

4.0 DISCUSSION

The intent of this study was to document informant, professor, and peer perspectives on the Spanish learning of the Chicana study abroad students in Mexico. As established in chapter 3, each student was different in her Spanish language background, and life experiences; however, as Spanish heritage language learners of Mexican descent studying in the country of their heritage, there were similarities across the four cases. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis across the case studies and discuss such topics as language features, general patterns in attitudes toward the Chicanas' Spanish skills, efforts in learning Spanish, and views on ethnic identity during their study abroad in Mexico.

4.1 CHICANA STUDENTS' SPANISH LANGUAGE

During the 10 weeks of study, some attitudes were the reaction to features manifested in students' Spanish as well as their perceived Spanish language improvement. The students showed convergent accommodation as they made efforts to speak the formal Spanish appropriate to the academic environment (Giles, 1973). Still, there remained distinguishing Spanish features from formal Spanish. This section discusses the Spanish language features and improvements observed in and by the four Chicana Spanish heritage language learners.

4.1.1 FEATURES IN CHICANAS' SPANISH

The Chicanas, their professors, and their suitemates described the Chicanas' Spanish characteristics. Each student possessed different Spanish language characteristics and Spanish language education (see Chapter 3 for an explanation of each student case). These differences in language background are expected since heritage language learners have been found to have varying language skills (Draper & Hicks, 2000; Hidalgo, 1993; Scalera, 2000; Valdés, 1995). Research in the study abroad context (Brecht & Robinson, 1995; Freed, 1998; Huebner, 1998)

has also found that there are a plethora of variables that language learners bring with them to the study abroad setting. Nonetheless, the study results show that there are some similarities in Spanish language characteristics. Chicana students' rural Spanish features, English influence, and verb errors in their Spanish will now be illustrated.

Mikaela and Gracie showed typical Chicano lexical characteristics as described in the literature (Hidalgo, 1987; Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, in press; Sánchez, 1983; Smead, 1998; Valdés, 1988) (see Table 3 for a chart of all features mentioned in the results). Both their professors and peers associated the features with the North of Mexico or with rural Mexican Spanish, and not being a variety heard on the university campus. For example, Gracie reported that her suitemate constantly corrected her for using an extra "s" on the end of second person singular past tense verb form. "*Dejiste (sic)*, I seem to add an s and pronounce it like *dijistes*." This is a typical feature in rural Mexican Spanish (Hidalgo, 1987; Sánchez, 1983, 1993; Valdés, 1988). Both Gracie and Mikaela use the non-standard Spanish word "*pos*" instead of the standard Spanish form "*pues*" ("well") (Hidalgo, 1987; Valdés, 1988). Mikaela's writing professor suggested she use "*nada más*," ("nothing/no more") the standard form for "*na' más*," because the former sounds more "respectful." The latter is an apocope, or loss of the final sound in the word, and is a typical rural Mexican form (Sánchez, 1983).

Another feature of Chicano Spanish is its English influences. Valdés (1988) mentions loanwords and Smead (1998) lists examples of the phrasal calque as influences from English in the Spanish of Chicanos. Only Gracie reported using these types of words. For example, she uses "*daime*" ("dime") and "*troca*" (truck) which is an English loanword (Sánchez, 1983), and "*llamar pa' trás*" ("call back") which is an English phrasal calque (Smead, 1998).

**Table 3. Chicano Spanish Features Used By
Chicanas Studying Abroad in Mexico**

Chicana student	Chicano Word	English translation	Explanation of Variation	Found in Mex. Span.	Who reported variation	Biographical Reference
Gracie, Mikaela	<i>Lllamar pa(ra) (a)trás</i>	Call back	English Phrasal Calque	no	Gracie, Ana, Art Professor	Smead, 1998; Sánchez, 1983; Reigelhaupt & Carrasco, in press
Gracie	<i>huerca</i>	little girl	common	yes	Ana	Sánchez, 1983
Gracie	<i>daime</i>	dime	English Loanword	no	Gracie	Smead, 1998
Gracie, Mikaela	<i>Pa'</i>	To	Apocope: loss of final sound	yes		Hidalgo, 1987; Sánchez, 1983
Gracie	<i>Pusistes, (urban) Pusites (rural)</i> (standard: <i>pusiste</i>)	To put; 2 nd person singular	–s addition to the 2 nd person singular	yes	Ana, Gracie	Hidalgo, 1987; Valdés, 1988; Sánchez, 1983
Gracie, Mikaela	<i>Pos (pues)</i>	well	Reduction of diphthong; common informal variety	yes	Ana, Writing Professor	Hidalgo, 1987; Valdés, 1988
Gracie	<i>Truje (traje)</i>	I brought	Archaic term; part of español culto	yes	Ana	Hidalgo, 1987; Valdés, 1988; Sánchez, 1983
Mikaela	<i>muncho</i>	much	Archaic term (old case of epenthesis)	yes	researcher	Reigelhaupt & Carrasco, in press; Hidalgo, 1987; Sánchez, 1983
Mikaela	<i>este</i>	Um...	Discourse marker	yes	Mikaela	Valdés, 1988
Mikaela	<i>Na' más No más (nada más)</i>	No more	Apocope: loss of final sound	yes	Writing professor, Mikaela	Sánchez, 1983
Leila			Intrasentential switches	no	Leila	Smead, 1998
Gracie	<i>troca</i>	truck	English Loanword	North Mex.	Ana, Art professor	Sánchez, 1983
Gracie	<i>Me miro mal? (Me veo mal?)</i>	Do I look okay?	Dialect difference	North Mexico	Gracie, Ana	Reigelhaupt & Carrasco, in press

The students reported intra-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching to English when speaking Spanish, another characteristic of Chicano Spanish (Smead, 1998; Valdés, 1988). The Chicana students' primary reason for code-switching was to say in English what they did not know in Spanish. This seems to represent a limited Spanish lexical repertoire characteristic of Spanish heritage language learners (Hernández-Chavez, 1993; Sánchez, 1993; Valdés, 1988; Valdés and Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998). For example, while observations were carried out in their writing workshop and welcome meeting with UDLAP faculty, Brooke and Mikaela appeared to code-switch to English when they did not know words in Spanish. Gracie was reported to code-switch often, because, as her professor explained, "*de repente se desespera . . . y no encuentra la palabra*" ("all of a sudden she gets impatient, and she cannot find the word") so then she switches to English. However, Brooke's roommate reported that Brooke was generally careful not to code-switch, except when talking with her roommate and Mikaela. In this case, Brooke's code-switching does not appear to occur because of a lack of Spanish lexicon, but rather, as a form of social expression characteristic of languages in contact, as explained in Gardner-Chloro (1997) and Smead (1998). Code-switching with another individual who can also understand both languages expresses solidarity and group identification.

Finally, all four Chicanas expressed problems with verb forms throughout the study abroad period. They seemed to know a verb, but conjugated it incorrectly. They expressed problems with conjugating the subjunctive verb form which is a common difficulty for most Spanish language learners and not characteristic of Chicano Spanish. Brooke even avoided using the subjunctive forms. Mikaela pointed out that "it's not the verb that I can't conjugate, it's just that I don't feel like I know the rules of Spanish." This is typical of SHLL who enter into a Spanish class with little formal academic schooling in Spanish. At the end of the study abroad

period, Brooke felt she had improved in her Spanish because she could use the subjunctive without pausing.

4.1.2 *SPANISH IMPROVEMENT*

The Chicanas, their professors and peers mentioned the students' Spanish skill improvement over the study abroad period. Also, students' sentiments on improvement were interpreted from any gain in the pre- and post- skill ratings, and were explicit in comments made in the students' final journal entries. The improvements in the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and Spanish vocabulary will be related (see also Table 4 for the Chicana Spanish skills rating).

Reading was the skill least mentioned in the Chicanas' journal entries and interviews. On their rating scales, Leila and Gracie indicated that they had not improved over the ten-week period of study, Brooke gave herself a half-point improvement, and Leila gave herself one point improvement. Leila commented the most on her own reading. She felt that it had improved because she read a 400-page novel in Spanish. Interestingly, most of the Chicanas mentioned their belief that their Spanish, especially vocabulary acquisition, improved according to how much they read.

Writing, a skill in which Chicano students characteristically lack experience and instruction (Marrone, 1981; Teschner, 1981; Valdés, 1995) seemed to improve during the semester. The learners in the Hernández Pérez (1997) study reported writing as their weakest skill. All the Chicanas reported a lack of Spanish academic writing skills and vocabulary, typical of Spanish heritage language learners (Hernández Pérez, 1997; Marrone, 1981; Teschner, 1981; Valdés 1995) (see section 4.1.2 for a description of perceived literacy improvement for the

Table 4. Ratings of Chicanas' Spanish Skills
(5 = native speaker skill level)

	Gracie				Leila				Mikaela				Brooke				
Raters	Professor	Peer	Chicana Beginning	Chicana End	Professor	Peer	Chicana Beginning	Chicana End	Professor	Peer	Chicana Beginning	Chicana End	Professor	Peer	Chicana Beginning	Chicana End	Average
Speaking	5	3.5	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2.5	3	3.8
Listening	5	4.5	4	4	3	4	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4.1
Reading	4	3.5	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	3	4	5	3.5	4	3.5
Writing	4	3.5	3	3	3	5	3	4			2	3	3		2.5	3	3.2

students). This appeared to be the case from the perspectives of the Chicanas, their professors, and the suitemates as the average Chicanas' writing skill rating was lower than their other skill ratings. This was likely because only one out of four of the Chicana students, Brooke, had previously received academic Spanish writing instruction at the university level. Gracie reported having never written in Spanish before; for this reason she took the Writing Communication class. Mikaela had not experienced writing Spanish since high school. Leila had had no Spanish writing instruction since elementary school. Although rated the lowest, writing seemed to be the skill that had most improved for the Chicana students. All students except Gracie rated themselves higher in writing than at the beginning of the study abroad. Further, according to the self-rating scores, the students improved the most in writing. The Chicanas felt their writing improved because they sensed being able to write faster, have fewer error marks on a composition, and feeling comfortable with writing.

Listening, on average, was the highest ranked skill. At the end of the data collection Brooke was the only one to rate herself higher than her original rating, which parallels her mention that "I think my listening skills have really improved and this puts me at much greater ease when I'm speaking to a fellow Spanish speaker." Leila also felt her listening improved the most, even though she rated herself with native Spanish listening at the beginning and at the end of the study abroad period. Leila explained that "I feel like I can understand everything anybody says, where at first . . . the native Mexicans who spoke amongst each other really, really fast...I just couldn't follow them." Both Brooke and Leila measured their listening abilities by how well they understood native speakers.

Speaking was the Spanish skill for which most comments were made. Although only one of the Chicanas rated her speaking higher on the self-rating scale at the end as compared to the

beginning of their study abroad program, all expressed belief that their speaking abilities had improved. Brooke felt that her Spanish was “more grammatically correct,” Gracie thought her Spanish had improved when she recognized the absence of the Chicano features, and Mikaela felt that her most improved Spanish skill was speaking. Leila mentioned that “with speaking, I just feel really comfortable . . . I guess that’s [where] I’ve put the most effort.”

The students expressed that they sensed improvement in speaking from interactions with native Spanish speakers. For example, Brooke’s Guadalajara host family mentioned that she “speaks a ‘*chorro*’ [‘ton’] of Spanish now . . . [and she] had more of a Mexican accent” as compared to the previous summer in Mexico. Brooke related that “it’s things like strangers acknowledging my Spanish skills that make me recognize them as well.” Gracie added, “the best thing was that I could communicate with the natives.”

Along with Spanish skill improvement, the Chicanas sensed growth in their Spanish vocabulary. This concurs with Freed (1998a), who mentioned that a varied vocabulary develops during study abroad. Brooke perceived improvement in her vocabulary in writing when she noticed fewer correction marks on her composition at the end of the semester as compared to the beginning of the study. Mikaela also sensed her vocabulary growth. Leila expressed that reading helped expand her vocabulary. Other participants mentioned the Chicanas’ acquisition of academic vocabulary. Mikaela’s roommate comments, “*yo siento que al estar acá, se le ha obligado a conocer muchas palabras, porque al hablar de economía como que usas un lenguaje muy propio, muy edecuada*” (“I feel that being here, she has been obligated to know many words, because speaking about economics, like you use very proper and educated language”). Leila commented about the “outrageous” vocabulary that she learned from her literature class. Brooke expressed that, at first, she had a hard time understanding the terminology in her

economics and art classes due to a lack of background knowledge. Gracie's professor commented that her academic vocabulary was getting better. Vocabulary increase is a characteristic of language acquisition in the study abroad context according to Freed (1998).

Mikaela demonstrated awareness of the difference between formal and informal Spanish vocabulary from the beginning of the study. She observed in journal 1:

I'm definitely learning new vocabulary words but if there's been any change at all, I would have to say that it's been in the formality of my Spanish. The Spanish that I speak at home with family or friends is usually very common language.

Mikaela's comments demonstrate that before her study abroad, she used Spanish words from the home register. This corresponds with research finding that Chicano Spanish speakers do not have a formal Spanish lexicon because their vocabulary is limited to the home context (Barker, 1975; Galindo, 1995; Solé, 1981; Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998). Thus, Mikaela's formal Spanish developed over the 10 weeks. At the end of the semester she wrote: "I noticed that I speak differently with my friends and suitemates here than with say, my [professors] or other [administrators] . . . I'm able to change my style appropriately."

Along with academic vocabulary, the students also increased their colloquial usage. Again, almost from day one, they reportedly "picked up on slang." The Chicanas learned from and used colloquial expressions with their suitemates. Brooke was the only one who did not mention using colloquial terms, and this could be because she had little contact with her roommates until the end of her study abroad time. Colloquial language and other native-like features (speech speed, quantity of words, fluency, and fewer mistakes) are what appear to create the impression of native-like speech in language learners during study abroad (Freed, 1998; Yager, 1988).

4.2 ATTITUDES TOWARD CHICANAS' SPANISH

This section examines attitudes toward the Chicana students' Spanish over time as related by the Chicana students, their professors, and their peers.

4.2.1 CHICANAS' ATTITUDES OVER TIME

The Chicana students' attitudes towards their own use of Spanish were analyzed before, two weeks, four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks, and ten weeks into their study abroad in Mexico, as summarized in Table 5. Before their arrival in Mexico, the Chicana students looked forward to knowing Mexico, had hopes to improve their Spanish skills, and were nervous about their current Spanish skills. Mikaela expressed the most comfort with her Spanish. But, after the first two weeks in Mexico, even Mikaela's confidence "was shot." In journal 1, the four Chicanas described being self-conscious and disappointed in their Spanish. Gracie felt "guilty that I should know Spanish, I should be able to communicate."

Four weeks into the study abroad, as documented in journal 2, the Chicana students expressed improvement, but not without some dissatisfaction. Brooke explained that

honestly, I am frustrated with my Spanish right now. Sometimes it just flows and I don't really have trouble saying what I want to say; but even just today, I was trying to say something a couple of times and I just couldn't get it out en "*español*." Sometimes I wonder why I, or anyone else for that matter, ever considered myself/me bilingual.

In the journal 3 entries, the students recorded more positive feelings than in the previous journals, although evidence of negativity remained. Gracie expressed that "I am still disappointed that my Spanish doesn't seem to be improving that much." Leila, Mikaela, and Brooke added their observations regarding their slow progress and some positive moments in language learning. The students' journal 4 entries, written eight weeks into the study abroad, reported improvements and positive attitudes toward their Spanish. Gracie was the only one to

Table 5. Chicanas' Attitudes Toward Their Spanish Skills Over Time

	Gracie	Leila	Mikaela	Brooke	Generalization
Before Study Abroad	People disappointed that she was traveling to Mexico which is not popular nor safe; they thought her Spanish was poor	Admires the language, knows that some things are better expressed in Spanish; previously made fun of by teammates	Felt comfortable and confident with her Spanish; Stanford professor warned her about potentially critical students and professors	Nervous, worried about academic environment; knows she needs to feel comfortable to speak Spanish	Most brought sentiments that made them weary about their Spanish in Mexico
Journal 1, 2 weeks	"Guilty that I should know Spanish," "frustrated...when I want to say something..."	"I found myself struggling quite badly...I was concentrating too hard, fearful of making a mistake."	Confidence "shot," Not as fluent as expected, feels "other people are being critical..."	Feels "okay" but "disappointed," "frustrating," "uncomfortable," "self-conscious"	Frustrated, not communicating as well as they'd like
Journal 2, 4 weeks	"I can recall that my Spanish has improved, not significantly..."	"My Spanish is... improving, just not as fast as I would like... I have been more frustrated than anything."	Does not feel improvement in speaking but has more confidence in writing	"frustrated with my Spanish... sometimes it just flows...;" knows "acting self-conscious" is unhelpful; questions her bilingualism	Most felt slight improvements, Brooke & Leila still frustrated
Journal 3, 6 weeks	"I am still disappointed that my Spanish doesn't seem to be improving that much."	"As for speaking, I would say progress is stationary. I am not quite as frustrated as before."	"I feel like my Spanish is getting a little bit worse;" felt good translating for others on vacation	"I was feeling a bit better... I still felt really lacking since I generally always feel this way."	Increase in positive feelings toward their Spanish (except Gracie)
Journal 4, 8 weeks	Suitemates often correct her; doubted that she could still articulate herself in English until she talked to a friend	"I don't speak as quickly but I feel the quality of my Spanish has improved and I am much less frustrated."	"Well, I think I can finally say that my Spanish has improved a little bit."	"I'd have to say that my sentiments about my Spanish were improving;" "I was... less intimidated... self-conscious."	General improvements (except Gracie)
Journal 5, 10 weeks	"... my Spanish has improved; that my confidence had grown from being in Mexico...It blows my mind, however, that I have survived so far."	"So, while I may not leave Mexico as fluent as I would like, it is at least comforting to know that I can get around this country just fine on my own...and with patience and a little more work, the fluency will come."	"I think that I feel very comfortable with my Spanish now. I feel like I can pretty much get through any conversation. I've accepted that fact that there is always going to be some word that I don't know how to say and have to ask."	"Right now I feel comfortable with my Spanish. It's still not as advanced as I'd like it to be and it still doesn't come as easy as I'd like but I feel like its now on a very workable level, a level from which I can definitely reach my Spanish goals."	Comfort, functionality in speaking Spanish, acceptance of their language

continue to express frustrations without positive comments. Mikaela recognized her improvement: “I think I can finally say that my Spanish has improved a little bit.” Leila admitted that “I don't speak as quickly but I feel the quality of my Spanish has improved and I am much less frustrated.”

Finally, in journal 5 and during the ninth and tenth weeks of the study, the Chicana students showed comfort in speaking, recognized the functionality of their Spanish, and showed acceptance of their language even though they did not feel as much improvement as they desired. Gracie explained in journal 5:

today I was touring three girlfriends throughout Cholula and found that my Spanish had improved; that my confidence had grown from being in Mexico . . . It blows my mind, however, that I have survived so far.

The students expressed a gradual change in attitudes over their 10 weeks of study. Their feelings went from insecurity and self-consciousness as seen in the journal 1 entries to feelings of improvement and acceptance of their Spanish skills in the journal 5 entries. Although the Chicanas' attitudes toward their Spanish fluctuated throughout the study, their confidence grew as they interacted with peers and in their classes, experienced success and compliments, and most of all, accepted their own Spanish skills at their developing state, even when they did not arrive at a native levels. Most students commented on their satisfaction with the functionality of their Spanish, thus evoking contentment and positive attitudes. Fishman (1999) discussed the same phenomenon: feeling that one's language is functional creates positive attitudes toward the language. Additionally, the Chicana students' less than native level of Spanish at the end of the study abroad period suggests that not even heritage language learners achieve native language levels after studying abroad, as Regan (1998) found for non-heritage language learners.

4.2.2 *PROFESSORS' ATTITUDES*

The professors' attitudes were gleaned from what the Chicanas and professors expressed to the researcher. Three of the four students perceived their professors to be supportive. (This is a difference from past years' reports of professors being critical of the Chicanos' Spanish skills.) The professors commented on their previous experience with Chicanos and attitudes toward the Spanish of the Chicana students in this study (see Table 6).

In general, the Chicana students felt that professors' attitudes toward their Spanish were positive, and the Chicanas were satisfied with their classes. Gracie sensed that her professors were "open," and Leila appeared to be content as well. Mikaela commented "I got here thinking that all of the professors were going to be very critical and judgmental, and none of them were at all. All of them have been very nice, very helpful." Brooke commented, "if anything, all the professors I have had here have been very understanding of . . . my Spanish abilities."

Each of the five professors interviewed had previous experience, albeit varied, in instructing Chicano students. However, their philosophies in teaching Chicano students were manifested in distinct manners, from not treating or instructing the student differently than other students, to having a special program designed for them. Brooke and Gracie's Art professor, who had 10 years of experience teaching Chicano university students studying abroad, was very egalitarian in her treatment of every student: "*es mi alumno y ya*" ("she is my student, and that is it"). At the other end of the spectrum is Brooke and Mikaela's Stanford writing workshop professor, who worked with the Stanford Chicano students during the 4 years prior to this study and developed a knowledge of what Chicano students characteristically need to develop their

Table 6. Professors' Background and Attitudes Toward Chicana Spanish

* (S= speaking, L=Listening, R= Reading, W= Writing)

Professor	Previous Experience with Chicano Students	Philosophy in Working with Chicano Students	Chicana Student	Ratings out of 5*	Comments on Chicana Student	Chicana Students' Comments on Professor
Popular Art Professor	10 years giving literature and culture classes to Chicanos and other international students	Chicanos not treated differently	Brooke	S = 3 L = 4 R = 4 W = 3	Professor focuses on the content of what Brooke says and feels that Brooke is a good student	Feels her Art professor is supportive of her, like the rest of the professors
Spanish Business Professor	Gave classes to Chicano students (in Mexico) from Texas for 3 years	Important to measure their understanding and level of Spanish at the beginning of class	Leila	S = 3 L = 3 R = 3 W = 3	Has not evaluated her much, but sees her as completely American in speech and the way she constructs her grammar	Did not think class was challenging, and that she was the one with the best accent in the class
Spanish Composition Professor	Various years of experience teaching international students, including Chicano students	Chicano students might need extra support in reading and writing; prof. must be sensitive when discussing certain issues	Gracie	S = 5 L = 5 R = 4 W = 4	Gracie is an open person and has very good Spanish verbal skills and grammar	Gracie perceived her professor as open and gives her special treatment
Economy of Mexico Professor	Has given various courses to Chicano students over many years	Some have minimal Spanish background which gives them problems in their academic courses; some Chicanos have concerned themselves to learn Spanish and speak it well	Mikaela	S = 4 L = 3 R = 2	"She speaks very well...economy is not her field of study, and because of this I cannot expect her to understand everything . . ."	He played the father figure role when Mikaela was homesick; "All of [my professors] have been very nice, very helpful."
Writing Workshop Professor	Has coordinated the writing workshop for Chicano students for the last 4 years; knows needs of the students	Supports their dialect, but teaches standard Spanish; is "there" for the students when they need her help	Mikaela Brooke	NA	"They need to clear up concepts of using vocabulary . . . that their syntax, discourse, nor academic level . . . was very strong nor solid."	" . . . she is really committed to helping us."

academic writing skills. She expressed awareness that students should develop their standard academic Spanish form in their writing, but adds that “*no quiere decir que ellas estén mal, que ellas no lo puedan decir [como lo aprendieron en su casa]*” (it does not mean that they are wrong and they cannot say it [they way they learned at home]). The professor expressed a consciousness of the heritage language instruction goal that students should learn standard academic language without it replacing their home variety (Draper & Hicks, 2000; Gonzalez-Berry, 1981; Hidalgo, 1993; Orrantia, 1981; Valdés, 1995). Along with understanding the Chicana students’ language needs, the writing coordinator also expressed being approachable and willing to coach students as they brought their doubts and questions to the workshop session, as is recommended for effective heritage language instruction (Draper & Hicks, 2000; Gonzalez-Berry, 1981; Scalera, 2000; Webb & Miller, 2000). The writing workshop coordinator reflected:

El simple hecho que yo esté allí para ellos es algo, no? o mucho...tienen con quien desarrollarse, que tienen con quien comentar, que tienen con quien leer sin miedo, que tienen con quien exponer sus ideas sin temor.

(The simple fact that I am there for them is something, no? or much... they have someone with whom to develop, with whom to comment, with whom they can read without being scared, with whom they can express their ideas without fear.)

Mikaela recognized that the writing coordinator was “really committed to helping us.”

In summary, all the participating professors appeared to be supportive and generally sensitive to the academic and emotional needs of their Chicana students. It is important to note that three of the five professors interviewed were language teachers and the other two taught content courses. The Art teacher was not a language teacher, and this may explain her focus on the content of Brooke’s writing and speech rather than her attention to Brooke’s language needs as a SHLL. The fact that the writing workshop coordinator was a language teacher and her special assignment was to coordinate the writing workshop particularly for Spanish heritage

language learners would necessitate that she learn and accommodate to the specific needs of SHLL. These differences in professors' content focus likely explain the difference in attention to the SHLL needs.

4.2.3 *PEERS' ATTITUDES*

The students' peers demonstrated a wider variety of attitudes toward the Chicanas' Spanish than did the professors. Also included in the peer data were comments from people outside the university setting. Attitudes appeared to form and adjust as the suitemates and Chicanas grew to know one another, and were apparent when the Chicanas were made fun of, complimented, and when people reacted to their identity (see Table 7).

The Chicanas and their suitemates generally took time to feel comfortable with each other. At first the Chicanas (except Gracie) reported feeling uncomfortable speaking in Spanish around their suitemates, and the suitemates expressed not knowing how to interact with their Chicana suitemates. Once they grew to know each other and expectations were voiced about what language learning support the Chicanas desired, a comfortable environment was established in which the Chicanas felt confident using their Spanish. Mikaela explained:

When I first got here I felt like they [her suitemates] were staring at me crazy because of my Spanish . . . lately, not only have they changed the way they respond to me talking but they've also commented that my Spanish is very good. I think we just weren't very comfortable with each other initially.

What made the Chicanas and suitemates uncomfortable was not necessarily negative attitudes, but rather not knowing one another well at the beginning of the study abroad. As the Chicana students felt more comfortable with their roommates, they felt more comfortable speaking Spanish to them. Giangreco (2000) noticed the same phenomena when speaking Italian. The more comfortable he felt around the people with whom he interacted, the more confident and comfortable he felt using Italian.

Table 7. Peer Attitudes Toward Chicana Student Spanish Skills and Identity

	Gracie	Leila	Mikaela	Brooke	Generalizations
Perceived Identity	At first, most think Gracie is a Mexican national	Suitemate has some knowledge of Chicanos in the U.S.; soccer teammates perceives Leila as American	Suitemates: see her as an international student, Outside of UDLA: see her as a Mexican national	Roommate sees her as Chicana; suitemates see her as a Mexican national	Chicanas viewed in varying ways
Beginning of Study Abroad	Suitemates felt comfortable around her because she has Mexican background; 2 weeks passed before they felt comfortable correcting her Spanish	Suitemates recognize Leila is very open and friendly; they laugh when she speaks Spanish incorrectly; Leila did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish with the suitemates	Little interaction with suitemates at first, she perceived them to be critical; people outside the suite complimented her but she questioned their perspective	Brooke avoided speaking to her suitemates to avoid intimidation; suitemates asked her what language she would like to speak; Ana recognized her abilities	Some discomfort between Chicanas and suitemates
Middle of Study Abroad	Suitemates correct Gracie and think she is “cute;” they imitated her which made Gracie feel uncomfortable; others think Gracie is a Mexican national showing off her English	As Leila got to know her suitemates she felt comfortable speaking Spanish, asks them to correct her; roommate laughs and is “snooty” when Leila makes an error; Mexican classmates say her Spanish is good	Mikaela realized she just needed to be comfortable around her suitemates; many compliments on her Spanish but Mikaela still wonders why	Peers outside UDLAP give compliments; still feels self-conscious around suitemates; classmates snickered while she read aloud	Compliments; more comfortable with suitemates than before; some joking directed at Chicanas
End of Study Abroad	Suitemate doesn’t think Gracie is aware of her errors because she hasn’t corrected them, wonders where Gracie learned the words; think Gracie’s speech is more fluid; still laugh at how Gracie pronounces some words	Non-Spanish speakers compliment her Spanish; suitemate says her Spanish is good, she has good knowledge of meaning; suitemates feel that it is their job to correct her	People continue to be impressed and tell her they think her Spanish is good	Roommate thinks her goal was too high; Brooke finally spends time with her suitemates who are friendly	Good relationship with suitemates, say Chicana Spanish is good
Overall Attitudes	Suitemates think Gracie’s Spanish is fluent and “cute” by the way she says things; they notice and correct her non-Standard Spanish and wonder where it comes from	Leila felt more comfortable with her suitemates over time; they correct her, only one has a negative attitude toward her; those outside of her suite compliment her	Peers and others are impressed with and compliment her on her Spanish	Took a while to warm up to suitemates; peers outside UDLAP compliment; supportive roommate	Peers are generally supportive although they might poke fun at Chicana Spanish

However comfortable the Chicanas became with their peers, there existed some laughing and joking about the student's Spanish in all four cases. For example, Gracie related that her suitemates thought Gracie's Spanish was very "*mona*" ("cute") and they imitated it, which almost made Gracie "cry" out of embarrassment. Leila reported that "my roommate will sometimes correct me and kind of laugh... she'll make little snooty remarks sometimes or make a joke with her boyfriend." Leila reported that she did not let the jokes bother her; otherwise she would have difficulty gathering the courage to speak Spanish. There was one case where other young Mexican nationals also made fun of a Chicanas' Spanish. Brooke did not report joking from her suitemates, but the researcher observed several Mexican classmates giggle when Brooke started to read aloud in her Art class.

The data suggests that the Chicana students received more compliments than they did jeering. Compliments came from their suitemates and people outside of the UDLA environment. Gracie's suitemate commented, "*está más fluído su español, pero los mismos errores los sigue teniendo*" ("Her Spanish is more fluid, but she continues to have the same errors"). Leila received compliments from her suitemate, her Art classmates, a non-Spanish speaking friend, and her suitemate's boyfriend. Although she questioned the validity of some of their perspectives, she appreciated every compliment and explained that "it is the little triumphs like those that will feed me the confidence I need to keep on." People constantly complimented Mikaela on her Spanish: "I think they all think my Spanish is very good." Brooke's roommate noted her Spanish improvement, "... *yo no dudo que ha mejorado porque el ambiente que la rodea es en español...tal vez, no es tan, tan, tan fluído como ella desearía.*" (I do not doubt that she has improved because everything around her is Spanish...but perhaps she is not so, so, so fluent as she would like...). Brooke was encouraged by the compliments on her Spanish by her

Guadajara host family, and other Mexican friends and acquaintances. Brooke mentions not being able to see her own improvement and “that’s why I rely on what other people say to me... if they are so bold as to comment.”

The Chicana students received compliments throughout the semester that showed signs of encouragement to the students. Where suitemates’ comments were not without criticism, other students, people on trips, and foreigners appeared to offer compliments free from criticism. This seems to have occurred because the suitemates knew more about the Chicanas’ Spanish by living with them on a daily basis, and seemed to feel a responsibility to assess their suitemates’ language. Nonetheless, the students felt encouraged by and appreciative to those who offered compliments.

Woven into the comments by suitemates and by others were perceptions of the Chicanas’ identity. Initial perceptions were formed by appearance: if the Chicanas looked Mexican, peers generally expected them to speak native Mexican Spanish and consequently reacted when the Chicanas did not or when they spoke native-speaker English. However, if the Chicana’s were perceived as international students and/or American, then Mexican nationals seemed to have different reactions to their Spanish. For example, people generally thought Gracie was a Mexican national because of her looks. Gracie’s suitemate explained:

empezó hablar conmigo normal Como a los cinco minutos de estar hablando con ella fue cuando me dijo que era de Tejas . . . su español, no se oye mal, se oye bien, y no me di cuenta que era Tejana. Y más por mis amigos que la conocen, a principio piensan que es Mexicana y hasta [tiempo después de estar] hablando con ella, se dan cuenta.”

(she started speaking naturally with me After about five minutes of talking she told me that she was from Texas . . . her Spanish doesn’t sound bad, it sounds good, and I couldn’t tell she was Texan. And more as my friends meet her, at first they think she is Mexican and after a while of talking with her, they realize [she is not].)

Leila, on the other hand, was not perceived by peers as a Mexican national. Before the study abroad experience, she told her soccer teammates that she was Mexican-American and they responded, "no, you're not, you're American." Leila's professor also perceived her as very "American."

Mikaela reported peoples' perception on her identity and the resulting surprise when she spoke. She felt that, because her suitemates thought she was an Anglo international student (and her roommate seemed to confirm this in the interview), they thought her Spanish was excellent. Her roommate expressed being surprised that Mikaela spoke Spanish so well, even though Mikaela explained that her great-grandparents came from Mexico. Outside of the UDLAP while Mikaela was vacationing, tourists and tour guides seemed to think she was Mexican, and were surprised when she started speaking in English. Mikaela wrote in journal 3 that people would say: "wait, how do you know Spanish so well? How do you know English so well? Are you or aren't you Mexican? You're Mexican and live in the US?" A lot of them were quite confused." This gave Mikaela the opportunity to explain to people that "you can be Mexican AND from the United States" at the same time.

Finally, Brooke explained her experiences with people's perception on her identity. Her roommate, who lived in Texas for five years and was familiar with the Chicano culture, saw Brooke as a Chicana and showed an attitude of respect and admiration: "*El hecho que un Chicano está en México significa . . . la gloria*" ("the fact that a Chicano is in Mexico is . . . glorious").

In summary, peer reactions and attitudes toward the Chicanas' Spanish varied according to how people identified the Chicanas. If the suitemates and/or others perceived the Chicanas to be Mexican, then they were surprised at their Spanish or English proficiency. If they perceived

them as American (or Chicana), then they were surprised that and/or admired the fact that the Chicana spoke Spanish so well.

These results do not totally coincide with the Riegelhaupt and Carrasco (in press) “expectations paradigm,” described in section 1.2.3.3. None of the Chicanas’ professors demonstrated expectations that their Chicana students would speak standard Mexican Spanish, as the paradigm proposes. The professors’ previous experience with Chicano students likely had an influence on their expectations that the Chicana students would not speak standard, academic Spanish. If the professors had no prior knowledge of or experience with Chicano students, such as a Mexican professor who encounters a Chicano student for the first time, then they might fit the paradigm. As far as the suitemates and other peers are concerned, expectations depended on how they perceived the Chicana and if they had previous experience with Chicanos. Only Gracie’s peers showed expectations of her being a Mexican national at first, and did in fact expect her to speak standard Spanish and reacted with confused and/or negative attitudes once they heard her speak English or Chicano Spanish. The other Chicanas’ suitemates either perceived the Chicanas as international or American students, or Chicanos, so there was little expectation that the Chicanas speak standard-like Spanish. It might be wise to add a “identity perception” component to the paradigm. If the Mexican host or professors perceives the Chicano as Mexican because there has been no prior contact with a Chicano, then the paradigm is accurate. However, if the Chicano’s identity is perceived as anything other than Mexican, then the expectations change. Expectations of language proficiency depend on identity perception.

4.3 CHICANA STUDENTS' EFFORTS IN LEARNING

Over the course of the ten weeks, the Chicana students and other participants reported on the efforts the students made to learn more Spanish. Sánchez (1993) comments on the efforts that must be made to learn Spanish as a heritage language:

It is, I think, politically important to be fully functional in both languages, and that is something that Latino and Chicano university students can attain, but it will undoubtedly take time and effort and most of all, the desire and willingness to do so. (p. 80)

One UDLAP professor mentioned that “*yo creo que es una tarea consciente la comunicación*” (“I think communication is a conscious effort”). Once in Mexico, the Chicanas themselves recognized the efforts they had to make to reach their goals to continue learning their heritage language. Gracie said, “I recognize that I need to practice consciously and think about what I am going to say.” Brooke asserted that, “my level of bilingualism without me making the effort to learn . . . was . . . low.” Leila concurred: “the more I put into learning Spanish, the more I will learn.” The Chicanas’ conscious efforts to learn more Spanish were evident in their initiative to study in Mexico, to have others correct their Spanish speaking and writing, to spend time with their roommates, and to use other strategies, all of which their suitemates and professors recognized.

The first effort is evident in the fact that they studied abroad in their heritage language country and developed goals to achieve more fluent Spanish. Leila did not feel her Spanish classes at Notre Dame were “teaching me enough.” Thus, in coming to Mexico she had determined that, “I’m not going home until I pass for a native.” Brooke set her course by stating that “I’m here on a mission. I’m here because I’m in search of better Spanish skills.” Gracie wrote that she came to Mexico to learn about the geography and culture, and later mentions that “I just hope that I will learn more, become confident in what I have to say and am able to

articulate just what is on my mind.” Mikaela wanted to improve her Spanish skills and realized “I want to have improved my skills while I was here, rather than returning to the US with the same speaking level that I came with.”

The students insisted that others correct their Spanish, created and took advantage of opportunities to interact with native Spanish speakers, and utilized other resources to aid their Spanish language learning. The Chicanas showed interest and appreciation for corrections. Mikaela expressed: “I . . . want people to correct me. If not, I feel like I’m never going to know I’m saying the wrong thing.” Brooke understood that when she was corrected, it was because she needed the correction. Gracie’s professor did not perceive that Gracie was bothered by corrections. For Leila, she encouraged corrections from her suitemates, commenting, “I need to learn Spanish, correct me . . . I’m fine with it.”

The students viewed the time with their suitemates as opportunities to improve their Spanish. Mikaela and her roommate spent time speaking in Spanish together, with a portion of that time usually dedicated to negotiating with hand signals what Mikaela tried to communicate in Spanish. Leila appreciated the fact that “my roommates are making me speak only Spanish to them.” Late in the study, Brooke made the conscious decision to greet and speak to her roommates more frequently than before. She regretted not having spent more time with them because she realized her Spanish, and Mexican friendships, would have improved more than they did when she did not interact with her suitemates. Gracie frequently interacted with suitemates, who constantly attended to Gracie’s use of Spanish.

Leila recorded other strategies for her increased language learning. She partnered with individuals outside of her suite, including a soccer teammate and another friend, to take turns speaking in Spanish and English. She appreciated “being forced” to speak Spanish on a trip,

with her soccer team, in class, and at work. Leila created a vocabulary list to keep track of words learned in class and with friends. She also constantly used the strategy of positive self-talk to encourage herself. She “must keep reminding myself ‘one step at a time’ . . . and with a little patience and a little work, the fluency will come.” Leila demonstrated a socioaffective strategy to encourage herself, or to control her emotions during language learning (Mercado, 2000).

Leila mentioned using her dictionary as a strategy to decode unfamiliar Spanish words. The other Chicanas also reported their interaction with dictionaries. Mikaela learned to better use the dictionary and realized it improved her vocabulary. Gracie started out “too proud” to use the dictionary, but toward the end of the study conceded using it. Brooke insisted on using a Spanish-Spanish dictionary because she was trying to “wean” herself off direct translation.

The professors and peers noticed the efforts the Chicanas students made in their Spanish language learning. Mikaela’s economics professor mentioned that “*ella me da la impresión que se ha preocupado por estudiar el español bien*” (she gives me the impression that she has concerned herself to learn Spanish well”). Mikaela’s suitemate reinforces the professor’s comment: “*siento que ha estado practicando, y ella ha aprendido*” (“I feel that she has been practicing and she has learned [Spanish]”). Brooke’s roommate commented on her effort:

Porque en verdad, Brooke ha aprendido el español por decisión propia. Porque en su casa . . . predomina el inglés . . . y bueno dijo “necesito aprender el español” . . . es muy valiente esto.

(In reality, Brooke has learned Spanish by way of her own decision. English is the dominant language in her household . . . she said “okay, I need to learn Spanish.” This is very admirable.)

Leila’s suitemate observed that she “*es una persona que le pone mucho empeño y ganas al idioma español*” (“is a person who puts much effort and enthusiasm in [learning] the Spanish language”). Perhaps Leila’s professor did not see this same level of effort since, as Leila

reported, she was not stimulated and admittedly did not make much effort to interact in the class. She seemed to place a high value on her informal Spanish experiences, which she credited as important in improving her Spanish.

Each Chicana made efforts to improve her Spanish skills, and Leila explicitly recorded her efforts and strategies more than the other students. These differences likely occurred because the students started the study abroad with various perceptions of language learning. Differences in goals and perceptions of language learning have been shown to influence language acquisition in study abroad (Brecht & Robinson, 1995; Pellegrino, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998).

4.4 CHICANA STUDENTS' AWARENESS

The Chicana students seemed to express various levels of awareness of their Spanish language skills, which can be connected with their previous experience with the Spanish language. Leila appeared to be aware of her Spanish because she had been playing with the Mexican national women's soccer team for three years prior to the time of this study. This awareness about her Spanish not being "native" probably had an affect on her determination and apparent intensity in learning Spanish during her study abroad. Brooke seemed to be aware of her Spanish skills and background, evident when she mentioned her "bilingualism" in many journal entries and her interviews. In the final interview she described her Spanish at home to be comprised of words for food and "from a children's book." Brooke's awareness seemed to come from her two Spanish classes for heritage language learners at Stanford and her Spanish classes for bilingual speakers in Guadalajara the summer previous to this study.

Mikaela also expressed knowledge about her family's Spanish lexicon starting in journal 1: "the Spanish that I speak at home with family or friends is usually very common language." She predicted that the words were "probably made up by my friends or grandmother." Mikaela

reported developing the sociolinguistic ability to use Spanish in informal and formal situations throughout the semester. Distinguishing between and appropriately using formal and informal registers is an important component in heritage language learning according to Draper & Hicks (2000), and may be a sociolinguistic feature acquired during study abroad.

Gracie was not sure where her Spanish features came from either (i.e., adding an extra “s” to the end of the second person preterite verb; using the English calque, and other English loan words). In journal 4 she wrote, “I wonder where that comes from?” Mikaela took Spanish courses consistently up through her junior year in high school, but Gracie did not. Neither of the Chicana students took a Spanish for heritage language learners class that may have increased their sociolinguistic awareness of certain Spanish features. Neither Mikaela nor Gracie had contact with Mexico when they might have compared their Spanish to standard Mexican Spanish. For this reason, both Mikaela and Gracie wondered about the origin of some of their words that seemed to cause the most reaction from suitemates and professors.

In the case of the four Chicana students, two seemed to be more aware of their Spanish language as compared to standard Mexican Spanish, and two were not. Brooke and Leila had either heritage language learner classes (with a goal of creating sociolinguistic awareness in the learner) and/or contact with Mexicans. Hidalgo (1993) would suggest that, having had more contact with monolingual Spanish speakers, Brooke and Mikaela previously had access to a gauge by which to compare their own Spanish skills, and were aware of their skill levels before studying abroad in Mexico. Whereas Leila and Gracie, having no university Spanish heritage language classes nor contact with Mexico, seemed to question the origin of particular Spanish forms in their spoken Spanish.

4.5 CHICANA STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE

All four case study participants identified themselves as Chicana, decided to study in Mexico in part to better know their Mexican background (an integrative motivation according to Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and had certain perceptions of their own ethnic identity before they came to Mexico. During the semester, their identity seemed to be influenced by insights into their Spanish and English language expression (see Table 8 for changes in language and identity during the semester).

Gracie studied in Mexico to learn about the “culture and geography” and seemed to want to “survive” with her Spanish. At Brown, she used Spanish to connect with her Latino friends and “raise my [Mexican] flag” to show pride in her Mexican heritage. Once in the land of her heritage, she gained a different perspective on her language and identity. Gracie admitted, “I’ve never been proud to know English before. But here in Mexico . . . I . . . accepted that English was a part of me.” She found she could express herself better in English. As in Pavlenko & Lantolf (2000), Gracie commented on the difficult to fully express her identity in another language. She also realized that “I come here and I’m completely not Mexican” as compared to the Mexican nationals. Gracie’s study abroad experience taught her how American she was, and that English, the language into which she switched all semester to better express herself, was a source of pride. She maintained her pride in Spanish as well, stating that she felt “now more than ever . . . Spanish will be a part of . . . me.”

Leila chose to study abroad in Mexico to improve her Spanish and be closer to her teammates. She felt the linguistic and cultural rift over the previous few years when her teammates laughed at her Spanish and told her “you’re not Mexican, you’re American.” Even though Spanish “reminded her of home,” she recognized that her family spoke a different

Table 8. Chicana Students' Identity and Language During Study Abroad in Mexico

	Language	Identity
Gracie	Before, used Spanish as cultural expression; now, feels proud of her English as she realizes she also needs English to properly express herself; continues her pride in Spanish.	Before, proud to be a Mexican in the United States; now, she realizes how American she is compared to Mexican nationals and appreciates and takes pride in being American.
	<i>Gracie summary: New pride in English, new appreciation for her American side</i>	
Leila	Before, wanted to be a native speaker of Spanish, especially to communicate with her teammates on the Mexican national soccer team; now, feels as though she has made a step toward her native-like Spanish abilities during her study abroad	Before, desired to be more Mexican, especially because she plays on the Mexican national soccer team; now, feels as though her "Mexicanness is meeting her Americanness"
	<i>Leila summary: Spanish has improved, "Mexicanness" greater</i>	
Mikaela	Before, fairly comfortable with her Spanish; grows slightly more comfortable with her Spanish, continues to use English and Spanish	Before, called herself Mexican; now, tries to explain to others that one can be Mexican and American at the same time
	<i>Mikaela summary: Confident with her Spanish & English, confident one can be simultaneously Mexican and American</i>	
Brooke	Before, her bilingualism always a point of struggle; now, realizes that Spanish is a part of her in a "Spanglish" way	Before, recognized her Chicano identity; now, she is more comfortable with her Chicano identity: being Mexican and American at the same time
	<i>Brooke summary: More comfortable with her "Spanglish," more comfortable with her Chicano identity</i>	

language, “Spanglish.” After a semester of study in Mexico, Leila felt that she had grown closer to her goal of native fluency in Spanish. She also felt that, as she had the chance to know the Mexican people and the Spanish language better, her “Mexicanness” came closer to matching her “Americanness.”

Mikaela studied in Mexico to improve her Spanish skills and understand “her [Mexican] culture.” From the beginning of the study abroad she expressed a confidence in her Spanish (although “shot” after initial contact with Mexico, it regained its initial level during the semester) along with her identity as a Mexican. Throughout the study abroad period she found herself explaining that one can be “Mexican AND live in the United States” to curious Mexicans and foreigners unable to identify her as Mexican or American because she spoke both languages. Her identity was both Mexican and American, just as she spoke both Spanish and English.

Brooke explained that “my Spanish is a huge part of my consciousness, it’s a huge part of who I am.” Although she reported a continuing struggle with her bilingualism that started from when she was young, she seemed to gain peace about it in Mexico. She stated “I would definitely say [my Spanish] is a big part of who I am more . . . in a Spanglish kind of way.” At the same time she realized she was comfortable with her “Spanglish,” Brooke explained “I feel very comfortable with my identity as a Chicano” as well. She was comfortable being both Mexican and American at the same time (Chicano) and speaking both Spanish and English. Gardner & Lambert (1972) found that HLL who were comfortable with both of their languages were also comfortable with both of their ethnic identities.

Being in Mexico and studying Spanish was a catalyst for further definition of the Chicanas’ identity, especially as connected to language. Interestingly, as Liebkind (1999) summarized, language and identity appear to be reciprocally related. This seems to be true in

this study because as the Chicanas' perception on language changed, so did their perception on their ethnic identity. The only exception is Mikaela, who did not seem to express such a shift. Fishman (1999) discusses how language and ethnic identity vary according to social context. The students experienced such a changes in their perception of both their ethnic identity and language during study in Mexico, a different social context than their American context.

4.6 FUTURE USE

The four Chicanas explained that, upon their return to the U.S., they will use their improved Spanish skills for purposes as documented in the literature review (Barker, 1975; Mejías & Anderson, 1988): for interpersonal communication within the Chicano community. In this case, leaning Spanish in Mexico seems to have been instrumentally motivated (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Brooke planned to use her Spanish skills more than she had used them before in the Stanford tutoring program. She stated, "it definitely helps the rapport between the . . . coordinators and the families whenever you can go in and speak to them in a language [with which] they are comfortable." She did not envision her interactions in the Stanford Chicano center changing because of her improved Spanish proficiency, whereas Mikaela does:

When I get back, I think I'm just going to make an effort to use [Spanish] more. I think I'll go back feeling more confident with my Spanish speaking skills . . . a lot of my friends would talk to me in Spanish and I would answer in English because I was never confident enough.

Leila continued to discuss her determination to develop her Spanish fluency and use with her soccer team: "primarily, I plan to use it for playing with the Mexican team . . . and I probably won't stop until I'm fluent." Gracie is not sure she will continue to study Spanish, but mentions that after studying abroad in Mexico "I'll be more accepted by my mom's side of the family . . . that knows Spanish."

On a professional level, the four Chicana students articulated plans to use their Spanish. Brooke would like to use it “to serve the Chicano community” while Leila would like to use it to work for a U.S. consulting firm in Mexico. Mikaela and Gracie also have plans to use their Spanish in their respective medical fields. Most importantly for all of them, however, is their desire to teach Spanish to their own children and younger relatives. Mikaela expressed that “I definitely want . . . all of my family to speak Spanish . . . that’s probably more important to me than what I’m going to do with it in my career.”

4.7 CONCLUSIONS

4.7.1 SUMMARY

In summary, the Chicanas’ attitudes toward their Spanish language changed from negative to positive over the 10-week study. Professors’ attitudes were mostly supportive and positive, and their previous experiences with Chicano students resulted in non-specialized to specialized instruction for the students. Peers showed greater variance in their attitudes toward the Chicanas’ Spanish than the professors, including linguistic support juxtaposed with criticism. Professors, with greater previous experience with Chicano students and awareness of Chicano Spanish language characteristics and learning needs, appeared to be less critical (at least openly) toward the Chicanas’ Spanish. Perceptions of a Chicana student’s identity seemed to influence expectations of Spanish proficiency.

Two of the four Chicanas exhibited Chicano Spanish features from the literature (i.e.: rural Mexican Spanish, influence of English on Spanish lexicon), all four showed evidence of code-switching, mostly due to a lexical gap in Spanish vocabulary, and all students reported having trouble with verb conjugations. Perceived Spanish improvement was marked by an increase in vocabulary, academic as well as colloquial, and a general improvement in Spanish

skills. Each Chicana noted improvement in different skills for varying reasons; nonetheless, all sensed improvement in the production skills of writing and speaking. Interactions with native Spanish speakers helped them to gauge their speaking and listening abilities.

The Chicanas also mentioned their efforts toward Spanish language improvement. The greatest effort was making time to study their heritage language in Mexico with goals to improve their Spanish, which they accomplished by applying various strategies. All welcomed Spanish corrections, recognized the benefits of interacting with suitemates and other native Spanish speakers, and used other strategies. The Chicanas' peers and professors recognized and complimented these efforts.

Finally, study abroad in Mexico provided a change in context that caused a change in the Chicanas' perception on their identity and bilingualism. Their perception change in language was parallel to their perception change in identity. Gracie became more accepting of her American side as she accepted that English was a part of her. Brooke felt more comfortable being American and Mexican and at the same time she realized that "Spanglish" described her bilingualism the best. Leila felt her "Mexicanness" meet her "Americanness" at the same time sensing she made steps acquiring native-like Spanish. Mikaela expressed comfort with her Mexican and American identity as she expressed herself fluently in both English and Spanish throughout the semester. The Chicanas projected that, having achieved an increase in confidence in Spanish during study in Mexico, they would use their Spanish in their families, other interpersonal situations, and in their profession.

4.7.2 *IMPLICATIONS*

This study of different perspectives on Chicana students' Spanish learning during 10 weeks of study abroad in Mexico has implications for the UDLAP study abroad program and

other language learning programs, especially regarding Spanish heritage language learners (SHLL). I would like to make the following recommendations for UDLAP professors, Spanish heritage language learners, and the suitemates and peers.

4.7.2.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR UDLAP PROFESSORS

In the results it is evident that the professors were sensitive and supportive of the Chicano students' needs to feel supported academically and socioaffectively. However, only one of the five professors, a language teacher, expressed extensive awareness of heritage language learner characteristics and teaching techniques similar to those in the research. I recommend that language and content professors alike increase their knowledge of the specific needs of SHLL. Webb & Miller (2000), written by teachers of heritage language learners, is an excellent resource to gain teaching ideas. Another theoretical base and idea source for heritage language instruction is the Stanford Spanish 300 course reader designed specifically for the teaching of SHLL (Valdés, 1999). UDLAP professors of SHLL should consider developing classroom materials to accommodate the SHLL needs. Professors and program coordinators should consider Valdés' (1995) four components of a heritage language program (see section 1.2.2). Professors are unlikely to have the luxury of designing a curriculum for a whole class of SHLL as there are few who study abroad at the UDLAP at one time; nonetheless, individualized instruction for SHLL students should be incorporated into course curriculum. For example, the literature recommends using learning packets and varied grouping so students may carry out independent work according to their skill level..

Results from this study and the pilot study demonstrated students' desire to be more encouraged in language learning and to have professors share perceptions on student progress. Therefore, it is recommended that professors pay more attention to student assessment. Mercado

(2000) suggested using a portfolio format, which includes a compilation of assignments and other documents, to assess student progress throughout the semester. In addition to a collection of course assignments, I suggest adding to the portfolio a list of student goals as well as journal reflections on student feelings and perceived language development.

For example, at the beginning of the study abroad period, students should be encouraged to write a list of three or four realistic, specific, measurable and time-based goals for their Spanish skill and socioaffective development (see Rubin (2000) for more ideas on language self-management and language strategy instruction). Journal reflections, with similar guidelines to those in this study, should be part of the portfolio. Written reflection is a helpful strategy to have students identify their own feelings, awareness, triumphs and strategy use during language learning. It can also be a tool for professors and students to discuss strategies to control emotions that may get in the way of language learning (Mercado, 2000).

The portfolio, complete with goals, assignments, and journal entries, should be reviewed once a month by professors and students so students may see their improvement and success. This portfolio could be compiled in the writing workshop, for example, so students do not have to create a portfolio for every class. Plus, an individualized weekly meeting structure between the writing coordinator and student is already in place in the writing workshop. Once every month time should be taken to analyze student goals, progress, and feelings regarding their language. A language counseling format should be considered, where the counselor guides the language learner in goal-setting, language strategy use, self-assessment, and evaluation of goals (Kelly, 1996). This review may especially encourage the students through times when confidence in their language is low.

Low confidence might be alleviated through increased awareness of the sociolinguistic aspects of their Spanish variety and implications of use when in Mexico, attitude fluctuation toward their Spanish throughout the semester, and strategies to keep positive and motivated through discouraging times. First, to increase sociolinguistic awareness, language professors should consider carrying out a general discussion about sociolinguistics and specifically address characteristics of heritage language learner (or Chicano) Spanish, as well as give students the metalanguage to discuss such sociolinguistic issues. Like Brooke and Mikaela, some Chicanos might have previous knowledge of their Spanish variety and/or about possible reactions to its use; however, many students will not be aware of such reactions until they experience them upon arrival to Mexico.

Second, students should be shown Table 5, an example of the pattern of Chicana student attitudes toward language over time. This would allow them awareness of the potential emotional roller coaster that Spanish heritage language learning may be in Mexico. They would also see that language improvement and confidence is attainable, which may encourage them to maintain their efforts in language learning. Also, students should be encouraged to have high, but attainable expectations. For example, students should not expect to reach native fluency, but rather, improve in native-like speech. Student discouragement in this study often came when their Spanish had not improved as much as they had hoped; once the Chicana students realized they would not be completely fluent, they became more comfortable with their Spanish language level and less anxious about their speech.

Third, students should know that they themselves can control their own emotions that affect their attitudes. Leila used positive self-talk to calm herself down when she realized her expectations to speak quickly were too high. Professors might introduce strategies to control

emotions (as suggested above in Mercado (2000)), and language learning strategies to encourage and make Spanish language learning more manageable (see Rubin & Thompspon (1994) for tips on language self-management). The previous three suggestions to create awareness about sociolinguistics, attitudes and the ability to control their emotions might take place in one presentation at the beginning of the study abroad semester, or, in a series of planned discussions over the first several weeks of the study abroad period. This talk or series of talks could possibly occur within the structure of the writing workshop, or in another setting as not all SHLL are enrolled in the writing workshop. A writing workshop could also be created for all Spanish heritage language learners at the UDLAP.

4.7.2.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SHLL STUDYING ABROAD AT THE UDLAP

This study has implications for the Spanish heritage language learners who study abroad at the UDLAP. The SHLL should be encouraged to set concrete language learning goals with the help of the writing coordinator or language counselor. As mentioned above, the goals should be attainable and when reviewed every so often, students should feel successful by what they have accomplished. It is recommended that students share these language goals with their professors and suitemates, and discuss how they may be involved with the SHLL's learning process over the study abroad semester.

This study shows that the Chicana students and suitemates were slightly uncomfortable around each other, not because of negative attitudes toward the Chicana student, but because the the suitemates were still getting to know each other. To diminish initial discomfort, SHLL are encouraged to be open with their suitemates: sharing about themselves, their background, and their language learning goals. The suitemates will likely desire to help the SHLL accomplish these goals because the suitemates in this study were enthusiastic about supporting the Spanish

learning of the Chicana students. Students should let their suitemates know if, when, and how they would like their Spanish to be corrected. Also, SHLL are encouraged to practice the Spanish language, initiating discussions regarding the suitemates' backgrounds and interests. Suitemates should be viewed not only as a language resource, but as a source of friendship and support. However, SHLL should be warned of the potential disrespect or joking directed at their Spanish variety. If this occurs SHLL might take the opportunity to explain the sociolinguistic implications of their Spanish variety in the UDLAP context. The UDLAP program of language coordinators might chose to organize a special welcome party with the Chicano students and their suitemates. During the party some time should be taken to explain the history and origins of Chicano Spanish. Riegelhaupt & Carrasco (in press) found this type of meeting to be effective and as a result, the family's attitudes appeared to improve toward their Chicana homestay guest.

Aside from suggestions for SHLL goal setting and suitemate interactions, another recommendation is that students be encouraged to study abroad for a full semester or year. It is understandable that there are home university schedules and limitations, but the language and study abroad experience might bear more fruit if students extend their stay. For example, both Brooke and Mikaela's writing coordinator and economics professors mention that it is a pity the Stanford students must leave Mexico so soon. Brooke even encouraged "any Chicano to come to Mexico and spend some time here, and not a short period of time." Olga Cantú (personal communication, May 8, 2000), director of international education in the Department of International Affairs, recommended studying abroad for two semesters.

4.7.2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR UDLAP PEERS

UDLAP suitemates and peers of Spanish heritage language learners are encouraged to support the study abroad experience of the students. Suitemates should make an extra effort to draw the new students in from the beginning of the study abroad period. SHHL might be a little shy about speaking Spanish, and even avoid interacting in Spanish as Brooke did in this study. Nonetheless, suitemates should continue to try to make contact with the SHHL and understand their background, interests, and language learning goals. Sensitivity will be needed when negotiating what the SHLL needs in way of corrections on their Spanish. Suitemates and peers should keep in mind that students may not be aware that their Spanish dialect is different than standard Mexican Spanish. SHLL will need encouragement and positive reinforcement, not joking or jeering, as they learn aspects of the formal variety of Spanish,.

4.7.2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

These same recommendations can be made to other study abroad programs that send and/or receive university heritage language learners for periods of foreign language study. Programs would do well to inform themselves of the language needs of heritage language learners, understand the sociolinguistic environment at the host university, and consider organizing special programs such as the writing workshop offered by the UDLAP (see section 2.1.3). Also, heritage language learners themselves should be prepared for a range of attitudes, including negative, toward their language variety. Students should be equipped with strategies to deal with different attitudes. Workshops can be given at the home institution before study abroad, but more than likely, students may find the information more relevant if given in the host environment. Although Wilkinson (1998) mentions that it is difficult to generalize across study abroad programs, the recommendations for HLL teaching can be applied to other programs.

4.8 *LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH*

As there were several implications in the study, there were also limitations to the study and suggestions for further research. One important limitation to this study is the length of time for data collection. The data collection only lasted for 10 weeks (longer, however, than similar studies in Mexico by Rieglelhaupt & Carrasco (in press) and Yager (1998)). Had the study covered a longer period of time, perhaps other developmental trends in language attitudes and linguistic features would have surfaced, and/or the Chicanas' awareness of their language would have become more acute. Future studies should allow time for data collection over a semester, year, or multiple years. A future research question should be: what are the changes in SHLL identity, language acquisition, and attitude over a full semester or a full year?

A second limitation to this study is not following up on students' language experiences after the study abroad period at their home university. Future studies should conduct follow-up interviews with students, professors, and/or family and peers in order to understand how changes in the Chicanas' Spanish skills, sociolinguistic awareness, and/or identity affect the student and relationships upon return to the United States. Research questions should include: How are students' linguistic and confidence gains described by family, friends, colleagues, and/or professors? How do students' linguistic and confidence gains influence their communication in relationships and decisions regarding further Spanish study and/or future profession? How do the students accomplish the goals they set for themselves for their return home? What factors contribute to the maintenance of linguistic and emotional gain once students return to their home university?

A third limitation was the small number and variety of case study participants. The data in this study did not represent the full range of perspectives on the Chicanas' Spanish skills

because not all professors and suitemates were interviewed. Also, all students and their suitemates were female. Mejías & Anderson (1988) found women to have more sentimental attachment to Chicano Spanish than men, and in this study, there was no Chicano perspective with which to compare Chicana perspectives. The perspective toward the Chicanas' Spanish skills was limited to the university context. Also, as is a risk in most studies, data might have been influenced by variables such as the Hawthorne or halo effects, or subject expectancy caused by participants' attitudes toward the study (Brown, 1988). The following questions should be asked to generate additional insights: What are all of the professors' and suitemates' perspectives on the Chicanas' Spanish? What is the perspective of Mexicans outside of the university setting? What is the difference in perspectives on language toward a Chicano versus a Chicana? How do perspectives toward Chicano Spanish differ by the gender of the observer?

A fourth limitation was the information gleaned from the Spanish skill self-rating scores. The scores were principally used to observe any differences between student, peer, and professor ratings, and as a tool to discuss how the students perceived their skill level improvement. Being qualitative in nature, this study did not intend to use the self-ratings in a statistically significant manner. However, an interesting component for future studies would be an added quantitative measure of Spanish skill ratings. More participants would be required to complete ratings in order for them to be statistically significant. A quantitative measure would add to the external validity of the study.

A fifth limitation is the lack of concrete data representing Spanish proficiency and linguistic gain. In future studies, additional data collection should include pre- and post-test Spanish skills scores and any other assignments and measure that reflect changes in Spanish proficiency. At the time of this study there were no standardized Spanish proficiency exams like

the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), that could be used across studies. With concrete data one may ask, what is the change in Spanish skill level proficiency? Is there one skill that improves more than another?

Along with the recommendations resulting from the study limitations, other suggestions for further research can be made. The study results categories (attitudes toward heritage language over time, language features, language strategy use, awareness and language change with identity) were generated from the data itself. To further test these categories, they should be used in future studies. For example, the categories could be used in comparative studies. What are the differences and similarities within categories when comparing study abroad experiences of Spanish heritage language learners and non-heritage language learners in Mexico? What are the differences and similarities within categories when comparing study abroad experiences of heritage language learners who chose homestay with a Mexican family and those who chose to live in the dormitories? What are the differences and similarities within categories when comparing study abroad experiences of Spanish heritage language learners and heritage learners of other ethnic languages (i.e.: Chinese)? When a Chicano student studies in a Spanish speaking country other than Mexico, how are results different within categories as compared to those results in Mexico?

This study has served to fill part of the gap in the research on university Spanish heritage language learners in a study abroad setting. It has also served to create more questions to be investigated. Future research should be carried out with heritage language learners in study abroad settings to continue the understanding of the “admirable” efforts students make to study the language of their heritage, and in doing so, further define themselves as members of two cultural and linguistic groups.