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Beyond Bilingual Programming

Beyond Bilingual Programming: Interpreter Education in the U.S. Amidst Increasing Linguistic Diversity

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the current state of educational opportunities for college and university-level students who wish to incorporate Spanish into their study of ASL–English interpretation. The number of Spanish–English–ASL interpreters is growing at a rapid pace in the United States, and demand for such interpreters is notable—especially in video relay service settings (Quinto-Pozos, Alley, Casanova de Canales, & Treviño, 2015; Quinto-Pozos, Casanova de Canales, & Treviño, 2010). Unfortunately, there appear to be few educational programs that prepare students for such multilingual interpreting. The number of these programs is currently not known (in that information has not been reported in publications, on the Internet, or in social-media sources), and one goal of this research was to gather information about such programs and relevant trilingual content that interpreter educators may incorporate in their classes. This study offers a number of suggestions to interpreter education programs that enroll multilingual student interpreters.

Keywords: Spanish, trilingual, multilingual, language brokering, demographics Dynamic Dialogue in Interpreter Education via VoiceThread

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1. Introduction and Background

One might expect that an increase in societal multilingualism would engender a demand for interpreters who are qualified to work in multiple community languages. Such demand draws attention to the availability of interpreter education programs and resources for the development of skills needed to work in multilingual environments. Interpreter education is an important component of managing communication in multilingual societies, and this study examines the intersection between growing societal multilingualism and educational programming for interpreting students.

The U.S. has become an increasingly multilingual country. A recently released national report found that 20.6% of the U.S. population (over 60 million residents) speaks a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). These data highlight the prevalence of multilingual residents of the U.S., with millions of families speaking home languages that are not English (Spanish: 37.5 million speakers; Chinese: 2.9 million speakers; Hindi/Urdu: 1+ million speakers; Arabic: approximately 1 million speakers; U.S. Census Bureau). Within kindergarten through Grade 12 (K–12) education, more than 9.2% of students in public schools (~4.4 million students) are English Language Learners (ELLs)—bilingual children identified as needing English language support (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Of particular interest for the readership of this journal is that children from non-English-speaking homes in the U.S. often serve as translators and interpreters for members of their family and community who are not fluent in English. These *language brokers* may be well suited to become professional interpreters as adults, with continued development of linguistic skills and the learning of interpretation techniques and other professional content (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Indeed, some of these multilingual individuals are students are currently enrolled in educational programs for American Sign Language (ASL)–English interpretation in the U.S., and over time they will likely become working interpreters in settings where languages other than ASL and English are used. One may wonder about professional development opportunities for these students beyond ASL and English.

The aim of the current study is to investigate the current use of curricula for interpreting in U.S. settings where Spanish is used (such as immigration, healthcare, and social services); this also includes consideration of cultural events of Spanish-speaking groups and other situations where knowledge of Spanish language and culture is beneficial. Such situations are often referred to as “Spanish-influenced” settings (Annarino, Casanova de Canales, & Treviño, 2014). To that end, we report data from a subset of interpreter training programs (ITPs) in the U.S., with a focus on multilingual curricula content and information about teaching staff (faculty). Knowledge of current practices in interpreter education can be helpful for future design of curricula for addressing the growing multilingual nature of this country and others with increasing linguistic diversity. As background for the study design and results, this section provides information about multilingualism trends among deaf and hard of hearing communities, trilingual (ASL–English–Spanish) interpreting in the U.S. (including professional development

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opportunities and organizations), and curricula that have been developed to aid in the education of ASL–English–Spanish interpreters.

U.S. trends concerning multilingualism are certainly present in families with deaf/Deaf and hard of hearing (d/Dhh) children. Cannon, Guardino, and Gallimore (2016) refer to such children as *d/Dhh multilingual learners*. More than 30% of d/Dhh children throughout the U.S. are from Latino/Hispanic backgrounds, with some states (e.g., California, Texas) reporting figures closer to 50% (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2011, 2013). In line with the recent increase of bilingualism in the U.S., there has been a steady increase in the number of deaf and hard of hearing children who come from Spanish-speaking homes, with most recent estimates at slightly above 19% (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2013; see Figure 1. Without a doubt, multilingual settings are much more common in the U.S. than they have been in the past, and this also applies to populations of deaf and hard of hearing persons.

The topic of multilingualism, especially as it applies to the linguistic landscape of the Deaf community in the U.S., extends beyond bilingualism. In some cases, three (or more) languages are used regularly in some of these communities. Unfortunately, even though there is a growing literature on bilingual education in the U.S., there is a dearth of publications on trilingual education or trilingual development for children in the U.S. Recent publications address trilingualism/multilingualism among hearing children from other countries (e.g., works by Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2015, and Liu & Edwards, 2017, describe the situation in China; Yi & Adamson, 2017, report on the situation in Mongolia; Björklund's 2005 work reports on the topic in Finland), with a range of topics considered (e.g., identity, teaching policy, and models of education). Publications on trilingual/multilingual development for deaf children and young adults are few in number, and they cover some of the same themes (e.g., Faircloth, Hynds, Jacob, Green, & Thompson, 2016; García-Fernández, 2014; Hynds, Faircloth, Green, & Jacob, 2014). In light of the above, there is a need to consider the topic of trilingualism/multilingualism in the U.S. and, for our purposes, how it applies to interpreter education. Few studies have addressed trilingual/multilingual interpreting (but see McKee & Awheto, 2010, which discusses trilingualism in a Māori community in New Zealand).

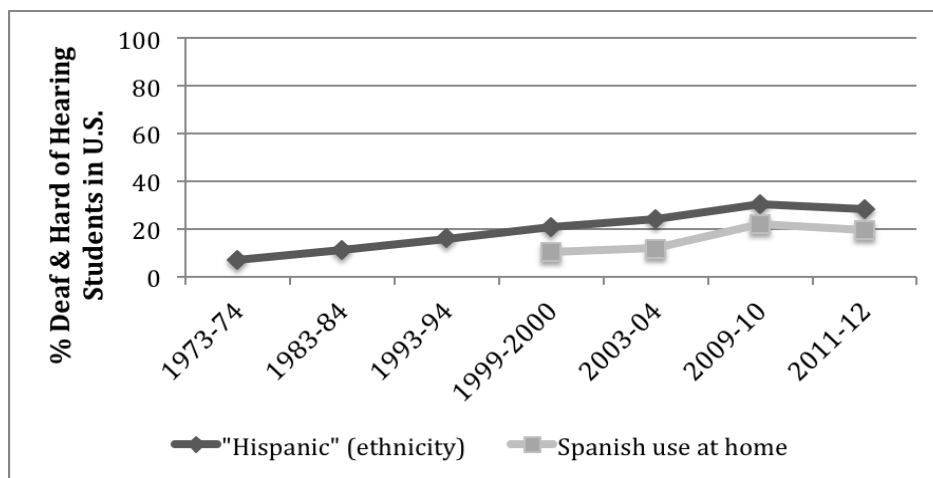


Figure 1. Deaf and hard of hearing students from “Hispanic” and Spanish-speaking families in the U.S.

One may wonder how the growing use of Spanish in the homes of deaf and hard of hearing children has been addressed within signed language ITPs, especially since ASL–Spanish and Spanish–English interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings and communities in the U.S. has a decades-long history (Quinto-Pozos, Roth, Mooney, Chavira, & Aponte-Samalot, 2014). To be sure, the number of Spanish–English–ASL interpreters has grown over the past several decades in the United States, and demand for such interpreters is also increasing (Oyedele, 2017; Quinto-Pozos et al., 2015; Quinto-Pozos et al., 2010; Treviño & Quinto-Pozos, 2018).

Spanish–English–ASL interpreters have become a notable part of the signed language interpreting profession in various ways. Since 2003, there has existed a national professional organization for interpreters who work in Spanish-influenced settings, known as *Mano a Mano*. This organization advocates for Spanish–English–ASL interpreters and provides professional development and skills-training opportunities via biennial conferences and

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supported regional workshops. In addition, the state of Texas offers a certification credential for Spanish–English–ASL interpreting (Dueñas Gonzalez, Gato, & Bischel, 2010), and for 6 years (2006–2011), the state’s Commission for the Deaf (now known as Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services—Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services) had operated a several-week intensive Spanish–English–ASL training experience (Quinto-Pozos et al., 2014).

Perhaps the first publicly available materials for interpreters who work in Spanish-influenced settings were developed by the National Multicultural Interpreter Program (NMIP), which was administered at El Paso Community College in cooperation with their ITP. Bringing together experts from across the country, the NMIP created curricula for interpreting in multicultural and multilingual settings, and those curricula were posted online for free access (see Appendix, Survey Question 12). The curricula contained the following six units: Multicultural Curriculum Overview for Instructors Interpreting in Multicultural Communities; Knowledge & Sensitivity: Interpreting in the African American/Black Communities; Knowledge & Sensitivity: Interpreting in the American Indian/Alaskan Communities; Knowledge & Sensitivity: Interpreting in the Asian American/Pacific Islander Communities; Knowledge & Sensitivity: Interpreting in the Hispanic/Latino(a) Communities; and Multicultural Interpreting Skills: Decision Making/Processing in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities—Creating Authentic Teams.

Over a recent 10-year period, the National Consortium for Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education from 2006–2016, developed video and text resources for professional development and skills improvement for interpreters working in—or aspiring to work in—Spanish-influenced settings. Those materials, produced by the NCIEC Trilingual Task Force, are openly available online (see Appendix, Survey Question 11). The curricula contain the following four modules: Communication: Spanish Across Latin America and the Caribbean and Within the Latinx Community²; Register and Genre Varieties in ASL, Spanish, and English; Recognizing Regionalisms and False Cognates; and Latin American and Caribbean Names, Signs, and Body Languages. Leadership and training sessions were also sponsored by the NCIEC over the last few years of their grant funding.

Notwithstanding the creation of the two curricula for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings previously described, there is minimal information in the research literature about curriculum development that is explicitly designed for the education of multilingual/trilingual interpreters. This is true for both signed–spoken and spoken–spoken language interpreting, although one notable exception is Sedano (1997), which touches on issues of culture and language for ASL–English–Spanish interpreting students. With respect to spoken–spoken interpreting curricula (in the Australian context), Slatyer (2015, p. 125) notes the following:

The overview of education for community interpreters doesn’t distinguish between language-streamed approaches and those that take a multilingual approach. While multilingual education is common in Australia and elsewhere (New Zealand has delivered multilingual education since the 1990s [I. Crezee, personal communication, 2015]), particularly for pre-service and in-service training and preparation for certification exams, there is no literature that explicitly reviews and evaluates this approach.

Few ITPs in the U.S. have provided instruction specific to interpreting in settings where languages other than ASL and English are used. Web-based information for Santa Fe Community College (see <https://www.sfcc.edu/programs/american-sign-language-interpreting/>) suggests that a trilingual option in Spanish is available for their students, and San Antonio College (see <http://www.alamo.edu/sac/asl/academic-advising/>) lists a Trilingual Interpreter Enhanced Certificate Degree Plan, among the various options for students in their program. Other programs may incorporate material for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings, but online searches have not resulted in details that could be included in this report.

In light of the above, the present study aimed to determine the current state of educational opportunities for college- and university-level students in the U.S. who wish to incorporate Spanish into their study of ASL–English interpretation. The guiding research question was the following: Do ITPs in states with large populations of Spanish

² The term *Latinx* is a gender-neutral version of Latino/a/@ (Ramirez & Blay, 2016). It has been adopted by various individuals and groups, including those who are part of Council de Manos, an organization of Latinx Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals in the U.S.

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speakers incorporate Spanish-related content into their curricula? If so, are specific components of currently available curricula utilized? If not, are specific solutions for the lack of such curricula being considered?

2. Methodology

A survey was designed to obtain information from ITPs about the incorporation of curricula focused on Spanish language and culture within interpreted settings in the U.S. The survey included queries about two focal curricula (NCIEC and NMIP) and questions designed to characterize each program in terms of numbers of faculty and students. The survey was distributed via email in September 2016, during which time each program received two email messages over a 2-week period: one early in the month and a second reminder message approximately 10 days later.

2.1. Interpreter Training Programs Targeted

Because of the primary focus on Spanish-influenced settings, only a subset of the 50 states was chosen for the survey. Based on 2009–2013 census figures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), nine states and one U.S. territory (i.e., a total of 10 regions) with the highest percentages of Spanish speakers were chosen. These regions included Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and the territory of Puerto Rico. Online Internet searches served to establish a list of ITPs in these regions. The authors identified a total of 62 programs, along with email addresses for two contacts within each program: the person in charge of the program and a general email account for information queries. Two email contacts per program were identified in order to maximize the responses, in case the primary contact was away from email communication or otherwise unable to respond to the survey query. During the data-processing portion of the study, steps were taken to ensure that data points represented unique programs rather than two responses from the same program (as explained in the section on data processing).

2.2. The Survey

A survey (see Appendix for questions and results) was designed within Qualtrics, an online survey software that tracks information about respondents such as the IP address used by a responder and the length of time required to complete each survey (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). The survey included questions about the following:

- Characteristics of the ITP
 - Location
 - Type of program (certificate, degree, etc.)
 - Number of full- and part-time faculty members and number of courses taught by each member
 - Estimated number of students in the ITP and in ASL courses
 - Estimated number of students from non-English speaking homes
- Utilization of curricula for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings
 - Whether each program utilizes two publicly available curricula (NCIEC & NMIP)
 - As appropriate, what aspects of these two curricula are used
 - Whether each program would like to incorporate additional content in languages other than ASL and English
 - Whether each program would be willing to partner with other programs/institutions for offering educational programming/opportunities for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings

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The design of the questions (content, wording, etc.) was guided by the overall research question and the need to gather general information about the faculty and students at the respondent ITPs. With respect to the overall research question (whether Spanish-themed content was included in ITP curricula throughout the country), six questions (10–15, including subquestions), were included. Nine questions (1–9) were included concerning general profiles of ITP faculty and students. A draft of the design was shared with a faculty member and administrator at an ITP, and suggestions for edits were incorporated into the final version of the survey. As part of the goal to encourage respondents to answer the survey and (all) the questions, the intent was to create a survey that could be completed within 15 minutes. Unfortunately, this resulted in the exclusion of one or more questions that might have been useful for a more detailed data analysis. This is discussed in the Results section.

2.3. Data Processing

In order to ensure that each response represented a single ITP, each respondent's IP address was examined and compared to responses given for various questions in the survey. If two IP addresses from a similar geographic location were identified (through similarities in the Qualtrics IP address information and participant self-reports of location information), responses to the survey questions were examined for similarity across those two respondents. In cases where there was high similarity of responses (e.g., more than 90% agreement), only one of the responses was accepted. This step was necessary because of the decision to distribute the survey to two contacts at each institution in order to maximize responses from the highest number of programs.

3. Findings

Responses were received from 31 of the 62 programs, a 50% response rate. This response rate ranks among ranges that are reported in different types of survey research, including combinations of email, postcards, and paper survey mailings (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004). The response rate in this study is attributed to various strategies utilized for administering the survey, including sending messages to two contacts at each ITP, sending out the first communication on a Tuesday morning (early in the week, but not first thing on Monday morning), and sending a reminder after 10 days. Sending personal messages in cases where the first author was familiar with the program coordinator may have also been an effective method of encouraging participation. The majority of the respondents (73.3%) reported that they served as coordinators and instructors in their program, whereas 13.3% served as instructors but not coordinators, and 6.6% worked as coordinators only. (See the Appendix for all survey questions and summaries of responses.)

3.1. ITPs Represented

Nine states from the continental U.S. were represented, with most respondents (8 programs, 25.8%) hailing from Texas. Other states with more than four programs responding included California, Florida, Illinois, and New York. Together these five states are home to the highest percentages of Spanish speakers in the country. The territory of Puerto Rico is not represented among the respondents, which is particularly pertinent to this study because of its expected use of Spanish curricula in its interpreter education.

Between one third and one half of participants reported offering one or more of the following: Certificate, Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree, and Associate of Science (A.S.) degree. More than one third noted that they partner with another degree-granting institution for Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) programs.

The vast majority of the programs (90.3%) have full-time faculty, with two full-time positions being represented most often (32%), followed by three positions (20%) and similar numbers for one, four, and more than six (16% each). It is particularly noteworthy that the full-time faculty were reported to teach four or more courses per term, with a remarkable number teaching five or more classes. The survey did not inquire about how many unique courses each faculty member was teaching, on average, which would have provided more information about the profile of the typical full-time instructor's teaching load. The majority of the programs also reported employing part-time

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faculty, with a notable percentage (nearly one third of programs) having six or more part-time positions. These faculty differ from the full-time faculty in their teaching loads, as they generally teach one or two courses per term.

One of the limitations of this survey is that it did not include specific questions about the types of courses that are typically taught by faculty. For example, the distribution of courses at these ITPs in terms of those devoted to theory versus practice is unknown because question(s) at that level of detail were not included.

3.2. Profiling Student Populations

Respondents were asked to estimate the number of students at all levels in their program, both within the ITP program and also within the ASL classes. This was done because there are often many students who take ASL but who do not enroll in the ITP. Most programs (43.3%) reported having up to 25 students enrolled in the ITP, followed by 30% reporting that they had between 26 and 50 students. Regarding students in ASL classes, seven programs (22.6%) reported having more than 200 students, and six programs reported having between 26 and 50.

Of particular interest are the reports of student language use at home. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that they were aware of students in their program from non-English-speaking homes. Only three programs reported that they were not aware of any such students. The most-often-cited home languages for these students were ASL (22 programs 84.6%) and Spanish (23 programs, 88.5%). See Table 1 for a list of other languages spoken by students at home, including estimates of numbers of students (total for all programs) from such homes.

Language	Programs reporting	Reported speakers
Arabic	2	15
Chinese (all varieties)	2	52
Colombian Sign Language	1	1
Creole	1	5
Japanese	1	No Number Reported
Mexican Sign Language	1	14
Russian	1	1
Tagalog/Filipino	3	42
Vietnamese	5	56

Table 1. Reports of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds other than Spanish and ASL

The particularly remarkable reports come from estimates of numbers of speakers of ASL and Spanish. Students from ASL-signing homes average 4.66 per program ($SD = 2.64$, Median = 4, Mode = 5), whereas students from Spanish-speaking homes average 41.25 ($SD = 54.63$, Median = 14, Mode = 6). As can be expected, there is much variation in the numbers of students from Spanish-speaking homes, with four programs reporting 100 or more students from such homes (this is represented visually with data points at $n = 100$ students, although some programs reported having more than 100), and others reporting numbers that more closely resemble those of ASL-signing homes. See Figure 2.

One limitation of the current survey design is that there were no questions about whether multilingual students had inquired about multilingual interpreting or expressed a desire to be exposed to content in languages other than ASL and English. In retrospect, it would have been useful to know what students desire, which could allow educators to keep that in mind as they plan curricula changes in the future.

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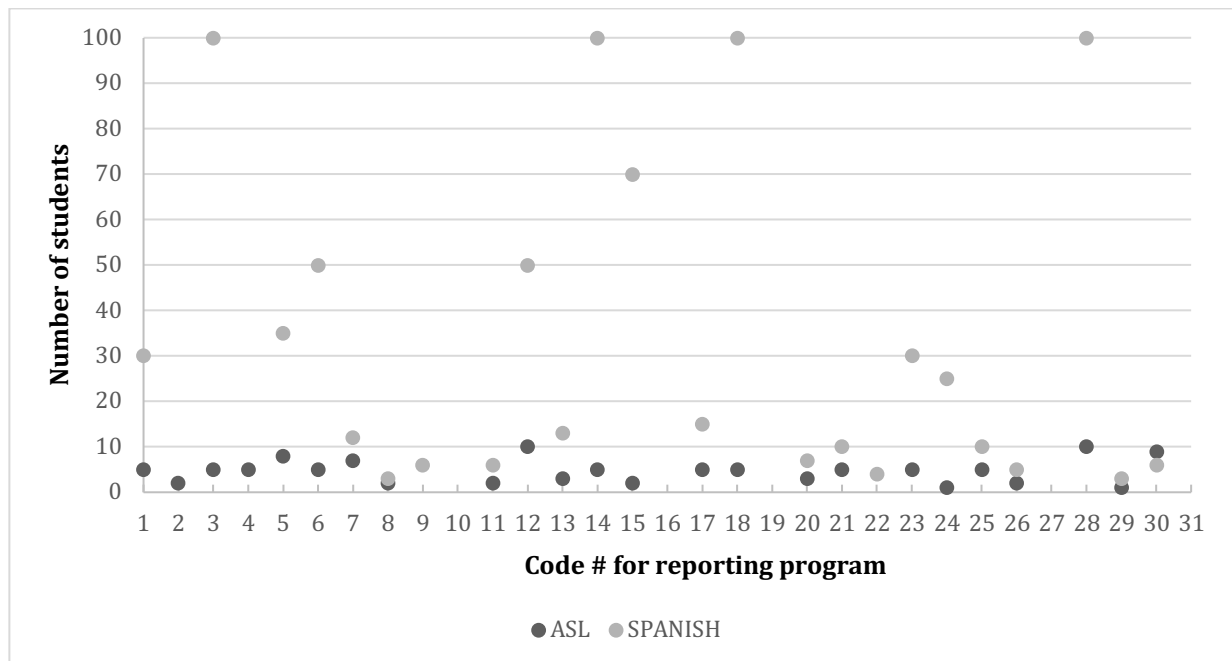


Figure 2. Estimates of students from ASL and Spanish-speaking backgrounds

3.3. Spanish-Themed Curricula

The survey asked whether curricula in ITPs contained content material on interpreting in settings where languages other than ASL and English are used. Twenty-one programs (67.7%) reported that they did not contain such content, whereas 10 programs (32.3%) reported that they did. Three programs reported having materials for Mexican Sign Language (LSM), four for Spanish, and two for other languages (Russian and one other language). None of the 10 programs that contained content material in other languages reported offering certificates or degrees which specifically focused on languages other than ASL or English.

Questions were asked about curricula that have been developed for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings. More specifically, surveys included questions as to whether the NCIEC and NMIP curricula were utilized in the respondent's program and, if so, which modules/units had been included. If the response was negative, respondents were asked whether there was a specific reason for not using the two curricula, as well as whether they would be willing to use the curricula if materials were provided to them.

Thirteen respondents (44.8%) reported that they used the NCIEC curriculum, as opposed to 16 respondents (55.2%) who indicated that they did not. Of those programs which reportedly utilized the NCIEC curriculum, eight programs were reported as using the Register and Genre Varieties module, and three as including the Spanish Across Latin America module. One program was said to use the Latin American and Caribbean Names, Signs, and Body Languages module from the NCIEC curriculum. Six programs cited lack of expertise as a reason for not using the curriculum, while three said they were not aware of the curriculum, and 10 indicated that there were other reasons for not utilizing the NCIEC curriculum. In response to the final question about the NCIEC curriculum, eight programs indicated that they would use the curriculum if sample materials were provided to them, with seven indicating that they would not.

Ten respondents (33.3%) reported using the NMIP curriculum, while 20 respondents (66.6%) indicated that they did not. Of those responding that they utilized the NMIP curriculum, seven programs reported using the Curriculum Overview for Instructors. Six programs indicated that they used the Multicultural Interpreting Teams unit, two programs used the unit on American Indian/Alaskan communities, five programs used the unit on African American/Black communities, five programs used the unit on Hispanic/Latino communities, and one program indicated using the Asian American/Pacific Islander unit. Seven programs cited lack of expertise for not using the

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curriculum, while seven reported a lack of awareness of the curriculum, and 11 respondents indicated that there were other reasons for non-use of the NMIP curriculum. As to the final question about the NMIP curriculum, 11 programs (57.9%) indicated that they would use the curriculum if sample materials were provided to them, whereas eight (42.1%) indicated that they would not.

3.4. Curricular Changes

In the latter half of the survey respondents were asked whether they would be interested in integrating particular changes into their curricula. Among the options were:

- Including more ASL content
- Including more English content
- Including more content from other languages

If a respondent indicated interest in including more content from other languages, a follow-up question was asked. For this question, the respondent was given a list of the top four non-English languages reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2005) as being spoken as the home language. This included Chinese (all varieties), Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, and Vietnamese. Mexican Sign Language (LSM) was also included in this list because of the presence of LSM users from Mexico in the U.S. Respondents were given the opportunity to designate another language(s) that was not listed in the question.

Eighteen of the respondents (78.3%) indicated that they would be interested in including more ASL content, five (21.7%) would like more English content, and 14 (60.9%) would like to see more content from other languages. Of those 14, the following indicates the number of programs that would like to incorporate content in each of the languages below:

- Chinese (all varieties): 2
- Mexican Sign Language (LSM): 4
- Spanish: 9
- Tagalog/Filipino: 2
- Vietnamese: 1
- Other: 3

Of those that indicated the “other” language category, two noted that they would like to see more Arabic content, while one respondent stated: “Source material for DI students - international sign, foreigners signing a mix of ASL and international/their own signed language, or dysfluent signers.”

The final content questions were intended to determine if programs might be willing and interested in partnering with other educational institutions to provide content in languages other than ASL and English that they currently do not or cannot provide. Additionally, they were asked about the possibility of students in their program gaining credit from another institution, for instance via an online course, and applying that credit to their certificate or degree-granting program.

Twenty respondents (64.5%) indicated that would be willing to partner with another institution, whereas 11 (35.5%) stated that they would not be willing to do so. Five respondents (16.7%) replied affirmatively to consideration of their students gaining credit from another institution, four (13.3%) said that was not possible, and 21 (70%) indicated that they were interested but not sure if such options would be allowed.

4. Discussion

An electronic survey was sent to 62 ITPs in the nine U.S. states and the one U.S. territory that have the highest percentage of Spanish speakers, in order to determine if curricula for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings had

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been incorporated into the programs. In addition to questions about curricula, the survey contained questions about faculty and students involved in those programs. A particularly remarkable finding was that large numbers of students in these ITPs hailed from Spanish-speaking homes. Whereas a modest percentage of such students was expected (such as 13%, to echo the percentage of Spanish home-language individuals), it is noteworthy that four programs reported having 100 or more students whose home language is Spanish. The reader should keep in mind the average of 41 such students per program (although the high standard deviation reflects a very wide range of reports; a more accurate statistic may be the median number of students, which is 14). These reports likely combine ITP students and ASL students who are not enrolled in the ITP, but the data from this study provide evidence that many ASL students come from Spanish-speaking homes.

Spanish was not the only non-English home language reported for the students from these programs. There were steady numbers of students from ASL-signing homes (averaging 4–5 per program), and students from homes where Chinese, Tagalog/Filipino, and Vietnamese are used. The suggestion that the U.S. is becoming more multilingual is supported by students enrolled in the subset of the nation's ITPs reported on here. Many of these students have likely been engaged in informal interpreting at various times in their childhood and young adult life—acting as a linguistic and cultural mediator between minority (i.e., non-English) language speakers in their family and the larger English-speaking society (Angelelli, 2010; Morales & Hanson, 2005). These experiences likely resemble the linguistic and social experiences of hearing children who are raised in signing households. For such developing multilinguals, formal interpreter education at the postsecondary level provides opportunities to increase knowledge, skills, and strategies for success as professional interpreters.

Unfortunately, only a minority of the ITP curricula in the present study incorporate content from a community language other than ASL and English. Since the primary focus of this study was on Spanish as the community language, it is notable that few of the ITPs utilize curricular content for interpreting in Spanish-influenced settings. Thirty-two percent of programs reported using NMIP materials, and 42% reported using those from the NCIEC. However, very few respondents indicated specific modules or units that are incorporated into their program and serve as instruction on particular topics such as Spanish across Latin America or lexical regionalisms in Spanish. One notable exception related to the NCIEC module about register and genre, with eight programs reporting the use of that module. It is worth noting that this curricular module focuses on a key aspect of interpretation, namely the management of register and genre. It may be that some of the programs that reported using the NCIEC curriculum included only this module (without incorporating its Spanish content), however this is speculation, because the other NCIEC modules were reportedly used very rarely.

What may be preventing the incorporation of publicly available (and free) curricula into these programs? One reason may be the seemingly high workload of full-time faculty. Most full-time faculty reported teaching four, five, or more courses, which may not allow for the time needed to incorporate additional content into some or all of the courses. As noted, one limitation of the survey was that questions about the types of courses that are taught by ITP faculty were not included. This meant that we were not able to analyze whether the distribution of course load might have impacted the makeup of program content. It is also notable that, in some cases, program personnel felt that they lacked the expertise to teach content that concerned languages other than ASL and English, and this was indeed reported by a notable percentage of respondents. As it is, there may be multiple reasons for the lack of Spanish-related content in these ITPs.

Even though there appears to be little Spanish-related content for students across programs, a majority of the respondents (64.5%) indicated that they are willing to partner with other educational institutions to provide this type of content to students. This is an important finding because it shows that ITP faculty are, indeed, willing to explore options concerning multilingual content that could result in positive outcomes for their multilingual students. Respondents who were interested in having their students gain credit from partner/collaborative experiences is further evidence that programs are interested in considering changes that would result in learning experiences for their students. However, it should be noted that some respondents were not sure whether such partnerships would be possible.

There are likely multiple ways that students from non-English-speaking homes can continue their education in their heritage language and become trilingual interpreters. One recommendation is to create a network across ITPs that would allow students to gain credit for online coursework. Another suggestion would involve one or more programs in the network offering hybrid coursework, which would involve a combination of in-person and online coursework. If one or a few ITPs were willing to offer online or hybrid coursework focusing on languages other than ASL and English, students from many ITPs could benefit. In such cases, it would be optimal if the students

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studying online would be able to earn course credit that could apply to their own degree-seeking program. Another recommendation is to develop relationships between professional interpreter organizations (e.g., Mano a Mano, RID, etc.) and ITPs that are interested in providing mentorship for their students who are seeking learning opportunities focused on their home language. The professional organizations likely have experienced interpreters who would be willing to pair with interpreting students, and the ensuing relationship could be mutually beneficial by allowing the professional interpreter to document their experience as a mentor, thus allowing it to contribute to their own ongoing professional development while gaining continuing education credits, given proper documentation of such work. Finally, interpreting students could join a professional organization as a student (e.g., Mano a Mano for ASL–English–Spanish interpreting) that would allow them to connect with other students across the country who are similar in linguistic, cultural, and educational profiles. Such connections could allow students to have a support network as they continue in their journey to becoming trilingual interpreters.

5. Conclusions

This article has reported on the results of a survey designed to investigate aspects of English–ASL ITPs in U.S. states with the highest percentages of Spanish speakers. The survey was designed to determine the extent to which students whose home language is not English are enrolled, and whether programs are offering educational opportunities in languages other than ASL and English.

The overwhelming finding is that students from Spanish-speaking homes are very prevalent in the 31 programs across 10 regions that took part in the study, and only a few of those programs are currently offering educational content in languages other than ASL and English. The findings show that students from various other minority languages are also represented in these ITPs, albeit in smaller numbers. This echoes the growing multilingual character of the country. The implication for interpreter education across the U.S. is that student multilingualism (and not just ASL–English bilingualism) is a factor that should be considered in curriculum development. In recent years, the growth of a Spanish-speaking population has resulted in more opportunities for ASL–English–Spanish interpreting. In addition to educational content in ASL and English, ITPs might consider how minority community languages such as Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog (among other languages with communities of speakers in the U.S.) might figure more prominently in the education of multilingual interpreting students. In such cases, it would be useful for programs to investigate models of multilingual development and language processing considerations of multilinguals (see, e.g., Gabrys-Barker, 2006; Lijewska & Chmiel, 2015). Program administrators and faculty could benefit from such knowledge as they develop educational experiences that are worthwhile and beneficial for their students. There is little work on such multilingual curricula in the research literature, and ITPs throughout the U.S. could be at the forefront of multilingual education and training.

Other data captured from this study concern faculty profiles and workloads, and these findings suggest that full-time instructors are carrying relatively heavy teaching loads. Such demands likely make it difficult for faculty to have the time to design and incorporate curricular content focusing on additional languages. We suggest that collaborations across programs, colleges, and universities may serve the growing number of students who come from non-English-speaking homes, and in particular the large number who come from Spanish-speaking homes. A notable percentage of respondents to the survey showed a willingness to collaborate to help meet the need for such additional content. Such developments could support the growing linguistic diversity of the U.S. and the interpreting profession.

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