

Indexicalities of a haiga: a transfronterizo sociolinguistic stereotype in an educational setting

Sociolinguistic stereotypes are variants that a community consciously recognizes as markers of certain groups and that may be perceived erroneously as categorical in these groups (e.g. Silva-Corvalán 2001, 95). In the US/MX borderlands and beyond, *haiga* is one of the most notorious sociolinguistic stereotypes and deployment of it by a speaker may trigger harsh judgements from some listeners. It has been the target of researchers promoting critical pedagogies in teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language (e.g. Martínez 2003, 10).

On the less emancipatory side of SHL education, it has been a target of eradicationist approaches that seek to eliminate non-standard variants. In appropriateness-based approaches, which some may see as a middle ground, *haiga* has received attention and is characterized as “beach Spanish” (Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski 2014, 17) in a widely used wardrobe metaphor for linguistic register.

Clearly this variant of *haber* elicits strong reactions from many sources and simplified views miss the transnational element. Specifically, there are no existing studies that document the way that language ideologies and attitudes are socialized in educational contexts in homeland countries and are subsequently brought by educators into US educational contexts. To fill this research void, the present study qualitatively examines interviews with five educators in a university-level Spanish department who had spent at least some time in classrooms in Mexico during their formative years and asks them about their experiences with *haiga*. While many participants reported that usage of this variant was more acceptable in the US, especially in familiar contexts, it was also the target of educators’ ire here. The indexical web that connects *haiga* to sociolinguistic factors reveals that it indexes poverty, rurality, and lack of education. On the other hand, it may be part of a speaker’s identity.

Works Cited

- Beaudrie, Sara M., Cynthia Ducar, and Kim Potowski. 2014. *Heritage Language Teaching : Research and Practice*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education Create.
- Martínez, Glenn A. 2003. “Classroom Based Dialect Awareness in Heritage Language Instruction: A Critical Applied Linguistic Approach.” *Heritage Language Journal* 1 (1): 1–14.
- Silva-Corvalán, Carmen. 2001. *Sociolingüística Y Pragmática Del Español*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.