REPORT

Microaggressions and intercultural competence in the Spanish classroom

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Abstract

Microaggressions are subtle offensive mechanisms that can be intentional or unintentional (Pierce, 1970). For the past 50 years, researchers have documented their damaging effects on peoples' mental and physical health. In this report, we focus on microaggressions in the Spanish classroom and with Latino/Latinx/Hispanic students, including their damaging effects within the context of changing demographics in the United States, how they impact our language classrooms, and how they can be mitigated through language curricula that promote intercultural citizenship. Also, we share strategies and suggestions to counter microaggressions in the language classroom, grounded in the assumption that to support socially just learning environments, educators must create a healthy atmosphere where all students feel safe, respected, and validated, and are held to high academic and civic standards. We believe that language teachers are uniquely positioned to create learning environments that model intercultural perspectives and foster the necessary openness to analyze and understand different perspectives as students advance their intercultural competence.

Introduction

The term *microaggressions* was coined by the psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce in 1970 to refer to subtle offensive mechanisms that can be intentional or unintentional (Pierce, 1970; Pierce et al., 1978). Pierce contrasted microaggressions with macroaggressions which are overt manifestations of racism. Pierce's (1970) seminal work focused on racial microaggressions due to his positionality as a Black man in the United States in the 1970s. More recently, Sue et al. (2007) brought back this construct and extended it beyond African Americans to other marginalized groups (e.g., Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics, Asians, women, LGBT individuals, persons with disabilities). Drawing from previous research (Nadal, 2018; Nadal et al., 2014; Pierce, 1970; Sue et al., 2007), this report focuses on microaggressions within the context of Latino/Latinx/Hispanic groups in Spanish as a second language (L2) or heritage language (HL) classrooms. First, we address the nature, contexts, and damaging effects of microaggressions. Second, we examine the changing demographics in the United States and how these changes impact language education as a field, enrollments, and consequently the language classroom as a microcosm. Third, using these changes as a springboard, we explore intercultural citizenship and its role when teaching culture to counter the damaging effects of microaggressions. Finally, we propose research-based strategies that draw from interdisciplinary sources and can be applied when teaching culture.

Why are microaggressions entwined with intercultural citizenship and teaching culture within the context of teaching Spanish as an L2 or HL? The answer is straightforward, yet complex. The straightforward part of the answer is that language classrooms are optimal spaces to start intergroup dialogues, promote critical thinking, and foster intercultural competence. The complex part of the answer is how to address microaggressions and deal with emotions and microaggressions' destructive effects on recipients' mental and physical health, self-confidence, and personal integrity. To achieve the Freirean concept of *conscientização* (Freire, 1963) all involved parties (recipients, source, and bystanders) in microaggressions should be considered. Thus, recipients can learn how to protect themselves, bystanders can become aware of their responsibility towards recipients, and the source (i.e., the person who generated the microaggression, the perpetrator) can become aware of any unconscious bias and their impact by reflecting upon them.

We believe that microaggressions happen and are not the product of people's sensitivities. Instead, they are legitimate life experiences that affect our students' overall wellbeing. When present in the classroom, they affect recipients' mental health and undermine the entire learning community and the learning environment, jeopardizing students' safety. We believe that teachers can address these issues while teaching culture as they create a supportive and safe learning environment for all the students in their classrooms.

Background

The term microaggressions refers to "subtle and stunning" (Pierce, 1970, p. 266) behaviors that belittle, humiliate, and embarrass others. Microaggressions are elusive and sophisticated ways of discrimination that can be intentional or unintentional. They are pervasive and seemingly harmless comments, jokes, and gestures that endorse racism and prejudice, targeting most commonly all genders from minority groups (Amodeo et al., 2020; Amos, 2020). Drawing from qualitative research, personal counseling journals, and current research literature, Sue et al. (2007) developed a taxonomy of microaggressions in everyday life and classified microaggressions into three different groups: microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. For instance, comments like "you don't look like a [profession/ethnicity]," or "all Mexicans are undocumented (or illegal)," or "are you really [nationality]?" are examples of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations, respectively. Nadal (2011), based on Sue et al. (2007), developed the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS). The REMS appraises different types of microaggressions that individuals experience. Specifically, Nadal (2011), identified 45 microaggressions that are documented in the literature and organized them into the following six categories: (a) assumptions of inferiority, (b) second-class citizens and assumptions of criminality, (c) microinvalidations (d) exoticization/assumptions of similarity, (e) environmental microaggressions, and (f) workplace and school microaggressions.

Researchers have found that different ethnic groups encounter distinct types of microaggressions. For instance, some studies (e.g., Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Meyers et al., 2019; Nadal et al., 2014) used the REMS to determine the specific type of microaggressions minority groups encounter. Forrest-Bank and Jenson (2015) found that overall, Black participants received the highest level of microaggressions, followed by Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics and Asians. Further, among the young adults participating in this study, the non-White groups reported significantly higher levels of microaggressions than their White counterparts. Yet, the nature and types of microaggressions differed across ethnic groups. For example, Latino/Latinx/Hispanic and Asian groups scored the highest in the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity subscale, and Blacks scored the highest in the Assumptions of Inferiority subscale. Meyers et al. (2019) used the REMS to investigate the role that context plays in the number of microaggressions multiracial and monoracial people of color (POC) may encounter. The authors suggested that more diverse contexts mitigate the occurrences of microaggressions for monoracial POC and multiracial people. In fact, they found that there was no difference in microaggressions between both contexts for White people.

Contexts and standpoints have an impact on the role and intensity of microaggressions. Because of the subtle nature of microaggressions and the hidden dimensions of people's cultural backgrounds, it is possible

to assert that microaggressions and their damaging effects are different across groups and individuals. Nadal et al. (2014) and Sue et al. (2007) contended that the types of microaggressions perpetrated on different groups or individuals vary in nature and intensity based on their contexts. Nadal et al. (2014) reported microaggressions about the experience of Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Peruvians and found differences among these groups related to gender (women experience more microaggressions in the academic settings or workplace), nativity (Puerto Ricans were more prone to be considered second-class citizens and self-identified Dominicans were exoticized), and age and educational level (younger Latinos with lower educational levels were more exposed to receive microinvalidations). When considering the impact context(s) and standpoints have on microaggressions, it is critical to consider that minorities are not uniform or monolithic groups (Nadal et al., 2014). Minority groups are diverse in themselves. Hence, one cannot generalize across an entire group. Each group's inner diversity and cultures has much to contribute to societal contexts and their development.

When investigating the role that context (more diverse versus less diverse) plays in the frequency of the microaggressions multiracial and monoracial POC experience, Meyers et al. (2019) found that more diverse contexts mitigate the number of occurrences of microaggressions. Yet, when looking into how White people experience microaggressions depending on the context, the researchers found that there was no significant difference in microaggressions for White people. An immediate implication from these findings is that racially diverse contexts are beneficial for individuals who live in them without negatively affecting the White population. Considering the changing cultural and linguistic demographics in the United States and its impact in the language classroom, more than ever, it is necessary to equip teachers with tools to foster learning environments rooted in respect and understanding of what background and individual experiences students bring to the classroom.

Changing Demographics in the United States: Impact in the Language Classroom

Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics are projected to become one third of all U.S. children by 2035 and one third of the overall U.S. population by 2050 (Rosa, 2019). These demographic trends have and will continue to impact the U.S. educational system. This demographic shift started in the 20th century when the immigration from Spanish-speaking countries increased and led to a series of legislative acts passed by the U.S. Congress during the 1960s and 1970s. Particularly relevant were the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), in which the federal government committed to equal and quality education for all, and the Bilingual Education Act (1967), which ensured equal educational opportunity for minority language speakers. In most cases, however, bilingual programs in the United States were not designed to allow students with limited English skills to use and even improve their Spanish, which was their first language. On the contrary, the curricula, pedagogy, and institutional culture of these programs were designed to devalue learners' first language, taking away their identity and right to be bilinguals. In many cases, the idea behind these so-called bilingual programs was for students to embrace English and become English monolinguals (Brown & Thompson, 2018). This approach hindered Latino/Latinx/Hispanic students' success in their quest for bilingualism and overall academic achievement. As a result, language loss by the third generation is common in languages other than English (Potowski, 2010).

Ethnic and racial stereotypes toward Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics have lowered the perceived value of the Spanish language and negatively affected their self-identification. Olson (2009) argued that at least 40 percent of young Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics have been victims of ethnic or racial discrimination or know someone close to them who has been the object of this type of discrimination. This is consistent with research on microaggressions experienced by Latino/Latinx/Hispanic students (Harwood et al., 2012; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Sanchez, 2017; Torres & Taknint, 2015). It is worth noting that discrimination also comes from within the Latino/Latinx/Hispanic community (García Bedolla, 2003; Potowski, 2012): Hierarchies, combined with language use and linguistic proficiency in both English and Spanish, have a strong impact on the self-identification and identity development of younger generations of Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics and can create tensions within families, communities, and classrooms. To this

end, Nadal et al. (2014), when studying Latino Americans' nativity, gender, and ethnicity, found significant differences in the type of microaggressions suffered for each variable.

Language is an important maker for identity development, but it is also used to target microaggressions. Many young Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics distance themselves from their HL because of negative experiences when growing up. Others are ashamed of their Spanish and frustrated that their proficiency is not good enough to communicate. Moreover, in some cases, friends or family members mock their language use when they spend time in their country of origin (Clachar, 1997; Potowski, 2011). These experiences push speakers to lose their HL and sometimes leave them in identity limbo. Additionally, as García and Alonso (2021) noted, the Spanish variety that is taught at schools is not the one spoken in U.S. Latino/Latinx/Hispanic communities, which continues to be ignored and dismissed. The tension between these linguistic realities generates hierarchies and inequities, reproducing appropriateness models for Spanish reinforcing dominant sociolinguistic hierarchies (Leeman & Serafini, 2016). This problem, coupled with microaggressions and negative stereotypes associated with immigration, pushes new generations away from their HL and culture. Early approaches in HL teaching aimed to produce more "refined and polished" Spanish speakers, thereby undermining HLs' identities and leading to attrition or, even worse, language loss. For example, Gutiérrez-Marrone (1982) analyzed early HL textbooks and found that they characterized Hispanic speech in the Southwest as full of "barbarisms." Feliciano-Foster (1982) criticized textbooks designed for bilingual Spanish speaking students pointing out that their language use was described as "full of bad forms to be extirpated like cancer before progress could be made in reading and writing of Spanish" (p.72). These viewpoints aimed to eradicate any informal or familiar use of the language among bilinguals, which in turn harmed their identity and self-esteem. Research on second language acquisition (SLA), particularly within HL education, has shown how detrimental this viewpoint has been for learners and programs alike. As a result, researchers and language educators find it more effective to build on the abilities that HL students already possess, recognizing their cultural and linguistic richness as an opportunity to expand their linguistic repertoires, helping them become critically conscious of the raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; García & Alonso, 2021) that have shaped representations of Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics in the United States and the classification of their language as inappropriate. This process of critically analyzing the power dynamics embedded into the Spanish language is another manner to achieve Freire's *conscientização* (1963), or the dismantling of ideologies that perpetuate inequalities inside and outside of the classroom.

It is critical to acknowledge the characteristics of all learners' proficiencies and sociolinguistic profiles. Thus, we can begin by understanding our Spanish language classrooms' changing demographics and exploring how to capitalize on them to build a community of intercultural learners. To this end, Brown and Thompson (2018) analyzed the history and evolution of postsecondary Spanish language education and showed how the diverse demographics of the United States, including the growing number of Spanish HL learners, underscores the need for curricular change. They argued that Spanish programs experience tension between traditional curricula focused on literary studies and more contemporary curricula focused on cultural studies. This latter focus is vital to recognizing and developing students' multilingual and multicultural identities and raising their critical awareness of language, politics, and power (Arnoux & Del Valle, 2010; García Alonso, 2021). This will allow students to expand their (inter)cultural horizons, generating a wealth of opportunities to reflect upon and to start dialogues about pressing issues in today's classrooms and societies (e.g., race, ethnicity, microaggressions). Strengthening the (inter)cultural component for Spanish programs has endless advantages for HL and L2 students. Consider the (inter)cultural exchanges that both groups can generate and the opportunities to learn more about each other's culture. Spanish teachers, with a deep understanding of intercultural education and a willingness to prepare students to be sensitive and mindful global citizens, can find fertile soil teaching culture to promote intercultural awareness, respect for each other, and a more inclusive and healthier learning environment. In the next section, we explore the concept of intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship as one way to create a more inclusive classroom.

Teaching Culture to Mitigate Microaggressions and to Prepare Mindful Global Citizens

The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) underscore the need for learners to understand the relationship between cultural products, practices, and perspectives. This framework intentionally highlights the interplay between language and culture to develop intercultural communicative competence. Rather than presenting culture as isolated facts, we argue that the language classroom should equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to engage in meaningful dialogue with people from cultures different from their own. Successful mediators have "knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country or region" (Byram, 1997, p. 231). An L2 is never learned in a vacuum but rather in a particular context that gives meaning to it. Frequently, language classes present students with a sanitized, one-size-fits-all narrative of the target culture and society, where daily life is oversimplified and cultural content is fragmented and trivialized (Canale, 2016; Chapelle, 2016; Corti, 2019). Moreover, sanitized and uncritical approaches to language education make invisible, exclude, or misrepresent the socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, ability, age, gender, and sexual orientation of marginalized groups. Such approaches ultimately deprive students of opportunities to critically understand and reflect on their own and the target cultures (Kubota et al., 2008). The last two decades have seen increased calls to teach learners to use language in various real-world contexts and cultures, starting with their own communities, and to intentionally teach intercultural competence in the language classroom (Byram, 1997; Byram & Zarate, 1996). This increase is further reflected in the recent creation of intercultural Can-Do Statements (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2007) at all levels of language education. Additionally, a complementary approach has focused on social justice in language learning, advocating for a historically situated curriculum, not divorced from current social and political discussions, which helps students understand important matters of injustice and inequality (García & Alonso, 2021; Glynn et al., 2018; Nieto, 2010).

The challenges we face in the 21st century as global societies are complex, and we posit that language educators in the United States are uniquely positioned to teach students to appreciate different beliefs, values, and behaviors that are often—although not always—expressed in different languages. Furthermore, language educators can facilitate students' development of the necessary skills to engage in constructive dialogues and problem-solving that involve people from various contexts and backgrounds. Doing so nurtures students' ability to successfully communicate in multiple real-world contexts and engage with people of diverse backgrounds, allowing students to bring their multiple identities and heritage to the classroom and to reflect upon their social responsibility within their communities and beyond. This process underscores how intertwined language development, intercultural competence, and intercultural citizenship are (Byram, 2008).

Byram (2008) introduced the concept of intercultural citizenship in tandem with the development of intercultural communicative competence, where learners apply these skills in local, national, and international contexts. This perspective acknowledges that language education cannot and should not avoid educational and political duties and responsibilities (Byram, 2001). It emphasizes civic action in the communities where learners engage with others in conversation and action. This approach introduces concepts such as active citizenship and political and civic engagement (Barrett & Zani, 2015). Back and Wagner (2019) recognized how difficult it is to teach concepts such as openness, civic engagement, and tolerance for ambiguity. However, they point out that language educators can help students consider a problem or an event from multiple perspectives by teaching intercultural competence. A class focused on developing intercultural competence and citizenship cultivates critical thinking by constantly challenging students to compare conflicting data and interpret it from multiple perspectives. We believe that in a demographically diverse Spanish class and under the leadership of an intercultural educator, there is potential to lessen the damaging effect of microaggressions. This type of work benefits all parties involved because it allows students to practice empathy and democratically participate in a diverse society. The following section provides some insights and suggestions on countering microaggressions in the language

classroom.

Counteracting Microaggressions in the Language Classroom

The first question we should ask ourselves is: Why is it important to counteract microaggressions in the classroom? Given that microaggressions have prospered with time and can undermine the learning environment and given that educators have moral and professional responsibilities toward their students, it is necessary to address microaggressions within the context of language classrooms. For instance, perceived discrimination puts Latino/Latinx/Hispanic adolescents at risk of substance use (Okamoto et al., 2009) and microaggressions severely affect psychological wellbeing (Torres & Taknint, 2015), increasing anxiety and depression symptoms (Huynh, 2012). Indeed, Ogunyemi et al. (2020) stated that microaggressions are a constant negative force in the learning environment. If language teachers are committed to providing a constructive and just learning environment for each of their students, microaggressions should not occur in any classroom.

Schools and classrooms need to be democracies that nurture students' moral and intellectual development by granting them opportunities for collaborative and cooperative decision-making (Dewey, 1903; 1923). Respect and a sense of community are critical components of any democracy and essential to keep checks and balances. Culturally responsive pedagogy provides a framework that reaffirms students' cultural identity while promoting students' achievement. Gay (2000; 2002) argued in support of culturally responsive pedagogy to improve the educational experience of diverse populations, while also balancing power and making classrooms more democratic. Thus, promoting intercultural citizenship in the language classroom is one more way to support a diverse pool of language learners who embrace their similarities and differences while creating a rich learning environment. As educators, we recognize that intercultural citizenship is a valuable concept to foster openness and civil and political engagement. However, it is important to remember that this concept and students' life experiences related to citizenship (and the rights that come with it) are not the same for all. This is particularly obvious if one considers that the United States has 11 million undocumented people (Migration Policy Institute, 2019), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) individuals, and Temporary Protected Status students who cannot fully participate in our democracy.

To promote intercultural citizenship in language classrooms, we need to consider the traits and profile of culturally competent educators. Thompson and Byrnes (2011) stated that:

> Culturally competent teachers have an authentic and caring relationship with all students. They know and honor their students' cultures and use curriculum that honors their students' cultures and life experiences. Culturally competent teachers use instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. They hold consistent and high expectations for each student, which leads to student achievement. Culturally competent teachers help their students to be culturally competent and to be able to confront issues of social dominance and social justice. (p. 95)

Given this definition, a second question we must ask ourselves is: What can language educators do to counteract microaggressions to promote an egalitarian and mindfully global community within their classrooms? Integrated approaches to teaching cultures are one answer to this question. Such approaches bring together the 5Cs of Cultures, Communities, Communication, Connections, and Comparisons (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) to extend language learning beyond the physical classroom. Therefore, students learn to communicate as they explore communities and their cultures, make connections and comparisons that help them analyze different perspectives rooted in respect and empathy. Coping strategies such as cultural trust, social engagement and connectedness, dispositional forgiveness, and self-efficacy lessen the effects of microaggressions (Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Language educators can use these coping strategies to frame their curriculum when teaching cultures. To this end, Ackerman-Barger et al. (2021) proposed the Microaggressions Triangle Model as a humanistic approach to address microaggressions in the health professions and respond to them in an articulated and coherent manner.

Fundamental principles of this model are: (a) consideration of all three perspectives (or parties) involved in microaggressions (recipient, source, and bystander); (b) sense of healing and restorative justice for all involved parties; and (c) macroaggressions as learning opportunities instead of a point of no return.

Ackerman-Barger and Jacobs (2020) proposed the Microaggression Triangle Model. The three points of the Microaggression Triangle Model are: ACTION, or the recipient's response; ASSIST, or the source's response; and ARISE, or the bystander's response. ACTION, ASSIST, and ARISE are acronyms that represent ways to structure informed responses to microaggressions with the intent of generating dialogues, restoring relationships, and bringing people together. These acronyms are defined in Table 1.

Table 1

The Microaggressions Triangle Model: Acronyms Definitions

Recipient's response	Source's response	Bystander' response
A: Ask a clarifying question	A: Acknowledge your bias	A: Awareness of microaggression
C: Come from curiosity, not judgment	S: Seek feedback	R: Respond with empathy
T: Tell what you observed in a factual manner	S: Say you are sorry	I: Inquiry of facts
I: Impact exploration	I: Impact, not intent	S: Statements that start with "I"
O: Own your thoughts and feelings about the subject	S T: Say thank you	E: Educate and engage
N: Next steps		

This Microaggressions Triangle Model can be adapted to language classrooms when teaching culture. For instance, it can help structure role-play activities that seek to engage students in dialogues, allowing language educators to promote understanding of microaggressions from different perspectives and simultaneously granting all involved parties opportunities to create healthier communities. To this end, Glynn et al. (2018), Leeman and Serafini (2016), Peart and van Olphen (in press), and Wallerstein and Auerback (2004), offer examples of class activities framed within social justice principles and rooted in current pedagogical approaches.

Other examples of class activities meant to sensitize students to microaggressions may include validation of different varieties of Spanish. For instance, students might read a map of the United States and list all the cities with Spanish names. They can then do small-scale research projects on the origin of those cities. Many students are entirely unaware of the origins of these cities and why there are so many inhabitants in these parts of the country that are Latino/Latinx/Hispanic. This research can thus provide counternarratives that highlight the Spanish legacy to the United States. Another activity that can help learners critically understand their present and past linguistic history is to carefully guide them in the creation of their own linguistic identity map. For example, students can draw a map or timeline that outlines their linguistic identity and language journey, answering questions about significant moments for them and focusing on language loss or conservation over the years (Quan, 2022).

These types of activities are multipurpose. First, they open the floor for dialogues to validate the position of the Spanish language in the United States and its historical relationship to the English language in North America. Second, these activities reinforce HL learners' sense of belonging in this land. Interdialogues and counternarratives complement each other as pedagogical tools that expand students' intercultural awareness

while incorporating different voices and omitted narratives or historical facts. Fisher and Petryk (2017) highlight the importance of balancing power and representing different groups when using dialogues. Alternative narratives also fit with the promotion of intercultural awareness rooted in empathy and critical thinking in language classrooms because they equip students with different perspectives.

As educators give their best to support a just and equitable learning environment, they may get tired or overwhelmed. Understandably so, carrying out these tasks and spending extra time in preparing activities to counter microaggressions can be overwhelming, tiring, and in some cases emotionally charged due to educators' own experiences. However, if one thinks that "the experience of discrimination can be one of the most harmful and distressing aspects in the acculturation process" (Okamoto et al., 2009, p. 3), then advocating for all our students should recharge teachers' batteries to continue. Part of this advocacy work includes cultivating a sense of belonging among our students. It takes time, various resources, and effort to ensure a just learning environment for all. Still, the ripple effect these efforts bring forward are immense, and to some extent, quasi-immeasurable given the intangibility of microaggressions' impact.

The suggestions provided here are not exhaustive and may not be effective with all student groups. However, they aim to provide some insights and inspiration for language educators. When counteracting microaggressions in the classroom, we need to provide students with the tools and skills needed to examine their beliefs, values, and origins, and how these factors interact when communicating with others. As teachers, administrators, and scholars, we encourage you to see yourselves as activists and community leaders and to act consistently through these principles. As Nadal (2018) wrote, "when social justice activists and community leaders can model healthy behaviors, they not only prevent microaggressive trauma in their own lives but also can be viewed as genuine, legitimate, and inspirational people who practice what they preach" (p.119).

Conclusion

Over 50 years ago, Pierce (1970) coined the term microaggressions within the context of racism toward Black Americans. Thirty-seven years later, Sue et al. (2007) revisited the concept and expanded its definition to include other groups (e.g., Asians, Latinos/Latinxs/Hispanics, LGBTQ individuals). Logic and common sense suggest that as science, technology, and our understanding of the universe advance, people should understand and respect each other more, thereby diminishing bigotry and xenophobia and narrowing the scope and target populations impacted by microaggressions and racism. Regrettably, here we are, in 2022 A.D., and in one of the world's most advanced societies, writing articles about the importance of promoting intercultural awareness to ameliorate the damaging effect of microaggressions on peoples' physical and mental health. Research studies in different disciplines (e.g., education, medicine, social work) have provided abundant evidence of microaggressions' damaging effects. Moreover, in some cases, these effects are worse than overt racism (Solorzano et al., 2000), given their subtle and ubiquitous nature.

As discussed earlier, Meyers et al. (2019) suggested that racially diverse contexts are beneficial for individuals who live in them, and that this diversity appears to lessen microaggressive behavior. Given the changing demographics in the United States and the increase in Latino/Latinx/Hispanic populations, intercultural educators should take advantage of these findings to raise awareness among students of the damaging effects of microaggressions. Spanish language classrooms and their curricula are uniquely situated to promote cultural diversity and to understand others' perspectives, values, and beliefs. Consequently, learning environments need to be safe and healthy, and build upon students' lived experiences and backgrounds

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