

***Ni modo mijo, tú dale gas: Interpreting strategies used by Spanish heritage speakers as child language brokers***

Many immigrant families often depend on their children, who have become fluent in English, for translation, interpretation, and other linguistic and cultural needs. This study aims to identify strategies used by Spanish heritage speakers when they functioned as child language brokers and ad hoc interpreters in medical settings. 71 Spanish heritage speakers in four sections of a medical Spanish class completed three journal assignments on topics designed to reflect on their experiences, attitudes, and assumptions as ad hoc interpreters in medical settings. These reflexive essays were analyzed and themes regarding their interpreting strategies were identified and classified. Of the 71 students, 55 reflected on their linguistic and cultural strategies in their journaling assignments. This included omission of medical terminology (15%), knowingly rendering the message incorrectly (24%), pointing or mimicking (4%), explaining or simplifying terminology (13%), asking the medical professional for clarification (11%), terminology research before (5%) and during (13%) the medical interaction, impartiality (9%), and demanding the help of an interpreter (13%). Surprisingly, more than 60% utilized sophisticated strategies similar to those employed by professional interpreters: asking for clarification, terminology research, and reformulating information. About 9% indicated they tried to remain impartial, as they set aside their feelings and concern for their sick relative and focused on the accuracy of the message. Finally, 13% ultimately requested an interpreter, even if this meant challenging the role assigned by their family and medical staff. The themes of these reflexive essays demonstrate that, in spite of their young age and lack of medical knowledge, some Spanish heritage speakers developed advanced linguistic and metalinguistic tools that helped them in their roles as child language brokers and ad hoc interpreters.