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Indira Garrido
Utah State University

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Teaching Languages Communicatively: The Journey of Becoming an Effective Teacher

Indira Garrido

Utah State University

Introduction

This portfolio is a compilation of various papers written throughout my studies in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University. These papers are the result of research and reflections on the most relevant and important topics I have learned during these two years of study. My journey through the MSLT program has been an experience of growth as I reflected on my own teaching practices and what research demonstrates as the most effective approaches for language teaching.

The core of this portfolio is my Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS). I display my beliefs, views, and perspectives on the role of the language teacher, the language learner, and the language instruction. It is a summary of deep reflections on research studies in the field of language acquisition. As I put together my TPS I had the opportunity to teach a Spanish course in which I could put into practice most of what is written in it and could develop my skills as a language teacher.

In this portfolio I have included work I have completed in the MSLT program. The topics covered in the artifacts include the benefits of the use of dialog journals for second language learners, the importance of teaching pragmatics focusing on the speech act of apologies, and an analysis of the language acquisition process of an English language learner. It also includes reflections on my own teaching and on observations of my peer teachers' classes. Finally, three topical sections of annotated bibliographies have been put together with the purpose of showing how the ideas on books and articles read throughout the MSLT program have impacted my thinking.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Apprenticeship of Observation

Since I was a little girl, though I loved my teachers and school, I viewed teaching as a degrading and meaningless occupation. Back then, I evaluated professions by how much money would I make and whether or not it would quickly allow me to become rich and famous. I cannot remember if this money-centered view came from society, peers, family, media, or a combination of them all, but now I realize that choosing a profession for the money or fame is a sure way to end up with a life full of regret. Teachers in the Dominican Republic are not paid well; therefore, the thought of becoming a teacher never crossed my mind until I was much older.

While I was convinced that money is happiness, I discovered this notion to be a great lie. As a college student, I had a job as a receptionist in the luxury floor of a five-star hotel in Santo Domingo. As an employee, I had the opportunity to meet rich and famous people from different parts of the world. From presidents, prime ministers, senators, and businessmen to famous actresses, singers, and baseball players. My interactions with the aforementioned people led me to realize that money, power, and fame do not satisfy our real needs as humans. On the contrary, take certain freedoms that 'regular' people have. Things like taking leisurely walks, making friends without questioning their true intentions, etc. After working at the hotel, I made up my mind to stop pursuing what does not satisfy and start a journey of discovering my purpose.

When I became a Christian at the age of twenty, I felt especially called to teaching in my heart. Having adopted a biblical worldview, my primary focus was no longer pursuits of money or status. My new goal was to use my gifts and time to serve God. My love for God became the primary focus in my life. Children are the most vulnerable and

innocent beings in society, and this inspired me to work in my little circle of influence to impact the lives of those around me. There is nothing better in the world than dedicating one's life to something or someone you love.

I began learning English at age seven when my parents placed me in a foreign language school. I enjoyed learning a new language, but it was not a conscious decision, as I was very young. While I was studying English in school, my motivation to continue learning was influenced by the success I experienced with pronunciation and conversation. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I attended several English schools. At the first two schools, my conversation skills were high and I was able to speak in the target language with nonnative-speakers, both peers and adults. However, when I enrolled in an English school that had greater prestige than the other two, the results weren't the same. I found that, for some reason, I was not able to speak English fluently and began to encounter difficulties.

My English proficiency level increased in subsequent stages through different opportunities. First, I got a job as a receptionist at a beach resort in Bávaro, the east coast of the Dominican Republic. My responsibility was to assist clients with their requests and complaints. This was the most difficult stage of my language learning process because I was frustrated I could not understand native English speakers very well. However, challenges are also opportunities to grow and learn. After a great deal of effort and practice, I developed my listening skills Then, as previously mentioned, I became a receptionist at the five-star hotel in Santo Domingo. This position required a greater level of comprehension and speaking skills. As a result, I was pushed to make even more of an effort to improve my language skills so I could keep my job.

When I became a Christian, I quit the hotel industry and became a second grade teacher in a bilingual Christian school. This was a real challenge, but it motivated me even more. I used to visit the classrooms of colleagues known as good teachers. While visiting, I would try to grasp everything I saw and imitate the concepts in my classes. I watched instructional videos of the curriculum I was using and read many helpful articles. I taught for eight years as a second and third grade teacher. Throughout that time, I grew as a facilitator as I was learning from my mistakes, implementing strategies I was learning from other teachers, and following recommendations from the curriculum, peers, and directors. Every school year brought new challenges for me and increased my passion for teaching.

During my second year of teaching, I became roommates with an American English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher who did not know a word of Spanish. Daily interaction with this monolingual English speaker provided me with excellent opportunities to achieve a higher level of English proficiency. I needed to be creative in expressing ideas and feelings, making requests, refusals, explanations, and jokes, and conveying every little communicative element of daily life. The year-long experience with an English-speaking roommate expanded my English skills greatly. I learned a lot more about American culture, pragmatics, and language expressions than any English teacher taught me before. I have no doubt that in that particular year I truly learned how to communicate in English. This supports all the theories of the communicative approach for teaching a second language that I have learned in the MSLT program so far, because it was a real-life experience for me.

By the end of my eighth year as an elementary school teacher, I became interested in pursuing a master's degree in second language teaching. After a series of tests, much paperwork, and several interviews, I was awarded a full scholarship by the Dominican government to enroll in the MSLT program at Utah State University (USU). This is an opportunity that I am thankful for.

During my time in the MSLT program I had the opportunity to teach Spanish to college students. Throughout three semesters as graduate instructor at USU I grew as a teacher as I had the opportunity to apply the teaching methodologies I learned in the program. It was challenging for me, first because I needed to teach under the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach which was a new experience for me. There was no doubt in my mind this teaching approach was ideal for language learners to acquire the target language in a relatively faster way. The feeling of accomplishment I experienced when I received feedback from my supervisor after she observed my class for the first time was wonderful. Second, the challenge of teaching students with a different cultural background to mine and a different age I was accustomed to, was an experience of growth. At first I did not have a clear idea of which were American cultural expected behaviors from an instructor at college level. I knew it was not as formal as in the Dominican culture. And even though I had taken classes at the graduate school level I did not know if at undergraduate class levels would be different. But as time passed by I learned the American pragmatic expected ways and realized there was nothing to worry about. My advantage was that since I was teaching a foreign language and languages are related to culture it was good for my students to also learn the pragmatic expected classroom behaviors of the target language cultures.

During my second semester teaching Spanish at USU I was awarded as graduate instructor of the year by the Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communications Studies (LPSC) at USU and later on was nominated for the same award at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHaSS). I do not have enough words to express my gratitude to God and to all the people in the department that believed in my qualifications as an instructor. By putting into practice the CLT approach teaching Spanish to college students I became more effective as a language teacher.

In addition, I will always be thankful and honored for the opportunity my classmates gave me when chose me as president of the MSLT club at the beginning of my second year at USU. It was an enriching experience to preside the club during the school year 2012-2013. The opportunities we had to do things together, help each other, share ideas, concerns, good news, bad news, etc. helped us grow together and keep memories that will last.

I love teaching and I feel that this is something I was born to do. To be a teacher "is a task that requires that those who commit themselves to teach develop a certain love not only of others but also of the very process implied in teaching" (Freire, 2005, p. 5). I have passion for teaching, I love students and to see them learn brings me a great satisfaction. Opportunities for EFL teachers are increasing in my country and all over the world. The work EFL teachers do is challenging and at the same time very motivating. My goal for the rest of my days in the classroom is to keep growing as a language teacher.

Professional Environment

My studies at USU have given me a better and wider perspective towards language teaching. I have been able to reflect on teaching theories and practices that have been proven to be better than traditional approaches. Since I have being given the opportunity to teach Spanish at the university level, I have grown not only in knowledge of theories but also in practice because I have been able to apply what I have been learning.

Teaching foreign languages is enabling people to communicate with others whose native language is different to theirs. That is my passion. Although, I particularly enjoy teaching elementary school children and also adult learners, I consider myself a language teacher with willingness and potential to work with any age group.

Besides teaching English and Spanish, another purpose I have is to provide a variety of training and workshops to language teachers in my homeland, the Dominican Republic. The joy of sharing new useful knowledge with fellow teachers is incomparable. Working together with colleagues, I look forward to improving foreign language teaching in my country.

My Personal Teaching Philosophy

Language teachers' beliefs about their role in the classroom, their perspectives on the role of the language student, and their views on language instruction guide their journey in this profession and define their identity as language teachers. In the present teaching philosophy statement I introduce the beliefs, perspectives, and views that shape my performance as a language teacher.

The conclusions that shape my teaching philosophy are based on years of teaching experience and on the knowledge I have acquired through the MSLT program. The three main topics that will be covered are: the language teacher, the language learner, and language instruction. My primary focus is on the language teacher and the language instruction because the greatest impact of the MSLT program for me has been on how I see myself as a language teacher and how I incorporate these views on my instructional performance in regards to pragmatics, the use of technology, how to teach grammar, the learning environment, and assessment.

The Language Teacher

Before offering my views on the role of language teachers, learners, and instruction, it is necessary to set the basis for this perspective. Why do people want to learn a second language in the first place? People's answers may vary but they typically revolve around the same purpose: Communication. "Most people [learn] another language to express ideas, understand messages and in the case of misunderstanding or lack of understanding, arrive at mutual comprehension" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001, p. 61). Therefore, I believe that the language teacher should be like an architect (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) who designs opportunities for learners to

communicate in the target language in a meaningful way. These opportunities should be tailored according to students' age, language proficiency level, and particular needs. Task-based activities are ideal to help learners find purpose in the use of the language. According to Ballman et al. (2001) a task-based activity has three components. First, instruction should be learner-centered and completion is only possible through students' interaction. Second students' exchange of information should be meaningful for them. Finally, students are guided through a series of steps that result in a concrete representation of information such as a chart, paragraph, diagram, etc.

The objective of class design is for students to use the target language purposefully without having to use their native language in the classroom. To accomplish this goal, comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) is an essential component of classroom performance. Comprehensible input is the result of a teacher making "verbal communication more understandable by consciously attending to students' linguistic needs" (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 79). Teachers use comprehensible input when they modify their speech rate, enunciation, and language complexity according to the students' proficiency level and combine it with a variety of techniques such as gestures, body language, pictures, etc. (Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2008). The linguistic level of the input should always be a little beyond the learners' current ability (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). This way, learners are challenged to step out of their comfort zone and progressively develop the skills that help them expand their proficiency in the target language.

Discourse competence

My goal as a language teacher is that learners achieve communicative competence (Shrum & Glisan, 2010) in the target language. Savignon (1998) was the first person in developing this concept of communicative competence as we know it today (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Communicative competence is defined as "the ability to function in a communicative setting by using not only grammatical knowledge but also gestures and intonation, strategies for making oneself understood, and risk-taking in attempting communication" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p.13). Communicative competence was renamed and redefined as discourse competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995; Celce-Murcia, 2007). According to the revised model, "discourse competence refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). This model maintains the central role of discourse competence among five competences that also play a role: Sociocultural competence, linguistic competence, formulaic competence, interactional competence, and strategic competence. The reason is that Celce-Murcia (2007) believes that "mastering only grammar and phonology results in linguistically accurate but socially dysfunctional oral communication" (p. 52). It is important to learn the linguistic aspects of a language but also the cultural aspects of it.

Moreover, to develop discourse competence, it is not enough to communicate using grammatical forms; learners also "need knowledge of the various sociocultural factors that affect communication, knowledge of how to use language to express their ideas and intent, and knowledge of strategies for how to communicate with others." (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 14). A focus on discourse competence sets the bar high for

language teachers. To help learners reach discourse competence, the key is for teachers to focus on learners' needs.

Language teachers' challenges

Numerous demands weigh on language teachers' shoulders nowadays. In my opinion, the two greatest demands sometimes play against each other and set the teacher in a vulnerable position: On the one hand, coverage of the material is expected, while on the other, students must actually learn regardless of whether the learners' general learning pace matches the course's planned time frame or not. Meeting this challenge will depend on a teacher' skills and abilities.

The role of a teacher "is not simply to cover the material or to expose students to content, but rather to maximize student learning" (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 8). For teachers to meet learner's needs and still cover the course content, the focus should be on the ultimate course goals and finding the most effective way to achieve those goals in the designated time frame. In other words, teachers should cover the material by the end of the course but paying close attention to learners' needs for proficiency development and making the necessary arrangements to meet those learning needs. What may vary is the *how* (teaching strategy), not the *what* (content). For example, if the adult Spanish language learners in my classroom are struggling with the acquisition of the preterit and the imperfect verb tenses and the test for that unit will be in two weeks, I should perhaps make some adjustments.

There is a popular expression that says 'sometimes less is more.' Since I would have designed a number of task-based activities to help students use the preterit and the imperfect in context, I could make a wise selection among those activities and perhaps

spend more time doing those. Sometimes students just need to be exposed to authentic materials which can be either oral or written (e.g., songs, magazines, TV commercials, soap operas, etc.) and have been produced by members of target language community for members of the same target language community (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Sometimes learners need to engage more with the course material by working in pairs/ groups to create a role play, audio-record it or film it, and then receive feedback from the teacher. In addition, I could assign a smaller load of homework but design it in such a way that it helps them reflect on the uses of these two verb tenses and the potential situations in which they would make use of preterit and imperfect. This scenario changes the how (strategies), not the *what* (content).

My responsibility as a language teacher is to guide learners in acquiring new knowledge and skills. This is accomplished not only by providing them with explicit instruction and explanations but also by asking them questions that would help to activate higher levels of understanding. If I fail to promote autonomous and critical thinking, learners become dependent on me and therefore do not develop the ability to think, critique, analyze, evaluate, create, and produce by themselves. To think critically "involves first discovering the who, what, where, and how of things and then utilizing that knowledge in a manner that enables you to determine what matters most" (hooks, 2010, p. 9). My teaching should always be oriented towards learners becoming effective independent communicators and thinkers. If learners only get to reach the first three levels of thinking in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) which are *remember*, *understand*, and *apply*, I am not accomplishing the goals. Reaching

the three higher levels, which are *analyze*, *evaluate*, and *create* should be among my

goals.

A new approach

Traditional language instruction has failed to promote these higher levels of

thinking. One of the reasons is the inappropriate vision of the teacher as an authoritative

transmitter of knowledge and the learners as passive vessels which only receive

information (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The image that comes to my mind is that of a

mother feeding her 10-month old son with a spoon. This represents a saying from the

Dominican culture: 'poniendo la comida en la boca' which literally means 'putting the

food in the mouth.' In my opinion, traditional language instruction has the tendency of

not only 'putting (input) the food (content) in the mouth (mind)' of the students but also

chewing it for them (giving the answers) in a figurative way. This view leads to the

perception that learners are incapable of independent thought, while their assigned

passive role prevents them from becoming effective communicators in the target

language. "Thinking is an action" (hooks, 2010, p. 7); therefore language learners need to

think by solving problems, finding answers for themselves, etc.

I believe that in order to accomplish the goal of learners reaching the higher levels

of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), this traditional vision

has to be put aside. Teachers need to step out of the spotlight and stop being the center of

attention. Instead, learners should be allowed to be the focus and the ones who do the

talking. The teacher should be more of a facilitator, learners should be actively engaged

in their own learning, and instruction should be under a Communicative Language

Teaching (CLT) approach (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) where the perspective is learner-

centered and the teacher is viewed as a provider of opportunities to communicate in the target language. Under the CLT approach, teachers design task-based activities for learners to be the ones speaking in the target language in pairs and groups most of class time. With these task-based activities learners are more likely to reach higher levels in Blooms' Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) because they need to *analyze* and *evaluate* the situation presented as a task and then they need to *create* a way to accomplish their communicative goals. This way, learners are prompted to use the vocabulary and the grammatical features of each unit in a meaningful way. It is my objective that by the time students leave my classroom they would have acquired the needed skills and abilities to continue learning by themselves.

CLT's general view of language as a whole system and not as four separate parts shaped the new Standards for Foreign Language Learning classification, namely the 5 Cs: Communication, Connections, Cultures, Comparisons, and Communities. For this reason, I have decided to move from a focus on grammar within a teacher-centered approach to a focus on communication within a student-centered approach. As Liskin-Gasparro (1987) states, "if you can't use a language, you don't know a language" (p. 26). The only way to acquire a language is by practicing it. Therefore, language instruction must be full of activities that provide learners with opportunities to communicate in the target language. "[CLT] has become a term for methods and curricula that embrace both the goals and the processes of classroom learning, for teaching practice that views competence in terms of social interaction and looks to further language acquisition research to account for its development" (Savignon, 1991, p. 263). To acquire a new language in a classroom

setting should be an engaging experience, full of interesting challenges for learners to be motivated and pushed forward.

Personal experience

From my previous experiences I have concluded that by not promoting a learner-centered environment in my classroom I was not guiding them to success. It did not matter that I always spoke in the target language, looked for ways to improve my teaching strategies, and made accommodations to attend to all their different learning styles. I could not get my students to develop their speaking skills. They were relatively good at writing, listening, and reading but not at communicating orally. The main reason I could not get my learners' speaking skills to improve was an incorrect view of language as four separate skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. I was unaware that "the inadequacy of a four skills model of language use is now recognized" (Savignon, 1991, p. 262). Also, I was using a teacher-centered and grammar-centered approach and was not aware of the new perspective that CLT provides.

As a language learner myself, I understand that the acquisition of a new language is a slow process. I must be patient and ready to deal with learners' frustration, which may be the product of them not reaching their own personal expectations or just feeling behind their peers. I need to expect that some learners experience difficulties in learning a new language and be ready to encourage them by helping them understand the nature of the process of second/foreign language acquisition. It is important for me to be flexible and sensitive to my students' needs. By fostering a low level of anxiety and a high level of motivation I will increase the likelihood that my learners acquire the new language (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

The Language Learner

In my view, learners must be active participants who will learn the target language by "interacting, interpreting, and presenting" (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, 2006) in the target language in meaningful ways. Learners should be active participants in the class. They should be engaged in oral interactions most of class time either with their classmates in pair/group work or with the teacher. "Today, listeners and readers are no longer regarded as passive. They are seen as active participants in the negotiation of meaning" (Savignon, 1991, p. 261). Since language is a skill (Sprang, 2006), it is by using the language that learners will learn the language.

When language learners are engaged in the classroom, the language teacher is no longer the center of attention. When this happens "the classroom functions more as a cooperative where everyone contributes to make sure all resources are being used, to ensure the optimal learning well-being of everyone" (hooks, p. 22). I believe learners assume responsibility for their learning as they participate actively in their learning process while they are scaffolded by the teacher. "In the classroom, teachers scaffold instruction when they provide substantial amounts of support and assistance in the earliest stages of teaching a new concept or strategy, and then gradually decrease the amount of support as the learners acquire experience through multiple practice opportunities" (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 100). For example, children that are starting to take their first steps perhaps will need adults to hold their hands while walking. But this assistance should decrease as children acquire more strength, coordination, and ability in their legs and body. Over time, children will need less assistance until they eventually walk on their own. The assistance was needed only until children could walk

independently. However, it should be borne in mind that occasionally, children who have already learned to walk still fall. This is natural and not the end of the world.

Regardless of the amount of support language learners need at different levels, there is one common denominator; input needs to make sense to them. "If new learning and understandings are to find a secure place to take hold in the brain's memory network, then they need to make sense, build on past experiences, establish connections, and take meaning from those connections that ultimately emerge" (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 48). The human brain stores information based on functionality and meaningfulness (Shrum & Glisan 2010); therefore, input has to make sense for learners to acquire new language features. Ideally, teachers' attention should be fixed on how each student is making sense with the content so each of them can be met where they are (Kohn, 2011).

Language Instruction

Developing student-centered instruction that is sensitive to student needs is crucial. There is enough evidence of the failure of a teacher-centered approach, mainly because of the lack of students' involvement in language practice. According to hooks (2010), "[students would] learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher" (p.19). I believe instruction must be student-centered as they actively participate in classroom activities and must be supported by a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of all types of learners and to reinforce the learning by providing multi-modality input. The use of pictures, along with audio files, videos, and hands-on activities, will enrich the learning process, help students in the storage process, and be more effective in reaching different learning styles. A student-centered sample lesson plan designed with multi-modality input is provided in Appendix A. The target

students of this lesson plan are third-graders learning Spanish at a dual-immersion

program in USA. I designed this lesson plan under the SIOP model. SIOP stands for

sheltered instruction observation protocol and it suggests that "language acquisition is

enhanced through meaningful [language] use and interaction" (Echevarría, Vogt, &

Short, 2008, p.16). Therefore students are provided with opportunities to use the language

purposefully as they find meaning, connections, and usefulness in the vocabulary and

grammatical features.

As learners engage in interactions completing tasks using the target language in

the classroom, teachers need to be aware of some details that need to be taken care of. At

this point it is clear that learners need to be active for them to acquire a new language but

some questions need to be answered. In which ways do they need to be active? What are

some of the aspects taken into consideration when designing the activities in which

learners will be engaged? How are they learning grammar? Could technology be helpful?

How should assessment take place? In the following sub-sections I provide my beliefs,

perspectives, and views on different aspects of language instruction:

Pragmatics

In my opinion, one of the topics typically overlooked in language teaching is

pragmatics. However, learning the pragmatics of the target language is crucial for

reaching a level of discourse competence that enables students to communicate

effectively. Pragmatic competence is defined as "dealing with the relationship between

utterances and the acts performed through these utterances, as well as with the features of

the context that promote appropriate language use" (Alcon Soler & Martinez-Flor, 2008,

p. 5). In other words, it is the ability to express and interpret speech acts and messages conveyed by members of the target language culture.

Language is the main tool of communication in any particular group of people that shares a particular culture. "The language that we speak is part of who we are. It gives us a powerful sense of belonging with those who speak like us, and an equally powerful sense of difference with those who don't" (Garrett, 2006, p. 86). For this reason, when learning a second/foreign language, it is necessary to become aware of cultural and pragmatic characteristics of the target language culture. This is mainly because "speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative, ill mannered, rude, or a combination of all three" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 244). Wannaruk (2008) expresses the same idea: "If a person commits a linguistic error, he is just perceived as less proficient in the language. If he makes a pragmatic mistake, however, he might appear as rude, disrespectful or impolite" (p. 319). Thus, it is imperative to raise students' awareness of the target culture pragmatics. I provide an example on how to raise students' pragmatic awareness on the speech act of apologies in Appendix B. The lesson plan is specially designed to teach how to express apologies in English. The target students are adult English language learners at the advanced level in a Spanish-speaking country setting.

How to Teach Grammar

Not many people learn a second language for a love of grammar. Yet language instruction has been ruled by a grammar focus for many years. The basic goal for people to learn foreign languages is their desire or need to communicate with other people. Therefore, from day one, language learners need to be encouraged and prompted to use

grammar for communicating ideas.   In this sense, it is critical to talk about how grammar should be taught. Since "communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar" (Savignon, 1991, p. 268), attention has to shift from grammatical features to a focus on meaning (Savignon, 1991). And students need to be able to reflect on the language they are learning to use (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). In other words, grammar is necessary for students to understand and therefore use the target language, but grammar should not be the goal of instruction (Ballman, Lisking-gasparro & Mandell, 2001).

There is a wrong impression that the CLT approach favors learner self-expression without assigning importance to form but this is far from the truth (Savignon, 1991). Focus on form can be of benefit and is crucial for students' progress (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). "While involvement in communicative events [e.g., requesting information, providing instructions, describing people or places, expressing emotions, etc.] is seen as central to language development, this involvement necessarily requires attention to form" (Savignon, 1991, p. 268). A language without grammar is like a human body without a skeleton; it does not exist. Structure is necessary and it is by using grammatical structures that people communicate. With this middle-ground view that grammar structures should be taught to facilitate communication the language teacher is both proactive and responsive (Ballman, Lisking-gasparro & Mandell, 2001). Proactive language teachers identify grammatical features students will need to reach a particular communicative goal and responsive language teachers provide corrective feedback to student-produced utterances (Ballman, Lisking-gasparro & Mandell, 2001).

Having said this, a question arises: How grammar should be taught? I believe the story-based approach (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002) for teaching grammar offers an improved vision compared to what traditional grammar instruction has made possible. Under the story-based approach, learning of grammar is viewed as a collaborative process between teachers and learners. "Once learners understand the meaning of the whole text, they will be better able to focus on and understand the contribution of the parts of the text to the meaning of the whole" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 221). Grammar structures constitute the "parts" of the "whole" which in this case is a particular text. The focus must be on the meaning of the text as a whole. Afterwards, it will be meaningful for the learner to understand the grammar that supports the meaning. "A story-based and guided participatory approach invites the learner to comprehend and experience the functions and purposes of language through integrated discourse in the form of a story" (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002, p. 270). Having reflected on the potential benefits of this story-based approach, I view the PACE model (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002) as an effective method for teaching grammar. PACE is an acronym for the steps developed to focus on form within the context of a story. The P stands for Presentation: to present the grammar point in the context of a story. The A stands for Attention: to focus attention of the learners on some aspect of the language as it occurs in the story. The C stands for Co-Construct: the exchange of information between teachers and learners in which both feel free to reflect, hypothesize, make predictions or generalizations and understand form, meaning, and function of the target structure. And the E stands for Extension: to practice what has been learned, applying the new knowledge in a new way at a later time.

The Use of Technology

One of the elements that enrich language instruction is the use of technology (Arnold & Ducate, 2011). Most young learners today find technology engaging because they are "digital-natives" (Arnold & Ducate, 2011). Digital-native is the term used to describe people who have grown up with technology and are savvy about its use. Given the influence of technology in the 21st century, most of our language students are very familiar with technological tools have become part of their lives. "Digital natives expect to use technology in the classroom to receive information quickly, multi-task, engage in hands-on activities, access graphics, randomly access information, network socially with others, play games, and be rewarded frequently" (Arnold & Ducate, 2011, p. 3). Therefore Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a useful tool for accomplishing communicative goals.

Instruction must never rely on technological tools since they were designed to assist the teacher and not to rule or replace instruction. I believe that CALL, when properly used, can be highly motivating for learners particularly in a setting with limited access to fluent speakers of the TL. As teachers "we must consider [technological tools] in order to both take advantage of what technology has to offer, as well as, make learning relevant and meaningful" (Arnold & Ducate, 2011, p. 3). CALL can serve as a helpful tool for learners to make and sustain contact with fluent speakers, target language culture, authentic materials, and so forth. It could also facilitate collaborative writing, promote social networking in the target language, enable the production and sharing of audio-files and videos, encourage authorship through blogging, and many more possibilities.

The universe of options that technological tools offer in language learning is vast. Nevertheless, I believe CALL will not replace language teachers. Therefore the continuous advance of technological tools should not intimidate teachers but encourage them. The attitude to be taken is not of enemy but of ally. "Technology will not replace teachers in the future, but rather teachers who use technology will probably replace teachers who do not" (Blake, 2008, p. 14). Teachers should not be reluctant to use technological tools in language instruction but should take advantage of what it has to offer to update and improve language instruction.

The Learning Environment

The relational environment created in the classroom is a critical component in language learning. The dynamics in the teacher-student relationship can affect learning positively or negatively. "The foundation for successful learning and for a safe and secure classroom climate is the relationship that teachers develop with their students" (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 20). Humans are social beings who learn by interacting with others. Therefore, teachers should promote an environment suitable for learning, where students feel accepted and understood. "If a teacher believes that certain students are inherently lazy or unmotivated, then that negative mindset leads the teacher to respond to these students with annoyance. That response sets the stage for a negative learning environment and alters the emotional state of the students" (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 21). Teachers' expectations of students influence the way they approach students. If a teacher's attitude toward a student is negative it will not only affect that student's development but also have an impact on the teacher's relationship with other students.

The language teacher should believe in each student's potential to develop proficiency in the target language. For this reason it is necessary to always push learners

a little bit further by giving them challenges that are reachable. The formula for this is called i + 1 (Krashen, 1982), which means that the input provided by the teacher should always be a little beyond the learners' current ability. This way learners will always have a challenge to overcome. As stated by Krashen (1985), "we are able to understand language containing unacquired grammar with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence" (p. 2). This means that second language learners already have the potential to deal with i + 1 and this level of input is beneficial for their development.

The following are two typical mistakes that language teachers make: 1) they provide substantial amounts of support and assistance in the beginning and continue doing so towards the end. 2) They do not to provide enough support and assistance. The former hinders students from developing. The latter hinders students from learning. Both approaches are anti-pedagogic. As mentioned before, learners need to be challenged in order to develop language skills. In this sense, to help students become independent learners it is important to decrease the amount of support provided as their proficiency increases. "Instruction is [...] more beneficial when it is directed toward how learners perceive and process input rather than when instruction is focused on having learners practice the language via output" (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993, p. 54). VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) suggest that language learners in the beginning levels need to be engaged in input activities that are structured. In other words, they need input that will help them concentrate on meaning while they put their attention to form. Intermediate and advanced language learners also need comprehensible and meaningful input that is tailored according to their proficiency level for acquisition to occur.

Assessment

Language teachers, "must discover what the students know and what they need to know" (hooks, 2010, p. 19) in order to be effective teachers. Testing, regardless of its kind, tends to stress students, who often perceive testing as a judgment of their intelligence (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). When students are under stress they are less likely to perform well. Stress produces a hormone called cortisol that "directs the brain's attention to the source of the stress" (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011, p. 65), which prevents them from demonstrating what they know. Therefore, I believe in a performance-oriented (Liskin-Gasparro, 1987) approach for assessment. This is a more realistic approach to assessment since it focuses on the skills students will need. For example, "what would be the skills students would need (...) if they were going to be dropped into a foreign country and you didn't want then to starve?" (Liskin-Gasparro, 1987, p. 27). I combine this performance-oriented focus with a project-oriented approach. I believe that students can demonstrate their skills and knowledge best when they engage in the completion of small projects throughout the semester or school year and a final project scaffolded by the teacher.

Communicative instruction involves task-based activities; therefore assessment should be focused on task-based performance. I have frequently observed that traditional assessment methods fail to contribute to significant learning that will last over time. However, in performance assessment, learners are forced to get involved in a process that leads them to apply the acquired knowledge in a meaningful and useful way. Thus, knowledge will be established in their minds as something that is part of their experience. According to Slater and Ryan (1993) performance assessments provide "insight into a

student's level of conceptual and procedural knowledge" (p. 1). It is not a matter of true or false, fill in the blank, or choosing the correct answer, but rather of developing skills and being able to apply them in real life. Language learners need to be involved in real-world use of the target language to become effective communicators in the language that they are learning.

Conclusions

The journey of becoming an effective language teacher started at the moment I decided to become one. I believe that "learning is a process of becoming" (Vågan, 2011, p. 44) and therefore as long as I am learning useful things to be implemented in my teaching practices, I am becoming a better instructor. In other words, my performance is shaped by my beliefs. What I have learned throughout the MSLT program has helped me become a more effective language teacher. As I put into practice what I have stated as my beliefs, perspectives, and views in the present teaching philosophy statement I will be learning more. My thinking will be constantly in a process of changing and improving as I encounter challenges, reflect on my own teaching, learn from other teachers and researchers, interact with colleagues and students, etc.

Throughout the MSLT program I have reflected on my old teaching practices and reasons for which certain language teaching approaches and methodologies are not as effective. I have encountered ideas from the CLT approach, the role of a teacher and students, the importance of teaching pragmatics, the SIOP model, the usefulness of comprehensible input, performance-oriented assessment, the importance of critical thinking, the Sociocultural theory, among other relevant topics that have helped me base a stronger theoretical foundation for my performance in the classroom. It is my belief that

a great teacher is the one who is always searching for ways to improve, is passionate

about teaching, and feels satisfaction as helps learners in their different stages of learning.

LEARNING THROUGH OBSERVATION

A reflection that came as a result of a comparison between my teaching

philosophy and class observations of other language teachers is presented in this paper. It

was an enriching experience to visit the language classes of six fellow teachers at Utah

State University. I attended and observed one class of lower-level Chinese, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, English, and German.

Every teacher and teaching methodology has strengths and weaknesses. There is no such thing as a perfect teacher or a perfect methodology. Room for improvement and growth will always be part of the teaching profession. By observing these language teachers in their classes, I observed their good skills and application of effective teaching strategies. At the same time, I considered some of the things I believe are needed to improve in their practice. Both kinds of observations are helpful to me since they contribute to my development as a language teacher.

Some of the key components of my teaching philosophy were corroborated and some others were contradicted during my observations. Regarding lesson planning, I believe the language teacher should provide students with opportunities to communicate in the target language in a meaningful way. In two of the classes I visited, the teacher prompted students to work in pairs and groups with carefully designed task-based activities for students to practice a targeted language feature. They both provided a model for guidance before each activity and walked around the room as students participated in group interactions. In the other classes students were more passive as they listened to the teacher and repeated some utterances. In these other classes the teacher was the center of attention and was the one who spoke more than 70% of the time. Most of the activities were with the whole class.

Even though I understand there might be some exceptions with the use of students' L1 in beginning level classes of distant languages, I believe that the teacher and the students should be speaking in the target language most of the time. By using the

language, students will develop the skills for communicating in that language. In two of the observed classes the teacher was using the student's native language most of the time. There was little use of the target language and therefore it is quite likely that the students' proficiency level will not develop efficiently.

Activities in a language class must be designed to take into consideration factors such as students' age, language proficiency level, and particular needs. All classes I observed were planned having these three factors in mind regardless of whether the activities were teacher-centered or student-centered. The use of games, role playing, videos, and pictures contributed to students engaging in the class, understanding the content, and opportunities to participate.

In conclusion, the experience of visiting and observing six language classes at USU made me reflect on how important it is for students to be actively participating in class so they can develop communication skills in the target language. The main purpose of language is communication; therefore a language classroom should be characterized by that.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

The recording of the teaching video took place during my third semester teaching

Spanish 1020 at USU. It was my fourth and last semester in the MSLT program and I was

teaching a class of twenty-four students. The class took place on March 8th from

10:30am to 11:30am. The topic of the lesson was the informal commands in Spanish. By

watching this video I realized that I am putting the basic concepts of my teaching philosophy into practice much more than I thought. I also noticed things that were absent and others could be opportunities for improvement.

The role of a teacher as expressed in my teaching philosophy statement (TPS) is to step out of the center of attention and create opportunities for learners to communicate in the target language in a meaningful way. In other words, students do the majority of the talking guided by the teacher. In this video I observed that during approximately 90% of class time students were engaged in conversations among themselves either in pairs or in groups using the informal commands in Spanish within different contexts. As they were completing the tasks I was walking around the room observing what they were saying and assisting them by answering their questions and concerns. My class included many task-based activities which are ideal to help learners practice the target language in a way close to real-life situations. The environment and dynamic of my classroom corresponds to the learner-centered approach I describe and explain in my TPS.

For teachers to cover the course content paying close attention to learner's needs for comprehension and practice is one of the aspects I emphasize in my TPS. Teachers should not ignore learners' needs for proficiency development when they are trying to cover the course material. Arrangements should always be made to meet these learning needs. As the popular expression states "sometimes less is more." In this class we did not have the opportunity to complete all the activities I designed. There are two reasons for this: (1) I always plan extra activities in case the pace of the class is faster than expected; (2) In this class, I spent more time in certain activities because by observing my students' performance I realized they needed to spend more time practicing the informal

commands within the context of those activities. The fact that we could not do three of the planned activities is not a reason for concern as I believe the students benefit more from doing a few activities that help them reflect on the usefulness of the target language features of the lesson than to participate in numerous activities done at a faster pace than most of them can manage.

As stated in my TPS, to accomplish the goal of the use the target language purposefully without having to use their native language in the classroom the use of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) is necessary. I noticed how I modified my speech rate, enunciation, and language complexity in a way students were able to understand. I also used gestures, body language and pictures to let myself be understood. I noticed how students understood the directions for each activity as they knew exactly what to do after each prompt.

Observing this video made me also reflect on the elements that would improve my performance as a teacher and lesson planner. Incorporating the use of authentic materials is an area in which I can potentially improve my lessons. One of the activities in this lesson included a song in Spanish that contained many informal commands. The intention was for my students to see the context in which Spanish speakers would use informal commands. The activity consisted of three stages: First, they needed to highlight the informal commands in their handouts as they listen to the song. Then, in groups of four, they were required to write three or four sentences describing the situation portrayed in the song. Finally, they needed to send their sentences in a text message to the screen so everyone could see them as I provided feedback to the whole class. I noticed that the sentences my students made were very superficial. Even though my stated purpose was

accomplished I realized it did not have the impact I expected. One reason could be my learners' low proficiency level as this was only their second semester taking Spanish at the university level. To research and try more effective ways to incorporate authentic materials in my lesson plans is an objective I established for myself after watching this video.

In addition, one thing I noticed was absent in my lesson was the presence of instruction on pragmatics. The informal commands in Spanish are used in pragmatic ways that may be foreign to American English speakers. But as I was following certain program guidelines that did not include pragmatics my lesson was also lacking this important aspect. Perhaps researching online sources on pragmatic instructions on informal commands and all other potential target language feature included in the SPAN 1020 program would provide another area of opportunity to improve my lessons.

The examination of this teaching video has been both encouraging and helpful. It was encouraging as I could see the extent to which I am actually applying what I have stated as my beliefs, views, and perspectives on language teaching. And it was also helpful as I noticed areas in which I find opportunities for improvement. As a result of this observation I am know incorporating instruction and activities on pragmatics into some of my classes. Once more I confirmed that as I teach, I learn and as I learn, I teach. Teaching is a process of constant growing and if I want to be a successful teacher in the classroom I should always be open to evaluate myself and find ways to improve and develop.

LITERACY ARTIFACT

Introduction and Reflection

When I started to engage with the ideas of the Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory

(SCT) I came across a research article on dialog journals that motivated me to dig deeper

into the benefits of this writing technique. Second language learners are often reticent to write in the target language. This might be caused by several reasons but the most common, I believe, is the fear of making mistakes. For me it was fascinating to explore the numerous advantages of writing in the target language without one's grammar being corrected. Within the context of dialog journals, learners can write to a real audience (typically the teacher) knowing they will receive a response based on the meaning they communicated.

Some of the findings in the research data I reviewed demonstrate that the use of dialog journals help learners improve their fluency and syntactic complexity. They also promote learners' autonomy and empower them to write about topics of interest to them (Orem, 2001). Learners become aware that what they have to write matters and can benefit others. Since they have freedom to write, they can use the strategies of their preference including the use of their L1 either to clarify, communicate, or learn (Schwazer, 2004). "The uncorrected, ungraded format" (Holmes & Moulton) of dialogue journals motivates learners to write more.

My goal with this research paper is to lay out the benefits of using dialog journals in the second language classroom. It is my hope that second language teachers implement this writing activity in their practices along with some other graded writing activities that could help learners see where they need to improve.

Abstract

Dialog journals are "a writen conversation in which students communicate individually with the teacher" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 279). To some second-language teachers, dialog journals sound like too much work, especially when the teacher is not convinced that students' improvement justifies the teacher's effort required. A sociocultural perspective in second-language teaching (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008) supports the use of dialog journals. The potential effectiveness of dialog journals can be described in relation to sociocultural concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), mediation, psychological tools, and internalization. In this paper I discuss why and how dialog journals have the potential to help L2 learners improve their literacy skills in the target language even though the focus of the teacher's comments with this type of journaling is not on mechanics or grammatical corrections but on meaning. Qualitative data will be presented in support of the effectiveness of dialog journals. The data includes a detailed case study of one student's literacy skills development as well as written and oral reactions from students and instructor. The findings support the idea that dialog journals have the potential of fostering the development of literacy skills of second-language learners.

How do dialog journals help second language learners develop their literacy skills?

This paper contains a discussion on how dialog journals create an opportunity to improve second language learner's literacy skills. Dialog journals are "written conversations in which a learner and teacher communicate regularly (daily, weekly, or on a schedule that fits the educational setting) over a semester, school year, or course" (Peyton, 2000, as cited in Larrota, 2006, p. 35). The distinctive characteristic of this kind of journal is that the teacher does not make grammatical corrections on the student's writing but rather makes comments in response to the message conveyed by the student. In this approach to writing, it is implicit that making mistakes is part of the learning process, especially when learning vocabulary, verb conjugations, and other elements of a new language. Having said this, the question that arises naturally is: How could this type of journaling foster the development of students' second language literacy skills if the teacher does not make grammatical corrections? However, other important questions need to be answered first are: What are literacy skills? And how does a teacher know if the students' literacy skills are improving?

Literacy

Literacy is "demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables the individual to function, appropriate to his age, independently in his society and with a potential for movement in that society" (Hillerick, 1976, p. 53). In the second language context, literacy includes the ability to use language effectively not only in written form but also orally. That is because writing and orality are related. "Orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing" (Ong 2002, p. 14) otherwise information is lost over time. In a certain way, a dialog journal provides a suitable combination of the use of both written and oral language. In his type of journaling the student and the teacher are

involved in a written conversation using the kind of exchanges that are typically used in an oral conversation. In the words of Peter Elbow (2000), "speech is usually social and communal, writing is solitary. But we can make writing communal too by having people write together and to each other [as is in dialog journals] (p. 158). In this sense, dialog journals prompt students to use the language as a tool for written communication with an oral style.

In addition, literacy includes using language meaningfully and purposefully. Within the context of the dialog journal, the students are communicating on topics of personal interest to someone. Therefore they are using the target language with a purpose. Research shows that "the goal of journal writing (...) is to empower students to write about issues of concern to them" (Orem, 2001, p. 74). Through dialog journal writing, students have the freedom to express their own ideas. Therefore, this activity triggers a written-language acquisition process in which learners improve their literacy skills.

Dialog journals

Dialog journal writing can be viewed as part of "a situation where language teaching and learning are organized so that communication is systematically dialogic" (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000, p. 99). It is essentially a written interaction in the target language that the student and the teacher carry out back and forth for a period of time. Dialog journals fall into Elbow's (2000) category of 'excellent writing' since it involves the audience. In his words, "the best writing has just this quality of being somehow a piece of two-way communication, not one way" (Elbow, 2000, p. 159). In dialog journals both audiences are actively involved in a written interaction back and forth as its purpose is dialogic.

An important approach that teachers and students should not miss in this type of writing is to view this activity as a means and not as an end. Dialog journals respond to "a whole language philosophy in which communication is viewed as one of the most important goals of the language class" (Schwarzer, 2004, p. 79). As explained before, language is a tool not a goal. In the case of dialog journals, the goal is the intended meaning being communicated and the tool used to communicate that meaning is the language.

According to Sociocultural Theory (SCT), learning is mediated by external help with the use of tools whether physical or psychological (Vygotsky, 1978). This external help which mediates the learning process may be people or objects (Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation through objects is called 'object-regulation' which in language learning is manifested when a child interacts with an object and learns the name of it (Vygotsky, 1978). Mediation through people is called 'other-regulation' and, as its name indicates, it happens when one person serves as the means for another to learn something. In the case of second language learning for example, a teacher might show the students a picture of an apple and pronounce its name in the target language. Other-mediation could also happen when a second language learner listens carefully to what a native speaker says when asking for something at a store (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, our involvement with the physical world is mediated by physical or psychological tools (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). Language for example, is considered a psychological tool because almost every goal that involves communication with others can be accomplished. Through language it is possible to ask for directions, order food at a restaurant, talk to a friend on the phone, understand what the teacher is explaining in a certain class, eavesdrop on a

conversation, write an email to a boss, write a love letter to a spouse, etc. There is almost no limit to what can be mediated by language as a tool.

One of the purposes of this paper is to review what research studies have shown on dialog journals and find out how this activity fosters development of literacy skills in second language learners. According to the SCT perspective, students will improve their literacy skills when they have internalized the target language features that serve as tools for them to communicate with others. Internalization is defined as "the process of making what was once external assistance a resource that is internally available to the individual" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 200). For language learners, the target language is an external resource, a tool that they would like to use for particular purposes, but that they do not know how to use yet. Throughout the language-acquisition process, learners internalize vocabulary and grammatical features (tools) of the target language step by step with the purpose of accomplishing communicative goals in the target language.

Zone of proximal development

An important factor to explore in the interaction between the teacher and the student within the activity of writing dialog journals is the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Interaction with others is viewed as the key to develop skills and strategies. Applying this idea to the present topic, the actual developmental level would be the literacy level that the language learner shows before engaging in the dialogue journal writing activity. The level of

potential development would then be what they can do with the help of their teacher's comments. Therefore, teacher's comments role in this interactive writing activity is critical because it is through them that learners will be guided to expand their ZPD. In other words, "if [teachers] guide their students throughout [the writing] process, students will have a greater opportunity to become aware not only the writing process but also strengths and weaknesses of their own writing" (Spicer-Escalante, 2011, p. 1454). The way to guide learners within the context of dialog journals is through comments focused on meaning as it is further explained.

Vygotsky states that "good learning is that which is in advance of development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). Under the SCT perspective, teaching and learning are closely related to the concept of ZPD. In fact, SCT views "teaching and learning in conjunction and close-up, looking to fundamental characteristics of the ZPD as a set of interactive processes wherein learning occurs because teaching facilitates it" (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000, p. 115). Within the interaction of a teacher and a student, where the teacher is the expert user of the target language and the student is the novice learner of it, a ZPD example is portrayed. The teacher is the one who mediates the student's learning. In dialog journaling, the written messages that come from the teacher (expert) scaffold the learner to develop literacy skills even though the focus is not on grammar correction. By the teacher (expert) focusing on meaning and not on grammar, the student is driven to naturally perceive and use written language as a tool (Lantolf & Thorne, 2008). In this sense, students write not to obtain a grade but to communicate a message.

Human beings learn by using tools (physical or psychological) that help them accomplish goals in real life (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of dialog journals the goal

is to communicate an idea of some sort. "Dialog journal writing responds to the learner's need to communicate with others in a meaningful context" (Orem, 2001, p.74). When people want to learn a second language their ultimate goal is to learn how to use this psychological tool to communicate with others. In real life, when people interact with each other, the focus is on meaning as well because the goal of using a language is always communication.

Free topic

Dialog journals are a unique means for learners to write freely about any topic they choose and not feel anxious about or focus overly on grammatical correctness. "Dialogue journals create opportunities for functional interactive written conversations in which students can pursue topics of interest to them, with intelligent responses from the teacher" (Peyton & Staton, 1993, p. 105). The teacher provides feedback on the message conveyed by the student but does not make grammatical corrections of any kind. This feature lowers the students' level of anxiety and increases their motivation to write since "they come to see writing both as an authentic means of communication and as a way to reflect on personal growth and development" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 124). By writing to someone, learners become aware that their lives matter and that what they write can be of interest to others. In fact, children learn to write when they have a reason to write and real audience to write to (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Authorship and voice

Journal writing helps students develop their sense of authorship and their voice. An example supporting this statement is the story of the teacher Erin Gruwell and her students. Gruwell became a literature teacher at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California in 1994. Her students were labeled as 'unteachable, at-risk' teenagers (Gruwell, 2009). They hated each other due to their diverse backgrounds (Latino, Vietnamese, African-American, Cambodian, and Caucasian) and daily exposure to gang violence. These students did not have many expectations or dreams for life to get better and were just trying to survive day by day. Gruwell had them read the journals of two girls to whom they could relate: *The diary of Anne Frank and Zlata's diary: A child's life in Sarajevo*. She also encouraged them to write journals themselves and gave them the freedom to write about anything.

Gruwell' students, who named themselves 'the freedom writers,' used their journals to write their own stories just as Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovic did. Gruwell states, "I encouraged the freedom writers to use a pen as a means of revolution. Through their writing, they discovered they shared a common identity, which united them into a community that connected them, not separated them from the world" (Gruwell, 2009, p. 276). When readers recognize the author's voice in a piece of writing, they typically feel compelled to read it (Elbow, 2007). The fact that these journals provided students the opportunity to write their own stories gave them the sense that their lives mattered and that they had a voice that others would like to hear. As a result of the journal writing and other teaching strategies, the course of the students' lives changed from becoming gang members to attending college. Some of them were the first ones in their families to graduate from high school. The story of Gruwell' students and their journals was

published in a book called *The Freedom Writers Diary* that soon became a best-seller and even a Hollywood film.

Dialog journal's components

Three components are considered essential for effective dialog journals: "(1) the written communication itself, (2) the dialogic conversation and (3) the responsive relationship between a literacy learner and a more competent member of a literate culture" (Peyton & Staton, 1991, as cited in Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 124). The third component, the relationship between a teacher and a student, is a crucial component for the student's development. As mentioned above, the teacher's comments are to be responsive to what the learner tries to communicate for the ZPD to take place. If the teacher, who is the expert user of the target language, performs any kind of correction, the learner will be focused on grammatical correctness instead of conveying a message, and since language is a tool for communication the basic point of second language learning will be missed. Teachers must also bear in mind that their responses to the journals are influential. "A statement of praise in the response (from the teacher) helps the students gain confidence and shows them that their writing is meaningful" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 125). Therefore it is important that the teacher pay attention to the little details that may deserve praise because the influence of the teacher's words has the potential to encourage students and help them expand their ZPD.

Learner's views on dialog journals

It is relevant to pay attention to what learners have to say about teaching methodologies. "In an era in which the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches is reduced to scores on standardized tests, the need to listen to students' perspectives is

magnified" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 134). To return to the key question of this paper: How could this type of journaling foster development of second language literacy skills if the teacher does not make grammatical corrections? Lantolf and Poehner (2008) offer an interesting account of journal writers' perspectives. The language learners in their study described how dialog journals were helpful to them in their language learning process and the influence that this activity had on their attitude towards writing. Their statements support many of the main aspects of journal writing that have already been discussed in this paper. For example, Trang, a Vietnamese ESL first-year student at a university explained what tends to happen to her when she focuses on mechanics and correctness:

> I realized that journal really help me to write down my idea without any blocking into my elbow. When I have idea in my head and I start to make it go down my arm to the paper, if I think about grammar, structure my idea blocks into my elbow and never goes to the paper (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 115).

Her writing and her thinking disconnect from each other when she tries to focus on grammar. Interestingly, when the focus was taken off the mechanics and correctness, she was able to develop her writing skills. Regarding this same aspect, Jabar, a Palestinian ESL student commented:

> From the journals I have learned and applied good ideas to the papers. I now make good ideas my first priority in writing a paper without considering the grammar, because otherwise if I think about the grammar the most I will write a poor paper in both ideas and grammar (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 134).

Learners recognize the benefits of focusing on meaning and the failure of focusing on correctness. Jabar, a Palestinian ESL student, stated that he writes more and better when his attention is not on mechanics.

Since literacy not only involves reading and writing competencies but also the critical use of language for all kinds of purposes in life, the following accounts support the notion that literacy improvement and meta-cognitive skills development occurred in their particular cases. Andre for example, a French ESL learner testified that dialogue journals promoted meaning as the main goal of writing: "[T]he journals allowed me to expand my thoughts and get my message across without interrupting myself thinking about what words to use or what to correct grammer (sic) should be (all the things that can be done later)" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 126-127). It can be noticed that, for this learner communicating a message was important. And as he was able to get his message across his literacy skills were improving. Moreover, as his thoughts were being expanded, his meta-cognitive skills were developing. "Language acquisition is facilitated when instruction focuses on meaningful activities and real world application" (Hadaway & Young, 2002, p. 5). Dialog journals are an interactive writing activity that enables students to use the language for their own purposes as they write freely about topics of their interest.

As soon as learners start focusing on communication they begin to produce more. Jabar said: "Journals helped me to think first; to think about ideas of writing instead of thinking about the grammar errors that I might make" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 127). This learner became aware that through the journals his thinking was being directed toward the ideas he wanted to communicate. When this kind of awareness is awakened in

language learners, their ZPDs are expanded since as learners write more they develop their writing skills.

Writing in different genres

Literacy also involves writing in different genres. The freedom that dialog journals provide allows students to write in the genre of their preference. Raj, a second language learner, provided insights on how dialog journals have made him aware of other kinds of writing: "[J]ournal helped us understand the difference between informal writing and essays. While writing essay you have to connect everything so that it makes sense. In journal writing you don't have to connect each and every idea of yours" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 133-134). By writing in their journals, students are better able to identify differences between formal and informal writing. It guides them to reflect on their own writing and therefore helps them to improve their literacy skills in general. With dialogue journals, students "develop control of their writing in a realistic, functional manner" (Hadaway & Young, 2002, p. 6). Ana testified of this fact when she wrote: "I think that writing in journals helped me to use techniques and strategies in other writing such as taking notes, short answer test questions, essay questions and research" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 134). The wide scope of what the use of dialog journals can accomplish with second language learners is worth of attention. In sum, the findings of many research studies point to the fact that the dialog journal activity provides important conditions for learning such as "interaction about topics relevant to learning, focus on interaction rather than form, enhancement of reading skills, modeling of correct grammatical forms, natural evolution of grammatical structures, and interaction in a

private, nonthreatening way" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p. 616). In conclusion, literacy skills are likely to be developed when engaging in this interactive writing activity.

Dialog journals are not enough

The activity of dialog journaling in itself is not sufficient for learners to develop their literacy skills since the process of learning a new language is dialectic: It is not a product of one isolated teaching strategy but a process of conjoining every aspect of life inside and outside the classroom setting. Second language learners should receive language instruction and/or other kinds of exposure to the second language (e.g., immersion in the target language community) along with these written interactions. Journals should function as a way for learners to express themselves in the second language with the tools they have acquired. "Dialogue journal writing allows beginning writers to use the wide range of language functions which they have already mastered in spoken language, whereas essays, formal letters, and many other types of school writing do not" (Shuy, 1988b as cited in Peyton & Staton, 1993, p. 105). This opportunity creates a relaxed atmosphere that encourages students to write in the target language not only about the topic they like but also in the way they like (e.g., narrative, poetry, etc.).

While dialog journals can play an important role in L2 literacy development, they cannot be the sole focus of instruction. Dialog journals must be accompanied by classroom instruction and/or interactions with a fluent speaker or the target language community in itself (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Other graded writing activities must be present in the curriculum along with oral interactions in the target language.

A case study conducted by Nassaji and Cumming (2000) emphasizes the crucial role that the convergence of a variety of methodologies played in the literacy

development of a particular language learner. Ali was a six year-old ESL student from Iran who had just moved to Canada. Ninety-five dialogue journal exchanges between Ali and his teacher Ellen, written over a period of 10 months, were analyzed. These dialog journals were his first writings in English. The authors state that "Ali was learning new mediational means from a variety of sources around him, such as classroom or conversational discourse, and developing his abilities by extending what is appropriate in one domain to another" (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000, p. 113). Since dialog journals are a means of expression, they provided Ali with opportunities to use the language he was acquiring in the classroom and through informal interactions with peers. The authors emphasize the centrality of meaning: "The dialogue journals created a 'setting for thought' [...] in which both participants reciprocally shared common knowledge, purposes and tools of communication, evidently understanding and appreciating them" (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000, p.114). Again, the focus on meaning makes the dialogue journals effective in fostering literacy development.

Conclusion

The effect of dialog journals on the literacy skills of second language learners are a field that needs to be explored further. What has been found thus far supports the notion that dialogue journals have the potential of fostering the development of literacy skills of second language learners due to some special characteristics: the focus on meaning, students' freedom to write about topics they like, the low levels of anxiety because there are no corrections, and the students' sense that what they have to write is of interest to others. Therefore, dialog journals can be promoted as an effective learning activity that may be included in the second language classroom to foster literacy skills of L2 learners.

Vygotskyan' sociocultural theory was the framework under which this paper was written. That is the reason why I did not mention the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. However, I believe dialog journal perfectly fit the CLT approach as well because it provides language learners with a scenario for practicing the target language in a meaningful way.

CULTURE ARTIFACT

Introduction and Reflection

Learning the pragmatics of the target language and target culture is really important for students, as it will enable them to communicate effectively with members of the target language community. It was my special interest to analyze the speech act of apologies due to the nature of the consequences that a failure might bring to the second/ foreign language learner in his/her relationships. This face-threatening speech act (that can also happen in written form) when not carried correctly according to the pragmatics of the target language community could affect a learner's social and professional relationships.

In this research paper I focus on apologies in English and I review various studies that address this speech act from different perspectives. My interest was to compare the English pragmatics of apologies with some other different languages and see which English language learners are more likely to experience pragmatic failures and which type. I found that speakers of languages that share similar pragmatic practices when apologizing are less likely to fail in their communication due to pragmatic transfer from their native language. At the same time, speakers of languages that have very different ways to apologize are more likely to be perceived as rude or annoying by members of the target language community.

My objective is for the readers of this artifact, either language teachers or language learners, to realize the importance of developing pragmatic awareness in the speech act of apologies. Second/ foreign language learners need to understand the language not only grammatically but also pragmatically. The purpose of language is communication. This implies that someone transmits a message and someone receives the

message. The message needs to be communicated in an understandable way but also in a sensitive way taking into consideration the recipient's expectations.

By researching on this topic I learned that language learners with high level of proficiency in the target language who do not know the pragmatics of the target language community will be unsuccessful in their attempt to perform speech acts such as apologies for example. The reason is that every culture has its distinct pragmatics practices and variations of these across cultures can cause language learners to fail when trying to communicate an idea. What is appropriate in one culture could be unacceptable in another and so forth.

Abstract

A review of various research studies on the speech act of apologies on English language learners is provided in the present paper. The importance of teaching the pragmatics of the target language in the second/ foreign language classroom is analyzed and it is concluded that lessons to raise pragmatics awareness in the second/foreign language should be included in the curriculum. Some research studies on pragmatic transfers in the speech act of apologies of English language learners from different cultures are analyzed. And a slight critique on the data collection method (Discourse Completion Task) used in these research studies is presented.

Comparisons between the practices of apologies typically found in English native speakers and English language learners from different cultural backgrounds are presented. The purpose is to emphasize the need for second language teachers to make learners aware of the pragmatic differences between their native language and the target language when apologizing. By understanding English pragmatics on apologies, language learners won't be misinterpreted as rude or annoying by the target language culture and therefore would become better communicators.

The Art of Apologies:

A Close Look at American Practices of Apologizing

Language is the main tool of communication in any group of people that shares a particular culture. Therefore, when learning a second/foreign language, it is necessary to become aware of cultural and pragmatic characteristics of the target culture. This is mainly because "speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative, ill mannered, rude, or a combination of all three" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 244). And since the purpose of learning a second language is to be able to communicate effectively with members of the target culture, L2 learners must become aware of pragmatics of the target language.

As language teachers our goal is for our students to reach a level of *discourse competence* (Celce-Murcia, 2007) which is "refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message" (Celce-Murcia, p. 46). Discourse competence includes *actional competence* which is often referred to as pragmatic competence as well. Actional competence can be defined as "knowledge of how to perform common speech acts and speech act sets in the target language involving interactions such as information exchanges, interpersonal exchanges, expression of opinions and feelings, problems (complaining, blaming, regretting, apologizing, etc.), future scenarios (hopes, goals, promises, predictions, etc.)" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 48). Thus, a close look at the cultural aspects of the target language should be included in our lesson plans e.g. pragmatic instruction on strategies and/ or habits of the target language culture or cultures related to speech acts such as apologies, requests, complaints, refusals, suggestions, etc. (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). A

question emerges from this assumption: Is it possible to teach actional/pragmatic competence? Kasper (1997) states, "the simple answer... is no. Competence, linguistic or pragmatic, is not teachable. Competence is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use, or lose" (p. 1). Does this mean that it is useless to pay attention to pragmatic aspects within our lesson plans? I think not. I believe what Kasper means is that learners already possess the potential to acquire actional/pragmatic competence in the target language.

In my opinion, pragmatic awareness can be cultivated. Our challenge as language teachers is to provide learners with opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of actional/pragmatic competence. It is important to remember that learners already possess a certain amount of L2 pragmatic knowledge. "This is because some pragmatic knowledge is universal, and other aspects may be successfully transferred from the learner's L1. But unfortunately, learners do not always make use of the L1 pragmatic competence" (Kasper, 1997, p. 2) and teachers should be aware of this. Therefore, an emphasis on reaching an appropriate level of actional/pragmatic competence should be part of the second/foreign language curriculum.

According to the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2012) culture involves three components: practices, perspectives, and products. The speech act of apologizing, which is the focus of this research paper, belongs to the category of practices. The *Standards* define practices as behaviors that have been accepted in a society and that are embedded in culture. Each culture has its unique practices, some of which may be similar across the L1 and L2 cultures but most of which differ at least minimally. In the case of the speech act of

apologies, which is the focus of this paper, it is critical for second language learners to be aware of the pragmatically correct way of apologizing in the target language if they want to be successful as communicators in the target language culture. Therefore, the language teacher, either native or non-native speaker of the target language should provide learners with instruction on pragmatically correct ways to apologize in the target language.

The different components of the speech act of apologies

Our starting point then will be to define key concepts. An apology is when "a person has performed an act (action or utterance), or failed to do so, which has offended another person, and for which he/she can be held responsible" (Trosborg, 1994, p. 373). There are two participants in this speech act: the apologizer and the victim, and since the apologizer carries an active role, second/foreign language teaching must focus on training L2 learners to be competent apologizers.

Another relevant aspect to focus on when teaching apologies is how to express them. Thesaurus dictionary online defines an apology as "a written or spoken expression of one's regret, remorse, or sorrow for having insulted, failed, injured, or wronged another." While apologies can be expressed in a written or a spoken fashion, there is a considerable difference between a spoken and a written apology. In written form, individuals may not feel the same pressure of eliciting an immediate answer that they will in a spoken exchange. Writing is typically less face-threatening than speaking, and therefore the apologizer may have time to think about possible strategies. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is a written tool used by researchers to collect the data regarding speech acts. But, is it valid to proclaim that the results of such research studies represent the reality of certain pragmatic practices both written and oral? There are different

opinions concerning this matter. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, (1989) for example, conclude that such results "cannot claim to represent what people actually say in interactions but only what they report they would say in a kind of written role play" (p. 120). Another limitation that is addressed by these same authors is the fact that the instrument (DCT) usually provides only one line for a response. This restriction may represent a significant limitation. Perhaps the obvious solution is to provide more space for each answer but in a real interaction "an apology may extend over several utterances, several turns, and even several days" (Holmes 1990, as cited in Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, p. 120). These considerations suggest the implementation of a different data collection tool for this kind of research.

Apologies in American culture

The focus of this paper is to analyze some research data on the speech act of apologies in American culture and make comparisons that may lead us to useful conclusions. Every culture has different strategies to express apologies. The apology strategies that are normally taken into consideration for research studies and that represent a more or less universal set of apologizing strategies are: remedial strategies (expressing concern for the hearer, promise of forbearance, recompensation, offer of repair), evasive strategies (minimizing the degree of the offense, querying preconditions, blaming someone else), indirect strategies (implicit or explicit acknowledgement of responsibility, expression of lack of intent, self-deficiency or embarrassment, explicit acceptance, explicit acceptance of the blame), explanation or account (explicit or implicit), offer of apology, request for forgiveness, and strategic disarmers (preparators)

(Trosborg, 1994). There are multiple ways to express apologies and therefore cultures are likely to vary in their choice as well as their frequency of use.

A discussion of pragmatics in teaching apologies should take important aspects of the target language culture into account. For example, is there a difference between male and female ways of apologizing? What is the effect of social distance in a particular scenario, e.g., higher, equal, or lower status? Is there evidence to suggest that some apologizing strategies are common or perhaps universal? Below, a review of some research studies on apologies that might answer some of these questions is presented.

Comparing apology strategies across cultures

Trosborg (1994) carried out a research study with Danish learners of English (non-native speakers, NNs) and Native English speakers (NEs) on apology strategies, with the purpose of making comparisons between the two groups. Among the similarities that were found, "the routine formula "I'm sorry" was by far the most commonly used form of an apology" (Trosborg, 1994, p. 399) in both groups. Also, both groups used expressions of regret, and in general, there were no significant differences between NEs and NNs on the main strategies. These findings suggest that pragmatic competence in apologizing would be easily reachable for Danish learners of English. In fact, similarities across languages such as Hebrew, Canadian French, Australian English, and German have been found (Trosborg, 1994).

Due to similarities in social factors, contextual elements and level of offense apologies are performed in similar ways across languages (Trosborg, 1994). These results raise the possibility that these nations have similar pragmatics in the speech act of apologies. However, in Trosborg's study, the level of politeness of the NNs was lower

than NEs even when the same apology strategy was used. NEs were likely to use more internal modifiers in their responses and as a result reached a higher level of politeness or increased degree of justification (Trosborg, 1994). We could get discouraged by this fact but it is important to mention that the NNs from this study did not receive any formal instruction on American English pragmatics.

The same results were not found in studies comparing some other cultures. Iragui (1996) reports on a DCT that was administered to 96 college students: 34 were native English speakers (NEs) and 62 were Basque learners of English (non-native speakers NNs). Iraqui found that alerters and intensifiers (politeness markers) were most commonly used by NEs. Furthermore, the limited usage of these politeness markers by L2 learners may be an indicator of pragmatic transfer from L1. Another interesting finding was the absence of significant differences between apologies of males and females. Nevertheless, in this study, factors such as social distance and social power were not taken into consideration. It is possible that the offended and the apologizer shared the same status in all the questions of the DCT. Alternatively, the scenarios may have included interlocutors of higher, equal, and lower status but the researchers did not take this matter into account. While these considerations do not take away the validity of the findings, they do help us focus our attention on those factors for further studies.

Comparing distant cultures, such as Japanese and Jordanian, is more likely to yield significant differences. In 2007, Kondo conducted a study to investigate whether a group of 45 Japanese study-abroad students would acquire pragmatic competence in making apologies during their time in the USA. He used a DCT (pretest-posttest design) and two control groups of 48 Japanese and 40 American individuals. It was reported that

in the pretest, Japanese students' tendency was to use "sorry" and to show concern whereas Americans preferred to give explanations. Kondo's posttest results indicate that one year later, Japanese students adjusted their answers to be more similar to those given by American English speakers in terms of giving explanations but increased their use of the strategy of showing concern. Kondo attributed this to the increase of their linguistic ability, despite not acquiring the sociopragmatic ability to know when and where was appropriate to use this semantic formula in English (Kondo, 1997).

While Japanese tend to overuse the same strategies, in Jordanian culture the opposite was found. In a study conducted by Bataineh (2005), the differences between American and Jordanian EFL learners' responses were clear. While Jordanian EFL learners' answers involved the usage of a considerable variety of explicit apologies, Americans used less explicit apology strategies. Jordanians also presented a tendency to exaggerate their expression of apology. The author inferred that this is probably an attempt to win the victim's sympathy. Bataineh also found that Jordanian respondents opted for proverbs and sayings since proverbs are widely used in their society. Regarding the differences between male and female responses, there were more differences in the Jordanian group when compared to American male and female responses, which the author attributed to the similarities between how boys and girls are raised in the U.S. compared to how they are raised in Jordan.

Conclusion

Based on the research studies reviewed in this paper, some conclusions can be drawn. Among similar cultures there will be similarities in the speech act of apologizing and a greater probability for language learners to reach a relatively high level of

actional/pragmatic competence. What I mean by similar cultures is when both nations

were linked in history at some point or have influenced each other through media or some

other way (e.g., Western cultures).   On the other hand, between more distant cultures

more significant differences are likely to be found and therefore a focus on pragmatic

differences is necessary for language learners to become aware of them and be better

communicators. One way or another, either if we teach English to Danish, Basque,

Japanese, or Jordanian learners, raising the pragmatic awareness of our students should

be one of our main goals as language teachers. In other words, pragmatic instruction is

necessary (Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008) in the language classroom. To address the

implications of teaching pragmatics in the classroom e.g., what language teachers could

consider when teaching apologies, an example on how to raise pragmatic awareness on

the speech act of apologies is provided in Appendix B. The lesson plan has been designed

to teach adult English language learners at the advanced level how to express apologies.

The native-language of the target students in this lesson plan is Spanish.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Introduction and Reflection

Second language learners are not passive recipients of information. They are active in the language acquisition process which has both linguistic and socio-cultural components. It is imperative to take into consideration language learner's opinions on second language teaching methodologies and other factors of the learning process that could be facilitating or hindering their language learning process. In this case study, I analyze linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of María (not her real name), a second language learner who has lived in the United States for less than a year and is taking a university-level intensive English course.

For data collection, I designed two semi-structured interviews. I included questions that would prompt the participant to use the language freely so I could explore the linguistic aspects of her acquisition process. I chose Krashen's acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) to identify the mistakes she commonly makes. I also designed questions aimed at exploring María's opinions on the language teaching method and situational/ cultural aspects that have and have not helped her language acquisition process. The socio-cultural analysis that I made was based on María's answers to the interview questions.

It was interesting to find that the participant's linguistic development matched Krashen's acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977). Therefore it can be concluded that María is in a normal/ typical English language acquisition process. Regarding the socio-cultural aspects, I was impressed when she stated that 'listening classes' are the ones that have been more beneficial to her even though her lower grades are from that class. Also, the fact that she is surrounded by many Spanish speakers is not helping her to

practice English. Since language is a skill, Maria needs opportunities to practice English

if she wants to achieve a level of proficiency in English.

Abstract

This is the case study of an adult English language learner who is taking an intensive English course and has been living in the United States for less than a year. Linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of her language learning process are explored. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participant. For evaluation of learner's linguistic aspects, Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) was used. Interview questions in the interviews were designed for exploration of the learner's socio-cultural aspects. The focus was to find out the learner's point of view of which teaching methodologies and activities have and have not been helpful and in which ways living in the USA has affected her English language acquisition process. According to the participant, classroom listening activities and activities that involve speaking have been the most effective. Regarding factors that hinder her language acquisition process she mentioned the lack of practice due to the fact she is surrounded by Spanish-speaking friends most of the time.

Analyzing the Language Learning Process of an Adult English Language Learner:

A Case Study

The different ways in which adult English language learners are exposed to the target language could be summarized as follows: "(1) formal lessons, (2) naturalistic experiences, and (3) a combination of (1) and (2)" (Pica, 1983, p. 465). The input received in formal lessons within the context of a classroom setting is structured. In other words, the target language is presented in lessons that focus on grammatical rules following a certain sequence (Pica, 1983). Through naturalistic experiences, the learner is provided with no formal instruction on grammatical rules but rather communication is based on meaning (Pica, 1983). The amount and conditions of exposure to the target language may vary from learner to learner but according to the "natural acquisition order of bound morphemes" proposed by Krashen (1977), English language learners will acquire the proposed grammatical morphemes in a certain so-called 'natural' order (Krashen, 1977). The bound morphemes are: the -*s* to form plurals, the irregular past formation, -*ed* for regular past, the -*s* for the conjugation of verbs in third person (agreement), the '*s* for possessives, and the -*ing* for progressives tenses. Subsequent studies (Brown, 1973; Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974; Pica, 1983) corroborate Krashen's (1977) findings and for a time this order was accepted as universal in the field of SLA.

Throughout the years, Krashen's acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) has been criticized by many researchers. Goldschneider and DeKeyser (2001) for example, concluded that instead of forming some kind of of a natural order, acquisition order of the grammatical functors "can be predicted by the combination of five factors:

perceptual salience, semantic complexity, morphological regularity, syntactic category, and frequency" (p. 61). Other researchers (Cancino, 1976; Andersen, 1983; Luk & Shirai, 2009) claim that morpheme acquisition order is heavily influenced by a learner's L1 and attribute differences in the acquisition order between learners with different native languages to L1 transfer. Krashen might agree with these above mentioned claims since he stated that "looking at morphemes in obligatory occasions does not give us a complete picture of the processes underlying language acquisition" (p. 150). Since most of the early studies 'subjects were Spanish native speakers it is generally suggested that Krashen's (1977) order tends to correspond to English language learners who are native speakers of Spanish.

When English language learners are learning the target language in a naturalistic way, e.g., are immersed in the target language culture, socio-cultural aspects are likely to play an important role in the language acquisition process. According to Peyton and Staton (1993), persons, whether infants or adults, when placed in language immersion situations where they interact frequently and meaningfully with native speakers, seem to acquire language rather quickly and reach a level of communicative competence which includes both sociolinguistic and linguistic mastery (p. 105).

In the present case study, linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of the English language acquisition process of one Spanish native-speaking adult are explored. The linguistic aspect is explored in light of Krashen's (1977) natural acquisition order of bound morphemes. The socio-cultural aspects of the language acquisition process inside and outside the classroom setting are extracted from the learner's statements in the interview. The language learner of this case study has been receiving formal English

language instruction in an American university while immersed in the target language culture for eight months.

Purpose of the Study

This case study was designed for the purpose of examining the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of the English language acquisition of one adult. The following questions guided data collection and analysis:

1) According to Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) what grammatical mistakes are commonly made by the interviewee?

2) From the point of view of this learner, which teaching methodologies and activities are helpful and which are not considered as effective?

3) In which ways has living in the USA affected this English language learner?

Research question 1 intends to explore linguistic aspects of this L2 learner' speech while research questions 2 and 3 aim to investigate the socio-cultural aspect of her language acquisition inside and outside the classroom.

Participant

The participant is an 18-year-old native Spanish speaker that I will call María. Originally from the Dominican Republic, María has been living in the USA for eight months. Her purpose for moving to Logan, Utah, was primarily to obtain a degree in Economics at Utah State University (USU). She has not yet started her undergraduate studies since her level of English proficiency is not high enough for the demands of her program of study. She has been enrolled in the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) at USU program for two semesters to improve her English proficiency.

Data Collection

To collect the data, two semi-structured interviews were designed (See Appendix C). The first interview protocol was designed with 15 questions while the second had 14 questions. There were 16 days between the first interview and the second. The first interview was carried out on March 7th, 2012, and the second on March 23rd, 2012. The first interview lasted 15 minutes and the second interview lasted 13 minutes.

Data Analysis

Both interviews were transcribed by the author. Second, a meticulous reading of the transcribed interviews was carried out. Third, each mistake that fell into one of the six categories of Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) was highlighted and analyzed. The participant's responses to interview questions were scrutinized for topics and themes related to the socio-cultural aspects of her learning process.

Findings

In interview 1, the highest rate of suppliance was with the use of *-s* to form plural. María used this morpheme correctly all seventeen times the context required it; having then a rate of 100% of suppliance. Table 1 shows the ranking from higher to lower rate of suppliance. The irregular past came in second place; María made only one mistake the twenty times she used irregular past. The rate of correct usage of the irregular past tense was 95%. In third place on her list is the use of *-ed* (regular past). She did not pronounce the *-ed* morpheme three times out of the eight times she used this morpheme. The rate of correct usage of this morpheme was 63%. In fourth place was the use of *-s* (agreement). María made one error the two times she used the-s (agreement) morpheme.

The rate of correct use of this morpheme was 50%. Regarding the use of *'s* as a

possessive and *-ing* for the progressive tense of verbs, María never used them during

interview 1.

Table 1: Morpheme use in L2 Answers on Interview 1

Rank Order	Total # of Errors	Correct Usage/ Total	Rate of Suppliance
-s (plural)	0	17/17	100%
irregular past	1	19/20	95%
-ed (regular past)	3	5/8	63%
-s (agreement)	1	1/2	50%
s (possessive)*	-	-	-
-ing (progressive)*	-	-	-

 * not supplied

During interview 2, the higher rate of suppliance was found on the use of *-ing*

for progressive tense of verbs (see table 2). This morpheme was used correctly the three

times that it occurred, having then a rate of suppliance of 100%. The second place is

occupied by the use of *-s* to form plurals. María made two mistakes out of the eleven

times she used the *-ing* morpheme on the second interview. The rate of suppliance was

calculated to be 82%. Taking the third position is the irregular past. She made four

mistakes in the thirteen times she used irregular past. The rate of correct usage was 69%.

Next was the use of regular past tense. María made four errors out of the five times she

used this morpheme. The rate of correct use was 20%.

In fifth place is the use of *-s* (agreement) at the end of verbs in third person

singular. María missed the pronunciation of this morpheme five times out of six she used

this in obligatory context (see Table 2). The rate of correct usage of this morpheme was

only 17%. Occupying the last position is the use of *'s* as possessive, which María never

used.

Table 2: Morphemes use in L2 Answers on Interview 2.

Rank Order	Total # of Errors	Correct Usage/ Total	Rate of Suppliance
-ing (progressive)	0	3/3	100%
-s (plural)	2	9/11	82%
irregular past	4	9/13	69%
-ed (regular past)	4	1/5	20%
-s (agreement)	5	1/6	17%
-s (possessive)*	-	-	-

*not supplied

Combining the data collected from both interviews (see table 3), the first research question of this case study can be answered: According to Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) what grammatical mistakes are commonly made by the interviewee?

The highest rate of suppliance was found in the use of *-ing* for progressive with 100% of correctness. In second place in descending order was the use of *-s* for plural with a 93% of suppliance. María made only two mistakes out of the twenty-eight times she used the -s (plural) morpheme.

The irregular past is in third position with a rate of correctness of 85%. She made five mistakes out of the twenty-eight times she used the irregular past. This is followed by the regular past in fourth place with 46% of suppliance. She missed the pronunciation of the *-ed* for regular past seven out of the thirteen times she used this morpheme.

The fifth position in this list is taken by the *-s* (agreement) with a 25% of suppliance. María failed to correctly use the *-s* (agreement) six times out of eight she used

this morpheme in her answers (see Table 3). Regarding the *'s* for possessive, the interviewee never used possessives.

Table 3: Morphemes use in L2 Answers on Interviews 1 and 2.

Rank Order	Total # of Errors	Correct Usage/ Total	Rate of Suppliance
-ing (progressive)	0	3/3	100%
-s (plural)	2	26/28	93%
irregular past	5	28/33	85%
-ed (regular past)	7	6/13	46%
-s (agreement)	6	2/8	25%
s (possessive)*	-	-	-

 * not supplied

Linguistic Aspect

Exploring the linguistic aspect of María's language acquisition process using Krashen's (1977) natural acquisition order of bound morphemes, it can be concluded that the order proposed by Krashen (1977) matches the order found in María's utterances.

Table 4: Comparison of the results from the present study with Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977)

Rank Order found in the present case study.	Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977)
-ing (progressive)	-ing (progressive)
-s (plural)	-s (plural)
irregular past	irregular past
-ed (regular past)	-ed (regular past)
-s (agreement)	-s (agreement)
's (possessive)	's (possessive)

These results corroborate Krashen's (1977) hypothesis on the existence of a certain order of natural acquisition of bound morphemes. It also support the claims of

some researchers (Cancino, 1976; Andersen, 1983; Luk and Shirai, 2009) on the influence of the L1 in these order of acquisition since María is a Spanish native speaker and early studies (Brown, 1973; Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974; Pica, 1983) exploring this so-called 'natural' order also corroborated Krashen's proposed order of morphemes. However, since the subject never supplied possessive*'s*, we cannot draw any conclusions about that morpheme.

Socio-Cultural Aspect

Socio-cultural aspects of María's language acquisition process inside and outside the classroom setting are also explored in this study. The second research question (transcripts of the interview are found in Appendix B) intends to explore socio-cultural aspects inside the classroom by asking María's opinion on American language teaching methodologies:

From the point of view of an English language learner, which teaching methodologies and activities are helpful and which are not considered as effective?

During the first interview María specifically and emphatically stated that she considers the listening class in the IELI program the most helpful for her: "*I think listening is better for me and is difficult because sometimes the vocabulary is very difficult 'cause is not my language; Is usually helpful and I can improve my English, my pronunciation and what people try to say*". She said that her lower grades were in this class, *"actually listening is my lowest score but it is really good (...) I think is (...) the best methodology that IELI has."* María mentioned that having an American teaching assistant in the classroom with whom she can talk, and that the classroom activities that involve speaking had been very helpful for her to improve her English.

Responding to the second part of the second research question, María stated that every methodology in the IELI program has been very effective for her. However, she mentioned that when she was learning English in a language institute in her country, one activity that was not helpful for her language learning process was the methodology they used to teach her writing. In her opinion she had poor written performance because of the lack of grammar instruction.

The third research question aims to explore socio-cultural aspects of María's language acquisition process outside the classroom: In which ways has living in the USA been helpful to this English language learner?

During the first interview María stated that she spoke English only in the classroom: "I just speak English in my class, not out of my class." When asked to explain the reasons for this she said: *"Maybe, I have a lot of friends that speak Spanish. I think is the first factor."* When ranking from 1 to 10 the amount of English she speaks everyday she ranked herself at a 5. She attributes this low score to the fact she is constantly speaking in her native language with her friends: *"As I say before, I have a lot of friends that speak Spanish."*

María said she has not experienced any kind of culture shock or rejection from the American community. In fact, she has felt welcome. She stated that her writing teacher last semester made her feel understood: *"She was like, kind of my friend here, she, like my mom because she helped me a lot and I'm feel really thank with her."* María also mentioned that a native-English speaking friend has shown himself to be willing to help her practice her English: *"He always call me (...) (he says) I will talk with you and maybe you can improve your English (...) I think is a motivation to me because I think I can do*

that." And in general she perceives Americans as welcoming: "They always try to talk with me and to start a conversation." The problem then is not that this L2 learner lacks opportunities to speak the target language but that she chooses not to because she thinks she does not have the ability to hold a conversation in English: "*I felt like I cannot have a conversation with them.*"

Discussion

In both interviews combined, the L2 learner used the past tense 46 times. This corresponds to the way questions were formulated. For example, during interview 1, María was asked two questions that would have prompted an answer using the past tense. Most of the verbs found in her answers were in the present tense (202 in total).

Also, since most of the questions from questionnaire 1 requested personal information, María was not prompted to use the third person singular. That might be the reason why she used *-s* (agreement) only once in the first interview.

She never used the *'s* for possessive in either interview. This could have been due to a lack of opportunity for her to use this morpheme in either of these two interviews. There were no questions that would have prompted an answer using the *'s* for possessive. For future research it is necessary to design questions in such a way that would prompt the L2 learners to use the morphemes. I might include more questions about past experiences and experiences with third parties. Another option would be to include a written tool for data collection such as an open-ended questionnaire in order to have written data that could corroborate the data from the interviews.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study show that María has difficulties using the *-s* (agreement) for the third person singular and also adding the *-ed* sound for regular past tense. I highlight the fact that she has difficulties when adding the *-ed* sound for regular past tense because interestingly her rate of suppliance for irregular past tense is 85% and she also was correct almost 50% of the times she used the regular past tense. This shows she has understood the concept of past tense in general because she is applying it to irregular past tense.

Socio-cultural aspects affect María's language acquisition process inside and outside the classroom. The fact that she is not having as many opportunities to practice English outside the classroom setting as she would like is hindering her from acquiring the target language faster. Inside the classroom she is having opportunities to practice English since classes are entirely in the target language.

Final Reflection

Comparing María's data with the list of Krashen's natural acquisition order of bound morphemes (1977) helped me to organize my data in a way that enabled me to analyze it. When I counted the mistakes and set them into categories it became easier to interpret María's language acquisition status. I understand that what can be observed in two interviews is very limited. However, this experience gives me a glimpse of what linguistic analysis is like.

I established three research questions at the beginning of my study. The first aimed to explore the linguistic aspect of María's language acquisition process, while the second and third questions were intended to explore its socio-cultural aspects. I enjoyed

this part of the research study because the learner provided unexpected information, which for me as a teacher was helpful. For example, I never imagined that a learner would consider listening activities the most helpful. María also provided information that confirms many of the studies I have read. Specifically, she stated that the factors that hinder her English acquisition process the most are that she has many friends with whom she speaks her native language and she admits that she is afraid of speaking in the target language with members of the native-speaker community that surrounds her.

LOOKING FORWARD

At this point I feel myself standing on a high mountain I just climbed watching the horizon in front of me. The high mountain represents my journey throughout the MSLT program with all the challenges and demands that helped exercise my mental muscles as I reflected on my own teaching at the light of research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The wide and overwhelming horizon represents the ample variety of ways in which I could apply what I have learned.

Before I enrolled the MSLT program my journey as a language teacher consisted solely of teaching English at the elementary school level. During the completion of this program I had the opportunity to teach Spanish to adults at the university level. This helped expand my horizons in regards to age group and language taught as I have enjoyed the experience of teaching Spanish to adults very much. As I look forward I would love to find opportunities to teach either English or Spanish to children at the elementary school level or adults.

I know that the completion of the MSLT program is only one part of the journey as a language teacher, a journey in which I have learned many lessons. Perhaps one of the greatest lessons I have learned during this program is the importance for me to provide language learners with opportunities to practice the target language in a meaningful context.

As a language teacher, I look forward to continue learning and growing professionally. I believe that the moment the teachers stop learning and trying new things, they lose the ability to teach others. I hope to never become discouraged and always be motivated to use my creativity to put new knowledge into practice.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction to Annotated Bibliography

A selection of some of the journal articles and books I have read during the MSLT program are presented in this section. These journal articles and books cover the most recent and/or relevant research in field of second language acquisition and second language teaching and learning. The insights and reflections on what I have learned from each of those books and articles along with a summary of their main focus have been organized by themes and presented in three topical sections: second language teaching, writing communicatively, and teaching pragmatics.

The topic of the first section is second language teaching. Descriptions and insights on books and articles that helped in shaping my perspectives on second language teaching and learning during the MSLT program are presented. The topic of the second section is writing communicatively. In this section I lay out the result of a review of research I conducted on the use of dialog journal for second language teaching. These are the books and articles I read for my literacy artifact. Finally, the topic of the last section is teaching pragmatics. My interest on pragmatics came from a culture class I took on my first semester in the MSLT program as I reflected in the importance of learning the pragmatics of the target language culture. Analysis and reflections on books and articles on pragmatics are presented in this last section.

Second Language Teaching

As a second language teacher I always look for ways to improve my instructional skills. Fortunately, I have found many sources with relevant information that have helped me to reflect on which are the best instructional strategies and methodologies not only from a practical point of view but also with a strong theoretical framework that supports it. One of these sources is the *Teacher's Handbook.* This is **Shrum and Glisan´s (2010)** compilation of the most important topics for second language teaching and learning under the communicative approach. It is a very useful book for second language teachers to consult because it covers in depth all the important aspects of teaching and learning under the perspective of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. These aspects include integrating the 5C's of communication into language instruction, developing interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication, addressing diverse needs of learners in the language classroom, and using technology to contextualize and integrate language instruction. The authors analyze traditional views of language instruction, planning, grammar teaching, and assessment, and address many current theories that have proved to be effective in developing communicative competence in learners. Shrum and Glisan's (2010) purpose is to provide second language teachers with a conceptual background and a guide to aid them in developing contextualized instruction that is standards-based in every aspect.

In my opinion, once a language teacher comes in contact with Shrum and Glisan's (2010) handbook, it will become a source for frequent consultation. My perspectives on language instruction, planning, assessment, teaching grammar, and the use of technology have changed as a result of engaging with this handbook. It has helped me reflect on the

failures of traditional methods for second/foreign language teaching. It has guided me to draw conclusions about better ways and methods for second/foreign language teaching. I have found the answers to my greatest queries on why language learners who have studied for many years and are considered excellent students are unable to communicate effectively in the target language. Now that I know the answer it seems very logical to me. If learners do not practice the target language they won't be able to communicate effectively in that language.

For second language teachers it is necessary to focus on learner´s needs. In this regard it is important to have in mind that the present and emerging generations are 'digital natives' as a result of technology influence in the world. Using technology as a tool for language teaching not only will make students feel more familiar but also will allow teachers to optimize time and resources. In this topic, **Arnold and Ducate (2010)** offer a relevant and useful compilation of research chapters on various technology topics relevant to language teachers. Each chapter covers a different technological tool itself that may be useful for language teachers in the pursuit of their goals. Although the focus is not on the tool but on how this tool facilitates language learning, each author presents in depth its application to facilitate language learning. Everything written in this book is viewed from the perspective of the communicative approach and is based on the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. The first two chapters provide a conceptual orientation on how computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can facilitate language acquisition. The remaining chapters cover different aspects of second/foreign language acquisition and how a specific technological tool can help optimize the learning process. Topics include how massively multiplayer online games (MMOG), social

networking sites, and place-based mobile games can provide students with task-based opportunities to interact with native speakers of the target language. In addition, the authors address how blogs and wikis can help language learners acquire abilities to write in the presentational mode, how to teach and assess pronunciation using CALL, how to facilitate reading comprehension using electronic dictionaries, text-based and multimedia CALL glosses, and how CALL facilitates culture teaching.

Before reading Arnold and Ducate´s (2010) book, I was completely unaware of how useful technological tools can be for language teachers. I was not familiar with the concept of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and the only technological tools I had used before were PowerPoint presentations and DVDs. Influenced by the readings of the chapters in this book, I have learned to use various technological tools in my work as a second/foreign language teacher, tools that may facilitate the accomplishment of my communicative goals as a language teacher. For example, I have used a 2.0 tool called www.spreaker.com which is a social network that enables users to create their own radio show. I have assigned students to work in pairs and groups to design and audio-record different radio shows with topics related to the course's content. I have also used www.polleverywhere.com, a website that has enabled me to create polls where students can send their answers via text message or internet. The benefit of this tool is that after students work in groups elaborating their answers (interactive mode) they send it to the screen where the whole class is able to see (presentational mode) and teacher is able to read students' answer out loud and provide feedback. This website protects the identity of users, so students may not feel anxious of being corrected in public. I believe that language teachers should constantly look for ways to be more effective as instructors and

make class more interesting and engaging to language learners. For this, **Herrell and Jordan´s (2008)** compilation of 50 strategies for teaching English language learners and **Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008)** SIOP model are very useful sources for English teachers. Specially, these texts were written for English teachers in the American school system who happen to have some second language learners in a class that is not supposed to teach English as a language per se but should teach it within the context of certain subjects.

On the one hand, Herrell and Jordan (2008) compiled fifty practical ways for teachers to apply what research supports and classifies as effective in helping second language learners in their second language acquisition process. They state, "It is vital that classroom teachers understand the implications of language acquisition research so they can provide the scaffolding necessary for their students to be successful in the classroom" (Herrell & Jordan, 2008, p. 2). The fifty strategies are explored and grouped according to their objectives: strategies for enhancing instruction through planning, strategies for supporting student involvement, strategies for building vocabulary and fluency, and strategies for building comprehension. Each teaching strategy is introduced in a brief description followed by a step-by-step detailed explanation in which the requirements for each step are described. In the application and examples section, the authors provide two examples of how the strategy may be applied, one for the context of an elementary school classroom and the other for a high school setting. At the end of the presentation of each strategy, concluding notes are provided. This is a useful handbook for teachers to consult any time. I particularly liked the set of 'strategies for supporting students' involvement.' I

believe that student involvement is one of the most critical aspects of success for a second language teacher.

On the other hand, Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008) provide a thorough explanation of each of the features that shape the SIOP model, which stands for sheltered instruction observation protocol. It is a model of instruction that came as a result of several research studies conducted by the authors. This book introduces a set of components that have been specially designed to meet the language needs of second language learners enrolled in K-12 schools in the USA without having to pull them out of classrooms. The SIOP model is built on the theoretical framework that "language acquisition is enhanced through meaningful use and interaction" (p. 16). Learners should interact in English with content that is relevant for them as students. SIOP lessons then are designed to integrate activities that incorporate listening, speaking, reading, and writing which are language processes that develop interdependently. SIOP teachers present to students, both native English speakers and English language learners, the grade-level content of the curriculum but through modified instruction that helps improve comprehension among both groups of students. There are thirty SIOP features which are classified according to their objectives in the lessons. They are grouped under the following headings: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/ application, lesson delivery, review and assessment. The content presented by Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008) reminds me of my teaching experiences in elementary school in the Dominican Republic. I was familiar with most of the SIOP features from previously having read other books that addressed effective teaching strategies in second language classrooms. However, the way they were

presented in this book helped me think of creative ways to apply those teaching strategies in the classroom.

People often move from one place to another and it is quite common to have students from different backgrounds in the same classroom, especially in big cities and more economically developed countries. Therefore, nowadays is imperative topic for second language teachers to pay attention to diversity. Even though in the Dominican Republic immigration is not very common, diversity is still an important topic for me to study as a language teacher because diversity is found not only when there are people from different cultural backgrounds. Human beings are unique and distinct from one another. In this topic, **Sousa and Tomlinson (2011)** make an important contribution, combining themes that are relevant in the field of education. On the one hand the authors present research findings on how the brain learns and their implications for teachers. The other topic is diversity of cultures, abilities, and languages in the classrooms. When these two important topics are combined the result is a theoretical framework that offers teachers steps to take in order to be successful when having diversity in their classrooms. The goal of this textbook is to ease the burden for teachers by providing them with helpful suggestions on how they can establish and manage differentiated classrooms. According to the authors, "this research pool (cognitive psychology, neuroscience and pedagogy) offers information and insights that can help educators decide whether certain curricular, instructional, and assessment choices are likely to be more effective than others" (p. 1). Throughout this book, differentiation is addressed in the light of the learning environment, curriculum, assessment, classroom management, and students'

readiness, interests, and learning profiles. In this sense it gives a careful analysis of how differentiation should be taken care of in every aspect of teaching.

Some other authors have been interested in a more holistic view of education. In fact, **Vygotsky (1978)** conceived a whole new and different view towards teaching and learning. His sociocultural theory contradicted the educational system in most of the countries at that time and even today. His thinking comes from a Marxist dialectical theoretical framework. Therefore he understands phenomena to be studied as "processes in motion and in change" (p. 6-7) and supports his views and ideas with research studies conducted by him and colleagues that he mentions along the way. This book offers a first-hand explanation from Vygotsky on how people learn. He lays out what he proposes as a new view of learning that will help teachers be effective "mediators." Since his sociocultural theory was a completely new approach towards teaching and learning, he spends time introducing, defining, and exemplifying concepts such as 'tools,' symbols,' 'internalization,' 'mediation,' 'Zone of Proximal Development,' 'practical activity' and 'the role of play.' Understanding of each of these concepts is crucial. If the reader wants to grasp the whole meaning of Vygotsky's theoretical framework.

While Vygotsky's focus was not specifically on second language teaching, his work can be applied to this field. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has influenced the current educational system but it has not replaced the traditional model. His worldview contradicted some of my preconceived views towards teaching and learning. As I interacted with the ideas in this book, my understanding began to change. I now find myself leaning towards Vygotsky's views but I think that, although it is a valid framework, there is a lot to be discovered yet.

Even though Vygotsky (1978) did not apply his Sociocultural theory specifically to second language teaching, some current researchers have found it applicable and useful. That is the case for **Lantolf and Poehner (2008)** who bring together a compilation of relevant chapters on second language teaching conducted from a sociocultural framework. The overall themes presented in this book are mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), concept-based instruction and classroom-world nexus. Among the different topics addressed are some specifically related to dynamic assessment. Those are the interplay between teachers and learners in dynamic assessment, the effects of dynamic assessment on L2 listening comprehension, and dynamic assessment in pre-service ESOL endorsement courses. There were two topics related to writing that present a sociocultural perspective on this matter: dialog journals to teach L2 writing, and a concept-based approach to writing instruction through genre analysis. Some other topics were also analyzed in depth such as drama and the ZPD in second language classrooms, materializing linguistic concepts through 3-D clay modeling mediation as objectification in the development of professional academic discourse, and others. By delving deeply into each of the topics of this book, the reader will come to a better and wider understanding of how Vygotsky' sociocultural theory could offer an effective approach to teach a second language. Lantolf and Poehner's (2008) book has helped me examine different ways to apply Vygotsky's basic views to second language teaching, I developed a clearer and more accurate understanding of how to apply the SCT framework in my language classroom.

In summary, each of these books and articles influenced my perspectives on language teaching in its own way. Each of them contributed to expand my knowledge

and shape my understanding in different areas pertinent to second language teaching. Although, I read some other articles and books, these were the ones that made the greatest impact in my learning process.

Writing Communicatively

In traditional models for teaching second language writing, exercises consisting in prompts to write letters, essays, descriptions, etc., are typically used. Language teachers used to read students' papers and mark the grammatical errors for students to observe the areas in which they needed to improve. One of the traditional approaches for language teaching is the audio-lingual method "known for its rigid adherence to procedures, its emphasis on inductive learning of rules" (Orem, 2001, p. 69). As a language learner myself I used to like it when teachers indicated my mistakes because then I knew what not to do and that gave me a sense of security. After a while I found myself struggling to write because I was afraid of making mistakes. My focus was on the grammar and not on the communicative intent of the paper I was writing. The traditional model led me to an unnatural use of language which limited my written production since I did not feel free to write. I believe that my experience is similar to many other language learners under traditional models with their strong emphasis on grammar corrections.

The good news is that language teaching has moved over the years from teacher-centered approaches that emphasize grammar structures and linguistic competence to learner-centered approaches that emphasize learning strategies and communicative competence (Orem, 2001). This is reflected also in the way writing is taught. **Orem (2001)** compares between classrooms in which emphasis is put on error correction versus the communicative classrooms where focus is on communication. While in the former type of classrooms journals are used as a means for students to demonstrate their skills in applying grammar rules, in the latter dialog journals are used as meaningful opportunities for students to communicate in written form with someone else. Within the context of

dialog journals, although students are focused on communication "they are (also) interested in not only communicating, but also perfecting their skills" (Orem, 2001, p. 74). According to Orem, dialog journals promote students' autonomy while laying on them the responsibility of communicating their ideas in the best way possible.

Four types of journals are reviewed in Orem's (2001) article: Two of them are kept by teachers (individual and collaborative teaching journals) and two of them involve students (individual and dialog journals). The author gives an account of the benefits and drawbacks of each type of journal. The first one is the individual teaching journal which "is a record of observations and responses (of teachers) to events that occur in the teaching-learning transaction" (Orem, 2001, p. 70). The second is the web-based collaborative teaching journal that provides a setting for teachers to share their reflections with others without been physically present. "Topics [...] might include specific teacher behaviors, student responses, or student-teacher interactions" (Orem, 2001, p. 71). The third and fourth types of journals are used as teaching techniques: individual and dialog journals. All will depend on the teacher's goal "whether the focus is on language structure, language for communication, or language for empowerment" (Orem, 2001, p. 73). The individual journal is better suited to language programs advocating a structural approach where the teacher's focus is error correction. In contrast, dialog journals are more suitable in communicative classrooms where the emphasis is on writing for communication.

As a teaching technique, "dialog journal writing responds to the learner's need to communicate with others in a meaningful context" (Orem, 2001, p. 74). This is a more natural way to learn second language writing, since as I mentioned before,

communication is the goal for using a language in the first place. **Holmes and Moulton (1997)** state that, in previous research studies on dialogue journals, the findings demonstrate that interactive writing activities provide important conditions for learning such as:

> interaction about topics relevant to learning, focus on interaction rather than form, enhancement of reading skills, modeling of correct grammatical forms, natural evolution of grammatical structures, and interaction in a private, nonthreatening way (p. 616).

Holmes and Moulton's (1997) focus is on something that had not yet been investigated at the time: The learners' perspectives on dialogue journals. Their study was conducted in an intermediate composition class of an English language program at an urban southwestern U.S. university for a period of 15 weeks. Students wrote weekly in their journals and although the whole class (21 students) volunteered for the study, only six were selected as they represented well the overall perceptions of the class. Weekly journals were analyzed along with four guided interviews. Participants' comments pointed toward topic choice, spontaneity, and frequency as the dialogue journal's attributes that helped them improve their fluency in writing.

From the learners' point of view, the dialogue journal's attribute that enhanced their motivation to write the most was "the uncorrected, ungraded format" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p. 619). This characteristic of dialogue journals gave students the space to take risks expressing their ideas in written English without fearing judgment as a response. Also, "students' perceived improvement validated Vygotsky's (1978) assumptions about the connections between learning and modeling through social

interaction" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p. 619-620). The L2 learners improved their writing as they used their teacher's written language as a model.

Moreover, students realized "that writing about topics of their own choosing (...) was an important factor in their growing fluency" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p. 617). They also noted that their freedom of expression encouraged them to stop using the dictionary and focus on the interaction and communication. In addition, students "acknowledged [a] connection between writing frequently and developing fluency" (Holmes & Moulton, 1997, p. 618). Since they were writing weekly, it helped them increase their fluency in writing. Holmes and Moulton's (1997) contribution is important because it brings to light students' points of view on this interactive writing activity that previous studies demonstrated to be effective to improve literacy development in writing.

When engaging in the written interactions that dialog journals require, some other aspects are important to mention. One of them is learners' development of a sense of authorship and ownership of what they write. In this light **Greenwood and Walters (2005)** implemented a literature-based dialogue journal project with the aim of providing students the "ownership of their learning while motivating and engaging them in the process of constructing meaning" (p. xiii). The authors introduce dialog journaling as an effective strategy for creating opportunities for learners to improve their literacy. Throughout the chapters of their book, the project is presented from various perspectives: journaling students, teachers, and researchers. Helpful information from journals is provided along with theoretical support from books and articles. Greenwood and Walters (2005) provide a compilation of case studies of dialogue journaling which present students' perspectives on this writing activity. Also is presented a step by step model on

how to implement dialogue journals effectively along with different strategies on how to assess students' writing and post-journaling activities. This book contains strategies prepared for teachers to use in the classroom. These strategies have the potential to provide students with opportunities to improve their reading and writing skills.

Although the Greenwood and Walters' (2005) focus is not on second language writing it provides ideas that second language teachers might want to implement. One point on which I disagree with the authors is their recommendation that teachers make grammatical corrections to student's entries. In my opinion, writing teachers, whether of the native or a foreign language, should balance their lesson plans and provide graded and ungraded writing activities for students to improve the quality of their writing in the former and their fluency in the latter. The reason for having ungraded writing activities is found in **Larrota (2009),** which provides qualitative data on implementing dialog journal writing in an adult ESL classroom. Dialog journals in this study were not intended to be an assessment tool; rather the goal was "to provide a space for the learners to express themselves freely writing in English" (Larrota, 2009, p. 36). The author (who is also the instructor of this ESL class) mentions that she did not make grammatical corrections on students' writing. She states that her goal was for students "to develop fluency writing in English, not to help them use correct English in their first attempt to communicate an idea in writing" (Larrota, 2009, p. 37). The study was conducted with a class of seventeen adult learners enrolled in an intermediate ESL literacy class.

Larrota' (2009) students were all Spanish native speakers. There were eleven males and six females who were between twenty-one and forty-three years old. The researcher used a four step process that guided the journal writing from the beginning to

the end of this study. The four steps were: providing a model, collectively establishing guidelines, doing guided practice, and assessing the dialog journal activity. One of researcher's final reflections was that this two-way written conversation with her students allowed them to use language in a meaningful way. Communicating, anticipating a response, creating knowledge about each other's world, and using generative themes helped students to express their points of views on topics relevant to the realities they were living. In conclusion, dialog journals helped these learners improve their fluency in writing in English by providing them a space to express themselves freely. It keeps surprising me that an effective way to foster fluency development in second language learners' writing is by the teacher not making grammatical corrections but replying based on students' intended meaning. It all comes down to students using language as a tool to communicate in a meaningful way, as the author mentions at the end of the article.

Some other benefits of the use of dialog journal in second language teaching are listed in **Kim's (2011)** case study. This is a case study of a young English language learner (ELL) originally from Korea who moved to Vancouver, Canada. Anthony (the ELL) exchanged dialogue journal entries with his teacher Ms. Lee for 10 months while he was in first grade. The findings indicate four main themes: (a) Anthony as a nascent author, (b) dialogue journals promoting reading and learning, (c) Anthony as an emergent artist, and (d) Ms. Lee as a collaborator. The patterns that appeared repeatedly in Anthony's journals were general topics related to Korea, the use of a variety of genres (e.g., scientific stories, mystery, action, riddles, and jokes), and sports (e.g., soccer, skating, and swimming). This demonstrates the development of Anthony's abilities as an author. Also, after seven months of being involved in the dialogue journal activity he

used around 80 to 100 different words and constructed complex sentences. This fact indicates that Anthony developed fluency and syntactic complexity in writing.

From Kim's (2011) findings three main themes arose: sense of authorship and identity, L2 literacy practice through drawings, and content learning through L2 literacy practice. First, "because Anthony had an active listener (the teacher) (...) he recognized himself as an author within the given boundary of dialogue journals" (Kim, 2011, p. 32). The L2 learner in this study demonstrated remarkable growth as a writer. Secondly, "drawings in journals showed the relationship between L2 literacy, L2 content learning and the learner's ownership of learning" (Kim, 2011, p. 33). This underscores the importance of integrating language and content. And thirdly, "the results of the study showed that Anthony's language and content developed simultaneously and influenced each other" (Kim, 2011, p. 33). He used the dialogue journal as a setting to practice what he was learning in other contexts.

In my opinion, one of the most important findings of Kim's (2011) case study is the fact that by writing in his dialogue journal Anthony was offered an opportunity to learn and practice content learning in a critical way (Kim, 2011). This interactive writing activity became a setting for Anthony to use the language he was learning in a meaningful context. The fact that the topic was free encouraged him to express his ideas in creative ways such as stories, jokes, riddles, drawings, etc. The findings of this case study indicate that dialogue journals helped the ELL develop some literacy skills in writing such as fluency and syntactic complexity. It is clear that this writing activity was meaningful to him and this helped him develop as a writer the way he did.

When writing, people tend to use strategies. Second language writing is not the exception. **Schwazer (2004)** designed his research to investigate "communication strategies used by both the students and the teacher in their dialogue journal exchange" (Schwazer, 2004, p. 77). The study was conducted in a beginning level Hebrew class at a large university in the Southwestern United States. Data was collected during two semesters and the dialog journals taken into account were from five selected students. Students wrote their journal entries once a week and turned them in on Fridays. On Monday, the teacher returned their journals with his responses. The teacher, who was also the researcher in this study, based his class design on "a whole language philosophy in which communication is viewed as one of the most important goals of the language class" (Schwazer, 2004, p. 79). Therefore the teacher's responses to the journals were focused on function rather than on form because communication was more important than correctness in this assignment.

The teacher allowed students to use their L1 when needed. Students mostly used their L1 in their journal entries as a resource for purposes such as: (1) translation as a clarification strategy; (2) codeswitching as a communication strategy; and (3) translation as a learning strategy. Among the strategies used by the teacher in his responses were: (1) summarizing information; (2) modeling conventions; (3) using translation, codeswitching, and other semiotic systems to convey meaning; (4) using basic and repetitive formats for the responses; (5) using students' themes and vocabulary; and (6) fostering authentic communication. From the findings, the author concludes that "dialogue journals are a good way to foster communicative competence, since the

students and the teacher-researcher in this class both had a very clear sense of audience and purpose" (Schwazer, 2004, p. 83).

From the beginning, the fact that the teacher encouraged students to use their L1 in class and in their journals was intriguing to me. I know that many researchers would disagree strongly with this perspective. Students were allowed to use their native language when they needed, through translation and codeswitching, "to convey ideas or concepts that were difficult to express with their rudimentary knowledge of the foreign language" (Schwazer, 2004, p. 78). Even though I might not agree with the use of L1 as a writing strategy the purpose was to ensure communication. In this study dialogue journals helped students increase their level of communicative competence. The results suggest that it is a good idea for language teachers to use dialogue journals in beginning level classes. Even though I might not agree with the use of L1 as a writing strategy the purpose was to ensure communication. In this study, dialogue journals helped students increase their level of communicative competence. The results suggest that it is a good idea for language teachers to use dialogue journals in beginning level classes.

Hadaway and Young (2002) provide a literature review supported by excerpts from students' journals and letters to demonstrate that "all children can be writers" (p. 5). The authors focus on accommodating diversity in literacy instruction through providing interactive writing opportunities to second-language learners. The two genres they employed were letters and dialogue journals.

The authors claim that "language acquisition is facilitated when instruction focuses on meaningful activities and real world application" (Hadaway & Young, 2002, p. 5). They argue that interactive writing opportunities are purposeful tasks for second-

language learners and therefore ideal to help them develop their writing skills. Teachers should encourage their students to move from their comfort zone and provide their students with: "[opportunities] to write, [written] role models, authentic communicative tasks, the freedom to task risks, meaningful feedback on writing efforts, and a sense of community" (p. 5). The main goal of this article is to demonstrate in detail how interactive writing tasks, such as letters and dialogue journals, represent real-world uses of writing for an authentic audience. Students improve their writing skills when they have to consider their audience's interests and language proficiency, tailor their responses using strategies, and so forth. The authors propose the implementation of these written activities as worth considering in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Dialogue journaling is a suitable activity to provide students with 'time and opportunity to write.' It helps them "develop control of their writing in a realistic, functional manner" (Hadaway & Young, 2002, p. 6). In dialogue journal writing there is a time to write, a time to read the responses and a time of excitement as students anticipate writing since they know someone will respond them. For letters and dialogue journals, students are free to choose their topic, change it whenever they want to, and select their genre according to their purpose and audience. They are basically free to tailor their entries however they want. This contributes to students' writing development in their second language.

In conclusion, each of these books and articles on writing dialog journals made me realize the effectiveness of this teaching tool for second language learners to develop their literacy skills. In sum, my views on second language writing were expanded as I encounter all what research shows on dialog journals.

Teaching Pragmatics

Each language is closely related to the culture of the people who speak it. In fact, language is part of the culture. **Garrett (2006),** who wrote about the high level of ownership people feel regarding their native language, states that "the language that we speak is part of who we are. It gives us a powerful sense of belonging with those who speak like us, and an equally powerful sense of difference with those who don't" (p. 86). For this reason, when learning a foreign language, it is important to not only learn the grammatical features but also to become aware of the pragmatics. Garrett (2006) mentions that people feel so deeply identified with the language they speak that, when they feel threatened by speakers of a different language, it may result in serious conflicts that typically involve some other issues such as territory, religion, and political power.

Therefore, to reach a level of discourse competence in the target language should be the goal of second language learners. According to **Celce-Murcia (2007),** discourse competence refers to "the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message" (p. 46). In this revised model five competences play a role. First sociocultural competence which refers to the learner's pragmatic knowledge e.g. how to request, apologies, refuse, etc. according to the target language expected norms. Second, linguistic competence which is about mastering phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic knowledge of the target language. Third, formulaic competence which deals with the routines, idioms, collocations, and lexical phrases that speakers of the target language use in their daily interactions. Fourth, interactional competence refers to the actual performance of speech acts and the turn-taking system in conversations. Finally, strategic competence is the ability to use either

learning or communication strategies for enhancing L2 learning. Celce-Murcia (2007) emphasizes that "mastering only grammar and phonology results in linguistically accurate but socially dysfunctional oral communication" (p. 52). This is the reason why instruction on pragmatics should be present in the second language classroom.

Learning the pragmatics of the target language is critical for language learners to be able to communicate effectively with the members of the target language culture. Reaching a level of pragmatic competence should be the goal of every language learner. Language learners should acquire the ability to express and interpret speech acts as the members of the target language community do. **DeCapua and Wintergerst, (2004)** state that "speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative, ill mannered, rude, or a combination of all three" (p. 244). These authors offer numerous relevant ideas for classroom activities that language teachers can implement in their classrooms for teaching pragmatics. As a language teacher I appreciate when writers in the field write practical applications of the theories that have been proven by research. That is also the case of **Tatsuki and Houck's (2010)** book on pragmatics. Based on the research literature, these authors provide a series of lesson plans that serve as samples of how to teach certain speech acts in English. Each lesson contains a brief conceptual background, context, curriculum, tasks, materials, activities, reflections, and an appendix with worksheets, transcripts of audio files online, and so forth. Tatsuki and Houck (2010) provide excellent models of how to teach lessons on requests, indirect acts, and responding acts. By reviewing each of these lesson plans, I became conscious of practical ways to accomplish the goal of helping my students to reach a level of pragmatic competence in the target language.

To underscore the importance of language learners reaching a level of pragmatic competence. **Wannaruk (2008)** claims that "if a person commits a linguistic error, he is just perceived as less proficient in the language. If he makes a pragmatic mistake, however, he might appear as rude, disrespectful or impolite" (p. 319). Wannaruk (2008) focuses on the responding act of refusals. She investigated the differences and similarities between refusals in American English and Thai and the possibility of pragmatic transfer by Thai EFL learners when making refusals. Following an analysis of the results, more similarities than differences were found between these groups when making refusals. Therefore it is not likely to find miscommunication between these two groups. Based on the findings, the author's recommendation is for teachers to design lessons that include the speech act of refusal in different cultural contexts in order for learners to reach a level of pragmatic competence. There was notably little pragmatic transfer from L1 compared to what was expected. This is intriguing because learners had never been exposed to formal pragmatic instruction. We may infer that it was because of pragmatic similarities between cultures, even though these two can be considered distant cultures.

Research such as Wannaruk's (2008) gives us light on how to teach the pragmatic features of the target language to certain cultural groups. Others have conducted similar kinds of studies that yield practical for language teachers. For example, **Iraqui (1996)** and **Cohen and Shively (2007)** studied requests and apologies. On the one hand, Iraqui' (1996) compares the linguistic expressions used to convey requests and apologies by native and non-native speakers of English. The non-native speakers of English were Basque EFL learners whose native language was either Spanish or Basque. The purpose of this study was to investigate if both groups use the same linguistic expressions while

making request and apologies, and to evaluate if these expressions vary according to the situation and whether they are linked to gender and social status. The results revealed that English native speakers use more politeness markers than Basque learners of English whose tendency was to be more direct. There were no significant differences between male and female responses.

On the other hand, Cohen and Shively's (2007) objective was to analyze the impact of a study abroad program on the acquisition of pragmatic awareness of requests and apologies. At the beginning of the study abroad, students were exposed to a brief orientation to become familiar with the speech acts. They were also given a self-guidebook on language and culture strategies and were assigned to write journals electronically. The sample consisted of American university students who spent one semester either in a Spanish or a French-speaking country. The results indicated that the students improved their pragmatic awareness of requests and apologies within the study-abroad semester. The results reported in these research studies are relevant to me because as an non-native speaker EFL teacher I need to become aware of the pragmatic differences between English and the native language of my students. Having learned about pragmatics one of my goals is for my students to become aware of the pragmatic differences in the speech act of request, refusals, and apologies between their native language and English.

In regards to apologies there was an interesting research study conducted by **Kondo (1997)** that caught my attention. This author studied the impact of a study-abroad program on Japanese students who spent a year in the USA. The focus was on the speech act of apologies. After a year of study abroad, Japanese students showed pragmatic

awareness when apologizing in English as a result of being immersed in the target language community. This finding leads to the conclusion that pragmatic awareness tends to improve when EFL learners become involved in the target language culture. However, not all language learners have the opportunity to spend time immersed in the target language community. Therefore, foreign language teachers should develop lesson plans to help learners acquire awareness of the target language pragmatics. **Bataineh (2008)** for example, investigated apology strategies that might be useful for EFL teachers in Jordan and Jordanian Arabic teachers in the US. Bataineh's purpose was to analyze and compare the strategies used by speakers of American English and Jordanian Arabic. Clear differences were found when apology strategies between American and Jordanian responses were compared. The results indicated that both groups often opted for the same apology strategies but differences were found in terms of frequency and order. One of the interesting things that was found was that Jordanians often used proverbs and sayings as a strategy to ease their responsibility and calm down the victim. Also, Jordanians used more non-apology strategies than Americans. In addition, more differences were found between the responses of Jordanian males and females than between American males and females. To observe the differences in terms of apology strategies among members of distant cultures is fascinating. This kind of research guides teachers' focus when trying to raise pragmatic awareness among EFL learners. As Bataineh mentioned, the fact that Jordanians often used proverbs and saying to assuage their responsibility and to soothe their victims' wrath could cause pragmatic failure in cross-cultural contexts when expressing apologies. Also, the use of non-apology strategies could cause them to be seen as rude. EFL teachers in Jordan should focus on these relevant details.

In conclusion, I strongly believe foreign language teachers all over the world should be aware of: 1) the importance of teaching pragmatics, and 2) the pragmatic differences between their students' native language and the target language. This way foreign language teaching will be more effective and therefore foreign language learners will be more likely to be successful when interacting with members of the target language community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SIOP Lesson Plan

Lesson 1

Topic: Spanish	Class: 2nd Grade in a dual-immersion program in USA	
Content Objective: (Stated word-for-word from state core) Exchange descriptions of people and products through oral and written descriptions (e.g. Write a brief description of a friend or classmate and present it to the class; Describe what you are wearing; Write a list of the things you have in your bedroom).	**Language Objective: (stated word-for-word from the state core)** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language. (Interpretive)	
Content Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language): To talk and write about what people and things look like. Hablar y escribir sobre las características de las personas y las cosas.	**Language Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language):** To understand what you read and what others say in Spanish. Entender lo que lees y lo que otros dicen en español.	
Key Vocabulary: Clothing: camisa, blusa, camiseta, pantalón, falda, zapatos, botas, abrigo, bufanda, gorro, pijama, cinturón, vestido, medias, guantes, suéter. The colors in Spanish: blanco, negro, rojo, anaranjado, marrón, azúl, verde, amarillo, gris, morado, rosado.	**Materials (including Supplementary and Adapted)**: Paper dolls Flashcards of clothing Flashcards of people with different clothing Cards of clothing Handout with a graphic organizer Powerpoint presentation with pictures of latin-american children	
Essential Question: What is absolutely essential for students to know at the end of this lesson? Have students exchanged descriptions of people and products through oral and written description?	**Higher-Order Questions:**	

Lesson Sequence

Warm up: How will you get students interested in the topic?
Students will receive paper dolls as models and paper clothing. The goal is for students to dress the dolls models (See supplementary materials).
1. The teacher models/demonstrates on board how to dress a doll (with a larger version of paper doll and clothing). Teacher assign a name to the doll she is dressing and at the end mentions the occasion (e.g. birthday party, going to the park with friends, a rainy day, etc.).
2. Teacher distributes the paper dolls and clothing evenly among each table so students have plenty of options.
3. Students are given 2 minute to dress the doll (male or female) and 3 minutes to share with others the doll's name and the occasion.

Anticipatory Set (Building Background)**:** How will you build/activate background knowledge?
1. Teacher states and explains the content and language objective of the day (already written on board). Take the elements of the previous activity as a base line to provide examples.
2. Introduce vocabulary:
Word Wall

    a. Teacher will start dressing a doll on board for winter time (a familiar clothing style for students). As teacher clothes the doll, asks students if the piece she chose is adequate for winter. Every time teacher adds a clothing piece will say and repeat the name of it. After she has finished she will show students flashcards with a labelled picture of each clothing piece she used for them to see how to write the word. Each flashcard will be pasted on the board or a wall for students to be able to see them at all times.

    b. Repeat step a with different choices of clothing for summer time. Each doll on board will have a name.

    c. The goal is to have 1 model for winter clothing and 3 models for summer time. Then teacher will ask students to describe the clothing's colors with sentences such as: El abrigo de Juana es rojo (Juanas's coat is red). Note: Students at this level have already mastered the use of colors.

3. Build background knowledge:

    a. Teacher will mention that winter is warmer in most Spanish-speaking countries. And that only a few countries see snow. Then, point to the summer time choices of clothing and say that this is the clothes they might be wearing in Spanish-speaking countries.

    b. Students are shown pictures of children from some LatinAmerican countries for them to see the way they dress.

Lesson Focus (Teacher Modeling)**:**
What will you do (step-by-step) to teach to content objective?
      This is where you directly teach the objectives.

1. Teacher will point at the content and language objectives written on board and will say that now we will get to describe ourselves.
2. First, teacher will describe her own clothing mentioning the name of each clothing piece and its color.
3. Students on each table will be assigned a number.
4. Students will be asked to describe their clothing in each table. Their turn is the number that was assigned to them.
5. Teacher will ask for a volunteer from each table to do describe their clothing in front of the class.

Guided Practice (Constantly checking for understanding):
How will you practice (step-by-step) the content objective with your students to ensure that everyone understands?
   This is where students engage in some type of activity that helps them to practice the objectives while receiving support from the teacher.
1. Provide each table with a stack of cards. Each of these cards has people dressed up for different occasions.
2. Each student take 1 one card.
3. Word recognition game: Students will be asked to stand up holding their cards. Teacher will describe the person on one of the cards chosen randomly. Students will be prompted to listen carefully and to sit down if what the teacher describes does not match the clothing of their card. Teacher goes on until only one student is standing.
4. This will be repeated 5 times.
5. Teacher will point at the content objective written on board and will say that now we will get to describe the people from the cards.
6. On the board teacher will model/demonstrate how to write sentences describing the clothing of one of the cards. For example: Pedro viste un abrigo verde.
7. Students will be prompted to write 5 sentences describing the clothing of their cards.
8. Teacher walks around the room to observe students work and to answer any of their questions.
9. Throughout the activity teacher will constantly provide students with feedback.

Independent Practice (Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice)**:**
How will students display their knowledge without any support from the teacher to prove that they have learned the objective?
   This is where students will independently or in groups/pairs to complete some type of activity to prove to the teacher that they have learned the objective.
1. Students will receive a handout with a graphic organizer for them to write the name of each clothing piece under a category (e.g. summer, winter, sleeping, and summer birthday party).
2. Students will be encouraged to see the labelled cards posted on the board or wall.
3. Throughout the activity teacher will constantly provide students with feedback.

Review/Assessment:
      This can be formal or informal. What will you do if some students don't get it?

The guided and the independent practice will provide information on students' understanding and performance.

Thumbs up/ Thumbs down
1. Teacher will show a flashcard and will make a sentence describing the picture (clothing) that might be true or false.
2. Students show their answers with their thumbs.

Response boards
1. Teacher will paste 6 flashcards on board and will assign a name to the person on each flashcard.
2. As teacher describes one of the pictures students write on their response boards the name of the person they think the teacher is describing.

SIOP Lesson Plan
Lesson 2

Topic: Spanish	Class: 2nd Grade in a dual-immersion program in USA	
Content Objective: (Stated word-for-word from state core) Exchange descriptions of people and products through oral and written descriptions (e.g. Write a brief description of a friend or classmate and present it to the class; Describe what you are wearing; Write a list of the things you have in your bedroom).	**Language Objective: (stated word-for-word from the state core)** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language. (Interpretive)	
Content Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language): To talk and write about what people and things look like. Hablar y escribir sobre las características de las personas y las cosas.	**Language Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language):** To understand what you read and what others say in Spanish. Entender lo que lees y lo que otros dicen en español.	
Key Vocabulary: Oso, sopa, tazón, silla, cama, niña. Adjectives: pequeño, mediano, grande, alto, bajo, corto, largo, caliente, frio, suave, duro, roto, resbaloso, perfecto, bonito, feo, oloroso, apestoso.	**Materials (including Supplementary and Adapted)**: Book of Goldilocks and the three bears in Spanish. Classroom objects Box full of objects Chart of animals from Latin America Flashcards for adjectives on vocabulary list.	
Essential Question: Have students exchanged descriptions of people and products through oral and written description?	**Higher-Order Questions:** What would you change in the story of Goldilock and the three bears? What would the story of Goldilocks and the three bears be like if it would have been in Latin America?	

Lesson Sequence
Warm up: 1. Students are encouraged to go to the reading circle.

2. Teacher tells the story of Goldilock and the three bears in Spanish (Risitos de oro y los tres osos).
3. Teacher uses the pictures of the book to emphasize the adjectives that are key vocabulary of the lesson.
4. Students are asked to describe Goldilocks' outfit (to review what we learned in previous lesson).

Anticipatory Set (Building Background)**:**

1. Teacher states and explains the content and language objectives of the day (already written on board). Take the elements of the story of Goldilocks as a base line to provide examples.
2. Introduce vocabulary:

a. Teacher will have classroom objects of different sizes and characteristics. One object for each adjective from the vocabulary.
b. Ask students which other objects they know with those characteristics.
c. Ask students to take an object from a box teacher has prepared.
d. Students will be prompted to share the main characteristic of the object they chose first within their groups (tables).
e. The goal is for students to recognize objects' characteristics.

3. Build background knowledge:

a. Teacher will mention that Spanish-speaking children may not be familiar with some elements of the story of Goldilocks and the three bears. Teacher will prompt students to guess why.
b. Teacher will connect some of their answers and will tell them that even though this story is very famous and popular in Spanish-speaking countries there are no bears in most Spanish-speaking countries. In fact, there is only one kind of bear that lives in the Andes Mountains (South America) and its name is 'the spectacled bear.' And there is only one kind of bear that lives in Spain and its name is 'the Cantabrian brown bear.'
c. Teacher will show a picture of these two bears and will compare their characteristics with the help of the students. Then will ask students which of the two looks familiar. NOTE: The Cantabrian brown bear looks like the Grizzly bear.
d. Ask a high-order question to whole class: What would you change in the story? Teacher will scaffold students to focus on characteristics of the bowls, chairs, beds, etc. in the case they don't.

Lesson Focus (Teacher Modeling)**:**

1. Using labelled flashcards for each adjective the teacher will model for students how to pronounce each word and will write sentence on the board to describe each picture.
2. After the third time teacher does this routine will ask students to provide a sentence that would describe the picture.
3. Teacher will paste each flashcard on the board and will write the sentence next to it.

Guided Practice (Constantly checking for understanding):

What would the story of Goldlocks and the three bears be like if it would have been in Latin America?
1. By using the list of adjectives (on vocabulary) they create a new story of goldilocks and the three bears as if it would have happened in a Spanish-speaking country.
2. Teacher will encourage them to change the animal, the environment, the look and name of Goldilock, etc. if they like.
3. Students will work in groups (tables). They don't have to re-write the story but just write sentences describing the elements of the story. A minimum of 5 sentences and a maximum of 10.
4. Teacher will provide a model/example of how to do it and will write some sentences on the board for students to know what the teacher expects. For example: La historia de Risitos negros y las tres cabras. La sopa de papá cabra está fría. La silla de mamá cabra está rota. La cama de bebé cabra está suave. (The story of black curls and the three goats. Papa goat' soup is cold. Mama goat's chair is broken. Baby goat's bed is soft).
5. Students will be given a time of 10 minutes to finish their challenge.
6. There will be a chart of animals from Latin America displayed on the board for students to choose from.

Independent Practice (Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice)**:**

1. Students have to choose a book from the classroom library. To save time teacher might place some limited options on each table.
2. As they take a look at pictures in the book, they have to look for representations of the adjectives learned.
3. Students should show what they found to members of their team.
4. Teacher walks around room observing students' performance.

Review/Assessment:

Total Physical Response
1. Teacher will act out a certain gesture for each adjective as students mimic it.
2. Then, as teacher mentions the adjective students have to act out the gesture for it.

SIOP Lesson Plan
Lesson 3

Topic: Spanish	Class: 2nd Grade in a dual-immersion program in USA	
Content Objective: (Stated word-for-word from state core) Exchange descriptions of people and products through oral and written descriptions (e.g. Write a brief description of a friend or classmate and present it to the class; Describe what you are wearing; Write a list of the things you have in your bedroom).	**Language Objective: (stated word-for-word from the state core)** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language. (Interpretive)	
Content Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language): To talk and write about what people and things look like. Hablar y escribir sobre las características de las personas y las cosas.	**Language Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language):** To understand what you read and what others say in Spanish. Entender lo que lees y lo que otros dicen en español.	
Key Vocabulary: Other adjectives: corto, largo, nuevo, viejo, liso, estampado, a cuadros, a rayas, a lunares, pequeño, mediano, grande, alto, bajo. The colors in Spanish: blanco, negro, rojo, anaranjado, marrón, azúl, verde, amarillo, gris, morado, rosado.	**Materials (including Supplementary and Adapted)**: Flashcards with people dressed up in the following patterns: polka dots, pin striped, printed, and plaid. Paper dolls and paper clothing Picture of a student wearing uniform	
Essential Question: Have students exchanged descriptions of people and products through oral and written description?	**Higher-Order Questions:**	

Lesson Sequence
Note: The day before this class teacher will ask students to come dressed up in mismatched clothes. **Warm up:** How will you get students interested in the topic? 1. Teacher gives students in each table a picture of someone dressed up in one of the following patterns: polka dots, pin striped, printed, and plaid. 2. Teacher will ask students not to show her the picture but to describe it. The goal is to play a guessing game where the teacher has to figure out how the it looks like.

3. As students describe it teacher will be drawing the described item on the board and will color it with the colors student mention. But since they won't be able to describe the pattern it won't be impossible for the teacher to draw exactly what students are describing.
4. Since on lesson 1 students learned to describe clothing focusing on colors only, teacher expects them to do the same.
Note: The purpose is to help students realize their need to learn how to describe patterns in clothing.

Anticipatory Set (Building Background)**:** How will you build/activate background knowledge?

1. Teacher states and explains the content and language objectives of the day (already written on board). Take the elements of the previous activity as base line to provide examples such as: Diana viste una blusa a lunares blancos y rojos (Diana wears white and red polka dotted blouse).
2. Introduce vocabulary:

    a. Students receive paper dolls and paper clothing.
    b. Students are asked to dress the dolls up (there are male and female samples).
    c. Options for each pattern will be provided as well as clothing with no pattern (for them to learn the term plain (liso).
    d. Students are given 2 minute to dress the doll (male or female) and 3 minutes to share with others the description of the clothing of their dolls.

Note: It is expected that students do not remember some of the clothing names. For this reason teacher will remind them to look at the flashcards displayed on the wall (from lesson 1).
3. Building background:
a. Teacher will explain students that in Spanish-speaking cultures clothing typically is a really important matter.
b. Students will be asked these questions: Would you mind coming to class in sweat pants and open shoes? Did you know that it is considered extremely improper in Spanish-speaking cultures? In fact, students come to class wearing uniforms which are usually formal clothing.
c. Teacher shows a picture of a student wearing uniform.

Lesson Focus (Teacher Modeling)**:**
What will you do (step-by-step) to teach to content objective?
      This is where you directly teach the objectives.
Note: Students are dressed up in mismatched clothes.

Word recognition game
1. The vocabulary words are written on board.
2. Teacher prompts students to stand up if they are wearing the patterns, the colors or some other facts she mentions.
3. As the teacher mentions the word for them to stand up she points to the corresponding word written on board.

Group interaction - presentational mode

1. Teacher calls out a volunteer to the front and starts describing his/her clothes. The third person form is used.
2. In groups of three, students should do the same that teacher did: to describe the clothing of a partner.
3. Students are allowed to check the labelled flashcards pasted on wall from lesson 1 for verification.

Guided Practice (Constantly checking for understanding):
How will you practice (step-by-step) the content objective with your students to ensure that everyone understands?
 This is where students engage in some type of activity that helps them to practice the objectives while receiving support from the teacher.
Note: Girls and boys will be separated for this activity. Groups of two will be formed among girls and boys separately.
1. Students will be prompted to write a list to Santa. This list should exclusively have the clothing they want. Students should be encouraged to be very specific and describe clothes really well. They should include color, pattern, size and any other detail. The list should have at least 10 items.

Independent Practice (Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice)**:**
How will students display their knowledge without any support from the teacher to prove that they have learned the objective?
 This is where students will independently or in groups/pairs to complete some type of activity to prove to the teacher that they have learned the objective.
1. Teacher will display four written clothing descriptions on board.
2. Independently, students have to draw a picture that matches the description on board. Each student will be assigned a particular description.

Review/Assessment:
 This can be formal or informal. What will you do if some students don't get it?
On the side of the room there will be one big circle shape on the floor. On previous classes students already learned the concept of circle.
1. Teacher asks students to go inside the circle.
2. The goal of the game is to discover who is being described.
3. Teacher will describe a student by its clothing. As the teacher describes the student those who does not match the description has to step out of the circle.
4. Repeat activity as much as time allows.

SIOP Lesson Plan
Lesson 4

Topic: Spanish	Class: 2nd Grade in a dual-immersion program in USA	
Content Objective: (Stated word-for-word from state core) Exchange descriptions of people and products through oral and written descriptions (e.g. Write a brief description of a friend or classmate and present it to the class; Describe what you are wearing; Write a list of the things you have in your bedroom).	**Language Objective: (stated word-for-word from the state core)** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language. (Interpretive)	
Content Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language): To talk and write about what people and things look like. Hablar y escribir sobre las características de las personas y las cosas.	**Language Objectives: (Stated in Student Friendly Language):** To understand what you read and what others say in Spanish. Entender lo que lees y lo que otros dicen en español.	
Key Vocabulary: The colors in Spanish: blanco, negro, rojo, anaranjado, marrón, azúl, verde, amarillo, gris, morado, rosado. Other adjectives: pequeño, mediano, grande, alto, bajo, corto, largo, nuevo, viejo, liso, estampado, a cuadros, a rayas, a lunares, bonito, feo.	**Materials (including Supplementary and Adapted)**:	
Essential Question: Have students exchange descriptions of people and products through oral and written description?	**Higher-Order Questions:** What is the difference between his room and your room? What would you change in his messy room? What do you think happened for his room to be like this? How would you feel if a friend sees your room like that? Do you think he will keep his room clean and organized? Why or why not?	

Lesson Sequence

Warm up: How will you get students interested in the topic?

1. Teacher shows students a picture of her bedroom (hypothetically).
2. Teacher provides a description of her bedroom and all the items in it.

Anticipatory Set (Building Background)**:**

1. Teacher states and explains the content and language objective of the day (already written on board). Take the elements of the previous activity as a base line to provide examples.
2. Introduce vocabulary:
Multimedia presentation
   a. Students are introduced to the vocabulary words with a powerpoint presentation.
   b. Different bedrooms will be presented to students and the teacher will emphasize the adjectives on the vocabulary list.
Thumbs up/ thumbs down
   c. On the third picture teacher asks questions to verify students' comprehension. Students should answer with their thumbs.

1. Building background:
   a. Teacher asks students the following questions: Do you think bedrooms from Spanish-speaking cultures look like yours. If not, how do you think they look like?
   b. Teacher explains that because of the climate bedrooms are designed to be cooler. They have different kinds of windows (show picture). People normally just use a sheet to cover themselves at night. The favorite colors for sheets are lighter colors. It is really important to make the bed in the mornings. Most bedrooms have a fan. Some people have air conditioners and some people just sleep with their windows open (if it is safe).

Lesson Focus (Teacher Modeling)**:**
What will you do (step-by-step) to teach to content objective?
        This is where you directly teach the objectives.
Interactive writing:
1. Using the picture of the teacher's room we will write a description on the board.
2. Teacher will display a chart with all the adjectives that could be used.
3. Students are encouraged to participate actively in this activity by asking questions.
4. Teacher negotiates each sentence before it is written on board.
5. Teacher scaffolds the writing.
6. Reread after each word is added
7. At the end, all the sentences will be read aloud.

Guided Practice (Constantly checking for understanding):
Independent Practice (Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice)**:**

Note: Guided and independent practice will be together in this section.

Learning Centers: Writing, Listening, Speaking
The help of two teacher aids will be needed. Each learning center should have an instructor.
1. Class will be divided in three groups for each learning center.
2. Each group will spend 10 minutes in each learning center.

Listening Center
Students will read a story (adapted text) of a boy who had a messy room. The story describes his room and provides pictures. In the story he cleans his room. Throughout the lesson instructor will ask students the following questions:
What is the difference between his room and your room?
What would you change in his messy room?
What do you think happened for his room to be like this?
Which things from his room are similar to yours?
How would you feel if a friend sees your room like that?
Do you think he will keep his room clean and organized? Why or why not?

Note: The use of students' L1 will be allowed for clarifications.

Drawing Center
Students will receive two sets of sentences for a bedroom description. They are expected for to draw a picture from that description.
This activity allows teacher to evaluate students' interpretation skills.

Writing Center
Students have to write a description of their own bedroom. Instructor will be there to support them answering their questions.

Review/Assessment:

Play the game 'Veo Veo'
The dynamic of the game is as follows:
Teacher: Veo Veo (I see I see)
Students: ¿Qué ves? (What do you see?)
Teacher: Una cosa (a thing)
Students: ¿De qué color? (What is its color?)
Teacher: (color)
Students: ¿De qué tamaño? (What is its size?)
Teacher: (size)
Students: ¿Y qué más? (And what else?)
Teacher: (teacher use another adjective)
Students: They start mentioning or pointing items until they guess.

Appendix B

Lesson Plan on Apologies

Introduction

This is a unit developed with the purpose of raising pragmatic awareness as it pertains to the speech act of apologies. This unit is intended to be delivered in three periods of class time to adults English language learners at the advanced level in a Spanish-speaking country setting.

Apology is defined by Thesaurus dictionary as "a written or spoken expression of one's regret, remorse, or sorrow for having insulted, failed, injured, or wronged another." In this lesson plan both kinds of apologies will be addressed: written and spoken. For the spoken type of apologies the focus will be on targeting the differences between apologies in American culture and Spanish-speaking cultures using video clips on authentic apologies. In addition, learners will be shown videos of scripted apologies were poor strategies have been used to analyze them and come up with better strategies. Different role play activities have been designed to address the interactive mode of communication in order to provide learners of opportunities for apologizing to lower, equal, and higher status people. For the written apologies, learners will be engaged in collaborative writing activities. They will write two letters expressing apologies, one of them will be formal which is commonly used in business and academic settings, and the other one will be an informal letter which is most likely to use among friends, acquaintances, and relatives.

Lesson Plan

Day 1

COMMUNICATIVE GOAL (Comparisons): Students will identify the differences between apologies in American culture from apologies in Spanish-speaking cultures, and will express apologies in a role play.

MODE OF COMMUNICATION: The mode of the spoken apologies focused on day 1 will be presentational.

LEVEL: Adult Advanced English as a Foreign Language

TIME ALLOTED: 50 minutes

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS: Computer, projector, Youtube videos, Powerpoint Presentation.

OTHER MATERIALS: White board and marker.

<u>WARM-UP</u>

· **<u>STEP 1</u>: Introducing the concept (10 min)** *Learner-Centered Activity with Whole-Class Participation)*

Objective of activity: To build interest in the topic. Learners will be introduced to apologies.

1. Show video 3 (See Appendix B3) to introduce the topic and build interest (time: 1:27) (Target Language - English).

2. Instructor calls out two volunteers to perform a role play in the native language (Spanish).

3. Show prompt of the Role play via Powerpoint Presentation (time: 1:30) (Target Language -

English).

<u>ROLE PLAY</u>

A: You have lost your friend's tickets to the final basketball game of the season.

B: Friend

4. Ask the following reflective questions (7 min).

- Which strategies did student A used to apologize?

- Which strategy do you think could have been used by student A?

5. Instructor copies an outline of their answers on board (Target Language - English). We should

spend between one or two minutes with each question.

NOTE: The purpose of these questions is to collect a list of strategies that learners normally use

in their L1.

ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: **Modeling Strategies (10 min)** Teacher-Centered Activity / modeling / whole class

participation

      Objective of activity: Learners will be shown models of the strategies of apologizing

that are considered universal (Trosborg, 1987, pp. 377-383) and then will identify them on a

video clip of an authentic apology.

1. Mention each of the following strategies for apologizing and model an example for each.

    Show strategies on PPT slide show one by one. Write them on board as long as they are

    mentioned. This information is in their textbook (see Section 2 of Appendix B4). (2:30 min)

       - **Remedial strategies**

Example: Expressing concern for hearer: e.g. *The least I want is to make you feel
uncomfortable.*

             Promise of forbearance: e.g. *Next time I will be more patient.*

             Compensation: e.g. *I promise that I won't take anything else from the refrigerator
anymore without asking first.*

             Offer of repair: e.g. *I'm going to pay for this.*

       - **Evasive strategies**

Example: Minimizing: e.g. *Oh What that matter, that's nothing; What about it, it's not the
end of the world.*

             Querying Preconditions: e.g. *Well, everybody does that; What is love then?* (in
response to the complainable *You don't love me)*

             Blaming someone else: e.g. *Gloria was there too.*

- **Indirect strategies**

Example: Implicit acknowledgement: e.g. *I can see your point; Perhaps O shouldn't have done it.*

Explicit acknowledgement: e.g. *I'll admit I forgot to do it.*

Expression of lack of intent: e.g. *I didn't mean to.*

Expression of self-deficiency: e.g. *I was confused; You know I am bad at....*

Expression of embarrassment: e.g. *I feel so bad about it.*

Explicit acceptance of the blame: e.g. *It was entirely my fault; You're right to* blame me.

- **Explanation or account**

Example: Implicit explanation: e.g. *Such things are bound to happen, you know.*

Explicit explanation: e.g. *Sorry I'm late, but my car broke down.*

- **Offer of apology** (written form)

Example: *I (hereby) apologize for...*

Please accept my sincere apology (for...)

My client would like to extend his apologies to you for the inconvenience involved.

- **Request for forgiveness:** e.g. Excuse me; please, forgive me; pardon me.

Example: *Please, forgive me, I'm terribly sorry (about....)*

Excuse me, I'm sorry for interrupting you, but...

Pardon me, I didn't hear what you said.

- **Strategic disarmers:** In order to soften the complainer feelings.

Example: *This is the most embarrassing for me, I really never meant to...*

Preparators: e.g. *Sorry to trouble you, but isn't that your car parked right in front of the garage* (before a request).

> *Excuse me, could I just get past, please?* (before "territory-invasion").
>
> *I'm terribly sorry but you seem to have taken my suitcase by mistake* (before complaint).
>
> *I'm sorry, but I'm afraid there are not more seats left for the late show* (before refusal).

2. Show video 4 (see Appendix B3), an authentic apology that contains apology strategies. Teacher should be stopping the video every time the character uses a different strategy for learners to identify and name it. (7:30 min)

Outline for teacher - strategies used on video
- Explicit acceptance of the blame 1:04
- Explicit acknowledgement and minimization 1:17
- Strategic disarmer - implicit expression of embarrassment 1:32
- Explicit explanation - concern for hearer 1:57
- Blaming someone else 2:40
- Promise of forbearance 2:57

STEP 2: **Observation List (10 min)** *Student-Centered Activity with whole-class participation.*

Objective of activity: Learners will observe apologies from video 1 and 2 and will make a list of observations of what struck them as interesting. Video 1 shows an authentic apology in the target language (English) and video 2 a similar one but in the native language (Spanish).

1. Learners will be informed that they will be watching some videos of authentic apologies in English and Spanish and they may take notes of the strategies that are used, the words that are chosen, body language, directness, etc.

2. Video 1 (see Appendix B3) will be shown (only three minutes of it). (3 min)

3. In order to make a list of observations learners (whole class) will be asked: (2 min)

- Which strategies were used and how?

- Which word or words were often used?

- Which things caught your attention?

4. Instructor must copy an outline of learner's answers on board.

5. Video 2 will be shown (only 3 minutes of it). (3 min)

6. The step 3 will be repeated. (2 min)

The reason to make this activity with the whole class is that learners have different learning styles. For learners who are better analytical thinkers, it will be easy to observe the little details while those who are better global thinkers, it will easier to observe the bigger picture of what is happening in each apology. This will definitely help to enrich the list of observations.

STEP 3: **Comparisons (10 min)** *Student-Centered Activity while they work in groups of three.*

Objective of activity: Students will compare apologies from video 1 and video 2 and will make their conclusions.

1. The class will be divided in groups of three.

TASK: Compare the apology in English from video 1 with the apology in Spanish from video 2 and make your own conclusions. Each group will share one conclusion with the rest of the class.

2. In groups, learners will compare the apology in English from video 1 (See Appendix B3) with the apology in Spanish from video 2 (See Appendix B3) and make their own conclusions (5 min).

3. Each group will share their conclusions with the rest of the class. The instructor must scaffold learners to pragmatic awareness. Learners should notice differences in the level of directness and politeness. "Native speakers of English use more politeness markers than non-native speakers, who tend to be more direct" (Iraqui, 1996, p.58)

4. The instructor will point out the social functions of apologies (Norrick, 1978, as cited in Trosborg, 1995, p.376). These are the same both in English and Spanish, the differences are in the level of politeness and directness in which the apology is done.

   - admitting responsibility
   - asking to be forgiven
   - showing good manners
   - calm down the addressee's wrath
   - getting off the hook

FOLLOW-UP

STEP 1: Role Play / Information Gap activity (10 min) *Student-Centered Activity while they work in pairs.*

Objective of Activity: Learners will practice the speech act of apology in a hypothetical situation.

1. Learners will be grouped in pairs and they will sit one in front of the other.

2. They will be given handouts. One student will receive worksheet 1 and the other will receive worksheet 2 (See Appendix B1).

3. Learners should do it orally and also in writting with the purpose for this to be an informal instructional assessment (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

STEP 2: Homework

1. Study the list of elements for internal modifications from your textbook (see Section 2, appendix E), and also the apology strategies that we learned today (see section 1, appendix B4).

2. Audio-record yourself performing the following apology. It must be around 1 minute in length. Send the audio file to the instructor by email before next class.

Apologize to your focus group with whom you were supposed to do your final project, for your non-cooperative attitude, laziness, and for having made the teacher believe that you were the one working the hardest.

NOTE: The rubric on Section 1, Appendix B4 will be used to assess this recorded apology. The instructor will provide feedback by email.

Lesson Plan

Day 2

COMMUNICATIVE GOAL (Communication): Students will apologize in different

situations, such as with a higher, equal and lower status person.

MODE OF COMMUNICATION: The mode of the spoken apologies focused on day 2 will be

interactive.

LEVEL: Advanced English as a Foreign Language

TIME ALLOTED: 50 minutes

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS: Computer, projector, video clip, Powerpoint Presentation.

WARM-UP

STEP 1: Role Play / Information Gap activity (10 min) *Student-Centered Activity while they*

work in pairs.

      Objective of Activity: Learners will practice the speech act of apology in a hypothetical

situation.

1. Learners will be grouped in pairs and they will sit one in front of the other.

2. They will be given handouts. One student will receive worksheet 3 and an the other will

    receive worksheet 4 (See Appendix B1).

3. Learners should do it orally and also in writting with the purpose for this to be an informal instructional assessment.

4. Switch partners every 2 minutes. 5 turns.

<u>ACTIVITIES</u>

<u>STEP 1:</u> Building Good Strategies part 1 (10 min) Student-Centered Activity / whole class participation / pair work

   Objective of activity: Learners will be shown a scripted video of a short interaction where poor strategies have been used. Learners will role play better strategies.

1. On PPT presentation, instructor will show the social functions of apologies (Norrick, 1978, as cited in Trosborg, 1995, p.376).

   -        admitting responsibility
   -        asking to be forgiven
   -        showing good manners
   -        calm down the addressee's wrath
   -        getting off the hook

2. Show video 5. (See Appendix B3)

3. Show questions on web page
   (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/Apologies/apologies_home.html) for whole class to respond. (See questions for reflexing on Appendix B, section 1).

4. Challenge learners to come up with better strategies within an American context.

5. Divide classroom in pairs for them to perform this same situation, but using social functions of apologies previously mentioned.

6. Switch partners every 1 minute. 5 turns.

STEP 2: Building Good Strategies part 2 (10 min) Student-Centered Activity / whole class participation

      Objective of activity: Learners will be shown a scripted video of short interactions where poor strategies have been used. In this case, the situation shown on video is within a Hispanic context (in the native language - Spanish). Learners will role play better strategies using social functions of apologies previously mentioned (in the target language - English).

1. Show video 6. (See Appendix B3)

2. Challenge learners to come up with better strategies within an American context.

3. Divide classroom in pairs for them to perform this same situation, but using social functions of apologies previously mentioned.

4. Switch partners every 1 minute and 30 seconds. 5 turns.

STEP 3: Switching Status (10 min) Student-Centered Activity / whole class participation

      Objective of activity: Learners will apologize to a higher and lower status person.

1. On PPT, students will be shown 2 hypothetical situations (see Appendix B2, Section 2). One of them will be a Janitor apologizing to a boss and the other will be a boss apologizing to a janitor.

2. Class will be divided in two teams. One of the teams will receive a blue handout and the other will receive a red handout. Both handouts have the same information (See Appendix B, Section 2).

3. Provide instructions for the game to the class.

      <u>Instructions</u>: You will stand up and go around the room with your handout (see Appendix B, section 2), both blue and red handouts are the same. In the beginning the blue team will be the bosses and the red team will be the janitors. When the bell rings you will switch roles. When the bell rings the second time, find someone else and do the same.

4. Collect handouts for an informal instructional assessment.

5. The bell will ring 2 minutes for each one. Each student will therefore have the opportunity to perform each role two times.

<u>FOLLOW-UP</u>

<u>STEP 1</u>: Questions (8 min) *Student-Centered Activity with groups of three.*

      Objective of Activity: Learners will reflect on the activities of the day. They will be asked questions that will lead them to make conclusions about the way the should apologize in English.

1. Class will be divided in groups of three to discuss questions.

2. On PPT, the following questions will be shown in order one by one.

        - What are the differences you have noticed between apologizing in English and apologizing in Spanish?

Expected answer: In English there is less directness and more politeness.

        - How do you think you can improve your ability to apologize in English?

Expected answer: By using elements for internal modifications.

3. Learners share their answers with whole class.

4. The teacher will make sure learners have developed pragmatic awareness by asking questions and scaffolding them to the right conclusions.

STEP 2: **Homework Assignment (2 min)** *Student-Centered Activity with whole class participation.*

1. Learners will listen to the instruction of the homework and will be able to ask any question about it.

Homework: Write two letters of apology intended to be sent by email:

- Formal (business/ academics): Apologize to your professor who is also the director of your career because you haven't attended class for a month.

- Informal (friend, relative, etc.): Apologize to your friend because you left her/him waiting for you at the movie last Friday.

Bring three copies to class.

Lesson Plan

Day 3

COMMUNICATIVE GOAL (communication): Students will write a formal letter

(business/academic) and a personal letter (friend, relative, etc.) of apology.

MODE OF COMMUNICATION: The mode of the written apologies focused on day 3 will be

presentational.

LEVEL: Advanced English as a Foreign Language

TIME ALLOTED: 50 minutes

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS: Computer, projector, video clip, Microsoft Word.

OTHER MATERIALS: White board, and marker.

WARM-UP

·   **STEP 1: Analyzing letters** (**10 min**) *Learner-Centered Activity / group work.*

Objective of Activity: Learners will compare the formal letter they wrote for homework with a

sample letter provided by the teacher and will identify the differences.

1. Instructor will show a sample formal letter in English (Word document displayed on screen,

   see section 1, appendix B6).

2. Class will be divided in groups of three.

3. Learners will compare each of their formal letters they wrote for homework with the sample letter displayed on the screen.

4. Learners will share their conclusions.

· **STEP 2: Analyzing letters (10 min)** *Learner-Centered Activity with group work.*

Objective of Activity: Learners will compare the informal letter they wrote for homework with the sample letter provided by the teacher and will identify the differences.

1. Instructor will show a sample informal letter in English (Word document displayed on screen, see section 2, Appendix B6).

2. Class will be divided in the same groups of three.

3. Learners will compare their informal letters with the sample letter displayed on the screen.

4. Learners will share their conclusions.

5. Teacher writes conclusions on board.

ACTIVITIES

STEP 1: Collaborative writing of formal letter (10 min for activity) (5 min for sharing)
Student-Centered Activity / group work

Objective of activity: Learners will fix the formal letter of one of the members of the group according to the conclusions to which they got from last discussion.

1. Class will be divided into the same groups of three.

2. Each group will pick a formal letter from one of the members.

3. Class will be informed that their letters will be graded. Each group will receive a handout with the rubric (see Appendix B4, section 2).

4. Each group must fix the letter according to the conclusions to which they got from last discussion, and must use elements for internal modifications displayed on textbook (see Appendix B5, section 2) (10 min).

5. Each group reads the letter to the class and shares their insights from this activity (5min).

STEP 2: **Collaborative writing of informal letter (10 min for activity) (5 min for sharing)**

Student-Centered Activity / group work

Objective of activity: Learners will fix the informal letter of one of the members of the group according to the conclusions to which they got from last discussion.

1. Class will be divided into the same groups of three.

2. Each group will pick an informal letter of one of the member.

3. Class will be informed that their letters will be graded. Each group will receive a handout with the rubric (See Appendix B4, Section 2).

4. Each group must fix the letter according to the conclusions to which they got from last discussion, and must use elements for internal modifications displayed on textbook (see section 2, appendix B5) (10 min).

5. Each group reads letter to class and students share their insights from this activity (5 min).

FOLLOW-UP

STEP 1: **Homework Assignment - Collaborative Writing project using a WIKI.**

Objective of Activity: Learners will get involved in a collaborative writing project in which they will write three letters expressing apologies to lower, equal, and lower status person.

Homework Assignment: In groups of three, you will write three letters expressing apologies, to a higher, equal, and lower status person (one to each). You will do it using a WIKI. Since this is a collaborative assignment, every member should participate equally and contribute significantly to each letter. You will have a week to complete this assignment.

Appendix B1

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Worksheet 1

STUDENT A

Victims and Apologizers

Apologize to your victim using the social functions of apologies.

-             admitting responsibility
-             asking to be forgiven
-             showing good manners
-             calm down the addressee's wrath
-             getting off the hook

In situation 1 you are the apologizer and in situation 2 you are the victim.

Situation 1

You haven't finished the report that you had to finish by the end of the day yesterday.

Write your apology after doing it orally:_____

_____

_____

Situation 2

You really want to go to the cinema, so make sure Student B promises you something really nice when he/she cancels.

NOTE: The role plays were taken from the following electronic source:

http://www.tefl.net/alexcase/worksheets/grammar/present-perfect/pres-perf-simple/apology-ever-roleplays/

Worksheet 2

STUDENT B

Victims and Apologizers

Apologize to your victim using the social functions of apologies.

-     admitting responsibility
-     asking to be forgiven
-     showing good manners
-     calm down the addressee's wrath
-     getting off the hook

In situation 1 you are the victim and in situation 2 you are the apologizer.

Situation 1

You are Student A's boss

Situation 2

You have to cancel going to the cinema with your friend.

Write your apology after doing it orally:_____

_____

_____

_____

NOTE: The role plays were taken from the following electronic source:

http://www.tefl.net/alexcase/worksheets/grammar/present-perfect/pres-perf-simple/apology-ever-roleplays/

Worksheet 3

STUDENT A

Victims and Apologizers

Apologize to your victim using **remedial strategies and explanation.**

In situation 1 you are the apologizer and in situation 2 you are the victim.

Situation 1

You have let your friend copy your answers to the homework but all the answers were wrong.

Write your apology after doing it orally:_____

_____

_____

_____

Situation 2

You are student B's neighbor who have played loud rock music late at night. You are very angry.

NOTE: The role plays were taken from the following electronic source:

http://www.tefl.net/alexcase/worksheets/grammar/present-perfect/pres-perf-simple/apology-ever-roleplays/

Worksheet 4

STUDENT B

Victims and Apologizers

Apologize to your victim using **indirect strategies and strategic disarmers.**

In situation 1 you are the victim and in situation 2 you are the apologizer.

Situation 1

You are Student A's friend.

Situation 2

You have made your neighbors angry by playing loud rock music late at night.

Write your apology after doing it orally:_____

_____

_____

_____

NOTE: The role plays were taken from the following electronic source:

http://www.tefl.net/alexcase/worksheets/grammar/present-perfect/pres-perf-simple/apology-ever-roleplays/

Appendix B2

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Section 1

Questions for Reflexing

http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/Apologies/apologies_home.html

Do you think Sara apologizes during their conversation? Why or why not?

Is there something Sara could have done to make a more explicit apology? Is it necessary in this situation?

Do you think this would be an easy situation for a nonnative speaker of English to handle? Justify your answer.

SECTION 2
Handout "Switching Status"
Situation A

You are the janitor of an insurance company. Your job is to pick up the trash, mop the floors and clean up the restrooms. One day, while you pick up the trash around the chief's office, you hear a phone conversation where the chief make some sarcastic comments about janitors. Right after that, he turned his face and realized that you were there and could hear what he said. The next day, he approaches you to apologize.

Draw a check mark by the strategy used by your boss.

- **Remedial strategies**   **Offer of apology**

    Expressing concern for hearer   **Request for forgiveness**

    Promise of forbearance   **Strategic disarmers**

    Compensation   Preparators

    Offer of repair

- **Evasive strategies**

    Minimizing

    Querying Preconditions

    Blaming someone else

- **Indirect strategies**

    Implicit acknowledgement

    Explicit acknowledgement

    Expression of lack of intent

    Expression of self-deficiency

    Expression of embarrassment

    Explicit acceptance of the blame

- **Explanation or accoun**t

    Implicit explanation

    Explicit explanation

Handout "Switching Status"
Situation B

You are the boss in an insurance company. While you go to the restroom, you hear the janitor of your floor gossiping about your private life. The janitor realizes that you were there and could hear what you just said. The next day, the janitor comes to your office to apologize.

Draw a check mark by the strategy used by your employee.

- **Remedial strategies**   **Offer of apology**

    Expressing concern for hearer   **Request for forgiveness**

    Promise of forbearance   **Strategic disarmers**

    Compensation   Preparators

    Offer of repair

- **Evasive strategies**

    Minimizing

    Querying Preconditions

    Blaming someone else

- **Indirect strategies**

    Implicit acknowledgement

    Explicit acknowledgement

    Expression of lack of intent

    Expression of self-deficiency

    Expression of embarrassment

    Explicit acceptance of the blame

- **Explanation or accoun**t

    Implicit explanation

    Explicit explanation

Appendix B3

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Videos

- Video 1 (time 7:15): An apology made by an American comedian on a late show (Target Language - English). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC26RI-Ria8

- Video 2 (time 8:21): An apology made by a radio speaker on a TV show (Native Language - Spanish). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twbm1u8Mep4

- Video 3 (time 1:27): An apology performed by two character of the NBC series Parenthood. One girl is teaching a boy how to apologize (Target Language - English). http://www.nbc.com/parenthood/video/learning-to-apologize/1361596

- Video 4 (time 4:17): An apology made by President Bill Clinton (Target Language - English). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r4e5Wg4PDI

- Video 5 (time 1:25): An interaction between Sarah and Lisa, two classmates that are working together on a class assignment. Sarah came 30 minutes late and the assignment is due the next day. http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/Apologies/apologies_home.html

- Video 6 (time 0:40): An interaction between Carlos and Nelly, two close friends. Carlos lost a Nelly's final paper that is due in an hour. http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/Apologies/apologies_home.html

Appendix B4

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Rubrics

SECTION 1

DAY 1: Rubric to assess the audio-file on an apology (presentational mode). NOTE: This rubric is an adapted version of a rubric designed by Tatsuki and Houck (2010, p.224).

HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Punctuation/ classification	Description
4. appropriate	Reflects a fine-tuned awareness of apologies in English; well-organized and coherent ideas; appropriate in the levels of politeness, directness, and formality; contains and appropriate range of grammar structures, semantic moves, and word choice with minor errors (if any) that do not cause misinterpretation; carries a tone that is preferred in the community.
3. somewhat appropriate	Reflects some awareness of apologies in English; adequately organized and coherent ideas; reasonably appropriate in the levels of politeness, directness, and formality; good or average use of grammar structures, semantic moves, and word choice with some errors that do not usually cause misinterpretation; carries a tone that is moderately appropriate in the community.

Punctuation/ classification	Description
2. somewhat inappropriate	Reflects little awareness of apologies in English; some problems with organization of ideas and coherence; sometimes problematic in the levels of politeness, directness, and formality; fair use of grammar structures, semantic moves, and word choice with some major errors that can at times cause misinterpretation; carries a tone that may sometimes be perceived as inappropriate in the community.
1. inappropriate	Reflects very little awareness of apologies in English; lacks organization of ideas and coherence; inappropriate in the levels of politeness, directness, and formality; poor use of grammar structures, semantic moves, and word choice with some major errors that can often cause misinterpretation; carries a tone that can most likely be perceived as inappropriate in the community.

Rubrics

SECTION 2

ANALYTIC ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

NOTE: This rubric is an adapted version of a rubric designed by Tatsuki and Houck (2010, pp.224-225).

Sociocultural Norms

Score	Criteria	Comments
3	(Excellent): Shows fine-tuned awareness of apologies in English and/or well-developed understanding of the cultural reasoning of the norms in USA.	
2	(Good): Shows adequate awareness of apologies in English and/or good understanding of the cultural reasoning of the norms in USA.	
1	(Needs more work): Shows little awareness of apologies in English and/or poor understanding of the cultural reasoning of the norms in USA.	

Organization

Score	Criteria	Comments
3	(Excellent): Well-organized and coherent; tightly connected and fluid; cohesive; excellent use of elements of internal modifications.	
2	(Good): Mostly organized and somewhat coherent; loosely connected and somewhat fluid; somewhat cohesive; good use of elements of internal modifications.	
1	(Needs more work): Poorly organized and lacks coherence; disconnected and confusing; lacks cohesion; little or no appropriate use elements of internal modifications (if any).	

Directness, politeness, and formality

Score	Criteria	Comments
4	(Excellent): Appropriate and effective in the level of directness, politeness, and formality.	
3	(Good): Adequately appropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality.	
2	(Fair): Somewhat inappropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality.	
1	(Poor): Often inappropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality.	

Appendix B5

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TEXTBOOK

SECTION 1: Apology Strategies considered universal (Trosborg, 1987, pp. 377-383)

- **Remedial strategies**

Example: Expressing concern for hearer: e.g. *The least I want is to make you feel uncomfortable.*

Promise of forbearance: e.g. *Next time I will be more patient.*

Compensation: e.g. *I promise that I won't take anything else from the refrigerator anymore without asking first.*

Offer of repair: e.g. *I'm going to pay for this.*

- **Evasive strategies**

Example: Minimizing: e.g. *Oh What that matter, that's nothing; What about it, it's not the end of the world.*

Querying Preconditions: e.g. *Well, everybody does that; What is love then?* (in response to the complainable *You don't love me)*

Blaming someone else: e.g. *Gloria was there too.*

- **Indirect strategies**

Example: Implicit acknowledgement: e.g. *I can see your point; Perhaps O shouldn't have done it.*

Explicit acknowledgement: e.g. *I'll admit I forgot to do it.*

Expression of lack of intent: e.g. *I didn't mean to.*

Expression of self-deficiency: e.g. *I was confused; You know I am bad at....*

Expression of embarrassment: e.g. *I feel so bad about it.*

      Explicit acceptance of the blame: e.g. *It was entirely my fault; You're right to blame me.*

- **Explanation or accoun**t

Example: Implicit explanation: e.g. *Such things are bound to happen, you know.*

        Explicit explanation: e.g. *Sorry I'm late, but my car broke down.*

- **Offer of apology** (written form)

Example: *I (hereby) apologize for...*

        Please accept my sincere apology (for...)

        My client would like to extend his apologies to you for the inconvenience involved.

- **Request for forgiveness:** e.g. Excuse me; please, forgive me; pardon me.

Example: *Please, forgive me, I'm terribly sorry (about....)*

        Excuse me, I'm sorry for interrupting you, but...

        Pardon me, I didn't hear what you said.

- **Strategic disarmers:** In order to soften the complainer feelings.

Example: *This is the most embarrassing for me, I really never meant to...*

        Preparators: e.g. *Sorry to trouble you, but isn't that your car parked right in front of the garage* (before a request).

        Excuse me, could I just get past, please? (before "territory-invasion").

        I'm terribly sorry but you seem to have taken my suitcase by mistake (before complaint).

        I'm sorry, but I'm afraid there are so many more seats left for the late show (before refusal).

TEXTBOOK

SECTION 2: List of elements for internal modifications in English apologies. Taken from Trosborg (1995, pp. 385-386).

Downtoners	Understaters	Hedges	Subjectivizers	Intensifiers	Commitment upgraders	Cajolers	Appealers
just	a little bit	kind of	I think	really	I was sure...	you know	okay
simply	a second	sort of	I suppose	terribly	I was certain...	you see	right
perhaps	not very much	somehow	I'm afraid	absolute	I was positive...	I mean	don't you think?
maybe			in my opinion	total	..that you wouldn't mind		
possibly				complete	...that you would forgive me		
				real			
				perfect			

Appendix B6

SECTION 1

Sample Formal Letter

Professor Mendez,

I am sending you this email with the intent to apologize for my behavior the past month. I am normally an attentive and diligent student, but lately I have been facing a number of personal and family crises that have had a negative effect on my school work, specifically my attendance. I am planning on working hard the rest of the semester to make up for the work I've missed, and I was wondering if there were any extra assignments that you could recommend to me in order to make up some extra ground that I've lost during my absence? Thank you for your patience with me, and I will look forward to seeing you in class and being a more active participant.

- Sierra Fischback

SECTION 2

Sample Informal Letter

Hi Megan!
I just wanted to send you an email to apologize for standing you up on Friday night. I was totally out of line and it was super rude of me not to even call or text you to tell you I couldn't make it. It turns out it was my brother's birthday and I had completely spaced it, and in the rush of figuring out how to have a party for him, and do the cake and present thing, I completely forgot that we had agreed to see that movie together. Was it good? Maybe we can see it together when it comes out on DVD - or we can pick a different one to go to see together! So sorry again for being lame, luv ya though! See you soon I hope.
- Sierra
PS: You forgive me, right? :)

Appendix C

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire 1

1. How old are you?

2. Where are you from and what is your native language?

3. Would you describe your country?

4. Do you speak other languages besides your native language and English?

5. When did you start learning English and why?

6. How have you learned English?

7. In how many English schools have you been? If more than one, for how long have you been in each?

8. If you have learned English in a formal educational setting such as a classroom, which teaching methodologies have worked well for you?

9. If you have learned English in a formal education setting such as a classroom, which teaching methodologies would you consider to be ineffective?

10. In your opinion, which activities are helpful for you as an English learner? Why are those specific activities helpful?

11. In your opinion, which activities are not very helpful for you as an English learner? Why?

12. In the present time, how much practice do you have each day interacting with native English speakers?

13. Have you used technology to learn English within a formal educational setting (i.e., a classroom)? If yes, which technological tools have you used and how do you think this has helped you learn English?

14. Have you used technology to learn or practice English in your daily life? If yes, which technological tools have you used and how do you think this has helped you learn English?

15. Who was an inspirational teacher for you and why (please share an anecdote if you want to)?

Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire 2

1. How long have you been living in the USA?

2. Since you moved to the USA, what has been the most difficult challenge for you as an English language learner?

3. What is your motivation to learn English?

4. Have you felt marginalized by a native English speaker in your community due your English abilities?

5. What factors in your daily life help you with your acquisition of English?

6. What factors in your daily life hinder your acquisition of English?

7. Do you have many opportunities to speak English every day? Ranking from 1 to 10, how would you classify the amount of English you speak normally every day? If less than 6, why do you think that is?

8. Have you experienced any kind of culture shock that may have negatively affected your motivation to speak English? If so, please explain.

9. Do you have any memorable experiences interacting with native English speakers that have motivated you to continue studying English? Please share.

10.   Do you have any memorable experiences interacting with native English speakers that have made you proud of yourself and your English proficiency level? Please share.

11.   What do you consider has been the most helpful fact to learn English?

12.   Would you share one of the happiest moments of your life?

13.   If you could change something in the world what would that be and why?

14.   What are you studying as a major and why did you choose to study that?

Appendix D

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

Transcription Interview 1

Researcher: The first question is: How old are you?

Interviewed: I am 18 years old

R: Where are you from and what is your native language?

I: I'm from the Dominican Republic and my native language is Spanish

R: Thank you very much. Would you describe your country?

I: Ehh has a tropical weather. Is very beautiful. With friendly people. And A lot of ehh fun places there.

R. Do you speak other languages besides your native language and English?

I: I can speak French.

R: Oh great! When did you start learning English and why?

I: I start in my school. Eh is a bilingual school and why? because I'm interested to learn more language, languages. And because the English is the first language around the world. Really important.

R: And how have you learned English?

I: How?

R: How.

I: Well, here my teacher has different, I don't know, different methods to teach me. Like reading, we have to take notes. And have to write papers, a lot of papers. Have to read two books per week. And then have to (unintelligible). We have to retain information. Have to com.. to comprehend the information.

R: Alright, and in how many English schools have you been? If more than one, for how long have you been in each?

I: In two. In the first one maybe I spent three years of, yes three years and the second one one year and a half.

R: That was while you were in your school?

I: No, is an English institute.

R: Ah, ok, good to know. If you have learned English in a formal educational setting such as a classroom, which teaching methodologies have worked well for you?

I: Well, I think listening is better for me and is difficult because sometimes the vocabulary is very difficult 'cause is not my language Is usually helpful and I can improve my English, my pronunciation and what people try to say, what they want to say. I think listening is better for me.

R: So the methodology was listening, and what exactly do you mean by listening?

I: We have a lot of reviews, different stories, and like a conversation (unintelligible).

R: You are referring to recordings?

I: Yes recordings

R: Out of those recordings, what does the teacher ask you to do afterwards?

I: After?

R: I mean, you listen to the recordings and then what?

I: I have to take notes in my (intelligible).

R: And that's what you think has helped you the most?

I: Yes. But actually listening is my lowest score. But it is really good, I think is my, I don't know how to say that, like the best methodology that IELI has.

R: Ok, you are in IELI?

I: Yes

R: Since when?

I: Last semester

R: Ok, great. In your opinion, which activities are helpful for you as an English learner?

I: Maybe share... Maybe talk to American assistant. I have an American assistant. In is activity speaking. Activities that we can do, because I can practice, I can learn new

vocabulary. Then, this one really good, we have to do presentations. We have to improve our vocabulary and (unintelligible).

R: And why are those specific activities helpful?

I: Why are...?

R: Yes, Why are those specific activities that requires you to speak, why are those helpful for you?

I: Because I can improve my English, why, learning. Because I want to speak a perfect English. I want to write good essays and because economy is my major eh, the first language is English, so I have to know everything about that.

R: Right. In your opinion, which activities are not very helpful for you as an English learner? And why?

I: I think each one are good and they have good methodology. For me each one are good.

R: And how about the activities in which you used to participate back in the DR, back in your country? Which activities in that specific English school were not helpful for you as an English learner?

I: Maybe writing. Was so bad. We just...

R: Why? Because writing in here you said it is good? What's the difference?

I: Because I think the most important thing is learn first of all grammar. And in the Dominican Republic they, well, she did not teach me nothing about grammar. I cannot read, I cannot write good, you know? Because is different verbs, different ehh how do you say that, like positive nouns, something like that. Was so bad. Because if you don't know anything of how to read, how to write and here they teach me everything. They teach me grammar, vocabulary, verbs, everything, now, I know I learn that. Now I can write better than in the Dominican Republic.

R: Great! In the present time, how much practice do you have each day interacting with native English speakers?

I: Well, not much. I have to practice. I just speak English in my class, not out of my class. I know I have to practice because this is the best, I don't know, maybe. My mom says I have to practice everyday because I can improve my English, I can learn new words and is very good because you have to practice everyday, because then you can forget all that you learned before.

R: And you said that you only practice in the classroom.

I: In the class

R: How many hours a week do you take English classes right now?

I: Five hours

R: Per week, ok.

I: No, not per week, per day.

R: Five hours per day of English class. That's IELI program? Wow!

R: Have you used technology to learn English within a formal educational setting (i.e., a classroom)?

I: Would you repeat again?

R: Have you used technology to learn English within a formal educational setting, I mean a classroom? Have you used technology such as Internet, Skype? Have you used technology to learn English in a classroom?

I: Not really.

R: Or maybe homework?

I: Yes, we have to search information. You know last week I wrote a contrast essay. Ehh I searched in the internet about Kennedy and Lincoln. So sometimes I have to search information there.

R: So You have used google maybe?

I: And wikipedia.

R: Wikipedia, ok. Have you used technology to learn or practice English in your daily life? Not as a part of the class but in your daily life to practice English.

I: Well I, everyday I hear songs in English so I can practice English. 'Cause I'm really shy and that's maybe why I cannot speak very well.

R: So songs, mostly songs. Alright. Who has been an inspirational teacher for you and why? And please if you can, share an anecdote with me.

I: My favorite teacher was. Her name is Jilda Yap. She was my writing teacher last semester. She helped me so much. She, for me she did a good job. She always gives us, not just me, to all my classmates, she gave opportunities. She explain very hard the grammar. She know is difficult for us because is not our language, is not my culture, is not my

country. She had been in the DR for three years. And she know that is very difficult for me and she helped me a lot. Everyday, every time. She said if you have questions you can asked me. You can feel like (unintelligible). Everything that you had. Like if you don't know how to say something you can ask me and I can help you. If you have a problem I can help you. She was like, kind of my friend here, she, like my mom because she helped me a lot. And I'm feel really thank with her. She went to another country cause she's not here. Yes.

R: So, she left.

I: Mmuhm Yes. I think everyday was a good time and her class was very fun and that's good. She was very good. She was very flexible with us. So, it feel so good.

R: And do you remember something, I mean would you share something that happened, any anecdote, something you remember?

I: That's really...because she everyday she did a good job. Everyday she hugged me. So for me last semester was good. Everyday was good, every day that I had with her. I think everyday was good. I have a specific day.

R: You know. This has been very helpful. Thank you very much.

Transcription Interview 2

Researcher: Ok, let's start. How long have you been living in the USA?

Interviewee: umm Six months, yes six months..

R: Ok. So if it is six months you arrived in august 2011?

I: Yes, yes

R: Ok. Since you moved to the USA, what has been the most difficult challenge for you as an English language learner?

I: Eeehh Well, was difficult to me because, ok, was really difficult because when I was trying to talk with American other people that speak English not my native language I was trying to say something and they say what? I cannot understand or something like that. And I think eeehhh communication is really important to know eehhh more people and to to make friends so was really difficult was like I feel, I felt bad the first two month because of that, now I feel better.

R: That's good.

I: Yes

R: And, what is your motivation to learn English?

I: Umm, my major, 'cause my major requires me to speak a perfect English and because is a really important language to me. I think I can I can have more opportunities if I can speak English, I can learn perfect English. You know.

R: Did you start your major already?

I: No, no yet.

R: Have you felt marginalized by a native English speaker in your community due your English abilities?

I: What do you mean the question?

R: Umm, if you have felt that a native speaker have set you apart because you don't speak English very well?

I: Not really. I think this is my problem because they always try to talk with me and to start a conversation and always, I just say: hi, how are you, good bye, because I felt like I cannot have a a conversation with them. So, I think is my problem not their problem.

R: But, what do you think is their reaction?

I: Why you don't speak? I mean you have to practice. Is not a big deal I mean you can do that. And sometimes I try to say but you can you see you can. They help me a lot.

R: Oh, that's good. They encourage you.

I: Yes

R: And what factors in your daily life help you with your acquisition of English?

I: Can you repeat again?

R: Oh yes, of Course. What factors in your daily life help you with your English acquisition?

I: Umm, I don't know. Oh, I don't know.

R: You don't know.

I: No

R: I don't know, maybe what do you think happens in your daily life that helps you in developing a better, you know, developing your skills for speaking in English?

I: Well, I think everyday I have something different to do or something different to learn and always I have to go to many places to (unintelligible) to help me, you know, maybe three month ago I have, I went to wellness center because I had a problem and I practice my English because I have problem in my wrist, tendonitis and probably like (unintelligible) and sometimes help me develop my English.

R: Alright, and what factors in your daily life hinder your acquisition of English? I mean, this is the opposite question. What hinder your acquisition of English: stop you from developing your English skills?

I: Maybe, I have a lot of friends that speak Spanish. I think is the first factor. (unintelligible)

R: Yes, definitely. Do you have many opportunities to speak English every day?

I: Yes, I have a lot of opportunities. And because I just talk in my class, in my classroom eehh, with people from other countries like china, and brazil and they speak their language and English and I have to talk everyday with my teacher and some American so (unintelligible) too.

R: Umm, but do you remember in the first interview that we had you said that you do not speak very much everyday. Do you remember?

I: Yes, I remember.

R: But know you say you have many opportunities to speak.

I: I have but just in my classroom I said, not outside.

R: Ok, right, and ranking from 1 to 10, how would you classify the amount of English you speak normally every day?

I: five?

R: Five. And why do you think that is? Why do you think you don't speak that much?

I: Because, as I say before, I have a lot of friends that speak Spanish and I just have (unintelligible) that speak English in my (unintelligible).

R: Yeah, great. And have you experienced any kind of culture shock that may have negatively affected your motivation to speak English?

I: Not really. I think I feel pretty good because I came here with my best friend. Ehh like a motivation. I don't feel alone and something like that and I don't care about their culture, their food so.

R: So you feel that you are adapted.

I: Yes.

R: And you don't ... ehh anything in the American culture has really shocked you?

I: No.

R: And do you have any memorable experiences interacting with native English speakers that have motivated you to continue studying English?

I: Yes.

R: Would you share one?

I: Yessica, he always call me, you have to come here. I mean to the floor and I will help you. I will talk a lot with you and maybe you can improve your English. And you know you can do that. Ehh, it's a new experience to you. So, I think he helps me a lot. So, I think is a motivation to me because I think I can do that so, and he can help me. So, yes.

R: Yessica is a male or a female?

I: a male.

R: ok.

I: It's a nickname.

R: Yes, ok. What do you consider has been the most helpful fact to learn English, like the most helpful fact to learn English?

I: Umm, maybe hear conversations between Americans, with one American to the other one. I think always I try to cash some words they say and to and then I practice with other people to remember and that is a good.

R: Hear conversations of native speakers.

I: yes.

R: So, would you share one of the happiest moments of your life? Any moment, not here necessarily, any moment, the happiest moment of your life.

I: When I graduated from high school was really good moment to me and to my family because finally I finish. I was, the day when so, I don't know I don't have words to describe the day (unintelligible). Now I know when I finish I knew I have to go to another place that would be different to me but I was excited. It's an experience that not everybody have, you know you can have that, so was really good yeah.

R: Great. And if you could change something in the world what would that be and why?

I: A change.

R: if you could change something in the world what would that be and why?

I: Maybe, but I give one to, you know I want to study economics and that's why because in my opinion the most important factor is the, I don't know how to say that. It's well I want to (unintelligible) in my country. My country is a small country and poor and I want to help the people maybe (intelligible) conference, something like that like programs to help them because I think the most important factor that Dominican Republic is poor is a poor country is because people just spend a lot of money in have (unintelligible) that we can't do anything with that, you know what I mean? Like we can't, we can't. I don't know that word!

R: It doesn't matter take your time.

I: (silence)

R: You said they spend stuff that they don;t need or something

I: Is not just people, the government. We spend a lot of money in something that we don't need that we can do other things, better things with the money and I just wanna help my country because I think everybody forgot that and doesn't know anything about my country and I just want to do a big change, like a big change, the maybe the.

R: Great, and what are you studying as a major, of course you already said it, but I would like to know why did you choose to study that? Why did you choose to study economy?

I: Maybe because umm I already tell you. I used one to. My country is developing and I think we need more people that can help the country like (unintelligible), ideas to develop a country. I think we need a lot of help and I don't know, I don't know yet. I just, I think (unintelligible) like really umm

R: Which areas do you think our country needs to improve?.... which areas need that kind of improvement in our country?

I: Well, I cannot give you the answer

R: Ok, I just wanted you to tell why did you like economy in general and you already said it. So, thank you very much for your time. This has been a very very good interview, this one and in the other one. You have been very helpful. Thank you very much (name)

I: Thank you