



Demographics of Heritage Language Speakers in the U.S. and Implications for Community Colleges

Tomonori Nagano <tnagano@lagcc.cuny.edu>

LaGuardia Community College
The City University of New York

Friday, May 14, 2021 @ Online

Outline of the Talk

1. Demographics of Heritage Language Speakers in the U.S. (Nagano, 2015)

How many HL speakers are there?

2. Heritage Languages at Community Colleges (Nagano et al., 2017, 2019; Ketcham et al., 2020)

Why is it relevant to faculty and students at community colleges?

Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. I

- Who is a heritage speaker? (see Valdés (2001) and others)
 - Those who speak a language other than English at home, but speak primarily English elsewhere.
 - 1.5- or 2nd-generation immigrants (born in the U.S. to parents speaking a minority language)
 - Unique linguistic ability (oral vs. literal, productive vs. receptive, and low- vs. high-register vocabulary)



Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. II

- How many HL speakers are there in the U.S.?
- Demographics of HL speakers using the U.S. Census/ACS data between 1980-2010 (Nagano, 2015)
- In this analysis, HL speakers are:
 1. 18 yld or older,
 2. speak a language other than English at home,
 3. are bilingual (i.e., did not select “Not well” or “Not at all” in the question regarding English proficiency), and
 4. immigrated at an age no older than 18 years if they are foreign born.

14 a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?

Yes

No → SKIP to question 15a

b. What is this language?

For example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese

c. How well does this person speak English?

Very well

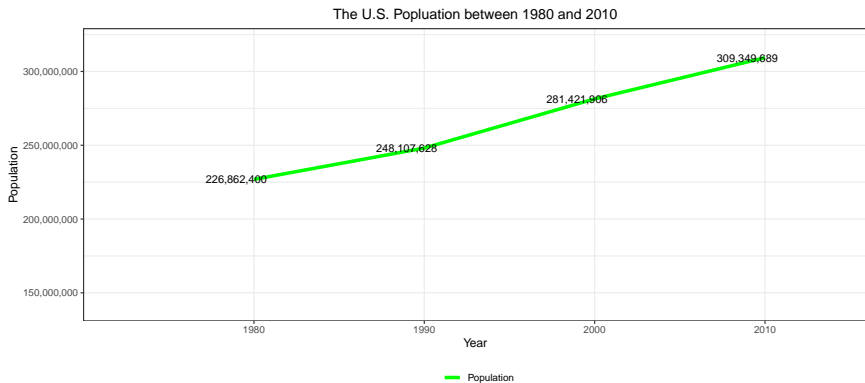
Well

Not well

Not at all

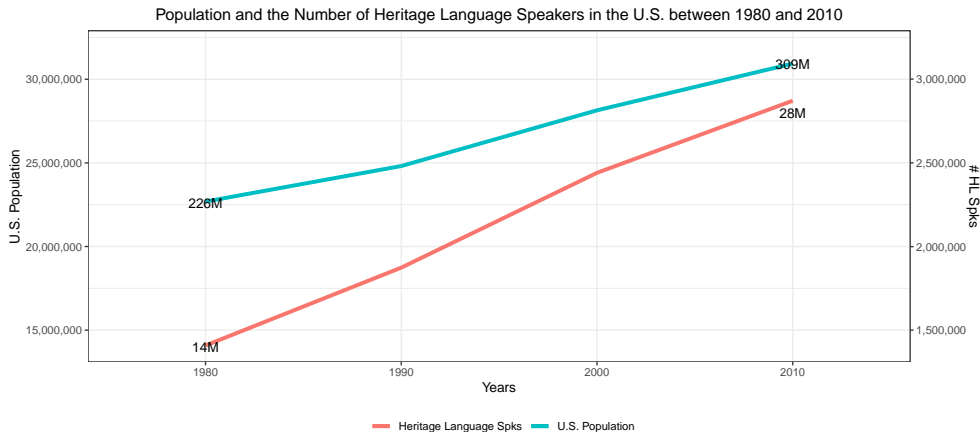
Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. III

- Between 1980 and 2010, the U.S. population grew from 226m to 309m (about 36% growth). There were about 14 million HL speakers in 1980. How many HL speakers were there in 2010?
 - 14m (↑0%)
 - 19m (↑36%)
 - 24m (↑70%)
 - 28m (↑100%)



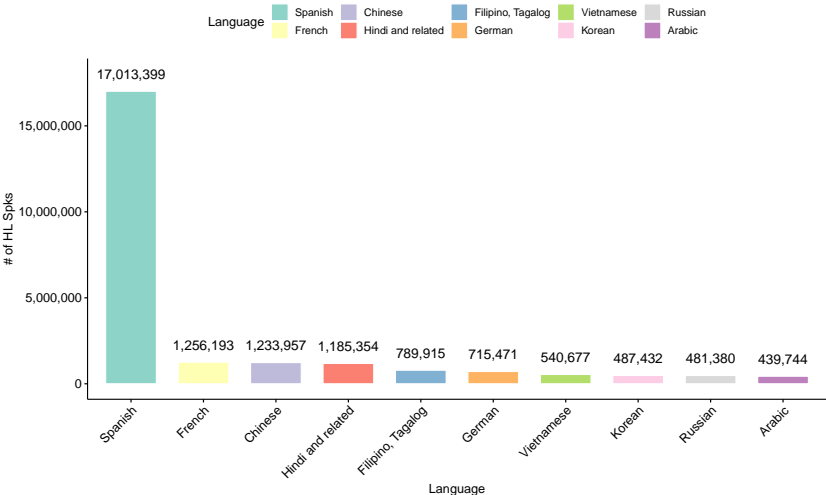
Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. IV

- 28 million HL speakers in 2010 (100% increase)



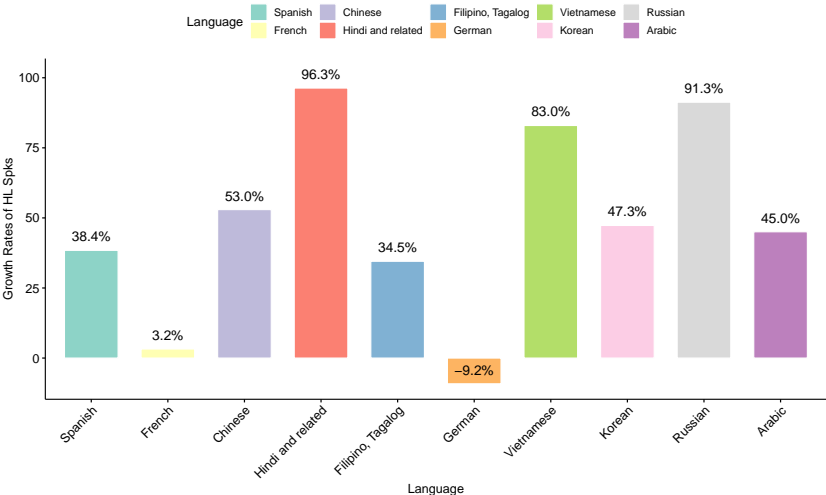
Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. V

The Number of Heritage Language Speakers in the U.S. in 2010 (by Language)



Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. VI

The Growth Rates of Heritage Language Speakers in the U.S. in 2010 (by Language)



Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S. VII

Summary of Demographics of HL Speakers in the U.S.

- A sharp increase of HL speakers (26.9% per decade)
- Massive language deaths among the colonial HL speakers
 - Rubén Rumbaut (Rumbaut, 2014, 2009): "In the United States a rapid process of intergenerational *Anglicization* that is effectively completed by the third generation" → the U.S. is a *language graveyard*

Heritage Languages at Community Colleges I

Heritage Languages at Community Colleges


- Community college students often come from immigrant backgrounds (Teranishi et al., 2011; Bailey and Weininger, 2002)
- Compared with four-year institutions, two-year institutions tend to have more
 - African American and Latino students
 - mature students (esp. age 30 or above)
 - students from economically disadvantaged households (esp. household income less than \$30,000)




Heritage Languages at Community Colleges II

- The Students and Instructors of Languages at Community Colleges (SILCC) Surveys

INSTRUCTOR SURVEY



Center for Integrated Language Communities



THE GRADUATE CENTER
of the City University of New York

Instructions:
This survey instrument was developed by the Language at the Community College Nexus project team at the Center for Integrated Language Communities (CILCC). This survey instrument was originally used as part of the Students and Instructors of Languages at Community Colleges Survey study in Fall 2015. The survey is designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The development of this survey instrument was partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.
If you have any questions, you can contact CILCC at 212-817-2086 or cilc@gc.cuny.edu.

About This Course

1. What language are you teaching in this course? _____
2. What is the level of this course?

<input type="checkbox"/> introductory/elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> mixed
3. Does this course have an additional focus or specialization?


<input type="checkbox"/> yes, literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare, Business etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> yes, language for heritage speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes, language for specific purposes (e.g., _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> no
4. To the best of your knowledge, how many students are enrolled in this course? _____
5. For this course, which are students required to use? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> commercial textbook/digital program	<input type="checkbox"/> authentic/non-pedagogical texts
<input type="checkbox"/> instructor-curated materials	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
6. In this course, how often do you require students to do the following?


	rarely / never	several times a semester	most weeks	every class period
use digital technology (software, apps, etc.)				
engage face-to-face with communities where the language is spoken				
engage electronically with communities where the language is spoken				

Center for Integrated Language Communities, A U.S. Department of Education Title VI Language Resource Center
365 Fifth Ave New York, NY 10018 | (212) 817-2086 | cilc@gc.cuny.edu | www.cilc.gc.cuny.edu
The SILCC Surveys are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

STUDENT SURVEY



Center for Integrated Language Communities



THE GRADUATE CENTER
of the City University of New York

Instructions:
This survey instrument was developed by the Language at the Community College Nexus project team at the Center for Integrated Language Communities (CILCC). This survey instrument was originally used as part of the Students and Instructors of Languages at Community Colleges Survey study in Fall 2015. The survey is designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The development of this survey instrument was partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.
If you have any questions, you can contact CILCC at 212-817-2086 or cilc@gc.cuny.edu.

1. What language are you currently studying in this class? _____
2. Which of the following are your reasons/goals for attending this college? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> to complete a certificate program	<input type="checkbox"/> for self-improvement/personal enjoyment
<input type="checkbox"/> to obtain an associate degree	<input type="checkbox"/> to change careers
<input type="checkbox"/> to transfer to a 4-year college or university	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> to obtain or update job-related skills	
3. For this current academic term, how would you characterize your enrollment at this college?

<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time
------------------------------------	------------------------------------
4. Why are you taking this language course? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> program requirement	<input type="checkbox"/> intellectual curiosity
<input type="checkbox"/> fulfill elective	<input type="checkbox"/> to communicate with family
<input type="checkbox"/> job/career prospects	<input type="checkbox"/> to communicate with friends
<input type="checkbox"/> enables transfer to 4-year college	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
5. What led you to choose the particular language (e.g. Spanish, ASL, Chinese, etc.) you are studying? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> it has the best potential for professional use	<input type="checkbox"/> it fulfills an elective
<input type="checkbox"/> it fits my schedule best	<input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in the culture
<input type="checkbox"/> it connects to my family background/heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> I speak it with family at home, or used to
<input type="checkbox"/> I studied it before	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> it is relatively easy to learn	
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not important at all" and 10 being "extremely important," how important is it to know more than one language?

1 (not important at all)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (extremely important)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you think this? _____

Center for Integrated Language Communities, A U.S. Department of Education Title VI Language Resource Center
365 Fifth Ave New York, NY 10018 | (212) 817-2086 | cilc@gc.cuny.edu | www.cilc.gc.cuny.edu
The SILCC Surveys are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Heritage Languages at Community Colleges III

Methodology of the SILCC Surveys (Nagano et al., 2019)

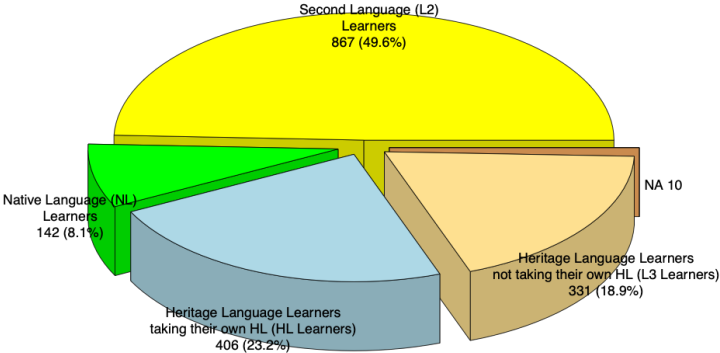
- 831 CCs in the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- Focusing on instructors and students in modern language classrooms at CCs
- E-mail request to administer paper surveys
- 1,756 student and 140 instructor responses from 101 CCs in 33 states

Findings of the SILCC surveys about the HL speakers

- 737 students (42%) out of 1,756 in the modern language class at CCs are HL speakers
- However, only 46% of HL speakers are studying their HLs at CCs.
- A large number of HL speakers (54%) are learning a new language that is different from their home language

Heritage Languages at Community Colleges IV

Distribution of the Language Learner Types in the SILCC Student Survey



Heritage Languages at Community Colleges V

- Why so many HL speakers learning a new language? → Different attitudes between HL and L3 (HL spks studying a new language)

Question 2: Which of the following are your reasons/goals for attending this college?

	HL (n=406)	L3 (n=331)
to obtain an associate degree	42.6%	28.8%
to transfer to a 4-year college or university	69.5%	60.1%

Question 4: Why are you taking this course?

	HL (n=406)	L3 (n=331)
job-career skills	45.1%	36.5%
enables transfer to four-year college	44.4%	33.1%
intellectual curiosity	41.4%	58.0%
to communicate with family	46.5%	12.8%

Question 5: What led you to choose the particular language you are studying?

	HL (n=406)	L3 (n=331)
It has the best potential for professional use	53.8%	37.7%
It connects to my family background/heritage	67.4%	15.0%
I am interested in the culture	44.7%	63.0%

Question 6: On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to know a language other than English?

	HL (n=406)	L3 (n=331)
	9.4	9.1

Summary

1. Heritage language (HL) speakers are those who speak a minority language (a non-English language) at home or in community.
2. Heritage language speakers are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population between 1980-2010
3. Community colleges tend to serve a large number of HL speakers
 - 42% of students in the modern language classrooms is HL speakers
 - But only about one half of them are studying their own HL.

Challenges

1. Reasons for learning HL at community colleges
 - Heritage languages are lost (Anglicized) across generations if it weren't for active maintenance effort (such as HL class).
 - HL maintenance has many positive impacts on students' academic and professional careers (high GPA, retention/graduation, career placement etc.)
2. But those who are NOT learning their own HL seem to have genuine interests in exploring new culture and language that are different from their own

Bibliography I

- Bailey, T. and Weininger, E. B. (2002). Performance, graduation, and transfer of immigrants and natives in City University of New York community colleges. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2):359–377.
- Fishman, J. A. (2001). 300-plus years of heritage language education in the United States. In Peyton, J. K., Ranard, D. A., and McGinnis, S., editors, *Heritage Languages in America: Preserving a National Resource*, pages 81–98. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
- Ketcham, E., Nagano, T., and Funk, A. (2020). Students of languages at community colleges: Who studies which languages and why? *ADFL Bulletin*, 46(1):56–70.
- Nagano, T. (2015). Demographics of adult heritage language speakers in the United States: Differences by region and language and their implications. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(4):771–792.
- Nagano, T., Funk, A., and Ketcham, E. (2017). Modern language instruction at community college: A survey-based study of modern language instructors. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(3):621–631. <http://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12284>.
- Nagano, T., Ketcham, E., and Funk, A. (2019). Why do heritage language speakers opt out of their own heritage language?: A survey-based study of heritage language learners at community colleges. *Heritage Language Journal*, 16(3):318–339.
- Rumbaut, R. G. (2009). A language graveyard? the evolution of language competencies, preferences and use among young adult children of immigrants. In Wiley, T. G., Lee, J. S., and Rumberger, R., editors, *The Education of Language Minority Immigrants in the United States*, pages 35–71. Multilingual Matters, Bristol, UK.
- Rumbaut, R. G. (2014). English plus: Exploring the socioeconomic benefits of bilingualism in southern california. In Callahan, R. M. and Gándara, P. C., editors, *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market*, pages xx–xx. Multilingual Matters, Tonawanda, NY.
- Teranishi, R. T., Suárez-Orozco, C., and Suárez-Orozco, M. (2011). Immigrants in community colleges. *The Future of Children*, 21(1):153–169.
- Valdés, G. (2001). Heritage language students: Profiles and possibilities. In Peyton, J. K., Ranard, D. A., and McGinnis, S., editors, *Heritage Languages in America: Preserving a National Resource*, pages 37–77. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
- Wiley, T. G. (2001). On defining heritage languages and their speakers. In Peyton, J. K., Ranard, D. A., and McGinnis, S., editors, *Heritage Languages in America: Preserving a National Resource*, pages 29–26. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
- Wiley, T. G. (2014). The problem of defining heritage and community languages and their speakers. In Wiley, T. G., Peyton, J. K., Christian, D., Moore, S. C., and Liu, N., editors, *Handbook of Heritage, Community, and Native American Languages in the United States: Research, Policy, and Educational Practice*, chapter 2, pages 19–26. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Zyzik, E. (2016). Toward a prototypical model of the heritage language learner: Understanding strengths and needs. In Fairclough, M. and Beaudrie, S., editors, *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching*, pages 19–38. Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C.