The role of ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions in Spanish language maintenance and identity

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Abstract:
Language is undoubtedly the most salient determinant of ethnic identity. Individuals may encounter difficulty when claiming identification within a specific ethnolinguistic group if the linguistic factor is absent. Lamentably, language is one of the first elements of immigrant culture that vanishes over generations. The significance of language maintenance results in maintaining solidarity and integration in the ethnic group, which is vital for the formation of ethnic communities. This research addresses a number of aspects regarding language maintenance among second-generation Argentineans living in the city of the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia. This study focuses on the importance of maintaining the Spanish language and identity and the strategies employed for the preservation of the Spanish language. This paper investigates the language maintenance of 24 second-generation Argentineans aged 18-35, from endogamous and exogamous marriages. It examines various domains such as the home, social networks, visits to Argentina, the Spanish media and other spheres of Spanish language activity, and includes some reflections on the future of Spanish in Australia.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistics, language maintenance, Argentina, Spanish, English, Australia

1. Introduction
Australian studies on heritage language use shows that the family is crucial for language maintenance (Martín, 1999; Clyne & Kipp, 1997). In order to understand and highlight linguistic loyalty issues referring to second generation Argentineans language maintenance and identity, it is important to review the history of Argentinean immigration to Australia from 1970 onwards. During the 1970s there was an increase in Argentinean immigration to Australia, thus this study concentrates on a small cohort of the children of some Argentinean immigrants currently residing on the Gold Coast within the 18-35 age group. Argentineans originate from distinct ethnic backgrounds and traditions and this may or may not have an effect on the transmission of the Spanish language to the second generation. The topic of heritage language maintenance is extensively documented in the United States of America,
yet worldwide academic studies investigating second-generation Argentineans in general are non-existent.

This paper addresses sociolinguistic research that is not well represented in Australia, in spite of the importance and visibility of diverse ethnic groups. There is only a limited number of publications on this topic, especially in regards to the wave of Spanish immigrants to Australia, and no publications which explicitly differentiate the second generation in terms of endogamous (i.e., married within the ethnic group) or exogamous (where one spouse is married outside the ethnic group).

2. The Argentinean community in Australia

Argentineans originate from a variety of European and South American cultures. They are not ethnically homogenous, and are of diverse ancestry. As evidenced by their surnames and their homeland’s history, they are of diverse ethnic descent, most being of Italian or Spanish origin, with some being of French, German, British, Jewish, Russian or Polish background (Lukas, 2001). Differences amongst Argentineans can be found depending on their cultural heritage, racial mixture, socio-economic class, ideology and level of education. Argentina was once a prosperous nation known for being a recipient of immigrants. However, during the 1970s Argentina began to experience emigration as its economy and standard of living markedly declined compounded by political issues (Solimano, 2002). Many Argentineans immigrated to countries like Australia, seeking improved economic and living conditions. It was during the 1970s and 1980s that 80 percent of first generation Argentineans received Australian Government travel assistance to immigrate to Australia. Argentineans in Australia were a small immigrant community and census records from January 1974 to mid 1985 reveal that 6,572 Argentineans immigrated to Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008b).

Australian Statistical census data records from 1970 onwards show that Argentinean settlers in Australia generally had a relatively high level of education (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008). They were urbanized, skilled workers and had basic knowledge of the English language upon arrival to Australia (Ibid). The latest 2006 Australian Census reported that 8,957 Argentineans claimed Argentinean ancestry, either alone or with another ancestry (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008a). Moreover, the main languages first generation Argentineans spoke at home were Spanish (74.2%), English (18.2%), and Italian (5.2%). In the city of the Gold Coast where this study was conducted, Spanish was tabulated as tenth out of the top 10 languages spoken at home. There were 11,370 Argentineans residing in Australia of which 1,060 lived in Queensland (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). This study utilized Giles and Johnson’s (1981, 1987) Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory as its theoretical framework, which will be discussed below.

3. Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory

Giles and Johnson (1981; 1987) developed the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory emphasizing the importance and use of language as a salient marker of ethnicity, and as such, is one of the most important articulations of ethnic identity both at an individual and group level. This theory claims that ethnic in-groups seek to achieve ‘psychological distinctiveness’ from out-groups by utilizing language as a means of social comparison with other groups. As individuals are simultaneously members of different groups, it is through language that one or another of these group memberships becomes salient at any given time (Giles & Johnson, 1987).

Many factors contribute to the ethnolinguistic vitality of a group. Giles and Johnson
(1987) postulate that the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group can be measured by examining three ethnolinguistic vitality factors which form part of their theory: (1) Demographic characteristics; (2) Institutional support; and (3) Status factors. These three ethnolinguistic vitality factors, discussed further below, were applied to assess whether and how the second generation maintain the Spanish language and their Argentinean identity.

Demographic factor

The demographic factor is essential in determining language maintenance and shift (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977). Important demographic factors include family, the number of minority language speakers in the community, and their geographical distribution. For Australian-born children of immigrant families, the presence of non-English speakers in the family is conducive to language use and maintenance. Australian case studies (Cavallaro, 1997; Katsikis, 1997; Murray, 1996) show that grandparents and relatives whose English is limited play an important role in language maintenance. Visiting their parents’ home country can also have a positive effect on language use and maintenance. These visits not only provide a real immersion into the heritage language but also an opportunity to acquire group registers and to use Spanish with family. Access to the heritage language via electronic, visual and other media has also dramatically increased. New media which includes interactive media such as smart phones, social network websites, videos, computer games, email and chat rooms may be more attractive to heritage language users.

Fishman (1991) also describes the role of various institutions in language maintenance within an ethnolinguistic community, such as language schools, libraries, print and broadcast media, religious congregations, social clubs, ethnic restaurants and shops. Additionally, Mackey (2004) notes the significant impact of multilingual broadcasting, the language of computer software, and languages through wired and satellite networks on language maintenance today. The key point made is that for a language to be maintained, it needs to be passed on to, and acquired by, each successive generation.

Media has a fundamental role in reference to change and continuity in finding a balance between cultures. Swedish media, as discussed by Sjöberg (2003) performs a vital role for first generation Swedish women in Greece. Reading online Swedish newspapers, talking online, reading Swedish children’s books, and watching Swedish television programs were common activities. Swedish media was a central means of maintaining their children’s Swedish language skills and culture (Sjöberg, 2003). Thus, the media was an important tool in maintaining this link with Sweden.

Language is tied not only to communication with family but to cultural identity as well, as it is often the parents who decide to teach their children their mother tongue (Fishman, 1991). Over time, many minority languages experience language shift. As children partake in school related activities, and are exposed to media in the majority language, they may feel less positive towards their use of their heritage language.

The arrival of new immigrants may also have a positive influence on language maintenance as new immigrants offer a more extensive network of speakers. Another factor that may contribute to the language maintenance is speaker density (Fishman, 1991). In Australia, Spanish is best represented in the state capitals – such as Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Clyne and Kipp (2000) point out that high concentration alone is not a guarantee for language maintenance. Added to this, as is the case for Australia as a whole, the state of Queensland has not received a significant intake of Argentinean-born immigrants since the 1970s. For these reasons, speaker concentration cannot be a facilitative factor for language maintenance of Argentinean-born speakers.

Consequently, children will encounter challenges in maintaining their parents’ native
language. This generation may not reside or have contact with a community of speakers of their parents’ ethnic language, and thus have inadequate interaction and participation in the language. Whilst parents’ language use at home is critical to a child’s acquisition of the language, sometimes this is not adequate enough for a child to achieve full command (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). In regards to language proficiency (speaking, reading, writing and listing), Clyne and Kipp (1999) yielded evidence of Spanish language attrition from the first generation to the second. Most first generation participants self rated their Spanish language proficiency as “very well” compared to “well” by the second generation (Clyne & Kipp, 1999).

For the Italian, Chinese, Spanish and Arabic community, demographic concentration, generation and parents’ language use patterns are significant in determining language maintenance and ethnic identity (Clyne & Kipp, 1999). The shift towards English occurs more rapidly where there is a lower concentration of first and second generation speakers. Numerical strength, domains of and for language use, ethnic schools, social and sporting clubs, and media are important aspects that contribute to the ethnolinguistic vitality of language maintenance.

Institutional support factor
The second factor affecting group vitality is the institutional support provided by the host country. Institutional support refers to the extent to which the language of the ethnolinguistic group is formally and informally represented in the various institutions of the nation, region, or community (Giles et al., 1977). In this study, formal support refers to whether or not a group has any control over a decision-making process in the institutions, in the mass media, business, and government. Informal support indicates the extent to which a group represents its own interests for public and private activities (Ibid).

Currently, there are no Argentinean cultural or sporting clubs on the Gold Coast or Brisbane, which assists in the Spanish language maintenance of first or second generation Argentineans. The lack of clubs in Queensland is one of the key institutional factors which contribute to Spanish language maintenance. In Sydney, two Argentinean clubs have been established: The Argentinean Social and Cultural Centre of NSW Inc. (2009) and the Argentinean Lidcombe United Club (ALU) Soccer Club. In Victoria, the Centro Argentino de Victoria (2009) [Argentinean Centre of Victoria] established since 1974 continues to this day. Furthermore, the Argentinean Embassy is located in Canberra and the Argentinean Consulate is located in Sydney. Unfortunately, these institutional factors determine the use of the ethnic language, the domains of use, and the cultural and other activities performed in the ethnic language appear to be non-existent in all of Queensland.

Status factor
The third factor, status, is the valorization given to a certain language by in-group members. For example, Spanish enjoys a high status for reasons such as Spanish is spoken by at least an estimated 400 million people worldwide, and it is currently the second most spoken language worldwide (Lewis, 2009). The status variables are those that pertain to the economic wealth of an ethnic community, to its social status, socio-historical prestige and the status of the language used by its speakers.

Australia’s policy toward ethnic languages has undergone significant changes during the last decades. Beginning with a policy of assimilation that discouraged immigrants from using their language and hindered the teaching of heritage languages at schools, it has shifted towards a multicultural view stating appreciation for the contributions of migrants and their heritage to Australia (Smolicz & Secombe, 2003; Clyne & Kipp, 1997). However, this view
principally focuses on the economic advantages of language maintenance (Romaine, 2000), but heritage languages remain vulnerable. In Australia, ethnoscientific community members have few opportunities to use their languages (Smolicz & Secombe, 2003). The lack of Spanish at the educational level hinders the language maintenance of not only second generation Argentineans but those of other Spanish-speaking backgrounds who wish to learn or maintain Spanish.

These three variables may ultimately affect the confidence and self esteem of speakers and by extension the vitality of a language. The more status an ethnoscientific community has, the increased number of speakers in a region, the stronger the institutional support, and the stronger the ethnic identity held by a community, the stronger the ethnoscientific vitality will be. However, the status of any language may depend on a number of issues, such as its relevance in the world, the extent to which it is taught in schools, and the culture it represents.

Factors in Language Maintenance
Language maintenance is a multifaceted notion. It could imply to factors such as the actual use of an ethnic language in addition to an immigrant’s attitude towards it and their language proficiency (Tannenbaum, 2003). Ethnic languages are generally maintained by first generation immigrants. In the second generation, heritage language proficiency usually decreases, whilst by the third generation the majority language becomes the sole language used (Garcia, 2003; Schmid, 2002). The second generation is perceived as the crucial link in terms of a language’s chances of survival. There are several factors that contribute to language maintenance and shift, with the most important being immigration, and the majority’s group attitude towards the language and the ethnoscientific group.

Australian studies examining heritage languages have contributed to a better understanding of factors affecting language maintenance, bilingualism and language vitality. Persistent use of the heritage language proves to be the most successful strategy. Parents and family who persist and continue to speak and use the heritage language with each other and their children are more successful than those who either abandon or decrease their own language use due to their children’s reluctance or who force their children to speak it.

It has been reiterated that families are important in the development of heritage languages; however they are usually affected by the maintenance or loss of ethnic languages (Ng & He, 2004). The language preference parents and children have towards a language will have consequences for their future ability to communicate at more complex levels. Other variables which may contribute to language maintenance is the effect of siblings (order and number) heritage language use in the family (Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 2002).

Nevertheless, for most immigrants and their children, the family home continues to be the main domain for language use. Moreover, family jointly with language maintenance education supported by government policies on language, linguistic and ethnic diversity constitute the main pillars for successful language maintenance. However, unless language maintenance is supported by the education system, the survival of heritage language will be at risk.

Language maintenance studies (Döpke, 1992, 1988; Sauders, 1988) confirm that endogamous families have a greater chance of language maintenance than exogamous families. Paulston (1994) identifies endogamy as one of the main factors contributing to language maintenance. Several studies show various factors affecting intermarriage, such as the relative size and distribution of racial and ethnic populations, parents’ level of education, and their geographic concentration (Hechter & Okamoto, 2001, p. 200).

It is important to remark that all these factors are interrelated. Therefore, many different factors might need to be in play to affect language behavior. The language spoken
by one’s spouse does not determine, by itself, which language survives. However, the speaker of the most prestigious language in an inter-ethnic marriage may determine the chances the ethnic language has of surviving in the home. The language maintenance factors described may vary or may not be applicable to all families of ethnolinguistic groups. Nonetheless, the above ethnolinguistic studies have provided important findings into heritage language dynamics in families.

4. Australian Ethnolinguistic Studies
Language maintenance has been a debated issue whenever languages come into contact. Multilingual societies, such as Australia offer great opportunities for in-depth sociolinguistic studies researching language maintenance and identity.

Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) applied the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory as their study’s theoretical framework. They revealed that the home was the first most important environment for the use and maintenance of the Spanish language in New South Wales. It was discovered that maintaining positive attitudes and beliefs towards Spanish determined how effectively parents transmitted Spanish to their children. Also, Spanish language education was a vital step for the preservation of Spanish in Australia. This was achieved through Spanish language instruction in primary and secondary schools, and Spanish Saturday classes. Furthermore, once children grew up and left the family home, the opportunity for Spanish use was reduced. Institutional support such as Spanish social and community clubs, Spanish-language newspapers, and Spanish radio and television programs assisted in language maintenance. Positive attitudes and beliefs concerning Spanish, identity, bilingualism and the use of Spanish language material such as music, movies and technology supported Spanish language maintenance and identity.

Plaza-Coral, Wright and Fox’s (1998) study on second generation Spanish-speaking secondary school students in New South Wales showed that the Spanish language was one of the main elements in the construction and reconstruction of their identity. Other studies with similar findings were those conducted with the Greek and Turkish communities in Australia. Smolicz (1979) findings on the Greek community in Australia showed that Greeks had high Spanish language maintenance rates. The factors attributed to their high Spanish language maintenance rates included the maintenance of the Greek language and culture in the home, positive attitudes towards the Greek language and identity, their religious participation in the Greek Orthodox Church, and they often married monolingual Greek speakers. Furthermore, Yagmur, Bot and Korzillus’ (1999) research on the Turkish community in Australia revealed high rates of Turkish language maintenance and low rates of shift towards English. Turkish adolescents mostly spoke Turkish with their parents in the domestic domain and in the neighborhood with other Turkish immigrants. Yagmur et al., (1999) established that the Turkish language remains a core value for self-identification, and those more positive attitudes towards Turkish leads to higher ethnolinguistic vitality ratings.

Studies of the German and Dutch community in Australia revealed quite opposite results from those found in the Spanish, Greek and Turkish studies. Clyne and Kipp (1997) and Schmid (2002) indicated that first generation Germans did not maintain the German language in Australia. Results from second generation Germans showed that they are interested in maintaining the German language, as German may provide them with Australian employment opportunities. They also expressed that they would like their children to learn and be exposed to the German language and culture, through family, friends and clubs.

Furthermore, a study by De Bot and Clyne (1994) reported that the Dutch community in Australia showed a low degree of Dutch language maintenance and a high degree of language shift to English. First generation Dutch also believed that they should integrate into
the Australian society, as they perceive that the Dutch language was not useful in Australia.

5. Language Attitudes of Ethnolinguistic groups

Italian-language attitude studies conducted by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988), and Hogg, D’Agata and Abrams (1989) concluded that first generation Italians generally held negative attitudes towards mixtures of the main language varieties (English, Standard Italian and Italian Dialect) when spoken in Australia. Nonetheless, these studies indicated that language purity is being lost from the first to the second generation despite efforts of language maintenance. The shift was particularly high in the home, the one domain considered crucial to intergenerational language maintenance. From another perspective, Rubino (2000) and Cavallaro (1997) found that second generation Italians had high rates of language mixture, with parents speaking Italian and/or dialect, and children using English extensively. For the second generation, Italian and dialect no longer had a communication, but a phatic function (Rubino, 2000.) This indicates that one of the main reasons for the decline of Italian language maintenance in the home domain, perhaps like the Spanish language in Australia is due to its low status and prestige in comparison to the English language.

O’Connor (1994) investigated second generation Italians language and cultural maintenance, and reported that the main reason they considered themselves to be Italian was that they always spoke Italian at home with family and friends. Participants considered ‘family’ rather than ‘language’ to be a core value. The Chinese and Greek community in Australia considered the Chinese and Greek language to have a more crucial role than family (Chiro & Smolicz, 1994).

Additional studies by Bennett (1997), O’Connor (1994), Vasta (1992) and Tamis (1991) discovered that as a reflection of Australian cultural diversity, it was common for the second generation to use their parents’ nationalities or hyphenated identities, referring to themselves as Italo-Australians, Greek-Australians and Dutch-Australians. The formation and affirmation of Italo-Australian identity and culture was found to be attributed by the growth of Italo-Australian youth clubs in Melbourne and Sydney created through the assistance of Italian regional governments, and extremely well advertised and well attended events (Baldassar, 1992). For, second generation Italians, having an Italian or Italo-Australian identity does not necessarily imply a need for the Italian language, since this generation constructed identity can have more salient elements than language (Baldassar, 1992).

Of paramount importance in renewing or establishing contacts with the Italian language and culture are trips to Italy. For the second generation, a trip to Italy can trigger interest in the Italian language and culture. O’Connor (1994) and Miglirino (2000) documented the impact of the Italian experience on the language and culture on the second generation and found it to be a positive effect in shaping their identity.

The second generation is usually decisive in relation to language maintenance. Growing up and going to school in Australia, they are likely to be more proficient in English than their parents’ generation, and it is likely to be up to them whether they will continue the use of their parents’ ethnic language in their daily lives.

Attitudes of the Majority

The attitude of the majority is an ambivalent factor (Kloss, 1966). As pointed out by Clyne and Kipp (2000), this factor’s ambivalence is heightened by additional factors pertaining to the community’s perception of themselves as well as to the individual’s self-identification. The second generation in Hughes (2005) study did not perceive Spanish as having an instrumental value. Their use of Spanish was limited to their interactions with their parents.
The second generation did not communicate in Spanish with their children (third generation), or with their spouses, due to the exogamous nature of their marriages, nor did they speak Spanish in any other domain such as work or social circles. Added to this, the second generation had no significant contact with the Spanish community from the time they left the parental home and no longer participated in any of the community activities or attend celebrations organized by any Spanish clubs.

6. Methodology
In order to provide some insights into the language maintenance and the cultural identity of second generation Argentineans, qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed in 2009 to provide both a richer, deeper insight into the issue, through a semi-structured interview, and a broader, quantitative data approach through a questionnaire format.

The total research sample consisted of 24 second generation Argentineans, aged 18 to 35 - being the children of first generation Argentinean immigrants who came and settled permanently in Australia from 1970. Twenty-four questionnaires were completed and twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted. The following selection criteria were applied to select the participants: a) must have been born in Australia; b) must have at least one parent who was born in Argentina and immigrated to Australia no earlier than 1970; and c) must reside in the city of the Gold Coast, Australia.

7. Domains of Spanish language maintenance
Language maintenance can be determined by domains, and this study found various domains where the Spanish language was used: home, educational institutions, media and other areas of Spanish activity such as visits to Argentina, social networks, reading Spanish books and viewing Spanish films on video/DVD and the internet. These domains are explored in the following paragraphs for those that impact the most on language maintenance and usage, to those which impact the least.

The Home
The most common usage of Spanish language was in the home between parents and their children. The use of Spanish was mainly utilised by those from endogamous marriages. Siblings from both exogamous and endogamous parentage mostly spoke English to one another. In the case where there were children without siblings, he/she maintained the Spanish language far better than those with brothers and sisters. Yet, the first generation always spoke Spanish amongst themselves.

In regards to traditions and customs, the best maintained traditions and customs were the celebration of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Easter and birthdays. The tradition maintained to a lesser extent was Argentinean cuisine. People living in endogamous marriages celebrated Argentinean traditions and customs more frequently than those in exogamous marriages. In the case of exogamous marriages, of those who continued Argentinean traditions, the wife was almost always Argentinean. The parents’ attitudes towards Spanish were also mentioned as an important factor, for example, as one interviewee stated:

Most of the children of Argentinean immigrants who I know speak basic to good Spanish because their parents were enforcing it at home. But, the availability of opportunities to use Spanish is limited. I could barely write Spanish before, but then I became so much more interested.

The Spanish language was considered to be a core value for many Argentinean...
families. According to Smolicz’s core value theory (Smolicz, 1979; 1981), ‘core values can be regarded as forming one of the most fundamental components of a group’s culture. They generally represent the heartland of the ideological system and act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership (Smolicz, 1981, p. 75). Another participant from an endogamous marriage emphasized her reasons for maintaining the Spanish language:

Spanish is my parents’ language and the carrier of our culture. They wanted to maintain the culture and be connected with their origins through access to literature and contacts with other Argentineans. The Argentinean culture is rich and knowing Spanish helps me to understand it.

The popular view among this group was that Spanish does not only exist as a communication medium but it is also an identity-cultural marker.

Social Networks
The second generation mainly had non-Spanish speaking friends (95.3%). This applied regardless of endogamous or exogamous parentage. In contrast, their parents mostly had Spanish speaking friends in Australia (88.2%) and were represented by more endogamous than exogamous marriages. More than half (76.9%) reported that they wished to maintain Spanish by attending Spanish classes and joining Spanish clubs in order to maintain and communicate with other native and non-native Spanish speakers.

Visits to Argentina
Some members of the second generation accompanied their parents on trips to Argentina and were encouraged to learn Spanish. One participant expressed her opinion as follows:

My first visit was a real turning point in my attitude towards Spanish language and culture in Argentina. I spent a lot of time with our cousins and their friends. I began perceiving Spanish as interesting. This visit helped me find my roots and gave me a sense of belonging to a nation with rich traditions and culture.

A study by Dębski (2009) confirmed that visits to Poland also influenced Polish language retention to a greater degree than attendance in a Polish school or participation in Polish social networks.

Institutions of learning
During this research, there were only two major universities and one private high school on the Gold Coast that provided Spanish language instruction. Interestingly, the greatest majority of the second generation attended Saturday ethnic school (35.4%) in either Sydney or Melbourne, with the majority being represented by endogamous parentage. In the cases of exogamous parentage, the mother was Argentinean. Only a few second generation participants (6.0%) attended Spanish classes at university.

Spanish media
The majority of the first and second generation did not receive satellite television at home (87.5%). If they did receive it, the first generation watched it (29.7%) and only a small proportion (5.2%) of the second generation watched it. A very small number (9.7%) of the second generation of exogamous families watched Spanish films on video/DVD. The majority of participants (86.3%) mentioned the success of using Spanish smart phone applications, social network websites, videos, computer games, email and chat rooms in order to explore how these entertainment aspects of such media would assist them as Spanish heritage language users. This view is collaborated by Schmid (2002) and Yagmur et al.,
(1999) in that those individuals who have access to new media can increase their exposure to the heritage language, by enhancing and enriching the heritage language input.

Identity
Language is an integral and pivotal part of ethnic identity and language preferences are important for the retention of identity (Smolicz et al., 1993). In this study, more than half of the respondents (76.1%) identified themselves with hyphenated identities – Argentinean-Australian. This contradicts the study by Markus (1993) who stated that ‘amongst the second generation, a key variable in determining primary identification appears to be the birthplace of parents; this research suggests that where both parents were born overseas – the Australian-born children were more likely to identify with their parents’ country of birth’ (Markus, 1993, p. 44).

A few members of the second generation (12.3%), all of exogamous parentage, identified themselves as completely Australian. This part of my findings agrees with the findings of Smolicz et al. (1993), according to whom those of endogamous parentage were more likely to identify themselves as completely Argentinean and those of exogamous parentage were more likely to identify themselves as completely Australian. Overall, the Spanish language represented the first tangible reality of participants’ ancestry and was a constant reminder of who they are.

8. Language shift rates among different language groups
Among the 24 respondent from this study, those who came from endogamous marriages retained language well while those from exogamous marriages did not, especially when the father was Argentinean. This is supported by Clyne (2003) when comparing language maintenance in the context of other ethnic groups in Australia.

According to Clyne (2003), pre and post-migration experiences of groups and individuals determine the possible shift to English of the ethnic group. Nevertheless, Clyne (2003) also identified other factors such as: cultural similarity to the dominant group, the relative importance of language in the core value systems of different language communities, and the relative size and dispersion of the group. Based on this, one could conclude that there is increasing language shift among Argentineans because of the lack of new immigration, length of residence (and ageing of the population) and lack of geographical concentration. As the above points show, challenges vary greatly depending on the particular circumstance of the family. Despite the difficulty of generalizing about the challenges families encounter, this study identified four main challenges.

First, parents contemplating language maintenance may question their own proficiency level of their own native language. Second, if parents or other family members provide the only input to the child’s language development, how does this affect this generation’s heritage language proficiency? Language maintenance requires a significant amount of effort. Third, parents who are more proficient in English than in their native language as well as parents who are bilingual held the opinion that it is a real effort to continue to speak Spanish to children who are hesitant to use it. Fourth, their parents also comment on the financial investment required to maintain a language successfully: the purchase of materials (books, videos/films, and games) to facilitate language, travel to their native country, and the cost of extracurricular activities to support Spanish language maintenance.

9. Discussion
The Spanish language among the second generation in Australia was on the whole well
maintained and was still a ‘core value’ (Smolcz, 1981), although there were differences of retention among endogamous and exogamous marriages. According to Clyne (2011) ‘in exogamous families across communities, English is either used throughout or is the language of family discourse and each parent interacts with the child in ‘their own language” (p. 54). The most popular domain for Spanish language use is the family home, followed by social communication within the extended family. More specifically, the first generation used Spanish widely, while the second generation used it only with parents and, sometimes, with their friends and grandparents, whilst they talked to brothers and sisters mostly in English. Thus, parents who used Spanish in a consistent manner with their children had more success in heritage language maintenance than those who did not. The first generation always used Spanish when speaking to their relatives, compared with more than two thirds of the second generation who spoke English.

Some of the second generation respondents were proud of their Argentinean ancestry and they wished to maintain the link by taking Spanish classes or joining Spanish clubs in order to improve their Spanish language maintenance. Also, children without siblings maintained the Spanish language better than those with brothers and sisters. Siblings mostly spoke English to each other and only spoke Spanish to their parents or grandparents. However, this research has revealed that the second generation used Spanish media facilities to continue or revive their Spanish.

According to the second generation, their parents believed in maintaining cultural traditions as they did not want to deprive their children of their cultural roots. The participants from endogamous marriages retained Spanish and Argentinean traditions and culture well, while those from exogamous marriages did not. The most important question arising from this paper is what will be the future of the Spanish language in Australia? The answer is uncertain, as it depends on the number of variables. Among these, is the most important factor which is that English is the dominant household language used. It is, therefore, very important to continue research on Spanish language maintenance particularly investigating the dynamics and any links between language and identity, and Spanish language maintenance.

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