Transnational Hispanic Identity and Heritage Language Learning: A Canadian Perspective

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Abstract

Bonnie Norton (2013. *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.)*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters) has placed the learner's identity as a key component of language learning. Heritage language learning (HLL) may be one of the most important domains for the confluence of identity and language learning. This intersection is particularly complex in the case of Spanish heritage language (SHL) teaching, since learners in this case not only have to contend with the identities of the different countries of origin and residence but also with a pan-ethnic layer, that of Hispanic/Latino identity. This study examines the role of this pan-Hispanic identity in SHL learning and how it might be useful to foster a wider sense of investment (Norton's term) in students by allowing them to develop a personal sense of identity that combines all these factors in strategic ways. Most studies of SHL learning have been based on US students, but here Canadian cases will be considered more in detail, since they highlight how identities change with specific local social conditions. It will be argued that the elements that promote this investment in US learners may not work in a Canadian context, where other aspects of Hispanic identity would have to be emphasized.

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In her pathbreaking study of immigrant women learning English in Canada, Norton (2013) shone a light on the key role that identity formations play in the language learning process. As she states, "it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self" (p. 45). What is more, those identities and the language that is used to create them are not neutral categories, but a site of struggle that is socially constructed, constrained, and disputed. A central component for language learning would be the notion of "investment," which extends the socially neutral concept of "motivation" (a constant quantity which does not change with time or social circumstance, an innate capacity of an individual which is not affected by the context of language practice) to include the often ambivalent and ever-changing relationship of the learners to the target language depending on the social and historical situation in which they speak it (p. 50). As an extension of this line of research, Norton and other scholars have incorporated the notion of "imagined communities" developed by Benedict Anderson to account for the creation and strength of national identities (Anderson 1991). Learners, as humans do in all kind of circumstances, use their imagination to establish a connection between themselves and other people in their social networks and beyond them (very possibly, with people they have never met). This process allows them to transcend their immediate circumstances and expand their own identities, a process for which language learning could be a prime example (Pavlenko and Norton 2007, p. 670). When a learner establishes ties with an imaginary community, what they are doing is in fact creating an imagined identity for themselves, rebuilding their sense of self in relationship to multiple and diverse groupings (Hornberger and Wang 2008, p. 7) that can allow them to transcend their current circumstances and conceive a wider range of possibilities for their future (Pavlenko and Norton 2007, p. 678).

The multiplicity and diversity of these groupings and reconfigurations of belonging can be a key asset to examine the language learning practices and investment positions of some groups, such as the growing number of second- and third-generation heritage language learners (HLLs) present nowadays, especially in countries that receive large numbers of immigrants (Guardado 2010, p. 331). As a matter

of fact, language preservation has been found to be the most important element in the maintenance of transnational ties and identities among descendants of immigrants to the USA (Rumbaut 2002). The transnational community is by necessity a type of imaginary community, since the individual will not be able to meet all its constituents; distance is indeed its defining feature, so the relationship can only exist in the learner's imagination (Norton 2013, p. 8). As Norton claims, "static categorizations need to be interrogated in the face of globalization" (p. 22), and few groups of language learners exemplify this situation better than HLLs. Imaginary identities and communities are particularly rich concepts to explore these individuals precisely because they are part of multiple communities (host country, family, immigrant group in the host country, country of origin, as well as various other intersecting categories such as class, race, gender, etc.). An illustrative example of the complexity in which different identity markers overlap and groupings are changed depending on specific situations is the young Dominican Americans who switch language varieties from African American Vernacular English (foregrounding solidarity with similarly racialized and marginalized African American peers) to Spanish, as a sign of group identity and differentiation from those peers, striving to uphold an identity based on language at odds with the phenotype-based categorization imposed upon them by US notions of race (Bailey 2000).

As the previous example shows, heritage learners of Spanish in countries such as the USA and Canada may constitute an especially fruitful group to consider when applying notions of imagined identities and investment. These individuals present an even richer set of possible categories of belonging. Their relationship is not just with a specific country of origin but also with crisscrossing and ill-defined racial groupings: Hispanics, even those with roots in the same country, are not racially and culturally homogeneous and often showcase hybrid identities which turn problematic for the traditionally more binary (Black/White) distinction of countries of settlement in the English tradition. Besides these, there is also an element that adds yet another overlapping layer of identity, namely, a form of pan-Hispanic identity which encompasses not just the Spanish-speaking immigrant population but the whole group of Spanish-speaking countries of origin, conceived as a transnational imagined community. The heterogeneity and complexity of this layer of identity makes it a key example of the process of creation of images of possibility for the self that transcend direct acts of engagement (Norton 2001, p. 163). The purpose of this essay is to examine how such an identity intersects with the process of Spanish heritage language (SHL) learning, focusing on the presence or absence of this identity in textbooks for North American SHL students, especially in the Canadian context. It is my contention that a judicious and critical engagement with pan-Hispanic identity can be a way for the instructor of a SHL class to access an imagined community which would allow students to engage and become more invested in the process (since the act of learning the language is already strengthening their belonging), but the very flexibility of Latino identity would at the same time allow for it to be adapted by each individual learner for their own needs and desires as they reorganize their sense of self and their position in the social sphere. The

multiple possibilities afforded by pan-Hispanic identity can prevent the imposition of a monolithic image of instructor expectations, which in turn should contribute to engagement and investment in the subject (p. 165). In order to examine this contention, one must first consider the complexity of Hispanic identity.

Latina/o-Hispanic Identities: A Problematic Category

Although generally acknowledged as an existing category, and repeatedly quoted in instances of self- and other-identification, pan-Hispanic identity is not easy to pin down. The common terms themselves (Latina/o and Hispanic) are distinct but sometimes used interchangeably. Some individuals will accept one but not the other (Flores 2004). "Hispanic" is seen as problematic by some, since it emphasizes the former metropolis as the site of identity, although from Spain there have been efforts to downplay that reproduction of the colonizer-colonized hierarchy by means of an emphasis on language as the key link (del Valle 2012). "Latino/Latina," on the other hand, has the advantage of reducing the role of the former colonial power and encompassing not just the former Spanish colonies but also Brazil. However, it is enmeshed in a problematic history: it had its origin in nineteenth-century French discourses and came to prominence as part of France's own colonial attempts in the region, as well as an ideological justification for the leadership of France at the head of the rest of the "Latin" (i.e., Romance-speaking) nations against a perceived Anglo-Germanic enemy (Mignolo 2005, pp. 77–80). It was taken up by elites in post-independence Latin America, since it justified the leadership of creoles (citizens of European descent), and it provided justification for their dominance over other social groups, especially those of indigenous and African descent (Mato 1998, pp. 607–608). The Spanish language became a key element in the construction of national identities for the newly independent republics of Latin America, in spite of its ties with the former colony. Its usage was pushed by local elites of European descent who wanted to eliminate linguistic variety for the sake of national identity-building, and in this process, Spanish also became a link of solidarity between these nations and the source of the idea of pan-Hispanism (Mar-Molinero 2006, pp. 15–16). Given that both "Latino" and "Hispanic" are terms in common use, even if they are somewhat flawed, this study will employ them indistinctly, although they are not exactly synonymous. An important fact to remember from this controversy is that a common language is always perceived as a key element in such an identity category, no matter what one names it (Bailey 2000; Carreira 2000).

Tammelleo (2011) summarizes the ideas of some contemporary thinkers on Hispanic identity. Jorge García places its origin in the encounter between Iberian colonists and indigenous people and claims that the term is useful to see the commonalities that join these diverse communities and which one might otherwise overlook. He emphasizes "mestizaje" (which originally referred to racial miscegenation, but eventually came to signify the commingling of diverse cultures and ethnic groups as the defining constituent of Latin American identity) as a key characteristic of this highly hybrid cultural community, and he prefers the term

"Hispanic." Linda Alcoff, on the other hand, eschews ontological definitions in favor of an identity constituted by the neocolonial confrontation with the USA, especially in the events surrounding the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), which ceded a large section of Mexican territory to the USA (California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado); the Spanish American War (1898), in which the former Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico (as well as the Philippines) became independent, but were subjected to a highly interventionist surveillance by the USA; or the creation of the state of Panama (1903) and the US sovereignty over its canal. Alcoff favors the term "Latino" and refers it to a relationship of opposition and discrimination by a colonial power that is still in operation (as opposed to the deceased Spanish empire). Angelo Corlett, for his part, is more concerned with specific political and administrative action for Hispanics in the USA (affirmative action, reparations, etc.) and therefore presents a gradual model of Latinity comprised of several characteristics, the most important and only necessary one being genealogical descent. Other (nonessential) markers would be a degree of language command, respect for Latino culture, and self- and other-identification as Latino. Tammalleo will go on to elaborate a more complex historical account partly based on these ones, which includes a colonial Hispanic identity present in the days of domination by Spain, a national Hispanic identity developed by the new independent nations, and a Latino/Latina identity which he circumscribes exclusively to Hispanics living in the USA. As with Alcoff, Tammalleo locates this identity in the opposition to and experience of discrimination and in the fact of Latinos being interpellated by the dominant culture as a single, homogeneous group, whether it be for discriminatory or for commercial and economic processes. This identity retains a large part of its diversity despite being treated as monolithic by the hegemony.

Tammalleo establishes a firm division between the identity experience of Latinos in the USA and of Latin Americans in Spanish-speaking cultures, but this fact overlooks a good amount of commonalities and especially misses the fact that at least a part of it is experienced as similar by individuals inside and outside the USA. This is one of the main points in Mato (1998), who describes Latinos as an "imagined transnational community" (p. 600) which encompasses individuals across the continent. Mato emphasizes the notion of identity-making as social construction, an active process, a constant struggle which in this case involves both the market forces that want to promote their products to this enormous population, and the individuals in the community that see the usefulness of a strategic essentialism in order to promote their social and political aims (p. 602). A transnational Latino identity, however, is also strengthened by the relatively recent phenomenon of a "consciousness of globalization" (p. 603), aided by large population movements as well as modern telecommunications and travel, which allow for an extended contact with the country of origin and among different national groups (Mar-Molinero 2006, p. 17).

A further complicating factor is the inclusion of Spain and Spaniards in this identity constellation. The original formulations of Hispanic/Latino identity would deny it, since they were attempting to create a culture in opposition to the former colonial power, but as time went on, these positions became more fuzzy. There have

been attempts from Spain to foster such a pan-Hispanic identity as a form of recovering diplomatic influence and opening priority spaces for commerce, and in recent years, cultural institutions such as the *Real Academia Española* (Spanish Language Academy) and the *Instituto Cervantes* (tasked with the spread of the Spanish language and culture abroad by teaching, developing language teaching materials, and providing teacher certification) have emphasized a stance of fraternity and equality among all Spanish speakers based on affect rather than political imposition or old attitudes of Peninsular superiority. José del Valle (2006, 2012) calls it *hispanofonía* ("hispanophony"), but again, it is not free from trouble, since it goes hand in hand with economic expansion by Spanish corporations, as well as a commodification of the language as an economic resource, a process in which Spain wants to position itself as the leading nation.

Identity in SHL in the USA and Canada

Given the much larger size of the Spanish-speaking population and the historical roots of a large number of them in the territory, most scholarly studies of SHL have focused on the USA: Peyton (2008) has a list of resources and basic bibliography; Beaudrie and Fairclough (2012) have a recent collection on this topic; Parra (2014) provides a useful "where to start" approach to designing HL courses from an ecological model perspective. Identity was a central concern of many of these programs, since they started in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of civil rights mobilizations by Latino activists (particularly Puerto Ricans in New York and Chicanos in the Southwest) and the flourishing of ethnic studies programs in US universities. As such, the early SHL courses had a large emphasis on inclusion and representation of marginalized groups, as well as instilling pride in the student's roots and identity (Leeman and Martinez 2007). Given this consciousness-raising intention, early iterations of US Hispanic studies stressed the commonalities between their target population and Latin America, fostering a sense of pan-Hispanic identity (p. 41), and Spanish was promoted as a key link of solidarity among US Latinos themselves and with the rest of Latin Americans. Given the distribution of specific populations in the USA, many of these programs were also focused on the national group that was more dominant in each region (Puerto Ricans in New York, Mexican Americans in California and the Southwest, Cubans in Florida, etc.) and tried to cater to these more specific identities and language varieties.

Although this early emphasis on identity has somewhat abated in favor of a more commodified view of the language as an instrument for professional betterment, US SHL students still find this approach highly appealing, as shown in the surveys carried out by Beaudrie et al. (2009) among students of the extensive SHL program at the University of Arizona. These students expressed the need for a more culturally relevant curriculum that established connections between the classroom and their homes and communities, but they also claimed to have gained a new sense of identity and understanding of their background through the classes (p. 167). The program strove to provide this cultural awareness and make connections with the

multi-faceted and heterogeneous nature of US Latino culture while at the same time value and respect the student's own cultural background. It is notable that self-identification as Hispanic rose as the program advanced, while identification as "Other" went down in the more advanced courses, indicating that SHL teaching may contribute to foster a sense of pan-Hispanic identity among the students (pp. 164–165).

As a contrast to US-centered SHL studies, it will be instructive to turn to the less studied case of Canada, which presents quite a different context for SHL and pan-Hispanic identity. The specific case of Toronto provides a good example of these differences, as seen in the cultural geography study by Veronis (2007). First, it must be noted that Hispanics are a relatively recent immigrant group in Canada. Second, the Hispanic population in Canada is marked by an enormous diversity. Unlike the USA, where a large majority is of Mexican origin and some groups dominate specific geographical areas, in Canada Hispanics encompass most of the Latin American nationalities, with no clear dominant group (this diversification is also beginning to change the landscape of US Latino identity, Aparicio 1993). Third, Hispanics in Canada are noticeable as a group in large Canadian cities, but constitute a relatively small immigrant group among many others (Veronis 2007, p. 460). In the USA, on the other hand, Hispanics are by far the largest immigrant population in most locations.

All these circumstances conspire to create a sense of what has been termed an "orphan community" (Veronis 2007, p. 455), with a diminished sense of integration in Canadian society and limited cohesion as a group. Veronis employs the notion of "imaginary space" (related to imaginary community) to analyze the attempts by members of the Toronto Hispanic community to demarcate an area as a specific Latin American neighborhood, an act that would give visibility and body to the community and bring its status to par with other immigrant groups, which possess such spaces (Chinatown, Corso Italia, Portugal Village, etc.). The very diversity of the community, divided by country of origin, has been an obstacle to achieve this aim. Varonis notes that notions of hybridity and fluid identities, although celebrated in academic writing inflected by poststructuralist ideas, can be problematic for immigrant collectives, since they make it difficult to articulate a common voice and to exercise political action (p. 458). In this case, the construction of imaginary geographies, such as a *barrio latino* or a *casa de cultura*, would constitute a case of strategic essentialism in which the marginalized group employs the perceptions of the hegemonic society to reify their identity and present themselves as a group who must be paid attention to. Part of this strategic essentialism would indeed be the fostering of pan-Hispanic commonalities based on an essentializing label recognized by the state, while at the same time maintaining internal diversity (p. 461). It must be noted that since the publication of this article (2007), no Hispanic neighborhood has emerged in Toronto, but the efforts to foster an "imaginary geography" of pan-Hispanic identity have continued with events such as the annual Salsa on St. Clair festival, now in its 12th edition, which bills itself as a celebration of Latin culture. In the case of Canadian SHL students, the adoption of a Latino/Hispanic identity (while at the same time not losing other specific identities, based on country

or region of origin, race, etc.) might similarly prove fruitful, as a way to position themselves in recognizable ways in front of Canadian society: a vital part of the multicultural tapestry that is celebrated (at least, in theory) in the ideology of the country. Yet another benefit for Canadian SHL students would be enlarging of the community in which they can practice their language skills while at the same time maintaining a sense of identity, since the lack of a visible, vibrant local community has been seen as contributing to language attrition for Hispanic immigrants in Canada (Duff 2008, p. 81).

Indeed, a key difference with the USA is the adoption in Canada of multiculturalism as official policy in the 1970s. In spite of its flaws (a certain stereotyped essencialization of the Other, or a tendency for superficial approaches of the "foods and festivals" type), the policy and stance of multiculturalism allows immigrant groups to position themselves as key elements in Canadian diversity and gives them grounds from which to advance their struggles for belonging (Veronis 2007, p. 463). In the USA, while overt racism against Hispanics has greatly abated, discriminatory attitudes toward the language have continued in less direct ways, such as the "English-only" movement and the curtailment of bilingual education programs (Beaudrie et al. 2009, p. 158). Indeed, in the post 9/11 context, language may have increased its status as a symbol of allegiance to the country and to a monolithic American identity (Hornberger and Wang 2008, p. 22). On the other hand, the pluralistic Canadian approach is often contrasted to the US model of covertly enforced assimilation described in the "melting pot" metaphor (Duff 2008, p. 72). One of the identity spaces opened by Canadian multiculturalism is the additional view of the heritage language not as a holdover from the past, but as an element in a multilingual and cosmopolitan self in which individuals position themselves as embodiments of that new multicultural Canadian identity. These are the conclusions of a study on the language ideology and preservation practices of three Hispanic families in Vancouver (Guardado 2010). Of special interest in this research is the notion of "third culture kids," which claims that individuals growing up in two or more cultural groups develop an identity which is not just a mixture of them, but a composite greater than the sum of its parts. The Hispanic/Latino label might provide one of the elements for building a complex, hybrid identity in which different aspects are additive and enriching instead of having to erase one of them for the purpose of assimilation. Thus, young SHL learners in Canada might mobilize their identity as a multi-faceted combination of various transnational communities based on pan-Hispanic identity, country of origin, and race (one of the parents in the study is a Guatemalan Maya) as well as present the combination of those communities as a multilingual, cosmopolitan subject that in its diversity fits the ideals of Canadian multiculturalism. In this sense, SHL would not be just a function of preserving links to the past but to bridge a gap between the local/individual and the global perspective, a function for which a transnational pan-Hispanic identity is very well suited. A caveat of this study is that all the families were educated, middle-class professionals; there is a entrenched tendency to consider multilingualism enriching and positive for higher-class individuals, but detrimental and a deficiency for underprivileged immigrant learners who need to integrate in the national fabric (Pavlenko 2006,

pp. 182–183; Ortega 1999, pp. 246, 248, 256; Lo Bianco 2008, p. 54). This perception of second language study as an elite endeavor might pose problems for the general applicability of the conclusions.

SHL Textbooks and Latino Identity

More often than not, the key structuring element in an SHL course will be the textbook. In order to examine how different approaches to identity are embodied in a course, this section will focus on textbooks as carriers of this type of language ideology. From a Canadian perspective, this attempt is problematic, since the market is dominated by US-based publishers who create books with the demographic of the US Hispanic population in mind. What one must consider is how those US points of view can be adapted to the Canadian context or which aspects of the textbook must be discarded in instruction in favor of other materials. In order to consider this, a summary of the study of SHL textbooks carried out by Leeman and Martinez (2007) from a US perspective will be offered, followed by an analysis of the presence of Hispanic identity discourses in *La lengua que heredamos* (Marqués 2011), a textbook that has been in use for a number of years in a SHL course at the University of Toronto.

Leeman and Martinez (2007) divide the field of SHL in two historical sections, before and after 1990. Earlier textbooks, in keeping with the relationship of the field to civil rights, empowerment, and social justice movements, emphasize identity and relationships to the community, which is often focused on specific groups (e.g., New York Puerto Ricans, Southwest Chicanos, etc.). There is a focus on community membership and elevation of local knowledge as valuable. However, this narrower focus does not exclude links with pan-Hispanic identities, present in expressions of ownership and inheritance in the titles and prefaces of the books. This approach does not forestall a certain limiting perspective of the emphasis on community knowledge: in the interest of identity-building, Spanish is relegated to a local and domestic atmosphere and appears to be erased from the public sphere (p. 49).

The trends toward globalization and commodification of education, together with a growing hostility in the USA toward minority rights movements and affirmative action, affected the point of view of later SHL texts, which start to construct cultural and linguistic diversity not as a mark of identity and empowerment but as an economically advantageous resource, especially relevant in view of the growing purchasing power of US Hispanics, as well as trade between the USA and Latin America. More recent textbooks emphasize Spanish not as grounded in the local community but as valuable world language. The target audience also reflects the growing diversity of the US Hispanic population, with pan-Latino identity overshadowing more specific subgroups. In presenting Spanish as a marketable resource, these textbooks present a neutral, generally understandable Spanish that conforms more to the monolingual norms of the main Spanish-speaking countries (i.e., the locus of authority is outside the USA), devaluing the practices of the local community and the Spanish dialect spoken by the learner's family, perhaps considered

inadequate because of class prejudices (Train 2007; Valdes 1998; Villa 2002), or some students' hybrid, creolized versions of the language, perceived as deficient (Carreira 2000; del Valle 2006; Leeman and Martínez 2007). In summary, by presenting Spanish as a commodity, these textbooks move away from notions of ownership and local communities toward an idealized standard that is meant to represent the commercially useful variety of the language. While this type of discourse favors notions of pan-Hispanism (this homogenizing view is after all the perspective of corporations that want to trade with Spanish speakers), it may contribute to a perception of foreignness of the language for some of the learners, since the value of the language is predicated on its economic potential rather than the learner's heritage, while at the same time it may cause a sort of alienation, since the underprivileged version of Spanish language which many students may be more familiar with and which indeed may form the core of their affective relationship with the language is erased or implicitly presented as inferior (Train 2007, p. 224). A positive development may be the clear movement of Spanish to the public sphere.

Originally published in 1986, and now in its 7th edition, *La lengua que heredamos: Curso de español para bilingües* (LLQH) might be seen as a bridge between those two periods. The title makes reference to the inheritance notions of earlier textbooks, but the subtitle avoids specific subgroup identity and addresses itself generally to "bilinguals." The preface continues in this vein, claiming to be designed for "students of Hispanic background" who "want to improve their formal knowledge of the language" (Marqués 2011, p. v). While there are no specific references to Spanish as a commodity, the text moves away from identity-based claims of relevance and focuses instead on the most formal registers (especially in writing) of an imagined pan-Hispanic variety of the language. In spite of this, the preface claims that the book "does not dismiss nonstandard varieties as useless and undesirable," but one is hard-pressed to find examples. The teaching approach prioritizes the development of discrete skills, specially on reading, writing, and vocabulary. Indeed, identity does not appear in the preface until the second page, in a section dealing with the included reading materials, which are the main (only?) source to "introduce them to the rich variety of the Hispanic world and to stir pride in their heritage" (p. vi). Several items are noteworthy in this statement: the perspective of identity is clearly that of pan-Hispanism rather than specific US Latinos; identity is seen as secondary (it's only dealt with via the readings, and only indirectly; these readings are only presented as an introduction to the issue, which the book does not treat directly otherwise); the third person plural offers a distancing effect, the preface is enunciated for the instructor rather than the students, and this instructor is considered to be separate from the students and their identity-making processes.

The emphasis on formal language and the scant presentation of cultural and identity-related materials were not lost on the University of Arizona students who used this textbook in an intermediate writing course and dismissed it generally as "just a grammar book" (Beaudrie et al. 2009, p. 170). The book devotes a chapter to each Spanish-speaking country, but the theme is limited to some readings that deal with cultural, economic, geographical, or historical facts about the country, sometimes containing brief literary excerpts. It is notable that the third chapter (after a

preliminary one and one devoted to Hispanic groups in the USA) focuses on Spain, which would therefore be considered part of that global Hispanic identity. The reading fragment is an extract from *Don Quixote*, which may in itself signal the attitude toward Spain in the place of a global Hispanic identity: its main value is bringing the prestige of a classic literary text in the Western Canon, but it does not seem to be considered an active partner in contemporary exchanges. This contribution could also help combat notions of inadequacy toward Spanish, seen as a low-prestige language by part of the US population. A similar value could be attributed to the introductory reading on the history of the language, which emphasizes its roots in Latin and the presence of the Roman Empire in Spain.

The general pan-Hispanic attitude of the text is also present in the chapter on Hispanic groups in the USA. A list of US-based Hispanic celebrities categorizes them by country of origin, even if they were born in the USA, signaling that the national origins are the ultimate criterion of identity and implicitly dismissing the notion of US Latino identity as a distinct reality from those other markers based on a monocultural nation-state. Interestingly, Spaniards living in the USA are present in the list, placing them in the same position as US-born Hispanics. The reading in this chapter reiterates these notions by presenting the US Hispanic population as a series of discrete groups with no attempt at establishing a common identity and with no reference to earlier historical conditions that established this presence. The only common element one can discern in the presentation is a discourse presenting these immigrants as hardworking and tenacious; indeed the only sentence in which Hispanics are represented as a unity claims that "the Hispanic population keeps growing, working hard and striving to prove that most of them come to this country to work, to progress through their effort, and to achieve a better future for their children" ("la población hispana sigue creciendo laboriosa y empeñada en probar que la mayoría viene a este país a trabajar, a crear con el fruto de su esfuerzo y a obtener una mejor vida para sus hijos" LLQH, p. 23, my translation). In this case, a global Hispanic identity is seen as the result of discrimination and stereotyping by the majority population of the country, and the manifestation of that identity is an attempt to prove those stereotypes false while at the same time adhering to a narrative of struggle and perseverance in line with idealized discourses of US identity (the "American dream," the pioneer spirit, the individual pursuit of prosperity and happiness, etc.). This mode of identity formation is in consonance with Linda Alcoff's contention of Latino identity being born of the neocolonial confrontation with the hegemonic power of the USA, but is resolved in an attempt of integration instead of a political response.

As was mentioned, LLQH falls somewhere in between the early wave of SHL textbooks (focused on identity raising and civil rights) and the later one (with a commodification of the language and labor market principles at its core). The same reading on Hispanic groups that was just mentioned adds a reference to the growing numbers of Hispanic-led companies and business leaders, including the subject of another reading in the chapter, Mexican-American entrepreneur woman Linda Alvarado (LLQH, pp. 26–28). While reiterating tropes of an "American dream" story by means of effort and perseverance, these stories of business leaders bridge

the gap between identity politics and language commodification by showing the economic success that is open to Hispanics. Indeed, she is described as a source of pride and an example to be followed by the Hispanic community (p. 28). A similar case is the reading in the chapter on Mexico, which features businessman Carlos Slim, ranked at that time as the richest man in the world (pp. 72–75). The focus on a Mexican corporate magnate is probably meant as an antidote to general stereotypes in the USA that associate Mexicans with low-skilled, poorly educated workers and illegal immigrants. The text again stresses his work ethic, business acumen, as well as moral and family values (in line with ideals of US identity) but only glosses over his Lebanese roots, a fact which could be an interesting reminder of the diversity of the Hispanic community, even in the countries of origin.

In sum, LLQH is mainly concerned with promoting the command of a formal variety of Spanish, useful in business, academic, and media contexts, but quite distant from the communities of speakers it is aimed at. This linguistic target is based on an idealized monolingual norm which fails to address other forms of expression by heritage speakers. Identity is presented in very limited ways, always as a secondary concern, and often in a contradictory way: the existence of a US Hispanic identity (the preferred term here, perhaps because it has less of a political connotation than Latino) is acknowledged only indirectly and mainly in respect of the interpellation of US culture and society (especially based on disparaging stereotypes). Principally, Hispanic identity is shown as residing in the country of genealogical origin and appearing as a discrete set of groups with little in common beyond the language.

Conclusion: SHL Identity from a Canadian Perspective

The approaches and textbooks that dominate SHL are (understandably) dominated by a US perspective, but in spite of the transnational nature of the Hispanic/Latino community, the same approaches may not be optimal in the case of Canadian SHL. As Veronis (2007) shows, a strategic adherence to the discourse of pan-ethnic Hispanic/Latino identity may be very useful in the space of Canadian multiculturalism, since the discrete national groups that conform it lack visibility and would be too small to exercise political influence. This might be true even in the case of the USA, with much larger and more developed communities (Carreira 2000, p. 424), but it is fundamental in the more diluted Canadian context. Several principles generally attached to Hispanic identity might provide a higher measure of investment for Canadian SHL students, with language itself being a key element of that strategic essentialism (Blackledge et al. 2008). The notion of "Latino" being born in a social and political confrontation with the US hegemonic power and the prejudices of its society might have a certain purchase, given that a good number of Spanish-speaking immigrants moved to Canada as a result of the dictatorial regimes of the 1970s in the Southern Cone and the civil wars of the 1980s in Central America,

events which happened with the complicity or even direct support of the USA (Veronis 2007, p. 460). However, Latino Canadians lack the experience of living in the very country that created the conditions of their displacement, as well as the deep historical roots of some of the US populations, which in some cases have endured this internal colonialism since the nineteenth century, so this form of identity formation will be more limited than the more common political grievances of US Latinos.

The bulk of Hispanic immigrants arrived after multiculturalism became an official policy and a commonly recognized stance in Canada. This social context is very different from the USA, in which integration into the established values of society is more stressed and mistrust toward recent arrivals is much higher. As a result, approaches to pan-Hispanic identity which promote US-centric notions of success (the "American dream" stories in LLQH) will be far less relevant for Canadian SHL students. On the other hand, incorporating Hispanic identity into the ideal of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism should be much more fruitful, as seen in the practices of the families studied by Guardado (2010). Indeed, the hybrid nature and wide diversity of Hispanic identity, as embodied in the notion of *mestizaje* (Tammelleo 2011, p. 537) should be able to provide a good set of opportunities for each individual student to articulate their own form of belonging in various interrelated areas of identity (pan-ethnic Hispanic/Latino, community of origin, race, Canadianness, second-generation immigrant, etc.). The very flexibility of this imagined community makes it a prime candidate for investment by the learner, who must be conceived "as having a complex social history and multiple desires" (Norton 2013, p. 50). As Norton claims, speakers are constantly reorganizing their sense of identity and their relationship to the social world in their process of language learning. Hispanic identity, and its interface with Canadian ideals of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, offers a rich set of opportunities and multiple possibilities for SHL learners to articulate a personal and individual sense of identity that includes elements of their heritage, the host culture, and their own unique situation, in a way that, as the "third culture kids" described by Guardado (2010, p. 332), becomes more than a sum of its parts.

The goals of HL teaching are several, and learners themselves are also in different positions: the category can be applied to newly arrived immigrants of different ages, as well as to second- and third-generation students with widely varying levels of proficiency in the language, even before taking individual interests into account. Guadalupe Valdés has identified four main goals that can be applied generally: "the acquisition of a standard dialect, the expansion of bilingual range, the transfer of reading and writing abilities across languages, and the maintenance of immigrant language" (Valdés 1995, p. 308). Another goal should be added: valuing the student's own varieties of the language, which almost never coincide with the prestige dialect often viewed as the ultimate learning goal, so that local and family identities can also be strengthened, thus promoting intergenerational solidarity and language transmission, as well as a critical analysis of the relationship of linguistic

and social hierarchies (Leeman 2005; Train 2007; Villa 2002). A critical engagement with pan-Hispanic identity should be useful in promoting some of these goals. The variety and multiplicity of Latino identity, especially in terms of linguistic variation, can come a long way in promoting both pride and interest in each learner's own linguistic heritage, as well as awareness and knowledge of the categories of dialect, sociolect, and register, which in turn will be useful when helping students acquire usage of the standard variety while becoming aware of the importance of context when choosing a specific register; issues of power and hierarchy will be represented in the linguistic choices and their consequences, which can open a fruitful critical reflection. G. A. Martínez (2003) presents a case for the use of critical dialect awareness in the HL classroom, as well as suggestions of specific activities for that purpose.

Throughout this paper, the usefulness of pan-Hispanic identity has been presented as a tool to increase the investment of SHL students, but always with the caveat that this usage must be critical. In order to sidestep the danger of a monolithic identity being imposed on students (which would certainly be detrimental for their personal investment), as well as a superficial approach to this complex, continuously evolving construct, its presence in the classroom must be undertaken precisely by examining its own central contradictions and the heterogeneity at its core (Duff 2008, p. 87). Latino identity, like all other types of imagined community, is an artificial construct, but such artificiality can become a force for individual agency and personal identity-building. A productive way to do it would be to present it to SHL learners in the context of the ideology of *mestizaje,* from which they themselves can take elements and adapt them to their own personal circumstances, as well as add to it in its continuous process of construction. An engagement with pan-Hispanism which emphasizes its historical qualities of miscegenation and hybridity would also allow SHL students to sidestep demands of binary identification with either the dominant or the heritage culture, allowing for individual combinations and fluid changes depending on time and social context (Hornberger and Wang 2008, pp. 13, 18), and reflect the actual multiplicity of practices and complex networks in which these speakers engage (del Valle 2006, p. 28). This perspective should go hand in hand with a consideration of the validity of different varieties of the language, including the student's own, which have their basis on the pluricentric nature of Spanish linguistic norms (Garrido 2010). Such an approach might increase investment in the language and thus alleviate the linguistic attrition often present in heritage language children and adolescents (Duff and Duanduan 2014, p. 46). As Aparicio (1993, p. 192) suggests, the very concept of Hispanic identity can be the goal of the class (consciousness-raising) and the method of inquiry that is used to reach that goal. The very ideas of "language" as well as "heritage" are social constructs (Blackledge et al. 2008), and they often present significant conflicts and contradictions, but that does not diminish their usefulness in the key process of identity formation by the language student, especially when they are presented as tools for the learner to resist reification into other-imposed categories (Norton 2013, p. 22).

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