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Understanding the Lived Experiences of Tenured, Non-native Spanish Speaker-teachers: A Phenomenological Investigation of the Native Speaker Fallacy

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UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TENURED, NON-NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKER-TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NATIVE SPEAKER FALLACY

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Abstract

There is limited research surrounding non-native speaker-teachers of world languages and the disruption known as the *native speaker fallacy* (Phillipson, 1992), which is the belief that only native speakers can be the most suitable teachers of a given language. This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish-speaking teachers who work across different public high schools on Long Island about their perceptions and experiences of the native speaker fallacy phenomenon. Six in-depth interviews were recorded and coded through the lens of self-efficacy and positioning theories to examine their experiences. The participants showed a strong belief in their teaching capabilities and reported that any insecurities related to their language competency are innate. The participants' limited experiences with the phenomenon led to the realization that their exposure to diversity within their school community is limited. They experienced the most bias enacted by native Spanish-speaker teachers within professional settings outside their workplace. Furthermore, they gauged their self-worth by placing value on many situation-specific factors and subscribing to specific components of professional practice that are influenced by their non-native status. Also, the participants positioned themselves as better suited for teaching non-native Spanish-speaker students. In addition, they developed high emotional self-efficacy from overcoming professional nativeship issues. This study provides opportunities to foster learning and information sharing among native and non-native teachers as a step toward dismantling the divisive nature of harmful societal stereotypes based on the native speaker fallacy.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my son, Christian Antonio. Your presence in my life is an

everlasting source of joy and inspiration. Thank you for being the light that guides me forward.

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Various people have journeyed with me in recent years as I have worked on this dissertation. Words cannot express my gratitude to my professor and chair of my committee, Dr. Joanna Alcruz, for her guidance through each stage of the process and her invaluable patience and feedback. I also could not have undertaken this journey without the members of my defense committee, Dr. Allison Roda and Dr. Maria Dove, who generously provided knowledge and expertise.

My mother's steadfast love is priceless, always fueling my motivation and boosting my self-confidence. The achievements and successes I've attained stand as a tribute to her unwavering belief in me. Mom, your resilience and strength make you a genuine role model, inspiring me to persevere diligently.

I am deeply grateful to my husband, Robert, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been invaluable throughout the challenges of completing this dissertation. Your presence in my life is a blessing beyond words. Thank you for patiently listening to my thoughts and frustrations, for your meticulous proofreading, and for the sacrifices you've made to support my pursuit of a doctoral degree.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The commonly accepted view in language instruction is that non-native speaker-teachers are inferior in knowledge and performance to native speaker-teachers (Shin, 2008). I represent one of many world language high school educators who have been ascribed the attribute of being a non-native speaker-teacher of Spanish by current world language researchers (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). After 16 years of teaching Spanish in an American high school and receiving a high score on my teacher performance evaluations, researchers still focus on ways to prove which type of educator is most effective (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). The knowledge of being classified and evaluated based on this attribute has me questioning the accepted view of native-speaking teachers as more valuable.

In the field of English language teaching and world language teaching, being a native or a non-native speaker teacher of a target language impacts and enhances language learning the most for learners (Árva & Medgyes 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Tsou, 2013). Likewise, according to some researchers, both types of teachers have their own unique set of advantages and shortcomings (Árva & Medgyes 2000; Tsou, 2013) and, at different stages of language learning, students hold differentiated beliefs about instructional competence and helpfulness of each group of teachers (Callahan, 2006; Chun, 2014; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009). As a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher in a secondary setting, I have always wondered about the perceived differences in the teaching behavior of each type of teacher. My interest grew after I welcomed a student teacher who identified as a native speaker of Spanish. Although I was confident in my ability to teach, it was only after working closely with a native speaker-teacher that I began to think about the

concept of the ideal teacher in relation to being a native or non-native teacher of Spanish. During my experience as a mentor teacher, I realized that I often compared my abilities, skills, and knowledge with my native student teacher, and the terms "native" and "non-native" were used often during our conversations. Naturally, I began to wonder if there was a clear-cut distinction between each type of teacher, and I became interested in research related to the native and non-native teacher dichotomy. Consequently, my research led me to Dr. Robert Phillipson (1992), who formulated the term *native speaker fallacy*, which suggests that the popular societal ideology—particularly in the case of English teaching—is that the native speaker teacher is naturally the ideal instructor (Phillipson, 2001; Zambrano, 2012).

Through this dissertation study, I examined the concerns related to being a non-native speaker teacher of Spanish, also known as nativeship issues (Liaw, 2004), in a secondary setting. More precisely, I wanted to examine how non-native speaker teachers of Spanish described their experiences with the idea of the *native speaker fallacy*. Although there are different viewpoints on what describes a native speaker, for the purpose of this dissertation study, the definition of a *native speaker of a language* is anyone who identifies as a native Spanish-speaker and who learned the language as a child through study and/or living in their home environment. The definition of a *non-native Spanish–speaker-teacher* is a teacher who learned Spanish as an additional language after childhood (Medgyes, 1994, 2001). It is also critical to note that what was traditionally referred to as foreign language is now often called world language (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). These terms are synonymous when referring to second-language teaching.

Statement of the Problem

The assumption that native-speaking teachers are the gold standard of language, whereas their non-native counterparts are inferior, is a common misconception that calls for responsiveness, particularly from non-native speaker-teachers of a language other than English (Liaw, 2004). There is a scarcity of studies related to high school–level, non-native speaker-teachers of languages other than English. Presently, studies that examine the differences between the two groups discuss the noted status of the native speaker-teachers (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). However, the research focusing on the lived experiences of non-native Spanish-speaking high school teachers concerning the native speaker fallacy is currently missing.

The identified research related to non-native speaker-teachers of a world language was mainly concerned with the distinction between the native and non-native teachers (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004). To date, one study by Thompson and Fioramonte (2013) focused on exploring the perceptions of non-native–speaking teaching assistants of Spanish related to their status as non-native speakers. The findings revealed several noteworthy themes that perpetuate the negative stereotypes of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers and support the fallacy. Nevertheless, amid the negative stereotypical outlooks, some findings revealed a hopeful change in perspectives (Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013).

The growing popularity of learning Spanish as an additional language in the United States deserves meaningful research surrounding conversations about the perspectives and lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers. A review of the literature suggested a need to focus on the world language field as well as the non-native speaker-teachers' nativeship

concerns, perceptions, and experiences related to the native speaker fallacy (Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The frameworks used to support this dissertation study were self-efficacy theory and positioning theory to examine the participants' lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy. I applied Albert Bandura's (1995) social cognitive theory and focused on the construct of self-efficacy, which is the confidence an individual has in their ability to be successful. Individuals form their self-efficacy beliefs by interpreting information from four sources. These influences—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological and emotional states—were used as a guide in creating my interview questions and assisted in the analysis and understanding of the findings. In my study, I focused on how the non-native teachers interpreted the four practices of influence mentioned earlier in this chapter to better understand their beliefs about their abilities to teach Spanish (Bandura, 1995). A focus on mastery experiences revealed the non-native teachers' achievements and the impact of occasional failures (Bandura, 1977). This focus added to the understanding of the participants' direct and past experiences with the native speaker fallacy.

The next primary practices of influence that I focused on were the participants' vicarious experiences and sources of verbal persuasion. Vicarious experiences are mainly formed by observing others and seeing them experience success, and the sources of verbal persuasion derive from forms of encouragement, suggestions, and praises received from others (Bandura, 1977). Exploring these practices of influence added to the understanding of what meaningful recommendations the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers learned and received from others related to the phenomenon.

The last core practice of influence I examined was the teachers' emotional arousal, also known as a person's psychological and emotional states (Bandura, 1977). Exploring how the non-native speaker-teachers perceived and interpreted their emotional, physical, and psychological well-being in relation to the native speaker fallacy also provided relevant information about the participants' abilities, how they managed anxiety, and how they enhanced their mood when faced with challenging situations related to the phenomenon in question.

In addition to self-efficacy theory, I applied the lens of positioning theory to identify how non-native speaker-teachers negotiate their role as non-native speakers of Spanish and how they position themselves to self and others—which in turn revealed more information about their self-efficacy beliefs. *Positioning theory* is a social constructivist approach that first emerged related to gender studies (Slocum & Van Langenhove, 2003). Davies and Harré (1990) introduced positioning theory, allowing for a better understanding of people's interactions with events and experiences. A critical aspect of this theory is to understand the position that people have taken. Harré (2012) defined a *position* as "a cluster of short-term disputable rights, obligations and duties" (p. 193). In other words, position is how a person perceives what is valued, what has status, and what is an appropriate way of doing something. Despite the power a person perceives they have or do not have to affect change, the foundation of positioning theory is the belief that not everyone involved has equal admission to privileges and responsibilities to perform certain types of meaningful actions.

From the perspective of positioning theory and the idea of placing self and others, one can infer that being a non-native speaker in the field of education is an attribute that has been ascribed to language teachers or that language teachers ascribe to themselves (Davies & Harré, 1990). Moreover, being a native and a non-native speaker of a language is a categorization that

includes considerable beliefs of rights and duties. Through positioning lens, I also examined how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers position themselves and the native Spanish speaker-teachers in relation to privileges, demands placed on them by others, and the assumptions others position them based on their non-native status.

Significance of the Study

There is an extensive body of literature that points to and responds against the unfair treatment and marginalization of the non-native English-speaking teacher in the English language teaching profession (California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2013; Canagarajah, 1999; Clark & Paran, 2007; Selvi, 2010; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., 2006). The problematic nature of the native/non-native dichotomy and the native speaker status creates an evident fracture between the two groups in the language-teaching field. Medgyes (2001) noted that within the framework of the native/non-native dichotomy of teachers of English, non-native teachers often feel underprivileged and discriminated against. To date, the literature has yet to address or identify this concern with teachers of languages other than English.

This study is essential because there have been only a small number of studies dedicated to teaching Spanish as a world language (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). The few studies conducted captured the experiences of non-native Spanish or foreign language teachers with teaching assistants (Ghanem, 2015; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2010). No studies exist with tenured, high school non-native Spanish speaker-teachers. The literature pertaining to high school-level language instructors is relevant for the world language community because the unfounded misconceptions found in the language-teaching literature call attention to the reality

that many language teachers will face as they enter the language-teaching profession (Brown & Thompson, 2018). Furthermore, the Spanish language is significant in this study because it is a widely taught language in the United States that has gained tremendous status at the high school and university levels (Brown & Thompson, 2018).

The captured lived experiences of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers related to the native speaker fallacy can inform future teachers of this phenomenon as well as empower them to question it and, if needed, learn to move past any internal and or external stereotypes concerning their capabilities. Their perceptions of themselves as able classroom teachers are essential to explore for their potential positive impact on student learning.

Teacher-education programs must prepare both native and non-native Spanish-speaking teachers who are entering the field for these potential misconceptions and provide the proper support. This study aims to emphasize the importance of creating programs that support pre-service and in-service Spanish-language teachers and that focus on developing strong efficacy expectations through a multitude of impactful experiences. Last, these findings can inform administrators and supervisors to oversee that world language departments will not let the unfounded perception of the native speaker fallacy influence their hiring practices and the assignment of courses to non-native teachers.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study aimed to understand how tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers described their lived experiences with the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy in their professional world language community. This study examined their perceptions regarding their status as non-native speakers of Spanish and considered their recognized self and social positioning as it relates to native speaker teachers, together with their

perceived level of self-efficacy of teaching Spanish as a non-native speaker. The overarching question was: What are the lived experiences of tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers as it relates to the native speaker fallacy? The following research questions guided my study:

Research Question 1. How do tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers describe their self-efficacy as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1a. How do they describe their mastery experiences as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1b. How do they describe their vicarious experiences of observing other teachers in their language department as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1c. What kind of encouraging or discouraging messages from others have the teachers experienced as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1d. How do teachers describe their somatic and emotional states when asked to think about the native speaker fallacy?

Research Question 2. How do tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers position themselves and the native speaker teachers in their school context?

RQ2a. How do they assume that others position them in relation to the native speaker fallacy?

Overview of the Methodology, Research Design, and Data Collection

For this dissertation study, I used qualitative methodology with constructivist epistemology to inform my research design, analyze and interpret themes as well as patterns in the data, and theorize the answers to the research questions. Specifically, I identified the hermeneutic, phenomenological approach as the most appropriate design to facilitate my

collection and analysis of data on non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' perceptions and lived experiences. The phenomenological approach best facilitated this study because it acknowledged the multiple and often diverse perspectives of reality that different participants might hold; as Beaudry and Miller (2014) stated, "Phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon from the point of view of the actors, and it depends on in-depth interviews and personal writing and reflections of the actors" (p. 47). By using this design, I provided an understanding of the *native speaker fallacy* phenomena through the details of the lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish-speaking high school teachers.

Since the nature of qualitative research sets the researcher as the data-collection instrument, one may assume that my perceptions and experiences as a non-native Spanish-speaker teacher were variables that impacted the research. The benefit of having an insider role status—or conducting research with populations of which I am also a member of (Kanuha, 2000)—was that doing so increased the potential for rich and deep data as I developed research questions based on my rich understanding of the issue needing investigation (Johnston et al., 2017). The challenge I faced with being an insider to this study was related to identifying pre-understandings and assumptions that I had about the phenomenon. The act of reflexivity or self-scrutiny, on the part of the researcher, assisted me with analyzing my biases and served as checkpoints along the way (Bourke, 2014). In addition, I followed key methodological considerations to limit my bias during the research process (Johnston et al., 2017).

Context and Setting of the Study and Participants

The participants in this study included six tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers currently teaching Spanish in several public high schools on Long Island. The following criteria were used in finding the group of participants for my study: (a) the teacher participants identified

as non-native speaker teachers of Spanish, (b) the participants taught at a high school setting and with at least one native Spanish speaker-teacher, (c) the participants had three or more years of experience teaching Spanish as an additional language and/or received tenure in their current district. The criteria related to tenure (i.e., having four years and a day of teaching experience in a New York public school) was essential in this study because an individual who is considered more of an expert has potentially invested more time experiencing the native speaker fallacy phenomenon. The criteria of being a tenured teacher offered a deeper understanding by providing a more ample amount of experiences as well as deeper insights into how they overcame challenges related to the phenomenon (Chi et al., 2003).

Data Collection and Analysis

Six participants were recruited through referrals. The 90-minute interviews took place from September 2021 to March 2022 via video conferencing due to COVID-19 precautions. The interview questions were designed to align with the study's theoretical frameworks and phenomenological approach. The interview questions also allowed for open-ended reflection and response. During their interview, I asked the participants questions that initially put their experience into the context of family, school, and work. Then, I asked them to reconstruct their experiences with the daily phenomenon in their school community and tell stories they had with colleagues and students related to the phenomenon. Last, I asked them to reflect on past experiences with successes and failures and the impact on their career. My insider status was revealed at the end of the interview to make sure that my status did not influence their responses in advance. After I shared my insider status, the participants were also curious about my experiences and asked many follow-up questions.

Throughout the data-collection phase of this study, data analysis was ongoing to allow for the identification of emerging themes. I kept a structured method of researcher reflexivity by keeping a reflective journal, where I noted and reflected on insights and possible biases that I may have throughout the data-collection process and analysis of the data. I transcribed the interview transcriptions verbatim to begin making connections with the data. I coded and interpreted the data to make meaning of the participants' words.

Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness refers to "authenticity and credibility of the data and the dependability of the analysis and interpretation of the data" (Beaudry & Miller, 2014, p. 52). In pursuing a study that is strong in trustworthiness, I acknowledged my positionality as an insider researcher. I considered key methodological considerations to maintain rigor within the method as I reflected on my pre-assumptions related to the phenomenon (Johnston et al., 2017).

To place emphasis on trustworthiness as an outsider researcher and consider the perspectives of the six participants by being balanced in my reporting, I relied on the participants' validation to clarify their experiences. During the first coding cycle, I used the language and terminology used by the participants to capture their lived experiences rather than using alternative methods where codes are pre-established based on previous research. Peer debriefing with members of my dissertation committee during the study design, data collection, and data analysis was also another strategy used to ensure trustworthiness.

With respect to confidentiality, I used pseudonyms to ensure that I would not disclose any harmful information. When writing the chapters of this dissertation, I made explicit the theoretical approaches that I used as well as a rationale for choices about content and design. I utilized a Heideggerian, interpretive-oriented phenomenological approach instead of a

Husserlian, descriptive-oriented approach to understand the non-native speaker-teachers' lived experiences (Vagle, 2018). I chose the interpretive approach because it does not aim to bracket out the researcher's perceptions of the phenomena, which is typical of the descriptive approach. Instead, this approach states that it is not possible for the researcher to completely remove their biases and suggested that the researcher engage in an act of ongoing interpretation.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

The literature highlights a dichotomy between native and non-native speaker teachers of Spanish, and the assumption is that there is an inherent difference between the two groups (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Likewise, there is a related assumption that the advantages of one group are the disadvantages of the other group (Ma, 2012). Although I presented some of the assumptions related to the comparison between native and non-native speaker teachers in the literature, my position as a non-native teacher could have created blind spots to the context and influenced my reporting. This was both a limitation and a method for me to self-reflect on my practice. Through self-reflection, I found that some findings were unexpected, and I represented the evidence with honesty to produce an ethical research study.

A common limitation to phenomenological studies is the difficulty other researchers may have with replicating them (Vagle, 2018). My dissertation attempted to respond to the limitation of transferability by providing a detailed outline of the essential steps in my method of inquiry and thematic verbalizations of the teachers' lived experiences as presented in Chapter 4.

I conducted this particular study with non-native high school teachers from public high schools in two suburban counties. The six participants that volunteered to be interviewed came from six different districts and the choice of districts and schools was not a selective decision. Five of the districts had a disproportionally high population of White students, one district had a

high population of Asian students, and all of the districts had a high population of White teachers. Conducting the study in public schools with a more diverse student body and a higher percentage of Latino teachers could reveal different findings. Although the findings might not be generalizable to other teachers' experiences, one can still generalize the two theories used to frame the study.

Some other limitations included the truthfulness of the participants' responses, their understanding of the native speaker fallacy, and the amount of time they had to recall all experiences related to this phenomenon. Sensitive topics or assumptions related to the researchers' expectations may have influenced how the participants responded to the interview questions. Also, this study was limited to the non-native speaker-teachers' perspectives. It did not include the native speaker-teachers' perspectives, which makes it difficult to compare or gain deep insights on information shared about their native counterparts.

Another limitation is my assumption as the researcher that tenured teachers are more likely than novice teachers to have experienced the phenomenon of native speaker fallacy. While one might assume that tenured teachers might provide deeper insights into this issue, individual experiences may vary based on a multitude of influences.

Definition of Terms

Nativeship: Describes the individualities of speakers in relation to the language they speak. An individual will be described as a native speaker of a language when he/she identifies him/herself with this language and/or learned it as a child (Liaw, 2004).

Native speaker fallacy: The idea that in language teaching, the native speaker teacher is the ideal teacher (Phillipson, 1992).

Native speaker teacher of Spanish: An individual who speaks the target language as his or her first language, also called L1, and who was born in the community where the language was spoken (Medgyes, 1994, 2001).

Non-native speaker teacher of Spanish: An individual who has acquired the skills to speak and teach the Spanish language later in life and consider it their second or third language (Medgyes, 2001).

Self-efficacy theory: A person's belief in his or her abilities to implement behaviors needed to succeed and change a situation based on past experiences (Bandura, 1977).

Positioning theory: Moghaddam and Harré (2010) stated that positioning theory is about "how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others (p. 2). Furthermore, "it is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others" (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010, p. 3).

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic of the dissertation. Through this hermeneutic phenomenological study on non-native Spanish speaker-teachers and their lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy, I discovered common themes from participants that can add to the growing body of research in the world language field. The next chapter provides a review of the literature and theoretical frameworks and describes how my study fills some of the gaps in the current research on this topic.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The growing numbers of Spanish learners across the United States creates an increasing demand for Spanish-language teachers. With the Hispanic population expected to grow by the millions in the coming decades, students recognize that Spanish-language proficiency provides a competitive advantage, making it the most commonly taught second language in American high schools (Brown & Thompson, 2018). As a consequence, there is a growing need for further research in the field of Spanish instruction and literature for educators specializing in Spanish. This literature review specifically focuses on native and non-native Spanish instructors and aims to synthesize the past and current research on native and non-native speaker teachers of a foreign language. In such a comparison, native teachers are often positioned as better instructors than their non-native counterparts, regardless of their level of teaching skills (Braine, 2010; Phillipson, 1992; Walelign, 1986). Thus far, there is little information available related to the lived experiences of non-native Spanish-language teachers and their perspectives on the idea that they are less skilled instructors (Brown & Thompson, 2018). The present study seeks to understand how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers experience the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy.

Chapter 1 introduced the research topic related to the native and non-native Spanish-speaker teacher dichotomy and discussed the need to explore the lived experiences of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in connection with the native speaker fallacy, which is the idea that native speaker teachers are the ideal instructors of a language (Phillipson, 1992, 2001; Zambrano, 2012). In this chapter, I begin by introducing the theoretical frameworks used in this study. Then, I review studies conducted by prominent researchers in the English language field

and present the literature surrounding the native and non-native teacher dichotomy and literature related to the native speaker fallacy. Last, I summarize studies related to the previously mentioned topics found in the foreign language field and describe how my study fills a significant gap in the research. This theoretical and empirical discussion then leads to Chapter 3, where I outline the research paradigm and the research design that guided my study.

Theoretical Frameworks

This section discusses the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and positioning theory (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010) selected for this study. My study explored the lived experiences of experienced, secondary, non-native Spanishspeaker-teachers and their self-perceived capabilities—commonly known as self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Through the self-efficacy construct, which is part of Bandura's social cognitive theory, I explored the non-native teachers' internal beliefs to understand their perceived strengths and potential weaknesses better as they relate to nativeship.

Through the lens of positioning theory, I examined how non-native teachers interpret their position in their world language school community, what they understand about what they do, what they know and do not know, and what they choose to ignore (Wenger, 1998) as it relates to being non-native Spanish speaker-teachers. I used specific tenets of these theories to craft the study's research questions.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Psychologist Albert Bandura made significant contributions to the fields of psychology and education. After conducting a series of studies, Bandura emphasized the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in his social cognitive theory. He claimed that people initially replicate appropriate and unattractive learned behaviors through observational

learning (Bandura, 1986). Although social cognitive theory is a personality theory that focuses on learned behavior through interaction with others and the environment, the construct known as self-efficacy, established within this theory, considers behavior learned through past experiences (Tileston, 2010).

Self-efficacy relates to the confidence a person has that they have the ability to accomplish a task effectively (Bandura, 1977). Within self-efficacy theory, a proposed clarification of motivation in behavior changes includes the components of efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. Since the efficacy expectation is the belief that a person has about their ability to achieve the behavior required to produce an outcome, it can help determine whether a person initiated a coping behavior, how much effort they put into it, and how long they sustained it in the face of challenges. Self-efficacy also strongly affects choices of activities, effort expenditure, and persistence (Bandura, 1977).

Tileston (2010) explained that "the basic difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem is that, while both terms refer to students' belief that they can be successful, self-efficacy is based on past experience" (p. 21). Since self-efficacy predicts motivation and focuses at the task level on one's capabilities, it is critical to consider that how confident teachers feel about their abilities to teach a second language could correlate with their performance and success.

Four Major Sources of Efficacy Expectations

In his social learning analysis, Bandura (1995) specified that people's beliefs related to their efficacy could be developed by how a person interprets four major practices of influence: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal.

The first practices of influence that impact teachers' belief in their abilities are mastery experiences. Mastery experiences, defined as personal experiences of success (Bandura, 1995), are considered most effective when creating a strong sense of efficacy, because they relate to personal performance accomplishments (Bandura, 1995). These experiences are also referred to as performance outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Generally, achievements raise the level of mastering a behavior, while failures decrease the chance of changing the behavior.

People derive vicarious experiences from observing others and seeing them experience success with difficult tasks (Bandura, 1977). An example is an individual observing another individual teach. Overall, a vicarious experience is the source that teachers imitate for stronger self-efficacy. This efficacy expectation is generally experienced during training and working with mentors.

Another source that influences teachers' belief in their ability is verbal persuasion, which usually involves one individual convincing another individual that they have the capability to perform a task successfully (Bandura, 1995). For example, people provide suggestions, offer praise, and share experiences to influence teachers' belief that they can speak the second language. This source considers the encouraging and discouraging messages and feedback that the participants received related to their non-native status.

The final source of self-efficacy is emotional arousal, which relates to the impact of cognitive feelings on confidence (Bandura, 1995). Another term for *emotional arousal* is *physiological feedback* (Bandura, 1977). It not only captures people's sensations but also emotional reactions to a situation and subsequent behavior. For example, teachers' sense of power and how they think and feel are related to their drive to perform, and what others believe to be true could also impact their feelings and actions. Stressful situations and fear reactions that

trigger emotional stimulation provide meaningful information related to personal competency (Bandura, 1977). This concept considered the strong emotions like fear and intimidation the non-native Spanish teachers experienced during specific situations and how they responded to them.

In this study, I used the integrative theoretical framework of self-efficacy to explain the second language teacher's internal changes, achievement, performance, instructional approach, and helped to predict elements of effective teaching (Barni, 2019). It examined the non-native Spanish speaker-teacher's past and current mastery experiences related to their language-teaching abilities. These experiences also considered their acquired learned behavior from previous mentors; their source of encouragement and discouragement in their school setting and language teaching community; and their emotional, physical, and psychological feedback influenced by how they feel about their abilities in a particular situation. I further examined the participants' words related to four primary sources of influence. I used positioning theory to explore further how the non-native teachers position themselves with the native speaker fallacy.

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory is a social constructionist approach (Slocum & Van Langenhove, 2003) that emerged from gender studies. The theory was introduced by Davies and Harré (1990), allowing researchers to understand and make sense of people's relationships to events and experiences. The term *position* relates to how a person perceives what is valued, what has status, and what they believe is an appropriate way to do something (Davies & Harré, 1990). In relation to education, *position* relates to how teachers perceive their moment-by-moment interactions, their perceived influence, and the power they perceive they have or do not have to affect change in their teaching community. Rom Harré and Ali Moghaddam clarified that this theory is about "how people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others" (Harré &

Moghaddam, 2010, p. 2). Furthermore, Davies and Harré (1990) explained that "Any narrative that we collaboratively unfold with other people thus draws on a knowledge of social structures and the roles that are recognizably allocated to people within these structures" (p. 52). Discourse of all types involves people with differing power relations and perceived status who are creating their view of reality. This co-established view of reality creates a storyline that guides the nature of the interaction and the perceived rights and duties of each person (Arkoudis, 2006). A very impactful dimension of this theory is understanding people's rights and duties. The theory proposes that an individual will act to what they perceive as their duty. Furthermore, how an individual will talk is influenced by their rights and duties. For this study, I created interview questions that aligned with this dimension of the theory and related to the teachers' perceived rights and duties to explore their position further.

Last, I focused on the reflexive positioning, or intentional self-positioning mode, of this theory for my study. The mode of reflexive positioning "in which one positions oneself" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48) recognizes that non-native teachers might view the native speaker fallacy and their nativeness from a particular position. How non-native teachers intentionally self-position themselves reveal their normative assumptions about being a non-native teacher of a language.

There is a general understanding of how the non-native Spanish-speaking teacher's role plays in the language-teaching community, and this theory reveals their perceived power, influence, and agency (Davies & Harré, 1990). In this study, I employed the theoretical framework of positioning theory to investigate the stances taken by non-native teachers in relation to the dominant ideology. This ideology supports the notion that native speakers are

superior language instructors. The research delves into both the positions held by non-native teachers and their subsequent teaching practices.

Literature Review

This section explores research pertaining to the definition of a native speaker in language education and addresses the significant concern associated with being either a native or a non-native teacher of a language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This literature review focuses on the native and non-native speaker teacher dichotomy, the native speaker fallacy. The differences between native and non-native speaker-teachers are highlighted to align with the goals of my study. This review also moves beyond the commonly cited research in the English language field and summarizes the foreign language studies related to native and non-native foreign-language teachers. Furthermore, it presents some challenges that non-native foreign-language teachers face with the expected level of preparation and qualifications in light of current World-Readiness Standards established by the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

What is a Native Speaker?

It is critical to summarize who is considered a native speaker. A current definition of *native speakers* suggests that these individuals have spoken the target language since they were a baby rather than acquiring the target language as a child or an adult (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). There is considerable debate among researchers on what it means to be a native speaker, and many have been on a quest to define this term. Some researchers investigated matters of competence of the individual by relying on performance indicators of teaching quality or how well the individual uses the language (Bloomfield, 1933; Chomsky, 1965; Davies, 1991; Nayar, 1994). Others restricted their definition to the first language they learned in childhood

(Bloomfield, 1933; Davies, 1996). A reevaluation of the definitions is necessary to determine the definition of what a native speaker is.

According to American linguist Noam Chomsky (1965), native speakers have perfect command of their language because they possess intuitive functional knowledge, control of grammar, and social awareness, which enables them to know in what way and when to use utterances appropriately. In addition, Nayar (1994) believed that native speakers do not always have perfect command of their first language and argued that native speakers are not, by that very fact, "knowledgeable, correct and infallible in their competence" (p. 4).

Although the term *native speaker* cannot be closely defined, most researchers continue to keep the term in their professional verbiage. Some even affirm that speakers of different competencies declare membership to one or the other category based on the group that created the division (Árva & Medgyes, 2000) and that having that distinction is useful. For instance, Davies (1991) explained its practicality by stating that "the native speaker is a fine myth: we need it as a model, a goal, almost an inspiration. But it is useless as a measure" (p. 157). For the purpose of my study, I espouse the definition that describes a native speaker as a person who learned to speak the language from earliest childhood rather than learning it as a foreign language (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).

Native/Non-Native Speaker-Teacher Dichotomy

Although a significant body of literature in the 1990s recognized the inappropriateness of positioning native and non-native speaker teachers into two opposing and separated communities (Moussu & Llurda, 2008), Medgyes (1992) restored the comparison by appointing each group with the "ideal" levels of proficiency. Medgyes concluded that the ideal native speaker teacher is one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in the target language and the non-native

speaker teacher is one who has achieved a near-native proficiency in English. This established

distinction in proficiency levels has led to a later discussion about the advantages and

disadvantages of the non-native teacher. Medgyes (1994) also explained that the deficiencies of

the non-native speaker teacher should be exposed to the language-teaching community so that

the non-native teacher may have the opportunity to work on them.

Although there are many arguments against the native and non-native teacher distinction,

it is crucial to consider that this "inadequate" binomial highlights two groups of distinguished

teachers that differ in competence, teacher qualifications, and experience (Árva & Medgyes,

2000). Namely, researchers who are interested in native and non-native teachers of a language

often study their differences in the following areas: (a) general attitudes toward teaching the

language and the culture (Medgyes, 1994), (b) teaching behaviors (Árva & Medgyes, 2000), (c)

self-perceptions of teaching abilities and their own identity (Carolyn, 2017), and (d) students'

attitudes toward each group of teachers (Hertel & Sunderman, 2009). Although this present study

does not focus on the differences between native and non-native speaker teachers, becoming

familiar with the literature concerning the non-native speaker teachers' competencies and

deficiencies can provide relevant information related to nativeship challenges they may face.

Differences of Native and Non-Native Speaker-Teachers of English

Árva and Medgyes' (2000) study compared competencies and deficiencies of native and

non-native speaker teachers of English, highlighting that their linguistic differences impact their

teaching strategies. The study analyzed teaching behaviors of the two groups of teachers by

comparing and examining their stated behavior during interviews and their actual behavior

during video-recorded observations of lessons. Arva and Medgyes (2000) categorized the

differences that emerged in three areas of teaching: (a) teacher usage of English in the classroom, (b) general attitude of the teacher, and (c) attitude of teaching the language and the culture.

Concerning teacher usage of the language, native teachers had a greater command of English and used authentic language compared to the academic language used by their non-native counterparts. Regarding the differences in general attitude, non-native teachers were more committed and empathetic, as they adopted a more cautious, strict, and guided approach and set realistic expectations for their students. Conversely, native teachers were less committed and empathetic, as they adopted a more original, spontaneous, and flexible approach and set unrealistic expectations. For their general approach to teaching language and culture, Árva and Medgyes' (2000) observed that the non-native teachers used one textbook, introduced items in isolation, and supplied less cultural information. In contrast, the native teachers used a variety of materials and introduced items in context. Last, the non-native teachers gave their students more assignments and tests. They also valued accuracy over fluency and grammatical rules over language in use. Their native counterparts spoke more in the target language, favored group work over controlled activities, and focused more on developing oral skills with a preference for colloquial language—a more functional style of speech applied in conversation and other informal contexts.

Liaw (2001) reported that studies on English language teaching revealed similar findings in the difference between each group. The results related to the "competent speaker" of a language tends to differ in teaching approach and behaviors. Furthermore, the teachers' cultural and linguistic background impacts the pedagogical advantages and shortcomings of each group. Overall, the differences between the two groups suggested that native and non-native teachers

contribute differently to the field of language learning and that the advantages of one group of teachers appear to be the disadvantages of the other group (Ma, 2012).

Native and Non-Native Speaker-Teachers of World Languages

This section summarizes the findings of six studies that focused on the sociolinguistic profile of Spanish and world language teachers in the United States. I also provide a brief summary of their similarities to the research findings in the field of English language teaching. Table 2.1 provides a general overview of the studies focusing on nativeship of instructors teaching languages other than English at American universities.

The results show that the vast majority of studies found a difference in the native and non-native teachers' level of confidence. Overall, nativeship had a significant bearing on teachers' identity and their perceived abilities to teach in the target language. Non-native teachers often positioned themselves as being the least competent teachers for advanced learners (Ghanem, 2015; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013), while native teachers felt qualified to teach high-level reading and writing (Liaw, 2004). Similarly, Callahan (2006) and Hertel and Sunderman (2009) found that students perceived their native-speaking instructors as more knowledgeable in the areas of pronunciation and culture. However, their non-native counterparts were better at addressing their language-learning difficulties. Only one study by Thompson and Fioramonte (2013) revealed a positive shift in the mindset of non-native teachers in that some were less critical of their own mistakes. Such change happened after teachers examined their perceptions regarding their non-native status and recognized that they held biased notions about themselves.

Several strengths and challenges in the previously mentioned studies relate to the teaching behaviors investigated by Árva and Medgyes (2000). However, most of the studies

conducted in foreign language studies focus mainly on the stated behaviors. Regarding the similarities in both fields (English language and foreign-language teaching), the non-native teachers not only tend to feel less confident when speaking in the target language but also less sure about teacher culturally knowledge, whereas the native teachers tend to have advantages in pronunciation and culture (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009).

Table 2.1

Summary of Articles on Native and Non-Native World Language Teachers

Article	Participants	Purpose of the Study	Native Teachers	Non-Native Teachers
Liaw (2004)	104 native and non-native language teachers from six language departments (Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, German, French and Italian) at a Midwestern U.S. university	Distinction between native and non-native teachers for comparison	• Felt qualified teaching high-level reading and writing classes • Rated themselves higher on the ability to teach colloquial language and culture	• Felt less qualified teaching high-level reading and writing classes • Had stronger command in explicit linguistic knowledge and are more effective at delivering grammar lessons
Callahan (2006)	31 university students of Spanish as a foreign language 24 university students of English as a second language	Opinions about qualities of instruction by native and non-native speakers	• Rated as better teachers of pronunciation and cultural knowledge • Highly favored by students	• Better at teaching grammar and understanding students' struggles with the language

Hertel and Sunderman (2009)	292 students enrolled in three different levels of undergraduate Spanish courses at a U.S. university	Knowledge and teaching ability of native and non-native speaking instructors of Spanish	• Perceived as the better instructors of pronunciation and culture	• Better at empathizing with students' struggles with the language
Kopczynski, (2010)	Interview with adult students taught by native and non-native Spanish instructors	Relationship between student proficiency in Spanish taught by native/non-native Spanish instructors	• Recommended for teaching the elementary-level Spanish classes with students who do not possess any experience with the Spanish language	• Students displayed significantly lower Spanish oral-proficiency levels when they taught inexperienced language students
Thompson and Fioramonte (2013)	Non-native Spanish teaching assistants teaching first- and second-year Spanish courses at a U.S. university	Teachers' perceptions regarding their own status as non-native speakers of Spanish		• Recognized biased notions about themselves related to pronunciation • Felt less competent teaching learners at a more advanced level • Were more forgiving of their own mistakes
Ghanem (2015)	Four native and four non-native graduate instructors of German at a larger southwestern U.S. university	Complexities of native and non-native speaker's identities and teaching of culture	• Positioned themselves as being the more confident and knowledgeable instructor	• Felt insecure, less confident, and unsure about the ways to teach culture

Another common theme occurring in the literature includes the empathetic nature of the

non-native teacher who show a greater ability to understand their students and better able to

anticipate language difficulties while being responsive to their students' needs (Árva &
Medgyes, 2001). The non-native teacher's ability to understand student struggles was not only
observed in actual behavior in the classroom (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Hertel & Sunderman,
2009) but also in stated opinions of language students (Callahan, 2006). Last, the body of
research on native and non-native teachers highlights the strengths of each group by positioning
the native teachers as being better at communicating perspectives of language (Árva & Medgyes,
2000; Liaw, 2009) and non-native teachers as being better at explicit linguistic knowledge and
the ability to deliver grammar lessons more effectively (Callahan, 2006; Liaw, 2009). Most of the
research conducted in the field of foreign language focused on stated beliefs of native and non-
native teachers and language students that were taught by each group of teachers. Also, all the
participants used in the world-language studies were teacher assistants at the university level.

Overall, the studies that address world-language teachers' identity and their self-
perceived capabilities shed light on the positive correlation between language proficiency and
teacher confidence in pedagogical abilities (Faez & Karas, 2017), the impact of nativeship
concerns on world-language instructors (Liaw, 2004), their years of experience and level of
confidence (Liaw, 2004), and the need for building world language communities of practice so
that native and non-native teachers alike have opportunities to learn from each other (Fraga-
Cañadas, 2011).

The Native Speaker Fallacy

TESOL scholars have challenged the mainstream idea that native speakers are better
language instructors, and the most influential individual in this group is Phillipson (1992), who
strongly disputed the idea that native speakers were, by nature of their birthplace, better English-
language educators. Phillipson (1992) first coined the term *native speaker fallacy* to refer to the

unfair treatment of non-native speaker teachers and identified as fallacious the belief that the native speaker is the superior instructor. Generally, native speakers are viewed as the more qualified language teachers regardless of their teaching skill, and their privileged status is favored (Walelign, 1986).

The practice of viewing native speakers as the linguistic standard has negatively impacted many non-native English-language educators (Braine, 1999; Tsuchiya, 2020). Although many teachers worldwide report being affected by the native speaker fallacy, most teachers are aware of this enormous topic and would rather not discuss or mention it (Tsuchiya, 2020). More importantly, some hesitations to discuss this topic point to the persistent existence of a power relationship between native and non-native speakers, limited studies in the foreign-language field, and the idea of viewing native speakers as the idealized linguistic standard (Tsuchiya, 2020). As a result, non-native speaker-teachers suffer the most from discriminatory practices due to the native speaker fallacy (Selvi, 2014).

Non-Native Speaker-Teachers' Educational Preparation

Regarding language teaching, the language proficiency of the teacher and their teaching ability are the most important aspects of teacher competence (Faez & Karas, 2017). In 2002, the ACTFL put in place a minimum proficiency requirement for teacher licensure adopted by most states. ACTFL established this prerequisite to empirically measure language competence and to ensure high-quality teaching in the world-language classroom.

Most states require teachers to achieve at least the "advanced low level" on the ACTFL scale for the Spanish language. Although studies demonstrate that at least 50% of the pre-service language teachers achieve the required score to become licensed in their state (Brown & Thompson, 2018), the minimum oral-proficiency requirements discourage potential teacher

candidates who might have natural teaching skills and creativity. This information is relevant to my study because non-native Spanish speaker-teachers might have faced challenges with passing the state's requirements and becoming licensed language teachers despite their excellent performance in their college-level courses.

One particular non-native Spanish teacher candidate, interviewed by Burke (2013), professed resentment toward the ACTFL oral-proficiency requirement and questioned why maintaining an A average in education and Spanish classes and spending time in an immersion setting abroad was not enough to meet these requirements. In her interview, she shared the following: "Even though I have gone through all of this, I am still not good enough in their eyes. Never mind the people who are native speakers that have no background knowledge of second-language acquisition and no creativity" (Burke, 2013, p. 532). This experience not only raises questions concerning which ability matters most—pedagogical ability or language proficiency—but also raises concerns about the number of passionate university non-native teacher candidates excluded after they complete all of their required Spanish courses.

Another recent challenge is that the profession seeks foreign-language instructors with additional knowledge, attitudes, competencies, and skills on top of the necessary skills for teaching communicative competence in the second language (Sercu et al., 2005). The sets of skills that students need to acquire to be proficient in a new language have evolved, and teachers must teach the practical communicative skills but also establish cultural sensitivity.

The increased emphasis on intercultural perspective in language teaching might be another challenge for non-native speaker-teachers. A study on pre-service world-language teachers in the United States indicated that most non-native speaker-teachers felt insecure and less confident when teaching and incorporating culture into the curriculum. Also, they felt unsure

about the ways to teach culture (Ghanem, 2015). Although this accepted intercultural perspective in language teaching has been developing in a variety of settings and in different parts of the world (Byram & Zarate, 1996; Wagner, 2013), world-language educators in the US must now be willing to understand this notion and show better evidence of implementation in language teaching.

Gaps in Current Research on Non-Native Spanish Speaker-Teachers

There is a tremendous amount of research in the field of English-language teaching that highlights the native teacher and non-native teacher dichotomy and that recognizes their differences in teaching behavior (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994). The research related to world-language teachers is limited (refer to Table 2.1), and the findings were informed mainly by novice teachers.

Although there are many studies in the English-language teaching field investigating the native and non-native speaker dichotomy, including aspects such as notable differences, advantages and disadvantages, and student perceptions of native and non-native instructors, to date, the literature has not addressed research on lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish teachers at the high school level. As Spanish is the first and second language spoken by millions of Americans, the obtainability and diversity of Spanish teachers are the highest among all of the languages taught in the United States (Brown & Thompson, 2018). This also suggests a high percentage of Spanish speakers and potential teacher candidates who learned the language as children and identify as non-native speakers of the language.

In the last few years, there has been an increase in research related to language teacher recruitment and retention that informs the literature related to teacher training in the world language field due to the changing landscape of language curricula and the world-language

teacher shortage (Brown & Thompson 2018). In our multicultural and multilingual world, creating native-like learners is an unsound language model (Ghanem, 2015), and the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers is an old-fashioned notion (Arzumanyan, 2016). A large body of research exists on the issues relating to non-native English teachers worldwide, and the established preconception has often been that the native language teacher is essentially the better instructor and that there are apparent differences (Moussu, 2008). Overall, the research into non-native instructors offers valuable knowledge for those who are not only entering the field of Spanish teaching but also for those who employ Spanish language teachers.

There is also a large body of research that focuses on the non-native teacher, with the purpose of informing teacher-training courses and bringing awareness to the lack of understanding of each group's respective strengths and shortcomings (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). After all, there are more than 20 years of research that discusses the position of teachers of English who were either native or non-native speakers of the language (Medgyes, 1994), but not as much research discusses the position of tenured secondary teachers in the United States who identify as non-native speakers of Spanish. As a non-native secondary Spanish teacher, I feel that there is always a need to look again at experiences of non-native teachers as well as difficulties and perceived advantages as they relate to present-day and future teaching situations.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the body of literature related to the research topic, outlined the theories, and described how this study can fill the gaps in the current body of literature. Throughout this literature review, I have provided information related to the following topics: (a) self-efficacy theory and positioning theory and how they apply to my study, (b) definition of a native speaker, (c) native and non-native language teacher dichotomy, (d) studied and reported

differences between native and non-native teachers of English, (e) summary and analysis of world-language studies related to native and non-native speaker teachers, (f) the native speaker fallacy, and (g) non-native speaker teachers' challenges during educational preparation. This theoretical and empirical discussion leads to Chapter 3, where I outline my research paradigm and the research design that guided this study.

Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter describes the research methodology utilized to conduct this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study and the ontological approach derived from two theoretical frameworks: self-efficacy theory and positioning theory. Through these lenses, I focused on examining the lived experiences of tenured, secondary, non-native speaker-teachers of Spanish in the following ways: (a) how they make sense of the native speaker fallacy, (b) their perceived level of self-efficacy as it relates to being a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher, and (c) their recognized social positioning. More precisely, the research objective was to understand better how experienced non-native Spanish speaker-teachers who learned Spanish as an additional language make sense of the native speaker fallacy, which positions the native speaker teacher as being the most competent regardless of their pedagogical ability (Braine, 2010). Another aim was to observe whether or not the frameworks of positioning theory and self-efficacy theory depicted their experiences and how purposeful they were in revealing the intrinsic and extrinsic challenges that non-native speaker teachers face in their professional language communities. Through individual interviews, I elicited the participants' perceptions of what it means to be a non-native speaker-teacher of Spanish, which influenced their self-efficacy in teaching the language. I looked closely at their level of confidence, their sense of power, and if any common factors impacted their drive to perform relating to their nativeship.

In language teaching, the literature revealed that teachers naturally gather themselves into two groups: native and non-native speakers of a target language (Árva & Medgyes, 2000). There is a widely recognized notion that being a native or non-native teacher of a language influences and enhances language learning (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Tsou, 2013). The

literature also indicated that the vast majority of researchers in the world language field focused mainly on native and non-native speaker teacher participants at the post-secondary level (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013), with a limited pool of high school teacher participants. Although Spanish has become a default world language course at the post-secondary level in recent years, it is difficult to ignore that the number of Advanced Placement exams given to high school students in Spanish language and literature increased from 4,378 to 152,962 between 1979 and 2014 (Brown & Thompson, 2018). It is evident that the teaching of the Spanish language and the integration of its instruction at the high school level has gained status in American schools and its high school level teachers demand proper attention.

The Research Problem

There is significant research about native and non-native teachers' pedagogical contributions to the field of language learning and their linguistic differences (Árva & Medgyes, 2000), but relatively little is known about the human experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers at the high school level. Suggested in the review of the literature was a need to further explore concerns related to being a native or a non-native teacher of the target language, often referred to as nativeship issues (Liaw, 2004) and the native speaker fallacy or the preconception that the native-language teacher is inherently the better instructor regardless of their teaching skill (Braine, 2010; Phillipson, 1992; Walelign, 1986).

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that research on native and non-native teacher dichotomy in the English and foreign language fields is often committed to highlighting their differences (Árva & Medgyes, 2000), and their dissimilarities are also interpreted as deficiencies (Ma, 2012; Tsou, 2013). Too often, the native speaker teacher is positioned as the better teacher

(Phillipson, 1992). As a result, I turned my research gaze to the necessity of finding various possibilities to understand non-native teachers and their experiences in ways that do not compare them to their native counterparts and/or highlight their shortcomings. The focus on a phenomenological perspective guided the subject of my study. As a phenomenological researcher, I did not attempt to resolve the discrepancy between native and non-native speakers of Spanish, and I did not see differences as mistakes. Rather, I examined multiple realities with the aim to exhaust all of the different interpretations of how the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers experience the phenomenon of native speaker fallacy.

Theoretical Frameworks

For this study, I used self-efficacy theory and positioning theory to design the interview questions for the participants and to assist in the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Guided by the theoretical foundation of self-efficacy found in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (1995), the study investigated how tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers perceived their level of self-efficacy as it relates to nativeship. The confidence individuals have in their ability to be successful is called self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). The focus on the construct of self-efficacy helped examine the participants' direct and past experiences with nativeship concerns and the native speaker fallacy as well as create an opportunity to reveal their sustained determination to overcome them. Bandura (1995) expressed that four major forms of influence develop people's beliefs related to their efficacy. In this study, I examined mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological and emotional states. I used these four sources of efficacy beliefs to design my interview questions and assist in the analysis and understanding of the findings.

Positioning theory, was originally developed by Davies and Harré (1990) and it focuses on how individuals employ language, including various forms of discourse, to position themselves and others.

Positioning theory provided a powerful lens to investigate how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers position themselves and determine their positionality within their professional language community. It also explored how the aforementioned teachers made sense of their relationship to events and experiences related to the native speaker fallacy. As stated by Moghaddam and Harré (2010), "It is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others" (p. 3). The dimension of positioning theory that had the most impactful relevance for constructing versions of social reality is the idea of rights and duties associated with positions. This dimension added to my exploration of how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers positioned themselves with respect to privileges, demands placed on them by others, and how they assume that others position them in relation to nativeship.

For data analysis, Moghaddam and Harré (2010) suggested exploring features of discourses in which participants perform particular kinds of meaningful actions when involved in social episodes. While analyzing the interview transcriptions, I questioned and examined the storylines or narratives that each participant brought into existence. I also examined the social forces of the speech, acts that constitute the participant's discourse, and the rights and duties that emerged in the discourse.

The theoretical frameworks used in this study informed my research on the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy. By examining the participants' internal perceptions of their capabilities as Spanish language teachers, I was also able to explore features of their discourses

related to their capabilities in which they revealed how they locate themselves in their school setting and professional language community.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The ultimate focus of this dissertation study was to address the lack of individual lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers at the high school level. To address this problem, the purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to examine how the above-mentioned teachers experienced the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy. The overarching question was: What are the lived experiences of tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers as it relates to the native speaker fallacy? The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1. How do tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers describe their self-efficacy as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1a. How do they describe their mastery experiences as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1b. How do they describe their vicarious experiences of observing other teachers in their language department as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1c. What kind of encouraging or discouraging messages from others have the teachers experienced as it relates to the native speaker fallacy?

RQ1d. How do teachers describe their somatic and emotional states when asked to think about the native speaker fallacy?

Research Question 2. How do tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers position themselves and the native speaker teachers in their school context?

RQ2a. How do they assume that others position them in relation to the native

speaker fallacy?

The present dissertation contributed to the world language research literature by

capturing multiple realities of teachers experiencing the aforementioned phenomenon in teaching

the Spanish language. Through the application of the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy and

positioning theory, I examined how the native speaker fallacy influenced and continues to

influence the self-efficacy beliefs of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study as well as

their reflexive positioning or intentional self-positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Research Methods

This study used a qualitative approach of phenomenology to elucidate the essence of the

native speaker fallacy from the participants' point of view (Beaudry & Miller, 2016). I carried

out this study by using a qualitative method to gain an understanding of the realities constructed

by my participants in various situations (Mertens, 2015), as the research purpose was to examine

what meanings participants ascribed to the aforementioned phenomenon. Last, since quantitative

research data and method provide a narrow and structured focus (Mertens, 2015), the qualitative

approach offered a unique depth of understanding.

Research Design and Paradigm

I used qualitative, interpretive, hermeneutic, phenomenological methodology to answer

the study's questions. The phenomenological approach "seeks to understand the essence of a

phenomenon from the point of view of the actors, and it depends on in-depth interviews and

personal writing and reflections of the actors" (Beaudry & Miller, 2014, p. 47). This research

design considers multiple interpretations of a phenomenon as it is lived by the participants. The

design distinguishes itself from other qualitative research approaches by prioritizing the

subjective experience of the participant in its analysis (Beaudry & Miller, 2014). Consequently, employing this approach in world language education enables an investigation into the experience of being a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher, particularly in connection with the native speaker fallacy.

The intent of phenomenological research is to obtain possible understandings and interpretations of everyday phenomena, emphasizing a deeper understanding of the multiple ways reality manifests and appears in and through being in the world (Vagle, 2018). The phenomenological design emerged from the field of psychology, primarily from the contributions of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who focused on understanding phenomena as the manner in which reality manifests in people's experiences and the meanings that people attribute to those experiences (Beaudry & Miller, 2016; Vagle, 2018). It was further developed by Husserl's prized student and colleague, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger made an ontological turn from descriptive to interpretive phenomenology type. The Husserlian approach differs from the Heideggerian approach in its conceptualization of phenomenology, as the former philosopher established that it was a purely descriptive process to observe phenomena. At the same time, the latter argued it to be an act of ongoing interpretation (Vagle, 2018).

This study utilized a Heideggerian, interpretive-oriented phenomenological approach to examine the non-native speaker teachers' human experiences of the phenomenon, which is often referred to in phenomenology as "lived experiences" (Beaudry & Miller, 2016). I chose the interpretive-oriented phenomenological methodology because it best captures the participants' views as it aims to understand and make sense of their experiences. Unlike Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology does not bracket out the researchers' perceptions of the phenomena, as it considers that it is not possible for researchers to completely remove

their subjective senses from the method of essence identification (Wojnar, 2007). For Heidegger, the analysis process considers the researcher's reflexivity as data. Researcher reflexivity is a methodological term used in qualitative research defined as "consistently examining how one's positionality, perspectives, backgrounds, and insights influence all aspects of a study" (Vagle, 2018, p. 14). During the analysis process, I followed the suggested steps for phenomenological methodology of the interpretive type, which I explain later in this chapter.

Philosophical Worldview

I analyzed the philosophical assumptions of my study within the constructivist interpretive framework, which is complementary to hermeneutic research. Creswell (2012) clearly articulates the definitions of *philosophical beliefs* and describes *ontology* as "the nature of reality" and its characteristics (p. 37). The ontological assumption in this study exemplified the social constructivism framework in that the researchers assumed the idea that participants' lived experiences construct multiple realities through and interactions with others. Together with Heidegger's interpretive approach, it proposed that reality is not an autonomous act and, through interaction, the individual constructs meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). Regarding how reality is known, or epistemology, the assumption was that reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and molded by the individual experiences of the participants. Finally, the axiological assumption, or the role of values (Creswell, 2012), considered all understandings of the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy, and all values were honored in an act of ongoing interpretation.

The examination of the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' narratives through the hermeneutic, phenomenological research method considered two theoretical frameworks—self-efficacy theory and positioning theory—to provide an in-depth understanding of how the

teachers experience the aforementioned phenomenon. My approach to inquiry, or methodological beliefs, used an inductive method of emergent ideas obtained through methods such as interviewing and analysis of texts.

Role of the Researcher

A principle underpinning my role in this study is my experience being a non-native Spanish high school teacher. For the past 15 years, I have worked as a Spanish teacher at a public high school where my colleagues and I identify as being native or non-native speakers of the languages we teach. As a non-native Spanish-speaker teacher, my experiences with the native speaker fallacy impact the research process. My role as an insider researcher, which refers to a researcher who conducts research with populations of which they are also members (Kanuha, 2000), entailed staying committed to examining the lived experiences reported by my participants as well as recording my perceptions and prejudices as possible sources of bias during the analytical stages of the research through the process of reflexivity. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), reflexive thinking requires commenting on past experiences and how past experiences shape interpretations. During this study, I engaged in reflexive thinking by writing reflective notes during the research process.

For objectivity purposes, during most of the interview, I only disclosed that I was an educator with an interest in research related to language teaching. The participants responded comprehensively to all interview questions, and I sensed that their contributions reflected their experiences authentically, free from my influence. When I reached data saturation, noticing a repetition or redundancy in their answers with no new information being conveyed, I revealed my non-native Spanish-speaker status. Depending on the flow of the interview and the nature of the conversation, I disclosed my insider status to participants at varying points. This revelation

occurred earlier for some participants than for others, always with a mindful effort to respect the time commitments they had made. Maintaining an initial distance from my participants ensured that the participants would not ask for examples of the type of experiences that I had with the phenomenon in question. Overall, I wanted their stories to come through without any unnecessary interruptions so that I could adequately represent their shared experiences. Overall, being an insider within the research was beneficial because I was very familiar with the participants' language and I was able to formulate relevant questions to the research, as I was familiar with the subtleties of the context.

  Methodological considerations as an insider researcher. As an insider researcher, I used key methodological considerations to maintain rigor within the method. The suggested key factors considered for this study were the following: usability, credibility, trustworthiness, and auditability (Johnston et al., 2017). With reference to usability, or the utilization of the chosen method and its philosophical base (Johnston et al., 2017), I provided a detailed outline of the essential steps in my method of inquiry as well as themed verbalizations of the teachers' lived experiences in my final report. Also, the ways data were collected reflected the participants' experiences, and the interpretations produced were in congruence with the philosophical foundations of the method used.

  To establish credibility, which refers to demonstrating truth in the reporting of the participants' lived experiences (Johnston et al., 2017), I used verbatim quotes from participants when discussing the findings rather than using research-derived codes. I also consulted with two participants to clarify specific information they shared about their experiences. During the interviews, I was open to all answers and did not have pre-conceived expectations of participant responses. Last, I reported all discrepant findings.

I relied on reflexivity and accounts of the research process for establishing auditability, referred to as a decision-making strategy proposed for establishing a lack of bias (Johnston et al., 2017). I considered the multiple perspectives of the participants by being balanced in my reporting in an effort to emphasize trustworthiness. Last, peer debriefing with members of my dissertation committee during the study design, data collection, and data analysis was another strategy to ensure trustworthiness.

Participants and Sampling Process

The participants in this study were six tenured non-native Spanish speaker-teachers teaching Spanish at various public high schools on Long Island. For a phenomenological study design, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended a range of 3 to 10 participants to obtain enough data to describe the phenomenon and address the research questions sufficiently. Through purposeful sampling, a deliberate process of selecting participants for inquiry (Beaudry & Miller, 2016), I selected participants who identified themselves as non-native speakers of Spanish.

For this study, I recruited teachers who taught for three years or more and received tenure in their current school district. The rationale to recruit tenured teachers—three or more years of teaching experience—was based on the following premises: (a) having tenure may grant the teacher participants the freedom to discuss more information about experiences related to the native speaker fallacy that may not have been discussed under an annual evaluation, and (b) tenured teachers may represent a problem in their domain at a deeper more principled level than novices (Chi et al., 2003). Furthermore, research suggests that teachers with a higher teaching experience may have compiled a larger number of effective strategies to overcome challenges and for dealing with the unforeseen (Chi et al., 2003). This ability could have revealed more

information on how the participants overcame challenges related to the native speaker fallacy and challenges with being a non-native speaker-teacher.

After obtaining the necessary permission to conduct my research, I contacted world language supervisors and teachers from Nassau and Suffolk County districts on Long Island who assisted with access to the participants in the study. I have been working in the world language field for more than a decade, and over the years, I have met and worked for several world language supervisors of high school language departments. I also presented a workshop at the 2019 New York State Association of World Language Administrators world language conference at Hofstra University, where I met several world language teachers and supervisors from different districts on Long Island and collected their email addresses to share information about my workshop. I reached out to several language supervisors to recruit participants. Through purposeful sampling, six participants committed to one 90-minute, semi-structured, video-conference interview.

Table 3.1 shows a summary of the participant demographics. Although there is diversity in the number of years teaching Spanish among the participants, there is an absence of racial and ethnic diversity. All the participants identified as White/Caucasian. Berta had the least number of years working as a Spanish teacher, and in this study, she was considered the most novice teacher of the group. Since Anna and Franco had the largest number of years teaching Spanish, they were considered the most veteran teachers of the group.

At the time of the interviews, all the participants worked as full-time employees in different public high schools on Long Island. They all studied Spanish abroad in college. Franco and Donna had more opportunities to travel and study abroad in different Spanish-speaking countries and reported marrying a Spanish-speaking partner. Five of the six participants learned

Spanish as an additional language in middle schools on Long Island. Similarly, Donna learned

Spanish in a Long Island middle school, but her experience differed, as she had learned another

language with significant lexical similarity to Spanish since childhood. All the participants

reported learning Spanish from a variety of native and non-native Spanish-speaking teachers.

There was an even distribution of participants teaching beginner and intermediate levels

of Spanish. Four participants reported teaching AP Spanish and college-level elective courses to

juniors and seniors in high school during their years of teaching. Although only two of the six

participants were teaching AP Spanish courses during the interviews, all participants received

training on how to teach the AP Spanish course and held a current certification.

Table 3.1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Race / Ethnicity	Institution Type	Studied Spanish Abroad	Spanish Course Level(s) Taught	Years of Teaching
Anna	Female	White	Public high school	Yes	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Placement	29
Berta	Female	White	Public high school	Yes	Beginner Intermediate	5
Carla	Female	White	Public high school	Yes	Beginner Intermediate	21
Donna	Female	White	Public high School	Yes	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Placement	18
Elisa	Female	White	Public high School	Yes	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Placement	25

| Franco | Male | White | Public high School | Yes | Beginner intermediate Advanced placement | 32 |

The participants in this study are teachers from six different public school districts across two counties (Nassau and Suffolk) on Long Island. There was an even distribution of representation from teachers who worked in schools in both counties. I did not initially select participants based on specific schools or districts; instead, my population selection was determined by volunteers. Due to the added stress, limited time, and increased responsibilities educators faced due to COVID, there was a limited pool of participants willing to share their experiences, preventing me from being selective in recruitment. After the interviews, it became evident that despite participants hailing from different Long Island districts, the comprehensive statistics revealed a lack of diversity in their schools. As a result, the predominantly uneven distribution of race and ethnicity in these schools exposes educators to fewer Spanish speakers or Hispanic students. According to the Long Island Index Report (2018), which gathers and publishes data on the Long Island region, a substantial challenge in the region is significant differences by race concerning public education. Although the overall composition of the student body is predominately White, there is ongoing segregation associated with economic inequalities. White and Asian students attend public schools that are more homogenously White, which indicates that Latino students are overrepresented in specific public high schools that are impacted by poverty (Long Island Index Report, 2018). In alignment with the aforementioned reports, districts that employed the participants in this study revealed similar segregated patterns. More than 50% of the overall composition of the student body in five of the six school districts

was White, and their minority enrollment stayed relatively flat in the past five years. In addition, over 66% of the student population in one of the five school districts was Asian. Overall, the statistics show a lack of diversity in schools.

Furthermore, Mangino and Levy's (2019) study that focused on teacher diversity found that there is also a lack of diversity among teachers in Long Island schools. Although the study showed that Latino teachers were hired more than Black teachers mainly because of their bilingual status, there is a lack of representation of Latino teachers in public schools on Long Island. Similarly, the participants of this study reported that their world language departments also lacked teacher diversity, as there were more non-native Spanish language teachers than native Spanish speaker-teachers in their schools. Five of the six teachers in this study worked in two or more districts on Long Island throughout their professional journey. The teachers did not disclose if their previous districts had similar characteristics to their current district. However, they did mention that they spent the majority of their teaching years in their current district. At the time of the study, Berta was the only participant who had worked only in her current district.

Data Collection

Data collection for phenomenological research relies primarily on interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I conducted video-conferencing interviews from September 2021 to March 2022 with each participant to adhere to the social-distancing protocols established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In preparation for the interview, I set up a video-conference call by sending an invitation link to each participant. Prior to my first interview with each participant, I explained the purpose of the interview, addressed terms of confidentiality, and asked for permission to record the interview as indicated in the informed consent. I asked the participants to sign a consent form that also permitted me to record the

conversations. I stored the signed consent forms on a password-secured computer in a locked location. The participants were made aware that their personal and professional information was confidential. Last, I gave the teachers in this study pseudonyms and disguised the name of their school district.

I prepared questions aligned with my theoretical frameworks, making it a mostly structured interview. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), structuring an interview with the major questions assists the researcher with answering the research questions. In contrast, probes assist with guiding the conversation, asking for clarification and examples, and indicating the desired level of depth. I used an interview protocol where my main questions and probes were worked on in advance to ensure that I covered all the major parts of my research problem. I listed the interview protocol that I used for this study in Appendix B.

During the interviews, the participants did not have much information about the phenomenon beforehand, and during our interview, I provided several examples of what the research stated about the native and non-native speaker teacher dichotomy. My initial intent was to build rapport and to get to know the participants and their backgrounds. The participants were audio recorded while they answered open-ended questions. Toward the end of the interview, I invited the participants to self-reflect and engage with the researcher on a deeper inquiry of previously revealed accounts. I allowed for periods of silence for participants to process their thoughts while I remained mindful of refraining from enacting my perspectives and personal experiences as a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher. After the interviews, I had follow-up interviews with two participants for clarification.

After each interview, I engaged in reflexivity to become aware of how my values, opinions, and experiences added to the research. A data-collection source that helped with the

process of continual reflection upon the research process was keeping a journal during the study. I kept a written record of the research process detailing what I did and why. According to Lincoln and Guba (1982), a reflexive journal is a strategic method for a researcher to check for biases carried into the context. Furthermore, the use of a reflective journal is an established tool that contributes to quality and validity in interpretative, phenomenological analysis (Vicary et al., 2016). When writing in my journal, I logged the following suggested sections to ensure quality and validity in the data analysis: (1) evolving perceptions, (2) day-to-day procedures, (3) methodological decision points, (4) day-to-day personal introspections, and (5) developing insights and hypotheses (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Last, in addition to keeping a reflective journal, I wrote interpretive summaries of each transcript. I used these written records for triangulation purposes and to enhance the reliability of research. Following the data collection, I transcribed the electronic recordings for further analysis.

Data Analysis

During the data-analysis process, I read, analyzed, compared and contrasted texts, and interpreted the participants' narratives about the following: (a) how tenured, non-native high school Spanish speaker-teachers describe their lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy; (b) how they perceived their level of self-efficacy as non-native speaker-teachers of Spanish; and (c) how they recognized their social positioning in their professional community.

Through interpretative, phenomenological analysis, I examined how the participants made sense of their personal and social world, with a focus on the meanings that specific experiences, events, and states signify for them (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis requires describing and analyzing the "text" to interpret the "context" (Smith & Osborne, 2003). In alignment with the aforementioned analysis and the questions

suggested by Smith and Osborne (2003), I focused on highlighting the transference of explicit information: what the participants say to implicit information and how the information is told and what is behind the narration, meaning, and the selected omission of information.

I also followed the analysis protocol suggested by phenomenologist researcher Mark Vagle (2018). I began with a holistic reading of the entire text, following with a series of line-by-line readings of transcripts. The line-by-line readings included careful note taking and margin notes that were questions and written statements. These readings ensured that I looked at every sentence or sentence cluster and also interrogated the data to consider how it influenced my analysis. After reviewing all notes, the next step entailed crafting follow-up questions. I contacted two participants and asked them to elaborate on the questions I had written related to their specific interviews. The final steps involved examining the meanings of all the gathered material and articulating analytic thoughts about each part for each participant. Last, successive readings involved reading across individual participants' material with the goal of looking for and finding themes or patterns of meaning (Vagle, 2018). At the end of this analysis, I revealed the results of my study in Chapter 4 in a narrative structure. I based the results on the most relevant themes that surfaced during the interviews.

Strategies for Validating Findings

For triangulation purposes, the transcripts from six semi-structured interviews, the interpretive summaries of each transcript, and my reflective journal notes served as data to validate the study's findings. The findings were revealed and analyzed throughout the next chapter of this dissertation study. In ensuring internal validity, I did not recruit participants who worked in my school district. Instead, I recruited participants from different school districts on Long Island to evade having a close working relationship with the participants. In doing so, I

avoided issues of imbalance of power between myself and my colleagues and ensured that I collected accurate information without jeopardizing my relationship with them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation study, I used a rich, thick description to offer several perspectives about a theme. I disclosed my positionality through the process of reflexivity in my reflective journal. I ensured that in my study, there was evidence of multiple sources of information to analyze, as well as different investigators to check my final report for accuracy.

My insider identity helped me embrace a phenomenological sensibility (Vagle, 2018), as it facilitated my interactions with the participants in this study. During the member checking phase, I specifically engaged with two participants who, due to their extensive years of experience, I believed could provide richer insights into the studied phenomenon. Moreover, their willingness to remain accessible beyond the interview and their offer to clarify any aspects further reinforced the credibility of this qualitative study. In addition, exploring the function of member checking clarified the bias I bring to the study and created an open and honest narrative. Last, to check that my approach was reliable, I created an interview protocol and carefully documented as many of the steps of the procedures as possible so that future researchers could follow them.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the design and methods used in my dissertation study. In the previous pages, I have detailed the application of the qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological design, through which I created the opportunity to investigate high school–level, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers with three or more years of experience. I framed the methodology of this research study in the constructivist epistemological worldview. The hermeneutic,

phenomenological approach to inquiry is complementary to the interpretive framework of social constructivism, as they both support the philosophical belief that people's lived experiences and interactions with others construct their multiple realities. In this dissertation, the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy and positioning theory helped generalize about various aspects of the phenomenon.

Chapter 4

Findings

In my experience, any negative connotation that I might have had was something that came from me, not from other people, and it was really a reflection of maybe my own insecurities.

– Franco (personal communication, March 21, 2022)

This qualitative study explored the native speaker fallacy and the lived experiences of tenured, high school–level, non-native speaker-teachers within the context of teaching Spanish as an additional language on Long Island. Based on the literature related to non-native and native speaker-educators, there was a need to explore further concerns related to being a non-native speaker-teacher of Spanish at the high school level, often referred to as nativeship issues (Liaw, 2004). These concerns are also related to the presumption that the native language teacher is innately the better teacher regardless of their teaching skill, often referred to as the native speaker fallacy (Braine, 2010; Phillipson, 1992; Walelign, 1986). This predetermined perception guided the structuring of the research questions and was discussed during the participant interviews.

The vast majority of researchers in the foreign language field focused mainly on novice native and non-native speaker teacher participants at the post-secondary level (Callahan, 2006; Ghanem, 2015; Hertel & Sunderman, 2009; Kopczynski, 2010; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). Conducive to contributing new knowledge to the literature, this hermeneutic, phenomenological study aimed to capture the lived experiences of non-native Spanish speaker-teacher participants with at least three or more years of experience teaching Spanish at different public high schools on Long Island. More specifically, this study examined how the participants

experienced the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy within their school community and throughout their professional journey.

As stated in Chapter 2, the research objective was to understand how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study experienced the value of nativeness as a superior form of language competence by approaching the native speaker bias through a self-efficacy theory lens. This lens concentrated on the teachers' behaviors necessary to produce individual performance realizations (Bandura, 1977). Along with self-efficacy theory, positioning theory focuses on the teachers' positions or collection of beliefs they assign themselves and others regarding rights and duties (Davies & Harré, 1990). The findings revealed the following about the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study: (a) environmental factors that validate their competency with regard to teaching Spanish, (b) a common shared framework for teaching language that was mainly influenced by their non-native status, (c) positive and negative perceptions related to their language-teaching abilities, (d) how the participants overcame negative self-concepts.

Overview of Chapter

At the beginning of this chapter I present tables and introduce the coding process before discussing my findings in order to provide a clear and organized presentation of information. By starting with tables, I aim to offer a visual representation of the data, making it easier to grasp the key patterns and trends at a glance. Lastly, this chapter provides a description of the participants and a description of the prominent themes and findings discovered.

Data Collection and Analysis

As described in Chapter 3, I used the whole-part-whole analysis method in this interpretive-oriented phenomenological study (Vagle, 2018) and kept a reflective journal. After I collected the data and transcribed the six interviews, I analyzed and coded the interview

transcripts. I began with a holistic reading of the entire interview text for each participant, and I also read through my reflective journal notes. After line-by-line reading, I was able to take careful notes and mark specific excerpts. At this point, I reflected on presuppositions and questioned how they influenced my analysis. For clarification purposes, my next step entailed follow-up questions for some participants. I spoke to two participants to clarify the intentional meanings that I predicted. I continued with a second and third line-by-line reading to articulate meanings based on my notes. Repeating this process twice ensured that the participants' keywords and phrases were categorized and assigned a code. Last, I read individual participants' material to find patterns of meaning.

The tables below illustrate first and second cycles of coding (Saldana, 2013), which initially involved repeating emphasized terms as well as initial codes derived from theories followed by organizing and creating links between the participants' experiences. In the analysis, several prominent codes emerged from the participants' direct quotes, as presented in Table 4.1. I created additional codes that aligned with the theoretical framework and literature review. By combining the codes from individual participants and the group as a whole, four primary themes arose. These four themes informed the findings of this study and are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Table 4.1

First Cycle of Coding

Code	Sample Excerpt	Category
Self-criticism of topic-specific vocabulary and pronunciation when teaching the target language	"It's intimidating because they are using terminology that you wouldn't typically use in the classroom. You know we're talking about methodology here, and those are not terms that I would use to teach my students." (Anna)	Negative self-views of language abilities

Resilience	"So I was really struggling in the beginning, but by the end of the semester, the native Spanish speakers in the class were coming to me for my notes because nobody had taken such good notes along the way. So it was a kind of interesting experience. I think good because it let me know that if I put my mind to it, I can find a way to be successful." (Franco)	Positive self-perceptions of language abilities
Pedagogical confidence	"I have knowledge of the culture but not the same as someone who grew up in the culture. However, I do think that most of it is based off of my confidence in my teaching ability, the strategies that I use, and how I am as a teacher. I think that that's where I excel." (Berta)	Positive self-perceptions of teaching abilities
Native Speaker Fallacy	"When I go into the city, I am being immersed into that culture. That's where I am feeling it more; we are here, and we are in the suburbs, lily-white." (Anna)	Invalidating experiences that impact self-efficacy
Connection to students' struggles	"A lot of my students appreciate that part of me because I think that I can help them in ways that maybe I can explain certain things to them in a way that maybe others might not be able to articulate. I am explaining it how I understand it from my point of view as a non-native speaker." (Carla)	Positive views of language-teaching abilities
Native speaker status	"I've been in conferences and professional development where I've been the only non-native speaker in a room, and I felt not necessarily it's something that they are doing on purpose but almost like the native speakers will kind of almost in a way almost disregard a non-native speaker, and you feel like I guess excluded a little bit. I felt that if I wasn't somebody who would speak up and get myself involved, if I was more laid back and quiet, then I would be left out." (Berta)	Invalidating experiences impacting self-efficacy
Impact of level of Spanish college degree	"I have a colleague who, we have this book which is out of print now, and it has great stories from the Spanish culture. When she	Validating experiences

	used to teach Pre-AP and AP she would have to come to me and ask me to interpret the stories because she didn't know what was going on, I guess she didn't have the level of graduate work that I had." (Anna)	impacting self-efficacy
Self-doubt in teaching Advanced Placement Spanish	"In my experience, any negative connotation that I might have had was something that came from me, not from other people, and it was really a reflection of maybe my own insecurities." (Franco)	Negative internal experiences
Self-assertive; standing up for oneself	"Some students, maybe a native speaker will question me. It's because being native themselves and being placed in my class, they thought that that was the only Spanish appropriate from their native Spanish country. If I didn't say it in a Mexican slang, they thought I was wrong. That's the only thing that was like a debacle. Like they would say "Isn't torta a sandwich" and I would say "Torta is a sandwich in Mexico, but torta in Spain is a cake." (Donna)	Overcoming negative self-concepts
Societal stereotypes of being a non-native speaker teacher	"You know people could assume that you don't really know the language well and that you bring less to the table. Yeah, it could. Like people may think that you don't know the language as much, you don't have a good grasp on the language, and it also could mean that you don't have as much cultural background. People could assume that you don't have much background in the culture." (Donna)	External invalidating experiences that impact self-efficacy

Development of Codes to Themes

The theory-driven and in vivo codes, or codes that utilize the terminology used by the

participants (Saldaña, 2013), are presented in Table 4.2. I presented the revised and final themes

in Table 4.3.

Table 4.2

Theory-Driven and In-vivo Coding

Theory-Driven Codes	In-Vivo Codes

Factors impacting the teachers' self-efficacy

- Pre-service training mastery experiences - Verbal persuasion: encouragement/discouragement feedback from the world language community - Vicarious experiences with native and non-native teachers and mentors - Emotional arousal experiences: Self-criticism Self-affirmation	- Pre-service training experiences: student teaching university workload quality of Spanish degree - Societal stereotypes of non-native instructors: minimal experience with the native speaker fallacy native speaker hierarchy - School community validation - Connection to the language and cultural experiences

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' professional practice

- Empathetic and most connected to student struggles - Perceived role as viewed as a role model to non-native speaker students - Perceived duty is to instill passion - Perceived role is to be prepared and to provide well-structured lessons that align with assessments	- Best practices in learning and teaching world languages: preparedness well-defined instruction cultural awareness and affinity communicative language teaching minimal grammar-led instruction appropriate pacing - Quality service to students: providing timely feedback going above and beyond building relationships - Creating an environment of respect and rapport - Preference for teaching introductory-level courses and working with non-native Spanish-speaking students

Theory-Driven Codes	In-Vivo Codes

Self-perceived positive and negative views of language-teaching abilities

Positive view:	**Positive view:**

- Attuned to non-native students' challenges with the language

- Have practical and successful pedagogical strategies and instructional abilities

- Role model for non-native students
- Grammatical advantage
- Pedagogical confidence
- Empathetic

Negative view:	**Negative view:**

- Perceived disadvantage with pronunciation and topic-specific vocabulary

- Low perceived self-efficacy level in teaching advanced-level courses

- Hesitancy to participate in advanced teaching opportunities:
   doubtfulness
   teaching preference

- Unfavorable view of Spanish accent

- Difficulty with topic-specific vocabulary

Self-Regard influenced by overcoming challenges

- Mindfulness
- Self-compassion
- Self-assertion theory
- Stereotype threat

- Diffusing threat
- Acknowledging shortcomings
- Standing up for oneself

To fully present the participants' experiences of the native speaker fallacy, I needed to establish categories that best organized shared perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. I accomplished this by using index cards. I organized the first round of categorizing the codes around the primary influences of self-efficacy. After reflection, I reorganized the cards based on clusters of coded perceptions. I divided the cards into groupings relating to positive and negative internal perceptions of their language teaching abilities and environmental factors validating their competence with teaching Spanish. The remaining index cards revealed groupings related to

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the non-native speaker teachers' professional practice, what the teachers stated they do mainly

influenced by their nativeness, and narratives related to overcoming negative self-concepts.

These groupings led to the formation of categories displayed in Table 4.3 and were

defined further into themes. These four themes informed the findings of this study.

Table 4.3

Themes, Codes, and Sub-codes

Theme 1: Non-native Spanish-speaker teachers' validating environmental factors impacting their self-efficacy and confidence with regard to teaching Spanish

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- Pre-service training mastery experiences:
  student teaching
  studying abroad
  vicarious experiences with native and non-native speaker teachers and mentors
  university workload and expectations
    level of degree and Spanish major in college

- Non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' societal stereotypes
  limited experiences with the native speaker fallacy
  lack of cultural diversity in their own school community

- Native speaker status/Hierarchy
  academic conferences
  teaching assignments

- School community verbal persuasion
  encouragement and discouragement from both students and parents

- Connection to the language and cultural experiences
  studying abroad and travel
  relationships and interactions with native speakers

Theme 2: Components of professional practice specific to the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers

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- Planning
  over-preparing
  well-defined structure of lesson or unit

- Instruction
  communicative language teaching
  minimal grammar-led instruction

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developing cultural awareness and cultural preference
relevant and authentic content
pacing and accents

- Classroom environment
respect and rapport

Theme 3: Perceptions impacting language-teaching abilities among non-native Spanish speaker-teachers

Positive views of their language teaching abilities
- Passion for teaching
commitment and dedication

- Pedagogical confidence
grammar knowledge

- Empathy toward non-native speaker students:
strong rapport with non-native speaker students
preference for teaching introductory-level courses
preference for teaching non-native students

Negative views of their language-teaching abilities
- Unfavorable view of their Spanish accent
- Difficulty with topic-specific vocabulary
- Hesitancy in teaching advanced-level courses
preference
doubtfulness
encouragement

Theme 4: Overcoming negative self-concepts through resilience
- The path of most resistance
- Mindfulness
- Acknowledging and working on shortcomings
- Self-assertion
standing up for oneself
diffusing threat
- Self-regard through self-compassion
mistakes as opportunity

According to Saldana (2013), a theme is a comprehensive phrase that identifies what a

component of data is about and reveals what it means. To give meaning to the participants'

experiences, I organized the categories into four final themes. The final themes of the study were as follows: (a) Non-native speaker teachers' validating environmental factors impacting their self-efficacy and confidence in teaching Spanish; (b) professional practice specific to the non-native speaker teacher: perceived role and duty; (c) perceptions impacting language-teaching abilities among Spanish non-native speaker-teachers; and (d) overcoming negative self-concepts through resilience. These themes encompass the lived experiences of the participants and enable me to answer my research questions. The following section discusses the findings as they relate to the themes of non-native Spanish speaker teachers' experiences.

Participants

There were five female participants and one male participant who volunteered in the study. The participants were full-time, tenured, public high school teachers currently teaching Spanish across different Long Island school districts. The participants taught various levels of Spanish throughout the years, but only three reported that they were currently teaching advanced levels of Spanish. When asked about their nativeness, all of the participants identified as not being connected with a Spanish-speaking country by birth. They also identified as non-native speakers of Spanish. This validation ensured that each teacher participant would provide a non-native speaker perspective in their lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy.

Summary of Findings

The primary findings of this study revealed that non-native Spanish-speaking teachers employed in public schools across Long Island had limited encounters with the native speaker fallacy within their school communities. This was largely attributed to the conspicuous absence of diversity, particularly in terms of Hispanic representation. Although these teachers were aware of the common misconception, which suggests that the ideal teacher is a native speaker-teacher,

they reported little or no experience with this phenomenon, and insecurities they experienced about their language competency were innate. The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study felt that most, if not all, of the criticism surrounding their language competence, came from themselves and not from others.

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers experience the native speaker fallacy most when interacting with native Spanish speaker-teachers outside of their school community— specifically at conferences held in New York City or in areas where native speakers formed the majority of the teaching population. These experiences indicate that the prevalence of this stereotype may vary depending on the context, with higher concentrations of native speakers. During professional conferences, the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers expressed that the native Spanish speaker-teachers asserted their authority by excluding them from conversations related to the Spanish curricula. Within the school setting, novice native Spanish-speaking teachers did not assert the same level of authority as they often sought assistance from their experienced non-native teacher counterparts regarding curriculum development and pedagogical strategies for presenting content to their students. I will delve into this topic in detail later in this chapter.

One significant finding revealed a progressive evolution in the core aspects of the participants' professional practice over time. For instance, compared to when they first began teaching, their approach now prioritizes the creation of a student-centered classroom environment characterized by mutual respect and strong rapport among students. This shift involves placing less emphasis on mechanical aspects and instead focusing more on fostering effective communication. Furthermore, their instructional methods now center on providing relevant and authentic learning experiences. The teachers displayed significant confidence in the

following pedagogical abilities: (a) their comprehensive way to express what they believe makes them highly effective teachers and (b) identifying factors that validate their pedagogical competence. All participants expressed that negative views of what impacts their language-teaching abilities came from their own perspective. Overall, their perceived positive attributes far surpassed their negative beliefs in their capabilities as language instructors.

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study positioned themselves as being most confident and comfortable teaching non-native speaker-students. Despite their advanced placement certification, they felt most hesitant about teaching native speaker students and advanced placement courses. They did not solely connect their hesitancy to their feelings of competence, which is explained later in this chapter.

Last but not least, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study overcame negative self-concepts through resilience. They have developed resiliency by taking the following steps: learning Spanish as an additional language, completing challenging college-level courses, studying abroad, completing pre-service evaluations and language-competency state exams.

I organized the evidence of themes around the following findings, which were structured based on the frameworks of self-efficacy and positioning theory. Within the self-efficacy model, the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs revealed their ability to handle challenges related to their professional responsibilities effectively. Their beliefs play a substantial role in influencing the students' academic achievements as well as their own well-being in the working environment.

Theme Analysis

Theme 1: Non-Native Spanish Speaker-Teachers' Validating and Invalidating Environmental Language Factors Impacting Their Self-Efficacy and Confidence in Teaching Spanish

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study were well aware of the challenging nature of the native and non-native dichotomy. The literature revealed that society uses these terms to categorize language teachers and often view non-native speaker teachers as the less competent instructor. Although the participants were well aware of the aforementioned societal stereotypes attached to the term "non-native," they still chose this term to identify themselves. Many noted that their non-native status was important to their non-native students, and they still preferred to categorize themselves in that way. Furthermore, all of the participants voiced that they understood the school communities' concerns that they are not native instructors of Spanish and that this awareness kept them motivated to seek meaningful opportunities for language and cultural experiences. All of the participants reported their familiarity with the term "native speaker fallacy" but disclosed that they had very few experiences related to this fallacy in their own school community. Franco described his experience with the native speaker fallacy in the following way:

> I think I am fortunate that in my circumstance and the school I work in, it does not [referring to the fallacy]. But I think that probably in the profession as a whole, it does. There is this idea out there that somehow if it is your native language, you can do a better job, and it's probably related to, no matter how proficient we become, we will never be as fluent in our second language as we are in our first language.

All of the participants reported that much of their insecurities with being a non-native Spanish instructor came from within. They consistently used the words "my own insecurities" to specify their feelings about their competence as language teachers. In turn, the feelings were fueled by their knowledge of the societal stereotypes revolving around non-native speaker-teachers.

Throughout their professional career, they have experienced different factors that have validated their self-worth as Spanish language teachers. Overcoming the challenges of their pre-service training experiences was their first validating factor. All of the participants reported that through vicarious experiences or observing cooperating teachers during their student teaching training, they were able to gain meaningful experiences that set them up for success in their own language classrooms. All of the participants noted that the language courses at the college level were challenging and that getting through the Spanish grammar and literature courses was an impactful, validating experience for them. Carla described her experience in her Spanish college courses in the following way:

I was terrified most of the time because I was usually the only non-native speaker in the classes. I think I had to work extra hard, more than most of the students. I think that a lot of my teachers did recognize that and appreciated that, but I always had a knot in my stomach.

Franco also spoke of his college experience and emphasized that he spent an excessive number of hours translating and analyzing literature for a Spanish course. During his interview, he remembered the following:

So, I was really struggling in the beginning, but by the end of the semester, the native Spanish speakers in the class were coming to me for my notes because nobody had taken such good notes along the way. So it was a kind of interesting experience—I think good because it let me know that if I put my mind to it, I can find a way to be successful.

It is evident that this experience solidified this participant's position about his self-worth in that particular Spanish college-level course, and it provided the motivation he needed to continue his degree in Spanish. Similarly, Anna spoke of the challenging Spanish literature courses she took

in college and how helpful these courses have been in her professional career. She noted that not all Spanish teachers, native and non-native alike, have experienced challenging college-level literature courses. She also expressed that the type of courses offered by a college or university for a Spanish major or minor greatly impact a teacher's preparedness and how they analyze and teach literature to their students. Throughout her career, she felt most confident with her ability to understand and teach literature because of her exposure to a great variety of Spanish-language literature from different Spanish-speaking countries in college. Anna recounted the following experience, which emphasized the importance of the type of Spanish degree she acquired:

> I have a colleague who, we have this book, which is out of print now, and it has great stories from the Spanish culture. When she used to teach Pre-AP and AP, she would have to come to me and ask me to interpret the stories because she didn't know what was going on; I guess she didn't have the level of graduate work that I had.

> Although she did not appreciate the workload and expectations of the courses at the time, she felt that this knowledge made the most impact on her confidence to teach the language to native and non-native advanced placement students.

> Based on all of the participants' experiences, one can conclude that non-native language teachers majoring in Spanish experienced positive and negative feelings of self-worth in their college-level courses, and one critical finding points to the level of degree they hold and the types of courses they took to fulfill their Spanish major. The type of Spanish courses they take in college matters substantially. Furthermore, four participants who received their Spanish degree over 15 years ago reported that college courses were not the same for everyone depending on the state or college they attended, resulting in a discrepancy in preparedness for Spanish literature. This realization increased the non-native teacher participants' confidence in teaching the

language when they were new teachers. It also placed them in an advantageous position when teaching Spanish literature and culture for advanced placement courses.

All of the participants reported that they knew of other people who had numerous experiences with the native speaker fallacy, but within their school community, they have always felt respected and supported. There is limited experience of judgment across districts on Long Island for being a non-native Spanish speaker teacher from this particular group of participants. Regarding his experience with the aforementioned fallacy, Franco shared the following:

> You're in a different lane. I am not teaching my own language and so there is always going to be a gap in between my command of the language—my experience with the language—than somebody else is. But, because of the way we work together, we share what our strengths are and we don't shame each other for our weaknesses. So, I think that we are all comfortable enough to ask for help when we need it and smart enough to mind our business and not give the help unless we are asked. So, I also think that I am very fortunate. I know that it's not the case in all other places. I can tell it's not like that in other departments.

However, there was one particular setting where most of the participants reported experiencing the native speaker fallacy most: academic language conferences. An interesting finding suggests that when experienced non-native Spanish speaker teachers step outside of their school community and their exposure to situations where they interact with a majority of native speaker teachers, they experienced societal stereotypes related to their competence most. When collaborating with only native Spanish speaker teachers at an academic conference, Berta recalled being "ignored" and "excluded" from conversations about the Spanish curriculum. She

summed up this experience by stating, "I felt that if I wasn't somebody who would speak up and get myself involved or if I was more laid back and quiet, I would be left out."

Anna had a similar experience where she recalled feeling intimidated and excluded after attending a language conference in the city while working with a majority of native speakers. She said, "When I go into the city, I am being immersed into that culture. That's where I am feeling it more [native speaker hierarchy]; we are here, and we are in the suburbs, lily-White Rosetown." Her main concern was the realization that her school community lacks diversity and her experiences with native teachers and native students is often limited. The lack of cultural diversity within their school community is another factor that impacts the non-native Spanish speaker teachers' confidence in teaching Spanish.

While all participants acknowledged that there was no explicit judgment within their district regarding being a non-native Spanish speaker-instructor, they collectively perceived an unspoken hierarchy between native and non-native instructors, particularly evident outside of their school community. During academic conferences, instances emerged where non-native speakers sensed condescension and superiority from native Spanish speaker-teachers. In curriculum discussions, non-native teachers often felt disregarded when attempting to contribute, leading to a tangible sense of exclusion and frustration. They observed that native Spanish speaker-teachers frequently dominated conversations, unintentionally marginalizing their input. This recurring dynamic reinforced feelings of inferiority and a lack of acknowledgment for their expertise and perspectives. For instance, Elisa recounted her experience of feeling sidelined when asked to collaborate with native speaker teachers during a professional conference:

You could sense that all the teachers there, who were native speakers, just looked down upon the non-native speakers. What are you even doing here? If we wanted to participate or say something, they would like attack us.

Overall, several participants noted that native Spanish speaker-teachers displayed their superiority in the way they dominated conversations during academic conferences and unintentionally disregarded the non-native speaker teachers' comments, which made them feel excluded.

Regarding teaching assignments, all of the participants felt that administrators often assigned the majority of the advanced placement courses to native speaker-teachers. Yet, they also felt that if they wanted to teach an advanced placement–level course, they would be granted that opportunity with no judgment.

The participants reported that the interactions with the native teachers in their schools are positive, and their years of experience teaching the language increases their self-assurance. In addition, many participants shared that their world language departments have a disproportionate majority of non-native language teachers. Based on this information, one can assume that the lack of diversity within their language departments decreases interactions with native Spanish speaker-teachers, which in turn limits the experiences they have with the phenomenon in question.

The school community validation impacts the non-native Spanish-speaking participants in this study, and the most significant and impactful feedback is from their students and parents. Comments about feedback from native speaker colleagues and the administrative team were minimal during the interviews. All of the participants reported that the students' positive perspective on their language-teaching abilities, along with high test scores on standardized

language tests, made them feel most confident. Despite her insecurities during academic conferences, Anna described how her students' test scores validated her language-teaching abilities:

> In the conferences, you definitely feel intimidated because you're thinking, oh my God, they can speak so much better than I can [referring to native speaker teachers], like what am I doing wrong? It makes you feel like you can't do it, but when I go back to the classroom, my kids get good scores on the exam. I remember earlier on with conferences, teachers would say, 'You know my kids are getting 1s and 2s [referring to AP scores]'; there is no way I can get these non-native kids to pass this exam, but it is doable, and I think it's a matter of what you do in the classroom.

Mainly, all participants recalled with pride many rewarding remarks that expressed students' encouragement of their teaching abilities, and these comments included students' wanting to return to and be a part of their Spanish classes, being influenced by the way they teach the language, and being inspired by their teaching to such an extent that they choose to major or minor in Spanish in college. Conversely, the students' negative comments made non-native Spanish speaker-teachers think most about how to defend their competence. The negative comments and the teachers' responses are discussed in Theme 4.

All of the teachers reported that they receive the most encouragement from their non-native speaker-students and get the most criticism from their native speaker-students. The encouraging and discouraging comments greatly impact their confidence in teaching the language. An interesting conclusion is that all of the participants expressed their preference to teach non-native speaker-students and are influenced by the type of feedback they receive.

The connection to the language and cultural experiences the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers create for themselves through relationships, traveling, studying abroad, and staying connected to current events are all factors that impact their self-efficacy. Two of the six participants have partners born in a Spanish-speaking country and are fluent in Spanish. These two participants reported that their daily interactions with their native speaker-partners and their Spanish-speaking family have improved their language-speaking skills, which has made them feel more confident. All of the participants studied abroad in college, and some continued to take courses abroad beyond the college years. The travel opportunities to Spanish-speaking countries and the different types of relationships they build and maintain with native speakers of Spanish help them grow in confidence and validates their language abilities.

In summary, theme 1 revealed significant validating and invalidating experiences from past and present that have made these teachers feel more confident or less confident in their language-teaching abilities. Due to their non-native status, participants felt they needed to prove themselves worthy early in their careers and continue to validate their language competency through experiences related to their professional career. The participants reported particular experiences that have impacted and continue to impact their language-teaching confidence the most. These validating factors included authentic evidence of successful and influential pre-service training experiences with learning to teach Spanish as an additional language. A few conversations with the participants related to their non-native speaker status and societal stereotypes surrounding their status led to the realization that their exposure to cultural diversity within their school community is limited. The participants' reported that their confidence was challenged most when they step outside of their school community and they interact with a majority of native speaker-teachers. Furthermore, the participants' school community's verbal

persuasion surrounding their language-teaching capabilities was the most significant validating factor. Last, staying connected to the language and creating more cultural experiences also played a significant role in their confidence in teaching Spanish as an additional language.

Theme 2: Professional Practice Specific to the Non-Native Spanish Speaker-Teacher

In the interviews, participants expressed a strong emphasis on delineating the knowledge and skills they value in their professional role and believe are essential to their practice. Many schools in the United States use the framework created by Danielson (1996) to evaluate and enhance teachers' professional practices. There are specific features of teaching that apply to all of the participants. Danielson (1996) identifies those aspects of a teacher's responsibilities in a framework divided by many components organized into four domains of teaching practices. Each component defines a distinct aspect of a domain. This section uses the framework to not only highlight the domains of teaching that the non-native Spanish-speaking participants value most but to also touch upon specific components within each domain.

Within the planning and preparation domain, the participants reported that they not only spend many hours planning for coherent instruction but also emphasize carefully planned lessons that align with their students' assessments. Many used the word "structure" to describe their lessons. Carla expressed one reason for her well-structured lessons in the following way:

> I am a non-native. I am super careful with everything that I do and with everything that I say. So, like, I really, really over-prepare, like a lot, because I want to make sure that I am doing things correctly. Does that make sense? Because I have to be.

Many participants shared that by having a well-defined structure of instruction, they are not only able to demonstrate their skill in organizing and sequencing activities to engage their students in learning but also ensure that they are aware of topic-specific vocabulary for each unit.

With regard to preparation of instruction, Franco also expressed the following: "I definitely had some moments of doubt and insecurity, but again, I tackled it with: I am going to prepare myself and over-prepare." Many participants expressed their insecurity with topic-specific vocabulary and, similar to Franco, to overcome self-doubt, they spend many hours lesson planning and over-preparing. Last, all participants noted a heavy workload related to having to go beyond the level of duties for their position, particularly with planning and preparation. Anna shared the following about the workload: "I spend an exorbitant amount of time lesson planning every Friday night. I am up late even Saturday lesson planning, and other people seem to be having fun."

When referring to instruction, all participants did not commit to using a specific language-teaching method. Instead, they put emphasis on the approach that they used the least. The deductive approach to teaching grammar, which presents students with rules and patterns to practice (Allen & Valette, 1994), was the least popular among this group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers. Although many of them learned Spanish with instructors that relied heavily on this approach, they all agreed that there is minimal emphasis placed on developing oral ability when relying heavily on a series of pattern drills. One participant expressed that his teaching has evolved over the years, and one significant difference is focusing less on mechanics and placing more emphasis on communication. Regarding his teaching-style perspective, Franco expressed the following:

> I try to approach it from the point of view of if I only spoke Spanish and I was either
> reading or hearing this, would I understand what you are saying? If the answer is yes and
> we have achieved communication, then that's all that really matters. I think that my style

has probably developed over the years from watching other people, watching people that did this, but also people that didn't do it, and seeing how much that inhibited students. Similarly, other participants expressed their awareness of the cons of explicit grammar instruction and their shift in teaching style, with the hope that they run their language classes differently from how they learned.

All the participants shared their awareness of the importance of teaching culture from different Spanish-speaking countries. Overall, the majority of the participants in this study felt that there is a need for a strong commitment to the development of cultural understanding within the classroom and that is why they strive to integrate culture and language teaching, which in turn is very different from the way they learned Spanish in high school and college. Additionally, the participants' traveling experiences and personal connection influences the preference and comfort in focusing on specific Spanish-speaking countries. Some participants shared the same sentiment of having a cultural preference for specific countries related to their interests, exposure, and or study-abroad experiences. When asked about teaching culture, Donna expressed, "I have a connection to Costa Rica and their expressions and ways of speaking Spanish because of my husband and my exposure to Costa Rica." Overall, many participants voiced a level of cultural comfort with specific Spanish-speaking countries.

All teachers spoke about the engagement of students in content and engaging students in meaningful work, which carries significance beyond the next test. A component of instruction that all participants discussed consists of a wide range of professional responsibilities associated with being a true professional educator. Last, the participants emphasized being role models in language learning for non-native speaker-learners.

All of the non-native Spanish speaker teachers in this study share certain characteristics related to elements of activities and assignments (Danielson, 1996). They design their classroom activities and assignment to be relevant and authentic. Many participants consistently used the words "authentic" and "real-life experiences" when talking about activities designed for student engagement. Donna expressed the following about activities and student engagement:

> I used those real-life experiences, studying in Costa Rica and Mexico City, and the advantage I took of seeing museums, culture, food, and everything from the daily life. I used them directly in my classroom. Whether it's sharing about those experiences or bringing up a certain piece of art that I knew and saw or Frida Khalo's house that I got to visit. Then we do a unit just on Frida Khalo and her art, talking about her art. The real-life experience engages the students more.

Elisa also spoke to the importance of student engagement through active learning and how she uses relevant and authentic material in her Spanish-language classrooms with the aim to go beyond the curriculum:

> I do a lot of music, I do soap operas, I do a lot of real material. I bring that to them because that's how I got better. So I think that my own personal ways of teaching myself is what I am trying to instill in my students…as much real experience as we can just to connect with them and make it fun.

Another component of professional practice particular to this group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers aligned to the instructional domain. Some participants emphasized the student-engagement element and referred to it as "pacing." The pacing they spoke of was not related to the timing of activities in the classroom. Their concern was the speed at which they spoke Spanish to their students, particularly during listening activities and assessments. Many

participants brought attention to their awareness of exposing their students to varying speeds of spoken Spanish. They acknowledged the importance of exposing students to Spanish accents from different Spanish-speaking countries.

Berta expressed her sensitivity to pacing by recalling the following language-learning experience. She reflected, "The native speakers [referring to her language professors] that were teaching Spanish or teaching the actual language—they would not always teach at the appropriate pace for us as learners of the language in my college course."

When it comes to testing or listening sections, all participants agreed that it is important to slow down their speaking speed or even play a listening passage several times for their students to increase comprehension. Anna expressed the following:

I try to speak all the time in the native language in the classroom, but I also have to throw in the native speakers [referring to listening passages], so they hear different accents, and I throw in news and the kids are like, 'Wow, can you slow that down?' and I can't, but I let them listen a couple of times.

During the interview, Anna shared that she exposes her students to a fast speaking speed because the Spanish language assessments require students to perform a task after they listen to recordings of native Spanish speakers from different Spanish countries. These native speakers not only speak at different speeds but also speak with different accents. Anna further explained how mindful she is of exposing her students to different Spanish accents. She stated, "When I am on the internet finding something to listen to, the kids need to know, okay that's the Argentinian accent, those are words typical from Puerto Rico. So, you know, I definitely look and search for other areas." During her lessons, she chooses to play the listening passages several times, even if the assessments require students to only listen to the passages twice. She recognizes that non-

native speaker students should have more opportunities to hear the listening passages. If they ask for another chance to hear a passage, it implies that they are interested and engaged in the learning.

Overall, the teachers in this study made it clear that they make hundreds of decisions daily about a planned activity and they endorse demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness in the classroom. Occasionally, a change in speaking speed and listening to a listening passage three or more times is required to improve their students' experience. Although they like to stick to a plan, they clearly understand when their plan is not working. By being responsive to their students' needs, they are better able to demonstrate great flexibility, which in turn creates a positive relationship with their students. Donna endorsed that being responsive to her students' needs is influenced mainly by being a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher and said the following:

> That always helped me in understanding what the students would go through learning another language [referring to being a non-native Spanish speaker teacher], so I was able to relate to them in that sense…knowing that speaking too fast, kids can get lost, knowing that certain expressions I would have to rephrase in another way so that kids could understand.

Since student engagement was a shared valued component of instruction for this group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers, how they convey their caring for students is also worth mentioning. All participants in this study expressed the importance of creating an environment of respect and rapport in their classrooms. High levels of respect in their classroom were described as treating their students with dignity, friendliness, openness, humor, and connecting to their

students' struggles as second-language learners but never by teachers forgetting their role as an adult and or allowing students to disrespect them about their knowledge of Spanish.

How the participants form relationships was different across cases. For example, Franco uses humor and shares stories about his Spanish language-learning struggles to grasp the attention of his students and to relate to students learning Spanish as a new language. Franco shared the following:

I try to be very open. I am kind of very down to earth. I don't have any qualms about sharing embarrassing moments, and again, it comes in a lesson, it's always in the context of a lesson when we talk about why is it hard to understand jokes in a foreign language. There is often so much culture and slang embedded in it that we don't always understand the double meaning, and then one of the questions I ask the kids is 'Have you ever had a moment where you say something wrong in a foreign language and it's an embarrassing moment?' Of course, no one wants to share, so I share mine.

Other participants form positive relationships with their students by providing positive, constructive feedback on their assignments. Others set high expectations for learning and achievement, which is also critical to efficient and respectful management of student behavior. Regarding her relationship with her students, Anna recalled the following:

I know one of my colleagues has always said to me, 'These kids really respect you, and I really don't seem to have a lot of issues getting the kids to do their work.' I wonder if it's because they see that I work very hard. You know, I give them feedback, and they might get something back with a lot of red marks, but I tell them, 'Keep in mind those red marks, it is not all bad; there is also positive advice there.' And I think the kids appreciate that I take the time to do that.

This participant establishes trust with her students by balancing the positive and negative feedback she offers during assignments. Her students value the timely and specific feedback she provides and appreciate that she celebrates their successes with the language.

This group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers discussed what they do in their classroom to ensure that students feel supported during their language-learning experience. The teachers' non-native status directly influenced the captured components of professional practice. The conversations about what they do most in their classrooms fell within three specific domains: planning and preparation, instruction, and the classroom environment (Danielson, 1996).

When it comes to planning, this group of teachers reported going above and beyond the call of duty, and their need to over-prepare is mainly related to their innate insecurities of being non-native Spanish speakers. They worked toward designing well-structured and coherent instruction that exposes students to authentic cultural material and accents from different Spanish-speaking countries. Although they recognize that they have a cultural affinity to the countries due to their exposure during their traveling experiences, they still make an effort to diversify their cultural lessons. They engage their students in learning by using communicative methods that focus on their speaking skills and less time on grammatical structure. Furthermore, they value structure and pacing but are flexible enough to understand when they must adjust their activities and assignments to better support their students. Last, when it comes to the classroom environment, they discussed most often how much effort they put into interactions with students. The teachers in this study demonstrate a genuine caring and respect for their students.

It is important to note that the teacher with the least years of experience in this study differed from the other participants in the domains that she emphasized most. During our

conversations, she focused on the planning and preparation and instruction domains. More specifically, she relied heavily on descriptions of the strategies she uses to teach language rather than speaking about how she gets to know her students on a deeper level. The teachers with the most years of teaching experience discussed how they consistently prioritize building strong connections with their students as they carve out time for humor and share stories that show their vulnerability.

In conclusion, the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study described their responsibilities as language educators, and their perceived role in their professional practice points to always going "above and beyond" what is expected of them. The teachers described what they should know as language educators, what they do in their classrooms, and what they value most as part of their professional practice. Comparable components of professional practice emerged during the participants' interviews. These components were influenced mainly by their experiences of learning Spanish as an additional language and are captured in Theme 2. I categorized the components of professional practice emphasized the most into the following domains: planning and preparation, instruction, and the classroom environment (Danielson, 1996).

Theme 3: Perceptions Impacting Language-Teaching Abilities Among Non-Native Spanish Speaker-Teachers

As discussed in Chapter 2, positioning theory provides an approach to capture how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers use words and discourses of all types to locate themselves and others (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010). Theme 3 captures the positive and negative views that the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers hold about their abilities to teach Spanish and how they position themselves and other teachers regarding success in the classroom.

Positive Views of Their Language-Teaching Abilities

A common theme among the participants was their interest in the field of education from an early age. Although they did not know that they wanted to be language teachers, they knew that it was the profession they were most interested in from childhood. Overall, there is a strong commitment and dedication to the teaching profession that is evident in all of the participants. Carla shared the following about what drew her to the teaching profession:

I remember being young and being like "Ah, one day I am going to be a teacher." I just remember that. But, just loving my teachers and loving my classes so much, especially in Spanish, just made me learn it more.

The teachers' innate calling for teaching impacts their sustained interest for the teaching profession and their concern with maintaining a distinguished level of performance. Although they all shared their love for the teaching profession, their interest in teaching the Spanish language developed after their exposure to language classes in school. Their motive for teaching Spanish was different across cases. For example, some participants reported that their language teachers in high school influenced their love for Spanish, while others became aware of the usefulness and popularity of the Spanish language early on. Regarding becoming a Spanish educator, Franco recalled the following:

There was a chart in the social studies textbook, which talked about the population changes graph rather in the United States, and it stated by the year of 2050, there would be more Spanish speakers in the United States than English speakers. This was during a time where the United States was in a recession, and I saw these older people losing their jobs and I had this lightbulb moment that 'Wow, if I spoke Spanish when I get to be old, I won't lose my job,' and that's why I chose Spanish over the objections of my parents.

The participants reported different motives for learning Spanish, but their love for teaching is evident in the way they spoke about their abilities to teach content. After their passion for teaching, their pedagogical confidence was the most reported strength. All participants positioned themselves as having practical and successful pedagogical strategies for teaching language to non-native Spanish speaker-students. In reflecting about her self-perceived strengths as a non-native teacher, Berta said the following:

I have knowledge of the culture but not the same as someone who grew up in the culture. However, I do think that most of it is based off of my confidence in my teaching ability, the strategies that I use, and how I am as a teacher. I think that that's where I excel.

During his interview, Franco also shared the following perception related to his pedagogical strength:

I think that the native speaker is not the best teacher at the beginning levels because they really don't understand the processes and the hardships that an English speaker will encounter. It's hard to explain concepts of things like "Ser and Estar" or "Preterit" and "Imperfect" or even just "Subjunctive" [referring to verb tenses] when you just have a feel for it or because you have grown up with it, and you're trying to communicate that to someone who this is just completely brand-new territory and you don't understand where they get hung up or even why they're being hung up here.

On the subject of pedagogical competency, the participants shared stories about Spanish native speaker-teachers that they have worked with and their opinions about their teaching abilities. On the topic of nativeship and Spanish native speaker-teachers, Anna shared the following:

Just because you are native doesn't mean that you are the better teacher. I find that a lot of native speakers don't know the grammar very well, and not to say that grammar is the most important, but just because you can speak a language does not mean that you can portray the material well, teach it well, or express yourself well.

This group of teachers also shared a common perception related to having the ability to easily explain Spanish grammatical concepts and rules to students seeking explanations. They also positioned native Spanish speaker teachers as being less familiar with explaining complicated grammatical concepts to students and or helping them relate these concepts to the English language. Franco shared his experience with mentoring a native Spanish student teacher and expressed her lack of preparedness with grammatical concepts in the following way:

I had a student teacher once who was a native speaker, and there were certain topics she refused to teach because she said, 'I don't know the rules, I just know how to say it,' which I thought it was a terrible thing for someone that was going into the profession of teaching, but it sort of mirrored what I had experienced as a student.

New language teachers trained to follow the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards focus less time teaching grammatical structures and more time preparing thematic cultural units. However, students still ask questions related to how to form specific grammatical structures and might request English examples of the Spanish verb tenses to which they have exposure. To Franco's surprise, the native Spanish-speaking student teacher had a difficult time answering student questions related to grammatical structures. As a result, the students questioned her ability to teach despite her ability to speak the language.

Most of the participants positioned themselves as being the better instructor for non-native Spanish speaker-students. They emphasized that pedagogical competency is just as

important as language competency. Many participants shared that the knowledge of the Spanish language, culture, and fluency is "just half of it," and to be successful, you need to have command of the classroom, especially with young children and young adults. Furthermore, some participants shared that process administrators who do not have a language background will focus most on the teachers' pedagogical abilities and less on the teachers' fluency and pronunciation during the hiring. Regarding hiring language teachers, Franco had the most experience and shared the following:

> You have the pedagogical aspect of it, the teacher that knows the buzzwords, and then you have the ones that don't. I would say that most administrators would go for someone…well, they unfortunately will lean toward the one who has the buzzwords.

> All of the participants shared the belief that teaching a language is different from teaching other subjects, and to be successful, they endorse that high school–level language instructors should have cultural and linguistic competency and strong pedagogical abilities.

All the teacher participants in this study positioned themselves as being most perceptive to their students' language struggles. Since they are attuned to their students' challenges with using the language, a commonly reported strength is that they are better able to anticipate areas in which their non-native students will need further support. The language-learning experience these teachers share with their non-native Spanish speaker-students makes them very interested in teaching introductory-level courses. During the interviews, a few participants shared meaningful conversations they had with their non-native students that not only express empathy toward them but also motivates them to keep trying. For example, Berta shared the following:

> I always tell them [referring to her non-native students], I was in your position, I remember what it's like. I remember doing listenings for the first time and having

absolutely no idea what was going on and just listening for keywords. So, I know what

it's like to be in their shoes, and I feel like they feel a little bit more comfortable when

they know, 'Okay, she knows what we are feeling, and it's possible to get to a higher

level, it's not like we are going to be like this forever,' so it's just more relatable.

In addition to feeling empathy toward their non-native Spanish speaker-students and

creating a strong rapport based on their shared language-learning experience, all of the teachers

reported a sense of responsibility for becoming an inspiring agent for the students just starting to

learn Spanish as a new language. Berta also shared the following about the influence of serving

as a role model for her students:

I think that it impacts them [referring to being a non-native Spanish teacher], because

they are non-native speakers, so they are learning the language for the first time; they can

see that it is possible to learn a language and to become fluent in it. I know a lot of them

feel like learning a second language could be very difficult, and they feel like they are not

going to reach proficiency, and by seeing somebody like me who has done it, they can

feel more confident that it is possible.

Negative Views of Their Language-Teaching Abilities

Although many language-teaching strengths were shared by the teachers during the

interviews, there were also many comments related to the participants' negative views of their

language-teaching abilities. One main perceived shortcoming of their language abilities was

related to their unfavorable view of their Spanish accent. Some participants were aware of how

they sound when pronouncing words in Spanish and felt that their accent might impact their

students' learning experience. With regard to their Spanish accent, two participants used the

derogatory term "Gringo," mainly used by Latin American people to refer to English-speaking

Anglo-Americans, to describe how others might refer to them when they hear their Spanish accent. Reflecting on her perceived pronunciation disadvantage, Elisa shared the following:

> It's something you think about [referring to how her accent impacts her students], but there is only so much you can do. That's why you want to be the best teacher that you can. Like, for example, exposing them to the native speakers and more authentic resources because, you know, you're not a native speaker, so they are not hearing, you know, an authentic accent, for example, a native accent.

Other participants also shared ways in which they expose their students to different native Spanish-speaking accents through authentic resources as a way to improve their students' language experience. Another reported that a negative self-view is related to having difficulty with topic-specific vocabulary. For example, when attending professional conferences, Anna spoke about her challenge with finding specific words to discuss methodology in Spanish:

> We're talking about methodology here and those are not terms that I would use to teach my students. I don't necessarily know those terms. It's kind of like what I said before— the word *stethoscope* is not a word that I use all the time. So when we're talking about methodology, it's harder for me to express myself in the native language; it's not terms I use all of the time.

Other participants shared similar experiences of having a difficult time with topic-specific vocabulary while teaching advanced levels of Spanish. To rectify the situation, the teachers shared that they put extra effort into preparing before each unit. They try their best to become familiar with the unit's vocabulary by researching a topic before they teach it and work hard to develop well-structured lessons and activities that serve as a guide to them and follow a predictable pattern.

Last, all of the participants reported hesitancy in teaching advanced-level courses. Although many of them took courses and are certified to teach AP Spanish, they expressed that this course is not their first choice. When discussing teaching assignments, this group of participants acknowledged that administrators assign most AP Spanish courses to native speakers, but they also admitted that it was mainly their choice not to teach them. Although some participants shared feelings of doubt about their abilities to teach AP courses, others admitted that it was mainly a matter of preference. For example, Elisa was clear about her interest in teaching AP when she stated, "I never wanted to," and said that she prefers teaching to "the little guy," or as she explained, the student that is not in honors classes and is learning Spanish from the very beginning. In conclusion, three of the six participants in this study were currently teaching AP Spanish classes, and they all reported that it took them a lot of effort to feel comfortable enough to teach them. Reflecting on his initial experience teaching an AP course, Franco shared the following:

> It's usually moments of insecurity, and these are things that happen in my own head. That same year, the teacher that used to teach the course that now I took over was free that period, and I used to close my door so that he wouldn't hear me teaching. He has never been critical; that was all my stuff. I don't close my door anymore, but I know that I felt insecure. But it was me. Someone outwardly didn't do it to me; I was doing it to myself.

Overall, the participants in this study have a low perceived self-efficacy about teaching advanced-level courses and experienced feelings of doubt in their abilities to teach the AP Spanish course despite having their AP certification. As a result, their common negative self-perception of their abilities to teach this Advanced Placement course might also decrease the

number of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers teaching it across different districts on Long Island.

Overall, theme 3 captured the participants' positive and negative self-perceptions in their Spanish-teaching abilities. During the interviews, the participants recognized and shared their own assets while being realistic about their limitations. Overall, the teachers in this study positioned themselves as the most suitable instructor for non-native students and introductory levels due to their shared experience of learning Spanish as an additional language. With reference to negative views or limitations, this group of teachers reported that most of their negative perceptions are innate insecurities. Despite holding an AP certification and having the opportunity to teach an AP Spanish-level course, the majority of the participants preferred not to teach it. The participants who taught the AP-level course during the study reported that they were encouraged to do so. Our conversations also revealed that some participants have an unfavorable view of their Spanish accent as well as difficulty with topic-specific vocabulary. These perceived limitations motivated these non-native Spanish teachers to find ways to improve their students' language experiences by exposing them to different native Spanish accents. Furthermore, they stayed current with the language by traveling to Spanish-speaking countries, participating in study-abroad experiences, and structuring the classroom lessons.

Theme 4: Overcoming Negative Self-Concepts Through Resilience

The fourth theme of this study captures how the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers worked toward overcoming negative self-concepts. During the interviews, the teachers shared the common feeling of having to always "prove their worth" in the Spanish-speaking community. Their journey was difficult every step of the way, and they chose to take the more challenging path or the path of greatest resistance to their professional career. Since they had voluntarily

placed themselves in an uncomfortable position when they chose to not only learn a second language but also teach it, they naturally and predictably built up resilience and developed self-care skills during their initial training and current state of career.

Concerning their emotional state, the participants used words such as "fear," "doubt," insecurity," and "pressure." They also emphasized the following common verbs such as "intimidated," "overwhelmed," and "embarrassed," to often describe negative feelings related to their Spanish language-proficiency experiences. Despite their unfavorable emotional state during their language learning and teaching journey, they were aware of their emotions and acknowledged and worked on their perceived shortcomings. As a result, they gained the ability to embrace and reward the inevitable challenges along the way.

In addition to being mindful and learning to face their fears, the participants in this study developed a sense of assertiveness or self-assertion as a way to respond to negative student criticism. Many participants shared stories of assertive responses to students that would often question their abilities as a Spanish teacher. Anna shared the following story of when a student questioned her competency as a teacher:

He's like [referring to her native student], 'You call yourself a Spanish teacher, and you don't know how to say dots?' So what I did was I put the word *defenestrate* on the board and I said, 'Well, what does this mean?" and he's like 'Well, I don't know,' and I said, 'And you call yourself an American?' I go 'This is an American word; you don't know this word?' and the whole class was like, 'You got him.' It was so quiet in the room and they were all so very proud of me that I did that as an example. I just said, 'Look, I consider myself fluent in the language, but just because I am fluent doesn't mean I know every word.' I said, 'Do you consider yourself fluent in English?" He said, 'Yeah.' I go,

'Well, you are. I think you're fluent, but did you know this word?' He said 'no.' And I added 'So, I don't know every word in the Spanish language either.' So, I said to the class, 'You also have to think about what words you're commonly using in your everyday language. You know dots is not a word I typically use. When I teach, you know, health and welfare, stethoscope is not a word that comes into play, maybe if I were in a hospital working with a doctor, that would be an everyday word in the classroom.'

Another way the participants in this study succeeded in dealing with negative self-concepts about their language competency was through their ability to respect and accept themselves through self-compassion, as they embrace the idea that everyone makes mistakes. Reflecting about having healthy self-regard, Berta shared the following:

I have the right to…I feel like…I have the right to make mistakes also. I am not going to be perfect at all times. I don't know everything that has to do with the language. Even though I am the teacher, I feel like I don't need to necessarily know every single thing, and I can still learn.

Other participants also embraced the idea of "mistakes as learning opportunities" and by admitting and "owning" their mistakes, they can begin to work toward improving their skills. The most meaningful common information shared by the participants focused on new teachers entering the world language field, and it was related to appreciating their perceived positive aspects and possibilities and accepting their negative aspects and limitations and still feeling good about their contribution to the field. Overall, the shared thoughts indicated that this group of participants have a healthy self-regard and a strong understanding of their strengths and shortcomings.

Lastly, the external factors affecting the self-affirmations of Spanish non-native speaker teachers in this study led them to prioritize certain professional practices in the classroom and develop "validation factors" to affirm their value in the Spanish-speaking teaching community. External factors and internal insecurities are examples of some of the challenges that the non-native Spanish speaker teachers had to overcome in their professional life, which in turn had a tremendous impact on their resilience.

To summarize, the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study developed a strong internal self-wellness. They demonstrated remarkable resilience in dealing with difficult situations that triggered negative self-concepts related to their language competency. Theme 4 captured the various ways these teachers overcame difficulties. Specifically, for the non-native teachers in this study, 'diffusing threats' in the classroom referred to instances where students mocked or undermined their fluency or knowledge gaps in the target language. These threats manifested as personal attacks on the teachers' competency in the language. The teachers in this study acknowledged their shortcomings through self-compassion and diffused threats in the classroom by being assertive and standing up for themselves. Through practicing self-compassion, these teachers highlighted to their students the importance of viewing mistakes as opportunities.

The Phenomenon of the Native Speaker Fallacy

Despite having amassed years of experience in teaching Spanish as an additional language, the participants in this study found themselves navigating relatively few instances that directly confronted the native speaker fallacy. While they readily acknowledged society's inclination towards native speaker instructors, they remained steadfast in their conviction of their own value and expertise within their school community. In response to the prevailing bias, these

educators articulated a compelling argument: their rigorous journey of mastering Spanish as an additional language uniquely qualifies them for their roles. What stood out in their reflections was that their only experience with the native speaker fallacy, often characterized by dismissive attitudes from native speaker teachers and a tendency to dominate professional discourse during academic conferences, was most likely attributed to their limited interactions with native speakers and students.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the significant findings of this qualitative, phenomenological study that answered the research questions. Several findings emerged throughout the data-analysis process. First, this group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers who work across different districts on Long Island had very few interactions with a majority of native speaker-teachers as well as native speaker-students. Second, any experience that had the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers question their language abilities and/or their worth as language teachers were mainly related to interactions with native speaker-teachers and/or native speaker-students. Although many external validation factors impacted their competency in teaching the language, any insecurities the participants hold about their language abilities are mostly innate. To navigate their insecurities and gauge their worth, the teachers in this study place value on many situation-specific factors. In addition, there are meaningful components of professional practice specific to their non-native status that they are mindful of and make an effort to offer to their students. Their love for the teaching profession and their connection to and understanding of student struggles with learning Spanish as an additional language mainly influenced these components. The most meaningful common finding that cut across all participants was resilience. Non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study developed strong internal self-wellness from having to overcome

professional challenges from the years of learning the Spanish language and teaching the Spanish

language and culture. Overall, these findings are helpful for future world language teachers,

language supervisors and/or administrators, and language-training programs. The implications

for world language practice are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to add to the research related to the teaching of Spanish by capturing the lived experiences of tenured, non-native speaker high school teachers of Spanish concerning the native speaker fallacy. The two frameworks utilized in this study included self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) and positioning theory (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010). Chapter 1 introduced the problem, purpose, and significance of this research study. Furthermore, I provided an overview of the methodology, setting, and participants. I concluded the chapter by discussing ethical issues, trustworthiness and defining the key terms related to this study. In Chapter 2, I provided a review of the relevant literature related to the research topic and to the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy theory and positioning theory. These theoretical frameworks offered a lens to understand how the participants experienced the phenomenon. In Chapter 3, I detailed the methodology of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study by discussing how I obtained participants, collected data, and designed the interview protocol. In Chapter 4, I analyzed the data, provided tables to visually represent the code development, and detailed how I condensed the codes into common themes. I concluded by presenting my findings related to these common themes. In the next section of this chapter, I provide an overview of the problem that led to the purpose of this research study.

In this chapter, I present a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings related to the literature and theoretical frameworks of this dissertation. I begin with a summary of the study and an overview of the prior four chapters. I then review the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and methodology of this phenomenological qualitative study. The primary

findings and surprise findings of this study are then elaborated upon, followed by the implications for practice, recommendations for future research and the limitations of this study.

Overview of the Problem

The research on native and non-native speaker teachers of a language and their differences focused on research related to teachers of English as a second language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). The preference for the native speaker-teacher is apparent across languages, and it is a persistent classification that, in some cases, is an inflexible requirement, especially in international schools offering English as a second language (Brown & Thompson, 2018). Since the pioneering work by Phillipson (1992) and Medgyes (1994), an abundance of studies has disproved the widely held traditional bias, also known as the native speaker fallacy (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992) that subscribes to the idea that the native speaker of the language is a naturally better teacher. Medgyes' (1994) research sustained the native and non-native teacher dichotomy and accentuated the strengths and weaknesses of each instructor. Regarding the most substantial concern related to non-native–speaking instructors, Medgyes (1994) concluded that their increased linguistic insecurities could limit their effectiveness in the classroom.

The Spanish language is the first language of millions of people and the second language for millions more in the United States. Still, a large body of research exists on this topic for teaching English. The largest and most diverse pool of future language teachers is Spanish language teachers, and only in recent years have studies emerged related to Spanish instructors and students' preferences (Brown & Thompson, 2018; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013).

Concerning Spanish-speaking instructors, there were a small number of studies that gathered data on non-native speaker-teachers. A study conducted by Hartel and Sunderman (2009) concluded that students' perceptions of native and non-native Spanish instructors changed across proficiency levels and with the uniqueness of their current instructor; mainly, they preferred their current instructor. Furthermore, in regards to non-native Spanish-speaking teachers, the university students in this study appreciated their teachers' grammatical knowledge and how their instructors were highly tuned in and sensitive to their language struggles. When examining non-native Spanish-speaking instructors' self-perceptions, Thompson and Fioramonte (2013) found that novice, non-native instructors of Spanish had negative stereotypes about themselves related to their competency in teaching advanced-level courses and were most critical about their own pronunciation.

The research into non-native instructors provides valuable knowledge for those entering the field of Spanish teaching, and these potential misconceptions and perceptions about their abilities are realities that many will face as they begin their language-teaching journey. Even with a large pool of current and future Spanish language teachers, a very limited body of research exists on non-native Spanish-speaker instructors and their lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy. To date, I did not find any studies that examined the lived experiences of high school, tenured, non-native speaker teachers of Spanish related to the native speaker fallacy phenomenon.

Summary of the Study

Six non-native Spanish high school teachers participated in this hermeneutic, phenomenological study to capture how they experienced the native speaker fallacy, which is the social misconception that the native speaker teacher is the better language instructor (Walelign,

1986). Regardless of the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' qualifications, the disruption of the native speaker fallacy inform outside perceptions of these teachers and impacts their perceptions of competence. Although much is known about the native and non-native teacher dichotomy and the native speakers' privileged status in the teaching field of English language globally (Brown & Thompson, 2018; Moussu & Llurda, 2008), there is minimal research focused on world language teachers of Spanish in the United States. This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers related to the native speaker fallacy. By considering the perceptions of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers, this study adds to the scholarly research in the field of world languages with a focus on teaching Spanish and teachers' lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy.

Discussion of Findings

The lived experiences of tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers that are related to matters of competence and the native speaker fallacy consist of four themes: (a) non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' validating environmental factors impacting their self-efficacy and confidence in teaching Spanish, (b) professional practice specific to the non-native speaker-teacher, (c) perceptions impacting language-teaching abilities among non-native Spanish speaker-teachers, and (d) overcoming negative self-concepts through resilience. These themes encompassed the participants' thoughts, insights, and perceptions of the phenomenon and answered the research questions.

The first theme aligned with the first question on how the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers experienced the native speaker fallacy in their professional career. The teachers' positive and negative beliefs about their speaking and teaching abilities are innate and shift based on the students and the courses they teach each year. It was surprising that the non-native

Spanish speaker-teachers shared limited experiences related to external perceptions of their non-native status in their school setting. Many of the conversations revealed that their uncertainties about their language-teaching ability came from their insecurities. This realization supports the literature that non-native Spanish-speaking instructors have negative stereotypes about themselves regarding their linguistic ability but differs in that it does not subscribe to the idea that their negative characteristics might get passed on to their students (Brown & Thompson, 2018; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). While it is not possible to say for certain that what they perceive as negative will get passed on to their students, one might reasonably surmise that their thorough planning and preparation of instruction and concern for exposing students to authentic material are examples of their professional practice components that work toward remedying the aforementioned claim.

In this study, the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' evaluation of their ideal characteristics far surpassed their negative perceptions impacting their language teaching. They felt most confident about their teaching abilities, highlighting mainly their ability to use a multitude of well-planned instructional strategies in their language classroom. This key takeaway involves the assumption that the teachers' years of experience might make a difference in their confidence in teaching language, regardless of their innate insecurities and non-native status. Similarly, when comparing the native and non-native language teachers' average level of teacher efficacy, Liaw (2004) concluded that the teachers with more teaching experience had similar confidence and that teaching experience is a factor that also impacts language teachers' capability in teaching the language.

Consistent with Thompson and Fioramonte's (2013) study of novice, non-native Spanish teaching assistants, the tenured teachers in this study were also cognizant that they had some

negative stereotypes and the realization that "everyone makes mistakes," directed specifically at their native-speaker counterparts, which made them less critical of their perceived shortcomings. But different from the aforementioned study, the teachers in this study added that they use their mistakes as an opportunity for a teachable moment in their language classroom. Relevant to using mistakes for discussions rather than dead ends, Staples and Colonis (2007) explained that mistakes "help the student and the class extend the idea that had been presented and continue to develop a viable solution collaboratively" (p. 259). In this study, most of the study participants modeled self-compassion by engaging in conversations with their students in which they acknowledge their language-teaching mistakes in pursuit of preserving their self-worth and communicating practical suggestions for improving language skills. This shared personal motto suggests that the teachers value normalizing mistakes and invite their students to see them as a valuable part of the process of learning a language. Although the participant with the least amount of years teaching also engaged in self-compassion, she did not share the same enthusiasm for finding opportunities to share her feelings with her students. Her main focus was to get through the academic content. Based on this understanding, one can presume that teachers with more years of experience might not feel as pressured to maintain authority in the classroom and make an effort to express emotions with students to develop strong connections. Anna and Franco, the teachers in this study with the greatest number of years teaching, shared a similar aim concerning their relationship-building efforts. They both consistently prioritized building strong connections with their students as they put in the time to make their relationships more systematic and intentional. For example, they took the time to show vulnerability and carve out time for humorous stories and motivational conversations.

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study shared that their most notable experience with the native speaker fallacy was at professional conferences, specifically when cooperating with a majority of native Spanish speaker-teachers. The educators in this study also recognized that their professional roles across multiple public high schools situated in Long Island predominantly revolve around teaching students from White and Asian demographics. Consequently, this context restricts their opportunities for meaningful interactions with individuals hailing from a diverse array of Spanish-speaking nations. As a result, this limited exposure significantly influences how they experience the native speaker fallacy.

Most teachers reported that they feel most comfortable working with a majority of non-native speaker-students and feel most valued and respected by their colleagues within their school community. However, when the teachers had increased interactions with a majority of native Spanish speaker-teachers at outside professional conferences and with native Spanish speaker-students in their school setting, they felt the fallacy the most.

The participants in this study realized that the abundance and/or lack of experiences related to the teaching of Spanish validated their competence. Having less or more diversity in the classroom was a notable competency-validating factor for the teachers in this study. One key takeaway is that there is growing awareness of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' limited exposure to an ethnically diverse Spanish-speaking population across different districts on Long Island and the impact this has on their competence and self-efficacy as language instructors of Spanish. This finding could be disadvantageous by highlighting that non-native Spanish-speaking public school teachers and their non-native Spanish speaker-students across different schools on Long Island are learning about the Spanish language and culture but have limited exposure to diverse opinions, thoughts, or cultural backgrounds.

The majority of the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study reported that they experienced stereotypes about their competence enacted by native Spanish speaker-teachers at professional conferences outside of their school community. Furthermore, the experience with stereotype threat was triggered most during this situation. Stereotype threat occurs when there is the opportunity for an individual to confirm a negative stereotype of a group of which he or she is a member (Steele & Aronson, 1995). This study's finding was that within a professional social setting, the native Spanish speaker-teachers assert authority. As described in Chapter 4, it was reported that native speaker-teachers dominate professional conversations, and in conversations related to advanced Spanish courses, they reportedly ignored and excluded non-native teachers in a group setting. Furthermore, in conversations related to changes in the Spanish curriculum, the native speaker-teachers were described as taking control and being forceful regarding their viewpoint. On the contrary, novice native speaker-teachers reported that they sought assistance from their non-native counterparts with matters related to pedagogical strategies, grammar, and literary analysis of Spanish literature.

Contributions to Theory

This research used Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, which relates to the belief in an individual's ability to succeed in a task or challenge. I did an in-depth investigation and examined all of the main practices of influences proposed by this theory to examine the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' beliefs related to their efficacy. Another theoretical framework used in this dissertation study was Moghaddam and Harré's (2010) positioning theory, which highlights ideas of people as characters in storylines. This theory served as a general theoretical lens through which I approached the study. Specifically, I examined how the non-native Spanish

speaker-teachers used words to locate themselves and others in their professional community with respect to language-teaching capabilities.

Self-Efficacy Theory

This section discusses the findings related to self-efficacy theory and the information reported that answers RQ1. The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' beliefs in their efficacy were developed by four primary sources of influences (Bandura, 1977). In this study, I examined the following influences: (a) mastery experiences; (b) vicarious experiences; (c) verbal persuasion; and (d) emotional state, also known as emotional arousal. I used these sources to structure my research and interview questions.

Research studies on world language teachers show that non-native teachers often positioned themselves as being the least competent teachers for advanced learners, and they perceived themselves as having a lower status (Ghanem, 2015; Liaw, 2004; Thompson & Fioramonte, 2013). Consistent with this research, the teachers in the present study also had a low level of self-efficacy in teaching higher-level classes, specifically AP Spanish. Two of the six non-native teacher participants taught AP Spanish courses at the time of the study, and due to their innate insecurities related to language proficiency, they expressed that they needed a great deal of courage to do so. However, after a few years of teaching the AP courses, the more veteran teachers in this study experienced high success with their students' high scores and felt confident to continue teaching these courses. Similar to Liaw's (2009) study, language teachers who accumulated more years of experience teaching higher levels developed a higher level of efficacy over time.

The participants who were not teaching AP Spanish at the time of the study expressed that despite having their AP training and certification, they preferred not to teach higher-level

courses. The teachers' diminished confidence about their ability to speak the language and the importance they place on birthright might make the non-native teachers feel vulnerable and perceive certain circumstances as producing fear and anxiety (Kralova, 2019). As a result, their insecurities related to their language competency might not only decrease their desire to teach higher-level courses but also intensify their decision to avoid undertaking this task. Another way to explain their hesitancy with teaching higher-level courses despite their described high level of pedagogical expertise could be related to the notion that teachers often internalize the prevailing ideologies of mainstream society (Mcvee et al., 2004). As a result, the teachers in this study might still adhere to the ideology that the ideal language instructor is defined mainly by how well the individual uses the language (Chomsky, 1965) and not by how well they teach the language.

The participants of this study reported that their language teaching has evolved as a result of the years of experience and, similar to Liaw's (2004) findings, their confidence level increased with more teaching experience. Samuel (2016) noted that teachers may have a strong sense of efficacy in one area of teaching but not in others and that perceived self-efficacy is situation specific (Bandura, 1997, 2006; Samuel, 2016). I found that although the teachers had a low perceived level of self-efficacy in teaching advanced-level courses, they still had a high perceived level of self-efficacy related to their pedagogical abilities. This finding aligns with this theory because self-efficacy can vary, depending on the situation and level of difficulty (Bandura, 1977).

In contrast from the review and analysis of research conducted by researchers Faez and Karas (2017) on teacher competence, the tenured, non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study had more confidence in their instructional abilities and, compared to their native counterparts, perceived themselves to have lower target-language proficiency, specifically

related to pronunciation, accent, and knowledge and usage of topic-specific vocabulary. The teachers expressed that it is challenging to recall words related to a specific field of study, also referred to as technical words, without having the time to look them up.

Mastery Experiences

A focus on mastery experiences revealed the non-native teachers' achievements and the impact of occasional failures (Bandura, 1977). Although their perceived shortcomings weighed heavily on their self-worth as able language speakers and teachers of Spanish, their love of the teaching profession sustained their motivation to improve. Based on the available evidence in this study, one could deduce that the intrinsic motivation of wanting to improve their skills align with their passion for teaching and their shared compassion for their students. All of the participants expressed that from a young age, they knew that teaching was a part of their professional life journey, and they came to understand this before they knew which content they were going to teach. Furthermore, this claim is supported by looking at the main components of professional practice. For this group of teachers, the most critical element of their practice was staying connected to and understanding their students' struggles and creating an environment of respect and rapport.

Furthermore, in connection with past experiences related to the participants' successes and challenges with learning to teach the language, working toward their teaching licensure appeared to be one of their most influential sources of efficacy information. Their pre-service training experiences—including completing university-level Spanish-language courses, studying Spanish abroad, and completing their student-teaching assignment—were most valuable in increasing their sense of self-efficacy.

Vicarious Experiences

The participants' vicarious experience related to observing other people successfully completing a task (Bandura, 1977). Seeing their non-native Spanish-speaking teachers and mentors during their first years of learning Spanish as an additional language influenced their decision to study and teach later on in life. These teachers' vicarious experiences are consistent with the self-efficacy theory since they claimed to have positive role models in their life, especially those who shared the same non-native status. They absorbed some positive beliefs about the self as a result of the healthy relationships they built with their previous language instructors and mentors.

Verbal Persuasion

Relating to verbal persuasion, or verbal feedback pertaining to the teachers' ability to teach in the target language (Bandura, 1977), the teachers in this study valued messages of encouragement and discouragement from their students. They reported that the most fulfilling feedback came from their non-native Spanish-speaking students, which is most likely why this group of teachers expressed their preference for teaching non-native students and introductory-level courses. According to Bandura (1977), individuals avoid criticized actions. Based on the criticism the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers receive from their native students related to their language ability, one can assume that they avoid teaching classes that have a high number of native students—such as advanced-level courses. In addition, their preference for teaching classes with a majority of non-native speaker students is also influenced by the positive feedback they receive about their language-teaching abilities.

Emotional Arousal

The last efficacy influence I examined in my study is related to the participants' emotional arousal, also known as physiological feedback (Bandura, 1977), which is related to

how their emotional, physical, and psychological well-being impacts how they feel about their abilities. Despite the teachers' shared fears and insecurities about being a non-native teacher, the teachers in this study had high emotion efficacy. The finding related to overcoming negative self-concepts through resilience described in Chapter 4 supports this claim. The conclusion aligns with this theory in that the types of attitudes the teachers had about their emotional arousal revealed how they persisted in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1977). Their reported responses and emotional reactions to specific challenging experiences revealed that this group of teachers were able to effectively navigate difficult emotions, regulate their emotions through healthy coping, and express their values through their actions.

Through the self-efficacy lens, I found that what the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers internalized about external negative and positive stereotypes regarding their language-teaching abilities impacted their level of efficacy beliefs. However, their years of teaching experience played a role in developing high levels of emotion efficacy. After analyzing the factors influencing the teachers' efficacy, including their mastery experiences and language-teaching challenges, they gained clarity in defining their roles in the professional language community in comparison to the native-speaker teachers.

In this study, the sources of efficacy information and their level of importance were situation specific, which aligns with the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977). The first theme in this study captured the situation-specific factors that impacted the participants' self-efficacy beliefs about teaching Spanish, and they fit into the category of validating and invalidating factors related to their language-teaching competence. To summarize all of the information I examined, the validating and invalidating factors that were a significant source of efficacy information for this group of teachers were the following: (a) pre-service training mastery

experiences, (b) vicarious experiences with native and non-native speaker-teachers and mentors, (c) university workload and expectations, (d) level of degree and Spanish major in college, (e) few experiences with the native speaker fallacy, (f) lack of cultural diversity in their own school community, (g) native speaker status at academic conferences, (h) school community verbal persuasion, and (i) connection to the language and cultural experiences. In Chapter 4, I provided more in-depth information related to the factors along with supporting quotes from the participants.

Positioning Theory

This section describes the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' self-positioning and the assumed positioning of their native counterparts based on their experiences related to the native speaker fallacy. According to Davies and Harré (1990), position relates to how an individual perceives what is valued, what has status, and what is the most effective way to do something. Relevant to what they value most in their language classroom, the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study reported that their non-native status influenced several components of their professional practice. My second finding, which addressed RQ2, delves into how non-native Spanish speaker-teachers position themselves regarding their abilities. The dynamic between non-native teachers and native speaker-teachers in their school context significantly influences their beliefs about their capabilities.

The research related to world language teachers in the United States, summarized in Chapter 2, positioned non-native instructors as better able to deliver grammar lessons more effectively than native language instructors (Callahan, 2006; Hartel & Sunderman, 2009; Liaw, 2004), whereas in relation to teaching culture, the non-native instructors positioned themselves as insecure and unsure about the goals for ways to teach culture (Ghanem, 2015). Although

world language studies mirrored what is generalized in the research related to the teaching of English, my study differs in that the teachers emphasized that they do not make teaching grammar a main priority in their classrooms.

The teachers in this study emphasized their grammatical expertise by positioning themselves as better able to explain grammatical concepts to their non-native Spanish speaker-students than their native counterparts. Despite their awareness of this favorable position, they strongly disproved of teaching grammar in isolation and using classroom time for a deductive presentation of grammar. Allen and Valette (1994) described a deductive approach as a dry and technical way of learning grammar, which involves presenting rules and patterns to students and providing ample opportunity for them to practice the new feature of grammar. At first, I thought that the teachers would support the idea that knowledge of vocabulary alone is insufficient for communication since their main strength was related to their grammatical expertise. However, they did not subscribe to any approaches to the teaching of grammar. Contrary to the studies conducted by Medgyes (1994), where he observed non-native teachers of English focus more on grammar rules over language in use, the non-native teachers in this study declared how they put most emphasis on teaching grammar in context and communicating and less emphasis on rule-based grammar lessons. In alignment with the study related to world language teachers conducted by Liaw (2009), the teachers in this study perceived teaching communicative language as more significant than increasing students' understanding of grammar.

The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2007) advanced the notion that world language instruction in the United States should include more than communicative and grammatical competence. Since then, the NYS Education Department (2019) requires language instructors to have cultural competence and demonstrate that they can teach

intercultural communicative competence. Different from the literature related to non-native graduate instructors of German, my participants did not position themselves as insecure and less confident about the goals for ways to teach culture (Ghanem, 2015). Rather, the participants in my study expressed an awareness that culture has taken an essential place in world language teaching, as they emphasized the importance of teaching cultural competence. Although they felt most connected to Spanish-speaking countries they visited and studied in, they reported being very comfortable and confident about integrating culture into their teaching to develop intercultural competence in their learners. As non-native Spanish teachers, their perceived responsibility is not only to be attentive to the changing landscape of the Spanish language curricula but also to stay current with the language and the changing cultures in the Spanish-speaking world.

Thompson and Fioramonte (2013) suggested that non-native Spanish-teaching assistants teaching first-year and second-year Spanish courses felt less competent teaching learners at a more advanced level. Similarly, my participants reported being less interested in teaching advanced levels of Spanish, but not for lack of training or qualifications. Although some of the teachers taught Advanced Placement Spanish courses at the time of the study, they reported that they needed quite a bit of convincing to take on the course and evidence of positive student scores on the final benchmark assessment as validation to continue doing so.

The participants in this study positioned themselves as being better suited for teaching introductory levels of Spanish despite having completed additional training for teaching Advanced Placement Spanish courses. Based on our conversations, their perceived role of being the more influential instructor for non-native Spanish speaker-students, who share the common experience of learning Spanish as an additional language, strongly influenced their preference.

Furthermore, one might reasonably assume that the amount of criticism they receive in the classroom when teaching native Spanish speaker-students might have influenced their position. Nevertheless, similar to the finding of researchers Hertel and Sunderman (2009), all participants positioned themselves as better at empathizing with their non-native students' struggles. Consistent with a previous foreign language study (Liaw, 2009), which discussed that non-native speaking language teachers were considered better role models for students, participants in this study also reported being better at anticipating students' learning problems. They located themselves as being more understanding of their non-native Spanish-speaking students.

Unlike in Liaw's (2004) study, my participants did not mention if they felt more or less qualified to teach high-level reading and writing in the target language. However, one participant emphasized feeling most qualified to teach literary analysis to her students in her advanced placement courses as a result of the quality of the Spanish pre-service university-level training courses. This conversation raised the question of not only the disparity in the quality of Spanish college-level courses but also the types of Spanish degrees offered by universities and the potential impact they might have on the language instructors' pedagogical and linguistic confidence.

Concerning how the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study assume that others position them with the native speaker fallacy, the findings in this study revealed an unspoken awareness of societal stereotypes of their non-native status in that teachers did not explicitly state these stereotypes. However, their conversations revealed the many ways they work toward remedying certain aspects of their craft directly related to them. Furthermore, there was a strong emphasis on sustaining the integrity of the self, which is closely related to the principles of self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988). All the participants in this study made an effort to state that

most of their insecurities do not come from other people's perspectives and that they are well respected and sought after as language educators within their school community. Yet, I found that the participants put great effort into responding in ways to restore self-worth.

During our conversations, the teachers rationalized their perceived strengths and shortcomings and discussed how they rectified their perceived negative views related to their language-teaching abilities. They emphasized components of their professional practice that they value most and attributed these components to their non-native status. Last, they shared stories of how they learned to diffuse threat in the classroom and developed self-regard, mainly influenced by overcoming challenges. Self-affirmation theory suggests that when individuals face threat to domains related to the self, which are roles, values, and belief systems, they are motivated to protect their self-integrity or maintain a positive image of themselves (Steele, 1988). In alignment with self-affirmation theory, the participants in this study are faced with information that threatens their self-integrity, and the response to this information is defensive. As a result, one could surmise that this group of participants' defensive reactions could be their attempt to minimize threat to preserve the sense of self.

Surprise Findings

The non-native Spanish speaker-teachers in this study reported having limited experiences with the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy. I was surprised to hear that they did not experience many of the challenges surrounding this ideology. Yet, most of the participants put great effort into responding in ways to restore self-worth, and many conversations addressed the shortcomings that the literature often associates with non-native language teachers. It was also unexpected to hear that one participant did not experience any external negative stereotypes about being a non-native Spanish speaker-teacher. Many teachers

worldwide report being affected by the native speaker fallacy, and this topic continues to be prominent, which most teachers are aware of and would rather not discuss or mention (Tsuchiya, 2020). To make sense of this, one can surmise that the non-native teachers in this study (a) did not have high exposure to native speaker-teachers or instructors during their language learning and teaching journey, (b) would rather not discuss or mention being affected by the phenomenon while they are still employed, or (c) did not have enough time to recall experiences related to this phenomenon.

Another surprising finding was related to a discrepancy in the literature related to pedagogical characteristics attributed to the non-native speaker teacher. Medgyes (1994) emphasized the importance of identifying and addressing the weaknesses of non-native speakers, empowering them with the opportunity to improve upon the areas that were revealed in his research. With regard to instructional approach and non-native teachers' shortcomings, the researcher described that the non-native instructors he observed adopted a more cautious, strict, and guided approach for their students. Although a guided approach might not appear ideal to this researcher, it is considered ideal in a secondary setting and instead favored when rating teachers' performances. According to the framework proposed by Danielson (1996), a widely used evaluation rubric for rating teachers in the United States, it is crucial for teachers to show evidence of a well-planned lesson or unit that aligns with their students' assessments. A guided approach more often considers the various learning needs of individual students or groups, and a well-defined structure is an essential component of a coherent instructional unit. I was surprised to learn that an "unfavorable" approach to language teaching is also considered a "highly favorable," age-appropriate, pedagogical component of teachers' professional practice, based on Danielson (1996) teacher evaluation rubric.

Trustworthiness

I used multiple sources of data collection to triangulate data and uncover themes. As an insider-researcher, I relied on reflexivity and accounts of the research process for establishing auditability. I considered the multiple perspectives of the participants by being balanced in my reporting, in an effort to ensure trustworthiness.

The incorporation of six purposeful in-depth interviews enabled me to assess a range of lived experiences surrounding the phenomenon of the native speaker fallacy, which provided new dimensions and commonalities of experience. I used verbatim quotes from participants when discussing the findings rather than using research-derived codes. I ensured the reliability and validity of my study through the triangulation of different participants.

I provided a detailed outline of the essential steps in my method of inquiry and provided themed verbalizations of the teachers' lived experiences in the final report. In addition, the ways data were collected, participants' reflections of their experiences, and interpretations developed were in alignment with the philosophical foundations of the method used. Peer debriefing was another strategy I used to increase trustworthiness. I consulted with members of my dissertation committee during the study design, data collection, and data analysis. I also received support in defining and or refining analytic research codes. Last, triangulating the data through peer debriefing and consulting with different participants for clarification purposes illuminated consistencies and contradictions amongst participants.

Limitations

A key aspect to derive from this phenomenological study is the need for future researchers to acknowledge and confront the potential implications that an insider positionality brings. Since I chose to study a group to which I belong, my insider perspective attempted to

emphasize the multiple lived experiences reported from the perspective of my participants to explore the phenomenon with a greater degree of objectivity. It is precisely through the process of reflexivity that I recognized that my prior experiences, assumptions, and beliefs could have potentially influenced the research process. Consequently, my insider perspective could have potentially assumed incorrectly that the non-native Spanish speaker-teacher shared similar characteristics to myself.

Second, I could have enriched the findings if I could have recruited more participants. Given my phenomenological design, however, the goal was to learn the lived experiences of these participants by hearing from them thoroughly, so a more comprehensive investigation of just one participant's perspective could have also provided meaningful information (Vagle, 2018). Since the majority of the participants were White females, the study would have benefited from having an increasingly diverse group of non-native Spanish speaker-teachers and more of a male presence. Regarding the diversity in the non-native teachers' linguistic background, the study could have also considered selecting non-native instructors with a similar criterion. Although it is highly unrealistic to define who a non-native speaker-teacher is, one might reasonably surmise that there is a great difference among the teachers who identify as non-native. For example, although Elisa learned Spanish as a young adult, she had prior knowledge of a language with great lexical similarity to Spanish since childhood, whereas Anna did not. The increased diversity in the non-native Spanish speaker-teachers' background could potentially make a difference in the lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy.

Last, in phenomenological research, there is a concern that existing literature "could put at risk the phenomenologist's philosophical and methodological commitment to remain as open as possible to the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2018, p. 79). In my experience as an insider researcher, I

have found that the literature review assisted me in understanding the previously mentioned misconception by providing additional insights and a comprehensive understanding of existing research.

Although my participants received a consent form and an email providing a brief explanation of the research being conducted, it was not enough to help them share ample and detailed information related to the phenomenon. During the interviews, the participants asked many questions about the native speaker fallacy. They also seemed unsure about how to answer some questions related to their self-efficacy. Perhaps my participants might have shared more detailed information about the topic if they had more information related to the phenomenon. Future researchers should consider providing knowledge of the research surrounding the native and non-native teacher dichotomy and the common misconceptions associated with being a non-native instructor.

Implications for Practice

These research findings warrant the following implications for future teachers who identify as non-native Spanish speaker-instructors. First, novice non-native Spanish speaker-teachers should become familiar with the literature surrounding the native and non-native speaker dichotomy as well as the native speaker fallacy, since it is a reality they will have to face as new teachers. By becoming familiar with this literature, they can feel empowered to vocalize their perceived strengths and have an opportunity to judge discrepancies found in the literature related to favorable and unfavorable characteristics of language instructors.

Since this study revealed that the teachers' pre-service mastery experiences were influential in developing the teachers' self-efficacy of language-teaching abilities, colleges and universities training new teachers should not only expose teachers to the literature surrounding

the native and non-native teachers' dichotomy but also ensure that the teachers have access to a program that offers the previously mentioned experiences. The teachers who taught higher-level classes at the time of this study reported a sense of accomplishment and higher confidence after they received encouragement and after several years of teaching these classes. In alignment with Liaw's (2009) study, the experience in teaching different levels of students in different contexts can potentially contribute to the efficacy in teaching higher-level classes. In addition, providing teachers with this opportunity could potentially develop a level of an efficacy equivalent to or greater than native-speaking teachers (Liaw, 2009).

Second, the research into native and non-native teachers offers valuable knowledge for those who are not only entering the field of Spanish teaching but also for those who employ Spanish language teachers. World language administrators and supervisors should consider pre-service and in-service training for all Spanish language instructors that focuses on developing strong efficacy expectations. The way to establish this confidence in both native and non-native teachers is to acknowledge their pedagogical differences, uncover and discuss the perceived advantages of each instructor to maximize the language experience of all students, and establish communities of practice that can help dismantle the divisive nature of societal stereotypes.

I recommend taking a closer look at Wegner's (1999) framework of communities of practice. This framework captured the critical aspects of teacher identity development that could lead native and non-native teachers of Spanish to have a raised existential consciousness and emancipated sense of self. Communities of practice consist of groups of people that have a constant interaction around a shared passion or concern and want to get better at what they do as they interact regularly. To be effective, they should include the following dimensions: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). For world language teachers,

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building communities of practice could be a way to communicate and share experienced reality, which contributes to a sense of teacher identity and teacher effectiveness. Fraga-Cañadas (2011) recommended that through well-organized communities of practice, non-native speaker-teachers can experience encouragement for their educational practices and their sense of self-efficacy—namely because nativeship issues of non-native teachers give unnecessary weight to their language abilities in relation to their abilities as capable teachers.

More specifically, the concept of communities of practice focuses on participation to support learning and increase the sharing of an individual's most valuable insights (Wegner, 1999). It is a space where teachers get support, get and share new ideas, and connect with their colleagues. I recommend providing support and resources for all world language teachers with a series of professional development courses that increase opportunities to come together and ask questions, share resources, and remain plugged into current literature surrounding their capabilities as language instructors. Furthermore, creating a forum for educators to address their issues and learn from the group can strengthen the relationships among teachers and encourage them to become better at what they do (Wenger, 1998). For communities of veteran, novice, native, and non-native teachers alike, this means that learning involves engaging in and contributing to the practices of their language community.

At the high school level, a member of the administrative team or a teacher interested in this type of language community could recommend creating this type of space that may interest (a) a mentor teacher or administrator overlooking a new teacher-mentoring program or (b) a world language supervisor and/or administrator of a school or a district. Specifically, world language supervisors could be instrumental in creating a series of face-to-face professional development opportunities at the beginning of the school year to help all teachers determine what

values they want to promote in their communities of practice while also taking the opportunity to share their specific department vision and mission. After creating opportunities for community-making activities—a space and/or an online platform to use and interact with each other—the members of the group work toward a shared goal of how to do things better and further their knowledge (Wegner, 1999). In addition, I suggest launching communities of practice that can last and grow throughout the years. The initial interactions might have to be guided and implemented through a series of professional development courses and/or different types of professional meetings that provide incentives such as in-service hours that encourage a salary increase. For increased flexibility, convenience, and longevity, I recommend the extension of communities of practice to an appropriate online platform accessible to the target audience. To keep the community engaged, appointing a teacher who could onboard members and engage in continuous conversations should be considered. Last, the appointed teacher might also receive an incentive to devote their time to promoting the community.

Fraga-Cañadas (2011) highlighted that when teachers in communities of practice see that the other teachers are struggling with similar problems and insecurities and the experienced teachers can help them, they feel a sense of belonging, mutual trust, and confidence. This experience helps them validate their professional identity and increases their teacher self-efficacy.

Recommendations for Further Research

The research on non-native and native speaker-teachers of English is plentiful. I recommend more studies specifically dedicated to native and non-native Spanish instructors at the high school level. During the recruitment process of the non-native teacher participants, there were many native Spanish speaker-teachers interested in being participants in my study.

Although they did not fit the criteria, they found the topic interesting and wanted to contribute. A study that explores the lived experiences of native speaker-teachers of Spanish across different public schools on Long Island could assist in understanding the extent of their revealed privileged status while also taking into account the general understanding that, as previously discussed in Chapter 3, school districts on Long Island have significant racial and ethnic disparities in student and faculty populations and that this reality may impact their lived experiences.

Concerning participants, researchers looking to capture information about non-native Spanish speaker-teachers should consider the teachers' linguistic background during recruitment. As discussed previously, the teachers who were introduced to an additional language during childhood with great lexical similarity to Spanish could potentially impact the findings of the phenomenon in question. For example, this study revealed that Elisa did not share the same negative perceptions of her language-teaching abilities as the other participants due to her past experiences with learning an additional language as a child. Another impactful criterion to consider is the participants' years of teaching experience. For example, Berta was the participant with the least number of years teaching, and as a participant, she also shared the least amount of information related to the phenomenon and the fourth theme that highlighted how the non-native teachers overcame negative self-concepts through resilience. Also, she heavily focused the main components of her professional practice on the instruction domain instead of the classroom environment domain.

Last, this study took place in a suburban environment across districts with a diversity score lower than the state average. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the highly segregated districts on Long Island contribute to school settings that are over-represented by a specific racial and or

ethnic student body population. In this study, five districts had a student body population and faculty that was disproportionally White, and one district had predominantly Asian students and White faculty. The location of these school districts impacted the findings in this study because the lack of diversity in these schools creates an environment that limits interactions between non-native Spanish teachers and native Spanish teachers as well as interactions with Latino students and their families. This is an unfavorable situation, because the primary purpose is to teach and learn about the Spanish culture and language—which is best embodied by the Latino population. For future research, it would be valuable to conduct a study with a similar design in urban or rural environments. Additionally, exploring other suburban communities could yield different results and reveal diverse experiences related to the phenomenon.

Conclusion

Although many teachers worldwide report being affected by the native speaker fallacy, this continues to be an enormous topic that most teachers are aware of and would rather not discuss or mention (Tsuchiya, 2020). More important, some hesitations to discuss this topic point to the persistent existence of the power relationship between native and non-native speakers, limited studies in the world language field, and the idea of viewing native speakers as the idealized linguistic standard (Tsuchiya, 2020). Since native-speaker bias impacts language teachers and learners, the goal of this study is to increase the crucial conversations surrounding nativeship concerns, to empower all language teachers, and improve the language-learning experience of learners. Another aim of this study is to put forth the idea that differences between native and non-native Spanish speaker-teachers are valuable. However, researchers should not use these differences to highlight the shortcomings of each group of teachers. These differences should be brought to light and discussed to dismantle the divisive nature of societal stereotypes.

These differences result from unique and meaningful lived experiences that produce a rich and diversified instructional approach specific to each type of language instructor. Researchers and educators should value all approaches for their worth, which is their unique way of enriching students' language-learning experiences.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Molloy College

1000 Hempstead Ave., PO Box 5002, Rockville Center, NY 11571-5002
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Kathleen Maurer Smith, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate Academic Affairs
T: 516.323.3801
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E: ksmith@molloy.edu

DATE: July 27, 2021

TO: Orsola Dutra, EdD
FROM: Molloy College IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1787636-1] Understanding the Lived Experiences of Nonnative Spanish Teachers: A Phenomenological Investigation of the Native Teacher Fallacy

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: July 27, 2021

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Molloy College IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations. However, exempt research activities are subject to the same human subject protections and ethical standards as outlined in the Belmont Report.

This acknowledgement expires within three years- unless there is a change to the protocol.

Though this protocol does not require annual IRB review, the IRB requires an annual report of your exempt protocol (Expedited and Exempt Research Protocol Annual Report Form) which is available on the IRB webpage.

If there is a proposed change to the protocol, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to inform the Molloy College IRB of any requested changes before implementation. A change in the research may change the project from EXEMPT status and requires prior communication with the IRB.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Eckardt at 516-323-3711 or peckardt@molloy.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Patricia Eckardt, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Chair, Molloy College Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

For all respondents: The purpose of the study will be explained to the participants by the researcher, and any questions related to the consent form or the study will be answered prior to the beginning of the study. The researcher will explain that the interview is confidential and that the information gathered during the interview will be used for educational purposes only. The interview will take about 90 minutes of their time. The subject will sign the informed consent to the researcher prior to the interview and will give verbal agreement to participate in the study and agree to be recorded at the beginning of the interview.

Date: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Release form signed: ( ) YES ( ) NO

Country of birth: _____

Years of teaching: _____

Major and degree _____

Do you identify as a non-native teacher of Spanish? ( ) YES ( ) NO

Languages spoken other than English: _____

Language(s) teaching this school year: _____

Do you currently work with a native teacher of Spanish? ( ) YES ( ) NO

Level of Spanish language classes that you have taught (refer to the AATSP levels below):

    Level(s): _____

    Grade(s): _____

    AATSP National Spanish Examinations competition levels:

_____ Level Pre01 (Grade 6) _____ Level 01 (Grade 7) _____ Level 1 (Grade 8)

_____ Level 2 (8-12) _____ Level 3 (9-12) _____ Level 4 (10, 11 or 12)

_____ Level 5 (11 or 12) _____ Level 6 (11 or 12) _____ AP Language/Literature

Average size of class(es) currently teaching:

_____Less than 10 students   _____ 11-15 students
_____16-21 students   _____ More than 22 students

I. Introduction:

Brief Project Description:

  Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study. My research focuses on non-native speaker teachers of Spanish and their lived experiences of the native speaker fallacy or the common misconception that the native teacher is the better teacher of a target language. More specifically, I want to explore how you view yourself as a non-native speaker teacher of Spanish, the successes and challenges that you experience as a non-native speaker teacher of Spanish, how you experience nativeship issues and the native speaker fallacy, your direct and past experiences with teaching Spanish as an additional language, and your perceived abilities as a non-native teacher.

_____

Introduction:

Please state your name, position and course(s) you teach.

 1. Do you identify as a native or non-native teacher of Spanish? Why?
  Probe: How and why did you learn Spanish?
  Probe: Did you live or study abroad?
   Probe: Do you have a connection to a specific Spanish-speaking country/community? If so, can you explain why?
  Probe: What was your college major/minor?
  Probe: What experiences have you had related to taking Spanish courses/methodology courses and being a non-native speaker teacher of the language you were studying?
  Probe: What about your student teaching experience?

Teaching Experience:
 2. What drew you to the teaching profession, and your current position?
  Probe: How many years have you been teaching Spanish as an additional language?
  Probe: Have you worked in different districts before your current teaching position?
  Probe: What experiences have you had teaching in different districts related to being a non-native teacher?

 3. How have your past experiences with learning the Spanish language shaped your teaching style?
  Probe: Do you believe that your teaching style/ teaching method is the same or different from other teachers of Spanish? Explain. By teaching style I mean teaching strategies and methods employed.
  Probe: Which language skill (listening, speaking, reading and writing) do you put most emphasis on? Explain.

To clarify what these terms mean, I am going to define what I mean by using the term "native speaker fallacy" in my next questions. The native speaker fallacy is the notion that the native language teacher is inherently the better instructor regardless of their teaching skill (Walelign, 1986; Phillipson, 1992). Nativeship issues are concerns with being a native or non-native speaker teacher of a language. Are you familiar with these terms?

Non-native Speaker Fallacy:
 4. What does the term "non-native teacher of Spanish" mean to you?
  Probe: Do you think that this term has a negative connotation? Explain why or why not.
  Probe: When have you heard this term before, if at all?

 5. In your opinion, do you believe the native speaker fallacy plays a role in your professional life? Why or why not?
  Probe: Is there a hierarchy between you and the native speaker teachers? Explain.

 6. What experiences have you had related to nativeship issues or the native speaker fallacy?
  Probe: Tell me about a time that you were questioned by students, parents, or colleagues about your ability to teach Spanish as a non-native teacher?
  Probe: Do parents request certain teachers because of nativeship?
  Probe: Are there specific lessons or classes that you feel the nativeship fallacy the most? Explain.
  Probe: What about experiences related to student teaching/studying abroad/ college level courses and/or professional development workshops/courses?

 7. What would you say is your level of confidence in teaching Spanish?
  Probe: Is your level of confidence most closely related to the years of experience you have teaching the language?
  Probe: Is it related to your language dominance and knowledge of the culture?
  Probe: What are your greatest successes and challenges with teaching Spanish?

 8. What types of experiences help you stay current with the language?
  Probe: Travel, PD, other experiences?

Self-efficacy:
Before my next questions, I am going to define what I mean by using the term self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). Overall, our belief in our own ability to succeed plays a role in how we think, how we act, and how we feel about our place in the education community. Self-efficacy also determines what goals we choose to pursue, how we go about accomplishing those goals, and how we reflect upon our own performance in the classroom.

 9. What factors do you identify as influencing your professional self-efficacy to teach Spanish? (outside circumstances, number of students, pre-service teaching experience)

 10. Is being a non-native teacher of Spanish a factor that influences your professional

self-efficacy? Why or why not?

11. In what ways do you believe that being a non-native speaker teacher of Spanish impacts the language learning of your students?
     Probe: Did you ever have any concerns with being a non-native speaker teacher?
     Probe: Do the students ever compare you and the native teachers?
     Probe: Do you tell your students about your background, why or why not?

Positioning of self and others
Before my next questions I am going to clarify a few terms. "Positions" can be defined as a collection of beliefs that you have with regard to rights and duties to behave in a particular way. When I refer to "rights" I am referring to what a person is owed by others. When I refer to "duties" I am referring to what a person owes to others.

12. As a non-native teacher of Spanish do you find yourself in an advantageous position?

13. What do you think is your perceived duty (what you owe to others) as a non-native Spanish language teacher to your students?

14. What do you perceive are your rights (what you are owed by others) as a non-native Spanish language teacher? For example, how would you finish this sentence "As a Non-native teacher I have the right to ....."
     Probe: What do you think should be provided or should have been provided to you by your district/supervisors/college professors during your years of teaching?

15. How do you describe yourself and others in your language community regarding teaching Spanish as an additional language (perceived ability of teaching the language)?

Reflection on the Meaning

16. What is it like to be a non-native teacher of Spanish in a school with native teachers?

17. Lastly, what advice would you give non-native teachers of Spanish during their first years of teaching?
Probe: What advice would you give non-native teachers during the hiring process?