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IDEOLOGIES, IDENTITY, CAPITAL, AND INVESTMENT IN A CRITICAL MULTILINGUAL SPANISH CLASSROOM

Abstract:
Although Spanish is a local language in the USA, US Spanish varieties are mostly absent from the language classroom. This practice perpetuates monoglossic language ideologies, which are limiting and detrimental to language learners (García and Sylvan 2011). Conversely, critical approaches take into account the sociohistorical context (Leeman and Serafini 2016) and students' backgrounds to help learners "gain critical understanding of how language is intertwined with social and political structures" (Leeman, Rabin, and Roman-Mendoza 2011b: 481), which may allow students to develop critical language awareness (Fairclough 1992) to identify the production and reproduction of hegemonic language ideologies, and to resist their domination.

This project adopts a critical approach to the teaching of Spanish at the college level while incorporating local Spanish and students' backgrounds into the classroom. The study focuses on a first semester Spanish course where the majority of students are language-minoritized multilinguals and racialized learners with connections to the Latinx community. A small number of students are also Latinxs. Through questionnaires, journals, and semi-structured interviews at the beginning and end of the semester, we describe three case studies to examine how the introduction of a critical approach helps students negotiate their language ideologies, capital, and identities while being engaged in the language learning process. The project draws from research on Norton's identity work (Norton 2000, 2013), language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000, 2004), and Darvin and Norton's (2015) framework to investigate how ideology, identity, and capital intersect and impact learners' investment in the practices and learning of Spanish and their additional languages.

Keywords: critical pedagogy ◆ identity ◆ ideologies ◆ investment ◆ language minorities

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Introduction

Although being bi/multilingual is the norm rather than the exception, prior language experience has been traditionally overlooked in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, partly due to the monolingual and native speaker biases that have placed the monolingual native speaker as the ultimate goal for any new language learner (Cook 2005, 2007; Ortega 2014, 2019). Until recently, the field has seldom considered that bilingual and multilinguals' competence (Grosjean 2008) as well as their lives, minds, and actions (García and Sylvan 2011) are very different from those of monolinguals, and consequently, that acquiring a second language (L2) is very different from acquiring a third or an additional language (Cenoz 2013). A recent multilingual turn in SLA (May 2014) highlights that bi/multilingualism should be the object of inquiry in the field. Ortega (2019) has also claimed that the field should embrace multilingualism and social justice as explicit disciplinary goals. Additionally, social approaches to SLA (Block 2003) continue to emphasize that the sociocultural context in which language learning takes place cannot be ignored. Along the same lines, ecological approaches note that socialization processes of language learners who are already socialized in their primary community include constant reflections about identity, social relations, and their political implications (Steffensen and Kramsch 2017).

Looking specifically at educational contexts, García and Sylvan (2011) argued that "models and pedagogies of second-language education and bilingual education developed in the 20th century generally treat groups as if they were monolingual and acquiring an additional language in a stepwise fashion" (385). Instead of adopting a *one model fits all* approach where individual, cultural, and schooling experiences of the learners are ignored, they suggest adopting a bottom-up approach that recognizes the language practices of students and focuses on the singularity of the individual experience. As García and Sylvan (2011: 391) claim, this type of approach is especially important for language minority students as it provides them with opportunities to "become engaged in their own struggle for liberation and education (Freire, 1970) and to *invest* in the development of their additional language (Norton, 2000)." *Investment*, as conceptualized by Norton, is viewed as "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often-ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton 2000: 10). This conception of investment also implies investment in one's identity as learners understand their relationship with the world and negotiate it while incorporating the new language into their linguistic repertoire.

The link between Freirian critical approaches to teaching languages and Norton's notion of *investment* in the language learning process lies at the root of this project, which takes place in a first semester college Spanish course taught under a critical pedagogical approach that takes into account not only the students' diverse cultural and linguistic background, but also the sociocultural context in which they learn the language. This is done by providing lessons and activities that go beyond Spanish grammar and Hispanic cultures around the world, and place the Spanish language as a current and important site to reflect about history, migration, inequality, racialization, and identity here in the United States. Importantly, given that the institution is located in an area where Spanish is a local language, the project attempts to give visibility to Spanish local varieties (e.g., hybrid and stigmatized) while providing a space for learners to reflect on their own linguistic practices.

In order to explore the impact that this teaching approach has on learners' investment, we draw from research on Norton's investment and identity work (Norton 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce 1995), language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000, 2004), and Darvin and Norton's (2015) framework to investigate how ideology, identity, and capital intersect and determine learners' investment in the language learning process and their additional languages. By means of semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires at the beginning and at the end of the semester, as well as instructor's classroom journals, we explore ideologies about languages (Spanish, English, and students' additional languages) that learners bring to the classroom as an attempt to understand beliefs and dynamics of power with which students approach the learning of Spanish in the classroom. We investigate the way these ideologies affect how students perceive their linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1987, 1991), how students negotiate these ideologies and capital over the course of the semester, and how ideologies shape learners' identities and investment in the classroom. We present three case studies to illustrate our students' journeys as examples of the impact that this approach may have in language-minoritized students.

Teaching Spanish Critically as a Local Language

C*ritical pedagogy* takes into account learners' own being, their interaction with the world, their concerns, and their visions of what they can become (Freire 1970). Advocates for critical approaches in language education (Correa 2011, 2016; Del Valle 2014; Leeman 2014; Leeman and Serafini 2016; Norton and Toohey 2004; Parmeggiani 2019; Pennycook 2001), thus, highlight the significance of acknowledging students' experiences as well as the sociohistorical context in which the language is taught. As Parmegiani (2019) claims, it is important to value the knowledge students bring to the classroom "especially when this knowledge is rooted in languages, dialects, discourse, and cultural practices that tend to be discounted by learning institutes and mainstream society" (xiv). To this end, Leeman and Serafini (2016) suggest including considerations of variation and multilingualism in language courses and call for language education "to incorporate critical considerations of the sociopolitics of language and multilingualism" (65). Other scholars such as Del Valle (2014) also claim that developing students' critical knowledge of the cultural, political, and social dimensions of language must be placed at the center of curriculum planning and syllabus design from the early stages of language learning. These perspectives are in line with *Critical Language Awareness* (CLA) (Clark et al. 1991; Fairclough 1992; Leeman 2018), a proposal for language education that attempts to raise students' awareness on "how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of" (Fairclough 1992: 215). A critical pedagogical approach of this nature is important for all learners but even more so for language-minoritized learners as it allows them to understand critically how "language prejudice is intertwined with broader social hierarchies and power relations" (Leeman 2018: 3) and plays a role in how learners perceive themselves and their relationship with their languages and the language learning process. Ultimately, the goal is to engage students in the cultivation of a critical consciousness to identify social injustices and to act on them.

The impact of CLA on language education has attracted increasing interest in the field of Spanish Heritage Language (HL) Learning (e.g., Beaudrie, Amezcua, and Loza 2019; Holguín Mendoza 2017). Holguín Mendoza (2017) developed a curriculum designed to foster CLA in a HL program in a public institution in the US Northwest. In this article, Holguín Mendoza describes the implementation of the curriculum and the results of a study conducted among 63 students in two courses of the program. The goal of the study was to measure students' development of CLA by means of an attitudinal questionnaire that asked learners if they considered that stigmatized words of Mexican Spanish spoken in the US were correct or incorrect, and if they would use those forms. The results revealed a significant improvement in positive attitudes towards certain language forms in one of the courses. More recently, Beaudrie, Amezcua, and Loza (2019) developed and administered a CLA questionnaire among 301 students enrolled in several Spanish HL courses at four large, public universities in the US Southwest. After conducting validity and reliability tests, a final version of the test was administered to 19 HL learners over a period of 14 weeks using a pretest/posttest design. Their results revealed a significant improvement in students' level of CLA, although, as noted by the authors, behavioral items did not seem to perform as well as attitudinal items, which could be an indication that behavioral changes are probably better captured with qualitative measures. In this manuscript we focus on qualitative analyses because we believe that interviews, instructors' notes, and qualitative information from the questionnaires provide an in-depth look at our students' journeys while engaging with a critical language class.

Since one of the key elements of critical approaches to language education is to acknowledge the sociohistorical context in which the language is learned, it is important to consider where and why students are learning it. As discussed by Leeman (2014), despite the fact that in the USA Spanish is a local language and that Spanish language learners are interested in using Spanish locally, many institutions still teach it as a foreign language. The lack of visibility of the *Spanish in the USA* variety not only reinforces an English-only ideology, but it also portrays monolingual varieties of Spanish spoken outside the USA as the most authentic or desirable (Leeman 2014). Considering only monolingual varieties of Spanish in the language classroom also ignores the presence of other native languages and cultures in Spanish-speaking countries. Several factors are posited to have led to the invisibility of local varieties in language educational contexts in the USA: first, Spanish in the USA is "a minority language historically associated with a population incorporated into the nation via conquest and currently linked in the public imagination to immigration from Latin America" (Leeman 2014: 280). Additionally, negative views of local varieties are reinforced by a *standard language ideology* (Lippi-Green 2012; Milroy and Milroy 1999) or *ideologies of language standardization* (Rosa 2016), i.e., ideologies that "stigmatize particular linguistic practices understood to deviate from prescriptive norm" (Rosa 2016: 162). These ideologies are related to the enlightenment discourse that created the one language-one nation-one people myth (Bauman and Briggs 2003), which in turn helped political elites to imagine and build the modern nation-states. In the context of the United States, this "culture of monoglot standardization" (Silverstein 1996) is wildly spread, and English is considered the language that "ideally express[es] the spirit of [the] nation and the territory it occupies" (Gal 2006: 163). However, cultures of monoglot standardization not only promote the use of a single language; they also assign value to a particular standardized variety (Rosa 2016). Thus, in the US, a standard variety of English has been imposed as the norm, and anyone who wants to be a legitimate member of this nation-state needs to adapt their linguistic practices to that standard.

With regard to Spanish, the most prestigious variety is often associated with Spain because of a Hispanic movement (which later became pan-Hispanic) at the beginning of the 20th century. This movement, led by Spanish academics such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal and his disciple Federico de Onís, "was based on the conviction that the Spanish culture, embodied in the language, persisted as an inalienable link between the Spanish-speaking nations even after the independence of the American territories" (Del Valle 2011: 554). Onís—who founded the discipline of Hispanic Studies in American universities, such as Columbia and the University of Puerto Rico—thought out and executed this movement/project, making Spain's variety of Spanish, its literature, and culture, more prestigious and desirable than any other variety in Latin America or the Caribbean (Degiovanni 2018). In this way, Spain's linguistic variety and culture became hegemonic in American educational institutions. Along those lines, Del Valle (2011) talks about *Hispanophony*, an ideology that establishes a standardized form of Spanish as the link that unifies Spain and Latin America, and stigmatizes US Spanish varieties.

Evidence of a prevalence of a standard language ideology and marginalization of Spanish local varieties in US institutions was found by Burns (2018) in her exploration of a university's beginner and intermediate Spanish as a foreign language courses. In her study, Burns (2018) looked at the treatment of US Spanish in the program textbooks. Additionally, she conducted instructor focus groups hoping to understand teaching practices and strategies regarding sociolinguistic variation and US varieties of Spanish. Her findings revealed that US Spanish varieties were ignored and undermined in the Spanish textbooks used by the institution, which aligns with similar findings in studies investigating language variation in foreign language textbooks (e.g., Heinrich 2005, for Japanese). Additionally, the focus groups showed that instructors felt that the nature of the program, which required them to concentrate largely on grammar, did not give them opportunities to supplement the course with language variation or to use the local Spanish-speaking community as a resource.

The present study will challenge ideologies of language standardization (Rosa 2016), and Hispanophony (Del Valle 2011) by including local varieties of Spanish in a first semester course in an American higher-education institution. We adopt a classification of Spanish language varieties that is in line with translanguaging and speaker-centered approaches inspired by a heteroglossic ideology that accounts for the complex languaging of bilingual Hispanic people in the USA and other Spanish-speaking areas (García and Otheguy 2015). This perspective allows us to consider the ways in which bilinguals skillfully utilize a multiplicity of linguistic features that social conventions assign to specific languages to intervene in a multilingual context such as the USA (García and Otheguy 2015). We see the Spanish classroom, thus, as a space for understanding heteroglossia and "characterized by agency, participation, and engagement on the part of learners and teachers" (Train 2007: 226).

Investment at the Intersection of Identity, Capital and Ideology

Investment was developed by Norton (2013; Norton Peirce 1995) as an attempt to depart from unitary and fixed notions of *motivation* in the SLA field that did not consider the realities of minority populations. For Norton, when learners invest in the learning of a language they "do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will increase the value of their cultural capital and social power" (Darvin and Norton 2017: 3). Additionally, investing in a new language means investing in one's identity, which is complex, dynamic, and often a site of struggle. Although this should be true for any individual, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) highlight that for oppressed and subjugated groups, languages can be appropriated "to legitimize, challenge, and negotiate particular identities and to open new identity options" (13). Consequently, teaching choices and classroom practices adopted by educators will have an impact on the way learners' position themselves and on the way they see and challenge how others position them.

Investment and identity are two areas where research has been rich in the last twenty years (see Norton 2012; Darvin and Norton 2017, for overviews). A recent example of an exploration of identity and investment in an L2 context is a study conducted by Anya (2017) during a 10-week intensive Portuguese study abroad program in Brazil. She analyzed video-recorded student interactions, field notes, weekly student journals, writing assignments from student coursework, and interviews. With four case studies, Anya showed how African American students co-constructed and negotiated multiple racialized, gendered, and classed identities, and how their investment influenced their learning of Portuguese.

In the US, a few studies have looked into investment and identity in educational contexts involving Spanish. For example, Potowski (2004) explored 4 Spanish learners (L2 and HL[1]) in a two-way Spanish-English immersion program. In her qualitative analyses, she found that students' degree of investment in the language varied a lot depending on what they expected in return from the instructor (e.g., strengthening their identity as Spanish speaker and academically-focused student). Leeman (2015) reviewed research on identity and HL learning from different perspectives (e.g., survey-based research, qualitative and ethnographic research), and included studies investigating the impact of critical pedagogical approaches on identity construction. A study conducted in a Spanish heritage program reported in Leeman, Rabin, and Román-Mendoza (2011a, 2011b) incorporated a critical service component where college students of Spanish taught Spanish as a HL at a local elementary school. The study revealed that students developed new identities as language experts and social activists, thus resisting previous identities that perceived them as linguistically deficient. Lowther Pereira (2015) also investigated the impact of service learning during four semesters in a Spanish as a HL course. Quantitative analyses revealed that thanks to the hands-on community experiences students felt more connected with their local Latinx communities, and believed that they made a difference in the community and in their own lives. Similarly to Leeman, Rabin, and Román-Mendoza (2011a, 2011b), qualitative analyses seemed to indicate that engaging in new roles as experts during the service learning experience helped them construct positive identities. More recently, Rolland and Borrachero (2020) investigated, under a critical pedagogical framework, how a telecollaborative project that partnered HL learners from two institutions within the USA provided a space for students to negotiate their identities. Importantly, rather than focusing on varieties from Spanish-speaking countries outside the USA, these three studies incorporated US Spanish into the curriculum.

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[1] HL or heritage speakers are "individuals raised in homes where a language other than English is spoken and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" Valdés (2000, 2005).

Darvin and Norton (2015) proposed an expanded model that places *investment* at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology. In this model, they incorporate capital and ideologies to provide the field with a critical framework that examines how learners "invest in particular practices not only because they desire specific material or symbolic benefits, but also because they recognize that the capital they possess can serve as affordances to their learning" (Darvin and Norton 2015: 46). Additionally, perceiving that their capital has value has a positive impact on their identity. However, certain ideologies disguise or hide the structures of power that prevent the valuation of specific forms of symbolic capital. In spite of that, learners' willingness to belong to an *imagined community* or to take on an *imagined identity* allows them to "gain from or to resist these positions" (Darvin and Norton 2015: 47). In sum, the model helps us understand that learners "have the agency to assert their own identities, negotiate symbolic capital, reframe relations of power, and challenge normative ways of thinking, in order to claim the right to speak" (Darvin and Norton 2015: 47).

Under this model, then, it is important to consider the language ideologies that students bring to the classroom when they engage in learning a language as they influence how the learners perceive their linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1987, 1991) and shape their identity. Language ideologies are values and beliefs regarding language generally, specific languages or language varieties, or particular language practices and ways of using language (Kroskrity 2004; Woolard 1998). Besides the ideology of language standardization (Rosa 2016) described above, examples of popular ideologies among students learning Spanish are that Spanish is easier to learn than other languages or that learning Spanish is increasingly necessary (Bucholtz and Hall 2008). Nevertheless, as noted by Pomerantz (2002), learning and becoming fluent in Spanish seems to be viewed as an advantage for a set group of middle- or upper-class English-speaking students interested in diplomatic, political, and military jobs. On the contrary, learning Spanish for students of Hispanic heritage could be viewed as a *problem* that would set them apart from the model of the ideal English-monolingual US citizen (Salaberry 2009). An issue that, to our knowledge, has not received much attention is how language-minoritized and racialized students perceive the learning of Spanish. Yet, recent linguistic and ethnographic studies describe how language ideologies influence the perception of Latinxs' linguistic practices in the US. According to Flores and Rosa (2015), the belief on the existence and the imposition of standardized American English to linguistic minorities in the US is one of many raciolinguistic ideologies that "conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices" (150). In the case of the students, standardized American English as well as the ideology of *languagelessness,* which "involves claims about a given person's or group's limited linguistic capacity in general" (Rosa 2016: 163), play a crucial role in determining the belonging or exclusion of this minoritized group in the nation-state or their circulation in the job market. These ideologies explain "how some white people who deviate from standardized English linguistic norms are able to ascend to the highest societal ranks [...], while other racialized persons' apparent production of standardized linguistic forms can be stigmatized as language-deficient" (Rosa 2016: 165). At the same time, they explain why Latinxs are expected to speak Spanish (even when they were born and raised in the US) on the job, but their employers do not compensate their linguistic dexterity (Barret 2006).

Purpose of the Study

This study adopts a critical approach to the teaching of Spanish in a first semester language course taught at an American university where the majority of learners are language-minoritized multilinguals and/or racialized learners. In line with critical approaches adopted in language education, we provide learners with an environment in which their linguistic and cultural practices are valued and respected contextualizing language learning with topics such as language and identity, variation, or bi/multilingualism. Additionally, we incorporate the context in which the language is taught by including local Spanish varieties. We investigate the impact of this approach exploring how ideologies, identity, and linguistic and cultural capital intersect and determine learners' investment in Spanish and learners' additional languages. In order to do so, we examine if this approach helps students negotiate their ideologies, perceive their linguistic and cultural capital as symbolic, and shape their identity while being engaged in the language learning process. In sum, we attempt to answer the following research question: How do *identity*, *ideologies*, and *capital* intersect to frame language *investment* when students learn Spanish under a critical pedagogical approach?

Methodology

Institutional Context

The study took place in a public Hispanic serving institution (i.e., it includes at least 25% of Hispanic students, as defined by the US Department of Education) located in an urban area in the northeast of the US (Bronx, NYC) where the majority of the population is Latinx and speaks Spanish frequently. In other words, for many of the students, Spanish is not a foreign, but rather a very prominent and vibrant local language that they hear on a daily basis. It is not surprising, then, that 53% of students at this institution report being Hispanic/Latinx. Additional ethnicities/races reported included: Black/Non-Hispanic (30.3%); White/Non-Hispanic (6.8%); Asian/Pacific Islander (7%); Non-Resident Alien (2.7%); American Indian/Native Alaskan (<1%). The institution also reports that there are 130 cultures represented among undergraduate students and that 35% of the students were born outside of the United States. Other statistics include: age (46% are 22 years-old and under; 14.3% are 35 years-old and over); gender (68% female/32% male); household income (50% below $30,000); and percentage of first-generation college students (56%).

Although reporting being Hispanic/Latinx does necessarily mean speaking Spanish, an average of 200 students per semester take one of the 4 levels offered for HL. This means that students enrolled in these courses are familiar with Spanish local varieties. The institution developed its own heritage placement test, which also separates heritage from non-heritage learners. Non-heritage students (approximately 350 per semester) take the WebCape exam[2] and are placed in one of the 4 levels of what is traditionally referred to as "Spanish for foreign or L2 learners." Although these courses tend to be seen in the USA as consisting of a uniform population (mostly monolingual, often white), the basic and intermediate sequence at this institution consists mainly of language-minoritized and racialized students who may speak languages other than English and Spanish. Additionally, these courses include Latinx students with almost no productive skills and low receptive skills in Spanish.

The study is part of an ongoing project at this institution and is designed to understand the needs of the student population in basic and intermediate Spanish courses while developing and testing curriculum materials that take into account students' backgrounds and the sociohistorical context in which the language is learned. The department chair and language program coordinator approved the study, which was also IRB approved. The approach taken did not involve changing the entire curriculum radically, but rather contextualizing the language lessons with meaningful content. In other words, students had the same syllabus and textbook as other sections of the same level, but critical and social justice issues were incorporated to frame class lessons, assignments, and assessment tools. Importantly, although the syllabus and textbook are the same for all sections, instructors at this institution have the freedom to create their own lessons, assignments (besides those required from the online workbook), and assessment tools. As Osborn (2006) notes, textbooks (as the one used in this institution) often depict an absurd and essentialized world of those who speak the language and do not take into account the real interests of students. Additionally, as Burns (2018) revealed, US varieties are ignored in textbooks designed for second or foreign language learners. We consulted Osborn (2006) and Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell (2014) to link themes found in the required textbook with critical and social justice issues, and we adapted those to our specific institutional context. For example, a typical section that often appears at the beginning of every textbook on *Introductions, origin, and nationalities* was re-framed as a section on *Identity, social categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity, race, ..), and language;* this was done to acknowledge the complex nature of our students' backgrounds (who cannot respond easily to the question "where are you from?") and to allow students to define themselves in their own terms rather than with pre-conceived notions determined by a textbook.

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[2] Developed by Brigham Young University in the 80s and widely used in the USA to place incoming students into foreign/L2 classes at the college level.

Participants and Classroom Context

The study took place in a first semester Spanish elementary course taught in fall 2018 after a pilot conducted to test materials in spring 2018. The protocol at this institution determines that students should be placed in the first semester if they have taken less than 2 years of Spanish in high school or if determined by the placement test. Eighteen students from this class (from a total of 22) were included in the final sample. There were 15 female and 3 male students (average age: 22 years old). Out of the 18 students, 7 students were not born in the United States. Tables 1 and 2 show students' self-reported nationalities, ethnicities, first (L1), L2, and additional languages (L3). For the students not born in the US, the age of arrival is also reported. These students arrived to the area as immigrants or as the children of immigrants, i.e., they are not international or exchange students who come to the US to spend a limited amount of time at an American institution.

Table 1. *Students born in the USA*

Ethnicity/Origin	**N**	**L1**	**L2**
African-American	3	English	
White (Italian roots)	1	English	
Gambia	2	Soninke Wolof	English English
Philippines	*1*	*Tagalog*	*English*
Nigeria	*1*	*English*	*Yoruba*
Puerto Rico	3	English	

Table 2. *Students not born in the USA*

Ethnicity/Origin	**N**	**L1**	**L2**	**L3**	**Age of arrival to the US**
Ghana	2	Twi	English		15, 21
Pakistan	1	Punjabi	Urdu	English	16
Guyana	1	English			20
Korea	1	Korean	English		4
Dominican Republic	*1*	*English*			*2*
Bangladesh	1	Bengali	English		13

Regardless of whether students were born in the US or not, they all have tight connections to their own heritage culture and may be raised in a household where one or more languages other than English are spoken. Although Spanish may be students' third or even fourth language, the context in which they learned their L1/L2/L3 languages (which may involve no literacy development or formal instruction in the language) differs greatly from the way they now learn Spanish. Additionally, students are locals and live mainly in the Bronx.

Although data was collected from all 18 students in the final sample, for this particular manuscript, we chose to focus on three students (see cases in italics in Tables 1 and 2) with very different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which, however, are rather frequent in our first semester classes. The three students were: Jake, born in the US, but of Filipino origin; Josie, born in the US, but raised by her Nigerian parents in the US; and Mario, born in the Dominican Republic, but who arrived to the US at age 2. We chose them also because the three seemed to have had similar experiences connecting with the critical content included in the classroom. The next section describes the procedures followed during the semester to collect data.

Procedures

At the beginning of the semester, participants completed a paper-and-pencil consent form, a questionnaire, and a 20-minute (average) semi-structured interview conducted by one of the researchers. The questionnaire asked students about their language practices and previous home and formal language experiences. At the end of the semester, participants completed an exit questionnaire and a final 30-minute (average) semi-structured interview. Besides personal background information, the interviews and questionnaires (which included Likert-scale and open-ended questions) were designed to ask learners about their ideologies, identity, capital, and degree of investment in their languages. Additionally, the interviews at the end of the semester also asked students about their experience with topics and issues presented in the class. For the three case studies we include in this article, we analyzed their semi-instructed interviews, and complemented them with qualitative answers from the questionnaires, and the instructor's journal notes on classroom observations.

The class met twice a week for 1 hour and 40 minutes. The lessons incorporated critical and social justice issues on a regular basis. We highlight here four ways in which this approach was incorporated:

1) During the first three weeks of the semester, the lessons included activities to help learners reflect on their identity. Students defined themselves in terms of social categories of their choice (e.g., gender, nationality, origin, ethnicity, race, religion, ...) and were asked to reflect on why they chose those categories over others as compared to other students in the class, to the instructor, or to society.

2) Cases of *translanguaging (Spanglish)*[3] were presented so that learners could learn from them and could make connections to their own languages (e.g., Taglish, as mentioned by the Filipino student to refer to the variety used by Filipino speakers when using features of English and Tagalog). An example of how translanguaging was presented comes from a YouTube video (The Mobile Movement 2014) that included young people living in New York speaking in Spanglish and talking about their experience "mixing" their languages. Students had to work on making sense of the meaning and were later

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[3] *Translanguaging* is defined by Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015: 281) as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages." *Spanglish* and *language mixing* were also used in class due to the learners' familiarity with the terms, but we acknowledge that *language mixing* expresses the outsider perspective rather than the individual's personal linguistic competence (Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015). Whether the term *Spanglish* is appropriate or not, as discussed by some scholars (Otheguy and Stern 2013), is beyond the scope of this investigation.

asked to create similar sentences using their own languages. This allowed for a discussion on "mixing languages", thus revealing certain language ideologies and students' perception of their own linguistic capital. Additionally, this exercise also allowed learners to further reflect on the connection between identity and language.

3) Local Spanish was also incorporated through a "Linguistic Landscape" project. Students walked around their own neighborhood looking for Spanish in visible signs and taking pictures. Besides describing what they saw, they were asked to reflect on the presence of Spanish in their neighborhood. The pictures were integrated into the lessons, which allowed for a discussion of students' findings. For example, the instructor incorporated some of the pictures in an exercise that required matching a picture with an activity that could be associated with the picture. This served as a way to provide input (both from the pictures and from the description) and to learn new vocabulary. Following this activity, a conversation opened up in English about the presence of local Spanish in the signs and the expectations that students had regarding the presence of Spanish in their own neighborhoods and in New York City.

4) Students shared their knowledge of local Spanish. Due to the large number of Latinxs from the Caribbean in the Bronx (mostly Dominican and Puerto Rican), both Latinx and non-Latinx students are usually already familiar with these varieties. Audiovisual material (e.g., YouTube videos such as the one described above) with examples from these varieties was presented. Additionally, students were provided with opportunities to share their Spanish knowledge when they worked in class activities (in-group or as a whole class). By doing so, some students became experts in the class, which may have allowed them to change their perception of their linguistic capital.

Importantly, although Spanish or translanguaging (Spanish and English) was used frequently to present and practice the material, the critical reflections were mainly done in English to allow for in depth discussions, which took around 5 minutes depending on the topic and the level of involvement of students.

Analysis and Discussion

In order to answer our research question, i.e., how identity, ideologies, and capital intersect to frame language investment when students learn Spanish under a critical pedagogical approach, we chose three case studies to illustrate our students' journeys. First, we explored ideologies, self-perceived identities, capital, and investment with which the students approached the learning of Spanish at the beginning of the semester. Interviews were transcribed with the application *VoiceRecorder* and edited by the researchers. Next, we analyzed the transcriptions closely and identified students' observations referring to identity, ideologies, capital, and/or investment. Understandably, some students' reflections could be categorized as referring to more than one factor. Both researchers analyzed each case separately and met to discuss findings and discrepancies. Results were complemented with answers in the questionnaires and instructor's notes. The same analysis was done at the end of the semester in order to see whether students' perceptions had changed.

Three Case Studies

Josie

Josie is an 18-year-old female student who was born in the United States and grew up in NYC except for the 2 years she spent in Nigeria between the ages of 10 and 12. Both of her parents are from Nigeria and speak Yoruba at home. In her questionnaire, she reported English as her L1 and Yoruba as her L2, although English is rarely used at home. However, in the interview she mentioned that although her parents speak Yoruba to each other and to her and she can understand everything they say, she mostly responds in English. She also reported that she never uses Yoruba outside of the household.

In her interview at the beginning of the semester, Josie did not consider that Yoruba defined her. This was confirmed in the questionnaire, as she felt neutral about the statement "my language [Yoruba] is part of my identity and I am proud of it." Interestingly, when she was asked whether she considered her language part of her identity in the interview, she said: "Yes, because it is part of the culture." These somehow conflicting messages reveal that she struggled to consider Yoruba an identity marker. Moreover, with her comment "I am not as fluent as I should be" she positioned herself as linguistically deficient in Yoruba and perhaps, then, not entirely entitled of claiming her Nigerian identity. This ideology of *languagelessness* (Rosa 2016) together with the lack of symbolic capital she saw in knowing Yoruba ("I will be fine without it") seemed to determine Josie's level of investment in the language, which was basically limited to speaking a few words with her grandmother.

With regard to Spanish, even though she claimed that it was not really important in her life at that moment, when her co-workers spoke Spanish around her, she was curious to know what they were saying. She also reported having friends who spoke Spanish around her. Interestingly, she reported: "I really want to learn Spanish, and I think I need to, because later in my life, I'm gonna come in contact with someone that speaks another language, like Spanish." For Josie, her *imagined identity* (Darvin and Norton 2015) involved being able to use Spanish to interact with Spanish speakers in the future, which could indicate that she did not perceive the linguistic capital of her co-workers or friends (i.e., local speakers) as symbolic.

During the exit interview, she defined herself as Nigerian. Although she acknowledged that she understood Yoruba, but could not speak it ("I mostly understand it, I just don't know how to speak it"), she called it her native language: "I am currently learning like my native language, my mother's native language, which is Yoruba." We also noticed that her practices had changed. She moved from trying to speak it only with her grandmother to speaking it and trying to learn it from her mother as well: "Mom, how do you say so and so?" At that point, then, it appears that she was using the language to legitimize her Nigerian identity. It seems that the content included in the course, which explicitly attempted to make linguistic diversity in the class visible, allowed her to perceive her linguistic capital as legitimate. This seems to be confirmed when we asked her about her experience in the class: "It makes me feel more appreciated, and how important it is to learn more about your language, your people, and your background." With regards specifically to her interest in learning her language, she said: "I always wanted to, but I was like 'ah, I will be fine without it', but, after taking another class and learning about other people's culture, and how it is important and what not, I wanted to learn more about mine." At the end of the course, Josie seems to be resisting hegemonic practices (i.e., English as the only language needed in America) and exercising agency in choosing what she perceives as beneficial to her existing and imagined identity (Darvin and Norton 2017).

This consciousness-raising may have influenced not only her investment in the learning of Yoruba, but also her investment in Spanish. To this regard, Josie claimed that she knew more about Spanish culture and its speakers and was more interested in learning the language. She also seemed to believe that Spanish was clearly not a foreign language in the USA (as declared in the exit questionnaire). Perhaps the inclusion of the Spanish local variety in the linguistic landscape project helped her change her perception of Spanish: "Some places have Spanish things, but I really didn't know it was this much."

In sum, it seems that the class allowed Josie to change her perception of her language as she realized that her struggles were common among speakers of other languages, including Spanish speakers. At the end of the semester, she perceived that knowing Yoruba had some symbolic capital and, thus, allowed herself to claim it as an identity marker. Similarly, she perceived local Spanish as having some symbolic capital. The approach taken in the class, then, appears to have influenced her investment in Yoruba, and also her investment in Spanish.

Jake

Jake is a 19-year-old male student who was born in the USA, but lived in the Philippines until he was 3 years old, when he moved back to the USA and was raised by his single mother in the Bronx. He reported Tagalog as his L1 and English as his L2. He also reported using Tagalog at home and very rarely outside of the household, including at work. Despite the fact that Tagalog was his L1, he rated his English (6 on a scale from 1 to 6 in all skills) higher than his Tagalog (4 listening, 3 in speaking, and 2 in reading and writing).

At the beginning of the semester, Jake defined himself as Asian and Asian-American. However, when talking about language, he identified more with English than with Tagalog because, in his own words: “I have been Americanized through the years”, reproducing the one language-one nation-one people ideology (Bauman and Briggs 2003) that English is the language associated with being American.

Although he identified as Asian and Asian American, his language practices reflected a multidimensional identity due also to his frequent interactions with the Latinx community from the Bronx. As Norton (2001) suggests, every language learner sees himself as being part of an *imagined community*. In this case, Jake was already part of a community, but his comments seemed to indicate that he felt the need to become fluent in Spanish to fully claim his belonging to that community, and to become, in his own words “a multilingual.” His involvement in the community is one of the factors that will determine his investment in the Spanish language.

His identity and investment in his languages were also influenced by ideologies of language standardization, which appear both in Tagalog and Spanish. He positioned himself as somebody who did not speak Tagalog well because he used the “wrong grammar”, although he claimed that he was confident in what he was saying because “it's part of my nationality.” This idea is reminiscent of what Parmegiani (2010) calls the “birth-right paradigm”; thanks to this right, Jake could appropriate the language to claim his identity despite his lack of command of the standard variety. Perhaps due to this same paradigm, Jake did not feel comfortable claiming Spanish as part of his identity. Also, Jake’s negative experience in the Spanish class in high school, where teachers were strict and he used to speak a lot (referring to speaking with their classmates and not paying attention in class) affected his investment in the language in the past, but he was determined to be more invested in his Spanish class in college, possibly due to his involvement with the community and how he envisioned himself in the future, thus revealing that he perceived Spanish as having some symbolic capital.

At the end of the semester, Jake identified himself as being from the Bronx and Asian; he added a “Bronx” identity (not an American identity) as he also claimed that people told him sometimes that he did not “act like any other Asian.” He verbalized how people (not him) perceived this combination as problematic "because of prejudices." These comments resonate with what Rosa and Flores (2017) call "the co-naturalization of language and race", where "linguistic and racial forms are jointly constructed as sets and rendered mutually recognizable as named languages/varieties and racial categories" (11). Since Jake's phenotypic features are socially recognized as belonging to the racial category of Asian, he is expected to speak Asian languages, like Tagalog, and not other named languages, like Spanish, which is associated with brown skin tones and dark hair color.

Identity definitively seems to be an area where he had done some self-reflection and could be a site of struggle for him. He seemed comfortable having a hybrid identity (American/Filipino) as he finally claimed his Filipino identity at work, where he could speak a mix of Tagalog and English. Although at the beginning of the semester, he explicitly mentioned that he identified more with English than with Tagalog, at the end, he elaborated more on his practices in Tagalog both at home and at work.

Interestingly, when we asked him his opinion about including issues of identity in the Spanish class, he said: "I think that was good because it showed that Spanish is like a way of life type of thing, where like people identify as Hispanic, is like a big part of them, the whole community type of thing…and then you can see that by like identifying yourself with it, yeah." When Jake said that Spanish was "a way of life", he was not seeing the language as a grammar-bounded code, but as a construct he could appropriate to legitimize his Latinx identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). This became more obvious when we asked him if there were possible connections between what had happened in the class and his culture: "I feel like… no, is that weird to say? I feel more Hispanic than Asian." It seems that what was covered in class allowed him to claim his Latinx identity. In a couple of occasions, Jake became aware that he was one of the sources in class for Dominican expressions. In other words, the class dynamics created situations where Jake was put in the position of expert and gave him the chance of perceiving his Spanish as having symbolic capital. His Latinx identity was also reinforced by the connections he was able to make between Tagalog and Spanish: "I've learned that there's like a lot of common words between Tagalog and Spanish, and how similar they are, and that made me learn from my roots, like the Spaniards and all that"[4].

In sum, Jake seems to have found a space in the Spanish class to strengthen his Tagalog identity and to claim his Latinx identity, which is not linked to his household and is also not "national", thus, challenging and resisting the one language-one nation-one people ideology, and the "birthright paradigm" (Parmegiani 2010). Again, as with Josie, it appears that Jake is exercising agency in choosing what he perceives as beneficial to his existing and *imagined identity* (Darvin and Norton 2017). This may be due not only to the connections he was able to make between Tagalog and Spanish, but also to his becoming aware of the sociocultural value of language and of his expertise in the language and culture, which allowed him to be more invested in his learning process.

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[4] Comment made in reference to the fact that the Philippines was a colony of Spain for more than 300 years (1521-1898)

Mario

Mario is a 19-year-old male who was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States at the age of 2. He reported English as his L1 and no L2. However, he rated his Spanish proficiency as 2 in listening skills (on a scale from 1 to 6), and 1 in speaking, reading, and writing skills.

At the beginning of the semester, Mario defined himself as Hispanic and Dominican. Due to the fact that the interviews were conducted when the semester had started[5], he had already seen a short video in class that depicted different young Latinxs in NYC using Spanglish, and talking about their background and their relationship with their language and culture. In the video, one of the young Latinxs mentioned that he was Dominican from the countryside. Mario identified with him and also claimed (in English) during the interview that he was from the countryside. This connection seems to have been very important to Mario, who referred to it at several points during the semester and also in the final interview.

Regarding his language practices, he mentioned that he understood a bit of Spanish "because living in the Bronx, mum and dad...", so he perceived Spanish not only as a home language but also as a local language. Additionally, when asked about the role of Spanish in his life, he said: "Spanish is the background where I come from, which I am not fluent and I want to be fluent for the future, for like jobs and just having the knowledge." As Jake did, he is perceiving the language not as a bounded code, but as a way of life. Thus, for him, becoming fluent in Spanish may reveal a desire to connect with his Dominican background and to be more integrated into his community**.**

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[5] Although every attempt is made to conduct the interviews as early as possible in the semester, students' schedules and last-minute cancellations make it very hard to complete all interviews during the first two weeks. Mario's first interview was scheduled for the second week of classes, but he needed to re-schedule and ended up doing it at the end of the third week.

When asked about what he felt when speaking or hearing Spanish, he said: "it's like, I'm a little bit... to be honest is [sic] like embarrassed because… I know the response but I don't know the response... I would start in Spanish and end in English… and then being born in the DR, like you're exp..." He didn't finish the sentence. We could tell he was struggling with saying "you're expected…", something he confirmed when we continued talking. We see his struggle when he said he saw Spanish as part of his identity, but then mentioned that he felt embarrassed about it because he was expected to speak it. This view reproduces the raciolinguistic ideology that conflates being Latinx with speaking Spanish. It appears that this ideology did not allow him to fully embrace his Latinx/Dominican identity until he was able to speak Spanish fluently.

When we started talking about his experience with Spanish in school or outside with family and friends, he referred to the one course he took in high school as "that's the Spanish I learned." He also felt frustrated when talking with his Dominican friends who speak Spanish because they made him feel like Spanish is something he should know not something he should be learning. He did not consider the Spanish he had learned at home real Spanish: "No, it is more like… joking around, Spanish slang and Spanglish, so it's not real Spanish we learn in school." He also referred to it sometimes as "broken Spanish." These experiences reproduce the ideologies of languagelessness, language standardization, and Hispanophony, that create a discourse that represents the Spanish learned in school as the real Spanish, as opposed to the Spanish learned at home. Language ideologies of this nature made Mario a "hater" of Spanish[6]; he was not invested in learning his own language because he didn't see any symbolic capital in the Spanish he knew.

At the end of the semester, he again referred to himself as from the countryside, but this time he actually used Spanish to say it ("*campesino de República Dominicana*"), so he was using Spanish to appropriate his Dominican identity. Although at the beginning of the semester he said he never used Spanish with his parents, at the end, he revealed that he used it more. Regarding how he felt when speaking Spanish, he did not use the word "embarrassed" anymore. Instead, his answer was more elaborated and indicated that he had done some reflection: "If it is a close person that knows me, like, I'm not ashamed or like discouraged to speak Spanish. I am not ashamed to like miss words or Spanglish, but if it is somebody I don't know, like, I try my best to make sure my Spanish is like very reasonable and understandable so depending on who I am with." His practices were still influenced by an ideology about real Spanish vs. less real Spanish, but he seemed to be more willing to use his Spanish and was more comfortable adapting to the situation, and this happened because: "I accept Spanish more…I have like more joy for it."

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[6] As he said in the final interview in reference to how he felt before taking the class.

Using Spanish with his parents and other people and feeling understood made him "proud", so it looks like accepting his language more allowed him to use it more, which reinforced his sense of belonging to his community. This seems to have played a role in his investment in the classroom and the language itself: "I kind of wanna learn it more to like, where I am like an efficient reader, writer, and I'd love to communicate."

What are the things that may have happened in the class that allowed him to accept his Spanish more? Mario reported that he enjoyed talking about issues such as identity or Spanglish because he was able to find out things about himself. He also mentioned that it was great involvement and that those topics should be addressed more. The use of Spanglish was perceived as useful and enjoyable because he could relate to it. It seems that incorporating Spanglish and the Dominican variety in class allowed him to perceive these varieties as having some symbolic capital as opposed to what he felt before he took the course. This also made him reflect on his affective connection to the language: "Back then [before the course], I really, I thought, like in the future, I wouldn't need Spanish, it wouldn't be that important, but I only said that because I was a hater and I didn't know a lot of Spanish… but now I see."

Overall, although at first Mario did not see any symbolic capital in his home language, the approach taken in the class seems to have allowed him to negotiate his perception on his Spanish and to use it to fully claim his Dominican identity. Similarly to Josie and Jake, Mario is resisting hegemonic practices and choosing what he sees as beneficial to his existing and imagined identity (Darvin and Norton 2017). This may have happened partly by recognizing the linguistic and cultural capital that Mario brought to class, for example, by providing examples from speakers from his same background or giving him opportunities to act as an expert in the class. Ultimately, this seems to have had an impact in Mario's identity and investment in the language.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Further Research

The goal of our study was to explore whether adopting a critical pedagogical approach to the teaching of Spanish in a first semester course with language-minoritized and racialized learners allowed them to negotiate their language ideologies, perceive their linguistic and cultural capital as symbolic, and invest in their identity and languages.

We observed that learners approached the classroom with ideologies such as languagelessness (Rosa 2016), language standardization (Lippi-Green 2012; Milroy and Milroy 1999; Rosa

2016), Hispanophony (Del Valle 2011), and a culture of monoglot standardization associated with the one language-one nation-one people myth (Bauman and Briggs 2003). These ideologies influenced how students perceived their linguistic and cultural capital and shaped their identity. For example, Josie perceived herself as being linguistically deficient in Yoruba; for that reason, she was not able to appropriate the language to claim her Nigerian identity. Additionally, she did not see any symbolic capital in knowing (and learning) Yoruba, which lead to lack of investment in her language. With regards to Spanish, Josie did not seem to perceive the local variety as having symbolic capital.

In Jake's case, although he mentioned that English was the language he identified more with, he was able to appropriate Tagalog to claim his Asian identity as his "birth-right." Nevertheless, this same "birth-right" and the "one-nation-one-language-one-people" ideology framed how Jake perceived his Spanish and his involvement with the Latinx community. In other words, although he perceived Spanish in the community as having symbolic capital, he did not see symbolic capital in his own linguistic and cultural knowledge of Spanish and the Latinx culture.

In Mario's case, his home language was also the target language in the classroom. As Josie, he perceived himself as being linguistically deficient in his language and, thus, not able to appropriate the language to claim his Dominican identity. Additionally, the lack of symbolic capital he perceived in his Spanish was influenced by the pressure he received from his own community, who often reproduced ideologies of language standardization and languagelessness around him; this community pressure is something that Josie and Jake did not seem face, and is related to the historical presence of Spanish in the US, the Hispanic movement in American universities of the 20th century, and the ideology of Hispanophony (Del Valle 2011), where Spanish speakers of all around the world are believed to belong to an imagined transnational community where a standard form of Spanish, created and controlled by la *Real Academia Española* and *Instituto Cervantes*, determines if they are a member or not. Overall, these ideologies seemed to be framing Mario's affective relationship and investment in the language.

At the end of the semester, all three students seemed to have changed the way they perceived their linguistic and cultural capital, as they were able to engage in a process of appropriating their home languages and (re-)claiming their identities. Additionally, Jake was able to appropriate Spanish to claim his Latinx identity, thus resisting the one-language one-nation one-people ideology. These negotiations ultimately had an impact on learners' investment in their home languages, as they all seemed to want to use it and learn it more (especially in the case of Josie and Mario). Additionally, due to the reaffirmation of their identities, the connections they made among their different languages and cultures, and the positive attitude developed towards the Spanish local varieties—which were perceived now as having symbolic capital—they were more invested in the Spanish classroom practices and, overall, in the learning of Spanish.

Importantly, their comments evidenced that for language-minoritized students, providing a critical approach to teaching Spanish where they reflect on their linguistic and cultural experiences, are put in the position of experts, and perceive stigmatized and hybrid Spanish local varieties as having symbolic capital, allows them to become aware of language prejudices and to understand how these prejudices are "intertwined with broader social hierarchies and power relations" (Leeman 2018: 3) and their own identities. Due to this consciousness-raising, learners become engaged in their own struggle for liberation and education (Freire 1970) and exercise agency resisting hegemonic practices and choosing what is beneficial for their imagined identities (Darvin and Norton 2017).

Our study looked at the impact of a critical pedagogical approach on language-minoritized and racialized learners of Spanish in a first semester course in a Hispanic serving institution located in an urban area; thus, our results are relevant for similar populations and institutional contexts. As one of the goals of a critical pedagogical approach in language education is to raise awareness about the connection between language prejudice and power dynamics (Leeman 2018), in institutions with mainly non-minority students, the outcome may involve helping learners identify their own prejudices and privileges as well as social injustices that affect others, which could lead to social change (Magro 2016). Future research should continue to investigate the impact that critical pedagogical approaches have on different types of populations and contexts.

It is important to note that a critical pedagogical approach of this nature does not impose any type of vision on students but provides them with opportunities to self-reflect hoping that they develop critical linguistic awareness. However, each learner's journey is unique due to their specific linguistic and cultural background, and the connection they have with their home language and the target language. Although in our study the majority of students in the class had noticeable changes, the three cases selected here were among the most salient. Also, due to the qualitative nature of the study, we do not intend to claim any type of causality or generalization of the results. Our interpretation of the data is rather an attempt to provide an insight into what some language-minoritized learners may go through when providing a critical approach to the teaching of Spanish in a context such as ours. Lado and Quijano (in progress) will include an account of both quantitative measures and qualitative findings of the class as a whole to provide a broader picture of the students' experiences.

Finally, we acknowledge that the process that students undergo is dynamic and may take longer than just one semester. However, we also believe that our findings are an indication that even without radically changing an entire curriculum, framing language learning with critical topics gives learners the opportunity to start a personal journey that involves negotiating their identity, ideologies, linguistic and cultural capital, and investment. Further research should look at whether learners continue this journey through and beyond their educational experience.

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