

**“Mi mama dice hocdots pero yo no”:
Social Meaning, Stylistic Variation, & Stigma in SHL Education**

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Numerous experts in the field have advocated for the incorporation of sociolinguistics in Spanish as a Heritage Language [SHL] curricula as a way to validate students’ home and community varieties while also helping them become proficient in standard varieties and formal registers in order to achieve social, academic, and professional successes (Valdés 1981; Potowski 2005; Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski 2014; Correa 2011). However, not only does this tension between validating students’ linguistic varieties and imparting an understanding of real-world language expectations perpetuate dominant socio-linguistic and cultural hierarchies—by relegating students’ own varieties of Spanish, and hence a good deal of their authentic selves, to informal contexts (Villa 2002; Leeman 2005; Lynch 2012), it also conflates notions of register and notions of style and mischaracterizes these simply as questions of formality and informality (Leeman 2005; Leeman and Serafini 2016). In addition, SHL pedagogical discourse often omits questions of prestige and stigma and fails to consider style as a “dynamic resource for identity performance” (Mortensen, Coupland, & Thøgersen 2017: 2).

In this presentation, I describe a critical pedagogical SHL curriculum that incorporates the sociolinguistic constructs of style, register, prestige and stigma, and the way that these are related to, but distinct from, questions of formality. Additionally, I present the results from a qualitative study utilizing attitudinal questionnaires to investigate students’ sociolinguistic attitudes before and after completing the two-course SHL sequence. The interrelated goals of the study were 1) to explore students’ awareness of these sociolinguistic constructs prior to

instruction, and 2) to investigate the impact of SHL instruction on students' sociolinguistic awareness. The preliminary results reveal that since the beginning stages of the program, students were able to differentiate categories of social stigmatization among particular linguistic forms. The data indicate that after students took one or more SHL courses, there was an attitudinal shift from dominant sociolinguistic and culture ideologies to a deeper understanding of social meanings and behaviors informing language use and social perceptions. Moreover, student comments reflected that they felt better prepared to choose how they can manipulate different language styles (to enact identities) and varieties in distinct socio-pragmatic contexts. These preliminary results indicate that SHL students are capable of developing a broader, more transcultural communicative competence if and when they are encouraged (1) to discern the social meanings of linguistic styles and (2) to articulate how their own linguistic decisions shape and are shaped by social values that either perpetuate or resist oppressive structures.

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