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Chicanos' Negotiation of Language and Culture with Standard English in Cache Valley, UT

Vanessa Garcia Vazquez

Methods

+IRB 12787

+Secondary Research

+Semi Structured Interviews

+Interview: Alex, Lesley, Lola

+Identification

+Chicanos

+Mexican-American

+Mestiza/o

Chicanos

- Born in the US with Mexican descendancy.
 - Mexican-American
- First language is both English and Spanish.
- Codeswitching
- Language is seen as illegitimate.

“I'm a Chicana...people will ask me "what does that mean?"
And I'll explain to them "I was born here, but
my parents were born in Mexico". (Lesley)

Borderlands

Living in the margins of two cultures.

+Conocimiento

+New Mestiza Consciousness

I never really felt like I fit in with Latino groups. I always felt like I was an outsider in a way, but I [also] felt like I was an outsider with the white American side" (Lola).

Loss of Language

Bilingual children neglect Spanish (Merino 1983).

- Spanish development stops when they begin learning English
- Communication insecurities

“I feel like I can't communicate [in Spanish] as well as I should”(Lola).

Standard English

English is not fully developed either.

- Language expectation
- Lack of exposure
- Limited vocabulary

“They just expected us to be at their same level or expected us understand everything”(Alex).

Chicano English

- Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)
 - Convergence
 - Divergence
- Codeswitching

"It's a lot more raw, so I feel like you say it how it is. It's lively. It feels different, it flows better. I guess it's just non-standard. If you ask someone who's from the outside, it's improper, it's hard to follow"(Alex).

Identity Development

- Identity develops in adolescents.
 - Latino adolescents' ethnic identity increases when attending PWI (Umaña-Taylor, 2009).

I feel like as you start to get older, that's where you try to get more involved and you kind of have a realization of, it's okay for me to be who I am and speak my language" (Lesley).

Community

- El Compromiso
 - Fourth Stage of Conocimiento
- Shared language and experiences

“I'm sure that we may have had similar experiences when it comes to having people that were tolerant, but not empowering”(Alex).

Conclusion

- Speaking native tongue is important to retaining identity.
- Chicanos are forced to negotiate language and culture with Standard English.
- Standard English requirements interfere with ethnic identity development.

“If you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language”(Gloria Anzaldúa, 1978).