

The impact of explicit instruction concerning grammar and lexical-related matters in the Spanish heritage language classroom: Searching for an effective way to teach aspectual distinction and semantic properties of homophones and homographs

by

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Abstract

Heritage language learners (hereafter HLLs), bilinguals who are exposed to Spanish from an early age in home contexts, possess varying proficiency levels of the minority language (Valdés, 1997). This can be explained by various factors concerning exposure, such as the quality (*minoritized* variety of Spanish) and the quantity of input (limited to casual contexts) (Beaudrie et al., 2015; Potowski, 2018; Rothman, 2007). More often than not, another determining aspect of proficiency fluctuation among this linguistic population is the limited access to formal instruction (Lynch & Potowski, 2014). Those fluent HLLs enrolled in Spanish classes often face unrealistic linguistic expectations (Beaudrie et al., 2015). To better prepare language instructors to teach this population and build on HLL's strengths, further research on the effect of teaching practices in the heritage language classroom is crucial. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the impact of explicit instruction on a) HLLs' grammatical judgment of the aspectual distinction (i.e., preterit and imperfect) and b) HLLs' recognition of the semantic difference in homophones (e.g., *tuvo* vs *tubo*) and homographs (e.g., *hacia* vs *hacía*) distinguished solely by the addition of diacritic accent marks (e.g., *tu* vs *tú*). The results of this study suggest that explicit grammar instruction has an overall negative impact on grammar-related matters. Nevertheless, direct instruction on the semantic contrast between homophones through the selection and implementation of diacritic accent marks significantly facilitated the development of a wider lexical repertoire.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this section is to understand the impact of explicit teaching strategies focused on grammatical aspect and lexical properties in the *Spanish heritage language learning* classroom. For this reason, the following section will provide an overview of (a) the population studied and (b) the instructional suggestions previously provided by researchers.

1.1 Who are Heritage Language Learners?

In the United States, any language that is different than the social language of the majority (i.e., English) is categorized as a heritage language. These minority languages are often minoritized (Potowski & Muñoz-Balsos, 2017). In other words, a minoritized language is seen as inferior and problematic. As a minority language, Spanish is primarily spoken in informal contexts (e.g., home and social gatherings). Spanish in the U.S. has had sociohistorical (e.g., The Conquest, The treaty of Guadalupe) and political events (e.g., Language English Unity Act and Enabling Act) that have resulted in the perception of U.S. Spanish as an incomplete and eroded language (Montrul, 2008). Spanish is perceived to be primarily spoken by uneducated immigrants with low registers of Spanish (Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998). From a linguistic standpoint, a heritage language learner is someone who has been raised “in a home where a non-English language is spoken. The student may speak or merely understand the heritage language and be, to some degree, bilingual in English and in the heritage language.” (Valdés, 2001; p.1).

Valdés’ definition is the most commonly accepted among researchers of grammatical features of HLLs. However, for scholars such as Montrul (2012), Valdés’ definition is problematic. Firstly, this definition fails to mention other languages besides English. Indigenous languages (i.e., nahuatl in Mexico) are heritage languages as well. Despite the attempt to explain

the linguistic competence among all HLLs, it is too, thus, it fails to distinguish the varying degrees of language proficiency among HLLs. Additionally, the generation of arrival to the country (first generation, second generation, third generation) is not addressed by Valdés. Nevertheless, concerning grammatical research, this definition benefits scholars for the distinction of factors such as language knowledge and use. In spite of the limited explanation of these two features, it provides a better explanation than the broad cultural connection proposed by Fishman (2001) since no linguistic ability is required.

1.1.1 Linguistic features shared across Spanish as a Heritage Language

Regardless of the widely-varying proficiency levels (e.g., minimal aural comprehension to advanced fluency in written and spoken registers), cultural backgrounds (e.g., first generation or third generation), and registers (e.g., formal and informal) of this heterogeneous group, all HLLs share common features. For example, they are exposed to the heritage language in early childhood, similarly to monolingual speakers, although they differ in their linguistic capacities. Also, heritage speakers “have typically mastered nearly 90% of the phonology of the language...and possess strong listening abilities” (Campbell & Rosenthal, 2000; p. 555). Often, the phonology system of a HLL compares to native speakers (Beaudrie et al., 2015).

The language variety used among Spanish HLLs has been referred to as *Spanglish*. According to Sánchez-Muñoz (2017), *Spanglish* corresponds to the use of “code-switching, code-mixing, borrowings, and other language contact phenomena” (p. 74). Code-switching is used for specific pragmatic discourses—an identity marker—and is “the moving back and forth between two languages in a single communicative exchange” (Sánchez-Muñoz, 2017; p. 75). Poplack (1980) and Zentella (1997) identified three types of code-switching: intersentential (i.e., between separate clauses), intrasentential (i.e., switches within sentences) and tags and frozen

phrases (i.e., common phrases such as *so*). As previously mentioned, *Spanglish* also includes calques (e.g., *llamar patrás* for ‘to call back’), semantic extensions (e.g., *carpeta* for ‘carpet’), transfer (e.g., *¿quién vas con?* for ‘who do you go with?’), and borrowings (e.g., *tuit* for ‘tweet’) (Poplack, 1980; Sánchez-Muñoz, 2017)—unfortunately, these features can often lead to stigmas that denigrate the linguistic features employed by HLLs.

1.1.2 Linguistic features of Spanish as a Heritage Language as compared to Spanish as a majority language

When compared with standard Spanish, that is, the type of language spoken in Spanish-speaking countries (e.g., Spain, Mexico, Peru.), some scholars perceive this type of Spanish as deficient (Valdés, 1978). Two main terms have been coined to explain this idea: incomplete acquisition and erosion. Incomplete acquisition refers to the linguistic features that do not fully develop, while erosion considers some linguistic features learned that later vanish.

It is important to emphasize that researchers consider Spanish as a heritage language to be different from standard Spanish regarding grammatical properties, such as gender agreement (García, 1998; Lipski, 1993), tense, aspect, and mood (Lynch, 1999; Martínez Mira 2009a; 2009b; Ocampo, 1990; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; 2003; Zentella, 1997), subject pronouns (Flores-Ferrán, 2004; Lipski, 1993; Otheguy et al., 2007; Silva-Corvalán, 1994), prepositions (García, 1995; Lipski, 1993), and *ser* and *estar* (Silva-Corvalán, 1994).

One grammatical feature that is believed to have suffered erosion is the aspectual distinction—the use of preterit and imperfect (Montrul, 2008; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). It is worth noting that aspectual distinctions thought to be inherently complex (Holmes, 2017). This complexity is explained by the inherent lexical aspect that different verbs have. Comrie (1976) defined four categories of verbal lexical aspect: achievements, accomplishments, activities and

states. Comrie (1976) employed the semantic qualities of these groupings concluding that achievements (e.g., *fulfilling something*) are: dynamic, telic¹, and punctual. Nevertheless, accomplishments (e.g., *building a road*) are dynamic and telic, but not punctual because they may require an excessive amount of time to complete. Additionally, activities (e.g., *playing soccer*) are not punctual or telic, but they are dynamic. Lastly, states (e.g., *feeling, being*) lack the three semantic properties previously mentioned. In addition, some verbs change their semantic meaning according to the grammatical aspect used in the conjugation, for example, *supe* ('*I found out*') and *sabía* ('*I already knew*'), serving as a further reflection of the complexity of aspectual distinction (Holmes, 2017).

1.1.3 Pedagogical approaches in the HLL classroom

Little attention has been paid to the role of pedagogical strategies for HLLs (Valdés, 2001); instead, most studies offer suggestions about what should be done when teaching this population (Correa, 2011; Lombart-Huesca, 2012). However, Beaudrie, Ducar and Potowski (2015) propose four steps when teaching HLLs. First, instructors need to assess the abilities and areas for improvement in each student. Second, they should create clear goals and expectations for the class. In addition to the materials provided, the level of courses available must be considered. Finally, instructors must develop examinations that create a positive washback effect (i.e., the content taught in class is seen on the exam). The focus on instructional strategies for HLLs enables researchers to determine the materials, programs, and evaluations that benefit these types of learners by taking into account their linguistic proficiency (Bowles, 2011; Lynch, 2008; Mikulksi, 2010; Potowski et al., 2009).

¹ Telic contains an inherent ending period (Lubbers-Quesada, 2013).

1.1.4 Limitations of previous research on pedagogical strategies

The need for probing instructional approaches for HLLs has been noted in several studies (Beaudrie et al., 2015; Correa, 2011; Lombart-Huesca, 2012; Valdés, 2001; 2005). However, studies that have provided pedagogical material are rare (Montrul, 2009; Montrul & Bowles, 2010; Potowski et al., 2009). In fact, few studies have focused on the implications for lexical-related principles (Fairclough, 2011) and aspectual distinction in the HLL classroom (Valentín-Rivera, 2015).

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.0 Spanish Heritage Language Learners' lexical usage

Studies focused on HLLs' lexical usage in the classroom are limited (Fairclough, 2011). Likewise, limited attention has been given to formal instruction (Valdés, 2001). Instead, the available publications tend to summarize pedagogical suggestions claimed by other researchers in the field (Correa, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to further explore the immediate effect of different teaching strategies and approaches in the HL classroom.

Concerning HLLs' lexical usage, Fairclough (2011) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of lexical recognition of nouns/adjectives/parts of speech among bilingual college students. The researcher worked with three groups: Spanish HLLs, second language learners (SLL), and bilingual graduate students (control group). In order to carry out the study, the participants were required to complete a background questionnaire that elicited data regarding their place of origin (whether they had been born in the US or elsewhere), age, gender, language(s) spoken at home during childhood, and any prior or current experience with formal instruction of Spanish. The information gathered by the survey allowed for classifying the subjects as SLLs or HLLs. The participant's previous experience with language instruction was a determining factor to divide them into two groups. Group A was composed of students enrolled in a Spanish class in the fall semester. Group B was formed by students enrolled in a Spanish class during the spring semester. Upon the completion of the survey, each participant was asked to complete a lexical recognition test of 120 words (e.g., *congelado* (*frozen*)), *verdaderamente* (*truly*), and *mar* (*sea*) in addition to 80 pseudo words (e.g., *temporante*, *fulfaitas*, and *monedir*). Each participant was asked to select the words whose meaning they could explain to a friend in which they could use in 10 minutes or less. Furthermore, a general language proficiency test was given to compare the

receptive vocabulary knowledge and general language ability through lexical decisions tasks. The Cloze Test in 2007² was given to Subgroup A, in which participants had to select the correct vocabulary in a fill-in-the-blank test. A multiple-task test—where the subjects had to carry out activities related to translation, dictation, fill-in-the-blanks, and multiple-choice—was given to Subgroup B. The goal of this test was to measure their grammatical knowledge. The results showed that HLLs were able to recognize a larger number of words (103.51) and (18) pseudowords as distractors. In contrast, SLLs recognized 55 words and 11.53 pseudowords. Thus, these scholars propose measuring the overall linguistic knowledge of this population to find effective pedagogic tools.

On the other hand, Correa (2011) reports the findings of previous studies (Gutierrez, 1997; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Potowski, 2002; Rodríguez Pino & Villa, 1994; Sánchez, 1981; Schwartz, 2001) on teaching practices in the heritage language. The main purpose of this article is providing different language pathways, sociolinguistic tools, and strategies to teach standard Spanish for instructors. This review offers Spanish instructors a communicative pedagogical approach to empower HLLs to learn without discriminating against their own regional varieties, which may differ widely from the standard language³. As several studies suggest (Mikulski, 2006; Roca & Gutierrez, 2000; Samaniego & Pino, 1998), these learners tend

² The Cloze Test in 2007 consisted of a paragraph in which fifth words was omitted (total =23 words) which students had to complete in an acceptable manner. Students had to complete the paragraph with the words that they believed best completed the sentence.

³ A register used by upper-middle class society with a higher level of education and who are empowered in institutionalized settings (Lynch, 2012).

to have less experience with literacy-related skills, due to the lack of or late access to formal instruction— compared to Spanish L2⁴ learners who are commonly exposed to the standard variety of Spanish in academic contexts first (Correa, 2007; Montrul et al., 2008), albeit at a later age. The lack of exposure to a formal register of Spanish may result into English transference among HLLs (Correa, 2011). Thus, some scholars (Ducar, 2008; Potowski, 2002; Reagan & Osborn, 2001; Samaniego & Pino, 2000; Valdés, 2000) suggest designing courses specifically for HLLs learners, so they may be engaged in a comfortable environment where they can build on the linguistic knowledge that they already possess. More specifically, the inclusion of a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach would facilitate the discussion of specific linguistic and cultural topics that would enable learners to analyze and better comprehend the linguistic choices they make.

On the other hand, a constructivist approach—where learners build their own knowledge through action and reflection—could represent a more effective approach as compared to CLT, given that in the constructivist approach, learners are responsible for their own learning and instructors act as facilitators in the classroom. Correa (2011) also points out the importance of adapting the content or material by including themes and topics based on HLLs' interests. Another suggestion for teaching HLLs is integrating teacher-student and peer scaffolding activities in the classroom. The implementation of surveys and assessments focused on the student's needs, strengths, weaknesses, sociolinguistic background, previous class experiences, and class expectations benefits HLLs. These should be implemented at different times throughout the school year in order to gather information that serves as the base to develop courses for HLLs. Lastly, incorporating an ethnic minorities model (EMs') allows students to

⁴ L2: Second language

understand and accept the different experiences correlated to their language. Therefore, learners would be able to identify the conflicts and accept the characteristics of being part of an ethnic minority language. At the same time, exposing HLLs to the standard form of Spanish will assist them to develop awareness of different types of registers that are employed in different social contexts (Correa, 2011).

2.1 Summary of studies focused on HLL lexical usage

Despite the need for adapting teaching approaches for HLLs (Valdes, 2001; 2005; Correa, 2011), few studies have done so (Fairclough, 2011). The present study notes limitations in current research. First, studies have only focused on lexical recognition among pseudowords and frequent vocabulary (Fairclough, 2011). Correa (2011) offers pedagogical suggestions focusing on sociolinguistic awareness and communicative learning approaches, but she does not provide models for classroom teaching methods. The current study incorporates pedagogical tools focused on the challenges that HLLs might encounter.

2.2 General Grammar characteristics of Heritage Language Learners

As previously noted, HLLs and L2 learners differ when recognizing grammatical elements. Some studies have researched the grammatical features with which HLLs are prone to have difficulties (e.g., aspect, tense, and mood) (Holmes, 2017; Montrul, 2009, 2011; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009). Additionally, pedagogical materials, such as books, have been developed in order to focus on HLLs (Burgo, 2015); however, few studies examine the grammatical and lexical topics in those materials.

Regarding the materials provided for instructors to teach HLLs, Burgo (2015) analyzes four HL books used in the classroom and provides suggestions for grammatical problems when teaching Spanish HLLs. This study analyzed four intermediate Spanish textbooks specifically

designed for this population: 1) *Entre mundos*; 2) *Sí se puede*; 3) *Conversaciones escritas*; and 4) *Mundo 21 hispano*. All of these books follow a grammar approach that focuses on: present indicative, nouns, gender and number agreement, the aspectual distinction (e.g., preterit and imperfect), simple future, conditional, and present and past subjunctive. Each book covered other topics in addition to the previously mentioned. *Conversaciones escritas* explained the use of the infinitive form, the *-ando* and *-iendo* morphemes (i.e., gerund). *Sí se puede* examined prepositions. *Mundo 21 hispano* reviews direct object pronouns, the use of the preposition “a” as personal marker, compound verb formation, the passive voice, verbs like *gustar*, the endings and uses of commands, and prepositions. Lastly, *Entre mundos* explained direct object pronouns, the use of the preposition “a” as personal marker, compound verb formation, the passive voice, the use of the infinitive form, the *-ando* and *-iendo* morphemes (i.e., gerund), and the endings and uses of commands. Additionally, these books aim to develop a more formal register, by exposing students to the sociolinguistic constraints on the selection between *tú* and *usted*. The pedagogical approaches and strategies for grammar instruction shared among all four books is input exposure accompanied by examples and focused-on-form activities of various formats (e.g., matching information, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks). Some specific features of each textbook included dictation (*Mundo 21 hispano*), translations tasks (*Sí se puede* and *Conversaciones escritas*), and error correction practices (*Conversaciones escritas* and *Mundo 21 hispano*). Burgos (2015) highlights that metalinguistic awareness is not emphasized in the most recent textbooks. However, they do include a variety of output-based communicative activities. Burgos summarized common grammatical topics of the HLL books, but did not evaluate the effectiveness of the pedagogical approaches addressed.

Potowski, Jegerski, and Morgan-Short (2009) investigate the effectiveness of processing instruction (PI)⁵ methodologies among HLLs in their linguistic development and compared their results with L2 students. This study also focuses on the effectiveness of PI and output-based instruction (TI)⁶ when teaching HLLs. The participants in this study were 127 heritage-speaking students, 80 % of the HL speakers were second generation with an average age of 20 years, and they were enrolled in an introductory or intermediate level course designed for HLLs at Chicago University. The second group was composed of 22 L2 students, while the control group consisted of entirely heritage learners. The PI treatment was composed of grammar context with mood aspect delivered in aural and written form. Next, an exercise and a critical connection activity was given to determine mood (e.g., indicative and subjunctive) and meaning. The same treatment was given to the students with TI treatment. However, TI activities were only focused on mechanical activities and one answer—while PI activities were referential, meaningful and communicative. A pretest and posttest were given to the participants with target and distractors. The findings suggest that HLLs (control group) benefit from focused grammar with PI, however it does not have the same effect on L2 learners. In addition, PI has more benefits for both types of learners. Nevertheless, this study suggests that a comparative analysis could allow HL learners to differentiate between two different grammatical forms. Lastly, there is a need for future research to determine what specialized type of instruction is more beneficial for the development of HLLs.

⁵ PI is a method of teaching grammatical features to L2 learners based on VanPatten's (1996, 2004, 2007) model of input processing.

⁶ Also known as traditional instruction.

Montrul (2011) examines the findings of previous studies in regards to gender agreement, differential object marking (DOM), tense-aspect, and morphology. Thus, the studies compared the nature of morphological variability with the missing surface inflection hypothesis (MSIH) and the failed functional features hypothesis (FFFH). The participants were 72 L2 learners, and 70 Spanish HLLs who completed a linguistic background and a written Spanish proficiency test. All participants were college students in the University of Illinois with an average age of 22 years. In addition, there was a control group composed of 24 native speakers from different Spanish-speaking countries. All the participants completed 13 tasks, and they were tested individually by the researchers in two sessions of an hour during different days. For gender agreement task, participants were required to read a paragraph and select the correct gender of the missing determiner or adjective. Then the same procedure was done with the oral production. In the DOM task, participants were asked to complete an oral production and written judgement task with grammatical and ungrammatical sentences with a story in the past tense. The DOM task was followed by two oral tasks and two written morphology recognition tasks. One oral production task was focused on aspect with the same story while the second task was used with broad questions to obtain opinions and use the subjunctive. Finally, for the written morphology recognition task testing tense-aspect, participants chose between preterit or imperfect in a story narrated in the past. Then, to test the subjunctive, participants had to select between subjunctive and indicative on providing advice and opinions. The results showed that L2 learners are more accurate on explicit and metalinguistic tasks. In contrast, HLLs are better at oral tasks with less metalinguistic knowledge and implicit/automatized knowledge. The HLLs performed better on aspect and mood morphology than L2 in oral tasks. However, L2 performed better on aspect and mood morphology than HLLs in written tasks. Thus, neither FFFH nor MSIH explain

morphological variability in HL speakers. However, the study concludes that HLLs will benefit from form-focused activities to develop their written grammar.

Montrul (2009) also assess incomplete acquisition, when children do not completely acquire their family language in childhood. Montrul (2009) characterizes HLLs' grammatical system in regards to aspect and mood as incomplete acquisition and not erosion (Montrul, 2008; Polinsky, 2006; Silva Corvalán, 1994). In her study, 23 native speakers (control group) and 65 second generation Spanish HLLs college students (undergraduate and graduate students) completed an oral-production-oriented activity. Participants completed a written elicitation task, and an interpretative activity. In the first part of the study, the subjects were required to narrate the children's story, *Little Red Riding Hood*, in the past tense for the oral production component. They were instructed to describe the story in the past with as many details as possible. For the written morphology recognition, a short narration in the past was given with two options (preterit or imperfect) in which participants had to select one of these two options. In addition, the participants had to complete a 15 minimal pair task composed of 5 stative predicates, 5 accomplishments, and 5 achievements; each participant was expected to determine whether the sentence was logical or illogical. The same groups participated in the second part of study, which evaluated each participant's knowledge and recognition of inflections that marked mood. To do so, participants completed three tasks, similar to the ones completed in the first part of the study. This time, the three activities stimulated the participants to provide opinions and to give advice to prompt the use of the subjunctive. The results showed that HLLs display a higher command of aspect-related morphology, as compared to mood-related inflection. However, this was better performed with achievements and accomplishments in the preterit or states in the imperfect, especially at more advanced levels.

Having in mind how heterogeneous HLLs can be, Holmes (2017) establishes the degree of morphological knowledge of Spanish that is possessed by receptive heritage bilinguals of Spanish (RHBS), that is when learners have the ability to understand, but not speak. Four groups partook in this study. Group 1 was composed of nine Spanish RHBS enrolled in a psychology course at the undergraduate level. Group 2 consisted of 23 Spanish RHBS who were taking a beginning Spanish course. Group 3 was formed by 41 advanced heritage bilinguals (AHBs) who were in the same psychology course as those RHBSs placed in Group 1. Group 4 included 10 monolingual-raised speakers of Spanish (i.e., control group). It is worth mentioning that all the participants completed a background questionnaire. They also carried out four tasks. First, a contextualized listening comprehension task, which was followed by an elicit imitation task. An aural grammaticality judgment task, which consisted of yes/no responses to grammatical and ungrammatical items with morphological errors was completed. Finally, an aural morpheme interpretation task was taken.

In the contextualized listening comprehension task, participants listened to 35 aural dialogues by L1 Spanish speakers. The aural dialogues varied on topics about chores, plans, educational experience, professions, pastimes and others. Then, participants completed a multiple choice comprehension question provided in English, based on the aural dialogue heard. On the other hand, during the elicited imitation tasks, participants listened to a total of 30 sentences that increased from 7 syllables to 17 syllables towards the end of the task. Once the participants had the opportunity to listen to each sentence, they were asked to repeat what they had heard to the best of their abilities. The sentences used in the study were modifications taken from Bowden (2016) and Zamora (2015). During the aural grammaticality judgment task, participants determined if the sentences that they heard were grammatical or ungrammatical.

Each sentence was identical with the exception of the target morpheme tested. The morphological targets were composed of gender agreement, subject/verb agreement, tense (present versus preterit), aspect (preterit versus imperfect), mood (present indicative versus present subjunctive), and a distractor. Finally, for the aural morpheme interpretation, participants listened to a total of 86 items (72 test items and 14 distractors). The test items covered the following morphemes: gender, grammatical person, aspect condition, and mood. Upon the morpheme aural exposure, participants responded to English comprehension questions regarding the content of each sentence. Results show that the Spanish RHBs mostly understood (77%) of the aural dialogues. For the elicitation limitation task, Spanish RHBs obtained a mean score of 29—ending in the upper “low “proficiency. In the aural grammatical judgment task, Spanish RHBs were able to distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical morphemes, however, the result ranged among the morpheme conditions given. Therefore, RHBS were more accurate on subject/verb agreement, followed by gender, tense, mood, and aspect. Lastly, the results in the morpheme comprehension task show that Spanish RHBs had 47% correct answers. The most accurate task was morphology condition, followed by tense, mood, gender, and aspect. Overall, Spanish RHBS understand what is being said to them in Spanish and their implicit grammatical knowledge varies. However, Spanish RHBs and AHBs were less accurate on the aspect distinction. Perhaps, this could be due to the complexity of aspect and mood as a development that completes later in childhood (Hodgson, 2005). For the purpose of this study, participants were neither RHB or AHB, but rather intermediate HLLs.

Despite the knowledge that previous studies have provided, there is limited research on the effects of different kinds of formal instruction in the HL classroom. Thus, this study expands the horizons of our comprehension concerning the impact of explicit instruction on grammar and

lexical-related matters. More specifically, this project aims to answer the following questions regarding instruction in the HL classroom:

RQ 1) What is the impact of explicit instruction, if any, regarding the aspectual distinction?

RQ 2) What is the impact of explicit instruction, if any, on the usage of diacritic⁷ accent marks (to distinguish the semantic properties of homophones and homographs)?

⁷ *La tilde diacrítica* is an accent mark whose addition and placement do not follow the “canonical” rules for written accents; rather, they are merely employed or used to mark a distinction among homophones (e.g., tu vs tú) in terms of meaning.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.0 Setting and Participants

Data for this study was collected at a public university in the Midwest of the United States in the fall of 2018. The pool of participants for this study consisted of seven undergraduates (N=7): one male and six females. All were students enrolled in an intermediate level course called “SPAN 411, Composition and Grammar for Heritage Speakers”. During the semester, students met twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) for an hour and twenty minutes. The objective of this class was to improve students’ literacy skills—including knowledge of grammatical topics—and to further develop academic and professional knowledge of the language.

In order to be enrolled in the course, the participants were screened to be Spanish speakers at home and have the ability to read and write in Spanish. In addition, placement scores and interviews with an HLLs coordinator were taken into consideration in determining Spanish proficiency. All of the participants were second-generation students born in the US; 80% of the participants were of Mexican descent, 10% were of Cuban descent, and 10% were of Paraguayan descent.

3.1 Materials and Procedures

All students in the class consented to participating in the study before proceeding. Two different data collection materials were designed to gather the data to fulfill the aim of this study, which was to provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of explicit instruction on vocabulary and grammar (preterit and the imperfect) for Spanish HLLs. These data collection components consisted of two tasks embedded in grammar and lexical factors that served as the pretest and the posttest. Explicit instruction has been chosen because it is the most commonly

used methodology suggested by scholars and present literature (Fairclough, 2011; Holmes, 2017; Montrul, 2009, 2011; Potowski et al., 2009).

3.2 Pretest

The researcher created the pretest prior to the treatment in order to evaluate learners' grammar awareness of Spanish aspect and lexical knowledge of homophones and homographs. Both sections are explained further below.

3.2.1 Section 1: Aspectual distinction

The purpose of this task was to determine the ability to select the appropriate Spanish aspect (preterit and imperfect). This section, also referred to as “Paso 1: *Palabras que cambian de significado*” (step 1: Words that change meaning), consisted of a total of 17 items. Participants circled the most reasonable conjugation depending on the context while reading a story about the Xoloxuintle⁸ and its relationship with the Day of the Dead. Five items addressed the preterit and five others the imperfect. There were seven distractors—three addressed the present indicative, two addressed the present perfect indicative, one addressed the present subjunctive, and one addressed the imperfect subjunctive.

3.2.2 Section 2: Distinguishing homophones and homographs

The second section measured the participants' knowledge of the orthographic knowledge of homophones and homographs. This section or “Paso 3: *¿Con qué letra se escribe?*” (step 3: How is it spell?), was comprised of twelve focus-on-form items. The participants had to pay close attention to the meaning in each isolated sentence and complete the sentence by selecting a multiple choice answer that they believed fit the sentence based on its orthographic structure.

⁸ A dog that was used by the Aztecs to help their people transition into the other world according to their beliefs.

Participants completed this section a week after the completion of section 1. Sections 1 and 2, along with practice activities used with students, are included in the Appendix.

3.3 Posttest

Three weeks after the treatment (described below), the participants completed a posttest over the same concepts. In order to minimize any practice effect, three sections were added to the posttest to have a reliable perception of what type of impact was caused. Thus, only sections 1 and 3 from the posttest were used for the data analysis because they correlate with the sections from the pretest. However, a copy that contains all the sections with a story about the similarities and differences of Day of the Dead and Halloween.

3.4 Treatment

The treatment contained a) preterit instruction, b) imperfect instruction, c) preterit and imperfect instruction, d) diacritic accent marks, and e) homophones. The division between the instruction of Spanish aspect was to avoid confusion between the preterit and imperfect. Thus, the preterit was explained first, followed by the imperfect, and finally the use of both together. Instruction on diacritic accent marks and homophones was discussed on the same day. The description of each treatment is described below.

3.4.1 Preterit explanation

Upon the completion of the pretest, section 1, a twenty-minute explicit grammatical explanation over the preterit was presented by the researcher. The presentation contained specific patterns regarding the preterit, contextualized examples, key helping words, and the orthography of irregular and regular verbs. This instruction was accompanied by a practice-fill-in-the-blank activity. This task was composed of 50 items which combined regular, irregular, and stem-

changing verbs in the preterit. This activity included the following contexts: dinner date with friends, a wedding anniversary, and strange events during the full moon.

3.4.2 Imperfect explanation

During the next class period, participants had a twenty-minute explicit presentation on the imperfect by the researcher. As in the previous day, the imperfect presentation explained patterns regarding the imperfect, specific examples, key adverbs, and the orthography of the verbs. Then, the participants completed an activity solely focused on the imperfect. This activity contained a total of 18 items; however, 7 items required the participants to complete the sentences by conjugating the verb. These were sentences that described habits during childhood. The other 11 items were fill-in-the-blank, based on the context of the Mayas and their rituals. Upon the completion of the practice activity, each participant received a summary of the preterit and imperfect presentation given by the researcher. This summary worksheet was similar to the one provided for L2 students in Spanish 2, however, some modifications were made by the researcher to the HLLs worksheets—such as adding preterit and imperfect examples.

3.4.3 Preterit and Imperfect Instruction

The following week, a ten-minute explicit explanation to distinguish each aspect was given by the researcher. There was emphasis on verbs that change their semantic meaning based on their aspect; for example, *saber* in the imperfect (to know) and in the preterit (to find out). Contextualized examples were provided to the participants and they were also allowed to ask questions if needed. In accordance with the previous grammar instruction sessions, the presentation was followed with a practice activity. The participants first heard a song by Eva Ruiz and Felipe Santos called “Éramos tú y yo,” which used preterit and imperfect. Each participant obtained a copy of the lyrics and was assigned to work in partners. Next, they were

required to analyze the aspect used in the song. This song has a total of 37 items: 17 items were in the imperfect and 21 items in the preterit. Subsequent to the analysis of the song, all of the participants shared their answers in order to be guided by the researcher— in case there was a mistake or confusion.

3.4.4 Diacritic accent marks, homophones, and homographs

The fourth and fifth parts of the treatment focused solely on lexical practice. This presentation took place on the same day as the instruction of the preterit and imperfect. Explicit instruction of words with a diacritic accent mark informed the participants of their use and contextualized examples. Each example was provided from the same story about the Xoloitzcuintle. While the researcher and participants read the story out loud one more time, the researcher prompted the participants with the direct translation of the word in English. For example, *sí* (yes) and *si* (if). Therefore, each participant had a copy of the story and a total of 24 items to translate. Each pair of words consisted of one word with a diacritic accent. Approximately ten minutes were used to complete this activity.

3.4.5 Homophones and homographs

Once the researcher explained the lexical differences that are interlinked with the absence and presence of the diacritic accent mark, the participants were given explicit instruction on homophones and homographs. The researcher presented an explicit definition of each word side by side with oral examples provided. Also, in order to reinforce the spelling format with the meaning, images with the definition were provided when possible. Each participant was able to keep a copy of the lesson learned on homophones. For example, *hacia* (towards) and *hacía* (to do in the imperfect form).

3.5 Data Analysis

This research employs a quantitative method because the pretest and posttest results were compared post treatment. Thus, this provides a better understanding of the impact of explicit grammar and lexical instruction that Spanish HLLs received. The participants' retention gained from the treatment in the heritage language lecture room is also analyzed in the findings. To this end, the comparison between the pretest and posttest was to obtain a better understanding of the learning process and teaching strategies that benefit this student population.

Chapter 4 - Results

4.0 Introduction

As mentioned before, this study focused on examining the impact of explicit teaching in the HLL classroom, more specifically regarding (a) grammar matters, such as the aspectual distinction (preterit and imperfect) and (b) the semantic distinction of homophones and homographs embedded in the use of *tildes diacríticas*.

4.1 Results Regarding Aspectual Distinction and Homophones

For each research question, two Paired Sample T-Tests were carried out to establish the impact of the instruction provided to the seven HLLs in the study. The results of the pretest and the posttest completed in class were then compared. This statistical analysis was adopted, as opposed to other repetitive means tests (e.g., one and two-way ANOVAS), given the absence of other groups (i.e., cohorts that received a different type of instruction, such as implicit, or a control group) that could serve as a reference of further comparison. As such, a Paired Sample T-Test enabled the identification of any linguistic development through time as the result of the explanations that were provided by the researcher.

4.1.1 Research Question 1: The impact of explicit instruction on aspectual distinction

The first research question focused on the degree of the impact of explicit instruction in the grammatical differentiation of the preterit (i.e., *supe*) and the imperfect (i.e., *sabía*) in the heritage language classroom. A Paired Sample T-Test was conducted to answer RQ1, see Table 1. The results of this test were not statistically significant ($p=0.502$).

Table 1. Sample Paired T-Test: Research Question 1

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	65.29	7	10.704	4.046
Posttest	59.29	7	17.395	6.575

The mean scores of the posttest decreased after the treatment; participants obtained an average score of 65.29 prior to the treatment, but their scores declined to 59.29 after. Hence, it could be possible that an explicit instruction did not benefit the participants and it confused post treatment.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: The impact of explicit instruction on homophone distinction

The second research question concerned the scope of impact of explicit instruction on homophones that carry diacritic accent marks (e.g., *si* vs *sî*). Similarly, RQ1 and RQ2 were answered by a Paired Sample T-Test, see Table 2. The results concerning RQ2 were statistically meaningful ($p=0.016$).

Table 2. Sample Paired T-Test: Research Question 2

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	63.71	7	15.997	6.046
<i>Posttest</i>	85.71	7	10.323	3.902

The mean scores the posttest increased by 22 points post treatment. This could indicate that explicit instruction benefits HLLs in lexical-related items.

Given that the results of the Sample Paired T-Test regarding the second inquiry were statistically significant, the size was calculated through a Cohen's *d* measure. The result was the

following: 1.2576459, which suggest a large size effect. This means that the statistical meaningfulness of the results was high.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

5.0 Introduction

Limited attention has been paid to the instruction of lexical features and grammatical particles in HLL classrooms. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of explicit instruction in a Spanish HLL classroom on Spanish aspectual distinction as well as homophones distinguished by diacritic accent marks.

To analyze the Spanish aspect (RQ1) and homophone distinctions (RQ2), data was collected through two mirror language proficiency multiple choice assessments (i.e., pretest and post test). The findings suggest that the results of the treatment of both features differ greatly from each other. First, explicit instruction was ineffective in helping students select the appropriate aspect as shown by the first T-Test ($p=0.502$) because their posttest scores decreased post treatment. Conversely, explicit instruction was effective in promoting the distinction of homophones as shown by the second T-Test ($p=0.016$). Due to the different results, each topic is discussed further below.

5.1 Observations on the aspectual distinction

As previously mentioned, explicit instruction in this study seemed to downgrade the participants' distinction of preterit and imperfect. Therefore, this finding partially supports previous results regarding the benefits of explicit instruction among HLLs (Montrul 2011; Potowski et al., 2009). Although there was an impact with explicit grammatical instruction, Montrul (2011) determined that the gains by HLLs were only for a short period of time. Similarly, these findings align with Beaudrie (2009) because explicit grammar explanation seemed to cause confusion among HLLs. Future research needs to explore the distinctive impact

of both implicit and explicit grammatical instruction. As has been noted, implicit, inductive instruction allows learners to autonomously discover grammatical forms with provided guidance (R. Ellis, 2006). Even when giving implicit instruction, input should be focused on the form to allow learners to ascertain the context and not merely make wild guesses (Ellis, 1996).

Spanish morphology is quite complex, especially mastering the aspectual distinction (Montrul, 2002, 2009). Hodgson (2005) claimed that even monolingual speakers master the use of the imperfect later in life. Keeping this in mind, Holmes (2017) noted that aspect and mood often lacked accuracy when compared to other grammatical features (e.g., gender agreement and subject/verb agreement) among HLLs. Silva-Corvalán (1994) concluded that the aspectual distinction has been simplified by HLLs. Also, in contrast with L2 learners, HLLs generally lack metalinguistic knowledge (Beaudre et al., 2015). Therefore, in order to address this complex grammatical feature, prolonging the treatment could be beneficial to the participants. By expanding treatment for more than a semester, learners could develop the semantic distinction between the preterit and imperfect. In addition, using top-down activities instead of bottom-up could allow learners to mitigate the meaning of the aspects presented (Carreira & Kagan, n.d.). Furthermore, contrastive analysis seems to prove its effectiveness in the HLL classroom (Potowski et al., 2011). Thus, the use of this method could allow students to distinguish aspectual differences. Nevertheless, more research is needed in order to determine the best teaching methods for complex grammatical topics, such as aspect.

5.2 Observations on homophones distinction

As reported above, explicit instruction improved HLLs recognition of homophones distinguished by diacritic accents. Results regarding the effectiveness of explicit instruction are in line with Mikulski (2006), who found that Spanish HLLs show significant improvement in the use of orthographic accents. I elaborate on the evidence of this practice in the results section above. Despite this study's finding of the efficiency of explicit teaching methods with all lexical feature there is currently little research on implicational strategies analyzing the efficiency of explicit teaching methods. Instruction on these areas of learners' vocabulary dynamics is needed. Language classrooms are informed by research on how second language learners develop grammatical and lexical properties. Yet, the focus of HLL teaching topics predominantly survey grammar items such as the conditional, imperfect subjunctive, present subjunctive, imperfect and preterit, future (morphological), pluperfect subjunctive, definite and indefinite articles, and participles (Carreira & Potowski, 2011). Although scholars have highlighted the importance of sociolinguistic awareness when teaching HLLs, — studies lack focus on classroom strategies for different levels of HLLs regarding vocabulary related items (Correa, 2011; Fairclough, 2011).

5.3 Implications of the results of this study

Another factor to take into account concerning the results of this project, is the number of participants (n=7). Despite the different results corresponding to RQ1 and RQ2, the number of students surveyed was very low when compared with previous studies. Future research needs to take into account these results and re-create this study on a larger scale in order to determine whether or not the findings hold up with a larger sample. Additionally, it is essential to add a survey with general linguistic and cultural background information prior to the experiment. By adding this information, researchers can have a better understanding of the results— in regards to

the generation, experience, and exposure to the target language in formal settings of each student. Also, a control group could lead to a comparison with the participants that received treatment. As a result, this would enable scholars to identify the materials and procedures necessary for teaching this population.

5.4 Pedagogic recommendations for aspectual distinction

Prior to developing teaching methods, instructors need to take into account the level of proficiency that HLLs bring into the class. This kind of information will help determine the explicitness of the treatment. As Gass and Selinker (2008) suggested, complex forms cannot be understood by meaningful input alone. Therefore, explicit research by itself might not benefit HLLs as seen in Beaudrie (2009). On the other hand, explicit form-focused instruction seems to be more beneficial among advanced proficiency levels (Ellis, 1996). Additionally, it is recommended that more complex rules should be explored inductively (Ellis, 1996). Therefore, when giving the focused-on-form input, the instructor should allow students to analyze the grammatical meaning of the examples. This means that an example of a possible semantic change could be elaborated with scaffolding questions that have a deeper analysis of the aspectual distinction. In this way, students can work in pairs with focused questions that guide them to the inflectional morphology and its meaning.

5.5 Pedagogic recommendations for lexical-related items

Concerning the pedagogical recommendations for lexical-related items, I conclude that explicit instruction does benefit HLLs with the distinction of homophones. Having said this, instructors can also elaborate the semantic distinction of lexical-related items with explicit instruction. As previously mentioned, contrastive analysis of two similar features is better understood by learners when they are put next to each other. This is even more feasible when

contextualized examples are provided in the explanation with follow up practice. However, this needs to expand with the investigation of other lexical features that might be challenging to HLLs.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

6.1 An Overview of the Results

Pedagogical approaches to grammatical features have been formerly explored (Beaudrie, 2009; Carreira & Kagan, n.d.; Montrul & Bowles, 2009; Potowski et al., 2009) in addition to lexical features (Fairclough, 2011; Mikulski, 2006; Potowski et al., 2011). Nonetheless, this study has contributed to the field by exploring (1) the impact of explicit instruction of Spanish aspectual distinction by HLLs usage and (2) the effect of explicit teaching methods for homophones with diacritic semantic differences. Explicit instruction solely favored lexical-related items while it caused confusion and less accurate results in aspectual distinction. Based on these observations, a list of pedagogical recommendations for the creation of instructional materials has been provided in this study.

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Appendix A - Pretest

Grammar based:

Paso 1: Palabras que cambian de significado. Lee el contexto en que las palabras similares son usadas. Escribe la palabra que pienses que sea correcta en la oración.

El Xoloitzcuintle, una guía al inframundo.

¿Conoces al perro Xoloitzcuintle? Si posteriormente tú _____ (ves, viste, has visto, veías) la película de *Coco*, te aseguro que sí.

Dante, un personaje particular de la película de *Coco*, es un perro y el mejor amigo de Miguel. La historia de Dante es mucho más especial que la de otros perros, mas hoy en día no todo el mundo _____ (conoce, ha conocido, conoció, conocía) la importancia de su raza en el mundo pre-hispánico. Él es un perro Xoloitzcuintle, también conocido como “perro azteca” o “xolo”. El “xolo” es una de las razas más antiguas del continente americano. Sé que te has de preguntar qué significa su nombre. Así que aquí tienes una explicación, se _____ (dice, ha dicho, dijo, decía) muchas veces que en aquella época “xolotl” _____ (hace, ha hecho, hizo, hacía) referencia al dios mexicano del inframundo y el fuego. De hecho, hoy se _____ (piensa, ha pensado, pensó, pensaba) que este dios _____ (es, ha sido, fue, era) hermano de Quetzalcóatl en aquel tiempo. Míticamente antes de la época pre-hispánica, “xolotl” _____ (traía, ha traído, trajo, traía) el fuego, la sabiduría y habitualmente _____ (ayuda, ha ayudado, ayudó, ayudaba) a los difuntos en el tránsito hacia el más allá. Tradicionalmente en la época pre-colombina, los perros _____ (son, han sido, fueron, eran) enterrados con los difuntos para guiarlos al inframundo sin importar si aún el perro _____ (está, estuviera, estuviese) vivo. En cuanto a los rituales para sepultarlos, el perro “xolo” habitualmente _____ (ha sido, fue, era) sepultado con honores. No se sabe cuántos perros antiguamente _____ (son, fueron, eran) enterrados en total, pero estamos conscientes que _____ (son, han sido, fueron, eran) muchos porque en la época colonial _____ (están, han estado, estuvieron, estaban) al borde de la extinción. Las personas quienes han tenido un “xolo” no pueden vivir sin ellos.

¿Quién ha tendido un “xolo,”? te preguntarás. Muchas personas famosas, por ejemplo, sabemos que Frida Khalo _____ (es, ha sido, fue, era) dueña de este tipo de perro durante los años 30’s. Además de su relevancia cultural para el pueblo mexicano, estos perros son muy inteligentes, afectuosos, alegres, juguetones, leales, y fáciles de entrenar. De hecho, su falta de pelaje actualmente _____ (hace, hizo, hacía) fácil tenerlos en casa. Ahora, querrás que alguien te dé un “xolo” por todas sus cualidades e historia. En mi familia no tenemos mascotas, pero si _____ (es, fuese, fuera) por mí, yo adoptaría un perro “xolo”. Espero que la siguiente vez que disfrutes tu taza de té mientras veas *Coco*, recuerdes la importancia de Dante en la película.

Lexical-related:

Paso 3: ¿Con qué letra se escribe? Completa las siguientes oraciones con la opción correcta.

1. Siempre _____ la basura en su lugar.
 - a. echo
 - b. hecho
2. Miraré la película _____ que termine la tarea.
 - a. asta
 - b. hasta
3. Yo nunca _____ escuchado sobre los homófonos.
 - a. e
 - b. he
4. Mariana _____ que estudiar mucho para su examen de gramática.
 - a. tubo
 - b. tuvo
5. Manuel terminó su lectura y ahora va ___ su casa ___ comer.
 - a. a
 - b. ha
 - c. ah
6. ¡___! Esto no estaba en la guía del examen.
 - a. a
 - b. ha
 - c. ah
7. Espero que _____ suficiente comida para todas las personas.
 - a. aya
 - b. haya
 - c. allá
8. El _____ es excelente con los niños.
 - a. aya
 - b. haya
 - c. allá
9. La uva es una _____.
 - a. baya
 - b. valla
 - c. vaya
10. Usted no _____ a clases sin sus libros.
 - a. baya
 - b. valla
 - c. vaya

11. _____ seis estudiantes en la casa.

a. ay

b. ahí

c. hay

12. El salón de clases está _____.

a. ay

b. ahí

c. hay

Appendix B – Treatment

Preterit and imperfect handout:

El Imperfecto

Regular Verb Endings

<u>-AR</u>		<u>-ER/IR</u>	
-aba	-ábamos	-ía	-íamos
-abas	-abais	-ías	-íais
-aba	-aban	-ía	-ían

Irregulars – Only 3

<u>Ser</u>		<u>IR</u>	<u>Ver</u>		
era	éramos	iba	ibamos	veía	veíamos
eras	erais	ibas	ibaís	veías	veíais
era	eran	iba	iban	veía	veían

When to use the imperfect:

1. Circumstance, description, setting
2. Telling what the day/date was
3. Telling what time it was
4. Telling someone's age
5. Emotional/mental verbs (thinking, wishing, wanting)
6. Habitual, repeated, ongoing past action
7. Simultaneous actions (I was reading while you were sleeping)

Imperfecto Key words:

Muchas veces

Mucho

A menudo

Siempre

Todos los días
Usualmente
Mientras
Cada noche
Nunca
Cada verano
Los martes, los veranos
A veces

El Preterito

Regular Verb Endings

<u>-AR</u>		<u>-ER/IR</u>	
-é	-amos	-í	-imos
-aste	-asteis	-iste	-isteis
-ó	-aron	-ió	-ieron

-car –gar –zar verbs

(irregular in yo form only)

-car à -qué sacar=yo saqué

-gar à -gué llegar=yo llegué

-zar à -cé empezar = empecé

Irregulars – see next page

When to use the preterit:

1. Sudden or completed action
2. Single event at a specific time (left at 7 pm)
3. Happened a specific number of times
4. For a specific amount of time
5. Consecutive past actions
6. Action that interrupts something

Preterito Key words:

Ayer, anteayer
El viernes. El lunes pasado
Anoche
El mes pasado
El año pasado
Una vez, dos veces
Esta mañana
Al mediodía
A las siete
La semana pasada
El 8 de marzo

Andar (to walk)	Anduve, anduviste, anduvo, anduvimos, anduvisteis, anduvieron
Conducir (to drive)	Conduje, condujiste, condujo, condujimos, condujisteis, condujeron
Dar (to give)	di, diste, dio, dimos, disteis, dieron
Decir (to say/tell)	dije, dijiste, dijo, dijimos, dijisteis, dijeron
Estar (to be)	estuve, estuviste, estuvo, estuvimos, estuvisteis, estuvieron
Haber (to have)	hube, hubiste, hubo , hubimos, hubisteis, hubieron
Hacer (to do/make)	Hice, hiciste, hizo, hicimos, hicisteis, hicieron
Ir/Ser (to go/to be)	fui, fuiste, fue, fuimos, fuisteis, fueron
Poder (to be able)	pude, pudiste, pudo, pudimos, pudisteis, pudieron
Poner (to put)	puse, pusiste, puso, pusimos, pusisteis, pusieron
Querer (to want/like)	quise, quisiste, quiso, quisimos, quisisteis, quisieron
Saber (found out)	supe, supiste, supo, supimos, supisteis, supieron
Tener (got)	tuve, tuviste, tuvo, tuvimos, tuvisteis, tuvieron
Traer (to bring)	traje, trajiste, trajo, trajimos, trajisteis, trajeron
Venir (to come)	vine, viniste, vino, vinimos, vinisteis, vinieron
Ver (to see) is usually regular except that the accents are usually omitted:	
vi, viste, vio, vimos, visteis, vieron	

Stem Changing Verbs

When some –IR verbs are conjugated in the preterit, the stem vowel of the infinitive changes as follows:

	e à I	o à u	in the <u>third person singular and plural</u>
Pedir (to ask for)		pidió (ud., él, ella), pidieron (uds.,ellos, ellas)	
Sentir (to feel)		sintió, sintieron	
Dormir (to sleep)		durmió, durmieron	

Verbs in which the third person preterit endings change as follows:

-ió à-yó	Verbs: Caer, Creer, Leer, Oír
-ieron à-yeron	

Words that Change Meaning

	Imperfecto	Pretérito
Conocer	<i>to know, to be acquainted with</i>	<i>to meet</i>
Saber	<i>to know (about)</i>	<i>to find out</i>
Haber	<i>there was/were (descriptive)</i>	<i>there was/ there were</i>
(occurred)		
Poder	<i>was able to (circumstances)</i>	<i>succeeded in</i>
No poder	<i>was not able to (circumstances)</i>	<i>failed to</i>
Querer	<i>wanted</i>	<i>tried to</i>
No querer	<i>didn't want</i>	<i>refused to</i>

Por ejemplo: Cuando llegué no conocía a nadie, pero más tarde conocí a Inma.

When I arrived, I didn't know anyone, but later I met Inma.

Preterit Practice:

Complete the passages with the preterit of the verbs in parentheses.

A. Una cena con amigos.

La semana pasada, Julio (decidir) 1. _____ invitar a unos amigos a cenar. El jueves, (ir-yo) 2. _____ con Julio para comprar los ingredientes para un arroz con pollo. El viernes, Julio y yo (volver) 3. _____ a casa después de clase para limpiar la casa. Él (pasar) 4. _____ la aspiradora y (sacudir -yo) 5. _____

los muebles. Después, (bañarse- yo) 6. _____ y Julio (afeitarse) 7. _____.
Luego, Julio preparó la cena y juntos, nosotros (poner) 8. _____ la mesa.

A las ocho, nuestros amigos (llegar) 9. _____. Ellos nos (traer)
10. _____ unas flores que (poner-yo) 11. _____ encima de la mesa.
Hablamos un ratito y después (ir-nosotros) 12. _____ al comedor para cenar. ¡Qué rico
(estar) 13. _____ el arroz con pollo! Después, (preparar-yo) 14. _____ el café y se
lo (servir) 15. _____ a todos.

Nuestros amigos (quedarse) 16. _____ hasta las tres de la madrugada. ¡Cuán
(divertirse- nosotros) 17. _____ y (reírse) 18. _____! Esa noche Julio y yo (dormir-
yo) 19. _____ como troncos. Nosotros no (levantarse) 20. _____ hasta las dos
del día siguiente. (Estar-yo) 21. _____ cansado todo el día y no (poder) 22. _____
hacer nada.

B. Un aniversario de bodas.

Para su quinto aniversario de bodas, Antonio y Carmen (hacer) 1. _____ una fiesta.
(Invitar) 2. _____ a todos sus parientes y amigos. Antonio (preparar) 3. _____ y (servir)
4. _____ unos entremeses riquísimos. No (faltar) 5. _____ nada a la fiesta, y todos les (traer)
6. _____ regalos preciosos. Yo les (regalar) 7. _____ un álbum de fotos, y de los padres de
Carmen, (recibir-ellos) 8. _____ unas copas de cristal. En la fiesta, Antonio le
(leer) 9. _____ un poema de amor a Carmen. Ella (ponerse) 10. _____ a llorar. Después,
(calmarse-ella) 11. _____, y todos nosotros (divertirse) 12. _____ muchísimo.

PRÁCTICA: Irregular and stem-changing preterit

¡Qué cambios más raros! With the full moon, strange things happen. Fill in the blanks with the correct preterit forms to indicate what happened when the moon was full.

1. Típicamente los niños **duermen** muy bien, pero anoche _____ muy mal.
2. Doña Lupe siempre me **dice** “Buenas noches”, pero anoche no me _____ nada.
3. Casi nunca **tengo** problemas con la tarea, pero anoche _____ muchísimos problemas con hacerla.
4. Por lo general, **puedo** terminar la tarea en una hora, pero anoche _____ terminarla antes de las once.
5. Mis amigos generalmente **vienen** a verme por la tarde, pero ayer no _____.

6. La tía Susana casi siempre se **pone** ropa elegantísima, pero ayer _____ unos blue jeans viejos y una camiseta sucia.
7. Pablo casi nunca **está** enfermo, pero _____ mal todo el día ayer.
8. Mi novio me **trae** una flor todos los días, pero ayer no me _____ nada.
9. Generalmente no **hay** muchas fiestas en mi casa de apartamentos, pero anoche _____ tres o cuatro.
10. Siempre **sirven** comida riquísima en Casa Paco, pero anoche me _____ una cena horrible.
11. Mi hijo generalmente **pide** helado de postre, pero anoche _____ pastel de chocolate.
12. Mamá generalmente **se siente** feliz, pero ayer _____ muy triste.
13. Julia y Pablito **se divierten** cuando están juntos, pero ayer no _____ para nada.
14. Típicamente, el Sr. Varela **se despide** de su esposa y sale de la casa a las ocho de la mañana, pero ayer no _____ hasta las nueve y media.
15. Dieguito siempre **se ríe** cuando ve “Garfield y sus amigos” en la tele, pero ayer no _____.
16. El bebé **sonríe** cuando ve a su mamá, pero ayer no _____ ni una vez.
17. Los niños típicamente **se visten** muy lento, pero ayer _____ muy rápido.
18. Generalmente mi amigo Raúl **puede** ayudarme con la clase de química, pero anoche él no _____ entender la tarea tampoco.

Imperfect Practice:

El imperfecto

1.1. Mi niñez. Cambia el verbo a la forma necesaria del imperfecto y completa las siguientes ideas.

Modelo: *mi padre me (contar)*

Cuando era niña, mi padre me contaba cuentos.

1. Yo (vivir)...
2. Mis amigos y yo (comer) mucho...
3. Mi familia (ir) con frecuencia a
4. Mis amigos (jugar)....

5. No me (gustar)...
6. Mi mejor amigo(a) (ser)...
7. Yo (tener) que...

1.2 Los Mayas. Pon la forma correcta del imperfecto de los verbos.

Los mayas (habitar) _____ el territorio del sur de México, Guatemala, Belice y parte de El Salvador y de Honduras, hasta el siglo X aproximadamente. Los mayas (tener) _____ una jerarquía civil y religiosa. (Disponer) _____ de una escritura jeroglífica, de conocimientos profundos de medicina, matemáticas, astronomía, escultura y cronología. El pueblo maya (adorar) _____ las fuerzas naturales y (practicar) _____ también sacrificios humanos. Las ciudades mayas (ser) _____ impresionantes. (Tener) _____ templos, palacios, observatorios astronómicos, canchas para el juego de pelota, baños de vapor y tumbas. La pintura y la cerámica (ser) _____ casi perfectas. Su sistema económico (estar) _____ muy bien organizado. Sus principales productos (ser) _____ el cacao, el maíz, el jabe y otros más. El pueblo maya (ser) _____ una gran civilización.

Preterit and imperfect identification task:

Éramos Tú y Yo

[Eva Ruiz](#), [Felipe Santos](#)

Éramos tú y yo

Los que *dijimos* que para nosotros, no **iba** a ver adiós

Los que **ganábamos** en cada guerra, **éramos** tú y yo

Pero el amor te sube y te suelta de pronto sin pedir perdón

Éramos tú y yo

Los de me quedo para siempre, pero creo que *se nos olvidó*

Los de bailar sin música en la calle, **éramos** tú y yo

No sé yo deo todo, si tú dejas todo y no sé qué *pasó*

Y **éramos** tú y yo

Los de querernos más que nadie, en este mundo y *se nos acabó*

Y nos ganó el orgullo y este miedo mío a decir que no

Tú fuiste toda para mí, yo fui tu vida, aunque digas que no
Aunque digas que no, que no, que no
Éramos los dos
Los que debimos ser felices para siempre
Éramos tú y yo
Y **éramos** los dos
Tú con tus discursos y yo con mis impulsos, y se terminó
Yo con estas ganas que nunca se fueron de decírtelo (y quiero decírtelo)
Que me desbarato cuando por la radio, suena tu canción
Y **éramos** tú y yo
Los de querernos más que nadie en este mundo y se nos acabó
Y nos ganó el orgullo y este miedo mío a decir que no
Tú fuiste toda para mí, yo fui tu vida, aunque digas que no
Aunque digas que no, que no, que no
Éramos los dos
Los que debimos ser felices para siempre
Éramos tú y yo
Y si te vas, vete con todos los recuerdos de los dos
Serán mi karma cuando quiera olvidarte
Y si te vas no quiero que te lleves a este corazón
Y que el fantasma de tu beso, me persiga a todas partes
Éramos tú y yo
Los de querernos más que nadie
En este mundo y se nos acabó
Y aunque digas que no, que no, que no
Éramos tú y yo
Los de querernos más que nadie en este mundo y se nos acabó
Y nos ganó el orgullo y este miedo mío a decir que no
Tú fuiste toda para mí, yo fui tu vida, aunque digas que no
Aunque digas que no, que no, que no ¡y **éramos** los dos!
Los de querernos más que nadie en este mundo y se nos acabó

Y nos ganó el orgullo y este miedo tuyo que nos derrumbó
Los que debimos ser felices para siempre **éramos** tú y yo

Lexical explanation:

Paso 1: Palabras que cambian de significado. Lee el contexto en que las palabras son usadas, piensa en su significado y escribe un significado en las líneas que están debajo del texto.

El Xoloitzcuintle, una guía al inframundo.

¿Conoces al perro Xoloitzcuintle? **Si¹ tú²** has visto la película de *Coco*, **te³** aseguro que **sí⁴**.

Dante, un personaje particular de la película de *Coco*, es un perro y **el⁵** mejor amigo de Miguel. La historia de Dante es mucho **más⁶** especial que la de otros perros, **mas⁷** no todo el mundo conoce la importancia de su raza en el mundo pre-hispánico. **Él⁸** es un perro Xoloitzcuintle, también conocido como “perro azteca” o “xolo”. El “xolo” es una de las razas más antiguas del continente americano. **Sé⁹ que¹⁰** te has de preguntar **qué¹¹** significa su nombre. Así que aquí tienes una explicación, **se¹²** dice que antiguamente “xolotl” **hacia¹³** referencia al dios mexicano del inframundo y el fuego. De hecho, se piensa que este dios era hermano de Quetzalcóatl. Míticamente antes de la época pre-hispánica, “xolotl” trajo el fuego, la sabiduría y habitualmente ayudaba a los difuntos en el tránsito **hacia¹⁴** el más allá. Tradicionalmente en la época pre-colombina, los perros eran enterrados con los difuntos para guiarlos al inframundo sin importar si aún el perro estuviera vivo. En **cuanto¹⁵** a los rituales para sepultarlos, el perro “xolo” habitualmente era sepultado con honores. No se sabe **cuántos¹⁶** perros antiguamente fueron enterrados, pero estamos conscientes que fueron muchos porque en la época colonial estuvieron al borde de la extinción. Las personas **quienes¹⁷** han tenido un “xolo” no pueden vivir sin ellos.

¿**Quién¹⁸** ha tendido un “xolo,”? te preguntarás. Muchas personas famosas, por ejemplo, sabemos que Frida Khalo fue dueña de este tipo de perro en los años 30’s. Además de su relevancia cultural para el pueblo mexicano, estos perros son muy inteligentes, afectuosos, alegres, juguetones, leales, y fáciles de entrenar. De hecho, su falta **de¹⁹** pelaje actualmente hace

fácil tenerlos en casa. Ahora, querrás que alguien te **dé**²⁰ un “xolo” por todas sus cualidades e historia. En **mi**²¹ familia no tenemos mascotas, pero si fuese por **mí**²², yo adoptaría un perro “xolo”. Espero que la siguiente vez que disfrutes **tu**²³ taza de **té**²⁴ mientras veas *Coco*, recuerdes la importancia de Dante en la película.

Paso 2: Monosílabas. Por lo general, los monosílabos no requieren acento escrito. Sin embargo, existen palabras homónimas que se escriben y se pronuncian igual. Para diferenciarse, se usa la tilde diacrítica.

El	Él	Se	Sé
De	Dé	Tu	Tú
Mas	Más	Te	Té
Si	Sí	Mi	Mí

Paso 3: Homófonos. Además, existen palabras que no son monosílabos, pero son homófonos. La cual, el significado cambia. Lee las palabras de la lista y presta atención a su significado.

<i>Echo-</i> primera persona del verbo echar, en el sentido de aventar o poner	<i>Hecho-</i> del verbo hacer
<i>Asta-</i> un palo o lanza	<i>Hasta-</i> indica el límite o término de algo
<i>E-</i> conjunción que sustituye le “y”	<i>He-</i> primera persona del verbo haber

<i>Tubo</i> - pieza hueca y cilíndrica abierta	<i>Tuvo</i> - tercera persona del verbo tener	
<i>Casa</i> - sinónimo de hogar	<i>Caza</i> - matar animales como deporte	
<i>A</i> – preposición que indica tiempo, causa, lugar, etc.	<i>Ha</i> -del verbo haber	<i>Ah</i> - expresa pena, sorpresa o admiración
<i>Aya</i> - mujer encargada en una casa del cuidado y educación de los niños	<i>Haya</i> - del verbo haber	<i>allá</i> - adverbio, indica lugar lejos
<i>Baya</i> - un tipo de fruto	<i>Valla</i> - una cerca	<i>Vaya</i> - del verbo ir
<i>Ay</i> -interjección que indica dolor o temor	<i>Ahí</i> -es un adverbio, indica un lugar	<i>Hay</i> - del verbo haber

PowerPoint:

The PowerPoint created by the researcher included a summary of the handout given to each participant. This presentation had explicit examples of the topics presented each day.

Appendix C – Posttest

Paso 1: Palabras que cambian de significado. Lee el contexto en que las palabras similares son usadas. Escribe la palabra que pienses que sea correcta en la oración.

El Xoloitzcuintle, una guía al inframundo.

¿Conoces al perro Xoloitzcuintle? Si posteriormente tú _____ (ves, viste, has visto, veías) la película de *Coco*, te aseguro que sí.

Dante, un personaje particular de la película de *Coco*, es un perro y el mejor amigo de Miguel. La historia de Dante es mucho más especial que la de otros perros, mas hoy en día no todo el mundo _____ (conoce, ha conocido, conoció, conocía) la importancia de su raza en el mundo pre-hispánico. Él es un perro Xoloitzcuintle, también conocido como “perro azteca” o “xolo”. El “xolo” es una de las razas más antiguas del continente americano. Sé que te has de preguntar qué significa su nombre. Así que aquí tienes una explicación, se _____ (dice, ha dicho, dijo, decía) muchas veces que en aquella época “xolotl” _____ (hace, ha hecho, hizo, hacía) referencia al dios mexicano del inframundo y el fuego. De hecho, hoy se _____ (piensa, ha pensado, pensó, pensaba) que este dios _____ (es, ha sido, fue, era) hermano de Quetzalcóatl en aquel tiempo. Míticamente antes de la época pre-hispánica, “xolotl” _____ (traía, ha traído, trajo, traía) el fuego, la sabiduría y habitualmente _____ (ayuda, ha ayudado, ayudó, ayudaba) a los difuntos en el tránsito hacia el más allá. Tradicionalmente en la época pre-colombina, los perros _____ (son, han sido, fueron, eran) enterrados con los difuntos para guiarlos al inframundo sin importar si aún el perro _____ (está, estuviera, estuviese) vivo. En cuanto a los rituales para sepultarlos, el perro “xolo” habitualmente _____ (ha sido, fue, era) sepultado con honores. No se sabe cuántos perros antiguamente _____ (son, fueron, eran) enterrados en total, pero estamos conscientes que _____ (son, han sido, fueron, eran) muchos porque en la época colonial _____ (están, han estado, estuvieron, estaban) al borde de la extinción. Las personas quienes han tenido un “xolo” no pueden vivir sin ellos.

¿Quién ha tendido un “xolo,”? te preguntarás. Muchas personas famosas, por ejemplo, sabemos que Frida Khalo _____ (es, ha sido, fue, era) dueña de este tipo de perro durante los años 30’s. Además de su relevancia cultural para el pueblo mexicano, estos perros son muy inteligentes, afectuosos, alegres, juguetones, leales, y fáciles de entrenar. De hecho, su falta de pelaje actualmente _____ (hace, hizo, hacía) fácil tenerlos en casa. Ahora, querrás que alguien te dé un “xolo” por todas sus cualidades e historia. En mi familia no tenemos mascotas, pero si _____ (es, fuese, fuera) por mí, yo adoptaría un perro “xolo”. Espero que la siguiente vez que disfrutes tu taza de té mientras veas *Coco*, recuerdes la importancia de Dante en la película.

Paso 2: ¡A traducir! Después de leer el texto, trabaja en parejas y presten atención a las palabras numeradas e intenten traducirlas en inglés.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Si-_____ | 2. Sí-_____ | 3. Tu-_____ | 4. Tú-_____ |
| 5. El-_____ | 6. Él-_____ | 7. Mas-_____ | 8. Más -_____ |
| 9. Se-_____ | 10. Sé-_____ | 11. Que-_____ | 12. Qué-
_____ |
| 13. Hacía-_____ | 14. Hacia-_____ | 15. Cuanto-_____ | 16. Cuántos-_____ |
| 17. Quienes-_____ | 18. Quién- _____ | 19. De-_____ | 20. Dé-_____ |
| 21. Mi-_____ | 22. Mí-_____ | 23. Te- _____ | 24. Té-_____ |

Paso 3: ¿Con qué letra se escribe? Completa las siguientes oraciones con la opción correcta.

- Siempre _____ la basura en su lugar.
 - echo
 - hecho
- Miraré la película _____ que termine la tarea.
 - asta
 - hasta
- Yo nunca _____ escuchado sobre los homófonos.
 - e
 - he
- Mariana _____ que estudiar mucho para su examen de gramática.
 - tubo
 - tuvo
- Manuel terminó su lectura y ahora va ____ su casa ____ comer.
 - a
 - ha
 - ah

a. mi

b. mí

7. _____ conoces a una persona que le guste las historias con culturales y los animales, recomiéndale la lectura sobre el “xolo”.

a. si

b. sí

8. Ahora, _____ conoces porque Pixar y Disney eligieron a Dante, un perro “xolo” en su historia.

a. tu

b. tú

Paso 5: ¡Ah leer y seleccionar la palabra correcta! Pon acentos dónde sean necesarios y decide cual es el homófono correcto.

¡Hola!

Mi/Mí nombre es Lisa Montero y soy **de/dé** los Estados Unidos, sin embargo, soy hija **de/dé** padres mexicanos. Lo cual, **e/he** crecido con ambas culturas toda **mi/mí** vida. Por ejemplo, en **mi/mi casa/caza** festejamos Halloween al igual **que/qué el/él** Día de Muertos. Mucha gente piensa **que/qué** estas celebraciones tienen **el/él** mismo día **de/dé** festejo **e/he** historia. **Mas/Más** **te/té** aseguro **que/qué** no es así.

Halloween **se/sé** celebra hace **mas/más de/dé** 3000 años por los Celta de Samhain. Ellos creían **que/qué** la línea **que/qué** separa al mundo terrenal del “otro mundo” **se/sé hacia/hacia** **mas/más** estrecha en esos días. Así, los muertos podían llegar **asta/hasta el/él** mundo **de/dé** los vivos. Estos espíritus regresaban en forma maligna y provocaban miedo, hacían gritar **a/ha/ah** todas las personas, “**¡Ay, Ahí, Hay!**” de terror. La gente adoptó formas para alejar **a/ha/ah** los espíritus, dado **a/ha/ah que/qué se/sé** creía **que/que** los espíritus dañarían **a/ha/ah** los vivos. Por eso, la gente **tuvo/tubo que/qué** utilizar máscaras y trajes terroríficos **como/cómo** las brujas, vampiros, fantasmas, y momias. De **echo/hecho**, también las personas prendían fogatas para alejar **a/ha/ah** los espíritus malignos.

Hoy en día, la celebración **se/sé a/ha/ah** adaptado en algo **mas/más** positivo. En los Estados Unidos, muchas personas decoran sus **cazas/casas** con calabazas y los colores negro, morado y anaranjado. Además, todos los niños salen **a/ha/ah** pedir dulces esperando **que/qué** uno le **de/dé**

por lo menos un dulce bueno. Eso yo lo se/sé muy bien porque siempre lo hacia/hacía cuando era niña. Me encantaba cuando echaban/hechaban en mi/mí bolsita dulces como/cómo Skittles, Twist, candy corn, Snickers, y Twizzlers. Al igual que/qué yo, la mayoría de/dé la gente a/ha/ah dejado la perspectiva negativa sobre esta celebración en el/él pasado. Entonces, cada año el/él 31 de/dé octubre todos están muy contentos, sobretodo, los niños porque es e/él día en el/él que/qué pueden comer golosinas. Sin embargo, es muy común que/qué alguien te/té de/dé un susto ese día por los disfraces que/qué llevan.

Por lo contrario, e/él Día de Muertos tiene otros orígenes, fechas y práctica. El/Él Día de Muertos es una celebración celebrada en México y Centroamérica. Este festejo tubo/tuvo origen en el/él mundo prehispánico, que/qué se/sé ausentó con la llegada de/dé los españoles a/ha/ah México, quienes/quienes trasladaron el/él festejo a/ha/ah inicio de/dé noviembre para que/qué coincidiera con las festividades católicas del Día de/dé todos los Santos y Todas las Almas.

El/Él Día de Muertos empieza el/él 1 de/dé noviembre, cuando/cuándo se/sé celebra a/ha/ah los niños difuntos, “todos los santos” y termina el/él 2 de/dé noviembre, dedicado a/ha/ah los difuntos mayores. A diferencia de Halloween, las personas que/qué celebran el Día de Muertos no les temen a/ha/ah los difuntos del mas/más aya/haya/allá mas/más los esperan con anticipación. Las familias hacen ofrendas para los fallecidos porque esperan la llegada de/dé sus seres queridos que han muerto todo el/él año. Las familias preparan comida típica como mole, pan de/dé muerto, calaveras de/dé dulce, chocolate caliente, tamales, y futras como/cómo manzanas, naranjas, plátanos, y bayas/vallas/vayas. También, la familia pone una foto y los artefactos favoritos del difunto en la ofrenda, la cual/cuál se/sé coloca en la casa/caza. Las calles se/sé decoran con papel picado de/dé muchos colores, los panteones se/sé limpian y son adornados con flores. Sin embargo, no son cualquier tipo de/dé flores dado a/ha/ah que/qué se/sé utiliza el/él Cempasúchitl. Esta flor amarilla hace que/qué los muertos bayan/vallan/vayan asta/hasta su hogar sin problemas en el/él transcurso.

Además, no se/sé utilizan máscaras o disfraces para asustar, pero se/sé suelen usar atuendos tradicionales con la cara pintada como/cómo calavera para representar a/ha/ah la muerte. Por ejemplo, el/él traje de “Catrina,” el/él personaje creado por José Guadalupe Posada que /qué

representa **a/ha/ah** la muerte para la cultura mexicana. **Cuando/Cuándo** la UNESCO declaró la festividad **como/cómo** patrimonio cultural inmaterial **de/dé** la humanidad en el 2008, todos los mexicanos **se/sé** sentían muy orgullosos y pusieron sus banderas en lo **mas/más** alto del **asta/hasta**. Esta celebración no es vista **como/cómo** algo triste o **que/qué** da miedo, tan solo