



National Heritage Language Resource Center

**Intercultural Competence of
Heritage Language Learners:
Motivation, Identity, Language
Attitudes and the Curriculum**



National Heritage Language Resource Center

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R. Kipling “We and They”

**FATHER, Mother, and Me
Sister and Auntie say
All the people like us are We,
And every one else is They.
And They live over the sea,
While We live over the way,
But - would you believe it?
- They look upon We
As only a sort of They !**

- Intercultural knowledge and competence:
"a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts."

Bennett, J. M. (2008). Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In M. A. Moodian (Ed.), *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations* (pp. 95-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Who are heritage language speakers?

- **Narrow definition**: those who have been exposed to a particular language in childhood but did not learn it to full capacity because another language became dominant. **FUNCTIONAL PROFICIENCY**
- **Broad definition**: those who have been raised with a *strong cultural connection* to a particular language, usually through family interaction. **CULTURAL AFFINITY**

Source: Polinsky and Kagan 2007

Intercultural Competence

- Intercultural competence of heritage speakers is a daily experience of negotiating between at least two languages and cultures.
- It is a multidimensional construct of identity, language attitude, motivation, linguistic ability
- It can be used as a cornerstone of HL curriculum

1. Heritage National Language Resource Center
2. Who are heritage language learners (HLLs)?
3. How do they differ from typical L2 students:
 - a) Motivation
 - b) Identity and language attitudes
 - c) Language behaviors/pragmatics
4. Impact on curriculum

- **National Heritage Language Resource Center** -- funded by the Title VI U.S. Department of Education (2006-2010, **refunded 2010-2014**)
- **One of 15 NLRCs**
- **LRCs WEBSITE:**
<http://nflrc.msu.edu/lrcs.php>

- **Research into heritage language acquisition**
- **Innovative teaching practices and professional development**
- **Design of HL-specific**
 - **instructional materials**
 - **assessment instruments**

Why focus on heritage languages

- **Need for speakers of FLs in general and LCTLs in particular**
- **Research into interrupted language development**
- **Emotional and psychological wellbeing of communities**
- **Language policies and politics**
- **Pedagogical necessity**

Most Spoken Languages in the U.S.

Estimated No. of Speakers	
Total:	283,833,852
Speak only English	226,738,479
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	35,470,765
Chinese:	2,656,309
Tagalog:	1,535,585
French (incl. Patois, Cajun):	1,337,720
Vietnamese:	1,292,672
German:	1,109,367
Korean:	1,104,243
Russian:	830,456
Arabic:	765,536
Italian:	765,282

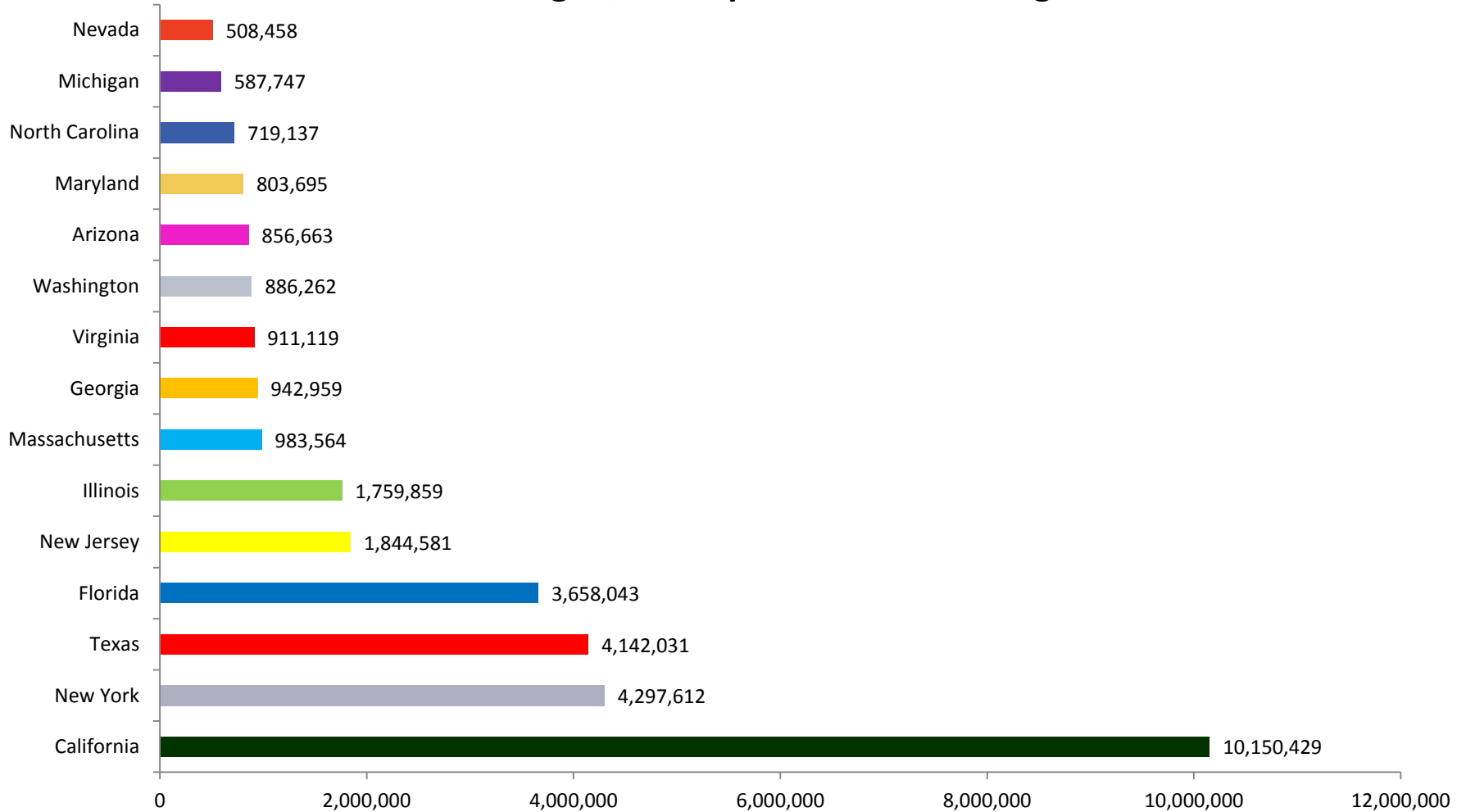
Source: Table B16001, American Cmmtty Survey 5-year Estimate, 2006-10. U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

Estimated No. of Speakers (con't.)

Other Asian languages:	809,558
African languages:	807,889
Italian:	740,220
Other Indic languages:	715,485
French Creole:	689,735
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole:	686,548
Hindi:	609,054
Polish:	595,994
Japanese:	452,161
Other Indo-European languages:	435,151
Other Pacific Island languages:	403,307
Urdu:	380,935
Persian:	378,908
Gujarati:	359,473
Greek:	314,311

Source: Table B16001, American Cmmtty Survey 5-year Estimate, 2006-10. U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

States with Foreign Born Populations Exceeding 500,000



**Source: Table CP02, 2006-10 American Community Survey 2010,
U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)**

Prolegomena to Heritage Linguistics

E. Benmamoun, S. Montrul, M. Polinsky

- <http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/pdf/HL-whitepaper.pdf> (NHLRC website)

Lessons, Teaching Heritage Languages: An Online Workshop - Windows Internet Explorer

http://startalk.nhrc.ucla.edu/startalk/lessons.aspx

the right of the first refusal

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Favorites Suggested Sites Free Hotmail Get More Add-ons

Lessons, Teaching Heritage Languages: ...

Page Safety Tools

Lessons

Show All | Close All

Teaching Heritage Language Learners: Profiles and Definitions

- Lesson 1. [Who is a Heritage Language Speaker?](#)
- Lesson 2. [Heritage Language Learners' Motivation](#)
- Lesson 3. [Teaching Implications for Heritage Language Learners](#)
- Lesson 4. [Connecting Heritage Learners to Their Communities Through The 'Macro Approach'](#)



Strategies for Heritage Language Learners: Differentiated Instruction

- Lesson 5. [Why do We Need Differentiated Instruction for Heritage Language Learners?](#)
- Lesson 6. [Know Your Students](#)
- Lesson 7. [Grouping Strategies for Differentiated Instruction](#)
- Lesson 8. [Assessment Strategies for Differentiated Instruction](#)



You need to [sign up](#) for an account and [log in](#) to view lessons.

Training and dissemination

- **Training:**
 - **Summer Research Institutes**
 - **6th Institute: June, 2012**
 - The Institute aims to support a principal NHLRC mission: the development of a research base for heritage language education and to connect research findings with pedagogical approaches.

STARTALK/NHLRC Teacher Workshops

- The workshops address topics such as selecting appropriate materials and assessment tools for heritage learners.
- Its goal is to bring research findings and best practices to practitioners

DATES: Third week in July, 2012, UCLA

Classes for heritage learners of

- Arabic
- Armenian
- Chinese
- Hindi/Urdu
- Persian
- Russian

- Children born in families where a language other than English is spoken, but educated in English
- 2nd, 1.5 generation
- Sequential or simultaneous bilinguals
- Unbalanced bilinguals: HL is the weaker language
- Heritage culture is one of the two (or more) cultures they are raised in

THE NHLRC SURVEY

- 2007-2009
- Online
- N= 1800
- Objectives:
 - 1) To create a profile of HLLs across languages and by language
 - 2) To propose curriculum design for HLLs

- **Biographic data**
- **Self-assessment of linguistic proficiency**
- **Motivations**
- **Identities**
- **Language Attitudes**

- **69%**

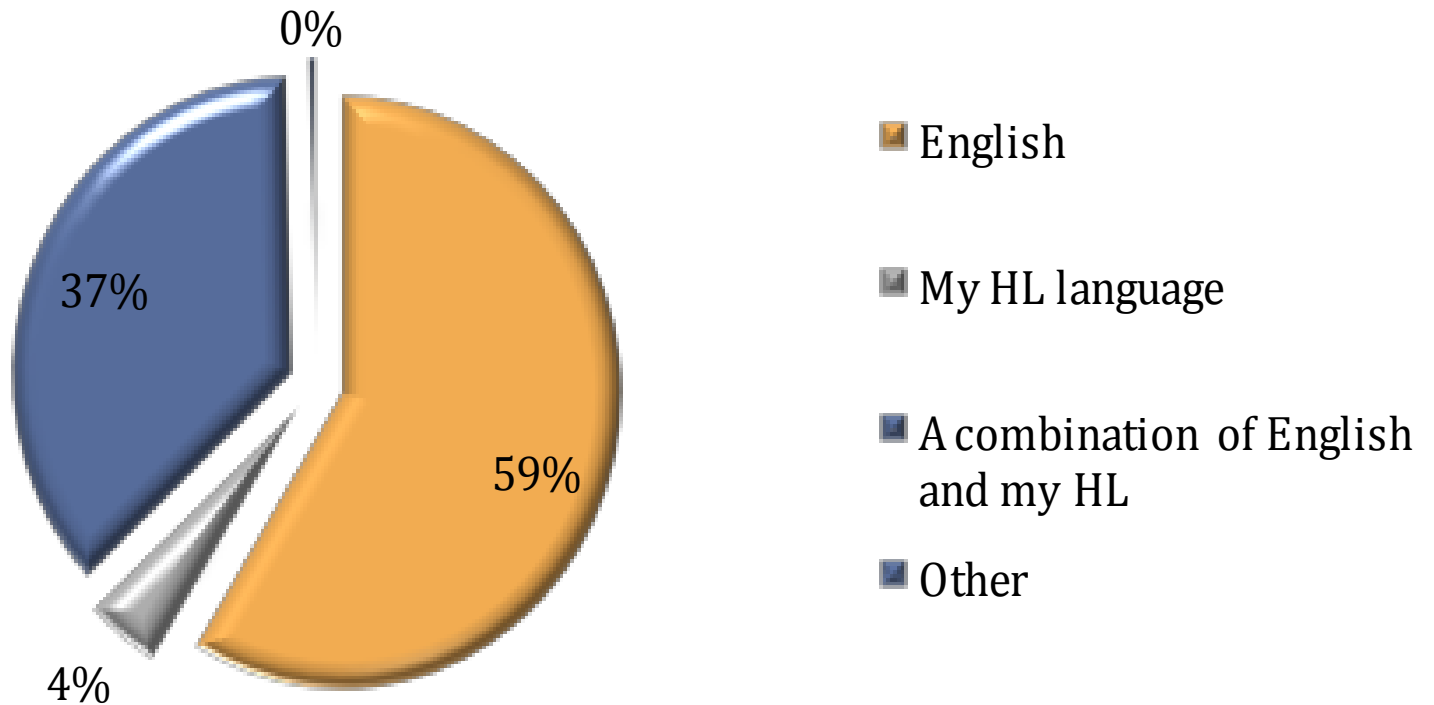
of foreign-born: before age of 10

- **TOTAL: 77%**

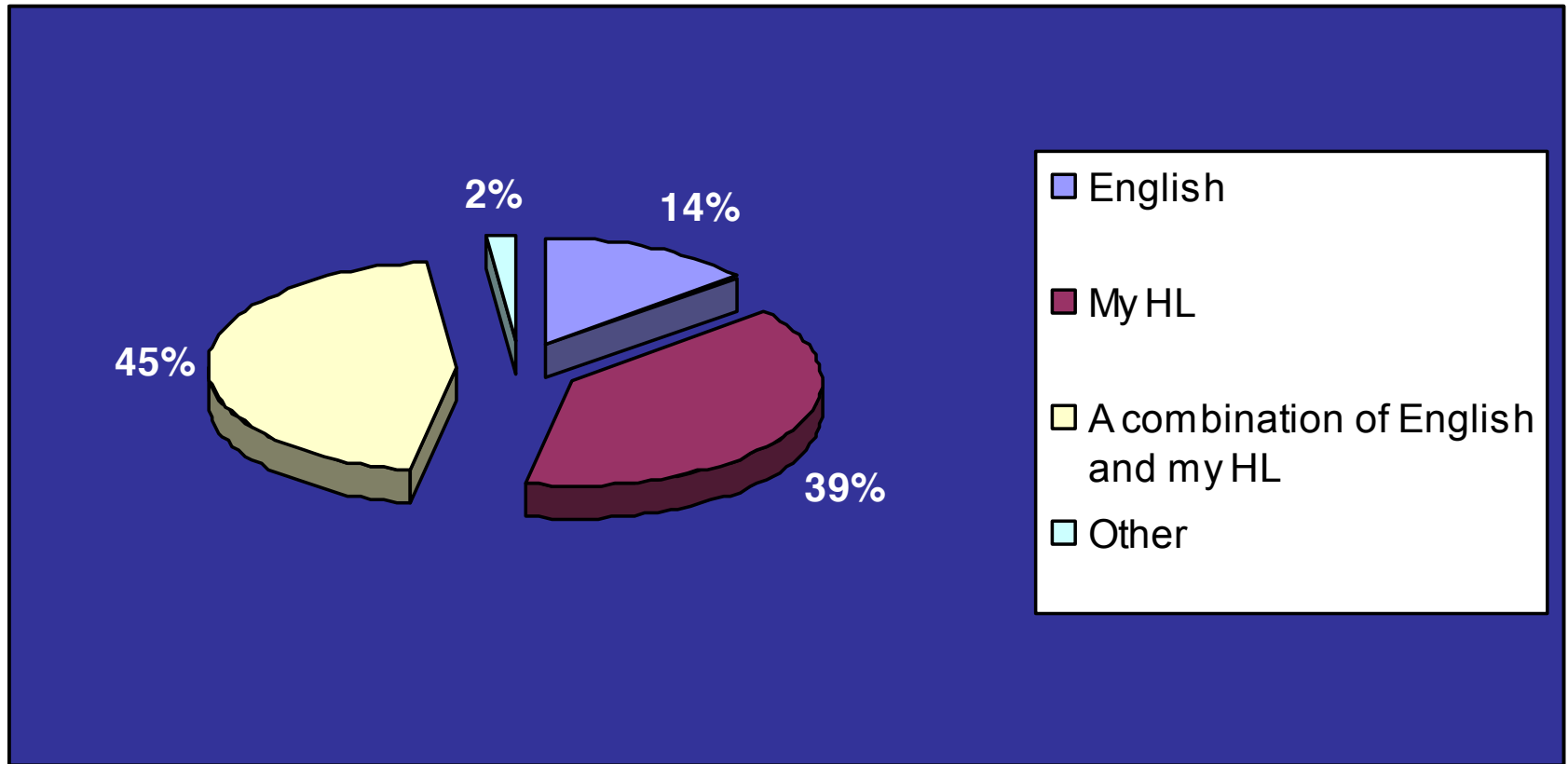
U.S.-born +

arrivals before age of 5

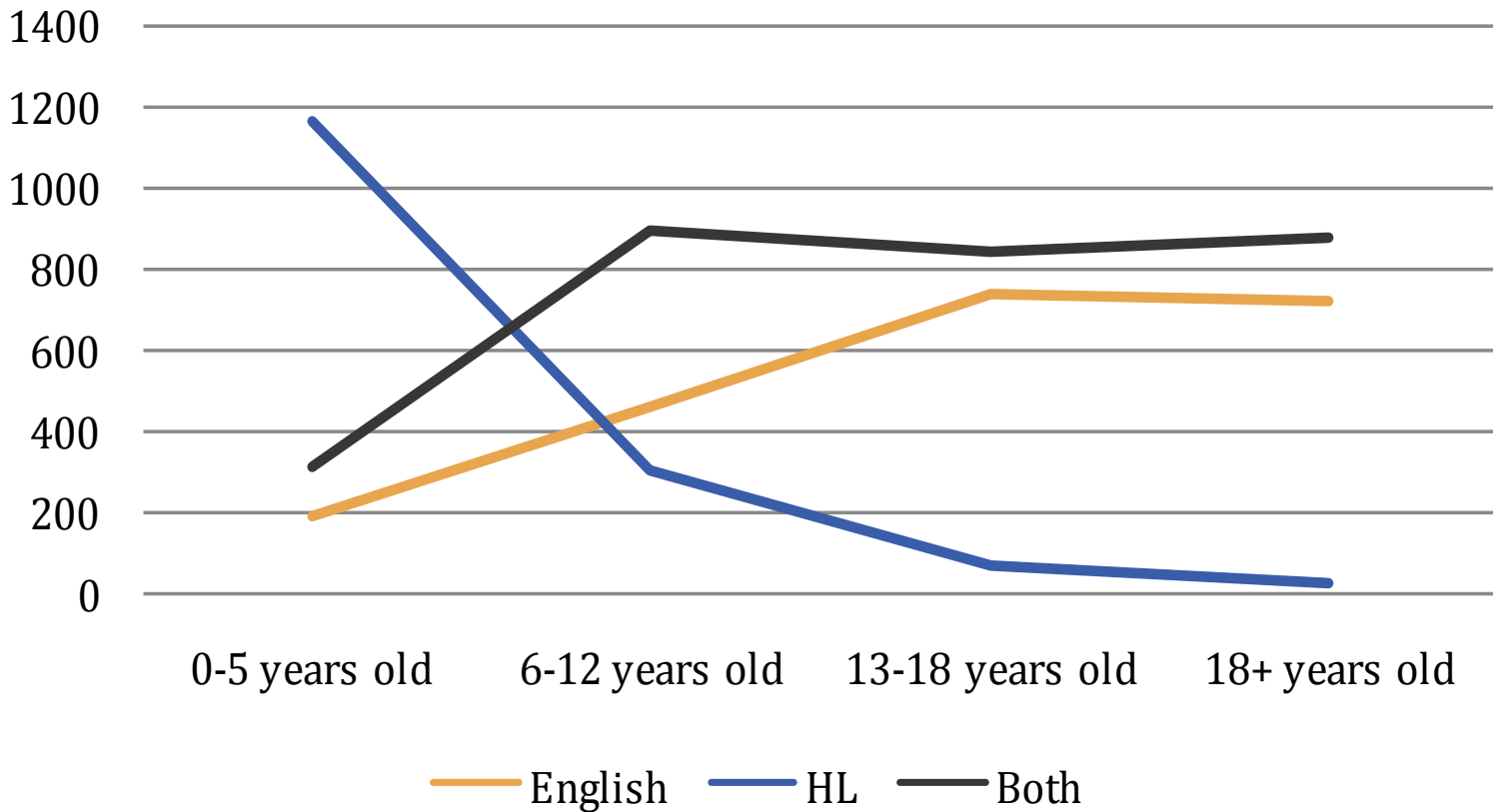
What language do you speak most of the time?



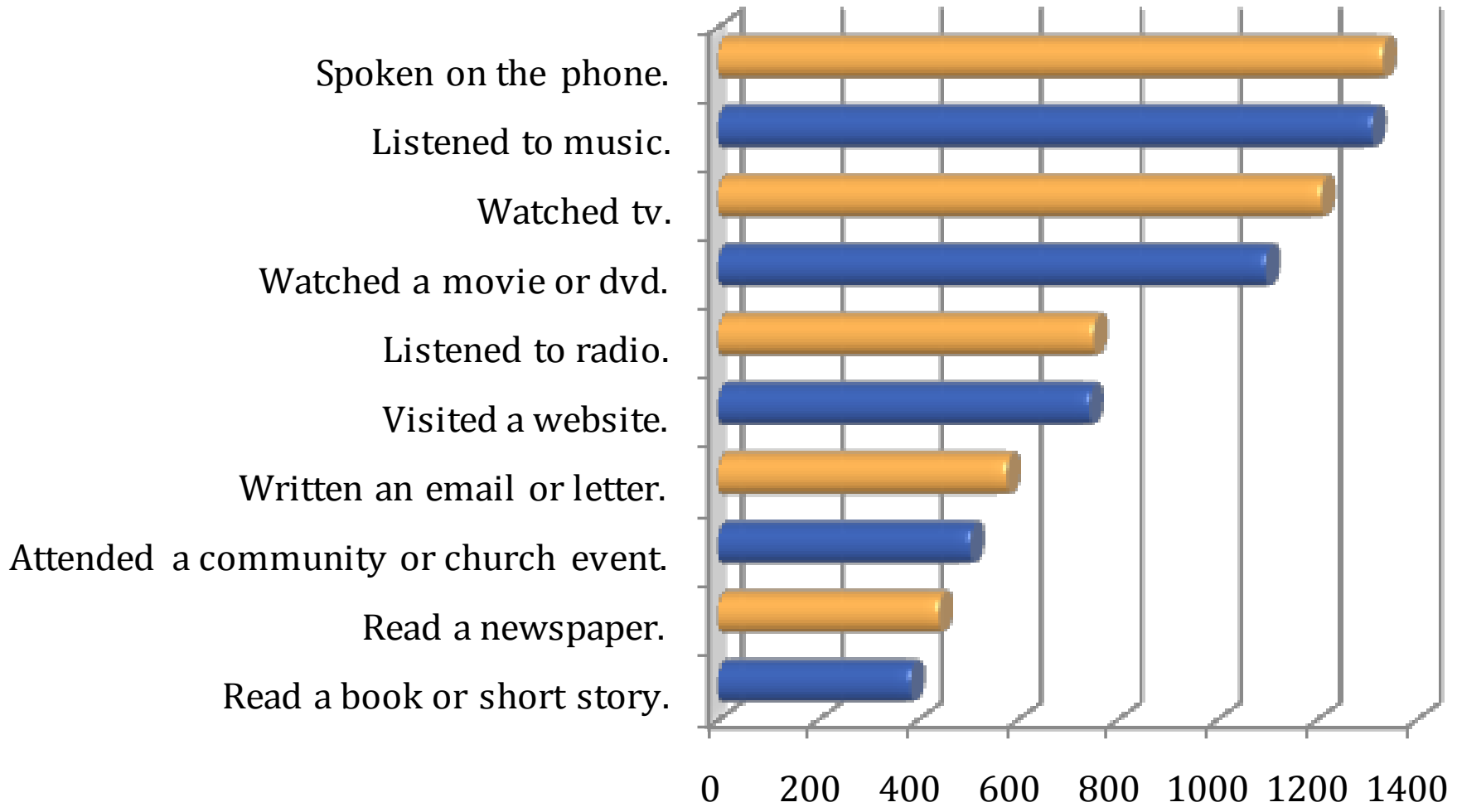
What language(s) do you speak at home with your parents/family?



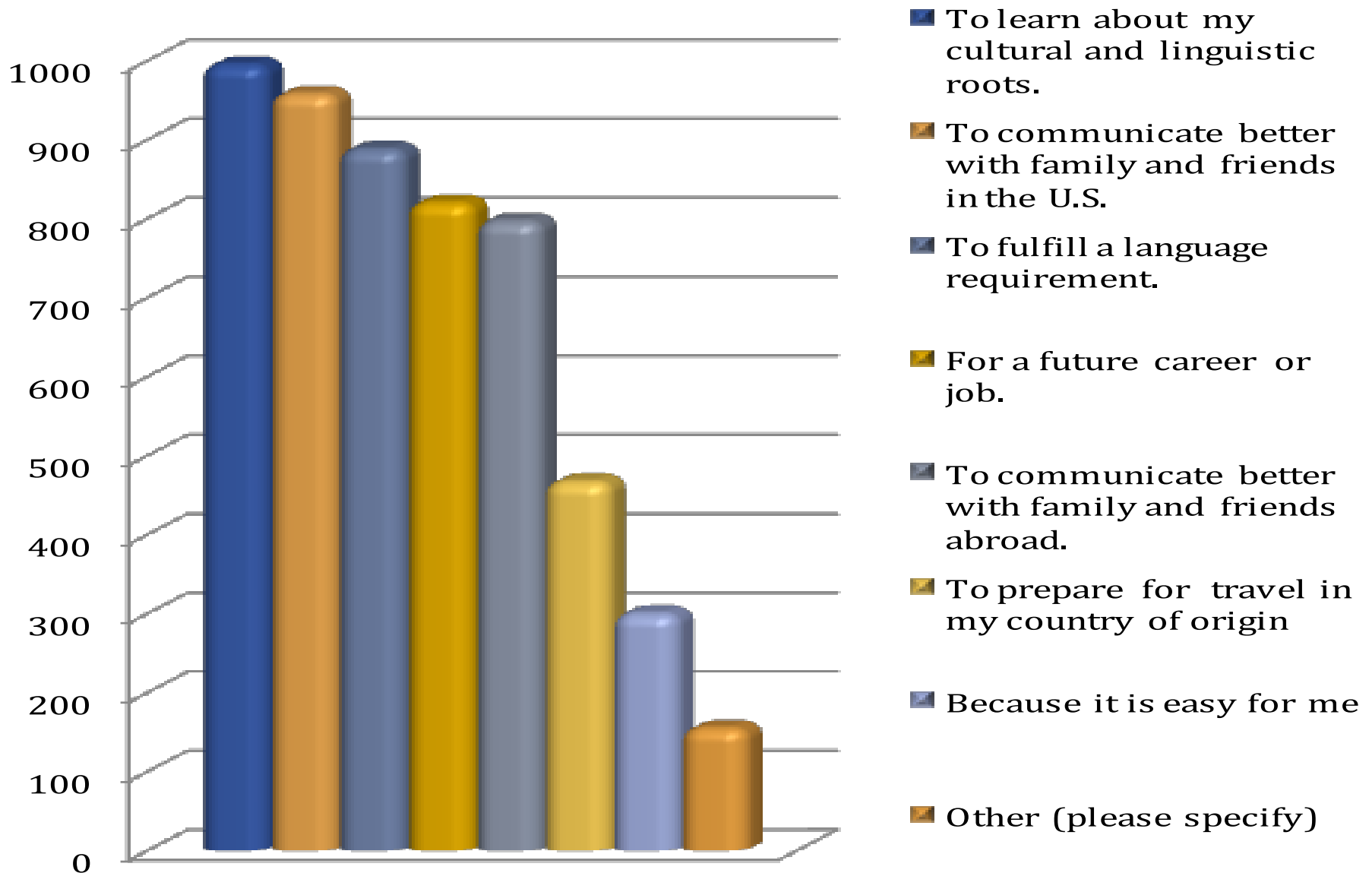
What language did you use most at the following periods in your life?



In the past six months, which of the following activities have you done in your HL OUTSIDE of class?



Why have you enrolled in HL courses

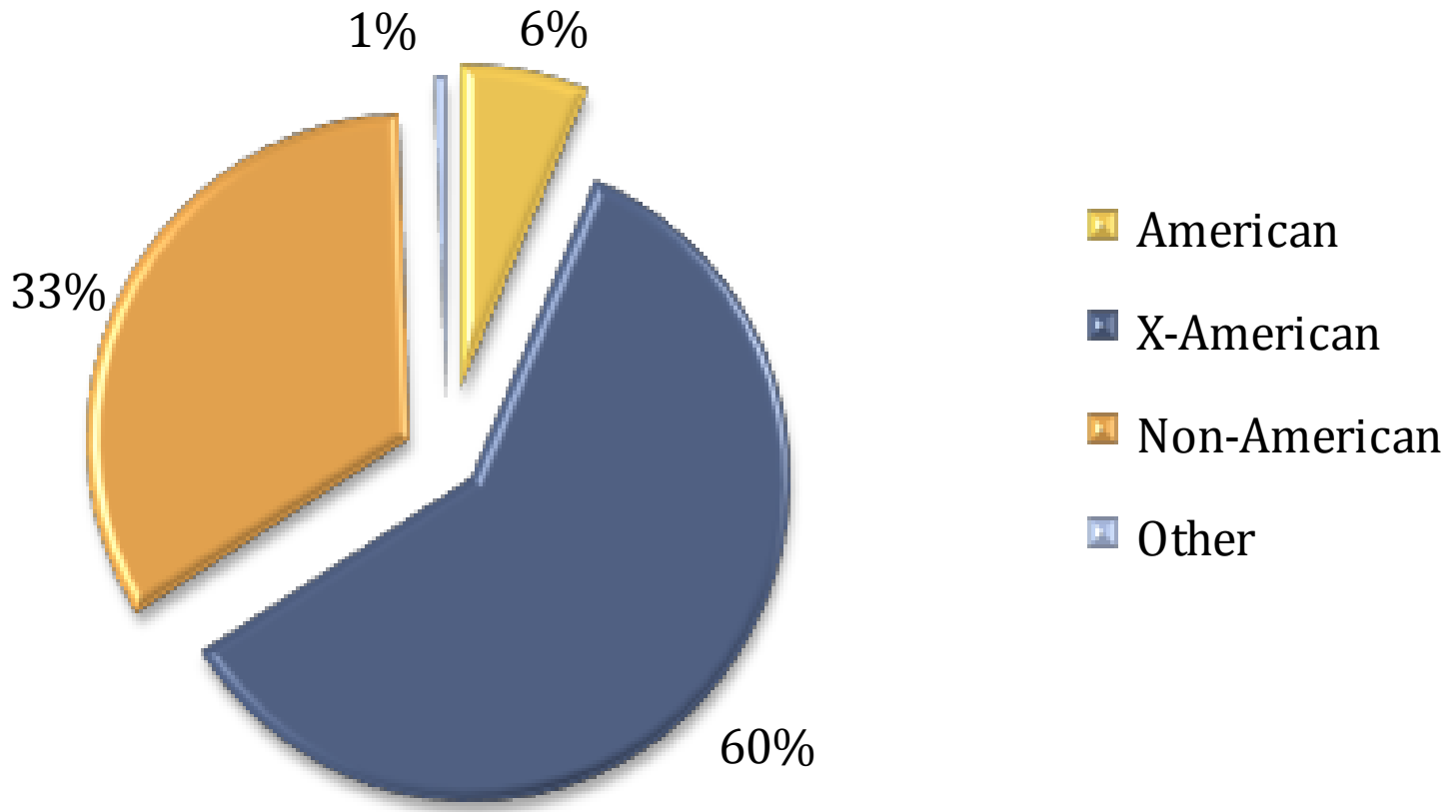


Survey results in a nutshell

Heritage language learners

- continue to use both English and the home language
- **are motivated** to study HL to:
 - Learn about their cultural and linguistic roots
 - Communicate with family in the U.S.

How do you self-identify?



... There is no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity...

**** Ethnic identity is meaningful only in situations in which two or more ethnic groups are in contact over a period of time.**

Jean S. Phinney “Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research” *Psychological Bulletin*, 1990, v. 108, N. 3, pp. 499-514

“...there is no contradiction
between an ethnic identity and
an American identity.”

Min Zhou “Assimilation, the Asian Way” (p.153)

In Tamar Jacoby (ed.) 2004 *Reinventing the Melting Pot: The New Immigrants and What It Means To be American*. New York, NY: Basic Books

How Do You Self-identify: a few examples

- Asian-American
- American-Chinese
- Chinese American
- Mexican-American
- Vietnamese-American
- Japanese
- Chinese
- Iranian

A Student's View on Identity

- Asian-American.. kuz in america ur asian.. and in asia ur american.. the question is pointless.. it's how others identify you.

Kipling's "WE" and "THEY" in one person

From Interviews with Russian HLLs

- 2006
- N=30
- In Russian
- Each interview 30 minutes long
- Attitudes to Russian, motivation for study, identities –
- **How do you self-identify?**

Examples from Russian interviews

- DF (5months old at emigration)
“Of course I am an American” **Triangular culture**
- IK 1.5 y.o.
“I am definitely an American”... **after I was in Russia last summer**
- ID 7 y.o.
“I am more of an American” **I think in English**

Russian interviews # 2

- RO 4 y.o.
“I think I consider myself an American” I am an American with Russian roots
- KB 6.5 y.o.
“Most likely I am a Russian American” I feel that I am an American but I am from Europe
- EL 7 y.o.
“In general, I am Russian” I am an American in my daily life, but I am Russian

Russian interviews # 3

- NK 4 months, Moldova
“I am Russian” I never say I am an American My mentality is more Russian
- SSh born in US
“I would say I am more Russian or Soviet” I am more Soviet; I have no common ground with Americans
- OL 4.5 y.o.
Russian American
“American friends think I am Russian, and Russian friends think I am an American”

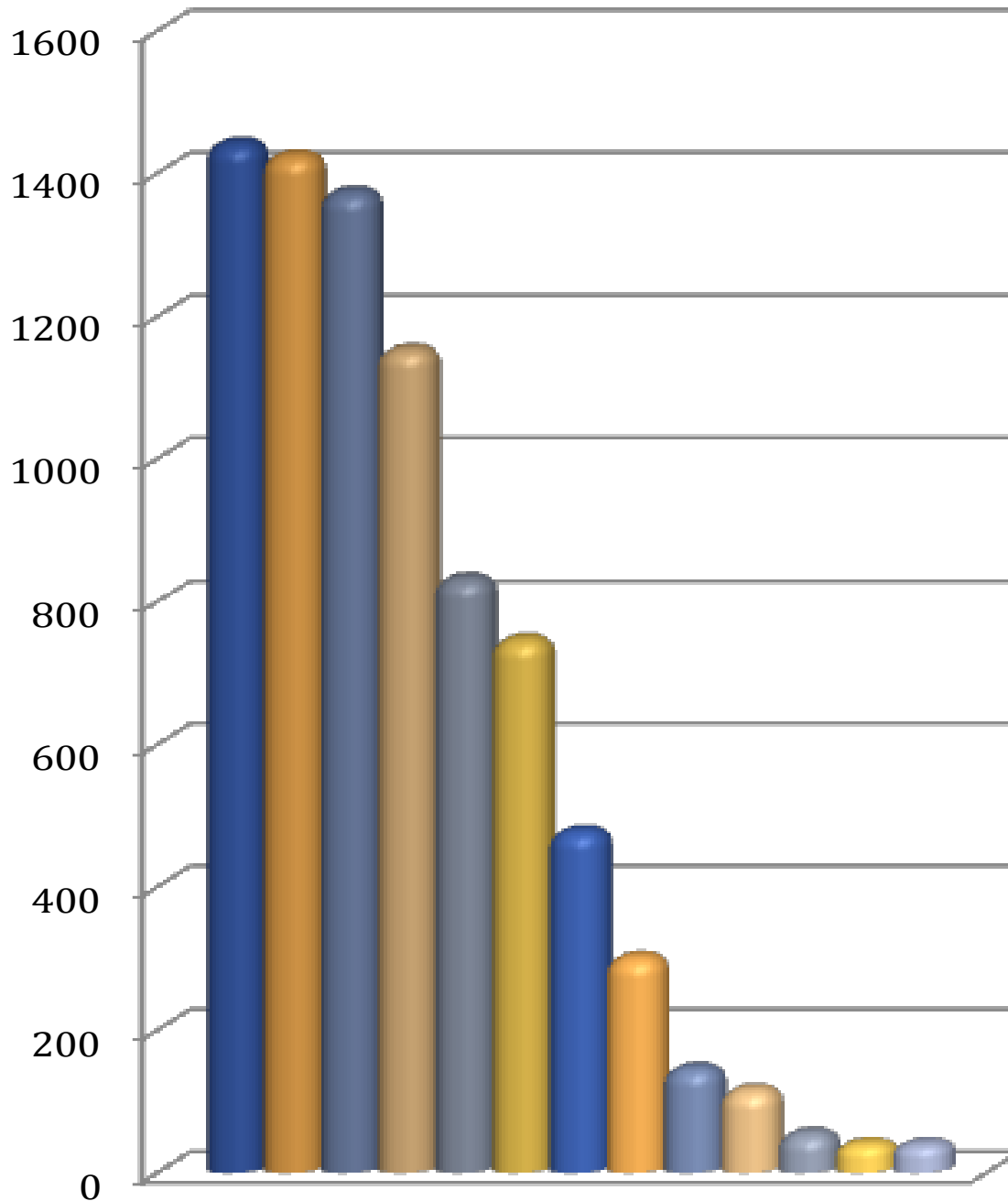
Conclusions on identity

- Respondents are conscious that identity is multidimensional and not inflexible
- **They have a clear realization of their multiple identities and “hybridity”**
(Bhabha, (1994). *The location of culture*. NY: Routledge)
- **Their sense of identity can be described as ‘articulated CONTINUA of identity’**
(Hornberger, Wang (2008) *Heritage Language Education*, NY: Routledge)

Language Attitudes

- Mostly positive
- Embarrassment
- Insecurity

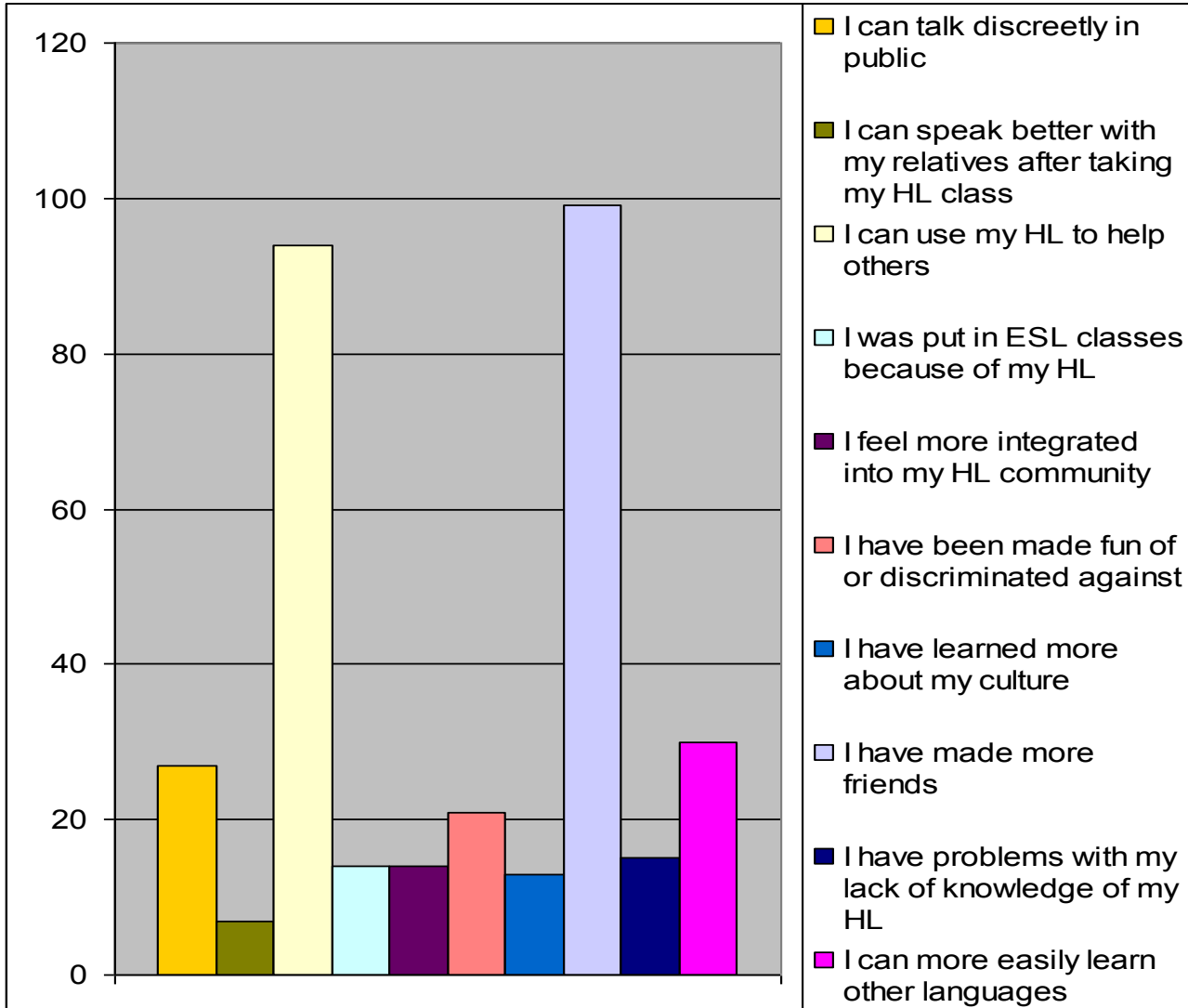
- Understanding the social, political, and emotional issues associated with having various degrees of proficiency in one's heritage language
- Being aware of students' attitudes toward learning their heritage language
- Incorporating personal voice into the instructional program, thereby nurturing self-esteem
- Advocating for heritage learners and promoting the importance of heritage language programs within the school



- It's a valuable skill.
- I find it useful.
- It's an important part of who I am.
- It's a necessary skill.
- It has helped me make friends.
- It has made school more enjoyable.
- At times I feel embarrassed.
- It has made school more challenging.
- It has made school less challenging.
- It has been a barrier to learning English.
- Other

How has your knowledge of your heritage language affected your experience in school? Can you remember an incident

when your heritage language was helpful or caused you problems in school?



Open-ended Questions

How has your knowledge of your heritage language affected your experience

- **in school?**
- **outside of school?**
- Can you remember an incident when your heritage language was helpful or caused you problems in school?

I have made more friends

- **It has made my experience at school more pleasant. By taking a HL class, I was able to meet more students with my HL. Thus, I have created new friendships with students of the same background as mine. It has never caused a problem for me. (Armenian)**
- **It has helped me make more friends, because most of my friends that I'm close with now are all Chinese too. If I need to ask or talk to someone privately with people around, I can ask them in Chinese. It never caused problems for me.**
- **I find my heritage language very useful in school. When I was in high school, it helped me find my very first friends. I was a new transfer student so i didn't know anyone, and this girl came up to me to make friends. And knowing Chinese has helped me to communicate with her in a better way since Chinese is her native language.**

Academic advantages

- In high school I took three years of French, and, my HL being Spanish, I was able to pick up the language very quickly. I received the highest grade in the class each year, and also received the highest AP score of my class.
- When reading Russian literature in translation, I was able to help my class understand the connotation of certain words that were not very clear in the translation. Also, surprisingly, when I studied Latin, I found certain vocabulary to have similar roots.

I can help others

- During my high school years, I was volunteering at an elementary school. There was a young Vietnamese girl who was crying, and she would not talk to anyone. So the office secretary asked me if I could speak to her and make her say something. **When I spoke to her in Vietnamese, she was actually responding to me. This experience touched me and I felt more connected with my Vietnamese heritage.** It's part of the reason why I'm taking the class now.
- It was helpful when I was young, when a new student came to school and did not understand English. **I helped him translate and translated the teacher's words to his parents.** (Cantonese)

- **When it would come to my turn, I would have difficulty speaking in Hmong and I felt embarrassed and ashamed of myself that I couldn't speak my language fluently.**
- **My lack of knowledge of my heritage language has made it difficult for me as I grew up since I became more and more embarrassed to speak the language because I felt like I was butchering the language.** My grandparents would often misunderstand me and we would have several miscommunications because of my lack of knowledge in my heritage language and my grandparents' lack of knowledge of English.

Inability to communicate

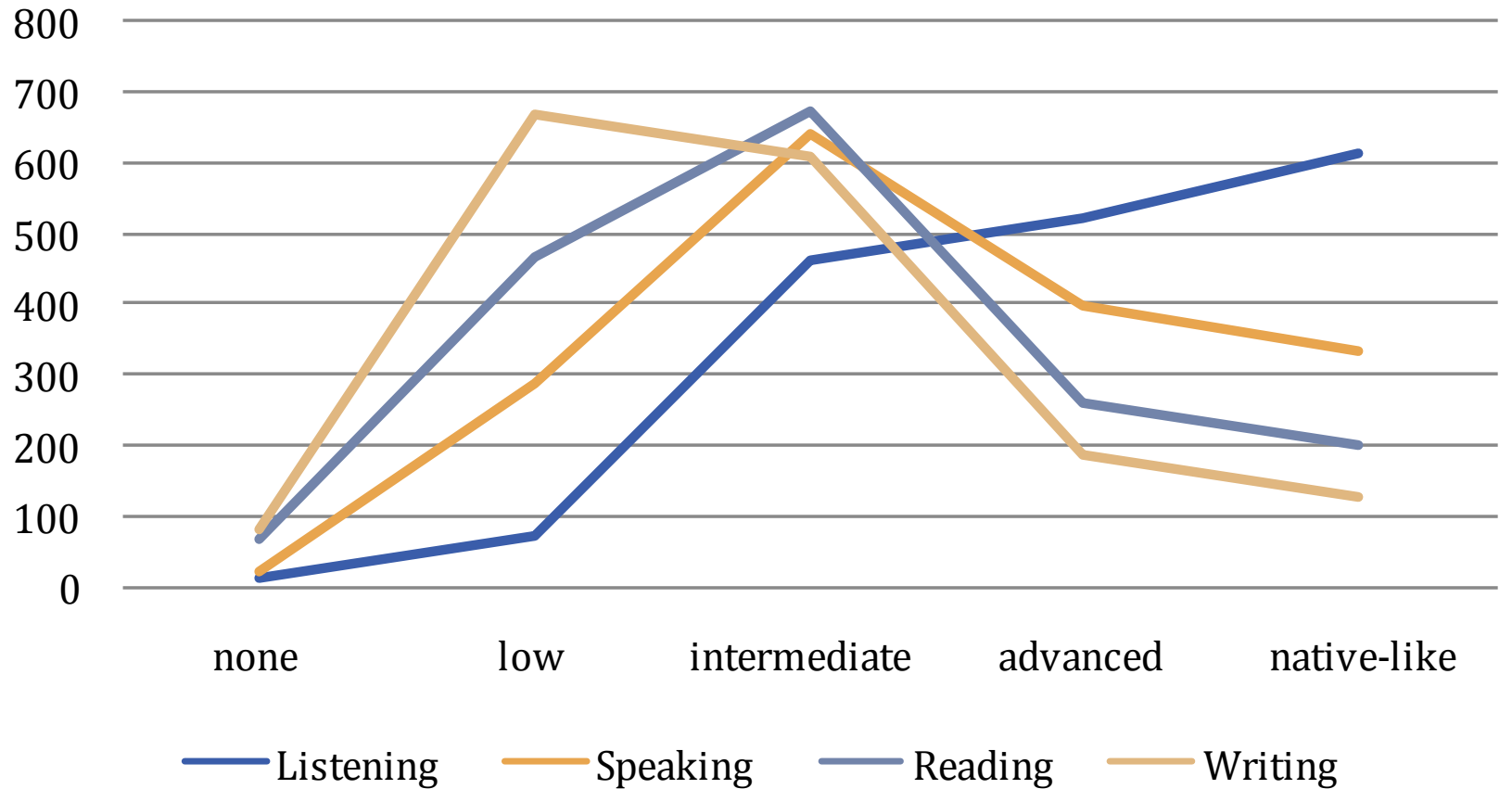
- At home, often times there is miscommunication. I get easily frustrated when I cannot get across a very simple point with my parents. This will lead to arguments over really stupid things. **In a way, it has been a barrier between my parents and me and making us grow apart somewhat.**
- **Once when I was visiting India**, I got on a bus. On the bus, an old lady was yelling at me in Gujarati. I didn't know she was yelling at me to go to the back of the bus. **Then, because I didn't move, the whole bus started yelling at me.**

English proficiency

It has made Chinese class a lot easier for me. However, **I feel that it has held me back from being a complete native English speaker. Although, I was born in America, I still feel that my English is not at the level it should be.** I feel like I make grammatical errors when I speak, and it is not as fluent as I would like it to be.

Socially, my heritage doesn't hinder me. However, I think that as an elementary and middle school student, having an Asian heritage has made it somewhat difficult for me. **Although I was born here, and speak English with no accent, administrators often tested me for ESL** even though I explained many times that my English was fine. In fact, **I learned to never put down that Vietnamese was my first language**, because that just caused more trouble and landed me in ESL programs that slowed down my education.

Please rate your heritage language abilities:



On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not important" and 5 being "extremely important", how important is it for you to accomplish the following goals in your HL class?

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Response Total
Improve speaking	84	61	109	175	685	1114
Improve listening	83	75	154	209	590	1111
Improve reading	86	40	111	194	680	1111
Improve writing	77	34	108	183	709	1111
Improve grammatical accuracy	76	38	132	223	642	1111
Increase vocabulary	77	30	79	183	740	1109

- HLLS are
 - neither native speakers
 - nor L2 learners
- They stride intercultural boundaries
 - Identity
 - Language attitudes
 - Motivations
 - (Socio)Linguistic competencies

HLLs have GAPS in

- vocabulary (Polinsky);
- some grammar (Montrul);
- pragmatics (Kagan, work in progress)

- **The goal:** to gain an understanding of the linguistic and experiential factors that contribute to HLLs' speaking proficiency.
- 50 Russian respondents (I-S)
- 41 Spanish respondents (I-S)
- Next step: Chinese and Hindi

- ACTFL OPIc
 - Internet-delivered version of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
 - Fixed form
 - All participants received the same prompts
 - Intermediate through Superior-level tasks
 - Same topics and role play situations
 - Blindly double rated by certified ACTFL raters
 - Samples are digitally recorded and archived

- You were ill and missed an exam. Leave a voice mail for your instructor telling him/her that you can make up the test today.

What's wrong with the prompt?

- It does not specify whether the situation takes place in U.S. or abroad.
- In Russian, the word 'exam' only means 'the final exam'
- In Russia, students do not call their instructors and leave messages

What's wrong with the responses?

- All 50 responses are off the mark:
 - Forms of address: dear professor; dear teacher; professor; hi, professor
 - Several students use the name and patronymic, but still make pragmatic mistakes
 - Explanations are too lengthy and detailed

- I have overslept
- I got ill; I had a stomachache (several students); I got food poisoning (details)
- My boyfriend is taking me to a hospital
- I will be free next Saturday
- I can't come to class, I have some problems
- Please call me back
- I can meet with you on the following days...

An Example: from an e-mail

I missed class Wednesday because shortly after lunch I burst a blood clot/socket in my mouth. My shirt had blood all over it (graphic, sorry!!) and my mouth hurt the most it's had over the past week. And that morning, it had felt almost 100% ok! Lousy day....

I apologize for missing the guest speaker and lecture.

Is our homework for the weekend to read and answer the questions on the Berdyaev text + memorize Tutchev poem?

I appreciate your time.

Thank you,

- Jan 10, 2012

Importance of Pragmatics

- There have been several times when in my community, I meet individuals of my HL and cannot communicate with them as properly and formally as I would have liked to.
Growing up speaking my HL at home has provided me with sufficient vocabulary to carry on conversations with my parents, but I have not learned how to speak formally to those outside the home. (From NHLRC Survey)

- A curriculum for HLLs needs to
 - build on their motivation, self-identity, language attitude
 - fill linguistic and socio-linguistic gaps
- IN ORDER TO
- Enhance students' language competency
 - Connect students to family and community

- HL learners come to the classroom from the community with their language and cultural knowledge being rooted in the community. They need to continue to be able to function in the community while also enhancing their academic and linguistic skills.
- Carreira & Kagan, 2011

- Community-based and group projects
- Ethnographic and linguistic research
- Content-based curriculum:
 - History of country
 - History of migration/s
 - Facts/beliefs/cultural figures
 - Use of students' initial aural/oral competencies

Knowledge of my heritage language has helped me outside of school in that **I've been able to communicate and connect with my family and the greater Ethiopian community...**

...especially because many older relatives, like my grandmothers, speak very little to no English at all.

Rewards of Teaching an HL!

- It has made me closer to my parents and I feel closer to them. They help me with whatever problems I have in learning the Thai language and I feel that they are more proud of me.
- All my life, I've been around people not of my native heritage. To be in a class with people of the same culture as I am feels inviting and accepting. I am now able to speak to my classmates in a different language whilst making myself feel integrated in my culture (Vietnamese)
- I only spoke Tagalog when calling relatives back in the Philippines during holidays and special occasions. I only started to take pride in my knowledge of my heritage language after coming to UCSD and joining Filipino clubs as well as enrolling in classes such as Advanced Filipino.

- M. Carreira, O. Kagan. (2011). The Results of the National Heritage Language Survey: Implications for teaching, curriculum design, and professional development. *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol.44 #1. pp. 81-105.
- O. Kagan, K. Dillon. (2011). Heritage Languages and L2 Learning Handbook of Second Language Acquisition S. Gass and A. Mackey, Editors, Routledge. pp. 491-505.
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