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Are we the same person in our L1 as we are in our L2?

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ARE WE THE SAME PERSON IN OUR L1 AS WE ARE IN OUR L2?

A Thesis Presented

by

ERIC A. WIRTH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Hispanic Linguistics

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Eric Alton Wirth

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
1 ARE WE THE SAME PERSON IN OUR L1 AS WE ARE IN OUR L2?	1
Purpose of the study.....	1
Approach.....	2
Relevance	3
Overview.....	5
2 THE NATURE OF WORDS AND CULTURAL REALITIES	7
Introduction: Goal of Chapter and Overview.....	7
Language and Signs.....	8
Culture and Mind.....	10
Sociocultural Theory and Expression.....	13
Contact of Language, Expression and Culture.....	15
"Languaculture".....	18
The Semiotics of SCT and the Personal Narrative.....	23
Conclusion.....	26
3 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY.....	27
Introduction.....	27
Participants.....	27
Data.....	28
Data Analysis Procedures	29
Conclusion.....	30
4 DATA ANALYSIS	32
Introduction.....	32
Section 1: The Silent Treatment and the Culture of Complaining.....	34
Section 2: Humor, Sarcasm, Subtlety and Irony	36
Section 3: Respectful Speech and Making Demands	40
Section 4: Doubling-Up on Languages.....	44
Conclusion.....	47
5 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	49
Introduction.....	49
Conclusions.....	49

Limitations	50
Opportunities for Further Investigation	53
Implications for Teaching and Study Abroad	55

APPENDICES

A: PARTICIPATION OUTLINE AND JOURNAL QUESTIONS	56
B: JOURNAL RESPONSES	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1: English 'Individualism' compared to French 'Individualisme'	19
Table 2: English 'Suburbs compared to French 'Banlieue'	20

CHAPTER 1

ARE WE THE SAME PERSON IN OUR L1 AS WE ARE IN OUR L2?

*What comes about through the development of language
in the broadest sense is the coming to be
of expressive power."
-Charles Taylor*

Purpose of the study

The statement 'I'm not the same person in my first language as I am in my second language', is a worthy statement to be investigated. This research focuses on second language acquisition during a study abroad experience and the developments or modifications in the personality of a language learner's L1 and L2 discourses through the acquisition of a new expressive voice. Ideas concerning language and mind, cultural frameworks and sociocultural theory will be utilized to investigate how seven American students interpret their understandings of their expressive voice in their first language and in their second language, Spanish. Students were participants in a five-month Spanish immersion program at the University of Oviedo, Spain and were asked to keep diaries reflecting on how they expressed themselves naturally in their first language, English, and what they are learning about expressing themselves in their L2. This study draws from areas of investigation in applied linguistics, sociocultural theory, and linguistic anthropology, and has at its base the idea that specific grammatical and syntactical structures and the indexicality of a language make unique statements about the perceived realities of the speakers. Mikhail Bakhtin viewed language as "comprising dynamic constellations of sociocultural resources that are fundamentally tied to their social and historical contexts. These collections, which are continuously renewed in

social activity, are considered central forms of life in that not only are they used to refer to or represent our cultural worlds, but they also are central means by which we bring our worlds into existence, maintain them, and shape them for our own purposes." (Hall, Vitanova and Marchenkova 2005).

Approach

To approach this problem this thesis first looks at previous research and study in the fields of sociocultural theory, second language learning, and the culture and context of conversation. Beginning with the sociocultural significance of words, grammars, phonemes, sound shapes, morphology and syntax starting with key founders such as Saussure, Peirce, and Jakobson and Waugh the indexicality of language will be explored. Indexicality is important in that it points to thought processes, goals and means that are unique to one individual or an individual culture. We all have different personal goals in our interaction with others. How we choose to achieve these goals varies regardless of whether others share our goals. The link to personality is in how these means tie into how we see ourselves in comparison to how others see us. Others do not always perceive us the same way as we perceive ourselves. Each person and culture can have their own unique perspective. Language does not simply index objects; it can also index social realities, warranting a brief dip into the world of Sapir and linguistic relativity. This approach eases our introduction into the realm of language and perception, and at the same time fends off those who would be alarmed by the mere suggestions or linguistic relativity.

Just as the works of Sapir and Worf have begun to recapture some researchers, Marxist philosophers have attracted the interests of academics in the fields of sociology,

anthropology and other academic disciplines. The founding father of socio-cultural theory of mind, Lev Vygotsky (see Vygotsky 1978, 1986, etc.), along with his disciples, has made great contributions to education theory and most importantly its application in language learning. The focal point falls on two important developments that have come out of the application of sociocultural theory. The first being its emphasis on tool use and motivation for creating need for expressing personal, private and mental meanings, and the second, its focus on language as a tool for social interaction and mediation of the world. If we are then to talk about language as a tool for mediation, we must also look at the context in which language is used, drawing on ideas of performance and genre outlined in the work of Michael Silverstein and how even the simplest things can shape context. Talking about ideas of genre will lead us to discussions of patterns and finally to a key component to this study, the work of the linguistic anthropologist Michael Agar. From here we will need to consider the importance of genre and frameworks in the way in which we establish our own personal narratives, metaphors, and culturally specific meanings.

Relevance

With resurgence in the study of language and mind, this study brings together the above-mentioned fields, using discursive analysis in ethnographic research to look at how language learners in a study abroad experience learn and make assumptions about their language use. The research began with the collection of data utilizing a group of students from the United States participating in a five month Study Abroad program in Spain, with Spanish as the target L2. During their period of immersion in the host culture, these students undertook the process of incorporating and

understanding new forms of expression in Spanish and were asked to reflect on their individual communicative sociocultural encounters. At the beginning of their time in Spain, 7 students, whose first language is English and who lived with Spanish-speaking host families while taking classes at the University of Oviedo, gave their permission to participate in this research. It required them to maintain a reflective expressive diary throughout their stay. Every two weeks students were emailed a new topic to reflect on in their diary and everyday lives as they interacted with native speakers.

The present research scrutinizes the students' writings under the lens of discourse analysis as a methodological tool for investigating the written narrative of these journals. To observe the connections between linguistics and individuality, the approach for collecting data lies within looking at the individual's linguistic voice and how this voice becomes a critical tool in the study of a particular individual's speaking and writing. Discourse analysis has been used in the study of writers' styles to try to explain and hypothesize about what they might have meant by their writing. It looks at the way in which they wrote, their particular style, and what this might say about them as individuals while paying attention to an individual voice. Attention to voice assists in the understanding of language, genre and literary periods. It is a methodology borrowed from literary criticism, because in this technique the linguistically attuned close-reading techniques of discourse analysis allow the reader to see what is individual about language.

Discourse analysis is used to study data from all sorts of sources, such as transcripts of speech, written texts, hypothetical conversations, and any number of theoretical orientations found within these types of works. The advantage to working

with this type of analysis is that through the use of close reading, rereading, listening and relistening, one can extract a great amount of detail from a relatively small amount of data. Discourse analysis allows the observer to take an in-depth look at every aspect of a text to determine exactly what is individual about it. It is through the study of what makes a subject's voice unique and individual that it may be possible to observe unique developments or modifications in the personality of a language learner's L1 and L2 discourses.

Overview

The data collected in this project hopes to provide additional insight into the culture of communications in contact, the process by which a learner interprets these encounters and the reshaping of their expressive voice. The motivations for this study come from comments and ideas expressed by American students with respect to their feelings about Castilian Spanish and the sociocultural contexts they are exposed to during their study abroad experiences in Spain. Shedding light on sociocultural elements behind American students' impressions of Castilian and English, such as their frustrations with the imperative (command form) use for making requests, expressions of courtesy, humor and annoyance when speaking and how these certain aspects also come into play with cultural norms. It is an investigation into how contact with new forms of agency, performance and narration solidify themselves in the mind of the learner and whether there is any kind of crossover or new mental "third space" created through assimilation and navigation of multiple cultural constructs in language.

The rest of the work is structured as follows: Chapter 2 is an overview of language indexicality, sociocultural theory and anthropological linguistics as they relate

to culture and mind, Chapter 3 presents the study that was conducted, Chapter 4 analyzes the data collected and its relevance, and Chapter 5 summarizes the conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF WORDS AND CULTURAL REALITIES

Introduction: Goal of Chapter and Overview

In this chapter I explore the connection between language, cognition, culture, and personality to understand how we are culturally trained by our understanding of words. The nature of the significance of culturally specific words, the nuances of languages' particular grammars, as well as the intonation and delivery of speech acts are given a unique perspective when investigated from the position of our native language; through this lens we begin to apply our knowledge and application of these elements across foreign linguistic and cultural realities. The present investigation will be looking at the understandings, interpretations, and application of social habits, contexts and genres as they relate to the use of culturally specific forms of expression in the student subjects' L1 and L2 environments. Insight into performance will be useful in this study since it can be a critical tool for reflective investigation that involves the gathering of data related to verb expression, and continuing to follow as Bauman and Briggs (1990) write, "studying performance can open up a wider range of vantage points on how language can be structured and what roles it can play in social life" (Bauman and Briggs p 61).

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section looks at language and signs. The second section reviews notions of culture and mind. The third section is an overview of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and expression. The fourth examines the contact between language, expression and culture, which leads into the fifth section that

reviews the notion of languaculture. The sixth and final section deals with the semiotics of SCT and the personal narrative.

Language and Signs

Charles S. Peirce ([1902] 1955) writes, “a sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity.” (Peirce p. 99) From Saussure (1959) we can assert that we know things through signs, the signifier (the sound image) and the signified (the concept). From here we can step into the Peircian trichotomy of icon, index, and symbol. The icon is the relationship of resemblance (and following Jakobson (1980), we can also include sonic values as iconic as well). The index points to something co-present; it could take the form of jargon, accents, etc., and is tied to language as well as socially to discourse. The third part of this trichotomy is the symbol, which is arbitrary and unmotivated. Peirce follows the Saussurean duality in the symbolic function of signs, the signifier and the signified. This duality is represented in the relation of the resemblance between the sign and the object it represents, (icon), and the relation of arbitrary cultural conventions associated with that sign, (symbol). What ties this duality to mind is how we index these icons and symbols to negotiate meaning and regulate higher mental functions such as intentional memory, voluntary attention, and planning. Words within a language are simply another example of signs that index a certain reality, the reality which the words and the speaker inhabit. They serve as icons or metaphors for the reality to which they refer and enact the arbitrary conventions of the language or code in which they pertain, indexing social uses. All words, as do signs in general, stand for something and point to something. The specific use then of words changes how someone orients themselves in relation to

others. Words influence our behavior and as Kramersch (2000) writes “in Vygotsky's goal-oriented semiotics, signs are a means of regulating others’ and one’s own behavior” (Kramersch p. 137). Kramersch goes on to point out that signs (and I would add words as well) are reversible, and that those exposed to a new language have the possibility of putting new context or semiotic framework around their understandings of these words. One goal of the present study is to examine how this process manifests itself in the language learner, and whether it allows new, culturally-specific meanings to take over previously established concepts, permitting them to be reinterpreted in new ways by these new frames.

Jakobson (1980) added to Pierce’s trichotomy, noting that there is social indexicality in sound just as in full words and language sets. In regards to pronunciation, Michael Halliday (1973) co-opted the idea, writing that sounds have social indexical value with the notion that one can equate the phrase, “I don’t like their vowels” as meaning “I don’t like their values”. Clearly intonation and pronunciation don’t escape social reality and the indexicality of language either. While Greg Urban's examination of the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis', (Urban 1986) the hypothesis that language structure affects the perception of reality, focused specifically on Sapir's work regarding the perception of the phonological reality of phonemes, in reading other writings of Sapir, such as in *Form in Languages: Grammatical Processes* (1921) it is easy to see how one wonders what other effects language might have on our perceptions.

In *Grammatical Processes*, Sapir expounds on the various ways in which world languages have adapted and structured their grammatical and syntactical constructions to convey our expressions, leaving the door open for wondering what effect these

constructions might have on us as subordinates of our language system. The ways in which our language allows us to communicate ideas lead Sapir (1921) to write in one case concerning the issues of number and subject verb agreement; "Number is evidently felt by those who speak English as involving a necessary relation, otherwise there would be no reason to express the concept twice, in the noun and in the verb." (Sapir p. 87)

Culture and mind

With the information Sapir presents, the question can be asked then, do these differences in grammatical and syntactical indexicality make unique statements about the perceived realities of the speakers? For example, do speakers of a language with explicit gendering of nouns, object-specific agents in some verbs, or the use of imperative in polite requests, think/feel differently about these objects than speakers of languages that make different distinctions?

Our feelings about our own language and its uses can also lead us to slowly shape the language that we call our own, to in some ways submit it to our will of use. If the utility of these changes is great enough we are able to then integrate them into our acceptable colloquial and sometimes formal linguistic repertoire. These changes can occur through phonemic interpretations, morphology and grammaticalization.

This kind of idea brings up murky questions found in the area of sociolinguistics, residing in and around the *Whorfian hypothesis*, the idea that language can influence thought. This hypothesis states that

(1) languages vary in their semantic partitioning of the world; (2) the structure of one's language influences the manner in which one perceives and understands the world; (3) therefore, speakers of different languages will perceive the world differently. (Gentner and Goldin-Meadow p. 4) (2003)

Similar and much more recent studies resurrecting Whorfian ideas of language and mind have looked at questions of language and cognition using investigative tools such as the use of grammatical gender (Boroditsky, Schmidt and Philips 2003), motion (Malt, Steven, Soloman and Gennari 2003) and prepositions (Munnich and Landau 2003).

What do these basic kinds of linguistic differences in speaking, syntax, phonology and syntax, mean for the new speaker? As language learners, when we pick up these differences through rich and intense exposure and arrive at a level of understanding where we are no longer translating the expression in our heads (so that the expressions no longer merely mean the same thing for us as in our first language), will the learner (my main focus of comparison being that between English and Spanish) see beyond the words and understand the “psychological power” behind these forms?

This “psychological power” brings up questions of performance that will also need to be considered. “Performance” as a category has sometimes been thought of as a trash bin type category, one that doesn’t matter. In the past it was thought that performance was what people actually do, and questions were raised around the question, why use the word “performance” and not simply “behavior”? The key between the two resides in the context and the recontextualization of ideas, bringing up complex issues of competence and performance. Linguistic competence—our knowledge of the language, and performance—how we use this knowledge, as addressed by Crocker (1996) states that the distinction between the two “is a formal property of any processing system: inherent to any process is both a declarative semantics, a characterization of *what* the process computes, and an operational

semantics, a specification of *how* the declarative specification is used, thereby realizing a particular algorithm” (Crocker 1996).

Michael Silverstein writes that language creates context and that simple things can shape context, meaning that verbal interaction can create new social context for further interaction (Silverstein 2004). This brings up the idea of genre (Heymes 1998 and Bauman 1990) since Silverstein writes:

“Such doings, as events, have value and meaning only insofar as they are patterned –the textually oriented word is ‘genred’ – so that even as they are participating in them, people in effect negotiate the way that events are plausibly and (un) problematically instances of one or more such patterns”. (Silverstein p. 622)

There is a specific thinking for speaking involved, an aspect of overall performance when we choose a certain genre, a historic social/cultural convention. In the case of Austin’s (1961) example of performative utterances such as in the verbal acts performed in marriage ritual, he writes:

“Now at this point one might protest, perhaps even with some alarm, that I seem to be suggesting that marrying is simply saying a few words, that just saying a few words is marrying. Well, that certainly is not the case. The words have to be said in the appropriate circumstances, and this is a matter that will come up again later. But the one thing we must not suppose is that what is needed in addition to the saying of the words in such cases is the performance of some internal spiritual act, of which the words then are to be the report.” (Austin p. 236)

The internal spiritual act is what is trying to be accomplished and the words are a verbal action, a performance of that willful act. Austin goes on to state that “the social habits of the society may considerable affect the question of which performative verbs are involved and which, sometimes for rather irrelevant reasons are not.” (Austin p. 245)

Sociocultural Theory and Expression

Sociocultural theory as set forth by L.S. Vygotsky (see Vygotsky 1978, 1986) approaches identity as a relationship between the activities of both the external and internal worlds we structure, with each having a profound effect on the other. A.N. Leontiev later moved the emphasis away from the semiotic mind and onto material activity. This is such since what was once a part of the internal is externalized, becoming a part of the outside world, which is then in turn internalized again to be used and even reinterpreted. Leontiev's theory of activity, developed following the original works of Vygotsky (1989), tells us that human activity gives rise to mental processes and that activity involves tool use, whether these tools be the implication of physical activity or the use of semiotic tools to derive meaning. It is the use of these tools/actions that creates the metaphors and associations by which we establish our mental processes.

Dunn and Lantolf (1993) have asserted in their work that "from the sociocultural perspective, second language learners have a second chance to create new tools and new ways of meaning. Thus, accents, (un)grammaticality, and pragmatic and lexical failures are not just flaws or signs of imperfect learning but ways in which learners attempt to establish (new) identities and gain self-regulation through linguistic means. In an important sense, L2 learning is about gaining the freedom to create..." (1998: 427). These kinds of self mediation and creativity through tool use can be seen in events such as in the activity of private speech or a child's babblings giving rise to processing and understanding of new linguistic tools, which we can then use to shape ourselves and the world around us.

Fernando L. Gonzalez Rey (1999) who writes on the subject of personality from the sociocultural and historical perspective expounds upon Leontiev's interpretations of Vygotsky. One of the key points that Gonzalez makes in his article entitled *Personality, Subject and Human Development* is that personality does not develop devoid of external social factors, rather that personality is "historically constituted in the course of human development; it is through development that the social becomes historical and acquires its subjective constitution." (See Gonzalez, 1999: 256) These forces are constantly changing as they pass between the internal and the external and they are constantly modified, as they are "re-enacted and reconstituted within everyday social interactions." (p. 256) From this point we gather that we cannot consider personality as a linear consequence of social interaction, rather it is something deeply seeded in our social interaction. Therefore, as the environment (our basis for social interaction) changes, so can our personality. The key to connecting environment, personality and voice resides in language. How language allows us to voice and express ourselves, how to be funny, how to be ironic, how to be empathic or serious are all expressed through language and give the speaker a voice.

In order to begin to assess how emotional expression may develop and shape our existing and developing L2 selves we should take a look back at how developments in language, cognition, and emotional expression integrate in the process of early development. The question here is to determine whether any of these processes translate to later on in our lives with the acquisition of new languages. What possible ramifications do findings in this area have for second language learners? Lois Bloom (1993) begins her book entitled, *The Transition from Infancy to Language: Acquiring*

the Power of Expression, with the central thesis that “children learn language in acts of expression and interpretation for sharing beliefs, desires, and feelings with other persons” (Bloom, p. 1). Bloom goes on to state “these intentional states underlying acts of expression are the personal, private, mental meanings for which knowledge of the conventional, public meanings of language is acquired.” The intentional states mentioned by Bloom are the internal needs of the infant to express and articulate mental meanings of the way the world appears, or the way in which they would like it to appear. In documenting the transition from infancy to language her study shows how the acquisition of a vocabulary of words is connected to developments in cognition and affect expression. When we are infants, the need to share our thoughts with those around us is not at the forefront of our intention, rather the motivation for sharing is in the need to sustain intersubjectivity with other people and through this connection locate ourselves in a social world. The need for contact and establishing location within our social environment is just as important when we enter a new culture and a new linguistic environment.

Contact of Language, Expression and Culture

In some ways the learning of an L2 through immersion in a foreign environment can create the same need for expressing personal, private and mental meanings that motivates us to acquire a first language. One of the major ways in which learners of foreign languages perfect and hone their speaking abilities is through being immersed in the culture of that language, in much the same way that we learned our first language through the process of associating what at first seem like abstract utterances, and then, through the assimilation of their signified meanings we attribute the significance to the

signifier. One of the benefits of learning in an immersion environment is that the learner is subject to the new language as a functioning and live entity, like observing animals in the wild, rather than in the confines of a fabricated habitat. Yes, we can still learn a great deal about language and culture from the confines of the habitat and structure of the classroom but when one is immersed in the host environment of the new language and culture, a new type of learning takes place. The learner is exposed not only to the structure of the language with its own implications of expression, but he/she is also exposed to the cultural constructs of the environment that shape and are constantly being reshaped by the native speakers. The learner is exposed to a new universe of cultural constructs and metaphors that are imbedded in the vocabulary of his/her new environment. As this student learns to express him/herself in the new language, new vocabulary from new cultural realities becomes incorporated into his/her expressive repertoire.

Language as a tool for social interaction and the mediation of the world must first take into consideration that we have something to express. Expression is manifested with some sort of outward gesture, cry or utterance, all of which could be considered tools for expression. Tylor (as quoted in de Laguna 1927/1963, p.17) a 19th century anthropologist wrote,

"We must cease to measure the historical importance of emotional exclamations, of gesture signs, and of picture-writing, by their comparative insignificance in modern civilized life, but must bring ourselves to associate the articulate words of the dictionary in one group with cries and gestures and pictures, as being all of them means of manifesting outwardly the inward workings of the mind."

The idea of language as expression can even be traced as far back as the fourth century "recollections" of Saint Augustine on how he himself had acquired language,

"And this by constantly hearing words...I collected gradually for what they stood; and having broken in my mouth to these signs, I thereby gave utterance to my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me these current signs of our wills, and so launched deeper into the stormy intercourse of human life" (Augustinus, 397/1945, p. 9).

It is clear through the words of both these writers that language is a tool for expression and a tool for regulating the world with the grammatical and cultural rules that we inherit from our ancestors functioning as a mediator between internal thoughts and the external world.

I have mentioned earlier that human activity gives rise to mental processes making activity a key tool for the higher mental function of mediation and the negotiation of meaning. Leontiev's Activity Theory gave rise to Helen Schwartzman's (1997) anthropological studies of the play of children, and also inspired researchers such as Lantolf (2005) to propose that the use of private speech as play is an essential tool for negotiating meaning in the acquisition of language. Play is seen as a way for those participating to practice roles, rehearse situations and develop understandings and meanings that can later be applied in future situations. In the case of children, the act of play is a way for them to prepare themselves to engage in adult activity. It allows the child to interact in the world while at the same time allowing them to perform beyond their present limitations and bridge the gap in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Lantolf's research into the use of private speech by adult language learners reflects this same idea in the use of private utterances and private writing as a type of play, which readies them for future interaction and sociocultural roles. Private reflection on language may also help a second language learner acquire and assimilate a

new language, to determine meanings and go about forming and discovering their expressive voice in the new language

"Languaculture"

To understand how language and culture play a role in the shaping of personality from the sociocultural perspective one can look to the contributions of the field of anthropological linguistics, specifically Michael Agar's (1994) work on understanding language in its cultural context. In his work Agar has coined the term "languaculture" describing "the lingua in languaculture" as being "about discourse, not just about words and sentences, and the culture in languaculture is about meanings that include, but go well beyond, what the dictionary and grammar offer." Agar's definition can be seen clearly in projects such as the "Cultura" project developed by Gilberte Furstenberg at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, Kathryn, & Maillet, Katherine, 2001).

Agar's approach looks at language and culture as they relate to one another in symbiotic relationship. In anthropology, the notion of culture grew up as a concept to cover the descriptions of isolated traditional communities. However a problem arose in defining a population's culture by strictly comparing it with the observer's own culture, in that it did not take into consideration the use of language within the populations being studied. I have previously noted the historical importance of language for its ability to transmit and reshape the speaker's worldview and collective understandings, so if the observer never really fully understands the language of the people they observe, their comparisons based solely on external observation fall short of grasping

the people’s full cultural identity. In his work Agar understands this and thusly called for the notion of culture to be attached to language.

The Cultura Project utilizes a type of online Internet-based forum, where American students and students from foreign universities abroad post and discuss a variety of artifacts and symbols to observe and stimulate dialogue regarding their respective cultural and historical interpretations of various aspects of life and language. In one of the forums posted between American Students attending MIT and French students at the Université Paris II, they were asked to post their own definitions for terms such as “individualism” and “suburb”. The forum entailed the American students defining these terms in their own words in English, and the French students defining what on the surface were their French cognates, “individualisme” and “banlieue” in their own colloquial French. The results that surfaced from each of the groups’ respective interpretations were staggering.

Table 1: English ‘Individualism’ compared to French ‘Individualisme’

Individualism	Individualisme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capitalism, ights, power • competition • independence, original • freedom, ego, choice • freedom, independence • important, courage, • important, freedom, American • important, responsibility • independence, egocentric • insecure, lonely • justice, euphoria, strength • loneliness, selfish • me, America, sex • privacy, self-governed • right, humanism, Renaissance • self respect,courage • self, pride • selfish, independence, ego • sin, isolation, pride • thought, truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • argent, ego, • capitalisme, athéisme • les etats unis, • opportunisme, égoïsme, • Parisiens, Travail, entreprise, • pourquoi pas moi • seul, capitalisme • seul,liberté • seul,personne • égoïsme, capitalisme, • égoïsme, arrivisme, solitude • égoïsme, enrichissement personnel, capitalisme • égoïsme, repliement • égoïsme, travail, écraser, indifférence • égoïsme, égocentrisme

http://web.mit.edu/french/culturaNEH/spring2004_sample_site/index_foru.htm

Table 2: English ‘Suburbs compared to French ‘Banlieue’

Suburbs	Banlieue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • backyard, front yard, white picket fence • boring, cheap, american • car, poor, cheap • cars, houses, children • commuter, disadvantaged • grow up, white, clean • houses, families • houses, people • minivan, Levittown, 1950s • minivans, soccer fields, cookie-cutter houses • neighborhood, yard, home • New Jersey, boring • nice homes, quite • outskirts, boring • quiet, green, clean • towns, homes, children • village, rural • where I live, easy life style • white, rich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficile, tour, • discrimination, partager, arabes, • ghetto, ressource, fourmilière, grouillement, • HLM, loin • immigration, violence, chômage, délinquance, • pouriture, racaille, noir, drogue, • maison, espace, train, verdure • nature, calme ou violence, transports en commun • pavillonnaire, exclusion, transport, • racaille, maisons • racaille, noir, inquiétant, non sécurisant, violence, • rap, exclusion, transports, capitale • urbanisme paris • ville, campagne • zones parfois très dangereuses, ghettos • étranger, violence, horreur

http://web.mit.edu/french/culturaNEH/spring2004_sample_site/index_foru.htm

The results are fascinating and speak for themselves. At face value we want to assume that because these words have similar historical roots they will carry the same sort of associations both in English and in French. However this could not be farther from the truth. What we find is that each of these words is uniquely charged with cultural history and interpretation, pure languaculture at work. For the language learner, the differences in these terms are at first invisible and hard to grasp. The learner may use terms inappropriately when they (as non-native speakers) begin to use vocabulary such as this when communicating with native L2 speakers, attempting to assume a particular position in individual expression, however what is understood by the native L2 speaker is completely different.

If the learner is observant enough and discussion ensues from differences in the non-native and native speaker’s languaculture, the learner's concept and understanding of the signifier’s new significance becomes incorporated into their framework for speaking. The speaker may not make the same error again when expressing him/herself using this term; they may even begin to use it within the newly acquired context, and

even absentmindedly apply this new context to the term when using it in their native L1. It is this type of application of new hybrid cross-cultural word frames that creates budding conflicts in our L1 and L2 forms of expression.

This may seem merely a matter of separating and building a new mental linguistic significance barrier between the languages we learn in order to keep these unique meanings apart from each other. But then what does it mean to be separating these differences from one another? In the case of the differences in English and French between the above-mentioned examples, to the near-fluent language user of both English and French, are these significances stored apart from one another, keeping the French expressive self in one place, and the English self in another? Culturally and in communicative situations with monolingual speakers in either of these languages, confusion and misunderstanding would surely occur if the corresponding cultural significance were inversely applied.

When talking about cultural differences, what Agar proposes is that we must change the notion we have of “culture” from thinking of it in terms of the mass inventory of a group of people, and turn it into something that handles the abounding differences, and then use the similarities to organize them. “Culture is supposed to be an answer to the problem of understanding differences, not a label that hides the question” (Agar 1994). Not all differences have to be cultural. People are still able to approach the same ideas, activities and functions differently within the same languaculture. Agar's response to this is that these differences can appear because a person might have a different identity.

The work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1966) considers culture to consist of patterns. These patterns can be prescriptive and descriptive, ideal and real, theoretical and a collection of various elements that together offer a coherent image. So if patterns are a mess, where do we begin to find the similarities that organize the differences? Agar (1994) offers the idea of cultural frames, as a unit for studying languaculture and to organize meaning and communicative expectation, and to reflect the default personal values learned by an individual functioning within a cultural pattern. I would suggest that these frames are the backdrops behind one's own voice, since the interlocutor is easily aware of unmarked (natural) and marked (non-basic, less natural) speech, social interaction and gestures. To examine these patterns through voice, the interlocutor's own reflections coax these often hidden defaults into the forefront. When the collection of these diverse elements forms what we can begin to define as a specific culture, these cultural activities, acted out daily, enable meaning to emerge, intermixing with the complexity of language, mind and society to form a languaculture. Therefore for Agar, languaculture is the abstract frame that consists of this ménage of experience, interpretation, repetition and reproduction. Frames show a coherent link among several differences that arise in language; they are holistic, they take language and culture and make them indivisible, they organize experience, limit the possibilities within a context, and they provide expected background information.

These frames can be clearly seen and understood in the context of the Cultura project when we begin to see how simple words by themselves in a language can offer up a host of cultural meaning, emotion and symbolism. After all, Vygotsky (1989) saw language as a semiotic tool where "signs are artificially created stimuli" whose purpose

is to influence behavior. In Vygotsky's view these meaningful signs were the keys to higher mental processes. Signs, language included, can contain unique meanings specific to cultures, since languages unknown in either spoken or written form make little sense to those who are not familiar with them. Just as Agar talks about languaculture functioning within frames, signs too function within a specific framework. The frames around signs function in an indexical manner referring to the context in that they occur, as well as in a symbolic function, operating independently of context, referring to other signs. Signs then relate to the world by referencing objects in the world and providing meaning by entering into relationships with other linguistic or nonlinguistic signs. The words we use are just another set of signs allowing us to negotiate our lives and the world around us. Going back then to our example of *individualism* vs. *individualisme*, the meanings of these signs can vary greatly depending on how one relates varying signs to one another.

The Semiotics of SCT and the Personal Narrative

The acquisition of a second language provides us with an opportunity to participate in a new culture and reconstruct and even reinvent ourselves. This application can be seen in the rewriting of the personal narrative and allows for a new languaculture to take over and reinterpret previously established concepts. Sfard (1998) offers two metaphors for the emergence of reconstructed selves. The first is the existing acquisition metaphor that deals with the internalization of knowledge as in the "accumulation of material goods". She goes on to suggest the emergence of a second metaphor, the participation metaphor. The participation metaphor would be most commonly seen in immersion environments and is a process that allows the learner to

acquire the ability to communicate and act according to the norms of the society/culture in which they are immersed (Sfard, 1998, p. 5).

In Lantolf and Pavlenko's (2000) research the authors analyzed ten autobiographies of language learners trying to become fluent/near native speakers in their L2. Through the analysis of these people's own personal narratives, the authors show how these individuals reconstructed their identity and their world. When beginning to look at how these individuals express a sense of reconstructed self it is important to take into consideration that these people have made a conscious effort to integrate themselves into their new environment, and they have accepted that this language will come to have a new and important influence over them. A student in a similar immersion environment might also decide not to integrate themselves completely and by this same motivation only allow themselves to develop their L2 linguistic capabilities to a certain degree, letting their ability and fluency fall by the wayside, without losing their original L1 identity of self or adopting a new one. So while some students (such as in the case of an informant of Lantolf and Pavlenko), who abandon or lose their old voice in their L1, there are still those who maintain a certain sensation of duality. The speaker is both a native speaker in their L1 and a near native speaker of L2. Regardless as to which of these personas the speaker considers being their true "self" there is still the existence of two forms of expression, simply one is considered to be more expressive than the other.

Sfard's participation metaphor suggests that there is a continuous stage of loss and only later in the L2 development is there an overlapping second stage of gain and reconstruction (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). This continuous stage of loss can be

characterized by several factors; such as the loss of one's linguistic identity (as in changing one's own name), the loss of all L1 cultural subjectivities like family, familiar surroundings and cultural identity, the loss of the frame of reference and the link between the signifier and the signified (referents without any conceptual systems or experiences to back them up), the loss of the one's inner voice ("words don't apply to my new experience" and "my feelings are untranslatable and my voice is the voice of a foreigner") (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 165). Vygotsky and Bakhtin stated "it is through inner speech that we create our experience, that is, in inner speech we organize and integrate the events that occur in space and time into the plot of our life narrative" (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 165). So if the inner voice is lost in one language then the new inner voice provides the opportunity for the individual's personal narrative to be rewritten and reinterpreted in the L2. Even with this one extreme example of the rewriting of the personal narrative with the loss of the L1 inner voice, we must still take into account the conflict during the process of loss.

Vygotsky, Jacobson and Bakhtin all believe that it is in language that individuals are bound into groups and at the same time enabled to exist as selves. In order to try to study this collective and individual sense of self we must look for the minimal unit of analysis, this preserved fundamental essence of consciousness. From a Bakhtin perspective the context of language is immeasurably tied to the social, and not simply a set of a-contextual forms. These social aspects come from the spaces that we inhabit as people, be it the familiar, work or community space. Language is the crystallization of events or genres which shape and act upon the speaker. There are dual forces at work in

language, on one hand, speakers shape language, and on the other, it is also true that language shapes us.

Conclusion

From patterns consisting of default values shaped by the social spaces we inhabit, a speaker is indoctrinated into a language culture. When a speaker comes into contact with a new language, be it in a relatively small exchange such as that outlined in the Cultura Project, or a deeper more intimate experience such as immigration and immersion into foreign culture, personal expression and notions of a speaker's own sense of voice and selfhood can be affected. From this point of reference, sociolinguistic techniques can be applied to studying the process of a second language learners' development in their L2 capabilities and shed light on the process of indoctrination into a new sociocultural framework.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. The first section describes the participants and how they were selected into the program and evaluated for their performance at the start of their study abroad experience. The second section describes the data collection procedures, followed by the data analysis procedures in third section. The fourth and final section concludes the chapter.

Participants

Twenty-three undergraduate students from the University of Massachusetts were asked to participate in this study. Of these twenty-three, only seven returned their field diaries, and of those seven, six fully participated in the study. Students were participants in a five-month study abroad program at the Universidad de Oviedo in Asturias Spain, with Castilian Spanish as the target L2. To participate in the program, it was required that students have proficiency in Spanish equivalent to someone who has successfully completed a fourth semester of college level Spanish (Spanish 240, Spanish 246, or Spanish 242 at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, or High School equivalent). Students were also formally evaluated by a faculty member/instructor from their language course. Evaluators had to satisfactorily rate the applicant's present Spanish competence in the areas of speaking, reading, listening and writing as compared to other students of the same level. Students were also considered based on the evaluation of their maturity, ability to adapt to a foreign culture, their

interest in learning Spanish, as well as their perceived level of enthusiasm. Upon arrival in the host city, students took a placement exam to determine their exact placement position within the program, that of either intermediate or advanced. The class materials in either level were comparable, with only the pacing modified according to level. Student on the program resided with native Spanish host families during their entire stay in order to afford them maximum exposure to the target language and culture. Therefore, students heard and spoke Spanish both in their daily interactions within the university and at home.

Data

During their period of immersion in the host culture, these students undertook the process of incorporating and understanding new forms of expression in Spanish and were asked to reflect on their individual communicative sociocultural encounters. At the beginning of their time in Spain the students, whose first language is English, gave their permission to participate in research that required them to maintain a reflective expressive diary throughout their stay. Every two weeks students were emailed a new theme to reflect on in their diary and everyday lives as they interacted with native speakers (See appendix A). Questions were presented in English and no specification was made as to the language students had to use in their entries, though all opted to write in English.

At the end of the program the responses from the participants were collected, transcribed onto a computer from their handwritten format and analyzed to see how students' own self-analysis coincided with the theory presented in this thesis.

Data Analysis Procedures

To observe the connections between linguistics and individuality, the unit of analysis for personality is the individual's linguistic voice and how this voice becomes a critical tool in the study of a particular individual's speaking and writing.

The unit of voice is articulated through the methodology of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has been used in the study of writers' styles to try to explain and hypothesize about what they might have meant by their writing and to show what their particular style says about them as individuals. Paying attention to an individual voice helps us to understand language; it implies close-reading techniques that allow the reader to see what is individual about language. Discourse analysis has been used in the past in evaluating sociolinguistic areas such as 'child discourse' (Cook-Gumperz and Kyratzis 2001).

In their research Cook-Gumperz and Kyratzis explored ideas of personhood and self-identity concerning how children understand their own position in a social world, emphasizing that how children gain a realization of who they are as a person within a social and cultural world is critical in child discourse inquiry. "Language is used by the child actively to construct a social identity and a self-awareness that comes with the self-reflection made possible through the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic resources of language" (Cook-Gmperz and Kyratzis 2001). In another example utilizing discourse analysis, M. Shatz in her book *A Toddler's Life* (1997) describes how, in acquiring a language the child becomes a social person, through the use of a diary study of her own grandson.

Second language learning can be reminiscent of childhood, though as adults we are already considered masters of our first language. Through the discourse constructed by students concerning their L1 voice, coupled with the self-reflection of their journal writing, attention is drawn to the mental processes of L2 learners. Discourse analysis then helps to examine data from these dairies. The advantage to working with this type of analysis is that through the use of close reading and rereading, one can extract a great amount of detail from a relatively small amount of data. Discourse analysis allows the observer to take an in-depth look at every aspect of a text to determine exactly what is individual about it. It is then through the study of what makes a subject's voice unique and individual that it may be possible to observe unique developments or modifications in the personality of a language learner's L1 and L2 discourses. Just as discourse analysis has been utilized in the studying of the rewriting of personal narrative, such as in the study by Pavlenko and Lantolf (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 165), or in the analysis of the private speech of language learners conducted by Centeno-Cortés (2003), so can it be used to analyze and reflect on the journal writings of the students participating in this study.

Conclusion

Students use of discourse analysis to create their narratives and reflect on expressive themes in their L1 and L2. “[Narratives] are forms of knowing, of making sense, that our lives ‘hang together’ as it were. At the core of the narrative is the *plot* – the ‘cohesive glue’ that imparts meaning to the events of the narrative...” (Polkinghorne 1988). From this ‘plot’ that the students form in their journal writings, discourse

analysis looks to what is unique about the student's voice and why they may feel as they do concerning each topic.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In analyzing the data, the first things that become noticeable are the tools that the students surveyed came armed with from the United States. These were the pre-established tools for negotiating and communicating that they had fashioned back in their home culture. And just like when traveling you need to bring an adapter to convert your domestic electrical appliances, so too were these students going to have to construct the appropriate conversation mechanisms in order to get their expressive appliances to function in the foreign environment.

In the environment of the second language classroom, students are instructed on how to make declarations and transmit information, and do not worry about the transmission of more subtle nuances of their personalities in Spanish. They have no reference beyond the teacher's use of the target language from which to mimic and make judgements related to the speaker's voice and personality. Outside the classroom, in a study abroad environment, the language learner is not only subject to the structure of the language, but rather all the cultural complexities and constructs of the environment of the native speakers.

Neither the language classroom nor their pre-departure meetings orient students to the readiness of expressing themselves and translating their personality. This leaves it up to the students, through a process of trial and error, which is the study abroad experience, to deploy, retract and modify their tools based on the clues, reaction and imitation of those around them. This chapter looks at those processes and how students

negotiate and formulate personality through their understanding of expressive voice and the negotiation for understanding and being understood.

I arrived at the themes described in the following sections through consideration of my own experiences and conversations with colleagues concerning the differences that commonly arise between Castilian Spanish and English. By asking questions with familiar expressive themes such as the voicing and conveyance of humor, irony, annoyance, and courtesy, my goal was to coax students to reflect on situations where there are culturally appropriate situations and manners of conveyance to see how they reflected on the handling of these expressive situations. The goal was to see how students interpret, process and reapply their L1 and L2 understandings in their pursuit to project their established voices, or construct a new voice for themselves.

This chapter is divided in four sections which stem from responses to questions posed to students regarding annoyance, humor, irony, subtlety, courtesy, making requests and specific reflections concerning the process of their L2 development. The first section, *The Silent Treatment and the Culture of Complaining* focuses on issues of vocalizing annoyance (or the lack thereof) and nonverbal cues stemming from the responses to questions asked to participants regarding themes of annoyance, courtesy and subtlety. The second section, *Humor, Sarcasm, Subtly and Irony* addresses humor and sarcasm as well as aspects of subtlety and irony as they related to culturally specific voices, interpretation and imitation. The third section, *Respectful Speech and Making Demands* comes from issues that arose in questions of courtesy and making requests with students offering reflections on L2 grammar and marked and unmarked expressions such as ‘thank you’. The fourth section, *Doubling-Up on Languages*

presents students' reflections concerning their progress and development in the L2 and their comments regarding thinking and speaking amidst the sorting, mixing and interference of L1 and L2 voices.

Section 1: The Silent Treatment and the Culture of Complaining

Based on questions that were posed to students concerning annoyance, courtesy and subtlety, students showed that verbal and nonverbal cues are sometimes harder to get across cultural boundaries than anticipated, especially when the interest of diplomacy comes to play.

Politeness is a key factor for many of the Americans surveyed. I will touch upon voicing courtesy further on in this chapter. However, from the first question students were asked pertaining to expressing annoyance, an overall culture of restraint while in the host country seemed to be observed. "I don't want to make enemies, and I don't need others creating stereotypes for other Americans simply because of how I react" (see Appendix B, 1b). This may be a universal passive position of diplomacy as well, as the same subject remarked, "all I know is that in the U.S., I have met foreign exchange students who are also very passive, and I think it may be a universal quality that comes along with adapting to a new culture and family" (see Appendix B, 1b).

The students seemed to interpret the use of subtlety such as facial expressions and the silent treatment as more polite in comparison to their observations that Spaniards were louder and more verbal and animated in showing their annoyance,

"...[the members of my host family] tend to express [annoyance] verbally (and very rapidly). They don't use any of the non-word 'vocals' that I do. I don't really express annoyance verbally. I think because I like to avoid conflict or confrontation" (see Appendix B, 1g).

Silence, gestures, and non-verbal cues contrasted against the students' limitations with vocabulary in Spanish in order to try to express and test expressing annoyance in Spanish.

"Normally, I express annoyance through silence and specific body language. If I am annoyed with a store employee or a professor (basically someone with whom I must interact, but do not know well) I give curt, cold replies. I might stare hard or assent to things silently. I also might cross my arms, turn away from the person, or not look him/her in the eye when I'm speaking to him/her. I usually don't express annoyance directly" (see Appendix B, 1c).

Students were split on the translatability of their established non-verbal cues.

One student wrote,

"In Spain, I've been using my natural forms of expressing annoyance. As most of them are related to body language and facial expression, they are not limited by my insufficient verbal Spanish. However they generally seem to be lost on the Spaniards" (see Appendix B, 1c).

However, another writes, "Eye-rolling and other gestures definitely transcend the boundaries between these two countries" (see Appendix B,1a). The student comments on a particular situation where her host sister became annoyed and observes that "her annoyance could clearly be seen in the intensity of her facial expressions, her somewhat elevated voice, and her broad hand motions" (see Appendix B, 1a). This student however does note that outside of the sympathetic environment of her host family, others are less adept, or I would guess patient, in trying to understand her, as she also notes,

"I have found, however that in public, I am understood but not well received. If you have a complaint in a public space, such as a restaurant or something it seems as though tending to that complaint is not a high priority. That may be where there is a gap between home and Spain when it comes to expressing annoyance" (see Appendix B, 1a).

So while students might get lucky that some of their annoyance falls on the eyes (rather than ears in these cases) of sympathetic interlocutors in the dealings with their host families, they aren't taught explicitly in their foreign language classroom about the culture of complaining. It is something that they observe and have interpreted for themselves.

"From what I've observed here, people tend to express annoyance more vocally. Within my host family, the mother and brother tend to speak loudly, more quickly and with exaggerated hand gestures when they are annoyed. I've seen people yelling in the street while gesturing rapidly as well. Of course, this sort of expression of annoyance is much more visible than the silent type" (see Appendix B, 1c)

This great vocalization of annoyance seemed to be interpreted as being more direct, whereas the American's attempts all centered on being indirect.

"I generally use facial expressions (like rolling my eyes, sighing heavily, etc) or changing the tone/pitch of my voice. [...] Using more subtle cues, however, ties in with knowing and being able to understand and interpret the more subtle social cues of a culture and its language" (see Appendix B, 1d)

Despite these observations, students failed to offer an opinion as to which they thought was better, their own style or that of their host. Their journals do however offer a sense of obvious preference towards their own natural-feeling forms of expression, and made no notes regarding the likelihood that they would adopt this form of expression at this early point in their overseas experience.

Section 2: Humor, Sarcasm, Subtlety and Irony

Preference toward their L1 forms of expression might come from insufficient observation and the inability to imitate. Students were also asked about conveying their sense of humor, which was difficult for them possibly due to the lack of understanding of culturally specific frameworks of imitation around voice, people and events. One

student remarked, "at home, actually in general [...] I am usually imitating other people" (see Appendix B, 2e), alluding to the fact that she is not yet familiar with stereotypical styles of speech which might index the personality type they wish to lampoon. The same student goes on to recount,

"I was imitating this girl that I know from the bars because I had run into her earlier. My friends [presumably other American English speakers] were laughing hysterically. When I met up with my tandem partner and did the same thing he did not laugh. He just responded, 'some people are strange like that' and changed the topic. I don't think he knew that I was trying to be funny. I guess we have a slightly different sense of humor."

Delivery of humor tends to rely on very specific forms of imitation and conveyance, all of which would seem to be culturally specific forms that one learns through observing and being able to reproduce certain styles. "When two Spaniards exchange comments, they seem to have no trouble noticing whether or not the other is insinuating something or just being serious" (see Appendix B, 3b). Another student noted,

"In English I express humor usually through the way I execute my sentences; how I emphasize certain parts or words and which words I choose. In Spanish, it seems as though humor is based more on jokes; that is, on the funniness of the content of what is said rather than the way it is said. In this way it is hard for me to be funny in Spanish. I feel like I've only managed it by making fun of myself or the typical behavior of someone else and things like that" (see Appendix B, 2f).

So in this case the student has begun to understand a culturally specific voice, that of herself in the L2, the voice of the foreigner. She is able to hear her voice and how it contrasts to native speakers' and lampoon her own speech styles and cultural stereotypes in order to convey a sense of humor.

Problems of memorization also impeded students' abilities to convey humor in their L2, given that they felt that their grammatical capabilities and vocabulary hindered

their delivery of the idea or narrative. "I don't think it has worked as I planned it in the beginning, because I must mess up the process with grammar or the recipient thinks I am just serious, when I'm not at all" (see Appendix B, 3b). The most successful manners for them to convey humor resulted from miscommunications or cultural difference, such as reactions towards food, or misunderstandings in communication. "I've found that I get laughs from the Spaniards unintentionally more or less" (see Appendix B, 2c)

Several students also remarked that sexual humor and innuendo seemed to be more prevalent, though for the most part subtlety and sarcasm were seen as crossing barriers of communication rather easily.

"I often use subtlety in my humor in English, along with sarcasm. I have found that many Spanish people do too, including my host family. My host sister will often use subtle comments to make fun of a situation. For example, poking fun at models on TV wearing ridiculous clothes. She will look at them and say 'Para ir a la clase, perfecto. Supercómodo.' I have also tried to use this humor, since I often use it in English, and it came across well" (see Appendix B, 3a).

Here is a perfect example of imitation, the student has observed her host sister's use of sarcasm and reflection, and has tried to use it for herself, modeling her inflection and tone after what she has seen and responded to in her host family environment.

Students' comments that Spaniards seem to communicate thoughts, feelings and emotions more directly than themselves also come up again in their notes on subtleties.

"It seems to me that people are generally quite direct in Spain and that my subtlety is lost on my host parents anyway. At home I use subtlety to indicate my preferences in a more polite way, especially regarding foods and activities. I also use subtlety to get information about someone/something without being obvious. Even little ways of being subtle, like saying excuse me or coughing, so that someone will move so you can pass by don't seem so common here. More often they will just push against you until you move" (see Appendix B, 3c).

This type of comment regarding personal space is something that is very culturally specific to Americans; above all I would imagine this state common among students who come from less urban environments where they are not used to having such direct contact with large groups of people in the streets on a day to day basis. Just as students were having comfort issues with direct contact, they also had problems with direct forms of speech, preferring to "beat around the bush" instead of being direct. Students generally felt though that subtlety was not something commonly used by Spaniards, or at least how to convey it outside of their own native forms continued to elude them. "I get the feeling that subtlety is not used to a great extent" (see Appendix B, 3c), and "in Spain people are not subtle about anything at all" (see Appendix B, 3e).

A common problem around trying to deploy techniques of "beating around the bush" centered on trying to decline offers of food. When students' host families would prepare a specific meal that they did not enjoy they would try to decline it by not showing high levels of enthusiasm or by offering minimal expressions of enjoyment, like 'more or less', or 'a little', and not wanting to be mean. Finally when the dish continued to be prepared for them, their exasperation forced them to communicate directly by saying, 'I don't like it at all!' "I tend to be subtle either when I want something from someone or I don't like something that someone either wants my opinion on or is offering me. I don't want to be rude so I will hint [at] things etc" (see Appendix B, 3g). Again students are very concerned about their politeness given their outsider and guest status in the host country. Concerning this tactic of beating around the bush and hinting at things,

"usually in the U.S. this tactic works for me in these situations, which is why I use it, but in Spanish it only works about half the time. If there is ever a

situation where I really like or really despised something, I usually abandon the subtle method and approach it more straight forwardly, but I don't want to be rude so I am usually pretty subtle" (see Appendix B, 3g)

Section 3: Respectful Speech and Making Demands

Indirectness, directness and tact also came into play when students reflected on courtesy and asking for things. "The whole idea of politeness and respectfulness is one of the things I find to be most different between our cultures, and I haven't quite figured it out yet" (see Appendix B, 4a). This section addresses comments such as this stemming from questions of courtesy and making requests, and touching on areas of grammar and markedness.

When asked to reflect on their respectfulness in Spanish and English, students first noted the most obvious differences between the two languages, in that Spanish utilizes a specific morphology to denote respect when addressing someone, the *usted* verb conjugation form, while they knew of no such morphology in English. Despite the existence of the *usted* and its plural *ustedes* pronouns and verb forms, students also quickly discovered that its actual use was quite specific to cultural norms and practices.

"I've been addressed as *Ud.* [abbreviation for *usted*] by waiters and cab drivers a few times here, and it always surprises me because I don't hear it that often here. Even the teachers at school are addressed with the *tú* [informal 'you'] by the students. When I have used the *usted* form here, such as with my host parents (and their relatives), when I first met them, I've always been told not to - that it's not necessary" (see Appendix B, 4c).

This common response by the student's host family could be for a number of reasons with any sociocultural factors and historical events surrounding some Spaniards' comfort and taste for being addressed as *usted*. Though no students seemed to be able to offer any explanation for why this might be the case, it has been the

observation of this researcher throughout many long-term stays in Spain that this may be the case. However, the same students did note with regard to *usted*:

"...if you don't use it in Spanish when it's required, you could really offend someone or come off as disrespectful. It seems like when the Spanish are courteous, they are very courteous, but they reserve that for specific occasions/certain people. Most of the time they are not particularly courteous (not in a rude way, but they just don't see it as required for the situation)".

Another interesting notion from a student surrounding the use of *usted* was the use its taking of the third person. "It is interesting in Spanish because they have the formal 'you' form '*Usted*', which is indirect, but in all other ways it seems to me that the conversations are still very direct, with imperative language often used" (see Appendix B, 4f). The student's understanding of the *usted* has led to her thinking of addressing that person in an indirect manner, since the verb conjugates the same as it does in the third person singular for the Spanish equivalent of *he*, *she*, and *it*. Also brought up by this student, and common across the students surveyed in this research, was their feelings towards the use of direct imperative speech for making requests.

"I express courtesy in English by using words like 'please' and 'thank you', and using indirect, non committal language like, 'would you like to...?' or 'could you tell me...' or 'is it possible if I...?' (see Appendix B, 4f).

"If I were making a request while being courteous I wouldn't use just a command. I'd use the conditional and 'could you please do ____.' I'm a lot more cautious with my language when I'm trying to show respect" (see Appendix B, 4c).

"I never just tell people to give me things or give commands. I use the conditional and ask for things instead" (see Appendix B, 4b).

It would seem that this is one of the most difficult things for students, using the imperative rather than the conditional, which is more customary in English.

One student surveyed had all this to say:

" Asking for things here in Spain is much different than at home. It goes along with the differences in politeness. The way Spanish people typically request things seems to me, as an American, to be more like demands. For example, at a restaurant or café, one does not say, 'I would like a coffee', but instead just says '*un café*'. Also, even in a family setting, 'please', 'thank you', or 'I would like', are not common phrases like in the States. Instead of, 'May I have a piece of bread', it's either '*pásame*' [pass me], or '*dame un trozo de pan*', [give me a piece of bread] or simply pointing and saying '*un trozo de pan*' [a piece of bread]. I often hear other American students at restaurants or other establishments saying things like, '*puedo tener un café*', since we feel the need to use our American habits when it comes to asking for things. The Spaniards always understand what we mean when we use phrases like that, but I'm sure it must sound very strange to them, and it's just another way they can tell we're not from around here. Since being in Spain I have learned to cut out the '*quisiera*' [I would like], or '*puedo tener*' [can I have], most of the time when I ask for things, but I always follow it up with a please and thank you. Although those phrases do not always accompany Spaniards' requests, I have a hard time setting aside that part of my culture and upbringing" (see Appendix B, 5a).

Through the use of more imperative language students tended to make the observation that

"In Spanish I am generally more direct. [...] Sometimes it's just less complicated to say the command than to try and qualify it with phrases that aren't necessary. From my observations, commands aren't viewed as harsh or rude the way they can be in English" (see Appendix B, 5c).

Some students did feel that their shortcomings with Spanish made them less assertive. They were more cautious about offending and fitting in, so they still felt more assertive in English. In their first language they presumably felt more comfortable and able to push the communicative envelope more when trying to accomplish a task, and worried less about how they might sound to an interlocutor. One student remarked,

"... in English I tend to be more assertive a bit more demanding, but still in a relatively polite way. I feel it is the best way to establish good communication, because if you're a person who just demands everything in English anyway, you come off as rude or snobby" (see Appendix B, 5b)

The student at least appears to understand that the lack of obvious courtesy markers such as '*por favor*' [please] and '*gracias*' [thank you] and the use of the

imperative are regularly accepted (unmarked) forms rather than impolite or overtly rude (marked). However, despite this same student's statement about her assertive feelings in English she goes on to say,

"In Spanish I feel it is much more accepted to be assertive instead of passive, or less polite. I don't have a clue why this is the case, but my teachers at the Uni. of Oviedo encourage me not to use the conditional as much, because that sounds like you are a goody-goody or think you are better than your peers" (see Appendix B, 5b).

Americans tended to utilize such words as "please" and "thank you" in excess of what the Spaniards felt was appropriate, and also felt more comfortable speaking in conditional and future verb tenses rather than in the imperative form favored by the Spanish.

"I've found in my attempts to be [as] courteous as I am in English that the words 'please' and 'thank you' are not nearly as necessary as they are in English. At home I say these words every time I ask for something or every time someone does something for me, be it friends or family or teacher or co-worker. Here, my host had to tell me many times to stop staying 'thank you' for every little thing" (see Appendix B, 4f).

Another student remarked:

"Being very polite with everyone is such a huge part of what I am accustomed to, so I will continue to be as polite in Spanish as I am in English, even if it may seem a bit unnecessary to people here in Spain" (see Appendix B, 4c).

It is this last type of statement that leads me to believe that despite their environment and a five-month immersion program, they are still not comfortable shaking off their old cultural habits in favor of new ones. Also, some students commented to the effect that as guests in a host country, they would rather be remembered as someone who was polite and clung to English cultural forms rather than run the risk of sounding demanding or ungrateful.

Section 4: Doubling-Up on Languages

Even from such a short stay students showed that their newfound L2 abilities were indeed having an effect on speaking and communication, both in their L2 and L1. Students had to navigate the sorting, mixing and interference of L1 and L2 languacultures and voices.

"I definitely experience moments when I forget an English word, or mispronounce it, or when a Spanish word comes to mind instead of the English one. It's a strange phenomenon. I never thought I would 'lose' my English" (see Appendix B, 7a).

Their exposure and constant need to use the L2 has created a deficit in their English, at least at the moment, and the L2 has begun to supersede the L1.

"I often find myself speaking Spanglish with my American friends. It has become so natural while speaking English to throw in Spanish words when they come to mind first, that when my mom and sister (who don't know a word of Spanish) came to visit me, I found myself throwing Spanish words or phrases at them mid-conversation, and then realized they must have no ideas what I am talking about. I feel like it's going to be hard to stop the Spanglish habit when I get home, and in a way, I don't want to lose the habit. I like having the ability to speak Spanglish whenever I want and have all my friends understand me completely" (see Appendix B, 7a).

This student, as well as the other, expressed a liking for having two linguistic resources at her disposal, adding to the ways in which she can communicate and be understood. In some cases students found that the Spanish that they had acquired acted more efficiently for them as a means of conveying what they wanted to express. This brings to mind the kind of languaculture that studies like the Cultura Project and Michael Agars' work have investigated, where cultural meanings behind language begin to take on an important and apparent role in communication.

"Also, Spanish expressions/words will come to mind when there doesn't seem to be an exact English equivalent, like *pijo* and *pesado*. It'll take me a bunch of examples and a long description in English to convey the same concept that

Spaniards can get across with just one of those words. I also noticed that I'll use Spanish words as if they were cognates in English even when they aren't. For example, in Spanish I'll say '*me cuesta...*' One day on the phone with my sister I said 'it costs me to do that,' and she said that doesn't really make sense. Once she pointed it out, I realized and explained, but I wanted to convey the exact sentiment that '*me cuesta*' has for me and English wasn't really sufficient" (see Appendix B, 7c).

Students also expressed difficulty in getting back to L1 meanings and expressions when the concepts in the L2 were explained to them in Spanish.

" I find that Spanish sometimes interferes with my recollection of English. Sometimes when I learn how to say something in Spanish, I can't remember how to say it in English if it's not a direct translation. For instance, we learned that '*espacio de seguridad*' meant personal space, but since she only used Spanish to describe the concept, I couldn't remember the English phrase. I knew that it wasn't secure space or security space, and I knew exactly what the teacher was describing, but it took me until the next day (when it randomly popped into my head) to remember the phrase, personal space (see Appendix B, 7c).

"I often get stuck on certain words in English because I haven't had to say it in so long and because I've been practicing Spanish and using it as often as possible. I once forgot the word "trophy" and had to describe it to my friends, "you know, a miniature statue that you get for winning something" (see Appendix B, 7f).

With other meaningful phrases like '*me cuesta*' as noted in one of the examples above, students made interesting remarks about new feelings and sentiments being linked specifically to their L2. Among L2 swears, which one student comments on as coming to mind first before vulgar expressions in their L1, students made other observations,

"Other times the Spanish phrase comes to mind first even when I'm having a conversation in English. It's as if the sentiment I was feeling was linked to the Spanish expression. For instance, this afternoon we were talking about what to do at night it didn't matter to me, but my first reaction was "*me da igual*" Here you can randomly throw Spanish into your English conversations, but when I'm home again I won't always be able to do that. In this case it wasn't that I couldn't remember how to say I don't care, but that Spanish just came first. I find that it's with phrases or compound words that I don't use all the time that I'll have

trouble recalling the English version, like personal space or construction paper" (see Appendix B, 7c).

"I often think of Spanish expressions before English ones, such as "*no pasa nada*" and "*no te preocupes*". I often use them in English conversations, even with people who know no Spanish" (see Appendix B, 7f).

Generally, students expressed confusion due to the fact that they also never really had to give up on their L1 completely, though it is clear that students were beginning to find utility in their L2 as it became more integrated into their speech. Students continued to socially interact predominantly with other English-speaking students, and therefore this kind of mixing of expressive voice was made apparent to them in their conversations with L1 peers and phone conversations with family. They caught themselves making more mistakes in their spelling or questioning English words such as homonyms. The L2 also took on a second nature for one of the students as she wrote,

"Occasionally I'll assume someone is speaking in English or that something is written in English because I understand it. For instance, last night we went out to a restaurant in Oviedo. When the waiter heard us speaking English he asked if we wanted menus with English descriptions. My friend said no, but when I opened my menu, 'I said, wait guys mine's in English.' My friends leaned over and, she said 'what are you talking about,' so I answered, "Lechuga [lettus], toma-... oh, never mind." When I said the words aloud I realized they were obviously not English words, but at first glance when the words connected to images in my mind without me thinking about it, I thought they had to be English words" (see Appendix B, 7c).

Sfard's participation metaphor suggests that there is a continuous stage of loss, and that only later in the L2 development is there an overlapping second stage of gain and reconstruction, characterized by the loss of L1 cultural subjectivities or frames of reference. It would seem, based on their writings, that some of the students entered into this overlapping stage, where the L1 and L2 lines were blurred. One student remarked

that she often forgot not to roll the letter "r" when speaking English, as she had grown accustomed to its occurrence in Spanish. Another student had this to say,

"I always forget how to say things in English, and I forget words in English. When I speak to my family on the phone, they suggest I take an English as a second language class (as a joke). I sometimes structure my English sentences as Spanish ones or I spell English words in Spanish in an e-mail (by accident). When I speak in English sometimes I slip up and say things in Spanish" (see Appendix B, 7e).

For some of these students, their L1 and L2 are clearly coming into conflict, leading students to grapple with these kinds of slip-ups and confusions.

Conclusion

The sections from this chapter were organized from the data collected in the manner in which they were as a means of analyzing how the surveyed students interpreted, assimilated their experiences, and voiced themselves in their L2 as well as in their L1. First and foremost, 'likeability' or diplomacy played the most crucial barrier in experimentation with the surveyed forms of expression. For the most part students were more concerned with making a good impression than with giving in totally to an L2 expressive voice. The goal for the students is less about changing their 'personalities' *per se*, and more about developing tactics and devices that allow them to have a personality in the L2.

It is the tactics and devices that they employ that are most interesting, since this is the learning process they rely on in order to find their voice in the L2, rather than reinventing it completely. The process by which they find these devices is a road that many adults do not often travel, and therefore may seem entirely different when looked at from the perspective of non-natives. The very act of participating in such a study such as this, actively requiring them to reflect and write down their musings, must have

also affected the way in which they approached their understandings. In the case of the student whose subtle expressions of annoyance went unnoticed by her host mother, she was led to think about what went wrong with this encounter, and how she might need to reapproach the situation in order to achieve the desired response. Children do this all the time in their attempts to manipulate the actions of their caregivers and the world around them, though we regularly do not have the good fortune of their personal reflective diaries to understand the process of trial and error they go through.

Given the observations and information expressed by the participants of this study I would propose that the L2 voice can be interpreted as one that results from the process and the effect of the learners' own experimentation and indoctrination into a new languaculture and sociocultural framework. While having two languages with which to express one's self does not imply that a budding or full bilingual is a schizophrenic, rather if we return to the generic comment of "sometimes I feel like a different person in my L1 compared to my L2" this research data would suggest that it is the road which we travel in order to arrive at a L2 voice, one built on different foundations and with unique tools that accounts for such feelings of duality.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section connects the analysis of the different themes presented in Chapter 4 with the issue of voice. The second section outlines the limitations of the study. The third section suggests possibilities for further research. The fourth and final section reflects on the implications this study holds for teaching and study abroad

Conclusions

During their five-month stay in Spain and through their exposure to the host culture and language, students improved their Spanish in ways that would not have been possible in the classroom. Study abroad allows for specific learning opportunities that are hard to replicate in the language classroom.

“I can think much more quickly on my feet and I am much more comfortable in doing so. I have strange moments when I will have a conversation in Spanish that feels so easy and natural that afterward it hits me and I feel a bit shocked. I have moments when I think to myself, "I just had a long conversation in another language and thought nothing of it. That's pretty cool." I love being able to communicate in a non-native language with such ease, all thanks to my experiences abroad. My expressive voice has become much more like my expressive voice in English now that I am much more comfortable thinking about speaking in Spanish” (see Appendix B, 6a)

Students all commented that their Spanish had improved greatly, in some cases making the assumption that they had learned more in just one month abroad than in a whole year in the classroom. The same student went on to make the very astute observation in her journal that “when you are immersed in a culture and language you start to adapt without even meaning to do it” (see Appendix B, 6b).

Students observed how aspects of their established L1 expressive voice transcended linguistic boundaries and also became aware of their own tools and tactics for communication as they compared to their developing communicative abilities in the L2. The forms of expression presented in the journal questions and later connected into the themes presented in the data analysis reflect on the process of adaptation to new sociocultural and linguistic environments. The importance of this study then lies not in the development of a new personality based on the social, cultural and linguistic nuances of the L2, but rather the manner in which students come to learn, adapt and execute the expression of who they are through L2 patterns and sociocultural markers.

Limitations

Though students did express some loss in L1 abilities, their stay in the host environment would appear to be too short a period of time for more dramatic elements of the L2 to be accepted and fully incorporated. In the case of the use of imperative forms of speech, it would seem that while students understood its use in Spanish for making requests, they were more concerned with how they were perceived by their hosts. Based on their journals, they would prefer to opt for the more hyper-politeness associated with their L1 forms, rather than further experimenting with and integrating L2 forms. Given the time constraints of the program, students were more concerned with expressing their own established L1 personalities rather than making new ones utilizing the L2. This could be for several reasons, one being that the temptation to translate themselves was still too strong, and thusly not providing them with the opportunity to realize deeper changes in their expressive voice. In further investigation

it would be interesting to specifically ask students' opinions on what impact the act of reflecting on their expressive voice might have been for them.

With regard to personality, due to time constrictions of their stay, coupled with the student's propensity to stay banded together as a group, a deeper integration and need for acceptance into the host culture was never fully realized. However, one student did remark "At first I felt as though I could never properly express my thoughts or how I felt in Spanish, now when I speak to people I feel as though more of my personality comes out, or shines through" (see Appendix B, 6e). Some specific meanings did take hold, in the case of culturally specific concepts like *pijo* and *pesado*, as well as the students' growing familiarity with the L2. However, there was insufficient time for these ideas to fully take over previously established concepts. This meant that the students continued to see themselves in their L1, never fully needing to rewrite themselves in the L2 and explore deeper ways of expressing themselves. The cultural frames that Agar describes, and those noted by the students who participated in other projects, such as the Cultura Project, appear to be a first step in awareness of linguistic difference, whereas preference for use and expression are developed later and after great exposure and social interaction. Preference for L2 patterns such as '*me cuesta*' did begin to take seed showing that the L2 was beginning to take on a meaningful utility for students in their expressive repertoire.

While frustration with their conveyance and the reception of their expressive voice and personality was demonstrated in the students' writings, the fact that they had their American compatriots to fall back on limited their need for L2 integration. What can be seen from their stay is the process of understanding and experimentation

undertaken by the students in order to communicate and express private mental meanings. Students were able to utilize the L2 as a tool for social interaction and mediation of their surroundings in order to express themselves, make observations and respond to their interlocutors. They were able to gauge for desired responses and understandings, making modifications in some cases in order to express themselves in a manner that would make them understood, and convey the desired meaning.

Shadows of Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2000) work with the rewriting of the personal narrative through the use of inner speech can be seen in these students' journals. Inner speech is central to Vygotsky's theory of mediated mind, based on the notion that social speech, in its goal to regulate others, develops into an inner/physiological speech which regulates not only our physical but mental behavior (Lantolf and Thorne 2005). However, the type of comment by a subject of Pavlenko, noting that her inner voice has become the "the voice of a foreigner" might be too far off for this particular group. This could be due to the fact that they lacked a need for full integration into the host culture, and may have not felt as isolated, underscoring the lack of provocation for deeper social interactions, thus keeping them from constructing large amounts of meaning and experiences in the L2. Though it is interesting how students observed difficulty in the translation of meanings explained to them in the L2 back to their L1. It seemed that they required time to make the connections between the L1 and L2 notions of the same idea, as in the case of the student who mulled over how she would say '*espacio de seguridad*' in English, or another student who forgot the word for "trophy" in English.

Another conflicting limitation which arises in this study and that has been brought to my attention is a methodological issue surrounding such qualitative research: that being that there may be a difference between what students who participate in such a study as this say compared to what they did and actually do; furthermore, there is a difference between how they interpret language, and how native speakers of Spanish interpret their own speech acts. For example, regarding comments made by students concerning the American tendency to say ‘thank you’ in certain situations this ‘thank you’ is not always about being polite, but rather being culturally appropriate in the unmarked sense. What is marked is not to say ‘thank you’. Pragmatics must also be considered, since in Spain, to say “thank you” is the marked case reserved for clear occasions. To say “thank you” in many situations is being ‘fake’. There tend to be culturally specific scripts and situations where people say ‘thank you’ (not in every situation or as often as people think), though certainly much more commonly than in similar situations in Spain.

Opportunities for further investigation

Suggestions for conducting further research in the area of expressive voice and personality development in a L2 would do best to begin with a group of students with a longer exposure period in the host culture. When looking at voice and expression the study presented in this paper does not begin to consider deeper social factors related to the students’ experience with the language. However, even in their brief time in Spain it would seem that the L2 is beginning to lose the marker of neutrality that may have once been perceived around its use. As students form social relationships, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, emotional ties are still felt and made within and

around the L2. Investigations into how these voices are channeled, and by what events might be a realm for further study. The use of vulgarity in Spanish might be a place to start, as anger and frustration are intense emotions and forms of expressions that students seemed to associate deeply with, giving the newly acquired L2 swears a more powerful sense of expressive utility for the learner. A student's preference and learning may be tied also with their feelings about their experience not just with their language learning, but also their social experiences as well, which were not taken into account fully in this study. What are the factors that govern a learner's code switching, preference and utility of L1 and L2 use?

Further investigation considering the speaker's personal background, language history, attitudes towards multilingualism, and the expressive value of the speaker's language along a greater period of exposure would also contribute to further research in this area. More specific survey questions would help to refine the subject matter and more specific examples such as words, phrases and expressions for specific reflection would also aid a more detailed study, where the focus was more specifically on concepts learned in the L2.

While the data presented in this study offers insight into personality and L2 expression, students were possibly still exposed to too much of the L1 due to their apprehensions, fears and anxieties over the L2 leading to a less profound integration in the L2 community. However, this study does show an early stage of development, improvement and understanding of the language, the early understanding of L2 integration, and the creation of a new expressive voice through implicit learning of cultural concepts and changes in preference for L2 expressive tools and vocabulary.

Implications for teaching and study abroad

While one goal of the investigation was to shed light on possible personality changes due to second language learning, the goal for the students appears to be less about changing their personality than developing a voice that allows them to have a personality in the L2. The very effect of the journal writing activity allowed them to reflect on this process and their quest for expressing their personality using the L2. The activity of reflecting on these issues allows for the emergence of new voices. Study abroad is not enough when it comes to a deeper development of language proficiency. It is certainly enhanced when it is accompanied by reflections. A potential recommendation for helping students to achieve L2 competence would be that students should keep journals when studying abroad. Just in the way that sociolinguistics has focused its attention on the language socialization of children, such journal reflections that emerge as a result of participating in a study abroad program would not only benefit the students' learning, but also open the door for additional research in the field of Second Language Acquisition. A further implication is that in our teaching of foreign languages it may be beneficial to train our students to be better observers of linguistic and cultural differences, i.e.: through the use of films, scripted reenactments or other materials that illicit sociocultural dialogue.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATION OUTLINE AND JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Masters Research Study

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The purpose of this study is to see how you reflect upon expression in a foreign language. Every two weeks or so you will be asked to reflect on a new topic. The questions below will be roughly the same format for each given expression. You are welcome to write as much as you like. Additional books can be provided.

Please do not feel obligated to put your name in your journal. You may simply identify yourself by your journal number found on this paper. (If email is more comfortable you may email me your entries, and I will store your reflections in a separate document only identified by your journal number). Numbers have been assigned at random and do not reflect any specific order.

Name:
Journal Number

Name:	Journal Number

I will not be reviewing your journals until the end of the study once the program has concluded. If you chose to revisit any of the topics previously address to comment on new thoughts or observations, even after your initial reaction period, please feel free to do so, but simply make it clear which topic you are referencing

#1 Annoyance (January 25, 2006)

We have all expressed our annoyance with certain people and situations in our lives, i.e. second hand smoke, people walking into us, or being asked to do things that we would rather not.

Think about, and then write on how you have expressed annoyance back home and in your first language.

Write about your observations regarding how you have observed annoyance being expressed here in Spain. Have you seen or heard it on television, on the streets, in cafes and bars, or in your homes here?

If you can, test either your natural forms of this expression and/or your new observations for this expression in Spanish. Did the recipient interpret your expression correctly? Why if yes, or why not if no?

#2 Humor (February 13, 2006)

We all know how to make people laugh, weather it be telling a joke, or playing with the meanings of words or situations to bring about a smile.

Think about, and then write on how you express humor in your first language.

Write about your observations regarding how you have observed humor in Spanish. Trying being funny in Spanish, if you haven't already. Did they get the joke, did they know you were joking, or was there confusion. Explain your answer.

#3 Irony and subtlety (February 28, 2006)

This one is a double, or just pick one or both since they are both along the same lines. What are the ways that you can play with the meanings of words to either be ironic or to be subtle.

Think about, and then write on how you express irony or subtlety in your first language. Write about your observations regarding how you have observed these in Spanish, i.e. in public, on T.V., etc.

Trying being ironic or subtle in Spanish, if you haven't already. Did your message come across, or was there confusion. Explain your answer.

#4 Courtesy (March 13, 2006)

What are the ways that you are courteous in English? What words and verb tenses do you use? What are the ways in which you use your language to show courtesy and respect?

Think about, and then write on how you express courtesy respect in your first language. Write about your observations regarding how you have observed these in Spanish, i.e.

with your host families, in public, on T.V., etc.

Try being courteous and respectful in Spanish, if you haven't already. What differences or similarities between Spanish and your first language are most striking to you.

#5 Making Requests and Asking for things (March 27, 2006)

How do you ask for something, like passing the salt, closing the window, or taking out the trash? How do you structure your phrases, what words do you use? Compare your use of language in making a request in your first language with that of Spanish. Do you think there are differences? Do they sound different to you? Feel free to write anything else related to this topic that you might have noticed.

#6 Reflections (April 10, 2006)

Write and reflect about how your Spanish is progressing. In addition to these reflections, what stands out the most to you regarding language use and your expressive voice during your time here in Spain?

#7 Reflections (April 28, 2006)

Write and reflect about how your use of Spanish and English. Do you think in Spanish? Do Spanish expressions come to mind before English? Explain your answers and be as thorough as possible.

APPENDIX B: JOURNAL RESPONSES

#1a	<p>When I'm at home it seems as though I often have a lot to vent about, in terms of annoyances, whether it be about a friend, boyfriend, school, work, etc. Typically, when I express my annoyance about something that isn't terribly serious, I usually use humor and try to make light of the situation. If it's something more severe that really has me upset I usually talk in a more serious way and tend to use a lot of facial expressions, like the classic eye rolling</p> <p>I have observed annoyance here in Spain to be expressed in much the same way as it is at home. Eye-rolling and other gestures definitely transcend the boundaries between these two countries. I have already found that in most aspects, Spanish-speaking people here in Spain are very similar, behaviorally speaking. My host sister, for example, is much like me when expressing annoyance. She tends to use humor and make fun of the situation or herself, as I do. She can also be more serious as well. She is a speech pathologist and works with children, and was complaining at dinner one night that her students are very bright and some of them don't even really need speech therapy, yet their parents insist upon it. She was especially annoyed by one case in which the child's first language is French (as is the parents') and his parents complain that he has a French accent and that this is going to be a problem in school. My sister was upset by the vanity of this comment, and her annoyance could clearly be seen in the intensity of her facial expression, her somewhat elevated voice, and her broad hand motions. She reacted as most Americans back home would.</p> <p>At the airport in Spain I realized that one of my suitcases had been lost. It has yet to be found (3 weeks later), so I have been able to express my frustration regarding this situation several times in Spanish with my family since I arrived. I simply expressed my annoyance in my typical manner, and it was well understood. My vocabulary in Spanish is not as good as I would like, so it's often hard to express myself in a completely natural way, but by using the same gestures and facial expression, my family understood my frustration. I also expressed my annoyance with my literature professor to my host mom and sister. I complained that she is not patient with us because we do not speak Spanish perfectly. They were very understanding of my complaint and reacted, as anyone would back home by saying, "what does she expect?" and "she's obviously not a very good professor. She should be more understanding."</p> <p>All in all, I have found that expressing annoyance here in Spain and back home has been very similar for me by using the same mannerisms as I would at home, I have found that I am easily understood, at least by my host family. I have found, however, that in public, I am understood but not well received. It seems to me that things such as customer service here are very different. If you have a complaint in a public place, such as a restaurant or something it seems as though tending to that complaint is not a high priority. That may be where there is a gap between home and Spain when it comes to expressing annoyance.</p>
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#1b	<p>In the united States, I think it is easier for me to express annoyance than here in Spain. When I am home, I feel I can speak my mind or just about anything that may annoy or bother me. An example of this is when someone says something that doesn't interest me or doesn't make sense I can quickly give them a rebuttal or perhaps even tell them off, whether I do it politely or rudely. Here in Spain, however, I have to fully analyze what the other person has said, which sometimes takes up to a minute, and this makes it very hard to express myself. Also, most people I talk to in the states already know my personality, so they know what to expect t from me usually. Here, no one knows me well and I have to try and keep my cool when someone else speaks because I don't want to make enemies, and I don't need other creating stereotypes for other Americans simply because of how I react. Also, I feel I should show more humility when I'm living under someone else's roof, even if I am against what they have said 100%. For instance, my host mother sometimes tells me I shouldn't go out on weekends or eat as much late at night. Truthfully, I wish I could tell her what I felt about these accusations, but I have respect for my elders, and I try to make peace and not war. All I know is that in the U.S., I have met foreign exchange students who are also very passive, and I think it may be a universal quality that comes along with adapting to a new culture and family.</p> <p>I have tried to test my forms of expressing annoyance with my host mother's grandsons, with whom I go out on the town with once in a while. One night, they ask me if I wanted to take a ride to one of their friend's house, and I said yes, although I was tired from class. Well, the ride took over an hour, and all they did was comment on cars and their girl-friends the whole time, so I got a bit aggravated and took the silent treatment for a good portion of the trip. They noticed after a while, and asked me why I was being so quite, so I told them I was bored, and they then understood that I wasn't interested in cars or their love-lives. I don't think they were mad, but more disappointed or confused, because they didn't understand why I was bored. So, they definitely interpreted the expression correctly.</p>
#1c	<p>Normally, I express annoyance through silence and specific body language. If I am annoyed with a store employee or a professor (basically someone with whom I must interact, but do not know well) I give curt, cold replies. I might stare hard or assent to things silently. I also might cross my arms, turn away from the person, or not look him/her in the eye when I'm speaking to him/her.</p> <p>I usually don't express annoyance directly. I might answer my friends and family listlessly saying, "I don't know" or "I don't care," and let them realize that I am not pleased.</p> <p>From what I've observed here, people tend to express annoyance more vocally. On television I've seen people yelling and using physical contact to express annoyance (not hitting with the intention of injuring a person, but with the intent to display displeasure/annoyance).</p>

	<p>Within my host family, the mother and brother tend to speak loudly, more quickly and with exaggerated hand gestures when they are annoyed. I've seen people yelling in the street while gesturing rapidly as well. Of course, this sort of expression of annoyance is much more visible than the silent type.</p> <p>In Spain, I've been using my natural forms of expressing annoyance. As most of them are related to body language and facial expression, they are not limited by my insufficient verb Spanish. However, they generally seem to be lost on the Spaniards. On the other hand, I'm subtle, and people in the U.S. who don't know me often miss my signals.</p> <p>My host mother doesn't seem to think I'm serious when I say 'no, I really don't want any more food' or 'no, I don't want to recite the swears I've learned during dinner.' I am most forceful in my expression of annoyance with guys who are being too forward (both at night at the bars and during the day). I think they notice that I am annoyed (and just don't care).</p>
#1d	<p>I think that expressing annoyance back home in my first language was obviously a lot easier than doing so here in Spain. To express annoyance in English, I generally use facial expressions (like rolling my eyes, sighing heavily, etc.) or changing the tone/pitch of my voice. I'm not a very direct person when it comes to expressing my frustration with people (for example, if I was annoyed I would more likely give them a look of disapproval/annoyance vs. flipping them off or yelling at them or something). Using more subtle cues, however, ties in with knowing and being able to understand and interpret the more subtle social cues of a culture and its language, which is why it's easier for me in my native language vs. Spanish as my second language.</p> <p>The one example of expressed frustration I can think of was one time when I was crossing the street, the light had lit up for pedestrians to cross, but there was still a car in the middle of the crosswalk because of traffic. So one woman that was crossing tapped on the rear window of his car with her rings, signaling him to move. He just looked at her and drove off. If someone in the U.S. had done that to someone else's car, they would have in the very least been flipped off or sworn at. That is a situation that would seem like one annoyance would provoke a reciprocated annoyance, but I guess not.</p> <p>This is probably a bad example because it involves drunk people who tend to be more socially inept, but it's the only situation I can think of. Last night, a group of friends of mine and I all went into a bar. We were at a table playing cards and a drunk guy came over and tried talking to us (he was so drunk we couldn't tell if he was speaking English or Spanish). We all tried just laughing and turning our backs at him, but he kept trying to talk to us. One of my friends went to get the bartender who told him to stop, which worked for about 15 minutes. He ended up coming back and one of my friends just straight out told him to leave us alone. She told him about 10 times before he left to go sit back down across the bar, where he sat and yelled random things at us for a while before he left. Like I said,</p>

	<p>this is probably a bad example because the guy was drunk, but he had a hard time understanding that we wanted nothing to do with him even after being told twice to leave us alone. If I can think of another example in the next 5 months, I'll let you know.</p>
1e	<p>There are a few ways I express annoyance back home in my first language. I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Clear my throat loudly •Become fidgety •Roll my eyes •Suck my teeth •Turn my back towards some one while they are talking and start doing something else (ignore them) •Stop talking and responding to what some one is saying. •Agree with everything some one says. I say “mhm”, “yes I understand”, “yes, you’re right” before they start speaking, while they are speaking and after they stop speaking. <p>I have observed in my home that when people are annoyed they walk always in the middle of a conversation, or they begin to yell and argue. In the bars people throw their hands up in the air and begin to curse. On television people are more verbal about their annoyance. They argue, and raise their hands in the air and curse.</p> <p>I’ve noticed that people in Spain don’t have a sense of personal space. They bump into you in the street and don’t say sorry, they walk and talk very close to you and in your face. My host mom does not knock on my bedroom door and wait for me to say “come in” she just opens my door and comes in. So one day when she walked in I sucked my teeth and rolled my eyes a, and she was talking to me and asking me questions so I turned my back and kept getting dressed (she walked in while I was NAKED! I was very upset) I did not respond. So she walked around me and faced me and kept talking. I guess since people in Spain are more verbal about their annoyance that she did not interpret my expression of annoyance. So I told her that I would talk to her after I go dressed and I asked it in a loud voice. She said okay and left. So I learned that when you are annoyed in Spain you cannot use non-verbal expression because people don’t pick up on them. You have to be verbal.</p>
1f	<p>In English, I express annoyance usually by my tone of voice. I typically will ask nicely for someone to stop doing something annoying in a nice way, like using “please” or “would you mind...?” but with a hint of annoyance in my voice. I think that that is how most Americans express annoyance. Here in Spain, I think it is expressed more openly, without the same subtlety as at home. I’ve experienced waiters who are annoyed with a special request or something and they will tell us exactly what they feel. For example, once someone tried to order just a dessert at a restaurant at lunchtime, and the waiter was clearly annoyed and said something about, you can’t order just a dessert at lunchtime, and almost didn’t serve it to her.</p>
1g	<p>I’ve noticed that I don’t really express annoyance verbally. I think because I like to avoid conflict or confrontation. Rather, I express annoyance through huffs/heavy sighs/(for lack of better words) growls. If something (but not</p>

	<p>someone) really pisses me off, maybe I will say a couple choice obscenities, or if someone really pisses me off I will complain about them to someone else later.</p> <p>It is difficult for me to identify when people are annoyed in Spain because of my language barrier, however, I have spent enough time with my host parents to know that when they are annoyed, they tend to express it verbally (and very rapidly). They don't use any of the non-word "vocals" that I do.</p> <p>Since my grasp of the Spanish language isn't quite good enough to express annoyance the way my host parents do, I have tested my own expression of annoyance in public in Spain. I have to say, the only time I get annoyed here (so far) is when I'm walking down the street. People here have a very different sense of personal space and tend to walk into you (or much too close) even when you are the only 2 people on an empty sidewalk. This really bothers me and I usually respond by cleaning my throat, etc, but I can't tell if they pick up on my annoyance because the contact is so short. One day I was walking behind 3 people on a pretty normal-sized sidewalk. They were walking really really slowly and I wanted to go around them, but every time I tried one of them would move in my way. I expressed annoyance in my way and they didn't pick up on it.</p>
2a	<p>Humor is one of my favorite things. I <u>love</u> to laugh, which is probably one of the first things people notice about me, because I do it <u>all</u> the time, and I also love to joke around. Humor for me in English is expressed in all kinds of ways – funny faces, making fun of myself, making fun of someone else, laughing at any situation... I can pretty much joke about and laugh at anything. Expressing something humorous for me usually involves sound effects or funny voices, or things like that, and I definitely find I do less of those types of expressions in Spanish, mainly because I am not entirely comfortable yet expressing <u>anything</u> verbally in Spanish, never mind trying to crack a joke.</p> <p>My host family here in Spain is very funny. They all have a great sense of humor, which is great for me, with my love of laughter and all. My host sister is especially humorous, and is always telling funny stories, or commenting on something outrageous on TV. My host mom is always very receptive to her jokes. The most recent example that I can think of was when my host mom bought a fancy kind of bag salad with some fancy/strange looking lettuce, and my host sister asked, "what kind of lettuce is this?" and my host mom said she picked it in Parque San Francisco.</p> <p>It seems to me that humor in English and Spanish is very similar. From what I have seen, Spaniards joke around about the same things anyone in the States would, and in a similar manner. I've tried to be funny a few times w/ my host family, and usually it works out fine and I am well understood. One time in particular I can remember, I actually messed up and said something with a slightly different meaning than I had intended, but luckily it still applied to something we had talked about earlier, so my host still found it funny. I find easier to joke around with my English-speaking friends in Spanish (rather than with native</p>

	speakers) simply because I'm not as afraid to mess up in front of them. Hopefully in a while I will be able to joke full out, sound effects and all, with native Spanish speakers!
2b	<p>Usually I use sarcasm and sheer wits to express my humor in English. I try and stray away from telling jokes because I need to remember them the way they were told to me, so they lose a certain something. I think humor is expressed in the same ways here in Spain, except for the fact that there are lost of random swears and phrases thrown in the middle of jokes and sarcasm.</p> <p>I try to be funny in Spanish with my host family, and I think sometimes I am successful, thanks to good ole' sarcasm yet again. I think it has worked out thus far because I like to play with the meanings of words, and I am very liberal about politics, art and sports. I may have a particular point of view that I believe in, but I never blatantly negate other people's opinions, rather, I listen and analyze. One way I then react is with humor, whether it be in English, Spanish or Portuguese. On the other hand, there is also confusion sometimes when I try to tell American jokes in Spanish, because our cultures and beliefs are very different.</p>
2c	<p>I usually use sarcasm or puns to be funning in English. I might tease someone or use dry wit.</p> <p>In Spain I've observed my host family telling jokes similar to ones I'd hear in the U.S. (one was about Jesus dying on the cross and another was about guys liking women with big boobs). My host parents also make comments with sexual undertones occasionally that they laugh about, which I'm not used to hearing from adults very much. Some of the sitcoms seem to rely on situational humor-almost slapstick- in order to be funny, but I suppose that happens in the U.S. too.</p> <p>I've found that I get laughs from the Spaniards unintentionally more or less. I don't usually try to be funny because I don't feel that I've mastered the language enough to pull it off, and I don't want my host family to misinterpret my sarcasm. They generally find it funny when they ask me if I understand and I say I understand one word or something really simple. For instance, I said "entendí Los Prados" yesterday after my host brother finished a really long story about doing work there. They also find it funny when they put out food, like sea creatures with their shells/bones and I inadvertently make a face of horror/disgust then try to cover it up.</p> <p>It's easiest to be funny by telling a funny (<u>simple</u>) story I've found. However, most laughter results from miscommunication or cultural differences.</p>
2d	Answered no further questions
2e	<p>At home, actually in general, I am not a funny person. But when people find me funny, I am usually imitating other people, or giving my opinion in a very straight forward, animated and raw manner.</p> <p>On television and on the street people are funny by using sexual innuendo, and playing on words. Also, people find being obnoxious funny, for example being</p>

	<p>loud and raunchy and inappropriate (usually the younger crowd).</p> <p>One afternoon before I went to meet my tandem partner I was telling a story to my American friends. I was imitating this girl that I know from the bars because I had run into her earlier. My friends were laughing hysterically. When I met up with my tandem partner and did the same thing he did not laugh. He just responded, “some people are strange like that” and changed the topic. I don’t think he knew that I was trying to be funny. I guess we have a slightly different sense of humor.</p>
2f	<p>In English I express humor usually through the way I execute my sentences; how I emphasize certain parts or words and which words I choose. In Spanish, it seems as though humor is based more on jokes; that is, on the funniness of the content of what is said rather than the way it is said. In this way it is hard for me to be funny in Spanish. I feel like I’ve only managed it by making fun of my self or the typical behavior of someone else and things like that.</p>
2g	<p>I’m a pretty quite person, so I express humor in pretty subtle ways. I usually do this by pointing out attributes of a person object/situation and making a stupid comment about it. For example, I was in the museum at the cathedral in Oviedo with a friend and we were looking at a statue of Jesus holding the world. To me, it looked an awful like a bowling ball so I said “I didn’t know Jesus was a bowler.” People usually think my comments are funny (or they are just being nice) because they know that I am joking even though I say things in a serious manner.</p> <p>On occasion I will throw comments like these in my conversations with my host parents. For example, one night we were all watching Mira Quien Baila and there is one judge on the show who almost always wears hideously colorful makeup. This particular evening her color scheme was blue... this included blue lipstick, so I mentioned that she must be cold because her lips were blue. My host parents thought that was funny, so I guess I got my point across.</p> <p>Spaniards (in real life and on TV) don’t seem to express humor all that differently than Americans. I don’t really see anyone expressing humor the way I do all that much in either culture. The sitcoms use the same kind of humor, as your typical American sitcom... there isn’t much variance.</p>
3a	<p>I often use subtlety in my humor in English, along with sarcasm. I have found that many Spanish people do too, including in my host family. My host sister will often use subtle comments to make fun of a situation. For example, poking fun at models on TV wearing ridiculous cloths. She will look at them and say things like, “Para ir a la clase, perfecto. Supercómodo.” I have also tried to use this humor, since I often use it in English, and it came across well.</p>
3b	<p>I love irony in English, because I have grown so accustomed to it through reading and television. Especially recently, I think some of the latest TV series use it often to mock pop culture or politics. Subtlety is used on a day-to-day basis to imply that you mean something by not necessarily saying it outright.</p> <p>I have tried to be ironic in Spanish, and I don’t think it has worked as I planned it in the beginning, because I must mess up the process with grammar or the</p>

	<p>recipient thinks I am just serious, when I'm not at all. Subtlety is easy to transmit, especially to my host mom and her grandsons. They know when I don't like the food, or what I like doing at night or what I like to watch on TV here, due to my polite but discrete comments.</p> <p>Irony and subtlety in the Spanish culture, from what I have observed is used in the same way that it is in the states. When two Spaniards exchange comments, they seem to have no trouble noticing whether or not the other is insinuating something or just being serious.</p>
3c	<p>It seems to me that people are generally quite direct in Spain and that my subtlety is lost on my host parents anyway.</p> <p>At home I use subtlety to indicate my preferences in a more polite way, especially regarding foods and activities. I also use subtlety to get information about someone/something without being obvious. Even little ways of being subtle, like saying excuse me or coughing, so that some one will more so you can pass by don't seem so common here. More often they will just push against you until you move.</p> <p>The other day at breakfast my host mom says to me, what's that on your face? A zit? This shocked me, but I just said, 'what? Oh yes' because I was obviously aware of it. My host mom continues to badger me about it, not picking up on subtle hints that I didn't wish to discuss it further (and certainly not being very subtle herself). She wanted me to put some face cream (or something, I don't know what it was) on and didn't heed my protest until I took it out of her hands and said, "no, I'll do it myself".</p> <p>It's hard to tell because I don't interact with very many Spaniards, but I get the feeling that subtlety is not used to a great extent.</p>
3d	Answered no further questions
3e	<p>When being subtle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I use euphemisms •I may participate or do something you ask without enthusiasm and with a little attitude •Instead of being direct with what I am saying I beat around the bush <p>In Spain people are not subtle about anything at all.</p> <p>My host mom makes this dish that I call "the mystery dish" because I don't know what's in it and when I ask her she just tells me to eat it, that it's good. So when I first tried it I didn't really like it, I ate it but I never wanted to eat it again. She asked me if I liked it, and I told her "more or less". So she made it again the next day with mashed potatoes, and I ate all the mashed potatoes and only a few bites of the mystery dish. She asked me again if I liked it and this time I said "a little". I didn't want to be mean. So she made it again for lunch the next day but just a smaller portion (slightly smaller) so that time I told her that I don't like it at all,</p>

	and I haven't seen it since then.
3f	This is a really hard one!
3g	I tend to be subtle either when I want something from someone or I don't like something that someone either wants my opinion on or is offering me. I don't want to be rude, so I will hint things, etc. For example, with my host parents when I wanted peanut butter I said something like "In the U.S. I really like to eat lots of peanut butter" but they didn't quite pick up on it. In the case where they offer me a new food, they almost always ask if I like it and if I don't I will say "It's ok, but I like such and such better". They usually understand after that that I don't really like what they prepared. Usually in the U.S. this tactic works for me in these situations, which is why I use it, but in Spanish it only works about half the time. If there is ever a situation where I really liked or really despised something, I usually abandon the subtle method and approach it more straight forwardly, but I don't want to be rude so I am usually pretty subtle.
4a	<p>Respectful speech in Spanish is interesting to me in that the Spanish language has actual forms designated for formally addressing someone. I find this interesting because, obviously there are polite or respectful manners in which to address someone in English, but we don't have an entire verb form for it (as far as I know - - ha ha), when trying to be polite/respectful while speaking English, I tend to use less slang and try to use more proper English (I suppose that's similar to using the <i>usted</i> form in Spanish). I probably pronounce my words better when trying to be respectful. Things like, "Excuse me" and "thank you" are commonly said in English when being courteous. Another common thing in English, which I do not notice as much in Spanish, is blessing someone when they sneeze. I find this to be less common here in Spain, although some people say, "<i>Jesús</i>."</p> <p>Even though Spaniards have devoted entire verb conjugation forms to formally addressing other, I have not found them to be an overly courteous or respectful people, at least not by our American standards, in which people are constantly trying to please others, it seems, at least in public interactions, and especially in regard to customer service. "The customer is always right" in America, but here I often feel like I am anything but right. People constantly bump into me in the street without so much as a "<i>disculpe</i>," and I sometimes feel like restaurant waiters couldn't care less about me. That being said, the majority of people have been courteous to me and patient with my lack of Spanish-speaking skills. Besides at restaurants, where I typically find the people a bit more rude and less accommodating, people are usually very polite. People in supermarkets and at my gym always greet me with a smile and an "<i>hola</i>." I still feel, however, that people in general are not polite to the extent that Americans are. When I hold a door open for someone, for example, they always look shocked, and most of the time they respond with an enthusiastic, "<i>gracias</i>."</p> <p>On the topic of thank-yous, I have found that thanking people is something I do often, and feel that Spaniards don't always find it necessary for me to thank them. For example, with my host family, I say thank you very often at meal times when someone serves me something or passes me something. I noticed soon into my</p>

	<p>stay here that they thank each other much less often for such things, and also don't say please as often as I would at home, where I would say "<u>Please</u> pass the bread," and follow it up w/ a thank you, they simply say "pass the bread" and often don't thank the person who passes it to them.</p> <p>Maybe in their culture it is not necessary to be so polite with their family, whereas at home my family members are always polite in that way. The whole idea of politeness and respectfulness is one of the things I find to be most different between our cultures, and I haven't quite figured it out yet. Being very polite with everyone is such a huge part of what I am accustomed to, so I will continue to be as polite in Spanish as I am in English, even if it may seem a bit unnecessary to people here in Spain!</p>
4b	<p>I try to be courteous in Spanish in various ways. First, when my host family needs help, I try to help them if I am not busy. Also, I never just tell people to give me things or give commands. I use the conditional and ask for things instead. I use the <i>Usted</i> form as often as I can with my teachers and my host mother. Also, when I'm at the bars or around town and someone bumps into me or vice versa, I say "excuse me" or "sorry".</p> <p>On the contrary, my host families do not use the conditional or questions when they want something. They use commands and assertive behavior, and it is just normal for them. My host brothers refer to their mother in the "<i>tú</i>" instead of the "<i>Usted</i>" form, which to me is a bit strange. But I guess I understand it in a way, because I act the same way when I am in the U.S.A. Although I still think I act politely, I am not half as timid as I am here in Spain. This must have something to do with being a foreigner and not wanting to seem or sound like a punk.</p>
4c	<p>When I'm trying to be courteous in English, I make sure not to use slang and to be polite (please, thank you, etc). When addressing people use Mr. ___ or Ms. ___, but I rarely use sir or ma'am. If I were making a request while being courteous I wouldn't use just a command. I'd use the conditional and "could you please do ___ ." I'm a lot more cautious with my language when I'm trying to show respect.</p> <p>One of the big differences I notice with Spanish is that the pronoun and verb form change when you want to address a person respectfully. I've been addressed as <i>Ud.</i> by waiters and cab drivers a few times here, and it always surprises me because I don't hear it that often here. Even the teachers at school are addressed with the <i>tú</i> by the students. When I have used the <i>usted</i> form here, such as with my host parents (and their relatives), when I first met them, I've always been told not to - that it's not necessary.</p> <p>I imagine that English must have had a formal way to address a person (thee?), but it has since fallen out of practice. Meanwhile, if you don't use it in Spanish when it's required, you could really offend someone or come off as disrespectful. It seems like when the Spanish are courteous, they are very courteous, but they reserve that for specific occasions/certain people. Most of the time they are not</p>

	particularly courteous (not in a rude way, but they just don't see it as required for the situation).
4d	Answered no further questions
4e	<i>Did not Answer</i>
4f	I express courtesy in english by using words like "please" and "thank you", and using indirect, non committal language like, "would you like to ...?" or "could you tell me..." or "is it possible if I...?" I also show respect with proper greetings and salutations and keep all slang and informal words and phrases out of my speech. It is interesting in spanish because they have the formal you form " <i>Usted</i> ", which is indirect, but in all other ways it seems to me that the conversations are still very direct, with imperative language often used. I've found in my attempts to be courteous as I am in english that the words please and thank you are not nearly as necessary as they are in english. At home I say these words everything I ask for something or every time someone does something for me, be it friends or family or teacher or co-worker. Here, my host had to tell me many times to stop saying thank you for every little thing.
4g	I express courtesy and respect in Spanish pretty much the same way I do in English. I guess the only difference with Spanish is that I use the <i>usted</i> form, whereas in English there is no such thing. I tend to use thanks/ <i>gracias</i> a lot, although I've noticed that Spaniards do not use <i>gracias</i> with as much frequency as I do. I obviously don't use slang or colloquial words in addressing people with respect in either language, though I guess up until recently I didn't know much Spanish slang anyway.
5a	Asking for things here in Spain is much different then at home. It goes along with the differences in politeness. The way Spanish people typically request things seems to me, as an American, to be more like demands. For example, at a restaurant or café, one does not say "I would like a coffee," but instead just says " <i>Un café.</i> " Also, even in a family setting, "please," "thank you", or "I would like," are not common phrases like in the States. Instead of, "May I have a piece of bread," it's either " <i>Pásame,</i> " or " <i>Dame un trozo de pan,</i> " or simply pointing and saying " <i>un trozo de pan.</i> " I often hear other American students at restaurants or toher establishments saying things like, " <i>Puedo tener un café,</i> " since we feed the need to use our American habits when it comes to asking for things. The Spaniards always understand what we mean when we use phrases like that, but I'm sure it must sound very strange to them, and it's just another way they can tell we're not from around here. Since being in Spain I have learned to cut out the " <i>Quisiera,</i> " or " <i>Puedo tener,</i> " most of the time when I ask for things, but I always follow it up with a please and thank you. Although those phrases do not always accompany Spaniards' requests, I have a hard time setting aside that part of my culture and upbringing.
5b	As I mentioned in my last entry, I usually ask for things using polite expressions, like the conditional, or the future of probability tenses when I speak in Spanish. On the contrary, in English I tend to be more assertive a bit more demanding, but still in a relatively polite way. I feel it is the best way to establish good communication, because if you're a person who just demands everything in English anyway, you come off as rude or snobby.

	<p>In Spanish, I feel it is much more accepted to be assertive instead of passive, or less polite. I don't have a clue why this is the case, but my teachers at the Uni. of Oviedo encourage me not to use the conditional as much, because that sounds like you are a goody-goody or think you are better than your peers.</p> <p>I think being an exchange student in someone else's house almost makes it okay to speak more politely in Spanish, because they might assume we haven't learned the culture of "demanding in Castellano", although I picked up on this in week one. I want them to remember me as a good polite person, and not the American jerk who demanded his lunch earlier than the family lunchtime.</p>
5c	<p>In English, I often use "would you..." or "could you..." when making a request in order to be polite. I also tack on phrases like, "if you have time" or "if you don't mind." For something such as passing the salt I would simply preface the command with please (and be sure to thank the person afterward). Sometimes I use a question in order to make the request. For instance, "Can you take out the trash?" It seems less forceful than the command alone.</p> <p>In Spanish I am generally more direct. At dinner with my host family people tend to just say the name of what they want like, <i>el agua o el pan</i>. Sometimes it's just less complicated to say the command than to try and qualify it with phrases that aren't necessary. From my observation, commands aren't viewed as harsh or rude the way they can be in English.</p> <p>However, sometimes what I say in Spanish is practically the same as what I would say in English. I might say "<i>Podrías__</i>" or "<i>Deberías__</i>." I notice that my host mom might ask me to do something, but then she'll say, "<i>cuando quieras</i>". This phrase makes it sound less demanding.</p>
5d	Answered no further questions
5e	<p>At home when asking for things I <u>ask</u>: "Can you please do this, or give me that? Thank you" always. It's a question, and I say, please, and thank you, even to relatives and friends no matter how big or small the request is.</p> <p>In Spanish when you "ask" for something or make requests it is a command "Pass me the salt" "Take out the trash" and there is no please or thank you.</p> <p>One night I was out at dinner with a few friends and I was being polite to the waiter saying "Can you... please... thank you... no thank you" and my friends asked why I kept saying please and thank you (even the waiter looked at me funny) and told me that if I really wanted to be polite to just say thank you on the way out.</p>
5f	<p>In English, I make requests by starting my sentences with words like, Could you, would you, can you, will you? And always use please and thank you as well.</p> <p>I've noticed that most requests in Spanish are in the form of commands. My host often asks me to take out the trash, refill the water bottle, and other things by</p>

	<p>simply using the imperative form. I've had a hard time doing this, because I can't help but feel disrespectful when making a request as a command.</p>
5g	<p>Asking for things in English for me is <u>much</u> easier and pretty informal, weather I be asking a store clerk, my parents, friends or a waiter. In Spanish I am usually more polite just by habit I guess and if I am speaking to someone unfamiliar to me (a clerk, professor, etc.) I tend to play out what I am going to say in my head before I actually ask, just to make sure I can communicate my need well to them. Almost always when I actually go to ask for whatever I don't say it how I planned, but it usually isn't a problem.</p>
6a	<p>My time here in Spain has done wonders for my Spanish abilities. Not only has my knowledge and understanding of the Spanish language improved, but more importantly, I am no longer shy or embarrassed to speak Spanish. My embarrassment to speak was definitely something that hindered my abilities before coming to Spain. I have never had much confidence in my ability to speak or in my knowledge of Spanish, even though I have always excelled in my Spanish courses ever since I started studying the language in the 1st grade. This experience allowed me to finally recognize that my hard work over all these years <u>HAS</u> paid off, because I know much more than I ever thought I did. I will no longer be afraid to have a conversation with someone in Spanish or to participate in Spanish classes. For me, that is the most important outcome of my experiences abroad when it come to language.</p> <p>My expressive voice definitely changed over the past few months while in Spain. In the beginning I was much more shy and had to take much more time to formulate thoughts in Spanish. I'm someone who enjoys joking around and coming up with clever things to say in a conversation, but in the beginning it took me so long to think of how to say something clever that the opportunity in the conversation had passed. This was frustrating to me, but no that is not as much of an issue as it once was. I still am not nearly a fluent as I would like to be, and opportunities still pass me by in conversations because I have to think so much about how to say what I want to say, but I have improved greatly. I can think much more quickly on my feet and I am much more comfortable in doing so. I have strange moments when I will have a conversation in Spanish that feels so easy and natural that afterward it hits me and I feel a bit shocked. I have moments when I think to myself, "I just had a long conversation in another language and thought nothing of it. That's pretty cool." I love being able to communicate in a non-native language with such ease, all thanks to my experiences abroad. My expressive voice has become much more like my expressive voice in English now that I am much more comfortable thinking about speaking in Spanish. I can joke around or hold an intelligent conversation about politics or religion. It's a great feeling.</p>
6b	<p>I think my Spanish has progressed a whole lot during my study in Oviedo. One of my friends said it best: "I learned more Spanish in a month here than a year in the States". When you are immersed in a culture and language you start to adapt without even meaning to do it. This might have something to do with the brains tendency to <u>want</u> to learn language but even if not, it is a better idea to go to the</p>

	<p>country where the foreign language is spoken rather than attempt to memorize words and all the grammar rules, which is pointless if you are not practicing any of this stuff but loud on a daily basis.</p> <p>I feel that I can now speak with much more comfort and ease. Even if I don't know exactly what I want to say, I keep going and rarely get frustrated. I can now detect when I should be using the subjunctive tenses more easily, even if the conjugations are wrong. All in all, I feel my accent has improved, and my slang and idiomatic expressions level is volumes better. It was definitely worthwhile studying abroad even if it means missing the Graduate Commencement.</p>
6c	<p>I haven't become magically fluent, but my Spanish has improved markedly since January. I notice the improvement especially in my reading and writing ability. Maybe because I'm around the language and vocabulary daily, it's more accessible to me. I can read (and remember and understand what I've read) so much faster than I could last semester at UMass. I can also write so much more easily. Phrases flow and I don't constantly have to look up irregular verb forms or Spanish translations of words. Yet, I'm worried I'll lose most of this when I return to the U.S. and am surrounded by English all the time.</p> <p>My aural comprehension has improved, too. I can notice the difference from January and February to now. When I'd hear my host brother talking in the other room in the beginning I would just hear a long string of mumbling, but now I can eavesdrop (just kidding, but I can understand what he's saying without staring at his mouth and using all of my concentration). With some people, my host mom for instance, I understand almost all of what she says, but with others, especially guys with really deep voices, I still have a really hard time. It is also hard to understand groups of young Spanish people talking to each other because they use so much slang.</p> <p>I think my speaking ability has improved the least, which I'm really disappointed about, but it's also hard to judge. Some days I feel like I'm communicating so well, but at other times I feel like I'm the exchange student who doesn't know any Spanish. I think it has a lot to do with confidence. If I'm speaking to my host mom or my <i>intercambio</i> partner there's a lot less pressure than when I'm talking to someone I've just met. The topic of conversation can also influence my speaking ability. If it's a topic that I don't know a lot of vocabulary about (like certain job / insurance related things), it's a lot harder to speak coherently.</p> <p>On the other hand, sometimes I surprise myself by blurting something out before I have had time to check it over in my head. I'll think wow, how did I know that I was supposed to use subjunctive, I answered so quickly. Sometimes though, when I get excited/emotional while telling a story, my Spanish can't keep up with my mind and I start to trip up a lot.</p>
6d	Answered no further questions
6e	My Spanish is improving. I definitely understand it more when people speak it to me, and when I speak it people understand me better now, than when I first came

	<p>here. Now I know more... slang, or common phrases. At first I felt as though I could never properly express my thoughts or how I felt in Spanish, now when I speak to people I feel as though more of my personality comes out, or shines through.</p>
6f	<p>I feel that my Spanish has progressed a lot since I've been here. I credit it mostly to the fact that I've had opportunity to speak the language every day, all day, which is far more than I had in America. Simply becoming comfortable speaking Spanish has helped me improve. I still make errors all the time, get stuck on a verb form, or forget vocabulary, but I learn from my mistakes and continue to speak as much as possible. I am also more comfortable asking questions about the language how to say something or what something means.</p>
6g	<p>Before I came to Spain I had a pretty decent grasp of Spanish. I could certainly get by in a Spanish speaking country, but reading and listening were much easier for me than writing and speaking. My grammar was lacking in some areas and vocab needed to be expanded and I had no idea how to use the <i>vosotros</i> form or even recognize it in some tenses. Since I have been here my grammar has improved a lot, especially in past, present and future indicative tenses. All of these feel very natural when I am speaking and I have learned how to use the subjunctive present and past tenses and use them, usually, when appropriate when I am speaking. Writing is a <u>lot</u> easier for me now because I can think quicker in Spanish and since writing is slower than speaking, my writing tends to come out more coherent than my speaking. I think that my reading/writing skills have improved more than my speaking, listening skills, but all 4 have improved a lot. My vocab is much larger now than before but could still use improvement. I noticed, even before I came to Spain, that I speak Spanish much more easily (and probably with fewer errors) if I am not under pressure (i.e. speaking in class, oral exams). It is so much easier to speak Spanish in a casual setting. Also, I think I speak better when I am drunk ha ha, but that could just be a factor of alcohol's "liquid confidence". I recognize that <i>vosotros</i> form easily, now, though I have only used it a few times. The thing that pisses me off about <i>vosotros</i> and now that I am used to it, when I use "<i>ustedes</i>" in place of "<i>vosotros</i>", even though it is correct it doesn't sound right to me. I also lisp some commonly used words like "gracias" and "<i>manzana</i>" and I lisp Spanish place names - all that need it (Zaragoza). It's pretty annoying but maybe I will lose the lisp if the Spanish speakers in the U.S. make fun of me.</p>
7a	<p>I definitely experience moments when I forget an English word, or mispronounce it, or when a Spanish word comes to mind instead of the English one. It's a strange phenomenon. I never thought I would "lose" my English.</p> <p>I often find myself speaking Spanglish with my American friends. It has become so natural while speaking English to throw in Spanish words when they come to mind first, that when my mom and sister (who don't know a word of Spanish) came to visit me, I found myself throwing Spanish words or phrases at them mid-conversation, and then realized they must have no ideas what I am talking about. I feel like it's going to be hard to stop the Spanglish habit when I get home, and in a way, I don't want to lose the habit. I like having the ability to speak Spanglish</p>

	<p>whenever I want and have all my friends understand me completely. At home, not so much. A lot of my friends at home don't speak Spanish!</p> <p>One habit I notice myself having when I switch from Spanish to English is rolling my r's in English. It's kind of a funny experience. R's are one letter that are pronounced in such a distinct way that I find myself forgetting to switch back.</p> <p>I never thought I would become so comfortable with Spanish that I would confuse it with my native tongue and feel as though I have "lost" my English. I guess it's a good thing!</p>
7b	<p>Truthfully, I feel I still think of expressions more in English than in Spanish, but I <u>do</u> thing to swear in Spanish instead of English nowadays, if that counts for anything... Since I have a Portuguese background, I sometimes think in that language before both English and Spanish, but rarely does it work with Castellano popping up before good ole' English.</p> <p>I do feel like I have lost some English since I have been in Oviedo, but that doesn't bother me, because I'm just a little rusty, and I'll fix that when I get back to the States. As for my Portuguese, I have lost tons of fluency in that language, because I used to talk to my dad and grandmother every day in Portuguese, and lately I never use it. Although this sort of disappoints them and me, I know Spanish is much more practical and useful in the U.S.A., so it doesn't bother me at all.</p>
7c	<p>I find that Spanish sometimes interferes with my recollection of English. Sometimes when I learn how to say something in Spanish, I can't remember who to say it in English if it's not a direct translation. For instance, we learned that '<i>espacio de seguridad</i>' meant personal space, but since she only used Spanish to describe the concept, I couldn't remember the English phrase. I knew that it wasn't secure space or security space, and I knew exactly what the teacher was describing, but it took me until the next day (when it randomly popped into my head) to remember the phrase, personal space.</p> <p>Other times the Spanish phrase comes to mind first even when I'm having a conversation in English. It's as if the sentiment I was feeling was linked to the Spanish expression. For instance, this afternoon we were talking about what to do at night it didn't matter to me, but my first reaction was "<i>me da igual</i>" Here you can randomly throw Spanish into your English conversations, but when I'm home again I won't always be able to do that. In this case it wasn't that I couldn't remember how to say I don't care, but that Spanish just came first. I find that it's with phrases or compound words that I don't use all the time that I'll have trouble recalling the English version, like personal space or construction paper.</p> <p>Another sort of weird thing I've noticed is that I've picked up on some of the awkward phrases / wordings that I hear a couple of my Spanish friends use when they speak English. For instance, my friend talks about his <i>work-mates</i> a lot. I'm not sure it that's British English or something he made up, regardless, I would normally say 'coworkers.' I didn't even realize I'd started to use <i>work-mates</i> until</p>

	<p>one of my American friends commented on it.</p> <p>Generally speaking, I don't feel like I've lost any of my English. Probably because I always speak in English with my UMass friends unless we're in a group where Spanish is the only common language. However, I have caught myself making more spelling mistakes or questioning my spelling of English words a lot more often than normally. I won't be able to remember if a certain consonant is doubled in the word or I'll mix up homonyms, like here and hear or your and you're or I'll leave off silent 'e's' at the ends of words.</p> <p>Also, Spanish expressions/words will come to mind when they're doesn't seem to be an exact English equivalent, like <i>pijo</i> and <i>pesado</i>. It'll take me a bunch of examples and a long description in English to convey the same concept that Spaniards can get across with just one of those words.</p> <p>I also noticed that I'll use Spanish words as if they were cognates in English even when they aren't. For example, in Spanish I'll say '<i>me cuesta...</i>' One day on the phone with my sister I said 'it costs me to do that,' and she said that doesn't really make sense. Once she pointed it out, I realized and explained, but I wanted to convey the exact sentiment that 'me cuesta' has for me and English wasn't really sufficient.</p> <p>Occasionally I'll assume someone is speaking in English or that something is written in English because I understand it. For instance, last night we went out to a restaurant in Oviedo. When the waiter heard us speaking English he asked if we wanted menus with English descriptions. My friend said no, but when I opened my menu, I said, wait guys mine's in English.' My friends leaned over and, she said 'what are you talking about,' so I answered, "Lechuga, toma-... oh, never mind." When I said the words aloud I realized they were obviously not English words, but at first glance when the words connected to images in my mind without me thinking about it, I thought they had to be English words.</p>
	<p>Answered no further questions</p>
7e	<p>I always forget how to say things in English, and I forget words in English. When I speak to my family on the phone, they suggest I take an English as a second language class (as a joke). I sometimes structure my English sentences as Spanish ones or I spell english words in Spanish in an e-mail (by accident). When I speak in English sometimes I slip up and say things in Spanish.</p>
7f	<p>I often get stuck on certain words in english because I haven't had to say it in so long and because I've been practicing spanish and using it as often as possible. I one forgot the word "trophey" and had to describe it to my friends, "you know, a miniature statue that you get for winning something?" Also, I often think of spanish expressions before English ones, such as "<i>no pasa nada</i>" and "<i>no te preocupes</i>". I often use them in english conversations, even with people who know no spanish.</p>

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