Spanish Heritage Language:
Speakers and Learners

Glickman Conference Center
1.302 CLA (Liberal Arts) Building, The University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712
September 30, 2017, 10:00am – 3:00pm

Presenters: Andrew Lynch, University of Miami
Gabriela Zapata, Texas A&M University
Anna Lawrence, University of Texas at Austin
Aris Clemons, University of Texas at Austin

10:00 - 10:10 Welcome

10:10 - 11:00 The ‘in-between’ paradigm in Spanish as a heritage language – Andrew Lynch

In studies of Spanish as a heritage language (HL), the majority of researchers have adopted a comparative stance, seeking insights into the ability (i.e., competence or repertoire) of bilingual or HL speakers/learners vis-à-vis that of native speakers or second language (L2) speakers/learners (e.g. Carreira, Montrul, Potowski, Pascual y Cabo, Rao, among many others). In this talk, I consider some of the main theoretical questions that motivate such comparisons and weigh the empirical evidence to date regarding the ‘in-between’ nature of HL ability, focusing on linguistic variation and speaker/learner awareness.

11:10 - 11:45 Heritage and L1 Spanish Vowel Spaces: Acoustic Correlates for Social and Phonological Contrasts – Anna Lawrence

Studies focusing on issues that affect heritage Spanish speakers (HSS) often overlook phonology as an aspect of their language that contrasts significantly with that of native monolingual Spanish (e.g. Rao & Ronquest, 2015). I will discuss the findings and the broader social implications of an acoustic pilot study completed in the emerging bilingual community of eastern North Carolina, in which considerable variation in the acoustic properties of the Spanish vowels between these two groups indicates a need to consider phonology as a factor impacting heritage speakers regarding issues such as linguistic identity.

11:45 - 1:00 Buffet lunch provided for participants
1:00 - 1:35  'English-Only': Exploring Language Ideologies and Identity of Spanish-English Bilinguals in Monolingual Contexts – Aris Clemons

Though the United States has no official language, English dominates public and most private spaces. Much of the discussion about language use and language policies is grounded in political ideologies linked with the tolerance of specific immigrant groups (Gándara & Escamilla 2016), but studies outlining what bilingual speakers are actually doing with their language in both bilingual and monolingual spaces are largely absent. The current study explores Spanish use in supposed ‘English-only’ spaces through an examination of the experiences of 12 Spanish-English bilingual adults. Furthermore, by calling on notions of linguistic ideology and ethnic identity formation, I make suggestions about how we can look to the experience of heritage speakers to inform both pedagogical and policy decisions in educational contexts.

1:45 - 2:35  A Match Made in Heaven: Learning by Design and Its Role in Heritage and Second Language Instruction – Gabriela Zapata

Since its development, the Multiliteracies pedagogy Learning by Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis et al. 2005, 2016) has been significant in offering educators tools to tailor instruction for socially and culturally diverse students. In this presentation, I will examine its theoretical underpinnings, and the role it can play in the development of open educational resources for the teaching of heritage and second languages. In addition, I will present sample pedagogical materials, and I will provide practical suggestions for their development and implementation.

2:40 - 3:10  Informal discussion with all presenters – Andrew Lynch, Anna Lawrence, Gabriela Zapata, Aris Clemons