

Shaping of L1 and L2 Linguistic Identities in a Migrant Family

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Abstract

Diasporas do not have stable and static identities bonded to the past or the homeland. In fact, they are changing communities, open to lateral connections in which their members are in continuous negotiation, especially with the dominant community in their new home, producing, contesting and preventing power conflicts. Since identity is negotiated through discourse, studying the linguistic behaviour of these groups is essential because it helps us understand the ways in which they use language to index new meanings and identities. Although the investigation of linguistic diaspora communities has increased in recent years, there has not been extensive research on how linguistic identity is constructed within migrant multi/bilingual families. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this paper uses an ethnolinguistic observational methodology along with sociolinguistic interviews to analyse linguistic identity negotiation processes among three generations of women from the same family who have crossed linguistic and cultural borders when they migrated to Asturias, Spain. Findings show a reconciliation of the Galician diasporic identity with other identities that arise in our participants' new social practices in the diaspora. Such identity negotiation is demonstrated through translanguaging strategies, which allow multilingual family members to communicate with each other and serve as performative discourses that enact speakers' complex identities, avoiding feelings of alienation or displacement.

Keywords

linguistic attitudes, migrant family, translanguaging practices, Asturian/Galician languages