UC Davis

UC Davis Previously Published Works

Title

Academic and cultural literacy for heritage speakers of Spanish: A case study of Latin@ students in California

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1rd2r67c>

Author

Colombi, MC

Publication Date

2015-12-01

DOI

10.1016/j.linged.2015.05.006

Peer reviewed

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Linguistics and Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/linged

Academic and cultural literacy for heritage speakers of Spanish: A case study of Latin@ students in California

María Cecilia Colombi*

Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Sproul Hall, One Shields Avenue, University of California, Davis, Davis, CA 95616, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Spanish as a heritage language
Critical language awareness
Systemic functional linguistics
Educational linguistics

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the multilingual landscape of California and emphasizes the potential of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in a university curriculum as a way of promoting students' language awareness and cultural literacy. Heritage speakers of Spanish in the U.S. constitute an important student population with unique linguistic and educational needs and challenges, in learning both English and Spanish (Carreira, 2007; Valdés, 2005). Spanish heritage speakers provide an example of a heterogeneous group of learners, both linguistically and culturally. Several studies on bilingualism (García, 2009; Grosjean, 2010; Hornberger, 2003) underline the importance of schooling to develop advanced bi-literacy in the heritage language. Heritage speakers' use of Spanish usually revolves around the home or community domains. As a result of having developed their linguistic registers in informal contexts they have not used Spanish in situations where this particular type of language is utilized to construct knowledge or negotiate membership in an academic or professional community. In light of this fact, they are subsequently less prepared to meet the linguistic and literacy demands of these settings. In order to become legitimate participants then, they not only need to expand their control over a range of oral and written academic registers but, just as importantly, need to negotiate, construct, and index new identities as members of the academic community (Achugar & Colombi, 2008).

This study describes pedagogical practices in a university curriculum for Spanish heritage speakers that stress the relationship between the bilingual continuum and its connection with the social and situational context. These practices emphasize the meaning-making of language in the construal of discourse. They argue for explicit instruction of dialect, genre and register theory as a way of promoting students' language awareness and academic literacy. Furthermore, a functional approach of language highlights the dialectical relationship between language and culture. The use of pedagogical practices that focus on auto-cultural, and inter-cultural language awareness can facilitate not only the development of bi-literacy but also the acceptance of cultural diversity in the Spanish speaking world and of Latins in the United States.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

This article examines the practices of teaching and learning Spanish as a heritage language in California. It emphasizes the potential of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) together with Critical Language Awareness (CLA) in a university curriculum

* Tel.: +1 530-752-1244; fax: +1 530 752 2184.
E-mail address: cmcolombi@ucdavis.edu

as a way of promoting students' language awareness and developing advanced cultural and academic literacy. *Advanced literacy* is defined here as the language practices that are used to construct knowledge or negotiate membership in an academic or professional community. Heritage language learners of Spanish are individuals who have acquired the language at home interacting with family members and friends; they are characterized by having functional proficiency in interpersonal and colloquial registers of the language as well as a strong socio-affective connection with the language and culture. Heritage speakers of Spanish want to study the language for a variety of reasons, certainly to use it in their professional fields but also to connect (or re-connect) with their cultural roots, interact with members of their community as well as find (or re-defined) their identity. At the same time, Spanish as the largest minority language in California, is immersed in a social context of contradictory language ideologies and policies that send conflicting messages with respect to their varieties of Spanish as well as to the value of being bilingual in society. Therefore, a pedagogical approach that combines a semiotic theory of language which makes explicit the connection between language and culture together with a critical language awareness approach which emphasizes the connection between language and power in social practices could become an effective tool in addressing the challenges of developing advanced literacy in the heritage language.

I align myself with CLA researchers who “advocate(d) for the inclusion of **explicit discussions about power issues in the context of literacy and language instruction** (Fairclough, 1992; 2004/2011). They wanted to add to the push for more explicit discussions and **conscious reflections** about how meaning is made with language; the idea that these meanings and choices were part of a larger social context. This meant acknowledging that certain *preferred choices* were not so because they were more correct (something that most people espousing this view of language agreed with), but also questioning the idea that the substitution of *correct* for *appropriate* linking it to a particular context hid the power struggles within that context by which certain choices were deemed more valuable or acceptable (Introduction to this volume) (the emphasis is mine)”. The relationship of language and power as a way of construing not only discourse but also in understanding language ideologies is nowhere more evident than in the instruction of heritage languages. This article as many other in this volume (e.g. 1 – Developing Teachers' Critical Language Awareness: A Case Study of Guided Participation; 2 – Constructing Racial Literacy through Critical Language Awareness and 3 – Pre-Service English Language Arts Teachers' Development of Critical Language Awareness for Teaching, among others) strongly advocate for the explicit instruction of the language as a way of becoming apprenticed into the professional community.

SFL, developed by the British linguist, Michael Halliday and his colleagues (e.g. Christie & Unsworth, 2000; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, 2004 to mention just a few) is a semiotic theory of language that is socially shaped. It describes language as *a meaning making resource*. Halliday and Matthiessen in the introduction to *Construing experience through meaning: a language based approach to cognition* (1999, p. 1) say that “the construal of human experience [is] (as) a semantic system; and language plays the central role in storing and exchanging experience but also in constructing it.” In other words: “**experience is the reality that we construe for ourselves by means of language.**” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p. 3) Therefore, SFL is a functional theory of language that is semantically motivated, i.e. the categories that make the *system* are based on meaning; it enables us to investigate how experience is construed in semantic terms, i.e. a theory of language that is “semantically motivated” as opposed to a formal theory of language that could be “semantically arbitrary”. This semantic perspective on grammar implies that meaning and form are not separated, but stand in a dialectic relation to each other. Meanings do not exist before the wordings that realize them, and they do not exist in a vacuum but they are always immersed in a social context (Hasan, 1996).

In educational contexts, “language is the fundamental resource in which teachers and students work together. Language is the principal semiotic or meaning-making resource available to students, and their success in learning depends quite crucially on the extent to which **they master language, engaging with the many ways in which it varies and changes, depending on context and purpose.** Such a statement applies even in the multimodal world of the 21st century in which many verbal or visual resources are used in teaching and learning (Christie, 2012, p. 7). (The emphasis is mine.) Furthermore, SFL understands literacy as an “activity”, i.e. what we do with language, our language practices. Halliday (1996, pp. 29–31) characterizes the concept of literacy from a linguistic point of view as follows: “(1) treating literacy as something that has to do with language; and (2) using the conceptual framework of functional linguistics as a way of understanding it. . . . **Literacy can be conceived as activity rather than as knowledge.** . . . being literate **means engaging with language** and its written form: distinguishing what is writing from what is not writing.” (The emphasis is mine). SFL shares with CLA approaches this dynamic perspective of language as an activity, i.e. placing it in its situational context but also understanding the dialectical relationship between the uses of language and its users.

When considering what pedagogical practices we can use for Spanish heritage speakers at the university level, SFL with its emphasis on language as socially situated and CLA with its emphasis on awareness of the social practices are valuable resources in connecting the bilingual experience of the students with their goals for developing advanced literacy in the heritage language. In this article I argue for the explicit instruction of dialect, genre and register theory as a way of promoting students' language awareness and academic literacy.

Spanish as a heritage language in California

Spanish has been in the Southwest of the United States from the time of the first Spanish explorers in the 16th Century.¹ The names of many places, such as California, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Barbara,² and many other toponyms, are relics of those times. But only recently Spanish, together with the Latin@ population, have taken more of a front stage in the public arena. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics became the largest minority in the United States in the year 2000 and their relentless growth is nowhere more evident than in K-16. Table 1 shows the Hispanic population growth for the last 40 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Table 1
U.S. Census Bureau Hispanic population data from 1980 to 2010.

Year	Population	Hispanic/Latin@	Percentage
1980	226,500,000	14,600,000	6.4%
1990	248,709,803	22,354,059	9%
2000	281,421,906	37,400,000	13.3%
2010	308,745,000	50,500,000	16.3%

The Pew Hispanic Research Center (2012) reported that 24% of K-12 population were of Hispanic origin in 2011. Furthermore, 2011 also marked the first time that the number of 18–24-year-old Hispanics enrolled in college exceeded 2 million and reached a record 16.5% share of all college enrollments nationwide. “In October 2012, 66% of all recent high school completers were enrolled in college. Among Hispanics who had recently graduated high school, 69% were enrolled.” This is a steep increase since fall of 2000 when only 49% of Latin@ high school graduates immediately enrolled in college after graduation. Although these figures are optimistic in regards to Latin@s pursuing higher education, the data also reminds us that “Hispanics and whites tend to attend different kinds of colleges and have different rates of degree completion . . . and young Latinos are less likely than their white counterparts to complete a bachelor’s degree.” (Pew Hispanic Research Institute, 2013).

In California, as the state with the largest Latin@ population in the United States, these figures are even more impressive. The 2010 U.S. census revealed that Latin@s at 37.6% had achieved parity with non-Hispanic whites at 40.1% (Asians at 12.8% and African Americans at 5.8% added to the 37,253,956 population of California) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). In February 2013, the *Los Angeles Times* forecasted that “Latinos [would] (to) surpass whites for the first time since California statehood (in 2014)”:

For the first time since California became a state in 1850, Latinos will surpass whites as the largest ethnic group by 2014, according to demographic numbers released Thursday.

The state Department of Finance estimates that by the middle of this year, whites and Latinos will each represent about 39% of California population, with Latinos reaching a plurality soon after that.

Officials expect that by 2060, Latinos will make up 48% of the state’s population, compared with 30% for whites. Asians will make up 13% of the population, and blacks 4%.

(www.articles.latimes.com, 2013).

And in March 2014 that prediction became a reality: “Latinos set to surpass whites in California in March” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2014), “Hispanic population ranks #1 in March 7th, 2014 (www.dailynews.com), etc. At the university level, the number of Latin@s students also reached unprecedented figures, for example at the University of California system, considering the nine campuses that accept undergraduate students, Latin@s students made up a 32% of the total number of students enrolled for 2013–2014 academic year. (University of California, 2014).

This data is relevant to show this “momentous demographic shift in terms of the value of Spanish as a heritage language and also of Spanish as the most frequently spoken second language in the United States” of the last two decades (Colombi, 2009, p. 39). “The value of speaking Spanish as a marketing tool is transcending the family circles and reaching mainstream businesses, with most of the marketing tools for the Hispanic population being done in Spanish or bilingually in Spanish/English” (Colombi, 2012, p. 274). Nevertheless the generalized use of Spanish underscores the paradox of the two co-existing linguistic ideologies that prevail in California as well as in many other parts of the country: attitudes of “language pride and language panic” (Hill, 2001; Martínez, 2006). The *language panic* ideology was clearly exemplified in the English Only movement of the 1980s that aimed at declaring English as an official language in many states. California was not exempt from this ideology approving English as the official language in 1986. Later on, in 1998, this monolingual ideology

¹ Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led an expedition in the southwest of the United States from 1540 to 1542. This expedition in search of “the cities of gold” started in what is now Mexico and covered a vast area arriving to what is now Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.

² Many of these places were named after the 21 missions founded from 1769 to 1833. Fray Junípero Serra founded the first nine of those missions from 1769 until his death in 1784.

reappeared with Proposition 227³ which banned bilingual education in the state, with noticeable long-term implications for the teaching of any language other than English in K-12. For heritage language students, these policies are even more pernicious as many schools do not offer bilingual education or education in any other language but English. Therefore, heritage students who may be fluent in other languages, e.g. Latin@s, are immersed in “English-only school”, moving them toward the monolingual end of the bilingual-monolingual continuum until they reach college level where they are “required” to study a “foreign language”, such as Spanish.

Heritage speakers of Spanish in the U.S. constitute an important student population with unique linguistic and educational needs and challenges, in learning both English and Spanish (Carreira, 2007; Valdés, 2005). Spanish heritage speakers provide an example of a heterogeneous group of learners, both linguistically and culturally. Valdés (2001, p. 38) says: “Foreign language educators use the term (heritage speaker) to refer to a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, **who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English.** For these educators, the heritage language student is also different in important ways from the traditional foreign language student. This difference, however, has to do **with developed functional proficiencies** in the heritage languages.” (The emphasis is mine). Therefore, this variation in “functional proficiencies” together with challenges presented by the contradictory language policies and the increasing Spanish language use in the public sphere create daunting challenges for students and educators. Heritage speakers, mostly natural bilinguals, differ from second language learners who are selective bilinguals in two major areas: functional proficiencies of the heritage (or L2) language and linguistic identity with the heritage language (or L2).

Heritage speakers’ use of Spanish usually revolves around the home or community domains. As a result of having developed their linguistic registers in informal contexts they have not used Spanish in situations where this particular type of language is utilized to construct knowledge or negotiate membership in an academic or professional community. In light of this fact, they are subsequently less prepared and more linguistically insecure to meet the linguistic and literacy demands of these settings. In order to become legitimate participants then, they not only need to expand their control over a range of oral and written academic registers but, just as importantly, need to negotiate, construct, and index new identities as members of the academic community (Achugar & Colombi, 2008). Several studies on bilingualism (García, 2009; Grosjean, 2010; Hornberger, 2003) underline the unique opportunity of schooling to develop advanced bi-literacy in the heritage language.

For Fairclough (2004–2011, p. 119) “Social practices such as teaching and learning are mediated by structures and events and are networked in particular ways through orders of discourse. Orders of discourse comprise genres, discourses, and styles or “ways of interacting,” “ways of representing,” and “ways of being.” Within these three levels: social structures (e.g. languages) > social practices (e.g. teaching and learning) > social events (e.g. texts) there is a relationship of semiosis that is always social. SFL, as a social theory of language, studies language in context and represents a compatible theory of language to be used in educational contexts where the aim of teaching and learning as social practices is to develop CLA.

In sum, the challenge of designing instruction to develop advanced literacy in Spanish as a heritage language raises a number of important theoretical issues for educators, practitioners as well as researchers. Some of these questions include:

1. What are the most effective pedagogies for heritage speakers?
2. Can we address the language diversity in Spanish by representing different varieties and registers of Spanish in our curriculum?
3. Should our curriculum aim at developing students’ multiple literacies in Spanish instead of focusing on an abstract concept such as the *monolingual speaker of Spanish*?
4. Can we facilitate the students’ development of a critical language awareness to better understand the connection between language and power?

Teaching Spanish as a heritage language: an SFL and CLA approach

Over the last decade, many publications have explored the connection between SFL and language teaching in the development of advanced biliteracy at a tertiary level (Achugar, 2006, 2008, 2009; Achugar & Colombi, 2008; Achugar & Pessoa, 2009; Allen & Maxim, 2011; Byrnes, 2002; Byrnes & Maxim, 2003; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Colombi, 2002, 2003, 2009) with special emphasis on the connection between an informed and explicit use of language in the classroom to enhance language awareness and cultural literacy. In the following section, I argue for the value of using SFL in the classroom as an essential tool for a productive pedagogy to raise critical language awareness in the context of teaching Spanish as a heritage language in the United States.

Halliday and other functionalist researchers (Halliday, 1978, 1994, 1996; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, 2004) established the connection between language and social context through three types of meaning: “ideational or experiential” which represents experience; “interpersonal” which sustains the interaction between people

³ In May 2014, the Senate of California voted to ask California voters to repeal the 1998 ballot measure that bans bilingual education in the state. This measure will be on the ballot in November 2016.

through language and “textual” which creates a coherent and cohesive discourse. All languages are organized into these three components or “metafunctions”: ideational, interpersonal and textual that work simultaneously. These three types of meanings relate directly to the context of the situation with regards to: “field” (the subject matter as well as the institutional setting in which a piece of language occurs); “tenor” (relationship between the participants mainly in connection with power relations, emotional involvement and frequency of interaction) and “mode” (the channel of communication such as written and oral as well as the role of language in the situation).

SFL focuses “on how people use language to make meanings with each other as they carry out the activities of their social lives. They do this through the selections from the sets of **choices that are available in the language systems**. The choices individuals can actually make from these systems are, however, constrained by two factors. The first is that meaning is always constructed within the context and, context limits the range of meanings that can be selected. The second factor that constrains individuals’ linguistic choices is that **not everyone within the culture or community has access to all of the possible contexts and therefore all the possible ways of speaking or writing.**” (Christie & Unsworth, 2000, p. 3) (my emphasis). Therefore, when applying the concept of *choice* in the teaching of heritage languages, it is important to consider what kind of choices the heritage speakers have had access to according to their social coding and how to apprentice them into new social contexts while making clear the dialectic nature of the choice in relationship to language and power, i.e. why certain choices or certain varieties of language (such as the educated monolingual speaker of Spanish) have been privileged while others are denigrated only because they are different from those expected in mainstream contexts? How they came to be considered the “valued” varieties of the language and who benefits from that fact?

In the context of Spanish as a heritage language in the U.S., the concepts of *dialect* and *register* as understood in SFL, are particularly relevant to position both Spanish and English in the social context of dominant–non-dominant languages as well as to better understand the variety of Spanishes spoken in the U.S. in terms of their relationship to the social (and political) power of users of the language. Furthermore, the concept of *register* is particularly productive in connection to academic language as a *register* that is considered prestigious due to the contexts of use and users. In this sense SFL can be said to be complementary to CLA, in that through the pedagogical use of SFL in the classroom, the students can be not only aware of the different uses of language in different contexts but also they can develop a critical understanding of why certain varieties of language receive a higher status than others. According to Maxim, Byrnes, and Norris (2010, p. 46), “Grammar provides the energy behind the semiotic system of language in that it presents **networks of interlocking options**, with particular wordings signaling construal of a particular sociocultural context.” To illustrate these ideas, I will describe how the concepts of *dialect* and *register* have been applied in our program.

In the context of Spanish as a heritage language and in connection with the language ideologies and policies described in the previous section, our heritage students come to the classroom with the belief that they do not speak “proper Spanish; they describe the variety of Spanish that they bring to the classroom as “malo”, “mocho”, “vulgar”, “machucado⁴”, to say the least, in spite of the fact that they can converse fluently in the language. This is nowhere better exemplified than in Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1978) when she explained how her language is described as faulty and therefore, she feels insecure speaking in English and Spanish, i.e. the belief of not having a “proper” language diminishes her sense of self and creates shame:

Ideslenguadas. Somos los del español deficiente.[Without tongues. We are the ones with a deficient Spanish] We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestizaje*, the subject of your *burla*.⁵ Because we speak tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically *somos huérfanos* [we are orphans]—we speak and orphan tongue.

Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized **the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language.** Low estimation of self. In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives” (58). (The emphasis is mine).

Furthermore, many students have been exposed to teaching practices that value the varieties of Spanish used by “educated speakers of the language” in places such as Spain, Mexico, Colombia or any other country where Spanish is spoken as the dominant language.⁶ In other words, heritage speakers of Spanish need to acquire control and agency over their own Spanish first to become confident speakers of the language. SFL as a functional social theory of language that considers language as an “activity” situated in a social context, together with CLA and its focus on the “social practices” and “language practices” also socially situated, could help develop a metalinguistic awareness to help elucidate the language choices and its effects

⁴ Translations “malo” <bad>, “mocho” <colloquialism: faulty, defective>, “machucado” <colloquialism: battered>.

⁵ Translation: *burla* <joke or teasing>.

⁶ In many institutional contexts the variety of the educated “monolingual” Spanish speaker is not only considered ideal but it is very much emulated to the detriment of the other varieties that are considered non-standard and “not good Spanish”. For more on the standard variety of Spanish used in the Spanish programs see: Hidalgo (1997), Torreblanca (1997), Sánchez (1994), Valdés and Geoffrion-Vinci (1998), Valdés (2005), among others.

in different social contexts. According to SFL, literacy is not defined as something that is acquired once and for all but as a capacity to interact with language in different social contexts.

In the course of “Spanish as a heritage language: theory and practice”, an applied linguistics class, we use functional linguistics to raise language consciousness. We begin by presenting Halliday’s (1978, 2009) conceptualization *dialect* (as a variety according to the users) and *register* (as a diatypic variety according to the use) to help students take a more critical position about language ideologies, and attitudes as well as to reflect toward their own varieties of Spanish. The following question serves as an example of how students began their self- assessment with respect to the languages they used. (See Appendix #1 for a complete reproduction of the linguistic biography we present in our classes).

11- Evalúa tu habilidad de hablar inglés/ español en el continuo bilingüe.
 1- implica que te sientes dominante en inglés, 9 en español y 5 que puedes usar las dos lenguas de la misma forma.
 (Inglés) 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9 (Español)
 11- Assess your ability to speak English/ Spanish in the bilingual continuum.
 1-implies that you feel dominant in English, 9 in Spanish and 5 that you can use both languages in the same way.
 (English) 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9 (Spanish)

The purpose of this linguistic bio is to have a first view about how they assess their own language abilities and language practices, i.e. why, when and with whom they will use either Spanish or English. At the end of the course we will go back to the this linguistic bio and re-assess their own conceptions and views about their own varieties of language, bilingualism, with the hope that after having explicitly presented and discussed uses of Spanish in social contexts in the U.S., their own language practices, attitudes and ideologies, they will be more critically aware of the different fields of knowledge, the different positionings of interlocutors and modes of interaction. Furthermore, students discuss the diversity of dialects spoken in the classroom and compare the variety of registers they use in English and Spanish and the complex situation of being bilingual in the United States.

Table 2 from Halliday (1978, p. 35, 2009) serves as a departing point in the classroom to look at their own varieties of Spanish and English in relationship to their communities and language practices.

Table 2
 Varieties in language.

Dialect (“dialectal variety”) = variety “according to the user”	Register (“diatypic variety”) = variety “according to the use”
A dialect is: what you speak (habitually) determined by who you are (socio-region of origin and/or adoption), and expressing diversity of social structure (patterns of social hierarchy) So in principle dialects are: different ways of saying the same thing and tend to differ in: phonetics, phonology, lexicogrammar (but not in semantics)	A register is: what you are speaking (at the time) determined by what you are doing (nature or social activity being engaged in) and expressing diversity of social process (social division of labor) So in principle registers are: ways of saying different things and tend to differ in: semantics (and hence in lexicogrammar and sometimes phonology as realization of this)
Principal controlling variables: social class provenance: rural–urban generation age gender	Principal controlling variables: field (type of social action) tenor (role relationships) mode (symbolic organization)
Typical instances: subcultural varieties: standard/nonstandard	Typical instances: occupational varieties: technical/non-technical
Characterized by: strongly-held attitudes toward dialects as symbol of social diversity	Characterized by: major distinctions of spoken/written language in action/language in reflection

Adapted from Halliday (1978, p. 35).

Students relate to the idea that “our language is also determined by who we are; that is the basis of *dialect*, and in principle a *dialect* is with us all our lives – it is not subject to choice. In practice, however, this is less and less true, and the phenomenon of ‘dialect switching’ is wide spread. Many speakers learn two or more dialects, either in succession, dropping the first when they learn the second, or in coordination, switching them according to the context of the situation (Halliday, 1978, p. 34)”.

Moreover, the administration of the autobiography at the very beginning of the course serves as a point of departure to focus our attention to *language use* and *language practices*. We then concentrate our attention to the diversity of the varieties of Spanish used in the United States. Then we compare the characteristics of the different varieties of Spanish represented

Table 3
Origin of Hispanic population in the U.S. according to the US. Census Bureau.

in the classroom and describe them from the perspective of the geographical and social variables. Spanish in the U.S. is not uniform, on the contrary there are many varieties of Spanishes spoken. Table 3 shows the origin of the major groups of Spanish speakers in the U.S.

Students interact with other dialects by means of interviews, videos, literary readings as well as through their community service.⁷ Thus, they become independent analysts of the language, i.e. in all their interactions they need to be able to identify the different dialects and explain why they are different. Furthermore, we can explore how speakers perceive their own varieties and in many cases they will vary the way they use the language through “*dialect switching*”. For example, students discovered that many speakers of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala will stop using “vos”, a second singular person pronoun, among people that are not from their communities. In California, as well as in the rest of the country, the great majority of Latin@s are of Mexican origin. Therefore, we discussed in class the use of “tú” as second singular person pronoun by Central American speakers in the context of the Latin@ communities in the U.S. Is it a form of adaptation or linguistic convergence? Why are Central American speakers doing this? Are they trying to not stick out? Why? Students consider many of these types of analysis of the different varieties of Spanish and the different language practices throughout the quarter, always questioning the reasons and connecting them with the attitudes and ideologies behind those language practices.

We follow these steps in the productive teaching of *dialect*:

- (1) Reflection about their own *dialect* of Spanish and use of Spanish and English (autobiography).
- (2) Explicit teaching of *dialect/register* concepts from a functional perspective: varying according to the users (geographical region, social class, rural-urban, etc.).
- (3) Interaction and analysis of *dialects/register*s in the classroom and in the larger community through their community service.
- (4) Discussion of the attitudes and ideologies attributed to the different varieties in different contexts. It is only after the students could really explain **why** certain varieties are *appropriate* in certain contexts and others are not, that they have developed a critical awareness of language; i.e. when they start questioning why certain varieties receive more value than others in society.

Another example of activities that students do in this course to become more aware of language is to record a language interaction such as an interview to a family member, or a conversation among friends, at a meal time, etc. in the Latin@ community; then they have to transcribe and analyze it following a functional perspective of language of *register* (field, mode and tenor), *language according to use*; and *dialect* characteristics (the social class the participants, generation, age, gender as well as place of origin rural-urban, etc.), *language according to the users*. In class the activities vary from the analysis of Latin@ literary texts of Mexican American, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Dominican, Puerto Rican or Cuban origin, among others from the cultural and linguistic perspective. The stigmatized use of language, such as the archaisms “haiga” or “ansina”, typical of many rural varieties of Spanish is another focal point of the class. We look at the lexico-grammatical and phonological characteristics of rural varieties in documentaries, movies and transcriptions. Later on, we compare them with the varieties spoken in the Latin@ communities in California. We discussed the strongly held attitudes toward the use of these forms

⁷ This course has a component of community service for which students need to work 10 h as volunteers in educational contexts such as bilingual schools, after school programs, tutoring programs, etc. or in other bilingual contexts where they can volunteer such as Latin@ health centers or immigration clinics, etc.).

and look at the linguistic value of them. Why do they receive such attitudes? What is the linguistic base for them? In a similar vein, we do comparable analysis and studies to the use of Spanish, English and Spanglish as being used in the Latin@ communities. And here again, the linguistic concepts of *dialect* and *register* become very productive.

The concept of *register* is presented together with *dialect*, comparing and contrasting them, i.e. while *dialect* depends on the *users* of the language, *register* depends on the *use* of language and it will be determined by the register variables of *field*, *mode* and *tenor*. The use of the *register* variables allow us to start from the context of the situation in the analysis of language and the lexicogrammatical features of that particular *register*.

We move from the varieties of Spanish they speak and the registers they are more familiar with to those that develop and are learnt in an educational context extending the linguistic repertoire of the speakers. As most of the students have acquired their Spanish mostly in interpersonal or familiar contexts, they have developed colloquial or familiar registers in Spanish while most of their education has been done in English and therefore, they have developed the academic registers in English. Again, we apply a productive teaching pedagogy by first reflecting about what registers we know and then, moving on with recognition, analysis and production of different *registers* to make a conscious decision of why certain *registers* are used in certain contexts. This class aims at developing oral literacy in Spanish, so we start with the conversational colloquial *registers* moving on in the continuum of language to the most monoglossic and professional ones such as oral presentations of research papers and microlessons.

Maxim, Byrnes, and Norris (2010) compare the SFL approach to the concept of “apprenticing into practice” promoted by Lave and Wenger (1991). This metaphor conceives knowledge as an activity in which certain people participate in different circumstances using language (pp. 52–53). Similarly, SFL defines literacy as a set of activities where one learns through participation. Using SFL the teacher and students can participate in a process of a productive pedagogy in which they can deconstruct the features of a *dialect* or the characteristics of a *register* by a thorough analysis of the text and then take part of a process of collaborative reproduction of other texts. SFL enables us to specify the language resources and the contextual features of the language of schooling and help students and teachers make those language resources a focus of discussion and engagement. The language–context relationship offered by this social theory of language help identify meaning-making resources that take prominence in different fields of knowledge, different modes of interaction as well as the positionings of the interlocutors. By identifying, analyzing, constructing and deconstructing these meaning making resources and understanding how interlocutors construct discourse and position themselves in different social contexts, students not only become language analysts by they also become apprentices in the language of schooling, i.e. they develop a critical consciousness about the role of language, variation in language, and how language is used to represent the social roles in society.

Conclusion

In this paper I emphasized the productive teaching of Spanish as a heritage language in a university curriculum using SFL as a social theory of language and CLA with its focus on power relations and social practices. This pedagogical approach is a useful resource to develop a linguistic awareness of language practices in different social contexts. In our pedagogical practices we start from what is known to the students from their cultural and linguistic context, from the familiar to the professional or academic context, with the aim of extending the linguistic repertoire. In addition, heritage speakers learn how to describe use and consciously talk about the value of these linguistic resources in the language practices, i.e. they become “apprentices in that professional community”, and this is the first step to develop a cultural and critical language awareness. They become conscious users of the language (or languages) of schooling, i.e. they can critically assess the value of those choices in society. SFL and CLA based pedagogy supports meaningful dialogic interaction about language use and power relations.

Moreover, the use of SFL as a pedagogical tool is significant in as much as it describes the use of norms according to the social context and allows for students to become independent analysts of language. Many of the students that have been exposed to this type of pedagogy attest to the fact that the most important tool they obtain from the class is the ability to think critically about “language as a meaning making resource” in a social context.⁸ From this perspective, grammar is never prescriptive but always descriptive and functional, i.e. it becomes a resource to construct meaning as well as a resource to construct their identity as members of the academic community.

Appendix #1.

La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: teoría y praxis.

Biografía lingüística

ANTECEDENTES PERSONALES Y EDUCACIONALES

Fecha: _____

⁸ See Appendix #2 as an example.

Nombre: _____ Grad: ____ Año: _____
 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____
 Edad: _____ Especialización: _____
 Lugar de nacimiento: _____
 1- ¿Dónde naciste? _____
 2- ¿Qué lenguas hablas en casa? _____
 3- ¿Cuál fue la primera lengua que hablaste en casa? _____
 4. ¿Cuántos cursos has tomado de lingüística en español? _____
 5- ¿Qué edad tenías cuando comenzaste a estudiar español en la escuela/ universidad?
 1-5 años 6-12 años 13-17 años 18 años- actualidad
 6- ¿Qué edad tenías cuando comenzaste a hablar español en la casa ?
 1-5 años 6-12 años 13-17 años 18 años- actualidad
 7- ¿Estudias otras lenguas aparte del español? Explica: _____
 8- Evalúa tu habilidad de hablar **español**. 5 implica una competencia comunicativa de un/a hablante bilingüe balanceado/a competente en ambas lenguas.

HABLAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCUCHAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
LECTURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCRITURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

9- Evalúa tu habilidad de hablar **inglés**. 5 implica una competencia comunicativa de un/a hablante bilingüe balanceado/a competente en ambas lenguas.

HABLAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCUCHAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
LECTURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCRITURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

10- ¿Cuál de las siguientes habilidades es más difícil de aprender? 1= la más fácil 5= la más difícil

HABLAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCUCHAR	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
LECTURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5
ESCRITURA	1.....2.....3.....4.....5

11- Evalúa tu habilidad de hablar **inglés/ español en el continuo bilingüe**. 1- implica que te sientes dominante en inglés, 9 en español y 5 que puedes usar las dos lenguas de la misma forma.
 (I) 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9 (E)

12- ¿Cuál ha sido tu experiencia favorita aprendiendo español? _____
 13- ¿Por qué estás en este curso? _____
 15- ¿Cuáles son las expectativas que tienes de esta clase? _____
 16- ¿Cuáles son las razones principales para aprender español en la universidad? Señala **todas las que correspondan**. Y evalúalas: 1- necesario 2- deseable 3- no-necesario

a- requisito	1.....2.....3
b- desarrollo profesional	1.....2.....3
c- viajes	1.....2.....3
d- comunicación con la familia	1.....2.....3
e- las culturas hispanohablantes	1.....2.....3
f- amigos que hablan español	1.....2.....3
g- la música en español	1.....2.....3
l- para mis estudios posteriores	1.....2.....3

Explica: _____

17- ¿En qué situaciones usas el español ? Explica. 1- todos los días 2- a veces 3- casi nunca

a- en el trabajo	1.....2.....3
b- en clase	1.....2.....3
c- viajes	1.....2.....3

d- comunicación con la familia	1.....2.....3
e- con mis amigos	1.....2.....3
f- con mis hermanos	1.....2.....3
g- con mis padres	1.....2.....3
l- con mis compañeros de trabajo	1.....2.....3

Explica: _____

Appendix #2.

From: XXXX
Subject: Looking for Students Interested in Working in a Dual Immersion Elementary School
Date: July 10, 2014 at 2:36:23 AM GMT+2

Dear Professor Colombi,

A couple of years ago, I took your bilingual education class, and it has since proven quite useful! Currently I'm running an after school program at Beamer Elementary in Woodland and am hoping to find students who are interested in working as tutors in a bilingual setting for the oncoming school year. Naturally, the Spanish department came to mind. If you are interested (and have the time) is it possible that the attached job posting can be sent to students who are involved in the department?

The position requires that students are eligible for work study and applications will be accepted all through summer.

Hope all is well!

XXXXXX

References

- Achugar, M. (2006). Writers on the Borderlands: Constructing a bilingual identity in Southwest Texas. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 5(2), 97–122.
- Achugar, M. (2008). Counter-hegemonic language practices and ideologies: Creating a new space and value for Spanish in Southwest Texas. *Spanish in Context*, 5(1), 1–19.
- Achugar, M. (2009). Constructing a bilingual professional identity in a graduate classroom. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 8(2), 65–87.
- Achugar, M., & Colombi, M. C. (2008). Systemic functional linguistic explorations into the longitudinal study of advanced capacities: The case of Spanish heritage language learners. In L. Ortega, & H. Byrnes (Eds.), *The Longitudinal Study of Advanced L2 Capacities* (pp. 36–57). New York: Routledge.
- Achugar, M., & Pessoa, S. (2009). Power and place: Language attitudes towards Spanish in a bilingual academic community in Southwest Texas. *Spanish in Context*, 6(2), 129–223.
- Allen, H. W., & Maxim, H. H. (2011). *Educating the future foreign language professoriate for the 21st century*. Canada: Thompson.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1978). *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Meztiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Byrnes, H. (2002). The role of task and task-based assessment in a content-oriented collegiate FL curriculum. *Language Testing*, 19, 419–437 (monograph issue).
- Byrnes, H., & Maxim, H. H. (2003). *Advanced foreign language learning: A challenge to college programs*. Canada: AAUSC, Thompson (monograph issue).
- Byrnes, H., Maxim, H. H., & Norris, J. M. (2010). Realizing advanced L2 writing development in collegiate FL education: Curricular design, pedagogy, and assessment. *Modern Language Journal*, 94 (monograph issue).
- Carreira, M. (2007). Spanish-for-native-speaker matters: Narrowing the Latino Achievement Gap through Spanish language instruction. *Heritage Language Journal*, 5(1), 147–171.
- Colombi, M. C. (2002). Academic language development in Latino students' writing in Spanish. In M. J. Schleppegrell, & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages* (pp. 67–86). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Colombi, M. C. (2003). Un enfoque funcional para la enseñanza del lenguaje expositivo. In A. Roca, & M. C. Colombi (Eds.), *Mi lengua: Spanish as a heritage language in the United States* (pp. 78–95). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Colombi, M. C. (2009). A systemic functional approach to teaching Spanish for heritage speakers in the United States. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 39–49.
- Colombi, M. C. (2012). Multilingual California: Spanish in the market. In W. Bowcher (Ed.), *Multilingual texts from around the world: Cultural and linguistics insights* (pp. 273–298). England, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Christie, F. (2012). Language education: A functional perspective. *Language Learning*, 62(March (Suppl. 1)), 1–247 (monograph issue).
- Christie, F., & Unsworth, L. (2000). Developing socially responsible language research. In L. Unsworth (Ed.), *Researching language in schools and communities* (pp. 1–26). London/Washington: Cassell.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). The appropriacy of 'appropriateness'. In N. Fairclough (Ed.), *Critical language awareness* (pp. 33–56). London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2004/2011). Semiotic aspects of social transformation and learning. In R. Rogers (Ed.), *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (2nd ed., pp. 119–127). New York/London: Routledge.
- García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and reality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Baltimore, US: University Park Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). London: Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1996). On grammar and grammatics. In R. Hasan, C. Cloran, & D. Butt (Eds.), *Functional descriptions: Theory in practice* (pp. 1–38). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2009). Varieties and variation in language: Dialect, register, code. In J. Webster (Ed.), *The essential Halliday* (Vol. 1) (pp. 429–450). London: Continuum.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in social-semiotic perspective*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (1999). *Construing experience through meaning: A language based approach to cognition*. London: Continuum.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Arnold.
- Hasan, R. (1996). Literacy, everyday talk and society. In R. Hasan, & G. Williams (Eds.), *Literacy in society* (pp. 377–424). London/New York: Addison-Wesley Longman.
- Hidalgo, M. (1997). Criterios normativos e ideología lingüística: aceptación y rechazo del español de los Estados Unidos. In M. C. Colombi, & F. X. Alarcón (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría* (pp. 109–120). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hill, J. (2001). The racializing function of language panics. In D. González, R. Melis, & Ildikó (Eds.), *Language ideologies* (Vol. 2) (pp. 245–267). Mahwah: LEA.
- Hornberger, N. H. (Ed.). (2003). *Continuum of Bilinguality: An Ecological Framework for Educational Policy, Research, and Practice in Multilingual Settings. Bilingual education and bilingualism 41*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Los Angeles Times. (2013). Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/feb/01/local/la-me-0201-latinos-young-20130201>
- Martínez, G. A. (2006). *Mexican Americans and language*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Maxim, H., Byrnes, H., & Norris, J. (2010). Realizing advanced L2 writing development in collegiate education: curricular design, pedagogy, assessment. *Modern Language Journal*, 94(s1), 1–235 (monograph issue)
- Pew Hispanic Research Institute. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/20/hispanic-student-enrollments-reach-new-highs-in-2011/>
- Pew Hispanic Research Institute. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/05/09/hispanic-high-school-graduates-pass-whites-in-rate-of-college-enrollment/>
- Sánchez, R. (1994). *Chicano discourse: Socio-historic perspectives*. Houston, TX: Arte Público Press.
- San Francisco Chronicle. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Latinos-set-to-surpass-whites-in-California-in-5146876.php>
- Torreblanca, M. (1997). El español hablado en el Suroeste de los Estados Unidos y las normas lingüísticas españolas. In M. C. Colombi, & F. X. Alarcón (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría* (pp. 133–139). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Valdés, G. (2001). Heritage languages students: Profiles and possibilities. In J. K. Peyton, D. A. Ranard, & S. McGinnis (Eds.), *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource* (pp. 37–77). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics/Delta Systems.
- Valdés, G. (2005). Bilingualism, heritage language learners, and SLA research: Opportunities lost or seized? *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 410–426.
- Valdés, G., & Geoffrion-Vinci, M. (1998). Chicano Spanish: The problem of the "underdeveloped" code in bilingual repertoires. *Modern Language Journal*, 82, 473–501.
- University of California. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2014/fall-2014-applications-table3.1.pdf> <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/more-california-freshmen-admitted-uc-fall-2014>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). www.census.gov. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov> and <http://www.census.gov/PressRelease/www/releases/archives/hispanic-origin-population/index.html>