#### **April 2009**

#### The Heritage Language Learner Survey: Report on the Preliminary Results

A Project of the National Heritage Language Resource Center Research Team:

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **Definitions:**

In the United States, a *heritage language speaker* is an individual who is exposed to a language other than English at home but educated primarily in English.

A heritage language learner (HLL) is a student who takes a K-16 or a community school language class in the home language.

The language spoken at home can be referred to as a heritage language (HL).

#### Purpose and methodology of the project

The goal of this online survey<sup>1</sup> is to collect information from heritage language learners (HLLs) currently enrolled in post-secondary heritage language courses to better understand their backgrounds, attitudes, and goals in studying their heritage language. In so doing, we hope to inform the National Heritage Language Resource Center's (NHLRC) design of heritage language curricula and professional development materials.

Research on HLLs indicates that their linguistic abilities are different enough from those of traditional students of world languages in U.S. classrooms to warrant distinct teaching approaches (see Brinton & Kagan, et al. (2008), He & Yiao (2007), Kagan & Rifkin (2000), Kagan & Dillon (2001/2003), Kondo-Brown (2006), Kondo-Brown & Brown (2007), Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis (2001), and Roca & Colombi (2003). Despite the range of heritage languages and the particularity of each language, research has found enough commonalities that heritage language knowledge can be considered a system.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> To administer the survey we contracted with SurveyMonkey (<u>www.surveymonkey.com</u>), a company that hosts surveys written by its clients, collects and stores responses, and provides analytical tools to analyze the results.

To date few curricular models are available for instructors and administrators who seek to initiate or improve programs for HLLs. This survey addresses this gap by showing characteristics and issues that define HLLs across languages, thus improving our ability to design and recommend curriculum for them.

The Survey is based on a previous survey that investigated the reading skills of HLLs (Jensen & Llosa, 2007). The current survey has a broader scope and thus includes questions about writing, listening, and speaking as well as reading. The survey also includes questions on motivation, attitudes, and interaction with the community.

We piloted the survey in January and February, 2007. Ten respondents took the survey while a research assistant observed. They were then asked whether the survey items were clear and comprehensive. The responses were analyzed and the survey was modified accordingly.

In January 2007 students in UCLA heritage language classes completed the survey. In March, the survey was opened to universities across the country. We found respondents by contacting instructors directly, posting LISTSERV announcements, and advertising on the NHLRC website. Many instructors administered the survey in a computer lab. Some instructors assigned the survey as homework.

#### 1. What is your heritage language?

Heritage Language		
Amharic	13	0.76%
Arabic	28	1.65%
Armenian	57	3.35%
Cantonese	174	10.23%
Gujarati	10	0.59%
Hindi/Urdu	24	1.41%
Ilocano	9	0.53%
Japanese	19	1.12%
Korean	134	7.88%
Mandarin	268	15.76%
Persian	60	3.53%
Russian	185	10.88%
Spanish	396	23.28%
Tagalog	111	6.53%
Thai	11	0.65%
Vietnamese	113	6.64%
Other	89	5.23%

As of this writing, 1701 students have responded to the survey. The distribution of languages represented is likely to reflect the University of California's demographics, as well as the classes offered by the UC system to heritage speakers.

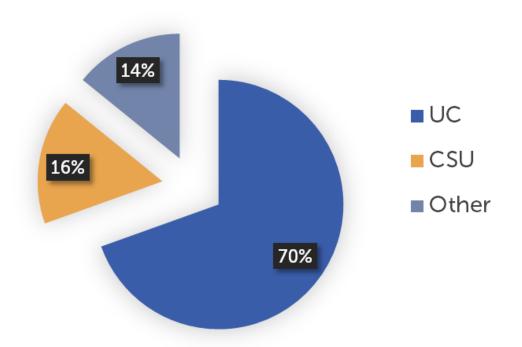
The survey revealed not only commonalities among HLLs and heritage language learning contexts, but also language-specific particularities. While the current report focuses on traits that all HLLs share, the next phase of analysis will focus on the backgrounds and needs of students of specific language heritage such as Spanish and Arabic.

#### **Demographics**

The following questions examine the demographic make-up of the respondents.

#### 2. What university are you enrolled in?

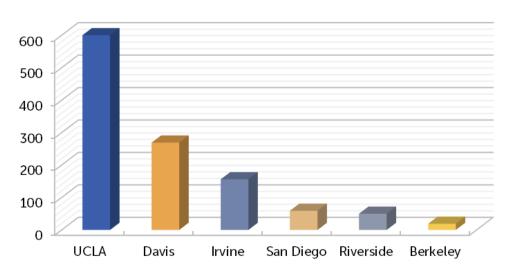
#### What university are you enrolled in?



In the initial stages of the survey, the UC system, especially UCLA, was targeted, and the responses continue to reflect an overwhelming number of participants who attend a UC campus. 1134 (70%) of our respondents were from a UC, 266 (16%) were from a CSU, and 231 (14%) were from outside the UC or CSU systems.

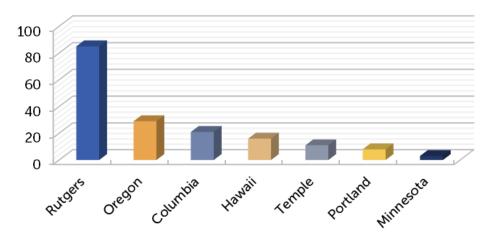
#### 2a. Which UC are you enrolled in?

#### Which UC are you enrolled in?



Again, as the survey was initially focused on UCLA language classes, the largest category of respondents from the UC system came from UCLA. Responses also came from Davis, Irvine, San Diego, Riverside, and Berkeley.

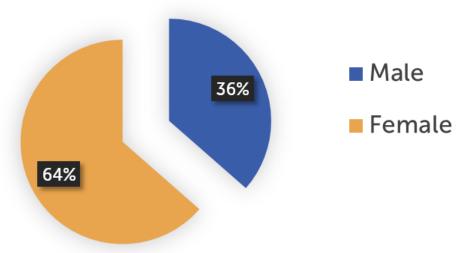
# Which Non-UC, Non-CSU are you enrolled in?



Of the non-UC, non-CSU universities that participated in the survey, the highest number of responses received from a single institution came from Rutgers University, which has a high enrollment of Russian heritage speakers. Responses also came from the University of Oregon, Columbia University, University of Hawaii-Manoa, Temple University, Portland State University, and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

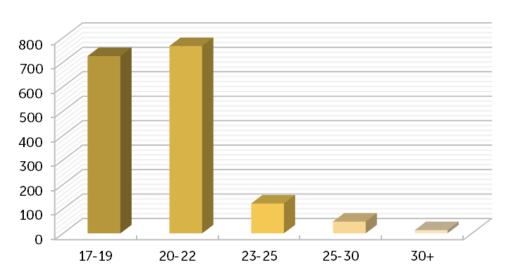
#### 3. What is your gender?

### What is your gender?



Following the trend among foreign language learners in general, the majority, 1065 (64%), of HLL respondents to the survey are female and 611 (36%) are male. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2000/2001, 13,260 college students obtained a bachelor's degree in a foreign language, and of these students, 9,604 (72%) were females (see table 287 at <a href="http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/dt287.asp">http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/dt287.asp</a>).

#### What is your age?



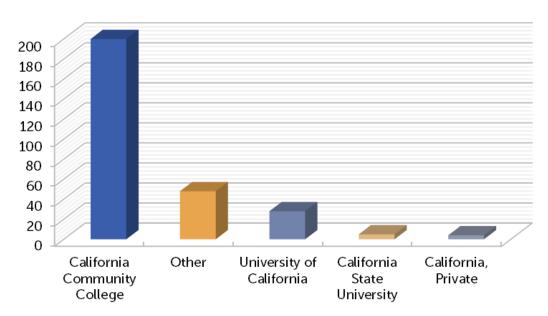
As the survey was administered to language classes at colleges and universities, most students fall in the 17-22 year age range. 725 respondents are in the 17-19 year range, and slightly more, 766, are in the 20-22 year range. 122 answered that they were 23-25 years old, 48 were 25-30, and 13 were over 30.

#### 5. Class Level

Class Level		
Undergraduate	1639	98%
Graduate	27	1.6%
Professional	2	0.1%
Other	5	0.3%

The results for class level correspond to the results for age. The vast majority of respondents were undergraduates, with only 27 graduate and two professional students. These results are also in keeping with the class level of most college students enrolled in language classes. In the "Other" category, one respondent reported being a high school student, and two were non-degree students.

# If you are a transfer student, where did you attend college before?



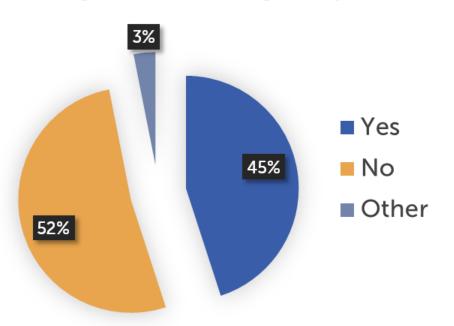
Most respondents, 1115, were not transfer students. Of those who did transfer, 200 transferred from a California community college, 28 from a University of California campus, 5 from a California State University, and 4 from a private California college or university. Of the 48 "Other" respondents, many transferred from non-California community colleges and some from universities abroad.

#### 7. What is your major?

Major	
Biological Sciences	609
Financial Studies	451
Social Sciences	711
Other Sciences	202
Miscellaneous	191
Languages and Linguistics	208
Other Humanities	223
International Studies	165
Ethnic Studies	130
Engineering	112
Arts and Design	80
Health Sciences (Except Biological)	72
Criminal Studies/Justice	52
Computer Sciences	30

Respondents reported a variety of majors that were then grouped into larger general categories. The sciences by far formed the largest category, with most majors in the biological sciences. This category includes all majors with "bio," biology, biochemistry, bioengineering, microbiology, etc. Health Sciences include nursing, clinical nutrition, etc. The most common major reported under Other sciences was psychology, with relatively large groups of mathematics, physiological science, and neuroscience. Financial studies mainly included economics, business economics, finance, and business. Social Sciences mostly included students who studied Communications, Geography, History, and Political Science. Engineering consisted mostly of Electrical and Mechanical engineering majors. Arts and Design included mostly majors in design, art history, music, and film and media. International studies included mostly political science and international relations majors, as well as smaller categories like global studies and international development. Ethnic studies include not only Ethnic Studies majors, but also Chicano and Chicana Studies, Asian Studies, Chinese Studies, etc. In the Other Humanities grouping, English, History, and Sociology majors were the most numerous, with smaller groupings for Anthropology and Communications Studies.

#### Do you live with your parents?



751 (45%) respondents reported that they live with their parents, and 866 (52%) reported that they do not. Of the 52 (3%) "Other" respondents, the majority reported that they lived alone or in the dorms during the week, but went to their parents' home for weekends or holidays.

#### Biographical Background

The following questions seek biographical information on our respondents to examine how biography might affect their HL skill levels and attitudes. Most questions in this section focus on the respondents' exposure to their HL before enrolling in an HL class.

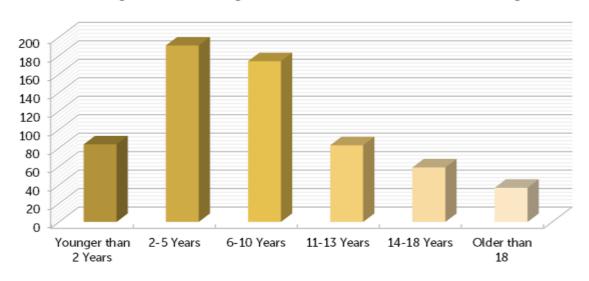
#### 9. Where were you born?

Place of Birth		
United States	1045	62.4%
Former Soviet Union	174	10.4%
Other Country	121	7.2%
China	76	4.5%
Mexico	54	3.2%
Philippines	42	2.5%
Vietnam	42	2.5%
Taiwan	39	2.3%
Korea	30	1.8%
Iran	27	1.6%
Japan	9	0.5%
India	7	0.4%
Thailand	6	0.4%
Indonesia	2	0.1%
Pakistan	1	0.1%
Israel	0	0.0%

The majority of HLLs who answered the survey, 62.4%, was born in the U.S. Of the 37.6% born abroad, the largest group came from the former Soviet Union, mostly encompassing the Russian and Armenian responses. The second largest group came from China, though adding in Taiwan and Hong Kong would produce a greater number of Chinese-speaking foreign-born HLLs than for the former Soviet Union.

### 10. If you were not born in the U.S., how old were you when you arrived in this country?

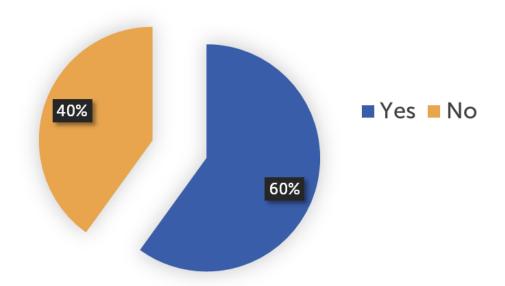
# If you were not born in the U.S., how old were you when you arrived in this country?



Out of 628 respondents who were born in another country, 84 (13%) arrived in the U.S. when they were younger than 2, 191 (30%) between the ages of 2-5, 174 (29%) between the ages of 6-10, 83 (13%) between the ages of 11-13, 59 (9%) between the ages of 14-18, and 37 (6%) were older than 18.

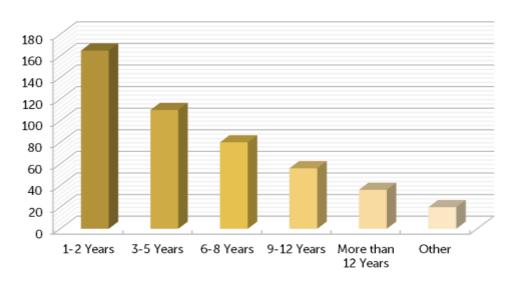
## 11. If you were not born in the U.S., did you attend school in your country of birth?

# If you were not born in the U.S., did you attend school in your country of birth?



Of the 642 who responded to this question, 385 (60%) did attend school in the country of their birth and 257 (40%) did not.

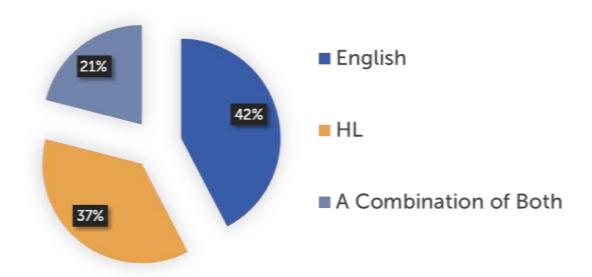
# If you attended school in another country, how many years did you attend school there?



467 HLLs responded to this question. This figure is larger than the 385 who said they attended school in their country of birth, which could be a result of both the different wording of items 11 and 12 ("another country" versus "country of birth") and the complexities of migration. The majority who responded in the affirmative to this question attended school in a country other than U.S. for fewer than 5 years: 165 (35%) spent 1-2 years and 110 (24%) spent 3-5 years. 80 (17%) went to school in a different country for 6-8 years, 56 (12%) for 9-12 years, and 36 (8%) for more than 12 years. The last two responses may seem surprising: if people have had more than 9 years of instruction in a home language, why would they need heritage language instruction? Again, it is important to note that the question did not ask whether they attended schools whose medium of instruction was their own native language; in countries of the former Soviet Union, for example, it would not be unusual to complete formal schooling in a language different from one's native language. Of the 20 (4%) who answered "Other," most mentioned study abroad trips or schooling in non-HL countries such as Australia or Canada.

### 13. As a young child, did you first learn to read in English or in your HL?

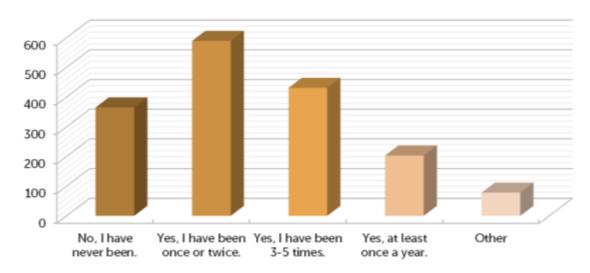
# As a young child, did you first learn to read in English or in your HL?



Given that 1,045 (61%) of our 1,701 respondents were either born in the U.S. or came here before the age of 2, it is not surprising that the largest group of respondents answering this question (695, or 42%), first learned to read in English. The number is low enough, however, that some who were born here or moved here before learning to read still learned to read their HL first or in tandem with English. 602 (37%) respondents learned to read their HL first, and 345 (21%) learned both at the same time.

## 14. Have you traveled to a country where your HL is predominantly spoken?

# Have you traveled to a country where your HL is predominantly spoken?



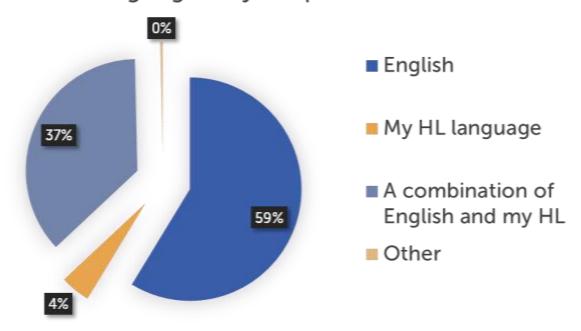
1,223 respondents reported visiting at least once a country where their HL is spoken. 589 reported visiting only once or twice, and 431 reported visiting 3-5 times. 203 answered that they visit regularly, at least once a year. Of the 78 "Other" respondents, the majority reported visiting more than once a year. A small number of the "Other" respondents misunderstood the question and answered that they were born in such a country.

#### Language Use

These questions focus on the respondents' language use in the past and present, specifically, which language they use with different conversational partners.

#### 15. What language do you speak most of the time?

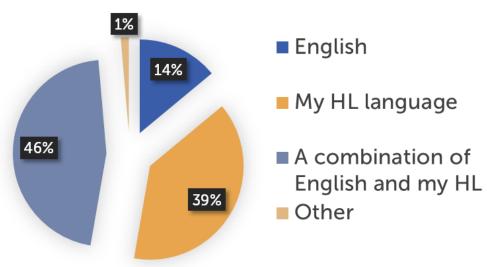
#### What language do you speak most of the time?



The majority of respondents, 980, reported speaking English most of the time. 611 reported speaking a combination of English and their HL, while only 72 respondents answered that they use their HL predominantly. Of the 6 "Other" respondents, most reported that they spoke a third language most of the time, either alone or in combination with English and their HL.

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

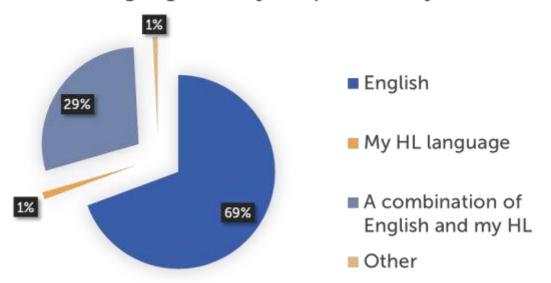
# What language(s) do you speak at home with your parents/family?



When asked what language they speak at home with their parents, the HL gains in dominance over English, but the largest number of respondents, 765, reported that they spoke a combination of English and their HL with their parents. 646 reported speaking their HL most of the time, and 233 reported speaking English most of the time with their parents. Again, the 23 "Other" respondents all reported speaking a third language with their family, either alone or in combination with English and/or the HL.

#### 17. What language(s) do you speak with your friends?

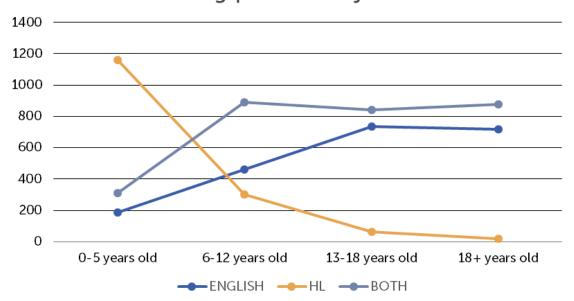
#### What language(s) do you speak with your friends?



The picture changes when the respondents were asked what language they speak with their friends. An overwhelming number of respondents, 1,159, reported speaking English most of the time with friends. 478 reported speaking a combination of English and their HL with friends, and only 20 answered that they predominantly used their HL with friends. Of the 14 "Other" respondents, some used a third language, and others reported using a combination of English and their HL, "depending on the friend."

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

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



The graph above shows the dramatic decline in students' use of their HL as they age. While 70% of respondents said they used their HL predominantly before the age of five, only 1.2% age 18 and over said the same. A slight majority of respondents said they mostly used "both" English and the HL from ages six to 18 and over. 45% of respondents reported using mostly English since age 18. However, 59% of respondents reported using English most of the time in response to question 15 ("What language do you speak most of the time?"), which suggests a discrepancy.

### Language Study

These questions examine the subjects' previous exposure to HL language instruction and to non-HL foreign language instruction.

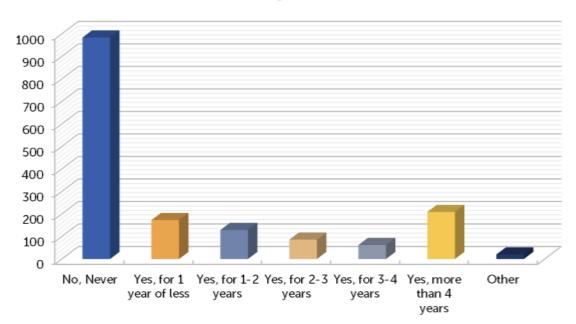
### 19. In addition to English and your HL what other languages do you speak or have you studied? (Check as many as apply)

Language		
American Sign Language	9	0.46%
Arabic	18	0.91%
Armenian	6	0.30%
Chinese	229	11.61%
French	401	20.33%
German	60	3.04%
Greek	9	0.46%
Hebrew	30	1.52%
Hindi	12	0.61%
Italian	70	3.55%
Japanese	167	8.47%
Korean	16	0.81%
Latin	52	2.64%
Portuguese	9	0.46%
Russian	43	2.18%
Spanish	799	40.52%
Tagalog	7	0.35%
Taiwanese	9	0.46%
Vietnamese	6	0.30%
Other	20	1.01%

1397 (82%) of respondents reported that they have studied a language other than English or their HL. It is not surprising that Spanish is by far the most popular choice, with 629 (54%) of all respondents whose HL is not Spanish reporting having studied Spanish. The "Chinese" response includes both Cantonese and Mandarin, and so is a somewhat unreliable number.

### 20. Have you studied your heritage language at a community/church school?

# Have you studied your heritage language at a community/church school?



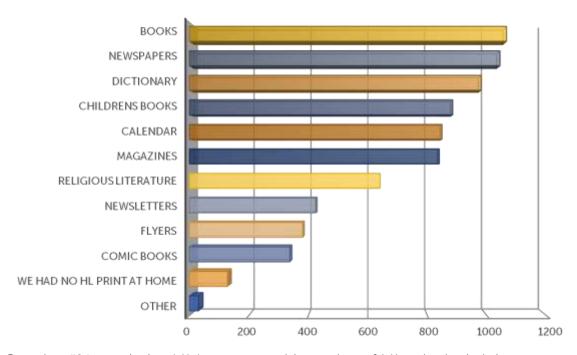
The majority of respondents (984, or 59.2%) did not study their HL in a community or church school. Of those who did, the largest group (209, or 12.6%) did so for more than four years. For all other groups, the rate of community school attendance decreases with the number of years attended. 173 (10.4%) attended for one year or less, 129 (7.8%) for 1-2 years, 86 (5.2%) for 2-3 years, and 62 (3.7%) for 3-4 years. Most of the 20 "Other" responses mention having attended school abroad or in their HL country, which casts doubts on whether the respondents understood what was meant by a community or church school.

#### Previous Exposure to Written Language

This section of questions focuses on HLLs' exposure to their HL as a written language, as we know from experience and research that HLLs typically have lower exposure to the written language than to the spoken language.

21. What types of HL print did you have in your home when you were growing up? (Check as many as apply)

## What types of HL print did you have in your home when you were growing up?

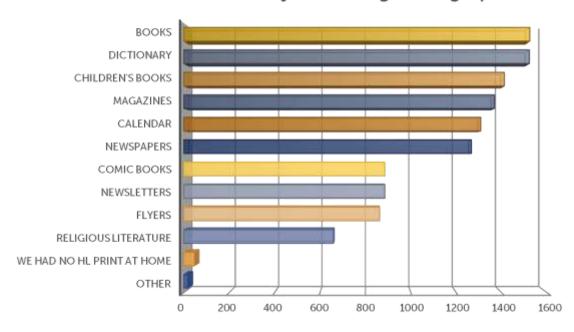


Question #21 reveals that HLLs grow up with a variety of HL print in their homes.

The "Other" category mostly includes menus and package labels. The responses to this question resemble the responses to Question #22 about English-language print. However, the answers to both questions show lower reported frequencies of comic books, newsletters, and flyers in English, while the total numbers of English-language print materials are higher in each category. Responses for both languages are closest in the categories of newspapers and religious literature. The answers for #23 show what print HLLs currently have in their homes. A noticeable difference is in the prominence of dictionaries in the responses for #23, which is to be expected in a student's home.

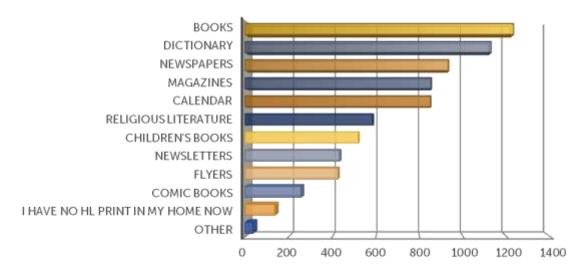
### 22. What types of ENGLISH-language print did you have in your home when you were growing up? (Check as many as apply.)

### What types of English-language print did you have at home when you were growing up?



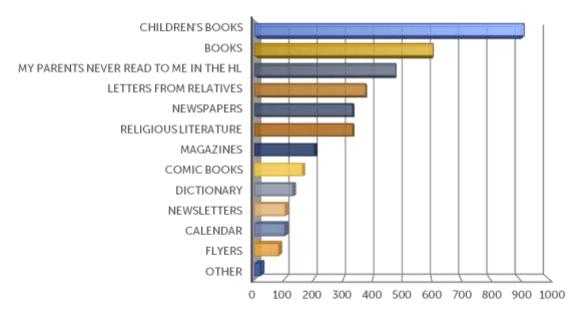
# 23. What types of HL print do you have in your home now? (Check as many as apply.)

# What types of HL print do you have in your home now?



24. Did your parents or other family member read to you in the HL when you were a young child? If so, what did they read? (Check as many as apply.)

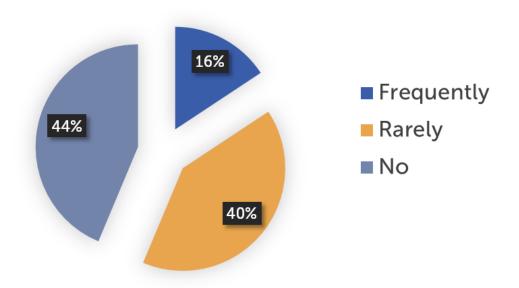
# Did your parents or other family member read to you in the HL when you were a young child? If so, what did they read?



342 (30%) of respondents reported that their parents never read to them in their HL. Among the respondents whose parents did read to them, most were read children's stories (620, or 79%) or books (395, or 51%). Letters from relatives (249, or 32%), newspapers (250, or 32%), and religious literature (179, or 23%) were also frequently mentioned.

#### 25. Do you access the internet in your HL?

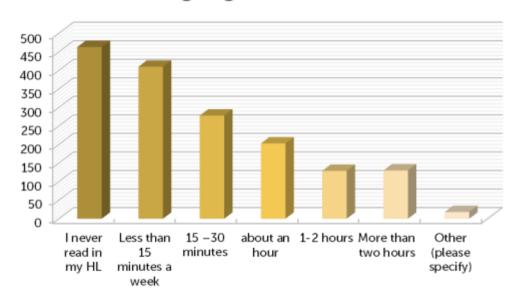
#### Do you access the internet in your HL?



The graph above illustrates that only 258 (16%) report that they frequently access the internet in their HL. Another 667 (40%) rarely do so, while the largest group, 717 (44%) never do.

### 26. If you read your HL, how many minutes a week do you spend reading in that language outside of school?

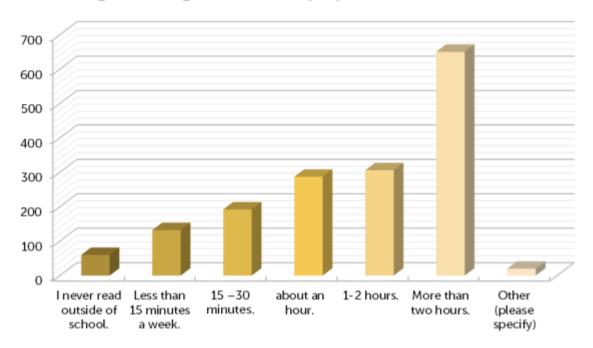
# If you read your HL, how many minutes a week do you spend reading in that language outside of school?



The number of students who read in their HL outside of class declines steadily as the time frame rises. 342 (30%) students responded that they never read in their HL. 269 (24%) read less than fifteen minutes a week, 190 (17%) read 15-30 minutes a week, 137 (12%) read about an hour a week, 85 (7%) read 1-2 hours a week, and 86 (8%) read more than two hours a week. Most of the 14 (1%) "Other" responses were elaborations on "more than two hours a week."

### 27. How many minutes a week do you spend reading non-school related materials in English (e.g. the newspaper, a novel, etc.)?

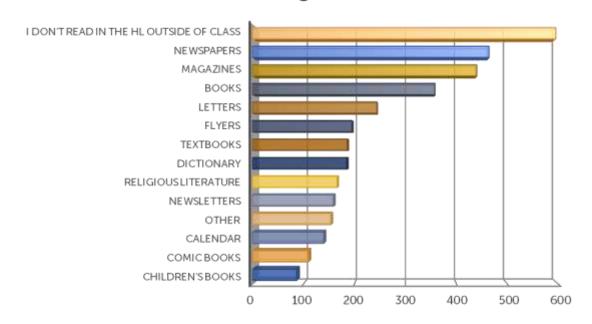
# How many minutes a week do you spend reading non-school related materials in English (e.g. the newspaper, a novel, etc.)?



The graph of students' reading habits in English presents a picture opposite to their reading habits in HL. That is, the number of students who report reading in English outside of class increases with each increasing amount of time. Only 60 (4%) responded that they never read in English outside of class. 132 (8%) read less than 15 minutes a week, 192 (12%) read 15-30 minutes a week, 287 (17%) read about an hour a week, 306 (19%) read from 1-2 hours a week, and 650 (40%) read more than two hours a week. Again, the 20 "Other" responses (1%) mostly reported reading more than two hours a week.

### 28. What do you read in your HL outside of class assignments? (Check as many as apply.)

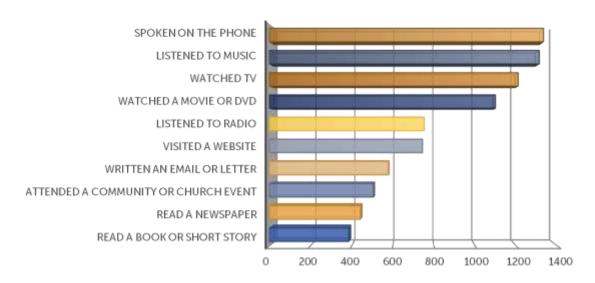
# What do you read in your HL outside of class assignments?



When HLLs do read in their HL, they seem to prefer magazines (440, or 27%) and newspapers (464, or 28%) to books (358, or 22%). In the "Other" category respondents mostly mentioned internet articles, websites, and chats, with several mentions of restaurant menus.

### 29. In the past six months, which of the following activities have you done in your HL OUTSIDE of class? (Check as many as apply.)

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



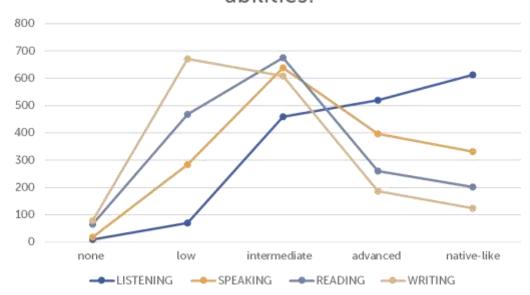
During the past six months most of the respondents reported talking on the phone (1,333, or 83%), followed by listening to music (1,312, or 82%), watching television (1,210, or 75%), and watching a movie (1,099, or 69%).

#### Self Assessment

The following questions examine HLLs' own assessment of their skill levels in their HL.

#### 30. Please rate your heritage language abilities:

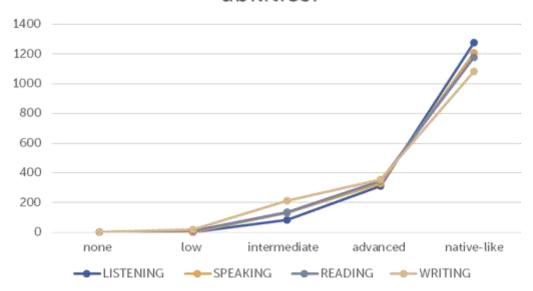
### Please rate your heritage language abilities:



When the respondents were asked to rate their heritage language abilities, a clear trend emerged. Most respondents rated their writing as the least developed of their skills followed by reading, speaking, and listening. In addition, writing skills were judged advanced or native-like by the fewest number or respondents, followed by reading, speaking, and listening, in that order. Clearly, writing presents the biggest challenge for HLLs, and they consider themselves most proficient in listening.

#### 31. Please rate your English language abilities:

# Please rate your English language abilities:



HLLs largely agree on their English-language abilities as well. They do not differentiate much between the four skills in English, and the vast majority feels they have mastered them, although what little separation they make between the skills reflects the same order as for the HL.

32. When reading in your HL, how easy or difficult do you find the following genres (texts)? Use the scale 1 to 5, with 1 being "very easy to understand" and 5 being "next to impossible to understand."

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Academic/Technical papers	129	173	298	332	448
Children's books	758	283	194	91	117
Comic books	503	259	246	132	108
Dictionary	399	304	425	213	132
Flyers	477	268	337	152	123
Letters/email	446	294	365	186	129
Magazines	353	224	343	260	175
Newsletters	284	219	315	242	193
Newspapers	247	210	353	326	276
Non-fiction	216	188	292	295	265
Novels/short stories	224	231	336	281	236
Poetry	158	177	290	313	375
Textbooks	187	294	385	301	232
Theatrical plays	158	155	285	244	294
Religious literature	150	180	246	255	334
Web pages	268	259	370	298	178

Academic and technical papers, non-fiction, poetry, plays, and religious literature, and newspapers appear to be the most difficult texts for the respondents to read in their HL. Dictionaries, flyers, letters and e-mail, magazines, newsletters and newspapers, novels, textbooks, and web pages are generally rated as being of average difficulty, while children's books and comic books were rated as being easy to understand by most respondents.

33. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely easy and 5 being impossible, rate how difficult you find it to accomplish each of the following tasks in your HL.

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Tell a joke	380	359	391	284	204
Tell a fairy tale	311	321	403	336	247
Tell a story	392	412	419	244	144
Use polite language	592	460	344	142	78
Be rude	635	343	334	183	119
Talk about current events	280	353	455	319	209
Debate an idea	217	248	393	427	330
Give a formal presentation before an audience	145	198	372	412	486

Most tasks in the list received a fairly even spread of responses across the difficulty continuum, though a few trends do emerge. Respondents judged that the easiest tasks on average for them to accomplish when speaking in their HL was to use polite language and to be rude. The hardest tasks were to debate an idea or give a formal presentation. The other activities were on average judged to be of middling difficulty. The fact that 'use polite language' was judged 'extremely easy' (second only to 'be rude') contradicts the intuition of instructors and anecdotal evidence of HLLs, who are thought to have problems with polite speech, since they mostly use their HL in a familiar, informal, or family setting. One possibility is that there is more than one interpretation of using "polite language": HLLs might think this means using a vocabulary of politeness, using words like 'please' and 'thank you,' taught to them by their parents. Instructors, on the other hand, might be thinking of polite language as a more formal register, the use of honorifics, indirect forms of request, and other grammatical and lexical ways of being tactful and deferential in a given language.

34. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely easy and 5 being impossible. Rate how difficult you find it to accomplish each of the following tasks in ENGLISH.

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Tell a joke	1205	195	98	46	69
Tell a fairy tale	1221	187	96	36	71
Tell a story	1268	167	83	24	71
Use polite language	1321	119	72	25	72
Be rude	1276	113	94	45	87
Talk about current events	1212	192	104	33	72
Debate an idea	1071	280	142	45	71
Give a formal presentation before an audience	923	328	206	71	78

Most respondents agreed that all tasks on the list were extremely easy for them to accomplish in English. Nonetheless, the tasks 'be rude,' "debate an idea," and "give a formal presentation" were judged more difficult than the other tasks.

35. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely easy and 5 being impossible, rate how difficult you find it to accomplish each of the following tasks in your HL.

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Understand humor	536	458	385	165	67
Understand a conversation if you eavesdrop	742	463	247	111	50
Understand news reports	473	366	398	272	102
Understand movies	606	439	350	158	59
Understand TV shows	633	425	338	154	59
Understand song lyrics	502	355	390	253	113
Understand a formal talk	464	346	395	274	127

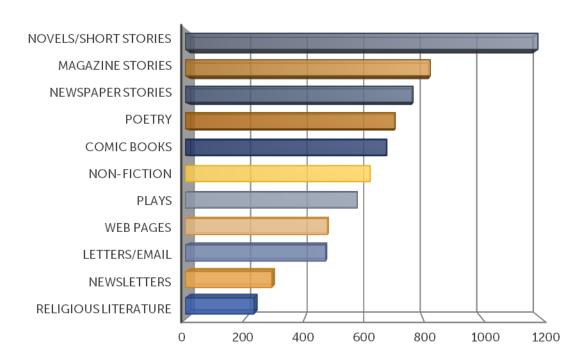
HLLs were more confident of their listening skills, and judged none of the tasks listed here as being on average "impossible" to accomplish. Most tasks were rated fairly evenly between 1 and 3 on the scale, and understanding TV, movies, and eavesdropping were rated as slightly easier than the others.

## **HL Class Preferences**

The following questions ask what HLLs would like to do and accomplish in their HL courses.

36. What would you like to read in your HL classes? (Check as many as apply)

# What would you like to read in your HL classes?



Respondents expressed a wish to read a variety of genres in their HL class. Students were least interested in religious literature, newsletters, letters and e-mail, and webpages; they expressed most interest in novels and short stories, followed by magazine stories, newspaper articles, poetry, and comic books.

37. 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
Improve speaking	121	85	144	232	1030
Improve listening	126	113	210	292	868
Improve reading	120	63	143	283	1000
Improve writing	108	53	133	245	1070
Improve grammatical accuracy	109	56	167	287	990
Increase vocabulary	111	44	101	240	1109

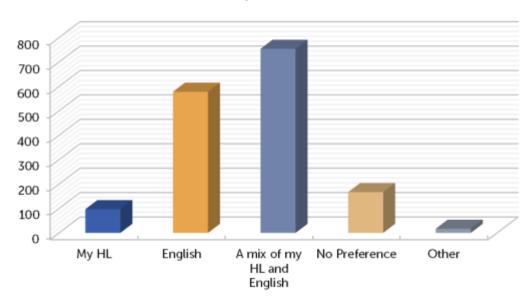
Most respondents felt that all six of the goals listed were important to them in their HL classes. Expanding vocabulary seems to be the first priority, followed closely by improving writing, speaking and reading (in that order). Grammatical accuracy seems to be less important than increasing vocabulary and improving writing, speaking and reading. Probably due to their confidence in their listening skills demonstrated elsewhere in the survey, they were a little less concerned with improving their listening skills than with other goals. A majority of respondents still considered listening to be especially important.

# **Attitudes**

The last section of questions examines the respondents' attitudes to their HL.

### 38. In general, what do you prefer to speak?

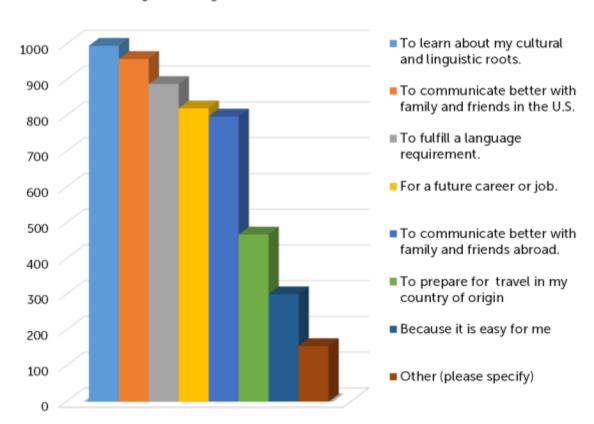
# In general, what do you prefer to speak?



The largest number of respondents (754, or 47%) prefer to speak a mix of the HL and English, followed by the group that prefers English alone (578, or 36%). 167 (10%) had no preference, while only 97 (6%) expressed a preference for their HL. The 17 "Other" responses (1%) mostly referred to a mix of the two languages or the addition of a third.

# 39. Why have you enrolled in HL courses? (Check as many as apply.)

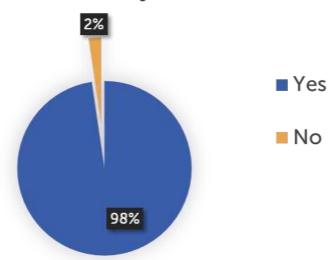
### Why have you enrolled in HL courses?



To answer this question, respondents were asked to check as many reasons as applied. Consequently, the most commonly chosen responses may not have been chosen as the most important reasons for enrolling in an HL course. On average, respondents gave 3.26 reasons for studying their HL. That said, the most common reasons HLLs had for enrolling in HL courses were (1) to learn about their roots, (2) to communicate better with friends and family in the U.S., and (3) to fulfill a language requirement, in that order. Communicating better with friends and family abroad and using their HL for a future job were also important to many respondents. Fewer than half of the respondents enrolled in an HL course to prepare for travel to their country of origin, while less than one fifth enrolled because it was easy for them. Respondents wrote a variety of motivations in the "Other" field, including wanting to learn reading and writing, for a major or minor requirement, "because I want to," and a few wrote "my parents made me."

# 40. Does your family want you to maintain your HL?

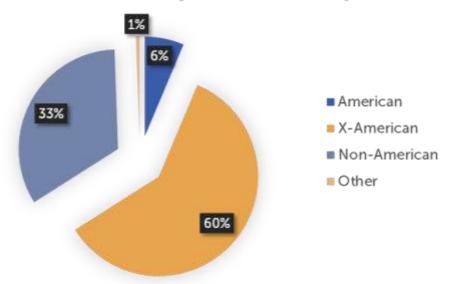
# Does your family want you to maintain your HL?



The overwhelming majority of HLLs have their family's support in learning their heritage language. 1,635 answered yes, while only 39 answered no.

# 41. How do you self-identify? (e.g. American, Vietnamese-American, Vietnamese, Asian, Asian-American, etc.)

### How do you self-identify?

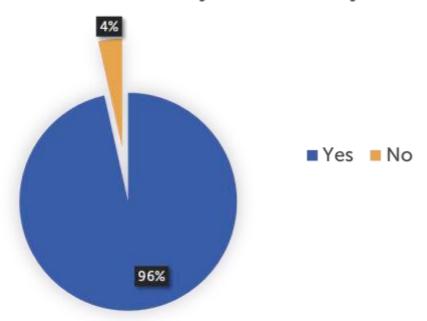


For this question respondents were asked to type in whatever response they wished. Self-identifications fell into the following three categories: "American" (unaccompanied by another identity); a hyphenated or qualified American (such as Asian-American, Mexican-American, etc.); identities without the word "American" (such as Asian, Mexican, etc.). We excluded "South American" from the hyphenated/qualified American category, as that term refers to a different America. A small number of responses did not fit into this scheme, including "human being," "whitey," and "me." Some responses were quite colorful, which gets lost in our sorting, such as people who answered:

- "American, the hyphenated American is the one that causes the downfall of this nation."
- "100 % Ethiopian."
- "depends on who I'm talking to .... and what my agenda is with that person. I pick the option that best benefit [sic] me in a particular situation."
- "Lebanese Only Forever."
- "Armenian stranded in America"
- "Lost"
- "IRANIAN ... who happens to have been born and raised in the U.S."

## 42. Do you intend to teach your children your HL?

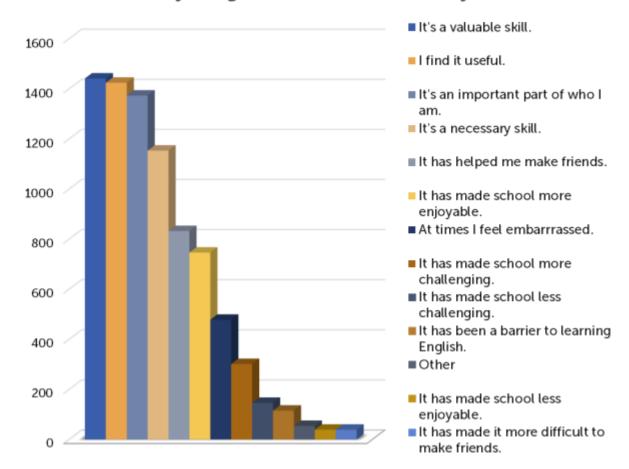
## Do you intend to teach your children your HL?



An overwhelming majority (1,616) of HLLs plan to teach their children their heritage language, while only 59 do not.

# 43. What are your general attitudes about your HL? (Check as many as apply)

### What are your general attitudes about your HL?



The respondents' general attitudes to their HL are positive, which can partly be explained by the nature of the sample, made up of students who chose to take HL classes. The majority of HLLs believe that their language is a valuable skill, useful, and important to who they are. Many also felt it has helped them make friends and made school more enjoyable. Very few felt their HL had negative consequences in their lives. The most common negative response, "at times I feel embarrassed," was chosen by fewer than a third of the respondents.

44. 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? (Answer in 4-6 sentences.)

Responses	
I can talk discreetly in public	43
I can speak better with my relatives after taking my HL class	17
I can use my HL to help others	171
I was put in ESL classes because of my HL	45
I feel more integrated into my HL community	43
I have been made fun of or discriminated against	51
I have learned more about my culture	35
I have made more friends	147
I have problems with my lack of knowledge of my HL	59
I can more easily learn other languages	95

45. How has your knowledge of your heritage language affected your experience outside of school, for example in your home, church, or neighborhood? Can you remember an incident when your heritage language was helpful or caused you problems in any of these settings? (Answer in 4-6 sentences.)

Responses	
I can talk discreetly in public	38
I can speak better with my relatives after taking my HL class	260
I can use my HL to help others	239
I have been made fun of or discriminated against	84
I have made more friends	94
I have problems with my lack of knowledge of my HL	132

For the last two questions respondents were asked to provide open-ended responses to questions. 20% of respondents skipped each question, though it was not in all cases the same 20% for each question; many respondents answered one and not the other. Because respondents could answer as they liked, the answers are hard to quantify. The tables above list categories that we noticed recurred frequently. These do not by any means encompass the entire spectrum of answers, but are intended to impart a sense of what respondents mentioned.

Overall the answers to both questions are positive. In #44 respondents focused on how their HL benefited them in school. The most frequently stated themes in the responses to this question reflect that respondents had used their HL to help someone, often a classmate with fewer English skills than they themselves did, and that their HL had helped them make friends in school. "Negative" responses were fairly infrequent. Of the 924 respondents who answered this question, only 21 reported that they had been made fun of or otherwise discriminated against because of their HL. 14 mentioned that they had been placed into ESL courses (usually in their opinions wrongfully) because of their

HL. And 15 mentioned they had had difficulties because of their *lack* of HL ability in their HL.

In #45 respondents again focused on the positive aspects of having an HL. Again, the most frequently occurring theme was that HLLs were proud of their abilities to help others by using their HL, with an equal group gaining pride from their increased HL abilities after enrolling in their college-level HL courses. The most common negative answer to this question was an expression of frustration at their insufficient HL knowledge. Some students also noted that their HL interfered with or adversely impacted their English.

Examples of responses to the two open-ended questions appear below, grouped into general categories.

#### 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.

#### I can help others:

• Several times the knowledge that I have of my HL has been to the benefit of teachers that had problems because of the language barrier between them and new students that

spoke mainly Cantonese. So in the end I ended up sitting next to them, being the big buddy, or whatever it was. In the end, it showed how much I really knew my language, even though it was easier to get the point across if I had explained it, but I still had a long way to go if I wanted to be fluent in Cantonese.

• 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)

#### It helps me learn other languages:

- When I was in elementary school, I made every effort to avoid speaking my heritage language. It made me feel different, and like all children that young, all I wanted was to fit in. It wasn't until I was a sophomore in high school that I realized how important it was for me to be fluent in my HL. Academically, having knowledge of my HL has been nothing but beneficial. 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. The grammar systems of these two languages is also very similar (at least in contrast to English). Also, there are many Russians involved in my major study of mathematics, so this has been useful at times, though as of yet I do not have a technical vocabulary that would be useful in reading papers in Russian.

#### Other academic advantages:

• My Heritage language has been an enormous asset to me in school. I am a history major and the amount of progress I have made in my HL through UCLA has allowed me to do two research projects for history classes, both of which required the use of sources in my HL.

• As a college student, I realize that knowing a second language can be very helpful, both socially and academically. My major requires me to take a foreign language and because Korean is my second language, it has been easy for me to take the placement test and be placed right into Korean 1C instead of having to go through 1A and 1B. However, it hasn't always been easy growing up with a heritage language. As a young student, I had difficulty in my writing classes.

#### It offers privacy, intimacy, etc.:

- It is very helpful. I met most of my friends because we all knew how to speak Russian and we were all coming from the same place of moving to America when we were little kids. I also find that my heritage language has helped made school more enjoyable. We would always laugh about a joke in Russian or something else that the English students couldn't or wouldn't understand. It made school fun!
- My heritage language at school is at most useful to tell jokes amongst us HL speakers. It's helpful in that we can rant about other things in a language people don't understand and are therefore free to whatever we please. Other than that, we don't talk in our HL much. It's only used for jokes. (Cantonese)

#### I have been made fun of or been discriminated against:

- I did not grow up speaking Japanese. But when I went to school over in Japan it was often embarrassing to make speeches in front of large groups and introduce myself to new people. Often teachers assumed things about me and my heritage culture. One time I yawned during class and my Chemistry teacher called me out explaining that he didn't know how it was in America but in JAPAN it was very rude to yawn while someone else was speaking.
- There was one incident when my lack of spoken Hmong caused me problems at school. One Friday evening a student organization held a Hmong Medical workshop where med students would take on the role of doctors and students would pretend to be taking an

elder, parent, or non-English speaking individual to see the doctor. Students had to play as interpreter between doctor and the non-English speaking participant. When it would come to my turn, I would have difficult speaking in Hmong and I felt embarrassed and ashamed of myself that I couldn't speak my language fluently.

#### The ESL issue:

- 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.
- I always am very happy that I know my language but I remember growing up in U.S. I have had people look at me funny because I didn't speak English. One time with my sister I would speak Cantonese an then English and a person passing by said, "good, you are speaking more English."

#### Other English issues:

- Since I learned Cantonese first, English was a little hard to learn since my parents refused to speak English to me (Something I'm very happy about now). As a result my grammar in both languages are not very good. When I started to learn Mandarin when I was 6 years old I didn't really like it since it was different from Cantonese but now I really like it. Overall it is just grammar that I need to work on.
- It has made Chinese class a lot easier for me. However, I feel that is 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 a fluent as I would like I to be.

• Just gave me more work to do and the pressure from my parents to master both languages just built up stress - maybe the reason why I am not living in my HL country. (Korean)

#### Belonging:

- 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)
- During middle school and high school, I felt that my heritage language was not something that I would consider a valuable skill. 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.

#### **Expanding horizons:**

- It has helped me understand people better, and understand the different levels of diversity we have in our university. It has allowed me to understand who I am and how I relate to my school environment. (Chinese)
- I think that my HL is very useful in today's increasing globalizing world. I have used my HL in class presentations, to teach others, and to explain concepts. (Mandarin)

#### Connecting with older generations:

- It has allowed me to communicate with elderly people who are only able to speak the heritage language. Without this language, I would never have had conversations with my grandmother, and would have never learned anything about her, but what I am told by my parents. (Dutch)
- I have found that my knowledge of my heritage language has been very useful. Wherever I go, if there is an elder who is also Vietnamese, I feel extremely comfortable just speaking to them. Often times, there is a language barrier that hurts the Vietnamese that do no speak English. With my extensive knowledge of both Vietnamese and English, it has been very helpful. I feel as if I am almost giving back to my culture.

#### Visiting the HL country:

- Over the past several months, because of the Polish class I am in, I have gained more confidence speaking the Polish language to my family. I recently went to Poland to attend my grandma's funeral, and had more confidence talking with my relatives. I may not have had a big vocabulary, but the extra confidence I feel made me sound like a much more competent, expressive Polish speaker.
- It has helped when I travel abroad every year to visit my relatives in the Philippines. They all speak my HL so it feels more comforting when I can understand what they are talking about, even though I can't really speak clearly back to them.

#### Professional opportunities:

• My heritage language has recently helped me qualify for a job at a traditional Japanese restaurant. Because I can speak in proper Japanese, I was hired to work there, for there are many businessmen from Japan who choose to eat there. This restaurant prioritizes people who speak both English and Japanese to cater to people from Japan, and those who are just in the neighborhood.

• In home, I try to practice as much as I can so that I will be better able to talk and communicate with my grandmother and relatives overseas. Also for my future career, I intend on dealing with overseas, and Chinese/Mandarin is a great necessity in the coming decade.

#### <u>Incidental perks:</u>

• It has allowed me to be able to make new friends easier. I was looking for a place to stay near school and it was difficult to find a place nearby. I was able to find a place and the owner happened to be Vietnamese speaking only. I got to rent the place thanks to the fact that I was able to talk to her in Vietnamese and that we had stuff in common.

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