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Target Practice: Exploring Student TL/L1 Use in Paired Interactions

Michelle Anderson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

Target Practice: Exploring Student TL/L1 Use in Paired Interactions

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Master of Arts

Teachers of foreign languages typically encourage their students to speak in the target language (TL) often, but due to various factors, this is not always achieved. Some reasons might include insufficient vocabulary, lack of topic knowledge, embarrassment, or simple unwillingness. Much of the existing research observes uses of the TL or native language (L1). The purpose of this study was to examine how often students use the TL in paired interactions and whether that amount has any relationship to the students' oral proficiency at the end of the course. In a SPAN 105 course at Brigham Young University, 27 students participated in this project by recording themselves during six in-class, paired interactions, after which they provided comments via questionnaires. This study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, with both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data revealed information about the time spent in the TL, as well as the time spent in the L1, and what relationship these variables had with listening comprehension and oral proficiency. The qualitative data exposed emergent findings related to TL/L1 use: helpful tools, effects of task type, pitfalls the students experienced, struggles and benefits of partnering, effects of recording, and student perceptions about the L1. The results of the study indicate a need for teacher strategies to encourage TL use in the classroom.

Keywords: clarification, confidence, defensiveness, interview, L1, oral proficiency, paired interactions, partner familiarity, perceptions, prompt, recording device, role-play, scaffolding, struggles, teacher expectations, TL

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the foreign language (FL) classroom, the use of the target language (TL) is essential. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2010), the general rule of thumb should be that at least 90% of class time be spent in the TL, with only 10% or less spent in the students' native language (L1). For students to develop language proficiency, ACTFL further indicates that the TL be used in meaningful communication. Therefore, in order for FL students to produce output within the classroom, the teacher needs to provide them with opportunities. Often, these opportunities come in the form of paired interactions with other students.

Traditionally, investigations into classroom communications have examined teacher-student interactions (Bateman, 2008; Cook, 2001; Edstrom, 2006; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Wilkerson, 2008). Of those that have included research on student-student exchanges, one study investigated how two groups of Intermediate students at the college level used the TL and their L1 specifically in solving a grammar problem (Scott & de la Fuente, 2008). Another looked at middle school immersion students and how they used their L1 to complete two different tasks whose product was a written story (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Others examined the use of the students' L1 during peer interactions in preparation for oral presentations (Moore, 2013), compared student interactions in pairs and small groups—specifically looking at how the L1 is used (Lasito & Storch, 2013), considered the effects of learner proficiency pairing and task type on the amount of the L1 used (Storch & Aldosari, 2010), and focused on the distribution of participation among learners in triads (Edstrom, 2015).

In recent years, other studies have discussed a revival and support for use of the L1 in the FL classroom. It has been suggested that use of the L1 in learning the TL is no longer something to be ridiculed—as implied in the monolingual instructional assumptions presented by Cummins (2007)—and that the way is open for a “paradigm shift” (Hall & Cook, 2012). Cook (2001) posited that the L1 and the TL cannot be compartmentalized; they are a single compound system, and therefore, the use of the L1 in the FL classroom should be revisited. However, these studies by Hall and Cook ignore research that shows it is important for students to speak in the TL as often as possible (Bateman, 2008; Edstrom, 2006). One study in particular demonstrated higher scores for students who spoke more of the TL (Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

Much of the research done with regard to L1 or TL use focuses on teacher use, but less has been done on student-student interactions. In particular, there is a lack of research regarding the amount of time spent in the TL while speaking in pairs and how that may relate to listening comprehension scores, oral exam scores, and overall oral proficiency. There is also a need to investigate the factors that contribute to whether students speak with their partners in the TL or the L1. Furthermore, current research does not adequately explain the problems that students may encounter while speaking in pairs. It would be important for educators to understand these issues in order to help their students to see the value of the TL and overcome obstacles they may face.

In order to address these concerns, this project investigated the frequency with which FL students use the TL, as opposed to their L1, in student-student interactions and how this affected their oral proficiency. Furthermore, the amount of time spent in the L1 was measured as an independent variable in the quantitative data analysis in order to examine whether frequent use of the L1 has a detrimental effect on oral proficiency. Other independent variables included

previous experience with the language, total time speaking, and oral pre-test scores. Additional dependent variables included listening comprehension scores and oral exam scores, as well as overall oral proficiency. Moreover, factors were examined to determine what influenced the students to speak more of the TL and what difficulties they encountered in paired interactions. The results of the study have pedagogical implications, which may affect FL educators, and should be considered when using student-student exchanges within the classroom.

### **Chapter Outline**

This thesis contains four other chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the topic of TL/L1 use. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in this study. It defines the participants, the instruments, the procedure, and the design. Chapter 4 reveals the findings of the study and Chapter 5 discusses the implications of these findings. The appendices at the end contain all of the documents used in this investigation.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there a relationship between the amount of time students spend speaking in the TL and their listening comprehension scores, oral exam scores, and overall oral proficiency?
2. What kinds of linguistic and environmental problems do students encounter when participating in paired activities?
3. What factors seem to contribute to the quantity of TL/L1 spoken in paired activities?
  - a. How do the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding of a task affect TL use in student-student interactions?

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

Oral proficiency and the use of the TL in the FL classroom are complementary topics. Too often, instructors predominantly use the L1 to teach the FL, which means that the students are hearing the L1 more than the TL. Because the goal of teaching a FL is for the students to be able to use the TL in authentic contexts, it makes sense that the focus of a FL course should be on that very idea. Without the proper encouragement or opportunities, the students cannot be expected to produce in the language. It has been well established that it is important for students to speak in the TL as often as possible (Bateman, 2008; Edstrom, 2006). Furthermore, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2010) has recommended that 90% of speech in a FL classroom be in the TL. Although some research has been done on student use of the TL, less has been investigated concerning that use in paired interactions within the classroom. The reasons for this are that it can be time-consuming and difficult to research conversations in pairs. However, outside of responding to and interacting with the teacher, students' only other classroom resources for conversing in the language are the other students in the course. In this respect, it seems vitally important that educators have information on the dynamics involved in this sort of activity. The present study examined the amount of time the students spent speaking in the TL during paired interactions, as well as the factors that contributed to the use of the TL and problems that the students encountered. This information was compared to the students' oral proficiency in order to look for relationships.

### **Student Use of L1/TL**

In order to allow the teachers to understand where their students may need help, it is important to know how much students use the TL. Scott and de la Fuente (2008) video recorded paired French student and paired Spanish student conversations at the Intermediate college level

to determine how they used the L1 and the TL in solving a grammar problem. One group of students was allowed to use the L1 while the other was required to use the TL. The recall sessions revealed that, regardless of the language they were asked to use, both groups completed the task by translating the structures into the L1. In short, they concluded that students use the L1 even when the task is exclusively in the TL. Swain and Lapkin (2000) looked at two classes of 8<sup>th</sup> grade French immersion students and their use of the L1 in completing two different tasks in which the product was a written story. Regardless of the task, nearly all of the students used the L1 to perform it. Gündüz (2014) ascertained that the students in the classes she observed used the TL more than the teachers did (55% of the time in England, 83% of the time in Turkey). This is an anomaly in the world of FL teaching because one expects the teacher to speak more of the TL than the students. The type of activity might explain it, as the activities were teacher-controlled. In this case, the activities focused on grammar and vocabulary; therefore, the teachers' language use may not have affected the students' language use because most of the language the students used was in response to the teacher. Student initiation was quite limited in both countries. Thompson's (2011) study also showed a similar situation in which the teachers engaged in more code-switching from the TL to the L1 than did the students. However, although the students did not code-switch as frequently, the teachers' approach caused the students to employ more of the L1 in some classes.

Additionally, Moore (2013), who observed peer interactions among Japanese university students in an English course in preparation for two oral presentations, determined that "the language chosen for the initial utterance of an exchange may influence that of following utterances" (p. 1). Edstrom (2015) looked at the distribution of participation among learners in triads. The students were given a scenario and asked to write a role-play script in the TL that

would be used for an oral performance. She found that the oral interactions for the task were carried out almost exclusively in the L1. Yet, no instructions were given on which language to use for their communications. Therefore, it should be considered that instructions from and modeling by the teacher may be important factors in how the students determined which language to use in their interactions with each other.

In a different form of investigation, Storch and Aldosari (2010) studied pairs of Arabic-speaking students in two English classes. The students were paired based on the teacher's assessment of their TL proficiency (high-high, high-low, and low-low) and were given three different tasks to complete (jigsaw, composition, and text editing). The researchers found an overall modest use of the L1 and that the task type had a greater impact on the amount of L1 use than did proficiency pairing. Of the three tasks, the text editing elicited the most L1 (17%). This may have been due to the sequencing of the tasks; the editing task was the third of three, which meant that the students were more comfortable working in pairs by then and, therefore, felt more comfortable using the L1. Nevertheless, proficiency did appear to play a role as the low-low pairs used more L1 (12%) than the other pairs (5%).

Does this L1 use affect the students negatively or positively? In Scott and de la Fuente (2008), the L1 group collaborated more cohesively while the TL group showed few signs of collaboration and only fragmented interaction. In a recall session afterwards, they discovered that it was easier for the L1 group to read, think, and talk than it was for the TL group. Nonetheless, both groups understood the task and talked about the grammar structures. Furthermore, regardless of the language they were asked to use, both groups completed the task by translating the structures into the L1. Their findings suggest that the use of the L1 for these types of tasks reduces cognitive overload. Therefore, they propose that teachers should rethink



their position on using the L1 in the FL classroom. In spite of these conclusions, they are proponents of nearly exclusive TL usage for communicative interactions and do not endorse frivolous use of the L1; rather, they believe that forbidding the use of the L1 in reflecting can be detrimental.

Similarly, the L1 can be a good cognitive tool (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). When assessing story quality in their study, Swain and Lapkin found that there was a relationship between L1 use and test scores in that those who spoke less of the L1 tended to score higher than those who spoke more. This was true for both of the French classes they studied. Unfortunately, these findings are not necessarily conclusive as there were students who had high scores and used the L1 frequently, as well as students who had low scores and used the L1 infrequently. In conclusion, although the lower-scoring students generally used the L1 more and the higher-scoring students used the L1 less, all students used the L1 to accomplish the tasks.

Although FL teachers prefer that their students use the TL for classroom interactions, it is impossible to enforce it perpetually. Therefore, teachers need to learn strategies that will aid in encouraging their students' use of the TL. In order to come closer to resolving the differences between what the teacher desires and what the students do, one must first understand the reasons behind the students' actions.

### **Reasons for and Beliefs about L1/TL Use**

Knowing the students' beliefs about using the TL or L1 and their reasons for their language choice can help teachers to gain insight into their students' actions. For example, Mora Pablo, Lengeling, Rubio Zenil, Crawford, and Goodwin (2011) found that the majority of students perceived the use of the L1 to be a natural part of the process for learning a FL. The information they gathered gave insight into the beliefs of the students with regard to the use of

the L1 in the FL classroom. However, their investigation only used questionnaires and interviews to obtain the data, and did not look at the interactions themselves.

In another study, some uses of the L1 were affected by additional variables such as the activity type (Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002). Depending on the activity, the L1 use was categorized in three ways: translation, metalinguistic use, and communicative use. Of the categories mentioned, most of the L1 was used for communicative use. They concluded that this type of use might facilitate language acquisition, but further research is necessary.

Additionally, Cheng (2013) investigated the use of code-switching in a Chinese course. She looked specifically at the interactions between the teacher and one student. In one portion of the interaction, the teacher commented in the L1 that the student could rephrase his statement in Chinese. By doing this, she used the L1 as a TL learning moment, encouraging the students to maximize their use of the TL and indicating that the student's language choice did not align with her pedagogical aim. This use of the L1 might also have helped in advocating for the use of the TL amongst the rest of the students. Explicit expectations about language use likely influence the way in which the students choose to use the language, but expectations that are not explicit lead to a gap in information.

Regardless of teacher expectations, many students prefer to learn through the L1 because it is comfortable (Hall & Cook, 2012). In the recall session, Scott and de la Fuente (2008) found that the use of the L1 for consciousness-raising, form-focused tasks reduced cognitive overload. Other research agreed that the L1 is a cognitive tool that can be used to scaffold learning (Cheng, 2013; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Swain and Lapkin determined that students use the L1 for three purposes: moving the task along, focusing attention, and interpersonal interaction. Yet, they observed that most of the L1 use was not off task and the L1

that was off task was mostly vernacular. This is corroborated by other studies as well (Cheng, 2013; Lasito & Storch, 2013; Moore, 2013; Storch & Aldosari, 2010).

Interestingly, Unamuno (2008) conducted a study in Barcelona, Spain in which she recorded pairs of students who had knowledge of three different languages: Catalan, Spanish, and English. The official language of the primary school where she performed the research was Catalan; however, the common language of the students was Spanish and English was the TL. In this unique environment, she found that Catalan or Spanish—the L1 equivalents, although not the actual L1 for all students—were used for different functions. When classroom instruction was in Catalan, Spanish was used to mark boundaries—shift from task completion to management. However, when learning English, Catalan was generally used because the tasks were subconsciously seen as having a teaching/learning purpose, and such activities were usually carried out in Catalan.

On a different note, Thompson's (2011) investigation found various reasons for code-switching from the TL to the L1: clarification, questions about grammar, translation, comprehension checks, and to maintain the flow, among others. Mora Pablo et al. (2011) also discovered some of these same uses in their study, concluding that the decision to use the L1 is multifaceted and related to personal "beliefs, assumptions, needs and desires" (p. 124). Interestingly, Thompson's (2009) research found that student beliefs about using the TL and L1 had showed no statistical significance when compared with actual TL use in the classroom.

While the researchers of these studies found a variety of uses for the L1 in aiding cognitive functions, the students felt that the L1 was comfortable and natural. In general, student L1 use was on task and functional. Furthermore, student beliefs about their L1 use did not necessarily coincide with its actual use. However, if teachers are aware of the uses and beliefs

behind their students' use of the TL and L1, they can find techniques for providing an environment in which their students can learn the FL in ways that work for the students.

## **Conclusion**

All of these sources acknowledge the need for the use of the TL in the FL classroom. Nevertheless, some researchers feel more strongly about allowing for use of the L1 than do others. Many of the sources look at student beliefs about L1 use in the classroom (Edstrom, 2006; Hall & Cook, 2012; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Thompson, 2009; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). In general, student opinions tend to suggest that they do not mind some use of the L1. More than one study proposed that future research is needed on the amount of L1 that should be used in the FL classroom (Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Wilkerson, 2008). There is no consensus as to exactly how much of the L1 should be used, but as Edstrom (2006) observed, it would be difficult to determine. The studies that look at student use of the L1 seem to agree that students use the L1 in order to perform cognitive functions (Cheng, 2013; Lasito & Storch, 2013; Moore, 2013; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Storch & Aldosari, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2000), which would be difficult to eradicate. Based on the studies within this chapter, future research is called for in determining the relationship between student TL/L1 use and TL proficiency. The present study addresses this question and dives deeper into the factors that affect language choice in the classroom.

## **Research Questions**

1. Is there a relationship between the amount of time students spend speaking in the TL and their listening comprehension scores, oral exam scores, and overall oral proficiency?
2. What kinds of linguistic and environmental problems do students encounter when participating in paired activities?

3. What factors seem to contribute to the quantity of TL/L1 spoken in paired activities?
  - a. How do the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding of a task affect TL use in student-student interactions?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Participants**

Twenty-seven students from two SPAN 105 courses participated in this research. The students ranged from freshmen to seniors and were between the ages of 18 and 25. The participants included three freshmen, ten sophomores, four juniors, and ten seniors. Most students had taken either SPAN 101 and 102 or at least two years of Spanish prior to attending the university. The L1 of all students was English. Because the classes were intact, random selection was not possible.

At Brigham Young University (BYU), where the study was conducted, there are two beginner courses: SPAN 101 and SPAN 102, listed as Foundational Spanish 1 and Foundational Spanish 2, respectively. SPAN 105 is listed as University Spanish 1 and it is an Intermediate-level Spanish course designed for students who have had two years of high school Spanish or Span 101/102, or take diagnostic placement test. Because of the nature of the study, SPAN 105 students were selected for their ability to sustain (at least basic) conversations in Spanish for a longer period of time than would SPAN 101, or even 102, students. Furthermore, the researcher was also the instructor for these courses.

### **Procedure**

Because the researcher was also the teacher, it was important that the students not feel compelled to participate. Therefore, Dr. Gregory Thompson, a Spanish Pedagogy professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, introduced the study to the students with a scripted recruitment announcement (see Appendix A). This was done in an attempt to make the students feel more comfortable about saying no. Only one of the students declined to participate in the

study and this student's results were not included in the results. Each student was then provided with a consent form outlining the study (see Appendix B).

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix C) at the onset of the study to identify their ethnicity, gender, age, background in Spanish, any parents or relatives who are native Spanish speakers, and similar demographic information. This was administered to all students who consented to participation in the research. Five extra credit points were offered under the homework section for completion of the questionnaire. The student who did not participate in the study was also given the opportunity to receive extra credit points by reading a newspaper article in Spanish.

Using a sign-up sheet, individual students were given a 15-minute MOPI pre-test at the beginning of the course. Each student, regardless of involvement in the research, met one-on-one with the researcher to participate in an interview conducted entirely in Spanish. This was a required assignment for the course, but only the information from those students who participated in the study was used in the findings. As far as possible, this test was administered in the same location for all students, in order to control for a location threat. To facilitate proper administration of this pre-test (as well as the post-test), the researcher participated in ACTFL's MOPI (modified Oral Proficiency Interview) training at Brigham Young University. This training was designed to give instruction on how to administer and score the MOPI for speakers between the Novice Low and Intermediate High levels of oral proficiency. The researcher participated in this two-day training workshop at BYU on June 9-10, 2016. Although it was called MOPI training, the only difference from the OPI training was the length of the workshop and the level to which one could test. Despite participating in the training, the researcher did not

go on to certify in MOPI administration as the certification process takes a minimum of one year. Therefore, the MOPIs administered in this study were not official ACTFL interviews.

Next, each participating student was recorded in pairs six times throughout the semester in various types of speaking activities related to each chapter of study. Of the six activities, four were role-plays, one was an interview, and one was a more open conversation. That said, two of the role-plays were very similar to interview format. The role-plays were extracted from the Cengage textbook *Fuentes: Conversación y gramática*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, and the speaking activities lasted between five and ten minutes. For three of the six activities, extra teacher measures were included: One incorporated preparatory instructions, one had modeling, and the last included scaffolding in the form of pre-speaking and guiding questions. For three activities, the students were allowed to choose their own partners; for the other three, their partners were assigned. Although the majority of assigned partners were new, there were a couple of instances in which some students were assigned a partner they had previously selected. Specific prompts for the speaking activities, when and what scaffolding was used, and when and how partners were assigned can be found in Appendix G. The students were instructed on how to use the recorders, and were prompted when to turn them on and off. After each session, the recordings were backed up in a separate location. However, of the predicted 84 recordings, six were missing at the time the other recordings were saved. None of these missing recordings affected any one person more than once, meaning that every participant in the study had at least five recordings.

After each conversation, all students were asked to fill out the post-speaking questionnaire, regardless of participation in the research. The content of the questionnaires included a breakdown of their conversations. This enabled the students to immediately recall the



language they used during the paired activity and to think about what might have influenced their language choice.

Near the end of the semester, all the participants were given another survey to help determine the factors involved in their language choice for each task. This survey identified the purpose of the study in order to encourage the students to comment on their use of the target language. Ten extra credit points were offered for completion of the survey. The student who did not participate in the study had the option to receive extra credit by writing a one-page paper on a Spanish newspaper article.

Finally, at the end of the semester, individual students were given a 15-minute post-MOPI to see if there were any proficiency gains, and to determine whether there was any relationship between their use of the target language in the paired activities and their final MOPI scores. Although testing might be considered a threat with a pre- and post-test, the MOPI is not a test that necessarily allows for a pre-test effect because it measures overall proficiency and not specific content knowledge. Furthermore, this test was administered in the same location for all students (as far as possible), in order to control for a location threat. In addition to looking at MOPI scores, regular test scores were examined, specifically the listening and speaking portions. This allowed for more data in order to look at the relationship between TL use in pairs and oral proficiency.

### **Instruments**

A background questionnaire (see Appendix C) was completed by the participants before the study began. This was used to identify variables that might affect student use of the TL. Included were questions about the participants' ethnicity, gender, age, background in Spanish,

whether they have any parents or relatives who are native Spanish speakers, and similar demographic information.

Each participant was given a pre-test in the form of a Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI) (see Appendix D). The interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes and were one-on-one with the researcher. This pre-test was used to roughly and informally ascertain the participants' ACTFL oral proficiency level.

Throughout the semester, students used digital voice recorders to record paired conversations. The purpose of the recordings was to allow the researcher to determine how much time was spent in the target language during each oral, paired activity. Immediately following the recordings, the students filled out a post-speaking questionnaire (see Appendix E) in order to provide feedback on their experiences. These helped in determining whether the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding were influential in the decisions to use either the TL or the L1. The information found therein was also a source of emergent findings. All students completed this post-speaking questionnaire. This counted as a required assignment for the course.

At the end of the study, a post-test was administered in the form of a MOPI. This test was used to see if there was any change between pre- and post-MOPI, as well as to determine whether there was any relationship between the time spent in the target language and oral proficiency gains. Afterwards, each student was given a post-study survey (see Appendix F) to gain their perspective on their ability to stay in the target language. Again, emergent findings were gleaned from this information.

## **Pilot Study**

In order to increase internal validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted over the summer term (June to August). None of the data from this pilot study were retained or published. The purpose was to ascertain the feasibility of the study, as well as the reliability of the intended instruments. This also aided the researcher in identifying potential threats to validity.

## **Analysis**

**Quantitative data.** The researcher analyzed the 78 student recordings in order to document the amount of time spent in each language for the oral sessions. To accomplish this, a language sample of the paired recordings was taken every five seconds to determine which student was speaking and whether the students were speaking in the TL or the L1, as well as any pauses. See Table 1 for an example of how this was done. This information, as well as total time spent speaking and previous experience with the language, were compared to the results of the two MOPIs and chapter listening and oral exam scores to determine any relationships. A mixed models regression analysis blocking on pseudonym was used to verify this. The analysis was done in SAS version 9.4. The researcher also conducted a correlational analysis in order to describe the relationship between the use of the TL in paired speaking activities and final MOPI scores.

**Qualitative data.** Using information from the recordings, the post-speaking questionnaires, and the post-survey, several variables were analyzed. These included the type of training, type of task, task familiarity, partner familiarity, and previous experience with the TL. Furthermore, the findings attempted to look at whether the individual students' level of Spanish proficiency or the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding of an activity

affected language choice. The students' responses to open-ended questions in the six questionnaires and final survey were analyzed using Weft QDA, qualitative data analysis software.

Table 1

*Example of Language Sampling*

Lisa		Colleen	
TL	L1	TL	L1
Pauses: 5 sec., 6:50-6:54			

In order to analyze the data, the questionnaires and surveys were transcribed and organized by question. While reading through the transcriptions various times, major ideas were identified and the responses were coded with notes in the margins. Many of these codes became categories, which were later organized in a Word document. After looking through the categories in the Word document, they were grouped into six different themes with subcategories and organized in a logical order. Using Weft QDA software, responses were highlighted from the transcripts and assigned to their proper subcategories. Doing this made it easier to view the subcategories individually and see all of the related data. Within each subcategory, and based on the data, a preliminary analysis was written in memo format. These notes guided the findings, which are separated by theme and then subcategory.

**Researcher Biases**

At this point, it is important to illustrate any biases the researcher holds in relation to this study. The researcher's dual role as researcher and teacher within this study could have an effect on the findings. However, the researcher did the best possible to distance personal affiliations

with the class from the data and to look at the information with as objective an eye as possible. This is mentioned merely for the pause it may give some who read this thesis.

As the teacher of the students participating in the study, there are regular pedagogical strategies that are used. One of those is to speak to the students at least 90% of the time in the TL. In all daily interactions and activities, use of the TL is encouraged. This is important to note as the original research question that drove this study deals with use of the TL.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Quantitative Data Analysis

This section of the chapter includes information gathered from the quantitative data analysis of the recordings. The main reason for the analysis was to determine whether there was a relationship between the amount of time students spent speaking the TL in paired interactions and their oral proficiency, as determined by the post-MOPI. The information was expanded to include the following independent variables: pre-MOPI scores, percentage of time speaking in the TL, percentage of time speaking in the L1, previous experience with the TL, and total time spent speaking. The final dependent variables were expanded to include listening and oral test scores for each chapter (six total), and the post-MOPI. The significance threshold was set at .05.

Using a mixed models regression analysis blocking on pseudonym in order to estimate the relationship among the variables, the data showed that the percentage of time speaking in the TL had no relationship with listening scores, speaking scores, or the post-MOPI. This was also true of total time spent speaking and previous experience with the language. However, the pre-MOPI and the percentage of time speaking in the L1 demonstrated statistical significance.

In the analysis for listening comprehension, the pre-MOPI was shown to be a good predictor of listening comprehension scores where  $p = .05$ . Furthermore, there was marginal evidence that the percentage of time speaking in the L1 showed a negative relationship with listening comprehension. It approached significance where  $p = .08$ . The results suggested that for every minute a student spoke in the L1, there was also a 6% drop in listening scores (see Table 2).

In the analysis for oral exams, the pre-MOPI was a good predictor of oral exam scores where  $p = .03$ . The percentage of time speaking in the L1 showed a negative relationship with

oral test scores where  $p = .03$ . The results suggested that for every minute a student spoke in the L1, there was also a 4.6% drop in oral scores (see Table 3).

Table 2

*Statistical Analysis of Listening Comprehension*

Solution for Fixed Effects					
<u>Effect</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Pr &gt;  t </u>
Intercept	83.9807	6.5955	25	12.73	<.0001
Pre-MOPI	2.7758	1.3979	121	1.99	0.0493
English_Time	-6.3895	3.6125	121	-1.77	0.0795

Table 3

*Statistical Analysis of Oral Exams*

Solution for Fixed Effects					
<u>Effect</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>t Value</u>	<u>Pr &gt;  t </u>
Intercept	86.7309	3.1861	25	27.22	<.0001
Pre-MOPI	1.4453	0.6637	122	2.18	0.0313
English_Time	-4.6774	2.1191	122	-2.21	0.0292

Finally, in the analysis for the post-MOPI, the pre-MOPI was the only variable that showed any relationship where  $p < .001$ . Because there was no relationship between time speaking in the L1 and the post-MOPI, recording time was included as an independent variable in the final analysis. However, no statistical significance was found between recording time and the post-MOPI (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Statistical Analysis of Post-MOPI*

Solution for Fixed Effects					
<u>Effect</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>t Value</u>	<u>Pr &gt;  t </u>
Intercept	1.8185	1.1583	24	1.57	0.1295
Pre-MOPI	0.4332	0.1107	24	3.91	0.0007
Recording_Time	0.2487	0.1854	24	1.34	0.1922

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

This section examines the qualitative data collected in the post-speaking questionnaires and the post-study survey. The answers were transcribed and combined in a Word document, organized by question. Afterwards, the researcher read through the transcription several times, identified major ideas, and coded the passages with notes in the margins. Many of these codes became categories, which were later organized in a Word document. After looking through the categories in the document, they researcher grouped them under four themes, the categories become subcategories, and then placed them in a logical order. Using Weft QDA software, quotes from the responses were highlighted and assigned to their proper subcategories. By doing this, the researcher was able to view the subcategories individually and see all of the related data. Within each subcategory, and based on the data, the researcher wrote her preliminary analysis in memo format. These notes guided the findings, which are separated by theme and then subcategory.

The main purpose for collecting the questionnaires and surveys was to answer the question of whether the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding of a task affected TL use in student-student interactions. However, these sources provided other



important information as well that was used to answer Research Questions 2 and 3 regarding problems the students encountered and factors that contributed to their TL/L1 use. This information has been classified using the following themes and categories, which can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

*Themes and Categories from Qualitative Data Analysis*

Themes	Subcategories
Helpful Tools	Teacher Helps Student Self-Helps Written Prompts
Task Type	Type of Activity vs. Amount of Speaking Role Definition
Pitfalls	Point in the Semester Student Struggles Solutions
Pairing Factors	Problems with Partners Benefits of Partners
Effect of Recording Device	Fill Time Exclusive/More TL Someone Will Hear
Perceptions of Speaking L1	Reasons for L1 Use Defensiveness Perceptions of Teacher Expectations for TL

**Theme 1: Helpful Tools**

**Teacher Helps.** Every post-speaking questionnaire included the question, “Did the teacher’s instructions, modeling, or step-by-step guidelines affect how you chose to accomplish this task?” The students were then invited to explain their answers. This question was repeated on the post-study survey, but slightly altered to determine whether they prompted the students to

speaking more of the TL. On occasion, students would simply answer with a yes or a no and refrain from further explanation. However, the students who gave explanations often had insightful comments. Not only did they mention what the teacher did that was helpful, they also explained the benefits of the teacher's actions.

Although isolated students cited various strategies, those that will be discussed contained remarks from three or more students, with some students commenting on the same strategy in more than one questionnaire. Figure 1 shows the number of students who commented on a particular approach (blue), as well as the total number of comments for each approach (orange).

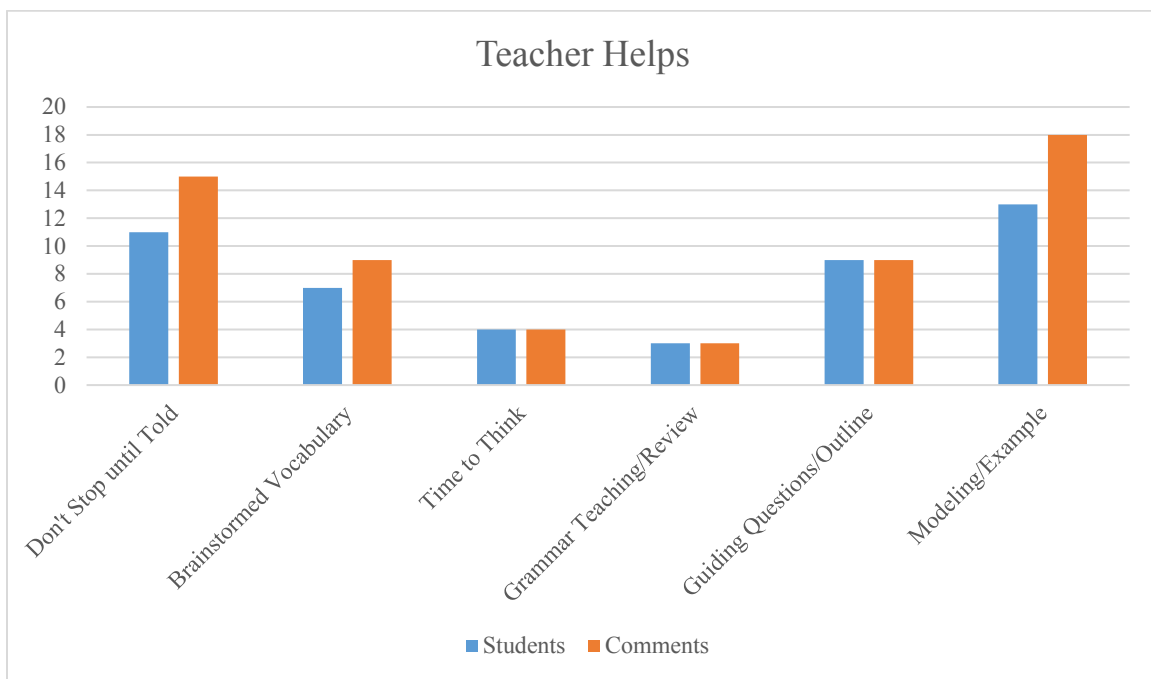


Figure 1. Comments on teacher helps.

***Don't stop until told.*** One commonly mentioned teaching strategy that influenced the way in which the students completed the task was the instruction to continue recording until the teacher gave the signal to stop. The teacher mentioned that this should be done regardless of whether they finished the task early. How the students interpreted that comment varied widely, with some understanding that they were to sit quietly after finishing the task and not speak at all.

*Marie:* Our teacher instructed us to not stop the recording until she said so, but that we could sit quietly if we finished early. So there were sometimes when I finished pretty early and just didn't say anything the rest of the time. (Post-Study Survey)

Most felt that this instruction meant that they fill the time with talk.

*Cindy:* She was very clear about not clicking stop, so I continued to talk until she told us to finish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Jerroleen:* She told us not to stop or start until she told us to. If she hadn't said that, we may have finished our conversation earlier. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Andrea:* We weren't supposed to stop speaking or recording until she said. So we felt obligated to keep speaking even if it wasn't important to the instructions. (Post-Study Survey)

*Emily:* What helped is when, after a couple of times, she said that my partner and I must continue to talk until the time is up, even if we feel we have completed the prompt. Just chat. This actually caused my partners and I to push ourselves to keep talking about the prompt until the time was up. (Post-Study Survey)

Generally, the consensus was that this instruction had its benefits by compelling the students to speak more generally—presumably in the TL. In some instances, this forced them to think of more to say.

Unfortunately, it also made one student feel as if the time constraints prevented her from speaking.

*Debbie:* She asked for us to continue recording until she asked us to stop. Most of the time this led me to try to think of more to say to fill up the time (so, to speak more

Spanish), but at least once, this stopped a conversation I was having in Spanish. (Post-Study Survey)

Although giving explicit directions of when to stop recording was not intended to be a specific teaching strategy for encouraging more use of the TL, it did seem to influence the students in various ways. Many of these behaviors are logical reactions, but there are a couple that were unexpected. Further discussion on this matter can be found in Chapter 5.

***Brainstormed vocabulary.*** Another teaching strategy the students mentioned was discussing or brainstorming vocabulary prior to the speaking activity. For one prompt, vocabulary that the students might find useful in order to speak about the topic was reviewed and brainstormed. This was also used in other speaking activities that were not recorded.

*Stephanie:* The teacher also discussed helpful vocabulary to help during the speaking assignment beforehand. I used the vocabulary a lot. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Cindy:* She took time to review words with us that would help us accomplish the task and got us thinking before we started. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Jerroleen:* She prepped us by getting us to think about movie vocabulary, which helped. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*AJ:* Beforehand we discussed movie terms which helped keep the conversation flowing! (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

As evidenced by these quotes, some of the benefits that were mentioned for this teaching strategy included keeping the conversation flowing, more frequent use of the vocabulary, and metacognition. Another benefit, referred to in other comments, was that this teaching strategy helped to direct their conversation.

***Time to think.*** Time to think was a teaching strategy used in the fifth recording. The students were shown their own prompt, as well as their partner's prompt, and given time to think about what they would say and how they would respond to their partner. As stated in the following comment by Jonny, this allowed the students to have pre-made answers.

*Jonny:* She had us think it out beforehand, which was nice and let me have some pre-made answers. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5).

***Grammar teaching/review.*** Although not explicitly designed as a strategy to keep students in the TL during the recorded paired interaction, teaching and/or reviewing the necessary grammar was something that a few of the students found useful. The student comments generally mentioned specific grammar points that were helpful for that precise task. One student commented that it was particularly helpful in the description used in the task.

*Stephanie:* We talked a bit about *ser* vs *estar* before the activity, which helped us describe my son in the activity. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3).

*AJ:* We went over subjunctive a little right before which helped. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5).

***Guiding questions/outline.*** Prior to two of the recorded paired interactions, the students were asked to brainstorm ideas and discuss relevant vocabulary. Afterwards, they were given some guiding questions in order to help them accomplish the task. Several students commented on the usefulness of this particular strategy.

*Paula:* The outline made it easy to ask questions and stay on track with our conversation. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Vanessa:* It was easy to follow the guidelines provided. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Stephanie:* The questions and vocabulary we discussed helped us direct our conversation and know what to say and how to say it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Andrea:* We were given very guided instructions that directed the conversation. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Kalila:* She gave us things to consider and so that was helpful. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Some of the benefits that can be gathered from these quotes are that the guidance made it easier to ask questions and stay on track. Furthermore, it helped students direct their conversation and know how to accomplish the task.

***Modeling/example.*** The most frequently mentioned teaching strategy for helping students maintain their use of the TL was modeling or giving examples. This strategy clearly made an impact as half of the students commented on it. The most common benefit was that it gave the students an idea of what they needed to do.

*Tawni:* She gave us an example of her family history and we got some ideas to model our conversation after. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Colleen:* Elegimos hacer la actividad mucho como su ejemplo. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Mike:* The modeling was really helpful. This is the first time I really felt comfortable and understood what was expected. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Mike:* When she did more modeling, or took more time to explain things I was able to use more Spanish, because I felt more comfortable. (Post-Study Survey)

*AJ:* Sometimes the modeling beforehand helped me be more comfortable with the topic. (Post-Study Survey)

Other benefits included help with brainstorming, structuring the conversation, figuring out vocabulary, feeling comfortable, and understanding the expectations. It also encouraged more use of the TL.

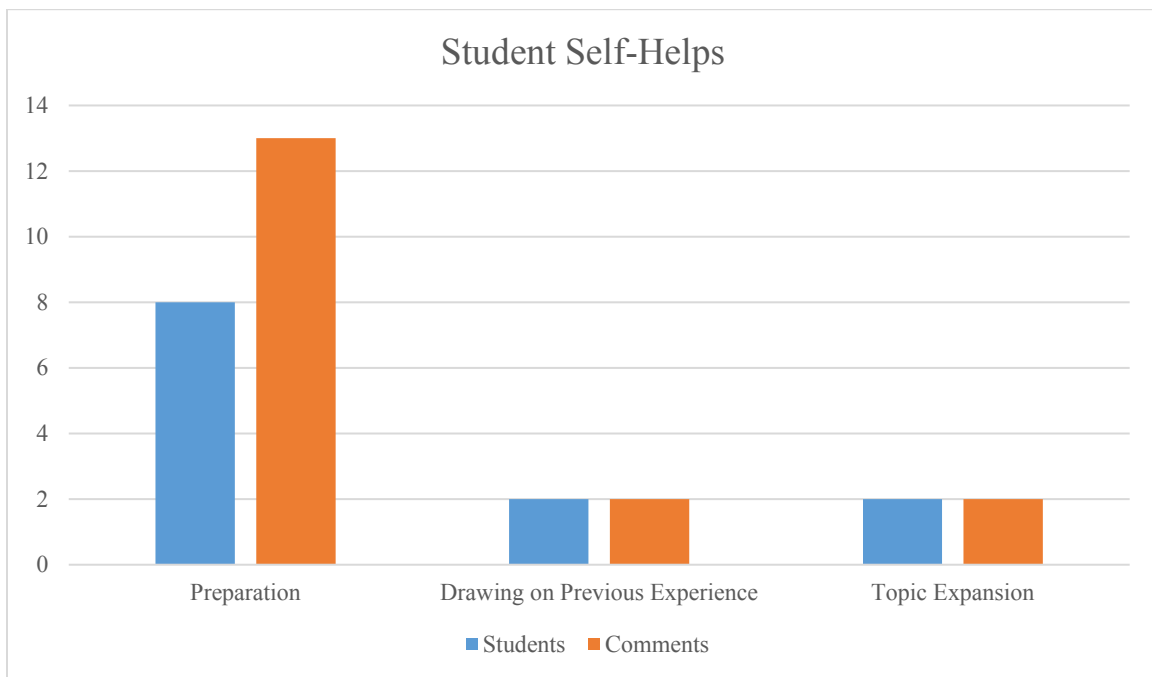
Overall, it seemed that the biggest benefit to the various teacher helps was that it made the task clearer and aided the students in knowing how to complete the activity. However, the questionnaires and surveys also showed that the students found numerous factors that support use of the TL. Some of the general benefits comprised guiding the conversation and thoughts, knowing the restrictions of the topic, helping structure the conversation, and encouraging thinking about what to say. Other strategies were mentioned by individual students, but because of their infrequency, they have not been included in these findings.

**Student self-helps.** Beyond the strategies the teacher used to aid in task completion that the students found beneficial, the students themselves were able to incorporate some of their own tactics. Although they were never specifically asked to comment on this idea, their observations were telling nonetheless. Many of their remarks were in response to the question, “Give a summary of how you used the time allotted for the task.” This was especially true for paired speaking activities that included no scaffolding. There were fewer comments about self-helps than teacher helps. Strategies cited by more than one student were included in this section. The number of students (blue) and comments (orange) for each strategy can be found in Figure 2.

**Preparation.** The largest number of comments were related to preparation. The students found various ways to prepare before completing the tasks. For some, that meant discussing or preparing what to say or how to say it beforehand.

*Kalila:* We thought about how to say certain things and then spoke in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Debbie:* We took some time to read the prompts and prepare what we might say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)



*Figure 2.* Comments on student self-helps.

For others, they thought about and discussed vocabulary needed for the task with some choosing to look up unknown words.

*Lisa:* I looked over the task, thought through the vocab I would need, then spent the rest of the time trying to speak! (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Kregg:* So my Spanish is struggling and there are a lot of words I don't know, so I was looking up words to communicate. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Debbie:* Before we began, we looked up words we didn't know from the prompt. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Preparation also included clarifying the instructions and the roles.

*Lisa:* We talked through the instructions with each other. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)



*Gabrielle:* We started by making sure we each knew what we needed to talk about.

(Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

Based on the popularity of this self-help, it is clear that the students found preparation to be a useful tool. It aided them in determining how they would accomplish the task.

***Drawing on previous experience.*** Drawing on previous experience, although not commonly mentioned, was helpful for a couple of students, with one citing experience in a previous class.

*Heather:* We just did it like an oral exam from SPAN 101. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Marie:* I have done speaking things like this before so I just did what I was used to.

(Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

Marie seems to make reference to practicing with paired speaking activities previously. Though not specifically stated, it would seem that she is also citing experience from a former class.

***Topic expansion.*** Finally, the students mentioned topic expansion. In other words, if the students did not know what to say, they expanded on the given topic.

*Trianna:* The instructions just said to talk about your ancestors, and when they immigrated to the U.S., but neither of us knew that, so we just talked about where we know they were from. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Gabrielle:* I don't know how my family came over, which made it difficult to talk about.

I ended up telling a story about my grandma coming to Utah. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

The students stayed within the topic, but they did not confine themselves to the specific prompt. This made the task easier for the students to accomplish. They recognized their limitations, but still found a way to speak with their partners about the given topic.

Other self-helps were mentioned, such as discussing with their partners how to improve, helping each other understand the grammar, incorporating grammar being learned in class, and circumlocution. Although some of these strategies are very intriguing, there were not enough data to justify including them with any thoroughness in these findings.

**Written prompts.** The last tool that the students mentioned as helpful to task completion were the written prompts themselves. Within these comments were some clear thoughts about the way in which the prompts affected how the students accomplished the task. The breakdown of the number of students (blue) and comments (orange) can be found in Figure 3.

***Straightforward.*** The overarching thought among the students' comments for this subcategory was that the prompt (see Appendix G) was more helpful than anything else. Several students mentioned that the prompt was straightforward, so they did not need any extra help. Generally, this was in response to the Research Question, "Did the teacher's instructions, modeling, or step-by-step guidelines affect how you chose to accomplish this task?"

*Eleanor:* We all knew how to do this task according to the instructions given. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Danny:* The prompt was great and we just went for it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

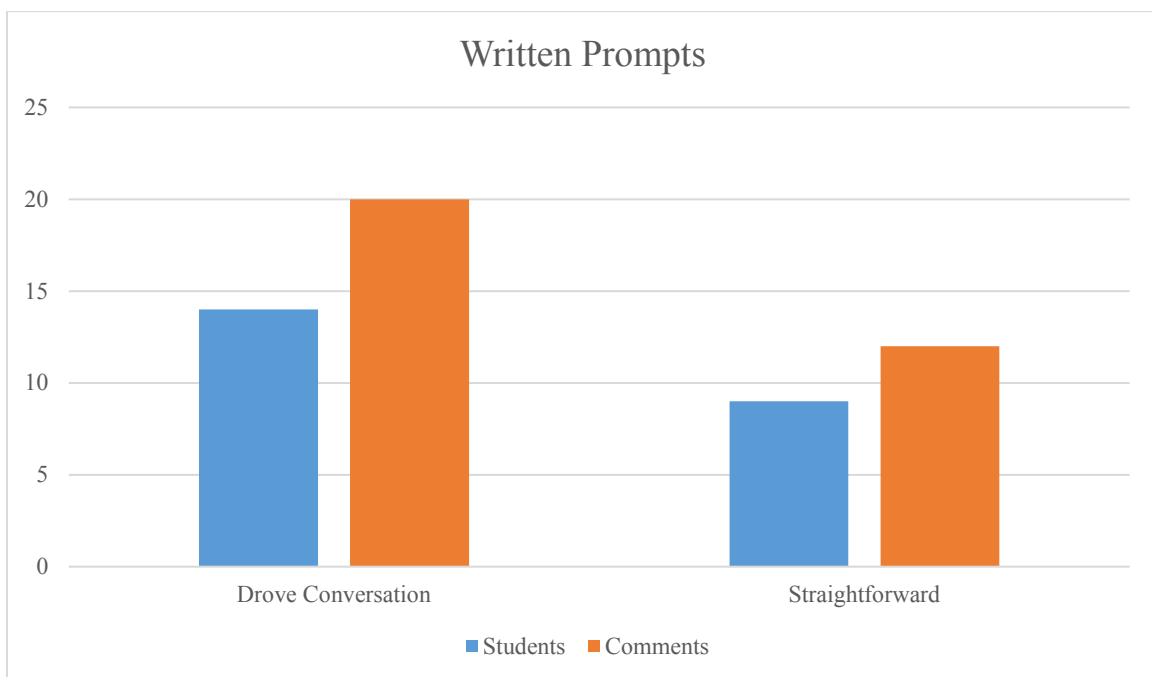
*Vanessa:* The instructions on the paper were direct and showed me what I should say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Eleanor:* There was hardly any necessary modeling; we were able to complete the activities completely using the prompts on slips of paper. (Post-Study Survey)

*Heather:* I already had an idea of what I was going to say after reading the prompt and before she modeled anything. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

On the other hand, at least one student felt that having the prompt limited creativity:

*Villate:* Some of the prompts were more specific so we got less choice in how to complete the activity. (Post-Study Survey)



*Figure 3.* Comments on written prompts.

***Drove conversation.*** To further this idea of the prompt being straightforward, the majority of students commented that they simply followed the prompt. In one sense this aligns with the previous notion; however, some of the comments also suggested that this meant there was no deviation from what the prompt stated.

*Stephanie:* We followed the instructions closely to accomplish the task. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*AJ:* I just did my best to play out the scenario given. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Paula:* We went by the handout. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Jane:* The task was written on a paper and I said the things I was asked to say chronologically. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Jonny:* We just covered what was on the paper. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

Simply following the prompt meant that the prompt drove the conversation.

*Stephanie:* The guidelines drove the conversation, so we followed the instructions closely to accomplish the task. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Eleanor:* The prompt helped guide our practice. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Stephanie:* The prompt gave instructions and helpful vocab in Spanish to help us drive the conversation. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Andrea:* We used the instructions to set the scene for the conversation and to guide what we said. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

These two reasons for classifying written prompts as helpful tools show the students' various viewpoints on having prompts, at least as far as task completion is concerned. Other comments, though not of high frequency, included contradicting ideas. Some felt that the prompt affected the amount of speech or TL, whereas others felt that the specificity of the prompt was either helpful or a hindrance, and one student felt that the prompts were not helpful at all.

## **Theme 2: Task Type**

**Type of activity vs. amount of speaking.** Many students considered the impact of these various task types (see Appendix G) on the amount of TL they used. This information was found in the Post-Study Survey in response to the first question: "Did the type of speaking activity

affect how much Spanish you spoke?” Figure 4 shows the number of students who mentioned the task types and the definition of their roles within the task (blue), and the total number of comments on the topic (orange).

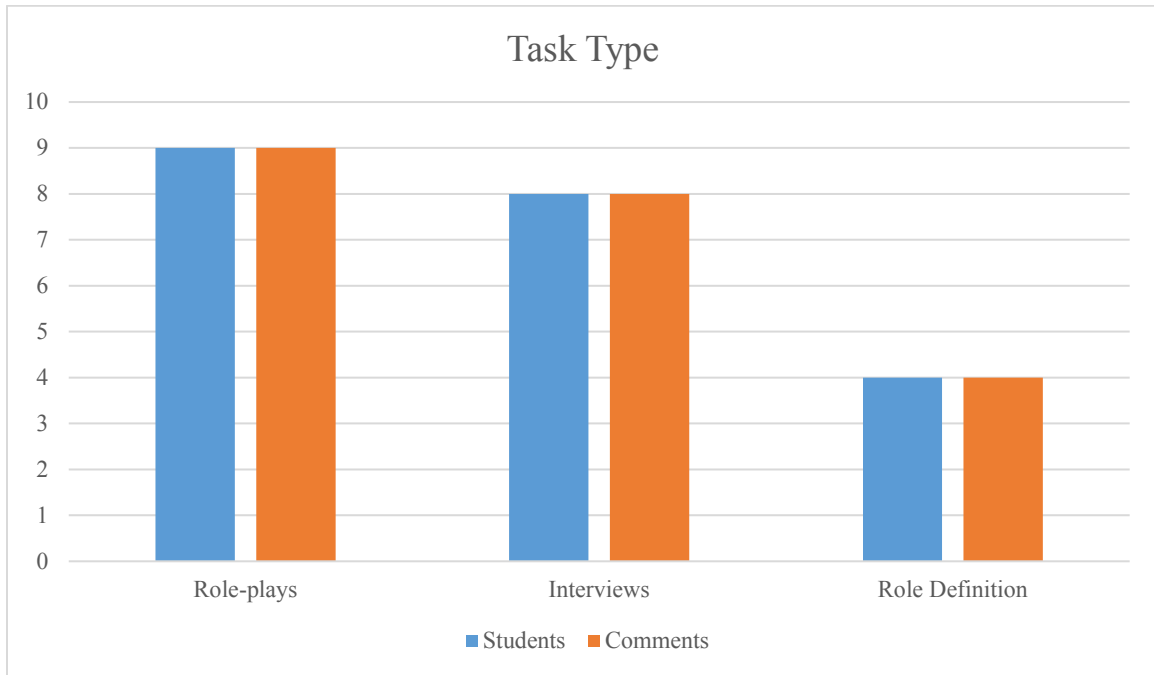


Figure 4. Comments on task type.

**Role-plays.** The task type most commonly mentioned by the students was role-plays. This was likely due to the fact that the study included more role plays than any other type of activity. Students had varying things to say about how this particular activity affected their TL use. Some felt that it caused them to speak only enough TL to accomplish the task and nothing more.

*Cindy:* In a role-play, I say just enough to accomplish the task. (Post-Study Survey)

*Marie:* With role-plays, I tended to only say enough to accomplish the task/role. (Post-Study Survey)

A few students thought that they did not have enough to talk about or they ran out of things to say.

*Trianna:* I felt that in a role-play, there was only so much you can talk about. (Post-Study Survey)

*Heather:* The role-plays were often difficult to come up with things to say. . . . It wasn't that I couldn't say things I wanted, I just ran out of things to say and filled the time with off topic Spanish conversation. (Post-Study Survey)

*Kalila:* Sometimes I would run out of things to say in some role-play situations like settling disputes and things like that. You solved the issue and there was nothing more to say. (Post-Study Survey)

Perhaps related to the previous idea, some found that role-plays caused them to speak less.

*Vanessa:* If I was role-playing, I spoke less. (Post-Study Survey)

On the positive side, others found that it provided better opportunities for both partners to speak or that it caused them to speak more of the TL.

*Tawni:* With role-plays, both partners are equally engaged. (Post-Study Survey)

*Jerroleen:* I do feel that I spoke more Spanish during role-plays as opposed to other speaking activities. (Post-Study Survey)

With only two exceptions, the students felt that the role-plays were restrictive and created a sense of a completing a checklist. They were adamant that the scenario determined the amount of speech.

**Interviews.** Another task type often mentioned by the students was the interview. Again, whereas only one paired speaking activity was touted as such, two of the role-plays could also have been construed in this manner. The most frequent comment was that interviews encouraged more speech.

*Cindy:* In a role-play, I say just enough to accomplish the task, in an interview, I might say more. (Post-Study Survey)

*Trianna:* In an interview, you can keep coming up with questions, and I feel like that's a bit easier. (Post-Study Survey)

*Vanessa:* There were more opportunities in the conversation to speak when it was an interview-type activity. It was also easier to speak because I had more liberty with what I could say. (Post-Study Survey)

*Marie:* With interviews or less guided activities I ended up speaking more. (Post-Study Survey)

Other comments suggested that this type of activity was easier than other types and allowed for more freedom. Two differing views were shared as well: one that suggested the interviewer spoke less while the other implied there were more opportunities for back-and-forth conversation. Regardless, students generally spoke more favorably about the interviews than the role-plays.

***Conversations.*** Some students commented on what they termed “conversations.” It seems as if they regarded this as its own type of task. For the purposes of this section, a conversation will be defined as an open-ended speaking task where no roles or interviewing are necessary. Speaking Activity #4 (see Appendix G) would be a good example of this type of task, or perhaps even Activity #2, although touted more as an interview.

In their comments, students felt that conversations were easier than other types of tasks. They also believed that this form of speaking activity helped in learning to listen and respond to their partners.

*Paula:* It was easier to do conversations instead of when we each had our own thing to say. . . . It helped me learn to listen and respond. (Post-Study Survey)

**Role definition.** Aside from the actual type of activity, several students felt that their role within the activity had a strong influence on their ability to speak the TL. However, there seemed to be a notable dichotomy in the opinions offered. Some students thought that the more defined or constrained the role, the easier it was and the more TL they spoke. Others believed that if the role was too structured, it became just a checklist of things to do.

*Mike:* Usually the more defined my role was the better I did at using Spanish. For example in the last one where I had a character it was easier to use Spanish than when I had to come up with facts about myself. The constraints made it easier to think of vocabulary. (Post-Study Survey)

*Kregg:* I feel like too much freedom, as in the assignment being too open, lead me to give up too easily, and too much structure just made the assignment a checklist activity. Interviews were a good middle ground for me. (Post-Study Survey)

*Debbie:* The more specific a certain prompt was (if it instructed me to use a certain phrase or say/express a certain problem) the more I felt like I just needed to say those specific phrases and then I would be done with the activity, almost like a checklist. The more open-ended the prompt was the more I could think of to say in Spanish. (Post-Study Survey)

There is no consensus among the students as to which type of activity is best. However, each student appears to have a preference for what influences their TL use.

In general, students felt that role-plays caused them to speak less and only enough to accomplish the task. They also thought that there was not enough to say within the roles, which



may have been a factor in the amount of speech. Interviews were generally seen as favorable, but there were mixed feelings about the amount of speech involved: some felt that interviewers spoke less. All student comments agreed that the task type determined the amount of TL or speech in general.

### **Theme 3: Pitfalls**

**Point in the semester.** At the onset of this study, the researcher thought that the point in the semester might affect student use of the TL. Although the data for this subcategory were not used in the quantitative analysis, an analysis has been included here. In the Post-Study Survey, students were asked “During paired speaking activities, did you speak more Spanish at the beginning of the semester, the middle of the semester, the end of the semester, or throughout?” As one might expect when learning a language, the students felt more comfortable speaking the TL at the end of the semester.

*Mike:* [At] the end of the semester . . . I felt more comfortable with Spanish and with the people in my class. (Post-Study Survey)

*Gabrielle:* By the end, I felt I could trust the people I was speaking too. It wasn't scary to mess up anymore. (Post-Study Survey)

*Paula:* I was usually not confident at the beginning. Now, I'm a little more confident. (Post-Study Survey)

*Kalila:* [By the] end of the semester I knew more words and how to say things and was more comfortable and familiar with the language and the classmates. (Post-Study Survey)

*Jane*: I believe Spanish would be used more at the end, just because we knew more and felt more confident. I'm not entirely sure if this is true in my recordings, though. (Post-Study Survey)

Jane's comment begs the question, "Did the students really speak more of the TL at the end of the semester?" and unfortunately, the answer is not an easy one. According to the quantitative data collected from the recordings, not all of the students spoke more of the TL at the end of the semester. As a matter of interest, Table 6 shows the change in percentage of time in the TL from task to task for those who specifically said they spoke more of the TL at the end of the semester.

Table 6

*TL Percentage by Activity*

	<u>Activity #1</u>	<u>Activity #2</u>	<u>Activity #3</u>	<u>Activity #4</u>	<u>Activity #5</u>	<u>Activity #6</u>
AJ	96% (56%)	X	96% (80%)	97% (40%)	95% (57%)	100% (41%)
Gabrielle	64% (48%)	82% (57%)	81% (49%)	78% (58%)	98% (59%)	90% (40%)
Jane	62% (52%)	80% (16%)	79% (63%)	X	86% (51%)	82% (46%)
Kalila	96% (47%)	66% (43%)	95% (37%)	91% (28%)	93% (41%)	88% (66%)
Kregg	98% (73%)	95% (52%)	97% (54%)	82% (72%)	96% (69%)	93% (74%)
Mike	100% (52%)	90% (21%)	100% (45%)	X	100% (43%)	100% (86%)
Paula	97% (38%)	91% (54%)	100% (44%)	90% (55%)	88% (55%)	74% (56%)

It is important to remember that the amount of time the students spent speaking in the TL had no relationship to any of the dependent variables. It should also be noted that these percentages by themselves might be misleading. They simply illustrate the amount of time the students spoke the TL during their turns. Their turns, however, may constitute a very small

percentage of the total speaking time between both partners. Therefore, their overall percentage of speaking has been noted in parentheses.

**Student struggles.** Not surprisingly, the students had their share of struggles along the way. Within the questionnaires and studies, several students commented on the difficulties they had within specific activities or across tasks. As before, Figure 5 shows the breakdown of student comments.

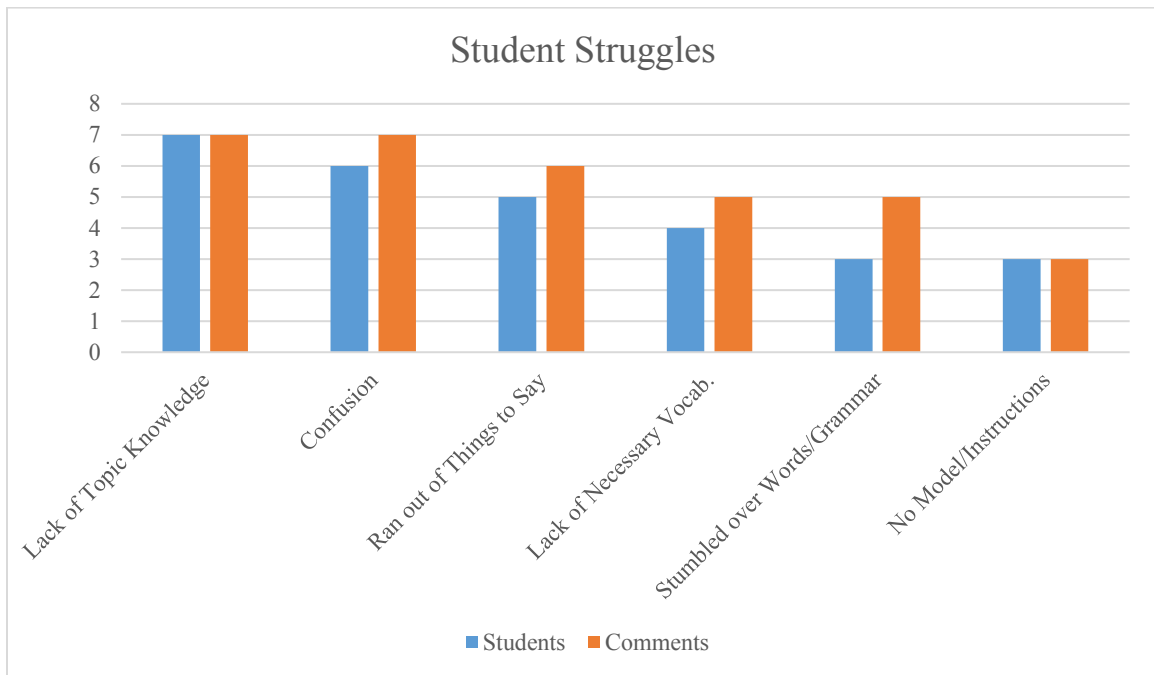


Figure 5. Comments on student struggles.

**Lack of topic knowledge.** The most commonly mentioned difficulty that the students encountered in accomplishing the tasks was that they did not know enough about the topic. Most of these comments related to Activity #4 (see Appendix G) where the students were asked to speak about family members who immigrated to the United States.

*Stephanie:* We talked about our ancestry, but we didn't know much. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Andrea:* We talked about the history of our families a little bit but we didn't know a lot about it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Trianna:* The instructions just said to talk about your ancestors, and when they immigrated to the U.S., but neither of us knew that. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Gabrielle:* The instructions were good. However, I don't know how my family came over, which made it difficult to talk about. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

Although a provision was given for lack of knowledge, it was apparently insufficient to avoid the obstacle.

**Confusion.** The second most common difficulty in maintaining TL use throughout the activities was a certain degree of confusion with the task or goals of the different assignments. Students expressed this throughout the study in various activities.

*Kregg:* Kind of confused with our conversation but we kept talking. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Eleanor:* A partner and I played parts of psychologist and retired person reading an autobiography. We read our portions, but then were confused as to how to continue. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Colleen:* In the beginning, Eleanor and I were very confused about exactly what we were supposed to say and who was who. This was mainly due to the biographies being in 3<sup>rd</sup> person/2<sup>nd</sup> person. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

To clarify this last comment, the prompts were written in second person, but in order to communicate the ideas, the students would have had to change the information to first person. This confused Colleen and her partner because the prompts made them think that the information

they had related to their partner. Therefore, each person attempted to communicate the information from the prompt as if it were about her partner instead of herself.

*Gabrielle:* We tried our best to follow the prompt. It was kind of difficult I didn't fully understand it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Kalila:* We talked about what we had to do in English because we were a little confused. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Mike:* I wasn't sure if I was supposed to do anything other than ask questions so that's all I did. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

***Ran out of things to say.*** Often, the students expressed that they ran out of things to say and not surprisingly, this seemed especially true for Activities #3 and #4 (see Appendix G).

These activities included prompts about a parent and teacher discussing a child's behavior—a situation in which none of the students had been—and stories about ancestors immigrating to the United States—something about which the students seemed to know little. It was not, however, limited to these two activities; there were comments for other activities as well.

*Heather:* We talked through the prompt as best we could and then stalled for time because we definitely ran out of things to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Lisa:* After a while, we ran out of things to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Debbie:* First I spoke about my ancestors and then my partner did. We quickly ran out of things to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Emily:* We both spoke about our ancestors some, but then right at the end ran out of things to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Trianna:* We talked for maybe half of the time about the issue given, and then ran out of things to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

This does not mean that they could not think of things to say related to the topic, only that they did not feel as if they had *enough* to say about the given topic.

***Lack of necessary vocabulary.*** The next struggle in maintaining the TL within paired speaking activities that the students mentioned was that they did not have the necessary vocabulary for the task.

*Mandy:* We tried to talk through the prompt, but didn't have all the vocabulary necessary. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Mandy:* We didn't know how to say it or talk around it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Emily:* I felt like I did not know a lot of relative vocabulary for this one, so I struggled, and had to spend a lot of time thinking of what to say instead of speaking. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

The lack of vocabulary would certainly make it more difficult to talk about a particular topic. In the case of this study, however, it should be noted that all speaking activities either were chosen directly from the book or were created to accompany the vocabulary from the chapter being studied.

***Stumbled over words/grammar.*** Overlapping with the previous struggle, students also mentioned that they stumbled over words or vocabulary.

*Lindsey:* We spent a lot of time talking, but sometimes we would stumble on words or grammar. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Lindsey:* I stumbled a lot to find the words and tenses to say, but we talked about the two movies we like. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Kregg:* The time for the task was used to describe our favorite movies but we, myself primarily, spent most of it stumbling over words in attempt to know what to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

Perhaps this should be grouped with the lack of necessary vocabulary, as they seem to overlap. However, it is interesting to note that both students quoted here used the verb “stumble” to refer to their struggles with vocabulary and grammar. The two students were in different classes and, therefore, were never paired together.

*No model/instructions.* The final, and perhaps most notable, struggle concerned no modeling or instructions. All comments were in response to the question, “Did the teacher’s instructions, modeling, or step-by-step guidelines affect how you chose to accomplish this task?” or the equivalent question from the Post-Study Survey.

*Kalila:* We didn’t really have those so I guess the lack there of caused us to be a little unsure of what we were doing. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Paula:* Usually our professor gave an example. It was difficult when a model was not given. (Post-Study Survey)

*Kregg:* I felt like no instruction would create problems. (Post-Study Survey)

All comments relative to this topic were written after all of the activities with scaffolding had been recorded. By this point, they knew what it was like to have activities with preparation or guidance or to go without any instructions.

It should be noted that not all of the comments about struggles were made by the weaker students, as one might expect. Weak and strong students alike admitted to having difficulties maintaining the TL at times. Other struggles mentioned, although with less frequency, included preoccupations, anxiety, and difficult prompts.

**Solutions.** Although they struggled, a few students also offered solutions for how to combat some of the obstacles that hindered their use of the TL. In order to overcome the issue of lack of knowledge about the topic, one student decided to alter the way she went about speaking and, later, to change the topic altogether.

*Jane:* We talked about our ancestors, but we both don't know much about them. So we talked about the family history we do know. We completed the task earlier than our professor said to stop, so we asked questions about each other that we did not know.

(Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

With regard to running out of things to say, students had similar solutions. A couple of the students decided to improvise.

*Lisa:* After a while, we ran out of things to say so we had to try to improvise. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Trianna:* [The prompt] never said to discuss solutions, but in order to fill up the time we needed to talk about more than his problems. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Two other students chose to change the topic.

*Emily:* We both spoke about our ancestors some, but then right at the end ran out of things to say so turned to school. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Heather:* We tried to give each other advice in subjunctive but couldn't think of any other sage words of wisdom so we started talking about food. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Although these solutions may not be momentous, seeing the ability to adapt and change in students is encouraging.



## Theme 4: Pairing Factors

There are several factors that were addressed concerning the pairing of students in the conversational dyads. Predictably, as with any interaction where two humans with differing ideas and opinions are involved, the students had problems with their partners. Yet, they were also able to find the positive aspects in their pairings. The majority of student responses regarding the notion of pairing came from their answers to the Post-Study Survey Question, “Did your familiarity with your partner affect how much Spanish you spoke in the paired activities?” However, there were also responses in several of the Post-Speaking Questionnaires that contained no questions that referred to partners (see Figure 6).

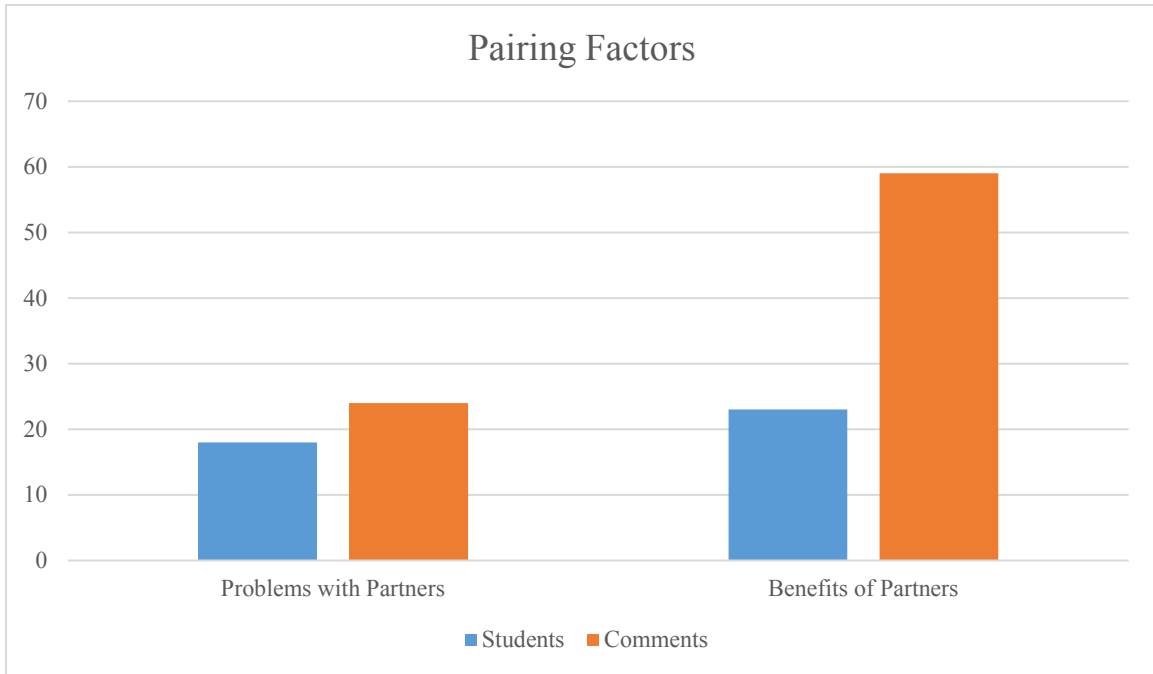
**Problems with partners.** In order to have conversations, students must have someone with whom they can speak. Unfortunately, working with a partner comes with its own set of challenges, several of which the students mentioned in their comments. Teachers often hear complaints about having to work in groups for projects because of the inequality of the participation. This very notion is addressed in the comments from this study. However, as the subject is paired speaking interactions, this relates specifically to the amount of time students were able to speak. Some students commented that their partners had spoken too much.

*Mike:* I tried to list a couple of problems my ‘son’ had. Then let him complain. When I tried to offer a solution, he complained more and I didn’t have time to say anything else. He talked most of the time. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Kregg:* I spent most of my time listening to my partner. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Jonny:* I listened to Mike’s complaints for a long time before I contributed, but that was mostly because I was waiting for him to stop but he never did. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Jonny:* I feel like I talked about the same for all of them except the last one, which was because my partner talked a lot. (Post-Study Survey)



*Figure 6.* Comments on pairing factors.

Others mentioned that they themselves had taken too much time.

*Marie:* During the allotted conversation time, I spent most of the time speaking, trying to explain/reach all the talking points on my sheet. Perhaps the conversation should have been more give-and-take. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Debbie:* I used most (actually, all) of the time trying to explain *Casablanca* to my partner and because it has a complicated plot I accidentally spoke the whole time. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Lisa:* I did the task first and told a story of my ancestors for most of the time. My partner didn't have very much time to answer the task, unfortunately. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

One might expect students to comment on problems in collaborations only when partners were assigned. Surprisingly, the students in this study also mentioned problems with partners even when they were allowed to choose their own partners. Regardless, some students were clearly offended that their partners spoke too long, while others felt regret at having spoken more than their partner. Aside from this difficulty, other problems mentioned, but with less frequency, were uncooperative partners, disinterested partners, and partner familiarity causing the students to speak more of the L1.

**Benefits of partners.** Although the students did comment on various problems with their partners, the benefits of having a partner far outweighed the disadvantages. Whereas some students chose to criticize the amount of time each person was able to speak, nearly half of the students declared that they took turns within their partnership in order to share the time.

*Tawni:* We traded off speaking back and forth. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Jerroleen:* We split up the time so we both had a chance to assume each role. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Andrea:* We started with me asking her about her favorite movie and why she liked it and why I should see it and then switched roles half way through. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Danny:* We divided the time evenly between us. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Villate:* We divided the time in half. For the first half I was the guest and I helped Danny with his problems. For the second part Danny was the host and helped me with my problems. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Eleanor:* I tried to . . . ‘take turns’ speaking to keep role play in the conversations balanced, same with interviews, etc. (Post-Study Survey)

This demonstrates that the students understand the importance of each partner having the opportunity to speak. It may help explain why some felt remorse at having spoken too long at times.

Partner familiarity also played a role in the benefits of having a partner. Again, almost half of the students commented on this. They felt that if they were more familiar with their partners, they spoke more of the TL, they spoke more overall, and they were less afraid to make mistakes.

*Mike:* I’m less worried about being embarrassed by a mistake the better I know them so I spoke more Spanish. (Post-Study Survey)

*Elsa:* The more comfortable I felt with my partner the less afraid I was of making mistakes or not communicating clearly. (Post-Study Survey)

*Stephanie:* When I knew the person better, I felt more comfortable with making mistakes and taking risks with the language. (Post-Study Survey)

*Emily:* If I was more familiar with them it meant they were more familiar with my level of speaking and I was less embarrassed to make mistakes. If I didn’t know my partner I was more embarrassed to make mistakes. I also felt like it was easier to think of things to say because we knew each other better. (Post-Study Survey)

*Colleen:* With partners I was more familiar with, I spoke much more. We spoke about the prompt and once completed, we continued talking until the time to talk had finished.

(Post-Study Survey)

*Lisa:* If I was more familiar with my partner, I spoke more Spanish because I knew their level of Spanish already and I was more comfortable making mistakes and awkwardly communicating with them.

A couple of these comments refer to the fact that being familiar with their partner is helpful because the students know their partner's language abilities. This gives them confidence in speaking the language themselves because they know what to expect from their partner.

Closely related to partner familiarity, and mentioned in several of the previous comments, is the notion of confidence and levels of comfort with regards to speaking in the TL. A few students said that they were comfortable with all of their partners.

*Jonny:* I was comfortable with all of the people I spoke with. (Post-Study Survey)

*Cindy:* I felt pretty comfortable with all my partners, so I spoke like I normally would.

(Post-Study Survey)

*Vanessa:* There were so few people in the class that I felt comfortable with all of the people I was paired with. (Post-Study Survey)

However, as evidenced by earlier quotes, most felt that the more they knew their partner, the more comfortable they were and the more confidence they had in their language speaking abilities.

*Kalila:* I spoke more and was more comfortable if I knew them well. (Post-Study Survey)

*Jane:* I feel like the more comfortable I got, the more I felt confident in my speaking skills. I felt like I spoke more Spanish and better Spanish (or maybe more confident Spanish) with a partner I'm familiar with. (Post-Study Survey)

In general, it appears that partner familiarity and confidence are closely associated. Other comments not mentioned stated that speaking with an unfamiliar partner caused a fear of making mistakes and that assigned partners coincided with a lack of confidence. If "assigned partners" is interpreted as a partner who is less familiar, then both of these types of comments support what the other students said.

### **Theme 5: Effect of Recording Device**

By analyzing the quantitative data in the recordings, it became apparent that many students had high percentages of time spent in the TL. This led to the question of whether the recording device itself was affecting their decision about which language to use. Therefore, in the Post-Study Survey, the question, "Did having the recording device change how you spoke with your partner (e.g. more Spanish/less English, more compelled to speak for the entire allotted time, etc.)?" was added in order to gain some insight into how the students felt about participating in paired speaking activities while being recorded. Figure 7 demonstrates the number of students (blue) and comments (orange) for each specific impression.

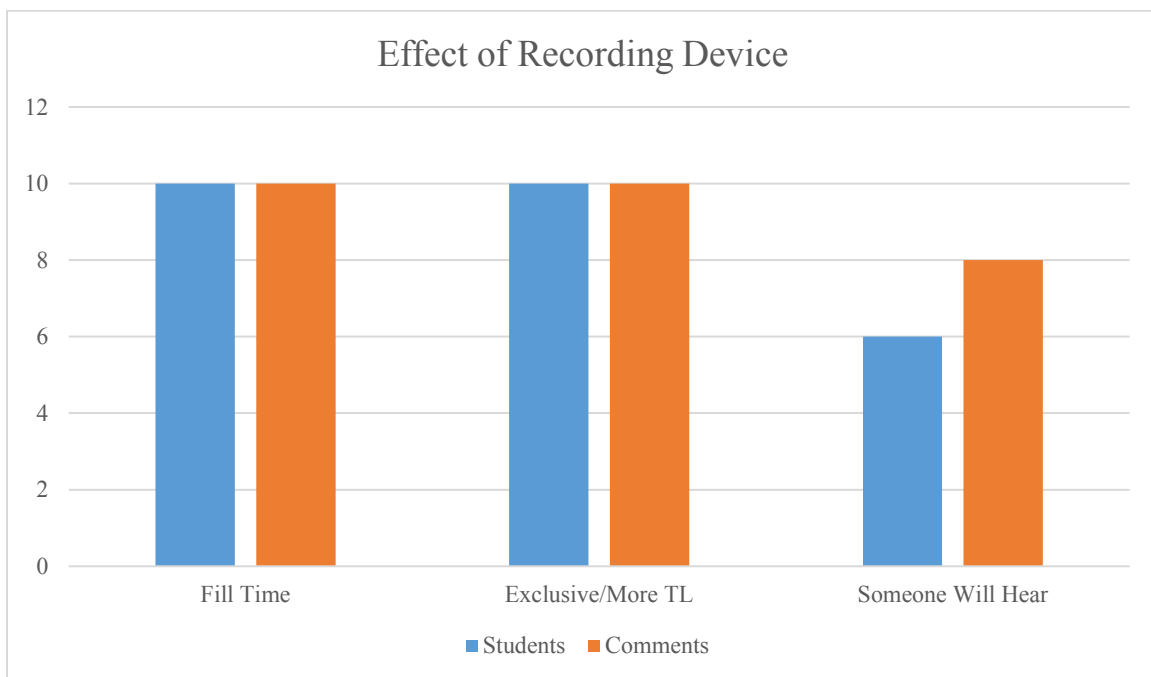
**Fill time.** The majority of comments centered on the idea of speaking for the entire time. This is likely related to the fact that the researcher emphasized not stopping the recording until the signal was given.

*Trianna:* Our teacher told us to talk the entire time, so even if we finished the activity we would still do small talk, because we knew the device was still recording, so we needed to fill in the extra time. (Post-Study Survey)

*Gabrielle:* I was more compelled to speak for the entire time. In other classes when we spoke, we just talked until we finish, with the recording I was more inclined to continue talking. (Post-Study Survey)

*Emily:* Having the device did . . . cause me to use all the time we had for the task, instead of talking about the prompt and then just sitting around for the rest of it. (Post-Study Survey)

*Kalila:* I felt more compelled to speak for the whole time and exclusively in Spanish. (Post-Study Survey)



*Figure 7.* Comments on effect of recording device.

**Exclusive/More TL.** This last comment leads right into the next impression: the recording device caused the students to speak more of the TL or exclusively in the TL. This appears to be an equally important effect.

*Lisa:* I spoke more Spanish, stayed on task a lot more, and felt more obligated to fill the allotted time with the task. (Post-Study Survey)

*Andrea:* The recording device made it so there was more Spanish and I was compelled to keep talking because it felt awkward to record when we didn't talk. (Post-Study Survey)

*Emily:* Knowing that I was being recorded made me try harder to speak only in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

Other students stated that they were wary of using the L1 or felt embarrassed or guilty for having spoken it. More information regarding TL and L1 use can be found under Theme 6.

**Someone will hear.** The last two remarks bring us to the reason for why the students felt compelled to speak for the entire time or, especially, to speak more of the TL: They knew that someone would listen to what they were saying.

*Jonny:* I think it made me more wary of using English just because I knew the teacher would hear. (Post-Study Survey)

*Heather:* If anything, it made me more anxious when I couldn't come up with a word. Knowing someone was going to be listening freaked me out a little. (Post-Study Survey)

*Colleen:* I felt more compelled to talk for the entire time and to speak more Spanish because I thought someone would listen to it in the future. (Post-Study Survey)

*Debbie:* I knew someone would listen to my conversation and know how much Spanish I spoke. I was definitely compelled to speak more Spanish for the entire time. (Post-Study Survey)

*Tawni:* I think the recording device did put more pressure on both of us to speak the whole time with no breaks. So it wouldn't be awkward and we felt like we had an audience judging us. (Post-Study Survey)



*Kregg*: I feel the recording device made me feel embarrassed to speak English, so I spoke as much Spanish as possible. It's like having evidence against you for not doing your assignment. (Post-Study Survey)

These comments are perhaps more incisive than the rest, showing a much stronger feeling towards having the recording devices. The last two comments, in particular, use language that is much more intense to describe their reactions: “judging” and “evidence against you.”

Other impressions mentioned by students were that the devices affected fluency, compelled the students to use more circumlocution to avoid using the L1, caused an increase in grammatical errors, and increased anxiety. Obviously, a normal, everyday classroom would not include recording devices, but they were necessary in order to obtain the data for this study. Whether the students would have reacted differently without the devices is a hypothetical question that cannot be answered in this study, or perhaps at all.

### **Theme 6: Perceptions of Speaking L1**

This notion can be seen interwoven throughout various comments in the other themes. Some very interesting information emerged from reading the students' responses, especially to the question, “Which parts of the speaking task were in Spanish and which were in English?” However, other questions also garnered responses related to this theme. The number of students (blue) and comments (orange) for each subcategory can be found in Figure 8.

**Reasons for L1 Use.** Within this section are various comments that describe why the students chose to use the L1 instead of the TL within the paired interactions. The reasons differ depending on the task and/or the student, but students mentioned several motivations for their L1 choice. They seemed eager to justify their use of the L1.

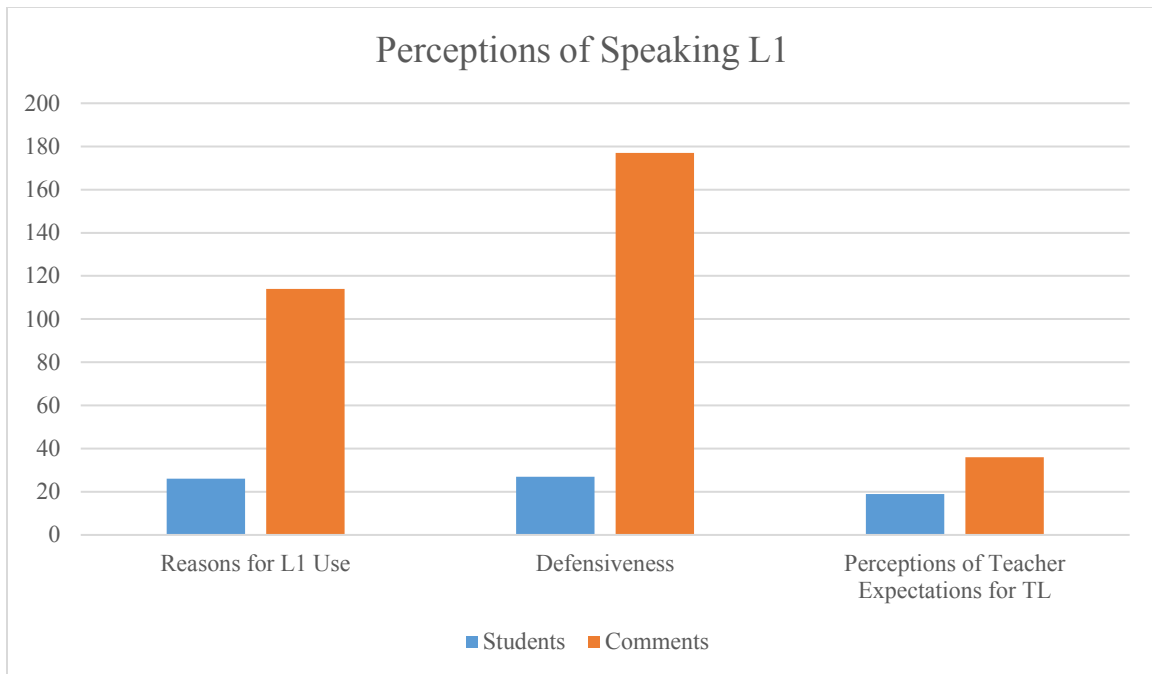


Figure 8. Comments on perceptions of speaking L1.

Nearly all of the students in the study commented that they used the L1 when they did not know a word or a phrase or they had forgotten it.

*Gabrielle:* The times we spoke in English were when we couldn't figure out how to say something. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Heather:* I didn't know two words so I just substituted the English word into my Spanish sentence. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Stephanie:* If we didn't know a word, then we would ask the teacher or use the English word. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Marie:* I wasn't sure how to say 'Poland' in Spanish so I said it in English and then guessed how to say it in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Jane:* [If] we didn't know a word, we'd either say it in English because we hadn't ever learned it, or say it in English because we forgot. If we forgot, we'd ask for help from our partner. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

Another similar reason for using the L1 during paired interactions was to discuss instructions or for clarification. This particular reason was the second most commonly cited.

*Lisa:* We clarified the instructions to each other in English. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Jerroleen:* We used a mix of Spanish and English before we started speaking just to make sure we were on the same page. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Kalila:* We talked about what we had to do in English because we were a little confused. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Paula:* I explained what to do to my partner in English because she didn't understand what we were doing. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Lisa:* If the speaking activity was confusing and it was difficult to understand what we were supposed to be role-playing or discussing we often spoke in English so we were on the same page as far as what to do. (Post-Study Survey)

The comments related to confusion over how to accomplish the task and unclear instructions were responses to questionnaires for speaking activities that had no scaffolding. It does appear, however, that not all of the students commenting were confused; some were helping befuddled partners.

Interestingly, this leads into the next reason for use of the L1, which was so that the students' partners could understand.

*AJ:* There were 2-5 words that I didn't know in Spanish so I said the English word so [my partner] would understand. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Colleen:* The only time we spoke any English is when one of us said something in Spanish that the other didn't understand. (Post-Study Survey)

*Elsa:* Expliqué en inglés también to make sure we understood. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

This last comment by Elsa presupposes that her partner would not understand, but there are not necessarily any data to indicate whether that is actually true. This may have been a common use of the L1 for many of the students, but without comments or follow-up interviews, there is no way to be certain.

The final reason stated with any frequency was the use of the L1 in order to prepare for the task. Although preparation before a speaking task is not a negative aspect in itself, it makes one wonder whether the L1 was actually necessary.

*Lisa:* We talked about the instructions in English and briefly decided what we would talk about in English. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Jerroleen:* At the beginning, we spoke in English to tell each other what role we would be playing in the role-play. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Vanessa:* All of the speaking that was recorded was in Spanish, but we had a minute to speak before about the kinds of things we could say to respond. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

This last quote does not explicitly state that the L1 was used for preparation. However, her use of the word “but” suggests that she and her partner did, in fact, use the L1 for this purpose.

**Defensiveness.** Perhaps the most interesting comments found within the questionnaires and survey were those that signaled a certain defensiveness on the part of the students. Almost without thinking, the students defend their use of the L1 in the various paired speaking activities. This subcategory is closely related to the final subcategory under this theme—perceptions of

teacher expectations for TL—in that the next section explains the reason for the students’ defensiveness.

As can be seen in Appendices E and F, there are a number of different questions included on the questionnaires and survey, none of which are meant to make the students feel guilty about which language they chose to use within the activities. Nevertheless, many responses to these questions suggest a defensive standpoint.

The first question to which the students showed signs of defensiveness was the question about how they used their time. There is no mention of language at all in this question, yet several students chose to include comments about speaking in the TL the “whole time,” as much as possible, or for the task.

*Jerroleen:* We spoke in Spanish the whole time. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*AJ:* We spoke in Spanish the whole time. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Emily:* We used Spanish as much as we could. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Lisa:* We read the instructions, discussed them a little bit in both English and Spanish, then completed the task in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

In some cases, their assertions that they spoke entirely in the TL were true; other times this was not the case. As for Lisa’s comment, her defensiveness suggests that completing the *task* in the TL is sufficient and all that is required; the rest of the time spent in the dyads was insignificant.

The more direct question about language use was the question, “Which parts of the speaking task were in Spanish and which were in English?” The degree to which the students become defensive appears to escalate with this question. All of the students, with only one exception, commented at least once that “everything” was in the TL. Many asserted this several times. Again, this was true in some cases, but not all.

*Andrea:* All of it was in Spanish except when we forgot a word or something. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Cindy:* It was all in Spanish, except the occasional clarification of a word. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Jane:* Aside from two words in English (“attitude” and “idea”), the entire conversation was in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Jonny:* All was in Spanish. We had a couple English words, but that’s it. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Megan:* All were in Spanish unless someone said “¿cómo se dice \_\_\_\_\_?” (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

*Mike:* All of it was in Spanish minus me saying “wow” because I didn’t know how to express that in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Stephanie:* We spoke the whole time in Spanish as directed (except if I couldn’t figure out the word or phrase). (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

In these particular responses, some noteworthy words signal that the students are offended at the mere suggestion that they might have used the L1. These words include “only,” “but,” “otherwise,” and “aside from.” Furthermore, comments found within parentheses suggest that they are afterthoughts and not as important as the rest of the sentence. Finally, more than half the students remark that the activity was “completely” or “all” in the TL, after which they include words such as “unless,” “except,” “however,” “minus,” and “although.” All of these terms imply that the students are defending themselves and justifying their actions. Perhaps the most blatantly obvious example of defensiveness is the following:

*Trianna:* Of course we spoke in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Although the students were never explicitly told which language to speak during the recordings, some prompts did reference specific points of grammar and some of the pre-speaking activities included vocabulary in the TL, so it can be assumed that there was a latent expectation of speaking in the TL. Furthermore, as the setting was a SPAN 105 class, instructions throughout the semester included encouragement to use the TL as much as possible. However, at no point were there any overt directions to remain in the TL the entire time. That would have defeated the purpose of the initial research question.

**Perceptions of teacher expectations for TL.** As previously mentioned, defensiveness is linked to this subcategory. Many of the comments suggesting the students are defensive go on to imply that the reason for using the TL—or conversely, for *not* using the L1—are associated with teacher expectations. The title of this subcategory contains the word “perceptions” because this is the way in which the students assume the speaking activities should be completed. As stated before, at no time were any explicit instructions given to remain in the TL for the paired interactions.

The majority of comments were in response to the question, “Which parts of the speaking task were in Spanish and which were in English?” Three perceptions were more prevalent than others, but one stood out above the rest. The idea that they “had to” or were “supposed to” was a reason that many of the students gave for using the TL.

*AJ:* It was all Spanish because we are good kids. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Megan:* All were in Spanish because it had to be. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

*Kalila:* We had to speak in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Jonny:* All of it was supposed to be in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Cindy:* It was all in Spanish. I was under the impression that that's what we were supposed to do. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

Being the first recorded paired interaction, it seems as if Cindy is taken aback by this question. She had not considered the notion that one might speak in the L1 for this activity.

The next most common perception of TL use is that the purpose of the task was to use the TL. Whether this is the actual purpose of the task, the students are in a language class and the idea of speaking in the TL has been ingrained in their heads.

*Lisa:* We did the whole speaking task in Spanish because . . . the point of doing it was to speak in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #1)

*Andrea:* We spoke all in Spanish because that was the task. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Danny:* It was all in Spanish because it was a Spanish assignment. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #3)

*Villate:* It was all in Spanish because the point of the activity was to respond and practice our Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #6)

Regardless of any rationale for the tasks—of which none was state—the students felt that the purpose of the tasks was to speak the TL. For some students, this was experienced so strongly that they felt regret for using the L1 at all.

*Emily:* Giving my name was in English, just out of habit, but that could have been in Spanish too. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Lisa:* We spoke in English a little bit at the beginning to make sure we know what was going on (sorry) but the rest was in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)



*Lindsey:* Most was in Spanish, but I used a few English words to ask for definitions, which I know next time to not. ☺ (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

*Colleen:* The only time we spoke any English is when one of us said something in Spanish that the other didn't understand. Looking back on it, we should've clarified what we were saying using Spanish words. We most likely resorted to English because of the stress of a timed assignment with a specific prompt. (Post-Study Survey)

The apologetic nature of these comments shows how deeply they perceived the teacher's expectations to be that they should speak strictly in the TL. One thing that the researcher noted while listening to the recordings was that the students often tended to speak the L1 in whispers or under their breath so as not to leave any evidence of it. Indeed, some utterances were difficult to detect without listening several times. One student confirmed that this was taking place:

*Emily:* It was all in Spanish except for sort of, under our breath, "Oh, what is that word?" (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Emily:* Every so often there was a whispered, "How do you say \_\_\_\_\_?" (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Other perceptions of why the L1 should not be spoken included prior experience with loss of points for speaking the L1, the device made them feel that the teacher would hear, the instructions led them to believe that they should use the TL—to varying degrees, and that they had been "told to."

## **Summary**

This chapter has been a summary of quantitative and qualitative data analyses received in the six recordings from the paired interactions, as well as the accompanying post-speaking questionnaires and the post-study survey. The quantitative data found two independent variables

that had statistical significance: percentage of time spent speaking in the L1 and the pre-MOPI. The qualitative data were coded using Weft QDA software from which six themes with their accompanying subcategories emerged. Each theme and subcategory has been substantiated by student quotes taken directly from the data.

In general, the students agreed that the teacher's pre-speaking scaffolding was helpful, especially if it included modeling the activity or giving examples of how to accomplish the task. Students also found self-helps that worked for them on an individual level. Furthermore, the prompts were a particularly powerful tool in guiding the paired speaking activities. As far as task type, the majority of students felt that open-ended tasks allowed for more freedom in their speech and encouraged a greater amount of output, but their role within the task had an influence on how much they spoke. Within the activities, the students encountered many struggles, most commonly a lack of knowledge about the topic. However, in some cases they were able to solve these problems by improvising or changing topic. There were also complications within pairs, especially with regard to the division of speaking time, but the benefits of working in pairs far outweighed the disadvantages. Partner familiarity was often a factor in determining the existence of benefits, as well as confidence in speaking the language. Most students agreed that the more familiar they were with their partners, the more they spoke, the more TL they used, and the more confident they felt. Another factor that affected TL output was the presence of a recording device. This caused students to feel compelled to speak the entire time and use more of the TL. When they did use the L1, they had various reasons for doing so because they felt very defensive at the suggestion that they might not speak entirely in the TL. This was largely due to their perceptions that the teacher expected them to speak in the TL 100% of the time.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter addresses the implications of the findings in Chapter 4. It also contains a discussion about the answers to the research questions for this study. Furthermore, limitations are included; however, where possible, they have been implicitly addressed throughout Chapter 4.

**Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between the amount of time students spend speaking in the TL and their listening comprehension scores, oral exam scores, and overall oral proficiency?**

**Quantitative data.** Language teachers tend to preach the importance of speaking in the TL, the amount of which varies by teacher. In the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University, SPAN 105 courses have a propensity to adhere to the ACTFL goal of 90% TL within the classroom. The information found in the quantitative data analysis suggests that there is some grounding for that.

Although this study originally set out to determine the answer to Research Question 1, the data showed no statistical relationship between the amount of time the students spoke the TL and their oral proficiency at the end of the semester. The following factors may have affected these results: sample size, length of study, amount of data collected, the students, and the MOPI. This study included a relatively small sample and the smaller the sample size, the less representative it is of the population in question. Furthermore, the investigation occurred during one semester consisting of 15 weeks and only five to six recordings per student for use in the data analysis. Longer durations yield more sources of quantitative data, which give a more accurate picture of relationships between variables. Another factor may be the students themselves, as a SPAN 105 student is generally more motivated to use the TL than a 101/102

student, or even a high school or middle school student. In addition, admission to BYU is very competitive; students tend to be academically inclined. Finally, in order to run statistics on the post-MOPI as an oral proficiency exam, the “scores” needed to be converted to numbers. Unfortunately, the MOPI—and by extension, language proficiency—is not quantifiable in this manner. By quantifying the proficiency scale, one assumes that the difference between proficiency levels is equal, and that is not the case.

On the other hand, similar to Swain and Lapkin’s (2000) investigation, the data did demonstrate with 95% confidence that the amount of time students spoke in the L1 has a negative relationship with oral exam scores. It should be noted that this is not a cause and effect; it is not known if the results suggest that because the students are speaking in the L1 their scores are decreasing. It is just as likely that their low scores are based on an inability to understand and/or speak the language because they lack the skills, which in turn, causes them to speak more of the L1 during paired speaking activities. Storch and Aldosari (2010) found that the low-low pairs of students in their study spoke more of the L1 because of their lack of language ability. Additionally, the amount of time speaking the L1 approaches significance concerning listening comprehension scores. Analysis of the data also revealed that the pre-MOPI was a good predictor of listening comprehension scores, oral exam scores, and the post-MOPI.

**Qualitative data.** Despite showing no significant results for time speaking the TL, the questionnaires and surveys revealed interesting information about the TL. They showed that the students had a very strong perception of an expectation that the TL be spoken most or all of the time. All of this points to greater student effort at speaking the TL and reporting on their use of it.

## **Research Question 2: What kinds of problems do students encounter when participating in paired activities?**

Several subcategories emerged from the data to answer this question. Students commented about stumbling over words and grammar, not having the necessary grammar to complete the task, running out of things to say, confusion, lack of modeling or instructions, and lack of knowledge about the assigned topic.

Not only did the student comments tell of their struggles, the students also report some solutions to combat the problems. This provides a good starting point for teachers to know how to help their students. Most importantly, however, teachers must understand the problems before they can determine how to solve them.

**Point in the semester.** One of the factors the students mentioned that affected their use of the TL was the point in the semester, which directly relates to experience and practice.

*Kalila:* [At the] end of the semester I knew more words and how to say things and was more comfortable and familiar with the language and the classmates. (Post-Study Survey)

*Jane:* I believe Spanish would be used more at the end, just because we knew more and felt more confident. I'm not entirely sure if this is true in my recordings, though. (Post-Study Survey)

Kalila and Jane have likely expressed what many of the students were thinking: They feel more confident at the end of the semester simply because they know more of the language. This seems like a logical assessment, but other students expressed that they tried to speak the TL equally throughout the semester. For some, the qualitative data show this to be true; for others, it was less about language learned and more about trust.

*Gabrielle:* By the end, I felt I could trust the people I was speaking to. It wasn't scary to mess up anymore. (Post-Study Survey)

Again, this is a rational statement, but also an argument for encouraging regular paired speaking activities in order to gain that trust sooner.

Based on the comments, it is likely that students of a FL will speak more TL at the end of the semester due to experience. Whether the point in the semester actually has a quantifiable influence on the amount of TL spoken cannot be determined here. Further research would be needed in order to establish this as fact.

**Shortages.** In this study, the most common difficulties that students encountered were deficiencies: lack of knowledge about the assigned topic, lack of necessary vocabulary for addressing the subject, and an absence of modeling and instructions. Teachers need to ensure that they prepare their students with the tools necessary to succeed in using the TL. If the students do not have the necessary information for the topic, the teacher should provide several ways in which the students can accomplish the task while still discussing the topic in the TL, but not feeling a sense of frustration. If the students do not have the words to discuss the topic, how can they be expected to sustain a conversation?

Some students had good solutions for how to combat the lack of knowledge about the topic: improvise or change the topic. Other students may not be as innovative; therefore, the teacher can help them to discover creativity or teach them how to be creative with the TL. Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO, a global design company, cites the importance of play in developing creativity (Brown, 2008). He proposes that playing helps form relationships and trust, which in turn allow people to feel comfortable and share ideas. In this study, students mentioned trust as an important factor for feeling confident speaking in the TL with a partner. Perhaps more games

should be used within the classroom to help develop those relationships of trust and teach pathways to creativity.

To further aid the students in accomplishing the task, the teacher should provide vocabulary for the activities. This will best benefit the students if they are involved in the process, therefore allowing the class to brainstorm vocabulary with the teacher would be more advantageous. Whether the students struggle on regardless of the stumbling blocks or give up because of them, brainstorming vocabulary—and even grammar—beforehand can help them.

Regarding the students' comments on the absence of modeling and instructions brought up an interesting question: If the students had never received modeling or guidance with any of the recorded activities, would they have commented on the lack thereof? There is, of course, no way of answering this question. However, it is interesting to note that all these comments were made after having experienced speaking tasks with and without scaffolding. The students' participation in guided activities helped them to realize that they did not want to be without it. Therefore, teachers must be sure to provide scaffolding for the students prior to speaking tasks.

**Problems with partners.** Several students complained of issues they experienced with their partners. Again, it is common for people working together in pairs or groups to encounter problems. However, if students feel that they are not able to work effectively with a partner, this can negatively influence their TL use and their ability to be successful.

Much like Edstrom (2015), this study found that turn taking varied greatly among the partnerships. For those pairs who had an unequal distribution, it is important for the students to learn not only to allow their partner to speak, but also to learn to take a turn themselves. This might mean that they need to learn ways of politely interjecting in order to have a turn. In the real world, people can lose their turn in a conversation if there is too long of a pause. Therefore,

students should be taught to avoid long pauses in their speech if they feel they have more to say. Unfortunately, this can be a complicated situation considering that pauses are often indicative of a lack of vocabulary.

Teacher should also encourage giving feedback to combat the problem of a disinterested partner.

*Jerroleen:* I often was paired with the same partner and when I felt that she didn't care about completing the activity or correcting me I wouldn't speak as much. This also kept me from correcting her mistakes because I didn't feel like she wanted feedback. (Post-Study Survey)

The act of commenting on someone else's speech has a number of benefits. First, one has to listen to what the other person is saying. Second, knowing what feedback to give requires one to use metacognition to think about the issues. Third, when one teaches, one learns. Giving feedback is a means of teaching another about a particular concept. Fourth, the person receiving the feedback gets personalized help, which is not always possible for the teacher to provide in a classroom setting.

### **Research Question 3: What factors seem to contribute to the quantity of TL/L1 spoken in paired activities?**

The students in this study mentioned a variety of different factors that contributed to the quantity of their TL/L1 use. Some of those factors were teacher helps—including clear instructions and modeling—and written prompts. Although disputed as to which task type produced more TL, it was clear that the type of activity was a factor in encouraging the students to use the TL. Another influence for TL/L1 use was partner familiarity. Generally, the students agreed that the more familiar they were with their partners, the more comfortable and confident



they were and the more TL they spoke. However, a couple of students felt that speaking with a familiar partner caused them to speak more of the L1. Although not common in this study, the latter view was typical in Storch and Aldosari's (2010) findings. The final elements that contributed to the amount of TL/L1 spoken were the recording devices and students' own perceptions of teacher expectations for use of the TL, both of which tended to encourage more use of the TL. Although the L1 was used across the activities, the students had a propensity to be defensive about it and came up with reasons to justify its use.

**Type of activity.** This study found that no one type of activity suits every student's needs. Some students preferred interviews, others favored "conversations," while still others fancied role-plays. In fact, some student comments indicated an interesting dichotomy between structured and unstructured tasks.

*Kregg:* I feel like too much freedom, as in the assignment being too open, lead me to give up too easily, and too much structure just made the assignment a checklist activity.

(Post-Study Survey)

*Mike:* Usually the more defined my role was the better I did at using Spanish. For example in the last one where I had a character it was easier to use Spanish than when I had to come up with facts about myself. The constraints made it easier to think of vocab.

(Post-Study Survey)

It is clear from these comments that not all task types work for all students; some students preferred more structure than others did while some were better able to cope with the freedom to say whatever they wanted.

The students generally found role-plays to be too restrictive; they did not allow for creativity. The students felt as if they had to stay within the confines of the scenario. It became

a checklist; when they had completed their roles, they were finished. These kinds of activities were sometimes difficult for the students because they had never been in those particular roles. For example, the third activity asked them to play the parts of a parent and teacher discussing a student's poor behavior. Not one of the students had ever been in this situation for either role, and consequently they found it challenging to complete. Although this particular activity could mirror an authentic situation, for these students it was unrealistic. This information does not mean that teachers should never use role-plays. For a few students, they were easier to accomplish than open-ended types of activities. However, teachers need to be aware of the limitations that role-plays contain and choose the topics and roles based on the course goals and student abilities. In this sense, catering to student abilities does not mean oversimplifying the task. Stephen Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis suggests that students need an  $i+1$  level of input in order to progress in their knowledge of the language. This means that the input the students receive needs to be comprehensible, but a little beyond their level in order to acquire the language. Swain (1985) expanded on this idea with her Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, stating that language learners have to notice a gap in their linguistic knowledge in order to modify their output and learn something new. Applying this back to role-plays, they should be chosen carefully in order to provide an opportunity for comprehensible output.

The students in this study were much more favorable towards interviews as a task type because this activity allowed them to be creative with the topic, thereby causing them to feel less restricted. Because this was a more open form of communication, the students felt that they had more opportunities to speak, generally because they did not feel confined to a particular topic or role. There was more freedom, which made it easier for the students to talk and think of things to say.

“Conversations,” as some of the students termed the open-ended task, is the activity that most students found easiest to accomplish. The reason for this is likely due to the freedom they have; other than a basic topic to follow, the students have more autonomy in these tasks. They can create their own language without feeling restricted to a confining topic. Furthermore, they typically do not run into the problem of lack of necessary vocabulary for the task.

It can also be positive from a teacher’s perspective to use “conversations.” This task type requires the students to listen more because there is no set role. One’s partner could say anything, therefore in order for the students to respond, they have to listen. Despite the stated benefits of this type of task, it should be noted that each kind of activity has its merits.

Unlike Swain and Lapkin’s (2000) study where the L1 was used regardless of the task, the results of the present investigation expand on Gündüz’s (2014) and Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie’s (2002) findings that activity type affects TL use. The students in this research project gave explicit examples that suggested that the task affected whether they spoke in the TL or the L1.

**Partners.** As stated in Chapter 4, the benefits of speaking in pairs mentioned by the students far outweighed the struggles they had. Some comments regarding the advantages of partner familiarity could be construed as an argument for allowing the students to choose their own partners.

*Colleen:* With partners I was more familiar with, I spoke much more. We spoke about the prompt and once completed, we continued talking until the time to talk had finished. With partners I was more unfamiliar with, we would usually just complete the assignment. (Post-Study Survey)

This quote, one among many, demonstrates the power of routine and familiarity in the FL classroom. In fact, eleven of the twenty-seven students in this study responded that their language skills were improved by having a familiar partner. Perhaps more felt the same way, but they made no comments about it. Interestingly, however, some students felt exactly the opposite.

*Trianna:* When I was paired with other people, I felt more obliged to speak longer, but when I was with my normal partner, we could kind of goof off and not talk as much.

(Post-Study Survey)

Trianna's comment supports the findings in Storch and Aldosari (2010) suggesting that the more familiar one is with one's partner, the more likely they are to speak in the L1. This further illustrates the idea that one size does not fit all. In light of this contradiction, it seems most beneficial to include a mixture of assigning partners and allowing the students to choose their own partners. The question that triggered these responses was Question 4 on the Post-Study Survey: "Did your familiarity with your partner affect how much Spanish you spoke in the paired activities?" Perhaps this question should have been expanded to include, "Do you see benefits to and problems in both assigned partners and student-selected partners?"

Mixing partners can prove advantageous where anxiety is concerned, as the students know that partners with whom they are familiar are less likely to laugh at them or cause them to feel bad for making mistakes. In fact, it would be appropriate to help the students learn to be positive, encouraging partners because they need companions who will help them gain confidence. This is possible, but it may take some time. At the beginning of the semester for this study, there was no indication that any of the students already knew each other, yet each one found someone with whom they became acquainted and grew in confidence and trust. If teachers can help their students to become more comfortable with their partners earlier in the

semester or school year, the students would become more confident in their speaking abilities that much sooner.

**Recording devices.** The students remarked that the recording device made them feel obliged to speak the entire time. The question to which they responded was, “Did having the recording device change how you spoke with your partner (e.g. more Spanish/less English, more compelled to speak for the entire allotted time, etc.)?” One student mentioned that she spoke the entire time, but she felt anxiety because of the device.

*Heather:* I was compelled to speak the whole time, but it didn’t really affect my Spanish.

If anything, it made me more anxious when I couldn’t come up with a word. Knowing someone was going to be listening freaked me out a little. (Post-Study Survey)

None of the recordings were heard until after the study concluded and the semester was over.

Had the students known this would be the case, it may have lowered their anxiety.

Several students mentioned that they spoke exclusively or more in the TL because of the device. Using more of the TL is, of course, the goal within the FL classroom. However, the researcher believes that the device itself is not the cause of more TL use, rather the cause is what the device represents: someone will listen to this. Kregg used a very strong term for this idea; he said that there would be “evidence against” him.

*Kregg:* I feel the recording device made me feel embarrassed to speak English, so I spoke as much Spanish as possible. It’s like having evidence against you for not doing your assignment. (Post-Study Survey)

This suggests that he feels like he is on trial for a crime, which is not surprising given that students use the L1 but the teacher has stressed that 90% or more of their speech within the

classroom should be in the TL. Of course, teachers should be wary of scaring their students into using the TL. It would be better practice to assist them in learning to love speaking the language.

Without a recording device, it would be impossible to know if the students are acting in the same manner. The only way of discovering this would be to have hidden devices so that the students are unaware of their presence. However, with this idea there are also ethical issues and numerous logistical problems, not to mention that the resources for such a study would likely be hard to acquire.

**Perceptions of speaking L1.** Although each student gave various reasons for why they chose to use the L1 in paired speaking activities, most of these are related to a feeling of defensiveness about their language choice. Furthermore, they felt defensive because they held certain perceptions about what the teacher expected of them. Teachers should be aware of such perceptions and the way they shape the FL classroom.

**Reasons for L1 Use.** All of the students but one had at least one comment about their reasons for using the L1. Villate was the only student who refrained from giving any rationale for using the L1. Even Andrea, who also always claimed to accomplish the assignment in the TL and had much higher TL speaking percentages than Villate, justified using the L1.

The most common reason that the students listed for using the L1 was for unknown words and phrases. If this is the case, teachers should educate their students on how to use circumlocution. It makes sense that students might feel inclined to substitute a word from their L1 for an unknown word in the TL when they know that their partner speaks the same L1. This supports Turnbull and Arnett's (2002) findings that students used the L1 for understanding when the TL was too difficult. However, if placed in a situation where their partner does not speak the same L1, in order to communicate their message, they would need to explain the word. At that

point, assuming the partner understands, he or she may be able to tell the student what the word is in the TL. In this way, not only are the students using a skill that tends toward Advanced-level speaking (ACTFL, 2010), but it also becomes a learning situation.

Another reason for using the L1 was to clarify instructions, also found in other studies (Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Thompson, 2011). For the activities under which these comments were made, no scaffolding was provided and therefore, the students felt confused about how to accomplish the task. Their use of the L1 helped provide the needed scaffolding, which is also evidenced in several other studies (Cheng, 2013; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). This is further argument for guiding the students in the activity in which the teacher wants them to participate, thereby ensuring that the students understand what the task entails. For the purpose of this study, the researcher avoided giving in-depth explanations for the speaking activities that did not include scaffolding in order to highlight the difference between the preparations for each task. Though teachers can choose to simply give their students a prompt and allow them to struggle through on their own, this is not advisable, nor would it be considered good pedagogy.

***Defensiveness.*** All but one student claimed to speak the entire time in the TL for at least one of the speaking activities. Some did manage to speak in the TL 100% of the time in various activities, but nobody spoke 100% TL during all of the recordings. However, most of the students qualified this claim with words like “except,” “unless,” “however,” or other similar expressions, denoting that they, in fact, did use the L1, but it was so insignificant as to be hardly worth mentioning.

Marie made several comments about having used the L1, but none of her remarks were defensive. She simply stated on one occasion that everything had been accomplished using the

TL and on another that 99-100% of the speech was in the TL. She could be considered the strongest in her class and appeared unconcerned about how she might be viewed for having used the L1 instead of the TL.

On the other end of the scale was Gabrielle. She was easily the weakest student in her class—which, incidentally, was not the same class as Marie. She struggled from the beginning and only seemed to make minor improvements. She is the only student who made no claim that she spoke in the TL 100% of the time for any of the speaking activities, nor did she ever write a defensive comment about using the L1. She very matter-of-factly expressed that she had used the L1 and state the reasons for doing so. She too came across as unconcerned, but in this case, it seems as if she knew she were a weak student of the language. She did not intend to let that bother her; she was just going to persevere and do the best she could.

Both of these outliers appear to have a healthy attitude about learning the language: One is strong while the other is weak and they are both aware of their situations. However, they perform speaking tasks in a way that is comfortable for them. This is the very thing that teachers need to instill in their students: Recognize your strengths and weaknesses, but do not give up; endure and do what works for you.

*Perceptions of teacher expectations for the TL.* The defensive attitudes of the other students are likely related to their perception of the teacher's expectations for using the TL. In contrast to what Edstrom (2015) found, the students in this study chose to perform the tasks in the TL, despite the fact that no explicit instructions were given on which language to use. One student in particular made a very interesting remark after a paired interaction.

*AJ:* It was all Spanish because we are good kids. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)



Although probably meant as a joke, AJ's comment suggests that there is some underlying impression that in order to be considered a good student, one must speak completely in the TL. Interestingly, he stopped one of his first recordings quite early because he and his partner had "finished" the task. They continued to speak with each other for the remainder of the time in the L1, but none of it was recorded. This demonstrates that the students—prior to the explicit instructions on when to stop recording—felt that completing the task was the most important aspect of the paired activities. With the new instructions, it seems as if AJ's viewpoint shifted.

Another student also commented on the directions to continue recording until a signal was given.

*Marie:* Our teacher instructed us to not stop the recording until she said so, but that we could sit quietly if we finished early. So there were sometimes when I finished pretty early and just didn't say anything the rest of the time. (Post-Study Survey)

Marie's comment supports the notion that the explicit instructions regarding recording may have changed the way the students viewed the teacher expectations. On the other hand, Andrea's comments on every questionnaire suggest that she believed that the TL was expected.

On a more subtle, yet still intriguing, note, one student remarked that the L1 was whispered or spoken under her breath.

*Emily:* It was all in Spanish except for sort of, under our breath, "Oh, what is that word?" But the actual conversation was all in Spanish. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #4)

*Emily:* I tried to do it all in Spanish, and for the most part it was. Every so often there was a whispered, "How do you say \_\_\_\_\_?" And then I would move on. This saved time from having to think of a way to go around what I wanted to say. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

Her comments point to a defensiveness that suggests she believed that the TL was expected. However, as noted in Chapter 4, this notion of speaking the L1 in a whisper or under one's breath was not unique to Emily; several students adhered to this practice, giving credence to the claim that they must have had perceptions that the teacher expected them to use the TL exclusively.

The question is, what do teachers do about it? In some cases, the fostering of this perception may be deliberate. Nevertheless, teachers should be aware of how their speech and actions can lead their students to believe that there are certain expectations. These expectations can be real, regardless of whether they are stated.

**Research Question 3 Subquestion: How do the teacher's preparatory instructions, modeling, or scaffolding of a task affect TL use in student-student interactions?**

Generally, the students responded that these preparations were indeed helpful. They were able to indicate specific examples of how the scaffolding helped, even going so far as to mention that the lack thereof caused them to struggle more. Most commonly, the students were better able to understand the prompts, feel comfortable with the task and topic, use vocabulary, and structure their conversations.

**Teacher helps.** Although there seemed to be mixed feelings about a time limit, requiring the students to continue recording for a set time forced them to think of more things to say because they felt compelled to do so. On the other hand, timed conversations can be detrimental because the students may feel as if they cannot finish their conversations due to a lack of time. This is a difficult problem to combat given that classroom time is limited. Perhaps a day could be set aside to allow for nothing but free speech. This would permit the students to use the language in meaningful ways specific to their own personal needs.

One of the strategies mentioned by various students was brainstorming vocabulary. The consensus was that it helped prevent students from becoming stumped and not knowing what to say. Although the vocabulary words were discussed beforehand, the students still had to create their own speech. Based on other comments about lack of necessary vocabulary, it seems that this pre-speaking activity is crucial and would be welcome.

During the second speaking activity, the teacher and students brainstormed vocabulary and many of the students commented that this was invaluable. It may also be crucial to review necessary grammar, assuming there is specific grammar on which the students should be focusing. Student involvement in brainstorming the grammar would likely benefit the students because they would be more involved in the process. Furthermore, this would aid in thinking about the topic, which, in turn, would help with content. It also assists the students in being more cognizant of what they have learned, which aids in retention.

Giving the students time to think allowed them to have “pre-made answers,” as Jonny mentioned, and this helped them to feel more prepared to talk about the topic. They were probably less likely to become stuck and it may have provided them with more to say in order to fill the time. They would be less surprised and anxious because they would not have to think of something in the moment.

Additionally, teaching or reviewing grammar before beginning a speaking activity may be very useful to the students. If specific grammar is needed for the task, this strategy can help the students understand how and when to use that grammar. This approach may also be helpful if the teacher is preparing the task with a specific grammar point in mind, otherwise, the students may not see the need for the grammatical structure and will not use it. If it is specifically referenced, they will be more likely to practice it. Teachers do not have to be cryptic with their

students; they can let the students know why they are being asked to do something. The students will be more apt to respond to transparent teaching goals.

Guiding questions can also be valuable if used sparingly. They clarify any doubts about how to accomplish a task and make it easier for the students to participate. However, there is also a negative side to using this strategy.

*Jane:* We had a list of things to talk about, and we followed that list to make sure we didn't miss anything. (Post-Speaking Questionnaire #2)

This quote illustrates the problem: Students may only follow the questions and not branch out with their own ideas and sentences. It needs to be made explicit that the students should come up with their own questions as well, and try to create more with the language. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines show that creating with the language is a main indicator of an Intermediate-level speaker.

Another disadvantage in using guiding questions is illustrated in the following student quote:

*Colleen:* The guidelines helped us know what to do in order to accomplish the task.  
(Post-Speaking Questionnaire #5)

The students may feel that the purpose of the activity is simply to accomplish the task; therefore, teachers need to help their students see the bigger picture. Again, transparent goals are best; in this way, teachers can explain to their students why they are using these “tasks” and how this practice can help them to use the language in real-life situations.

Modeling and examples are an excellent strategy for preventing the students from languishing in the activity, but this is highly dependent on the topic assigned to the students for discussion. For this study, the assignment to discuss the origins of their family incorporated

modeling in order to give the students an example of what to say concerning the topic.

Unfortunately, this particular subject proved difficult for students as many of them did not know this information about their families. The purpose of this activity was to allow the students to use vocabulary from the chapter to talk about their ancestors in a natural way. It is important for students to try to branch out in their topics of conversation so that they can learn to talk about unknown subjects.

**Without teacher helps.** When students are not given any scaffolding, they are forced to find their own ways of accomplishing the task. Obviously, the students find these personal strategies to be helpful, hence the reason for their use and the resulting comments. However, at times, these self-helps may not allow the students to accomplish the task adequately; they need extra support.

It is clear, based on the comments of those who took time to prepare for the speaking activities, that some students—perhaps all—need time to prepare. This is not necessarily realistic for an authentic situation, but perhaps instructors should think of this as a teaching opportunity in order to train the students for authentic situations. Too often teachers spend time trying to include authentic activities in their classroom activities, but they forget that the students need to learn how to function within those situations. In a sense, taking a language course in one's own country is an advantage because one can be taught *how* to use the language before being exposed to the real-life situation. Many of these students do not have the luxury of learning in the TL country where they would encounter circumstances in which they *have* to speak without preparation. This does not mean that every time the students participate in a paired speaking activity they must be given time to prepare, but according to the comments in this research, it facilitated learning for many of the participants.

Regarding the final self-help, the students who commented on topic expansion clearly recognized their limitations. Much like circumlocution, they found ways to address the given topic, but using a technique that worked for them. Teachers should promote the use of innovation within paired speaking activities because it is likely that all students will encounter a speaking topic that they find difficult. If they have been encouraged to use the TL to expand on the topic or perhaps invent information to match the theme, they will be more successful in the language and feel a sense of accomplishment.

The use of written prompts is also an important matter for teachers to consider. This study showed the magnitude of the prompts' impact on how the students chose to accomplish the task and what language they used. When the teacher did not provide scaffolding, the students relied heavily on these prompts and in some cases, they felt that the prompts were very helpful and guided their conversations. In others, the prompt made the students feel as if they could not deviate from the topic.

*Vanessa:* There were more opportunities in the conversation to speak when it was an interview-type activity. It was also easier to speak because I had more liberty with what I could say. (Post-Study Survey)

Again, it is important for teachers to impress upon their students that using the language is more important than the constraints of a prompt.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Given the information regarding L1 use and its relationship to listening comprehension and oral exam scores, it is clear that students need help from their teachers. If L1 use negatively impacts listening comprehension and oral exam scores, then teachers should be encouraging TL use as much as possible. However, if the L1 is being used because the students lack the ability to

use the TL, then the teacher needs to either provide the students with the necessary skills to accomplish the speaking tasks or modify the task.

Teachers can help their students to learn creativity in order to combat the struggles they face in paired interactions and to find ways of using the TL. One way to do this is to provide opportunities to use cognitive strategies. If the students can enhance their ability to think in the TL, this will aid them in their creative abilities. Brainstorming sessions as a class or in groups can assist in facilitating these strategies.

In addition to cognitive strategies, teachers can give their students tips on how to take turns; for example, students can be taught how to address something that the other person says by agreeing with it, after which they might continue to talk about the reasons why they agree or include a “however” statement. This will allow the students to speak without feeling as if they have cut the person off.

In order to reach every type of student, it is important that teachers provide a variety of task type options throughout the semester or school year. Teachers should choose or create tasks based on what they want their students to be able to accomplish—their goals for the activity. If one type of task is more suited to the goals, then teachers can feel confident choosing that activity.

Perhaps the most important area in which teachers should intervene involves student pairings. As long as the teacher knows that the students will put forth an effort to use the language with a partner of their choice, it seems logical to allow students opportunities to choose their own partners. There may be students for whom this is not appropriate, but rather than single them out, a mixture of assigned partners and student-selected partners can be used. Furthermore, to help students become comfortable with the other students in the class early on,

teachers can include daily, paired speaking opportunities. However, the onus should not be entirely on the students. Teachers should create an environment where students feel they can make mistakes and ask questions.

If the students feel as if they are stuck in their paired speaking interactions, the teacher can encourage speaking about things other than the topic. This would mean that the students would be required to improvise more than they might do with a specific idea. The positive side of this is that it more closely imitates authentic speech, something that language teachers strive to achieve in their classroom activities. At any rate, teachers need to be careful, when assigning tasks, that they give the students the tools they need to accomplish the task. However, they also need to allow the students to have some freedom to expand on a given topic or even deviate slightly if they so choose.

### **Validity and Limitations**

Wherever possible, attempts were made to increase validity and reliability within this study. Each claim has been supported by student comments. Where relevant, other research has been used to reinforce these claims. However, as with any research project, there were drawbacks. Due to the nature of college course registration, the data for this study were collected from a convenience sample. Although this form of sampling is easier and faster, it does have drawbacks, especially given the fact that the researcher for this project was also the instructor for the courses from which the participants came. Because of this limitation, the sample may not be representative of the population. Notwithstanding, the sample was also purposive given that the researcher chose SPAN 105 because of the communicative abilities of the students. Furthermore, because of the researcher's dual role within this study, there is the



possibility for researcher bias. Nevertheless, the researcher has tried to be objective in all areas throughout the investigation.

Another limitation to the results of this study could be the point in the semester. Each recorded paired interaction occurred within each of the chapters being studied. Because languages are learned by building on current knowledge, it is extremely likely that more TL would be spoken later in the semester simply because the students have more knowledge of the TL. Moreover, as the semester comes to a close, some students may feel anxious for a break and be less inclined to put forth the effort needed for the speaking activities. This, as well as other external factors in each student's life, could also affect responses to the post-speaking questionnaires and post-study survey. For example, if a student is distracted by personal matters, they may feel less inclined to be thorough in their responses. Unfortunately, given the parameters of the study, there is little to be done to control for these variables.

Perhaps one of the biggest limitations is the presence of digital recorders, which may cause the students to feel pressured to perform a certain way. In fact, this information can be confirmed by the students' own comments stating that many of them felt compelled to speak more of the TL. Regrettably, without the proper resources, it is not possible to control for this threat. Additionally, the students' lack of knowledge regarding how to work the devices likely caused several recordings to be deleted or simply not record. At least once, the device needed new batteries, but the students did not say anything and nothing was recorded. Although these problems did not affect any student more than once, there was always the possibility of it occurring. Because all of the recording devices were distinct and worked in different ways, and because of the variation in partnering, it was not possible for the students to use the same device for every recording.

The researcher's presence and regular classroom procedures were also likely contributors to the use of the TL. Aside from recorded paired interactions, the students were often encouraged to speak the TL in class. Also, the instructor spoke the TL the majority of the time. In fact, about a month into the study, the use of the TL was reinforced in earnest as the official means of communication within the course. From a pedagogical standpoint, this is not a bad thing. However, it may mean that the results are due not only to the actions of the students, but also the actions of the teacher.

Another limitation is that the instructions given about when to start and stop recording were unclear in the beginning. Therefore, in the first three recordings, several pairs stopped recording early and valuable data may have been lost. On at least one occasion, two students proceeded to speak in the L1 after stopping the device, which compromised the data for the quantitative analysis. However, there is no way of knowing if they would have spoken the L1 if the device were still running. Nevertheless, this is a strong argument for giving unequivocal instructions about the way in which the students should proceed.

### **Future Research**

The results of the quantitative data analysis showed no relationship between the amount of TL spoken and oral proficiency. In fact, there was no relationship between TL amount and any other dependent variable. It is possible that this is due to the small sample size. It would be of interest to see if the data change with a larger sample. Information from such a study would help support or disprove the notion of speaking exclusive or near exclusive TL within the FL classroom.

Many of the students gave examples of helpful ways in which the teacher prepared them to participate in the speaking activities. It would be of interest to see a study focused on

techniques for teaching speaking and the effect they have on improving proficiency or encouraging exclusive or near exclusive use of the TL. This would be of great benefit to educators in the FL field in implementing strategies that are more effective.

Given that the presence of the recording devices appeared to influence the amount of TL the students spoke, it is impossible to know whether the absence of these devices would change the students' performance. Further research using an experimental design might provide further insight into this. In this way, one could compare a class using the devices with classes who do not use recording devices. Both classes would have to perform the same speaking tasks on the same days. Controlling for time of day would likely be difficult, as well as circumventing intact classes. The difficulty with such a study is that one would need a method of recording the control class without their knowledge in order to determine the amount of TL being spoken.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has included the implications of the quantitative and qualitative data from this study, as well as pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research. Although the data could not confirm a statistical relationship between the amount of time spent in the TL and oral proficiency, the amount of L1 used showed a negative relationship with listening comprehension and oral exam scores. Moreover, it is clear from the data that various factors contribute to when and how often students use the TL. Some of these determinants come directly from the students, while the teacher provides others. Furthermore, as paired speaking activities are used frequently in a FL classroom, knowledge about the problems students encounter in these tasks and the aspects that encourage use of the TL can be invaluable to a FL teacher.

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## Appendix A

### **Research Project: Student Paired Interactions CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT**

Hello, my name is Dr. Thompson. I am a professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Your instructor, Señora Anderson, is conducting research on student paired interactions in a foreign language, and I am inviting you to participate because you are enrolled in SPAN 105.

Participation in this research includes taking a survey about your background and experience with foreign languages, which will take approximately five minutes. It also includes a post-survey at the end of the study, which will also take approximately five minutes. There are other elements involved in the study, but most are requirements for the course regardless of participation. The one notable exception is the use of audio recordings. All students will be audio recorded during six of the paired interactions throughout the semester. However, only the recordings from participants in the study will be used in the data analysis. Aside from the required course elements, your total time commitment outside of class for this study will be approximately five minutes.

For portions of this study, your instructor will offer extra credit for completion. For those who choose not to participate, she will also offer alternative methods of earning extra credit.

The information gathered from participants in this study will be kept completely confidential and under lock and key. No identifying information will be shared in academic presentations or publications. The audio recordings will be heard only by your instructor and will not be shared with anyone else.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary; your status and grade in this course and your standing in the university will not be affected by your choice. Should you choose to participate, you will need to sign this consent form. Keep in mind that, even if you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you have any questions, I can be reached at the phone number or e-mail address listed on the consent form. Your instructor's contact information is also listed, should you wish to speak with her about anything regarding the study.

## Appendix B

### Consent to be a Research Subject

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#### **Introduction**

This research study is being conducted by **Michelle Anderson, M.A. candidate** at Brigham Young University, to look at **student interactions in paired speaking activities**. You were invited to participate because of **your enrollment in SPAN 105**.

#### **Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- you will fill out a questionnaire about your background with the Spanish language
- you will be given a pre-OPI (oral proficiency interview) for approximately fifteen (15) minutes near the beginning of the semester
- the questionnaire and OPI will take place in 3002-A JKB or 3002-B JKB at a time convenient for you or it will take place at a time and location convenient for you
- you will be audio recorded six (6) times throughout the semester for five (5) to ten (10) minutes as you speak to a partner in order for the researcher to listen to your paired interactions
- the audio recorded paired activities will take place during regular class times in the classroom
- you will fill out a post-speaking questionnaire after each paired activity
- you will be given a survey and post-OPI for approximately twenty (20) minutes at the end of the semester
- the survey and post-OPI will take place in 3002-A JKB or 3002-B JKB at a time convenient for you or it will take place at a time and location convenient for you
- total time commitment outside of class will be approximately thirty-five (35) minutes

#### **Risks/Discomforts**

**The risks of participating in this study are minimal. Because you will be interviewed in Spanish and audio recorded during some class activities, you may experience discomfort or embarrassment.**

**The research will minimize these risks by allowing you time to discuss any linguistic fears you may be experiencing.**

#### **Benefits**

There will be no direct benefits to you. It is hoped, however, that through your participation researchers may learn about the nature of student paired interactions in the foreign language classroom.

#### **Confidentiality**

The research data will be kept on a password protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be kept in the researcher's locked **cabinet**. Each student will be



assigned a pseudonym. No identifying markers will be attached to any publications or presentations that result from this research. Only pseudonyms will be used.

**Compensation**

Participants will receive 5 extra credit points in the homework section for completing the questionnaire. An additional 10 extra credit points will be given for the survey at the end of the semester. For those who do not wish to participate in the research, 5 extra credit points can be earned by reading a newspaper article in Spanish. An additional 10 points are available to those who wish to write a 1-page paper in Spanish on the article.

**Participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your class status, grade, or standing with the university. Pre- and post-OPIs are, however, part of your grade and will be administered whether or not you choose to participate in the study.

**Questions about the Research**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Michelle Anderson at manderson78@byu.edu for further information.

**Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Research Project: Student Paired Interactions PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the appropriate box () or write your answers in the space provided. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Some questions may have more than one answer so please check the boxes that are appropriate for you.

All of this information will be locked in a secure cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Thank you.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender  Female  Male

3. Your age \_\_\_\_\_

4. Major \_\_\_\_\_

5. Minor \_\_\_\_\_

6. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

7. How do you define your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever lived outside of the U.S.?  Yes  No If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Parents' place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you have ancestors from a Spanish-speaking country?  Yes  No  
If so, which country? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How would you rate your ability to understand Spanish?

Excellent                      Very Good                      Fair                      Poor

12. How would you rate your ability to speak Spanish?

Excellent                      Very Good                      Fair                      Poor

13. How would you rate your ability to read Spanish?

Excellent                      Very Good                      Fair                      Poor

14. How would you rate your ability to write in Spanish?

Excellent

Very Good

Fair

Poor

15. Have you ever taken Spanish courses designed for Heritage Learners?  Yes  No

16. How many months/years have you studied Spanish? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you speak any other languages besides English and Spanish?  Yes  No  
If yes, which? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Have you studied in a Spanish-speaking country?  Yes  No If yes, which and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you studied in a bilingual education, immersion, or dual language program?  
 Yes  No If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

20. As you were growing up, did you speak Spanish in the following environments? Mark all that apply.  
 Home  School  Church  Spanish-speaking country

## Appendix D

### Research Project: Student Paired Interactions

#### SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE MODIFIED ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW (MOPI)

The following questions are examples of questions that could be asked during a MOPI. However, because every student will answer in a different way, the interviewer will tailor the interview to the individual students.

- How are you doing today?
- Where are you from?
- Tell me about your hometown.
- Tell me about the traditions in your hometown.
- Tell me about your family.
- How did you meet your wife/husband?
- Tell me a little about your wife/husband.
- What kinds of things do you like to do in your free time?
- What kinds of things does your wife/husband like to do?
- Do you work?
- Tell me about your job.
- Tell me about your classes.
- What are your plans for the future?
- What kind of job would you like to have in the future?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Tell me about a typical day in your high school from beginning to end.
- We're going to do a role-play. (varies) (e.g. You want to rent an apartment. Talk to the building manager and describe what you want. Ask four or five questions to find out everything you need to know. In this role-play, I'll be the building manager and you will ask me questions.)
- I've asked you a lot of questions, now I'd like you to ask me four or five questions about my hobbies.
- What plans do you have for the rest of the day?

## Appendix E

### Research Project: Student Paired Interactions POST-SPEAKING QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions relate to the speaking assignment you just completed. Please write your answers in the space provided. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. All of this information will be locked in a secure cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Thank you.

1. Give a breakdown of how you used the time allotted for the task. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Which parts of this were in Spanish and which were in English? Explain why. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Did the teacher’s instructions, modeling, or step-by-step guidelines affect how you chose to accomplish this task? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix F**

**Research Project: Student Paired Interactions  
POST-STUDY SURVEY**

The following questions relate to the audio recordings from this semester. Please write your answers in the space provided. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. All of this information will be locked in a secure cabinet to ensure confidentiality. Thank you.

1. Did the type of speaking activity affect how much Spanish you spoke (e.g. role-play, interview, etc.)? Be specific. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Did the instructions given before each speaking activity prompt you to speak more Spanish? Give details. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you speak more Spanish at the beginning of the semester, the middle of the semester, the end of the semester, or throughout? Explain why. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did your familiarity with your partner affect how much Spanish you spoke? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did having the recording device change how you spoke with your partner (e.g. more Spanish/less English, more compelled to speak for the entire allotted time, etc.)? Explain.

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6. Would you say that you feel more comfortable speaking in Spanish? Why or why not?

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## Appendix G

### Research Project: Student Paired Interactions BREAKDOWN OF ACTIVITIES

#### 9/14/16 – Activity #1

- No scaffolding
- Students chose their own partners
- Prompts:

<b>Padre/Madre</b>	<b>Cosas que hace tu hijo/a</b>
<p>Your son/daughter is 17 years old and is a little rebellious. Look at the list of things that s/he does and shouldn't do, and then tell him/her what s/he has to do to change his/her routine. Also, there are some things in your routine that your son/daughter doesn't accept and is going to comment on. Question what s/he says to you, but try to understand your son/daughter. Start the conversation by saying "I want to speak with you."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• misses class</li> <li>• plays the drums (<i>la batería</i>) constantly</li> <li>• stays up late often</li> <li>• send message while eating</li> <li>• lies a lot</li> <li>• prefers to hang out with bad companions</li> <li>• gets bad grades in school</li> <li>• sleeps all weekend</li> </ul>

<b>Hijo/a</b>	<b>Cosas que hace tu padre/madre</b>
<p>Your father/mother observes everything you do. Because of this, you decide to observe the things that s/he does. Here is a list of things that s/he does. Now, your father/mother is going to talk to you about the things that you do. Question what s/he says to you and tell him/her about the things that, in your opinion, s/he shouldn't do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spends a lot of money on unnecessary things</li> <li>• says that s/he is sick and misses work when s/he is fine</li> <li>• plays the piano very poorly</li> <li>• tends to watch <i>Wheel of Fortune (La rueda de la fortuna)</i> on TV</li> <li>• yells when s/he speaks on the cell phone</li> <li>• drinks a lot on the weekend</li> <li>• secretly smokes (<i>fumar</i>) behind the garage</li> </ul>

#### 9/28/16 – Activity #2

- Pre-speaking activity
  - Showed posters for some movies and asked students their opinions of the movies.
  - Discussed how to talk about movies. What kinds of things do we say in English?
  - Gave time to plan what they would say about their favorite movie.
- Students chose their own partners
- Prompt:
 

Your partner is studying film, and has asked you about your favorite movie. Tell your partner about your favorite movie/film. Tell him/her why you like it and why s/he should see it. Discuss the plot using the preterit tense if you can.



### 10/12/16 – Activity #3

- No scaffolding
- Assigned partners with vocabulary word/definition. Students were given a small strip of paper containing a vocabulary word or a definition of a vocabulary word. To find their partner, they had to match the word with the definition.
- Prompts:

#### **Padre/Madre**

Tu hijo de ocho años es muy bueno y obediente. Siempre te dice que el/la maestro/a no lo quiere y lo trata muy mal y por eso saca malas notas. Estás muy enojado/a y ahora tienes una cita con su maestro/a. Explícale la situación y háblale de la personalidad de tu hijo.

#### **Maestro/a**

Eres maestro/a y hay un estudiante de ocho años que tiene muchos problemas de comportamiento (*behavior*) y ahora viene el padre o la madre a hablarte. Explícale cómo es su hijo y cómo se comporta últimamente.

### 10/25/16 – Activity #4

- Modeled how to do it. I told the students the story of how my mother emigrated from France.
- Assigned pairs with random.org
- Prompt:  
Cuenta todo lo que sabes de tus antepasados que inmigraron a los EE.UU. Si no sabes ninguna historia, puedes hablar de lo que sabes de tu historia familiar.

### 11/15/16 – Activity #5

- Gave time before to think about what to say. The students were first shown the two prompts. They were then allowed two minutes to think of some advice they could give the other person based on their scenario, as well as how the conversation might go. The following guiding questions were posted to help them think through their conversations:
  - Host: How do you begin the conversation? What kind of general advice might you be able to offer? How do you end the conversation?
  - Caller: How do you respond to the initiation of the conversation? What complaints do you have? What follow-up questions can you ask?
- Students chose their own partners
- Prompts:  
Una persona va a llamar un programa de radio para contar sus problemas. La otra persona va a ser el/la presentador(a) y dar consejos.

Persona #1: “Mi vecino es insportable. Se levanta temprano y se pone a bailar salsa. Hace un ruido fatal. Hablé con él, pero dice que hace ejercicio porque necesita bajar el colesterol, que está en su casa y que nadie puede decirle lo que debe o no debe hacer”.

Persona #2: “Mi esposo está loco. Desde que el doctor le dijo que debe hacer ejercicio para bajar el colesterol, no para un momento. Ahora baila salsa todo el día; por la mañana se levanta temprano y empieza chaca, chaca chaca chaca, chaca chaca, chachachá. Insiste en

que yo vaya a su clase de salsa también. Pero yo no sé bailar. Estoy harta y no sé qué hacer”.

1. La persona #1 llama a un programa de radio para contar sus problemas. La persona #2 da mandatos y sugerencias para solucionarlos.
2. La persona #2 llama a un programa de radio para contar sus problemas. La persona #1 da mandatos y sugerencias para solucionarlos.

11/29/16 (1<sup>st</sup> class), 12/2/16 (2<sup>nd</sup> class) – Activity #6

- No scaffolding
- Assigned partners based on perceived aptitude/grades. Stronger students were paired with weaker students, and so on.
- Prompts:  
Tú eres don Rafael, un jubilado que está haciendo una revisión de su vida. La otra persona es un(a) psicólogo/a. Lee tu biografía. Debes hablar de las cosas que lamentas de tu pasado usando expresiones como **¡Qué lástima que...!**, **Es triste que...**, etc. Puedes inventar detalles.

#### **Rafael Legido, 75 años, jubilado**

Cuando eras joven, tus padres ofrecieron pagarte los estudios universitarios, pero no quisiste estudiar. En vez de estudiar, fuiste a trabajar de cajero en un banco. Después de muchos años, llegaste a ser subgerente del banco. En tu trabajo, conociste a la mujer con la cual te casaste. No tuvisteis hijos. Tus compañeros de trabajo jugaron juntos a la lotería y ganaron 10 millones de dólares. No quisiste jugar.

Tú eres doña Carmen, una jubilada que está haciendo una revisión de su vida. La otra persona es un(a) psicólogo/a. Lee tu biografía. Debes hablar de las cosas que lamentas de tu pasado usando expresiones como **¡Qué lástima que...!**, **Es triste que...**, etc. Puedes inventar detalles.

#### **Carmen Ramos, 77 años, jubilada**

Llegaste a ser Miss Chile. Nunca usaste tu fama para luchar contra el abuso de menores o la pobreza de tu país. No te casaste con el amor de tu vida porque él no tenía dinero. En cambio, te casaste con un millonario, pero no tuviste un matrimonio feliz. Tuviste seis hijos, pero nunca les dedicaste mucho tiempo; más bien pasaste tu tiempo viajando.

Tú eres un(a) psicólogo/a. Escucha a la otra persona y hacerle ver el lado positivo de su vida usando expresiones como **¡Qué bueno que Uds...!**, **Es maravilloso que Uds...**, etc. Puedes inventar detalles.