

Type of proposal: Individual Paper (30 minutes)

Title: *Sociolinguistic Justice en la comunidad: A Community Engagement project between University Heritage Speakers and High School students*

Abstract for conference program (50 words)

This paper presents a community engagement project that promotes social justice through language, by educating university HL speakers who, in turn, become teachers and mentors for high schoolers. The results show that students develop a better understanding of language diversity, ideologies, and attitudes as well as their own language practices.

Presentation proposal (300 words)

This paper presents the work that university Heritage Language (HL) students did at a high school through a community engagement project. Students developed lesson plans on topics pertaining to heritage and minority languages, language ideologies, variation, and attitudes, guided by two faculty mentors. The lessons were facilitated by the university students in a social science course at the partner high school. The goal of this project is to promote social justice through language, by educating about diversity and variation, aiming to legitimize the language practices and knowledge(s) of all language users, and to provide resources for youth to examine their own language varieties in settings that have traditionally devalued language practices of minoritized language users (Bucholtz et al. 2014).

We designed two courses as service-learning to prepare HL students for this project. In these courses, students learned about how race and ethnicity influence language variation, how language is used to construct identity, and about the effects of hegemonic ideologies on minoritized languages and their speakers. Three lead HL students were selected to facilitate lesson plans across three visits to our partnering high school during the second half of the semester.

We collected pre and post surveys to assess learning outcomes, which were given both to university and high school students at the start and at the end of the semester. The surveys were designed to evaluate knowledge of concepts central to the relevant lesson plans and evaluate any changes in student beliefs about language variation and diversity. The results show that this community engaged project resulted in an increased understanding of language discrimination and its effects on speakers, of the need to legitimize the practices and linguistic knowledge of all language users, and a willingness to reflect on dominant ideologies about language and how they interact with systems of power.

References

Bucholtz, M., Lopez, A., Mojarro, A., Skapoulli, E., VanderStouwe, C., & Warner- Garcia, S. (2014). Sociolinguistic justice in the schools: Student researchers as linguistic experts. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 8(4), 144-157.