

The university Spanish heritage language mixed classes: Sociopolitics, attitudes, and ideologies.

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Experts generally agree that specialized courses for Spanish heritage language (SHL) learners are necessary to serve their socio affective, linguistic, and educational needs more effectively (Beaudrie, 2009, 2012). Despite this educational truth, the vast majority of SHL learners in the US educational context share a classroom space with second language (L2) learners due to insufficient program/department resources, to a lack of awareness among administrators, to low SHL learner enrollment etc. (Beaudrie, 2012; Carreira 2016; Carreira & Kagan, 2018). Mixed SHL/L2 courses have become a focal point of SHL research in recent years due to the lack of empirical classroom-based research as well as practical real-world teaching materials, pedagogical approach, and curriculum. As such, mixed courses are problematic for SHL learners because they are often indistinguishable from L2 courses (Carreira, 2016) and often fail to implement key instructional principles that are vital to providing a quality educational experience for such students. Specifically, our presentation centers on the crucial need to instill SHL learners and L2 learners with positive attitudes toward their SHL varieties of Spanish and, most importantly, toward HL maintenance; a core element of SHL education that is often absent from mixed class curriculum.

This presentation will review recent classroom-based research (Loza, 2019; Vana, 2020) that demonstrates the various ways that mixed courses promote and reinforce dominant ideologies regarding SHL learners and the Spanish they speak (Leeman & Serafini, 2021; Loza, 2019; Randolph, 2016, 2017; Vana, 2020). Data comes from a mixed-methods study conducted in a large metropolitan university in the US Southwest. Through pre and post matched-guise tasks and semi-structured interviews conducted with students in an advanced mixed classroom, we will focus on how such attitudes and ideologies become operationalized and localized within mixed classroom practices (e.g., curriculum, oral corrective feedback, student-student interactions, teacher-student interactions, classroom discourses). By reviewing this data that exemplifies the inequitable treatment SHL learners often face, we provide suggestions on how language programs with mixed classrooms can adopt sociolinguistic principles (e.g., mutually beneficial partnerships, sociolinguistic interviews) (Carreira, 2002; Leeman & Serafini, 2016) and critical language awareness (Beaudrie, Amezcua & Loza, 2020) to provide SHL learners with an equitable learning experience that promotes self-respect and SHL/L2 mutual understanding.