

NEGOTIATION OF LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN THE CLASSROOM ALONG THE U.S.- MEXICO BORDER



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BACKGROUND

- ❑ This study is part of a large ethnographic study conducted by a graduate class at a university on the U.S.-Mexico border, where the student population is 79.5% Hispanic.
- ❑ First year composition class
- ❑ Required course for entering college students
- ❑ Helps prepare them for college-level writing

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- ❑ How can language ideologies facilitate the writing and learning process in a course where English is the target language of instruction?
- ❑ How are language ideologies negotiated in a first year English composition class?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Canagarajah (2011)

- Language varieties should be viewed as a resource for writing

- Mori (2014)

- Language ideologies are important in social interactions

- Achugar (2008)

- Language ideologies have direct consequences on people's lives.

METHODOLOGY

- ❑ 43 hours of classroom observation of a freshman English composition class
- ❑ 17 student interviews in person and via telephone
- ❑ 3 interviews with the instructor
- ❑ 3 instructor surveys and 4 student surveys
- ❑ Field notes, including video and audio recordings of classes

PARTICIPANTS

- ❑ 1 instructor
 - ❑ Hispanic
 - ❑ Female
 - ❑ Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition
- ❑ 11 student participants
 - ❑ 6 females (one commutes from Mexico)
 - ❑ 5 males

FINDINGS

- ❑ Most student participants used Spanish in casual conversation
- ❑ Students accessed their Spanish for the invention and writing process

INSTRUCTOR'S LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

- ❑ Experience with translanguaging
- ❑ English academically beneficial
- ❑ Language ideology was not conveyed to students in any form
- ❑ Spanish can be used for clarification
- ❑ Occasionally shuttled between English and Spanish

STUDENTS' LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

- ❑ Various language ideologies
- ❑ Tools for expression
- ❑ Socialization
- ❑ Unhelpful

TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE CLASSROOM

Group work

□ “Your Nissan”

Danny: “¿que tipo de carro manejas?”

Student: “Yo manejo un Nissan.”

Danny: “We should use the cheapest car in case something happens to it”

TRANSLANGUAGING IN ACADEMIC WORK

Spanish in the Prewriting Stages

- ❑ Develop their ideas

No Spanish in academic assignments (final drafts)

- ❑ Spanish does not belong in academic writing
- ❑ Spanish would look “funny” if it appeared in a paper that was written for a grade.
 - ❑ “No because that is not right, because that would be weird that wouldn’t be academic.”
 - ❑ “...ever since we were small they never showed us to combine both languages. I think of some words in Spanish and write them in English

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- ❑ Evidence indicated that translanguaging is a spontaneous occurrence
- ❑ Translanguaging benefits student learning

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- ❑ The findings support our argument that in border communities such as ours, pedagogy should reflect the culture and language of the community.
- ❑ The natural transitions between languages, the use of either Spanish or English, demonstrates how ingrained the use of both languages is for many in this region.
- ❑ Ultimately, it is important that students have the agency to decide when it is advantages to them to use Spanish.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- ❑ Allowing translanguaging to occur in the prewriting stages and peer collaboration can improve the teaching of courses at the university level in border regions
- ❑ Teachers should consider providing a space for this type of language hybridity

QUESTIONS?

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