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Increasing Target Language Usage In Level II Spanish Language Classes

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INCREASING TARGET LANGUAGE USAGE IN LEVEL II SPANISH LANGUAGE
CLASSES

by

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Bachelor of Science, Valley City State University, 2005

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

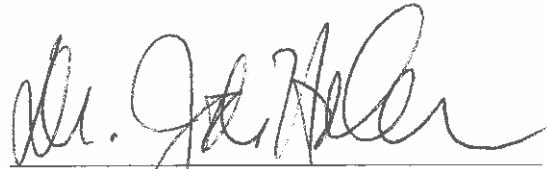
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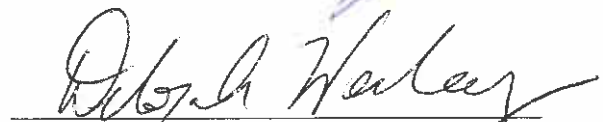
This thesis, submitted by Kathleen A. Bolstad in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.



Dr. Wayne Swisher, Dean of the Graduate School



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Kathleen A. Bolstad

December 5, 2014

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ABSTRACT

In the process of learning a new language students often feel uncomfortable using their language skills in an original and spontaneous manner. In a class that is not conducted solely in the Target Language (TL), it can be difficult to motivate and encourage students to use more of the TL. In this study I explored the use of code-switching as a strategy to encourage my Level II Spanish language students to use more language without fear of making a mistake or forgetting vocabulary. I also administered a survey to students to discover what they felt would be helpful in creating an environment more conducive to TL use. One thing that became clear is that teacher expectation can have a great impact on the willingness of students to communicate. Many students also want to feel that they are being rewarded for taking risks in using the TL. This study can afford other Foreign Language teachers some insight into how to increase the use of TL in their classrooms, particularly in lower level classes where it may not be desirable or necessary to teach in a TL only environment.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals for teachers in teaching a foreign language is to equip and prepare students to be able to communicate with others in that language. Ideally, all students would have the opportunity to travel to another country and be immersed in the language where they would have ample chances to participate in authentic communication, but that is not realistic. Instead, Foreign Language (FL) teachers must work within the confines of their classrooms and communities to provide more opportunities for students to communicate with each other in the Target Language (TL) (see Table 1 for terms and definitions used throughout the paper). I feel like I have been underserving my students in encouraging them to use more TL leading me to explore this concept and try to find new ways to increase my students' communication skills in the TL. While I teach both Levels I and II of Spanish, I concentrated on increasing the TL use of my Level II students as they prepare to go on to Level III where they are expected to communicate solely in the TL. My question then is how to encourage my Level II Spanish students to use more original, oral language in class each day even though I do not teach in a TL only environment.

Background

While past language pedagogies have focused on linguistic competency, this strategy has not necessarily led to communicative competency (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Thus, it is not enough to teach students the TL; they must learn

how to use it in authentic social situations. Much research has been conducted on communication in second language (L2) classrooms from the points of view of English Language Learners (ELL) (Gocer, 2010; Nakatani, 2010; Cheng & Milnes, 2008), and while many ideas that work for ELL classrooms can also transition to Foreign Language (FL) classrooms, I did not find many resources specifically for FL teachers with concrete ideas and strategies to promote TL use in the FL classroom. Most of the research provides very broad ideas about language learning and usage such as the idea that students need to be motivated to use the TL. Some of the additional questions I need to address, then, are how to increase the willingness to communicate for all of my students, how to increase my students' sense of autonomy in the classroom and thus their motivation for learning the language, and what are the specific strategies that I can incorporate in my classroom to promote more TL use. If I can find strategies that result in a measurable increase in TL use by my students, I feel this is a work that would be very beneficial not only to my future classes but also to other FL teachers. While my study will take place in a Spanish classroom, the ideas explored are transferable to other language classrooms if FL teachers apply similar interventions and strategies in their own classrooms.

Factors in Increasing TL usage

As previously stated, linguistic competence does not necessarily equal communicative competence. While the factors that can contribute to a student's willingness to communicate are numerous and complex, there are some factors that teachers have a great deal of control over, including the situational context of the communication (MacIntyre et al, 1998). Situational context involves the specific purpose

behind the communication taking place and the amount of confidence a speaker has in any perceived context. Students will be more willing to use language if they have a high level of perceived self-confidence in any given communicative moment. Beyond the things over which I have direct control, I also need to be aware of some of the deeper, more foundational factors that impact students' willingness to use the language. These include each individual's motivation for learning the L2 as well as each individual's personality (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Students will be more motivated to learn and use the target language if they have a greater sense of autonomy in the process. Learning a language is interpretive, so students need to realize some sense of autonomy if they are to truly have a lasting interest in learning and using the language. I need to be a driving force in creating an environment and using teaching strategies that will promote autonomy and teach the students how to use the language. Since many classrooms are centered on teacher control, increasing the level of autonomy in the classroom may be unsettling for everyone at first, but is important. The emergence of more autonomous learners who feel they have more control over their learning experience can increase student motivation (Egel, 2009).

Knowing that I need to increase my students' motivation and promote an environment that will increase their willingness to communicate, I next need to have an idea of some specific classroom strategies I can use to accomplish this. In a FL classroom, the more the teacher uses the target language the better, but recent research has questioned whether a "TL only" approach is really the most pedagogically sound approach to L2 education (Lee, 2012). While a TL only environment has shown to increase linguistic competence for most students, particularly in grammar, compared to

instruction utilizing the students' first language (L1) (Viakinnou-Brinson, Herron, Cole, & Haight, 2012), even students who experienced more success were often frustrated and viewed TL only instruction in a negative light (Viakinnou-Brinson, et al., 2012; Lee, 2012). I want my students to start using more of the TL, but through their own desire and motivation. A "TL only" environment is not always viable because some students will become frustrated and will shut down without the option of using the L1.

One approach that has been shown to be effective in increasing student participation in the FL classroom is the instructional format of the class. Use of small group or partner work in FL classrooms is more effective than whole class instruction. The key is in finding communicative activities that emphasize function and meaning over form. Activities should have clearly structured expectations, but provide open-ended possibilities (Gahala, 1986). These can also be structured to provide support in the TL for students who may not have confidence in their language skills.

Another strategy I am interested in exploring is the use of codeswitching (CS) in the FL classroom. CS occurs when students switch back and forth from L1 to L2 during communication. This can take place at even the individual word level producing sentences like, "Ella usa her lápiz to write." During my own language education my teachers frowned upon CS and instead advocated circumlocution to talk around unknown or forgotten vocabulary, a helpful strategy, but also a difficult strategy for novice language learners to use. CS was seen by many as an imperfect grasp of the L2 or even as leading to attrition of the L1 (Bolonyai, 2009). New research, however, shows that students using CS are most often using it as a contextualization strategy and that their use of CS better resembles more authentic multilingual interactions outside of the classroom.

One study even coined the term “translanguaging” to denote a stance that is more flexible toward language use instead of the traditional monolingual ideology of past FL classrooms (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). This can also take away some of the pressure of performance for students if they are allowed to switch between L1 and L2 without having to pause and think for one word that they do not know or have forgotten. Other strategies and interventions implemented during the research process were determined based on student responses to survey questions and my own further research and will be addressed later in my data.

Study Design

The research is being conducted in Level II language classes in a local high school and began with a pilot study in the spring of 2014. The research continued in the fall of 2014 with new students. Most of the students are sophomores but I also teach a few juniors, seniors, and the occasional freshman each year.

This is my eighth year of teaching in this school. Since I also teach Level I Spanish classes, the Level II classes are a mix of students I had last year and students new to my classes from the other level I teacher. There are very few discipline problems and the majority of students in the last reporting period earned a C or higher. Most current students are earning a C or higher. As such, all demonstrate some competency in the TL in classroom activities and assessments.

The research took place in three main stages in the pilot study and two stages during continuing research. First, I documented how much original language my students were using. Next, in the pilot study, I administered a survey to students to find out how much original language the students thought they used, what they felt was holding them

back from using more of the TL, and gave them a space to offer suggestions that would facilitate their TL use. Finally, I implemented chosen strategies and suggestions from the students and documented the TL use during each intervention. Over the course of the study I learned many things about my students and how to encourage them to use more TL. I also became much more aware of my own teaching and how much thought needs to be directed at structuring classes and instruction in a way to promote TL use.

Table 1. Terms and definitions

Terms (Abbreviations)	Definitions
Code-switching (CS)	The use of multiple languages in communication. Switching between them and occur at even the word level.
English Language Learners (ELL)	Any student learning English as a foreign language.
First Language (L1)	A person's native language.
Foreign Language (FL)	Any language that is not one's native language.
Second Language (L2)	A person's second learned language.
Target Language (TL)	The language being taught in a Foreign Language classrooms

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW
Historical Context

The idea of how a L2 is acquired is a fairly new concept. Only in the second half of the 20th century as people became more mobile, and the world seemed to become smaller through advanced technology, has learning another language become necessary for more people. Thus, teachers and researchers needed to start to think about how people acquire another language (Ellis, 1997). Everyone in the world acquires a first language in a similar way, no matter what the language is. In the first three years of a child's life they begin by recognizing words and responding in an appropriate manner, move on to producing simple utterances of high frequency words, and finally start to combine known words into simple sentences. By the age of four most children have mastered the basic structures of a language and are able to give commands, ask questions, and give reports, both real and imaginary. This is a natural process, however, that cannot be repeated later in life with a second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

The question then is how to best teach an L2 to students? In the 1950s and 1960s the behaviorist theory held sway (Ellis, 1997). Behaviorists believed all behavior was a matter of habit so in order to teach something the teacher would supply a stimulus and the student would be rewarded for giving a correct reaction, such as the correct response to a question asked in another language. This model focused on memorization and mimicry and did little to address the complexity of L2 acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

In the 1970s Stephen Krashen put forth the Monitor Model which posits that people acquire an L2 in much the same way as an L1, but they can only truly master the language by paying conscious attention to form and rules. He also put forth that L2 acquisition will follow predictable sequences similar to the L1 and that acquisition best occurs when students are exposed to language that is comprehensible, but still a bit beyond their level of production. Using these ideas many schools implemented immersion and content-based instruction in language classes which can allow students to progress further in L2 acquisition than memorization and mimicry, yet the students will still reach a point of failure unless they also have access to guided, direct instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

While many schools today are still focused on immersion or content-based instruction, some have started to take into account the socio-cultural implications of language learning. Psychologist Lev Vygotsky believed language develops from social interaction. In the 1990s and 2000s when this idea was expanded to L2 acquisition, researchers began to show that interaction and collaboration between the language learners, not just the learners and the teacher, is important. From this perspective, the output of students, their ability to produce the language through writing and speaking, is as important as their ability to demonstrate listening and reading comprehension of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Student Participation in FL Classrooms

In starting to explore how to increase students' TL use in the classroom I began with research involving student participation. Gahala (1986) identified four areas under direct teacher control that can lead to increased student participation in the FL classroom;

1) teacher expectations, 2) classroom atmosphere, 3) instructional formats and 4) teaching activities (see Figure 1).

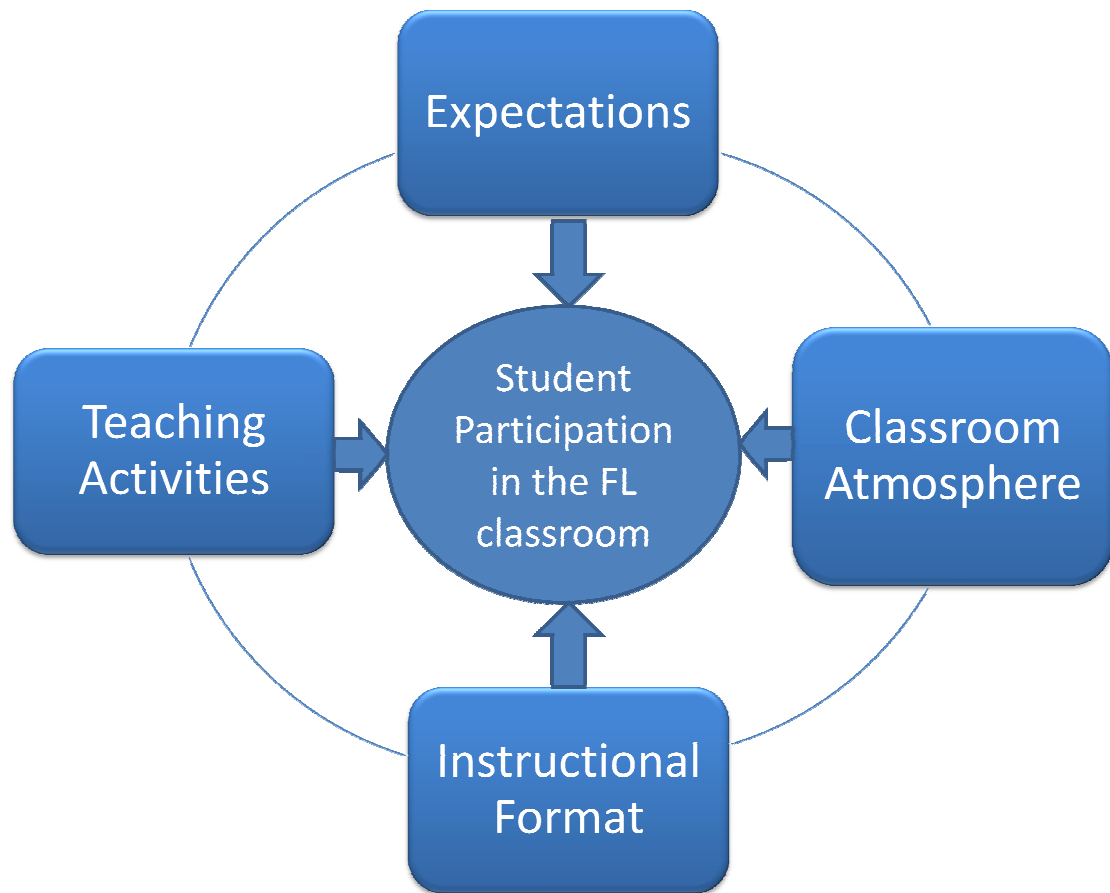


Figure 1. Framework for increasing student participation in FL classrooms (Gahala, 1986).

In the area of teacher expectation it is clear that the teacher should be the first model of using the TL in the classroom. She must then communicate those expectations clearly to the students. High expectations have frequently been shown to be an indicator of student success and engagement (Ketsman, 2012). The teacher needs to have a clear idea of what she expects from the students in class. These expectations may change based on the type of communication taking place at any point during a lesson. Students often have their own interpretations of learning objectives and new types of discourse

may develop throughout an activity (Cheng, 2013). At a point where student and teacher expectations clash, misunderstandings can occur and both must navigate the situation to resolve the issue. Clarifying teacher expectations to students is a major component of this study.

Expectation has further impact on the second area explored by Gahala (1986); classroom atmosphere. Most classrooms create a dependency between the teacher and classroom group in which the teacher is the dominate figure leading all learning activities. In a FL classroom, it is often more important to create a space in which students feel comfortable and welcome than it may be in other classrooms because FL teachers are often asking students to perform publicly which carries with it a sense of risk (Gahala, 1986). Language learners also need to learn “how to learn” and “how to use” a foreign language and as they do so, learn their own strengths and weaknesses as to better self-direct their language development. To do this the students must develop a sense of autonomy (Egel, 2009). This requires a careful balance of pushing students towards autonomy and making them feel like they are safe and able to take risks. A shift towards autonomy may require a phase of uncertainty before the true autonomous learner can emerge (Egel, 2009).

Instructional format is of particular concern to FL teachers and contributes to the classroom atmosphere. Whole class or large group formats have been proven to be the least effective in FL instruction. Students get more practice, especially with spoken language in partner or small group work (Gahala, 1986). Students with access to conversational interactions with both the teacher and other learners engage in the language process and must negotiate the social interaction to create and clarify meaning

(Lightbown and Spada, 2006). This is brought about through the final area under teacher control: the actual teaching activities the teacher includes in the classroom.

Activities chosen in the FL classroom should emphasize both linguistic and communicative competence and emphasize function and meaning over grammatical form. The teacher should also provide clearly structured expectations, but ones that provide open-ended possibilities to allow for student creativity and increased originality (Gahala, 1986). The classroom activities used need to depart from standard forms found in many textbooks of fill in the blank, matching answers, and simple questions and responses. Instead, teachers need to strive to provide activities that model actual communicative scenarios and engage students in more complex forms of thought (Gahala, 1986). Students should be allowed to explore language as they practice instead of being trained to provide rote answers in response to stimuli (Ellis, 1997). Students will not only have better practice with the language, but will be able to exhibit humor and creativity with such activities.

Two additional areas that need to be addressed when researching student participation are classroom strategies and student motivation. Strategies are separate from teacher activities because they are a way for students to approach using language and they can be applied in many situations while the teaching activities comprise the planned portions of each lesson. Strategies are a way for students to apply problem solving to using the TL. According to Covington (1998), “the concept of learning strategies bridges the domains of effort and ability, so that trying hard, but in sophisticated, strategic ways, is tantamount to increasing one’s ability to learn” (as cited in Graham, 2004, p. 187). Strategies outside of planned instruction that can be incorporated into the classroom to

encourage TL use are somewhat under teacher control. The one particular strategy that I want to experiment with during the research process is the use of CS in FL classrooms. CS has not always been seen as a valid strategy for FL classrooms (Cheng 2013, Gardner-Chloros, 2009), but it will be discussed further below.

Code-switching

Throughout my research I want to provide my students with strategies or approaches to the language that will help them increase the amount of TL they use in class. One language strategy that is quite interesting and the subject of more and more research every day is the use of CS in the FL classroom (Cheng, 2013; Creese & Blackledge; 2008, Lee, 2012; Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012). Attitude studies and interviews with bilingual speakers have found that while CS is often seen as bilingual incompetence (Gardner-Chloros, 2009), it is actually a systematic way to create meaning and is a common and distinctive feature of bilingualism. If we look at the FL classroom as a miniature bilingual community then the use of CS by teacher and students can be a way of sharing knowledge and making meaning in a more authentic, communicative manner (Lee, 2012). Seeing the benefit of using CS in the classroom, however, requires changing the common and historically held attitudes towards CS.

Historically, CS was only seen as a step in the process of language borrowing and transfer, not as a separate phenomenon. The first research to focus on CS and see it as something separate occurred in the 1960s and 1970s (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). While in some cases links can be made between CS and language transfer, since CS occurs at the individual level and in different ways, it is clearly also something more. Many researchers note that some creativity is needed for speakers to use CS; it is a dynamic

process in which different elements of grammar and vocabulary interact in language production and can be intentional with each individual having different reasons for choosing their switches (Treffers-Daller, 2009,). In some multi-lingual communities, CS occurs as a way to take full advantage of nuances and expression that may not be as equally available across all languages spoken (Gardner-Chloros, 2009).

Another belief commonly held about CS is that it is in some way a lesser form of communication. A majority of bilinguals see CS as an “easy or lazy” option for speakers who may not be as fluent in the L2, and they tend to disapprove of its use, even as people who utilize CS in their own language production (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). It is true that in some cases when studying CS in speakers who have a great difference in their levels of proficiency between the L1 and L2 the use of CS can be inappropriate and point to a lack of control over language (Bolonyai, 2009), but most uses of CS serve a specific purpose within the community of the speaker. In addition, fully functioning bilinguals are at all times accessing both systems of language and while they may be able to “turn down” one of their languages, they can never fully disregard one or the other thus every word choice is an active choice by the speaker based on the audience and context of any given situation (Treffers-Daller, 2009).

Another recently adopted pedagogical perspective is to recognize and utilize the full linguistic repertoire of both teachers and students, hence the right to use CS in the classroom. Having “hard boundaries” between L1 and L2 has been shown to suppress language, especially in classroom contexts, while “soft boundaries” can create more authentic language practices (Cheng, 2013). This fits with the use of CS by students based on context and environment. When students are engaged in learning a language

with other non-native speakers, CS can be a valuable tool to create meaning in the classroom between many speakers with similar levels of proficiency in both the L1 and L2. As previously stated, most students view TL only instruction negatively, even when it leads to gains in linguistic competence (Lee, 2012; Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012). Even in environments that are supposed to be TL only, such as English-only private schools in countries with different native languages, the use of CS is flourishing. While using CS remains taboo in certain countries, others are starting to see the benefit of using CS as a pedagogical tool between teachers and students with the same L1 (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). I and my students share the same L1 and they are all at the relatively same level of proficiency in the L2. I am also a language learner who understands some of the difficulties in using the L2. These are many reasons CS is an excellent strategy to promote in FL classes with the understanding that as much of the TL as possible will be used in any given situation.

Student Motivation

The last area to be addressed as it pertains to increasing student participation is student motivation. Student motivation is more complex in terms of control, stemming from the teacher but ultimately lying with the students. According to Dickinson (1995), “Learning success... is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning, being able to control their own learning and perceiving that their learning successes or failures are attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control,” (as cited in Graham, 2004, p. 174). While student motivation is not entirely within teacher control, it is still something that needs to be addressed because it is an important consideration in trying to increase student participation; students must

be motivated to learn the L2 and then also be motivated to use it. Without some motivation, students fall into the danger of viewing learning a language as something that requires a special gift or aptitude and if they experience early failure, they will continue to view their lack of ability as a fixed entity and can develop a “learned helplessness” in the FL classroom where they see any effort as pointless and success impossible (Graham, 2004).

Some students may be motivated to learn the L2 by external factors such as needing to know another language for a job or to apply to college (Ellis, 1997). If a student is studying a language due to these instrumental concerns, their motivation is more likely to be extrinsic and extrinsically motivated students are less likely to put forth more effort to learn the language (Bonney, Cortina, Smith-Darden, & Fiori, 2007). In my own experience these sources provide the least consistent and weakest motivation for students to continue learning the language after they have met the external requirement. These students are also less likely to be motivated by their grade in the class. It is better if the teacher can develop resultative motivation. With resultative motivation the students are motivated as a result of experiencing success in learning the L2 (Ellis, 1997) This does not necessarily equal receiving a good grade, but it is reflected by how confident students feel using the L2.

Intrinsic motivation is even better because students find something within themselves that motivates them to learn. By definition, intrinsic motivation is the “inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one’s capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, as cited in Bonney, et al., 2008, p. 1). If students are curious and feel personally involved in the learning process, they

will be more motivated to learn (Ellis, 1997). This goes hand in hand with creating more autonomous learners. Autonomous learners demonstrate self-efficacy which can result in academic performance above and beyond a student's actual ability (Graham, 2004). In situations where teachers are less controlling students demonstrate higher motivation to learn. Students who are in more autonomous classrooms have more intrinsic motivation, higher levels of self-esteem, and higher perceived competence (Egel, 2009). If we follow this line of thinking, a more autonomous classroom will create higher-achieving students more willing to participate in communication of the TL.

Summary

The history of FL education has gone through a series of philosophies and pedagogies. The most current school of thought revolves around creating authentic communicative experiences for students in FL classrooms. The focus of this study is on increasing student participation in the learning process. Gahala (1986) identified four areas that teachers need to consider; 1) teacher expectation, 2) classroom atmosphere, 3) instructional formats, and 4) classroom activities. To this I also explored the areas of 1) classroom strategies, particularly the use of CS in the FL classroom and 2) student motivation. Considered together, these areas serve as a framework to guide teacher thinking in how to increase student participation in the classroom and, as it pertains to this study, increase the use of TL in the classroom.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this Action Research was to study how to increase the original TL use of Level II Spanish students. The format for my research was based on Nancy Fichtman Dana's (2013) inquiry cycle and will include 5 stages: develop a wondering, collect data, analyze data, take action, and share with others (See Figure 2). Dana encourages teachers to begin by asking themselves what their strengths and weaknesses are, what puzzles them about their students, what they have recently learned that they want to try, and what parts of their curriculum are challenging to teach. These questions led me to my wondering of how to encourage my students to use more TL in class (Dana 2013).

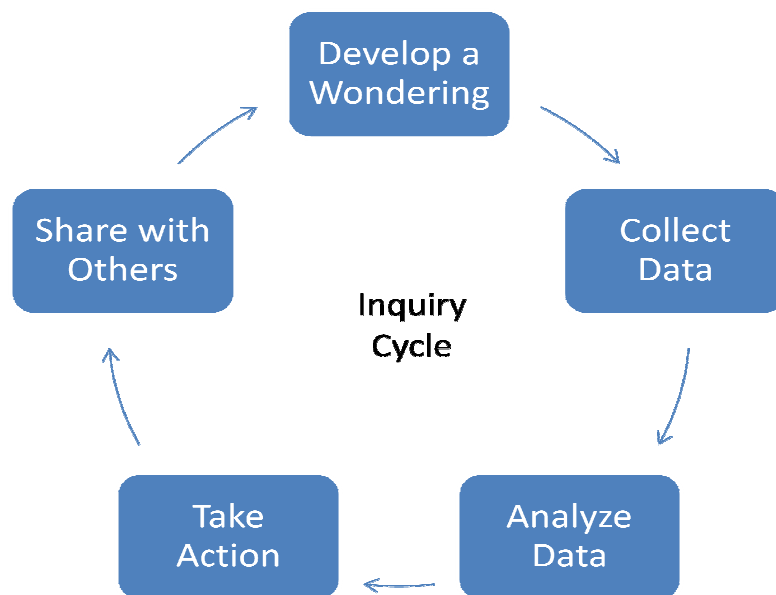


Figure 2. The Inquiry Cycle (Dana, 2013, p.2)

Teacher Inquiry is a cycle that allows teachers to reflect on their own teaching and practices and develop changes that reflect what was learned during the inquiry process. Inquiry is an ongoing process, combining with teaching in such a way that the cycle is continuous and the teacher becomes a practitioner researcher, ever refining and researching wonderings and using inquiry as a way to systematically improve teaching practice (Dana, 2013).

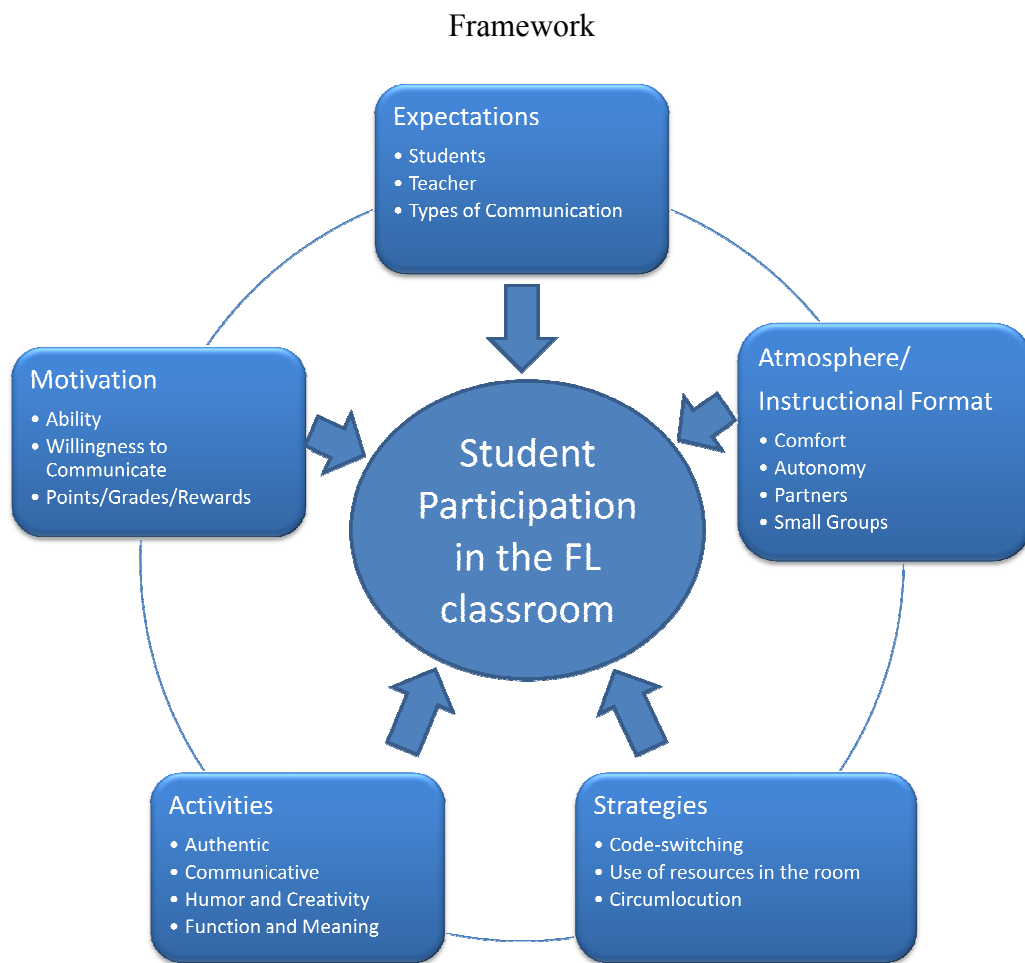


Figure 3. Research Framework adapted by Bolstad (2014) from Gahala (1986)

By starting with Gahala’s (1986) framework (See Figure 1, p. 9) and adapting it to incorporate other areas of consideration in increasing student participation in a FL classroom (see Figure 3 above), there are five areas that form the foundation for my

research and will guide the steps taken to answer the question of how to encourage students to use more TL in the classroom.

Gahala's (1986) framework began with four areas: 1) teacher expectation, 2) classroom atmosphere, 3) instructional format, and 4) teaching activities. Many studies have shown the link between teacher expectation and positive or negative results for students (Babad, 1993, Brophey, 1982, Cooper & Good, 1983, and Jussim, Smith, Madon, & Palumbo, 1998; as cited in Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006). I know I expect my students to well, but I do not know if I am clear in that expectation. Part of the purpose of this study is to find out if students feel they are expected to use the TL in class. If students do not feel like they are expected to use the TL I cannot fault them for not using more of it. In that case, I will have to work to make my expectations for students clearer.

For the purpose of this study I am going to combine two of Gahala's (1986) areas. Classroom atmosphere and instructional format are closely related. Students need to feel comfortable in the FL classroom so they are more willing to take risks in trying new things, including using the TL, and instructional format contributes to the classroom atmosphere. I also chose to combine these two areas because I feel my instructional format is already in line with best FL practice and while I can do more, the classroom environment is already quite comfortable. For many students, the simple fact that they already know me from class the previous year goes a long way towards creating a classroom culture that is welcoming and relaxed.

The last area of Gahala's (1986) framework is made up of the actual teaching activities used in the classroom. Previously discussed was the necessity of getting away

from materials and activities that are too simplistic and result in non-authentic communicative situations. As the teacher, I need to spend more time considering the guidelines Gahala provides for effective teaching activities when creating new activities for my classes. Effective activities should require communicative competence, refer to the learners themselves in some way, and provide options and choices for students. This is something I need to be more conscious of. It may also be beneficial to allow students to have some input on the teaching activities used in class.

To complete my framework I added the two areas of 1) classroom strategies and 2) student motivation. There are many strategies used in any FL classroom to aid students in learning the L2. Some of these include oral or written practice with new material, making flashcards to practice new material, and trying to use context and similarities between L1 and L2 to infer meaning (Bonney et al., 2008). In this study I looked for strategies to specifically help students produce more of the TL orally. There are many useful phrases and terms posted around the room that I pointed out to students. I also encouraged them to use CS as we began the process of trying to incorporate more TL and wanted CS to be a tool for students with less confidence in their speaking ability. As the year progresses I also want to encourage them to try to use circumlocution to talk around words they do not know or remember. Students also had input on the strategies used in class through their responses collected by a survey.

Student motivation is perhaps the most difficult area to test or measure. Each student is motivated differently. As explored above, the best thing any teacher can try to do is create resultative motivation in her classes (Ellis, 1997). If students who are not motivated to learn the L2 intrinsically, they can perhaps be motivated by experiencing

success communicating and using the L2. Each teacher should strive to provide the best learning experience possible for students and in finding new ways to teach and engage them, the better the chance of each student being successful and feeling more motivation. It is also necessary to ask students what they perceive to be their greatest motivation. All together, these are the five focus areas of my study.

To promote TL use by students I need to consider:

- the expectations for each class and making those clear to the students
- the classroom atmosphere and instructional format of the class
- the teaching activities used
- the classroom strategies I can incorporate
- what motivates each student.

Participants and Timeframe

The study took place over six weeks in the spring of 2014 and over five weeks in the fall of 2014. The participants of the study were eighty-four current and former students in Level II Spanish classes. In order to respect the participants' rights as research subjects, this project only began after receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board of the university (see Appendix A) as well as permission from the school district to ensure ethical research practice. All students and their parents were asked to give consent for the student to participate in the study. Both students and parents signed consent forms (see Appendices B and C). All students were assured when in class that opting out of the study would not affect their standing in the class in any way. Of the one hundred ninety students enrolled in the classes over the course of the two semesters, eighty-four students total participated divided evenly between the pilot study in the spring

and the continuing research in the fall. They were divided between seven different classes, grades 9-12. There were twenty-one males and sixty-three females. The amount of students per class ranged from eight to sixteen students. In all one freshman, sixty-six sophomores, ten juniors, and seven seniors participated in the study.

Data Collection

There were three main sets of data collected in this study. The first set of data was collected via a checklist to discover how much TL the students are currently using. The second set of data was collected using the same type of checklist to keep track of the results of language use for each student after the implementation of interventions (see Figure 4). The checklist was divided by day and I simply placed a checkmark next to each student for each time they used an original utterance during any fifty minute class period.

Attendance Grid		Teacher Name: Kathleen Bolstad				
		4/7	4/8	4/9	4/10	4/11
7(1-2) Spanish II	100192					
	101877					
	102964		✓✓			
	103636					
	106901					
	107024		✓			
	110230					
	110271					
	110923					
	111048					
	33298					
	34701		✓✓			
	34971					
	35862					
	36020					
	36930					
	36987					
	38970					
36086						
36088						
36328						

Figure 4. Example of checklist.

I also kept observational field notes for four students from each class to keep track of a sample of what was being said word for word and to provide qualitative evidence of the use of the TL in each class (see Figure 5). The four students from each class that I chose to keep observational notes for were a mix of male and female students and a mix

of academically successful and academically weaker students. The academically successful students earned or are earning an A in the class and the academically weaker students earned or are earning a C. To take the notes I created a column with each student's initial at the top and divided the column by day. Each day the students said something original I wrote it down verbatim including any errors in grammar or vocabulary or use of CS.

Bolstad- Example Observation Notes

R	I
3/17: ¿Paquetes, sí? Tiburones,	
3/18: ¿No tarea hoy, sí?	3/18: ¿Puedo usar mi teléfono para hablo con mi madre?

Figure 5. Example of field notes.

The final type of data collection only occurred during the pilot study in the spring 2014. During the pilot study I administered an anonymous, three-item survey to the students to find out what they think is motivating them to use the TL and also to get student input on what strategies they see as helpful in learning a FL. I administered the survey to thirty-eight students in the pilot study. Forty-two students consented to be in the study, but four were absent from class that day. I directed students to leave their names off of the survey and to write in simple print. I also had all students put the

completed survey in one envelope so surveys from all classes were mixed into one group. The survey asked students to state how much original language they think they currently use and to identify what might hold them back or discourage them from using more of the TL. The last question was an open ended question asking students for suggestions on how to facilitate their TL use (see Figure 6).

1. On average, how many times do you think you use original Spanish sentences in class? (This does not count, "¿Me permite...?" or "¿Cómo se dice...?" phrases or any practice work done with partners)

- a. Multiple times per class
- b. Once per class
- c. 2-3 times per week
- d. Once per week
- e. Less than once per week

2. What are some reasons you do not use more original Spanish in class? (Check all that apply)

- a. _____ I do not feel like it is expected of me
- b. _____ I am afraid of making a mistake
- c. _____ I do not think I will be understood
- d. _____ I feel like I do not know enough Spanish to use original Spanish
- e. Other _____

3. What are some things Srta. Bolstad can do to encourage you or make it easier for you to use more Spanish in class?

Figure 6. Student survey.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the checklists were analyzed to determine how many students used the TL and how often. During the first week of data collection the data from the checklists were compiled and represented via a chart to show the percentage of students using the TL broken down further by the frequency with which they used the

TL. During each week of data collection with interventions, I tracked the overall percentage of students using the TL represented by a graph. This percentage was then broken down further into how often the students were using TL during each week.

The responses to the survey questions were compiled and analyzed for the student responses on their current language use and the reasons they do not use more language. The responses to the first question on how much of the TL the students thought they used were represented by a chart to compare the data to the actual use of the TL documented by the checklist. The responses to the second question about what inhibited students from using more TL in class were represented by a graph to show how many students responded in each category. Qualitative responses from the survey were coded into themes and the results validated by member checking and a data analysis meeting with fellow students in an action research class. My advisor also checked my data throughout the study. The observational field notes were used to provide qualitative evidence of TL use by students throughout the study. By using multiple subjects spread throughout seven classes it was as if the same study was repeated seven times and similar results between classes can be seen as valid.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Pilot Study, Spring 2014

I began with the question of how to get my students to use more TL in class. To answer this question I decided to consider how to increase the willingness to communicate for all of my students, how to increase my students' sense of autonomy in the classroom and their motivation for learning the language. I also wanted to find some specific strategies that I can incorporate in my classroom to promote more TL use. I started by documenting how much of the TL my students already use in class. I then administered a survey to find out student perceptions of TL use in the classroom and to find out what they think would motivate them to use more of the TL. Finally, different interventions were implemented and I continued to track TL use by students.

The first set of data collected uncovered what I had feared. I use as much of the TL as possible in my instruction and my students use the TL every day while practicing with each other, responding with answers when called on, and by using phrases they know they must say in the TL (such as asking to leave to get a drink). The amount of *original* TL they use in class, however, is nearly non-existent. Over the course of a week I tracked how many students used original phrases in every class via the checklist.

Students' perceptions of their language use were quite different from reality. I administered the survey to students in the pilot study. The vast majority of students felt

that they used original language at least once per class or multiple times per week (see Figure 7).

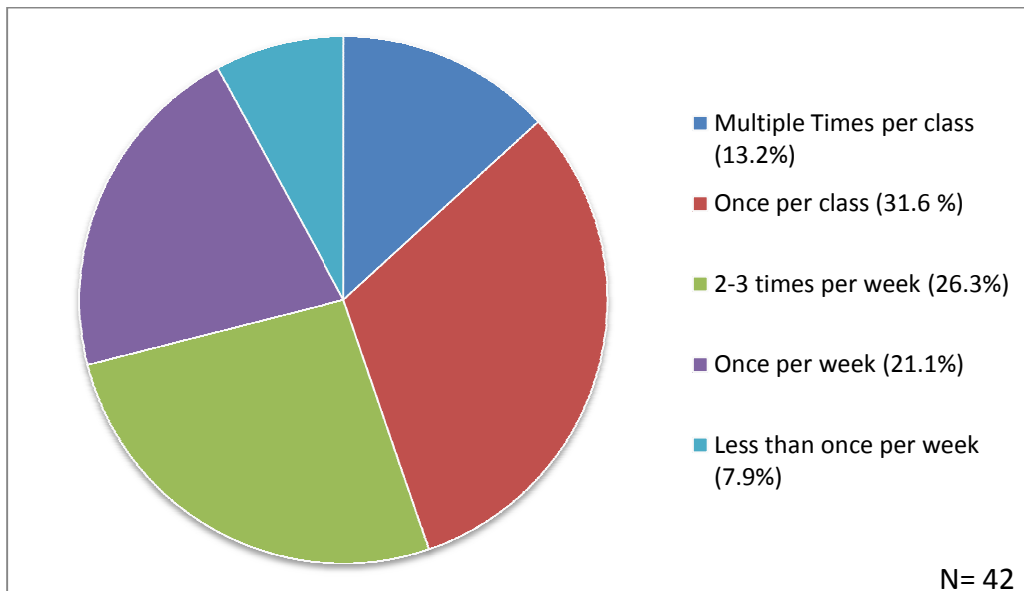


Figure 7. Student perception of TL use.

Only 8% of students (the smallest percentage) thought that they used original TL less than once per week. Once per week is defined as any time during any five of the fifty minute class periods per week. Twenty percent of students thought that they used original TL at least once per week and 26% thought they used original TL two or three times a week. The largest group at 32% though they used original TL at least once per fifty minute class period each day. The last group, at 13% thought that they produced original utterances more than once per class period.

While documenting the use of original TL by students I found a very different reality (see Figure 8). Only 2% of students used original TL more than once per class. Only about 5% of students used original phrases two or three times a week and only about 5% used any original TL once per week. The largest group by far was comprised of students using original TL less than once per week at 88%. These results only

underline my need to do more to encourage my students to use original TL and find ways to help them do so.

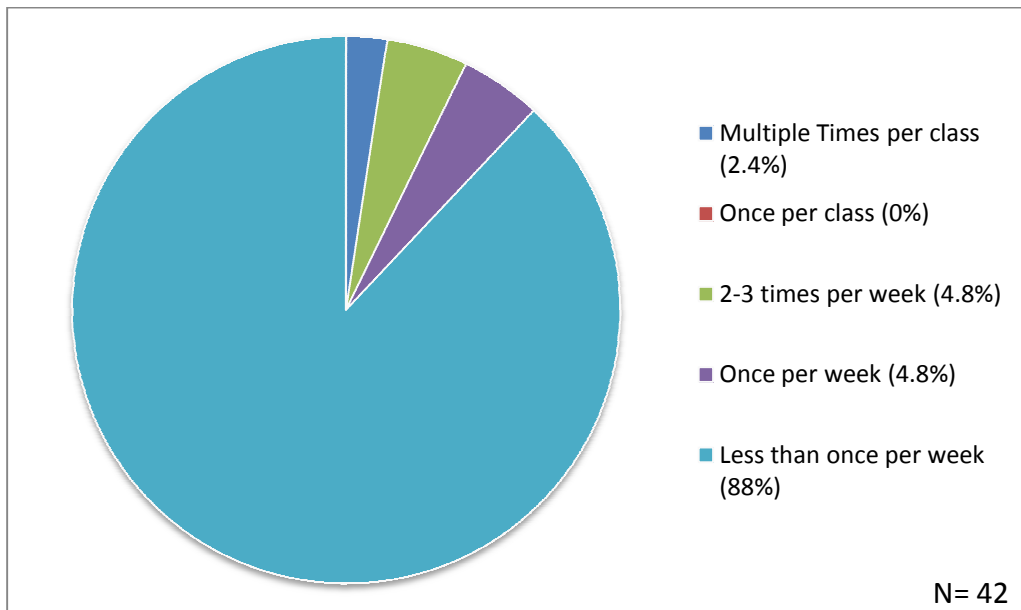


Figure 8. Actual use of TL by students: pilot study

The answers from the second survey question that asked students to name reasons they do not use more TL in class revealed a key piece of information. When asked why they do not use more of the TL in class, most students responded that they did not feel it was expected of them (see Figure 9). While I want and expect my students to use more language as they continue to develop their language skills, I clearly did not communicate this to the students. Other reasons show a lack of confidence in students in their ability to use the L2 in a communicative manner. Most of the responses in the “other” category actually fit into one of the other categories or were issues unable to be addressed in this study. Examples of this are statements such as, “It won’t sound right,” “I don’t feel like it,” and “I don’t know how to use the future tense yet.”

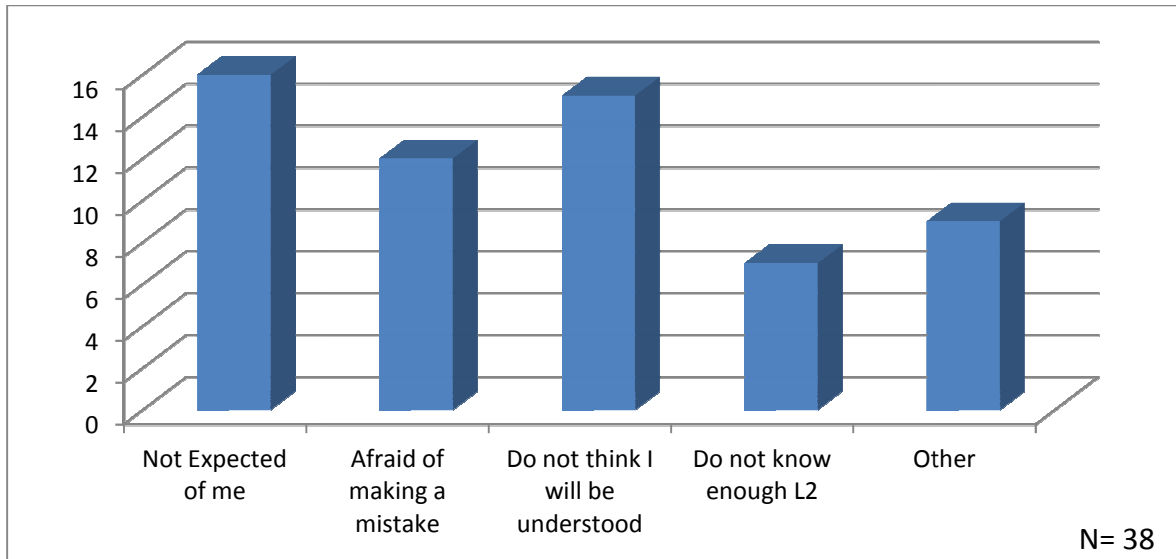


Figure 9. Student reasons for not using more TL in class.

The open ended responses to the last question on the survey somewhat echoed the previous question about what inhibits students in their language use, but some students offered different perspectives. The question was what could I do to encourage them or make it easier for them to use more of the TL in class? Their answers fell into one of five themes (see Table 2). One category was comprised of non-answers. Some students did not write anything or responded with sentences like, “I don’t know. You do a good job.” Another category repeated some of the confidence issues expressed in response to the second question. Students replied with sentences like, “I’m just afraid of being wrong,” or, “Talk more but not in front of the class because people will get nervous.” The third category was made up of responses like, “Play more games,” and, “You can give us extra credit if you use a certain amount in a certain timeframe,” showing that students expect some type of reward for using more language in class. The fourth category gave some specific suggestions for classroom activities. Many suggestions had similar themes such

as using some class time each day or one entire day each week to use the TL or talking about specific things that students are familiar with using the TL.

Table 2. Coded survey responses, themes, and assertions.

Codes from survey	Themes	Assertions
encourage us give a reason make it mandatory if expected ask us tell us make us make it expected	Expectations	1. Many students feel that being told more TL use is expected of them is the only motivation they need to use more TL.
fun interesting extra credit play games award system get a prize eat cookies less tests	Rewards	2. Some students need more motivation to use the TL, such as a reward or activities they view as entertaining. They also want a say in what activities are used in class.
one day only Spanish create actions class discussion more conversation activities weekend plans talking	Classroom suggestions	
not confident afraid nervous do not remember	Confidence/ comfort	3. Some students do not have a clear idea of what would motivate them to use more of the TL or do not feel comfortable enough to use it in class.
nothing don't know usual good job (no answer)	Non-answers	

The final category, and the biggest, was about the expectations of language use. Students said, “Just tell us to use more I guess,” and, “If it was expected of us, I think I would use more Spanish.” This shows that I was not being clear of my expectations for students to use the TL and that many believe that they do not need any more encouragement other than being told it is expected of them to try and use more language. Others want to feel like they are being rewarded or gaining something for using more TL in class. Finally, some students do not have a clear idea of what would motivate them to use more language, or require motivation with additional comfort and support to feel able to use more of the TL in class.

Based on these answers and my own previous research I developed a plan for the next few weeks of class in the pilot study in the spring that I implemented and then tracked students’ language use with a checklist and observational field notes.

Week one: students were asked to use more of the TL.

Week two: I talked with them about CS, asked them to use as much as they could in the TL, and to not be afraid of making a mistake or to use CS if they could not put together a full sentence in the TL.

Week three: class time was set aside each day for students to converse in small groups about a topic of their choice, although they were provided with some suggestions based on the vocabulary they knew and topics they were familiar with.

Week four: students could earn extra credit points for using the TL in class.

Looking at the data as a whole, there are some definite trends in the amount of TL used by students in each class. As all teachers know, no class is the same and none of my

classes responded in the exact same way to each new round of interventions, but by the end of the data collection there were times in each class that I had to frantically take notes and was having trouble keeping up in tracking how much language was being used because so many students were trying to use so much all at once. The trends are displayed in Figures 10 and 11 following the discussion.

During the first week in the pilot study, the results were not spectacular. While nearly 40% of students stated that they only needed to be told that I expected them to use the TL, this was not often demonstrated during the first week of data collection. Some students did try to increase their TL use. I documented eight students using the TL during the week compared to the five spring semester students using the TL during the original data collection. A good sign was that five of them used multiple original phrases during the week (if not yet at the point of using multiple phrases per class). The language used varied from short phrases such as one student announcing to the class that we had a quiz that day to another student telling me in a correct, complete sentence that she liked my makeup another day. Other students even started experimenting with CS even though it had not been discussed as a strategy yet. My classes were displaced to another room one day so the FL classrooms could be used to administer the ACT and after this was announced one student asked, “¿Por qué aquí? (Why here?) ¿Por qué no en (why not in) the English classrooms?” This same student used at least one original phrase each day of class during the week. During this week the students started out strong, but their determination lessened by the end of the week. This may also be contributed to the fact that as the week went on I become more concerned with the lesson material I needed to cover and I forgot to remind students of the expectations regularly.

During the second week of data collection in the spring I reminded students that they were expected to use more of the TL and discussed CS with each class. I told them that they should use the TL as much as possible but that they could use English to get past tricky spots that they did not know how to communicate in the TL. Students seemed to respond favorably to the idea of CS; many commented that they already do this with friends and accidentally when writing. This week showed mixed results, however. Only seven students used original phrases in class. Some of them were students who had not previously used original TL in class before, however. The students using the TL also used it more often during the week. In one class two students used original language and both used it multiple times that week. One student used it multiple times per class including some use of CS asking, “¿Me permite (may I) throw it?” This student also correctly used the past tense, which is what they were studying at the time, to say that she thought her recent chemistry test was “stupid.” While perhaps not the most academically appropriate sentence, it was very good use of the TL. The most promising data from this week showed three students using the TL that had not yet done so. Students also started to make time to talk to me in the TL during the few minutes before or after class during this week.

In week three of the pilot study I set aside some time each day for students to speak to each other in small groups using the TL. I asked a student in each group to take notes on what was said. I sat in on some groups and listened. The groups were different each day and the students talked about something different each day although I tried to provide topics the students could use that included vocabulary they had studied. The students in one of the classes were quite successful in carrying on conversations in the TL

while the conversations tended to be choppy and bounce from topic to topic more quickly in the others. Many students incorporated CS during these conversations, yet every student also put together at least one short sentence in the TL that was part of a conversation with others.

This week was definitely a turning point in my study. Each student participated in the conversation when it was a defined part of the class each day. In addition, more students started using the TL at other times during class. Over the course of the week, fifteen students uttered original phrases in addition to the TL used during the conversation time each day. Six students used the TL multiple times during the week. A few students at this point showed growth in the amount of language used while new students started to incorporate the TL into class. Some students also started to make good use of CS constructing longer phrases using more TL, yet switching to English for the phrases they do not know. One student told a classmate during a discussion, “No es importante porque podemos (it’s not important because we can) codeswitching,” when someone asked me how to say word in the TL. Another thing I observed during this week was more students starting to talk to each other in the TL, not only during the small group discussion or to ask me a question or in response to something I said first. I do not know exactly what to attribute this sudden leap in language use to. It may have been that three weeks into my study more students started to take me seriously when I said they needed to use more language, but I also think that perhaps the small group discussion “broke the ice” for some students and got them to start each class thinking more in the TL and this carried through the rest of the class time.

For the fourth week of data collection in the spring, I instituted a policy that students could earn extra credit points for using a certain amount of the TL during the week. I wanted to see if the idea of a “reward” would have an impact on the amount of TL used. I told the students that I will give them one point for every short phrase or sentence using the TL and CS they use and two points for every complete sentence they use in the TL. For every 10 points they get I will give them five actual points of extra credit. Even though the students themselves listed the expectation of the teacher as the greatest motivator at the start of the study, for many more students the “reward” of extra credit points and the chance to improve their grades resulted in the greatest number of students using the TL. Nineteen students used the TL language in original sentences and phrases during this week. While certain classes did better than others in the previous weeks they were all close to the same this week. Even better, most students used the TL multiple times per week or multiple times per class. Students tried to find situations where they could use more language. One student stopped before leaving class to tell me his favorite tennis player won the Madrid Open and he did so completely in the TL. Another student told me in class that she liked my eyes in the TL. Some students stopped to talk with me in the hall between or before class to earn more points so they could earn more extra credit. At the end of the four week pilot study in the spring I was able to document growth not only in the number of students using the TL but also in the amount of TL the students used (see Figures 10 and 11).

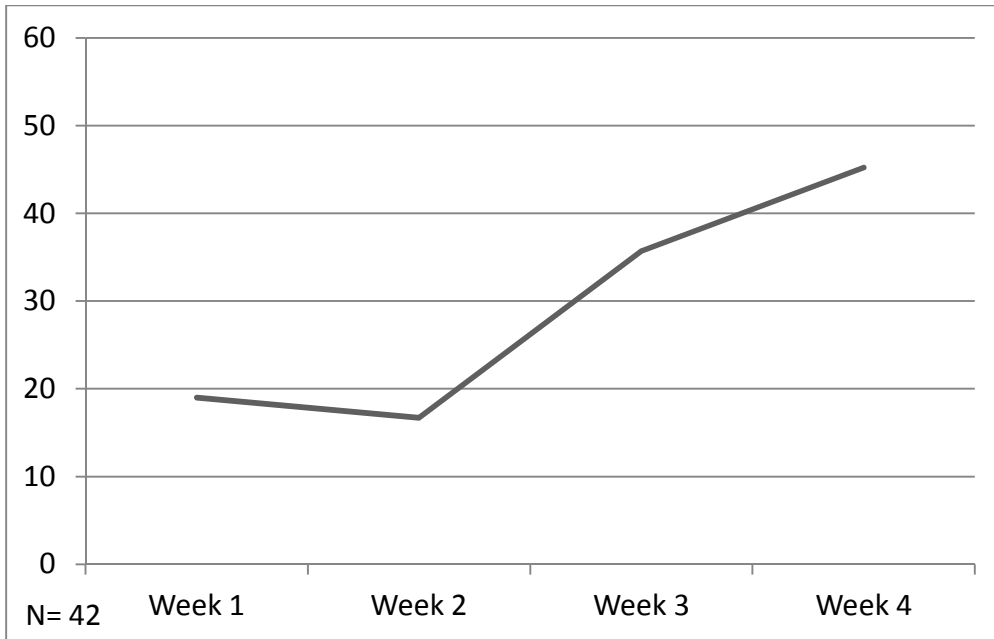


Figure 10. Percentage of students using TL: pilot study.

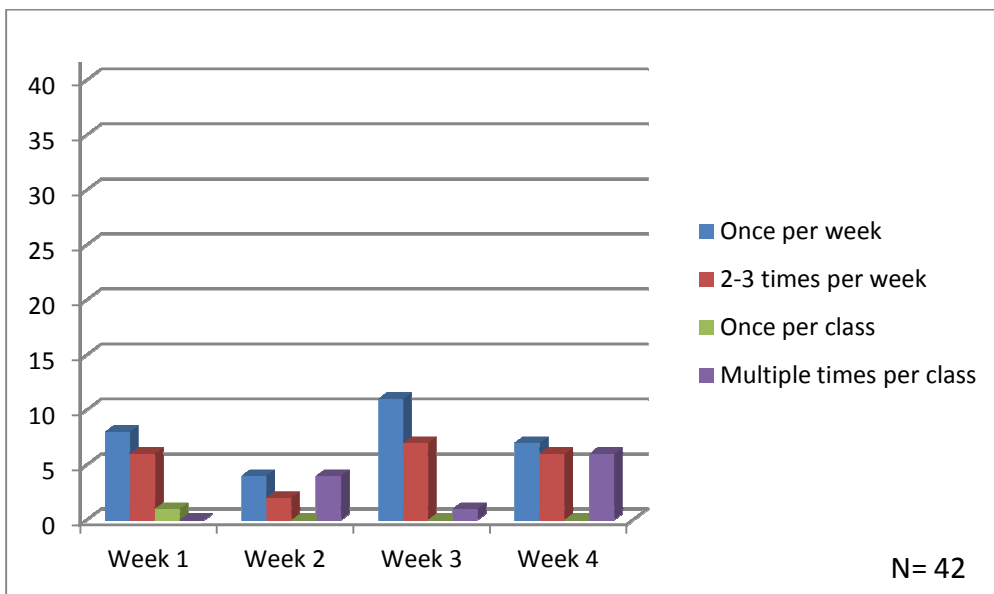


Figure 11. Amount of TL used: pilot study

As Figure 11 shows above, the amount of TL use shifted quite dramatically over the four weeks in the spring. During the first week no one was using the TL multiple times per class period. By the fourth week, the number of students in that category was almost even with the amount using the TL only once per week. While the number of

students using the TL at least once per week fluctuated quite a bit and was actually a little lower at the end of the fourth week, some of those students joined the groups using the TL two or three times per week or multiple times per class period. Of note, there were still many students who had not produced any original TL by the end of the fourth week. While the expectation was motivation for some during the first two weeks and the external motivation of bonus points motivated more during the fourth week, clearly some students still need some other source of motivation.

There was also a noticeable change in the students' written work in the spring. While not originally meant to be part of my data, the last quiz I gave my spring students demonstrated clear growth for some students using the TL. On the last quiz the students had the opportunity to write original sentences using irregular verbs in the past tense to earn extra credit points. Many students attempted the extra credit and quite a few earned points although their sentences were not always particularly "original." For the verb "to produce" I modeled sentences in class like, "Costa Rica produced a lot of coffee last year," and many students wrote something similar. For the students that used the most TL in class, however, they showed improvement in both the length and originality of their sentences. The students who consistently tried to use more of the TL in class tried to use more original vocabulary and expand beyond the basic sentences we practiced the verbs with. One student wrote, "El perro produjo muchos perritos el año pasado (The dog produced a lot of puppies last year)," and another wrote, "Mi mamá produjo la leche para el bebé (My mom produced milk for the baby)." With the verb "to come," instead of people coming to parties or houses or schools like in the sentences we practiced with in class, two students wrote, "Los niños vinieron a mi puerta el pasado Halloween (The

children came to my door last Halloween),” and “Yo vine a la boda de mi hermano el sábado (I came to my brother’s wedding on Saturday).” All of these sentences are complete sentences using vocabulary that we did not use with these verbs in class demonstrating a great deal of originality from the students. While they may not be completely correct either grammatically or idiomatically, students had never written so many sentences that demonstrated true originality on this quiz and I see it as an unforeseen outcome of my study with spoken TL in the classroom.

Fall Classes, 2014

Using the data collected from the spring classes I created a plan for the new fall classes. The fall classes were not yet at the level of the spring classes from the previous year, so I modified the interventions to take into account their general experience with the TL.

I again spent one week documenting how much TL the students used without any interventions and the results were similar to the results from the pilot study in the spring (see Figure 12).

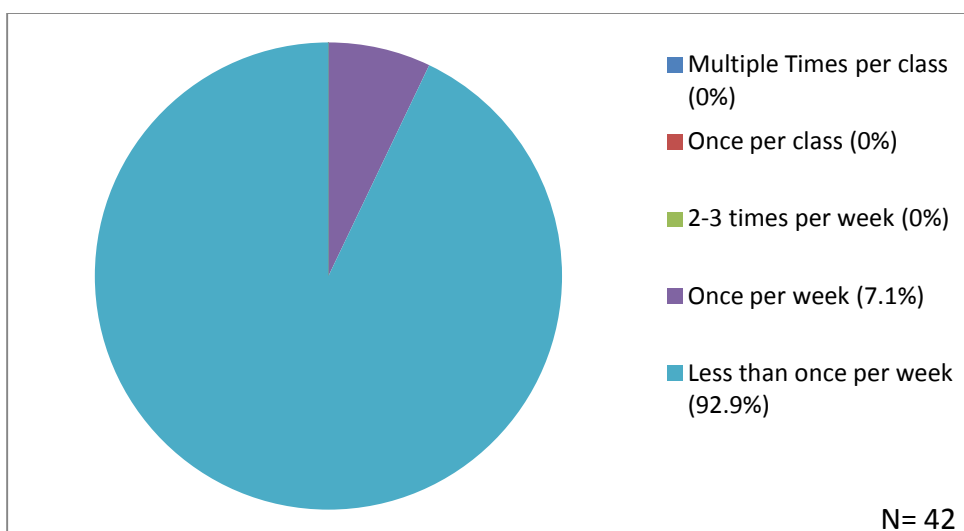


Figure 12: Actual use of TL by students: fall classes.

Only 7.1% of students used original TL once per week and no one used the TL multiple times per week much less per class. The vast majority of students, again, did not use any original TL.

For the first week in the fall I used the same intervention from the pilot study; telling students more TL use is expected during the first week. Reminding the students of my expectations and asking them to use CS became a constant intervention for the remaining weeks in my fall classes. After seeing the results from the pilot study I decided to draw out the implementation of interventions to incorporate the entire school year.

During the first week, the results were comparable between the spring and the fall. Some students tried to use more of the TL in class, but not many. Out of forty-two students only six used original TL in class. Two students were able to use the TL multiple times per week. Some of the utterances were complete sentences almost entirely in the TL; they were examples of using the TL in authentic communicative situations. One student said that he was not going to be in class the next day and when I asked why he responded, “Yo tengo un examen mañana (I have a test tomorrow), el PSAT.”

The second week in the fall repeated the second week intervention from the spring. Students were reminded of the expectation of using more TL in class and then told to use CS to facilitate TL use. Again, the results in the fall were similar to results in the spring. Fewer students used the TL, but two students used the TL that had not used any during week one. Similar to the previous week, students tried to use sentence length discourse almost entirely in the TL. A student asked me how to say “to attend” and then used that verb in a complete sentence to ask if I planned to attend the football game that

night. Of the three students that used the TL, one was able to use it more than once during the week.

At this point my study diverged from the pilot study in the spring. The current students were not as advanced as the spring students were because they had less instruction and practice with the TL. I chose to continue the second week’s intervention of using CS and reminding students of the expectation to use more TL for a longer period of time.

For the third week in the fall, then, the intervention was essentially the same as the second week. I continued to remind students of the expectations and reminded them to try using CS. During this week a few more students used the TL compared to the second week. Five students used original TL and encouragingly, two were students who had not previously used any TL. One used CS to ask, “Puede ir a un (Can I go) choir lesson mañana o jueves (tomorrow or Thursday)?” Like some of the other examples used from the fall semester, this sentence is complete, mostly in the TL, and is being used to communicate in a meaningful way. The same intervention continued into the fourth week with another slight increase in the number of students using the TL.

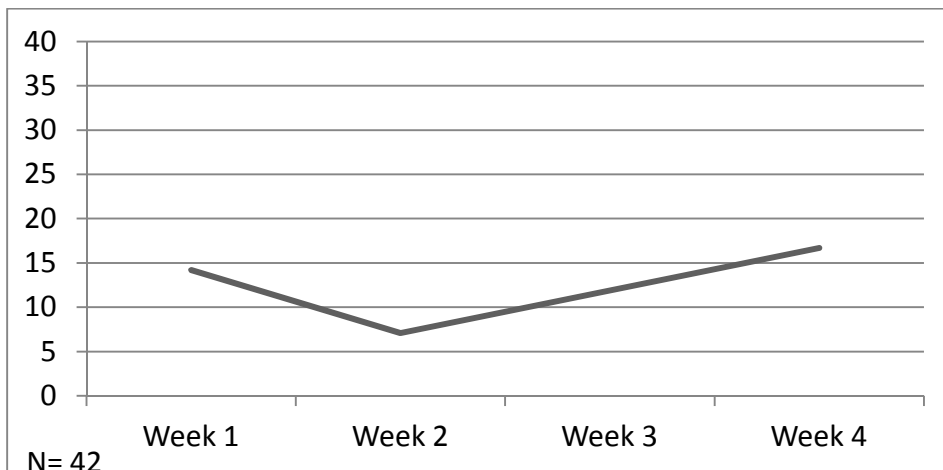


Figure 13. Percentage of students using TL: fall classes

As Figure 13 (see above) demonstrates, the same trend that occurred in the spring occurred in the fall between weeks one and two. When students were asked to use more TL they started out strong, but without consistent reminders, and even with the option to use CS, they did not use as much TL. Again, this may be contributed to the fact that as I concentrated more on the lessons each day and the overarching scope of the unit I was less diligent in reminding them of the expectation to use more of the TL.

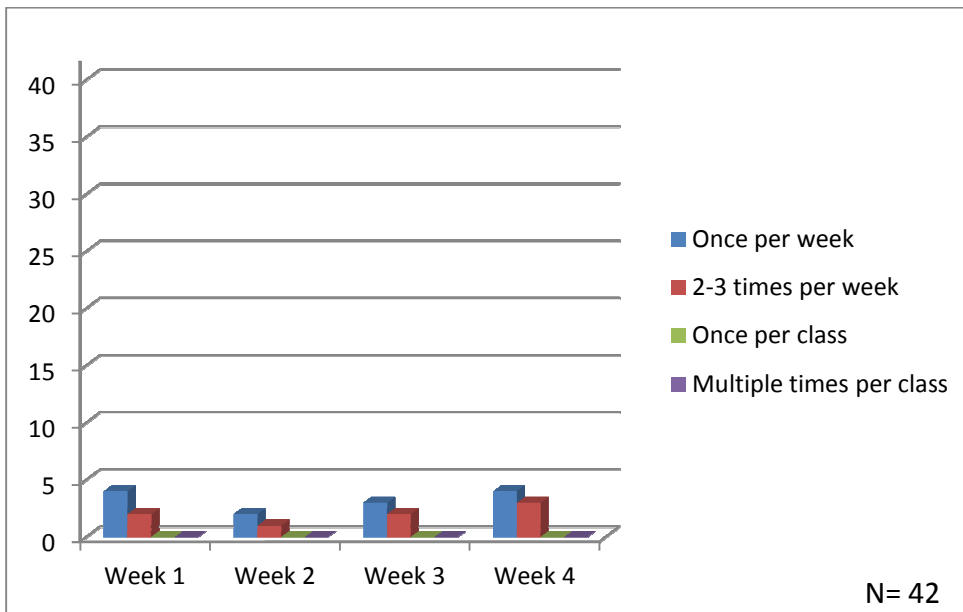


Figure 14. Amount of TL used: fall classes

Figure 14 (see above) shows that the students in the fall used the TL either once per week or two to three times per week. No one was able to use the TL once per class throughout the week much less multiple times per class. There were also no more than five students in any category. These students have less experience with the language, however, and over the course of the entire school year I expect that these numbers can change. These numbers also point to the fact that merely having the expectations stated and reiterated is still not enough motivation for many students to take a risk in using original TL in class.

The small group discussion intervention from the third week in the pilot study is something I used differently in the fall. Instead of having a discussion every day, which at this early point in the year I feared would be overwhelming and a little too difficult for many students, I tried to incorporate a small group discussion within each unit taught. Towards the end of the unit when most students had learned and had adequate practice with the vocabulary I gave them two or three questions to ask each other pertaining to the current unit. I did not ask a student to take notes but did sit with a group to observe participated if asked questions. Again, every student I listened to was able to contribute to the conversation using the TL. Many of them used CS, while others tried to stay entirely in the TL and talk around the words they did not know. When one student asked another student how to say average size, the student asked replied, “Um, no es grande y no es pequeño (it is not big and it is not small).” This is an example of circumlocution and is something that requires creativity and thinking to accomplish. Seeing this example in the fall semester is greatly encouraging for the rest of the year. The extra credit intervention from the pilot study is something I also plan to incorporate later in the year as the students progress in their language study.

At the end of four weeks the growth in the fall was not as dramatic as in the spring (see Figures 10, 11, 13, and 14), but it is early in the year and I will continue to document my current students’ use of the TL throughout the rest of the school year and will compare it to the findings from my pilot study when they are at similar points in linguistic ability.

This study began with the question of how to encourage students to use more original TL in my Level II Spanish classes? To the original question I added how can I

increase students' willingness to communicate, their sense of autonomy and motivation to learn Spanish, and what are some specific strategies I can implement to accomplish this? From the perspective of the students the answers to these questions are to make the expectation that they use the TL clear and also reward them in some way if they use it. Others feel that they need to be more comfortable in class to use more TL. Through the interventions implemented in class it is clear that a combination of expectations, rewards, and providing opportunities through activities to produce more original TL can be effective. While not all students used the TL throughout the course of the study, there was an increase in the amount of TL in just a few short weeks during both the spring and fall semesters. With continued practice, repeated expectations, and improved motivation, I expect that the amount of TL use in my classes will continue to grow.

CHAPTER V

ACTION PLAN

The implications from this study for my future classes and possibly for other FL teachers are great. Throughout this research I found ways to motivate my students to use more of the TL as well as different pedagogical strategies I can use in class to encourage and ease TL use. Through observing my students in class and seeing their work post-intervention I can see a definite difference in their language use, both oral and written. I believe that what I ascertained can aid other FL teachers in finding new ways to encourage TL use without necessarily implementing a TL only policy in their classes.

As a foreign language teacher I believe the TL should be used as much as possible in the classroom, but in novice-level classes, a TL only environment is often seen in a negative light by students; some may become easily frustrated and shut down (Lee, 2012, Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012). This led to me to wonder; how can I encourage my Level II Spanish students to use more TL without instituting a TL only policy? This wondering then led to the cycle of inquiry and becoming a teacher researcher (Dana, 2013). After refining the wondering to include how to increase the students' willingness to communicate, how to increase student autonomy and motivation, and what are some specific strategies that can be used in the FL classroom, I designed a study to document how much TL the students use without any intervention and then how much they use after implementing different strategies to encourage TL use.

Before moving on to the second step of the inquiry cycle, collecting data, I conducted research to find out what factors go into creating an atmosphere conducive to student participation in the FL classroom. Gahala (1986) identified four areas, 1) teacher expectations, 2) classroom atmosphere, 3) instructional formats, and 4) classroom activities. To this I added 1) classroom strategies and 2) student motivation. The most interesting strategy I found was the use of CS in the FL classroom and recent research has identified CS as a sound pedagogical tool (Cheng, 2013, Lee, 2012).

Some of the data I collected came from a survey administered to students to gain their input and insight into what would encourage and motivate them to use more original TL in class. Analyzing the student responses, step three of the inquiry cycle, led me to three assertions that helped guide the continuing research. One, some students feel that the only motivation they need to use more TL is to be told it is expected of them. Two, some students need more motivation such as feeling they are going to be rewarded or have fun. Three, there are some students who need to feel more comfortable to use the TL or have little idea what it would take to motivate them to use more TL. These assertions guided the interventions used in the study, step four of the inquiry cycle. I began by stating the expectations clearly, had students try to use CS to create a low-risk environment, structured lessons to include use of the TL in small, low-risk groups, and offered students a “reward” by letting them earn extra credit points for using original TL in class. During each intervention I documented how many students used the TL in class and how often they used it. This continued the inquiry cycle by producing more data that I could analyze to see if the amount of TL use increased with the interventions used. I

am now at the point where I am ready to end the first complete cycle of classroom inquiry and share the findings from the study.

One of the most important outcomes of this study is the affirmation that expectation plays a role in encouraging students to use more TL in the classroom. They see it is a major component in motivating them to use more of the TL and so I need to be clearer in my expectations for my students and remind them of my expectations more frequently. This does not work for all students, though, and there were many students that, except for in the small group discussions, did not use any original TL in class the entire duration of the study. With subsequent classes I will need to keep seeking out new ways to motivate my students and increase their interest and willingness to use the TL.

Since I am still working with the students currently in my classes, there are some things I will do with them later in the year that I did not feel able to attempt yet with their current proficiency in the L2. For students that are intrinsically motivated and who actually want to learn to use the language to communicate I want to provide them more opportunity to do so. This may mean incorporating more small-group discussions or days where the students are told they are expected to only use the TL. I will also gauge student interest in setting aside a time outside of class for discussion. For another example, I plan to offer them extra credit for using the TL during the 3rd quarter of the year. This intervention was the most successful during the pilot study and shows that more students need an external motivator than may think so. Then, if the data is favorable, I will go a step further and make the use of TL an assignment during the 4th quarter. This would provide students a stronger external motivator because not using the TL would negatively affect their grades whereas before the only result for using the TL

was to better their grades. With three quarters of practice using original TL and CS it is possible that all students will be able to use some on at least a weekly basis during the last quarter.

The one area I did not feel I had adequate time to prepare for and address in my study was how to alleviate the confidence issues some students expressed. I feel like this is important and may have been the main reason some students did not produce any original TL at all. While the strategy of CS helped some students and the small-group discussion led to more students using the language in a low-risk environment in front of only a few other students, I learned that I need to keep looking for strategies and resources to help students feel more comfortable in using the TL and to help them feel more able to do so. To try to address this during the rest of the school year I will try point out some low-risk situations students can take advantage of. Since some students tried using the TL in the few minutes before and after class, this fall I explicitly told my students that talking to me during those times is something they can try so they are not talking in front of the entire class. I also encouraged them to practice original phrases with their partners before trying them in class or with me. A final tool I want to try using in my classes this year is to have students create their own “dictionary” of phrases and words they learn outside of the vocabulary taught. This is a tool many language learners, myself included, use when traveling but I think it can work equally well in the classroom, especially for the students who are highly motivated already and are always asking how to say new things.

I started my study with the question of how to encourage my students to use more of the TL in the classroom. While many students did not use any original TL through the

course of the study, I did document improvement for many students. By making the expectation clear to students that they use more TL, by implementing strategies to ease their TL use, and instituting systems that “reward” students for using more of the TL, the percentage of students using the TL rose from less than 10% to more than 40%. The unanticipated result of my study was an increase in the output and quality of students’ written work as well.

How to encourage my students to use more TL is something that I will continue to study with my current and future classes. With the data collected from my spring classes I was able to start some interventions earlier in the year and modify what I did last year. Inquiry is a cycle, though, so I will continue to explore, wonder, and research what will best encourage students to produce more of the TL in class to see if I can improve the results and help my students become more proficient communicators.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval

REPORT OF ACTION: EXEMPT/EXPEDITED REVIEW
University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board

Date: 3/26/2014 Project Number: IRB-201404-387

Principal Investigator: Bolatad, Kaltheen

Department: Education and Human Development

Project Title: Increasing Target Language Use in my Spanish II Classrooms

The above described project was reviewed by a designated member for the University's Institutional Review Board on 4/8/2014 and the following action was taken:

Project approved. Expedited Review Category No. 7
Next scheduled review must be before: APR 7 2015
 Copies of the attached consent form with the IRB approval stamp dated APR 8 2014 must be used in obtaining consent for this study.

Project approved. Exempt Review Category No. _____
 This approval is valid until _____ as long as approved procedures are followed. No periodic review scheduled unless so stated in the Remarks Section.

Copies of the attached consent form with the IRB approval stamp dated _____ must be used in obtaining consent for this study.

Minor modifications required. The required corrections/additions must be submitted to RDC for review and approval. This study may NOT be started UNTIL final IRB approval has been received.

Project approval deferred. This study may not be started until final IRB approval has been received. (See Remarks Section for further information.)

Disapproved claim of exemption. This project requires Expedited or Full Board review. The Human Subjects Review Form must be filed out and submitted to the IRB for review.

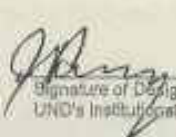
Proposed project is not human subjects research as defined under Federal regulations 45 CFR 46 or 21 CFR 50 and does not require IRB review.

Not Research Not Human Subject

PLEASE NOTE: Requested revisions for student proposals MUST include adviser's signatures. All revisions MUST be highlighted and submitted to the IRB within 90 days of the above review date.

Education Requirements Completed. (Project cannot be started until IRB education requirements are met.)

cc: Dr. Jodi Bergland Hulen


Signature of Designated IRB Member
UND's Institutional Review Board

4/8/2014
Date

If the proposed project (clinical medical) is to be part of a research activity funded by a Federal Agency, a special assurance statement or a completed 310 Form may be required. Contact RDC to obtain the required documents.

(Revised 10/2008)

APPENDIX B

Parent Consent Form

Parent Consent Form
Increasing Target Language usage in my Spanish II classrooms
Primary Researcher: Kathleen Holstad

Your student is being asked to participate in a study in my Spanish II classrooms on how different strategies and procedures can create an environment in which students feel more comfortable and able to use original Spanish. This study is being conducted as a part of my Action Research class at the University of North Dakota with Dr. Jodi Bergland Holen. It may also become part of my final thesis before I graduate with my Masters Degree. Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to let your student participate in the study.

Since the purpose of this study is to find out what I can do to encourage my students to use more Spanish, there will not be anything expected of them that I would not normally ask as part of normal class work. The reason for this consent form is to grant permission for me to use the data I collect outside of the classroom as part of a study.

This study will be conducted in the classroom. There is no risk involved. There will be no compensation for participating in the study.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify individual students. Research records will be kept in a locked file and only I will have access to them.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You or your student may request at any time to no longer be a part of the study. A student's withdrawal from the study will in no way impact their grade or their standing in my class.

If you have questions now or later, you can reach me at kathleen.holstad@nd.govschools.org or 701-213-3778. If you have questions regarding your or your students' rights as a research subject, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____
Your Name (printed) _____
Your Child's Name
(printed) _____

Approval Date: APR 8 2014

Expiration Date: APR 7 2015

University of North Dakota IRB

APPENDIX C

Student Consent Form

Student Consent Form
Increasing Target Language usage in my Spanish II classrooms
Primary Researcher: Kathleen Bolstad

You are being asked to participate in a study in my Spanish II classrooms on how different strategies and procedures can create an environment in which students feel more comfortable and able to use original Spanish. This study is being conducted as a part of my Action Research class at the University of North Dakota with Dr. Jodi Bergland Holm. It may also become part of my final thesis before I graduate with my Masters Degree. Please read the following information carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Since the purpose of this study is to find out what I can do to encourage my students to use more Spanish, there will not be anything expected of you that I would not normally ask as part of normal class work. The reason for this consent form is to grant permission for me to use the data I collect outside of the classroom as part of a study.

This study will be conducted in the classroom. There is no risk involved. There will be no compensation for participating in the study.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify individual students. Research records will be kept in a locked file and only I will have access to them.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may request at any time to no longer be a part of the study. Withdrawal from the study will in no way impact your grade or your standing in my class.

If you have questions now or later, you can reach me at kathleen.bolstad@nd.scholarship.org or 701-213-3778. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or if you have any concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

Approval Date:	APR 8 2014
Expiration Date:	APR 7 2015
University of North Dakota IRB	

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