

Undergraduate Students of Spanish: Motivations and Attitudes

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of Harriet Lea Halcomb, who passed away in September 2010. "Señora Halcomb" was my Spanish teacher from 1997 to 2001 at Atlantic Community High School in Delray Beach, Florida. Her excellent teaching helped me channel my fondness for Spanish into strong language skills, and she often encouraged me to continue to study Spanish after high school. She also took risks on my behalf by mentoring me when I wrote an extended essay in Spanish for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, something that she normally did not advise her students to do. Unfortunately I was never able to tell Señora Halcomb that I followed in her footsteps, because she retired shortly after I graduated and we lost touch. Years later, especially as I find myself teaching Spanish to undergraduates, I still recall her talent, enthusiasm, high standards and creative teaching methods. I will always cherish the memory of Señora Halcomb. *Que en paz descanse.*

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| ACTFL | American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages |
| EML | English monolingual |
| FL | Foreign language |
| GMU | George Mason University |
| HL | Heritage language |
| OELA | Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (U.S. Department of Education) |
| OHL | Other heritage language |
| SFL | Spanish as a foreign language |
| SHL | Spanish as a heritage language |
| SNS | Spanish for native speakers |
| TL | Target language |

Abstract

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF SPANISH: MOTIVATIONS AND ATTITUDES

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Since 1995, enrollments in undergraduate Spanish courses have surpassed those of all other non-English languages combined at institutions of higher education in the United States. At the same time, a heated debate about the use of Spanish in the public sphere is taking place in state legislative bodies, departments of education, school districts, the media, and elsewhere in the country. It seems that the Spanish learned in the classroom is encouraged, while the Spanish spoken by speakers with a native or heritage connection to the language, or Spanish learned at home, is criticized. This discrepancy brings up several questions: Why do undergraduate students study Spanish? Do students in different levels of Spanish have different reasons for studying the language? Do students with different home language profiles have different reasons for studying the language? How many students in the introductory courses plan to study Spanish beyond their language requirement? Do different groups of students show different attitudes toward Spanish? Are there relationships between students' attitudes and broader ideologies regarding the Spanish language and Spanish speakers? To investigate these questions, a survey was administered to undergraduate students

enrolled in every level of Spanish offered at George Mason University (GMU) during the Spring 2011 semester. The survey phase was followed up by an interview phase to collect qualitative data about a subset of participants from three home language profiles that were enrolled in different levels of Spanish. Undergraduate students of Spanish appear to be studying the language to fulfill a requirement and/or because they believe that it has practical applications in their life. It seems likely that there is a relationship between the course level in which undergraduate students are enrolled and both their reasons for studying Spanish as well as their beliefs about Spanish and Spanish speakers. It is also very likely that students from different home language backgrounds have some distinct motivations for studying Spanish and hold slightly different attitudes toward the language. Gender and major or minor field of study may have a relationship with motivations and attitudes, as well. Few students in the introductory courses intend to continue studying Spanish beyond their language requirement; it appears difficult to predict whether or not a student plans to continue based on demographic factors alone, but it does seem likely that continuing students have had a personal experience that sparks their desire to persist in their study of Spanish. On the other hand, students' attitudes toward Spanish tend to reflect both personal experiences and a strong influence from stereotypes and broader ideological discourses that 1) portray language skills as a marketable commodity and 2) employ Spanish as a marker for Hispanics in the United States. The results of this mixed-methods investigation can potentially inform university language requirement policies, strategies used to recruit students into language courses, and language curricula.

Chapter 1: Grounds and Purpose

I am just one among many millions of English-speaking Americans who have studied Spanish in public school and at the university level. When the topic of Spanish comes up in conversation with my friends and acquaintances, many of them recall studying Spanish for a number of years in school but claim not to remember much more than, "Hola." These former students of Spanish often lament not being able to speak the language, and many a monolingual English speaker has expressed envy of my ability to communicate with people who work in restaurants, building maintenance, and construction. It is true that I am able to communicate well in Spanish with any person I might meet, but the reasons for my lifelong study of the language have to do with much more than the development of basic communication skills; among the factors that influenced my desire to study Spanish are my childhood experiences in South Florida, my educational experiences, my friendships, my family, my professional connections, and, after so many years of speaking Spanish, even my own identity. Yet these factors do not readily or frequently come to mind for English monolinguals, a phenomenon that leads me to agree with those who claim that, within the United States, Spanish serves primarily as an ethnic or racial marker for working-class Latinos. Do these anecdotes signify that there is a broader relationship between attitudes toward Spanish and language education in this country?

Spanish in the United States

As Leeman (2004) points out, in the United States the Spanish language serves as an index in order to characterize people as Hispanic or Latino, "constructing them as essentially different" (p. 508). This discourse also assigns several generalized characteristics to Latinos: recent immigrants, non-English speakers, service workers, etc. Recently, the Census Bureau published a brief, *Overview of race and Hispanic origin: 2010*, to explain the definition of racial and ethnic categories used in the national population survey (Humes, Jones, & Ramírez, 2011). In this brief it is noted that all agencies of the federal government are required to report demographic statistics that assign people to one of two categories, Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino; so how is "Hispanic or Latino" defined? "Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race" (Humes et al., 2011, p. 2). The core of this definition is a heritage connection, near or remote in time and/or space, to a Spanish-speaking community or region of the world. At the same time, a person may self-identify or be identified as Hispanic or Latino whether or not he or she speaks Spanish. Abiding by this definition, the 2011 Census data indicates that 16.3% of the total population is Hispanic or Latino, while 83.7% is Not Hispanic or Latino (Humes et al., 2011). In my opinion, these classifications are essentially becoming the new "Black" and "White" of our time by constructing a binary set of racial categories.

Meanwhile, those U.S. Latinos who do speak Spanish make up the second-largest Spanish-speaking community in the world, a fact that some Americans find threatening to their concept of national identity. Numerous scholars have uncovered

ideological links between 1) the pervasive belief that English monolingualism is a pass for inclusion in U.S. society, and 2) the suspicion of Spanish when used by minority speakers in public settings such as schools, government, and business (Aparicio, 2000; Barrett, 2006; Martínez, 2009; Pomerantz, 2002; Tse, 2001; Valdés, González, López García, & Márquez, 2002). For example, the Official English movement suggests in its discourse that the use of minority languages creates linguistic enclaves and encourages ethnic conflicts; multilingualism is permissible as long as the use of languages other than English is relegated to private life ("U.S. English", n.d.). Furthermore, Aparicio (2000) demonstrates how certain social groups in this country, including Latinos, associate Spanish with economic marginalization, political exclusion and social isolation.

Thus we see that the use of Spanish in the public sphere is stigmatized in a society where, according to estimates from the 2007-2009 American Community Survey, over 12% of the population speaks Spanish or Spanish creole at home ("United States", n.d.). Yet in the same society, 13% of children and adolescents study Spanish in school, as do the majority of college students who are enrolled in foreign language courses. Even the Official English movement does not necessarily view the *teaching* of languages other than English as harmful ("U.S. English", n.d.). Aparicio (2000) calls the dichotomy between undesirable minority language maintenance and desirable foreign language acquisition "differential bilingualism." The Spanish spoken by speakers with a native or heritage connection to the language, or Spanish learned at home, is criticized; at the same time the Spanish spoken by native English speakers, or Spanish learned in the classroom, is applauded.

Enrollments in Spanish courses in the United States

In 2000, over 68% of students in grades seven through 12 who studied a foreign language were learning Spanish (Draper & Hicks, 2002). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) reported that, during the 2004-2005 school year, 72.9% of students in grades K through 12 who studied a foreign language studied Spanish; that figure remained relatively stable in 2007-2008, dropping slightly to just over 72% (ACTFL, n.d.). This means that in 2007-2008, of the 8.9 million school-age children across the country studying languages other than English, over 6.4 million were studying Spanish. This trend carries over into colleges and universities. In a national poll, 78% percent of college-bound high school seniors said that they were interested in achieving proficiency in a foreign language, and Spanish was the most popular choice among those who planned to study a foreign language in college (Hayward & Siaya, 2001). Indeed, since 1995 enrollments in Spanish courses at institutions of higher education in the United States have surpassed those of all other modern languages combined. In 2006, over 52% of all language course enrollments were in Spanish (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2007); this percentage remained relatively stable in 2009, dropping only slightly to 51% (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010). These statistics are not likely to be startling to any reader, since the number of undergraduate students who choose to study Spanish has been rising since 1960 (Furman et al., 2010). Spanish is undoubtedly the most popular non-English language studied in the country.

Possible explanations for the Spanish "boom" include: the prevalence of the belief that Spanish is useful in daily life, the expectation that Spanish is valuable on the local and global job markets, and the recognition of Spanish as a "world language" with millions of global speakers (Leeman, 2006; Pomerantz, 2002). It is also likely that many

English-speaking students choose to study Spanish because they consider it a default second language of the United States (Leeman, 2006). Whatever the reasons behind the high enrollment numbers may be, the rate of proficiency, as defined by guidelines developed by ACTFL and the federal government, achieved by the majority of English-monolingual college students who study Spanish is generally considered to be quite low. In fact, the rate of proficiency achieved by the majority of English-monolingual college students who study any foreign language is generally seen as lacking (Tse, 2001; Malone, Rifkin, Christian, & Johnson, 2005). The classroom is not the only place where one can learn a language or continue to develop existing language skills, but language coursework is seen as an important vehicle for developing competency in a foreign language for undergraduate students. However, Malone et al. (2005) point out that it can take up to 720 hours of instruction for a student to achieve proficiency at the ACTFL advanced level, and most undergraduate programs at U.S. colleges and universities only offer students an average of three contact hours per week; three hours multiplied by 15 weeks, multiplied by four semesters, comes to a total number of 180 hours of instruction. That is only one quarter of the estimated 720 hours needed to achieve proficiency.

One way that an undergraduate student can progress on the path to proficiency is to enroll in advanced language courses, which often exceed the level stipulated by foreign language requirements. Furman et al. (2007, 2010) report that the ratio of introductory to advanced undergraduate course enrollments in Spanish at four-year institutions in the U.S. was three to one in both 2006 and 2009. At George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax, VA, where the present study was conducted, the ratio of enrollments in introductory/intermediate courses (110-250) to advanced courses (306-484) was also three to one in March 2011, after the drop deadline had passed for the

Spring 2011 semester. Furman et al. (2010) make the following notes about the loss of enrollment numbers from introductory to advanced language courses:

Enrollments in introductory classes may reflect degree requirements, whereas enrollments in advanced classes are more indicative of possible language minors and majors; advanced undergraduate language enrollments may also reflect courses taken as a part of professional preparation... Although different languages require different time frames for attainment of competency levels, for most European languages enrollments in advanced classes should indicate the beginning of a functional level of competency. (p. 5)

As the researchers indicate, one explanatory factor behind the skewed distribution of enrollments in introductory courses could be the presence of a foreign language requirement. Based on casual conversations with Spanish instructors that I conducted outside of the scope of this research, I would say that the commonly held belief of many instructors is that the majority of students enrolled in basic Spanish courses are there primarily to fulfill an institutional foreign language requirement. Furman et al. (2010) also speculate that students enrolled in advanced Spanish courses may believe that Spanish will help them in preparation for their careers. Thus, the fulfillment of a language requirement and the belief that Spanish will be useful in a future career are two possible reasons, among many, that students choose to study Spanish; furthermore, it is possible that the belief that Spanish will improve one's prospects for employment is related to the continued study of Spanish and an interest in achieving proficiency. The picture that the above figures paint is that of an enormous funnel: from the vast pool of students who study Spanish in school and college, very few end up in advanced undergraduate courses. Are differences in motivation related to this phenomenon? Does the way students of Spanish perceive the language have something to do with their desire to continue to study the language?

Discourse about Language Education in the United States

Since the 1979 publication of *Strength Through Wisdom*, the report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, it seems that there exists an enduring sense of "foreign language crisis" in the United States. The words published over 30 years ago seem to have a contemporary ring to them:

We are profoundly alarmed by what we have found: a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political, and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity, and public sensitivity... Americans' incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse... While the use of English as a major international language of business, diplomacy, and science should be welcomed as a tool for understanding across national boundaries, this cannot be safely considered a substitute for direct communications in the many areas and on innumerable occasions when knowledge of English cannot be expected. The fact remains that the overwhelming majority of the world's population neither understands nor speaks English; and for most of those who learn English as a foreign language, it remains precisely that. (Perkins, 1979, p. 457-458)

The report also indicates that, at the time, Americans held a "dangerously inadequate understanding of world affairs" (Perkins, 1979, p. 458), and applauds the efforts of "a few" colleges and universities to incorporate foreign languages and international studies as vital components of undergraduate education.

Fast forward from 1979 to The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which replaced the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) of the U.S. Department of Education with the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA). The OELA states that its mission is twofold: to "provide national leadership to help ensure that English language learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academically" and to "assist in building the nation's capacity in

critical foreign languages" ("Office", n.d.). The languages that are currently considered "critical" to U.S. economic and security interests are Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla/Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu ("Critical", n.d.). So it seems that our nation's preoccupation with our foreign language abilities and our level of global understanding persists: the federal government funds multiple scholarship programs for language study and international education ("Critical", n.d.); institutions such as the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland and the Center for Applied Linguistics continue to publish reports and hold conferences with a message of urgency about the nation's foreign language capacity (Voght & Schaub, 1992); articles, poll reports, and position papers about the need for multiple languages other than English are abundant and ever increasing in number (Hayward & Siaya, 2001; Burnsed, 2011; Association of International Educators, 2011). These programs and publications often emphasize the role of language skills in the global economy and encourage students to study a language for the enhanced career opportunities that having multilingual skills would offer them; in other words, language skills are characterized as both economically critical and as a prized commodity on the job market. Furthermore, a report from the American Council on Education suggests that 86% of public believes that knowledge of a foreign language would improve their chances for professional success (Hayward & Siaya, 2001). The preoccupation with foreign language capacity has evolved into a public discourse that portrays Americans as incorrigibly monolingual and that uses economic and security arguments to encourage the acquisition of certain languages.

Although this circulating discourse about the importance of foreign language education and the value that it can add to one's career potential would seem to inspire

increased language enrollments and foreign language requirements, it appears that the opposite trend is taking place. Overall foreign language enrollments today represent 8.6% of total higher education enrollments (undergraduate and graduate), which is half the ratio (16.5%) registered in 1965 (Furman et al., 2010); other studies have documented a decrease in both the presence and the length of foreign language requirements at colleges and universities (Brint, Proctor, Murphy, & Turk-Bicakci, 2009; Furman et al., 2010). And, although enrollments in languages such as Arabic and Chinese are demonstrably on the rise (Furman et al., 2007 & 2010), they have not overtaken the hugely popular, though "non-critical", Spanish.

Purpose of the Present Study

We have seen that a heated debate about the use of Spanish in the public sphere is taking place in state legislative bodies, departments of education, school districts, the media, and elsewhere in the country: the Spanish learned in the classroom is encouraged, while the Spanish spoken by speakers with a native or heritage connection to the language, or Spanish learned at home, is criticized. In fact, in terms of enrollment, Spanish is the most popular language studied by American students at all educational levels. We have also seen that the investment of national resources to encourage the study of other languages is not necessarily diverting college students from studying Spanish. These concurrent and contradictory phenomena related to Spanish in the United States raise several questions:

- Why do undergraduate students study Spanish?
- Do students in different levels of Spanish have different reasons for studying the language?

- Do students with different home language profiles have different reasons for studying the language?
- How many students in the introductory courses plan to study Spanish beyond their language requirement?
- Do different groups of students show different attitudes toward Spanish?
- Are there relationships between students' attitudes and broader ideologies regarding the Spanish language and Spanish speakers?

The juxtaposition of these questions brings together the seemingly separate themes of prior research: 1) motivations and attitudes as factors in the process of language acquisition, and 2) language ideologies inside and outside the classroom.

In order to begin to answer these questions, a survey was administered to undergraduate students enrolled in every level of Spanish offered during the Spring 2011 semester at George Mason University (GMU), a large, public university in Virginia known for the cultural and linguistic diversity of its student body. The survey phase was followed up by an interview phase to collect qualitative data about a subset of participants from three home language profiles that were enrolled in different levels of Spanish. The results of this mixed-methods investigation can potentially inform university language requirement policies, strategies used to recruit students into language courses, and language curricula.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Definitions of Motivation and Attitude

The concepts of "motivation" and "attitude" are difficult to define and therefore somewhat problematic to investigate in language students: for example, Masgoret & Gardner (2003) define "motivation" as goal-directed behavior, such as intensity of effort; many definitions of "attitude" draw from the field of social psychology, where the main dividing line is between mentalist and behaviorist definitions (Almeida, 2003); then there is Dörnyei (1994), who defines "motivation" as the motors of behavior in an individual, and "attitudes" as a result of interpersonal/intergroup relational patterns. The way researchers define the two concepts is not always clear, and researchers tend to use the two terms interchangeably. Furthermore, given that both motivation and attitude are latent, complex characteristics that are difficult to measure, researchers often bring in other measurable concepts, such as behavior and use, to their studies. For example, Mejías, Anderson-Mejías, & Carlson (2003) used a questionnaire to conduct a study of college students' attitudes toward Spanish, but all of the statements on the questionnaire begin with "I use Spanish to..."; in fact, the table of results even refers to the data as "reasons why Mexican-American students use Spanish." In the analysis of the data, there is an assumed equivalence between use and attitude/motivation. Cortés (2002) also fluctuates between the terms attitude and motivation, and does not make a clear distinction between attitudes toward foreign languages and attitudes toward foreign language learning in general.

In *Attitudes and language*, Baker (1992) points out the plurality of definitions of the terms "attitude", "motivation" and "ideology" used by researchers, and the difficulty this causes when making comparisons between theoretical frameworks. (In fact, Baker uses the term "attitude" when referring to Gardner's research despite the predominance of the term "motivation" in the latter's body of work.) The author also sees five major deficiencies in the literature about attitudes and language produced prior to 1992: little reflection of evolutions in attitude theory; the absence of references to attitude change; the lack of multidimensional statistical analysis; an approach that manifests a separatist ideology of languages in contact rather than a holistic or organic view of bilingualism; and the dominant interest in attitude as a factor in language acquisition or performance. Furthermore, Baker outlines some prominent problems with instruments used to measure attitudes, including the possibility that people may respond with what they think are socially desirable answers and/or may be affected by the researcher and the perceived purpose of the research. He also suggests that age, gender, educational context, ability, language background, and cultural background play a part in determining attitudes.

For the purposes of the present study, the definitions of motivation and attitude provided by Dörnyei (1994) are the most relevant. As a researcher, I also agree with Dörnyei's position that attitudes and motivation toward language learning depend on the sociopolitical and geopolitical relevance of the language in the cultural milieu (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). In the United States, Spanish cannot be seen as an abstract academic subject divorced from its sociopolitical and geopolitical relevance. Thus, the reader may utilize the following definitions of "motivations" and "attitudes" in his or her interpretation of the present study:

- *Motivations* - the motors of behavior in an individual
- *Attitudes* - individual beliefs that result from interpersonal/intergroup relational patterns

Motivations, Attitudes, and Language Acquisition

Part of the confusion between terms arises because motivation and attitude are related to one another, and many researchers are interested in their combined effect on behavior or language acquisition outcomes. Several prior studies in the fields of sociolinguistics and second language acquisition have analyzed the relationship between motivation, attitudes, and outcomes, such as success in language acquisition or the continued study of a language (Bacon & Finneman, 1990; Bartley, 1970; Benjamin & Chen, 2003; Hernández, 2006; Hsieh, 2008; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2003; Pratt, 2010; Ramage, 1990; Shedivy, 2004; Thomas, 2010; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002). For example, in a meta-analysis of studies by Gardner and associates on 75 different samples to investigate the relationship between motivation and second language achievement, Masgoret & Gardner (2003) found motivation to have the strongest correlation with achievement than the other variables (integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, integrative orientation, instrumental orientation, availability of the language in the community, and age), with no difference between second language and foreign language settings. Hernández (2006) also found a positive relationship between integrative motivation and achievement on the simulated oral proficiency interview (SOPI) and the desire to study a language beyond the language requirement. Hsieh (2008) reported that self-efficacy, positive attitudes toward the language, and low anxiety were predictors of language achievement, and that successful students were more integratively (socially) motivated;

Hsieh also found that the predictors of achievement for heritage learners were no different than those for non-heritage learners.

The study by Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud (2009) demonstrates that motivations and attitudes differ from setting to setting; other studies show that these factors differ from language to language. For example, Humphreys & Spratt (2008) surveyed university students in Hong Kong about their motivation to study English and Putonghua, as compulsory languages, and either French, German or Japanese, as optional languages. In the Hong Kong context, English is not only a world language but also a former colonial language; Putonghua is the official language of the People's Republic of China and a world language as well. The overarching conclusion of the study is that students' motivational profiles differ from language to language.

Other studies have looked specifically at the motivational profiles of beginning university language students. Horwitz (1988) found that beginning university students of Spanish perceived their language of study to be somewhat easier than students of German or French; they were also more optimistic about the opportunities that they would have to use Spanish and about the value of Spanish in helping them get a good job. Mandell (2002) conducted research with students in a similar population and found that the majority was enrolled in beginning courses in order to satisfy the institutional language requirement; the second most popular reason for enrollment was to use the language in travel, work, or study.

Motivations and attitudes of heritage learners. It is essential to point out that the majority of the aforementioned studies have focused primarily on students of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL), although some, like that of Hsieh (2008), recognize the presence of heritage learners in SFL classes. Over the past three

decades, there has been an increase in research on heritage learners and the development of Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) and Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) courses and programs in the U.S., both at the high school and the university level. Still, a number of different applications of the terms "motivation" and "attitude" also appear in studies of SHL students, many of which include these terms in the title but in reality examine the linguistic competency, the use of Spanish, and/or the demographic background of heritage learners enrolled in SNS and SHL courses. For example, in a qualitative study, Mikulski (2006) asked students in a university SNS course about their language learning goals, which the researcher defined in terms of linguistic skills or course content, and also reported that students had "positive attitudes" toward Spanish. In another qualitative study, Alarcón (2010) also found that university SHL students had positive attitudes toward the language and culture, an awareness of their own dialect, integrative and instrumental motivations, and an association between the Spanish language and their own Hispanic identity. In a study involving SHL students at a university in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, Yanguas (2010) reported that integrativeness, defined as a positive attitude toward Spanish speakers, was positively correlated to the motivation to improve one's Spanish skills.

The data from the report by Carreira & Kagan (2011) on a national survey of heritage language learners conducted at colleges and universities across the country between 2007 and 2009 is somewhat more clear and applicable to the present study, because the survey included questions about motivations for heritage language study and attitudes toward the heritage language. The largest linguistic group, nearly a quarter of all respondents, spoke Spanish as a heritage language; 71.1% of SHL learners said that they were studying Spanish for their career or job goals; the other reasons they

reported were to communicate with family and friends in the U.S. (50.2%), to learn about their cultural and linguistic roots (48.9%), and to fulfill a language requirement (47.3%). The researchers provide details for the overall sample about respondents' attitudes toward their heritage language, without separating the results by language: the top responses were "It's a valuable skill" (88.9%), "I find it useful" (88.5%), "It's an important part of who I am" (85.2%), and "It's a necessary skill" (70.7%). Carreira & Kagan characterize these responses as indicative of positive attitudes toward the heritage language.

Persistence in language study. Much of the existing literature about high school and university language students captures data that is relevant to the present study's research questions, such as research on the relationship between motivation and persistence in language study. "Persistence" is defined as the continued study of a language beyond introductory or required levels, often associated with the end goal of achieving proficiency. For example, Bartley's (1970) study about gender, attitudes, and language dropout found that females had more positive attitudes toward language study than males and thus were more likely to continue their enrollment in language courses. Ramage (1990) developed profiles of continuing and discontinuing high school language students: continuing students were more likely to be enrolled in a higher level in an earlier grade (e.g. a ninth grader in a level three class), to get better grades in the language class, to be motivated by learning a language for the language's sake and as a means to achieving other goals (both intrinsic and extrinsic), and to hold positive attitudes toward language class; discontinuing students were more likely to assign a lesser degree of importance to the same reasons for studying a language as continuing students, and to be primarily concerned with fulfilling a language requirement. In a

qualitative study, Shedivy (2004) identified five common reasons that certain students study a language beyond the minimum two years in high school, linking persistence to a desire for proficiency: 1) a spark (a personal experience that stimulates the desire for proficiency); 2) a desire to blend in with the target language community; 3) a desire to immerse (integrative motivation); 4) pragmatic (or instrumental) orientations such as travel or business; and 5) political awareness of historical and contemporary relations between the U.S. and Latin America. Like Bartley (1970), Pratt (2010) also found that female high school students were more likely than their male counterparts to intend to continue to study Spanish in college; the strongest factors in the decision to continue were the possibility of good grades, being able to use Spanish in one's daily life, and potential career benefits.

Other attitudes and perceptions of languages. In another study, Kissau (2006) used a combination of survey instruments and interviews to collect data about grade nine students of French in Ontario. The data revealed that female students display a stronger desire to learn French than males; male students perceived French as feminine and were concerned with how society would assess their masculinity if they spoke French. Williams, Burden, & Lanvers (2002) administered a survey and conducted interviews with secondary school students enrolled in mandatory French and German courses in grades seven, eight, and nine in southwestern England. The researchers concluded that, overall, there was higher motivation to learn German than French, especially among males. The preference for German and the corresponding gender difference was explained in the interviews: students perceived French to be more "feminine" and German to be more "masculine." The researchers also cite a prior study that reported that students found Spanish to be "useful" and considered German to be

"easy" and "enjoyable." This data, as the authors point out, begs further research into students' perceptions of languages and attitudes toward them.

The research questions in the present study seek to confirm, expand, and update the findings of prior research by investigating the differences in motivation among students in different levels of Spanish and those with different heritage languages. This study also seeks to determine how many students in the introductory courses plan to continue their study of Spanish through coursework (persistence). Furthermore, this study approaches the investigation of attitudes by examining particular beliefs about Spanish and whether or not different groups of students tend to express different attitudes.

Interactions Between Ideologies and Attitudes

In many prior attitudinal studies of language learners, the individual attitudes of students were described in terms of the relationship between these attitudes and learning outcomes. As Dörnyei's (1994) definition of "attitude" implies, individual beliefs are not formed in isolation but rather they are influenced by relational patterns between societal groups. Thus, ideologies about language that are manifested in the discourses that circulate on the societal level can influence, or "trickle down," to the level of individual beliefs and attitudes. For instance, the studies by Kissau (2006) and Williams, Burden, & Lanvers (2002) indicate that ideologies about language and gender may affect individual students' attitudes toward particular languages. Other scholars have examined ideologies about language education and multilingualism present in the public and academic realms, where they can have a potentially significant impact on individual students' attitudes.

The question of what Leeman (2006) observes as "the commodification of language and the contemporary fixation on the marketability of particular types of knowledge" (p. 38) appears in several studies. Pomerantz (2002) describes two ideological assumptions that can underlie language education at universities: 1) that language is an object that can be acquired and measured; and 2) that one gains the right to use the learned language by becoming a member of a profession. Since these discourses are reproduced and circulated at universities, they are embedded in the most immediate context that affects students' individual beliefs about languages. Kouritzin et al. (2009) examined what aspects of the social context influence foreign language learners' beliefs and attitudes about language learning and, thus, motivate learners to engage in successful foreign language (FL) learning. The researchers surveyed more than 6,000 university students in Canada, Japan, and France to determine differences in language learning beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. It is noteworthy that there are ideological underpinnings concerning FL learning that the authors of the study themselves state very clearly. They believe that the global nature of the economy requires multilingualism, and that the bias toward monolingualism in Canada and the United States is making those countries less economically competitive; thus, the authors see FL learning as a marketable commodity. For instance, the authors list Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish and Japanese as languages that Canadians will need to learn for economic competitiveness. They also chose Canada, Japan, and France for their study because they are G8 countries, and they maintain that students in these countries elect to study FLs because of personal or societal motivations rather than a sense of necessity.

Leeman & Martínez (2007) point out a significant trend in the teaching of Spanish as a heritage language in the U.S.: the discourse has shifted from Spanish as a marker of identity to Spanish as a commodity in the global marketplace. Similarly, Heller (2002) describes what she terms the "emergent globalizing discourse" that frames the learning and use of French in Canada as an asset for economic opportunities in the global marketplace. This represents a shift from the traditionalist and modernizing discourses that positioned French as a cultural value and a resource for advancement that belonged to the ethnic francophone minority. As French-English bilingualism becomes more and more of a desired technical commodity, the debates multiply about who has access to bilingual education and which varieties of French are valued. Immigrants, anglophones, and non-ethnic francophones compete for access to schooling in French. According to Heller, although the current discourse has moved away from the traditionalist view of French that was associated with francophone nationalism in the first half of the 20th century, the conflicts over bilingualism and who has the rights to linguistic resources are still very much tied to the reality of social categories in Canada.

As discussed at length in Chapter 1, several studies have dealt with discourses about Spanish in the U.S. and how conflicting language ideologies about multilingualism can coexist even in public contexts where it is supposedly encouraged (Aparicio, 2000; Barrett, 2006; Leeman, 2006; Martínez, 2009; Pomerantz, 2002; Tse, 2001; Valdés et al., 2002). The present study will not only examine why students study Spanish and what beliefs they hold about Spanish, it will also evaluate how these public discourses may affect individual students' beliefs.

Chapter 3: Method

A survey was administered to undergraduate students enrolled in every level of Spanish offered during the Spring 2011 semester at George Mason University. The survey phase was followed up by an interview phase to collect qualitative data about a subset of participants from three home language profiles that were enrolled in different levels of Spanish. Due to the limited nature of the sample, the data cannot be extrapolated to undergraduate students of Spanish across the U.S., as the sample is not representative of that population, but it may be relevant for similar universities. Therefore a detailed description of GMU is provided below for comparison to peer institutions.

Setting

George Mason University is located in Fairfax, Virginia in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, a diverse region that is home to many different ethnic and linguistic communities. In addition, the proximity of the university to the nation's capital places it in an environment populated by government agencies, international organizations, think tanks, nonprofit associations, and political groups; faculty members and speakers from these sectors are part of the university community, and students are often able to work, intern, or volunteer off campus. There are also several other universities in the area, including both private and public institutions, large and small. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2010) classifies GMU as a public, large, four-year, primarily residential research university. The majority of its enrolled students are undergraduates, and the undergraduate profile is considered medium full-time four-year,

selective, and higher transfer-in. The undergraduate instructional program at GMU is considered balanced between the arts and sciences and professions, with a high coexistence with graduate students.

At the beginning of the Spring 2011 term, there were 18,855 degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled at GMU's Fairfax campus; 78.1% were pursuing a full-time course load and 21.9% were part-time students. Of those students, 9,841 (52.2%) were female and 8,963 (47.5%) were male (51 [0.3%] not reported); 87.4% came from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and 12.6% were from out of state (GMU Institutional Research & Reporting, 2011). See Table 1 for the breakdown of ethnic categories among the undergraduate population.

GMU confers BA, BAS, BFA and BS undergraduate degrees. The university's general education requirement does not have a foreign language component; however, undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor of arts (BA) degree in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Science must "demonstrate intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language" ("Foreign Language," n.d.). Students can do this in one of three ways: 1) they may take the placement test in one of the languages offered by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, or Latin); 2) if they have experience with a language not offered by the Department, they may be granted a waiver of the foreign language requirement by presenting documentation; or 3) they may complete an intermediate-level sequence of coursework in one of the 10 languages offered by the Department, equivalent to 110 (six credits) and 210 (three credits) ("Foreign Language," n.d.).

Table 1. Undergraduates Enrolled at GMU's Fairfax Campus, by Ethnic Category

| | African American | Asian American | Hispanic American | Native American | Non-resident Alien | White American | Pacific Islander | Two or more races | Other / No race |
|----------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| N | 1,660 | 3,067 | 1,890 | 27 | 614 | 8,882 | 69 | 846 | 1,800 |
| % | 8.8% | 16.3% | 10.0% | 0.1% | 3.3% | 47.1% | 0.4% | 4.5% | 9.5% |

Participants

The survey was administered during class to students in every level of Spanish. With the approval of the Chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the permission of faculty and instructors, the survey administrators (the researcher and two research assistants) visited 36 course sections either at the beginning or the end of the first class session of the semester (January 24, 25, or 26, 2011) to request the participation of the students present and to administer the survey. Every section of each course was surveyed with the exception of 110 and 210; these are the courses with the most sections, therefore only a sample of sections were surveyed. The selection process for the samples consisted of two steps: 1) sections were divided according to time slot, and 2) if more than one section fell into one time slot, the section numbers were randomly selected using a random number generator. This process was applied to select half the number of sections for each course: for 110, seven sections were selected, and for 210, nine sections. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Spanish Courses Surveyed

| Course Code | Number of Sections | Sections Surveyed |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 110 | 14 | 7 |
| 115 | 3 | 3 |
| 210 | 17 | 9 |
| 250 | 3 | 3 |
| 306 | 2 | 2 |
| 309 | 2 | 1 |
| 315 | 1 | 1 |
| 336 | 1 | 1 |
| 370 | 2 | 2 |
| 385 | 1 | 1 |
| 390 | 1 | 1 |
| 480 | 1 | 1 |
| 481 | 2 | 2 |
| 484 | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 51 | 36 |

A subset of participants from the survey sample was recruited for the interview phase by passing around a sign-up sheet in the classes that were surveyed; participants were informed of the compensation for participating in an interview, a \$10 Starbucks card. More than 300 participants from every course level signed up to be a potential interview subject. Due to the anonymous nature of the surveys, the course level was the only information known about the participants who signed up to take part in an interview. Therefore a follow-up email was sent out to all those who signed up asking them to indicate what languages were spoken in their home when they were children (home language profile) and their availability. Participants were then selected based on their responses and their availability in order to obtain diversity in terms of course level and home language profile. (See Table 3.) Thus the set of participants was stratified, but also self-selected and convenience-based. The qualitative data from the interviews, however, is not intended to be descriptive of the population of students of Spanish at GMU; rather

it is intended to explore and uncover details about students' motivations and attitudes not captured in the survey data.

Table 3. Matrix of Interview Participants, by Course Level and Home Language Profile

| Home Language Profile | Course Level | | | | | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | 110-210 | 250-309 | 315 | 336-390 | 480-484 | |
| English monolingual | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Spanish as a heritage language | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Other heritage language | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 15 |

Description of the survey participants. The total number of participants in the survey sample was 567. The distribution of the participants according to course level was similar to the total enrollment data as recorded by the university on the first day of the Spring 2011 semester (see Appendix 4).

The majority (86.5%) of respondents belonged to the age group 18-24; 9.4% were 25-34; 2.1% were 35-44; 1.9% were 45 or older. The gender distribution of the sample differed from the gender distribution of the GMU undergraduate student body, with a greater proportion of female students: 35.5% identified as male, and 64.5% identified as female. In the overall sample, 32.6% of respondents reported to have either a declared or intended major or minor in Spanish. The home language distribution showed 64.5% to be EML, 15.9% to be SHL, and 19.6% to be OHL. (All percentages reported are valid percentages that exclude missing data.)

A two-sided Pearson chi-square analysis was performed to determine if the characteristics of the students in each of the course level ranges were significantly different than the demographics of the overall sample. The Pearson chi-square value

was $p < .008$ for gender, $p < .084$ for age group, $p < .001$ for major/minor, and $p < .001$ for home language profile. Thus there was a significant association between course level and gender, major/minor, and home language profile. More females, Spanish majors and minors, and heritage speakers of Spanish were present in all of the higher course levels than in the 110-210 levels. Given the significant association between course level and gender and major/minor, the latter two variables were controlled in the analysis of the data.

Description of the interview participants. A subset of 15 survey participants from different course levels and with different home language profiles participated in the interview phase (see Table 3). One EML participant was enrolled in SPAN 315, the course designed for heritage speakers. Three participants were male students and 12 were female; 13 participants were between 18 and 24 years old and two were between 25 and 34. Seven of the participants were majoring or minoring in Spanish, including all three males and four of the females. All of the Spanish majors/minors were enrolled in 300 or 400 level courses, with the exception of one Spanish minor who was enrolled in SPAN 250; one Spanish minor had dropped the Spanish course he was enrolled in (SPAN 336) at the time of the survey, due to a scheduling conflict with another course in his major field of study. The three participants enrolled in 400 level courses were enrolled in multiple (two) 400-level courses; these three were also all Spanish majors. All of the participants enrolled in the 250-484 course range had previously taken Spanish courses at GMU; only one participant in the 110-210 range had taken a prior Spanish course at the university. Every participant had studied Spanish in middle or high school or at Northern Virginia Community College before studying it at GMU.

Materials and Procedure

The research protocol and instruments were developed during the Fall 2010 term and approved by the GMU Human Subjects Review Board in December 2010. The survey instrument includes 24 total items and was designed to take less than 15 minutes to complete; no identifying information was collected to maintain the anonymity of the participants. The first six questions request the subject to select a response from a set of choices or write in their answer; these questions were designed to elicit demographic data for the independent variables. The next 11 questions request the subject to select a number on a four-point scale; these questions were designed to obtain data about the relative importance of the motivational factors that led the subject to study Spanish. The next question requests the subject to select a response from a set of choices about his or her plans to continue to study Spanish beyond their language requirement. The final six questions request the subject to select a number on a six-point scale; these questions were designed to obtain data about the subject's attitudes toward Spanish relative to other languages and to prevent responses based on what may have been perceived as socially desirable attitudes toward Spanish. (See Appendix 1.)

The attitudes section was originally designed to include all nine modern languages offered at GMU (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish) and English. However, when the survey was pilot tested, the respondents complained that it was time consuming and confusing to select a number from one to six for 10 languages for six items, a total of 60 tasks. Therefore, the number of languages was reduced to six, to include three "critical" languages (Arabic, Chinese, and Russian) and the other Romance languages (French, Italian), in addition to Spanish.

There was nearly universal participation by eligible students in any given course section surveyed, and participants took about 10 minutes to complete the survey. Students under the age of 18, graduate students, and non-degree undergraduates were asked not to participate. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were given a copy of an informed consent form. In one section of 210, several students declined to participate because the instructor asked the survey administrator to wait until the end of the class, and some students needed to leave for their next class. In the higher course levels (336-484), the level of participation was nearly universal, but with an important characteristic: students were asked to only complete the survey one time, and many of the students in these courses were enrolled in more than one course; therefore students who had already completed the survey in another class were asked not to participate. A total of 569 surveys were collected; two surveys were found to have been completed by non-degree students and therefore were not included in the data, bringing the sample size to 567 participants. The enrollment numbers recorded by the university on the first day of the Spring 2011 semester (January 24, 2011) do not indicate unique students who were enrolled in multiple courses, but the sample included in this study is considered to be limited to unique students, to the extent that students enrolled in multiple courses followed the instructions of the survey administrators. The anecdotal reports of the survey administrators suggest that each survey pertains to a unique participant. (See Table 4.)

The interviews were conducted with individual subjects and lasted between 30 and 50 minutes each. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were signed an informed consent form; each participant also received a \$10 Starbucks card as compensation. The interview questions were similar to the items on the survey, except

they were asked in an open-ended format (see Appendix 2). For instance, rather than asking the subjects to rate each motivational factor on a list, they were asked questions about why they chose to study Spanish, what made them decide to take Spanish as opposed to other languages, etc. The interview also incorporated a word association exercise with the 6 languages listed in the survey's attitude items: Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. At the beginning of each interview, the subject also filled out another survey, not to be included with the survey data but rather to be compared to the subject's responses in the interview.

Table 4. Number of Surveys Collected

| Course Level | Surveys Collected |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 110-210 | 352 |
| 250-309 | 92 |
| 315 | 8 |
| 336-390 | 69 |
| 480-484 | 46 |
| TOTAL | 567 |

Data Analysis

In light of the research questions for this study, a set of independent variables was selected from the demographic data: Spanish course level, gender, age group, major/minor, and home language profile. Data was collected about three additional independent variables but was not used in the analysis: whether or not participants were born in the U.S., how long they have lived in the country, and their current language profile. For the purposes of the analysis of the survey data, a set of values was determined for each (see Table 5). When performing the statistical analysis, the higher

age group categories were collapsed (25 or older) due to the disproportionately large size of the 18 to 24 age group.

The Spanish course levels were divided into five categories: the basic sequence that fulfills the foreign language requirement for the BA degree (110, 115, 210); intermediate language courses (250, 306, 309); 300 level advanced literature, writing, and culture courses (336, 370, 385, 390); 400 level advanced literature, writing, and culture courses (480, 481, 484); and SPAN 315, the only course designed specifically for heritage speakers, thus separated from the rest of the courses. (See Table 6 for the corresponding titles of each course.) The higher course categories were combined (250-484) for some of purpose of statistical analysis, due to the large difference in size between the segment of the sample enrolled in the introductory sequence (110, 115, 210) and the other course level groups.

The home language profile variable was divided into three categories (see Table 7):

- *English monolingual (EML)* - English, without any other language, was spoken in the participant's home when he or she was a child
- *Spanish as a heritage language (SHL)* - Spanish, whether along with or without any other language (including English), was spoken in the participant's home when he or she was a child
- *Other heritage language (OHL)* - a language other than English or Spanish, along with or without any other language (including English, but not including Spanish), was spoken in the participant's home when he or she was a child.

See Appendix 3 for a complete list of the heritage languages reported by participants.

Table 5. Independent Variables

| Variable | Values |
|-----------------------|---|
| Spanish course level | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 110-210• 250-309• 315• 336-390• 480-484 |
| Gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male• Female |
| Age group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18-24• 25-34• 35-44• 45 or older |
| Major/Minor | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spanish major or minor• Other major or minor |
| Home language profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• English monolingual (EML)• Spanish as a heritage language (SHL)• Other heritage language(s) (OHL) |

Table 6. Spanish Courses Offered at GMU, Spring 2011

| Course Code | Number of Sections | Credits | Title |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--|
| 110 | 14 | 6 | Elementary Spanish |
| 115 | 3 | 3 | Review of Elementary Spanish |
| 210 | 17 | 3 | Intermediate Spanish |
| 250 | 3 | 3 | Gateway to Advanced Spanish |
| 306 | 2 | 3 | Spanish in Context II |
| 309 | 2 | 6 | Intensive Spanish in Context |
| 315 | 1 | 3 | Spanish for Heritage Speakers |
| 336 | 1 | 3 | Spain through Social Media |
| 370 | 2 | 3 | Spanish Writing and Stylistics |
| 385 | 1 | 3 | Introduction to Spanish Linguistics |
| 390 | 1 | 3 | Introduction to Hispanic Literary Analysis |
| 480 | 1 | 3 | Teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language |
| 481 | 2 | 3 | Section 1: Latin@s, Gender & Human Rights Section 2: Spanish History through Film |
| 484 | 1 | 3 | Literature of Spain II |

Table 7. Matrix of Home Language Profile Categories, More than One Home Language Reported

| | English | Spanish | Other(s) |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| English | EML (only English) | SHL | OHL |
| Spanish | SHL | SHL (only Spanish) | SHL |
| Other(s) | OHL | SHL | OHL (only other(s)) |

Let us move now to the definitions of the dependent variables: motivation to study Spanish, plans for continued study of Spanish, and attitudes toward Spanish (see Table 8). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the terms motivations and attitudes are defined, for the purposes of this study, as follows:

- *Motivations* - the motors of behavior in an individual
- *Attitudes* - individual beliefs that result from interpersonal/intergroup relational patterns

Ten principal motivational factors were identified for this study, with opportunities for open-ended responses built into the instruments. Due to the inconsistent nature of the theoretical framework for the latent attribute of motivation, each factor may be described using a wide variety of terms that are, unfortunately, not defined in a standard way.

Notwithstanding, the factors may be described as follows:

1. *Language requirement* - an external or extrinsic factor imposed by the educational context of the university
2. *Studied in high school* - an internal or intrinsic factor related to previous study of the language that could be either goal-related (to continue to study or improve a previously studied language) or convenience-based (to avoid starting from the beginning with a new language)

3. *Spanish is popular to study* - an external or extrinsic factor related to the educational context in the U.S.
4. *Parental influence* - an external or extrinsic factor suggested or imposed by parents or guardians
5. *Self-efficacy* - an internal or intrinsic factor related to one's perceived success in the previous study of a language (not limited to Spanish) and/or to one's perceived potential for success in future academic language courses
6. *To speak with family/community* - an integrative, external or extrinsic factor related to the desire to use the language with the target language (TL) community; could be related to either a heritage connection or to a proximity connection to the TL community
7. *Roots/identity* - an internal or intrinsic factor related to the perceived relationship between the language and one's individual identity or cultural background
8. *Study or travel abroad* - an external or extrinsic factor related to the desire to use the language with the TL community; could be considered both integrative and instrumental
9. *Career application* - a factor related to the perceived level of use of the language in one's desired career; could be considered both goal-related (instrumental) and/or related to a desire to use the language with the TL community (integrative)
10. *To achieve fluency* - a factor based on the desire to achieve proficiency; could be considered both goal-related (instrumental) and/or related to a desire to use the language with the TL community (integrative)
11. *Other*

It seems nearly impossible to delineate and define complex attitudes about languages; and if they result from intergroup and interpersonal relations, each individual's experience affects the attitudes that he or she maintains and is willing to express. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a set of attitudes common in the metalinguistic discourse among students and faculty and in the body of literature were selected for study. A set of perceptions were considered to be manifestations of attitudes toward Spanish: *Spanish is easy*; *Spanish is beautiful*; *Spanish is intellectual*; *Spanish is valuable on the job market*; *Spanish is useful in daily life*; *Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable*. The variable connected to plans for continued study of Spanish is related to the behavior termed "persistence" in the literature (Bartley, 1970; Pratt, 2010; Ramage, 1990; Shedivy, 2004).

Table 8. Dependent Variables

| Variable | Values |
|--|---|
| Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language requirement • Studied in high school • Spanish is popular to study • Parental influence • Self-efficacy • To speak with family/community • Roots/identity • Study or travel abroad • Career application • To achieve fluency • Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum = 1 (not important) • maximum = 4 (very important) |
| Plans for continued study of Spanish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/Currently • No/Not sure |
| Attitudes toward Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish is easy • Spanish is beautiful • Spanish is intellectual • Spanish is valuable on the job market • Spanish is useful in daily life • Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimum = 1 (not at all) • maximum = 6 (very) |

All raw data from the surveys were entered into SPSS. To verify the accuracy of the data entry, the data from 66 surveys from three randomly selected courses was checked. The accuracy rate was determined to be 99.96%. Descriptive and frequency statistics were calculated to describe the sample. A two-sided Pearson chi-square analysis was used to compare relationships between categorical variables, while making sure that each cell had an approximate minimum number of 5 observations ($n \geq 5$) or data points; some categories were combined when necessary. When comparing the data of different groups (categorical and continuous variables), a reliability analysis was first run to determine if such a comparison would be appropriate. If the Cronbach's alpha value exceeded .5, univariate ANOVA was performed to test for difference between groups. Gender and major/minor were controlled variables in these tests, due to their significant association with course level. In addition, some categories were combined if the sample size of a given group was less than 30 ($n \geq 30$). In all inferential statistical tests, an alpha value of less than .05 was determined to be acceptable ($\alpha < .05$; $p \leq \alpha$). When $\alpha < .05$ and $p \leq \alpha$ were satisfied, the null hypothesis was rejected and a significant difference between groups was considered likely.

Chapter 4: Results

Survey

Motivation to study Spanish. Overall, the 567 survey participants reported that *Language requirement, Career application, To achieve fluency, and Study or travel abroad* were the most important motivational factors in their decision to study Spanish; they reported that *Parental influence* and *Roots/identity* were the least important factors. See Table 9 for the distributions of the responses to each survey item about motivations for studying Spanish. Those participants who wrote in another reason (*Other*; n=51) also tended to indicate that reason as a very important factor in their decision to study Spanish. Some of the other reasons that respondents gave were:

- "To perfect reading & writing skills"
- "I hated French"
- "Studied since 1st grade"
- "Art/Music"
- "Because I love the language"
- "Want to be bilingual"
- "To maybe learn Portuguese later on"
- "My girlfriend is Latina"
- "To complete upper division credits"
- "It's a good head up / Spanish is 2nd language in America"

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics - Motivational Factors

| Factor | n | Mean | Median | Mode | SD |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Language requirement | 536 | 3.35 | 4 | 4 | 1.075 |
| Studied in high school | 498 | 2.84 | 3 | 3 | 1.071 |
| Spanish is popular to study | 542 | 2.75 | 3 | 4 | 1.115 |
| Parental influence | 469 | 1.64 | 1 | 1 | 0.994 |
| Self-efficacy | 531 | 2.62 | 3 | 3 | 1.119 |
| To speak with family and community | 533 | 2.86 | 3 | 4 | 1.149 |
| Roots/identity | 419 | 1.84 | 1 | 1 | 1.221 |
| Study or travel abroad | 542 | 3.12 | 3 | 4 | 1.054 |
| Career application | 551 | 3.27 | 4 | 4 | 0.946 |
| To achieve fluency | 547 | 3.24 | 4 | 4 | 1.056 |
| Other | 51 | 3.73 | 4 | 4 | 0.695 |

Note. Mean values are based on scores on a four-point scale (1=not important, 4=very important).

Differences in motivation according to course level and home language profile. The responses of participants according to course level and home language profile are provided in Table 10. Comparative tests were performed to determine if any of the differences in the responses to the 10 motivational factors by participants grouped by course level and home language profile were significant, while controlling for gender and major/minor. The gender and major/minor variables were controlled because of their significant association with course level. In order to perform comparative tests on the means for different course level groups, the course level variable was collapsed into two categories because the size of the 110-210 group was so much larger than all the other course levels combined. See Appendix 5 for the results of the univariate ANOVA.

Table 10. Motivational Factors by Course Level and Home Language Profile

| Factor | Course Level | | | | Home Language Profile | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | 110-210 | | 250-484 | | EML | | SHL | | OHL | |
| | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean |
| Language requirement | 342 | 3.68* | 194 | 2.77* | 348 | 3.40 | 79 | 3.16 | 103 | 3.34 |
| Studied in high school | 310 | 2.86 | 188 | 2.79 | 326 | 2.91 | 73 | 2.56 | 95 | 2.79 |
| Spanish is popular to study | 342 | 2.85* | 200 | 2.59* | 353 | 2.77 | 77 | 2.52 | 106 | 2.86 |
| Parental influence | 292 | 1.65 | 177 | 1.62 | 302 | 1.58 | 70 | 2.13 | 93 | 1.48 |
| Self-efficacy | 323 | 2.31 | 208 | 3.09 | 341 | 2.46 | 83 | 2.99 | 101 | 2.85 |
| To speak with family and community | 327 | 2.64 | 206 | 3.20 | 340 | 2.66 | 85 | 3.42 | 102 | 3.04 |
| Roots/identity | 252 | 1.40 | 167 | 2.49 | 257 | 1.38* | 86 | 3.62* | 73 | 1.38* |
| Study or travel abroad | 335 | 3.02 | 207 | 3.66 | 348 | 3.02 | 84 | 3.33 | 104 | 3.33 |
| Career application | 337 | 2.90 | 214 | 3.82 | 351 | 3.14* | 88 | 3.57* | 106 | 3.50* |
| To achieve fluency | 341 | 3.67 | 206 | 3.77 | 354 | 3.12 | 80 | 3.60 | 107 | 3.42 |

Note. Mean values are based on scores on a four-point scale (1=not important, 4=very important). Significant differences noted with an asterisk *. See Appendix 5 for p values. When the intersection between Course Level x Home Language Profile was significant, the main effects of Course Level and Home Language Profile were ignored.

There was a significant relationship between course level and two motivational factors: *Language requirement* and *Spanish is popular to study*. There was a significant relationship between home language profile and *Roots/identity* and *Career application*; Tukey post-hoc tests demonstrated that the significant difference was between SHL and the other two home language profiles for *Roots/identity*, and that for *Career application* the significant difference was between EML and the other two profiles. When participants were grouped by both course level and home language profile, a significant relationship was found between the intersection of these variables and *To speak with family and community*, *Study or travel abroad*, and *To achieve fluency*. Gender did not have a significant influence on any factor, but major/minor had a significant influence on

Language requirement, To speak with family and community, Roots/identity, Career application, and To achieve fluency.

Plans for continued study of Spanish. Participants either responded positively ("Yes" or "I am currently continuing to study Spanish beyond my language requirement") or negatively ("No" or "Not sure") about their plans to continue to study Spanish after completing their language requirement. The majority (68.8%) of respondents in the 110-210 course level range responded negatively about their plans to continue to study Spanish (see Table 11). To maintain consistency in the analysis of the dependent variables, plans for continued study of Spanish was analyzed for a relationship with home language profile, while controlling for gender and major/minor, using univariate ANOVA (see Appendix 5). There was no significant difference between the home language profile groups and plans to continue to study, but there was a significant relationship with major/minor.

Table 11. Plans for Continued Study of Spanish by Course Level

| Plans for Continued Study of Spanish | | Course Level | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | 110-210 | 250-309 | 315 | 336-390 | 480-484 | |
| yes/currently | % | 31.0% | 80.4% | 62.5% | 88.4% | 91.3% | 51.3% |
| no/not sure | % | 68.8% | 19.6% | 37.5% | 11.6% | 8.7% | 48.5% |

Attitudes. The mean responses to each of the six survey items related to attitudes are provided in Table 12. Descriptive statistics pertaining specifically to attitudes toward Spanish can be found in Table 13.

Differences in attitudes toward Spanish according to course level and home language profile. Attitudinal responses by course level and home language profile are provided in Table 14. To maintain consistency in the analysis of both

motivations and attitudes, participants were compared according to their course level and home language profile, while controlling for gender and major/minor (see Appendix 5).

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics - Attitudes

| Factor | Language | n | Mean | Median | Mode | SD |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----|------|--------|------|-------|
| Easy to Learn | Arabic | 557 | 1.55 | 1 | 1 | 1.011 |
| | Chinese | 554 | 1.31 | 1 | 1 | .718 |
| | French | 558 | 3.39 | 3 | 4 | 1.270 |
| | Italian | 554 | 3.54 | 4 | 4 | 1.345 |
| | Russian | 551 | 1.95 | 2 | 1 | .999 |
| | Spanish | 557 | 4.30 | 4 | 5 | 1.286 |
| Beautiful or Enjoyable | Arabic | 555 | 3.03 | 3 | 1 | 1.736 |
| | Chinese | 552 | 2.48 | 2 | 1 | 1.528 |
| | French | 559 | 4.62 | 5 | 6 | 1.380 |
| | Italian | 554 | 4.97 | 5 | 6 | 1.107 |
| | Russian | 551 | 3.02 | 3 | 3 | 1.521 |
| | Spanish | 562 | 4.87 | 5 | 6 | 1.190 |
| Philosophical or Intellectual | Arabic | 541 | 3.70 | 4 | 6 | 1.711 |
| | Chinese | 538 | 3.70 | 4 | 6 | 1.710 |
| | French | 541 | 3.99 | 4 | 4 | 1.496 |
| | Italian | 539 | 4.01 | 4 | 4 | 1.524 |
| | Russian | 535 | 3.53 | 3 | 4 | 1.592 |
| | Spanish | 545 | 4.36 | 4 | 6 | 1.467 |
| Job Market Value | Arabic | 561 | 4.57 | 5 | 6 | 1.609 |
| | Chinese | 559 | 4.78 | 5 | 6 | 1.476 |
| | French | 560 | 3.49 | 3 | 3 | 1.481 |
| | Italian | 556 | 3.17 | 3 | 3 | 1.415 |
| | Russian | 556 | 3.45 | 3 | 3 | 1.531 |
| | Spanish | 561 | 5.46 | 6 | 6 | .894 |
| Daily Utility | Arabic | 557 | 1.77 | 1 | 1 | 1.364 |
| | Chinese | 555 | 1.71 | 1 | 1 | 1.245 |
| | French | 557 | 1.84 | 1 | 1 | 1.345 |
| | Italian | 552 | 1.74 | 1 | 1 | 1.253 |
| | Russian | 553 | 1.53 | 1 | 1 | 1.083 |
| | Spanish | 561 | 4.54 | 5 | 6 | 1.524 |
| Respect or Admiration | Arabic | 561 | 4.74 | 5 | 6 | 1.553 |
| | Chinese | 559 | 4.82 | 5 | 6 | 1.387 |
| | French | 560 | 4.75 | 5 | 6 | 1.469 |
| | Italian | 559 | 5.09 | 6 | 6 | 1.150 |
| | Russian | 559 | 4.73 | 5 | 6 | 1.424 |
| | Spanish | 563 | 5.31 | 6 | 6 | 1.020 |

Note. Mean values are based on scores on a six-point scale (1=not at all, 6=very).

Table 13. Overall Attitudes toward Spanish

| Attitudes | n | Mean |
|---|-----|------|
| Spanish is easy | 557 | 4.30 |
| Spanish is beautiful | 562 | 4.87 |
| Spanish is intellectual | 545 | 4.36 |
| Spanish is valuable on the job market | 561 | 5.46 |
| Spanish is useful in daily life | 561 | 4.54 |
| Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable | 563 | 5.31 |

Note. Mean values are based on scores on a six-point scale (1=not at all, 6=very).

Table 14. Attitudes Toward Spanish by Course Level and Home Language Profile

| Category | | Spanish is easy | | Spanish is beautiful | | Spanish is intellectual | | Spanish is valuable on the job market | | Spanish is useful in daily life | | Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable | |
|-----------------------|---------|-----------------|-------|----------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
| | | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean | n | Mean |
| Course Level | 110-210 | 348 | 4.06 | 349 | 4.52 | 341 | 4.04 | 348 | 5.36 | 348 | 4.12* | 350 | 5.09 |
| | 250-484 | 209 | 4.69 | 213 | 5.45 | 204 | 4.90 | 213 | 5.63 | 213 | 5.23* | 213 | 5.67 |
| Home Language Profile | EML | 358 | 4.05* | 360 | 4.67* | 349 | 4.11* | 359 | 5.43 | 359 | 4.26* | 361 | 5.14* |
| | SHL | 85 | 4.93* | 87 | 5.53* | 86 | 5.15* | 87 | 5.63 | 87 | 5.70* | 87 | 5.75* |
| | OHL | 108 | 4.61* | 109 | 5.05* | 105 | 4.62* | 109 | 5.49 | 109 | 4.57* | 109 | 5.55* |

Note. Mean values are based on scores on a six-point scale (1=not at all, 6=very). Significant differences noted with an asterisk *. See Appendix 5 for p values. When the intersection between Course Level x Home Language Profile was significant, the main effects of Course Level and Home Language Profile were ignored.

There was a significant relationship between course level and the attitude "Spanish is useful in daily life". There was a significant relationship between home language profile and all attitudes except "Spanish is valuable on the job market;" Tukey post-hoc tests demonstrated that there were significant differences between EML and the other two home language profiles for "Spanish is easy" and "Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable," between SHL and the other two home language profiles for "Spanish is useful in daily life," and between all three profiles for "Spanish is beautiful" and "Spanish is intellectual." When participants were grouped by both course level and home language profile, no significant relationship was found between this intersection of

variables and attitudes. Gender had a significant influence on all attitudes except "Spanish is easy" and "Spanish is useful in daily life," while major/minor had a significant influence on "Spanish is beautiful" and "Spanish is intellectual."

Interviews

Open-ended responses about motivations and attitudes. When asked open-ended questions, the interview participants described in detail the reasons why they chose to study Spanish and their beliefs about languages in general (e.g. which are the most beautiful). (See Table 15.) Selected details from the interview data appear in the following chapter.

Plans to continue to study Spanish. Each interview participant completed a new survey at the time of the interview. Half of the four participants from the 110-210 course level range indicated that they were planning to study or currently studying Spanish beyond their language requirement, including one participant in SPAN 110 and another in SPAN 210; however, when asked about their plans, the participants indicated that it depended on the room they had in their schedule and the types of courses offered; some mentioned the plans they had to continue to develop their Spanish skills outside the classroom.

Word association responses. Toward the end of each interview, the participant was asked to complete a word association exercise in response to Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. The researcher said the name of each language, one at a time, and the participant said aloud the first word or words that came to his or her mind. (See Table 16.)

Table 15. Interview Participants: Attitude Responses

| Participant | Characteristic | | | | | Respected culture |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | Easy | Beautiful | Intellectual | Valuable on Job Market | Useful | |
| 1 | None | French and Italian | Spanish and French | Spanish and Chinese | English and Spanish | Europe and Africa |
| 2 | Spanish | French and Italian | Latin, English, and Chinese | Spanish, English, and Chinese | Spanish and English | Arabic cultures |
| 3 | Spanish or Italian | Chinese | English | English, Spanish, and Chinese | Spanish and English | Chinese and Indian cultures |
| 4 | Spanish | Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek | English and French | Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and French | French and English | Spain |
| 5 | Spanish and Italian | French | French | Arabic, Chinese, and Russian | Spanish and English | Arabic culture |
| 6 | None | Italian and French | None | None | English | Third world countries outside of America |
| 7 | Spanish and Italian | Italian, French, and Portuguese | English | Arabic and Chinese | English, Portuguese, and Spanish | Canada |
| 8 | Romance languages | Italian and Spanish | English or Spanish | Spanish | English and Spanish | Spain |
| 9 | Sign language | Italian, Greek, and French | Italian or Spanish | Spanish and Arabic | English and Spanish | Catholic culture of Italy and Latin America |
| 10 | Spanish, English, and French | French, Italian, and Spanish | Italian or French | Spanish | Bassare, Twi, English, and Spanish | Hispanic culture of Latinos in the U.S. |
| 11 | Spanish and French | Slavic languages | None | Arabic, Spanish, French, and Chinese | English and Spanish | British accent and European culture |
| 12 | Romance languages | Romance languages, Farsi and Arabic | Greek or Latin | Middle Eastern languages | English and Spanish | Moorish architecture in Spain |
| 13 | Spanish and other Romance languages | None | Latin | Spanish and Korean | Spanish and English | Korean, Hispanic, and Japanese cultures |
| 14 | Spanish | Arabic, Spanish, and Italian | Arabic | Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish | English and Spanish | Middle East and Latin America |
| 15 | Portuguese and Italian | Italian and French | Latin | Arabic or Chinese | English, Spanish, and Spanglish | Hispanic, including Spain, culture |

Table 16. Interview Participants: Word Association Responses

| Participant | Language (reponses below) | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Arabic | Chinese | French | Italian | Russian | Spanish |
| 1 | Quran | Chinese food | Eiffel tower | -- | My ex-boyfriend | Family |
| 2 | Middle East | China, dynasties | Napoleon, France | Rome | Czar, Russia | South America, Hispanics |
| 3 | Chinese | China | Snails | Pizza | Russia | Spain |
| 4 | Aladdin | Duck | Me | Pizza | Moscow | Class |
| 5 | Difficult | Ancient | Beautiful | Classic | -- | Fun |
| 6 | [Friend's name] | High school friends | [Friend's name] | Food | [Friend's name] | High school |
| 7 | Burka | Chicken | Love, glamour, Pepe Le Peu | Café | Cold, rigid, stern | Nature, diversity |
| 8 | Math | Dragon | Cooking | Armani | Vodka | Fun, flamenco, beach |
| 9 | Conflict | Chinese food | -- | Catholic | Ballet | Food |
| 10 | Pakistan | Money | Family | Love | Russia | Friends, family |
| 11 | Complicated | Ugly | Beautiful | Beautiful | -- | Useful |
| 12 | Fabric | Lions, lion statues | Food | Sunflowers, Tuscany | Soldiers | Workers, "as terrible as that is" |
| 13 | My uncle | [Acquaintance's name] | France | I would be a good Italian; food | Soviet Union | Right now |
| 14 | Complicated, pretty, throaty | Ugly, awkward | Snooty | Very pretty | Ugly | Pretty easy, simple, very expressive |
| 15 | [Arabic] alphabet | "Ni hao kat-lan" (children's TV show) | Paris | Food, pizza | Workers | Melting pot |

Chapter 5: Discussion

The results from the survey and the supplemental data obtained in the interviews provided information that, with a high degree of confidence, begins to answer the original research questions:

- Why do undergraduate students at GMU study Spanish?
- Do students in different levels of Spanish have different reasons for studying the language?
- Do students with different home language profiles have different reasons for studying the language?
- How many students in the introductory courses plan to study Spanish beyond their language requirement?
- Do different groups of students show different attitudes toward Spanish?
- Are there relationships between students' attitudes and broader ideologies regarding the Spanish language and Spanish speakers?

I will discuss the results as they pertain to each one of these questions, but first I would like to make some general observations.

There is a significantly higher number of females and Spanish majors and minors in the higher course levels, which is not an entirely surprising result, since over three-quarters of all Spanish majors/minors are female. In addition, although heritage speakers of Spanish only make up about one-sixth of the entire population that studies Spanish, they comprise nearly 27% of all Spanish majors/minors. Therefore, when interpreting the results, it is important to keep in mind that in the higher course levels, we

are more likely to see female students, Spanish majors/minors, and heritage speakers of Spanish than in the introductory course sequence (SPAN 110, 115, 210). It is also worth noting that the interview participant subset was 87% females and 47% Spanish majors and minors, which may demonstrate that females and Spanish majors/minors were more likely to sign up for an interview, since the interview participants were first self-selected and then chosen based on course level, home language profile, and availability. Alternatively, 73% of the interview participants were enrolled in the 250-484 course level range and the proportion of females and Spanish majors/minors in those courses is higher, making it more likely that interview participants from those courses would have these demographic characteristics.

Why do undergraduate students at GMU study Spanish? Although this particular study cannot discern how students' reasons for studying Spanish change over time, or as students may progress through a sequence of Spanish courses, the results do provide a reliable snapshot of the population as a whole. Based on the survey results, the overall most important reason to study Spanish that students reported is the presence of a language requirement; in a close second place, students indicate that they study Spanish to be able to use it in their career; the other important reasons include the goal of achieving fluency or proficiency and the desire to study or travel in a Spanish-speaking country. These results corroborate the findings of prior studies that demonstrated that many undergraduate students in study Spanish due to a language requirement or to use Spanish in work, travel, or study (Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Horwitz, 1988; Mandell, 2002). The interview participants reported several reasons for studying Spanish that varied from student to student; very few described their language requirement as an important reason, but many mentioned their experience studying

Spanish in high school as a factor. In some cases, it may have been that students were indeed studying a language because of a requirement but, when asked why they were studying Spanish, they simply described the reasons that they chose Spanish in particular, as opposed to another language, to fulfill that requirement. Nearly every interview participant mentioned the usefulness of Spanish in his or her career, the expanded job opportunities that Spanish skills make available, or the number of Spanish speakers in the United States as factors in their decision to study Spanish.

Do students in different levels of Spanish have different reasons for studying the language? Based on the survey results, there are some significant differences between the motivation of students in the introductory course sequence (SPAN 110, 115, 210) and that of students in all other course levels. Students who are in the introductory sequence tended to report that the fulfillment of a language requirement and the popularity of Spanish were more important than did their counterparts in levels 250-484. Students who complete the 110-210 sequence in many cases satisfy their language requirement (if any) and most are not likely to enroll in intermediate or advanced courses, as is the case at most universities (Furman et al., 2007, 2010). Thus, it is not surprising that the language requirement is one of their primary motivating factors. Mandell (2002) also found that beginning university students of Spanish were primarily studying the language to fulfill a language requirement.

A language requirement, prior study of Spanish in high school, opportunities to use Spanish outside the classroom, and increased job opportunities were common motivational factors reported among interview participants in the 110-210 levels. Their counterparts in the higher course levels also tended to report a language requirement, opportunities to use Spanish outside the classroom, and the value of Spanish in their

career or increased job opportunities as motivational factors, but they often gave self-efficacy and to improve one's skills or achieve fluency as additional reasons for studying Spanish. It makes sense that the students enrolled in higher courses feel that they are successful in their study of Spanish; if they did not feel this way they would probably be less motivated to continue their study into the higher levels. They may also perceive themselves as closer to fluency than students in the lower course levels, and therefore see the study of Spanish as a means to achieving proficiency. It is important to bear in mind that the high concentration of Spanish majors and minors in the higher course levels could mean that the motivation of advanced students probably closely reflects the motivation of those who have chosen Spanish as a concentration in their studies. In the survey results we saw that major/minor had an influence on several motivational factors.

Do students with different home language profiles have different reasons for studying the language? In response to the survey, SHL students were the only heritage language group to lend a strong importance to the connection of Spanish to their roots or identity as a reason for their study of Spanish. All students tended to report that they intend to use Spanish in their career, but SHL and OHL students assigned a significantly stronger importance to this factor than EML students. This corroborates the findings of Alarcón (2010) and Carreira & Kagan (2011) that indicated that SHL students study Spanish to improve their skills, to learn about their roots, and to use the language in their job or career. It may be that SHL and OHL students view the potential use of Spanish in their career differently than EML students because the former are accustomed to a multilingual reality; therefore it is not difficult for them to see their study of Spanish as having applications beyond the educational context. Several of the SHL interview participants also expressed the specific desire to improve their reading and

writing skills in Spanish, which corroborates the findings of Alarcón (2010) and Mikulski (2006).

How many students in the introductory courses plan to study Spanish beyond their language requirement? According to the survey results, the majority of students in the beginning course levels do not plan to continue their study of Spanish. A student's home language profile does not seem to influence whether or not he or she plans to study Spanish beyond their language requirement. The interview participants often expressed mixed feelings about their plans to continue to study Spanish; in many cases, they expressed the desire for strong communication skills in Spanish, but were somewhat ambivalent about pursuing more advanced coursework. Only one of the interview participants in the lower course levels expressed plans to continue her study of Spanish after fulfilling her requirement (another was already studying Spanish outside of a language requirement). Several students described a past personal experience when they were able to communicate in Spanish in the workplace, with Spanish-speaking classmates, or traveling in a Spanish-speaking country as an event that spurred their desire to be able to speak and understand Spanish well. This connects quite clearly with Shedivy's (2004) observation that a common experience among continuing students of Spanish is a personal "spark" experience.

Do different groups of students show different attitudes toward Spanish?

The survey respondents tended to view Spanish as easy, beautiful, intellectual, valuable on the job market, and useful in daily life; they also indicated a high degree of respect for Spanish-speaking cultures. At the same time, all survey respondents seemed to view all six languages as intellectual and to indicate a high degree of respect for the cultures associated with them. It is possible that they felt that the most socially acceptable

answer (Baker, 1992) was to rate all languages the same and high on the scale for these qualities; it is also possible that students were confused by the question about how appropriate each language was for expressing philosophical or intellectual ideas, because many left this item blank or wrote a comment indicating that they didn't know or didn't understand the item. Therefore it is difficult to determine whether or not students view Spanish as *particularly* intellectual, or if they *particularly* respect Spanish-speaking cultures.

We do see that students in higher course levels have different attitudes toward Spanish than their counterparts in the beginning levels. The students in the higher levels tended to view Spanish as more useful in daily life than students in the introductory courses; this finding is quite compatible with certain important motivational factors reported by more advanced students: they want to speak Spanish with people in their family or community, to study or travel in a Spanish-speaking country, and they plan to use Spanish in their career. This particular attitude about the usefulness of Spanish reflects the findings of Horwitz (1988) and Carreira & Kagan (2011).

It appears that students from different home language profiles have slightly different attitudes toward Spanish. Students with a heritage connection to Spanish also reported that Spanish was more useful in their daily life than other students, which is a perfectly understandable result since these students typically speak Spanish with their family and friends. Both SHL & OHL students found Spanish easier and reported a higher level of respect for Spanish-speaking cultures than EML students. SHL students already have some familiarity with or knowledge of Spanish, which is likely to give them the impression that Spanish is easier to learn, and OHL students may find Spanish easier due to their exposure to multiple languages. Perhaps OHL students, as they

come from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds, have a more sympathetic or positive view of Spanish-speaking cultures. The high level of respect reported by SHL students for cultures associated with their heritage language corroborates the findings of Mikulski (2006), Alarcón (2010), and Yanguas (2010). SHL students also found Spanish easier, more beautiful, more intellectual and more useful than their peers; their personal and cultural connection to the language likely has something to do with their positive evaluation of it.

Are there relationships between students' attitudes and broader ideologies regarding the Spanish language and Spanish speakers? In order to dissect students' attitudes toward Spanish and Spanish speakers, we must first look more broadly at how they tended to express their attitudes toward languages in general. The survey respondents tended to report all the Romance languages as easier and more beautiful than the non-Romance languages. Students indicated that they found Spanish to be more useful in daily life than other languages and that Spanish was very valuable on the job market, along with Arabic and Chinese; they indicated that French, Italian, and Russian were valuable, as well, although somewhat less so.

When the interview participants were asked open-ended questions about which languages embodied certain characteristics, they tended to say that Spanish was easy to learn, valuable on the job market, and useful in their daily life. Students often mentioned other Romance languages along with Spanish when asked which languages were the easiest to learn; they also tended to include Arabic and Chinese when asked which languages were most valuable on the job market. The most common pairing of languages that they deemed to be useful in their daily life was Spanish and English; OHL students also included their heritage language(s). When asked which languages

were the most beautiful, the Romance languages dominated the responses: about one-third of the interview participants mentioned that Spanish was beautiful, but nearly all responded that French and/or Italian were the most beautiful. These cluster patterns in their responses are reflective of the way survey respondents tended to evaluate these languages in the corresponding survey items.

Relationships to stereotypes and cultural discourses. On one hand, we see that students of Spanish have very strong notions that the Romance languages (including Spanish) are both easier to learn and more beautiful than other languages. When asked about why the Romance languages are easier, the interview participants often gave linguistic reasons related to the phonetic alphabet, the similarities among the languages, and shared cognates with English. When asked which languages were the most difficult to learn, they named Arabic and Chinese (along with other Middle Eastern and Asian languages), citing the writing system and orientation for Arabic and the characters and tones for Chinese as the aspects of the languages that made them harder to learn. A handful of the students who were interviewed had experience with other Romance languages; two had also had studied Arabic or Chinese in addition to Spanish.

The students also tended to qualify their answers to these questions, noting that they were responding based on their own home language profile and the languages that they already knew (which tended to be English and other Romance languages); two students maintained that learning a second language was difficult no matter the language. An OHL student majoring in Spanish attributed the popularity of Spanish to the fact that she had heard that is easy for English speakers to learn: "Most of the friends I have learned Spanish, because that was the language to take," she added. An

OHL student minoring in Spanish suggested that her perception of Arabic and Chinese as difficult to learn was based on a "stereotype." Overall, there is a sense that students evaluated languages based on a "folk" understanding of linguistic features and the language acquisition process; they were aware of repeating stereotypical discourses and would often make disclaimers such as "I've heard that..." or "One of my professors said that..." when describing languages with which they did not have much personal contact.

The utterance of these qualifiers and disclaimers may be related to the finding of many linguistic anthropologists that folk linguistic evaluations of languages are based more on perceived social and political characteristics of speakers than on the systematic evaluation of linguistic features. For example, in the study by Alfaraz (2002) of Miami Cubans' perceptions of varieties of Spanish, respondents rated varieties of Spanish on a seven-point scale according to perceived "correctness" and "pleasantness." The researcher found that two non-linguistic factors, the racial composition and the degree of economic development of the country associated with each variety, were correlated to the perceived degree of correctness and pleasantness. This phenomenon displayed itself quite clearly in the present study when participants described which languages were the most beautiful. French and Italian were at the top of the list, described as romantic, pretty, melodic, and associated with love. On several occasions students attributed these perceptions to having seen movies that took place in France or Italy, either in general or specifically; some titles that they mentioned were *Life is Beautiful*, *Eat, Pray, Love*, and *Under the Tuscan Sun*. One EML student majoring in Spanish reflected on the movies that she had seen in her university courses that portrayed Italian cultural stereotypes: beautiful architecture, good food, and good-looking people. "I think that just translates into our perception of the language, so when we're watching a movie

and we see all these things, the language is going to be beautiful too," she commented. Similarly, an OHL student mentioned that she liked Greek because she thinks that Greece is a pretty country. When students described the languages that they found to be ugly, they tended to describe them as more foreign-sounding and unfamiliar. One EML student explained why she didn't like the sound of Chinese: "It's so far from what I am used to hearing, I think that's why I don't like it... I can't relate at all." Several students mentioned that Russian sounds aggressive, ugly, harsh, and mean. At the same time, when reflecting on their word association responses, students tended to note that they did not know much about Chinese or Russian. When analyzing the sources of their associations with Russian, in several cases they cited movies about the former Soviet Union containing images of soldiers or documentaries about human trafficking and human rights abuses in Russia.

Several other images and motifs from movies and television came up, such as the Disney movies *Aladdin* (Arabic) and *Mulan* (Chinese), the cartoon character Pepe le Peu (French), and the children's TV show *Ni Hao Kai-Lan* (Chinese). The preponderance of these references suggests that many of the cultural stereotypes and cultural discourses that students repeat come from movies and TV. Another common source of stereotypes and discourses may come from their teachers and professors. Students often cited information—with varying degrees of accuracy—that they claimed to have heard from a language instructor, including: the languages with the most number of speakers in the world, the top languages in the job market, the languages most similar to English, etc. It appears that the facts and opinions expressed by language instructors have a strong influence on the way students think about languages.

Relationships to the commodification of language skills. In one instance, an SHL student majoring in both Spanish and another field described what his faculty adviser told him when he decided to major in Spanish: "Yeah, that's great that you want to major in Spanish. So that means you'll be... an expert, but you want to be an expert in *something*." The message, as the student described it, was that having a degree in Spanish would not be sufficient, and that he needed to be "more marketable." Another student explained that, before declaring a major in Spanish, she used to be a Global Affairs major because she thought it would offer her more job opportunities. In both the survey responses and the interviews, students tended to report plans to use Spanish in their career, that Spanish would expand their job opportunities, or that they put their Spanish skills on their resume; this suggests that students have internalized the broader discourse about foreign language capacity and tend to think about their Spanish skills as a commodity. They have also heard the message about "critical languages" loud and clear, reporting Arabic and/or Chinese as very valuable on the job market on the survey and in the interviews; students described Arabic and Middle Eastern languages as valuable for government jobs and Chinese or Mandarin as valuable for jobs in international business, recognizing that Arabic was needed for U.S. diplomatic and military activities in the Middle East, and that Chinese was important for global commerce and U.S. economic relationships. One student saw Chinese and Arabic as equally valuable and said that her choice to study Arabic (in addition to Spanish) was simply a matter of comparison shopping: "For me, it was kind of like, pick one or the other." Students viewed Spanish as valuable on the job market as well, but they tended to mention that it was needed on a more permanent basis in the U.S. and/or in the Western Hemisphere; in addition, they mentioned that Spanish would be useful in a

broader range of jobs and professions, including education, social work, retail, or "no matter what job you have." The need for Arabic seemed to be temporary or contingent on ever-changing world affairs, while Spanish was seen as the default second language of the workplace in the U.S.

One EML senior graduating with a degree in Spanish described a rude awakening that she has had when looking for jobs: she can't find a government job where she can apply her Spanish skills. In her experience, most of the government job openings require Middle Eastern languages, or if they require Spanish, the ideal candidate is a native speaker of Spanish who was born in Latin America. Another EML student minoring in Arabic described how she was able to balance out her coursework in both Spanish and Arabic: she is not worried about whether or not she obtains the credits required for the Spanish minor, because "Arabic will look a lot better" on her resume. This same student in fact expressed a strong motivation to achieve proficiency in Spanish—she just did not consider it as marketable a language as Arabic.

Furthermore, those students who had used Spanish in their prior or current job experiences all reported using Spanish only occasionally; they also said that it was not required for the job. So it appears that there are contradictory discourses circulating about the value of Spanish: it appears to be valuable on the job market, but not unless it is combined with another set of skills. Students feel that there will probably be a need for them to speak Spanish on the job, but this does not correspond to their personal experience. In addition, they find that the critical languages are more valuable than Spanish for the most coveted government and international jobs. Several students mentioned these types of jobs when discussing their career goals, which may be a result of the presence of the federal government in the area that surrounds GMU.

Relationships to discourses about Hispanics in the U.S. The reason that Spanish is so important in the U.S., according to EML and OHL students, is the present and growing number of Spanish speakers. "I feel like it's necessary," said one student. In their discourse it appears that the students equate Hispanics, immigrants from Latin America, and Spanish-speakers when talking about the people with whom they would use Spanish to communicate in the U.S. Nearly every interview participant mentioned the growing number of Spanish speakers in the U.S. at some point during the interview.

One EML student made a particularly interesting statement: she feels that the U.S. is moving toward becoming a bilingual country, due to the growth of the Hispanic population and immigration from Latin America; she believes it is possible that the U.S. may become a Spanish-speaking country in her lifetime. "I'm nervous that I'm going to get left behind," she remarked. This seems to indicate that the racializing discourse that uses the Spanish language to identify Hispanics may be circulating among students of Spanish at GMU. At the same time, SHL students tended to report that they used English as much as or more often than Spanish in their daily life, contrary to the student's prediction cited above that Spanish will continue to be the dominant language of Hispanics from generation to generation.

Another aspect of this discourse is that it characterizes Hispanics as working-class immigrants; in addition, several students described experiences where their contact with Spanish speakers was with working-class immigrants. Many of the students reported that they spoke Spanish occasionally with people who work in service or labor jobs on the GMU campus. One student formed a student organization to provide literacy tutoring to Spanish-speaking campus employees; three of the interview participants were volunteer ESL tutors at a center for Hispanic workers. At the same time, some students

showed a degree of self-awareness when they associated this discourse with Hispanics. One OHL student talked about wanting to work in health education with immigrants, and then specified that when she thinks of immigrants in the U.S. she is really only thinking of people from Latin American countries. An EML Spanish major talked about how often she has worked with immigrants from Latin America in her jobs and used Spanish to communicate with them; "they are everywhere," she commented. Later, when asked what word came to mind when she heard "Spanish," the same student responded, "'Worker,' as terrible as that is." When I asked her to tell me why she thought it was terrible to say "worker," she said that she hates the stereotype that Hispanics will take any menial job and that they don't know English. "I know that they're not just workers," she said, but many of the Spanish speakers she has met were immigrants who needed to support their families.

Students also reported using Spanish with Spanish speakers outside the U.S. or with extended family. When I asked them if they spoke Spanish with their friends, students from all home language profiles said that they only spoke Spanish occasionally with their friends. EML and OHL students of Spanish do not seem to view the use of Spanish in the U.S. as threatening or suspicious, but they do seem to reproduce the public discourse that the number of Spanish speakers in the U.S. is growing. All students in the interviews reported that they use Spanish on rare occasions outside of the classroom, and SHL students reported being English-dominant in terms of their language use.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

We have seen in this study that undergraduate students of Spanish, when looked at as a whole, appear to be studying the language to fulfill a requirement and/or because they believe that it has practical applications in their life. It seems likely that there is a relationship between the course level in which undergraduate students are enrolled and both their reasons for studying Spanish as well as their beliefs about Spanish and Spanish speakers. It is also very likely that students from different home language backgrounds have some distinct motivations for studying Spanish and hold slightly different attitudes toward the language. We have also seen that gender and major or minor field of study may have a relationship with motivations and attitudes. Few students in the introductory courses intend to continue studying Spanish beyond their language requirement; it appears difficult to predict whether or not a student plans to continue based on demographic factors alone, but it does seem likely that continuing students have had a personal experience that sparks their desire to persist in their study of Spanish. On the other hand, students' attitudes toward Spanish tend to reflect both personal experiences and a strong influence from stereotypes and broader ideological discourses that 1) portray language skills as a marketable commodity and 2) employ Spanish as a marker for Hispanics in the United States.

Limitations of the Study

Notes about the survey instrument and data analysis. The survey items related to motivations and attitudes were defined based on conversations with students

and instructors and the existing literature. It is recommended that future studies modify and improve these items based on a more systematic preparatory phase of research, including open-ended surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups. In addition, information about income/socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity was not collected on the survey, as is customary for most studies involving students in P through 12 education. The socioeconomic status of one's family is still a very important demographic factor; on the other hand, many college students are partially or financially independent from their parents. It would be beneficial for later studies to collect information about family and individual income, along with the source of financing for tuition. In addition, the home language profile was considered more relevant to this study than race/ethnicity; in hindsight, however, this information would have served useful to sift out possible group differences. Furthermore, some of the nuances and differences between the course level groups were lost when the course ranges were collapsed into two categories to deal with the unequal sample sizes of the groups. Future studies might analyze random samples of equal sizes from each of the course ranges in order to make more in-depth comparisons.

It is also important to keep in mind that the survey results are generalizable only to the population of undergraduate students who studied Spanish at GMU during the Spring 2011 term. The extrapolation of the data to undergraduate students across the U.S. would not be appropriate, as the sample is not representative of that population.

Other suggestions for further research. Future studies on the motivations and attitudes of university language learners could be conducted in a longitudinal format to see how students' beliefs and expectations change over time. Comparative studies could also be conducted with students who are studying different languages. A study of the

attitudes held by language faculty would also provide insight into the beliefs that students attribute to information provided by their professors. It would also serve the field well to cultivate a unified theoretical framework for studying motivations and attitudes that is applicable to both FL and HL learners, and to develop instruments and procedures that can be used to replicate studies in different settings.

Implications

Implications for the university. It seems that those students who start out their study of a language upon entering a university and under the influence of a foreign language requirement will not achieve proficiency in that language by completing the required sequence; they are also not likely to continue to study that language beyond the requirement. Thus, university officials must ask themselves whether or not the goal of the language requirement is that students achieve communicative competence in a language other than English; if that is the goal, then the language requirement alone is not likely to be effective.

At GMU, many students come from the local school districts or transfer from local community colleges, and many of them have experience studying a language. In this study, students who were studying Spanish to fulfill a requirement also tended to indicate that they studied it on high school. Yet many students of Spanish do not take the placement exam or disregard the results of the exam in order to enroll in an easier course or to review what they learned in high school. This was this case with all of the interview participants enrolled in introductory courses. If the goal of the language requirement is proficiency, then perhaps the university can develop an incentive system to encourage students to progress in their language study rather than coast through the language requirement. It may also make sense for high school and university educators

to collaborate and articulate the foreign language programs at local schools with the university's; perhaps a summer language immersion program between high school and college could aid students in the transition, boost their confidence, and give them opportunities to interact with Spanish speakers. Or, if students are interested in a language other than the one they studied in school, they could participate in a summer program to give them a similar jumpstart in the new language and reduce their anxiety.

Students also come to the university with a remarkable variety of heritage languages, including the current "critical" languages (see Appendix 3). In this study, it appears that students with a heritage connection to Spanish make up a disproportionate number of Spanish majors and minors, as well as enrollments in higher level courses. If this is the same case for other languages, it may be in the interest of the university to establish relationships with the heritage language communities in the area to assess the ways that the languages are being taught and maintained (such as through Saturday schools and houses of worship), create educational partnerships to foster heritage language development, and provide transitional support to heritage language learners when they enroll in courses at GMU. Heritage learners often have a foundation that they can build on and are already motivated to develop their language skills to speak with their family and community or learn more about their heritage. Incentives could also be offered to heritage learners to continue to develop their language skills rather than taking the placement exam to receive the credits that fulfill a language requirement.

Implications for the language department. The Department of Modern and Classical Languages can play a pivotal role in helping students make choices about which language study. I have a hunch that the students who participated in this study became more self-aware of their motivations and attitudes as a result. Spanish is the

most popular language studied at GMU, but it appears that Spanish students are interested in other languages and come into contact with speakers of other languages in their life. It may be that the stereotypes about which languages are easy or difficult, which languages are valuable on the job market, and which languages are useful in daily life lead students away from studying the languages about which they are genuinely curious. In fact, despite having the idea that Spanish is easy, valuable on the job market, and useful in daily life, some students reported that Spanish was more difficult than others told them it would be, that they did not personally experience a need for Spanish in their jobs, and that they rarely or occasionally used Spanish in their daily life. The department could organize cultural events, mini language workshops, meet-and-greets with faculty, and language fairs so that students can find out more specific information about different languages rather than relying on stereotypes. The department could also offer resources to students, such as a self-awareness questionnaire, to help students clarify their motivations and goals, and to aid them in choosing a language that they will enjoy studying.

Implications for language educators. Most of the students in this study who were interested in achieving proficiency had an experience or a series of experiences where they were able to develop a friendship, help a customer, or understand something new about the world thanks to their ability to communicate in Spanish. Language educators will not be able to constantly base their instruction on the complex motivations of each and every student, but we *can* think creatively about how to facilitate "spark experiences" for our students; in addition, we have seen in this study that students tend to absorb attitudes toward languages from their instructors. As I mentioned above, GMU is located in an area that is rich in heritage language communities, and many students of

Spanish are participating in volunteer programs where they serve and learn from Spanish speakers. Taking students in all different course levels outside the classroom and into a situation where what they are learning becomes immediately applicable could potentially have a great impact on students' motivation. There is also an opportunity to connect heritage speakers with FL learners at GMU, especially since there are both FL and HL learners enrolled in nearly every Spanish course in the 250-484 range. Heritage speakers could be invited to provide a non-linguistic presentation on a topic that may interest students. Language course curricula could also incorporate projects where FL students interview their HL friends in the target language; HL students can also be instrumental in teaching FL students about language variation, the experience of being Latino in the U.S., and other cultural topics.

Another exercise that instructors can do to combat the non-critical adoption of attitudes is to ask their students to identify, analyze, and deconstruct the stereotypes associated with their language of study. For example, instructors of Spanish can ask students what they associate with the Spanish language, with different Spanish-speaking countries, and with Hispanics in the United States; students can then talk about which associations are stereotypes, where the stereotypes originate, what their personal experiences are, and what they would like to learn. These topics need to be handled with great care because many students may not want to reveal the stereotypes that they think about, and other students may be offended by the stereotypes. This activity may work best as a journal entry or reflection paper.

Final Words

The discourse that treats language skills as a marketable commodity can create unrealistic expectations for students of Spanish or lure them away from studying other

languages that may interest them. In addition, stereotypes about Hispanics and myths about Spanish in the U.S. tend to circulate among students of Spanish, especially those who grew up in an EML home. At GMU, so many students are heritage speakers of so many different languages that we might be able to avoid assigning fleeting values and ideological constructions to languages in order to motivate students to study them. Instead, we might encourage students to develop their heritage languages, to try languages that may have previously intimidated them, and to use their skills along the way so that language study leads to meaningful human connections and becomes more than just a resume booster or linguistic insurance policy.

Appendix 1

Survey

Demographic and Language Profile. Please place an X in the box next to your answer and/or write your answer in the space provided.

1. **Gender:** Male Female
2. **Age:** 18 - 24 25 - 34 35 - 44 45 or older
3. **What is your major (and minor, if applicable) at GMU? Please write your intended major/minor even if you have not officially declared it yet.**

Undecided Major 1: _____ Major 2: _____
 Minor 1: _____ Minor 2: _____

4. **How long have you lived in the United States?**

- Less than 5 years 5 - 10 years More than 10 years
- I was born in the U.S. and have lived here most or all of my life.
- I was born in the U.S. but have lived more than 10 years outside the U.S.

5. **Which of the following languages were spoken in your home when you were a child? Mark all that apply and write any other languages that are not listed.**

- English Arabic Chinese French Italian
- Russian Spanish Other(s): _____

6. **Which languages do you currently speak and/or understand (besides English)? Mark all that apply and write any other languages that are not listed.**

- Arabic Chinese French Italian Russian
- Spanish Other(s): _____

Reasons for Choosing to Study Spanish. Please indicate how important each of the following factors were in your decision to study Spanish by selecting a number from 1 to 4: 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, 4 = very important. If a factor does not apply to you, please select n/a = not applicable. Please circle your answer. Write in another reason you chose to study Spanish if it is not listed (optional).

| | not important ←————→ very important | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----|
| 7. To fulfill your foreign language requirement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 8. Because you studied Spanish in high school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 9. Because Spanish is a popular language to study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 10. Because your parent(s) suggested or required that you take Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 11. Because you do well in Spanish (or other language) courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 12. To speak Spanish with people in your family or in your community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 13. Because Spanish connects you with your roots or identity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 14. To be able to study or travel in a Spanish-speaking country | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 15. Because Spanish will be useful in your career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 16. To achieve a high level of proficiency, or become "fluent", in Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |
| 17. Other: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | n/a |

Plans for Continued Study. Please place an X in the box next to your answer.

18. Once you have completed your language requirement, do you plan to continue to study Spanish? Please choose one answer.

- Yes No Not sure I am currently continuing to study Spanish beyond my language requirement.

Characteristics of Languages. Please indicate what you think about the characteristics of these different languages by selecting a number for each language from 1 to 6: 1 = not at all / not much, 6 = very / a lot. Please circle your answer.

19. In your opinion, how easy is it to learn each language?

| | not easy ←————→ very easy | | | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

20. In your opinion, how beautiful or enjoyable is each language?

| | not beautiful ←————→ very beautiful | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

21. In your opinion, how useful is each language for expressing philosophical or intellectual ideas?

| | not useful ←————→ very useful | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

22. In your opinion, how valuable is each language on the job market?

| | not valuable ←————→ very valuable | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

23. How useful is each language in your daily life?

| | not useful ←————→ very useful | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

24. How much respect or admiration do you have for the cultures associated with each language?

| | not much respect ←————→ a lot of respect | | | | | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Chinese | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| French | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Italian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Russian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Spanish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

1. Where you born in the U.S.?
 - a. If yes: Did you spend a significant part of your life (10 years or more) living outside the U.S.? Where and when?
 - b. If not: Where were you born? How long have you lived in the U.S.? How old where you when you arrived to the U.S.? Did you speak English when you arrived to the U.S.?
2. What languages were spoken in your home when you were child?
 - a. Who spoke LX?
 - b. Did you speak and understand LX as a child?
 - c. Was your schooling in LX? Up to what grade?
3. What languages do you speak and understand today?
 - a. How did you learn or develop your LX skills?
 - b. What are some reasons why you no longer speak LX?
4. What other languages are you familiar with, even if you don't speak or understand them completely?
 - a. Did you study a language in high school (or middle, elementary school)? How would you describe your experience in those language classes?
5. What is your major and minor at GMU?
 - a. If Spanish major or minor: what the key reasons why you chose to major/minor in Spanish?
 - b. If not a Spanish major or minor: What is your language requirement, if any?
 - c. At any point in time have you considered majoring/minoring in Spanish or another language?
6. Once you have completed your language requirement, do you plan to continue to study Spanish?
 - a. What are the particular reasons why you plan to continue / not to continue?
 - b. If you already completed it, what were the reasons that led you to continue studying Spanish beyond the requirement?
 - c. Do you plan to practice or continue learning Spanish outside of the classroom? (travel, study, work, friends, etc.)
7. Why did you decide to take Spanish?
 - a. (Offer possible reasons if subject is having trouble thinking of them.)
 - b. Why did you choose Spanish over the other languages offered at GMU?
 - c. Are you taking / have you taken any other language courses besides Spanish?
 - d. Would you have taken Spanish even if you did not have a language requirement?
8. What Spanish course are you currently taking?
 - a. Is this the first Spanish course you've taken at the college level? What other courses have you taken? How would you describe your experience in those language classes?
 - b. What reasons led you to enroll in this particular course?
9. In your opinion, what are the easiest languages to learn?
 - a. What makes a language difficult to learn?
 - b. What sort of experience or perceptions do you think about when considering how easy a language is to learn?
10. Are there any particular languages that you find beautiful or enjoyable?

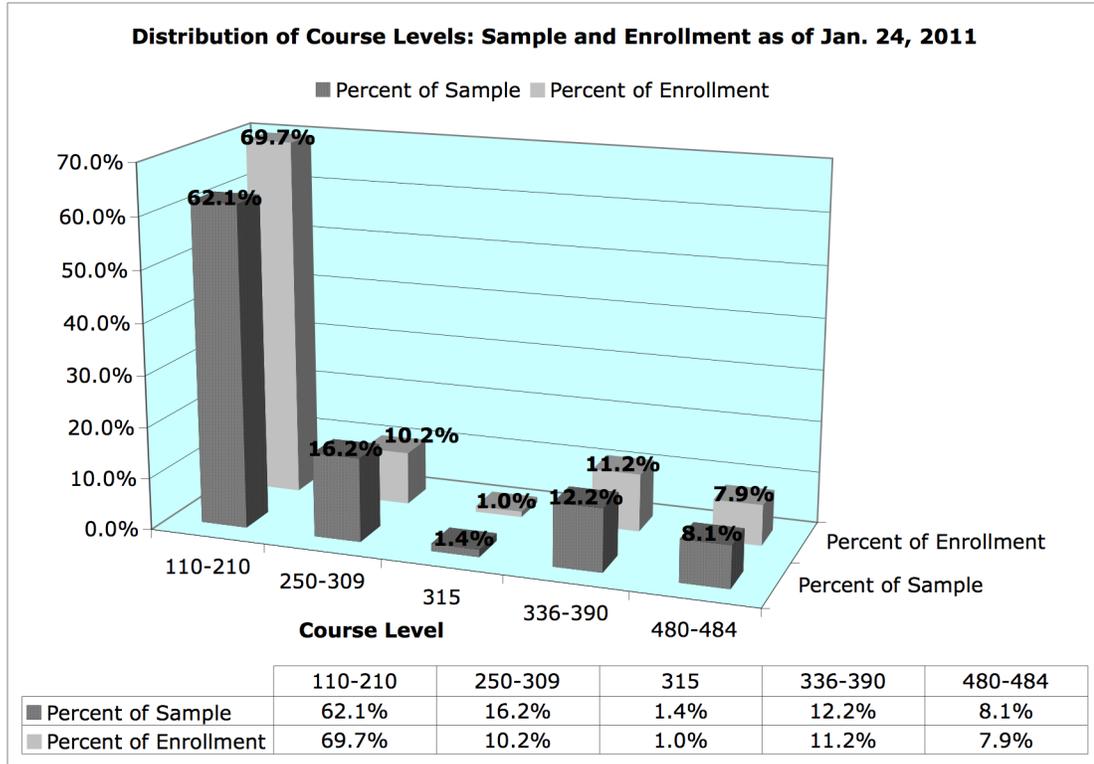
- a. What specific qualities about LX are beautiful or enjoyable?
 - b. Think about a language that you find to be ugly or not enjoyable. Which one comes to mind, and what about it is not enjoyable to you?
 - c. What sort of experience or perceptions do you think about when considering how beautiful a language is?
11. If you knew multiple languages very well, which ones would you use to express philosophical or intellectual ideas?
- a. What qualities of LX make it useful for this purpose?
 - b. What sort of experience or perceptions would you think about when determining if a language is useful for communicating intellectual ideas?
12. Do you think that a certain language or languages are more valuable in the job market?
- a. What sort of jobs would LX serve well in?
 - b. What level of language skills would be needed: beginning, intermediate, advanced, fluent?
 - c. What sort of experiences or perceptions do you think about when considering how valuable a language is in the job market?
13. What languages do you use in your daily life?
- a. Where and with whom do you speak LX?
 - b. What languages do you wish you knew so that you could use them in your daily life?
 - c. What level of language skills do you desire to have: beginning, intermediate, advanced, fluent?
14. Is there a particular culture that you admire and respect?
- a. What are the qualities or aspects of this culture that you find admirable?
 - b. What language(s) is associated with this culture?
 - c. Do you associate this culture with a particular geographic region?
15. Now we will do a word association exercise. I am going to say the name of a language and I want you to tell me the first thing that comes to mind. Don't think about it for more than a few seconds; just say out loud the first word or first few words that you think of when you hear the name of the language. Do you have any questions? (Answer questions if participant has any.)
- Okay, let's begin. (Write down responses.)
- a. Arabic
 - b. Chinese
 - c. French
 - d. Italian
 - e. Russian
 - f. Spanish
16. I am going to read back to you the words that came to mind when you heard the name of each language. I'd like you to tell me more about the word, characteristic, or image that you thought of for each language. Why do you think this was the first thing that came to mind?
- a. Arabic (read word[s])
 - b. Chinese (read word[s])
 - c. French (read word[s])
 - d. Italian (read word[s])
 - e. Russian (read word[s])
 - f. Spanish (read word[s])
17. Those are all the questions I have for you. Do you have any comments or questions for me?

Appendix 3

List of Heritage Languages Reported by Survey Respondents

1. Amharic
2. Arabic
3. Bassare
4. Bengali
5. Bulgarian
6. Catalan
7. Choctaw
8. Chinese
9. Creole (Krio)
10. Creole
11. Czech
12. Dutch
13. Fanti
14. Farsi
15. French
16. German
17. Greek
18. Gujarati
19. Hebrew
20. Hungarian
21. Hindi
22. Italian
23. Illocano
24. Japanese
25. Korean
26. Lao
27. Pashto
28. Patois (Patwa)
29. Polish
30. Portuguese
31. Punjabi
32. Romanian
33. Russian
34. Serbian (Serbo-Croatian)
35. Sinhala (Sinhalese)
36. Somali
37. Spanish
38. Swahili
39. Tagalog
40. Tigrinya
41. Thai
42. Tsalagi
43. Turkish
44. Twi
45. Urdu
46. Uzbek
47. Vietnamese
48. Yiddish

Appendix 4



Appendix 5

Group Differences in Motivational Factors

| Factor | Course Level | Home Lang. | Gender | Major/ Minor | Course Level x Home Lang. Prof. |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Language requirement | p < .009* | p < .437 | p < .888 | p < .001* | p < .069 |
| Studied in high school | p < .300 | p < .272 | p < .563 | p < .549 | p < .248 |
| Spanish is popular to study | p < .027* | p < .728 | p < .201 | p < .849 | p < .247 |
| Parental influence | p < .004 | p < .001 | p < .462 | p < .102 | p < .506 |
| Self-efficacy | p < .013 | p < .010 | p < .020 | p < .010 | p < .098 |
| To speak with family and community | p < .297 | p < .001 | p < .969 | p < .002* | p < .010* |
| Roots/identity | p < .238 | p < .001* | p < .957 | p < .011* | p < .398 |
| Study or travel abroad | p < .079 | p < .172 | p < .437 | p < .041 | p < .002* |
| Career application | p < .202 | p < .010* | p < .029 | p < .002* | p < .053 |
| To achieve fluency | p < .012 | p < .188 | p < .313 | p < .001* | p < .003* |

Note. Significant p values noted with an asterisk *. When the intersection between Course Level x Home Language Profile was significant, the main effects of Course Level and Home Language Profile were ignored.

Group Differences in Plans for Continued Study of Spanish

| Variable | Course Level | Home Lang. | Gender | Major/ Minor | Course Level x Home Lang. Prof. |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Plans for continued study of Spanish | p < .006* | p < .779 | p < .057 | p < .001* | p < .056 |

Note. Significant p values noted with an asterisk *. When the intersection between Course Level x Home Language Profile was significant, the main effects of Course Level and Home Language Profile were ignored.

Group Differences in Attitudes Toward Spanish

| Attitudes | Course Level | Home Lang. | Gender | Major/ Minor | Course Level x Home Lang. Prof. |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Spanish is easy | p < .151 | p < .001* | p < .502 | p < .175 | p < .729 |
| Spanish is beautiful | p < .067 | p < .001* | p < .001* | p < .002* | p < .084 |
| Spanish is intellectual | p < .410 | p < .001* | p < .018* | p < .010* | p < .357 |
| Spanish is valuable on the job market | p < .444 | p < .953 | p < .001* | p < .115 | p < .887 |
| Spanish is useful in daily life | p < .002* | p < .001* | p < .146 | p < .337 | p < .988 |
| Spanish-speaking cultures are admirable | p < .145 | p < .002* | p < .001* | p < .084 | p < .777 |

Note. Significant p values noted with an asterisk *. When the intersection between Course Level x Home Language Profile was significant, the main effects of Course Level and Home Language Profile were ignored.

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Curriculum Vitae

Emily Adelman was raised in a monolingual English home, but she grew up in the bilingual peninsula of South Florida and started learning Spanish at the age of seven. She received a BA in Spanish from Cornell University, with *summa cum laude* honors for a thesis about adult literacy campaigns and popular movements in Latin America. She spent several years working with the Latino Economic Development Corporation in Washington, DC before deciding to revisit to her interest in languages, education, and society. Upon receiving her MA in Spanish and Bilingual/Multicultural Education from George Mason University, she plans to keep one foot in the classroom as an educator, and one foot in the ever-changing debate about Spanish and multilingualism in the United States.