Advancing Pre-Service ESOL Teachers' Metalinguistic Awareness of Spanish: Questioning Language Ideologies

Jost (2006) defines ideology as “…an interrelated set of moral and political attitudes…” (p. 653) that “…helps to explain why people do what they do [and] organizes their values and beliefs…” (p. 653). Language ideologies provide communities with a shared frame of reference intertwined with educational, social, and political overtones which commonly promote monolingual norms and expectations. The ESOL classroom is one primary location in which a monolingual ideology is normally fostered and accepted in an effort to encourage multilingual learners to effectively acquire English. In order to challenge this ideology, educator preparation programs must instruct future teachers about these students’ linguistic “funds of knowledge” (González et al., 2005) to familiarize them with the language strengths these learners possess. This presentation overviews an exploratory research study in which mono/bilingual pre-service elementary education teachers enrolled in a TESOL applied linguistics course at a small public college in the southeastern United States participated in a multi-week unit within the course in which they read a variety of articles and participated in various activities familiarizing them with important aspects of Spanish linguistics. Results suggest that the course unit contributed to their understanding of Spanish linguistics and positively influenced their views of these learners.

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