



It will be so much better (in English)!: Uses of English and Spanish in a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

This study considers how participants in a small, beginning foreign language Spanish class use English and Spanish to talk about real events. Data are analyzed using an imagined communities framework, which conceives of foreign language classrooms as sites where learners converge to learn language in preparation for future real-world use. Monday discussions about students' weekends are submitted to microanalysis that considers how students use English and Spanish to recount real events in ways that construct their immediate social context, and/or prepare them for future language use. Building on an intuitive starting point that language choice relates to student investment in storytelling, discourse analysis reveals that language choice also relates to the specificity and predictability of stories, and to who takes conversational control of their telling.

1 Introduction

Upon beginning observations in the Spanish as a foreign language (FL) classroom, from which the data for this study came, I soon noted classroom instances in which students *really* wanted to share stories with their classmates: Stories they would likely recount to friends in contexts where English, not Spanish, was the accepted linguistic medium; stories that were there for social purposes, rather than linguistic practice. Students often asked teacher permission to recount these stories in English, rather than Spanish. My take-away from these scenarios was that students' uses for Spanish were not aligned with socially meaningful interaction: Spanish could be exchanged for English when the message was *actually* important. That students may reserve Spanish for non-urgent language acts piqued my interest, because it pointed to the possibility that Spanish was not used for real interactions. The present study is inspired by this anecdotal starting point, and attempts to thoroughly and systematically consider the nuances of Spanish and English use in this beginning language classroom, specifically when the topic of talk is potentially immediately socially meaningful.

2 Theoretical framework

The extent to and ways by which language use in the context of the FL classroom is socially authentic has been an emergent theme in the literature over recent decades, particularly in theoretical works (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Kramsch, 1993; van Lier, 1996, 2011). Scholars (Gee, 2005; Levine, 2011) generally agree that language use of any sort is socially situated in some way (albeit in a contrived environment such as an FL classroom), and is therefore authentic. Still, there re-

mains a certain preoccupation surrounding the social authenticity of FL use, because often, students are practicing the FL in order to use it ‘for real’ in the future.

In considering the data for this study, I make use of Norton’s (2001) notion of imagined communities, which frames FL classrooms as sites where learners converge to learn language, in order to pursue various social ends elsewhere in an actual or imagined future. That is, FL education is oriented to students’ possible futures as language users in the social world(s) beyond the classroom. Traditional FL discourse might therefore be thought of as largely preparatory of an imagined future in which talk might facilitate uncontrived communicative ends.

The very nature of the FL endeavor is such that absent people (often native-speaker strangers) and real-world situations must be conjured as possibilities. Unlike Lave and Wenger’s (1991) communities of practice, which focuses on groups of individuals united by a common purpose, the idea of imagined communities extends beyond the concrete boundaries of the FL classroom, necessitating an additional dimension in understanding participants’ experiences: FL participants must constantly negotiate between their immediate linguistic and social contexts, and their respective linguistic and social futures.

This all happens *within* an FL classroom setting, and theoretically every moment is thus co-constructed by participants as something that contributes to the present and/or the future, via language practice and/or socially meaningful communication. Teacher use of the first language (L1) for classroom management purposes is a common finding noted in the literature review, and exemplifies socially meaningful communication in the immediate present. Conversely, many language “exercises, question-and-answer work, and other *unreal* (non-communicative) things” share no reciprocity with the immediate social environment of the classroom, and are therefore symbolically situated beyond it (Clark, 1981, p. 153, italics in original). These two examples each quite clearly fall into one temporal realm (i.e. present or future) and into one language realm (language practice or social communication): My assertion is that most language sequences in their entirety do not fit neatly into these categories, and are negotiated by participants as they co-construct the temporal and linguistic properties of their discourse.

3 Review of the literature

Historically, L1 use in the FL classroom has been approached empirically from a quantitative angle, and has focused predominantly on teacher language (Duff & Polio, 1990; Guthrie, 1987; Levine, 2003; Wing, 1987). As the L1 is invariably present to some degree, there has more recently been a lively debate as to whether it should be embraced or avoided (Cook, 2001; Levine, 2011; Macaro, 2001, 2005; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009). One point upon which all parties appear to agree is that any attempt to fully exclude the L1 from the FL classroom denies students the opportunity to become authentically bilingual. Researchers who have considered the role the L1 plays in student progress argue that it is not only helpful to certain FL learning tasks (Brooks, Donato, & McGlone, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) but that it should be regarded as a “critical psychological tool” that permits students to externalize their inner speech (Antón & Dicastilla, 1999, p. 245).

Some early work into the role of L1 in the FL classroom considered not only the amount of L1 use, but took into consideration the nature of the communication being enacted. For example, Wing (1987) distinguished between language for communicative ends and language that described the FL, and found that communicative functions were slightly less likely to take place in the FL. Guthrie (1987) took a similar approach, classifying entire lessons as either content-focused or form-focused. Polio and Duff (1994) appreciate the decision to classify language based on communicative function, but unlike Guthrie, who classified entire sequences of talk under one discursive function, and unlike Wing, who classified utterances individually, Polio and Duff note the importance of the variation of language within each sequence, and thus conducted a microanalysis of sequences of talk in university FL classrooms. Polio and Duff found various teacher uses of the L1, including for grammar instruction, for classroom management, and to offer empathy to students. Isolated English terms such as “review section,” “midterm,” and “homework,” which the

authors refer to as “administrative vocabulary” (p. 317), constituted the most frequent uses of the FL.

Levine (2011), in reflecting on a previous study (Levine, 2003), notes that “in contexts often deemed most important to students, such as gathering information about tests and course policies ... the L1 appears to be the default choice a good deal of the time” (Levine, 2011, p. 79). Indeed, McMillan and Turnbull (2009) note that even one of their case study teachers who was staunchly opposed to L1 use in his classroom used it to outline classroom policies, including an “orientation session” (p. 32) in English. Similarly, research has repeatedly revealed that L1 is quite often used for discipline and classroom management purposes (Franklin, 1990; Macaro, 1997; Nagy & Robertson, 2009; Polio & Duff, 1994). Polio and Duff (1994) argue that classroom directions often constitute “the most authentic and natural communication in the classroom” (p. 322), and that neglecting to use the FL for those purposes situates it apart from those markers of real communication.

Polio and Duff (1994) also found that FL teachers used their students' L1 to check on student wellbeing, display empathy, and build rapport with students; and Macaro (1997) observed that teachers utilized the L1 for special praise. On this topic, Cook (2001) notes that offering praise in the L1 may feel more “real” as the teacher is “treating the students as their real selves rather than dealing with assumed L2 personas” (p. 416). Polio and Duff (1994) actually point out that this scenario is not ideal in that it “prevents students from receiving input they might be exposed to in ‘real life’ situations outside the classroom and reinforces the notion that English, not the FL, is the language for genuine communication” (p. 322). Levine (2011, p. 83) refers to this “default” linguistic scenario as the “status quo” in the FL classrooms he studied in 2003, and argues that the L1 might even be considered the “unmarked” language choice.

Researchers have increasingly turned their attention to student L1 use in the FL classroom. Dailey-O’Cain and Liebscher (2009) considered how conversational functions depend, in part, on interlocutors’ socially-situated roles in the FL class: Teacher code-switching, they say, is often understood as a means to ensure student comprehension, whereas student code-switching is viewed as indicative of inability to continue in the FL. Similarly, Levine (2009) points out instances in an action-research study focused on student-student dialogue in which one participant expresses herself in the FL, and then translates her own statement. Levine points out that “self-translation ... is not just about ensuring comprehensibility ... rather also about fostering a connection to another person” (p. 154).

Dailey-O’Cain and Liebscher (2009) also lend attention to what they call “meta talk,” describing how English-speaking students of German prepared to speak to their class in their target language by framing their future FL utterances in English planning language. That is, different languages are used to denote different types of language acts. This was noted both in group work, and during other classroom discourse, such as when the teacher tried to reel students back in after a tangential conversation. Levine (2009) notes a similar phenomenon, and characterizes it as a certain “privileging” of English, in that English is the default, or framing, language, which hearkens back to his comments on a “status quo.”

While Levine (2011) celebrates the possibility that students and teachers alike make use of their full spectrum of linguistic resources in order to co-construct dialogue, he is adamant that they do so reflexively (as are Blyth, 2009; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Polio & Duff, 1994). The present study seeks to follow that advice on an empirical level: While fascinating work has been done into the ways by which L1 enters into classroom discussion, this study endeavors to go a step further by considering how student and teacher uses of the L1 and FL at once represent and construct the linguistic status quo of this FL classroom, specifically when participants talk about real-life events.

Talk about real events in the FL theoretically turns student attention away from an imagined future and instead to an immediate social reality. Further, it disrupts the assumption that the FL be “allocated to communicatively non-essential domains such as drills or dialogue practice, while the mother tongue remains the appropriate medium for discussing matters of immediate importance” (Littlewood, 1981, p. 45). In short, it challenges students to make the present into the moment for

which they are learning their language, and is thus rich with information about when, how and to what extent the FL can meet students' immediate communicative endeavors. Returning to my initial observations that students appear to use English and Spanish for different purposes that relate to their investment in telling a story, my two research questions are:

1. How do beginning Spanish students and their teacher make use of English and Spanish to talk about real events?
2. How does student investment in recounting real events relate to use of their L1 and FL?

4 Methodology

The data used in this study come from an eighth grade Spanish classroom in the southwestern United States. There are only seven students in the class, and although they are officially at the end of their Spanish I curriculum (which, at this particular private school, is stretched over two years), many of them also had some Spanish instruction through their elementary years. Most students have high beginner proficiency, meaning their basic present tense grammar is well intact, and they have enough vocabulary to talk about a variety of topics.

I was present in this classroom from October through May of an academic year. During three of these months, I was in the classroom for four of five class sessions a week, taking field notes, conducting interviews, and audio-recording. Because my presence was at first very gradual, and then very consistent, I became a comfortable fixture of this classroom, and developed individual relationships with each of the students, as well as their teacher, whom I will refer to as Ms. Ross.

On Mondays, Ms. Ross begins her class by talking in Spanish with her students about their weekends. There is an understanding among participants that Spanish is central to these discussions, but English is not explicitly forbidden. Ms. Ross asks each student in turn what he or she did, and the student answers. Ms. Ross asks some follow-up questions, while the other students listen and occasionally contribute. The Monday morning weekend discussion concludes when each of the students has had a turn. These exchanges are central to the data for the present study. In all, analysis included five transcripts of Monday morning weekend discussions, each spanning between ten and fifteen minutes of class time. Three of these discussions happened after a typical two-day weekend, while the other two took place after a longer break. No transcripts of Monday morning discussions were excluded from this analysis.

Line-by-line transcript analysis was largely influenced by the tradition of Conversation Analysis (Silverman, 1998), and thus was highly attuned to conversational structure, as well as the conversational roles of interlocutors. Ms. Ross was present in all of these discussions, and was thus naturally at the center of what Levine (2003) calls the "constellation" of interlocutors in this classroom: Analysis is based on teacher-led discussions, and student-student exchanges would likely have looked very different.

The systematic analysis involved in comparing and synthesizing across transcripts is informed by the tradition of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007), and is thus primarily interpretive and data-driven. Still, there were some a priori guidelines, such as what qualified as 'real' and what qualified as an 'event.' For example, on a Monday morning in March, the five female students in the class spilled into the room chatting about the previous Friday's release of the popular movie based on the book *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). Ms. Ross posed the question of why it was the girls in her classes, never the boys, who were so taken with books and movie. Although this discussion was about a real topic, it was not the recounting of an event, and I thus excluded that sequence from analysis. On the other hand, student recounting of specific scenes in the movie was included in analysis. Although the plot of the movie was not real in the sense that it actually happened, the happenings of the movie were real in the sense that students were invested in sharing them as part of what they had experienced over the course of the weekend.

5 Findings

Three themes have emerged as relating both to investment and to student use of English and Spanish in talking about real events:

1. Specificity, or the degree of detail or nuance in a story;
2. Predictability, or the extent to which a story and its discourse structure can be anticipated; and
3. Conversational control, or who is guiding the exchange at any given moment.

Specificity and predictability are first presented hand in hand, as they are quite reciprocal in their effects. Conversational control is discussed next, followed by a discussion of L1 and FL use itself.

5.1 Specificity and predictability

The only two boys in the class, Ricky and Henry, play golf on weekends. The consistency with which they play has created a predictable ritual for Monday's weekend discussions. Variations in the information the boys share from one week to the next are fairly mundane and usually relate to location, score, or the day the boys played. The transcript that follows includes much of this generalized, predictable ritual until line 56, when Ms. Ross poses a familiar question that neither boy appears able to answer:

Excerpt A

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
51	Henry:	Y, uh, y lunes uh, uh, primero yo ah jugo el golf con-	And, uh, Monday, uh, uh, first I, ah, play ¹
52	Ms. R:	Jugué, you'd say, jugué	I played. You'd say I played.
53	Henry:	Jugué el golf con Ricky.	I played golf with Ricky.
54	Ms. R:	Sí. Y?	Yes. And?
55	Henry:	Y, um	And, um,
56	Ms. R:	Y quién ganó?	And who won?
57	Henry:	[[² Ah ...	
58	Ricky:	[[Ah ...	
59	Ms. R:	Fue un empate?	Was it a tie?
60	Ricky:	Sí.	Yes.

Here, we see that the word for "tie" does not come easily to the boys. In fact, arguably, both boys strategically prompt Ms. Ross to ask if it were a tie in line 59, when they fail to answer such a straightforward, familiar question as "who won?" Because of the predictable nature of the question, Ms. Ross poses in line 59, Ricky is able to answer her question affirmatively in line 60. This all unfolds in Spanish, even when a new scenario (there was no winner) arises.

Although the typical golf talk is highly predictable and fairly general, Henry occasionally does talk about golf in a more specific way. In the excerpt that follows, the information is more specific, and both content and conversational path become less predictable:

Excerpt B

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
133-4	Henry	... And then, um, y domingo yo, um, jugo el golf en a tournament?	... And then, um, and Sunday, I, um, play golf in a tournament?
135	Ms. R	Un torneo.	A tournament
136	Henry	Un torneo? Y yo, how d- how do you say made? Like I m-	A tournament? And I, how d- how do you say made? Like I ma-
137	Ms. R	Hice	I made

138	Henry:	How?	
139	Ms. R	Hice.	I made
140-1	Henry	Hice un doce (.5s) um, on a hole which (inaudible)	I made a twelve (.5s) um, on a hole which (inaudible)
142	Ms. R	Ah. Esto es el día, entonces, que fue en el torneo que jugaste mal	Ah, that's the day, then, it was in the tournament that you played badly.
143	Henry	Sí. Muy muy mal.	Yeah, very very badly.
144	Ricky	Uff.	Uff
145	Ms. R	Lo siento.	I'm sorry.
146	Henry	It was bad. Well it was funny.	

Unlike his more general golf reports that typically state when he played, and whether he won, Henry presents information here that deviates from the typical report. The first new piece of information (for which Henry lacks the vocabulary) is that he was actually playing in a tournament (line 133). Further, he not only reports his score, but contrasts it with what presumably was the par of that hole- something I have not otherwise witnessed in Henry's golf talk. Lastly, Henry typically makes it well known that he often wins. Playing badly is thus noteworthy and new in the context of these Monday morning discussions. The three pieces of this story that differentiate it from his typical narrative, point to the possibility that Henry had enough investment (and not enough FL resources) in telling the story to make use of English to tell it; and it is the specificity of the story – the pieces that deviate from his more common, generalized narrative – that push him to do so.

In integrating more specific information into his golf narrative, Henry arguably makes it more real for himself and his interlocutors. This passage feels reflective of something that very much happened, whereas “I played golf Saturday and I lost” may or may not satisfactorily represent a real world experience; it may simply be an engagement in the Spanish language ritual rather than the meaningful telling of a story. High specificity and low predictability then might be thought of as inherently linked to the realness stories: The extent to which they are steeped in real-world details likely makes their recounting increasingly socially urgent, and increasingly linguistically challenging for a beginning language student.

5.2 Conversational control

The theme of control emerged from what I originally coded as Ms. Ross scaffolding her students in telling their stories. For example, lines 266 and 268 in the following sequence were both initially coded as “scaffolding”:

Excerpt C

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
262	Ms. R	Kelsey, qué hiciste?	Kelsey, what did you do?
263		1.0 s	
264	Ms. R	Te pintaste el pelo. Se ve muy guapa. Sí?	You dyed your hair. It looks great. Yes?
265	Kelsey:	Well, primero yo fui a Virginia	Well, first I went to Virginia.
266	Ms. R:	Aha, ¿por qué?	Oh, why?
267	Kelsey:	There's un hotelo?	There's a hotel? (guesses word)
268	Ms. R:	Un hotel (Sp.)	A hotel (provides word)
269	Kelsey:	Un hotel, con water park	A hotel, with a water park.

In line 266, Ms. Ross makes use of her own position in the sequence as a listener to prompt Kelsey to continue with her story. She offers Kelsey a simple question to understand, but not to answer, in that it requires Kelsey to make use of vocabulary not necessarily at her disposal. Thus, line 268 becomes a different type of scaffolding, because Ms. Ross offers Kelsey not a conversa-

tional prompt, but vocabulary that permits Kelsey to continue. Interestingly, in line 267, Kelsey effectively did tell the story she needed to tell in that her incorrect guess for the word “hotel,” was nonetheless presumably comprehensible to all present. Then, although Kelsey was seemingly giving the control to Ms. Ross by requesting information, she had successfully completed the story in line 267, although the Spanish language ritual was not complete for a few turns after.

There are often Monday morning stories that are unprecedented in the specific information they convey, but still follow a predictable conversational flow, including scaffolding on the teacher’s part. For instance:

Excerpt D

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
183	Ms. R	Quinn, qué hiciste?	Quinn, what did you do?
184	Quinn:	Um (1 s) Uh, viernes, yo fui a Trampoline Party	Um, (1s) Uh, Friday, I went to Trampoline Party.
185	Cassandra:	(with us?)	
186	Ms. R:	Ah, sí, con muchas chicas, verdad?	Oh, yeah, with a lot of girls, right?
187	Quinn:	Sí.	Yeah.
188	Ms. R	Lo pasaron bien?	Did you have a good time?
189	Quinn:	Sí.	Yeah.
190	Ms. R:	Sí? Yo nunca he ido a Trampoline Party.	Yeah? I’ve never been to Trampoline Party.

In this instance, we see Quinn, who has more of a tendency than her peers to make use of English, stay in Spanish throughout the exchange. Although neither Quinn nor anyone else in the class has previously reported going to Trampoline Party, a local trampoline park, the way the dialogue unfolds is straightforward: In line 184, Quinn makes use of the common Monday-morning term “yo fui” (“I went”), and simply integrates a location that has not before been talked about. Because Trampoline Party is a proper noun, it passes as appropriately used English in the context of this class, much like the names for restaurants and other venues. Ms. Ross’ two follow-up questions help Quinn to stay in Spanish while reporting further information about this experience. The fact that Ms. Ross confirms that Quinn went with a group of girls in line 186 indicates that Ms. Ross may be using some background information to further scaffold the conversation.

Over the course of my initial analysis, I noted that scaffolding was not universal enough to encompass everything I was seeing as far as who guided the conversation and when. That is to say, sometimes the students very obviously guide the conversation, independent of Ms. Ross’ input, as is the case with the continuation of the Trampoline Party sequence:

Excerpt E

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
190	Ms. R:	Sí? Yo nunca he ido a Trampoline Party.	Yeah? I’ve never been to Trampoline Party.
191	Erica:	I’ve gone to Jump Party.	
192	Ms. R:	Ah es igual	Oh, it’s the same.
193	Henry:	I don’t know what that is (<i>laughs</i>).	
194	Erica:	It’s not as good it’s it’s like the	
195	Ms. R:	Jump Party no es tan bueno?	Jump Party isn’t as good?
196-7	Erica:	No, it’s- I liked it but apparently everyone who’s been to Trampoline Party-	

In stating that she herself has not been to Trampoline Party, Ms. Ross effectively takes the focus off Quinn as the keeper of information, thus signaling the end of the question-answer sequence

with Quinn. Ms. Ross' sharing of information appears to be read as an opportunity by Erica to respond to Ms. Ross with her own, parallel experience. That Erica chooses to do so in English may be due to Ms. Ross' more complex grammatical construction in line 190 that students are not expected to be familiar with at this level (Erica likely understood Ms. Ross' utterance based on the dialogic context rather than through grammatical means); it may also be because Erica understands Quinn's turn at speaking Spanish to be complete, and therefore English is fair game to put into use for social talk between more ritualized Spanish language turns.

Further, we see Ms. Ross continue to use Spanish but, this time, instead of framing students' turns by prompting them in Spanish, she becomes the respondent to student utterances, first in line 192, when she contributes information and again in line 195, where she simply repeats the sentiment of Erica's utterance in Spanish, while Erica continues her train of thought in the following line in English. In effect, it appears that Ms. Ross has lost conversational control of this exchange for the time being. While Ms. Ross commands this classroom and could easily gain back the floor were she to want to, the fact that she allows the students to run with the conversation for a bit does indeed allow the sequence to unfold naturally and spontaneously, in a way that likely feels uncontrived to the students.

There are also instances in which students take control over the conversation within their own turns at reporting about their weekends. Mary, for example, initiates a sequence (she was not directly asked to contribute) that takes place within a discussion about the movie *The Hunger Games*:

Excerpt F

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
120 ³	Mary:	Mi padre (2s) Cómo se dice wanted to be cool-	My dad (2s.) How do you say wanted to be cool?!
123	Mary:	Wanted to be cool. Wants to be cool?	
125	Ms. R:	Quiere.	Wants
126	Mary:	Quiere	Wants
127	Ms. R:	Ser.	To be
128	Mary:	Ser (1s) Frío? (laughs)	To be ... cold
129	Ms. R:	Cool, no- cool's always hard. It- it- [[it's so like	
130	Mary:	[[Fun, okay, I'll just	
131	Ricky:	Divertido	Fun
132	Ms. R:	Depending on which language it is or even that like dialects of the language but,	
133	Mary:	Divertido	Fun
134	Ms. R:	Yeah, divertido, o	Yeah, fun, or
135	Mary:	So, um, um, él, I mean usted, um, lee uh, los	So, um, um he, I mean you, um reads, uh, the
136	Ms. R:	no, él lee los- leyó los libros	No, he reads the- read the books
137	Mary:	Leyó los libros	He read the books.
138	Ms. R:	Ah, y le gustaron?	Oh, and did he like them?

Here we see Mary initiate this sequence (unlike Kelsey and Quinn in the above sequences who were both prompted to share their stories), in which she is reporting that her father began reading *The Hunger Games* trilogy upon seeing the movie. In lines 125–128 we, once again, see a certain form of scaffolding on Ms. Ross' part in that she is paving Mary's way with the vocabulary Mary implicitly stated herself as needing in line 120. In line 128, upon venturing an incorrect guess (albeit one that she does not seem to take seriously), Mary alters the flow of the conversation in that she takes a step forward without Ms. Ross' help. In line 130, perhaps based on Ms. Ross' indication that there is no obvious choice in translating the word "cool," Mary changes the course of her

own story a bit (for the sake of the language ritual, apparently, as the story itself is somewhat altered as a result), and decides on a different word to use without Ms. Ross' guidance. We see Ms. Ross acknowledge Mary's choice in line 134, and it appears she is about to offer an alternative as well, but Mary continues on her own.

Over the course of the remainder of this sequence, we see Ms. Ross and Mary negotiate for control of the conversation. If we consider Cazden's (2001) explanation of the common classroom initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequence, it becomes clear that there are some aspects to the IRF sequence that are intact, and others that are not, leaving a certain ambiguity as to whether this exchange follows the norms of a classroom, or the norms of an informal social interaction. For instance, we note that Mary's decision to use "divertido" was never prompted by teacher initiation, although it did ultimately receive feedback in line 134. In the lines that follow, Mary is given grammatical feedback in line 136, but once she corrects her own utterance in line 137, the response from Ms. Ross is one of a conversational interlocutor, providing a response token not in response to Mary's language use, but in response to her story. This blend of classroom and social discourses is a fascinating demonstration of how participants co-construct their linguistic and social realities across temporal and linguistic realms.

5.3 Language use

As stated above, student use of English in recounting real events may come hand in hand with a sense of urgency, or investment, on the student's part. This section is a reflection of the systematic analysis of this possibility, and considers the numerous ways by which students make use of English and Spanish in order to tell their stories, particularly as language relates to the themes addressed thus far.

In a discussion about what students had done over spring break, Ms. Ross asked Kelsey the typical initiation question: "Qué hiciste?" (What did you do?). Students often respond with the phrase "yo fui" (I went), followed by a location. In this particular instance, Kelsey first explains in Spanish that she went to a hotel and a water park (see Excerpt C above). She continues below, soon requesting to use English:

Excerpt G

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
271	Kelsey:	Y and hay un Wizard Quest?	And there's a Wizard Quest?
272	Ms. R:	Qué es eso?	What's that?
273	Kelsey:	Can I say it in English, it's so hard to explain.	
274	Cassandra:	[[It will be so much better!	
275	Ms. R:	[[Okay	
276-286	Kelsey:	Okay, well it's like this thing and you get a wand and you get this book and then you go to this magical tree and it's like all across the hotel and you go to this tree and then you go on a quest? And you have to go across the hotel looking for these things to complete the quest and you wave your wand at it? And you can become like a super wizard? And I became (.5) a master wizard which is like the highest rank (laughs). So now, I am now a master wizard.	

Kelsey's lengthy explanation of the Wizard Quest is perhaps the longest turn taken by anyone in any of the Monday morning transcripts, indicating that she had a lot to say that was very much independent of language practice; in this case, her investment in sharing this highly specific event with her class precludes the opportunity to make use of Spanish. And yet we see her step into English quite gradually: In line 271, the linguistic structure of her utterance is fairly common, and yet she integrates an English proper noun, which passes as appropriate, as did "Trampoline Party" above. Ms. Ross' prompt in line 273 requires that Kelsey explain something highly specific that she most certainly cannot do with her level of Spanish. While I cannot speculate as to Ms. Ross' motive (if, indeed, she consciously had any in this moment) in asking this, I can analyze the effect it had: Namely, that Kelsey immediately requested in English to answer the question in English. That is to say, the meaning embedded in the answer that Kelsey had to share took immediate precedence over the linguistic ritual.

As we see in line 274, Kelsey is not alone in her eagerness to convey her story to classmates: Cassandra pleads for Ms. Ross to permit the code-switch, offering the reasoning that the telling of the story will be "so much better" if English is permitted. While this is perhaps the most blatant example in my data of a student justifying English use, it is not an isolated one and it reflects back to the anecdotal observations I referred to at the start of this piece. In supporting Kelsey's request, Cassandra indicates her own ideological stance insofar as the uses of Spanish and English in this instance: Kelsey's story is worth telling in the immediate social realm and, in order to do this properly, the linguistic ritual that may gloss over specifics of the Wizard Quest must not be prioritized. Once Kelsey explains the Wizard Quest in English, the conversation continues:

Excerpt H

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
286	Kelsey:	... So now, I am now a master wizard.	
287	Student:	Woo. (claps)	
288	Ms. R:	Ah, impresionante! Okay,	Oh, impressive! Okay,
289-90	Kelsey:	Wait, wait! And then después yo voy a North Carolina.	Wait, wait! And then after I go to North Carolina

Kelsey's use of English in line 289 contrasts with Ms Ross' use of Spanish in the previous line and therefore treads on the re-instituted Spanish-use context. And yet, English is not used extensively in this case, but as a simple way for Kelsey to gain back the floor before returning to a more general use of Spanish to continue explaining her vacation. Then, a simple summation of this data indicates that Kelsey's investment in giving the Wizard Quest description was high enough for her to ask permission to use English, whereas, in line 289, her use of English is not meant to help her tell another story, but is a matter of helping her regain conversational control of the floor, so that she may continue in Spanish. Interestingly, it appears that the urgency with which Kelsey asserts her desire to regain the floor most naturally happens in English, but it is her transition to Spanish that permits her to continue speaking: This type of code-switching from the L1 to FL as a means to hold conversational control is also noted by Dailey-O'Cain and Liebscher (2009).

I offer Kelsey's Wizard Quest narrative not as a common happening, but as an extreme in which English is used both extensively and with teacher permission. There are numerous other instances of storytelling in which more limited uses of English are embedded in otherwise Spanish utterances. A common phrasing that students make use of in order to do this is "cómo se dice" ("how do you say ...") followed by important components of the story itself. For example:

Excerpt I

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
151-2	Mary	Pero, um la (1.0) fin, final ah, ah, novela es muy (3s). Cómo se dice de-	But, um the (1.0) end, ending ah, ah, novel is very (3s). How do you say

		pressing?	'depressing'?
152	Ms. R	Deprimente	Depressing
153	Mary	De-deprimente	De-depressing

Interesting in this type of utterance is the very use of “cómo se dice” in line 152: Because the English in this sentence does effectively tell the story, it seems that “cómo se dice” is a loophole that allows students to use English by requesting the vocabulary that, for the purpose of getting the story told, becomes unnecessary. Using Spanish in this way also carries an apologetic quality to it: An admission that, were Mary able to continue in Spanish, she would have. Unlike Dailey-O’Cain and Liebscher’s (2009) observation that not all student code-switching was because they could not continue in the FL, it would seem that Mary’s use of “¿cómo se dice?” to mark her code-switch purposely draws attention to her novice role, perhaps ensuring that it goes unnoticed that, in asking for help, she has successfully made her point.

In this particular sequence, Ms. Ross responds to Mary with the requested vocabulary term, and Mary repeats that term. In doing this, two things happen: First, Ms. Ross responds as a teacher with information, rather than a listener with a social response. Secondly, between the offering and uptake of the relevant vocabulary term, nothing meaningful happens; the story has already been told. Lines 152 and 153 effectively provide Mary with a Spanish vocabulary term that is no longer relevant for the present, but perhaps will become useful in the future. In effect, these two lines turn the orientation of the sequence from present meaning to potential future language use.

In other cases, it is not a single word, but an entire phrase that students insert after asking “cómo se dice?”. In the sequence below, Quinn, is recounting part of the movie *The Hunger Games*, and actually neglects to ask “how to you say?” in Spanish:

Excerpt J

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
163	Quinn:	Oh, oh, Peeta dice, um, nosotros, in (<i>pronounced een</i>), hang on I got this	Oh, oh Peeta says, um, we in (<i>pronounced een</i>), hang on I got this
164	Mary:	Amor?	Love
165	Kelsey:	It’s a quote?	It’s a quote?
166	?:	Amore? What does that mean?	Love ⁴ ? What does that mean?
167	Quinn:	In amore y (1s) how do you say feel free to kiss me any time?	In love and (1s) how do you say feel free to kiss me any time?
168	Ms.R	Y (1.5s) bésame cuando quieras.	And (1.5s) kiss me whenever you want.

That Quinn asks in English how to say the quote is at best a vague acknowledgement that this sequence might involve some language practice, but she is not offering token bits of Spanish to Ms. Ross, as we saw Mary do above. Instead, it would seem that Quinn is not cooperatively participating in the negotiation of temporal realms and linguistic purposes, because she is uniquely oriented to the purely social act of asserting her identity as a fan of the movie. One indication that Quinn is not receptive to Ms. Ross’ attempts at finding the balance between language practice and social exchange is that, unlike Mary, Quinn does not repeat the translation Ms. Ross offers. As we have seen above, when Ms. Ross offers vocabulary items they often pave the way for students to continue their stories, even when the English has effectively already done so. In the above instance, though, Ms. Ross’ translation is drowned out by inaudible discussion in English about *The Hunger Games*, after which the transcribed sequence continues:

Excerpt K

Line	Speaker	Actual Utterance	English Translation
175	Ms. R:	Esperen! Le toca a Quinn.	Wait! It’s Quinn’s turn!
176	Quinn:	Cave scene, it’s the cave scene.	
177	Henry:	Oh, there’s a cave scene!	

178	Ms. R:	La escena en la cueva (laughs)	The cave scene
179	Students:	(erupt into inaudible chatter again 5 s. Some pieces audible:)	
182	Mary	Well the first one was only cheek.	
183-4	Ms. R:	You know, I'm going to start charging you limpiras, I'm going to take away limpiras if I hear English.	

In this excerpt, the only person speaking Spanish is Ms. Ross, and she is echoing Quinn's use of English. Ms. Ross appears to be trying to reign her students back in, first in line 175, when she gains the floor back for Quinn, and then in line 178, when Ms. Ross translates a phrase that is not adopted in the next utterance. Again, that Quinn does not repeat the phrase may indicate she is very intent on getting the story told, which she has done, and the linguistic ritual of repeating the phrase is deemed unnecessary. Typically, Ms. Ross does not threaten students to take away *limpiras*, which is the classroom economy currency. In that sense, the extent to which students erupt into English and talk over one another in this particular excerpt is an anomaly; however the point of interest here relates to the investment students appear to have in discussing *The Hunger Games* which not only prompts them to take control of this very specific (including a verbatim movie quote in line 167) discussion, but it prompts them to make use of English to do so.

6 Conclusion

This study has attempted to consider student uses of Spanish and English in talking about real events. We have seen a variety of ways whereby students and teacher acknowledge that Spanish is the preferred language for Monday morning discussions in the linguistic sense; and we have seen that English tends to creep in with teacher permission, or alongside an apology, specifically when the social drive to communicate is more immediate. Aside from exploring the specific language ideologies of this classroom, which assign certain linguistic or social value to the respective languages in various communicative scenarios, the present study itself has attempted to maintain a neutral stance insofar as L1 use in this type of FL communicative setting. I will now focus more directly on the implications of English use in this classroom, and ways forward both pedagogically and empirically.

When Cassandra chimed in with "It will be so much better!" in support of Kelsey's request to use English, she did more than vote for the social exchange over linguistic practice: She established herself as an interlocutor-listener who already knew Kelsey's story. This offers a reminder to what social exchanges that involve the (re)telling of real events often look like: Interlocutors in Cassandra's position often chime in to the main narrative in order to clarify and embellish certain points and, of course, to assert their previous knowledge of the story (Silverman, 1998). This hint at the authenticity of this social interaction begs the question: How might we, as educators, foster this type of conversational authenticity (and, indeed, proficiency) in Spanish? As shown in this example, as the authenticity or 'realness' of communication appears to go up, so too does the use of English: As authenticity of speech in the FL classroom is not easy to come by, particularly in a beginning language classroom, some English-scaffolded real-speak is perhaps to be celebrated. On the other hand, too much English use dilutes the role of Spanish as a potential language in which real communicative work can be accomplished. Then, FL teachers have a challenging and fascinating set of decisions to make with regard to how to balance FL language use and immediately socially meaningful exchanges in their classrooms, across all levels of language proficiency.

I propose that researchers and educators alike continue to reflect on student language choice in a nuanced way, considering the communicative contexts, goals, and effects of various language choices. If we step away from determining whether each language choice does a service or disservice to student FL progress (because typically we can probably argue for both), we may gain a more robust understanding of how teachers and students make use of their L1 and FL. Echoing Levine's (2011) call to award greater attention to the ways classroom participants "do curriculum"

(van Lier, 1996, p. 2), I propose we turn our focus to the emerging bilinguals in our FL classrooms, and the choices they make as active users of their languages.

Notes

¹ Mispronounced. He says the word for “juice”.

² I use these brackets to indicate overlapping speech.

³ The lines in this transcript are inconsistent because some background chatter was initially transcribed, but was excluded for the concision of this analysis.

⁴ This is the Italian, not the Spanish word for love. The Spanish word is *amor*.

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