



Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2019 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 1

Commons East, Easel 50

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

The Importance of Peer Interaction in the Spanish Language Classroom

Julia Jinju Hwang, Senior, Public Health-Global Health

Mentor: Ana Fernandez Dobao, Spanish and Portuguese Studies

Spanish is one of the fastest growing spoken languages in the United States. In 2017, the US census reported that about 41 million residents (13.4%) speak Spanish in the home. Since the number of Spanish speakers increases annually in the United States, it is important to research how Spanish heritage language (HL) learners and Spanish second language (L2) learners interact with each other. Many assume that speaking with a Spanish HL learner will improve the quality of the L2 learner's Spanish. The goal of my project is to analyze the amount of English spoken between the two types of students and the opportunities for learning created during their interaction by correcting each other's grammar or helping each other to use different vocabulary words. To this end, I have transcribed the Spanish conversations between two Spanish L2 students and formatted them using the F4/F5 transcription software. I am currently coding them using a qualitative data analysis program called Atlas.Ti, with the addition of three other transcriptions that had already been transcribed. I predict that our results will demonstrate that, while some learning will occur between the HL and L2 students, a majority of the learning will occur among Spanish L2 learners. Since the research is still ongoing, I predict that due to the greater level of comfort a Spanish L2 learner has while talking to a fellow Spanish L2 learner, they will work together to solve more language issues than with a Spanish HL learner. This research is important due to its implications for improving how Spanish is taught in schools across the United States.

POSTER SESSION 2

Commons East, Easel 49

1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

What Happens during Classroom Interaction between a Spanish Heritage Language Learner and a Second Language Learner?

Maria Martinez Alonzo, Senior, Spanish, Education, Communities and Organizations

Mentor: Ana Fernandez Dobao, Spanish and Portuguese Studies

The focus of this research is on Spanish heritage language (HL) and second language (L2) learners. An HL learner is a student who comes from a house where Spanish is spoken, but still; needs Spanish classes to master certain aspects of his/her first language. Sometimes English is also spoken at home: e.g., one parent speaks Spanish and the other English, or the student speaks Spanish with his/her parents but English with his/her siblings. On the other hand, an L2 learner is a student who is learning Spanish in a classroom setting. His/her first language may be English or any language other than Spanish. Between these two groups of students, there are important differences when it comes to learning Spanish, for example, L2 students are more knowledgeable about Spanish grammar rules and academic vocabulary. On the other hand, HL students have more fluency and much more knowledge about the culture. The focus of this research is on how the interaction between an HL and an L2 learner in a classroom impacts learning for both students. My role in this research is to transcribe the audio-recorded conversations between two L2 students and to compare these conversations with those between the same L2 students and an HL learner. I will analyze how the students collaborate and how they work to find the solution to any challenge they face that is associated with vocabulary, grammar or orthography. I hypothesize that pairing an L2 and an HL student will generate more interaction since each student offers different sources of knowledge. Pairing an L2 student with an HL student creates a diversity of ideas that I expect to increase learning. This analysis will help us to better understand how to create a more efficient learning environment, for both HL and L2 students, within mixed classrooms.