INVESTIGATING NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH

TEACHERS' LANGUAGE PRACTICES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE

SCHOOL SETTING: A MIXED METHODS APPROACH

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) suggest that a high
proficiency in the language is essential for all Spanish teachers. No matter what level of
Spanish (SPN) a teacher teaches, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines declare that the
minimum level of proficiency for Spanish teachers should be advanced low, which sets
the standards high. Most teacher preparation programs do not have a system in place to
help non-native language instructors maintain and improve their language proficiency.
With the growth of the Spanish speaking population in the U.S and the diversity of the
Spanish Culture, teacher education programs need to ensure that teacher candidates are
better equipped to face the increased demands of language proficiency.

This study investigated both native and non-native high school Spanish teachers'
language practices outside and inside of the school setting. It considered the level of
involvement with the target language that teachers demonstrated through participating in
various activities inside of the school (talking in Spanish with other Spanish teachers,
etc.) and outside of the school (belonging to a Spanish conversation group for teachers,
etc.) This two-phase, sequential mixed-methods study obtained statistical results using a
survey (106 high school Spanish respondents), followed by five case studies that were
designed to explore survey results in greater depth.

Results suggest that NSTs and NNSTs had different needs in the areas of teacher education and professional development. While native teachers preferred to focus on improving their pedagogical knowledge, most non-native teachers sought additional classes and professional development opportunities designed to enhance their language proficiency. Survey results suggested that NNSTs had considerably less experience teaching upper level classes than NSTs. Many NNSTs felt that teaching only lower level Spanish classes affected their confidence and proficiency in the language.

Several important implications for teacher educators and Spanish teachers emerged from this study, including the development of a fluent communication channel between foreign language and teacher education departments to ensure that Spanish teachers' proficiency development does not stop when they enter a teacher preparation program, the establishment of safe and effective learning Communities of Practice (COP) for Spanish teachers in which the target language is the sole language of the community, and the implementation of a rotation system in which teachers alternate in the teaching of lower and upper level classes. Recommendations for future research are also offered.

Dedicated to my beloved family, Alejandro, Santiago, and María Camila

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The question, "what makes a good language teacher?" has been at the core of

numerous articles written in both the foreign and second language education fields and in

the field of teacher education at large. One of the most often-cited components, near

native or native-like language proficiency, perhaps unintentionally privileges native

speakers (NS) as better language teachers, and is often referred to in the literature as the

"native speaker model" (Braine, 1999; Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 1994, 2001). Banno

(2003) cites several studies that identify sufficient proficiency, standard accent, and clear

pronunciation as the essential characteristics of a 'good language teacher.' The current

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards approved

by the specialty areas studies board of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE) include knowledge and skills in language, linguistics, cultures,

literatures, cross-disciplinary concepts, language acquisition theories, and standards

(ACTFL, 2002). Both ACTFL and NCATE recognize how essential proficiency in a

language is for foreign language teachers in their requirements for programs of foreign

language teacher preparation. The first two requirements state:

> 1. The development of candidates' foreign language proficiency in all areas of
> communication, with special emphasis on developing oral proficiency, in all

language courses. Upper-level courses should be taught in the foreign language. 2. An ongoing assessment of candidates' oral proficiency and provision of diagnostic feedback to candidates concerning their progress in meeting required levels of proficiency. (ACTFL, 2002, p. 2)

Furthermore, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) places a strong emphasis on language proficiency. For example, no matter what level of Spanish an individual teaches, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines declare that the minimum level of proficiency should be advanced low, which sets the standards high. Spanish teachers at this level should have the ability to converse fluently, and in a clearly participatory fashion. At this level, the speaker should be able to discuss concrete and factual topics of personal and public interest in most informal and formal conversations. In fact, the current emphasis on exclusive use of the target language in the classroom requires that foreign language teachers have strong language skills.

Peyton (1997) enumerates several skills and knowledge that foreign language teachers need. Included among the top skills the researcher identifies a high level of language proficiency in all modalities, the ability to use the language in real-life contexts and comprehend contemporary media in both oral and written forms, and the ability to interact successfully with native speakers. Thus, Peyton argues, "regardless of the skills and knowledge that foreign language teachers posses when they commence teaching, maintenance and improvement must be an ongoing process" (p. 3).

Unfortunately, a large number of teacher education programs fail to provide language teachers with adequate support to reach this level of proficiency (Schulz, 2000, 2002). Most teacher preparation programs do not have a system in place to address non-

native language instructors' need to maintain and improve what Lee Shulman deems 'pedagogical content knowledge,' that is, the ability to successfully fuse and implement content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Cruickshank & Associates, 1996). By administering a survey in Georgia, Cooper (2004) sought to learn how foreign language teachers evaluated their professional preparation. According to Cooper, many of the open-ended responses indicated that teachers felt their college and university courses had failed to promote the acquisition of foreign language skills necessary for communicative language teaching. Cooper (2004) stressed the need for foreign language teacher preparation programs to promote the development of language proficiency through the inclusion of intensive immersion experiences in a target language community.

Similarly, Schulz (2002) asserts that "a major weakness in foreign language education is that numerous foreign language teachers in the schools have neither the communicative competence nor the confidence to use the target language as means of classroom communication" (p. 291). Schulz (2000, 2002) emphasizes study abroad programs as essential tools with which to help teachers reach the proficiency benchmark, such as Advanced Low for Spanish teachers. While it is true that exposure to the target language and culture is essential to achieve a high level of proficiency, many foreign language teachers face financial obstacles that impede their ability to participate in study abroad programs. Schulz (2000) writes:

> Most perturbing, we still have not found ways to develop and to guarantee an adequate linguistic proficiency in all of our teachers. With few exceptions, language departments still are hesitant to assess and certify the language proficiency of their majors, and language competence and other relevant skills and knowledge domains are still measured predominantly in semester-hours rather than in demonstrable competencies. (p. 517)

In summary, the literature on foreign language teacher education places a strong emphasis on the development of language proficiency (Cooper, 2004; Lafayette, 1993). According to Schulz (2000), "the single, most important obstacle to effective foreign language education in the United States is the limited and often inadequate language competence of many teachers" (p. 518). Likewise, in a review of the literature in second language teacher education, Vélez-Rendón (2002b) asserts that due to the higher standards posed by ACTFL and NCATE foreign language teachers need a body of knowledge and competencies not required two decades ago, and suggests that "a large number of foreign language programs fail to provide prospective teachers with acceptable proficiency levels" (p. 462). The situation for Spanish teachers, especially those who are non-native speakers, is similar. With the growth of the Spanish speaking population in the U.S and the diversity of the Spanish culture, teacher education programs need to ensure that teacher candidates are better equipped to face the heightened demands of language proficiency.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to the literature, language skills renewal is an essential component missing in language teacher education programs. However, not all Spanish teachers have the same needs regarding language competence. Native Spanish teachers may have different needs than non-native Spanish teachers. The issue of non-native vs. native foreign language educators has been at the forefront of the debate in language teaching for the last fifteen years. Among the articles and books written on the subject, the

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majority tackle issues of non-native teachers of English as a foreign and second language, as does the landmark book edited by George Braine (1999). Even a thorough literature review on language teacher education (Crandall, 2000) suggests that most researchers address the issue of native and non-native solely in English education. While there is plenty of literature that describes native and non-native English language teachers' issues (Amin, 2001; Braine, 1999, 2005; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Medgyes, 1994, 2001; Pessoa & Sacchi, 2002) few studies have investigated native and non-native educators of other foreign languages, and none have addressed high school Spanish teachers in particular. A few studies have addressed non-native Japanese teachers in the U.S (Armour, 2004; Kachi & Lee, 2001; Yokochi Samuel, 1987), and one study considered French teachers (Colville-Hall, 1995).

A study conducted by Colville-Hall investigates language loss in non-native French teachers and recommends an immersion program component in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Though most of the study is dedicated to the description of a one-week immersion workshop, both the introduction and conclusion underscore the lack of research in language loss among non-native language teachers, and the lack of acknowledgment of this issue within teacher education. The author asserts, "The real challenge, however, is for foreign language departments to provide learning experiences that enable teachers who desperately need to maintain their language skills" (p. 1000).

Bernhardt and Hammadou (1987) conducted an extensive review of the literature in foreign language teacher education and assert that the foreign language-specific database is troublingly small. Moreover, they stress that most articles indicate a reliance on experiential knowledge from experts in the field of language education as opposed to

data-based studies. They conclude that it would be disheartening to imagine the profession still facing the same obstacles at the end of yet another decade, and they suggest that, "the time has come for subject matter specific research in teacher education" (p. 296).

More than a decade later Vélez-Rendón (2002b) published yet another extensive review of the literature in language teacher education. She called for research that aims to inquire into language teachers' worlds and personal teaching practices. Moreover, Lange (1990) acknowledges that English language teacher education and foreign language teacher education could benefit from sharing research on an attempt to devise models for effective teacher education (in Vélez-Rendón, 2002b, p. 458). Likewise, Freeman and Johnson (1998) acknowledge that the field of language teacher education is at least a decade behind generic teacher education. In fact, a literature search in the main foreign language journals confirms this trend in that it shows that no recent scholarly articles have been published on Spanish teacher education. Furthermore, not a single study has been found that addresses native and non-native Spanish teachers.

Vélez-Rendón asserts that the field of language teacher education would benefit from an increased number of qualitative investigations since they employ methods that are well-suited to exploring teachers' practices. Currently, the fields of foreign language teacher education and Spanish teacher education have not published any investigations utilizing both a quantitative and qualitative research approach to richly describe Spanish teachers' use of the target language inside and outside of the school setting. It is imperative that such studies are undertaken so that teacher education programs can better serve and equip Spanish teachers.

Even though the most important national organization for teacher education (NCATE) and the most important national organization for foreign language education (ACTFL) emphasize the importance of language proficiency (especially oral proficiency) for all language teachers, the literature in foreign language teacher education (Cooper, 2004; Lafayette, 1993; Schulz, 2000) suggests that foreign language teacher education programs do not offer many opportunities for language teachers to maintain or improve their language skills. It seems that these programs exclusively provide methods classes designed to target pedagogical knowledge. How can Spanish teachers candidates reach ACTFL advanced low proficiency? What is more, once these pre-service teachers become in-service teachers, one might ask what they do to maintain their high proficiency in the language.

Vélez-Rendón calls on researchers to undertake much needed language-specific teacher education research designed to investigate what language teachers do and how knowledge is acquired through formal and informal experiences. In an effort to contribute to the language specific literature and the foreign language teacher education literature, this study aims to investigate both native and non-native high school Spanish teachers' language practices outside and inside of the school setting. Specifically, it examines the level of involvement with the target language that teachers demonstrate through participating in various activities inside of the school (talking in Spanish with other Spanish teachers, using the target language most of the time when teaching, etc.) and outside of the school (belonging to a Spanish conversation group for teachers, participating in cultural activities of the target language, reading authentic materials such as novels or newspapers in the target language, etc.).

1.2 Research Questions

Even though Spanish is the most commonly taught language in the U.S., and though it accounts for 52.2 % of all language enrollments in higher education institutions (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2007), to date, research studies that have investigated in-service Spanish teachers' language practices both inside and outside of the school setting have been non-existent. A major concern expressed by the literature in these areas pertains to the scarcity of data that would allow us to understand what foreign language teachers actually do to maintain and develop their content knowledge and proficiency in the language, and what kind of activities Spanish teachers engage in that involve target language use outside of the classroom setting. Given the absence of available data, one might also wonder how their level of target language practice outside the classroom setting influences their teaching practices. Target language practice is defined here as the time spent regularly outside of the classroom using the target language in authentic and meaningful situations (see definition of terms at the end of this chapter). Thus, the overarching research questions include:

1. What are high school Spanish teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning?

2. What is the level of high school Spanish teacher's language practice outside of the school setting?

3. What is the level of high school Spanish teacher's target language practice inside of the school setting?

4. What are the differences in Spanish language practices between native and non-native high school Spanish teachers?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Due to the fact that the literature that explores high school Spanish teachers' language practices inside and outside of the school setting is scarce, foreign language teacher educators in general are in need of research-specific data. Findings from investigations such as the one conducted here would allow them to make informed decisions about not only their teacher education programs, but also the planning of professional development opportunities that meet the specific needs of this group of teachers. In other words, the field of foreign language teacher education requires language specific studies that incorporate data-driven implications for teacher education.

Moreover, much has been written about issues regarding native and non-native English teachers in the U.S and abroad (Braine, 1999; Lee, 2000; Medgyes, 1994, 1999, 2001; Thomas, 1999). However, little has been written about native and non-native teachers of foreign languages other than English. Spanish teachers in the United States, for example, might be experiencing similar or different challenges compared to those explored in the literature about English teachers. This study seeks to provide pedagogical and content implications for teacher education programs that prepare both pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers. It also aims to provide data that shed light on the current dynamics of high Spanish teachers' school community, as well as their use of Spanish, so that teacher educators, administrators, and language teachers can develop

better opportunities for Spanish teachers to maintain or improve their language proficiency.

Furthermore, at the present time, there is an abundance of information on native and non-native foreign and second English language teachers in the U.S and abroad, the result of which has allowed some teacher preparation programs in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to develop specific strategies to address, amongst other things, non-native English teachers' needs. Nevertheless, the lack of research about Spanish teachers in the U.S translates into few existing recommendations and implications for foreign language teacher education departments that prepare Spanish teachers. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature so that teacher preparation programs for foreign language teachers other than English can benefit. Indeed, it is hoped that the triangulation and integration of data from a survey, classroom observations, and interviews will serve as instruments with which to increase accountability in foreign language teacher education programs.

The following section will provide the reader with a set of definitions for key concepts that are used throughout the chapters that follow.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Content Knowledge: Knowledge of the subject matter. In other words, knowledge of the
      Spanish language and cultures.

Pedagogical Knowledge: Knowledge of teaching methodologies, the general concepts,
      theories, and research needed to teach effectively.

Language Practice: specific set of activities undertaken in the target language, such as

    talking in Spanish, reading, writing and speaking in Spanish.

Native Speaker Model (NSM): This model positions the native speaker of a language as

    the linguistic expert, and as the example to follow for those who seek high level

    or native-like language proficiency. It is a deficiency model in that it diminishes

    the non-native speaker as one incapable of reaching the goal of native like

    proficiency.

Native Speaker (NS): Traditionally, a native speaker is someone who speaks a language

    as his or her mother tongue, L1 or native language. However, it goes beyond the

    location in which a person has been born, as one can be brought up speaking a

    different language from that spoken in ones country.

Non-native Speaker (NNS): Traditionally, a non-native speaker is someone who speaks a

    language that is not his or her mother tongue, L1 or native language. Usually, but

    not exclusively, this person has learned or studied the language after childhood.

Native English Speaker Teachers (NEST): A teacher who speaks English as his or her

    mother tongue, L1 or native language. Traditionally, this person has been

    understood to have been born and raised in an English speaking country.

Non-native English Speaker Teacher (NNEST): A teacher who does not speak English as

    his or her mother tongue or L1. English is therefore his or her second language or

    L2.

Native Spanish Teacher (NST): A teacher who speaks Spanish as his or her mother

    tongue, L1 or native language. Traditionally but not exclusively, this person has

    been thought to have been born and raised in a Spanish speaking country.

However, heritage speakers (teachers that grew up speaking Spanish) may also be

included in this category.

Non-native Spanish Teacher (NNST): A teacher who does not speak Spanish as his or her

mother tongue or L1. Spanish is therefore his or her second language or L2.

Target Language Practice outside of the school setting: Level of involvement with the

target language that teachers demonstrate through participating in various

activities outside of the required teaching practice. For instance, belonging to a

Spanish conversation group for teachers, having fairly regular contacts with

native or advanced speakers of the language, participating in cultural activities of

the target language, reading authentic materials such as novels or newspapers in

the target language, etc.

Target Language Practice inside of the school setting: Level of involvement with the

target language that teachers demonstrate inside their school setting and

classrooms. For instance, the amount of oral target language use in the different

levels of Spanish they teach, the amount of Spanish use in written materials

(handouts, textbook, etc.) as well as the use of authentic materials, and the amount

Spanish use among their community of Spanish teachers.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

Just as the literature on native and non-native English teachers describes many

differences regarding their knowledge of the language and their teacher preparation

experience, so too does it assume that there are differences between native and non-native

Spanish teachers, and that these differences affect their teaching practices and their level

of target language involvement both inside and outside of the classroom setting. A second underlying assumption is that high school Spanish teachers will be forthcoming in the survey study and truthfully share their language practices outside and inside the classroom setting. In other words, it is assumed that participants will respond as truthfully as possible and to the best of their knowledge in the questionnaire, the result of which will render their responses trustworthy.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study vary according to each respective phase. Phase one utilizes a primarily quantitative approach to data collection using a survey that was administered to high school Spanish teachers. I used the list of secondary Spanish language programs provided by the state of Ohio department of education, which might have some units missing (see more on efforts to reduce survey error in the methodology chapter). Furthermore, transferring results from the survey to other Spanish teachers should be done (if at all) with acute prudence. The mode of administering the survey can also produce some limitations. For instance, online surveys have proven to be effective only when the sample population selected as participants is known to have access to a computer and understand how to use it (Dillman, 2000). For that reason, this study used a classical paper-and-pencil survey since many teachers working in school districts do not have high speed Internet access.

The limitations for the qualitative phase of the study are related to the voluntary status of the five participants for the case studies, which proves to be a small number in proportion to the Spanish teachers employed in the county where the study took place.

Indeed, this purposive sample procedure (Patton, 1990, 2002) decreases the

generalizability of findings. Another limitation associated with the qualitative research

paradigm is that the interpretation of findings could be subject to other interpretations as

well (see role of researcher in methodology section)

.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

My interest in foreign language teacher education developed over the three years that I spent working with professors as a teaching assistant for methods classes and supervising foreign language teacher candidates during their field experience and clinical practice. Specifically, my interest in native and non-native foreign language teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge inspired a colleague (a non-native Spanish speaker) and me (a native Spanish speaker) to form an informal conversation group for Spanish teachers called Maestros Aprendiendo Todo del Español (M.A.T.E.). This 'teachers learning all about Spanish' community formed in reaction to a group of non-native pre-service Spanish teachers' desire to both practice and polish their language skills. The pre-service teachers themselves possessed a wide range of Spanish language proficiency, ranging from intermediate high to advanced. The group met regularly from 2003-2005. Every year the group was blessed with new members as old members ceased to come regularly once they started teaching full time.

Throughout the monthly meetings native and non-native language teachers issues surfaced in spite of the efforts of the two facilitators to share the leadership within the group. Indeed, many of the group participants positioned me (the native speaker) as a language expert, but as we grew as a community and as collaboration between my non-

native Spanish speaker colleague and I flourished, we manage to challenge the placement of the native speaker as the expert or authority. Together we attempted to confront the native speaker model and created opportunities for transformation. Participation in this group led me to reflect on the native speaker model. Moreover, it not only triggered memories of my experiences teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Argentina, my native country, but it also inspired my quest for answers in the literature.

I started teaching EFL when I was sixteen. I vividly remember the moment I secured a job at a prestigious bilingual school in 1997. Bilingual schools in Argentina usually offer content area classes in Spanish in the morning, and both grammar and content area classes in English in the afternoon. This particular school boasted having mostly native English teachers, but I still took the chance. After all, I had four years of teaching experience, and I was studying at an elite English teachers' college in Buenos Aires. As I entered the waiting area of the school, I noticed other teachers waiting to be interviewed. I engaged in conversation with them, all native English speakers from the U.S. At first I panicked, but when my name was called I walked in with confidence, determined to help the foreign language chair recognize my attributes as a non-native teacher, and the strengths I brought as compared to native English teachers. That same day I was hired to teach English to bilingual sixth graders. I came home triumphant, knowing that I had been chosen over native English teachers. This experience led me to recognize that the native speaker model was prevalent in Argentina. Native English teachers were the norm, and non-native teachers the exception. I also experienced first hand the sense of insecurity and lack of confidence that a non-native language teacher

may experience when competing with native language teachers, especially if the school community embraces a native speaker model.

Supervising foreign language teachers and working closely with non-native Spanish teachers for four years opened my eyes to the challenges they face and the latent pressure the native speaker model exerts on them. Thus, this literature review is intended to explore native and non-native language teacher issues, including teachers' beliefs regarding the native speaker model in foreign language education and how it affects their ongoing professional lives. In addition, it presents studies that describe differences between native and non-native language educators as well as differences in hiring practices in the U.S and abroad. Unfortunately, there are no studies that specifically examine native and non-native Spanish teachers in the U.S in regards to what they do outside the classroom to improve and maintain their proficiency in the language. There are also no studies that present quantitative data about high school Spanish teachers' practices in general, or about their beliefs regarding language teaching and learning. Thus this review of the literature draws upon research on native and non-native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) in the U.S and abroad, as well as research on Japanese and French teachers in the U.S. Finally, this review of the literature describes Wenger's (1998) 'communities of practice' (COP) and Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'legitimate peripheral participation' in order to provide a theoretical framework for building communities of practice in foreign and second language education.

2.1 Difference is Not Deficiency: Confronting the "Native Speaker Model"

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In a landmark book entitled *The Non-Native Teacher*, Medgyes (1994) assures readers that the native speaker / non-native speaker distinction is a fact, and that many teachers are particularly conscious of this reality, especially those whose variety of English is not considered standard. Medgyes agrees with Phillipson's (1992) and Kachru's (1996) analysis supporting the notion that countries in the inner circle have used 'standard English' as a tool of domination and colonial expansion. In this sense, British and American English are regarded as the norm and all other 'world Englishes' are depicted as deficient. Medgyes emphasizes that world Englishes are not necessarily deficient. This hierarchical notion of varieties of a language affects the status of native and non-native teachers since the native speaker is positioned as the expert. Many researchers have denounced and extensively documented discriminatory hiring practices in the field of English language education (Amin, 2001; Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999). Similarly, Au (2002) suggests that Hawaiian teachers have historically been disqualified from teaching in the government English schools because they spoke English as a second language.

Canagarajah (1999) argues that the notion of the ideal teacher of English as a native speaker is a questionable rationalization for the hidden economic, ideological, and political motivations that are congruent with the maintenance of a societal power structure. He asserts, "Chomsky's native speaker of a homogeneous speech is an idealized construction" (p. 79). According to this view, the native speaker model is not a myth but a reality, one that exercises an important political and economic pressure on non-native teachers.

Davies (2003) suggests that the concept of the native speaker is not as clearly defined as some linguists would have it. Indeed, over the years the field of linguistics has painted native speakers as people who have "insider knowledge about 'their' language. They are the models we appeal to for the 'truth' about the language, they know what the language is and what the language isn't. They are the stakeholders of the language, they control its maintenance and shape its directions" (p. 1). In his book, Davies examines the concept of native speaker in the field of applied linguistics and thoroughly describes many aspects of being a native speaker, including the psycholinguistic, sociolinguistics, linguistic, etc. Furthermore, he moves beyond the work of other linguists in that he acknowledges that previous native speaker idealizations were racist. He suggests that, "what is often meant by native speaker in this context is the deliberate exclusion of those who are not, in fact, in with a chance of being one" (p. 8). Thus, a pressing question becomes: how does this native speaker model influence non-native foreign and second language teachers?

In a study that examines the status of native and non-native instructors of Japanese in higher education in North America, Yokochi Samuel (1987) examines a total of 226 teachers, 146 of whom are native Japanese teachers (64.6 %), and 80 of whom are non-native Japanese teachers (35.4 %). In addition, 27 out of 34 schools surveyed in the study (79.4 %) reported having native Japanese instructors only. In response to an open-ended question, one of the respondents explained:

> For a long time, we have been using native instructors only, but it came to our attention that being native does not insure success in teaching. This year, for the first time, we hired a non-native instructor with experience in teaching Japanese. When the quarter started, half of the class (15 out of

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30) dropped the course because they wanted a native instructor. (Yokochi Samuel, 1987, p. 134)

Yokochi Samuel concludes that the field of teaching Japanese as a foreign language has not yet earned recognition as a legitimate academic discipline. This 'second-class status' is perhaps augmented by the sentiment that many non-native Japanese teachers are "tsukinami," or unoriginal (p. 138).

In a different article that discusses the experiences of Sarah Lamond, a non-native Japanese language teacher in Sydney, Armour (2004) addresses the native versus non-native language teacher issue and explores notions of authentic and impostor. His participant recounts, "Although I had done a lot of casual teaching on and off, that was my first proper job […] it was a pretty rough school. I felt very insecure about my Japanese, I really didn't feel legitimate" (p. 113). Obviously, non-native foreign and second language teachers face the danger of internalizing this lower status that the prevalent native speaker model supports.

In this regard, Thomas (1999) affirms, "we [NNESTs] often find ourselves in situations where we have to establish our credibility as teachers of ESOL [English to speakers of other languages] before we can proceed to be taken seriously as professionals"(p. 5). Likewise, Tseng (2003) shares her personal story regarding the challenge of establishing her credibility when, on the first day of class, students stared at her with looks of distrust due to the fact that a non-native speaker was going to teach them English. She began by introducing herself in English, then continued in Spanish, and finally in Chinese. Only then did students begin to pay attention and value her 'authority' as an English teacher.

Árva and Medgyes (2000, p. 357) provide a useful table comparing perceived differences in teaching behavior between native and non-native English speaking teachers in Hungary that is relevant to this discussion. Interestingly, the non-native speaker teachers in their study perceived competency in English as a crucial factor in teachers' efficacy. The authors refer to non-native speaker teachers' engagement in various forms of language practice as their sole source for language proficiency improvement. They state, "Conscious of their linguistic handicap, non-native teachers took pains to make improvements" (p. 361). In an earlier study, Medgyes (1994, 1999) affirms that the pressure to embrace the native speaker standard greatly influences teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

Kachi and Lee's (2001) study looks into Japanese and American teachers' collaboration in the EFL classroom in Japan. One observation the researchers make is that "Japanese teachers avoid, consciously or unconsciously, conversing with American teachers in English in front of the students" (p. 4). The researchers attribute this to Japanese teachers' concern with their lack of oral fluency and their fear of losing credibility as English teachers. In a different study, Morita (2004) explores issues of identity as non-native speakers participate in a Canadian academic community. Most of the students had taught EFL in Japan and felt insecure and inferior to their classmates. One of the Japanese English teacher participants in the study, Lisa, explains, "I didn't want to make English mistakes in front of other students" (p. 585). Morita (2004) also asserts that Lisa associates non-native speakers with their limitations and deficiencies. Indeed, Lisa comments:

I found that my self-image got really lowered after I came here…especially as an English teacher because I felt I have lots of English problems. It took a long time to empower myself. Still, I can't say I'm confident… But I don't feel comfortable calling myself a non-native speaker anymore. (p. 586)

Hence, 'healthier' associations are needed because difference is not deficiency and non-nativeness should not be experienced as deficiency. As Rajagopalan (2005) explains, "the fact of not being a native speaker and, worse still, of never being able to become one no matter how hard they tried, often becomes a source of anxiety and job frustration…" (p. 287).

Similarly, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) affirm that the social category of native speaker enjoys power and status while the category of non-native speaker does not. They add that this tension is exacerbated by the profession's continued adherence to Native Speaker Model dominance. They report a study in which Marc, a Mexican woman in her late twenties and a non-native English teacher, reveals her struggles to cope with herself as a language teacher and learner, which prompted feelings of insecurity in her perception of herself as an expert speaker. The researchers suggest that "joining the NNEST (Non-Native English Speaking Teacher) Caucus in the professional TESOL organization gave her comfort in the fact that she was not the only one and gave Marc the support that she felt was missing from her graduate program" (p. 27). As will be seen in chapters 4 and 5, many of the non-native Spanish teacher participants in this research study experienced similar feelings of insecurity and a lack of confidence in their language skills.

Teacher education programs have the potential to help non-native teachers 'reimagine' their identities as multilingual speakers in order to generate a new sense of

professional agency and legitimacy (Pavlenko, 2003). Pavlenko argues that the English

education discourse supports 'standard white middle class' English as the only legitimate

form of the language, and it suggests that it is not surprising that many non-native

teachers see their English as imperfect and anxiously try to polish it. She shares several

comments from teachers that are struggling with their image as non-native educators, one

of whom recalls, "I felt I had a kind of deficiency because I was a non-native English

speaker" (p. 258). Moreover, the author stresses that the Native Speaker Model may be

equally damaging for both Americans and second language users, such as native Spanish

teachers who might choose to teach their native language instead of their second

language. Hence, in the field of teacher education at large, it is necessary to demystify

the native speaker as the linguistic expert in an attempt to ensure that non-native teachers

are encouraged to teach their second language without fears and regrets.

2.2 When in Doubt, Consult the native speaker: Demystifying the Native Speaker Model

        Regrettably, the erroneous axiom, 'When in doubt, consult the native speaker' is

latent in non-native teachers' attitudes. Being a native speaker teacher of Spanish myself,

I remember numerous occasions when I was asked questions about the Spanish language

during my first year of teaching at a local university and was unable to provide detailed

explanations. Sometimes I resorted to the often-used answer: "Well, that's how a native

speaker would say it!" However, I soon recognized the mediocrity of this answer, and

was inspired to learn more about my native language to ensure that a more precise answer

could be given. When I was hired in 2001 to teach Spanish at a local university, I had

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already spent more than five years teaching English as a foreign language in Argentina, the results of which made the transition to teaching Spanish smoother in terms of pedagogical knowledge. Nevertheless, I was conscious of my need to learn more about the grammar, and I borrowed many books with the intention of studying them. It was only then that I realized how strongly the Native Speaker Model was engrained in students and faculty alike.

I share my experience as a native Spanish teacher in an attempt to demystify the Native Speaker Model. Medgyes's book *The Non-Native Teacher* (1994) contributed enormously to demystifying the Native Speaker Model. He states, "It is common experience that the intuitions and judgments supplied by even the most educated native speakers are not always reliable. And they seldom agree amongst themselves" (p.11). Several chapters in his book are dedicated to enumerating the advantages and disadvantages of being a native teacher and non-native teacher. For instance, non-native speaker teachers are thought to provide good models for imitation; for teaching language learning strategies more effectively; supplying learners with more information about the language; anticipating and preventing language difficulties; being more empathetic to the need and problems of learners; and making use of the learners' mother tongue (Medgyes, 1994, p. 51). Consider this powerful quotation regarding the ideal teacher:

> I believe that as models fluent non-native speakers can be just as good as native-speakers are and, at least in some important respects, even better. Fluent non-native speakers reveal strategies […] that can help other non-native learners to cope better with the target language. Also non-native teachers have one inestimable advantage over native speakers, particularly those who have never learned a foreign language. They have actually learned the target language as foreigners and have *direct insight into and experience of the process involved* for other non-native speakers. (O'Neil, 1991, p. 304; cited in Medgyes, 1994, p. 77)

It is interesting to note that the researchers compare native teachers to 'fluent' non-native teachers, concluding that the latter are preferable because they have learned and mastered a foreign language and know first hand the daily commitment involved in doing so.

Lee's (2000) personal account of being a non-native English teacher further supports the preceding discussion:

> I know that it requires much more effort to convince students that non-native speaker teachers can be equally good, if not better, English teachers than their native speaker counterparts can […] because non-native speaker teachers themselves have learned English as a second language or foreign language, they understand the needs and experience of ESL students better. (p. 19)

Cook (2005) characterizes the Native Speaker Model as unattainable by most non-native teachers. She suggests a multicompetence view that describes non-native language teachers as individuals competent in two languages and who strive to help students become successful second language users. Cook problematizes the notion that many non-native language teachers have spent their lives trying to sound 'native' and become upset when researchers say that the target is meaningless: "what they want to hear is praise that they have almost got there and could be mistaken for natives" (p. 54). Finally, Cook highlights non-native teachers' strengths not only because they provide models of proficient second language users, but also because they often have more appropriate training and background.

In short, blind confidence in the native teacher only perpetuates the false ideal of native speaker competence. Medgyes argues that it is essential for any teacher, especially non-native teachers, to enjoy themselves in the classroom, to find the right balance and to maintain a *high degree of confidence* in their language ability. He concludes, "I believe

that the sine qua non of good teaching is for the teacher to feel confident and relaxed in the classroom" (p. 47). As we have read, Cook, Lee, and Medgyes agree that confidence in one's language proficiency plays an essential role in teachers' practices. Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation present data that support many of the claims made in this section. These chapters also explore high school Spanish teachers' beliefs about the advantages and disadvantages of being native speaker and non-native speaker teachers, and uncover the Native Speaker Model present in many of the schools that participated.

The next section of the literature review examines the work of researchers who have taken a closer look at non-native teachers' classroom practices. These studies, undertaken mainly in the field of English as a foreign or second language education, highlight the detrimental consequences of assigning only lower level language classes to non-native speaker teachers. What is more, these studies provide an excellent platform for comparing the results obtained in my own study of high school Spanish teachers.

2.3 Non-native language teachers in the classroom

Medgyes (1994) draws attention to the fact that many non-native speaker teachers only teach beginners because they are comfortable teaching lower level classes, which, he argues, is detrimental to their proficiency. He declares, "Those teachers who are content with teaching only beginners are in danger of leaving their own English to rust […] because they are not being forced to improve it" (p. 53). Indeed, survey results reported in his book show that the most damage to non-native speaker teachers' proficiency occurs in the fossilization of pronunciation. The author acknowledges that the development of

speaking skills is probably the most difficult to maintain and improve for non-native

language teachers.

Placing non-native language teachers in lower level classes has been (and

continues to be) a common practice sustained by teachers, supervisors, and administrators

alike. Indeed, in a survey study conducted by Llurda (2005), practicum supervisors were

asked: how many of your non-native speaker teachers would you recommend to teach at

any of the following levels? Results indicated that 90% would be recommended to teach

beginner and low intermediate levels. While it is true that these results might depend on

the qualifications of those pre-service language teachers as well as supervisors' beliefs

and attitudes, it is interesting to note that a large percentage of non-native speaker

teachers was confined to lower level classes. Many authors underscore how detrimental

this practice can be.

Armour (2004) suggests that a common drawback non-native Japanese teachers

face is the fossilization of the language when they lack interaction with native speakers,

and when their target language exposure is confined to Japanese language textbooks and

Japanese learners. One of Armour's participants explains:

> I don't feel completely natural as a Nihonjin [Japanese person] so yeah my
> language could be better. […] Perhaps in the kids' eyes—I mean they
> know that a lot of native speakers are hopeless teachers but they are
> authentic because they are Nihonjin. So we wish we had a native speaker
> to model off. (p. 115)

To prevent fossilization in the English language, Medgyes (1994, 1999) suggests two

strategies: "stay in English-speaking countries as long as you can and meet English-

speaking friends as often as possible" (p. 94). Unfortunately, economic constraints might

prevent many non-native speaker teachers from traveling and immersing themselves in the target language and culture. For that reason, Medgyes (1994, 2001) stresses the collaboration between native and non-native teachers as an alternative and valuable resource.

A crucial part of maintaining a balanced classroom environment is a teacher's confidence in her own ability to serve as a model of linguistic competence. If a non-native language teacher holds herself to the standard of the Native Speaker Model she is further complicating an already challenging task. Cook (1999) argues that the non-native model should replace the Native Speaker Model because of the appropriateness of the former over the latter under certain conditions, such as the larger number of non-native English teachers in EFL settings. While the study in question occurred in Japan and featured EFL, the conclusions drawn are equally relevant to the context of Spanish in the United States. Certainly, just as English is a key language in Japan, Spanish is rapidly gaining importance in various fields in this country. The resulting drive to promote Spanish/English bilingualism has given rise to situations that problematize the usefulness of the Native Speaker Model in the field of language education and teacher education. Both teacher educators and the school community should help non-native Spanish teachers reach high levels of proficiency without embracing a Native Speaker Model. Again, additional studies similar to the one conducted by Cook are needed in the area of Spanish language education.

In a study that analyzes the cultural knowledge in non-native English teachers' classrooms, Lazaraton (2003) concludes that second language teacher education programs should offer language and culture courses for their non-native teachers or at

least direct them to such classes. In addition, this author recommends that teacher educators pair up native and non-native speaking pre-service teachers. Medgyes (1994, 1999, 2001), like other researchers (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Pessoa & Sacchi, 2002), posit the viability of a partnership between native and non-native teachers of English, and suggests that the two "arrive from different directions but eventually stand quite close to each other" (p. 74). While contact with native speakers is an invaluable resource for learning the target language and culture, non-native models of proficiency are also crucial in developing the next generation of non-native speaker teachers. In other words, highly-qualified non-native language teachers provide their students with a successful foreign language model. Thus, it is crucial that they feel confident in their language proficiency and that they possess the ability to transmit that confidence to their students.

The studies presented thus far provide a general description of non-native English teachers' identity in the classroom, as well as some suggestions for teacher education programs. There is a need to expand these studies to the Spanish language teacher population due to the growth of this language in the U.S. It is necessary to address such issues such as: Is the Spanish language teaching profession also embracing the Native Speaker Model? If so, how is it affecting Spanish language teaching and learning?

2.4 Foreign Language teacher education: The importance of team-teaching

The literature on native and non-native English teachers is vast and has produced significant changes in teacher preparation programs. Among the most commonly cited studies is that of Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999), who promote the incorporation of graduate classes specifically designed to tackle the native speaker construct and create

conditions wherein all English teachers are valued, regardless of their background. Moreover, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy assert that the question of whether native speakers or non-native speakers are better language teachers is irrelevant. Instead, they challenge the construct of expertise that diminishes non-native speaker professionals and positions a native speaker as the ideal teacher of English. Their article analyzes the classroom discussions, dialogic letters, and personal autobiographies of 19 students enrolled in a graduate seminar for non-native English teachers. There are many powerful accounts from students who obviously enjoyed the seminar and who learned a lot during their experience. Indeed, such graduate classes are essential in problematizing existing paradigms and guiding teachers to become agents of change. Likewise, Brady and Gulikers (2004) offer a comprehensive guide to implementing a practicum course for non-native English-speaking student teachers, and suggest that teacher preparation programs need to respond to their specific cross-cultural needs.

The social discourse of the Native Speaker Model defines native speakers of a language as the ideal language teachers; while native teachers may enjoy power and status, non-native teachers might not (Au, 2002; Varghese et al., 2005). It is not uncommon for non-native teachers to strive towards native speaker language competence, the result of which can lead to a detrimental identity formation mechanism, something many speakers have come to realize (Pavlenko, 2003). As many research studies have shown, for some non-native speaker teachers the pressure to perform at a Native Speaker Model level is so strong that they shy way from conversing with native speaker teachers for fear of making mistakes, or they remain content teaching lower level language classes only (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Rajagoplan, 2005).

Moreover, Pavlenko underscores the need for teacher education programs to "offer identity options that would allow teachers to imagine themselves and others as legitimate members of professional communities" (p. 253), thereby limiting the likelihood that non-native language teachers would feel like second-class teachers. Unfortunately, many foreign language teachers choose to teach the language they speak from birth and/or are discouraged from teaching their foreign or second language (Pavlenko, 2003). Teacher education programs for foreign and second language educators should offer not only resources for maintaining and improving TL competence, but also a context in which to problematize Native Speaker Model alignment. One such resource is collaboration between native and non-native teachers and the creation of communities of practice.

The literature available on team-teaching (Brumby & Wada, 1990; Tajino & Tajino, 2000) points to the strong pedagogical advantages for all parties involved. However, specific literature about team-teaching between native and non-native teachers is scarce. Some of the positive effects of this collaborative practice include fostering mutual trust, openness, tolerance, and responsibility; making the partners more reflective about their own teaching philosophies; enhancing their familiarity with another value system and culture; and decreasing anxiety, loneliness, and teacher burnout (Medgyes, 1994). What is more, Tajino & Tajino (2000) suggest that team-teaching in Japan may be most effective when it is 'team-learning' in the sense that all participants are encouraged to learn from one another by exchanging ideas and cultural values. Sadly, results from the survey conducted by Medgyes (1994) in Hungary reveal that there has been little collaboration between non-native English teachers (NNEST) and native English teachers

(NEST) at the school level. Whenever collaboration occurred, it was regarded as a top-down approach, with the native teacher positioned at the top 'helping' the non-native, who was situated at the bottom.

Liang (2003) stresses the need to move away from a deficit model of teacher development in which NNEST are afraid to initiate collaboration with NEST due to language anxiety, and recommends an integrative model of NNEST teacher development that would allow for continual native speaker/non-native speaker collaboration, preferably beginning at the pre-service level and extending into the teaching career (Kamhi-Stein, 1999). Johnson (2003) writes from the NEST perspective and recommends working alongside a NNEST to further professional development. In fact, she asserts that doing so helped her to challenge her own unconscious understanding of herself as the English language authority.

By and large, many programs in TESOL foster collaboration between native and non-native English speaking teachers. For instance, Matsuda and Matsuda (2004) assert:

> From the perspective of teacher educators, collaboration is desirable because it can contribute to the creation of a community in which teachers learn from their differences. In such a learning community, the professional, cultural, and linguistic diversity that teachers bring with them becomes an asset rather than a liability. From the perspective of pre-service and in-service teachers, collaborative teacher development not only makes their learning experience more positive and productive but also helps them develop the ability to work collaboratively, which may be a necessity in their future careers. (p. 177)

Matsuda and Matsuda support the creation of a community of language teachers that values what each member has to offer regardless of their native or non-native status. Wenger (1998) and Lave (1991) provide an excellent theoretical framework for the

establishment of communities of practice (COP) that can be applied to language teachers as well.

2.5 Building Communities of Practice in Foreign Language Teacher Education

Wenger (1998) describes every person as a social being, and suggests that their status as such is an essential aspect of learning. Lave (1991) sees "mind, culture, history, and the social world as interrelated processes that constitute each other" (p. 63). According to their theory, knowing involves participating and actively engaging with the world in communities of practice (COP), and constructing identities in relation to these communities. Lave and Wenger (1991) define "legitimate peripheral participation" as a process of becoming full participants in a sociocultural practice. For them, "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (p. 31) that entails the ability to communicate in the language of the community and act according to its practice. In addition, they note that the "social structure of the community of practice, its power relations, and its condition for legitimacy define possibilities for learning (i.e. for legitimate peripheral participation)" (p. 98).

In his book *Communities of practice,* Wenger (1998) describes a claim processor company scenario. At this company, employees appear to work individually, but they actually act as resources for each other, exchanging information, and making sense of situations. Similarly, teaching may appear to be a lonely profession in which teachers are isolated in their own classroom spaces; nevertheless teachers do form COPs within the same school. They exchange information in the teacher's lounge, support each other when difficulties arise, and share new ideas and instructional practices.

Wenger asserts that it is possible to belong to many COPs at the same time, but since they are so informal, one rarely notices them. Thus, learning for an individual is a matter of "engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities" (p. 7). Learning for a community, on the other hand, is a matter of "refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members" (p. 7). Likewise, building COPs in foreign and second language teacher education programs is a way to establish the next generation of foreign language teachers while at the same time embracing learning, as Wenger (1998) promises:

> Inventive ways of engaging students in meaningful practices, of providing access to resources that enhance their participation, of opening their horizons so they can put themselves on learning trajectories they can identify with, and of involving them in actions, discussions, and reflecting that make a difference to the communities that they value. (p. 10)

Most language teachers would hope that their students would one day be able to participate in communities of practices in which the target language is spoken. In fact, most language teachers do whatever they can to provide learners with access to resources that will enhance their participation, such as authentic materials. Teachers also try to involve their students in action, in discussions, and in reflections wherein the target language is used meaningfully. In other words, without knowing it, contemporary language educators strive to incorporate a COP approach to learning. However, if teacher educators as well as language teachers truly believe COPs are worthwhile, they should embrace COP in their teacher education program for foreign and second language (FSL) teachers and in their schools. Moreover, teacher educators should provide both pre-service and in-service teachers with opportunities for authentic experiences in the

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communities they are training to join (Sutherland, Scalon, & Sperring, 2005). Foreign and second language teachers, especially non-native FSL teachers, require daily contact with the target language. COPs can provide non-native FSL teachers with opportunities to develop confidence and competence in the language.

According to this theory, a COP should have the following dimensions of practice: a) mutual engagement, b) a joint enterprise, and c) a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement comprises engaged diversity, doing things together, relationships, social complexity, and community maintenance. If language teachers are to develop good relationships, it is essential that their level of competence in the TL is 'good enough' to encourage them to become full participants in their COP. In other words, competence allows participants to connect meaningfully, and to engage in the context of a shared practice. Regarding a COP of language teachers, this competence could be related to participants' language proficiency. In a COP of Spanish teachers, teachers might possess a wide range of Spanish language proficiency, ranging from intermediate to advanced, the result of which creates both challenges and opportunities in their mutual relationships. As Wenger (1998) explains, "sustained interpersonal engagement generate[s] [its] fair share of tensions and conflicts" (p. 77). This COP of language teachers is in turn a fair representation of a multilevel language classroom. As teachers participate in a COP, they experience what their students might experience later as they engage in meaningful communication. Data from chapters 4 and 5 describe the common tensions and conflicts present in several high school Spanish teachers' COPs. Interestingly, some teacher participants drew comparisons between their classrooms and their COP.

The second dimension, a joint enterprise, pushes participants toward a collective process of negotiation and mutual accountability. A COP of Spanish teachers, for example, should strive to help all members achieve high proficiency in the language, thereby creating an arena for mutual accountability. Finally, the third dimension of COP according to Wenger (1998) is a shared repertoire which consists of resources such as routines, words, and gestures. "It includes the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members" (p. 83). Spanish teachers participating in a COP should share their passion for the Spanish language and culture. In addition, non-native speaker teachers might share a common culture, which could serve as a point of departure for drawing comparisons and making connections with the target language culture (see Figure 2.1, Wenger, 1998, p. 73).

negotiated enterprise
mutual accountability
interpretations
rhythms
local response

joint enterprise

mutual engagement

shared repertoire

Engaged diversity
Doing things together
Relationships
Social complexity
Community maintenance

Stories, artifacts,
styles, actions, tools,
discourses, historical
events, concepts
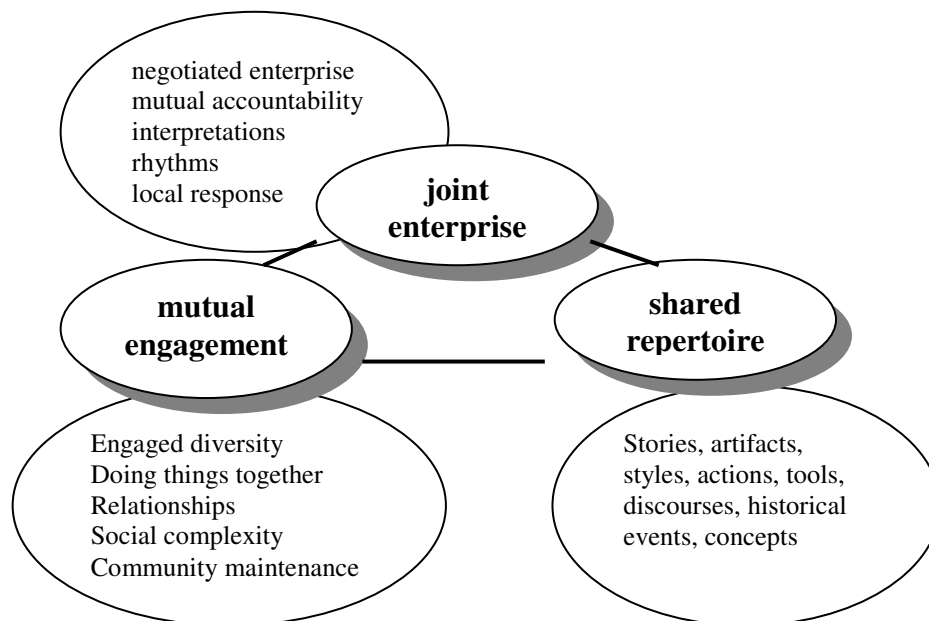
Figure 2.1: Dimensions of practice as the property of a community.

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Finally, Wenger (1998) underscores several characteristics of a COP. One of the key elements is 'negotiation of meaning,' which is attained through participation and reification. By participating in a COP wherein the target language is spoken, language teachers engage in a continuous negotiation of meaning, a critical component of language learning. Language competence does not come by itself, but requires socialization with speakers of the language and allegiance to the community of native speakers. Thus, time to socialize with both native and non-native speakers is essential. It is hoped that participation in such a COP will carry its effects into the classroom since "participation is not something they simply turn off. […] It is part of who they are" (Wenger, 1998, p. 57).

Reification is "the process of giving form to our experience […] a certain understanding is given form. This form then becomes a focus for the negotiation of meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 59). A very important reification process that should be part of any COP for language teachers, namely, is that of reifying the Native Speaker Model predominant in the U.S and abroad. The native speaker model assumes that there is a set of characteristics and competences, most notably native-like proficiency, that language teachers need to have in order to become a member of the Spanish teachers' community of practice. To this end, non-native Spanish teachers might be trapped in a rigid idea about legitimate membership and eligibility for belonging, something that is frustratingly out of their reach. No matter how proficient they become, they will never be native speakers of the language. Language teachers need to be aware of the deficit model promoted by the native speaker model. Reifying, or, 'confronting the native speaker model' and acknowledging its existence, is not without drawbacks. Wenger (1998) writes about 'the double edge of reification' and asserts that "though something is probably

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much more diffuse and intangible in practice [when reified] it becomes something people can point to, refer to, strive for, appeal to, and use or misuse in arguments" (p. 61). Therefore, it is important to remain aware of this double-edged sword in order to reduce the likelihood that a COP of Spanish teachers will reproduce the very model they seek to reify.

Wenger also suggests that competence is not static and that learning occurs in practice. Thus, as language teachers engage in conversations using the target language and negotiate meaning, they build their identities. Lack of competence is manifested when members do not quite know how to engage with others, or fail to understand the intricacies of the COP. But even this lack of competence or non-membership shapes teachers' identities through their confrontation with the unfamiliar (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) suggests that this experience of non-participation is significant depending on its status as peripherality or marginality. Lave and Wegner (1991) suggest that, as a "place in which one moves toward more-intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering position" (p. 36). However, a marginal position places the COP member in an outskirt position with movement towards the outside, not the inside of a COP. Such is the case of a non-native speaker with a lower proficiency in the language compared to that of the larger group. This teacher might never dare to use the target language among colleagues and his or her feelings of illegitimacy could bring about low self-portrayal of language competence, which in turn could hinder his or her engagement in a COP and make it marginal.

Wenger and Snyder (2000) emphasize that COPs help solve problems quickly, transfer best practices through the sharing of stories, develop professional skills through

apprenticeship and collaboration, and bring experienced teachers into contact with novice teachers. In this sense, COPs not only become resources for maintaining and improving target language competence, but also provide a context in which to problematize Native Speaker Model alignment.

2.6 Conclusion

In his review of the literature, Braine (2005) poses a key question: "What does the research reveal?" (p. 22). This review of the literature has highlighted the differences between native and non-native teachers, as well as teachers' self-perceptions in terms of language proficiency and teaching behavior. Additionally, it has described research studies that problematize the native speaker as the linguistic expert and that look for solutions with which to transform non-native speaker teachers' self-images. Furthermore, this literature review has investigated non-native language teachers in the classroom, as well as studies that address the issue of teacher preparation for non-native language instructors. These studies make a strong case for collaboration between language teachers and for the creation of COP.

It is worth mentioning that most of the studies detailed in this literature review were conducted by non-native speaker teachers, the result of which contributed enormously to their own empowerment (Braine, 2005). Indeed, research on native and non-native English language teachers has questioned existing assumptions about language teaching and has led to newer, sounder and more equitable paradigms that treat

non-native language teachers as successes, and not as failures. It is essential that such research be undertaken in the field of Spanish language teaching as well.

Some researchers also place the native speaker/non-native speaker debate in the background and move teacher education to the forefront. Such is the case with Pasternak and Bailey (2004), who insist that pre-service teacher training programs assess all teachers' declarative and procedural knowledge regardless of their native speaker or non-native speaker 'status.' They assume that the greater the knowledge, the more confident the teacher will be. In the same way, Derwing and Munro (2005) highlight the key role teacher education programs play in moving away from the native vs. non-native language teacher dichotomy, and propose rigorous entry requirements for all language teachers, detailed plans to meet language teachers' individual needs, and clear standards that candidates are required to meet in order to graduate.

Derwing and Munro conclude that teacher education programs should ensure that future teachers have an appropriate level of proficiency, gain the requisite linguistic knowledge and skills for classroom teaching, and are able to employ pedagogically sound principles in the classroom. Hence, they state, "the issue of native speaker versus non-native speaker status is irrelevant in and of itself" (p. 180). Similarly, Rajagopalan (2005) believes that there is still much work to be done in terms of empowering and encouraging non-native language teachers in Brazil to rethink their own roles and face what he calls "their nagging inferiority complex" (p. 288) that "was thrust upon them as part of an insidious agenda and which, over the years, many come to accept and silently learned to live with" (p. 287). Like Rajagopalan (2005), Varghese et al. (2005) highlight the importance of understanding how language teachers form their identities in their

teacher education programs and beyond. Indeed, a discourse of unequal power such as the one proclaimed by the Native Speaker Model might profoundly impact language teachers' identity and self-image.

Since the early 1990s, much has been written about issues related to native and non-native English teachers in the U.S and abroad. However, little has been said or written about native and non-native Spanish teachers in the U.S who might be experiencing challenges similar to those explored in this literature review. Thus, the next chapter describes a mixed-methods research study designed to investigate native and non-native Spanish teachers' language practices inside and outside of the school setting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes a mixed-methods research study design. First, it depicts

Phase One of the study, which uses a quantitative research approach. Following this, a

detailed explanation of Phase Two of the study, which utilizes a qualitative research

design, is provided. In this sense, this mixed-method study strives for data-driven results

that are grounded in the lives of the high school Spanish teachers who participated in the

study, something that might not otherwise have been possible had an exclusively

quantitative design been employed. Likewise, using only a case study design limits one's

ability to offer connections of broader significance.

3.1 Research Design

Many different terms are used to refer to the research design adopted in this study,

including multimethod, dialectical, synthesis, and integrational. However, current

scholarship prefers the term "mixed methods" (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Greene &

Caracelli, 1997; Murray, 2003; Tashakkori & Tedddlie, 1998). According to Greene and

Caracelli (1997),

The underlying premise of mixed-methods inquiry is that each paradigm offers a meaningful and legitimate way of knowing and understanding. The underlying rationale for mixed-method inquiry is to understand more fully, to generate deeper and broader insights, to develop important knowledge claims that respect a wider range of interests and perspectives. (p. 7)

This two-phase, sequential mixed-methods study initially obtained data from 106 high school Spanish teachers who completed questionnaires in a major Midwestern city. Following this, five Spanish teachers were selected for follow-up case studies in an effort to explore the survey results in greater depth. In the first phase, quantitative research questions addressed the level of target language practices outside and inside the school setting. In the second phase, the teacher participants were interviewed and observed in their schools to explore their target language practice inside the classroom, and to elicit more in-depth data about their target language practices outside of the classroom.

I chose a mixed-methods approach for two reasons: (1) to better understand the research problem by converging both broad numeric trends from a quantitative analysis and the detail of qualitative data, and (2) because all methods have limitations, and biases inherent in any single method can be addressed using a combination of methods and a triangulation of data sources (Creswell, 2003). Thus, this research is designed sequentially as I wanted to expand and elaborate the findings of the quantitative survey method (Phase One) with five qualitative case studies that entailed detailed exploration of the teachers' practices (Phase Two). It should be noted that this sequential research design does not imply that priority was given to quantitative data, but that the two methods were integrated during the final interpretation phase of the study.

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3.2 Phase One: Quantitative Approach

Phase One of the study took place during Fall 2006 and entailed the collection of data using a cross-sectional self-administered survey to address the following research questions, as noted in Chapter 1:

5. What are high school Spanish teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning?

6. What is the level of high school Spanish teachers' language practice outside of the school setting?

7. What is the level of high school Spanish teachers' target language practice inside of the school setting?

8. What are the differences in Spanish language practices between native and non-native high school Spanish teachers?

The survey (see Appendix A) provided both numeric and descriptive data pertaining to the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of 106 high school Spanish teachers from the largest county in a Midwestern state.

3.2.1 Sample

A list of all high school Spanish teachers (n= 177) from the largest county in a Midwestern state was provided by the state of Ohio department of education, and all of the teachers were invited to participate in a survey. The decision to include all of the teachers was based on the wide variety of schools within the county. There are 47

different schools that vary widely in terms of location and size; this includes urban and suburban schools, as well as small schools with only one Spanish teacher and large schools with at least nine Spanish teachers. Given that some of the questions specifically investigated Spanish teachers' language practices with their colleagues inside of the school setting, it was essential to include both small and large schools.

3.2.2 Instrumentation: The survey

The High School Spanish Teachers' Survey, which was constructed for this study, consists of a total of thirty-two questions. The survey seeks to explore high school Spanish teachers' perceived level of target language practice outside and inside the classroom. Target language practice outside the classroom is defined here as the time spent regularly using Spanish in authentic and meaningful situations outside of the classroom, such as conversing with other Spanish teachers or belonging to a Spanish book club. The survey items were developed following an extensive literature review of foreign language education as well as valuable feedback obtained from a preliminary field test study.

The instrument was designed with the help of experts in the field of survey and questionnaire design. I prepared the instrument while taking a doctoral survey design class, and at the same time I coordinated efforts with Statistical Consulting Services (SCS) at my university. I met the SCS team once a week during the development period to share the progress of the survey, obtain valuable feedback, and overview the field-testing pilot study. Figure 3.1 below provides a summary of questionnaire items.

Questionnaire Content Type of Questions	Type of Questions
(1-5): Demographic and linguistic background information	• 3 short answer type questions (open-ended, one-line) • 1 choice one answer question (bullet) • 1 check all that apply question
(6-12): Opinions regarding teacher education program and professional development opportunities	• 2 short answer type questions (open-ended, 4 lines) • 4 choice one answer questions (bullet)
(13-15): Teaching experience and classroom practices	• 1 choice one answer question (bullet) • 2 short answer type questions (open-ended, one-line)
(16-18): Participation in professional organizations and conferences	• 2 choice one answer questions (bullet) • 1 check all that apply question
(19-23): Beliefs about Spanish teaching and learning and practices inside the school setting	• 3 questions (rating scale) • 1 question for other comments (open-ended) • 1 choice one answer question (bullet)
(24-26): Community of teachers	• 2 choice one answer questions (bullet) • 1 open-ended question, 3 lines
(27-29): Practices outside of the school setting	• 1 choice one answer question (bullet) • 1 question (rating scale) • 1 check all that apply question
(30): Suggestions from teachers, opportunity to write final comments	• 1 open-ended question, 6 lines
(31): Invitation to participate in a follow-up study	• 1 choice one answer question (bullet)

Note: See Appendix A for a copy of the entire instrument.

Figure 3.1: Summary of questionnaire items

The survey was administered using a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. As can be seen in Figure 3.1, it contains both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were mostly behavioral and attitudinal, and possessed a wide range of response items such as Likert scales, frequency scales, and monopolar response items. The design closely follows expert advice from the survey literature (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Brown, 2001; Dillman, 2000; Groves, Dillman, Eltinge, & Little, 2002; Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowiski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2004; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).

In keeping with the guidelines established by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at my university, survey data were kept confidential. A code was assigned to each participant, and I was the only person with the list of participants and codes. Data were stored in my personal computer under a secured password.

3.2.3 Validity and reliability of the survey

Validity and reliability are of primary concern when developing a survey instrument. Validity refers to whether the instrument is actually measuring what it is supposed to measure (Brown, 2001). To ensure that it did so, I used two validity strategies. First, face validity (the degree to which the instrument appears valid to untrained readers) was established by asking a pool of respondents to provide feedback during the preliminary field test. This field test utilized a secure website and only respondents whom I directly invited could access the survey. Thus, their names and any identifying information was kept confidential, which theoretically diminishes respondents' fear and encourages them to be honest in their responses. Since respondents

were directly asked about their field of expertise, Spanish teaching and learning, I believe that their motivation to respond was most likely high. Indeed, of the 20 teachers invited to participate, 16 Spanish teachers field-tested the instrument. In fact, all 16 respondents expressed their interest in taking the survey and completed all of the items. Only three items in the questionnaire posed problems, and these were either removed from the survey or modified according to respondents' suggestions.

Content validity (the degree to which the survey content matches the theoretical content that I was trying to measure) was verified by expert judgment. Three experts in the field of survey design from Statistical Consulting Services at my university, and two university professors who have more than 15 years experience teaching Spanish and working with Spanish teachers in the community, examined the theoretical concepts, the research questions, and the survey. Questions that proved to be problematic were deleted or rephrased according to their suggestions so that the questions included in the instrument were only those that were highly rated.

Reliability refers to the consistency with which a survey measures what it is intended to measure (Brown, 2001). A reliable survey question, then, is one that yields similar results when administered repeatedly to similar samples or populations. Since this instrument was newly developed for this investigation, reliability of the survey was tackled by field-testing the survey with a sample of sixteen Spanish teachers. In addition, internal consistency was addressed by building redundancy into the instrument (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). Therefore, several items of the survey addressed the same topic, and were rephrased so that I could check the consistancy of the responses.

3.2.4 Survey administration: Mailing procedures and survey errors

Steps for administering the survey were carefully implemented and monitored

following Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method (TDM) in order to maximize the

return rate and minimize survey errors. Dillman (2000) states:

> Tailored Design is the development of survey procedures that create respondent
> trust and perceptions of increased rewards and reduced costs for being a
> respondent, which take into account features of the survey situation and have as
> their goal the overall reduction of survey error. (p. 27)

With this in mind, I implemented the following procedures for contacting respondents as

recommended by Dillman (2000, p. 151):

1. A brief prenotice letter sent to respondents informing them of the study. I also

   included an incentive within the letter. Respondents were informed that upon

   completion of the survey they would be entered in a drawing for a cultural

   presentation at their school and a $50 gift certificate to shop at a local 'mercado.'

   (See appendix B for prenotice letter)

2. I mailed the questionnaire that included a cover letter, the survey and a traditional

   bookmark from a Spanish speaking country. (See appendix C)

3. A thank-you e-mail or postcard sent a few days after the questionnaire was

   delivered.

4. A replacement questionnaire with cover letter was sent to nonrespondents 2-4

   weeks after the first contact.

5. A final contact targeted at nonrespondents was made by phone a week or so after

   the fourth contact.

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Dillman (2000) also enumerates several common errors that I consciously tried to avoid making. The first is a sampling error that occurs when some and not all units in the survey population are surveyed. This is closely related to the second source of error, coverage error, which occurs when the list from which the sample is drawn does not include all elements of the population, thereby making it impossible to give all elements an equal chance of being included in the survey sample. Both sources of error were controlled by including in the sample all high school Spanish teachers in the county, and by crosschecking the current list provided by the state department of education with the list provided by the foreign language coordinators for each school district in the county.

According to Dillman (2000), a third source of error is measurement error, which occurs when a respondent's answer to a survey question is inaccurate. Measurement error was addressed from the very beginning; when constructing the instrument I paid close attention to question wording and elicited feedback from field testing respondents in order to remove vague and ambiguous question wording.

Lastly, the fourth source of error, nonresponse error, occurs when a significant number of people in the survey sample do not respond and have different characteristics from those who do respond. This source of error was tackled using Dillman's Tailored Design Method described on the previous page, which promises to yield a better response rate, thereby reducing the risk of nonresponse bias (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowiski, Singer, & Tourangeau, 2004) In fact, 106 completed questionnaires were received, bringing the response rate to 60%.

3.2.5 Data analysis

First, the data generated by the paper-and-pencil questionnaires were entered manually into the statistical software package SPSS for Windows. This program was used for all data analysis. During both the entering of the data and the analysis of the data, I worked weekly with the Statistical Consulting Service at my university. They not only verified that I was entering the data correctly, but also helped me to create the codes for further statistical analysis.

Statistical procedures employed included descriptive statistics for the various items on the survey in an attempt to examine overall frequencies (totals, percentages, means, and standard deviations). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to examine whether significant mean differences existed across different categories, such as years of teaching experience, native and non-native status, self-reported language proficiency, and so forth. Data from closed-ended questions were reported using tables with descriptive statistics. Data from open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. This involved my coding for patterns, and searching for regularities and irregularities in teachers' responses. Several emergent themes surfaced while I engaged in a thematic analysis of the responses, and many participants' comments were chosen to illustrate the quantitative data results. To that end, chapter 4 of the dissertation not only includes tables, but also participants' voices drawn from the open-ended responses.

3.3 Phase Two: Qualitative Research

Phase Two of the study involved the collection of data using a qualitative case study research approach (Patton, 1990; Stake, 2000) that incorporated the use of

classroom observations and teacher interviews. Merriam (1998) states that choosing a study design entails understanding the philosophical foundations underlying the type of research, and taking stock of whether there is a good match between the type of research and the researcher's personality. Indeed, qualitative research is a "major ongoing sensemaking strategy" (Meloy, 2002, p. 26) in that interpretation does not wait until all the material has been collected. A researcher must therefore be gifted with sensitivity and curiosity. Furthermore, Meloy (1994) describes the transformative power of practicing qualitative research:

> Qualitative researchers leave their marks not only in the context but also on any resulting documentations and discussions. Not only are they learning about a particular context, but they are also learning from and with it. Meaning is mobile, transitory and cumulative. (p. 85)

Thus, before describing data collection strategies, it is essential that I reflect on the assumptions of qualitative research and my role as a researcher within this study.

3.3.1 Assumptions of qualitative research

The strength of qualitative inquiry lies in the opportunities it creates for researchers to get close to people and the phenomenon being studied, either through physical proximity or participation/observation over extended periods of time (Schram, 2003). Similarly, in their introduction to the *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible [...]. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

This 'naturalistic' side of qualitative research goes hand in hand with the need for

qualitative researchers to remain flexible. Schram (2003) writes, "To immerse yourself in

naturally occurring complexity calls for your ability to let go of control of possible

confounding variables and to expect and be prepared to go with the flow of changing

circumstances" (p. 7). In this sense, qualitative research is not only subjective and open

ended, but also thorough. Indeed, all research that is framed in the qualitative paradigm

calls for a deeper reflection regarding the role researchers' epistemological and

ontological beliefs play within the study, since the perspectives and subjective lenses that

the researcher and research participants bring to the study form part of the context for the

findings (Schram, 2003).

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) also highlight the importance of recognizing

subjectivity, as well as the sociocultural baggage that each researcher brings to the table.

They write, "The state of mind of the researcher reflects, to some extent, the world in

which he or she lives. What researchers believe, what they accept as forms of knowledge,

is often a reflection of their social and cultural context" (p. 5).

The qualitative researcher inquires about who he or she is, and is sensitive to his

or her personal biography and the role it plays in shaping the study. Merriam (2002)

foregrounds the importance of revealing the shortcomings and biases of the researcher

since he or she is the primary instrument. They assert, "Rather than trying to eliminate

these biases or subjectivity, it is important to identify them and monitor them as to how

they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (p. 5). In the same vein,

Glesne and Peshkin (1991) identify subjectivity as the invariable presence of personal

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factors in any qualitative research study. They clearly acknowledge the importance of

perceiving subjectivity as a constant dimension in the research process and urge

researchers to reflect on when, and with what impact, these personal factors emerge:

> My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on
> which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a I, equipping me with the
> perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as I … Seen as virtuous,
> subjectivity is something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise. (p. 104)

The qualitative researcher is part of the research study and is immersed in the data, which

makes the process of addressing subjectivity essential. To account for this, Lincoln and

Guba (2000) introduce the concept of *reflexivity*. They assert, "Reflexivity is the process

of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument" (p. 183).

Researchers are encouraged to reflect upon their position in relation to the phenomenon

under investigation, for example, with the aid of an intensive and extensive journaling

process.

3.3.2 Role of the researcher

Researchers should address their own biases and build upon their subjectivity.

They should recognize that "their own background shapes their interpretation, and […]

position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from

their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (Creswell, 2003). Likewise,

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) conclude that, "this practice of making sense of one's finding

is both artistic and political" (p. 23). Foucault (1983) highlights the idea that "nothing is

innocent and everything is dangerous" (p. 343). It is essential that, as a researcher, I

remain aware of the sources and ideas that motivate me, and that I be willing to confront

them (Vidich & Lymam, 2000, p. 62). Thus, the role of the researcher for this particular study is shaped by my notion of several "selves":

➢ The native Spanish teacher self: This is the self shaped by five years experience teaching Spanish in the U.S. This "self" will certainly play a key role in the research. Indeed, I will have to remain aware of how being a native speaker myself can influence classroom observations and interviews of both native and non-native Spanish teachers.

➢ The non-native English teacher self: This is the self shaped by seven years spent teaching English as a foreign language in a South American country and three years spent teaching English as a second language in the U.S.

➢ The non-native Italian teacher self: This is the self of a beginning teacher who has studied the language for the last three years, and who has recently begun tutoring Italian.

➢ The Latina self: This is my outgoing and energetic self, the product of growing up in a country characterized by difficulties, where you have to be proactive in order to survive.

➢ The political self: Closely connected with the Latina self. Growing up in South America helped me to embrace the importance of education and authentic dialogue between teachers and investigators without imposing a hierarchical position.

➢ The trilingual self: I am fluent in Spanish, my native language, as well as in English and Italian. Certainly, my passion for the teaching and learning of foreign languages is essential to my desire to undertake research with Spanish educators.

Surely, all of these "selves" are not isolated from each other. On the contrary, they are connected and interact with one another constantly. Indeed, they shape the identity of the researcher in this particular study, making it unique. The possibility of maintaining a delicate balance between participation and observation is not feasible in qualitative research, which insists that no matter how careful the observer is, he or she will affect what he or she observes (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000). In fact, after five weeks in the field, I began to notice how my presence influenced the teachers with whom I was working. My being a native speaker of Spanish created opportunities for the Spanish teachers to use the language. At first, some of the teachers were hesitant to do so, but later, they all began to communicate with me in the target language, which in turn resulted in their continued use of the language when conversing with other Spanish teacher colleagues. Further information regarding the role of the researcher is included in chapter 5 of the dissertation.

3.3.3 Participants and the Setting

All of the teacher participants that completed the survey were asked at the end of the questionnaire if they wanted to be contacted to participate in a study that involved classroom observations and interviews. Of the 106 respondents, 52 indicated that they would like to participate further. Only three of the 52 were native Spanish teachers. One of the three NSTs was about to retire and the other had only a few years of experience and was located in a school further away from the other schools involved in the study. Thus, I chose the third one, who had 25 years of teaching experience. Likewise, the NNSTs were chosen according to location and years of experience. I wanted to have both

novice teachers and experienced teachers in several neighboring districts so that I would

have to drive for a shorter amount of time in between locations. In sum, all teachers

selected were located in neighboring school districts, which constitutes a purposeful

sample. Patton (1990) states:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich
> cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can
> learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the
> research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169)

Having all participants in neighboring school districts allowed me to closely monitor

them and to provide an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of each school. As Patton

(1990) asserts, "The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative

inquiry have more to do with the information-rich of the cases selected and the

observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size" (p. 185).

It is also worth noting that before the collection of data in the schools began,

permission from each school district was secured by sending a letter to the school

principals explaining the purpose of the study. I also met with each of them during my

first day at each of the schools.

3.3.4 Data collection procedures

Five in-depth individual case studies were undertaken in order to explore what is

common and what is particular about each teacher's language practices inside and outside

of the classroom, both holistically and in context (Patton, 2002). Four of the participants

are NNSTs, and one is a NST. Participants volunteered to take part.

The data corpus included notes from classroom observations, transcriptions of teacher interviews, and field notes. Classroom observations occurred once every two weeks for each participant, for a total of five observations per participant. I mainly sat at the back of the classroom and recorded everything that I witnessed. First, I described the classroom arrangement and teacher-student rapport as the students were coming in for class. Then, I orderly wrote down the succession of activities with their time frames. I also divided my field notebook pages in two and recorded on one side when English was used, and on the other side when Spanish was used. This provided in-depth qualitative data that supplemented and informed the survey results. In addition, extensive field notes were recorded during the process.

I also conducted three semi-structured interviews with each participant. Seen within the framework of a qualitative approach, "interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two people leading to negotiated, contextually based results" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 646). Semi-structured interviews allowed for questions prepared ahead of time, as well as questions that emerged during the interview process (see Appendix D for a complete list of questions). All interviews were audio-recorded with the interviewee's consent. The general purpose of the first interview was to learn about the participants' experiences as Spanish learners and as Spanish teachers, to uncover high school Spanish teachers' target language practices outside of the classroom and inside the classroom, to gather information pertaining to the activities they engaged in where Spanish was spoken outside of the school setting, and to investigate the reasons for which they chose to participate in these activities.

The second round of interviews employed an emergent design as they were conducted after a set of observations and varied according to the teacher (Patton, 2002). However, I also chose to share some of the results of the survey in order to elicit the participants' opinions regarding the connection between teaching lower-level Spanish classes and respondents' low level of involvement with Spanish inside and outside of the school setting. The emergent questions were designed to clarify some of the teachers' decisions when teaching a certain level of Spanish such as their reasons for using (or not using) the target language in particular situations.

The final interview was conducted after the fifth observation. Initially, I asked several emergent questions regarding specific decisions the teachers had made during the lessons I observed. The common focus for each of the interviews was the school community of teachers and its dynamics, as well as the teachers' opinions regarding the concept of 'near native proficiency.' In addition, teachers were asked to react to the following quote from Dudley & Heller (1983), who eloquently describes the harsh process of accomplishing near native proficiency in a second or foreign language:

> It should be recognized that the pursuit of native fluency imposes a condition of perpetual slavery to a goal that can never be possessed. Nor can it be pretended to without constantly dedication to the maintenance of skills, equal in difficulty to the daily drudgery of a concert pianist, a prima ballerina or an operatic athlete. (p. 58)

As can be seen in Figure 3.2, the first interview was conducted at the beginning of Phase Two. Following this I conducted two observations; a second interview; three more observations; and a final interview.

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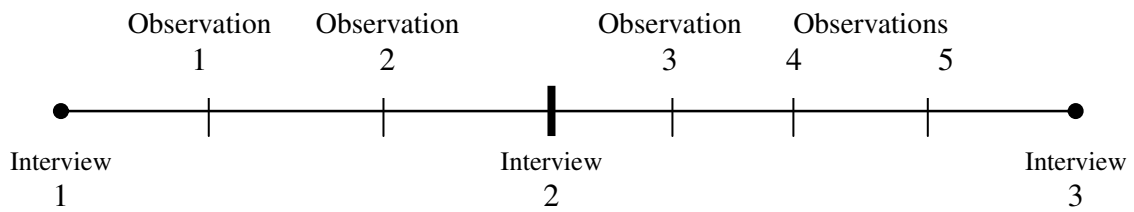
Figure 3.2: Case study observations and interviews timeline for Phase Two

3.3.5 Data analysis

The data corpus of field notes, transcriptions from interviews, and observation notes was analyzed qualitatively, in an attempt to locate common trends and patterns and compose a list of themes for further intensive analysis. Descriptive narration of the findings and the results are at the heart of this phase of the study. Data were organized and refined every other week through a process of rereading and color-coding for common themes. I transcribed the audiotaped interviews immediately after they occurred, and I listened to them periodically. According to Merriam (1998), "without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious and overwhelming in the sheer volume of materials that needs to be processed" (p.162). Thus, I recognized a need to remain attentive to "regularities- things that happen frequently with groups of people" (Merriam, 1998, p. 131) so that patterns and salient themes could later emerge into categories. Janesick (2000) describes the inductive process of data analysis and emphasizes the idea that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data and are not imposed prior to data collection. Similarly, Schram (2003) eloquently asserts:

As a qualitative fieldworker, you cannot view your task simply as a matter of gathering or generating 'facts' about 'what happened.' Rather, you engage in an active process of *interpretation:* noting some things as significant, noting but ignoring others as not significant, and missing other potentially significant things altogether. (p. 9)

Moreover, Janesick (2000) states, "Staying close to the data is the most powerful means of telling the story" (p. 389). Consequently, qualitative data are richly descriptive. "Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon" (Merriam, 2002; p. 5). Accordingly, thick description is at the core of this research. First, I analyzed each case study searching for key linkages or patterns of generalization within the case at hand (Erickson, 1986). Then, I compared and contrasted case studies in search of similarities and differences across them. In both instances, I incorporated participants' voices through the use of direct quotes.

Meloy (2002) compares writing a qualitative dissertation to an organized chaos in that the data are all around the researcher. She also asserts that writing such a dissertation is a constructive process in that the researcher observes the whole only at the end of the experience. Thus, it is essential that qualitative researchers are gifted with sensitivity and curiosity since "this practice of making sense of one's finding is both artistic and political" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 23). As the researchers above suggested, the process of writing chapter 5 of the dissertation was both chaotic and rewarding. The amount of data at first threatened to drown me, but as I listened to the participants' voices, it became clear that there were many themes in common. My initial reading of the data corpus produced more than twenty possible classifications, which, upon further examination, were reduced to five: 1) teaching lower levels and teachers' confidence in

their language abilities, 2) community of practice among Spanish teachers, 3) the role of professional development, 4) near-native proficiency, and 5) forming good habits. These five categories allowed me to select key events and quotes from the data and provide a comprehensive portrait of the Spanish teachers' concerns.

3.3.6 Integration of quantitative and qualitative data

The combining of qualitative and quantitative data allowed for triangulation and verification of the data in order to enrich understanding of how high school Spanish teachers used the target language inside and outside of the school setting. The integration of data also helped me generate realistic educational recommendations and implications for both Spanish teachers and teacher educators. Integration of the findings occurred in the sixth and final chapter of the dissertation, which is structured according to the four research questions, and which is followed by implications and a conclusion.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research should not be judged with a positivist lens since validation and reliability of qualitative data follows a different approach. Validity is referred to as trustworthiness in a post-positivist paradigm, and reliability is referred to as dependability. Indeed, the qualitative research verification process is complex, and it is achieved through the triangulation of sources. In other words, trustworthiness constructs such as credibility, applicability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba,

1985) constitute pragmatic choices for researchers concerned with the acceptability and authenticity of their data.

Researchers agree that in order to ensure internal validity or trustworthiness, it is essential to triangulate the data sources (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). Indeed, data gathered from interviews, observations, and field notes were constantly compared through an ongoing analysis. In addition, I consulted my participants regularly to cross-check my interpretation of the data so that they could suggest modifications to better capture their perspectives, a strategy known as *member checking*.

As the literature notes, "Triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Flick, 1998; in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5). Triangulation encompasses a multiplicity of sources, and provides the qualitative researcher with a way of securing an in-depth analysis of the phenomena being investigated. Merriam (2002) suggests that triangulation is achieved when "what someone tells you in an interview can be checked against what you observe in a field visit or what you read or see in documents or artifacts relevant to the investigation" (p. 25). Maintaining both journal and accurate field notes were crucial qualitative practices that not only reinforced the trustworthiness and the dependability of my study, but that also provided a venue for self-reflection of ethical issues.

Janesick (2000) underscores the idea that there is no value-free research. She explains that qualitative researchers deal with individuals face-to-face, and hence need to make decisions regarding ethical concerns. Indeed, several ethical issues arose that demanded my immediate attention. The first was whether to engage as an active

participant or as an observer during the classroom observations. My status as a NST

provided the teachers with an authentic resource in the classroom. All of the teachers, the

NST and the four NNSTs alike, asked me cultural and grammar check questions before,

during, and after my observations. Early in the study I realized that it was impossible to

remain invisible, so upon careful consideration and discussion with several other graduate

students who were conducting research in their fields, I decided to talk to my participants

about it. Together we came to the following resolution: we would talk about grammar,

culture, or anything they wanted to ask me before and after class, but not during class, so

that my presence could remain as unobtrusive as possible. For the most part this proved

successful, although there remained some participants who were more inclined to seek

my advice, a fact that is documented in chapter 5 of the dissertation.

The second ethical issue was related more to my role as a researcher and how it

affected the community of teachers in each participant school. I worked with one teacher

in each school. Some schools had nine teachers, and others had only three or four

teachers. At the beginning of the study, when the non-participant teachers talked to me,

they did so in English with the exception of the NSTs. However, after a few weeks into

the study, my participant teachers started to use more Spanish with me and their

colleagues, which created a snowball effect. Eventually, most of the Spanish teachers in

each school community began using more Spanish in their conversations with each other,

as well as in their conversations with me. These events are also documented in chapter 5

of my dissertation. The third and final ethical issue arose while I was writing chapter 5

and deciding how much to disclose about my participants in the final report. I wanted to

conceal their true identities to the fullest. Therefore, I used pseudonyms and discarded

personal accounts that could give away their identities. Deciding what to include and what not to include is a difficult, but necessary task for any qualitative researcher.

Merriam (2002) underscores the fact that decisions regarding how to handle ethical dilemmas have a direct impact on the trustworthiness of the entire study. They conclude, "Examining the assumptions one carries into the research process-assumptions about the context, participants, data, and the dissemination of knowledge gained through the study- is at least a starting point for conducting an ethical study" (p. 30). It is my hope that this chapter on methodology, and especially this section on the qualitative phase of the study, has accurately described my ongoing practice of self-reflection and study. The following two chapters present first, the quantitative results of the survey, and second, the qualitative results of classroom observations and field notes.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the language practices inside and outside the classroom

setting of 106 high school Spanish teachers in a major Midwestern county. The

participants were both NST (Native Spanish Teachers) and NNST (Non-native Spanish

Teachers). Using a mixed-methods designed, the study explored teachers' language

teaching and learning experiences, their proficiency and confidence in the Spanish

language, their engagement with the language inside and outside of the classroom, as

well as their beliefs about language teaching and learning. This chapter addresses two

sets of related themes. The first grouping consists of the analyses of collected data and

the discussion of the results and findings generated by a survey that was completed by all

106 respondents. The second cluster features the comparative analysis of native teachers

and non-native teachers in terms of their educational level and proficiency in the

language, their involvement in professional development opportunities, their teaching

experience, their beliefs about language teaching and learning, and their language

practices inside and outside of the school setting. The survey data consist of both

quantitative results and respondents' comments to several open-ended survey questions.

Finally, this chapter includes a summary of results at the end.

4.1 Respondents' characteristics, confidence level, and beliefs

This section describes the demographics for all 106 respondents, and presents information about their teaching experience, their confidence level in their language abilities, and their beliefs about language teaching and learning. It answers the first research question, which asked, "What are high school Spanish teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning?" To do so it draws upon data generated by questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, and 23 of the survey.

4.1.1 Demographics

According to the list provided by the department of education in the state where this research took place, there are 47 public schools employing a total of 177 high school Spanish teachers in the state's largest county. One hundred six completed questionnaires were received, bringing the response rate to 60%. It is also important to note that 81% of the schools in the county had at least one or two teachers who participated in the study, with 74% of these schools having at least half of the teachers in the school participating. Moreover, at least half of the schools in the county had almost all or all of the Spanish teachers participate in the study. Only 9 out of 47 schools (19%) did not participate. There does not seem to be a pattern for non-participating schools since they vary in size (1-3 Spanish teachers) as well as in type of school (urban, suburban, and religious schools.)

Survey results show that there are 91 NNSTs and 15 NSTs. In other words, one out of every six teachers is a NST. All NNSTs have English as their native language

except one, who identified German as her first language. In addition, there are 94 female

teachers and 12 male teachers, the ratio being one male for every eight females.

4.1.2 Respondents teaching experience and educational level

Survey results show that there are 35 novice teachers with 1-5 years of teaching

experience, 37 experienced teachers who have between 6-15 years of experience, and 34

veteran teachers with 16 or more years of teaching experience. The average teaching

experience for novice teachers is 2.6 years, for experienced teachers 9.6 years, and for

veteran teachers 25.4 years (see Table 4.1 below). The 106 high school Spanish teachers

who completed the survey have taught for between 1 and 35 years.

Group	N teachers	Average years of experience
Novice (1-5)	35	2.6
Experienced (6-15)	37	9.6
Veteran (16-over)	34	25.4

Table 4.1: Years of Teaching Experience

Regarding high school Spanish teachers' education level, the majority of the

teachers (65%) have a Master's degree; 34% of the teachers have a Bachelor's degree,

and only one teacher has a Ph.D. What is more, most of the teachers (69%) identified

Spanish as their major, while 6% listed education as their major; and 4% had a dual

major in Spanish and education (see Table 4.2 for teachers' educational level and Table 4.3 for their areas of specialization).

	N teachers
Bachelor	36
Master	69
Doctorial	1

Table 4.2: Teachers' Educational Level

	N teachers	%
Spanish	73	69%
Education	7	6%
Education & Spanish	4	4%
FL education	2	2%
Linguistics	3	3%
Other	12	11%
Missing	5	5%
Total	106	100%

Table 4.3: Teachers' Areas of Specialization

4.1.3 Teachers' perception of their Spanish proficiency and their teacher preparation

When asked, "Since you have finished your last courses of studies, do you think your overall Spanish proficiency has declined somehow, stayed the same, or improved?"

56% of the teachers suggested that their overall Spanish proficiency had improved since they finished their last degree. However, 20% of the teachers thought that their Spanish proficiency had declined and another 25% thought it had remained the same. Taken together, these last two groups comprised almost half of the teachers who felt that their overall proficiency in the language had not improved.

Question 6	N	%
Declined	21	20%
Stay the same	25	24%
Improved	60	56%
Total N	106	100%

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perception of Their Proficiency in the Target Language

Furthermore, teachers identified specific areas that were supported by their teacher preparation program. When asked, "To what extent do you think your teacher preparation program has prepared you in the following areas?" Sixty percent of the teachers thought that their teacher preparation program had prepared them 'to a great extent' in the area of methodology, while 49% thought that their teacher preparation program had prepared them to a great extent in grammar; 48% of the teachers felt that their teacher preparation program had prepared them to a great extent in reading; and 44% thought that their teacher preparation program had prepared them to a great extent in writing. However, 58% of the teachers thought that it had prepared them only to some extent in the area of culture, and 48% agreed that it had only prepared them to some extent in listening and speaking (see Table 4.5).

70

Question 7	Not at all	Some extent	A great extent	NA	Total
Listening	8%	48%	37%	7%	100%
Reading	6%	40%	48%	7%	100%
Writing	6%	43%	44%	7%	100%
Grammar	4%	40%	49%	8%	100%
Culture	8%	58%	28%	7%	100%
Speaking	10%	48%	35%	7%	100%
Methodology	2%	36%	60%	2%	100%

Table 4.5: Teachers' Perception of their Teacher Preparation Program

Even though survey results suggest that the least addressed area in their respective teacher preparation programs was culture, the teachers' open-ended comments pointed to a need for more speaking practice. For example, in response to the final open-ended survey question, one teacher wrote:

> I really feel that there needs to be more classes on speaking, most schools don't require speaking courses other than linguistics. I think conversation classes for Spanish teachers should be mandatory. If classes were also aimed more for teaching teachers how to teach a foreign language class it would be nice as well. Most of us come out knowing how to do everything but it is hard to transfer that to a classroom.

 Likewise, two other teachers shared their concerns about their teacher preparation program in the area of speaking:

> It would be nice for the university to have speaking/conversation opportunities for local teachers. I graduated from […] and felt like there were way too many Spanish teachers graduating from the program that truly couldn't converse in Spanish. Sure, they can answer simple questions or read sentences/answers from a book but many could not have a normal/unrehearsed conversation. There are still too many teachers that way.

> I believe Spanish teachers here don't speak Spanish very well because […] has what must be a poor Spanish program. As a result, Spanish teachers don't have the confidence or ability to speak the language they have learned there. I can only guess that Spanish majors are given very little speaking assignments.

Finally, one teacher simply wrote, "'I need a conversation class!" This teacher expressed

what seems to have been a concern for 48% of the respondents in that teacher preparation

programs were only thought to have prepared teachers to 'some extent' in speaking.

Another 10% suggested that teacher preparation programs did not prepare teachers at all

in the area of speaking.

4.1.4 Teaching experience in levels of Spanish

Question 13 of the survey asked teachers to indicate their experience teaching

each level of Spanish. The majority of the teachers had experience teaching the lower

levels. Indeed, 91% had taught Spanish 1, 94% had taught Spanish 2, and 76% had taught

Spanish 3. However, 51% had experience teaching Spanish 4, and only a select group had

taught Spanish 5 (8%). Likewise, a small group of the teachers had experience teaching

Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish (20%) and other advanced Spanish classes (14%),

such as international business and Spanish for heritage speakers (see Table 4.6 for the

teachers' experience teaching each level).

In addition, question 14 of the survey asked teachers to indicate what levels of

Spanish they were teaching that academic year. At the time of the survey, 47 of the 106

respondents were teaching Spanish 1; 76 were teaching Spanish 2; 54 were teaching

Spanish 3,; 26 were teaching Spanish 4; 7 were teaching Spanish 5; and 13 were teaching

AP Spanish (see Table 4.7).

Level of Spanish	# of teachers
Spanish 1	96
Spanish 2	100
Spanish 3	81
Spanish 4	54
Spanish 5	8
Spanish AP	21
Spanish Other	15

Table 4.6: Teaching Experience in Levels of Spanish

Level of Spanish	# of teachers
Spanish 1	47
Spanish 2	76
Spanish 3	54
Spanish 4	26
Spanish 5	7
Spanish AP	13
Int. Business	2

Table 4.7: Levels of Spanish Taught at the Time of the Survey

4.1.5 Beliefs about language teaching and learning

Thus far, the data have been used to present teachers' characteristics in terms of

gender, teaching experience, native language, and education. The next group of questions

investigates their beliefs about language teaching and learning. Teachers were asked to

indicate the importance of six characteristics in the present Spanish teaching profession

on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not important and 5 being very important). As can be

seen in Table 4.8 below, all of the characteristics were important to the teachers. The

most important was knowledge of grammar (4.7), and the second most important was

knowledge of teaching methodology (4.5.) Next came the ability to comprehend oral and written media in Spanish (4.4).

In question 21 teachers were asked to choose what they felt was the most important characteristic. Survey results show that 29.5% chose 'knowledge of grammar' as most important. Another 29.5% chose 'knowledge of teaching methodology' as most important. Hence the majority of the teachers agreed that a combination of grammar and methods was essential for the Spanish teaching profession. It is interesting to note that 'having native-like communication skills' ranked just behind the top two choices at 23.8%. This was followed by the ability to interact successfully with native speakers (12.4%). However, very few teachers identified either 'knowledge of the cultures where Spanish is spoken' or the ability to 'comprehend oral and written media in Spanish' as important (see Table 4.9).

Question 20	Mean	SD
Knowledge of Spanish grammar.	4.7	0.5
Having native-like communication skills.	4.2	0.84
Knowledge of the cultures where Spanish is spoken.	4.3	0.67
Knowledge of teaching methodology.	4.5	0.72
Being able to interact successfully with native speakers.	4.3	0.8
Being able to comprehend oral and written media in Spanish.	4.4	0.68

Table 4.8: Important Characteristics for the Spanish Teaching Profession

Question 21	# of teachers	% of teachers
Knowledge of Spanish grammar.	31	29.50%
Having native-like communication skills.	25	23.80%
Knowledge of the cultures where Spanish is spoken.	3	2.90%
Knowledge of teaching methodology.	31	29.50%
Being able to interact successfully with native speakers.	13	12.40%
Being able to comprehend oral and written media in Spanish.	2	1.90%
Missing	1	*
All	106	100.00%

Table 4.9: Most Important Characteristic for Spanish Teachers

Finally, the teachers' open-ended responses to question 22 ("Briefly explain why you think the characteristic from question 21 is the most important to you") yielded interesting information. Teachers who chose grammar as the most important criterion for Spanish teachers considered grammar the foundation of language learning, and felt that the Spanish curricula at the high school level placed a strong emphasis on grammar. Hence, they seemed to assume that teachers needed to be proficient in this area in order to teach the other areas of the language. The following comments illustrate the reasons for which respondents chose grammar as the most important characteristics:

1. In order to be a successful Spanish teacher, you must know the grammar and structure of the language. With grammar knowledge the rest of the aspects of the language and culture all come together.
2. College prep entrance exams, placement exams, and AP all stress grammar.

3. Although I strongly believe in speaking almost entirely in Spanish (so that the kids can absorb the language), I feel that having knowledge of Spanish grammar is a priority. If a teacher of Spanish does not feel comfortable with grammar structures, how will the kids feel?
4. In order to teach Spanish you must have the basics of grammar so you can teach it.
5. Teachers must have near perfect grammar skills so as not to pass on mistakes/misconceptions to students.

Teachers who chose 'knowledge of teaching methodology' felt that no matter how proficient one might be in the language, an inability to teach the subject made it difficult to succeed in the classroom. Moreover, they felt that even if a teacher was lacking in content knowledge, he or she would be able to compensate with good methodology. The following comments illustrate the reasons for which respondents chose 'knowledge of teaching methodology' as the most important characteristic:

1. I believe that without the teaching methodology to share Spanish with students, all of the other knowledge and skills on the list won't be as beneficial.
2. If you cannot effectively teach Spanish it does not matter how well you speak/read/write the language.
3. Teaching methodology is not necessarily important, however the ability to be a good teacher is. Some people can know the subject matter very well, but if they can't break it down and teach it at the level of the students it doesn't matter how well they know it. A great teacher can make students succeed at any thing they teach.
4. If I cannot get students' attention and successfully relay the information, the language skills I possess are useless.
5. B/C knowing how to present the material allows for student success and proficiency on the language, which is the main goal for teaching.

Finally, question 23 asked teachers to rate their Spanish proficiency in different areas. Overall, the Spanish teachers rated themselves as being "OK" in all areas. Areas on which teachers needed to work more included 'Oral proficiency' and 'Cultural knowledge' (see Table 4.10).

	Needs A Lot of work	Needs Some work	It's OK	Does not need any work
Pedagogical knowledge	0.0%	17.9%	61.3%	20.8%
Listening proficiency	2.8%	9.4%	60.4%	27.4%
Reading proficiency	0.0%	12.3%	60.4%	27.4%
Oral proficiency	0.9%	18.9%	54.7%	25.5%
Writing proficiency	0.9%	10.4%	65.1%	23.6%
Cultural knowledge	3.8%	24.5%	54.7%	16.0%

Table 4.10: Teachers' Perceptions of Their Proficiency in the Language

4.1.6 Section summary:

The data in this section addressed the first research question: What are teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning? Data show that 1 in every 6 teachers is a native instructor, and that 1 out of every 8 teachers is a male. The 106 teachers who completed the survey had a wide range of teaching experience (1-35 years) with an average of 2.6 years of teaching for novice teachers, 9.6 years of teaching for experienced teachers, and 25.4 years of teaching for veteran teachers. In addition, the data show that most teachers had a Master's degree with Spanish as their major. Relatively few teachers had dual majors in both Spanish and education. A little over half of the teachers felt that their language proficiency had improved since they had gotten their degree, but the rest felt that it had remained the same or declined. Most teachers believed that their teacher preparation program had prepared them well in the area of methodology, but was lacking in its treatment of listening and speaking.

Results show that the majority of the teachers had taught lower and intermediate level Spanish classes such as Spanish 1, 2, and 3, but only a selected few had taught the upper level classes, such as Spanish 4, and Advanced Placement (AP). Regarding their

beliefs about teaching and learning, most teachers thought that knowledge of grammar and teaching methodology was essential for the present profession, along with native-like communication skills. Finally, teachers believed that they needed to work more on their cultural knowledge and their oral proficiency.

4.2 High school Spanish teachers' language practices outside the classroom setting

In this section, data are used to address the second research question: 'What is the level of high school Spanish teacher's language practice outside the school setting?' Data were gathered from questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 27, 28, 29 of the survey. First, I describe teachers' involvement in professional development (Pd) and the types of Pd offered in the district or county. Second, I consider the teachers' involvement in language organizations. Finally, the data are used to depict teachers' language proficiency practices outside of the school setting.

4.2.1 Professional development (Pd) opportunities for high school Spanish teachers

Questions 8 through 12 asked the teachers about their participation in and opinions about professional development opportunities exclusively for Spanish teachers in their district or county. The results show that the majority of the teachers (n=70, 66%) had not participated in any professional development (Pd) exclusively for Spanish teachers since 2003. Indeed, only 36 teachers (34%) said that they had participated in some form of professional development for Spanish teachers. Moreover, when these 36 teachers were asked to describe the Pd opportunities exclusively for Spanish teachers in which they had participated since 2003, many depicted Pd that related more to the

improvement of pedagogical knowledge than to the maintenance or improvement of content knowledge and language proficiency. For instance, most teachers described professional development opportunities in which Spanish teachers met to discuss assessments and prepare final exams for their classes within their respective school districts. In addition, 10 teachers stated that they had attended workshops in state and national conferences regarding the teaching of culture, authentic materials usage in the classroom, curriculum development and techniques in grammar correction as well as workshops on Total Physical Response (TPR), strategies on increasing fluency among students, IPOD-PodCasting, video recording, digital recorder, differentiated instruction, and reading strategies. The Pd opportunities mentioned above were geared towards improving teachers' pedagogical knowledge rather than developing their content knowledge. Unfortunately, relatively few teachers named the following Pd for Spanish teachers focused on maintaining or improving their Spanish proficiency (an aspect of content knowledge): immersion weekend (3 teachers) and graduate classes for Spanish teachers exclusively (7 teachers).

While these results indicate that there are many opportunities for teachers to improve teaching methods, they also suggest that high school Spanish teachers lack opportunities to improve or maintain their language proficiency through professional development opportunities that tackle content knowledge. Data from teachers' open-ended responses show that many teachers lamented the fact that Pd opportunities exclusively for Spanish teachers were not generally available. In fact, many of them stated that when such opportunities were offered, they usually involved travel outside the state or country, the result of which presented serious time and money constraints. One

79

teacher, who had not attended a Pd for Spanish teachers, stated, "I have attended professional development opportunities for all world language teachers, but not exclusively for Spanish teachers. There is usually a lack of time and/or money in seeking out these opportunities." Another teacher shared, "'I would be greatly interested in attending or participating in Pd programs specially for Spanish teachers but I have not been aware of any offered by my district." Likewise, another teacher explained, "'I wish there were more university offerings to help practicing Spanish teachers improve their communication/grammar skills."

Furthermore, teachers were asked: "To what extent does your school district or county provide you with opportunities to maintain or improve your Spanish proficiency and your foreign language teaching methods' knowledge?" As can be seen in Table 4.11, most teachers thought that their district and county neglected to provide them with opportunities to improve their Spanish proficiency. At the same time, most teachers also asserted that their district or county provided sufficient opportunities to participate in Pds that focused on pedagogical knowledge. For instance, one teacher shared, "There needs to be more professional development opportunities for Spanish teachers sponsored by the district. I'm glad there is some research being done on this."

Maintain or improve	Not at all	To some extend	To a great extend
Spanish proficiency	59 (56%)	42 (39%)	5 (5%)
Teaching methods	25 (24%)	68 (64%)	13 (12%)

Table 4.11: Extent to which School District or County Provides Pd for Spanish Teachers

In their open ended responses to question 12, teachers were asked to describe two types of Pd exclusively for Spanish teachers in which they would regularly participate. Of the 70 teachers that responded, 57% described opportunities related to content knowledge maintenance or improvement, including immersion camps, conversation tables, study abroad programs, cultural enrichment activities, involvement with the Hispanic community, regular meetings with native speakers, and graduate classes for Spanish teachers (grammar refresher and conversation classes in particular). The remaining 43% expressed a desire to participate in Pd opportunities related to pedagogical knowledge improvement, such as curriculum development, use of technology in the classroom, best assessment practices, individualized instruction for IEP students, sharing ideas and best practices among Spanish teachers (specifically those that are designed to improve speaking activities in the classroom).

By and large, results show that most teachers did not participate in professional development opportunities geared towards maintaining or improving their Spanish proficiency within their school district or county, primarily because such opportunities were not offered on a regularly basis. It is also evident that districts offer a wide variety of Pd opportunities that are designed to help foreign language teachers improve their methodology, and that teachers take advantage of these opportunities. However, many Spanish teachers wished that there were more accessible Pd opportunities that exclusively targeted the maintenance or improvement of their language proficiency. One teacher shared her frustration at the end of the survey:

> Although professional development opportunities specifically related to foreign language and again specifically to enhance and improve language would be ideal,

I do not see it probable nor possible in a public school system: financial resources are not there nor is the priority.

4.2.2 Involvement in foreign language organizations and conferences

Three questions in the survey (questions 16, 17, and 18) inquired about the teachers' involvement in and commitment to language organizations. Data show that 38% of the teachers did not belong to any language organization (n=40), while 57% (n=60) belonged to one language organization. Only six teachers belonged to two language organizations. Results also show that 50% of the teachers (53/106) were members of the Ohio Foreign Language Organization (OFLA); seven belonged to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL); and 12 belonged to the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) (see Table 4.12).

	ACTFL	AATSP	OFLA	Other
Members	7	12	53	1

Table 4.12 Involvement in Language Organizations

When asked if they had participated in foreign language conferences in the last three school years, 39 teachers (37%) indicated that they had not attended a foreign language conference since 2003. On the other hand, 24 teachers had participated in one conference, 25 teachers had participated in two conferences, 15 had participated in three conferences, and 3 teachers had participated in a conference every school year. When asked if they had presented at these conferences, 100 teachers (94%) indicated that they

had not presented at a language conference since Fall 2003. Five teachers (5%) had

presented once, and only one teacher had presented twice (see Table 4.13).

Question 17		Question 18	
Conferences	Teachers	Presentations	Teachers
attended	involved	at conferences	involved
0	39	0	100
1	24	1	5
2	25	2	1
3	15		
4	2		
5	1		
Total=	106	Total=	106

Table 4.13 Teachers' Involvement in Language Conferences

Overall, the data show that just over 60% of the teachers belonged to and

participated in a language organization, and attended conferences regularly, but only few

of them presented at conferences. However, approximately 40% of the teachers neither

belonged to nor participated in a language organization.

4.2.3 Language proficiency practices

In this section, data are provided to illustrate the frequency with which teachers

engaged in specific activities designed to address language proficiency maintenance and

improvement. Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they disagreed or

agreed with several statements (see Figure 4.1 below for a sample of the survey

question).

	SD	D	A	SA	N/A
1) Whenever I come across a native speaker of Spanish, I try to speak Spanish with him/her.					
2) I frequently seek opportunities to <u>speak</u> Spanish.					
3) When I'm with other Spanish teachers, I almost always speak Spanish.					
4) I frequently seek opportunities to <u>read</u> in Spanish.					
5) I believe my <u>oral</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.					
6) I believe my <u>listening</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.					
7) I believe my <u>reading</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.					
8) I believe my <u>writing</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.					
9) I believe my <u>cultural</u> knowledge in Spanish has improved since I started teaching					
10) I frequently incorporate authentic materials to use in my classrooms.					

Figure 4.1: Question 19 of the survey.

Data show that the majority of the teachers either agreed (A) or strongly agreed (SA) with the majority of the statements. However, the two statements with which many teachers strongly disagreed (SD) or disagreed (D) were statement 5, which reads "I believe my oral proficiency has improved since I started teaching," (28%), and statement 6, which reads, "I believe my listening proficiency has improved since I started teaching," (22%). In addition, the two statements for which most teachers chose SA or A were statement 1, which reads, "Whenever I come across a native speaker of Spanish, I try to speak Spanish with him/her," (83%), and statement 9, "I believe my cultural knowledge in Spanish has improved since I started teaching" (85%) (see Table 4.14).

Question 19	SD	D	A	SA	NA	Total
1) Whenever I come across a native speaker of Spanish, I try to speak Spanish with him/her.	3	13	40	48	2	106
2) I frequently seek opportunities to speak Spanish.	3	14	48	36	5	106
4) I frequently seek opportunities to read in Spanish.	5	16	50	34	1	106
5) I believe my oral proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	4	26	29	40	7	106
6) I believe my listening proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	7	16	38	37	8	106
7) I believe my reading proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	3	17	41	39	6	106
8) I believe my writing proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	3	15	36	46	6	106
9) I believe my cultural knowledge in Spanish has improved since I started teaching	2	9	41	50	4	106

Table 4.14: Responses to Question 19 of the Survey

Teachers were also asked to share the frequency with which they engaged in several target language activities outside of the classroom, including reading books or magazines written in Spanish, listening to news reports and music or watching television or movies in Spanish, participating in conversations, and writing letters to friends or colleagues in Spanish (see Table 4.15). Results show that 75% of the Spanish teachers listened to music in Spanish frequently or almost always, making this the most popular target language activity that teachers engaged in outside of the school setting. Likewise, most teachers (65%) stated that they frequently or almost always participated in conversations that required them to use Spanish outside of the school setting. The third and fourth most popular target language activity teachers engaged in outside of the school setting were reading magazines and news reports in Spanish (54%), and watching

television in Spanish (50%). Still, there were many activities that teachers never, rarely or

only occasionally engaged in. Sixty-one percent of the teachers noted that they never,

rarely or occasionally watched movies or surfed the internet in Spanish; 70% rarely read

a book in Spanish; 74% rarely wrote letters to friends and colleagues in Spanish; and

88% rarely chatted online in Spanish. In addition, only 13 teachers denoted other

activities they engaged in frequently outside of the school setting that required them to

use Spanish. This included interpreting, translating, and communicating with family

members abroad. It is also worth mentioning that one teacher opted not to answer this

question, bringing the total number of respondents to 105 out of 106.

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always	Total
Read a book in Spanish.	26	47	18	14	105
Read magazines, news reports.	2	46	40	17	105
Watched T.V in Spanish.	11	41	38	15	105
Watched a movie in Spanish.	15	49	28	13	105
Listened to music in Spanish.	1	25	54	25	105
Had entire conversations.	6	31	44	24	105
Surfed the internet in Spanish.	21	43	25	16	105
Chatted online in Spanish.	78	14	5	8	105
Wrote letters to friends.	34	44	17	10	105
Other: translate, interpreting.	0	3	2	8	13

Table 4.15: Responses to question 27 of the Survey

4.2.4 Travel abroad experiences

Almost all of the teachers that responded to the survey had traveled abroad at least

once. Only six teachers had never traveled to a Spanish speaking country. Table 4.16

shows the most frequently visited countries, which included Spain (127 trips) and Mexico

(93 trips). In addition, the Spanish teachers had made 28 trips to Costa Rica, and 13 trips

to the Dominican Republic. Of the 336 trips that were made, 127 (38%) were to study

abroad, 134 were for pleasure, and 52 were work related (see Table 4.17). The study

abroad trips ranged in length from 1 to 52 weeks. Seventy-seven teachers (73%)

participated in a total of 127 study abroad trips. More than 50% of the study abroad trips

lasted from 3 to 13 weeks, with the median being 6 weeks. Twenty-four of the 127 study

abroad trips (19%) lasted more than 16 weeks (four months). There were only eight trips

that lasted at least one year (see Table 4.18).

Country	Trip Count
Spain	127
Mexico	93
Costa Rica	28
Dom. Republic	13
Guatemala	12
Puerto Rico	12
Venezuela	9
Chile	8
Argentina	5

Table 4.16: Most Visited Countries

The data presented in Table 4.19 suggest that teachers were increasingly traveling

abroad to Spanish speaking countries. Indeed, during the 1970s there were only 9 study

abroad trips; during the 1980s there were 12 study abroad trips; and during the 1990s

there were 40 study abroad trips. Interestingly, of the 127 study abroad trips, 56 had been

taken since the year 2000. One possible explanation for travel abroad increasing each

year might be that the average age of teachers in my study is younger and that I had fewer

teachers in my study who are still teaching since 1970s.

Reason for trip	# of trips	Percentage
Pleasure	134	39.88%
Study	127	37.80%
Work	52	15.48%
Service	18	5.36%
Other	5	1.49%
Total	336	100.00%

Table 4.17: Reasons for Traveling Abroad

Length (In weeks)	# trips
1-2	19
3	27
4	8
5	6
6	11
8	7
9	2
10	7
12	7
13	2
14	3
15	3
16	5
17	1
20	4
24	3
28	1
36	1
44	1
48 or more	8
N=	126
Missing =	1

Table 4.18: Duration of Study Abroad Trips

Decade	# Of trips	Percentage
Before 1970s	10	7.9%
1970s	9	7.1%
1980s	12	9.4%
1990s	40	31.5%
2000s	56	44.1%
Total	127	100%

Table 4.19: Decade of Study Abroad Trips

4.2.5 Section summary

In this section, data from questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 27, 28, 29 of the survey are used to depict high school Spanish teachers' language practices outside of the school setting in order to address the second research question: 'What is the level of high school Spanish teacher's language practice outside the classroom setting?'

In regard to professional development opportunities for high school Spanish teachers, the data suggest that school districts and the county offer an abundance of opportunities for teachers to improve their pedagogical knowledge, but offer few or no professional development opportunities to maintain or improve their content knowledge, specifically, their proficiency in the language. Hence the majority of the teachers (66%) had not participated in a Pd designed exclusively for Spanish teachers, although many of them indicated that they were open to the idea of participating regularly in conversation tables, immersion activities, and community involvement with native speakers.

Second, in regard to teachers' involvement in professional organizations, the data indicate that most teachers (57%) belong to one language organization, with OFLA being the most popular by far and only 11% belong to two language organizations. The

remaining 38% did not belong to a professional language organization. Moreover, 63% of the teachers had not only participated in conferences, but had also presented at least once since 2003, whereas the remainder (37%) had not participated in a conference at all.

Finally, in this section the data were used to depict teachers' engagement in various target language activities outside of the school setting. For the most part, teachers' responded positively to all of the statements enumerated in question 19 of the survey. For example, 83% stated that they tried to speak Spanish with native speakers, and 85 % felt that their cultural knowledge had improved more than their oral, listening, reading, and writing proficiency since they had first started teaching. Data also show that the highest percentage of Disagree and Strongly Disagrees occurred in response to statement 5 (I believe my oral proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching, 28%), and statement 6 (I believe my listening proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching, 22%). Survey results also show that the majority of teachers (75%) listened to music in Spanish, and that 65% participated in conversations in the target language outside of the school setting. The majority of the teachers did not chat online in Spanish (88%), did not surf the Internet in Spanish (74%), and did not read books in Spanish (70%). Regarding their travel abroad experiences, the data show that 94 % of the teachers had traveled abroad to a Spanish speaking country, with Spain and Mexico being the most frequently visited. However, only 38% of the total trips taken had been motivated by an opportunity to study abroad. In addition, the majority of the study abroad trips were relatively short (1-3 months). Only a few trips (19%) lasted for four months or longer, and only nine trips lasted at least one year. It is also worth noting that

the teachers seemed to travel abroad more frequently with each passing decade, as the largest number of trips occurred after the year 2000.

4.3 High school Spanish teachers' language practices inside the classroom setting

In this section, I intend to present survey results to answer the third research question: 'What is the level of high school Spanish teacher's language practice inside the school setting?' The data were gathered from questions 15, 24, 25, and 26 of the survey.

4.3.1 Spanish usage in the classroom

Data generated by the question, 'what percentage of time did you use Spanish in the levels you taught last school year?" suggest that as the level of Spanish increases so too does the percentage of time that teachers spend using Spanish in the classroom. On average, teachers reported using the target language 41% of the time in Spanish 1, 53% of the time in Spanish 2, 68% of the time in Spanish 3, 78% of the time in Spanish 4, and 88% of the time in advanced placement Spanish. In addition, the mean percentage for other advanced classes was 90% (see Table 4.20).

	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Spanish 1	53	41%	19.1	10%	45%	75%
Spanish 2	77	52%	19.25	10%	50%	90%
Spanish 3	52	68%	20.11	10%	75%	95%
Spanish 4	26	78%	21.87	10%	85%	100%
AP Spanish	16	88%	14.2	50%	95%	100%
Other	7	90%	9.47	75%	95%	100%

Table 4.20: Percentage of Time Spent Using Spanish in the Classroom

4.3.2 Spanish usage among colleagues

Several survey questions asked the teachers to describe their community of Spanish teachers. Data show that only 24% of the teachers agreed with the following statement, "When I'm with other Spanish teachers, I almost always speak Spanish," while 15% strongly agreed with the statement. However, 51% of the teachers disagreed with the statement, and 9% strongly disagreed. Hence, 60% of the teachers (51% + 9%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Similarly, the data show that 43% of the teachers only occasionally spoke in the target language with their colleagues. Indeed, only a select few teachers (10%) suggested that they almost always engaged in target language conversations with other Spanish teachers (see Table 4.21).

Question 25	N teachers	%
Never or rarely	11	10%
Occasionally	45	43%
Frequently	36	34%
Almost always	11	10%
Missing	3	3%
Total	106	100%

Table 4.21: Frequency of Target Language Usage among Spanish Teachers

Open-ended responses shed light on the reasons for which the teachers were less likely to use Spanish in conversation with colleagues. For example, the only time when teachers indicated that they were likely to use Spanish exclusively with other Spanish teachers was when they were in front of students and needed to discuss information that

they did not want the students to know about. One teacher stated, "I speak in Spanish when the info is confidential or I don't want students to understand what we are saying." Likewise, a colleague shared, "None [of us] are native speakers. [We] only speak Spanish when we don't wish students or someone else to understand us." However, another teacher clearly opposed to this practice. She stated, "I think it is rude to speak in front of the students, especially when the other teachers seem to always be saying things they don't want the kids to hear."

Unfortunately, most teachers did not use the target language with their colleagues since they were not comfortable using their Spanish, and because it felt more natural to talk in English. In addition, these teachers were concerned that their language skills might be scrutinized. Other teachers noted that because their colleagues never addressed them in Spanish, they never thought to converse in Spanish either. Time constraints in schools also appeared to make it difficult for Spanish teachers to find time to sit and talk. When they were able to do so, other teachers might be present, and many teachers suggested it was disrespectful to use Spanish in front of them. Finally, many teachers stated that they were not confident in their language abilities and felt that it had declined, or that they were in need of practice. The following quotations extracted from teachers' open-ended responses to question 26 illustrate the dynamics of the schools:

1. Some members of the department have different comfort levels and may not continue a conversation in Spanish that I initiate or we may have a non-speaking colleague with us whom we are including in the conversation.
2. Except for one teacher, we are all native speakers and it is more natural for us to converse in English. We are rarely alone and also do not want to be rude by speaking Spanish in the teacher's lounge, etc. But we should do it more for the practice!

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3. Afraid of making errors. Effort factor. Colleagues may see each other as deficient, bad pronunciation, wrong vocabulary, etc.
4. Not encouraged/discouraged within department. Mentality: Spanish stays in the classroom.
5. It is challenging to speak entirely in Spanish when I'm trying to use certain expressions or slang. I suppose I am afraid to make mistakes so it is easier to speak English at times (I must sound like a student).

This section explored the third research question, which addressed teachers' language practice inside the school setting. As the data show, and as one Spanish teacher stated, "Spanish seems to stay in the classroom." Teachers did not seem to use the target language amongst themselves, often because they did not feel comfortable doing so. For example, one teacher wrote:

> My pet peeve is the lack of teacher language skills. I am able to carry on normal conversations with one of our new teachers. She is not a native. Most teachers only speak English to their colleagues. They shy away from a normal paced everyday conversation.

As can be seen, data provide interesting results regarding the community of high school Spanish teachers. More detailed information about the dynamics in five different schools is provided in the next chapter. The following section presents data comparing NSTs and NNSTs in the areas of language teaching and learning.

4.4 Native and non-native Spanish teachers: Similarities and differences

This last section of this chapter presents information to answer the fourth and last research question: What are the differences in Spanish language practices between native and non-native Spanish teachers?

4.4.1 Educational level and proficiency in the language

As was stated previously, a total of 15 Native Spanish teachers (NST) comprised 14% of the respondents, and 91 Non-native Spanish teachers (NNST) comprised 86% of the respondents. All but one NNST identified English as their first language. Regarding their level of education, 14/15 NST (93%) had a Master's degree while, 56/91 NNST (62%) had a Master's degree (55 teachers) or above (1 teacher had a PhD). Native teachers' apparent higher level of education is most likely due to the fact that they came to the U.S. with a university diploma and began their education at the master's level in order to obtain a license to teach in the U.S.

Regarding their self-reported proficiency in the content area, 73% of the NSTs thought that their overall Spanish proficiency had improved since their last course of study, whereas only 53.8% of the NNSTs thought their overall proficiency had improved. Native Spanish teachers higher improvement percentage might be due to the possible increased in the knowledge of grammar of their native language. In addition, about one quarter of the NNSTs (n=21) thought that their proficiency had remained the same, and another quarter of NNSTs thought that their Spanish proficiency had declined (see Table 4.22).

	Declined	Stayed the same	Improved
NNST	21 (23.1%)	21 (23.1%)	49 (53.8%)
NST	0	4 (26. 7%)	11 (73.3%)
All	21	25	60

Table 4.22: Self-reported Proficiency in Spanish

4.4.2 Teacher preparation programs

Native Spanish teachers (NST) were generally more content with their teacher preparation program in the area of methodology than were NNSTs. Results show that 73% of the NSTs felt that their teacher preparation program had prepared them 'to a great extent' in methodology, whereas only 58% of NNST agreed with them. A little over 50% of the NNSTs were content with their preparation in the areas of 'Reading' and 'Grammar', but the majority thought that their teacher preparation program had prepared them 'to some extent' in the areas of listening (54%), speaking (55%) and culture (63%). As Table 4.23 shows, NSTs results were very spread out except in the area of methodology, which could be explained by the fact that they did not take classes in the language since they were NS, and because their teacher preparation had focused primarily on pedagogical knowledge.

Preparation Levels		Not at all	To Some extent	To a great extent	NA
Listening	NNST	5.5%	53.8%	37.4%	3.3%
	NST	26.7%	13.3%	33.3%	26.7%
Reading	NNST	2.2%	44.0%	50.5%	3.3%
	NST	26.7%	13.3%	33.3%	26.7%
Writing	NNST	3.3%	47.3%	45.1%	4.4%
	NST	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Grammar	NNST	2.2%	40.7%	51.6%	5.5%
	NST	13.3%	33.3%	33.3%	20.0%
Culture	NNST	5.5%	62.6%	27.5%	4.4%
	NST	20.0%	26.7%	33.3%	20.0%
Speaking	NNST	6.6%	54.9%	35.2%	3.3%
	NST	33.3%	6.7%	33.3%	26.7%
Methodology	NNST	1.1%	38.5%	58.2%	2.2%
	NST	6.7%	20.0%	73.3%	0.0%

Table 4.23: Teacher Preparation Levels for NNST and NST According to Area

4.4.3 Involvement in professional development opportunities

In general, NSTs (60%) participated in professional development opportunities more frequently than did NNSTs (30%.) As was discussed in a previous section, the majority of the Pd offered to Spanish teachers related to pedagogical knowledge, whereas few Pd focused on content knowledge. Data from open-ended responses indicate that NSTs were interested in Pd opportunities geared towards pedagogical knowledge, whereas NNSTs, in general, preferred Pd geared towards content knowledge maintenance or improvement. Thus, it is not surprising that a discrepancy existed between NNSTs and NSTs in the area of professional development participation.

For example, one NST explained, "I love sessions that encourage teachers to share their ideas and materials. I also think it's important to have sessions to be reminded about pacing of courses, standards, and such." Similarly, another NST noted that she would like to be involved in "lesson development for Spanish teachers", while a colleague expressed an interest in "development of a curriculum for the district and articulation meetings with teachers of Spanish throughout the district." Yet another NST felt that, "foreign language teachers should have the opportunity to meet, work, and develop strategies useful for the foreign language class." Moreover, another NST indicated that she would like to participate in Pds pertained to "using technology in the Spanish classroom."

On the contrary, most NNSTs expressed a desire for Pd opportunities that were geared toward content knowledge, specifically opportunities that would allow them to practice both their listening and their speaking abilities with other Spanish teachers. For instance, one NNST commented, "'I would like to see professional development on

speaking activities and also on reading comprehension." In the same way, several NNSTs wished to be involved in a "a conversational workshop where I could speak in Spanish," in activities that involved "Spanish conversation partners," and in "immersion-type programs such as Coffee Table with native speakers." Similarly, another NNST shared, "'It would be nice to have at least one event where all the Spanish teachers actually participate in/use the language in conversation." Finally, one NNST explained that she would like to participate in "a workshop lead by a NS. It could be about teaching methods and or culture or a conversational workshop where I could speak in Spanish."

Hence, data show that the needs of both groups were quite different. While the majority of NSTs wanted to participate in professional development opportunities focused more on pedagogical knowledge such as instructional methods and teaching strategies, the majority of NNSTs wished to participate in Pd that focused on content knowledge, specifically their ability to speak and communicate fluently in the language.

4.4.4 Teaching experience

Results suggest that NST's experience teaching upper level Spanish courses (Spanish 4, Spanish 5 and AP Spanish) was greater than that of their NNST colleagues. Still, two-sample t tests suggested that the differences are not statistically significant at level 0.05 at each individual course level, which might be due to the smaller number of native Spanish teachers (n= 15) among the 106 respondents. The results are consistent in that at lower level Spanish courses (Spanish1 and Spanish2), NSTs have less experience than NNSTs. Moreover, at higher-level courses (Spanish 3, Spanish 4, Spanish 5 and AP Spanish), NSTs have more experience than NNSTs (see Table 4.24).

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Teaching Experience		Spanish 1	Spanish 2	Spanish 3	Spanish 4	Spanish 5	AP Spanish
NST	# Teachers	13	13	11	6	1	6
	Mean ± SD	6.8 ± 7.0	5.9 ± 7.7	6.7 ± 9.8	12.2 ± 7.6	10 ± *	10.3 ± 8.5
NNST	# Teachers	83	87	70	48	7	15
	Mean ± SD	7.6 ± 6.5	8.5 ± 7.7	6.6 ± 6.7	6.3 ± 7.1	3.3 ± 3.2	4.5 ± 3.8

Table 4.24: Years of Teaching Experience at all Levels

As can bee seen, NSTs had an average of 12 years teaching Spanish 4, whereas NNSTs had only six years. In addition, NSTs had an average of 10 years teaching AP Spanish, whereas NNSTs had an average of five years teaching the same course. Results also reveal that there was no difference in the lower level classes as both NSTs and NNSTs had approximately the same number of years of experience. Figure 4.2 depicts the difference in years of experience between native and non-native teachers

Further statistical analysis in which I clustered Spanish 1, Spanish 2 and Spanish 3 into one group (lower level course) and Spanish 4, Spanish 5 and AP Spanish into another group (higher level courses) showed that there was no statistically significant difference in teaching experience between the NSTs and NNSTs at lower level courses (p= 0.35, ANOVA), while there was a statistically significant difference in the upper level courses. Certainly, the NSTs have statistically longer teaching experience than the NNSTs (p=0.0039, ANOVA).
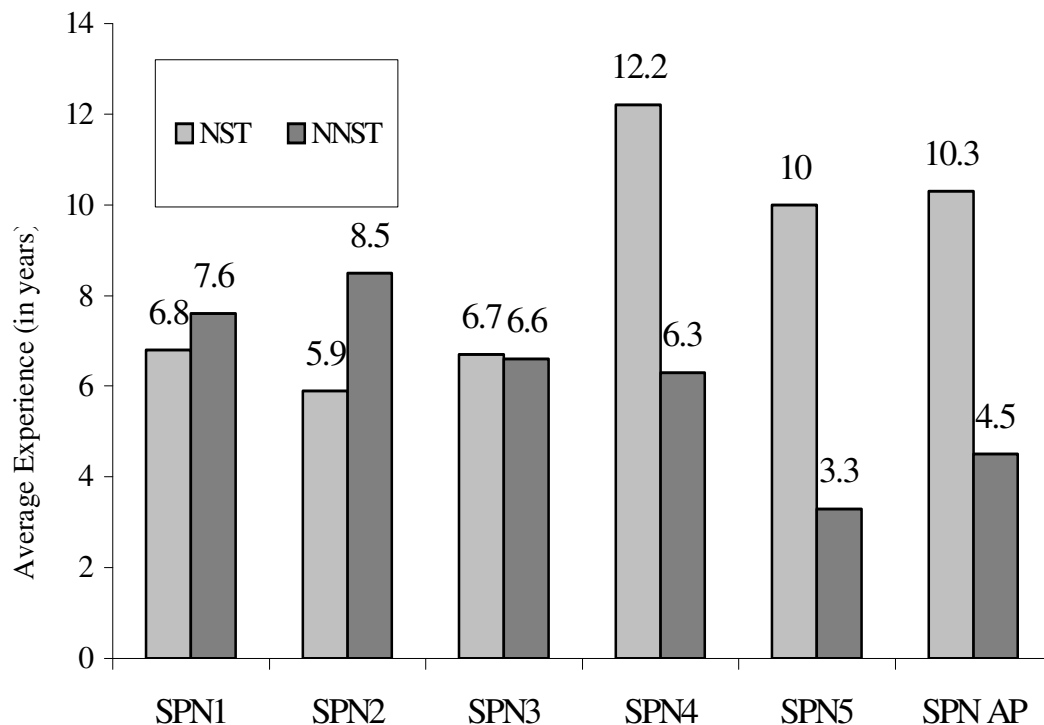
Figure 4.2: NST and NNST years of teaching experience.

Non-native Spanish teachers' open-ended responses to question 30 of the survey

offer some of their concerns regarding not having the opportunity to teach the upper level

classes. One teacher said:

> I took a 2-year break before teaching in which I didn't use Spanish and I forgot a
> lot. I've been teaching level one and two and have really forgotten stuff like the
> subjunctive that is not part of my curriculum. I feel like I need refresher classes
> but there isn't anything like that offered anywhere I've looked and it costs too
> much to take university classes.

Likewise, another NNST shared:

> Colleagues/Spanish teachers from other districts who also teach Spanish I and II
> have shared my concern, which is that teaching only the lower levels causes our

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language skills to decline somewhat. As younger teachers we are used to having spoken all in Spanish, all tenses, all days in college.

Yet another NNST stated her concern about this issue:

I feel that my knowledge of grammar, culture, etc. have improved since I started teaching but my comfort level with speaking and my fluency have not b/c of the basic level of Spanish that students learn and I teach. The experiences available in college just aren't available now!

Finally, a teacher explained "Taking this survey makes me realize that Spanish teachers go from a very high level of proficiency at the university level to a very low level when teaching Spanish I or II." It is obvious that this is an area of concern for NNSTs. Further data regarding this issue is presented in the next chapter, which describes 4 case studies of NNSTs and 1 case study of a NST.

4.4.5 Spanish usage in the classroom

When teachers were asked what percentage of time they used Spanish in the classes they taught, both NSTs and NNSTs reported using more Spanish as the level of Spanish increased. However, it is interesting to note that NSTs reported using Spanish less frequently than did their NNST colleagues in Spanish 1. NSTs reported speaking Spanish only 25% of the time in Spanish 1, whereas NNSTs, reported using the target language 43% of the time (see Table 4.25).

The fact that NSTs reported using Spanish less often in the lower level classes than did NNSTs could have different explanations. One possible explanation could be that NSTs were reluctant to use the target language with beginners for fear that students would not understand them. Another explanation could be that the NNSTs overestimated

the percentage of time they spent using the target language in the classroom while the

NSTs underestimated it.

	NSTs		NNSTs	
Question 15	*%*	n	*%*	n
Spanish 1	25.7	7	43.5	46
Spanish 2	50.0	12	53.3	65
Spanish 3	75.7	7	66.7	45
Spanish 4	76.7	3	78.4	23
Spanish 5	82.5	2	87.5	2
AP Spanish	92.0	5	86.8	11

Table 4.25: Percentage of Time that Teachers Use Spanish in the Classroom

4.4.6 Spanish usage among colleagues, writing proficiency and use of authentic materials

Teachers were asked to indicate to the extent to which they disagreed or agreed

with several statements. Results were similar for both NSTs and NNSTs in that both

groups tended to agree with most statements (see Table 4.26). However, in response to

statement 3, "When I'm with other Spanish teachers, I almost always speak Spanish,"

9.9% of NNSTs strongly disagreed, and 56% disagreed, whereas 40% NSTs agreed, and

33.3% strongly agreed. This suggests that although NSTs used their native language

regularly to communicate with other Spanish teachers, their NNST colleagues did not. As

was noted earlier, data from the case studies further support and account for this finding

in the next chapter.

Results were also dissimilar in the case of statement 8, "I believe my writing

proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching." Interestingly, 60% of

NSTs strongly agreed with the statement, whereas only 40% of NNSTs did so. It seems

that NSTs experience in teaching their own language was beneficial to their writing abilities more that it was to their NNST colleagues.

Finally, data from statement 10, "I frequently incorporate authentic materials to use in my classrooms," show that 53% of the NSTs strongly agreed, whereas 51.6% of the NNSTs agreed. This seems to indicate that the native teachers used authentic materials in the classroom more regularly than did their NNST colleagues. Taking into account that NSTs seem to be teaching more upper level classes than NNSTs, it makes sense that they would report using more authentic materials, particularly because these materials are essential in upper level preparatory courses.

Question 19		SD	D	A	SA	NA
1) Whenever I come across a native speaker of Spanish, I try to speak Spanish with him/her.	NNST	3.3%	14.3%	39.6%	42.9%	0.0%
	NST	0.0%	0.0%	26.7%	60.0%	13.3%
2) I frequently seek opportunities to speak Spanish.	NNST	3.3%	14.3%	50.5%	31.9%	0.0%
	NST	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	46.7%	33.3%
3) When I'm with other Spanish teachers, I almost always speak Spanish.	NNST	9.9%	56.0%	22.0%	12.1%	0.0%
	NST	6.7%	20.0%	40.0%	33.3%	0.0%
4) I frequently seek opportunities to read in Spanish.	NNST	4.4%	16.5%	51.6%	27.5%	0.0%
	NST	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%	60.0%	6.7%
5) I believe my oral proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	NNST	4.4%	26.4%	30.8%	37.4%	1.1%
	NST	0.0%	13.3%	6.7%	40.0%	40.0%
6) I believe my listening proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	NNST	7.7%	14.3%	41.8%	34.1%	2.2%
	NST	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%

Question 19		SD	D	A	SA	NA
7) I believe my <u>reading</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	NNST	3.3%	16.5%	44.0%	35.2%	1.1%
	NST	0.0%	13.3%	6.7%	46.7%	33.3%
8) I believe my <u>writing</u> proficiency in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	NNST	3.3%	15.4%	38.5%	40.7%	2.2%
	NST	0.0%	6.7%	6.7%	60.0%	26.7%
9) I believe my <u>cultural</u> knowledge in Spanish has improved since I started teaching.	NNST	2.2%	8.8%	41.8%	47.3%	0.0%
	NST	0.0%	6.7%	20.0%	46.7%	26.7%
10) I frequently incorporate authentic materials to use in my classrooms.	NNST	2.2%	6.6%	51.6%	38.5%	1.1%
	NST	6.7%	0.0%	40.0%	53.3%	0.0%

Table 4.26: Percentage of Agreement or Disagreement for Question 19 of the Survey

4.4.7 Beliefs about language teaching and learning

Teachers were asked to check the most important characteristic for them in their profession. Table 4.27 below shows that 53% of NSTs believed that "knowledge of teaching methodology" was the most important characteristic for them. Nevertheless, NNST results were more spread out: 30.8% believed that "knowledge of Spanish grammar" was essential; 26.4% believed that "having native-like communication skills" was most important; and 25.3% believed that "knowledge of teaching methodology" was the most important characteristic for their profession.

	NNSTs	NSTs
Knowledge of Spanish grammar	30.80%	20.00%
Having native-like communication skills	26.40%	6.70%
Knowledge of the cultures where Spanish is spoken	2.20%	6.70%
Knowledge of teaching methodology	25.30%	53.30%
Being able to interact successfully with native speakers	13.20%	6.70%
Being able to comprehend oral and written media in Spanish	1.10%	6.70%
Missing	1.10%	*
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table 4.27: Most Important Characteristic for Spanish Teachers

4.4.8 Confidence level in language proficiency

Non-native Spanish teachers reported that their language proficiency and knowledge was "OK", whereas NSTs reported that their proficiency and knowledge in the language "Does not need any work." Table 4.28 shows the results for question 23 of the survey. It is interesting to note that 22% of the NNSTs reported that their oral proficiency was in need of some work, and that 25% reported that their cultural knowledge was in need of work. Conversely, 26% of NSTs reported that their pedagogical knowledge needs some work and roughly 20% reported that their cultural knowledge was in need of work. Hence, for both NSTs and NNSTs cultural knowledge represented the area in need of the most work. This might be due to the diversity of cultures that comprises the Spanish-speaking countries of the world. Spanish is spoken in 20 different countries, which provides a wide array of cultural possibilities. Therefore, it is quite challenging for Spanish teachers, natives and non-natives alike, to be proficient in

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the area of culture. What is more, data show that Spain and Mexico were the most frequently visited Spanish speaking countries. It consequently is not surprising that both NNSTs and NSTs would feel that their cultural knowledge 'needs some work.'

Question 23		Needs a lot of work	Needs some work	It's OK	Does not need any work
Pedagogical Knowledge	NNSTs	0.00%	16.50%	62.60%	20.90%
	NSTs	0.00%	26.70%	53.30%	20.00%
Listening Proficiency	NNSTs	3.30%	11.00%	63.70%	22.00%
	NSTs	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%
Reading Proficiency	NNSTs	0.00%	14.30%	62.60%	23.10%
	NSTs	0.00%	0.00%	46.70%	53.30%
Oral Proficiency	NNSTs	1.10%	22.00%	57.10%	19.80%
	NSTs	0.00%	0.00%	40.00%	60.00%
Writing Proficiency	NNSTs	1.10%	11.00%	69.20%	18.70%
	NSTs	0.00%	6.70%	40.00%	53.30%
Cultural Knowledge	NNSTs	4.40%	25.30%	57.10%	12.10%
	NSTs	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%

Table 4.28: Teachers' Rating of Their Proficiency in the Language

4.4.9 Community of teachers: Language practices inside the school setting

Earlier in this chapter, data suggested that most teachers did not speak Spanish with their colleagues. A further comparison between NSTs and NNSTs shows that 33% of NSTs almost always speak Spanish with their colleagues, whereas only 6.6% of NNSTs engaged in target language conversations almost always or always. In addition, 12% of NNSTs reported that they never or rarely use the target language with their colleagues whereas none of the NST reported this. Table 4.29 provides detailed information regarding the frequency of target language use among teachers.

Question 25	NNSTs	NSTs	All
Never or rarely	12.10%	0.00%	10.40%
Occasionally	41.80%	46.70%	42.50%
Frequently	37.40%	13.30%	34.00%
Almost always	6.60%	33.30%	10.40%
Missing	2.20%	6.70%	2.80%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.29: Frequency of Target Language Use among Spanish Teachers

Data from open-ended response questions designed to elicit the reasons for the

lack of Spanish use among colleagues show that many NSTs did not use their native

language because they felt that their NNST colleagues were not proficient enough to

engage in normally paced conversations. NSTs also noted that after several frustrating

attempts to stay in the target language, their NNST colleagues opted to answer in English,

the result of which led NSTs to reluctantly converse in English. Only few NSTs stated

that they always used Spanish because they were not proficient in English. The

following responses illustrate some of the reasons for which NSTs opted not to use

Spanish with their colleagues:

1. They rarely speak Spanish with me and it never occurs to me to do so.
2. If they were native Spanish speakers = comfortable (more so) in Spanish I'd speak Spanish with them.
3. Non-native Spanish speakers feel inhibited. Afraid of making mistakes in front of a native speaker. Their proficiency level needs work.
4. Some cannot follow the entire conversation.
5. My colleagues are not as proficient with speaking and prefer to use English with each other but I tend to try to use Spanish with them on a regular basis.

6. Most of my colleagues don't understand what I say, bc it is too fast or too complicated so I try not to use Spanish and neither do they.

While on the one hand native Spanish teachers believed that their colleagues lacked the language proficiency needed to converse with them in Spanish, the majority of the non-native Spanish teachers referred to their lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, low comfort level, and lack of vocabulary in the language as their primary reasons for not using Spanish with their colleagues. In fact, one NNST stated, "Some members of the department have different comfort levels and may not continue a conversation in Spanish that I initiate." Another wrote, "Challenge-if someone in the dept. is too critical of other teachers' skills, that teacher will not want to speak it."

Results from several open-ended responses show that the majority of the non-native teachers were insecure with their oral language skills, and therefore did not use Spanish often outside the classroom:

1. Afraid of making errors. Effort factor. Colleagues may see each other as deficient, bad pronunciation, wrong vocabulary, etc.
2. Intimidation with native speakers but good practice and instant feedback and ways to learn new words and expressions.
3. Fear of making mistakes. Less thought involved to speak native language.
4. Lack of actual conversational skills away from grammar and book.
5. Not sure why not/ I guess I'm worried I'll mess up and they will think I don't know Spanish well enough.
6. The fear of using incorrect grammar prevents many teachers form speaking with one another.

Interestingly, one NNST highlighted the similarities between the teachers' confidence level with their oral language and students' sentiments in the classroom when they tried to use Spanish in front of classmates and their teachers. She wrote: "It is challenging to speak entirely in Spanish when I'm trying to use certain expression or

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slang. I supposed I am afraid to make mistakes so it is easier to speak English at times (I

must sound like a student)." Results also reveal a less than ideal community of Spanish

teachers in several schools. One NNST stated, "Why speak to them in Spanish if they are

going to answer back in English? Also, some of them can't speak Spanish outside of a

classroom setting anyway. Their language skills are not strong enough." Another teacher

wrote, "Sometimes the younger/newer teacher feels embarrassed by a mistake or two so

they stay quiet rather than risking an error in front of another adult." Similarly, another

NNST expressed:

> I speak Spanish with one exclusively and the other two almost never. I take the
> opportunity to speak and learn from other professionals. The other two teachers
> seem to be reluctant to speak in Spanish with me despite several attempts. I now
> suspect that they are embarrassed by their lack of proficiency.

What is more, another teacher sadly shared:

> At my first school, the Spanish teachers almost always spoke Spanish-I loved it
> plus it improved my skills. At this school, only 1 teacher regularly speaks
> Spanish with me, and one other when we need to speak privately in front of the
> students. I'm the new kid on the block and I don't want to make waves.

In the same way, three other NNST stated:

1. I talk with the native speakers always. The non-natives seem confused or
   it is hard for them to understand/comprehend conversation. The non-native
   speakers are good at grammar but all other aspects of the Spanish
   language are poor!
2. I don't always feel that my colleagues will understand everything I'm
   saying, or may be they can't respond back easily in Spanish. I don't want
   to make them feel like they are being put on the spot.
3. Sometimes when I begin in Spanish they answer in English. One of them
   has never spoken Spanish in my presence. I'm not always comfortable
   because I practice so little. I need to start so that I can practice more often.
   Some don't speak the language outside of school and have to think what to
   say. It takes up time.

As can be seen, the situation in many schools was less than ideal. On the one hand, NSTs felt that their NNST colleagues were not proficient enough to follow a normal paced conversation, and they did not want to pressure their colleagues into speaking Spanish. Yet on the other hand, the data suggest that NNSTs lacked both the confidence and the competence needed to use the language in front of their colleagues without feeling scrutinized by them. While teachers understood the value of using the target language outside of the classroom, many expressed their frustration and were at a loss as to how to solve the situation. As one teacher suggested:

> For me it depends on the person I'm speaking to. Certain teachers always talk to me in Spanish, so I do, too. Some teachers use English, then I do, too. However, I think it is great for Spanish teachers to speak in the target language for many reasons-practice makes perfect and it may help motivate students to speak Spanish as well.

Another concurred: "If the colleagues are not native speakers it is easier to speak in English. On the other hand, speaking in Spanish can provide some good practice." The next section compares data in regard to NNSTs and NSTs language practices outside of the school setting.

4.4.10 Language practices outside of the school setting

As was expected, NSTs always (or almost always) engaged in activities in which the target language was spoken, such as reading books in Spanish, reading magazines, and watching television or movies in Spanish. However, NNSTs only occasionally engaged in the activities enumerated above. Additionally, neither NSTs nor NNSTs seemed to chat online or write letters to friends in Spanish. Finally, data show that the

most frequent activity that NNSTs engaged in was listening to music in Spanish (54.9%).

See Table 4.30 for information regarding the frequency of teachers' activities in Spanish

outside the school setting.

	Never		Occasionally		Frequently		Always	
Question 27	NST	NNST	NST	NNST	NST	NNST	NST	NNST
Read books	6.7%	27.5%	26.7%	47.3%	6.7%	18.7%	60 %	5.5%
Read magazines	0.0%	2.2%	20 %	47.3%	20.0%	40.7%	60 %	8.8%
Watched T.V	0.0%	12.1%	6.7%	44 %	33.3%	36.3%	60 %	6.6%
Watched movies	13.3%	14.3%	6.7%	52.7%	26.7%	26.4%	53.3%	5.5%
Listened to music	0.0%	1.1%	13.3%	25.3%	26.7%	54.9%	60 %	17.6%
Conversed in SPN.	0.0%	6.6%	0.0%	34.1%	33.3%	42.9%	66.7%	15.4%
Surfed the internet	13.3%	20.9%	20 %	44 %	13.3%	25.3%	53.3%	8.8%
Chatted online	53.3%	76.9%	6.7%	14.3%	6.7%	4.4%	33.3%	3.3%
Wrote letters	0.0%	37.4%	40.0%	41.8%	26.7%	14.3%	33.3%	5.5%

Table 4.30: Frequency of Language Practices Outside of the School Setting

4.4.11 Traveling to Spanish speaking countries

Only five of the 15 NSTs had traveled abroad to study the language. In fact, 92%

of the study abroad trips were undertaken by NNSTs. As was expected, the majority of

the trips taken abroad by NSTs were for pleasure (26 trips), of possibly to visit family

and friends in their native countries. Moreover, 87% of the total number of trips were

taken by NNSTs. The average number of trips taken abroad per person was similar for

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both groups. The NSTs averaged 2.8 trips per person, while the NNSTs averaged 3.2 trips

per person (see Table 4.31).

Question 29	Trips to Spanish Speaking countries				
Reason	NNST		NST		Total
Pleasure	108	80%	26	20%	134
Work	45	86%	7	14%	52
Study	118	92%	9	8%	127
Service	18	100%	0	0%	18
Other	5	100%	0	0%	5
Total	294	87%	42	13%	336

Table 4.31: Teachers' Trips to Spanish Speaking Countries

4.4.12 NNST and NST section summary

It is evident from the survey results that NSTs and NNSTs had different needs,

and that they had different educational experiences. While the majority of NSTs were

happy with their teacher preparation program and felt that it had prepared them very well

in the area of pedagogy, the majority of the NNSTs thought that their teacher preparation

had not prepared them well in the areas of listening, speaking and culture. In addition, the

NNSTs open-ended responses indicated that desired professional development

opportunities that focused on target language use either through involvement in the

Hispanic and Latino community or through opportunities to converse with colleagues and

native speakers.

One interesting result pertains to the difference in teaching experiences in terms

of the upper level Spanish classes. The experience of NSTs seems to be double compared

to that of their NNST colleagues. In other words, the majority of the NNSTs have taught

lower level Spanish classes for a longer period of time. This issue surfaced in their open-ended responses, in which several NNSTs shared their concerns regarding their lack of oral and speaking proficiency, a fact that many of them attributed to their having taught Spanish 1 and 2 for so many years.

NNSTs and NSTs beliefs about language teaching and learning also differed. When NSTs were asked to choose the most important characteristics for Spanish teachers, 53% chose "knowledge of teaching methodology." However, NNSTs responses were diverse, with three characteristics being important for them: "knowledge of Spanish grammar" (30.8%); "having native-like communication skills" (26.4%); and "knowledge of teaching methodology" (25.3%).

With regard to NST and NNST language practices inside and outside of the school setting, results show that most NNSTs did not speak Spanish with their colleagues for the following reasons: afraid of making mistakes in front of colleagues, lack of vocabulary and fluency needed to engage in conversation, and lack of opportunities to do so. NSTs also stated that they had a hard time communicating in Spanish with NNSTs, especially because many were unable to follow the conversation. Moreover, outside of the school setting the majority of NSTs continued with a high level of contact with the language, probably due to the opportunity to converse with Spanish speaking family and friends close by. However, the majority of NNSTs did not seem to have cultivated the habit of reading in Spanish regularly, nor were they frequently engaged in Spanish speaking activities beyond listening to music.

In sum, this section has compared NNSTs and NSTs in several areas, including their involvement with the target language inside and outside of the school setting, as

well as their beliefs regarding language teaching and learning. Survey results show that each group is unique, and that their needs regarding both pre-service and in-service education and professional development vary.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the results from a survey that was administered to 106 high school Spanish teachers. Several tables, figures and excerpts from open-ended responses were used to support the narration of findings, and to answer the four research questions. The first section described teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning. The second section investigated Spanish teachers' language practices outside of the school setting. The third section presented survey results regarding Spanish teachers' language practices inside the classroom setting. The fourth and last section compared data results for native and non-native Spanish teachers. Every section was followed by a summary of findings.

The next chapter presents the results of the qualitative portion of this mixed methods research design. Extensive narration of classroom observations and teacher interviews is presented regarding five case studies in an attempt to expand and support the findings outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The previous chapter investigated the language practices, both inside and outside

of the classroom setting, of 106 high school Spanish teachers. It reported survey results

that were both quantitative and qualitative. This chapter consists of the analyses of

collected data and the discussion of the results and findings from five case studies that

involved four NNSTs and one NST. All the NNST participants were white females

whose first language was English. The NST was a Hispanic female. Classroom

observations and interviews were conducted during the winter and the spring portions of

the school year. Classroom observations occurred once every two weeks for each

participant, for a total of five observations per participant. In addition, I conducted three

semi-structured interviews with each participant. The classroom observations were not

limited to one class period. Often, I stayed for 2 or 3 periods in one day in order to

observe the teacher for an extended period of time.

This chapter presents data to further inform and support the findings generated by

the quantitative phase of the study. Following a brief description of the participants, a

combination of narration and participant voices are used to explore the following topics:

teaching lower level Spanish classes and teachers' confidence in their language abilities;

communities of practice among Spanish teachers; Spanish outside of the school setting: reaching near native proficiency; the role of professional development; and the importance of forming good habits.

5.1 The participants and their use of the target language

<u>Cheryl</u>: Cheryl is a NNST with four years experience teaching Spanish 1 and 2. Cheryl is in her late twenties, and, at the time of the study, she was teaching Spanish 3 for the first time. The first day we met she hesitantly spoke Spanish with me. My field notes documented, "Cheryl is very energetic but kind of nervous to have a chance to speak with a native speaker. It seems that she has been out of 'Spanish speaking practice' for quite long and her proficiency is a bit rusty." Cheryl continued to talk to me in Spanish, but frequently switched to English whenever our conversation deviated from the normal 'how was your day?' question. She lacked the advanced vocabulary needed, for instance, to talk about discipline problems she was having with a particular student.

Regarding her education, Cheryl held a BA in Spanish education and had studied abroad in Spain for 3 months. She had also visited Mexico for a week, and was planning a missionary trip to Central America with her church at the time of the study. She began taking Spanish in the 8th grade, and her favorite Spanish classes were Spanish 4 and 5 in high school, as well as the culture and literature classes she took in college. She decided to become a Spanish teacher during her sophomore year of college.

In Cheryl's classroom, the target language was used primarily for modeling, giving instructions, praising students, and explaining grammatical points. Even though she first explained the activities in Spanish, she immediately translated everything she

said into English. This was a common practice in all the classes I observed. For example, the field notes that I recorded during one of my observations read, "Students don't need to pay attention to the Spanish explanation; they just wait quietly for the English version to follow." When I asked Cheryl about this Spanish/English translation strategy, she informed me that she did not want the students to waste valuable time thinking about the instructions in Spanish, but wanted them to begin working right away. When asked why she did not do without the Spanish and save even more time, Cheryl explained, "I want them to at least hear the Spanish in the hope that something will get stuck with them." In Cheryl's mind, it was repetition that accomplished the goal of making Spanish comprehensible for learners. She seemed unaware that the translation practice she employed prevented the students from making an effort to understand the target language.

Sarah: Sarah is a NNST with two years of experience teaching Spanish 3, 4, and 5. She is in her mid-twenties, and holds a Master's degree in foreign language education. She had studied in Mexico for two months, and had taken several short trips to Spain for pleasure. She began taking Spanish in 7th grade, and decided to become a Spanish teacher some time between her senior year of high school and her freshmen year of college.

From the moment we met, it was obvious that Sarah was very comfortable speaking the target language, and she made no attempts to switch to English during the entire duration of my interviews. My field notes described her as "a confident and proficient speaker of Spanish. She rarely makes mistakes and even responds to all of my e-mail communications in Spanish." In Sarah's classroom, the target language was used

most of the time. She frequently corrected students' mispronunciations of words, making sure that their accents sounded less American and more native-like. Thus, my observations and field notes documented a very proficient Spanish speaker with native-like pronunciation. There were only a few instances when Sarah used English, the most notable being when she needed to explain advanced grammar points to her Spanish 5 class.

Sarah's passion for mastering oral proficiency appeared to have been motivated by the regret she felt for not having been given more opportunities to speak the language in high school. She shared:

> We had pretty much the same teacher all through high school and I would say she was a fairly good teacher, but she probably did not do as much with speaking, as I'd wanted to. When I grew up I was really, really shy so I didn't like speaking in front of people anyway. I went on the school trip to Spain and that was my junior year of high school, and I came back and then continued my senior year and then college. At first it was pretty tough. There were other students that studied abroad when they first got there so their Spanish was amazing and I could write a pretty good essay, but my speaking was not up to the challenge. (Sarah, interview 1)

In sum, Sarah exclusively used Spanish with me, and her approach to teaching reflected her commitment to increasing her students' use of the target language.

Lori: Lori is a NNST with two years of experience teaching Spanish 1 and 2. Like Sarah, she is also in her mid-twenties, and holds a Master's degree in foreign language education, and had studied abroad in Mexico for two months. Lori had started taking Spanish in high school, but only for the first three years since she "could not fit Spanish into her schedule." She initially studied early childhood education in college minored in Spanish, but after a study trip to Mexico she declared Spanish as her major and decided to become a foreign language teacher. She explained:

I didn't even take my 4th year 'cause I didn't know I was ever gonna use it and then I started originally in college. I started as an early childhood education major and I was a Spanish minor but after I studied in Mexico. Well, I think I decided right before that, but I decided I actually did want to major in it. I missed taking the classes and the more I thought about it, early childhood wasn't really what I wanted. I think the best experience with it was just living it everyday. Living with a Spanish speaking family. Going to the school everyday so I just kind of fell in love with it after that. (Lori, interview 1)

Lori's passion for the language was evident in her classes. Even though she taught lower level Spanish, she constantly used the target language because she felt that doing so was the best mode of instruction.

My field notes described Lori as "a Spanish teacher who runs the extra mile to be understood in Spanish." She also made an effort to speak only in Spanish with me, though she frequently struggled with the use of the subjunctive and other advanced grammar. Her pronunciation and fluency also suffered, as she made a conscious effort to speak as accurately as possible.

Jenny: Jenny is a NNST with nine years of experience teaching Spanish 1, 2, and 3. She is in her mid-thirties, and, at the time of the study, she was teaching college level Spanish in the evenings as well as teaching high school. She holds a Master's degree in Spanish, and she had studied in Spain, first for a semester, and then for a whole academic year. Jenny had also taken short trips to Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. She began studying Spanish in 9th grade, and took four years of the language in high school, with her fourth year being advanced placement. She explained, "I was a declared major from day one in college." Furthermore, following her freshman year in college, Jenny began

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working with Spanish speaking migrant farm workers, and instantly knew she wanted to be a Spanish teacher.

Along with Sarah, Jenny was the most proficient Spanish speaking teacher participant, though she had no experience teaching Spanish beyond level 3. However, she lived and traveled abroad extensively, and planned to continue doing so for as long as possible. Jenny's commitment to the Spanish language and culture was evident not only in her effortless Spanish oral proficiency, but also in her consistent use of the target language in the classroom. She shared with great pride her decision to write her Master's thesis in Spanish:

> I wrote my Master's thesis in Spanish, which was challenging. Writing so many pages in English is challenging as well, but in Spanish, it was definitely challenging. I have zero regrets! I had the option of writing it in English but I knew that I would feel like a much greater accomplishment to do it in Spanish and that process was really good. (Jenny, interview 1)

From the very beginning of the investigation, both our written and oral communications were conducted in Spanish. My field notes repeatedly praised Jenny for her "good command of the language, error free e-mails, and long and accurate conversations in Spanish."

Like Lori, Jenny believed in the exclusive use of Spanish in the classroom, a result of her experiences studying the language abroad. She stated:

> No falling back on the English, not even to ask questions, and I remember having this pounding headache the first week and then it just clicks, you know if you…and I didn't believe people when…it just clicks, you're almost gonna know when that exact moment when it just clicks for you and you start dreaming in Spanish, and it just works and I remind myself that I am not doing them a favor if I just fall back onto the English unnecessarily. It makes me work harder to stay in Spanish, 'cause it is a lot more work for me to find ways to get them to understand in Spanish than if I just say, "This is what it is!" That's a daily thing, you know, that I have to remind myself. (Jenny, interview 1)

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Pat: Pat was the only NST participant in this portion of the study, and she taught Spanish

for 25 years. She taught all levels of Spanish in high school, including Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4,

and advanced placement. However, she spent most of her career teaching levels 3 and 4.

At the time of the study she was approximately in her late forties. Pat holds a Master's

degree in foreign language education, and not only speaks Spanish and English, but also

French. Before starting her career as a high school Spanish teacher, Pat taught French 1

and 2. She visited many countries for a few weeks, including Chile, Bolivia, Nicaragua,

Spain, and Costa Rica. Like many NSTs, she began teaching Spanish by tutoring, and she

did not study Spanish in college. In fact, Pat studied psychology and French in college,

and decided to go into education only after she graduated.

Pat believed that it was necessary to have a superior knowledge of the Spanish

language and culture in order to teach the upper levels, especially because the latter

classes required teachers to comprehend oral and written media in Spanish, and to

interpret, analyze, and prepare authentic materials for the students. In the classroom, Pat

comfortably used humor in the target language with the students, and she tried to

incorporate authentic materials daily. Moreover, she informed me that she had stopped

teaching French because she did not have the proficiency needed to teach beyond French

2, and because there were more positions available in Spanish, which apparently

demanded less effort from her since she was already proficient in the language. She

explained:

> I've taught French, level 2, for about three years and I was comfortable with it
> and probably if I went on with it I would still be able to increase the levels just as
> long as…what I have to do as a teacher is just practice it and take classes or travel

to keep my French fresher and more up to date. More practice than just the students. (Pat, interview 1)

It is interesting to note that Pat, the only NST, acknowledged the challenges involved in teaching a language other than one's first language. She recognized that she would have needed extensive practice to maintain and improve her French regularly in order to teach it at the advanced level.

In this section, I have described my participants using a combination of my field notes and several salient quotations drawn from initial interviews in order to provide a portrait of the participants as teachers. The next section describes the participants' experiences teaching lower level Spanish classes, and its influence on their confidence using the language.

5.2 Teaching the lower levels and teachers' confidence in their language abilities

Results from the survey showed that NSTs had an average of 12 years teaching Spanish 4, whereas NNSTs had only six years experience teaching the same course. In addition, NSTs had an average of 10 years teaching advanced placement Spanish whereas NNSTs had only five years. The NNSTs' lack of experience teaching the upper levels was evident in the case studies as well, since only one out of three NNSTs had experience teaching the upper levels, and since the NST had the most upper level experience. Jenny, an experienced NNST, confirmed these survey results when she stated:

I think the perception is that a native speaker would be able to teach more effectively in the upper levels. It has been my experience in the schools I've taught in that it has been this way. The NST at our school is the only one that wants the upper levels right now. And she is passionate about teaching the upper levels and she is good at it. Down the road, for equity, we'll probably switch it up

if somebody else wants a shot at it. I think with the upper levels you are pretty safe in that, most people recognize where their ability is. If your speaking ability is not as strong as you'd like it to be, you are not usually the first one to volunteer to teach the upper levels where it's going to be painfully clear that you are not, you don't have quite the ability to teach at that level. It depends on the teacher. I think that. (Jenny, interview 1)

During the interviews it was evident that teaching only lower level classes was a concern for all of the teacher participants. Cheryl, Lori, and Jenny, who were only teaching levels 1, 2 and 3, along with Sarah, who was the only NNST teaching upper levels, believed that teaching lower level courses for a long time was detrimental to their proficiency.

In order to explore this concern further, I began my interviews with each of the participants by asking them, "What are your concerns, if any, regarding your skills as a Spanish teacher?" Cheryl identified her weakness in grammar, and suggested that it affected her confidence when she spoke Spanish:

> For me it is just the grammar stuff because that's my weakest area, and knowing that, it's like I'm wrong all the time in my head, and I'll catch myself self correcting. I don't have a problem with that, but I'm not as confident in that area: I guess I should say speaking Spanish. I think you can get away more when you speak because people get the basic ideas and they're not like, "you just said that wrong!" When it comes down to writing or like having conversations with native speakers, I do get a little nervous 'cause I think, "Oh I just said that wrong." (Cheryl, interview 1)

Likewise, Jenny identified grammar as the area in which she lacked confidence. According to her, she did not use advanced features of the language regularly due to the fact that she had taught only lower levels. She commented:

> Where I can lose confidence is when I'm concentrating really hard on my grammar, you know, because most of the grammar is fine to me. But when you get to more advanced structures 'cause I don't use them in class and it's been a while since I've used them in conversation, and I don't have a lot of opportunities, too, you know, to really speak at the advanced level. It's been a long time and that's where I lose confidence a bit. (Jenny, interview 1)

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Cheryl thought that her Spanish proficiency was deteriorating because of her lack of

opportunities to practice using the language outside of her Spanish 1 and 2 classes. She

also expressed her desire to 'do more' outside the classroom:

> My concerns are that my own personal language skills are deteriorating because I
> don't get the chance to exercise them like I once did in college and when I lived
> abroad. In order to maintain them, I do the best that I can to speak in Spanish as
> much as possible in my classes. I try to read things like books or magazines on
> my own leisure time, go to events that celebrate and honor Hispanic culture like
> the Latino festival, or watch programs or shows on television in Spanish. I would
> really like to do more/attend more things outside of the classroom (Cheryl,
> interview 1)

Moreover, at the end of the interview Cheryl suggested that teaching lower level Spanish

classes had been a decisive factor in her lack of language improvement. At the time of the

study she was teaching one level 3 class for the first time, and she felt that teaching this

class had helped to review some of the advanced grammar that with which she was

uncomfortable:

> My comprehension ability and speed has definitely declined. I think for me,
> honestly, teaching lower levels has something to do with it, versus, this year I feel
> like it has improved a lot because I'm teaching 3 again. However, in the last 2
> years all I taught is 1 and 2, and I felt that my Spanish has stayed the same, but I
> didn't feel that I was being challenged to really grow in it. This year, teaching
> different grammatical aspects like subjunctive, I'm being challenged again so it
> has improved in some ways. But I would say that in the past 3 years, overall, I felt
> that my Spanish has stayed the same or decreased. […] It's important for
> language teachers to be able to teach at least a lower and an upper […] I think for
> a teacher to stay challenged, and to keep on top of your language skills, it helps
> you. Versus if you are only teaching the lower levels all the time, you just kind of
> get stuck in the whole, you know, "my name is so and so, I look like this and I
> have five brothers and they are wearing this". The language is more simplistic,
> that's all. (Cheryl, interview 1)

Finally, Cheryl shared that the NNSTs at her school were comfortable teaching lower

levels and did not 'want to step up', especially if there was a NST to teach those

advanced courses. She said:

> Most teachers in the schools I've been in didn't want to teach the upper levels. If
> you have a NST teaching the upper levels, I think they obviously have more
> background and a lot of the culture. [NSTs'] language skills are stronger, but I
> think that this can also attribute to why you have NNSTs not improving in their
> language skills either because if they've not taught in a level that's challenging
> them. I think they also need to teach the upper levels so that they have that mix
> and I just don't want to get stuck just teaching the lower levels. And even after
> this year, you often get stuck with freshmen and kids who don't want to be there
> and I'm burnt out. My lower levels have been my hardest classes! (Cheryl,
> interview 2)

As can be seen, Cheryl realized that she needed to work on her Spanish, and she was

frustrated with her inability to do so. She did not want to 'get stuck' teaching the lower

levels. Likewise, Lori, another NNST, explained that teaching levels 1 and 2 had

minimized her opportunities to learn new and more advanced language skills. She also

noted how important it was 'to keep up her language' by using it outside of the

classroom. She stated:

> You know, there are a lot of things I don't know and I have to just keep learning
> the language, you know, in order to teach it. Like I learn new things everyday. I
> think the hardest thing is using the language all the time because I'm the only one
> using it, and I am not getting that input, you know, I'm not sitting in the class
> where I'm listening to other people. It's always me so I have to seek out, listening
> to music, you know, going to half-priced books and buying books in Spanish, and
> trying to challenge myself. (Lori, interview 1)

Like Cheryl, Lori also thought that teaching higher level classes was beneficial to

teachers' language improvement. Nevertheless, she felt that she needed to study abroad

before teaching an upper level class. She explained, "I would like to teach the higher

level and it would improve me and it would be fun. But I really want to be good at what I

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do and I would like to study abroad for a while. And then, it would be a little more natural for me to use it a 100% of the time."

Like the other participants, Lori was concerned about the detrimental consequences involved in teaching only the lower levels for a prolonged period of time, and she believed that traveling abroad would prepare her for teaching higher levels. She emphatically stated:

> I don't want to be saying that my Spanish skills have declined 10 years from now! Maybe the teachers feel it's declining because they've been doing it so long and have to keep teaching the same thing. It's easy to stay static and think, "Oh 1, 2, and 3 are so easy and you know I don't have to put extra work in it. I just follow the book kind of thing!" When I look at my future, I want to, my most important thing is that I wanna spend a longer amount of time abroad because my interest is there. Doing that, I think, would make me a better teacher, make me more comfortable with the language, too. So I think in the future, in the next few years, I would like to be teaching higher levels. If I were given the upper levels, I would work hard to teach it and prepare for it. I think I could do it. I have to take everything I have and pull it together, and use the language as much as possible. If I know in advance, and I have the summer to prepare, I think I could be ready. If I get an opportunity like that, I'm gonna take it and run with it. If you stay at 1 and 2 for a long time, and don't have the chance to go abroad again, teaching the higher levels would be tougher. In the next couple of years, I'd like to be teaching the higher levels and go abroad again, and do something during the summer. (Lori, interview 2)

Lori also made a strong case for increasing NNSTs' confidence in their language abilities by creating opportunities to use the target language outside of the classroom. She believed that a strong sense of confidence would translate into better teaching and more 'authentic' use of Spanish in the classroom. She explained:

> It's so important to have a high confidence in the language. You have to make it exciting and you have to love it! Being confident in one's own language ability, for me, is probably the most important aspect of using and learning the language. As a non-native Spanish speaker, I will always be seeking to improve upon this level of confidence through striving to learn more via conversation, reading, TV viewing, etc. As a teacher, having confidence in my language ability becomes even more important since one must provide as much of an authentic language

experience as possible for the students during instruction as well as while interacting with the students. […] Confidence in one's own oral abilities in the language translates directly to a more authentic experience for students. (Lori, interview 2)

Unfortunately, the situation at Lori's school was similar to that of Cheryl's in that most of the NNSTs were content with teaching the lower level classes and the same teacher had been teaching the upper levels for a long time. Still, Lori understood the importance of finding a balance between lower and upper level teaching, and she recognized that doing so would challenge her to improve. She stated:

> Nobody else wants to teach 4 so I will do it. Everybody is happy with what they have. It's going to be a lot of work, but I think I want to do it and practice, practice, practice. Our department head, she doesn't want to do the higher levels, nobody else requested the higher levels so I'm gonna step up to the plate. I'm just excited because I'm gonna be learning along with [the students], and I think as long as I'm step up higher [than the students], I can be challenging, you know. I have this thirst, and I just want to learn more. If I don't know something, it really bothers me. I think I'll go crazy if I had to teach 1s and 2s forever! I mean, it's so easy! I have everything done, but it's just so stagnant, and so dull! I think when you get to the higher levels it forces you to become a better teacher because you are pretty much doing everything in the target language. (Lori, interview 3)

As can be seen from the interview data, Cheryl and Lori shared many things in common. They were both young NNSTs who had been teaching lower levels, and they recognized the need to 'challenge' their Spanish knowledge by not only using Spanish outside of the classroom, but by 'stepping up' and teaching upper levels as well. Furthermore, Lori and Cheryl taught in schools in which NNSTs were assigned lower levels classes and rarely given the opportunity to teach the upper levels. This situation would appear to give NNSTs a sense of security since they are comfortable where they are, which is teaching lower levels only. However, as excerpts from the interviews have shown, this situation is

detrimental in that it causes teachers' target language abilities, especially their speaking

proficiency, to plateau.

Unlike Lori and Cheryl, Sarah was teaching upper level Spanish classes, and

preparing to teach advanced placement (Spanish AP) the following year. Data obtained

from field notes and interviews depicted a much more confident language user, and a

teacher who understood the responsibilities involved in teaching higher levels. She

explained:

> I'm gonna have a new advanced placement class next year. I'm gonna be teaching
> it and my big fear is that I need to improve my Spanish to be able to help [the
> students] so that they can score really well in the advanced placement test. And
> I've never taken the advanced placement class myself so you know, it is tough
> […] so I'm not a person who is a half at [meaning mediocre], you know, I wanna
> make sure I'm well qualified to teach it. I'm not gonna settle for not being that
> way. (Sarah, interview 1)

When asked if her overall Spanish proficiency had improved, declined or remained the

same since her last course of study, Sarah suggested that teaching upper level classes had

helped her improve her proficiency tremendously. However, she lacked confidence in her

speaking and listening proficiency, as suggested by the following comments:

> I would say mine has improved a little bit, not by leaps and bounds, but I think it
> has to do with the level you teach, too. In some levels you look at different things
> that maybe we didn't get to study as much in college, like the subjunctive and
> stuff like that, so it does help because you are reinforcing the concepts and you
> are thinking about them yourself, too. (Sarah, interview 2)

> I don't know that I'm ever gonna feel 100% satisfied with my speaking or
> listening, I just have the desire to be near native and I think that I will always be
> trying to get there. (Sarah, interview 2)

> I'm confident about my desire to improve my Spanish abilities, but I'm not
> confident that my skills are where they should be for teaching the level I teach
> and giving them Spanish all the time. I'm always doubting myself when I'm
> speaking, and I really strongly feel that one of the only ways to improve upon
> what you're doing is making errors and reflecting upon them, and have the

motivation to go look something up and question yourself. I'm not confident 100%, but I feel good about knowing that I'm not gonna settle for being at the level I'm at. (Sarah, interview 2)

By and large, Sarah was passionate about her profession and believed that all teachers, especially those teaching only lower levels, should strive to improve their language proficiency on a daily basis. She explained:

> Every single year you have to make an effort to do as much as you possibly can and I think some teachers get into the Spanish 1 and 2 rut […] And then, time goes by, and then they don't improve anything. Once you are in a teaching position, you are in a pretty secure job and nobody really evaluates you on stuff like that so I think they figure they have a job and it doesn't really matter, some teachers, unfortunately. It just kind of reinforces the fact that you have to do something daily to continue to improve. I just think it's sad that some teachers go in the profession without any motivation, self-motivation to improve things unless it's required. I think that's kind of sad. (Sarah, interview 2)

Similarly, Pat, the only NST participant, suggested that the situation at her school was less than desirable in that she was the only one who wanted to teach the upper levels:

> This is my second year teaching 4s and 5s. I've been teaching 4s for a while. I think I've been teaching level 4 for 8 years. At this school specifically, teachers don't want to teach the upper levels. They are happy where they are, there is no desire for them to move up. I think that if you present the idea of changing levels to the teachers, and they know ahead of time, it'd be a challenge but…I'm always a believer that if you are told ahead of time you can prepare, but the dynamics of the people are different in every place. As a teacher, you perform better if you are comfortable with it, with what you teach, because if those people have learned Spanish but can't comfortably talk to a native speaker, for example, it's obvious that those people may refuse to do it. It would be difficult. (Pat, interview 1)

Pat further explained:

> I prefer teaching the upper levels. I have not taught 1 in a while, but I think as a department we should share all the levels. But some of the teachers have limited themselves in the sense that they don't feel like going beyond level 2 of the language and therefore they don't feel comfortable moving up, they don't want to, and they are probably not capable as far as what their knowledge is. And these

teachers are, of course, the ones who don't communicate in Spanish with me or other colleagues. (Pat, interview 3)

In sum, all of the case study teacher participants believed that teaching only lower level Spanish was detrimental to their ability to maintain and improve their target language proficiency, as well as their confidence in their language abilities. They also acknowledged the need to teach upper level Spanish in order to remain in contact with the more advanced features of the language that were not used in the lower level classes. In the following section, interviews with the teacher participants are drawn on in order to further describe the target language practices that exist within their respective communities of practice.

5.3 Community of Practice among Spanish teachers

Data from interviews and observations showed that collaboration among Spanish teachers was rare. During the first interview the teachers were asked: "How regularly do you use the target language with other Spanish teachers?" Several of them talked about a hidden competition that prevented them from freely using the target language without feeling that their colleagues were scrutinizing their proficiency. Three of the non-native Spanish teachers were novice teachers with two-four years of teaching experience. These issues of professional insecurity and competition could be related to their lack of experience as teachers. Notwithstanding, Cheryl explained:

> There are currently six Spanish teachers in my school including myself. I feel like there is maybe this underlying competition that exists in the foreign language world as to who knows more, who speaks better, who is a better teacher, etc. As a result you find many people that don't want to share their stuff because they don't want others to get credit for it or whatever. It's not the kind of environment that necessarily fosters learning from one another and helps one another improve. I would like to see that change in the future. I would like to see us working together

more and speaking/writing in Spanish when we do collaborate because I think that it will benefit everyone and it will help everyone to improve. (Cheryl, interview 1)

Likewise Sarah referred to this 'underlying competition' as a 'divide' among the

teachers. She also stated that her community of teachers, like Cheryl's, preferred to use

English rather than Spanish when they conversed with one another:

> It's like, there's kind of a divide, a personal divide in our building with some of the other Spanish teachers and we normally don't [speak Spanish]. I don't know if it has to do with the fact that we went to [university name] or what, they don't really associate with us that much. It seems that the other teachers are OK where they are and they speak English all the time. I think it is really a question of attitude. (Sarah, interview 1)

Jenny, the most experienced NNST participant, also explained that Spanish teachers did

not use the target language among themselves in all of the schools she taught in due to

the fact that there was a wide range of proficiencies. She commented:

> I would say that the teachers of the same language could use that language when they are speaking to each other. That would be something that could be done. I don't think it would be done. When I taught in New York it was the same story. Within a group of teachers that teach the same language there are a vast array of abilities, and though you know that it would help out everyone to use the target language, especially those with a little bit less ability, you are looking at a frustrating situation, you are looking at a real resistance to doing that. What I am saying, ideally people would force themselves to stay in the language, realistically it won't happen. It is easy to get lazy. (Jenny, interview 1)

In her third interview, Jenny also suggested that a sense of competition existed within her

community of teachers. She concluded:

> I think in education in general, language teachers especially, there's a judgmental nature where you feel ashamed often if you ask somebody else for help. Depending on whom you ask, they may judge you as, "Why don't you know that?" I ask anyway 'cause I want to have it right, but I'd be lying if I said that there wasn't a part of me that wondered, "Did they feel that I should know that?" I'm not a bad teacher because I had to ask that. Competition is a good word for

that. It's an insecurity, too. Insecurity on the part of both people, the person that is choosing not to speak Spanish because they don't want to be judged, […] and an insecurity on the part of the listener who is judging because that's a big reason why people compare themselves to others, to be able to say, "I'm better than that, I do better than that." (Jenny, interview 3)

Data also suggested that the situation at Lori's school was no different. In fact, it was further aggravated by the fact that the department head did not set the example. Lori explained:

Unfortunately, we don't use the target language among us. I should be initiating it more because you know when you do it people speak back to. The one thing I have not done and I have not really seen it since I'm here, is the department head speaking it for an extended period of time, you know. She does not want to teach the higher levels, and I think she is comfortable with what she is doing and she runs the department. (Lori, interview 1)

Even in our department, the five of us, when we have department meetings, we don't really do anything in Spanish. This is what we are doing, we have an agenda. I find that when I initiated it you get it back, and you have to constantly try to initiate it and have the kids seeing that you are using it with other teachers. And they will say, "Did she just ask you about the CD or something?" and I'm like, "Yeah, good! You heard that! That's excellent!" For the students' sake and for the sake of making you a better teacher you have to keep initiating it. Sometimes they don't always feel comfortable; there are just other teachers that they don't like that I talk to them in Spanish. I don't know. It's kind of hard. (Lori, interview 2)

Lori suggested that when she initiated a conversation in the target language, some of the teachers in her department failed to answer in Spanish because they were not comfortable using it. Although she taught in a different school, Cheryl supported Lori's comments when she suggested that her confidence level decreased tremendously when she found herself in the presence of other teachers, which in turn diminished the amount of Spanish that she used around them. She said:

With other teachers I do struggle with my confidence level, not with the students or you. I don't teach with you and you are not here to judge me, plus you are a NS and I just assume you are better than me and I can learn from you. When I talk to

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you or other NS is 'what I'm gonna learn out of this conversation' versus 'how am I coming across' when I speak with my colleagues, the pressure is on. There is just an unspoken competition level that really goes on, like, "who is better at what they do? Is their Spanish better?" (Cheryl, interview 2)

Thus far, the interview data have revealed the opinions and thoughts of the NNST participants. Pat, the only NST participant, noted that hardly anyone in the community of teachers to which she belonged spoke the target language with her, a fact she attributed to their being intimidated by her native speaker status. She stated:

With the teachers it is the same old story; some are intimidated to talk in Spanish because I am a native teacher. A couple of them talk to me in Spanish all the time and one of them is a Science Teacher that learned Spanish a while back. But in my department we have a wide range of abilities. My idea is that they would want to practice. As teachers, they should want to practice with me since I am from a Hispanic community. (Pat, interview 1)

According to Pat, she had initially made an effort to create a non-threatening environment so that teachers would feel comfortable using Spanish with her, but these efforts had not proven successful. She acknowledged:

So, it's a nice idea and it would be great if teachers would talk in Spanish. I would like to see that more here. The one problem that I see is that I would talk to them in Spanish and they would answer in English. Some people have even confessed that they are intimidated. They don't want to show how bad their Spanish is and I'm like, "That's the way to improve it, to practice it with me, I'm not gonna judge you because you made a mistake or anything!" It's sad but you can't force them. (Pat, interview 3)

Pat believed that you could not force a teacher to speak the target language, just like you could not force a student in your classroom to do so.

When asked, "How can we create a community of teachers that is willing to communicate in Spanish?" The teacher participants offered several interesting insights. Cheryl, for example, believed that teachers needed to 'suck it up' and realize that by

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practicing amongst themselves, they were helping to maintain and improve their

proficiency without spending extra money:

> We need to suck it up. Are we here to get better or not? I have no problem speaking with another Spanish teacher, and then there's another one who you can speak Spanish to but she'll never respond in Spanish, and then there are other ones who I'm really uncomfortable with, and I need to just get over that and think what my ultimate goal is and just do it! I think when we are talking about what do we do to challenge ourselves, I think that would be the easiest in terms of like you don't have to travel, you don't have to spend any extra bucks or spend time outside school. It's right there and we don't take advantage. (Cheryl, interview 2)

Jenny felt that veteran teachers needed to set the example and create an environment that

was conducive to learning, and that allowed all teachers to feel safe using the target

language without fear of being judged or making mistakes:

> Well, teachers need to feel safe to speak to each other and not be judged, to be mutually seeking improvement rather than judgment, comparison, and competition. I think a lot of that, too, comes from your veteran teachers. If they, I'm kind of in the middle of it, but I don't feel weird approaching anybody to be truthful because I don't really care if I want to know something. Probably my confidence is high but if you have a veteran teacher in the department that says to a younger teacher, "What did you do when you taught this? I'm looking for some new ideas". That to me is huge in establishing that culture of cooperative learning among teachers and improvement. It's a two-way thing where everybody wants to learn from each other. Absolutely, new teachers should be coming in with new ideas and new ways, but veteran teachers also need to start the ball rolling. (Jenny, interview 3)

Finally, Lori thought that it took a couple of teachers in the department who were willing

to use the target language all the time to 'start the ball rolling' and be advocates for

change. She stated:

> I think Laura and I have the desire to improve our Spanish. We are not satisfied with where we are. I think that's not gonna change. I think other teachers do see that so I think it kind of makes them wonder, "What I am really doing? Am I speaking Spanish in class? Am I practicing Spanish?" I think that it does kind of make them think about what they are doing. We are definitely gonna be advocates

for practicing Spanish outside of class as much as we can. I'm optimistic about it. (Sarah, interview 2)

By and large, all of the teacher participants described a current community of Spanish teachers whose members seldom used the Spanish language among themselves. Moreover, most believed that teachers needed to have the inner desire for change, and that either veteran teachers or department heads should set the example.

One final note, Cheryl, Sarah, Jenny, and Pat described their 'ideal community of teachers,' as one which teachers collaborated and did not compete. They envisioned a community of teachers that used the target language on a daily basis, and whose members, NNSTs and NSTs alike, were comfortable with their own levels while also striving for improvement. Cheryl stated:

> I would like that we spoke Spanish to each other and write emails in the language. That we kept up on what's going on in the community and we went to those types of things together. I would like it to be a closer-knit department where we were constantly challenging and helping one another. Where we share our materials and ideas and it does not become like a competition. We don't have to be best friends, but we are colleagues. We are at different levels. Like I have my kids doing pair work because I believe that some posses strengths that others don't and vice versa. We need to kind of embrace that. (Cheryl, interview 3)

Similarly, Sarah and Jenny explained:

> I would love to have everybody here along with some NSTs to get together once a week for the whole year. It's like working out. If you don't set aside a time and do it you are not gonna get it done. And you know, whoever can come comes and just meet like here or another place and just practice it, correct each other and everybody feels comfortable talking, and everybody feels comfortable working together, and everyone realizes that everyone else is at a different level. I mean that to me would be the most, just like a classroom. The best thing for everyone here! (Sarah, interview 3)
>
> Teachers that work together, share ideas willingly and speak Spanish to each other most of the time. Every beginning of the year we seem to start hard-core in

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the language. I stick with it and then usually around Thanksgiving time it starts to fade. It's a real effort sometimes. (Jenny, interview 3)

For her own part, Pat foregrounded the similarities between the community of teachers and the community of learners in the classroom. She believed that a community of teachers that embraced the target language sent a positive message to the student body. She asserted:

> I think students would be more motivated about learning and using it. The kids love it when they hear another teacher and me speaking in Spanish. They would mention, "I understood all of that" or they are intrigued by that and they want to know. Their faces light up when they are able to pick up words from the conversation. (Pat, interview 3)

Unfortunately, the community of teachers illustrated in the preceding comments fails to resemble the community of teachers that actually existed in the schools that participated in the case studies. Spanish teachers rarely spoke in Spanish amongst themselves, even when they were in front of students. Similarly, they rarely exchanged electronic communications with other members of the Spanish department in the target language.

The next section examines teachers' opinions about their teacher preparation programs and the need to 'do more' with Spanish outside of the school setting, especially when the school setting fails to foster an atmosphere of target language maintenance or improvement among teachers.

5.4 Using Spanish outside of the school setting: Reaching near native proficiency

5.4.1 The role of professional development

As was expected, all of the teacher participants identified 'study abroad' as the most important language learning experience. What is more, they all wished that they

could travel abroad more frequently to 'keep up' their language skills. Unfortunately,

traveling abroad was not feasible for many of them and that is the reason why in-service

teachers turned to professional development for help. According to Cheryl, the

professional development opportunities offered in her county generally focused on

pedagogical knowledge only. She also regretfully admitted that she seldom sought

opportunities outside of the school setting to improve upon her proficiency:

> Yeah, you know the professional development focus here are just to help us be better teachers, but it's not to help us improved our Spanish proficiency at all. We are really expected to do that on our own. I think that sometimes you are just so exhausted at the end of the day with what you do and you've got other stuff going on in your life, families, but if you don't work on your Spanish it will decline. If you don't make if part of your life, it's hard. How do I make it part of my day? Currently, I don't, I'm guilty of that right now. I really don't do much apart from the travel that I do with the students here. (Cheryl, interview 2)

If professional development opportunities that are geared towards improving content

knowledge are not offered within the county, NNSTs need to find other ways to stay

attuned to the Spanish language and culture. Lori, Jenny, and Sarah shared what they did

or felt they needed to do, to maintain their proficiency in Spanish:

> What I really want to do is live abroad again so I can really better my skills. Not so much the grammar, I'm pretty good at that, but I, just the speaking and the listening. I just saw the movie *Volver* and things like that I can do at home. I put on music. I just bought a novel for the summer. I read *People* magazine in Spanish all the time and I read *Fronteras.* (Lori, interview 1)

> As a professional language teacher, when you are not a native speaker, the Spanish that we hear everyday is obviously not anywhere near native contextual Spanish. My ear for it is really what needs to booster up. As a professional, you need to make a commitment that I am going to seek out ways, immersion ways, really it is the only way, I am gonna have to travel for the rest of my 30 years of teaching. (Jenny, interview 1)

> A couple of other Spanish teachers and I have a book club, but there are some other non-Spanish teachers but we still talk about how fun and useful it would be

to have one for just Spanish teachers but I haven't read a real book all in Spanish since grad school and I have them. (Jenny, final interview)

I think that activities like movies or reading magazines are a good supplement, but I need something intensive like one more person and me on top of that. I don't think those activities here and there would be enough. We are thinking about getting together with another Spanish teacher during the summer and a native speaker and talk. We are also sending each other e-mails in the target language. (Sarah, interview 1)

These NNSTs recognized the importance of creating opportunities such as conversation groups or book clubs for Spanish teachers, watching movies and reading novels regularly in order to maintain and improve their language proficiency. They also recognized that doing so entails a great commitment. For her own part, Jenny admitted that even though she owned novels in Spanish, she had not read anything since graduate school. Furthermore, Lori asserted:

I think schools should provide opportunities for us to practice and teachers should seek those opportunities. Teachers need to look for ways to improve their skills! It's obvious that this county does provide more professional development for the teaching and learning than they do for the language aspect. (Lori, interview 2)

Overall, the interview data presented in this section described the teachers' concerns regarding the lack of professional development opportunities designed to maintain or improve their language proficiency. It also depicted the most common activities teachers engaged in, as well as those they would like to participate in, outside of the school setting. Although it is evident that NNSTs preferred constant contact with the language outside of the school, they were also the first to admit the difficulty of doing so due to a lack of professional development opportunities as well as other personal reasons. The following section investigates teachers' opinions regarding the concept of near native

proficiency, and seeks to determine the extent to which they strive to accomplish that goal.

5.4.2 Is near-native proficiency a legitimate goal for NNST?

During the third interview, the four NNST participants agreed that it was essential for NNSTs to always have the goal of near native proficiency in mind. But at the same time, they also suggested that reaching near-native proficiency was difficult and took a tremendous personal and financial commitment. Sarah, for example, explained:

> I think it's an excellent goal that every Spanish teacher should have. I feel like if you manage to be near native by the time you graduated from college I would consider that to be wonderful and amazing. Because to me, the only way to get there is to really immerse yourself, because to me that's the only way to do that: to go and live abroad for at least a year. For me, my goal is to get there as soon as possible and keep practicing it all the time. If you are not focusing on your Spanish every single day you lose a little bit of it. I'm so motivated to be at near native and I think it should be the goal we should have, but life gets in the way a little bit. (Sarah, interview 3)

According to Cheryl,

> If you cannot speak in Spanish, why are you going to teach Spanish? It makes you no different than your students in some ways. There are a lot of students who can write beautifully and can read in Spanish, but they cannot speak and honestly I think that in order to teach a language you need to be able to do all of it! You don't set any kind of an example for your students and your kids don't have faith in your ability nor do your colleagues really respect you, you know if you can't. (Cheryl, interview 3)

Like Cheryl, Lori and Jenny also made a strong case for near-native proficiency, and suggested that advanced proficiency translated positively into the classroom:

> I think having native like communication is the most important thing for our profession because, you know, you could harp on grammar all day long, but if they are not hearing it being used naturally and not forced, students are not gonna

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get used to, they'd never gonna get enough input to be able to process. (Lori, interview 3)

I mean, I don't know what other goal you'd have. That should be what you are striving for because it's fun to study the grammar and everything but, really, the goal is to be able to use it, to be able to understand it and that should be our students' goal, too. I think it is important to want to be at that level because you really have to have the inner desire to learn to be a good teacher. Like, "Oh my gosh! I need to look that up" and go and get the dictionary, showing your students that it's OK to keep learning it. You have to enjoy it. (Lori, interview 3)

My Spanish 1 teacher had that no English rule and he was not a native teacher. He had near-native fluency, and that's what's important. Not so much that you are a native, but that you are at least at a near native ability. Otherwise, it would be hard for the teacher to find different ways if you yourself are struggling a bit with the Spanish and it could be difficult to force yourself to stay in Spanish or [the students]. It would also likely make the input less comprehensible if you yourself are not at least at near native fluency. The importance of that increases with each level, but it is important at level one, even at level one, that students be hearing a Spanish that is, perhaps not with a native accent, you do the best you can, that they are exposed to a fluent sounding Spanish. (Jenny, interview 1)

According to Jenny and Lori, this concept of 'near nativeness' is important no matter what level of Spanish you are teaching, especially since excellent teacher proficiency translates into not only a better input for the students, but also a goal for them as well.

Thus far the data from the interviews have revealed that the NNSTs believed that reaching near-native proficiency was not only a legitimate goal, but one that required a great deal of daily dedication. Therefore, during our third and final interview, I asked the teachers to react to the following quote from Dudley and Heller (1983), who eloquently described the difficult process of accomplishing near native proficiency in a second or foreign language:

It should be recognized that the pursuit of native fluency imposes a condition of perpetual slavery to a goal that can never be possessed. Nor can it be pretended to

without constant dedication to the maintenance of skills, equal in difficulty to the daily drudgery of a concert pianist, a prima ballerina or an operatic athlete. (p. 58)

Cheryl admitted once again that not many teachers, including herself, were willing to take Dudley and Heller's 'practice makes perfect attitude' to that extreme. However, she recognized that teachers were obligated to move out of their comfort zone in order to improve their proficiency. She consequently concluded:

> There is major dedication that goes into developing that language. I think realistically, you are not going to find many people that have the time to do it to that extreme, but I think you need to find someone who is always looking to improve herself. So whether teachers are willing to speak Spanish with their department because it puts them outside of their comfort zone and it challenges them to get better or send e-mails to each other in Spanish, I think the more we use it the more we will be able to improve, and I think that should be the criteria for people that work within the department. (Cheryl, interview 3)

Similarly, Sarah disliked Dudley and Heller's comparison with slavery, but acknowledged that "attaining near native proficiency" was always at "the back of her mind", thus giving her a sense of perpetual slavery. She stated:

> It's true, but it seems a little bit negative, but it's true. You have to be, just like everything else, practicing the piano. It's really a skill that you have to practice every single day. I agree with it! I mean every single day when I revert back to English or every single time where I'm reading something and I'm just thinking I probably could be reading this faster if I practiced more. I really *do* think about this every single day, about practicing and using it more. I mean it really *is* always at the back of my mind, you know. (Sarah, interview 3)

Unlike Sarah and Cheryl, Lori seemed to be more optimistic in that she believed that any NNST could achieve the 'near-native' goal provided that they practiced hard:

> If you have this constant need to never be good enough, it just makes you work that much harder and that's what I get out of this quote. It shouldn't be slavery to the goal, not in the negative sense. It should be something that you like doing and so this is immediately what that makes me think of. Constant dedication to the

maintenance of skills: if you don't work out for a week you are not gonna be able to run what you ran two weeks ago. It's that same type of mentality with the body and the mind. I think we can all reach native-like ability. You'll never be native, but you can reach that level if you want to and it's not gonna happen overnight, it's gonna take a long time and a lot of practice to get there. You got to keep going and going till you know, you can, it's not a tangible thing. You can't hold it within your hand, as soon as you get really good at something you pick up a newspaper from another country and I always learn a new word and I need to find out. I don't agree with "it can never be possessed". I mean you can always have it in sight. It's more of an idea, I guess. (Lori, interview 3)

Finally, Jenny, the more experienced of the NNSTs, acknowledged that teachers'

listening and speaking skills were the hardest to maintain and improve. She talked about

'coming to terms' with the fact that 'near native fluency' was a goal that could never be

attained, but one that teachers should nonetheless strived to achieve. She concluded:

I completely agree. As the quote says, 'it's not possible.' I can do the absolute best by immersing myself again for a long time, and even if life allows me to go back to Spain for another year and live there full time with no other English speakers around me. I know I can get my fluency back to, and even better than, what it was at the end of my graduate year, because my grammar is better now, so applying it now in speaking it, hearing it, I know I can get my fluency at the top. But then I know, too, I would have to come back and over time it would erode again and it would always be pretty good. There are times where I feel I'm speaking well and then there are times that I feel like it's harder. But for someone who wants to sound like a native is impossible. It's not realistic, so once you come to terms with that fact you can give yourself a break but not to the point that you say, "Well, I can't get any better!" and that's not true either. You can always get better and you can create the situations to get better. (Jenny, interview 3)

In her comments, Jenny acknowledged that her grammar proficiency had improved since

graduate school, but also suggested that her listening and speaking constantly fluctuated.

She recognized that NNSTs should invest in improving their proficiency, but also felt that

they needed to realize that they would never be 'native speakers'.

In sum, the qualitative data presented in this chapter described how teachers' confidence in their language proficiency diminished when they taught only lower levels, and when they shied away from normal paced conversations in which they used the target language with colleagues. Data also revealed that teachers believed that teaching lower levels was potentially detrimental to their proficiency if, within the community of teachers to which they belonged, there was no desire to use the target language or engage in professional development opportunities that focused on content knowledge and language proficiency. Finally, the NNSTs acknowledged that near native proficiency should be a goal for all teachers. Nevertheless, the data also revealed that few teachers were taking the steps needed outside of the school setting to attain that advanced level of proficiency, nor was the community of teachers to which they belonged supporting their language maintenance or improvement. Thus, I could not help but to wonder how the NNSTs could ever perform at a 'near native' level.

5.4.3 Forming good habits from day one: The need to start the ball rolling

My role as a researcher during this qualitative data collection phase created a sense of accountability among teacher participants very much needed in a community of Spanish teachers. After a few months in the field, I began to observe changes in several of the schools involved. At the beginning, NNSTs were hesitant to use Spanish with me. My field notes described several instances when Spanish teachers met in the corridors or in the main office and did not use the target language among themselves or with me. However, my field notes from late February, March and April recounted several significant episodes denoting change:

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I am so thrilled! Finally Cheryl is conversing with me in Spanish only! It's obvious that she does not do it very often since she frequently makes grammar mistakes (specifically subjunctive) and double guesses herself but at least she is trying! Hurray! (Feb, 2007)

Yupi! A Spanish teacher interrupts Lori's classroom to ask her for a CD and some books. Even though this teacher uses English in front of the students, Lori responds in Spanish. The teacher hesitates for a second and then continues the conversation in Spanish as well! Students are staring at the teachers and their faces light up as if they understood some of the exchange. (March, 2007)

I spent 5 hours with Jenny today and not a single word in English! As we departed for home she smiles and says, "Nice to have you around." I replied, "How so?" "Well", she adds, "it's been a while since I have someone to speak in Spanish with all day! I wish one of my colleagues would at least try to!" (April, 2007)

It seemed that my presence helped the teachers become more alert to the need to use the target language daily within their school setting. More importantly the teachers started to notice that change within their school community was possible if at least one teacher could 'start the ball rolling'. Cheryl shared:

Talking to you about this stuff, it's good because it gives me accountability, it reminds me, like, 'this is what I need to be doing' and gets me back on track. When you show me the results of the survey I know that I'm not the only one that's going through this situation and I feel more motivated just for being with you and helping me see that it's an issue. I really don't want to get into that pattern of a NNST that rarely uses Spanish outside the classroom. (Cheryl, interview 2)

Ever since I've been meeting with you I have actually been speaking to [the other teachers in the school] in Spanish and e-mailing them in Spanish and they are all responding although a few of them would write in English back or whatever, but for me it is good practice. (Cheryl, interview 3)

Likewise, Sarah noted that, since I had first begun observing in the school, several teachers had come to enjoy communicating with each other more in the target language. As she said in her third interview, "Teachers in my school started talking to each other

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more in Spanish. Actually, that started happening right about when you came here, which is interesting. Probably you motivated them!"

For a researcher, it is obviously reassuring to know that you inspired positive changes in the field. However, the teacher participants realized that long lasting changes were dependent on them, not an outsider. Thus, in response to the question, "How can NNSTs perform at a 'near native' level?" Cheryl, Lori and Sarah made a strong case for forming "good habits" both at home and at school.

Cheryl stated that NNSTs need to have a 'work out' mentality and make a daily commitment to using the target language inside and outside of the school setting so that eventually it becomes more natural. She said:

> It's the same thing when you are working out: 'do the same thing for 28 days and it becomes a habit', so it's like you have to make that extra effort, and if everyday I'm outside that door greeting the kids in Spanish and speaking only in Spanish, the kids will get used to it, I will get used to it, and it'll become more a natural thing, and it's the same way with speaking with my colleagues. If I just forced myself to do it, maybe after 28 days it will become a habit and we'll do it more naturally. It takes a lot of effort and some days you come in and you are just tired, and you have to suck it up! (Cheryl, interview 2)

In her third interview, she also identified one of the biggest enemies of forming good habits: time. In Cheryl's words, the longer you wait to change a 'bad' habit, the harder the ability to do so become. She suggested that teachers needed to set aside their pride and use the target language among themselves immediately:

> Oh, it is very challenging! With foreign language teachers it all comes down to pride in a lot of ways, and it is a sign of maturity when you can set aside that and ask for help in the areas you are not that good at. And it makes it easier to receive criticism from other teachers. We just have to continue to work together and become more comfortable using the language with one another. And I think the longer you teach and don't create that arena we were talking about, the harder it gets. (Cheryl, interview 3)

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Likewise, Sarah mentioned that the longer a person waited to improve his or her

proficiency, the faster it decreased. She also suggested that she would 'feel like a failure'

if she did not have that constant desire to improve and speak better every day. She

explained:

> It's absolutely insane to expect to be a Spanish teacher and not want to constantly improve your skills, and I think the longer you wait, the more your skills will go down hill and that's my biggest goal in life: to improve my Spanish and to be fluent. But I really don't think that there is anyway to improve my Spanish unless I'm practicing it on a daily basis. I would feel like a failure, even if I was teaching lower level Spanish, and then don't speak to anyone. (Sarah, interview 1)

Lastly, Lori underlined another important characteristic of creating 'good habits,'

namely, the need to make that habit a part of your daily routine and enjoy doing it. She

explained:

> Living with a Spanish speaking family. Going to the school everyday so I just kind of fell in love with it after that and now I, you know, every chance I have I want to hear it. I put the Spanish radio on when I'm driving home. I just want to always be learning it, you know, I'm just gonna always be learning it my whole life. The key is to make it a part of your routine and really enjoy it. (Lori, interview 1)

In sum, the NNSTs recognized the importance of making a daily commitment to maintain

and improve their language proficiency. The teacher participants also recognized that

forming the 'good habit' of using the target language inside and outside of the school

setting needs to start sooner, rather than later, in the language teacher's career.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented qualitative findings obtained from classroom observations, field notes, and teacher interviews with 4 NNSTs and 1 NST. All of the teachers shared the challenges they faced in their efforts to participate in their respective communities of practice. Many admitted their frustration with existing on the periphery and lacking the confidence or proficiency needed to become a full member of that community. In sum, they all noted that they seldom used the target language with other Spanish teachers.

Although each of the case study participants agreed that teaching lower level Spanish classes for a long period of time was detrimental to their proficiency, several admitted that many of the teachers in their school preferred to continue teaching the lower levels and avoid teaching the upper level classes. One teacher participant acknowledged that she would need the summer and advance notice to 'feel confident enough' to teach upper level classes.

In the final chapter of the dissertation, I integrate the results obtained from Phase One and Phase Two of the study in order to draw conclusions and propose implications for teacher education and teachers alike.

CHAPTER 6

INTEGRATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS,

IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current emphasis on exclusive use of the target language in the classroom

requires that second and foreign language teachers have advanced language skills

(Banno, 2003; Cooper, 2004; Peyton, 1997; Schulz, 2000, 2002). For more than a

decade, researchers have investigated issues involving non-native English teachers,

including the Native Speaker Model, the lack of opportunities to teach upper level classes

due to their 'non-native status,' their concerns regarding the maintenance and

improvement of their language skills, and the lack of collaboration between native and

non-native language teachers (Amin, 2001; Braine, 1999, 2005; Brutt-Griffler &

Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Medgyes, 1994, 2001; Pessoa &

Sacchi, 2002). In spite of the growing interest in Spanish, and despite the growing

number of Spanish teachers in the U.S., little research has looked at Spanish teachers'

language practices beyond the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to examine both native and non-native high school

Spanish teachers' language practices outside and inside of the school setting to better

understand the level of involvement with the target language that they demonstrate through participating in various activities. A mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003) was employed to achieve a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the complexity of high school Spanish teachers' language practices both inside and outside of their classrooms. Phase One of the study utilized a survey, and Phase Two was comprised of five qualitative case studies.

This final chapter is divided into three sections. First, a summary of the research findings (both quantitative and qualitative findings are integrated) divided by research questions, followed by a discussion of the results, is provided. Second, specific implications for teacher education programs and school communities, are discussed. Finally, some conclusions, along with recommendations for further research, are offered.

6.1 Findings Summary and Discussion

6.1.1 Findings summary for research question 1

Research Question 1:

"What are high school Spanish teachers' characteristics and beliefs about language teaching and learning?"

Survey results showed that of the 106 respondents, 94 were female teachers, and 12 were male teachers. Moreover, there were 91 NNSTs and 15 NSTs. Thirty-five of the teachers were novice teachers with 1-5 years of teaching experience, 37 were experienced teachers who had been teaching for between 6-15 years, and 34 were veteran teachers with 16 or more years of teaching experience. Sixty-five percent of the teachers held Master's degrees, and 69% identified Spanish as their area of specialization. All five of

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the case study teachers held a Master's degree, two in Spanish and three in foreign language education. Survey findings also revealed that 56% of the teachers thought that their overall Spanish proficiency had improved since they completed their last degree whereas 20% of the teachers thought that their Spanish proficiency had declined. Another 25% thought that their proficiency in the target language had remained the same since they finished their last degree. Both survey respondents and case study participants expressed their concern with three proficiency areas they believed had been somewhat neglected during their teacher preparation program: culture, speaking, and listening. However, in their open-ended responses to the survey questions, most teachers identified speaking proficiency as the area was most in need of attention. Survey respondents' concerns were supported by the case study findings. According to the four NNSTs, maintaining a fluent conversation using advanced grammar was a challenge, particularly for individuals that had been teaching lower level classes for a long period of time.

Results from the survey showed that only half of the teacher respondents had some experience teaching Spanish 4, and only a select group (8%-15%) had taught Spanish 5 or above. Likewise, as was shown in chapter 5, teaching lower level classes was a major concern for all of the NNST participants. Their comments suggested that their lack of experience teaching upper level classes did not help them improve or maintain their language skills. Moreover, the teachers noted that they lacked confidence when speaking with other Spanish teacher colleagues, and therefore refrained from participating in conversations that required them to use the target language.

Regarding teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning, survey data revealed that 29.5% of the teacher respondents thought that 'knowledge of grammar' was

the most important characteristic for Spanish teachers, and another 29.5% thought that 'knowledge of teaching methodology' was the most important. In third place, were 'native-like communication skills' (23.8%). Case study participants were asked in their final interview if they believed that near native proficiency was a legitimate goal for NNSTs. Participants agreed that it was essential for NNSTs to work with that goal in mind. However, they also agreed that reaching near native proficiency was difficult, and suggested that doing so entailed a tremendous personal and financial commitment. Three of the NNSTs also believed that having near native proficiency translated into more confident and credible Spanish teachers in the classroom, as well as a positive language learner model for students. The fourth NNST participant believed that teachers should invest in improving their proficiency, but also felt that they needed to realize that they would never be 'native speakers'. Finally, all NNST participants acknowledged the importance of using the target language on a regular basis, just as they would 'work out regularly' if they were athletes. They also underscored the significance of creating habitual opportunities to speak, read, write, and listen in Spanish.

6.1.2 Findings discussion for research question 1

The findings from both the survey respondents (106) and the case study participants (5) revealed an interesting portrait of high school Spanish teachers in a large Midwestern county. It is not surprising that one out of eight teachers was male, since the profession is largely composed of females. However, it is interesting that only one out of eight respondents was a NST, which illustrates either a lack of interest in the survey from this group of teachers, or a scarcity of native Spanish instructors at the high school level.

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In either case, findings showed that the majority of the teachers were highly educated with at least a Master's degree in Spanish education or foreign language education.

The scarcity of native instructors seems to be a concern for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), since it recently outlined a set of recommendations for improving language education. One of the recommendations encourages districts to apply for the 'Visiting Teachers from Spain Program' that brings native instructors to teach in the state for at least three years. The other recommendation seeks to increase the number of initial licensure programs geared towards preparing heritage and native instructors to teach their native language in the schools (Foreign Language Advisory Council, 2007).

One noteworthy result is that just over 50% of the respondents thought that their overall Spanish proficiency had improved since they began teaching. The rest of the teachers either thought that their proficiency in the language had remained the same, or had declined over the course of their careers. Moreover, respondents also thought that their oral proficiency was the area that suffered the most neglect during their teacher preparation program. These sentiments have been echoed in the literature on pre-service teacher education, which underscores the idea that teacher candidates require extensive practice to maintain and further develop their language proficiency. Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, and Foell (2006) cite results from a 1999 survey which found that 89% of novice teacher graduates "would have liked more coverage of fluency-building strategies in the foreign language teacher education" (p. 512). Morin (2007) also cites several investigations in which teachers demanded a greater number of opportunities to upgrade their oral skills. Likewise, Vélez-Rendón (2002a) suggests that, "teachers feel that their professional education programs afford them with abstract and theoretical concepts and

little practical knowledge" (p. 105). Equally significant are reports from a study undertaken by Koike and Liskin-Gasparro (1999) in which participants complained that professors in their language education programs "left them to sink or swim when it came to their oral proficiency; and confessed to fear of ridicule." (p. 59) One respondent even reported that, "some students in her program experienced harassment in class because of limitation in their proficiency" (p. 59).

Case study participants from my study also believed that they needed extensive support in the areas of speaking and listening in Spanish. One possible explanation for the decline in language proficiency these teachers reported was the lack of opportunities to teach upper level classes. According to the findings, only an elite group of teachers (comprised primarily of NSTs) seemed to have the responsibility of teaching courses beyond Spanish 3.

According to the survey findings and case study data, most high school Spanish teachers identified a balance between knowledge of grammar and teaching methodologies as being essential for the profession. Moreover, teachers also thought that 'having native-like communication skills' was very important, which connects nicely with the current trend of communicative language teaching and proficiency oriented language education. However, Burke (2006) suggests that the challenge for language teachers is to implement communicative language teaching and create a curriculum that promotes communicative competence, since "using communicative language teaching principles requires confidence and conviction and teachers must possess a high level of communicative competence themselves in the language" (p. 161).

Unfortunately, findings from my investigation indicated that 'del dicho al hecho hay más que un trecho', which means that it is difficult to practice what we preach. This study showed that in theory, the Spanish teachers understood the importance of having a high proficiency in the language, and of being a model of high communicative competence in the classroom. Nevertheless, I also found that in practice, teachers did not regularly seek out opportunities to increase their language proficiency, and most NNSTs had relatively little experience teaching upper level Spanish courses. Similarly, all of the NNST case study participants supported the survey findings in that they believed that near-native proficiency was a legitimate goal for Spanish teachers in the current profession to work toward. Yet, as will be seen in the section that follows, none of them was involved in any regular professional development programs or activities that required them to use Spanish outside of their classroom.

6.1.3 Findings summary for research question 2

Research Question 2:

What is the level of high school Spanish teachers' language practice outside of the school setting?

This research question investigated the language practices that teachers participated in outside of the school setting in an attempt to maintain or improve their Spanish. These language practices included: a) participation in professional development opportunities, b) involvement in foreign language organizations and conferences, c) language proficiency practices, and d) travel abroad. Survey results showed that the majority of the teachers (n=70, 66%) had not participated in professional development

opportunities designed exclusively for Spanish teachers. These teachers explained that most professional development opportunities were oriented towards all language teachers, and hence focused on pedagogical knowledge instead of content knowledge. They also conveyed their interest in participating in professional development opportunities related to content knowledge maintenance or improvement, such as immersion camps, conversation tables, study abroad programs, cultural enrichment activities, involvement with the Hispanic community, regular meetings with native speakers, and graduate classes for Spanish teachers (grammar refresher and conversation classes especially). Similarly, three of the four NNST case study participants stated that they would like to participate regularly in conversation meetings with other advanced speakers or native speakers of Spanish.

Furthermore, survey data revealed that just over half of the teachers belonged to and participated in professional language organizations and attended their conferences. However, approximately 40% of the teachers neither belonged nor participated in a language organization. Results from the survey also illustrated teachers' language proficiency practices. Seventy-five percent of Spanish teachers listened to music frequently or almost always, and 65% frequently or almost always participated in conversations that required them to use the target language outside of the school setting. The third and fourth most popular target language activities in which teachers engaged in outside of the school setting were reading magazines and news reports in Spanish (54%), and watching television shows in Spanish (50%). Unfortunately, teachers rarely reported watching movies in Spanish, or reading books or writing in Spanish. Correspondingly, the four NNST case study participants indicated that they also listened to Spanish music

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regularly, but only one of the four reported reading a book in Spanish that was not part of the school curriculum.

Regarding their travel abroad experiences, survey results showed that only six teachers had never traveled to a Spanish speaking country. The most frequently visited countries were Spain and Mexico. However, only 38% of the travel abroad experiences involved opportunities to study, and these ranged in length from one week to one year (two-six weeks being the most common duration). Likewise, all of the case study participants had traveled abroad, and the four NNSTs had also studied abroad in Spain and/or Mexico.

6.1.4 Findings discussion for research question 2

An intriguing issue in these findings involved the apparent lack of professional development opportunities designed to target high school Spanish teachers' language maintenance and improvement. Both the survey respondents and the case study participants suggested that they longed for opportunities of this sort, especially if they were offered within the district. These findings imply that high school teachers have plenty of professional development opportunities for improvement in the area of methodology, but few in the area of content knowledge and proficiency development.

Survey results also revealed that most teachers belonged to the state language organization (Ohio Foreign Language Association) and participated regularly in the annual conference. However, very few teachers belonged to the national foreign language organization (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), and a sizeable number (40% of respondents) did not belong to or participated in organizations and their

conferences, despite the fact that researchers such as Wilbur (2007) have underscored the importance of active membership in professional organizations in order to develop a spirit of lifelong reflective practice and a sense of professional identity.

High school teachers' self-reported comments regarding their proficiency practices outside of the school setting also merit extended discussion. Both survey and case study data showed that teachers regularly engaged in the following target language activities: listening to music, conversing with native speakers when given the chance to do so, reading magazine articles, and watching news reports. However, most teachers did not watch entire movies in Spanish, nor did they read books or even write in Spanish.

These results suggest that teachers are not frequently involved in target language activities that demand both an intensive and an extensive use of Spanish outside of the school setting, even though these opportunities are readily available and can be undertaken within the comfort of their homes. In the recent literature on foreign language teacher education, Pearson et al. (2006) state:

> Candidates who choose not to engage in these autonomous learning opportunities are perhaps showing us that they do not possess the disposition to be a successful foreign language teacher. The "Meets Standard" descriptor of the ACTFL Program Standards for "Dispositions for acquiring proficiency" closely echoes this last suggestion: "Candidates maintain and enhance their proficiency by interacting in the target language outside of the classroom, reading, and using technology to access target language communities." (p. 516)

These researchers believe that a professional who chooses not to be involved in opportunities to enhance his or her knowledge of the subject matter might not possess the dispositions needed to be a successful foreign language educator.

An encouraging finding is that almost all of the teachers had traveled abroad, which is essential for fostering oral proficiency and cultural understanding (Lafford & Collentine, 2006; Magnan & Back, 2007; Pearson et al., 2006). Nevertheless, most study abroad trips lasted only three weeks, and only one of the NNST case study participants had lived abroad for an entire academic year. Liskin-Gasparro (1999) suggests that "without a significant linguistic immersion experience, it is a rare language major who will graduate from college with an oral proficiency rating of Advanced" (p. 288). She recommends at least one semester of study abroad, and suggests that without this teachers "will step into their first classroom without the linguistic tools they need to communicate easily and comfortably in the target language" (p. 289). Hence, results from my investigation revealed that though most teachers were traveling abroad, their experiences doing so were considerably shorter than the length recommended in the literature.

In this section I have discussed teachers' language practices outside of the school setting. The following section summarizes Spanish teachers' language practices inside of the school setting.

6.1.5 Findings summary for research question 3

Research Question 3:

What is the level of high school Spanish teachers' target language practice inside of the school setting?

Not surprisingly, self-reported survey results showed that the higher the level of Spanish an individual taught, the more frequently Spanish was used in the classroom. These results held true for all the case study participants, all of whom increased the

amount of Spanish they used in the classroom as the level of the Spanish classes they

taught increased. Interestingly enough, both the survey findings and the case study

findings yielded similar results in the area of speaking the target language among school

colleagues. Survey data showed that 43% of the Spanish teachers occasionally spoke

Spanish with their colleagues, and only a select group of teachers (10%) almost always

engaged in target language conversations with other Spanish teachers. This finding was

also supported by the open-ended answers the respondents provided to explain why they

did not use Spanish to converse with other Spanish teachers. Most teachers explained that

there were different comfort levels within their department, so some teachers simply

chose not to use Spanish for fear of making mistakes in front of their colleagues.

Likewise, my field notes and observations of the five case study participants described

Spanish teachers that rarely used Spanish among themselves, even though opportunities

to converse and share planning time with other Spanish teachers existed. What is more, in

their interviews, each of the case study participants acknowledged the challenges and

fears involved in using Spanish with colleagues. This included a lack of confidence, fear

of being judged as incompetent, and an underlying sense of competition among

colleagues that prevented those whose abilities were not at the advanced level from using

Spanish outside of their classroom.

6.1.6 Discussion of findings for research question 3

     As I have stated previously, the literature on non-native English instructors is

extensive and recent. Many researchers have documented non-native language

professionals' feelings of insecurity in different educational settings (Braine, 1999, 2005;

Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Llurda, 2005). The contribution of high school Spanish teachers regarding their language practices inside the school setting deserves at least the same level of attention given to non-native English teacher issues, if not more, due to the fact that Spanish is the largest and most widely taught language in the U.S. The findings revealed a troublesome pattern in all of the participants' schools. On one hand, teachers reported using Spanish more often as the level of the Spanish class they taught increased, which is to be expected; yet on the other hand, they reported using little or no Spanish with their colleagues. The observations I conducted of my five case study participants confirmed these results. It is surprising that colleagues, who are supposed to share the same passion for the Spanish language and culture, found it intimidating to use the target language they teach to communicate with one another. Findings appeared to indicate that teachers were not confident in their oral proficiency, and were therefore reluctant to use Spanish among colleagues.

Koike and Liskin-Gasparro (1999) found this same sense of inequality, insecurity, and fear of making errors amongst graduate students seeking Spanish teaching positions. The majority of the participants in their study declined an offer of an official oral proficiency interview (OPI) rating for their dossiers. Thus, it seems that this low confidence in their language abilities starts at the pre-service level and continues as new teachers enter the teaching community. Significantly, the findings from my investigation underscored a need to implement change and increase teachers' proficiency and confidence from the day they declare their desire to go into teaching.

6.1.7 Findings Summary for research question 4

Research Question 4:

What are the differences in Spanish language practices between native and non-native high school Spanish teachers?

Integration and comparison of the results between NSTs and NNSTs is only possible for some of the issues that surfaced in Phase One of the study, since there was only one NST among the five case study participants in Phase Two. Therefore, the integration of findings that follows comprises only those areas in which data from both the survey respondents and the case study participant were available.

Regarding language proficiency, survey findings showed that 73% of the NSTs thought that their overall Spanish proficiency had improved since their last course of study, whereas only 53.8% of the NNSTs thought that their overall proficiency had improved. Moreover, although no NST thought that their Spanish proficiency had declined, 23% of the NNSTs thought that their proficiency had declined since they had finished their teacher education program. Similarly, among the five case study participants, three of the NNSTs thought that their proficiency had not improved in the area of speaking and listening. In fact, only Sarah, the one NNST teaching upper level Spanish classes, stated that she had improved her proficiency in the last two years due to the fact that she needed to use the target language in class to explain advanced grammar features. Overall, results from the survey revealed that both NNSTs and NSTs were content with their teacher preparation programs in the area of methodology. However, many NNSTs thought that their respective teacher preparation programs had prepared

them only 'to some extent' in the areas of listening (54%), speaking (55%), and culture (63%).

Regarding their participation in professional development, the majority of NSTs stated that they would like to participate in professional development opportunities that focused on pedagogical knowledge, whereas the majority of NNSTs were interested in participating in professional development opportunities focused on content knowledge. Survey data also showed that NSTs (60%) participated in professional development more frequently than did NNSTs (30%). This is not surprising due to the fact that most professional development opportunities reported in this investigation seemed to address issues of pedagogy for all language teachers rather than subject matter for Spanish teachers only. Likewise, all of the NNST case study participants expressed their interest in participating in professional development opportunities geared exclusively for Spanish teachers and that tackled the area of speaking and listening in Spanish.

Regarding differences in teaching experience, both quantitative and qualitative results showed that NSTs had more experience teaching upper levels than did NNSTs. Survey results showed that the average experience teaching lower level classes (Spanish 1, 2, 3) was the same (or similar) for NNSTs and NSTs. However, where teaching upper level classes (Spanish 4, 5, and advanced placement) was concerned, NSTs had at least twice as many years of experience when compared with their NNST colleagues. Likewise, among the five case study participants, the NST was teaching all of the upper level classes in her school, whereas only one of the four NNST participants was teaching Spanish 4 and 5 in her school. The remaining three NNSTs had never taught upper level Spanish classes.

Regarding NSTs' and NNSTs' use of Spanish in the school community, survey results showed that NSTs used their native language regularly to communicate with other Spanish teachers, but their NNST colleagues did not use Spanish regularly to communicate with other Spanish teachers. Results from Phase Two of the study showed that all five case study participants rarely used Spanish with most of their colleagues. Even Pat, the sole NST participant, explained that after several failed attempts to use Spanish with her colleagues, she had decided to speak English.

6.1.8 Discussion of findings for research question 4

The integration of results revealed that NNSTs and NSTs had different needs when it came to professional development opportunities. NSTs preferred professional development opportunities oriented towards pedagogical knowledge, whereas NNSTs preferred professional development opportunities oriented towards content knowledge. Hence, it is not surprising that NSTs reported participating in professional development opportunities more often than did NNSTs, since the Spanish teachers that participated in this investigation consistently reported that relatively few professional development opportunities designed to tackle content knowledge in Spanish were readily available to them.

Another interesting difference between NSTs and NNSTs pertained to their opinions about their teacher preparation programs. NSTs were generally happier with their teacher education programs than were NNSTs. In general, NSTs stated that they had been well prepared in the area of pedagogy. It seems that NSTs believed that they had received what they needed from their programs. Likewise, NNSTs were content with the

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preparation they had received in the area of methodology, but stated that their teacher

preparation program had not prepared them well in the areas of reading, writing,

speaking, grammar, listening, and culture. These results attested to the importance of

tailoring teacher preparation programs to better serve NNSTs' content knowledge needs.

One point that merits further discussion is the fact that NSTs seemed to have more

years of experience teaching upper level Spanish classes, whereas only a select group of

NNSTs seemed to have had the opportunity to teach beyond Spanish 3. These findings

point to an interesting dilemma in our foreign language proficiency oriented profession.

Current researchers and teacher educators are in agreement with the standards of the

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language in that they believe that all

Spanish teachers should have an advanced proficiency in the language (Derwing &

Munro, 2005; Lazaraton, 2003). Still, one might wonder how NNSTs can reach,

maintain, and even improve their proficiency levels if "they commit significant amounts

of attention and reflection to a level of language [lower level classes] that poses neither

much of a challenge nor much of an opportunity for growth in their own language

abilities" (Byrnes, Crane, & Sprang, 2002, p. 28).

Finally, the integration of results revealed an unsettled community of Spanish

teachers. On the one hand, many NSTs suggested that they tried to communicate in

Spanish with their NNSTs colleagues, but found that their colleagues either lacked the

confidence or the advanced proficiency level needed to carry on such conversations using

the target language exclusively. On the other hand, NNSTs argued that the pressure to use

the target language correctly in front of their colleagues was so strong that it prevented

them from taking the risk needed to do so. Issues about collaboration between native and

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non-native English teachers have been documented in the recent literature. My investigation echoes Liang's (2003) and Kamhi-Stein's (1999) recommendations for fostering collaboration at the pre-service level to ensure that non-native language teachers are not afraid of initiating collaboration due to language anxiety.

In sum, results revealed that NSTs and NNSTs had different needs in the areas of teacher education and professional development. Most importantly, the integration of findings suggested that high school Spanish teachers did not generally collaborate among themselves in the school setting, a situation that does not create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Personally, I find it paradoxical that high school Spanish teachers found it hard to put into practice what they strove to achieve in their own classrooms. That is, a spirit of collaboration among all students and an environment in which each student, regardless of their language proficiency, took risks and used the target language without fear of making mistakes.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

> I have taught French in high schools and colleges- all levels of language plus literature. I lead groups to France, and I am in good standing in my department and at my university. And yet this is the first time in my twenty-nine-year career as a French teacher that anyone has asked me to demonstrate that I can actually speak the language. (Liskin-Gasparro, 1999, p. 284)

6.2.2 Implications for Teacher Education Programs

Developing advanced proficiency

The quotation from a French teacher offered above refers to the implementation of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) as a required assessment of foreign language

teacher candidates' language proficiency. The implementation of the OPI is one of various reform efforts taken at the national level to foster stronger subject-matter preparation and ensure that both teacher education programs and their students are accountable for the skill and knowledge levels of beginning teachers.

Even though more than a decade ago, Lafayette (1993) underscored the importance of language proficiency: "lack of content knowledge […] causes lack of teacher self-assurance" (p. 127). It is only recently that steps are being taken to ensure teachers' high proficiency in the language they teach. In 2002, collaboration between the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) gave birth to a much needed document in our field: the Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (ACTFL, 2002). This groundbreaking document constitutes a response to the concerns of language teachers and other stakeholders regarding the lack of assessment in the area of oral proficiency.

In the state of Ohio, there has been no oral proficiency assessment for Spanish teachers since they discontinued the ETS Praxis II Spanish Productive Language Skills in 2003. Though the reasons behind this decision are beyond the scope of this study, the current lack of oral proficiency assessment for Spanish teachers is not. Throughout this investigation teachers have consistently reported feeling a low level of confidence in their oral abilities. Moreover, data show that NNSTs are not getting the same experience teaching upper level classes as are their NST colleagues, which poses risks to their proficiency advancement. Findings also suggest that teachers are not pleased with the scant attention that teacher education programs have paid to language teachers' oral

proficiency, and they complain that few opportunities exist for them to improve and build upon their undergraduate Spanish classes. Thus, one of the major implications for teacher education programs is to better prepare teachers in the area of oral proficiency. There are several changes that teacher education programs need to undertake.

First and foremost is the development of a fluent communication channel between foreign language and teacher education departments to ensure that Spanish teachers' proficiency development does not stop when they enter a teacher preparation program. One way to ensure this communication channel would be to create several faculty joint appointments between departments so that these professors serve as liaison between the foreign language and the teacher education departments as well as strive to create spaces for dialogue and cooperation. Pearson et al. (2006) emphasize the "necessity for cooperation between the traditionally separate fiefdoms of the language departments and the college of education through an articulated program or major for the successful preparation of teacher candidates" (p. 510). Liskin-Gasparro (1999) denounces the fact that "in foreign language education, we seem to have struck an unspoken agreement that the acquisition of content knowledge is the province of the language and literature departments" (p. 286). Our current proficiency oriented language field cannot successfully prepare highly qualified teachers if this divide continues to exist (Byrnes et al., 2002).

Veléz-Rendón (2002a) argues that the new guidelines offered by the Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (ACTFL, 2002) place pressure on both foreign language departments and teacher education departments to "examine both their curricular structure and content and their practices in order to

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guarantee the development of higher proficiency levels" (p. 129). She also asserts that, in

compliance with ACTFL/NCATE program standards, teacher preparation institutions

should implement an ongoing summative and formative assessment system to measure

teacher candidates' proficiency levels at several points in order to provide them with

positive feedback and help them make the necessary adjustments to achieve the required

level (Veléz-Rendón, 2006). Thus, cooperation between departments of foreign language

and teacher education as well as an on-going assessment system are two essential

measures needed to help all language teachers achieve higher language proficiency.

     Although reform efforts in education call for stronger content knowledge for new

language teachers and count on assessment to serve as an agent of change, the reality is

that, in the state of Ohio, no such system is in place. A step in the right direction was

taken, however, with the creation of the Foreign Language Advisory Council. The

Council was charged with developing a statewide foreign language implementation plan

that was submitted to legislators and policymakers on December 31, 2007, in the form of

a promising report: Passport to the Future: Ohio's Plan for World Languages (Foreign

Language Advisory Council, 2007). Ohio's plans to implement the plan by the 2014-

2015 school year consists of a set of recommendations to ensure that language teachers

are better equipped to teach the target language and culture incorporating the Standards

for Foreign Language Learning. One important recommendation (number six) calls for an

increase in the number of qualified world language instructors in the state of Ohio. It

requires teacher candidates to demonstrate proficiency on both the Oral Proficiency

Interview (OPI) and the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) as a condition for

licensure (see Appendix E for a current list of states with proficiency assessments in place).

Implementing the ACTFL/NCATE standards and the FLAC recommendations necessitates a serious revamping of teacher education to equip Spanish teachers with the necessary advanced proficiency that would allow them to go into teaching and be confident enough to teach any level of Spanish. Teacher education programs need to afford NNST candidates increased opportunities to practice their language skills by providing numerous and varied opportunities to work collaboratively with NSTs. As an entry level condition, teacher education programs should require at least a semester of study abroad, if not a full academic year. They should also provide immersion experiences at home, such as service learning. Methods' instructors should encourage candidates to take full advantage of extracurricular activities in order to keep in close contact with both the target culture and language. As Veléz-Rendón (2006) states, language teachers must be aware "that their own agency and investment in the learning process is crucial for success. Language learning is a long, complex process and much of language acquisition happens outside the confines of the classroom, therefore, candidates must seize every opportunity available to them to enhance their competencies" (p. 331). One way to seize every opportunity would be to insist that Spanish teacher candidates speak the target language amongst themselves all the time.

Language teachers, especially NNSTs, must become autonomous learners and seek regular exposure to the target language they teach so that when they enter the teaching profession they can continue to practice the 'good habits' they embraced during their pre-service status. As Murti (2002) asserts, "when one gives up the role of learner,

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one is doomed to stagnation. The dialectical tension between learning and teaching is what makes teaching so stimulating" (p. 28). Similarly, Byrnes et al. (2002) acknowledge that non-native teachers must attend to a continuing engagement with the process of L2 learning.

Problematizing the Native Speaker Model (NSM)

As the review of the literature about English language teaching and learning has documented, the Native Speaker Model is a reality in our language profession (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1996; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Thomas, 1999; Tseng, 2003). Similarly, the results from my investigation indicate that in the Spanish teaching profession in the county where the study took place, at least at the high school level, NSTs typically have the most experience teaching upper level courses, result of which may suggest a higher language authority of native speaker teachers. As Murty (2002) suggested, it is the image of the native speaker as a master of a language with the absolute authority to teach upper level classes that teacher education programs need to deconstruct in order to lead to a greater recognition of non-natives as teachers.

Byrnes et al. (2002) refer to the NS model non-native teachers need to face as the "rarely acknowledged credibility deficit" when they assert:

> [As] future members of the foreign language profession, [non-native teachers] face a constantly present though rarely acknowledged credibility deficit vis-à-vis their native speaking peers, a problem that becomes acute when the patent irreversibility of their nonnativeness runs against both cavalier behaviors and a certain helplessness and inability on the part of the foreign language profession to advise nonnative speakers on concrete ways for attaining and maintaining high levels of L2 competence. (p. 26)

Therefore, it becomes essential for teacher education programs that prepare pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers to problematize the NS model by incorporating components in their programs that specifically address native and non-native foreign language issues, such as specific readings that tackle the issue in order to create a space for critical debate and transformation. It is also critical that partnership and collaboration between NSTs and NNSTs be established at the initial preparation level so that native Spanish teachers understand they also have a lot to learn from NNSTs.

Amin (2001) states that teacher educators should help non-native language teachers build foreign language pedagogies from their non-native teachers' identities rather than trying to follow the native speaker norm. We need a pedagogy that builds upon non-native foreign language teachers' strengths and that does not diminish their non-native status. Both native and non-native foreign language teachers need to be aware of the native speaker model present in foreign language education and learn to problematize it. I agree with Cook (1999), who suggests that non-native language teachers should see themselves as "successful multicompetent speakers, not failed native speakers" (p. 204). The ability to realize this end requires a new attitudinal stance toward language on the part of learners and teacher educators (Train, 2003).

Train states, "A comprehensive training program should prepare future educators for the realities and the ideologies attached to the standard language, such as linguistic (in)security and (in)correcteness, that students will encounter throughout their professional lives" (p. 24). I recommend that high school Spanish teacher candidates undertake action research projects with their mentors to find out how the Native Speaker Model influences in-service teachers' practices in various school settings.

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While it is true that my investigation was conducted in the in-service world, I believe that it is essential to implement change at the pre-service level first since teachers are at the onset of their careers and generally more open to embracing new experiences. In addition, change takes time and trying to implement drastic changes when teachers are already in the midst of their careers and lives might be very difficult. In the two sections that follow, I draw some implications for pre-service Spanish teachers and then for in-service Spanish teachers and also suggest some changes in professional development implementation.

6.2.3 Implications for pre-service Spanish teachers
Creating COP in the teacher education program

In chapter two, I summarized the theory of communities of practice (COP) (Wenger, 1998) and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which I believe provide an excellent theoretical platform for change. Certainly, as Wenger (1998) states, COP "hold the key to real transformation-the kind that has real effects on people's lives" (p. 85). After being involved in a COP called M.A.T.E (Maestros Aprendiendo Todo del Español) with several pre-service Spanish teachers, I realized how beneficial was their belonging to a COP such as M.A.T.E. for their language proficiency. We need COP at the pre-service level so that novice teachers can experience the benefits of belonging to them early in their careers and perhaps be more willing to embrace COP in their school placements.

Teacher educators, method instructors, as well as language professors should coordinate efforts to allow the formation and development of such a community for SPN

teachers. Perhaps, belonging and participating regularly in meetings with other Spanish

teachers with the understanding that the sole language of the community is Spanish

should be a requirement in their teacher education program.

Involvement in service learning opportunities

Pre-service Spanish teachers need to be involved in service learning opportunities.

Such opportunities are readily available in the community with the increase of the

Spanish speaking population in many areas in Ohio and other parts of the U.S.

Participating in these activities will help Spanish teachers be in close contact with the

language and culture of the Spanish speaking world. The Ohio State University offers a

600 level class called *Spanish in Ohio: An experiential course* that has successfully

immersed advanced Spanish students in a wide range of service and experiential learning

opportunities. This is the class description,

> Spanish 689 is designed for undergraduate Spanish majors and minors, as well
> as other interested students, who wish to improve their oral language skills
> while learning about Hispanic culture in Ohio. The course format will consist of
> 2 two-hour classes and one three-hour class per week during the first five weeks
> of the winter quarter. Students will have the opportunity to hear guest speakers
> from the Hispanic communities of Ohio and take field trips to local points of
> interest. During the second half of the quarter, students will meet on an
> individual basis by appointment with the instructor. All students will meet
> together the final week to make presentations summarizing their activities.
> Students enrolled in Spanish 689 are required to participate in ten hours per
> week (100 hours total) of language use outside of class, in a mixture of
> situations that will include some service learning. They will document their
> activities in a journal to be handed in at the end of the course. In addition,
> students will complete an original project (to be presented in both oral and
> written form) on a theme related to the Hispanic experience in Ohio.

Teacher education programs that prepare Spanish teachers should require teachers to participate in classes such as the one described above so that they continue to work and improve in their language proficiency while they are learning about pedagogy.

6.2.4 Implications for in-service Spanish teachers

Embracing COP in the schools

After conducting this study and realizing how fragmented high school Spanish teachers COPs are, I believe that high school Spanish teachers from neighboring schools and districts should come together to create new COPs that provide a safe learning environment for all Spanish teachers, regardless of their level of proficiency. The establishment of safe and effective learning COP for Spanish teachers will foster growth in both foreign language educators and learners. By using the target language as the sole language of the community, teachers have the opportunity to practice and learn from each other, thereby increasing their proficiency. In order to embrace this model, it is essential to understand how COPs, with their boundaries and membership dynamics, work.

When designing COP we should take into account that members learn in relation to other members, and that COP should foster a learning curriculum, not a teaching curriculum that is arbitrarily decided upon by 'old-timers'. Furthermore, Lave and Wenger (1991) note that, "communities of practice are engaged in the generative process of producing their own future" (pp. 57-58). A COP for Spanish teachers should be characterized as dynamic and capable of rejuvenating itself by integrating new comers. Recall that Lori, one of my case study participants, explained that, as a new teacher, she wanted to use the target language all of the time when collaborating with colleagues, but

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since not even the department head utilized the language, she was 'uncomfortable' initiating such change. For a COP to work, all members should collaborate and support each other as they communicate in the target language.

A COP for Spanish teachers should come together not only to engage in pursuing a common enterprise (improving and maintaining the Spanish language and cultural knowledge), but also to figure out how their engagement fits in the broader scheme of things (Native Speaker Model). A joint enterprise pushes participants towards a collective process of negotiation and mutual accountability (Wenger, 1998). Moreover, any COP is part of a larger sociocultural context, and the first step a COP for Spanish teachers should take is to acknowledge the Native Speaker Model present in the broader system in order to transform and transcend it in favor of a model of professional agency and legitimacy for all language teachers. In this sense, Wenger (1998) underscores the idea that 'identity in practice is therefore always an interplay between the local and the global" (p. 162).

Just as it is important to provide pre-service teachers with a space in which to critique the Native Speaker Model, a COP for Spanish teachers should also strive to problematize the Native Speaker Model, which assumes that there is a set of characteristics and competences, the most notable being native like proficiency, that language teachers need to have in order to become a member of the Spanish teachers' community of practice. To this end, non-native Spanish teachers could find themselves trapped in a rigid idea about legitimate membership and eligibility for belonging, which is frustratingly out of their reach. They may come to believe that no matter how proficient they become, they will never be native speakers of the language. Language teachers need

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to be aware of this deficit model promoted by the native speaker model, and a COP for Spanish teachers provides the space for conversations that help them realize this end.

Both the literature in the field as well as the comments that were made by some of the participants in my study indicate that in many schools the best language teachers are presumed to be native speakers (Llurda, 2005; Varghese et al., 2005). These schools create unattainable images of the language-teaching world that are based on disconnected and ineffective assumptions. Wenger (1998) states that this type of imagination "detaches our identity and leaves us in a state of uprootedness" (p. 178). Thus, Pavlenko (2003) underscores the need to "offer identity options that would allow teachers to imagine themselves and others as legitimate members of professional communities" (p. 253) so that non-native language teachers are not made to feel like second-class teachers.

A COP for Spanish teachers could become a context where identity and learning serve each other, where non-native language teachers empower themselves to re-imagine their teacher selves transcending social boundaries and confronting the NS model. In fact, crucial for the success of COP for high school Spanish teachers is the creation of a space for native and non-native teachers alike to legitimize their participation and expand the narrow NS model so prevalent in our society (Leki, 2001). School districts should offer opportunities for engagement so that language teachers invest themselves in COP.

Furthermore, schools and districts that "can understand the informal yet structured, experiential yet social, character of learning- and can translate their insight into designs in the service of learning- will be the architects of our tomorrow" (Wenger, 1998, p. 225). Designing a COP for Spanish teachers and targeting non-native language teachers is a challenging but worthwhile undertaking. Wenger and Snyder (2000) define

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COP as the new organizational form that is emerging in both educational and business contexts. They stress that COP "promise to complement existing structures and radically galvanize knowledge sharing, learning, and change" (p. 139). They also note that COP are organic, spontaneous, and informal in nature. Thus, for a successful design, schools should provide an infrastructure in which communities can thrive.

The infrastructure comprises first a physical space. Teachers should have a comfortable and private place where they can meet regularly. Second, school administrators should support COP by reserving time in the school schedule for teachers to meet during the school day. Third, administrators should provide financial support so that teachers can invite special guests (perhaps members of the Hispanic community) and stay in close contact with the language and culture.

Throughout this investigation I examined the practices of high school Spanish teachers and their fragmented school communities. I believe that a COP for Spanish teachers could help remedy many of the problems I identified, transfer best practices through the sharing of stories, further develop language proficiency through apprenticeship and collaboration, and bring experienced teachers in contact with novice teachers. Such COP will become resources for maintaining and improving target language competence and a context where identity and learning serve each other, where non-native language teachers empower themselves to re-imagine their teacher selves transcending social boundaries and confronting the NS model.

Level rotation system for all teachers

Koike and Liskin-Gasparro (1999) assert that "nonnative [teachers] who had worked long and hard to become near-natives both culturally and linguistically could serve as living models of what their students might also accomplish" (p.57). These researchers highlight the importance of advanced proficiency for teachers and the key role it plays in the classroom. Yet, how can we bring more NNST to that proficiency level if most are 'stuck' teaching lower level Spanish classes for years? Byrnes et al. (1999) state, "Taking up the well-known dictum that one comes to know and understand what one is challenged to teach, we suggest exploring the opportunities for advanced L2 learning that the teaching of upper-level […] courses might present for non-native [teachers]" (p.25). Likewise, I recommend that schools offer all NNSTs the opportunity to teach upper level Spanish classes. Data from the survey and interviews show that non-native teachers in general do not have such opportunities and that many NNSTs are satisfied with teaching the lower levels and do not accept the challenge to teach beyond level 3. Perhaps a rotation system similar to the one proposed by Byrnes et al. (2002) in which teachers alternate in the teaching of lower and upper level classes would ensure that more NNSTs are given the opportunity to practice with the language.

To be sure, teaching at the advanced level is hard work for NNSTs, who must spend substantial amounts of time preparing for class, but the experience is particularly positive for teachers' proficiency. As Cheryl, one of my participants, explained in her initial interview, "In the last two years all I taught is 1 and 2 and I felt that my Spanish has stayed the same but I didn't feel that I was being challenged to really grow in it. This year teaching different grammatical aspects like subjunctive, I'm being challenged again

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so it has improved in some ways." Another teacher, Lori, explained how difficult, but

rewarding, it would be for her to teach the upper levels:

> If I were given the upper levels I would work hard to teach it and prepare for it. I think I could do it. I have to take everything I have and pull it together and use the language as much as possible. If I know in advance and I have the summer to prepare I think I could be ready. If I get an opportunity like that I'm gonna take and run with it. If you stay at 1 and 2 for a long time and don't have the chance to go abroad again, teaching the higher levels would be tougher.

All teachers, starting with the veteran teachers who usually have the first say when it

comes to choosing the classes they teach, should embrace this system of rotation. It is

worth noting that I do not recommend that schools mandate this system of rotation since

it could create a hostile atmosphere among teachers who are reluctant to change. Pat, the

one NST among my participants, stated in one of the interviews:

At this school specifically, teachers don't want to teach the upper levels. They are happy
where they are, there is no desire for them to move up. I think that if you present
the idea of changing levels to the teachers, and they know ahead of time, it'd be
a challenge but…I'm always a believer that if you are told ahead of time you
can prepare but the dynamics of the people are different in every place.

I believe that as conscientious professionals, all teachers, especially NNSTs, should

realize that they need constant contact with the language at the advanced level to keep

their proficiency updated.

6.2.5 Implications for professional development

Given that the survey and case study findings point to a need for more authentic

opportunities designed exclusively for Spanish teachers at the high school level,

especially for NNSTs, it is essential to change the professional development opportunities

available to Spanish teachers. As was reported earlier, NSTs seemed to participate more often in professional development opportunities than did their NNST colleagues. One of the reasons for this was that both groups reported diverse needs regarding professional development opportunities. NSTs looked for opportunities to improve their pedagogical knowledge, and data showed that opportunities of this sort were offered more frequently for all language teachers. However, NNSTs requested more subject matter oriented workshops geared toward Spanish teachers alone, something that seemed to be scarce in the county in which this investigation took place. Hence, NNSTs' apparent lack of participation in professional development compared with NSTs was likely the result of a feeling that their needs were not being met.

Professional development for Spanish teachers should present opportunities to maintain and improve their language proficiency and knowledge of the Hispanic cultures. Although my case study participants suggested that the most important resource for building their proficiency and professional growth was their study abroad trips, not all teachers were able to regularly engage in these kinds of opportunities. Therefore, professional development opportunities that target content knowledge and the improvement of proficiency in the target language need to be offered regularly within the district and/or county so that all teachers are able to access them without finding themselves in the difficult position of having to travel for long periods of time away from their families.

Likewise, the Foreign Language Advisory Council recommends the creation of meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers that target their proficiency and that are focused on language and culture learning. The report states:

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World language teachers also need continuous professional development opportunities to maintain and increase their own language proficiency, international understandings, assessment skills and technology skills. Professional development for beginning and practicing world language teachers is best accomplished through collaboration of teacher education programs, professional associations, ODE and school districts. To maintain and expand their own language proficiency, teachers need contact with Ohio's heritage communities, opportunities to study abroad or opportunities for participation in virtual target language environments. They also need job-embedded professional development that focuses on proficiency-based teaching, learning and assessment. (Foreign Language Advisory Council, 2002)

This report not only attests to the importance of developing advanced proficiency for teachers, but also underscores the need for significant collaboration between Ohio's schools and universities. In fact, one of the most critical aspects in the formation and maintenance of a meaningful professional development opportunity is the collaboration between a school and a university.

University teacher educators, in-service teachers and other stakeholders should work together to plan professional development opportunities designed exclusively for Spanish teachers since such partnerships could have a great impact on the quality of professional development opportunities that are offered. High school Spanish teachers in this investigation repeatedly denounced the lack of professional development planned exclusively for them, and suggested several options that would target their oral proficiency, including conversation round tables, Spanish book clubs, regular meetings with native Spanish speakers from a variety of countries, and university evening or weekend classes that provide in-service Spanish teachers with advanced language practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Lieberman (2000) uses the word "network" to refer to school-university collaboration in the creation of professional development. She highlights the importance of rejuvenating professional development opportunities by planning them according to the current needs of a specific group of teachers instead of targeting all teachers. She states:

> Decisions about curriculum and instruction are often made without reference to real problems of classroom life. Teachers are "developed" by outside "experts," rather than participating in their own development. Unrelated to classroom contexts and teaching practice, bureaucracies tend to create "one size fits all" solutions that often fail to make distinctions among different kinds of school and classroom contexts, or between the needs of novice and experienced teachers. (p.221)

In sum, this investigation has documented the current needs of high school Spanish teachers regarding professional development opportunities. It is essential that university-school partnerships be established to create professional development opportunities that are not 'one size fits all', but that instead distinguish between the professional development needs of NSTs' and NNSTs, and that take into account the current need for advanced proficiency in the language.

6.3 Conclusion

This investigation was undertaken to explore high school Spanish teachers' language practices and their involvement in activities that foster the growth of an advanced proficiency in the language. It was also designed to fill a gap in the foreign language teaching and learning literature that is dominated by a concern with issues related to English as a foreign language. The current study produced findings that are in

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accordance with previous studies in the field of teaching English as a foreign language,

such as the dominance of the Native Speaker Model (Amin, 2001; Braine, 1999; Brutt-

Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Medgyes, 1994), the detrimental

consequences of non-native teachers' lack of confidence in their proficiency (Medgyes,

1999; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese et al., 2005), the deterioration of language proficiency

when teachers are not regularly involved in the teaching of advanced level classes

(Armour, 2004), and the importance of collaboration between native and non-native

language teachers (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Lazaraton, 2003; Pessoa & Sacchi, 2002).

Moreover, the current study demonstrated the diverse needs of native and non-

native high school Spanish teachers in an effort to ignite change in teacher preparation

programs. It also underlined the need to reconceptualize language teacher education

programs in an attempt to provide both teacher candidates and in-service teachers with

regular opportunities to maintain and improve their proficiency in order to achieve the

current advanced standard. Promoting change in teacher education programs and foreign

language teachers' practice is not an easy task (Fullan, 2001; Middleton, 2002). Fullan

(2001) defines change as "reculturing the teaching profession-the process of creating and

fostering purposeful learning communities" (p. 136). In order to promote change, foreign

language teacher education programs need to provide Spanish teachers with opportunities

to experience the language and culture day in and day out. In-service Spanish teachers,

especially NNSTs, need to be immersed and continuously learn new things since both

maintenance and renewal of their language abilities is essential for both professional and

student success. If high school Spanish teachers can't speak the language well, they will

not use the language as frequently in their own classroom, nor will they use it outside of

the classroom. Hence, how can we expect them to raise the level of their students above their own level?

It is important that all high school Spanish teachers, especially NNSTs, understand that it takes an enormous level of investment to achieve advanced proficiency in the language. What is more, data from this investigation suggest that most NNSTs experienced difficulties maintaining their proficiency once they are in the profession, especially when they are 'confined' to teaching only lower level Spanish classes for a long period of time. Data also suggest that teachers believe that their university language coursework have failed to provide them with an adequate proficiency level as well as with meaningful professional development to help them achieve high proficiency in the target language. While rigorous entry, exit and ongoing assessment of teachers' proficiency is necessary to make both teachers and teacher education programs accountable and increase the number of highly qualified teachers, the real value of assessment "is to motivate and to serve our educational vision. The challenge for us is to initiate the process of change and to manage and direct it" (Liskin-Gasparro, 1999, p. 311).

Non-native Spanish teachers need to be passionate about learning the language and culture even after they have reached an advanced proficiency in the language. Furthermore, Spanish teachers, whether in their first or fortieth year of teaching, must continue the process of learning, not because certification standards require it, but because to stop learning about your subject matter is, in effect, to stifle the learning process in both teacher and student. As, Smith (2000) observes, "I was fortunate to realize that my development as a teacher […] was to be a continuous, ongoing process,

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that it would not be a trip with a final destination of 'knowing all'" (p. 20). Highly qualified Spanish teachers should embrace communities of practice in their schools since "working and sharing with other practitioners in the language teaching community, learning the discourse of that community, […] and associating […] with certain local, regional, and national groups through official membership have given me a professional identity and a sense of belonging that have enabled me to progress" (Smith, 2000, p. 21).

This investigation was also conducted in an effort to contribute to the understanding that the responsibility of helping teacher candidates achieve advanced level of proficiency not only falls under the foreign language departments but also the teacher education departments. Considering the growing enrollment numbers in Spanish, the increase of the Spanish speaking population in the U.S, and the importance of bilingualism today, the development of future Spanish teachers is essential. We need Spanish teachers who are highly proficient in the language, who understand the value of using the target language regularly, both in the school setting and outside of the school setting, who participate actively in professional organizations and professional development, and who form communities of practice in order to share their knowledge and expertise with other teachers.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Foreign and second language researchers are encouraged to conduct extensive longitudinal studies on high school Spanish teachers' efforts to maintain and improve language proficiency, and to further examine non-native Spanish teachers' involvement with the target language. Future studies might also examine in detail the quality of

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professional development opportunities designed exclusively for Spanish teachers in order to determine their impact on teachers' teaching and learning practices. Moreover, there is a need for replication of Phase One of this investigation in order to increase generalizability of results to other populations, such as teachers of less commonly taught languages. It would also be useful for future studies to replicate the survey in other cities, states, and with other foreign language teachers to draw similarities and differences with the results obtained in this investigation. In addition, more complex statistical investigations need to be conducted with a larger number of native Spanish teachers in order to allow for further comparison between this group of teachers and their non-native Spanish colleagues.

Another area that needs to be explored further is the power issue between native and non-native language teachers in the U.S. Spanish teacher participants in this investigation have shared their concern with the current practice of placing native speaker teachers to teach higher level courses. More studies are needed to investigate power issues well documented in the non-native English speaker teachers- native English speakers (NNEST-NEST) literature described earlier in chapter 2.

By and large, the profession must answer the call for expanded research efforts if foreign language teacher education is to change. We need to conduct longitudinal studies at language teacher preparation sites to investigate how they are preparing NNSTs to be proficient at the advanced level, and to examine how assessment practices such as the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) are influencing candidates' proficiency development.

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APPENDIX A

HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH TEACHERS' SURVEY

High School Spanish Teachers' Survey

Principal investigator: Dr. Keiko Samimy

Co- investigator: Cynthia P. Fraga-Canadas

The Ohio State University

Please take your time answering these questions (15 - 30 minutes max.) Answer them as accurately and truthfully as possible and remember that your name will be kept confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you can choose not to continue at any time. Your insights are very valuable and very much needed in the profession of language teaching and teacher education programs. I encourage you to contact me should you have any concerns: fraga.1@osu.edu.

Q. 1. How long have you been teaching **Spanish (SPN)** (in years)? _____

Q. 2. What is your first (<u>native</u>) language? _____

Q. 3. What is your primary <u>second</u> language? _____

Q. 4. What is your gender?

☐ Female   ☐ Male

Q. 5. Please check <u>all</u> the degree(s) you received, write your major(s), and the year you graduated.

	Degree(s)	**Major(s)**	**Year**
☐	Associate degree		
☐	Bachelor's degree		
☐	Master's degree		
☐	Doctorate degree		
☐	Other (_____)		

Q. 6. Since you have finished your last courses of studies, do you think your <u>overall</u> SPN proficiency has declined somehow, stayed the same, or improved?

☐ Declined   ☐ Stayed the same   ☐ Improved   ☐ Not applicable

Q. 7. To what extent do you think your teacher preparation program has prepared you
   in the following areas:

	Not at all	To some extent	To a great extent	Not applicable
Listening	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reading	☐	☐	☐	☐
Writing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grammar	☐	☐	☐	☐
Culture	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking	☐	☐	☐	☐
Methodology	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q. 8. In the last 3 school years (since Fall 2003 including your summers) have you
   participated in any professional development <u>exclusively</u> for SPN teachers provided
   by your district or county?

☐ Yes

☐ No⟶ Skip to **Q.10**

Q. 9. Can you please describe these professional development opportunities <u>exclusively</u>
for SPN teachers? (Please answer and then skip to **Q.11**)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q. 10. Spanish teachers have different reasons for not participating in professional
development opportunities. Can you please share some of your reasons for not
participating in these opportunities?

_____

_____

_____

Q. 11. To what extent does your school district or county provide you with opportunities to:

	Not at all	To some extent	To a great extent
Maintain or improve your SPN proficiency?	☐	☐	☐
Maintain or improve your foreign language teaching methods' knowledge?	☐	☐	☐

Q. 12. Please describe 2 different types of professional development opportunities (within your school district) in which you would like to be regularly involved and which would be exclusively designed for SPN teachers.

_____
_____
_____

Q. 13. What is your experience in teaching each level (in years)?

Spanish 1: _____ years
Spanish 2: _____ years
Spanish 3: _____ years
Spanish 4: _____ years
Spanish AP: _____ years
Other (_____): ____ years

Q. 14. What levels of SPN are you teaching <u>this academic year</u>? (Please check <u>all</u> that apply.)

☐ Spanish 1   ☐ Spanish 2   ☐ Spanish 3   ☐ Spanish 4   ☐ Spanish AP   ☐ Other
_____

Q. 15. What percentage of time do you use SPN in the levels you taught <u>last school year</u>? (<u>0-100 %</u>)

Spanish 1	_____ %
Spanish 2	_____ %
Spanish 3	_____ %
Spanish 4	_____ %
Spanish AP	_____ %
6) Other (_____)	_____ %

Q. 16. Are you currently a member of any of these organizations? (Please check <u>all</u> that apply.)

| ☐ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) | ☐ American Association of Teachers of SPN and Portuguese (AATSP) | ☐ Ohio Foreign Language Association (OFLA) | ☐ Other _____ _____ |

Q. 17. Since Fall 2003 (in the last 3 school years including your summers), how many (if any) foreign language conferences have you attended? (Include international, national, and state conferences <u>only</u>)

☐ 0 (Skip to **Q. 19**)   ☐1   ☐2   ☐3   ☐4   ☐5   ☐6 or more

Q. 18. How many times, if at all, have you presented at these conference(s) since Fall 2003 (in the last three school years including your summers)?

☐ 0   ☐1   ☐2   ☐3   ☐4   ☐5   ☐6 or more

Q. 19. Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
11) Whenever I come across a native speaker of SPN, I try to speak SPN with him/her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12) I frequently seek opportunities to <u>speak</u> SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13) When I'm with other SPN teachers, I almost always speak SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14) I frequently seek opportunities to <u>read</u> in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15) I believe my <u>oral</u> proficiency in SPN has improved since I started teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16) I believe my <u>listening</u> proficiency in SPN has improved since I started teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17) I believe my <u>reading</u> proficiency in SPN has improved since I started teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18) I believe my <u>writing</u> proficiency in SPN has improved since I started teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19) I believe my <u>cultural</u> knowledge in SPN has improved since I started teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20) I frequently incorporate authentic materials to use in my classrooms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q. 20. Given the present Spanish teaching profession. How important are these

characteristics to you? (1 being not important and 5 being very important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of SPN grammar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having native-like communication skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Knowledge of the cultures where SPN is spoken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Knowledge of teaching methodology.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to interact successfully with native speakers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being able to comprehend oral and written media in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q. 21. Which <u>one</u> of the characteristics listed in <u>Q.20</u> is the most important to you?

(Check <u>only one</u>)

☐ Knowledge of Spanish grammar.

☐ Having native-like communication skills.

☐ Knowledge of the cultures where SPN is spoken.

☐ Knowledge of teaching methodology.

☐ Being able to interact successfully with native speakers.

☐ Being able to comprehend oral and written media in SPN.

Q. 22. Please briefly explain why you think the characteristic from Q. 21 is the most

important to you.

_____

_____

Q. 23. At the moment, how would you describe your SPN …

	Needs a lot of work	Needs some work	It's OK	Does not need any work
1) Pedagogical knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
2) Listening proficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) Reading proficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) Oral proficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐
5) Writing proficiency	☐	☐	☐	☐
6) Cultural knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q. 24. How many SPN teachers are there in your school (<u>including yourself</u>)?

☐ 1 (Skip to **Q. 27**)   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5   ☐ 6   ☐ 7   ☐ 8   ☐ 9 or more

Q. 25. How often do you speak SPN with them?

☐ Never or rarely   ☐ Occasionally   ☐ Frequently   ☐ Almost always or always

Q. 26. People might have different reasons for speaking or not speaking SPN with their

colleagues. Would you please share some of those reasons/challenges?

_____

_____

_____

Q. 27. Thinking only <u>outside</u> the school setting, how often have you had time to engage

in these activities during the last 3 school years (since Fall 2003 including your

summers)?

	Never or rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost always or always
1) Read a book in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2) Read magazines, news reports in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3) Watched T.V in Spanish (Telemundo, Univisión, TV shows in SAP, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐
4) Watched a movie in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5) Listened to music in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6) Had entire conversations in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7) Surfed the internet in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8) Chatted online in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9) Wrote letters to friends or colleagues in SPN.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21) Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q. 28. Have you ever traveled to a SPN speaking country?

☐ Yes ☐ No ➔ (Skip to **Q. 30**)

Q. 29. Please complete the table below to the best of your knowledge. Start with the most recent experience and work backwards for your <u>last 5 trips</u>. Gracias.

Name of Country	Year Visited	Duration (in weeks)	Reason for visit				
			Pleasure	Study Abroad	Work	Service	Other (Specify)
			❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
			❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
			❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
			❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
			❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Q. 30. We are getting to the end of the survey, but before we finish I would really like you to write freely what other things come to your mind related to the topics covered in this survey. Anything else you would like to share?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q. 31. I would like to ask you to volunteer to participate in a more in-depth study, which will involve 3 interviews and 5 classroom observations. May I please contact you to invite you to participate? Remember you will be compensated for your time.

❏ Yes
❏ No

<u>Complete last</u>

203
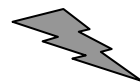
If YES, please complete the information below.

Name:

_____

Mailing address:

_____

_____

Preferred e-mail:

_____

Phone number:

_____

Le agradezco de todo corazón su tiempo y no dude en contactarme si tiene preguntas. Mi Email es fraga.1@osu.edu y mi teléfono es (614) 340-4244. You have been entered in a drawing for a Hispanic Heritage performance at your school and a $50 gift certificate to shop at a local mercado.

¡Buena suerte!

Cynthia P. Fraga (PhD candidate, co-investigator)
Dr. Keiko Samimy (principal investigator)
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX B

PRENOTICE LETTER

Dear Spanish teacher:

I am a doctoral candidate at The Ohio State University and I would like to learn more about your practices as a Spanish teacher so that teacher preparation programs can better serve Spanish teachers in the future.

In the next weeks, you will receive a questionnaire that should take you between 15-30 minutes top to complete. After completing the questionnaire and in appreciation of your time you will be entered in a drawing for a Hispanic cultural performance at your school and a gift certificate (worth 50 dollars) to shop at a local 'mercado'.

Le agradezco de todo corazón su tiempo y no dude en contactarme si tiene preguntas. Mi Email es fraga.1@osu.edu y mi teléfono es (614) 340-4244.

Cynthia P. Fraga-Canadas (PhD candidate)
Foreign and Second Language Education
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER FOR PAPER AND PENCIL SURVEY

Dear Spanish teacher:

¡Hola! I am a doctoral candidate studying in the Foreign and Second Language Education Department at The Ohio State University. I am writing to ask you to participate in a survey for all high school Spanish teachers in Franklin County. The purpose of the study is to learn a bit more about your experiences and practices as a high school Spanish teacher in an effort to improve teacher education programs and better serve you.

Your participation in this survey is very important and appreciated. Please be honest in your responses and remember that what you share will be kept confidential. The survey is voluntary and should take you between 10-20 minutes.

Remember that in appreciation of your time you will be entered in a drawing for a Hispanic cultural performance at your school and a gift certificate (worth 50 dollars) to shop at a local 'mercado'.

Le agradezco de todo corazón su tiempo y no dude en contactarme si tiene preguntas. Mi Email es fraga.1@osu.edu y mi teléfono es (614) 340-4244.

I hope you like the bookmark! Muchísimas gracias,

_____

Cynthia P. Fraga-Canadas (PhD candidate)
Foreign and Second Language Education
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview #1

Focus: Learn more about their experiences as language learners and language teachers.

1. Please tell me about your experiences learning Spanish. When did you start taking Spanish? Why? Favorite classes? Least favorite classes?

2. When did you decide to become a Spanish teacher? Why?

3. What experiences as a language learner have influenced your teaching practices? Why?

4. What are your challenges as a Spanish teacher?

5. What are your strengths as a Spanish teacher? Since the completion of your Spanish teaching degree, do you think they have improved?

6. What are your concerns, if any, regarding your skills as a Spanish teacher? Do you make any special efforts to improve these?

7. What activities do you engage in with the target language? And how often? Why?

8. What other activities would you like to be engaged in? Why?

9. Let's talk a little bit about the school community, how many other Spanish teachers are there in your school? Do you collaborate with them? Why? Why not?

10. Do you use the target language with other Spanish teachers? How regularly? Why? Why not?

Or if the teacher is a native Spanish teacher:

1. Please tell me about your experiences growing up speaking Spanish. Did your whole family speak Spanish? Did you take any formal Spanish classes? Favorite classes? Least favorite classes?

2. When did you decide to become a Spanish teacher? Why?

3. What experiences as a language learner have influenced your teaching practices? Why?

4. What are your strengths as a Spanish teacher? Since the completion of your Spanish teaching degree, do you think they have improved?

5. What are your concerns, if any, regarding your skills as a Spanish teacher? Do you make any special efforts to improve these?

6. What activities do you engage in with the target language? And how often? Why?

7. What other activities would you like to be engaged in? Why?

8. Let's talk a little bit about the school community, how many other Spanish teachers are there in your school? Do you collaborate with them? Why? Why not?

9. Do you use the target language with other Spanish teachers? How regularly? Why? Why not?

Interview # 2

Focus: Self-evaluation of the lessons observed and member check on the results of the survey.

1. How do you think the lesson work? Would you change something?

2. Why did you choose to explain […] in English? In Spanish?

3. What would you change for the next lesson?

4. I noticed you […] Why?

5. I wanted to share with you some results of the survey [show teacher numbers for several questions.] Why do you think teachers' answer this way?

Interview # 3

Focus: The school community of teachers and its dynamics as well as it elicited teachers' opinions regarding the concept of 'near native proficiency.'

1. I have asked you about your experiences as NNS/NS in the profession, any other experiences you would like to share?

2. What is your opinion on the standard of near-native ability for Spanish teachers? What are your views regarding the legitimacy or necessity of the construct?

3. What do you think about this quote from Edward Dudley (1983)?

   It should be recognized that the pursuit of native fluency imposes a condition of perpetual slavery to a goal that can never be possessed. Nor can it be pretended to without constantly dedication to the maintenance of skills, equal in difficulty to the daily drudgery of a concert pianist, a prima ballerina or an operatic athlete." (p. 58)

4. What would be your ideal SPN school community?

5. Any other thing you would like to add?

APPENDIX E

LIST OF STATES USING OPI/WPT

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

The following states are using Official ACTFL testing in foreign languages for some component of their teacher certification process. These states have established a formal testing protocol with the ACTFL Testing Office, LTI, to assess teacher candidate speaking and writing proficiency. The minimal level of proficiency is established by the individual state.

State	Test	Purpose	Required for	Minimal level required
Alaska	OPI/WPT	Highly qualified status	Russian, Japanese and Chinese teachers	Advanced Mid/Advanced Low
Arkansas	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification	Chinese Mandarin teachers	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
California	OPI	BCLAD Requirement	All teachers must demonstrate language ability in a language	Novice High
Connecticut	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification	WL teachers	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
Georgia	OPI/WPT	Teaching Permit	WL teachers – Languages using Roman based alphabet	Advanced Low/Advanced Low
	OPI/WPT	Teaching Permit	WL teacher – Languages using Non-roman based alphabets	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
Maine	OPI	Teacher certification	WL teachers	Advanced Low
Maryland	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification	Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Japanese and Russian teachers	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
New Jersey	OPI	WL teacher certification	Teachers of Category I, II, III languages	Advanced Low
	OPI	WL teacher certification	Teachers of Category IV languages	Intermediate High
	OPI/WPT	ESL teacher certification	ESL teachers	Advanced Low/Advanced Low
	OPI/WPT	Bilingual teacher certification	Bilingual teachers (English)	Intermediate High/Advanced Low
	OPI/WPT		Bilingual teacher (target language)	Advanced Low/Advanced Low
North Carolina	OPIWPT	Lateral entry and added area certification	WL languages	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
Pennsylvania	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification as an alternative to the Praxis	WL language teachers	Intermediate High
Virginia	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification	Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish Teachers	Advanced Low/Advanced Low
Texas	OPI/WPT	Teacher certification	Arabic and Chinese	Advanced Low/Advanced Low
			Japanese and Russian	Intermediate High/Intermediate High
			Vietnamese	Advanced Mid/Adv. Low
Utah	OPI	Teacher Certification	Spanish, French & German (WPT's not required)	Advanced Low
	OPI/WPT		Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Hindi, Korean & Farsi	Intermediate High
Vermont	OPI/WPT	Teacher Certification	WL teachers of Roman alphabet languages	Advanced Mid
			(other than French, Spanish, German, and Latin)	
	OPI/WPT		WL teachers of Non-roman alphabet languages	Intermediate High
Wyoming	OPI	Teacher Certification	All Modern Languages	Advanced Low

*Document provided by Ryan Wertz from the Ohio Department of Education, Febrery 2008.