that my Spanish was really good. I would receive comments from latinx/hispanic people who were not indigenous and would say "mija hablas muy bien espanol". Now that I am older, I question what they meant by that or what their intention behind their comment was. (Karina, p8)

In sum, each participant dealt with varying degrees of linguistic confidence, oftentimes dependent on what they were told about their Spanish from educators or family members.

Lack of representation in course content

Another factor that impacted their identities during their K-12 education was the content of their courses. As noted earlier, many participants chose not to take Spanish courses prior to college but were able to notice how courses like history would have a lack of representation of Latinx/Indigenous history. In fact, the participants remarked how white-centric their history classes were, as explained by Tsitsiki (p1) in excerpt 76 and Mundo (p4) in excerpt 77.

76. “talked a lot about like quote unquote Americans, like you know, colonizing, being the greatest of all, *y que no sé que tanto*, I just hated it like I'm like well, what about like the Native Americans *siempre me cuestionaba* and, like, I would like- why don't they teach us that? And stuff like that, but it was everything about you know the white settlers, the white *todo white, todo white like nada que-* there was nothing for me to represent, *que me representara a mí o que yo me podía identificar*, it was just like you know white people white people, the best the best, *y ya*, so I hated it.” [p13938]
77. “I think something I can't quite pinpoint this, but something that I definitely started to pick up was, I think history was, I mean, I guess this is like a very general complaint. But I think history was very whitewashed to me. I don't think I quite picked up on it until the end of high school. Now that I understand history a little bit better and I studied a little bit more, or a lot more I do- I'm like, yes, I

can- I can pinpoint what.” [p43701]

- 78.** “I think coming back to like the history ones I do- I do think that I remember like being very annoyed when in like AP World History like whenever we only covered it felt like we only talked- covered Europe, and then China, for the most part. I do remember being very annoyed with that and complaining about that to my teacher, which he agreed with me, but he doesn't really have much control over it. So I like I can't hold him too accountable for that.” [p44016]

Unfortunately, even though Mundo (p4) complained to his teacher about the content of his history class, the curricular restrictions often found in K-12 education due to various factors often make it difficult to make changes. Elsa (p3) also had similar complaints about the content of her courses in high school and how they were mainly Eurocentric in nature in excerpt 79.

- 79.** “the things that I was taught in high school were very, like, limited to like, like, basically, white people. And like, you know, like, the San Juan Islands are called the San Juan islands because, yeah, and that was basically all later, I- learned about, like, you know, Spanish people, like coming into the US, or America. But, you know, that's basically all, we only only learned what we were taught. And I feel like I was- I wasn't really taught or I'm able to connect to my own culture. And so I didn't know that. There was so much to learn about, like, you know, each identity and each group.” [p33305]

Karina's (p8) written reflection also focuses on these topics, and how going into higher education helped her get introduced to content that she felt she could relate to. Participants like Karina grew up in majority white contexts where the idea of being exposed to content representative of her identity was not at all expected. She shares more about what this discussion made her realize in her written reflection by stating:

My education was also impacted in ways I didn't understand until now. In high school, the history that was taught was so far from anything that could've related to us and taught from a colonizer's perspective. In college I was introduced to Latin American history that mattered and related to me. (Karina, p8)

Based on these excerpts, it becomes clear that various participants were keenly aware of the lack of representation during their education prior to entering college. On the other hand, some participants never considered being exposed to content relevant to their identity until taking what Kovats Sánchez (2020) calls “affirming courses” during college. Similarly, Alvarez (2013) also discusses the importance of exposing SHL learners to course content relevant to their lives and identities. Nonetheless, the inclusion of Latinx material was not common for many of the participants in K-12, much less material specifically focused on Indigenous people.

4.5.1 Theme five: Implications of teachers’ positionalities and practices

Equally important to the content of courses is the educator that imparts the content. There were some standout instances of teachers during the participants’ time in grades K-12 that had an impact on participants’ identity development, which includes their linguistic development. In the case of Karina (p8), although she reported having strong linguistic self-esteem and being told she was a good Spanish speaker most of her life, when she started school, her teachers chose to meet with her parents about her Spanish use. She explains what happened in excerpt 80 below.

- 80.** “So what my mom tells me is that she would speak to me only in Spanish as I was growing up, and as I started talking, and then when I got to kindergarten, my mom says I was, um, stronger in Spanish than English. And in kindergarten, the teachers actually had to do a conference with my parents, because they said that my English wasn't very good. And that she needed to teach me more English because I was struggling in- in kindergarten, because I didn't speak that much English.” [p82609]

Clearly, Karina’s educators believed that her Spanish skills were a problem rather than an asset upon starting kindergarten. This view of bilingualism as being framed as a deficit

rather than a benefit is unfortunately a common ideology in the U.S. (see Fuller & Leeman, 2020), and has clearly impacted the participants in the present study. Karina (p8) goes on to explain that due to this meeting with her parents, her mom began to worry about using only Spanish with Karina and started to use more English. Fortunately, Karina was able to retain her linguistic competence in Spanish regardless of this intervention by her teachers, but she did say it had lasting impacts on how her family communicates in her household. This intervention by her teachers early on in her education led to lasting linguistic policies in her family where Karina was forced to speak to one parent in Spanish and the other in English, which is a policy she still follows today.

Based on their varied experiences with how bilingualism was treated during their K-12 education, many participants chose to either take or not take Spanish classes due to their teachers. Tsitsiki (p1) was one of the participants that did decide to take a Spanish course. Her high school Spanish teacher was a white woman who not only held unusual opinions about language, but also relayed unexpected political beliefs as well. Tsitsiki details in excerpt 81 below how her Spanish teacher did not approve of the use of the diminutive morpheme *-ito* often used among the many Mexican students in her classroom in California, but also did not believe undocumented people in the country had a right to stay in the United States.

- 81.** “For- la gramática, she would be like oh I don't like using the word *-ito* like I just don't like it ... like what the heck! [laughs] ¿Qué dijo? That she didn't think that the parents should have like papers like *los hijos de los inmigrantes que estaban bien que se quedarán, pero los papás no... que los hijos si tienen el derecho de quedarse aquí pero los papás no*. I was just like, ok, like” [p13443]

Even though Tsitsiki (p1) was in a Spanish class with many fellow Mexican students present with varied immigration statuses and histories, the Spanish instructor chose to share her linguistically unsound opinion on their variety of Spanish and her anti-immigrant ideologies as well. Tsitsiki shared that most students were left speechless by these comments from this Spanish instructor. This is an example of the possibility that studying/teaching a language other than English as a white American does not necessarily lead to being a more empathetic or culturally competent educator. It is not unusual to hear language teachers mention that learning a second or third language has the potential lead greater intercultural competence and/or empathy (Byram & Wagner, 2018; Chen, 2013; Dewaele & Wei, 2012; among others). Unfortunately, this has not been proven to be the case for this instructor that was living in a state that was previously part of Mexico and was regularly in contact with students of color with varied documentation statuses.

Many of the participants explicitly mentioned that they chose not to take a Spanish class before college due to the identity of the teacher that would be imparting the class. Oftentimes they reported not taking the course due the teacher in question being a second language learner of Spanish. Elsa (p3) and Mónica (p5) were two of the students that shared this sentiment in excerpts 82 (Elsa) and 83 (Mónica).

- 82.** “Yeah, and I think that, like, I heard that a lot of, or the teachers would not be like very fluent, I guess, or like the things that they would say are right or wrong for the students like, "Oh, no, like, that's not how you say it" or things like that” [p32136]
- 83.** “the lady that was the teacher that was teaching Spanish was like a dual chemistry teacher and Spanish was not even her first language it's just kind of like someone had to teach that and they put this teacher to do it and it was kind of like, there's nothing that I'm going to learn in this class from someone whose- Spanish is not their first language that I can't capture at home.” [p54512]

While there is no doubt that second language learners of Spanish can be excellent teachers, the positionality of the Spanish teachers available to the participants influenced the participants' decision to take a Spanish course before entering college. The attitudes towards their Spanish teachers and the people who they felt should be teaching them, regardless of whether the class was made for SHL learners or not, coincide with what González Darriba et al. (2021) found in their study. They found that SHL learners tend to favor teachers from Latin America and Spain over L2 and even heritage instructors. At the same time, Tsitsiki (p1) did choose to take a Spanish course with a white woman and ended up having to endure the teacher's harmful beliefs about language and immigrants. Although this situation and educator can be deemed to be an outlier, it still may have been less likely to hear such ideologies from a U.S. Latinx teacher.

University, non-SHL courses

Upon entering college, not only were participants able to choose the content of their courses but they also were able to take into consideration the positionality of their instructors. After enduring the anti-immigrant Spanish teacher in high school, Tsitsiki (p1) chose to take a Mexican American course in college. Her instructor was an African American man married to a Mexican woman that was teaching at a college in California. Tsitsiki (p1) mentioned that not only was her instructor knowledgeable and straightforward about the history of Mexican Americans, but he also was encouraging of his many Mexican American students. She shares what her instructor would tell her and her peers in class in excerpt 84 below.

- 84.** “Taking a class like that the Mexican American history, American Mexican history .. the way my professor worded things like he didn't sugarcoat anything was just like, *aquí está ira, no se hagan mensos* basically. [laughs] ... *nos decía*, you guys have a lot of power, especially here in California, because there's more of us, you know more Latinos *más así* so he's like basically like encouraging us so I- I would really recommend my professor's class” [p17345]

Upon seeing these quotes, Gabriela (p2) reflected on her own experiences in high school and during her time as an undergraduate student. She says that despite being among many Mexican peers growing up like Tsitsiki, she did not receive encouragement from her teachers. She shared during her individual *testimonio* what schooling in Nogales, Arizona was like for her in excerpt 85.

- 85.** “We were mostly again like 99% Latinos all of us. So you know how typically- at least my experience has been that- students often get you know, maybe discriminated or segregated by race or language, well here they couldn't do that because we were all very- very you know similar population, so they would divide us, based on, you know, academic achievement, so the students that were IB/AP honors they got. They had like assemblies, where you would have college recruiters go and talk to them about scholarships, financial aid, applying to college, all these things and those of us that weren't in those classes, we were not given those talks, like literally, we were not given those talks. So I think that the school the function of the school was basically you know to funnel kids” [p22837]

Due to the disparities in treatment Gabriela (p2) saw by her educators, she later expressed during the sharing circles that she wishes she would have had an encouraging teacher like Tsitsiki. She says,

- 86.** “And I think that lack of empowerment, or that lack of teachers really supporting us and telling us that we could make a difference like this, this Mexican American teacher saying you have a lot of power, I wish I would have heard that maybe my journey or some of my peers' journey would have been different, potentially, had we learned to believe in ourselves.” [p25311]

Fortunately, some participants were able to take courses that were not Spanish with instructors they could relate to in college. For example, Caro (p7) noted during her

sharing circle that the first time she was able to have a professor with an identity similar to hers was when she enrolled in a Chicano Studies class. Meanwhile, Mundo (p4) had the opportunity to take a class with an Indigenous professor. He details what the course and the professor was like in excerpt 87.

- 87.** “I took a class with a indigenous professor and didn't- it wasn't Spanish, but it was a- it was another class. And it was, I felt a lot more open to talking about these themes with. I mean, they are they were Navajo, I think, Diné. So that's not new-completely different experiences, you know, I- that's like the same thing with like, the Andean and Mesoamerican, they have nothing to do with each other. But when it comes to like, the more personal things and like, I mean, it's still a different thing, but I just felt a little bit more- I thought that they would understand a little bit better. And I think they did. I did talk about these things with them.” [p411258]

Mundo (p4) shared more about his experiences in this class that was mainly focused on exploring Indigeneity with Helen (p6) and Caro (p7) during their sharing circle. He reiterated how much this course and the Diné instructor impacted him in excerpt 88.

- 88.** “I took a class with the Diné professor and she was like super- super kind. And I think like, at least from, like, I don't think we have like, well, we have shared experience, but like not really, not in a negative way. It's just like, they're completely different communities, of course, there's gonna be different experiences. But it was, I don't know, I think like when I told her like some of these, like, personal struggles, whether that be with indigeneity, or like my own community, like, I don't know she was like, very understanding of that. And so, I don't know- it was like, I don't know, I think if she like, gave me a lot of validation about like, how my own experiences are, like unique to this, like greater Zapotec experience of migration, like, also like integration. Mestizaje. So in that sense, I was really appreciative of her, you know, she had a very, like, very holistic understanding of indigeneity. And I think that helped me.” [p47052]

Upon sharing this, the other participants in the sharing circle Helen (instructor) and Caro (student), expressed how much they would have loved to have had the opportunity to take a course with an Indigenous professor. Unfortunately, it did not seem that anyone other

than Mundo (p4) was able to take a course with an Indigenous educator, as far as they knew.

However, in the other sharing circle, Mónica (p5) did recount that although she would have been happy to have an Indigenous instructor, she did take part in a research project that incorporated issues relevant to her Indigeneity. She describes what this experience was like and how proud she was to take part in a project in Oaxaca even if it was with a non-Indigenous instructor in excerpt 89.

- 89.** “I do remember taking a gen ed class where they did talk about like research on fruit vendors in LA and I thought that was like, so amazing. And like, to me that's already connecting to my community, because you know, that we have a lot of street vendors and I love to support street vendors. And they were talking about doing a research project in Oaxaca. And I was like, Oh my God, and they kind of spoke about it and then they later was like, if anyone's interested in this field research program, you know, you can apply for it. And I think from there like I had such a connection to this- I think she was a TA at the time. And I was like oh my god, for you to even know kind of like of where I come from even though I don't think she identified as indigenous herself but she was like doing the research on it and she had some knowledge of it and to me after that, I think I was never the same because I kind of got a glimpse of- of what I missed out on right? Of what I didn't have. But up until that point it was just kind of like teachers are there just to do their jobs and- and teach you the requirements of these courses. And me just being there to like, do my job in like trying to learn or pass the classes or whatever.” [p57437]

Evidently, Mónica (p5) realized the value of being able to integrate her own identity and culture into her college studies upon taking part in a research program in Oaxaca. While this shift in perspective was enlightening, it was not until the end of her undergraduate studies that she was able to learn how different her studies could have been had she had more opportunities to incorporate content relevant to her life in her classes. In sum, most of the participants seemed to retroactively wish they had had the opportunity to have an Indigenous instructor during their time in college.

SHL courses

Following the questions about their instructors in higher education in general, each participant was asked about the impact of their SHL instructors. From this section on, the second and third research questions about their experiences specifically in SHL courses are addressed. For specifically in this section is a discussion on their instructors' impacts and positionalities are highlighted. The students' perspectives about their teachers are presented first from excerpt 90 through excerpt 99. Following that, input from the instructors Helen and Gabriela is outlined. Finally, some ideas from a sharing circle with Helen, Caro, and Karina are provided. To start this conversation on SHL educators, Tsitsiki (p1) shares that her SHL instructors have definitely had an impact on her in excerpt 90.

- 90.** “yeah so I feel like I've learned a lot through my professors. Because they always have different ideas, different ways of how they view and, especially, you know, like in our Spanish classes... So I feel like a lot of the teachers do have an impact- have had an impact on me and how I viewed my opinions about Spanish and like just basically everything.” [p15508]

Elsa (p3) describes the positive impact of her SHL professor which also happened to be the director of her program in excerpt 91.

- 91.** “Their Spanish was really good. For one. And I noticed that like, well, my first teacher, or professor, I'm sorry, I'm getting confused with high school and college now. But my first professor was [profe name], and I'm sure you know her. But um, she- it was really nice, because she would bring in her own, like, traditions or part of her traditions, into class. And like, it was very nice to like, have our assignments, like, connect to our own life, you know, like, we had to interview our parents and like, kind of learn more about them as well. And I feel like it pushed me to, like, ask those questions and like about my grandparents. So that was really nice.” [p34650]

As evidenced in excerpt 91, not only was Elsa's professor willing to share about her own traditions, but her practices and assignments were clearly aimed at incorporating the students' identities into the class. However, the professor also created an opportunity for Elsa to share her perspectives as an Indigenous SHL learner on a panel with other students like her. Elsa (p3) describes this experience in excerpt 92 below.

- 92.** “So, yeah again, my professor [name], she, um *profesora*, [name], she, she has always opened these opportunities for me. And there was, what was it? I'm not sure, there was an event where a lot of I feel like... staff like school staff and headquarters, they were gonna, they were looking at, like, ways in how to, like, improve their educational system. And so [name] brought in me and I think, two other girls, who identified as Indigenous, and talked about their experiences. And we each talked about our own experience, and like, people would ask us questions about how that was like, and how it affected us. And towards the end, it was really cool, because some of the staff would come up to us and like, ask for our like, opinions on like, what we thought about, like such and such forming, or how to form like a unity between their own students to take that back with them.”
[p35654]

It is evident that in Elsa's case, her Indigeneity was not only recognized but valued as a needed perspective to continue to improve not only the SHL program at her university but that of other pedagogues in attendance. While this experience was quite unique among the participants, what remained clear was that each student participant did have the sense that their SHL instructor cared about their SHL courses. Mundo (p4) shares the following about his experience in the one SHL course he took in excerpt 93.

- 93.** “I don't know much of her background, she- she really likes the heritage learners class. I think that was like her year that she could have been on like, I don't know, sabbatical on leave. But she was like, I just want to be able to teach this course. And this one matters a lot to me. So even when- even- I don't know if she was like, technically supposed to be doing stuff for like her department, she still wanted to teach that course. So I knew that she cared a lot about it, which also played a role into why I wanted to take it because it seemed like she would care.”
[p48027]

Although Mundo (p4) was not sure about his instructors' background or how they identify, he did know that she was not Indigenous but did care quite a bit about being able to teach the SHL course in her department. This professor's investment in the SHL course motivated Mundo to take the class. Instructors like Elsa's and Mundo's demonstrated that they cared about their students in different ways. In Karina's (p8) case, she had SHL instructors that not only cared about the students' ability to feel comfortable but also made sure that students felt confident in their Spanish abilities. Karina (p8) shares the impact her SHL instructors had on her in excerpts 94 and 95 below.

94. "I remember [instructor] had us introduce ourselves and like, say, like, where we're from, and she even like said, like, what you're comfortable- I remember one day, she was like, what you're comfortable saying, like, when you introduce yourself to like, other Spanish speaking people, what do you say like when they ask you where you're from? What do you say? And so I remember, like us going around, like, Oh, we say, like, you know, this person was saying, My friend is from Michoacán but I would say, Oh, I'm indigenous, y soy de Oaxaca, you know, like that. Like, that's how we introduce ourselves, which I thought was so neat" [p84704]
95. "the first class again, is when she really talked to us about like, formal versus informal. Like, there's no such thing as incorrect Spanish. And that really like just, she like drilled that into my head. Because for the longest time, I was like, conscious about that, like, words that are, quote unquote, incorrect to many people. And so I remember her telling us that like, there's no such thing as incorrect, there's so many different ways to say something like, that's part of language. And language is always like changing all the time. So that really impacted me from her first class that I took." [p85052]

Positionality of instructors in SHL courses

In terms of where the SHL instructors were from or sharing their positionality, most participants were not fully able to recall for certain if their instructors shared about themselves in that manner. Some of this uncertainty was relayed in the excerpts above in teacher impacts, but this section includes moments when students were a bit more

confident about their SHL instructors' positionalities, whether it was based on what the instructor explicitly told them or based on their variety of Spanish. In general, participants were not often taught by fellow U.S. Latinx people, and not a single person in this study was taught by an Indigenous Latinx person. Despite this lack of representation among the educators that taught their SHL courses, some participants reported having encouraging instructors. For example, Elsa (p3) had the opportunity to have a very supportive non-Indigenous Mexican professor as shown in the previous excerpts, but she did recall taking at least one other SHL course during her undergraduate studies with a woman from Spain. However, the main reason Elsa knew she was from Spain was due to her dialect rather than what she remembers the instructors specifically mentioning, as demonstrated in excerpt 96.

96. “I think she's from Spain. if I'm correct? I should probably ask her. But her Spanish is different. But it's still really good. It's only different for me because she uses like *vosotros* type Spanish, instead of like, *ustedes* Spanish or something.” [p34806]

When asked about her SHL instructor, Mónica (p5) mainly recalled her instructor being a Chicano graduate student in excerpt 97.

97. “It was a TA. I don't remember where he was from um, or I just know that it was like a grad or PhD student who was teaching the class because it was like very small, very informal. Like um, it wasn't like a big lecture hall. It was just a- like a discussion type of class. So there must have been like, no more than 15 to 20 of us in there. He- I don't remember anything from him other than he was... um, a TA, or like, he was like a student there too. But he was really good. Like he- I learned a lot from the class. All I remember is that he identified as Chicano, that's the only thing I remember.” [p56304]

In Mundo's (p4) case, his instructor not only cared about the class but based the class on students' identities, much like Elsa's class. Upon asking students about their

backgrounds, Mundo's instructor also shared a bit about her own background, as shown in excerpt 98.

- 98.** “She like, asks us where we're from, because I do think she bases at least some of the material off of that. So when we- I met individually, again, she asked me like, where are you from? I don't know if she asked me where are you from? And then where are you from in Mexico, but she did ask me where I was from. So I told her I'm from Oaxaca. And she told me she's from Baja California.” [p48434]

It is important to note that Mundo did not mention being Indigenous when his Mexican instructor asked about students' backgrounds, which will be discussed further in themes seven and eight. At the same time, Caro (p7) also mentions having had at least two Latinx professors, though she was not sure about specifics beyond the fact that her Latina professor mentioned having German ancestry. It is certainly interesting that at least for Caro, this professor's European ties were made clear but not necessarily her ties to *Latinidad*.

- 99.** “I do think he was Latino. My second professor, I remember her being also a Latina, but I do remember her mentioning something about having German ancestry. So she was very light skinned.” [p75933]

Unfortunately for Helen (p6), one of the SHL instructors in this study, she was not able to have a single Latinx professor during her entire education in the U.S. until she started graduate school. Even though Helen was required to take courses relevant to her identity/Latinx people, they were taught by white people and her peers were almost always exclusively white as well, given that she went to a primarily white institution (PWI). Helen (p6) details the way her courses were designed, and the positionality of her instructors impacted her in excerpt 100.

- 100.** “You design classes for white people that were really racist, and I suffered through them so we should all be thankful I even made it through. But that's what

grad school taught me right? Heritage language classwork taught me that. Linguistics taught me that. Having finally, after- finally in grad school, I started to get like Chicano professors. I had my first Chicano professor in grad school. And it was for heritage language.” [p66509]

As instructors Helen (p6) and Gabriela (p2) describe their time in higher education, they both reflected on the identities of fellow SHL instructors. They have both been at the same universities from their time as undergraduate students until becoming SHL instructors/doctoral students at the time of this study, which meant they have been able to take note of who their fellow SHL instructors are for several years.

Given that Gabriela (p2) has had to work closely with various SHL instructors in the program at her university over the years, she has noticed the positionality of the instructors over time and how they often are not U.S. Latinx people themselves. She highlights these circumstances at her university that has a significant amount of Latinx students in the excerpt below.

101. “So a lot of our instructors- we don't get a lot of US Latino instructors we really don't unfortunately so most of them are students from- international students right? Lots from Spain lots from Latin America and they come here thinking, Oh these poor little you know these poor little Chicanitos, oh we need to teach them how to speak correctly that's their attitude and they're- they're great I mean they're great, they're well meaning, you know they're nice people, but they don't understand just the very bas- they don't understand what it's like to grow up as a bilingual person of color in the US right? They don't understand linguistic oppression, they don't understand the experience- and you can tell them about it, you can say hey these students are oppressed, and they'll be like, “Well yeah cus they don't speak correctly” right? [p25810]

Unfortunately, as evidenced above, Gabriela (p2) has noticed how many of the instructors that she has worked with that come from Spain or Latin America have had this perspective of having to “fix” their SHL students, which align with the deficit-based perspectives towards SHL learners found in previous studies (García et al., 2021; Villa,

1996, 2002; Zentella, 2017; among others). The SHL students at Gabriela's institution in particular are often Chicana or U.S. Latinxs, which does not align with the identities of their SHL instructors. As such, it is not surprising that many of these instructors cannot fully relate to the backgrounds and experiences of their bilingual students of color.

However, Gabriela asserts that despite having many instructors in her SHL program that do not share the same backgrounds as the students, there are SHL instructors of various identities who are capable of serving their SHL students well. She explains more in excerpt 102.

102. “I don't think it's a matter also of race, whether you can be a good heritage instructor or not, I think it's a matter of- I know that we had like a couple of students that were from Spain and they were amazing instructors and they did really amazing work with the students really and it wasn't you know, has nothing to do with where you're from, but they were very well what's the word- they really took the time to educate themselves. I know that these people had a very strong background in like sociolinguistics and in pedagogy and then one of them was from like she spoke another language from Spain and also Spanish so she had experienced that you know oppression of bilingualism so she was not, you know, Hispanic Latino whatsoever. But she was very humble, and she was very willing, and she- she valued her students' knowledge and what the students had to say.” [p28726]

Overall, it appears that Gabriela (p2) has seen concrete examples of instructors that have successfully been able to do the work necessary to be a respectful and well-rounded SHL instructor, despite not being Latina. While Gabriela (p2) appears open to the potential success of SHL educator colleagues of different races, Helen (p6) does not seemingly share this belief about white SHL instructors. During her individual *testimonio* and her sharing circle, Helen (p6) clearly explains her position on white instructors teaching SHL courses. She asserted the following in her sharing circle:

103. “I don't think white people should teach heritage language in the United States period. I think they should go and focus on looking at how we teach Spanish to white people, they can go make the healing that the rest of us need, that isn't our responsibility. So if they really want to contribute to improving Spanish language access, or heritage language access, they should look at why white supremacy has taken that away and refocus their efforts on white people.” [p67922]

Upon sharing this sentiment, both Caro (p7) and Karina (p8) agreed with Helen's point about white SHL instructors. Caro (p7) said the following right after Helen (p6) finished speaking:

104. “Yeah, I agree. I wish I could put the words- I can't articulate my feelings the way that Helen does, but I totally agree.” [p78005]

Karina's (p8) response following Helen and Caro are in excerpt 105, though she does note that she had positive experiences with her white American SHL instructors during her time in her program.

105. “I love [Mexican professor name]. She was amazing. But my first few Spanish teachers in college were white. However, I am grateful that they acknowledged that and provided space to you know, students like they definitely were great teachers, but I do wish you know, it was taught by someone who was from, you know, Hispanic Latinx heritage.” [p88105]

At the time that Karina (p8) took her first SHL course, a Mexican woman was the director of the SHL program as well as her first professor. Karina mentioned on various occasions how much she enjoyed being taught by this Mexican woman.

Nonetheless, Karina (p8) also took SHL courses with white women who were supportive and knowledgeable but did not have the same impact on her as the Mexican professor. In her written reflection, Karina (p8) details how her first SHL Spanish course with this Mexican professor impacted her identity and how she would have loved to have more Latinx professors. She wrote the following:

My first college Spanish teacher helped me discover my identity and encouraged self-exploration within identity. I would have liked for more of my instructors and teachers to be of latinx/hispanic cultures. I believe this would have been so much more relatable to me and my peers who also identified as latinx/hispanic. Although we briefly talked about indigenous cultures in my first few classes, it opened my eyes to exploring and getting curious about other indigenous cultures within other Spanish speaking countries. (Karina, p8)

Additionally, based on this discussion during their sharing circle, Helen also continued to consider the impact of SHL instructors' positionalities in her written reflection. She writes:

It was also affirming to know that I am not the only one who wonders why white people feel it is okay to teach heritage language learners or study us. Why don't they stop occupying the space of our identities and instead teach white people about white supremacy and colonization, and research their own perpetuations of white supremacy rather than teach us about ourselves? Let our own do that. Create space for us, don't occupy our spaces.

In conclusion, instructor positionality does appear to be important to these participants, though they are not all on the same page about who should be able to teach SHL courses.

The student participants mainly seem satisfied with their instructors from Latin America or Spain, which corroborates the findings of González Darriba et al. (2021). However, they were not explicitly asked if they would prefer an SHL instructor, though they did seem very open to the idea of having an Indigenous instructor that could relate to them, and not as interested in having only white instructors. Meanwhile, the instructors both felt it that an SHL instructors' positionality should be aligned to that of the students, though Gabriela (p2) and Helen (p6) diverged in opinion over the importance of race/ethnicity for an SHL instructor. While Gabriela (p2) seemed open to the idea of an instructor from any background being appropriately trained and successful as an SHL educator, Helen (p6) felt that it was less possible for white instructors. This difference

likely had to do with both of their completely opposite institutional contexts, since Gabriela was at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) while Helen (p6) was at a Primarily White Institution (PWI).

4.6.1 Theme six: Discrepancies on knowledge and holders of knowledge

After each participant described their experiences in K-12 education, higher education, and the different types of instructors they had, it was not unexpected to uncover the fact that many of these participants did not fully trust their teachers. Many expressed a level of distrust, or at the very least uncertainty about, teachers/people that held higher education degrees as the ultimate holders of knowledge. In fact, they were often opposed to automatically considering people with so-called “formal” education as being knowledgeable, especially if these people were not members of their communities. As Tsitsiki (p1) notes based on her experiences with her high school Spanish teacher,

106. “you can learn it from your own experiences and not really believe everything that everybody tells you like, even though they're like teachers. I feel like you have to really question everything, be careful about what you accept as knowledge for you, especially for us, you know who, will have families, who are first generation, or like it's just really difficult to- like from what I've learned from this teacher, you know, like I can't trust every teacher.” [p13741]

The mistrust goes hand-in-hand with the lack of focus on Latinx people's histories and catering to Latinx students' needs. In a follow-up to the previous excerpt, Tsitsiki (p1) also says

107. “For us Latino you know, students no nos cuentan todo. Like the true history of the US and how it came about.” [p13826]

This mistrust in teachers, which are normally viewed as holders of knowledge in a conventional sense, was also mentioned by Elsa (p3) in her own *testimonio*, as shown in excerpt 108.

108. “I feel like, as students, we always think that teachers and professors are like right about everything. And I feel like I didn't realize that they could be wrong until like college. But I feel like when maybe things that are repetitive, or like, continued to be talked about, I feel like could also be a part of like, that knowledge, or like that knowledge going around and clarifying, basically.”
[p32802]

While the apprehension towards a teacher is not uncommon among students, both instructors in this study also voiced similar mistrust towards teachers and/or people within higher education. Gabriela (p2) details her perspective on what knowledge means and the type of people that typically get to be regarded as knowledgeable in excerpt 109.

109. “You know just because you have a degree doesn't mean you know anything right? And- or that you, you know I can have so many undergrad students who just get the work done, they haven't learned anything, they don't critically think about anything but they have the same paper right? So it's like even if you have the degrees, that- the education, knowledge and you know, especially when you reflect about how the knowledge impacts like who you are I think, when you can make a connection there that's- it's better when you think critically and you think about. [p23455]

Helen (p6) also shared moments where her mistrust of her educators, people she previously considered holders of knowledge, had in fact proven to be less knowledgeable than she expected. She shared moments of being one of the only Latinx people in her school and how she was treated differently due to this in her primarily white schools in the Midwest.

Nonetheless, Helen shares how her perspective began to change over time as she noticed the teachers not only treated her differently but were also at times incorrect in the

content they would share with their classes. Helen (p6) describes a particular moment when she realized she could stand up for herself and not fully trust her teachers in high school in excerpt 110 below.

- 110.** “So before I thought they were knowledgeable and racist, and then I came back and I was like, No, you're actually not very bright. And I remember saying that to an English teacher. So when I got into AP English, [laughs] I remember saying to the English teacher, she said something to me that I was wrong or something I was like, No, you're wrong. And she said, I have a master's degree in English. And I said, I know and I sit here every day and wonder who gave you one. Um, so clearly, I was a snarky little teenager who thought knowledge was not based on education.” [p65633]

As evidenced above, there were quite a few examples of students and instructors alike being resistant towards accepting conventional concepts of knowledge and knowledge holders, according to the educational systems in the U.S. Although Elsa was unable to join a sharing circle, she read the quotes above in this sixth theme and commented on how they made her feel in her written reflection. She writes,

Reading other peoples' responses made me feel better about not always knowing what is right, wrong, or misunderstood. Knowing that other people like myself take precautions with what they are taught gives me comfort in not always knowing. (Elsa, p3)

Even though Elsa did share the moment she realized teachers in formal educational settings did not always know everything in her individual testimonio (see excerpt 108), she clearly still felt uncertain about how she perceives knowledge. However, the fact that her peers in this study held similar ideas had a positive impact on her.

Other “non-conventional” holders of knowledge

As the participants reflected on knowledge and knowledge holders, they would often express that they viewed their own families or community members as

knowledgeable. Thus, they would express trust in people that are non-conventional holders of knowledge, people that in the U.S. and in academia might not normally be viewed as legitimate sources of knowledge (see Delgado Bernal and Villalpando, 2002). In fact, Brayboy (2005b) describes the distinctions between “cultural knowledge” derived from being a member of an Indigenous community versus “knowledge acquired from elite institutions in higher education” (p. 196). While these forms of knowledge may be often viewed as being in contention, Brayboy (2005b) and Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) note how these knowledges should come together to benefit these Indigenous participants. Currently, the participants in the study seemed to still be unsure of how to find this balance, but they were more willing to show support for their cultural knowledge holder than their educators with formal degrees.

For example, Mundo (p4) mentions that one of two people he most associated with knowledge is his grandfather in Oaxaca.

111. “so two people come to mind very quickly. One of them, I think- I think my grandpa is very knowledgeable, because whenever I talk with him, or whenever I asked him for explanations, he'll go on and on and on, even if he's just explaining himself or our family.” [p45340]

Mundo (p4) also mentions a friend that he reads and studies with on his own time, outside of what might typically be considered a formal school environment. Nonetheless, he returns to his assertion that his family in Oaxaca is one of the most important sources of knowledge to him. Mundo (p4) reiterates this point in excerpt 112.

112. “I call them pretty often, and we'll talk about things that they went through or that I talked about that have to do with Oaxaca. And so a lot of that matters to me a lot. Because their opinions, like, I mean, they're they lived through it. So they are, they're one of the best sources I'm going to get in that sense,” [p46046]

Like Mundo, Mónica (p5) also talks about her family, in this case her parents, and how they have been a major source of knowledge for her growing up in the U.S. She explains that although they may not have been the ones to impart her with academic knowledge, they taught her other skills and characteristics that were crucial for her development, as evidenced by her explanation in excerpt 113.

113. “I would associate that to my parents, because I think that to the- where I've gotten now, it's not that they- obviously, they weren't the ones that taught me like K through 12, or they're not the ones that like, gave me my degree. But I know that like.. where I am at this point in my life, like all the motivation that I had, or the skills or the perseverance, it was because I saw it reflected in them. And that's what they taught me that perseverance, that um, like that way to just make things work and try to get things done.” [p55217]

Mónica (p5) was one of the student participants that explicitly denounces the conflation of academic knowledge with being a knowledgeable or successful person. She explains her perspective in excerpt 114 below.

114. “there's still a very big stigma in my community that, you know, accomplishments are associated with degrees and associated with, you know, how prestigious the university that you went to was, but I think now, I see it more as you know, if you're at a point where like, you're happy with your life, and you're like, you're good. And even if you didn't go- I don't think you need, like, I don't believe that you need a college degree to be successful. Like, you know, I think people have such a- such diverse talents, that, to me, like being accomplished or being happy, like, there has to be more than just like the measure of having a college degree to say that you're successful, obviously. So I'm like, there's no way to cater that across the board to all these different knowledge, sorry, all these different talents and all these different like areas of knowledge that, you know, the stigma of having a college degree fixes everything, if anything it's like worse because you graduate with college debt. [laughs] But yeah, I just I don't see it as a measure and value of somebody.” [p55351]

In the excerpt above, we see how Mónica (p5) views knowledge and knowledge holders in a much different light than what she believes is typically valued in the U.S. This ability to see the difference between what counts as knowledge to her and what counts as

knowledge to academia is one that corroborates what Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) describe in their work.

It is important to note that Mónica also recognizes that this conceptualization of knowledge and knowledge holders can also be found among people in her *pueblo* in Oaxaca. During her sharing circle, Mónica (p5) explains how knowledge and achieving the American dream is sometimes measured among her people in the excerpt below.

115. “I think, you know, part of like, the American dream for my community is like oh people that were able to leave the pueblo and like, come here and get a job. And you know, especially if it doesn't have to be, like, physical labor jobs. And so I work in an office. So I think it's so much more harder to have like, the endurance to stay in your community and, and what you put out to be part like in the pueblo, or like people that are in the pueblo, like, they put in so much work to maintain the pueblo. And that in and of itself should have so much value, because then we get to go back and experience like, the beauty that that is or even here, like people have immigrated, and you know, they're like, Oh, well, you know, so my parents would say, like, oh, you know, go to school, so you don't have to end up like us like gardeners and like cleaning houses and things like that. But to have that physical strength or that endurance to do that every single day, for hours at a time. It's like, it's that hard work and that mental- to be able to have like that mental power to keep going and doing that every day. It's like, I would never be able to.” [p55834]

Similar to what the participants in Barillas Chón's (2022) study mentioned, many of the Indigenous people in Mónica's community viewed having a job that is not physically demanding as a measure of success. At the same time, Mónica (p5) in some ways combats this belief since she knows how much skill, strength, and endurance goes into having these types of jobs. She highlights that despite having a college degree, she would not have the skills or mental capacity to handle taking on such type of work, which points to dismantling typical conceptions of low skill versus high skill jobs.

Helen (p6) also describes how acquiring certain skills, ones not typically considered to be valuable for high skill jobs or prestige, are moments she felt particularly proud to learn and view as knowledge. She explains that learning how to use a *metate* became a skill that she learned from knowledgeable people in Mexico and how this stood out to her while sitting in a classroom back in the U.S. in excerpt 116.

- 116.** “that year I learned how to use a *metate*. Like, where you- the corn grinder? I don't know what it's called in English. A metate. It's probably not the Spanish word either. But um, I remember that being knowledge to me. And remember thinking, none of you know how to do that. I remember sitting in class thinking that. I don't know why I would pull on that. But yeah, so I saw some things as being knowledge and people not having it.” [p65950]

Similar to both Mónica (p5) and Helen (p6), Caro (p7) explains how she views her mother as a knowledgeable person that has skills that she does not have and did not acquire in school.

- 117.** “Like, kind of, like what I just said about my mom was like, she obviously didn't go to school out here. But I mean, she knows a lot more than I do. She, I remember, she has, like, she says, she was taught how to sew, she was taught how to cook. Like, all these things that like are very useful, are things that I mean, that I probably- she exposed me to, but not necessary, like, you know, I wasn't- it wasn't something that I learned. It's something that I do want to learn now. But things like that, I want to say like, informal schooling is not necessarily like informal,” [p75354]

Beyond specific skills and abilities, Caro (p7) describes the value of the traditional knowledge her community members hold, much like Mundo (p4) mentioned previously. She goes a step further by expressing her desire to save her community members' knowledge in recordings for future generations. Caro (p7), like Mónica (p5), also comments on the difference between what is emphasized as knowledge in academia versus what is typically the case in her pueblo in Oaxaca in the excerpt below.

118. “The traditional acknowledges that they hold that they- I want to say that now, like, from when we have conversations with our parents, like, I've always wanted to, you know, record the conversations. So that way, you know, whenever, you know, they move on. We know, we can still pass down the knowledge and the traditions that we, you know, have come from our families for generations. So I think that's very important as well, but definitely, like, I feel they- that here, they emphasize a lot more like academia and like going to college, as opposed to like doing like a trade or something like that. Where yeah, like, in our communities back in Oaxaca. Like, it's mostly about the fields like going to, like big- ways to survive, as opposed to go into college.” [p76715]

As demonstrated in the excerpts in this section, the participants in the present study seem resistant to accepting conventional profiles of what it means to be a knowledge holder. During these conversations on knowledge and knowledge holders, the participants highlight moments where they came to realize that their educators were not fully knowledgeable in concepts and matters that were important to these participants. In fact, they highlight how their own family members, community members, or other people in their lives were important fountains of knowledge for them. These ideas coincide with scholarship on what counts as knowledge to people of color (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Yosso, 2014), and in this case, Indigenous people navigating colonial systems of education in the U.S. (Brayboy, 2005a, 2005b; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). It is important to take these ideas into consideration in SHL courses since we aim to support students and what they find important for them and their lives rather than placing degree completion as the main, and often the only, goal for the students.

4.7.1 Theme seven: Inclusion of Indigeneity in SHL courses

The previous themes thus far have mainly outlined the participants' experiences prior to enrolling/teaching an SHL course at the university level. Within the excerpts in

this theme and in theme eight, research questions two and three are directly addressed. The research questions generally ask whether the students and instructors in this study believe Indigeneity has been included in their SHL courses and if they would like to see decolonial perspectives included, especially if they are not already. Therefore, each participant was asked to reflect on their experiences taking or teaching a class on SHL. A couple of the student participants mentioned that their courses were designed as mainly a language course which focused mainly on developing their linguistic competence rather than anything related to their identities or other content relevant to their lives. Mónica (p5) mentioned the following about her SHL course:

- 119.** “it was specifically like, about like, grammar, learning Spanish grammar, but for native Spanish speakers. And so I ended up learning a lot from the class but that's how I ended up taking it.” [p55914]

Like Mónica, Caro (p7) also reported taking an SHL course particularly centered on grammar, though she also describes that it was a lecture-heavy class that did not provide much opportunity for student interaction.

- 120.** “But yeah, I just remember it being very like lecture like- lecture like, almost borderline boring. Because again, it was a lot of reading, a lot of grammar, just like writing things down. The homework again is just like practicing. And then, like, we never like, interacted with each other. It was just like us listening to the professor. That was one teacher.” [p75648]

Interestingly, both Mónica (p5) and Caro (p7) were from Los Angeles and went to universities in California. Even so, they both ended up in grammar heavy SHL courses that they said did not incorporate content beyond what could be used to improve their linguistic skills. In both of their educational environments, they were surrounded by many fellow Latinx students but did not remember many opportunities in the course to

explore that aspect of their course. However, during her sharing circle, Caro (p7) did recall having one assignment that allowed for students to choose the topics they could present on, as detailed in excerpt 121.

- 121.** “I can't remember exactly what like the prompt or like the- the point of it was, but I do remember that my presentation was about *la danza de la pluma*, which is a traditional dance that they do in the *valle*, which is my dad's region where he's from. And I- that's the only time I remember, like, I was talking about something regarding my culture,” [p78910]

While Caro (p7) was able to incorporate a dance from her dad's Indigenous *pueblo* into one of her course assignments, she did express that this was the only opportunity she recalls having to share about her Indigenous identity in her SHL classes.

- 122.** “that was like the only time I remember like even talking about like, you know, traditions or anything like that in our Spanish language classes.” [p78949]

She reiterates that she personally went out of her way to incorporate her Indigeneity into her assignments in excerpt 123.

- 123.** “I honestly don't remember, like, it being like a big topic, about like, indigenous people or anything like that, again, it was just me trying to plug in wherever I could to talk about it.” [p76717]

Fortunately, the other six participants did provide examples of Indigeneity being incorporated into the SHL courses they took or taught. In Tsitsiki's (p1) course, one of the ways in which the course content touched on topics relevant to Indigeneity was the conversation on the difference between a language and a dialect. She says her instructor explicitly described Indigenous languages as being languages and not dialects. This point clearly combats the erroneous idea perpetuated in Latin America, and clearly also in the U.S., that Indigenous languages are not fully complex languages that are independent from Spanish (Canizales & O'Connor, 2022; Macedo, 2019; Schissel et al., 2021;

Veronelli, 2015; among others). Tsitsiki (p1) describes the impact of learning this difference in her class in excerpt 124.

124. “I remember language learning about the importance of language and the difference between like dialect and language, because I know that, before you know the- it wasn't considered a language, *estaba* that- I don't know what to say, but it was just like I guess it wasn't considered language which is really weird for me like why wouldn't it be? But I remember learning that the first time, like Oh, you know never thought about it this way, like that's right like, why have we been calling it *dialecto* and it's, not even a dialect? like I remember that that was like a huge clarification for me.” [p16034]

Tsitsiki (p1) was not able to recall other specific instances or examples where Indigeneity itself was a main component of the course, though she does remember her instructors at times making connections to Indigenous communities (see excerpt 142 below at the start of theme eight).

On the other hand, Elsa (p3) was one of the students that recalled the most instances of Indigeneity being incorporated into her SHL class. She explains how her course overviewed the history of colonization and backgrounds of Indigenous people in the Americas in excerpt 125.

125. “We talked about how there were Indigenous groups here, already settled in America before like, Christopher Columbus, you know, came and um but yeah, we talked about how some of those groups got separated, and how they ended up in Mexico and like, basically, just the history and background of indigenous people.” [p36154]

Aside from the historical content, Elsa (p3) mentioned that her professor also incorporated words from an Indigenous language from Mexico as well, though she was not sure about the name of the exact language. These vocabulary words from the Indigenous language were even incorporated into one her exams, as she details in excerpt 126.

126. “Um, we did learn- or she did bring up some words in Mixteco, but it was a different one or no its Mestizo or something like that but it was an Indigenous language and she had even made it she had even made it part of like our- our exam. So it's something that we definitely had to learn.” [p36000]”

Elsa was the only student that not only gave specific examples of Indigeneity but also recalled it being part of an actual form of evaluation for her course.

While Karina (p8) also remembered going over at least one Indigenous language and Indigenous people in her SHL class, she did not detail it being part of an exam, though this was not an explicit question asked by the researcher either. Karina (p8) shared how Indigenous content was covered by her instructor in excerpt 127.

127. “But her touching on Indigenous, like, groups from Mexico like um, I think like one of them was like people that speak Nahuatl. Um, but like, briefly touching on that. And I- that's when I found out that there was more indigenous groups other than just people from Oaxaca. I was so shocked because I was like, wait, what? Like it's not just Oaxaca? Like there's other indigenous peoples out there?” [p86443]

As evidenced above, for Karina (p8) not only was this content an incorporation of topics relevant to her own life, but it was also revelatory in that she learned about the existence of Indigenous communities beyond her own. Given that Karina (p8) grew up mainly in a white dominant part of the country with her interactions with Indigenous people being from her own pueblo in Mexico, she explains she had not gained enough exposure to other Indigenous communities to be knowledgeable about them until she started taking the SHL courses. Being exposed to these topics that in turn impacted their own identities in higher education is also highlighted in Kovats Sánchez (2019). In her dissertation, she describes how taking affirming courses helped with her Indigenous participants' identity formation.

Conversely, Mundo (p4) mentioned that his SHL course did not have many instances of touching on Indigeneity, except he did recall a movie that the instructor shared with the class about Bolivia and colonization in Puerto Rico. He describes this experience in excerpt 128.

128. “we were watching a movie about Bolivia, and these, like reporters coming in to shoot a film about colonization in Puerto Rico. And they were using like, like, Quechua people to represent Taíno people. And they like asked about that. And we touched- talk- like, like, there were some- like we talked about Indigeneity a bit, at least within the context of colonization, I remember someone being like, Oh, well, like, like, I think that they're like, if there had been an indigenous person, like trigger warnings would have been important. And I was like, that's interesting, because I am.” [p48727]

In the excerpt above, while we see that the instructor did provide an opportunity to have a critical discussion on Indigeneity/colonization in her SHL class, it was done in a manner that erased Mundo's (p4) Indigeneity. The conversation was had in a manner that assumed nobody in the room was Indigenous, which the instructor did not correct, although Mundo had told her that he is from Oaxaca. At the same time, just because Mundo said he was from Oaxaca, it does not warrant his professor to assume he is Indigenous. The complexities of how Mundo identified himself to his SHL instructor and class, and how his Indigeneity was not made explicitly clear, is explained in more detail in theme eight.

As opposed to the students, the instructors were undoubtedly more aware of the specific ways in which Indigeneity is incorporated into their SHL courses, though this is to be expected as they are the ones who must plan and teach these courses unlike the students. Gabriela (p2) began by mentioning that many of the more specific changes to courses where Indigeneity has been included has come from the instructors in the

program. She notes that one instructor had their own connections to Indigeneity and incorporated it into her class in excerpt 129.

- 129.** “there's been some changes to the level right after the beginning level where we talk about music and one of the instructors has like- I haven't taught that curriculum specifically, but one of the instructors has a big project around Indigenous music in New Mexico. Because I think probably her *abuelita* is like part Indigenous *o algo así* and she does- she talks about like *brujería* and she talks about *curanderismo*, and she talks about- she brings up those topics to the class and she teaches about them and then the students do their own research.” [p26802]

As Gabriela reflected on how Indigeneity in the SHL program she was a part of, she realized it was not an easy task to come up with examples. She details this issue in the program and how it impacts her and her own family in excerpt 130.

- 130.** “It doesn't come up very often, which I think is an issue, I think it should come up a lot more often, especially when we talk about- most of the students, we get- we get are Mexican American. Like the vast majority of them are and I don't think it's fair, you know, for us to talk about the Mexican side without acknowledging and talking about the damage that colonialism did to us like like I don't speak my- you know that language, because of all these, you know, ideologies that my parents were exposed to, and my grandparents, and so this idea of having to change who you are or assimilate to the dominant society, I think it's important to talk about that, but I don't think we do it enough.” [p27826]

After thinking about Indigeneity inclusion in her program a bit more, Gabriela also recalled that during discussions on land, colonization, and language they also include Indigenous communities. They discuss the erasure of Indigenous history and languages as they look at maps of their current geographical areas where tribes were and, in some cases, continue to be. She describes this in excerpt 131 below.

- 131.** “we talk about the history of the land, like the area here and it's basically to make a point you know this is like an English- all of our students were you know educated post Prop 203 so they went through English only public education... we show them maps like this used to be, you know the different tribes that used to inhabit here Indigenous peoples from here, ... we talk about you know when the

Spaniards came, ... how- colonialism has you know come up in cycles and in different ways... why we are in the English only era now and what's happening... to see like, why is this land multilingual right? This is a multilingual land, where are we located? ... and look at the erasure that is going on right with all of these communities that we don't talk about" [p27017]

Conversely, when asked about Indigeneity inclusion in her program, Helen (p6) describes a few different ways she includes Indigenous/decolonial content in her program. She says that even in classes that she teaches that are content focused but still made for SHL learners, she overlaps the course topic with Indigenous topics and knowledge. In excerpt 132, Helen (p6) says that in her healthcare courses she uses a book written on decolonization of food.

132. “And we read things about colonization through language. And even in like the healthcare ones, right like the book by Luz Calvo and Catrióna Rueda Esquibel, *Decolonize your Diet?* We read that.” [p68511]

In terms of specific conversations on language and decolonization, as briefly mentioned in excerpt 132, she highlights a clear example of this in excerpt 133.

133. “And so then I'll talk about that and contact language with Nahuatl. And we'll talk about contact languages, and how that influences Spanish. And it helps too because then we talk about contact with English, right? So I talk about Indigenous contact with Spanish. And- so we'll do the basics to like, *aguacate* and *chocolate* and those kind of things. But I'm like, so are those Spanish? Alright, so what makes that Spanish but not, you know, *la troca*? And so that helps, too, because then they're like, no, like, this is always changing and evolving.” [p68724]

In addition to including intersections of Indigeneity, language, and food, Helen also includes music by a Mixteco rapper in her classes. She shares that including an Indigenous musician is important because she does tend to receive a mix of SHL students with different Indigenous backgrounds at times and this type of representation helps connect to them. Helen (p6) describes the trilingual rapper a bit more in excerpt 134.

- 134.** “he sings in Mixteco, Spanish, and English. And he, he raps. And he's- and the song is Mixteco is a language, not a dialect. And so it's perfect. And I use that.” [p68850]

After reflecting a bit on the content of their SHL courses, Gabriela (p2) later adds during her sharing circle that her program has been considered Mexican centric, with a clear focus on *mestizo* Mexicans. She explains what she means in excerpt 135.

- 135.** “So not only is it Mexican centric, but we don't even recognize the other communities that are Spanish speaking that are not Mexican, it's even less when it comes to the indigenous communities, which is super terrible and sad. And we try, you know, to create materials and things we talk about mostly history and it comes into like a history portion of the heritage class, about the land and looking at the Indigenous communities that were here and talking about how the border is a political thing and how there's these communities that were broken up by the border. And saying- recognizing that Spanish is a colonial language that was imposed, we tried to do that. But what happens in each individual classroom kind of feels like it's out of our control, which is hard.” [p28208]

While Gabriela describes efforts being made to make sure the courses are taught in a consistent manner, she does highlight that being aware of this room to grow is a positive point in excerpt 136.

- 136.** “But I think the positive side is that we're aware of it. And we're trying to work towards it, like towards making it more inclusive, the program. But it's a work in progress. Definitely.” [p28234]

As Mundo (p4) listened to Gabriela's point about her program being Mexican centered, he said his own program was not and he was thankful for that in excerpt 137 below.

However, the fact that it was not Mexican centric did not mean his program included more Indigeneity in its courses.

- 137.** “I feel like we learned a lot about like, like a lot about the Caribbean. And I also learned, like really important things about Central America, especially during the 1900s that I had not learned about in any other space before. And so I was very grateful to get to know that history. And, you know, I think we learned also other

stuff in South America, especially in around Perú and Bolivia, which I also thought was really cool.” [p48444]
As such, Mundo’s SHL course did seem to explore different communities within the various Spanish speaking countries. As they overviewed various Spanish speaking contexts, they did at times touch on Indigenous communities.

Indigenous peers (students/instructors)

Each participant was also asked to think about their peers/students in their classes, as this was also a relevant part of their SHL experiences. While it was clear that none of the students had Indigenous instructors or colleagues in their SHL classes, most of them did not have fellow Indigenous students in their classes either. One of the participants that did have an Indigenous student in her SHL class was Tsitsiki. In excerpt 138, Tsitsiki (p1) describes what having a fellow Indigenous person in her class was like for her.

138. “Other student in our- in our class that was um, Indigenous but from Perú, I think it was Perú or somewhere in that region. *Ya no me acuerdo*, but I was, I remember like oh cool I like I’m not the only Indigenous community, like what didn’t I ever research this or you know, *hay más comunidades, en toda América* and yeah that’s one of the- *¡Me sorprendió!*” [laughs] [p16235]

In this case, the course itself was not necessarily the only way that Tsitsiki happened to learn more about Indigeneity. In this case, she learned more about Indigeneity in her SHL course through the experience of having a fellow Indigenous student in her class.

Furthermore, the fact that this peer was an Indigenous person not from a community in Mexico was particularly enlightening for her.

Meanwhile, Caro (p7) did not have fellow Indigenous students in her SHL class, but she described that not having mainly Latinx people in her college classes felt unusual. This change in demographics among the students in her courses was shocking because

she grew up in a mainly Latinx community growing up in Los Angeles. She describes her experiences of starting university in the Bay area in California and how the backgrounds of the students in her SHL classes surprised her in excerpt 139.

- 139.** “when I first got to the Bay, it was like a culture shock, because I was just like, not used to being around like, different types of people. Like I grew up literally with, like, you know, brown people here, brown and Black people. So going up there like seeing like, white people, and like Asian people was just like, a culture shock. So like, seeing them in Spanish classes. I was like, wow, like, and some of them even spoke better Spanish than me. That was kind of like, like a shock to see.” [p76054]

It is clear that both Tsitsiki and Caro were surprised by the racial backgrounds of their fellow SHL students, but for different reasons. Nonetheless, most participants were not able to meet other students that identified as Indigenous in their SHL courses, or at least not in a way that was obvious to the participants.

For example, Mundo (p4) described his SHL course as having many white Latinx people, and that he was acutely aware of the backgrounds of his peers since he says he is always on the lookout for fellow Indigenous students. In excerpt 140, Mundo (p4) details that he did not have Indigenous peers in his SHL course. However, he was able to meet the only Indigenous Mexicans at his university that he was aware of, though they did not get to take courses together as they were in different years.

- 140.** “No, I don't- no I don't think so. Um, yeah, I don't think there were any- yeah, cuz I mean, of course, I'm always- I'm always thinking about that. And I would have- I would- I would, of course, be thinking about it in that class, especially because those themes did come up. Even- yeah, those themes, they come up, so of course, I would be thinking about it. And I did think about it, but there was nothing that would be like, oh, like this set me off. And I also, I know a couple other Indigenous Mexicans at [university name], there's like two other in my grade that I know of. And I think they would have at least mentioned them to me. And so because there was no overlap in any of that information that I knew, I was never-

I- there was nothing like for me to set that off, or there was nothing that like, would make me be like, hmm are they?" [p419414]

Conversely, both instructors mentioned that they were able to teach Indigenous students at their respective institutions. Gabriela (p2) highlighted that although she has met and taught Indigenous students, not many of them identify as Indigenous when they come to the SHL classroom. She explains more in excerpt 141.

141. "I don't think I've had very many heritage students that identified as Indigenous I think a lot of them recognize that they have Indigenous roots they don't necessarily identify it, but they will talk about that you know, in terms of colonialism and in terms of- but a lot of them, most of them don't admit" [p29721]

However, as noted previously, they did not get to teach alongside other U.S. Latinxs often, much less Indigenous instructors. It is also important to continue to consider the concealment practices previously mentioned (see Machado-Casas, 2009, 2012), as it is also possible that there may have been students or colleagues that chose to conceal their Indigeneity in these courses.

4.8.1 Theme eight: Tensions between taking/teaching SHL courses and being Indigenous

The identification of fellow Indigenous peers related directly to how they chose to identify themselves in their SHL classes. The student participants in this study took different approaches to mentioning their Indigeneity. Tsitsiki (p1) was one of the participants who explicitly told her class that she identified as Indigenous and said that the fact that the course itself mentioned Indigeneity led her to making this decision in excerpt 142.

- 142.** “yeah I think for one of them, one of the reasons why I identify as an Indigenous I think it was your class and then the 316 or something where they do talk a lot about, the Indigenous communities and there was other class that I took later on I think it was the literature class that talked about the Indigenous communities, and especially the Native Americans in Arizona, and everything.” [p15905]

Elsa (p3) was another student that also clearly mentioned being Indigenous in her SHL class, and she says that it led to being asked about her Indigenous language skills.

- 143.** “I guess the conversation that led up on that was talking about like my family and if they spoke the language and kind of like the reasons as to why I don't and every time I bring it up, someone always asks me to like say a word. But I say th- the basics or the things that I know.” [p36501]

Although Caro's (p7) class did not bring up Indigenous content that allowed her to segue into mentioning her own Indigenous identity, she shared during her sharing circle that she still made sure to bring it up on her own in her SHL class.

- 144.** “I feel like again, I grew up very, like proud, like, my mom always instilled that, you know, we're very, like, we're Indigenous, and we should be proud. So like, whenever I have a chance to, I will. I will talk about it. I will insert myself.” [p79627]

On the other hand, there were participants that did not explicitly identify themselves as Indigenous to their SHL instructor or classmates. Mundo (p4) was one of these participants as evidenced in excerpt 145.

- 145.** “yeah, there were- there were times when we talked about indigeneity, or Indigenous people within Latin America, but I never was like, okay, me person-, from my personal experience, like I never, I don't- I never did that.” [p48621]

As noted in previous excerpts, Mundo (p4) was in a course that in fact brought up Indigeneity and even had a moment where the people in the class assumed that no Indigenous person was in the room. Additionally, Mundo explained that although he did not use the term Indigenous, he did mention to his teacher and peers that he is from

Oaxaca and even did a presentation on Oaxaca. In some ways, Mundo (p4) might have expected his teacher and classmates to deduce that he might be Indigenous given that Oaxaca has the most Indigenous communities in all of Mexico (see Schissel et al., 2021). At the same time, his decision to not clarify their assumptions about his identity was seemingly intentional.

When Mundo was asked to elaborate on his decision to not make his Indigeneity completely clear to his instructor and peers, he made his perspective clear in excerpt 146.

146. “I think it's uncomfortable to discuss about some of these topics, without anyone there who actually knows that much about it. And so I think, I think I would prefer a more historical perspective, which is what she did at the beginning. But then you also have the problem that- then your own- you're kind of putting Indigenous people in the past, which is a problem. But if you think about them in the present, but you don't really have someone that really understands, I mean, I guess if, you know, if she had like, a very- if she had like really worked through a module, and she felt you know, I don't know, I think it's a very awkward- I think it's an awkward situation, because I do think that it's important to think of it in a contemporary context, but I just don't know how- how a teacher would go about doing that properly. I think the movie was like a pretty decent, like, jump off point... um to think about it in a contemporary setting, but I just don't know- I don't know how else. I also think it kind of messes with like the message of the- because this is a Spanish heritage course, you know, you have this idea like, you know, this like, you know, you have this idea that like it has to do with culture and that I mean- heritage is in the name, you know? But then when you think about like Indigenous people and languages, there's conflict with Spanish. There- a lot of conflict with Spanish. And so it kind of, I think it kind of messes up the narrative that most classes are pushing.” [p412012]

As shown in excerpt 146, Mundo's decision was based on many factors. Some of the factors include the course content, the way Indigenous communities are framed, the people in the actual classroom, and the contentious relationship between Spanish and Indigenous languages. In addition to these factors, Mundo (p4) notes that this part of his identity is personal, and he does not expect his non-Indigenous instructor and non-

Indigenous peers to be interested in his Indigeneity. He explains this in excerpt 147

below.

- 147.** “And so then when you consider- and when you consider, you know, this class, I think, I don't- I don't want to- I don't think I'm interested in necessarily teaching or like talking about these experiences, because they are complicated and they are personal and most of these things they're just not gonna understand. And they- and then that's also assuming that they would care. And I don't see the point in talking about something that- or like trying to explain something very personal that people may just not care about. I just- that doesn't- that seems so unnecessary in that context. That's also why I don't think I ever brought up anything, yeah, anything personal.” [p410952]

Like Mundo, Mónica (p5) mentioned during her sharing circle that she also would tend to tell people she is from Oaxaca without explicitly saying she is Indigenous. She explains the reasoning behind this conscious choice in excerpt 148.

- 148.** “No, I wouldn't, I did- usually, I would just also specify, like, all my family's from Oaxaca, which people will sometimes make the deduction for the same reason that it's just a lot of indigenous communities in Oaxaca. But I wouldn't specifically say that, just because I also feel like, just, there's this kind of perception of what an Indigenous person looks like. And I didn't want to have to defend myself why maybe I don't fit that perception of it. And at the same time, also not have- to not justify it, not have to justify it, and then at the same time, not have to share my personal experience, because that's, from what, what I grew up with, and I share that with my family or with my community, and I don't need to put it on display for a class.” [p59802]

It is evident that for Mundo and Mónica their preference is to share that they are from Oaxaca and allow people to make their deductions since their Indigeneity is a more personal topic for them. At the same time, it is clear that Mónica (p5) is not interested in proving her Indigeneity or being a representative for her community, in the way that Elsa (p3) mentioned she is sometimes asked to do through language skills (see excerpt 143 above). Meanwhile, Karina (p8) was a participant that would also mainly highlight that she was from Oaxaca in her SHL classes but did so without mentioning being Indigenous

because she thought nobody else would understand. In some ways, this is similar to Mundo (p4) but in a way it is not since she was not even aware that other Indigenous people existed outside of her own community.

In excerpt 149, Karina (p8) explains this revelation when her teacher started talking about Indigenous groups in her SHL class.

149. “I just remember her talking about like, different indigenous groups. And I was like, [gasps] like, oh, my goodness, there is more than just my little family, my little Oaxacan family. And that's also I will say, when I realized there is, like, I felt like that validated my identity more as an indigenous person. Because I would never say before that, that I was indigenous, because I thought that that was just my family. And just a thing that like, something that only like people from Oaxaca were. And I didn't think that there was a bigger, greater community of indigenous people. But after the fact, knowing that, then I was like, that validates me a little more, but I'm not- we're not the only ones.” [p86609]

The instructors on the other hand would typically mention their Indigeneity and how it impacted their own linguistic development. One of the instructors, Gabriela (p2), highlights the complexity of her identity and how it can be relevant to what her SHL students' experience in excerpt 150.

150. “And it depends on what the students bring, right? But I often talk about my experience. How I'm not seen as being maybe Indigenous enough because I don't speak the language or because I'm not affiliated with this and then we try to find potentially context where other people have had that too, like maybe they're not seen as being, I don't know, Latino enough because their Spanish isn't good enough, so that we kind of see the parallels in a way. But without- we're always recognizing you know, some people have it worse than others, but we have to hear the sides of everyone. So I think that's helped a little bit cus I've had students who are very monolingual Spanish speakers. Who are not- and they're also fair skinned- they're not Indigenous either they're not- and they identify as heritage speakers or Latinos. And they don't see that connection, cus they haven't experienced that so we talk about privilege, we talk about accents, we talk about language use, we talk about, you know, trying to find kind of connections and under- trying to put ourselves in other people's shoes in a way, or at least plant the seeds, right?” [p29615]

Helen (p6), the other instructor, takes a similar approach to Gabriela (p2) by also talking about her Indigeneity and how it relates to Spanish. She explains her approach in excerpt 151 below.

- 151.** “I also talk about Indigeneity right and it's influenced with Spanish and my Spanish. And so I'll say like our book uses a lot of Spain Spanish right? As most textbooks do. And I'll say my Spanish isn't like this. I did have a student- and I do it pretty much daily, I'm like here are the words I use and these are correct and they're influenced by this- by these languages right? Which are Indigenous. A student complained on rate my professor.com, which it got removed. I don't know who helped get it removed. But she said she's a great teacher, except for she's Mexican. So it's not Spain Spanish.” [p69432]

As evidenced by Helen's comment above, some students were reluctant to even accept Mexican Spanish in the first place, much less learn about what parts of it come from Indigenous languages.

Nonetheless, during the second sharing circle Gabriela (p2) reflected on the comments made by Mundo and Mónica about their decisions to mention their Indigeneity in their SHL courses. She begins by noting that SHL instructors should first be trained in a way that does not put Indigenous students in a sort of spotlight when bringing up Indigenous content. She details her perspective in excerpt 152.

- 152.** “You know, when instructors are being prepared or trained to teach a heritage class or being given a curriculum for a heritage class, I think it's important that- to explicitly tell instructors, like make sure you don't make your students become the show and tellers of your class, like make sure that when you talk about these topics, you're not looking, you know, for singling people out or making anyone share specifically, I think that's important because I think it can very easily turn into that, especially if instructors lack that awareness or lack that preparation, it can become very, you know, where are you from? Are you indigenous? Are you this? Are you that? And then, which is not where we want to go with this.” [p29855]

Gabriela (p2) made a follow-up comment to this point by reiterating that she does make her identity clear to others, though she has not had to defend her Indigeneity nor be a representative for her people like Mónica and others noted.

- 153.** “I always introduce myself as part indigenous part. I always say, *fronteriza*, border person, part Mexican part indigenous, born and raised in the United States. I speak you know, and then I- my last name, and although people think it's not, they don't know where it's from, I always introduce myself explicitly using the word indigenous always. And I've been very fortunate that I've never been asked, you know, made to- as the spokesperson for anything. I think that's great that I've never been made- put in that position where I'd have to be like, I'm not the spokesperson, I've never had that. But I always do say it as an instructor, as a student as a- I make it a point, always to say it.” [p29942]

During her sharing circle, Helen (p6) explains that while she does already tend to mention her Indigeneity, she also brings it up when people make offensive comments.

- 154.** “But if someone says something offensive, then I use myself as an example, right? Because I think people think that indigenous people don't exist, or that it doesn't impact Spanish language or Spanish language teaching or so anyway, I only bring it up, if I'm looking to be argumentative and correct someone.” [p69708]

It is important to note that Helen (p6) brought this up while discussing this theme of directly or indirectly identifying as Indigenous, but she did not necessarily say she uses herself as an example to combat an offensive comment in the classroom.

Conflicts between their Indigeneity and the SHL course

As these conversations on identifying themselves as Indigenous developed, some participants highlighted clear moments when their own Indigeneity conflicted with taking/teaching their SHL courses. These discussions were particularly relevant for the instructors since it was part of research question three about whether they have had to adjust their pedagogy due to conflicts with their own knowledge/perspectives as

Indigenous people. The responses to that question show that they did not feel like they had to modify materials or practices in the SHL classroom due to any discrepancies with their Indigeneity. However, the fact that they are both Indigenous Mexicans and teach Spanish while knowing the history and ramifications of colonization on their families and not speaking their Indigenous languages did weigh heavily on both instructors. For example, in excerpt 155, Gabriela (p2) reflects on the conflicting reality of identifying as Indigenous and finding decolonial topics important while continuing to teach and defend Spanish.

155. “it's very important for us to talk about, especially when it comes to decolonial just- just ideologically speaking and- and it's sad because it becomes more of defending Spanish you know, in a place where English is dominant, but I think it's the same concept right of trying to fight back and not assimilate so it's all these students are trying to reclaim their Spanish, which is the language that was imposed here and now we've lost, you know a lot of Indigenous languages, sometimes I think about that I'm like here I am defending this colonial language of these people that did such you know, such horrors and such horrible things to my family and to- and here I am defending right? The colonial language and fighting for its rights in the US like I- I'm like that's sad like if someone with my last name, teaching Spanish, defending Spanish from English in this space like it's weird.” [p28006]

As a student, Mundo (p4) notes how his instructor made an emphasis on learning Spanish as part of the students' cultures and future generations, though she did not acknowledge that the students may also have other heritage languages in their families. Mundo (p4) explains that this lack of acknowledgement is a source of conflict between Spanish and Indigenous languages for SHL learners in excerpt 156.

156. “I remember the professor saying, like, you know, this is an important class, because, you know, you're, you know, you're learning Spanish. And this is something that's, you know, part of your culture, and you'll pass it on to, like, you know, you know, it's something that you want to, like, be able to talk about with, like, your older family members, and maybe, you know, you know, future

generations and stuff. I don't know if she said that part specific- but she did mention like being able to like communicate with older family members and stuff. And so like, the importance that, you know, Spanish plays in that, which I would agree with, but I don't think I think when you think about indigenous languages, there's a conflict there or indigenous people, the conflict of Spanish, you know?" [p42100]

The excerpt above also reiterates the point that for Mundo, Spanish is not the only language that matters in his family. Turning back to the instructors, Helen (p6) also highlights the clash between her Indigenous identity and teaching SHL courses, as shown in excerpt 157.

157. "it's problematic for a lot of reasons, which I'm sure you know, but one of the things that I tell them is like so the language that my family spoke is P'urhépecha. I don't speak it because it's been colonized by Spanish. And so I've been colonized by two languages. So where does heritage language begin?" [p68445]

Caro (p7) was another student that mentioned the conflict between her Indigeneity and Spanish classes, and even proactively provided some pedagogical suggestions in her reflections in excerpt 158 below.

158. "Yeah, I think it is pretty important just to talk about. I think it's, um, I mean, it would be like history related too. How like, um, I want to say, like, indigenous people were forced to speak Spanish, almost. Like, I mean, when they were colonized, they had like, no choice, and then they would get beaten. Like, if they weren't able to speak the Spanish- speak the language, and even like, my mom tells me sometimes that, like, they were not allowed to speak in Zapoteco, because they would get like, you know, hit. So I think it's very important to also, like, just, when in those classes to kind of just remember like, that some- like, some people were forced to learn the language, not necessarily like, at their own will." [p77249]

In addition, Caro (p7) mentions that within these conversations with her family on the ramifications of colonization, she also makes connections to issues beyond language as evidenced in excerpt 159.

- 159.** “and I think about that a lot, too. Sometimes I'm like, why? I think- yeah, like, just like, the Catholic Church, too. It's kind of like a topic that like, is a little iffy for me, it's like, why am I learning something that like, like, my ancestors were like, killed for, and like, being forced sometimes. But at the same time, I think it's like, this, just like, part of like, the history now. And it is very important to still talk about that kind of- how it came to be, I guess?”[p77324]

Decision to incorporate Indigenous content in SHL class

During these conversations on being explicit about their Indigenous identities in their SHL classes and the conflicts that they have noted, we also discussed whether Indigenous content should be incorporated into an SHL class. Mundo (p4) said this question was one he had been reflecting on since his first individual interview, and noted the following during his sharing circle:

- 160.** “I've been reflecting on this, like the need- I think it's complicated to have a conversation about Indigeneity in a Spanish heritage learners class like the like, mmm, like I think there's a conversation like- there it should be had. But I also don't know how you would go about it because I think it's still like an uncomfortable- I think it could still be an uncomfortable space because of what the first one, like the first quote mentioned, like Spanish is still- it's a colonial language. And so it's like, I don't know, I've been trying to think through that.” [p48515]

In that same sharing circle, Gabriela (p2) agreed with Mundo on the complexity of incorporating certain topics in SHL classes, especially given her experience with the instructors in her own program. She highlights how other critical topics have also proven difficult for instructors to incorporate into their courses in excerpt 161.

- 161.** “I work with a lot of instructors of heritage courses and something we discuss is do you bring up this idea of the sociopolitical status of Spanish in the US? Do you bring up language subordination, language discrimination? So I know that those are different topics. But when it comes to very sensitive topics, I know instructors feel very uncomfortable, especially if it's not their area of study, or if they're not part of that community, they feel very uncomfortable leading discussions with any topic that is sensitive.” [p28939]

In a follow-up to this initial comment on discussing sensitive topics, Gabriela (p2) goes on to question what the goals of SHL pedagogy are and if they are aligned with addressing sensitive issues. Her reflections on this are detailed in excerpt 162 below.

- 162.** “What is the what is the goal of a heritage language course of a heritage language program? Is it just to learn Spanish or is it a space to be critical and talk about sensitive issues? And then it comes to how do the instructors feel about leading that? Are they prepared to lead that? Because it can go both ways. It could go really good when you have that experience and you feel, Oh, I can talk about my Indigenous roots here, because my instruct- instructor is someone that I feel safe with, or someone that is, you know, educated enough to where we can have this great discussion? Or is it a space where I'm going to be discriminated, where I'm going to feel uncomfortable? So it's- it's very tricky. I don't have an answer for this. But I think instructor preparation is a big part of it, of whether these topics get touched on or not. And I think even being from the community, you can have people who are from the community still, you know, putting down that same community. So I don't know what the answer is.” [p29046]

During that same sharing circle after Mundo and Gabriela's comments, Mónica weighed in with her own point of view as a student, as shown in excerpt 163.

- 163.** “in terms of like a student perspective, I also probably would not share my experience, because then it just becomes, in my head, like this sort of, like, show and tell for the moment, you know, just kind of like, oh, yeah, we have like, an- someone that has indigenous roots, why don't you share, like your experience and, or, kind of just like, the pleasure for everyone else to hear in that moment, and then it's never discussed again, in the future, or it's not related to the course or then people I feel would also perceive me as a spokesperson. And, and I, I was always very, like, cautious to not be that, especially because my experience is a reflection of someone who still was born in LA, born and raised in LA, and, you know, I do have ties to the community, but I don't know their experience in terms of like living, you know, in Oaxaca, or like, also, like, my experience is unique. And so I don't want my experience to be perceived as like, Oh, everybody experiences that, or everybody goes through that. So that's why I also refrained from talking about that, in any course or any class.” [p59221]

In sum, it seemed like the participants from the first sharing circle, noted just above, were at least in agreement that if Indigeneity were to be included in SHL education, it must be

done in a well-planned manner that does not force students to showcase their own identities. Mundo (p4) reiterated this point in his written reflection below.

From talking with the other participants, I think we all felt that forcing the Indigenous students to speak on these topics in class can often times have harmful repercussions. It is not their duty to handle these very complex and possibly exhausting topics. Even now, when I reflect on my own experience, I am not sure how I could have brought it up with other classmates. One participant pointed out that they were taking important steps at an administrative level to facilitate these conversations, and I think this first step may be the most necessary. Putting the pressure on these students seems unfair to me, and I think having a voice of authority at least initiate these conversations, could be something very powerful. (Mundo, p4)

A similar idea was noted by Helen (p6) in the second sharing circle. She says that while she believes that Indigeneity should be included in SHL classes, it should be done without viewing it through a white lens. Helen's (p6) point is noted in excerpt 164 below.

164. “So yes, I would like to see it showcased. But even when it's showcased, right now, it's showcased very much through a white lens. But I don't even have people realizing that there is a white lens that there is a white gaze. So before I can get them to change their gaze, I need them to acknowledge what their gaze is, I think?” [p69736]

On the other hand, Karina (p8) was one of the student participants that had the opportunity to learn more about Indigeneity and other communities like hers in her SHL class, and she shares how including these topics impacted her in excerpt 165 below.

165. “But it wasn't until then that I really began to understand that, I always thought or I guess I was- I was never aware of other Indigenous cultures like that existed even in Mexico or in like other Spanish speaking countries. Like, I was pretty shocked to find that there's like other indigenous cultures out there. So to me is when I reclaimed I feel like I reclaimed my indigenous identity and really understood and wanted to know more about what that was really about and how that fits into my life and what that means for me. So I really took an interest in linguistics for that reason as well when I was in college.” [p81010]

As such, at least in Karina's (p8) case, learning more about Indigeneity and its impact on Spanish in her SHL had a positive impact on her personal and academic development. Accordingly, the participants in this study were seemingly in agreement that Indigenous communities should be brought up in some way in the SHL classroom. However, most participants asserted that the incorporation of Indigeneity should be done carefully, and that the positionality of the instructor/fellow students should be taken into consideration. These perspectives directly answer the second and third research questions on whether the participants see a need for including Indigenous/decolonial content in their SHL courses. Their more specific pedagogical suggestions on what should be included in these courses can be found in the following section.

4.2 Pedagogical implications: Reflections and Suggestions on Indigeneity in SHL

Education

Each of the eight participants was asked at the end of their individual interviews and during the sharing circles to share any suggestions they would like to share for improving SHL courses. More specifically, they were asked how they might improve the way Indigeneity is brought up in the course and how it might be better represented in the course content. Although not every participant could come up with concrete ideas, the participants that did usually had already experienced having Indigenous content in their SHL classes. Their ideas are organized according to the main suggestions they provided below.

History on race and colonization

The most commonly highlighted pedagogical suggestion throughout the *testimonios* and sharing circles were to better represent the history of Indigenous peoples and how Spanish colonization has directly impacted current conceptions of race, language, culture, and more. Tsitsiki (p1) says that SHL students take SHL courses to learn more about themselves and their histories, and if they were to be taught the truth, they would know more about Indigenous communities. She details this point and how her professor of Mexican American history helped her understand these points better in excerpt 166.

- 166.** “they don't really know that we have like Indigenous roots, so I think if you like, there's a way like maybe even before.. um, studying everything else, like the colonial period basically *cuando*, you know *la conquista*, I felt like- I felt like that that's very important to know, maybe they can incorporate that in some way somehow just because um- I feel like one of the reasons why a lot of students take Spanish classes are because they want to know more about their identity, they want to know more about like who they are, where they come from that was one of the reasons why I took Spanish just to learn more about everything, so I feel like Indigenous- I want to say it how my professor said it, though my Afrolatino one, he said, basically, you know. Mexico native- you know natives and Spain, like had a baby and like *así se hizo México*, so I feel like a lot of people don't know that they have that so, that part of them, and I feel like it would be neat if they knew. *No discriminarían a la comunidad indígena*. [p16553]

Elsa (p3) was another participant that said she would like to see more Indigenous history in these courses, as shown in excerpt 167.

- 167.** “it's important to continue telling the stories of indigenous people, because they have been here for a very long time. And I feel like they have expanded into like, a lot of different cultures, for example, like Chicanos and like, Latinos and Hispanics, and just people who don't necessarily, like identify as indigenous. But I feel like that's kind of the root of how things began. So I feel like that's important.” [p36811]

Indigenous people/Native Americans not a part of the past

As a follow-up point to the inclusion of Indigenous history, both Tsitsiki and Elsa also mention that these communities should not be regarded as being just a part of the past. Elsa (p3) makes this point clear in the excerpt below.

- 168.** “I feel like it'd be cool like to not, like- not to not- but to talk about their history, but also talk about like, how um talk about those groups in present times. And like, their lives today. And how they kept their traditions and how they've changed them.” [p36652]

Tsitsiki (p1) also noted that the languages of Indigenous people should be explicitly taught as being languages and not dialects. Also, she highlighted that people need to understand that there are numerous Indigenous communities across the Americas.

- 169.** “as long as they talk about you know Native American communities, Indigenous communities exist, I think that that would be a great start, giving- acknowledging that you know their- the language is a language. It's not a *dialecto*, you know, the differences and really just talking briefly like, Oh, you know there's such you know Indigenous communities in this region like Mexico and then like Perú. I know Brazil has a lot of Indigenous communities *también* just knowing the fact that indigenous communities exist in America, not just like in Mexico *y también expandir esa idea de que o* are like oh it's just Mexico because it's not just Mexico. Like Spanish is not just Mexico [laughs] yeah like *hay más allá*. [p16757]

These two facts are ones Tsitsiki was able to learn in her own SHL courses and by taking the Mexican American history class in college. As Kovats Sánchez (2019, 2020, 2022) has found, higher education in conjunction with affirming college courses were crucial for her Indigenous participants' identity formation. The participants in Kovats Sánchez's (2019) dissertation also expressed frustration with Indigenous communities as being framed as a part of the past. It appears the same conclusion can be drawn for some of the participants in the present study. In addition, the SHL courses that incorporated Indigenous content were among the affirming courses they were able to take that played a

part in their Indigenous identity formation. Thus, at least for participants such as Tsitsiki (p1) and Karina (p8), taking an SHL course positively impacted the way they viewed their own Indigenous identities and languages. It is worth noting that both Tsitsiki (p1) and Karina (p8) were able to take these courses within programs that consider themselves as being rooted in CLA foundations (see Loza & Beaudrie, 2021 for an overview of CLA perspectives in SHL).

Content from Indigenous authors, artists, and experts

Another suggestion that was provided was to focus on the knowledge and work of Indigenous people themselves. Mundo (p3) points out that there are various Indigenous authors that publish in Spanish, which means their work could definitely be incorporated into an SHL course. He shares his point more clearly in excerpt 170 below.

170. “I think there definitely can be, because I think most indigenous scholars within Latin America do write in Spanish, like maybe they don't- maybe that's not the first language they write in. Or maybe that's not the predominant, but most, most scholars, most indigenous scholars within Latin America, write in Spanish. That's not to say that they specialize in it. But why would- why would you not present their work? Or why would you not consider their work in a Spanish class? It's still Spanish. They're still contributing to this body of work if- even if it's not central. I don't think it has to be central. So yes, I do think that there's definitely space I think that the- like could the department do more? Yes.” [p412927]

Mundo (p3) mentioned this point again during his sharing circle, but this time he added the fact that Indigenous people are particularly knowledgeable about questions of race and history.

171. “I know that there's like a lot of indigenous scholars within Latin America whose main work or the main language they, like produce work in is in Spanish, who have a very good unders-, like, have a very, like an incredible understanding of what, like race and history looks like in their context.” [p4100356]

Upon sharing that, Mundo was asked to clarify a bit more about this topic on Indigenous knowledge. He clarified what he meant in excerpt 172.

- 172.** “I guess I'm specifically thinking about Mexico and what like, and what racism looks like there and has looked like for the past 100 years has been systemic. I feel like those kinds of voices could definitely be centered in a Spanish heritage learners class, I think, you know, the material is there. And I don't know if that would necessarily require like someone speaking out, speaking on their personal experience, but like, I think that's, at least that's the only solution that I can like comes to mind off the top of my head.” [p410425]

Based on these excerpts and the ones on Mundo's (p4) perspective on centering Indigeneity in an SHL class, it becomes clear that if Indigeneity is to be included, Mundo believes the content should come from Indigenous people themselves. However, that does not necessarily mean it should be an Indigenous student in the actual SHL class, since being forced to be the representative for Indigenous people and/or being made to share their personal identities is not something that Mundo and others in this study would be interested in. In addition to Indigenous authors, Elsa (p3) also suggested incorporating Indigenous music, like Helen (p6) currently does in her class.

- 173.** “Maybe like music and not just like music, but like music in Mixteco. Like, there's also people who do that. And maybe like, a small like, how do I say? A small video of like, someone teaching like the audience Mixteco and [overlap] how to pronounce it-” [p37901]

Solidarity with other minoritized communities

Another specific suggestion made was to tie issues of Indigeneity with issues of other minoritized racial groups, such as African Americans and Afro-Latinx people. Tsitsiki (p1) said that her Mexican American professor, who was African American, was able to make connections between Indigenous communities of the Americas and African

Americans. In excerpt 174, Tsitsiki (p1) explains that this would be a useful perspective within SHL courses as well.

- 174.** “found it very useful and what my professor also tied in was the um, slavery, ... the way we see slavery and you know that could have been us that could have been the Indigenous communities so... *Sí fue y no fue a la misma vez, pero* I feel like that has to do a lot, too, so I feel like someone who's knowledgeable in slavery *también* in the movement .. we're minority group *también*. Unfortunately, you know the African American community, eh, you know we're down there with them, so I feel like that's really important to tie that into.” [p17745]

Additionally, Helen mentioned extending the conversation on race to also include the African diaspora, as she believes that there is more erasure of Afro-Latinx people than Indigenous people in the Americas. This would undoubtedly include Afro-Indigenous Latinx people who also face multiple layers of erasure within the Latinx population.

Thus, when Helen (p6) was asked to elaborate more on how and why she includes Afro-Latinx artists in her SHL courses, she provided her reflections in excerpt 175 below.

- 175.** “Because I think there's more erasure of it. Um, there's erasure of both for sure. But I think if you ask people like, Are there brown people in the Americas? They'll say yes. And if you ask them, if there are black people, there'll be- maybe some will think there are in Brazil? [laughs] And then I'll be like, no, there's black people everywhere.” [p69550]

Language testing

Another specific suggestion Helen (p6) brought up is language testing. This topic was one that particularly impacted Helen's education as evidenced in the first four themes. While she has been able to overcome and resist the many ways in which the educational system in the U.S. attempted to erase her identity and make her monolingual, she continues to see the gaps in how people's language competency is tested. As such,

Helen (p6) says that when it comes to placement for SHL learners and their language testing, there are important changes that should be made.

- 176.** “well one of the things that absolutely needs to be incorporated that they are going to start doing is when people sign up to take the language test is to ask them if they've had exposures to other languages at home or in the community, so that we can identify heritage language speakers, not just of Spanish but of other languages.” [p69852]

Community/interdepartmental collaboration

The participants were also asked if they saw a need for collaborations between their SHL class and their community and/or other departments. Gabriela (p2), one of the instructors, said since her university is geographically very close to local tribes, that it would make sense to have people from the tribes share their knowledge with the university students. She said that this collaboration would make sense given that some of the instructors in her current department, the Education department, are also Indigenous.

- 177.** “I would like to see more collaboration ... like the Pascua Yaqui tribe is right here, you know, couple miles from the university like making connections with people in those communities there's a lot of Indigenous instructors in the college of ED. So making connections with them, and you know, seeing, especially the ones that are there's a lot of pre-service teachers that will go back to work, you know, in K through 12 settings at the reservation... I think that would be great to talk about to talk with people that are local people that can come and share... to do history, like the history of the land, the history of- I would love to see that, more collaboration.” [p28420]

Elsa (p3) also saw the value in having local community collaborations and felt this was particularly important as many of local agricultural workers she grew up with were also Indigenous, yet their stories are not told. Her reflection on this is noted in excerpt 178 below.

- 178.** “I feel like, yes, definitely because... maybe to other people, they might think that there's like, not many of us left. But I feel like I grew up in an environmen- in an

environment where like, there is- where I saw that there was so many of us and like, like, for example, when I lived in the agricultural camps, literally the majority of them were indigenous. And I feel like they're overlooked. And their stories aren't told. So, yes, definitely.” [p37552]

In addition to telling the stories of the Indigenous people in her community, Elsa (p3) also thought it would be interesting to talk about Indigenous food, as Helen (p6) does in her class. Elsa (p3) says that teaching others about Indigenous food would be a good idea and surprise people who do not know about it in excerpt 179.

179. “I can't think of a specific collaboration with like, a specific organization right now. But I feel like it'd be really cool to talk about... the foods. I know, it's very like, simple and stuff, but I feel like the way in how- the way they make food is just, I don't know, its shock- It's like, surprising to me, or a shock to me, because... it's like such a long process. And I feel like it'd be really cool for people to actually see like, that process of like, making tortillas, for example.” [p37744]

Meanwhile, other participants were not sure about what types of collaborations they would suggest, but that it seemed like a good idea overall. Karina (p8) is one of the students that shared this sentiment during her testimonio, as shown in excerpt 180 below.

180. “I never really thought about it that way, but that would be really good to see.” [p89500]

Difficulties of implementing changes to/collaborations with SHL courses

While many participants seemed interested in the idea of collaboration in and outside of the university and changing SHL courses, they also often expressed that they know changes are not always easy to implement. As an example, Mónica (p5) notes how it may be difficult to be truly inclusive of different Indigenous communities.

181. “it's the how exactly I'm not really sure. Like, it's very difficult because I don't want to- it's hard when you can't group like, a big group together, like, you can't- you can't- and I think that's what becomes a problem, right? You tell everyone like all Mexicans and Mexican culture, but everywhere is so different. It's so diverse, that I don't know how we can successfully do that, to be inclusive of

every group of every- because even in Oaxaca, you have like, in terms of indigeneity, you have like, the Zapotec region that you have the Mixteco region and then you have like, the region that borders with, that Veracruz, which is another group that I don't remember the name of. So even then, like it's very different.” [p58414]

Caro (p7), also from Los Angeles with family from Oaxaca like Mónica, shared similar sentiments. Her perspective on what collaborations might look like and including different Indigenous groups in SHL content is highlighted in excerpt 182 below.

182. “Well, I think everything's like, intertwined. Or it should be at least like, I think, to be intersectional with, throughout the, you know, the whole curriculum, I think it's important, especially like now, with everything that has been going on, I think it's very important to just respect each other and respect each other's cultures. So I think in order to do that, people do need to learn about other cultures and, and specifically, like, yeah, Indigenous people. I think, in order to learn, we can't really- I don't know how to explain- there's not like just one culture that you can really like, learn from, I mean, indigeneity there's folk from different like countries, I mean, it's going to be different everywhere. So I don't really know if there's a way to just like, centralize it all.” [p78136]

The participants also recognized that making changes to an already established SHL course would not be an easy task. Similar to her comments above, Mónica (p5) believes that being truly inclusive and intersectional can end up being difficult for professors.

183. “I just- I think it's difficult also, I mean, obviously to this intersectionality of like so many identities right to, to put pressure on like professors or like courses to like, integrate a little bit of everything and still do it justice.” [p510504]

As a follow-up to her point above, Mónica (p5) says that the challenge of doing Indigenous content justice in an SHL course is likely one of the reasons it is not normally included in an SHL course.

184. “And maybe that's why it's not talked about because to do it, I think I would prefer for the topic to not come up as opposed to like Oh let's brush upon it and then never dive into, like, you know, dive more into it and give it like, kind of the justice and conversations that it deserves. So with any identity, right?” [p510534]

Overall, Gabriela (p2) noted in her sharing circle that she believes these changes have a lot to do with how instructors talk about how their students speak. She shares how language and identity have always been linked and provides the situation one student faced with an instructor that was not accepting of language variation in excerpt 185.

185. “And most- most of the disrespect comes from that just criticizing the way people speak, or telling them that there's a correct way to speak. Because those are just social ideas that exist, but they're not linguistic realities. And, and it's so tied to your identity, right? The way you speak the words you use the the type of the phrases you use, like those are very personal. I know what one student got points taken off. And, like a comment from her teacher because she called her her. She had a word that she used for her grandma, her grandmother and her grandfather, like an Indigenous word. I don't remember which one it was. She called them that. And in her writing, she would call them that. And the teacher said, Tienes que escribir abuela y abuelo, no uses esta palabra porque es informal, like a heritage teacher told her that, and the girl was like, Well, I guess because this is a Spanish class so I'm supposed to use like, No, you use whatever the hell you want to use. It's agency, you know, it's not- We can learn- let's learn all the synonyms that exist for grandma and grandpa está bien pero let your students have the agency to use the words they want to use and to use language in the ways they want to use if they choose to.” [p211238]

In conclusion, each of the participants shared that there are indeed changes that need to be made within SHL Education, though many of them recognized that this would not be an easy task. Some of the SHL students seemed more willing to forgive the lack of Indigenous content in SHL courses, but the instructors were expectedly more vocal about the changes they would like to see. Nonetheless, all the participants most interested in seeing more Indigenous content in their SHL courses also asserted that this inclusion must be done in a respectful and fully planned manner.

4.3 Considerations on Allyship, Answerability, and Positionality

The final part of the interviews and sharing circles was dedicated to considerations on allyship. This concept was implemented given the fact that research

and pedagogy designed for SHL courses is usually developed by non-Indigenous people. Each person was asked to consider what this term means for them, what it might look like to establish a sense of allyship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Latinx people, and if they had any thoughts on handling anti-Indigenous sentiment. The inclusion of addressing anti-Indigenous sentiment was added after the participants shared moments where they had already encountered discrimination. Since they had already had experience dealing with these types of issues, they were asked if they would like to share how they handled it and if there was something they would do or say differently in response to the discrimination they faced.

Tsitsiki, one of the participants that mentioned facing anti-Indigenous discrimination from mainly other non-Indigenous Mexicans, shared the following about how she would respond to that discrimination now.

186. “I’m not better than them, so I don’t think that I would say anything I feel like I’m more like my actions towards them and just like, you know be nice and kind to them, para *recibir eso también* and not like, basically just like tell them don’t say rude comments.” [p17053]

As a follow-up to this idea, she was asked if she had any suggestions for non-Indigenous people interested in being allies of Indigenous peers/communities. In excerpt 187,

Tsitsiki (p1) provides some of her ideas for potential future allies.

187. “yeah I feel like they can do research or take a class or something that way they learn more about like the true history and why you know, *existen* um, Indigenous communities, because that was the first- first community *que ha existido aquí* so I feel like basically you know get educated I guess that would be the best thing and then that way I can probably like lead them to like resources like look.” [p17148]

In excerpt 187, Tsitsiki clearly details the importance of combatting the myth that Indigenous communities are part of the past and even mythical, as is commonly

perpetuated among Chicana/Latina people and in Spanish textbooks (Holley-Kline, 2013; Quijano, 2000; Pulido, 2018). When Elsa (p3) was asked about what she would like other non-Indigenous people to know or consider to be allies, she offered the reflection in excerpt 188.

188. “I feel like um, well, in my background, my family, there's situations that they... like, they do things that might seem like weird, or like, different, very different to like other people. For example, like, the way they wash clothes, the way they carry babies, the way they make food and like the crops that they grow, and like the reasons as to why they have so many animals, like just being open to the idea that that is a life. And that it's not like- and not see it as like, like I said, just not see it as something different and act like it's different. Because at the end of the day, we all have like, different lives. But being open to be part of that as well.” [p37405]

Conversely, Mundo (p4) commented on the people he knew that were already researching topics on Oaxaca and that might consider themselves allies. Mundo came to realize that just because people engage in research on Oaxaca did not mean that they were always willing to discuss their research with people from Oaxaca. He describes his experience with trying to reach out to a professor that conducts research in Oaxaca in excerpt 189.

189. “I'm sure they're decent, but I just thought I was- I remember that there's been a couple times where I've been, like, a little bit upset when they don't get back to me. And I know that like they've done work in Oaxaca. I don't- I feel, I don't know. I feel like that's bad in nature. You know, like, how? I don't know, like, your work is- I'm not, I feel like that- I don't want to generalize. I don't think I can generalize. But something about it is like, I feel like you're a bit disconnected from your work. Right?” [p412531]

As revealed by this situation, Mundo (p4) believes that it is important to be answerable to Indigenous people if you are seemingly working within Indigenous communities. In other

words, the Indigenous communities themselves are an active and important part of what makes someone an ally.

This idea is related to what Gabriela (p2), one of the instructors, describes as allyship for her. She details her perspective in excerpt 190 below.

190. “yeah allyship is hard, I think that- you can't... Like a person like myself you know, like someone- I don't think anyone can deem themselves an ally honestly, I don't think that, that's fair that I don't think I can call myself an ally of you know X, Y or Z. I think it's the community that has to see you as an ally, I think people need to want to be an ally, I think that- but there's like this fine line between wanting to be an ally and like a white savior type thing you know I see that a lot, that like savior complex with a lot of our instructors like, “Oh, I really want to help you and save you”, its like no.” [p28620]

These points about being answerable to the community and respecting the sovereignty of Indigenous people are points highlighted by previous scholars interested in

Indigenous/decolonial studies (Anthony Stevens, 2015; Leonard, 2020; Patel, 2015).

Many of the participants shared that defining allyship was a bit difficult, but they still offered different reflections and qualifiers to this idea in their own words. Mónica (p5) offers her own ideas in the excerpt below.

191. “I don't know what allyship would mean, other than just, you know... appreciating something that's different from them without feeling the need to also partake in it. You know, like, I think, what- not that- not that I wanna- what is it called when? Not that I want to gatekeep, like my culture, because obviously, like my experience is my experience, which differs from other Indigenous people from the same region. But, I think um, just by listening, and like when people want to share, like, you know, let them. And creating space for them without feeling the need to be like, Oh, me too, or Oh, like, yeah, I think maybe that's the closest I can define it as.” [p58130]

Helen (p6) makes a similar assertion to the other instructor Gabriela in that allyship is possible though rarely does a true ally call themselves an ally. She makes this point in excerpt 192.

- 192.** “I think allyship is possible, but it never comes from someone who defines himself as an ally.” [p610158]

Upon making this claim, Helen was asked to clarify what she believes a true ally is. She describes what she has noticed being in a majority white context for her higher education and as an SHL instructor in excerpt 193.

- 193.** “So in Spanish departments, so white people who would like to continue in the Spanish departments, maybe some inner gaze would be good. And that's where I see someone like [researcher/profe name], who is looking inwards and looking at white people and saying, we have failed, we need to do better. We need to stop studying brown- black and brown bodies and telling them how to speak. And I don't- I have never heard him define himself as an ally. But if he did, I think he would be open to me telling him to never do that again.” [p610321]

Therefore, based on Helen’s point, an ally would be willing to engage in self-reflection and be open to dialogue with the communities they claim to be working with while not centering themselves. Some of these ideas are like ones Caro (p7) highlights in her description of an ally.

- 194.** “an ally is someone that respects, like who you are, where you come from and isn't judgmental. At the same time putting themselves and their privilege at the upfront whenever there is, you know, violence towards marginalized communities. So I think like, using the privilege for, you know, to confront like the- whatever is coming at the, you know, discriminated people. So that's what I imagined an ally to be also just like a friend, you know, like someone that like, won't judge you. Um, and then that's always just like, like, understanding.” [p77544]

The key point of maintaining respect was one of the ideas commonly expressed by Caro and others, which also happens to be one of Brayboy et al.’s (2012) four “R’s” when conducting research with Indigenous communities. In addition to this point and touching on yet another one of the “four R’s”, Caro (p7) also asserts that it is not the communities’ responsibility necessarily to have to teach potential allies everything, though they should

be fully willing and available to listen to Indigenous communities when they do find it appropriate to share about themselves.

Thus, the responsibility is also shared by the people that are interested in learning more and being in relation with Indigenous people. Caro (p7) states these ideas and what it has been like to share about her experiences in excerpts 195 and 196 below.

195. “But maybe like, if there is like, like, wherever you're at, like, if you want to focus on like the- the indigenous people from the area and have, you know, just them come on or like, again, like you had mentioned, it's like, again, it's not no one's responsibility to teach you but at the same time, it's like, you don't want to misinform people. You don't want to be like talking over like indigenous peoples', you know, their voices. So I think that's how- I wouldn't know how to go about intertwining, I'm sure there's ways that that I couldn't figure out right now, but it's definitely something to think about.” [p78223]

196. “I think just having conversations like with people, like, even just like things like this, I think it's just very important to just hear like people's experiences, like where they're coming from. But definitely, like all the other suggestions that people brought up in these quotes, I think it's also great ideas. But I just, I think it's very interesting to just hear, you know, just talking, and bringing up your own experiences as well, because I think at the same time, it helps us reflect, you know, what we've gone through. And I think throughout this whole, through all four sections, I identify, or really- I relate to a lot of what other people say, as well. So like, this whole time, I was like, was that my quote? Was that my quote? No, that couldn't have been me. So I think we have a lot of like, similar experiences, and it's just, like, really nice to talk about it and just have people like, listen out, or just like hearing about, like, what we've lived through, and things like that. So I just think it's like conversations like, these are very important, as well.” [p710607]

Although each participant at first seemed unsure about how to define allyship, each participants' contributions altogether formulate many of the same considerations outlined by scholars on this concept (Anthony Stevens, 2017; Brayboy et al., 2012; Leonard, 2020; Patel, 2015; among others). For example, many of these participants highlighted the importance of maintaining Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and being answerable to

them. Thus, the definitions and ideas the participants in the present study detail regarding allyship are closely aligned to what scholarship in the field has maintained as well.

4.4 Final Participant Takeaways

In the previous sections, many of the participants' final written reflections were incorporated into the appropriate theme sections. This was especially the case when the participant labeled and organized their written reflections into sections that followed the exact themes already outlined in sharing circles. As a reminder, the only participant that was unable to submit a final written reflection was Tsitsiki. Nonetheless, in the rest of the participants' final ideas, they would also at times write about final takeaways about the process of being a part of this study. Elsa (p3), who was unable to attend a sharing circle but submitted a written reflections based on the organized themes, writes the following:

I'm very happy I was a part of this process because I gained new perspectives on identity and the knowledge on underrepresented communities. I believe that this is definitely moving towards the right message and I am looking forward to how much more it expands. (Elsa, p3)

In Mundo's (p4) reflection, he starts by mentioning that some of the themes behind this study were ones he had not considered before, at least not before his first interview.

However, he also takes the time to reiterate some of the same points he made during his individual interview and sharing circles. The opening to his written reflection says the following:

The first is what role Indigeneity has in the context of a Spanish class in college. In retrospect, this epiphany felt like a huge oversight on my behalf considering the influence that Indigenous people and languages have had on the development of Latin American states. Once the second conversation started though, it became evident to me that while I can recognize the value of discussing these themes in a Spanish class, I do not have a good idea of how it would be possible to successfully implement them. (Mundo, p4)

While Mónica (p5) also wrote about the impacts of reflecting on these topics, she also wrote about being able to share about herself and her experiences with people that could relate to her during this process. She writes:

It was so interesting to hear quotes from different people whose indigenous identity and experiences were both so different and yet so similar to mine. I definitely noticed that our identity really impacted us in all areas of our lives though we sometimes never had the space to express the extent of how. When we were going over the quotes from our first interview, there were some that I was reading and assumed that I for sure said, until I realized that it was somebody else's quote. It made me feel really seen and in a safe space where my thoughts were validated. (Mónica, p5)

In her reflection, though she did give pedagogical suggestions like the other instructor Gabriela, Helen (p6) was much more explicit about how participating in this study made her feel and her final thoughts. Helen (p6) details the following in her written reflection:

Whew! The group discussion on Heritage Language felt more like a group therapy. Especially in terms of navigating indigenous identity and languages. I logically know that I am enough, and that language doesn't make belonging--that it has been colonized out of us and that even talking about our languages and our families' languages is resistance but at the same time, I never want to claim or appropriate. Which is so strange, when you look at white people who teach heritage language, and about indigenous language, they take-up space, they occupy the spots we should be in. Yet, here we are the children of the ancestors who survived brutal colonization (is there any other kind) and we tread lightly, making sure that we share only our stories, and feeling alone in it sometimes. It was nice to hear others say "yeah I don't speak Purepecha and I wish we did, I wish we had learned it, and I am still Purepecha even if I don't speak it." I felt so alone in that before this study. I am thankful for the space Valeria is creating for us. I hope white academics will sit down, be quiet, and pass the mic, and create spaces for heritage language instructors with the lived experience, and I hope the white academics will ensure the amplification of the voices of those they are silencing. White academics are silencing us by writing books on pedagogy with HL Latinx in the US and failing to understand their own roles in upholding white supremacy. I am thankful for the space to think this through with others, thankful for the group discussion. (Helen, p6)

Similar to Helen and Mónica, Caro (p7) also details what the process of being a part of this work was like for her and how it felt to learn about other Indigenous peoples' experiences. She mentions the following in her written reflection:

Throughout this whole process, the experience was great overall. Like I mentioned in the meeting, I loved seeing and hearing that a lot of the other participants had a similar experience as I had growing up and throughout our academic careers. I also really enjoyed hearing people's experiences that were "the opposite" of mine because it helped me see the other end of it. I do believe that meetings like these are important to not only make our voices heard, but also to hear others' voices as well. I felt very safe in the space that was created and truly appreciate being able to partake in the experience. (Caro, p7)

Finally, Karina (p8) chose to reflect on the differences among the participants' *testimonios* and how it made her think about her own family as well. She writes in her written reflection that,

As we broke down our discussion into sections, I see the impact our experiences have in different areas of our education, language, and even family. Even more so speaking to people who did not grow up in the same little rural town that I did. Hearing that for some families it was not encouraged to speak their indigenous language breaks my heart because I understand the difficulties that come with not being able to communicate to someone in their native language. My paternal grandmother only speaks Mixteco and I wish I could carry a conversation with her to hear her stories and tell her the things I have accomplished in my life. (Karina, p8)

4.5 Chapter Summary

The results and discussion in this chapter revealed eight salient themes that in turn respond to the three research questions. In the first theme, the participants shared about their identities and how they choose to identify themselves, often mentioning their relation to their Indigenous pueblos in Mexico. This relation to place for these Indigenous participants (see Wilson, 2008), and their ability to construct transnational identities as Indigenous Mexicans in diaspora (see Stephen, 2007) were consistent with previous

scholarship. While their identity negotiation was also complex and consistent with previous SHL research (Leeman, 2015; Tecedor et al., 2020; Vergara Wilson & Martínez, 2011), the ways in which they negotiated their identities as Indigenous people in diaspora is not a point SHL scholarship has yet to address, especially when it comes to Indigenous identity formation in mestizx dominant contexts. The most relevant literature to the Indigenous Latinx experience exists mainly within the fields of Education, Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnic Studies, and other SHL adjacent fields (Alberto, 2013; Barillas Chón, 2020; Blackwell et al., 2017; Casanova, 2019; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; González, 2019; Kovats Sánchez, 2020, 2021; Machado-Casas, 2012; Nicolás, 2020; Urrieta et al., 2019; among others).

As evidenced in the second theme, language and identity continue to be closely linked for these participants in ways that extend beyond the typical SHL learner. While each of the participants took SHL courses to continue to develop their Spanish competency, they each felt that Spanish was by no means the default language of their family. The fact that they were working towards actively maintaining their Spanish and English, and thereby shifting away from their Indigenous languages, was a source of contention for each of these participants. Many expressed that they wish they could be proficient in their Indigenous to connect more to their Indigenous communities and feel more confident in their identities as Indigenous Mexicans in diaspora. These experiences of prioritizing colonial languages over their Indigenous languages and the impact it has had on the identity formation of Indigenous Latinx people is also corroborated by previous scholarship (Barillas Chón, 2022; Canizales & O'Connor, 2022). Also noted

within the present participants' experiences that coincides with previous scholarship is the crucial role family members play in the maintenance of the Indigenous language (Bishop & Kelley, 2013; Casanova, 2019; Casanova et al., 2016; Mesinas & Pérez, 2016; Morales, 2016; among others). However, it is important to note that the participants differed in opinion on whether knowing their Indigenous language is an essential aspect of their identities.

In the third theme, anti-Indigenous discrimination was highlighted among the participants. Five of the eight participants shared the discriminatory experiences they faced growing up among other Latinx people in the U.S. The participants described being called several denigrative terms meant to make them feel like outsiders, even among fellow Mexicans. The Oaxacan participants in particular were targeted among Mexican peers and were bullied based on phenotypic traits, clothing, and hairstyles. Their experiences corroborate previous scholarship on intra-Latinx discrimination against Indigenous peers (Barillas Chón, 2010; Fox, 2006; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; Kovats Sánchez, 2019, 2021; Urrieta & Calderón, 2019; Van Dijk, 2005; among others). Unfortunately, in Karina's case, she continued to face anti-Indigenous sentiment in her workplace as an adult, demonstrating that these types of experiences do not end upon entering adulthood. These experiences are what often lead Indigenous Latinx people to enact "concealment practices" that protect them from enduring anti-Indigenous discrimination (see Machado-Casas, 2012).

In the fourth theme on experiences related to language and identity in school prior to starting higher education, the participants described the various ways in which their

identities were disregarded. Participants like Tsitsiki and Mundo noted how the history courses they took not only lacked content on Indigenous people but seemed to exclusively focus on the communities and cultures of European people. Even for the participants that chose to take Spanish classes, the backgrounds of the Latinx students in the class were regarded negatively. For example, Gabriela's Spanish course focused on Peninsular Spanish culture and literature in yet another context with the bulk of the students being of Mexican descent. Gabriela and Helen both also noted that their Mexican American varieties of Spanish were framed as "incorrect" and needing to be fixed by their Spanish teachers (Fuller & Leeman, 2020; Villa, 2002; Zimmerman, 2019). Based on these experiences, there is evidence that their schooling experiences aimed to center settler colonial interests and futurity rather than the interests and histories of these Indigenous students (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Urrieta et al., 2019).

Related to the participants' experiences during their schooling, in the fifth theme the participants discussed their teachers' positionality and impacts in K-12 and college. In their experiences, some teachers they had held negative beliefs about their students. In Tsitsiki's case, she endured a white woman teacher that had unexpected opinions about Spanish and held anti-immigrant beliefs that she shared with her majority Mexican students in California. However, upon entering college and taking a Mexican American history course with a supportive African American professor, Tsitsiki was able to feel empowered in her identity and learn more about the history of her own people. The positive impacts of this course for Tsitsiki and her identity are ones that previous studies have noted for other students as well upon taking classes related to their ethnic identities

in college (Alvarez, 2013; Kovats Sánchez, 2020). The rest of the participants also had examples of both supportive and unsupportive instructors. In terms of instructors' positionalities, Mundo (p4) was the only participant that was able to take a course with an Indigenous professor.

In the themes five and six, there is a continued discussion on educators and holders of knowledge. The participants, including the two instructors, did not always trust their educators due to the experiences they endured. Factors that contributed to their mistrust was the positionality of their instructor, the lack of Latinx much less Indigenous representation in their courses, and their awareness of knowledge extending beyond formal degrees/education. Each of the participants expressed valuing the knowledge and knowledge holders that already exist in their families and communities. Participants such as Gabriela, Mónica, Mundo and Helen were particularly adamant about how the knowledge of their Indigenous community members is just as valuable or more valuable than the knowledge that can be acquired via formal schooling. The perspectives of the present participants align to what previous scholarship has demonstrated counts as knowledge and holders of knowledge for Indigenous people (Brayboy, 2005a, 2005b) and other people of color (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Yosso, 2014).

In the following theme, theme seven, the participants reflected on the content of their SHL courses and whether they included Indigeneity. For Mónica and Caro, their courses were focused mainly on linguistic development and did not touch on topics related to their identities at all. For the rest of the students, at least a minimal inclusion of Indigeneity was found. The students that did have SHL courses with significant

Indigenous content reported that the course helped them better understand their own identities and generally had positive impacts on them as Indigenous students. These results coincide with Kovats Sánchez's (2021) point about students being able to develop stronger ethnic identities upon taking affirming courses in college.

In the seventh theme participants also discussed whether they explicitly revealed their Indigeneity in their SHL courses and the factors that informed their decisions. Four of the student participants and both instructors directly mentioned being Indigenous in their SHL courses. The students that chose to mention it were in courses that included Indigenous content, which helped them feel comfortable enough to disclose that they are Indigenous. Meanwhile, for the participants that did not reveal it explicitly, Mundo and Mónica, they explained that they say they were from Oaxaca but did not feel it necessary to expand beyond that. Some of the reasons why they did not expand further included feeling their Indigenous identity being personal, it not being relevant for a Spanish class, not interested in knowing whether their peers/instructor cared about their Indigeneity, among other reasons. Meanwhile, both instructors made sure to always mention that they are Indigenous to their students and shared their perspectives as Indigenous Latinx as part of their pedagogy.

In the seventh and eighth themes, they were asked about including Indigenous content into their SHL courses and whether they see any conflicts with being in/teaching a Spanish course as an Indigenous person. Although all the participants mentioned that they would like to see Indigeneity included in their classes, some students were more certain about this change being possible than others. It was clear that the participants that

had already had experience having Indigeneity as a part of their SHL course were more confident about this being feasible than the participants that had not had any Indigenous content in their courses at all. As expected, the instructors had seemingly considered the contention between being Indigenous and teaching SHL courses than the students.

Although, Caro did explain that she would often have these conversations about maintaining Spanish/other colonial traditions and practices while being Indigenous with her family members. In sum, the participants seemed to be supportive of including more Indigenous/decolonial content in their courses, though they recognized that there are factors that complicate this possibility.

Since the participants did see the need for including more Indigenous/decolonial content in their SHL courses, they were asked to provide concrete pedagogical ideas of what they would like to see change. As previously noted, the participants that had already had experiences where Indigeneity was brought up in their SHL course were able to offer more ideas. However, Mundo was a participant who had minimal Indigenous content in his SHL class, yet he had carefully been considering the ways in which this pedagogical change could be implemented. The instructors were also expectedly able to offer specific pedagogical suggestions since they had already been incorporating Indigeneity/decolonial content into their SHL courses. In addition to changes to the SHL courses themselves, all the participants agreed that more community/interdepartmental collaboration would be beneficial for their respective SHL courses. Nonetheless, a few participants brought up important points about how these changes should be planned and the fact that they should not be incorporated through a white lens.

In the final sections, the participants' definitions of allyship were provided along with some of their reflections on what it was like to be a part of the present study. In terms of the conceptualizations of allyship, many of the participants at first seemingly struggled with defining this term. Nonetheless, upon more in-depth reflection, each of the participants offered ideas coincide with what previous scholars have discussed regarding allyship when it comes to working minoritized communities (Ortega, 2020; Patel, 2015), and Indigenous communities in particular (Anthony-Stevens, 2017; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Leonard, 2020; Smith, 2012; among others). Finally, in the last section of this chapter there are excerpts from participants' written reflections that commented on what it was like to take part in this dissertation. Based on the participants' feedback, their experiences appeared to be positive overall as they were able to think deeply about topics relevant to their identities and lives while also hearing from fellow Indigenous Mexicans living in different parts of the U.S. Overall, the participants seemed to be appreciative to be a part of this work and were excited about its implications.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The present study is one of the first to delve into the experiences of Indigenous instructors and learners within the field of SHL Education. Two instructors and six students that have taken/taught an SHL course at a university in the U.S. shared their individual *testimonios*, participated in sharing circles, and wrote reflections about their participation in this study. These data were analyzed through an iterative process of using *testimonio* as a method as well as a methodology (see Pérez Huber, 2009), while utilizing a Critical Latinx Indigeneities framework (Blackwell et al., 2017; Urrieta & Calderón, 2019; Urrieta et al., 2019). This dissertation aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What can the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors before and during their enrollment in SHL courses tell us about their identities and how they navigate educational spaces?
2. How, in the students' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. How do the experiences of Indigenous students reflect, or not, the consideration of decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom?
 - b. Do these students see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL pedagogy require modification?
3. How, in the instructors' view, have Indigenous communities been acknowledged in the SHL classroom?
 - a. Have these instructors ever had to modify any lessons, materials, or practices in the SHL classroom due to conflicts with their own Indigenous knowledge/perspectives?
 - b. Do these instructors see a need for incorporating decolonial perspectives in the SHL classroom? If so, in their view, what aspects of SHL Education require modification?

The findings from the data revealed eight main themes in these participants lives that were relevant to the present study. The eight themes are:

- 1) dynamic identity development and identity negotiation
- 2) connections between language and identity
- 3) impacts of anti-Indigenous discrimination among Latinx people
- 4) maneuvering language and identity in K-12 education
- 5) implications of teachers' positionalities and practices
- 6) discrepancies on knowledge and holders of knowledge
- 7) inclusion of indigeneity in SHL courses
- 8) tensions between taking/teaching SHL courses and being Indigenous

In addition, concrete pedagogical considerations as well as reflections on the concept of allyship are offered on behalf of the eight participants. Due to the in-depth findings from these eight themes, pedagogical suggestions, and discussions on allyship, the research questions of the present study were addressed. The first six themes were the most relevant to answering the first research question that focused on participants' identity development and educational experiences as Indigenous Mexicans in the U.S. These themes uncover the many ways in which their identities are constructed in a dynamic manner and often get negotiated within the dominant mestizo Mexican rubric that erases their Indigeneity as previous scholarship has demonstrated (Blackwell et al., 2017; Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000; Kovats Sánchez, 2020; Urrieta, 2017; among others). In some cases, participants' Indigeneity was not erased but in fact used against them through intra-Latinx discrimination (Barillas Chón, 2010, 2019, 2021; Calderón & Urrieta, 2019; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Kovats Sánchez, 2020; Sánchez, 2018; Van Dijk, 2005; among others), as shown in theme three.

Unfortunately, their Indigeneity was often erased within their educational experiences as well. They were often conflated with other Latinx people in their

schooling and had to endure overlapping codes of power that marginalized their Indigenous languages and knowledge to prioritize their colonial languages, particularly English (Barillas Chón, 2021; Canizales & O'Connor, 2022; Rosa & Flores, 2017). While some participants were able to take courses with educators that encouraged them to explore their identities and feel empowered, more often the bulk of the participants had educators and course content that maintained settler colonial interests (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Urrieta et al., 2019), rather than the interests of the Indigenous Mexican students in this study. In this way, there were clear discrepancies between what the participants viewed as knowledge and knowledge holders and what academia/the U.S. educational system taught them to view as knowledge and conventional holders of knowledge (see Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Brayboy, 2005a, 2005b). These incongruencies are undoubtedly important to take into consideration as these students enter SHL classrooms, since we aim to create curriculum and enact practices that are student-centered and reflect the sociopolitical realities in which our students live.

In terms of the second research question, for at least two participants, their SHL courses were still mainly focused on developing the students' linguistic competence. For example, they expressed that the content in their SHL classes presented various opportunities to improve their grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and similar explicitly linguistic exercises. They did not recall any examples of the course incorporating their identities, much less their Indigeneity. Fortunately, the rest of the participants did have concrete examples of Indigeneity being incorporated in their SHL courses, though to

varying degrees. Tsitsiki (p1), Elsa (p3), and Karina (p8) all took SHL courses that did concretely incorporate Indigenous content, while Mundo's class touched on Indigeneity once.

For Tsitsiki, she recalls learning the difference between languages and dialects and how she realized through this lesson that her Indigenous language was in fact a language and not a dialect. In Karina's case, she recalls going over how Indigenous languages have influenced Spanish and the fact that there are various Indigenous communities that exist within Latin America. Meanwhile, Elsa had perhaps the most salient examples of various ways Indigeneity incorporated into her SHL courses and even outside of the courses as well. Elsa shared how conversations on colonization, Indigenous communities and practices, and Indigenous languages were included in the content of her SHL classes. She was also the only student that mentioned information on an Indigenous language being part of at least one of her exams. Overall, for four of the six student participants Indigeneity was included in the SHL courses they took, and it was incorporated in varied ways for each student. From the examples provided of the times Indigenous content was included in their SHL courses, most of the inclusion focused on linguistic and sociolinguistic content such as language versus dialect, language contact, and language variation.

Based on these findings, there seemed to be consideration for Indigenous/decolonial perspectives in four of the six students' SHL courses, even though most of the discussions were mainly about linguistics. Even so, each of the student participants that did provide clear examples of Indigeneity/Indigenous communities being

a substantive part of their SHL course (Tsitsiki, Elsa, Karina) were students that also mentioned that these courses had an impact on their identities as Indigenous Mexicans. As Kovats Sánchez (2019, 2020) details, being able to take affirming courses in university helped them positively develop their Indigenous identities. The participants in the present study described entering higher education and taking these SHL courses as critical to their identity formation as Indigenous students, and fortunately were able to receive their undergraduate degrees, much like Kovats Sánchez's (2020) participants. The participants that did not have any (Mónica and Caro) or minimal (Mundo) content related to their identities did not report that their SHL courses had an impact on their identity. However, Mónica and Mundo were able to take other courses or participate in research that did help them continue to develop positive identities as Indigenous people.

Each of the student participants agreed that incorporating decolonial/Indigenous perspectives into their SHL courses would be a good idea, though their reflections on how to go about doing so varied by person. While it is understandable that the students that already saw Indigenous content in their courses saw this part of their courses as normal and expected, the students that had not had much Indigenous content in their SHL courses found it more difficult to offer suggestions on how Indigeneity/decolonial perspectives could be part of those courses. The students also described the differences in what they felt their SHL courses could incorporate based on the positionality of their instructors and peers. Overall, the students that already had at least some Indigenous content in their SHL courses (Tsitsiki, Elsa, Mundo) were the ones that were able to provide concrete suggestions for modifying SHL pedagogy. Meanwhile, Mónica, one of

the two students who did not have any identity-related content in her SHL course, seemed the most unsure about how Indigeneity could be appropriately incorporated into an SHL course, especially if the teacher is not Indigenous.

In terms of the third research question, the two instructors who were both linguists, also relayed sharing the same linguistic points the students saw about Indigenous languages in their SHL courses. In other words, both instructors mentioned that they have seen Indigeneity included in their SHL programs, but this was not necessarily the norm within the field of SHL Education overall. Gabriela described how much of the incorporation of Indigenous content depended on the individual instructors' decisions as they taught the courses. However, Gabriela did recall various ways in which instructors had incorporated Indigeneity in the classes in her SHL program so far. Some examples include discussing traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices such as *curanderismo* and *brujería*, reviewing local maps and histories of the multilingual Indigenous lands they were on, the impact of colonialism, and more. Although Gabriela shared clear examples of Indigeneity in her SHL program, she noted that there was a need for the courses to be more consistent about what they each cover and that they still had progress to be made as far as being less mestizx Mexican-centric.

Helen was also able to utilize her expertise in linguistics and merge it with Indigenous topics in her SHL courses, even when the courses were not language-focused courses and were more content-focused such as a medical Spanish or writing course. She described incorporating decolonial perspectives and Indigenous expertise when discussing nutrition, music, language contact, colonization, and more. Helen also noted

that adding Afro-Latinx artists and authors to her courses was also important for her since she said she wanted to combat their erasure within the Latinx community as well.

Fortunately, neither Gabriela nor Helen felt like they had to modify the lessons, materials, or pedagogical practices due to conflict with their own Indigenous identities or knowledge. However, they both described the conflicting experiences and attitudes they faced as Indigenous instructors of Spanish given their awareness of the impact this language and colonization has had on their own families and communities. They both reiterated that the impact that colonization, and in turn Spanish, has had on Indigenous communities transnationally must be brought up and critically discussed in SHL classes. Helen also added that these changes must be done via an Indigenous perspective rather than continuing to utilize a white lens to teach about minoritized communities.

Both instructors noted that overall, there was much progress to be made in terms of Indigenous inclusion in the field of SHL Education. Consequently, they both were able to adjust their own pedagogies, material, and practices to better reflect the Indigenous people like themselves within the Latinx diaspora. Nonetheless, they were both keenly aware that it is not common to see Indigeneity/decolonial perspectives in SHL courses unless individual instructors made the effort to include it. For this reason, both Gabriela and Helen both repeatedly emphasized the need to incorporate more Indigenous/decolonial content with SHL pedagogy in a responsible and more consistent way. Interestingly, Gabriela believed that anybody could be trained and have the appropriate attitude to be a successful SHL instructor.

However, Helen did not share this sentiment as she believed that white instructors were not as well positioned to teach SHL learners as other people of color. Nonetheless, it is important to once again reiterate that Gabriela and Helen lived in completely opposite contexts in terms of racial diversity in this country. Helen had faced a great deal of racism growing up in the Midwest while Gabriela mentioned that it was not possible to be discriminated against based on race growing up as a *fronteriza* among mostly other Mexicans. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising that these two instructors have differing perspectives on who should be teaching SHL learners.

From these findings, we can continue to rethink and revise our pedagogies to better serve the students with multifaceted identities that arrive in the SHL classroom. While the field of SHL Education has made great progress in terms of promoting critical consciousness and social justice-based movements that center diversity (see Loza & Beaudrie, 2021; Parra 2016b, 2020), questions related to Indigeneity and decolonial perspectives are just beginning to be discussed in the field. This is particularly necessary given that racial/social justice efforts cannot be fully realized in our field without acknowledging the full range of diversity within our students (see Patel, 2015). Fortunately, the *testimonios* these participants have shared in this study can help shed light on the lived experiences of Indigenous Latinx students prior to entering the SHL classroom. As Kovats Sánchez (2021) explains, there is a dearth of research on Indigenous Latinx people in general, and even less scholarship available on their experiences in higher education. Therefore, the present dissertation aims to shed more light on the realities of Indigenous Latinx students' identity development and identity negotiation to better serve

them in the SHL classroom. In addition, these findings indicate that these Indigenous Mexicans do see a need for incorporating their communities into the SHL classroom, though in a respectful, well-planned, and critical manner.

As evidenced within this dissertation, much of the scholarship thus far about Indigenous Latinx students comes from the fields of Education (Austin, 2019; Barillas Chón, 2010, 2022; Patel, 2015), Linguistics (Leonard, 2020), Ethnic Studies (Kovats Sánchez, 2019, 2020, 2021), and other fields relevant to teaching Spanish as a heritage language. They have been able to offer important findings for SHL researchers and pedagogues to consider, though this dissertation is among the first to merge these interdisciplinary fields to make a noteworthy contribution to the field of SHL Education. The present study aimed to contribute to conversation on what diversity actually looks like among students and educators in this field, as Parra (2020) asserts must be done to “generate new meaningful narratives rooted in reality” and to stand in solidarity with diverse Latinx youth (p. 20). By sharing the stories and knowledge of these participants, we can begin to understand how our current models and practices can be adapted to address their needs, especially since they often face obstacles other Latinx students/instructors do not. The findings of this study also demonstrate how fellow Latinx people can be complicit in the marginalization and discrimination of other Latinx people, in this case Indigenous people. By making this intra-Latinx discrimination more apparent to the field of SHL Education, we can make our educational spaces more inclusive and responsive to the longstanding forms of transnational settler colonial tenets that persist in higher education.

Furthermore, Carreira and Kagan (2018) reflected on the progress of the field of SHL and future directions it must take, they noted that previously held assumptions about SHL learners had to be reconsidered to better inform our research and pedagogy. While the authors did not explicitly comment on social/racial factors related to students' identities, I would like to believe that this work contributes to our reimagination of who our SHL students and instructors are and who they could be in the future. This dissertation was intended to not only center the often-erased population of Indigenous Latinx people in our communities, but to also imagine the ways in which we can be answerable to them, untangle critical and decolonial perspectives, create more meaningful alliances, and support Indigenous futurity as Tuck and Yang (2012) describe. Thus, the intentions of this study are to begin this process by acknowledging the "colonial yoke" that teaching Spanish to BIPOC can perpetuate (see Macedo, 2019), while also questioning our own positionality, reflexivity, and answerability to these learners. In this way, the idea of inclusion can be more carefully examined to benefit SHL learners and instructors of varied races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, and other overlapping experiences of what it means to be a human being.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

In addition to the responses to the research questions there were many important considerations for the field of SHL Education. First and foremost, based on these findings, we must consider the way we present the varied languages, histories, communities, cultures, and other important aspects of what it means to be Latinx in the U.S. As evidenced in the experiences of these participants and in previous scholarship

(Blackwell et al., 2017; Urrieta & Calderón, 2019), our courses continue to exclude content about Indigenous people within the Latinx community. As such, one of the first points of departure for our SHL courses should be considering whether our courses actually reflect and relate to the dynamic identities of our students. While previous SHL scholars have continuously highlighted the diversity among SHL learners and have advocated for including students' identities in the classroom, there is a need for clear models that address race and racism.

In their chapter, Lacorte and Magro (2021) detail the advances that CLA perspectives have offered SHL Education thus far in terms of addressing the intersections of language, race, power, ideologies, and other elements relevant to teaching Spanish to heritage learners. Yet, they go on to explain the need to include explicitly anti-racist pedagogical approaches that take the tenets of CLA and merge them with anti-racist scholarship to teach SHL learners. Based specifically on language teaching, the authors define antiracist pedagogies as being pedagogies that “examine the role of language in (re)producing, maintaining, challenging, and transforming asymmetric power relationships, discrimination, inequality, social justice, and hegemony in relation to race and ethnicity” (Leeman et al, 2011; Norton 2013; as cited in Lacorte & Magro, 2021, p. 30). Upon offering critical theoretical frameworks and pedagogical models that have been proposed to teach both L2 and heritage learners, they outline their antiracist model for CLA in heritage teacher education.

To begin, they first explain that as a starting point, teacher training programs should include an overview of sociocultural, multiliteracies, and differentiated

instructional approaches through a CLA lens. Next, they explain that their model answers questions made about Hawkins and Norton's (2009) model for critical teacher education and builds upon it to offer their own antiracist model that covers four areas. The four areas they focus on are: 1) counternarratives as core curriculum, 2) connecting with critical race theory, 3) focus on specificity and locality, and 4) taking into account educators/students' racial identities. Upon reviewing each of the four sections, it becomes apparent that not only do they take an interdisciplinary approach and build upon previous CLA pedagogical models, but they also suggest many of the same tenets as the ones highlighted in the results of this study. Although the discussions in the present study did not explicitly ask participants to reflect on anti-racist approaches, the participants' ideas and suggestions align quite well with what Lacorte and Magro (2021) explain in their chapter.

For example, the participants each offer their *testimonios*, which are in fact counternarratives that tell their experiences from a first-person perspective that often detail the racist and unjust experiences they face among other Latinx people and in educational settings. They also demonstrate through their stories that they do not see themselves reflected in the content of their courses, including their SHL courses for some. As such, their normally untold and marginalized *testimonios* as Indigenous Mexican students are foregrounded and can be woven into curriculum as Lacorte and Magro (2021) suggest. In addition, the Critical Latinx Indigenous framework utilized to analyze the findings of the present study connect directly with the foundations of Critical Race Theory but in a way that specifies the Indigenous Latinx experience. In other words,

the frameworks are rooted in the same premises and objectives, just with emphasis on different racialized communities.

In terms of the third area covered by Lacorte and Magro (2021), the participants in the present study also described the importance of focusing on local Indigenous communities and their histories. Gabriela was the participant that was the biggest advocate for focusing on local/specific communities. Nonetheless, many of the other participants also took this into consideration upon considering community/interdepartmental collaborations. In fact, Mónica, Caro, and Mundo specifically questioned how to include Indigenous content in their SHL courses and collaborate with Indigenous communities in a truly inclusive way. They noted that it would in fact be difficult to represent all Indigenous communities, thus it would be pertinent to carefully plan collaborations and curriculum since it would be in some way impossible to include every single community. The considerations from the participants in the present study along with Lacorte and Magro's emphasis in their chapter highlight this point very clearly.

Finally, the fourth point of the model that also gets explicitly detailed within the results of the present study are the differences in perspective that can arise based on students' and teachers' racial identities. As Lacorte and Magro (2021) note, white educators and racially minoritized educators will likely have different strategies when it comes to implementing antiracist approaches, especially since white educators continue to be the majority. The authors provide more nuance on how to train educators to reflect on their differences, while also providing varied pedagogical suggestions for having these

discussions in class and incorporating pedagogies that serve as vehicles for antiracist content. In the present study, the participants reiterated the importance of considering their educators' positionalities, as well as of their fellow peers. The instructor participants were the most explicit about taking the racial identities of their fellow instructors and students into account, though their views on who should teach SHL courses varied. In sum, the four areas of the antiracist model Lacorte and Magro (2021) provide in their chapter closely coincides with the previous scholarship and results of this dissertation.

In addition to the incorporation of antiracist pedagogy overall, is the question of specifically addressing Indigeneity the SHL classroom. As the findings in this study indicate, there is still much progress to be made in terms of combatting the erasure of the realities of non-mestizo Latinx students. While every participant in the study was able to see the need of incorporating Indigeneity in their SHL courses, there was a clear emphasis of not putting Indigenous students in the spotlight as a sort of representative for their people. This point is particularly important to highlight because Indigenous Latinx students can face anti-Indigenous discrimination upon being identified as Indigenous (Alberto, 2017; Barillas Chón, 2022; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; Urrieta et al., 2019; among others). Instead, it is crucial to first train teachers carefully as was noted above, and then incorporate the suggestions the participants offered in the study and in previous scholarship. Both Gabriela and Helen provided important considerations for teacher training to relate to what has been proposed in aforementioned chapters in this dissertation on antiracist and decolonial teacher training proposals (Austin, 2019; Lacorte

& Magro, 2021; Todd & Robert, 2018). However, each participant also detailed explicit considerations that they would like to see in the SHL classroom.

While the explicit suggestions the participants offered are already outlined in chapter four, it is important to highlight that their pedagogical suggestions also align with what previous scholars that focus on Indigeneity have asserted. Notably, within the twenty-five projects presented by Smith (2012), there are many examples of how to incorporate Indigeneity into any course without forcing Indigenous people to be the spokesperson for their community. While not all projects are explicitly rooted in Indigenous practices, many of them align to what the participants in this study have suggested such as storytelling, celebrating survival, remembering, revitalizing and regenerating, reading, representing, and more. In other words, many of the pedagogical suggestions the participants in this study have presented have been outlined in Smith's projects. As such, they can be utilized as a starting point for incorporating Indigeneity in SHL classrooms but should also consider the specificities and local experiences and needs of Indigenous Latinx people.

Although previous scholarship on Indigenous ways of being and knowing have presented anti-colonial and decolonial interests that can be applied transnationally, it is also important to consider the ways in which Indigenous communities have distinct perspectives and needs as sovereign people. As Urrieta et al. (2019) note, CLI has allowed educators to “examine the intersections of Latinx Indigeneities and education to better understand how Indigenous Latinx communities define and constitute Indigeneity across multiple and overlapping colonialities and racial geographies, and, especially, how

these experiences overlap with, and shape their educational experiences” (p. 1). Through reflecting on and incorporating this unique critical framework, SHL Educators can start to become familiar with the obstacles this part of the Latinx community faces, but also value their knowledge and resilience to promote their well-being, success, and overall futurity. By incorporating the tenets of CLI, SHL educators can also dispel common myths about Latinx people such as the idea that they arrive as immigrants to a nation comprised mainly of other immigrants, erasing the histories and survival of Indigenous nations in the U.S. This myth along with various other components of how Latinx people and their histories, cultures, languages, and other issues get represented transnationally become reconceptualized through a CLI lens. As such, I advocate for all educators that teach Latinx students to delve into CLI and related frameworks to better understand the identities of their students and the rich diversity that exists throughout the Americas.

Finally, one of the other crucial pedagogical implications that arose in this dissertation that was not necessarily overviewed in literature review nor considered in the research questions is the question of language placement for SHL learners. Helen was the instructor that shared how language testing directly impacted her throughout her schooling. Thus, it was clear that this point was important for her and in turn she explicitly mentioned how current language placement in SHL program, particularly when gathering background information about students, must be adapted to consider Indigenous students. While there have been several proposals for creating, adapting, and overall improving heritage student placement exams (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2012; Bowles, 2022; Fairclough, 2012; Fairclough et al., 2010; MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2020;

Moreno & Garrett-Rucks, 2021; Potowski et al., 2012; among others), they understandably typically focus on developing a placement process that can be applied for as many of their Spanish students as possible. However, based on the most recent overview by Ji (2021), the process of placing students into a heritage course does not seemingly address the possibility of having Indigenous Latinx students.

In their systemic review of previous scholarship on placement tests (PT) for heritage learners, Ji (2021, p. 703) outlines the following principles:

- A proper HL placement should align with a program's vision and address the needs of local programs and HLLs.
- Ideally, an HL program may provide a comprehensive PT including both receptive and productive modes for the most accurate placement. However, due to limited resources, an HL program may also opt for tests on discrete items that are research-grounded and scrutinized by item-by-item analysis, while open-ended tasks such as oral and written tests can be used as supplementary instruments to identify and rectify misplacement.
- Test item design should consider the domains of language use and, therefore, be contextualized for authenticity. In addition, interactiveness should be addressed as well to mirror the real situations where an HL is used.
- PT design is an ongoing process and should be reviewed continuously for the sake of validity and reliability.
- Relevant empirical studies are critical and essential for test design and outlining HLLs' typology. Gatti and O'Neill (2017) maintained that understanding heritage speakers' strengths and needs are paramount when determining placement practices. Kagan and Friedman (2003) also reinforced that testers should be sensitive to HLLs' linguistic characters to improve rating accuracy

Based on these principles summarized from the previous studies on SHL placement tests, which includes background questionnaires, there is overarching emphasis on learning about students' Spanish and English skills exclusively. In other words, the placement test questions ask about their biographies, language practices, domains, and similar points in

a way that frames heritage students as only having experiences, families, and cultures that match the dominant mestizo bilingual Latinx student profile. Thus, if a question during the placement process asks if a student's home language is Spanish and they say no, it can be taken as the student utilizing mainly English at home when in fact their home language can be Zapoteco, Mixteco, or another Indigenous language as evidenced in this dissertation. As Helen mentions in this study, the lack of acknowledgement of students' full linguistic knowledge and familial experiences must be addressed to better reflect the diversity of SHL students' identities and linguistic competency.

5.3 Study Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present study was able to address the proposed research questions and shed light on other important and relevant matters regarding Indigenous SHL students and instructors, there were still a few limitations. One of them is the fact that the sharing circles were not conducted in person as was originally intended following the guidelines of Tachine et al. (2016). While it was beneficial to have participants from different parts of the country to get different understandings of what it is like to be an Indigenous Mexican in the U.S., the original plan was to be able to have more of a sense of community and potentially provide food and drink for the participants to be able to have a more comfortable and enjoyable time as a group. It is likely that having these sharing circles over Zoom as opposed to having them in person like Tachine et al. (2016) describe impacted the dynamic of the discussions. Reading the written reflections off a screen and following along was also more complicated than it would have likely been if the sharing circles could have been in-person.

In addition to the questions of participants' locations is the fact that all the participants were from Indigenous communities in Mexico. Although the participant selection was not meant to exclusively be from one Latin American country, the people that agreed to participate all happened to be Indigenous Mexicans. In future studies, it would be important to incorporate the perspectives of Indigenous people from various Spanish-dominant countries, especially since Venezuelans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans have been the fastest growing population in the U.S. from 2010 to 2019 (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). As such, current scholarship on Indigenous Latinx people has shifted to shed more light on the large Mayan diaspora (Barillas Chón, 2022; Canizales & O'Connor, 2021, 2022; Estrada, 2013; Gómez Cervantes, 2021; among others) that have more recently arrived in the U.S. compared to the mainly Indigenous Mexicans that had arrived during the Bracero Programs (Barajas, 2013; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Kearney, 2000). Therefore, future studies should also aim to center the needs of these Indigenous students who will also one day be present in our SHL courses.

Another point for consideration for future studies are the educational contexts in which many Latinx students are, for example, community colleges. Loza's (2019) dissertation highlights the lack of SHL research conducted in community colleges, despite them playing a crucial role in minoritized, and often of low socioeconomic status, students' access to higher education. In addition, as Cuellar (2014) explains, four-year institutions also can prove to be challenging for many Latinx students coming straight out of high school. At the time of Cuellar's (2014) publication, less than 10% of higher education institutions were designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), over half

of the Latinx students in the country enrolled in HSIs (p. 499). As such, the educational contexts in which Indigenous Latinx students are most likely to be found and the impacts that their institutions have on their identities and educational attainment should be a point of departure for future studies. Kovats Sánchez (2021) has begun to shed light on these issues thus far, but there is still much progress to be made regarding Indigenous Latinx students and instructors in SHL Education.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

The present study aimed to center the experiences of Indigenous students and instructors within the field of SHL Education. Based on their *testimonios*, sharing circles, and written reflections, salient themes and subthemes were outlined to not only address the research questions of this study but to also shed light on their lived experiences as Indigenous Mexicans in the U.S. The findings have indicated various avenues to consider to be able to improve our understanding of the Indigenous Latinx people within the field, which were outlined in the eight themes above. This is the first dissertation to take an interdisciplinary approach to this topic within SHL Education, which means there is much progress to be made in terms of research on this matter and pedagogical innovation. As such, it is my hope that scholars and educators turn to these matters in their work regardless of number of people it is expected to serve. Quite often when it comes to discussing questions of lived experiences and how they relate to race, gender, class, and other social factors in SHL Education, the focus stays on serving the masses while continuing to marginalize the few. Unfortunately, aiming to create general conceptualizations of SHL learners and build frameworks that create a type of “pedagogy

for all” can lead to the erasure of the Latinx students that do not fit the predetermined molds researchers and pedagogues have constructed for them. As such, my hope with this dissertation is to show the value of focusing on the experiences of students and instructors in the field that offer a distinct perspective to that of a mestizo Latinx person, even if they do not represent the realities of the “majority” of the people in our field.

In addition to these broader interdisciplinary considerations for Indigenous people in the field of SHL Education, I would like to reiterate my intentions and positionality while doing this work. My goals and practices as a Chicana SHL learner/researcher/educator have always aimed to benefit the Latinx community in the U.S. Nonetheless, as I unpacked my own family’s inability to acknowledge their Indigeneity and learned about other people’s similar transnational histories, I realized there was much that I had not been taught about the intersections of language, race, and settler colonial interests. As such, I have been on an interesting journey of unpacking my own complicity within these ongoing colonial systems of power, while also learning from Indigenous experts from various fields. It has been the greatest honor of my life thus far to learn from the participants in this study and other Indigenous knowledge holders, as they have helped me reconceptualize my own understanding of myself, my research, my responsibility to others, and other important aspects of my life. At the same time, I recognize that I am not an insider within the Indigenous Mexican community and must continue to be answerable to them and align to their struggles as I engage in this work. In sum, my hope for this dissertation is that it can foreground the stories of some of the people within the field of SHL Education that have yet to be fully acknowledged, so that

their knowledge, experiences, and sovereignty as Indigenous Latinx people can be respected and foregrounded within future research and pedagogy.

REFERENCES

- Achugar, M., & Pessoa, S. (2009). Power and place: Language attitudes towards Spanish in a bilingual academic community in Southwest Texas. *Spanish in Context*, 6(2), 199-223. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sic.6.2.03ach>
- Alberto, L. (2017). Coming Out as Indian: On being an Indigenous Latina in the US. *Latino Studies* 15, 247–253 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-017-0058-y>
- Alim, H.S., Rickford, J.R., & Ball, A.F. (Eds.) (2016). *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190625696.001.0001>
- Alvarez, S. M. (2013). Evaluating the role of the Spanish department in the education of US Latin@ students: Un testimonio. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 12(2), 131-151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2012.745405>
- Anthony-Stevens, V. (2017). Cultivating alliances: Reflections on the role of non-Indigenous collaborators in Indigenous educational sovereignty. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 56(1), 81-104. <https://doi.org/10.5749/jamerindeduc.56.1.0081>
- Aparicio, F. (1997). La enseñanza del español para hispanohablantes y la pedagogía multicultural. *La Enseñanza del Español a Hispanohablantes: Praxis y Teoría* (pp. 222-232). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Austin, T. (2019). Towards decolonizing heritage language teacher education. In D. Macedo (Ed.), *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education: The Misteaching of English and Other Colonial Languages* (pp. 131-151). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453113-5>
- Baldauf, R. B., & Kaplan, R. B. (Eds.). (2007). *Language Planning and Policy in Latin America* (Vol. 1). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690074>
- Barajas, M. (2013). Mexican-origin indigenous immigration to the United States: A historical and intersectional perspective. In I. Ness (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, (pp. 1-9). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm341>
- Barillas Chón, D. W. (2010). Oaxaqueño/a students'(un) welcoming high school experiences. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 9(4), 303-320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2010.491043>
- Barillas Chón, D. W. (2017). *Indigenous Immigrant Youth's Understanding of Indigeneity: Language, Power Inequities, and Self-Understanding* (Publication

- No. 10624873) [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Barillas Chón, D. W. (2019). Indigenous immigrant youth's understandings of power: Race, labor, and language. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 15-41. <https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.427>
- Barillas Chón, D. W. (2022). K'iche', Mam, and Nahua Migrant Youth Navigating Colonial Codes of Power. *Urban Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211073902>
- Bartolomé, M. A. (2005). Visiones de la diversidad: Relaciones interétnicas e identidades indígenas en el México actual [Visions of diversity: Interethnic relations and Indigenous identities in present Mexico]. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.
- Beaudrie, S. (2015). Approaches to language variation: Goals and objectives of the Spanish heritage language syllabus. *Heritage Language Journal*, 12(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.12.1.1>
- Beaudrie, S., & Ducar, C. (2012). Language Placement and Beyond: Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of a Computerized Spanish Heritage Language Exam. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 77-99. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.9.1.5>
- Beaudrie, S., Ducar, C., & Potowski, K. (2014). *Heritage Language Teaching: Research and Practice*. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Beaudrie, S., Amezcua, A., & Loza, S. (2019). Critical language awareness for the heritage context: Development and validation of a measurement questionnaire. *Language Testing*, 36(4), 573-594. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532219844293>
- Beaudrie, S., Amezcua, A., & Loza, S. (2021). Critical language awareness in the heritage language classroom: Design, implementation, and evaluation of a curricular intervention. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 15(1), 61-81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2020.1753931>
- Beaudrie, S. & Vergara Wilson, D. (2021). Reimagining the goals of SHL pedagogy through critical language awareness. In S. Loza & S. Beaudrie (Eds). *Heritage language teaching and research: Perspectives from critical language awareness*. London, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148227-5>
- Beck-Gernsheim, E., Butler, J., & L., Puigvert. (2003). *Women and Social Transformation*. New York: Peter Lang.

- Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15(2), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>
- Bernal-Enríquez, Y. & Hernández Chávez, E. (2003). La enseñanza del español en Nuevo México: ¿Revitalización o erradicación de la variedad chicana? In A. Roca & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi Lengua: Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States* (pp. 96-119). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Bishop, L. M., & Kelley, P. (2013). Indigenous Mexican languages and the politics of language shift in the United States. In C. Benson & K. Kosonen (Eds.), *Language Issues in Comparative Education*. (pp. 95-113). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-218-1_6
- Blackwell. (2017). Geographies of indigeneity: Indigenous migrant women's organizing and translocal politics of place. *Latino Studies*, 15(2), 156–181. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-017-0060-4>
- Blackwell, M., Boj Lopez, F., & Urrieta, L. (2017). Special issue: Critical Latinx indigeneities. *Latino Studies*, 15(2), 126–137. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-017-0064-0>
- Bonfil Batalla, G. (1989). México profundo: Una civilización negada [Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization]. Grijalbo.
- Bowles, M. A. (2022). Using instructor judgment, learner corpora, and DIF to develop a placement test for Spanish L2 and heritage learners. *Language Testing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322221076033>
- Bradbury-Jones, C. (2007) Enhancing rigor in qualitative health research: exploring subjectivity through Peshkin's I's. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 59, 290–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04306.x>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005a). Toward a tribal critical race theory in education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425-446. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-005-0018-y>
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005b). Transformational resistance and social justice: American Indians in Ivy League universities. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 193-211. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2005.36.3.193>

- Brayboy, B. M. J., & Deyhle, D. (2000). Insider-outsider: Researchers in American Indian communities. *Theory Into Practice*, 39, 163–169. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_7
- Brayboy, B. M., Gough, H. R., Leonard, B., Roehl, R. F., & Solyom, J. A. (2012). Reclaiming scholarship: Critical Indigenous research methodologies. In S.D. Lapan, M.T. Quartaroli, & F. J. Reimer (Eds.), *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs* (pp. 423-450). John Wiley.
- Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7(4-5), 585-614. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407>
- Burns Al Masaeed, K. (2014). *The ideology of U.S. Spanish in foreign and heritage language curricula: Insights from textbooks and instructor focus groups* [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona]. Retrieved from http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/bitstream/10150/323442/1/azu_etd_13369_sip1_m.pdf
- Burns, K. E., & Waugh, L. R. (2018). Mixed messages in the SHL classroom: Insights from CDA of textbooks and instructor focus group discussions. *Heritage Language Journal*, 15(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.15.1.2>
- Byram, M., & Wagner, M. (2018). Making a difference: Language teaching for intercultural and international dialogue. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(1), 140-151. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12319>
- Calderón, D., & Urrieta Jr, L. (2019). Studying in relation: Critical Latinx Indigenities and education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 52(2-3), 219-238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2019.1672591>
- Cammarota, J., & Aguilera, M. (2012). ‘By the time I get to Arizona’: Race, language, and education in America’s racist state. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(4), 485-500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.674025>
- Campbell-Montalvo, R. (2021). Linguistic re-formation in Florida heartland schools: School erasures of Indigenous Latino languages. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(1), 32–67. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220924353>
- Canizales, S. L., & O’Connor, B. H. (2021). From *preparación* to *adaptación*: Language and the imagined futures of Maya-speaking Guatemalan youth in Los Angeles. In D. S. Warriner Ed., *Refugee Education across the Lifespan* (Vol. 50, pp. 103–119). Cham, USA: Springer. Educational Linguistics. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79470-5_6

- Canizales, S. L., & O'Connor, B. H. (2022). "Maybe not 100%": Co-constructing language proficiency in the Maya diaspora. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2022.2065598>
- Carreira, M. (2004). Seeking explanatory adequacy: A dual approach to understanding the term. *Heritage Language Journal*, 2(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.2.1.1>
- Carreira, M., & Kagan, O. (2018). Heritage language education: A proposal for the next 50 years. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(1), 152-168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12331>
- Casanova, S. (2012). The stigmatization and resilience of female indigenous Mexican immigrant. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 34(3), 375-403. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986312449584>
- Casanova, S. (2019). Aprendiendo y sobresaliendo: Resilient indigeneity & Yucatec-Maya youth. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 42-65. <https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.428>
- Casanova, S., O'Connor, B. H., & Anthony-Stevens, V. (2016). Ecologies of adaptation for Mexican Indigenous immigrant children and families in the United States: Implications for Latino studies. *Latino Studies*, 14(2), 192-213. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2016.4>
- Cashman, H. R. (2006). Who wins in research on bilingualism in an anti-bilingual state?. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 27(1), 42-60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447140608668537>
- Charity Hudley, A. H., & Mallinson, C. (2018a). Introduction: Language and social justice in higher education. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 46(3), 175-185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424218783247>
- Charity Hudley, A. H., & Mallinson, C. (2018b). Dismantling "the master's tools": Moving students' rights to their own language from theory to practice. *American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*, 93(3-4), 513-537. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00031283-7271305>
- Charity Hudley, A. H., Mallinson, C., & Bucholtz, M. (2020). Toward racial justice in linguistics: Interdisciplinary insights into theorizing race in the discipline and diversifying the profession. *Language*, 96(4), e200-e235. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2020.0074>
- Chávez, L. R. (2008). *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Chen, C. (2013). Empathy in language learning and its inspiration to the development of intercultural communicative competence. *Theory and Practise in Language Studies*, 3(12), 2267–73. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.12.2267-2273>
- Cook, V. J. (1983). What should language teaching be about?. *ELT Journal*, 37(3), 229–234. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/37.3.229>
- Correa, M. (2011). Advocating for critical pedagogical approaches to teaching Spanish as a heritage language: Some considerations. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44(2), 308–320. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2011.01132.x>
- Cotera, M. E., & Saldaña-Portillo, M. J. (2015). Indigenous but not Indian? Chicana/os and the Politics of Indigeneity. In R. Warrior (Ed.), *The World of Indigenous North America* (pp. 549–568). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Craft, J. T., Wright, K. E., Weissler, R. E., & Queen, R. M. (2020). Language and discrimination: Generating meaning, perceiving identities, and discriminating outcomes. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, 6, 389–407. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-linguistics-011718-011659>
- Cruz-Manjarrez, A. (2013). *Zapotecs on the move: Cultural, social, and political processes in transnational perspective*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cuellar, M. (2014). The impact of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), emerging HSIs, and non-HSIs on Latina/o academic self-concept. *The Review of Higher Education*, 37(4), 499–530. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2014.0032>
- Cueva, B. M. (2013). *Theorizing the Racial and Gendered Educational Experiences of Chicanas and Native American Women at the Ph.D. Level in Higher Education: Testimonios of Resistance, Defiance, Survival, and Hope* (Publication No. 3549365) [Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (Vol. 20). NYU Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ggjjn3>
- Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 105–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800107>
- Delgado Bernal, D. & Villalpando, O. (2002). An apartheid of knowledge in academia: The struggle over the "legitimate" knowledge of faculty of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2), 169–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713845282>

- Delgado Bernal, D., Burciaga, R., & Flores Carmona, J. (2012). Chicana/Latina testimonios: Mapping the methodological, pedagogical, and political. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(3), 363-372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698149>
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. The New Press.
- Dewaele, J. M., & Wei, L. (2012). Multilingualism, empathy and multicompetence. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 9(4), 352-366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2012.714380>
- Doerr, N.M., & Lee, K. (2009). Contesting heritage: language, legitimacy, and schooling at a weekend Japanese-language school in the United States. *Language and Education*, 23(5), 425–441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500780802651706>
- Dominguez, J. I. (2019). Immigration as Foreign Policy in US–Latin American Relations. In R. W. Tucker, C. B. Keely, & L. Wrigley (Eds.), *Immigration and US foreign policy* (pp. 150-166). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429043451-9>
- Ducar, C. M. (2006). *(Re) presentations of United States Latinos: A critical discourse analysis of Spanish heritage language textbooks* (Publication No. 3207162) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Arizona]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Durán Urrea, E. & Meiners, J. G. (2019). Creating and implementing open educational resources for the Spanish as a Heritage Language classroom. In A. Comas-Quinn, A. Beaven, & B. Sawhill (Eds), *New Case Studies of Openness in and beyond the Language Classroom* (pp. 23-36). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2019.37.964>
- Eckert, P. (2018). *Meaning and Linguistic Variation: The Third Wave in Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316403242>
- Elia, N., Hernández, D. M., Kim, J., Redmond, S. L., Rodríguez, D., & See, S. E. (Eds.). (2016). *Critical Ethnic Studies: A reader*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hpkv8>
- Estrada, A. I. (2013). Ka tzij: The Maya diasporic voices from contacto ancestral. *Latino Studies*, 11(2), 208-227. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2013.5>
- Esterline, C., & Batalova, J. (2022, March 17). *Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

- Fairclough, M. (2012). A working model for assessing Spanish heritage language learners' language proficiency through a placement exam. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 121-138. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.9.1.7>
- Fairclough, M., Belpoliti, F., & Bermejo, E. (2010). Developing an Electronic Placement Examination for Heritage Learners of Spanish: Challenges and Payoffs. *Hispania*, 93(2), 273–291. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25703436>
- Felix, A. (2009). The adult heritage Spanish speaker in the foreign language classroom: A phenomenography. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(2), 145-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390802703414>
- Finlay, L. (2000) 'Outing' the researcher: the provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research* 12, 531–545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052>
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages* (Vol. 76). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.2307/330061>
- Fishman, J. A. (2006). Acquisition, maintenance, and recovery of heritage languages. In G. Valdés, J. A. Fishman, R. Chávez, & W. Pérez (Eds.), *Developing Minority Language Resources: The Case of Spanish in California* (pp. 1-11). New York: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598999-003>
- Flecha, R., Gómez, J., & Puigvert, L. (2003). *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149-171. <https://doi.org/10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149>
- Foulis, E. & Alex, S. (2022). *Mi idioma, mi comunidad: español para bilingües*. Press Books. <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/idiomacomunidad/>
- Fox, J. (2006). Reframing Mexican migration as a multi-ethnic process. *Latino Studies*, 4(1), 39-61. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.lst.8600173>
- Fox, J., & Rivera-Salgado, G. (2004). *Indigenous Mexican migrants in the United States*. La Jolla, CA: Center for US-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego.
- Freire, P. (1967). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Freire, P., & Faundez, A. (1989). *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*. New York, NY: Continuum.

- Fuller, J. M., & Leeman, J. (2020). *Speaking Spanish in the US: The Sociopolitics of Language*. *Multilingual Matters*. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788928298>
- García, O. (2009). En/countering Indigenous bilingualism. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education: Indigenous Youth and Bilingualism*, 8(5), 376-380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348450903305155>
- García, O., Flores, N., & Spotti, M. (2017). Language and society: A critical poststructuralist perspective. In O. García, N. Flores, & M. Spotti (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Society* (pp. 1–16). New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190212896.001.0001>
- García, O., Flores, N., Seltzer, K., Wei, L., Otheguy, R., & Rosa, J. (2021). Rejecting abyssal thinking in the language and education of racialized bilinguals: A manifesto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 18(3), 203-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2021.1935957>
- Gómez Cervantes, A. (2021). Language, race, and illegality: indigenous migrants navigating the immigration regime in a new destination. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2021.1968294>
- González, E. (2019). Ethnoracial attitudes and identity-salient experiences among Indigenous Mexican adolescents and emerging adults. *Emerging Adulthood*, 7(2), 128–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818805336>
- González-Barrera, A. (2021, July 9). *Before COVID-19, more Mexicans came to the U.S. than left for Mexico for the first time in years*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/09/before-covid-19-more-mexicans-came-to-the-u-s-than-left-for-mexico-for-the-first-time-in-years/>
- González Darriba, P., Kinsella, B., Marull, C., & Campbell, N. (2021). The effect of perceptions: Instructor–student dynamics in the Spanish heritage classroom. *Languages*, 6(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages6010046>
- Grinberg, J., & Saavedra, E. R. (2000). The constitution of bilingual/ESL education as a disciplinary practice: Genealogical explorations. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(4), 419–441. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543070004419>
- Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L. (2004) Ethics, reflexivity and ‘ethically important moments’ in research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 10, 261–280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403262360>
- Gutiérrez, N. (1999). *Nationalist myths and ethnic identities: Indigenous intellectuals and the Mexican state*. University of Nebraska Press.

- Hamzeh, M. Z. & Oliver, K. (2010) Gaining research access into the lives of Muslim girls: researchers negotiating muslimness, modesty, inshallah, and haram. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 23(2), 165–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390903120369>
- Hernández, D. J. (2004). Demographic change and the life circumstances of immigrant families. *The Future of Children*, 14(2), 17–47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602792>
- Hernández Cañuelas, J. (2021, June 3). *The unique struggles of Indigenous migrants*. Latin America Working Group. <https://www.lawg.org/the-unique-struggles-of-indigenous-migrants/>
- Holguín Mendoza, C. (2018). Critical language awareness (CLA) for Spanish heritage language programs: Implementing a complete curriculum. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 12, 65–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2017.1401445>
- Holguín Mendoza, C. (2021). Sociolinguistic Justice and Student Agency in Language Education: Towards a Model for Critical Sociocultural Linguistics Literacy. In S. Loza & S. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Heritage Language Teaching* (pp. 138-156). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148227-10>
- Holguín Mendoza, C., Davis, R., & Weise, J. (2018). La pedagogía crítica y las ciencias sociales: Estrategias para empoderar a estudiantes de español como lengua de herencia y de segunda lengua. *Hispania*, 101(3), 368–380. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2018.0144>
- Holley-Kline, S. (2013). History through first-year secondary school Spanish textbooks: A content analysis. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 4(2), 221-240. <https://doi.org/10.5070/B84110063>
- Hornberger, N. H., & Wang, S. C. (2008). Who are our heritage language learners? Identity and biliteracy in heritage language education in the United States. In D. Brinton, O. Kagan, & S. Bauckus (Eds.), *Heritage Language Education: A new field emerging* (pp. 3-35). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315092997-2>
- Horsburgh, D, (2003) Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 12(2), 307–312. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2702.2003.00683.x>
- Iturriaga Acevedo, E. (2020). Desencriptar el racismo mexicano: mestizaje y blanquitud. *Desacatos. Revista De Ciencias Sociales*, (64), 148–163. <https://doi.org/10.29340/64.2339>
- Ji, J. (2021). College-level placement for heritage language learners. *Foreign Language Annals*, 54(3), 690–713. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12523>

- Juncosa, J. (1987). Abya-Yala: una editorial para los indios [Abya-Yala: An editorial for Indigenous Peoples]. *Chasqui: Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación*, (23), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.16921/chasqui.v0i23.3036>
- Kearney, M. (2000). Transnational Oaxacan indigenous identity: The case of Mixtecs and Zapotecs. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 7(2), 173-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2000.9962664>
- Kovats, A. G. (2010). Invisible students and marginalized identities the articulation of identity among Mixteco youth in San Diego, California [Unpublished master's thesis, San Diego State University].
- Kovats Sánchez, G. (2019). *Affirming Indigeneity in Public Spaces: Indigenous Mexican Testimonios About Higher Education* (Publication No. 22619770). [Doctoral Dissertation, Claremont Graduate University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Kovats Sánchez, G. (2020). Reaffirming Indigenous identity: Understanding experiences of stigmatization and marginalization among Mexican Indigenous college students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 19(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2018.1447484>
- Kovats Sánchez, G. (2021). “If We Don’t Do It, Nobody Is Going to Talk About It”: Indigenous Students Disrupting Latinidad at Hispanic-Serving Institutions. *AERA*, 7(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211059194>
- Kosygina, L.V. (2005). Doing gender in research: reflection on experience in field. *Qualitative Report* 10(1), 87–95.
- Kincheloe, J. (2007). Critical pedagogy in the twenty-first century: Evolution for survival. In P. McLaren & J. Kincheloe (Eds.), *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?* (pp. 9-42). New York: Peter Lang.
- Kramsch, C. (2019). Between globalization and decolonization: Foreign languages in the cross-fire. In D. Macedo (Ed.), *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education: The Misteaching of English and Other Colonial Languages* (pp. 50-73). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453113-2>
- Krogstad, J. M. & Noe-Bustamante, L. (2021, September 9). *Key facts about U.S. Latinos for National Hispanic Heritage Month*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/09/09/key-facts-about-u-s-latinos-for-national-hispanic-heritage-month/>
- Lacorte, M., & Magro, J. L. (2021). Foundations for Critical and Antiracist Heritage Language Teaching. In S. Loza & S. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Heritage Language Teaching: Critical Language Awareness Perspectives for Research and Pedagogy*, 23-43. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148227-3>

- Leeman, J. (2005). Engaging critical pedagogy: Spanish for native speakers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2005.tb02451.x>
- Leeman, J. (2011). Standards, commodification, and critical service learning in minority language communities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(2), 300–303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01184.x>
- Leeman, J. (2012). Investigating language ideologies in Spanish as a heritage language. In S. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a Heritage Language in the United States: The State of the Field* (pp. 43-59). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Leeman, J. (2015). Heritage Language Education and Identity in the United States. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 100-119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000245>
- Leeman, J. (2018). Critical language awareness and Spanish as a heritage language: Challenging the linguistic subordination of US Latinxs. In K. Potowski (Ed.), *Handbook of Spanish as a minority/heritage language* (pp. 345–358). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315735139-22>
- Leeman, J. (2020). Linguistic variation and the teaching of Spanish: Critical perspectives. Lecture given at the Observatorio Cervantes, Harvard. May 21st.
- Leeman, J., & Martínez, G. (2007). From identity to commodity: Ideologies of Spanish in heritage language textbooks. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 4(1), 35-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427580701340741>
- Leeman, J., Rabin, L., & Román–Mendoza, E. (2011a). Identity and activism in heritage language education. *Modern Language Journal*, 95(4), 481–495. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01237.x>
- Leeman, J., Rabin, L., & Román-Mendoza, E. (2011b). Critical pedagogy beyond the classroom walls: Community service-learning and Spanish heritage language education. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(3), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.8.3.1>
- Leeman, J. & Serafini, E. (2016). Sociolinguistics and heritage language education: A model for promoting critical translanguing competence. In M. Fairclough & S. Beaudrie (Eds.), *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching* (pp. 56–79). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Leeman, J. & Serafini, E. (2021) “It’s Not Fair”: Discourses of deficit, equity, and effort in mixed heritage and second language Spanish classes. *Journal of Language*,

- Identity & Education*, 20(6), 425-439.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1777866>
- Leeman, J., & Driver, M. (2021). Heritage speakers of Spanish and study abroad. Shifting identities in new contexts. In R. Pozzi, T. Quan, C. Escalante, D. A. Koike, & J. Muñoz-Basols (Eds.), *Heritage Speakers of Spanish and Study Abroad* (pp. 141-159). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429289163-7-11>
- Leonard, W. Y. (2017). Producing language reclamation by decolonising 'language'. *Language Documentation and Description*, 14(1), 15–36.
- Leonard, W. Y. (2020). Insights from Native American Studies for theorizing race and racism in linguistics (Response to Charity Hudley, Mallinson, and Bucholtz). *Language*, 96(4), e281-e291. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2020.0079>
- Le Page, R. B., & Tabouret-Keller, A. (1985). *Acts of identity. Creola-based approaches to language and ethnicity*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2011). *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203348802>
- Lomawaima, K.T. and McCarty, T.L. (2006) *'To Remain an Indian': Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lomnitz-Adler, C. (1992). *Exits from the labyrinth: Culture and ideology in the Mexican national space*. University of California Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520912472>
- López, J., & Irizarry, J. G. (2019). Somos pero no somos iguales/We are but we are not the same: Unpacking Latinx indigeneity and the implications for urban schools. *Urban Education*, 00(0), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085919835292>
- Louie, D. W., Poitras-Pratt, Y., Hanson, A. J., & Ottmann, J. (2017). Applying Indigenizing principles of decolonizing methodologies in university classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education/Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur*, 47(3), 16-33. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v47i3.187948>
- Lowther Pereira, K. A. (2015). Developing critical language awareness via service-learning for Spanish heritage speakers. *Heritage Language Journal*, 12(2), 159-185. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.12.2.3>
- Loza, S. (2019). *Exploring language ideologies in action: an analysis of Spanish Heritage Language oral corrective feedback in the mixed classroom setting*

- (Publication No. 157767). [Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University]. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing.
- Loza, S., & Beaudrie, S. M. (Eds.). (2021). *Heritage language teaching: Critical language awareness perspectives for research and pedagogy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003148227>
- Macedo, D. (Ed.). (2019). *Decolonizing Foreign Language Education: The Misteaching of English and Other Colonial Languages*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453113>
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P. (2020). Language, Culture, and Spanish Heritage Language Learners: Reframing Old Paradigms. *Dimension*, 19-34.
- MacGregor-Mendoza, P., & Moreno, G. (2020). Streamlining the Placement of Spanish Heritage Language Learners. *Dimension*, 108-131.
- Machado-Casas, M. (2009). The politics of organic phylogeny: The art of parenting and surviving as transnational multilingual Latino Indigenous immigrants in the U.S. *The High School Journal*, 92(4), 82–99. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.0.0034>
- Machado-Casas, M. (2012). Pedagogías del Camaleón/Pedagogies of the Chameleon: Identity and Strategies of Survival for Transnational Indigenous Latino Immigrants in the US South. *The Urban Review*, 44(5), 534–550. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-012-0206-5>
- Malagón, M. C., Huber, L., & Velez, V. N. (2009). Our experiences, our methods: Using grounded theory to inform critical race theory methodology. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*, 8(1), 253-272.
- Martínez, G. (2003). Classroom based dialect awareness in heritage language instruction: A critical applied linguistic approach. *Heritage Language Journal*, 1(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.1.1.3>
- Martínez, G. (2016). Goals and beyond in heritage language education. In Fairclough, M. & Beaudrie, S. (Eds.), *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching* (pp. 39-55). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Martínez, G. (2021). El español para fines específicos y los programas de lengua de herencia. In D. Pascual y Cabo, J. Torres, & J. Muñoz-Basols (Eds.), *Aproximaciones al estudio del español como lengua de herencia*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429443657>
- Martínez, R. A., & Mesinas, M. (2019). Linguistic motherwork in the Zapotec diaspora: Zapoteca mothers' perspectives on indigenous language maintenance. *Association*

- of *Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 122-144.
<https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.431>
- Martínez, G., & Schwartz, A. (2012). Elevating "low" language for high stakes: A case for critical, community-based learning in a medical Spanish for heritage learners program. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(2), 37-49.
<https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.9.2.3>
- Martínez, M. I., Meadvin, J., Diaz, A., Skibbins, H., Hurwitz, A., & Sapien, C. (2022). Keeping an eye on equity in bilingual education. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26390043.2022.2048144>
- Maxwell, J.A. (1996). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meek, B., & Messing, J. (2007). Framing indigenous languages as secondary to matrix languages. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(2), 99–118.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.2007.38.2.99>
- Mesinas, M., & Pérez, W. (2016). Cultural involvement, Indigenous identity, and language: An exploratory study of Zapotec adolescents and their parents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 38(4), 482–506.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986316670390>
- Morales, P. Z. (2016). Transnational practices and language maintenance: Spanish and Zapotec in California. *Children's Geographies*, 14(4), 375–389.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2015.1057552>
- Morales, P. Z., Saravia, L. A., & Pérez-Irribé, M. F. (2019). Multilingual Mexican-Origin Students' Perspectives on Their Indigenous Heritage Language. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 91-121.
<https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.430>
- Moreno, O., & Garrett-Rucks, P. (2021). Identifying and Placing Spanish Heritage Speakers: One Program's Placement Test Approach. *Dimension*, 72-91.
- Miller, L. (2021, July 24). After police killing of a Zapotec man in Salinas, questions about a language barrier. *Los Angeles Times*.
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-07-24/la-me-salinas-shooting-indigenous>
- Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1999). *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. Psychology Press.
- Mines, R., Nichols, S., & Runsten, D. (2010). California's indigenous farmworkers. *Final Report of the Indigenous Farmworker Study (IFS) to the California Endowment*.

- Mulík, S., Amengual, M., Maldonado, R., & Carrasco-Ortíz, H. (2021). Hablantes de herencia: ¿una noción aplicable para los indígenas de México?. *Estudios de Lingüística Aplicada*, 73(1), 7-37.
<https://doi.org/10.22201/enallt.01852647p.2021.73.970>
- Nation, I. S. (2022). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009093873>
- Noe-Bustamante, L., López, M. H., & J. M. Krogstand. (2020, July 7). *U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>
- Nicolas, B. (2012). *Reclamando lo que es nuestro: Identity Formation among Zapoteco Youth in Oaxaca and Los Angeles* (Publication No. 1514829). [Master's Thesis, University of California, San Diego]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Nicolás, B. (2020). *Zapotec generations across settler colonial borders: Gendering belonging and identity* (Publication No. 28087875). [Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Nicolás, B. (2021). “Soy de Zochina”: Transborder comunalidad practices among adult children of indigenous migrants. *Latino Studies*, 19(1), 47-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-021-00285-9>
- Ortega, L. (2020). The study of heritage language development from a bilingualism and social justice perspective. *Language Learning*, 70(1), 15–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12347>
- Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Parodi, C. (2008). Stigmatized Spanish inside the classroom and out. In D. Brinton, O. Kagan, & S. Bauckus (Eds.), *Heritage Language Education: A New Field Emerging* (pp. 199-214). New York: Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315092997-14>
- Parra, M. L. (2016a). Understanding identity among Spanish heritage learners. An interdisciplinary endeavor. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed), *Advances in Spanish as a Heritage Language* (pp. 177-20). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sibil.49>
- Parra, M. L. (2016b). Critical approaches to heritage language instruction: How to foster students' critical consciousness. In M. Fairclough y S. Beaudrie, S. (Eds.), *Innovative Approaches in Heritage Language Teaching: From Research to Practice* (pp. 166-190). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

- Parra, M. L. (2020). Working with diversity in the Spanish heritage language classroom: A critical perspective. *Porta Linguarum Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 34(1), 1-24.
<https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.v0i34.16730>
- Pascual y Cabo, D., & Rothman, J. (2012). The (IL)logical problem of heritage speaker bilingualism and incomplete acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(4), 450–455.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ams037>
- Patel, L. (2015). *Decolonizing Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315658551>
- Patel, L. (2016). Pedagogies of resistance and survivance: Learning as marronage. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 49(4), 397–401.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2016.1227585>
- Patel, L. (2019). Fugitive practices: Learning in a settler colony. *Educational Studies*, 55(3), 253–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2019.1605368>
- Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (Fourth edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Pérez Huber, L. (2009). Disrupting apartheid of knowledge: Testimonio as methodology in Latina/o critical race research in education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(6), 639-654.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390903333863>
- Pérez Huber, L., & Cueva, B. M. (2012). Chicana/Latina testimonios on effects and responses to microaggressions. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(3), 392-410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698193>
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Pillow, W. (2003) Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16(2), 175–196.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635>
- Potowski, K., Parada, M., & Morgan-Short, K. (2012). Developing an online placement exam for Spanish heritage speakers and L2 students. *Heritage Language Journal*, 9(1), 51-76. <https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.9.1.4>
- Prada, J., Guerrero-Rodriguez, P., & Pascual y Cabo, D. (2020). Heritage language anxiety in two Spanish language classroom environments: A comparative mixed methods study. *Heritage Language Journal*, 17(1), 92-113.
<https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.17.1.4>

- Primeau, L. A. (2003). Reflections on self in qualitative research: stories of family. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 57(1), 9–16.
<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.57.1.9>
- Pulido, L. (2018). Geographies of race and ethnicity III: Settler colonialism and nonnative people of color. *Progress in Human Geography*, 42(2), 308-318.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516686011>
- Quan, T., Pozzi, R., Kehoe, S., & Menard-Warwick, J. (2018). Spanish heritage language learners in study abroad across three national contexts. In C. Sanz & A. Morales-Front (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of study abroad research and practice* (pp. 436-451). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315639970-29>
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power, ethnocentrism, and Latin America. *NEPANTLA*, 1(3), 533–580.
- Reyhner, J. & Eder, J. (2004). *American Indian Education: A History*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Reyna Rivarola, A. R., & López, G. R. (2021). Moscas, metiches, and methodologies: Exploring power, subjectivity, and voice when researching the undocumented. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 34(8), 733-745.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2021.1930262>
- Reznicek-Parrado, L.M. (2015). “Spanglish”: Bringing the academic debate into the classroom. Towards critical pedagogy in Spanish heritage instruction. *E-journALL*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.21283/2376905X.3.51>
- Rivera-Salgado, G. (1999). Mixtec activism in Oaxacalifornia: Transborder grassroots political strategies. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(9), 1439-1458.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764299042009016>
- Román, D., Pastor, A. & Basaraba, D. (2019). Internal Linguistic Discrimination: A survey of bilingual teacher’s language attitudes toward their heritage students’ Spanish. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 42(1): 6–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2018.1563006>
- Rosa, J. (2019). *Looking like a language, sounding like a race*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190634728.001.0001>
- Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in society*, 46(5), 621-647.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000562>
- Rossmann, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2016). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research: Learning in the Field*. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802694>

- Ruiz, N. T., & Barajas, M. (2012). Multiple perspectives on the schooling of Mexican indigenous students in the US: Issues for future research. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 35(2), 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2012.703639>
- Rumbaut, R. (2008). Pigments of our imagination: on the racialization and racial identities of ‘Hispanics’ and ‘Latinos’. In J. Cobas, J. Duany, and J. Feagin (Eds), *How the U.S. racializes Latinos at home and abroad* (pp. 15-36). Boulder, CO: Paradigm
- Saldaña-Portillo. (2017). Critical Latinx Indigeneities: A paradigm drift. *Latino Studies*, 15(2), 138–155. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-017-0059-x>
- Santos, B. S. de (2007). Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledges. Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 30(1), 45–89.
- Samaniego, M. & Warner, C. (2016). A ‘multiliteracies’ approach to heritage language instruction. In Fairclough, M. & Beaudrie, S. (Eds.), *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching* (pp. 191-213). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Sánchez, P. (2007). Cultural authenticity and transnational Latina youth: Constructing a meta-narrative across borders. *Linguistics and Education*, 18(3-4), 258-282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2007.07.007>
- Sánchez, D. (2018). Racial and Structural Discrimination Toward the Children of Indigenous Mexican Immigrants. *Race and Social Problems*, 10(4), 306–319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-018-9252-2>
- Sánchez, P., & Kasun, G. S. (2012). Connecting Transnationalism to the Classroom and to Theories of Immigrant Student Adaptation. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 3(1), 71-93. <https://doi.org/10.5070/B83110061>
- Sánchez-López, L. (2017). Learning from the paisanos: Coming to consciousness in Zapotec LA. *Latino Studies*, 15, 242-246. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41276-017-0061-3>
- Sánchez-Muñoz, A. (2016). Heritage language healing? Learners’ attitudes and damage control in a heritage language classroom. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed.), *Advances in Spanish as a heritage language* (pp. 205-217). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sibil.49.11san>
- Sánchez-Muñoz, A. (2021). Language Matters: On Teaching Spanish in Chicana/o Studies in Academic Settings. In M. D. Escobar, A. I. Estrada, & M. C. Galván (Eds.), *Aniversarios de Resistance: Reflections from the CSUN Chicana/o Studies Program and Curriculum* (pp. 95-100). https://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Aniversarios_final_e-book.pdf#page=95

- Sánchez-Muñoz, A., & Amezcua, A. (2019). Spanish as a tool of Latinx resistance against repression in a hostile political climate. *Chiricú Journal: Latina/o Literatures, Arts, and Cultures*, 3(2), 59-76. <https://doi.org/10.2979/chiricu.3.2.05>
- Schissel, J. L., De Korne, H., & López-Gopar, M. (2021). Grappling with translanguaging for teaching and assessment in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts: teacher perspectives from Oaxaca, Mexico. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 24(3), 340-356. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2018.1463965>
- Schmid, C. (2000). The politics of English Only in the United States: Historical, social and legal aspects. In R. González & I. Melis (Eds.), *Language Ideologies: Critical Perspectives on the Official English Movement* (pp. 62-86). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315045429-4>
- Schmitt, N. (2019). Understanding vocabulary acquisition, instruction, and assessment: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 52(2), 261-274. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000053>
- Shenk, P. S. (2007). 'I'm Mexican, remember?' Constructing ethnic identities via authenticating discourse. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(2), 194-220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2007.00318.x>
- Shively, R. (2018). Spanish heritage speakers studying abroad. In K. Potowski (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of Spanish as a heritage language* (pp. 403-419). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315735139-26>
- Silva-Corvalán, C. (2004). Spanish in the Southwest. In E. Finegan, & J. R. Rickford, (Eds.), *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-First Century*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511809880.013>
- Sium, A., Desai, C., & Ritskes, E. (2012). Towards the “tangible unknown”: Decolonization and the Indigenous future. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), I–XIII.
- Showstack, R., Nicks, S., Woods, N.K., & Martínez, G. (2021). Interprofessional Education for Students of Translation/Interpreting and the Health Professions. *Hispania* 104(3), 485-501. doi:10.1353/hpn.2021.0098.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.
- Spada, N. (2007). Communicative Language Teaching. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds), *International Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 271-288). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-46301-8_20

- Speed, S. (2019). *Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler-Capitalist State*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press Books. <https://doi.org/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469653129.001.0001>
- Stavenhagen, R. (2002). Indigenous peoples and the state in Latin America: An ongoing debate. In R. Sieder (Ed.), *Multiculturalism in Latin America* (pp. 24-44). Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403937827_2
- Stein, S. (2017). A colonial history of the higher education present: Rethinking land-grant institutions through processes of accumulation and relations of conquest. *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(2), 212-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2017.1409646>
- Stein S., de Oliveira Andreotti, V. (2016). Decolonization and Higher Education. In M. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-532-7_479-1
- Stephen, L. (2007). *Transborder lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822389965>
- Stronach, I., Garratt, D., Pearce, C., & Piper, H. (2007). Reflexivity, the Picturing of Selves, the Forging of Method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(2), 179–203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406295476>
- Tachine, A. R., Bird, E. Y., & Cabrera, N. L. (2016). Sharing circles: An Indigenous methodological approach for researching with groups of Indigenous peoples. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 9(3), 277-295. <https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.3.277>
- Tagliamonte, S. A. (2006). *Analysing Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511801624>
- Taylor, A. (2002). *American Colonies* (Vol. 1). Penguin.
- Tecedor, M., Del Carpio, L., & Ochoa, V. (2021). Novice or expert? Heritage speaker's orientation to the novice-expert paradigm. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 182, 253-264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.02.013>
- Tienda, M., & Sánchez, S. M. (2013). Latin American immigration to the United States. *Daedalus*, 142(3), 48-64. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00218
- Trevizo, P. (2015, July 8). Communication Still a Challenge for Indigenous Border Crossers. *Arizona Daily Star*. https://tucson.com/news/local/border/communication-still-a-challenge-for-indigenous-border-crossers/article_b80a0a9e-4e26-5592-b90d-b41723e67d28.html

- Truax, E. (2018, December 19). Opinion: The U.S. Must Provide Interpreters for Indigenous Migrants. It Could Save Lives. *Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/19/us-must-provide-interpreters-indigenous-migrants-it-could-save-lives/>
- Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), 409-428. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15>
- Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernández, R. A. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 29(1), 72-89.
- Tuck, E., & McKenzie, M. (2015). Relational validity and the “where” of inquiry: Place and land in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(7), 633-638.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414563809>
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1(1), 1-40.
- Turner, C. S. V., & Myers, S. L., Jr. (2000). *Faculty of color in academe: Bittersweet success*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Turner, C. S. V., Myers, S. L., Jr., & Creswell, J. W. (1999). Exploring underrepresentation: The case of faculty of color in the Midwest. *Journal of Higher Education*, 70(1), 27-59.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.1999.11780753>
- Urciuoli, B. (1996). *Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Language, Race, and Class*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Urrieta Jr., L., & Calderón, D. (2019). Critical Latinx Indigeneities: Unpacking Indigeneity from within and outside of latinized entanglements. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 145-174.
<https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.432>
- Urrieta Jr, L., Mesinas, M., & Martínez, R. A. (2019). Critical Latinx indigeneities and education: An introduction. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.425>
- van Dijk, T.A. (2005). *Racism and discourse in Spain and Latin America*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.14>
- Valdés, G. (1978). A comprehensive approach to the teaching of Spanish to bilingual Spanish speaking students. *Modern Language Journal*, 63(3), 101-110.

- Valdés, G. (1995). The teaching of minority languages as academic subjects: Pedagogical and theoretical challenges. *Modern Language Journal*, 79(3), 299-328.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1995.tb01106.x>
- Valdés, G. (1997). The teaching of Spanish to bilingual Spanish-speaking students: Outstanding issues and unanswered questions. *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría*, (pp. 8-44). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Valdés, G. (2000a). Introduction. Spanish for Native Speakers, Volume I. AATSP Professional Development Series Handbook for teachers K-16. New York: Harcourt College.
- Valdés, G. (2000b). The teaching of heritage languages: An introduction for Slavic-teaching professionals. In O. Kagan & B. Rifkin (Eds.), *The learning and teaching of Slavic languages and cultures* (pp. 375–403). Bloomington, IN: Slavica.
- Valdés, G. (2001). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. In J. K. Peyton, D. Ranard, & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America* (pp. 37-80). Delta Systems/CAL: McHenry, IL.
- Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized?. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(3), 410-426.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2005.00314.x>
- Valdés, G., Fishman, J. A., Chavez, R. M., & Perez, W. (2006). *Towards the Development of Minority Language Resources: Lessons from the Case of California*. Clavedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Vásquez, R. (2019). Zapotec identity as a matter of schooling. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 13(2), 66-90.
<https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.2.429>
- Veracini, L. (2010). *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230299191>
- Vergara Wilson, D., & Martínez, R. (2011). Diversity in definition: Integrating history and student attitudes in understanding heritage learners of Spanish in New Mexico. *Heritage Language Journal*, 8(2), 270-288.
<https://doi.org/10.46538/hlj.8.2.6>
- Veronelli, G. A. (2015). The Coloniality of Language: Race, Expressivity, Power, and the Darker Side of Modernity. *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies*, 13, 108-134.

- Villa, D. (1996). Choosing a ‘standard’ variety of Spanish for the instruction of native Spanish speakers in the U.S. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29, 191-200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1996.tb02326.x>
- Villa, D. J. (2002). The sanitizing of US Spanish in academia. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(2), 222-230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2002.tb03156.x>
- Villalpando, O., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). A critical race theory analysis of barriers that impede the success of faculty of color. In W. A. Smith, P. G. Altbach, & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *The racial crisis in American higher education: Continuing challenges for the twenty-first century* (pp. 243–269). New York: State University of New York Press
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research as ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Black Point, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>
- Yosso, T. J. (2014). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. In A. D. Dixson, Rosseau, C. K., Anderson, & J. K. Donnor (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory in education* (pp. 181-204). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315870557-17>
- Yoshioka, H. (2010). Indigenous language usage and maintenance patterns among indigenous people in the era of neoliberal multiculturalism in Mexico and Guatemala. *Latin American Research Review*, 5-34.
- Zentella, A. C. (2017). “Limpia, fija y da esplendor”: Challenging the symbolic violence of the Royal Spanish Academy. *Chiricú Journal: Latina/o Literature, Art, and Culture*, 1(2), 21-42. <https://doi.org/10.2979/chiricu.1.2.04>
- Zimmerman, E. S. (2019). *Racioliteracies: Race and subjectivity in the teaching of Spanish to bilingual Latinx students*. (Publication No. 2240201322) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/docview/2240201322?accountid=4485>

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS

Personal Background

- Identity. Self-description of the participants' identity, sharing any aspects they feel comfortable sharing
- Indigenous Community. Description of their community and any elements of their particular community they want to share.
- Family. Overview of their family, how they grew up, etc.
- Country of origin/relationship to nations. How they view themselves within communities, community membership(s).

Education

- Knowledge. Their conceptualization of knowledge, who has it, how it is validated, etc.
- Schooling. Their perspectives on schooling, the function of schooling, etc.
- Educational background. Description of educational history. Considerations of "formal vs informal" schooling.

SHL

- Training received in teaching, particularly in language teaching.
- Training received in teaching SHL, linguistics, related fields
- Spanish instructor colleagues, thoughts on their colleagues' identities
- Courses taught overall, and then courses taught in SHL

Indigeneity in SHL

- Indigenous Acknowledgement. Whether Indigeneity has been brought up in SHL classroom, and if so, how in the following facets:
 - language
 - culture
 - history
 - society
 - race
 - power dynamics
 - other?
- Have they experienced any conflicts between SHL pedagogy (materials, lessons, goals, practices) and Indigeneity? Have they had to modify their pedagogy due to any problematic/anti-Indigenous concepts/representations?

Indigenous/Decolonial Approaches

- Whether they see a need for decolonial perspectives or not
- Possibilities for advancement in terms of aforementioned areas or other areas
- Pedagogical suggestions they may have based on previous responses
- Considerations for allyship on behalf of non-Indigenous Latinxs or others
- Possibilities for interdisciplinary/community collaboration

Keeping the door open. Participant decides what else to discuss, what they would like to elaborate on, etc. Thank them for participation and inform them of next step in the participation process.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TOPICS/QUESTIONS

Personal Background

- Identity. Self-description of the participants' identity, sharing any aspects they feel comfortable sharing
- Indigenous Community. Description of their community and any elements of their particular community they want to share.
- Family. Overview of their family, how they grew up, etc.
- Country of origin/relationship to nations. How they view themselves within communities, community membership(s)

Education

- Knowledge. Their conceptualization of knowledge, who has it, how it is validated, etc.
- Schooling. Their perspectives on schooling, the function of schooling, etc.
- Educational background. Description of educational history. Considerations of "formal vs informal" schooling.

SHL experiences

- Courses taken in Spanish, particularly ones that are designated for SHL learners.
- Backgrounds of instructors' identities/instructors' acknowledgement of positionality
- Indigenous Acknowledgement. Whether Indigeneity was brought up in SHL classroom, and if so, how in the following facets:
 - language
 - culture
 - history
 - society
 - race
 - power dynamics
 - other?

Indigenous/Decolonial Approaches

- possibilities for advancement in terms of aforementioned areas or other areas
- considerations for allyship on behalf of non-Indigenous Latinxs
- interest in interdisciplinary/community partnership
- other topics that relate to their Indigeneity that they would like to see incorporated in their SHL class

Keeping the door open. Participant decides what else to discuss, what they would like to elaborate on, etc. Thank them for participation and inform them of next step in the participation process.

APPENDIX G
IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Brendan O'Connor](#)
[CLAS-SS: Transborder Studies, School of \(STS\)](#)
 480/727-4741
 Brendan.H.Oconnor@asu.edu

Dear [Brendan O'Connor](#):

On 3/4/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Foregrounding Indigenous Latinx Educators and Learners in Spanish as Heritage Language Education
Investigator:	Brendan O'Connor
IRB ID:	STUDY00013544
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • IRB Social Behavioral Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Protocol for Instructor Interviews, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Protocol for Student Interviews, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Provost approval, Category: Other; • Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Social Media and Email Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Student consent form, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 3/4/2021.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Valeria Ochoa
Valeria Ochoa
Brendan O'Connor