A Multiple Case Study of How Bilingual-Bicultural Teachers' Language Shame and Loss Affects Teaching English Language Learners

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Abstract : This two-year multiple case study of eight Spanish-English speaking teachers explores bilingual-bicultural Latino teachers' lived experiences as English Language Learners and, more recently, as adult teachers who work with English Language Learners in mainstream schools. Research questions explored include: How do bilingual-bicultural teachers perceive their native language use and sense of self within society from childhood to adulthood? Correspondingly, what are bilingual teachers' perceptions of how their own language learning experience might affect teaching students of similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds? This study took place in an urban area in the Pacific Southwest of the United States. Participants were K-8 teachers and enrolled in a Spanish-English bilingual authorization program. Data were collected from journals, focus group interviews, field notes, and class artifacts. Within case and cross-case analysis revealed that the participants were shamed about their language use as children which contributed to their primary language loss. They similarly reported how experiences of mainstream educator and administrator language shaming invalidated their ability to provide support for Latino heritage ELLs, despite their bilingual-bicultural expertise. However, participants reported that counter-narratives from the bilingual authorization program, parents, community and church organizations, and cultural responsive teachers were effective in promoting their language retention, pride, and feelings of well-being.