

Linguistic Attitudes and Language Learning Needs of Heritage Language Learners of Spanish in the United States

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Abstract : Heritage language learners are students who have been raised in a home where a minority language is spoken, who speaks or merely understand the minority heritage language, but to some degree are bilingual in the majority and the heritage language. In view of the rising university enrollment by Hispanics in the United States who have chosen to study Spanish, university language programs are currently faced with challenges of accommodating the language needs of heritage language learners of Spanish. The present study investigates the heritage language perception and language attitudes by heritage language learners of Spanish, as well as their classroom language learning experiences and needs. In order to carry out the study, a qualitative survey was used to gather data from university students. Analysis of students' responses indicates that heritage learners are motivated to learn the heritage language. In relation to the aspects of focus of a language course for heritage learners, results show that the aspects of interest are accent marks and spelling, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, writing, reading, and culture.

Keywords : heritage language learners, language acquisition, linguistic attitudes, Spanish in the US

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