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Lenguas, Literaturas, Culturas y sus Aplicaciones

Doctoral Thesis

Speaking Proficiency in a Hybrid Language Environment. A Mixed-Method Study of Spanish Beginner Learners

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Resumen

En el sistema de educación superior de los Estados Unidos, es muy común enseñar clases de idiomas a nivel elemental de manera híbrida (Blake et al., 2008; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Meskill & Anthony, 2015; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Seaman et al., 2018) principalmente por su flexibilidad, individualidad, énfasis en la comunicación y el aprendizaje colaborativo (Rubio, 2014). Sin embargo, las investigaciones comparativas de clases tradicionales e híbridas han producido resultados pequeños o estadísticamente insignificantes con respecto a la competencia oral (Blake, 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Scida & Jones, 2016; Thoms, 2012). Por lo tanto, Rubio (2008) anima a los investigadores a ir más allá de contrastar y más bien evaluar "qué" enseñamos y "cómo" enseñamos. Este estudio longitudinal tuvo como objetivo mostrar cómo se desarrolló la competencia oral a través de un enfoque de métodos mixtos mediante la observación de cuatro secciones de español elemental en un centro de estudios superiores de EE. UU. durante dos semestres. A través de la triangulación de fuentes de datos, se analizaron observaciones de clase, contenido del curso, cuestionarios y evaluaciones orales de los estudiantes. Contrariamente a lo esperado, la modalidad híbrida no tuvo los resultados esperados en las habilidades orales de los estudiantes. Al final del segundo semestre, los estudiantes no pudieron alcanzar los niveles esperados lo que podría estar relacionado con el tipo de instrucción tradicional. El análisis de errores reveló áreas que los estudiantes aún tenían dificultades para comprender, como el uso de artículos, la concordancia de género y número de sustantivos y la semántica, entre otras. Aunque estos errores son comunes en estudiantes de primer año de lengua española, los datos muestran la necesidad de un reciclaje sistemático de determinadas estructuras del lenguaje para que sean plenamente asimiladas. Por lo tanto, los resultados generan información sobre lo que ocurre en los

cursos híbridos que adoptan un enfoque tradicional de enseñanza de idiomas en lugar de cambiar pedagógicamente para incluir actividades más comunicativas.

Resum

En el sistema d'educació superior dels Estats Units, és molt comú ensenyar classes d'idiomes a nivell elemental de manera híbrida (Blake et al., 2008; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Meskill & Anthony, 2015; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Seaman et al., 2018) principalment per la seua flexibilitat, individualitat, émfasis en la comunicació i l'aprenentage colaboratiu (Rubio, 2014). No obstant, els estudis comparatius de classes tradicionals i híbrides han produït resultats menuts o estadísticament insignificants sobre la competència oral (Blake, 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Scida & Jones, 2016; Thoms, 2012). Per lo tant, Rubio (2008) anima als investigadors a anar més allà de contrastar i més be evaluar "què" ensenyem i "cóm" ensenyem. Este estudi llongitudinal va tindre com a objectiu mostrar cóm es va desenrollar la competència oral a través d'un enfocament de métodos mixts per mig de l'observació de quatre seccions d'espanyol elemental en un centre d'estudis superiors dels EE. UU. durant dos semestres. A través de la triangulació de fonts de senyes, es varen analisar observacions de classe, contingut del curs, qüestionaris i evaluacions orals dels estudiants. Contràriament a lo esperat, la modalitat híbrida no va tindre els resultats esperats en les habilitats orals dels estudiants. Al final del segon semestre, els estudiants no varen poder alcançar els nivells esperats lo que podria estar relacionat en el tipo d'instrucció tradicional. L'anàlisis d'errors va revelar àrees que els estudiants encara tenien dificultats per a comprendre, com l'us d'artículs, la concordancia de gènero i número de sustantius i la semàntica, entre unes atres. Encara que estos errors són comuns en estudiants de primer any de llengua espanyola, l'estudi mostra la necessitat d'un reciclage sistemàtic de determinades estructures del llenguage per a que siguen plenament assimilades. Per lo tant, l'estudi genera informació sobre lo que ocorre en els cursos híbrits que adopten un enfocament tradicional d'ensenyança d'idiomes en lloc de canviar pedagógicamente per a incloure activitats més comunicatives.

Abstract

Teaching elementary-level language classes in a hybrid environment has become the trend in the United States higher education system (Blake et al., 2008; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Meskill & Anthony, 2015; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Seaman et al., 2018) primarily due to its flexibility, individuality, with emphasis on communication and collaborative learning (Rubio, 2014). However, comparative studies of traditional and hybrid classes have produced small or statistically insignificant results regarding speaking proficiency (Blake, 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Scida & Jones, 2016; Thoms, 2012). Therefore, Rubio (2008) encourages researchers to go beyond contrasting and rather assess "what" we teach and "how" we teach. This longitudinal study aimed to show how speaking proficiency was developed through a mixed-methods approach by observing four sections of Elementary Spanish at a US community college during the fall and spring semesters. Through data-source triangulation, class observations, course content, questionnaires, and oral assessments were analyzed. Contrary to expectations, the hybrid modality did not have the expected results in students' speaking skills. By the end of the second semester, students were not able to reach the novice-high to intermediate-low levels expected at the end of the first year of Spanish, which could be linked to the form-focused type of instruction students received. The error analysis revealed areas that students still struggled to understand, such as article use, noun agreement in gender and number, and semantics, among others. Although these errors are common in first-year Spanish language learners, the study shows the need for systematic recycling of certain language structures for them to be fully assimilated by students. Therefore, the study generates insight into what occurs in hybrid courses that adopt a traditional language teaching approach rather than changing pedagogically to include more communicative activities.

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Ever since I was young, my mother believed in my abilities and pushed me to be the best version of myself. My heartfelt thanks go to her and my dad for supporting me by coming several times from Europe to the US to take care of my three boys so that I could study for my doctorate and do my research.

My husband has also been by my side, cheering me on and motivating me to accomplish my goal. I am thankful for the times when I could go to the library to study while he took care of the boys. He also knew how to lend a listening ear whenever I was brainstorming about how to approach my data analysis or discussion. I thank him for every encouraging word and advice during the writing process.

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Abbreviations

AAAL	American Association for Applied Linguistics
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
BL	Blended learning
CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
CARLA	Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition
C-BLI	Concept-Based Language Instruction
CMC	Computer-mediated Communication
CEFR	Common European Framework for Languages
DELE	Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera
EA	Error Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
F2F	Face to Face
FL	Foreign language
IC	Interactional competence
L1	Native language (first language)
L2	Second language
LMS	Learning Management System
OPI	Oral Proficiency Interview
SCMC	Synchronous computer-mediated communication
SCT	Sociocultural theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

1. Introduction

Teaching elementary-level language classes in a hybrid environment has become the trend in the United States higher education system (Blake et al., 2008; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Meskill & Anthony, 2015; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Seaman et al., 2018) primarily due to its flexibility, individuality, and emphasis on communication, and collaborative learning (Rubio, 2014). This need was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic when we noticed the majority of language instructors had to adapt their classes at an unprecedented pace to either a hybrid or fully digital learning environment.

Unlike fully online courses, a hybrid or blended language course combines face-to-face (from now on, F2F) meetings, whether in a classroom setting or over a web conferencing application (i.e., Zoom, Skype, etc.), with online content that students can access at any time. The percentage of how much time should be spent on personal interaction with the instructor versus online varies greatly. This variation also occurs regarding how much of the course material should be transferred online in a blended course, with some courses having as little as 20-30% and others as much as 70%, as stated by the Online Learning Consortium (Means et al., 2010).

Besides the obvious benefits, such as the convenience of working from home and cost-effectiveness for the institution (Graham, 2006), the hybrid language course can potentially speed up the language learning process. Thus, class time no longer focuses on language form but rather on communication activities and peer interaction. Moreover, the individualization aspect of learning is crucial since students can choose how much time to interact with the material. In a traditional classroom setting, it is the instructor who leads and decides when to move from one structure to another, whereas, in a blended course, it is the student who decides when to interact

with another structure. The other aspect is "differentiation" since the content can be varied to match learner preferences (Means et al., 2010, p. 6).

This study analyzed, through a mixed-method approach, how well speaking proficiency is developed in such a hybrid/blended course, especially considering that students receive less time to engage with the material in class, as well as with their peers and instructor. The data were gathered through class observations from several hybrid sections taught to first-year learners of Spanish at a US community college. Although the terms hybrid and blended are often used interchangeably, the research was conducted at an institution where "hybrid" is the official term used for the classes observed. Therefore, it was maintained throughout the study when identifying the observed courses.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Spanish represents the foreign language most taught at higher education institutions in the US. The Modern Language Association reported 712,240 enrollments, which is greater than all the other foreign languages combined (Looney & Lusin, 2018). Although the number is high, there was a 9.9% drop in enrollment compared to previous studies, showing the need to implement innovative language programs that would attract students to learn Spanish. The drop was considerable, especially at two-year institutions, with a 17.2% decline in enrollment from 2013 to 2016. Moreover, 80% of college students in the US enrolled in only a maximum of two years of foreign language instruction (Goldberg et al., 2015), which is too little to receive a good foundation for functioning in that language in the long term.

Therefore, the post-secondary Spanish language courses have known a "hybrid revolution" (Long, 2014, p. 1), with many programs embracing the structure of combining F2F with online elements because the hybrid/blended model has offered flexibility, adaptability to different

learning styles, and affordability. A meta-analysis of 176 studies (US Department of Education, 2010) on traditional versus online learning indicated that student performance in online courses was slightly higher than in F2F ones. Most of the success might be due to the blended learning environment since nine of the eleven studies that showed significant effects for the online medium used the blended approach. When addressing oral proficiency, the hybrid modality allows for the synchronous and natural flow of conversation while emphasizing the utterance structure through technology.

However, for this improvement to occur, the curriculum needs to be intentionally designed, and instructors need to use pedagogical methods to help the learner become autonomous, motivated, and skilled at learning a new language. The blended learning environment seems to clash with studies showing that for students to reach advanced levels of a foreign language, they need at least 720 contact hours, while the traditional US language program offers approximately 320 hours (Arispe & Burston, 2017). Since the blended/hybrid learning environment normally reduces the F2F time from 20-50%, the rest of the needed time remains with the learner, who needs the right tools to use time effectively in developing his/her language skills. The use of computer-assisted learning materials is key to bridging the gap created by the reduced F2F time, offering increased opportunities for experiencing an immersion learning environment by exposing students to various listening, writing, and speaking activities.

Another challenge has been an increase in non-tenure track Spanish language faculty in the field (Colburn, 2017). In 2004, 87% of adjunct instructors were teaching foreign languages at two-year colleges (Laurence, 2009), and the prediction was that by 2040, only 10% would be tenure-track faculty (Morson & Schapiro in Colburn, 2017, p. 89). The non-tenure-track faculty often lack the institutional resources to engage in professional development (Culver & Kezar, 2020) that

would train them in the latest pedagogical and technological developments. This has the potential to negatively impact the teaching and development of blended/hybrid language courses. Moreover, research analysis done on blended learning across disciplines (Halverson et al., 2014; Wu, 2015) pointed to several limitations, such as the fact that many studies had small sample sizes, did not account for attrition bias, did not look at the effects of hybrid courses on student subgroups, were not longitudinal, and few established causal inferences by using controlled variables. Halverson et al. (2014) criticized the researched publications for not evaluating the design process, contributing to pedagogical theory, and not determining the causal and correlational relationships between variables. Similarly, Graham, Henrie, and Gibbons (2014), in their discussion about the appropriate research design for a blended course, noted that previous studies did not focus on the pedagogical elements of the blended courses and the connection between learning outcomes and course design.

Besides focusing on the connection between pedagogy, technology, and design, it is equally relevant to give voice to practitioners and students as they engage in blended language courses and analyze their experience (Arispe & Blake, 2012; Sharma & Westbrook, 2016). To achieve this goal, researchers should use more qualitative and ethnographic studies (Anderson, 2018; Gleason, 2013).

The greatest challenge was that blended courses in the research literature may not be representative of the majority of blended courses currently being taught since studies tend to be based on courses that received funding to be developed and/or used unique methods to replace the publisher's online platform of activities, therefore not depicting the reality of the field (Anderson, 2018; Hermosilla, 2014; Wu, 2015). Studies may also use well-designed courses created to solicit research data (i.e., Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2016), which may not reflect what happens at smaller universities or community colleges. Moreover, the different definitions of what hybrid or blended

learning means have made it difficult to analyze the factors that make a successful foreign language hybrid course.

Blake (2015) considered that the current language assessment tools are "blunt" in pointing out significant differences in first and second-year language learners, especially because of their limited vocabulary and hours spent studying the language. The transition from novice to intermediate seems to occur after approximately 200 hours of training, equivalent to a first year of language study. However, the question is whether the hybrid environment can provide the 200 hours needed to move from one level to the next, especially since most students at a community college stop after fulfilling their one-year language requirement. Even though measuring progress in first-year students can be "a muddy undertaking," it is necessary since instructors need to be aware of the tools that motivate students to continue studying a foreign language as they become autonomous learners.

Multiple challenges need to be addressed to make hybrid environments successful, among which we note the need to motivate students to work independently (Anderson, 2018), provide the appropriate tools for both instructor and student success (Godev, 2014), and overcome the lack of appropriate technical training (Boyle et al., 2003). When it comes to the reality of language courses, one of the greatest challenges discussed was having buy-in from instructors who already have an efficient traditional curriculum and now must redesign their courses into hybrid ones, having to give up invaluable F2F communication (Anderson, 2018, p. 5).

1.2 Rationale of the Study

Although this study cannot address all the challenges mentioned above, it offers insight into how a hybrid course is taught at a US community college level where resources are limited,

and no unique method was funded to be tested and developed. It tried to offer the reality of the field and the pedagogical challenges instructors face.

The question of whether the hybrid class can be effective in general has been proven by numerous studies (Dixon et al., 2021; Grgurovic, 2007). However, comparative studies of traditional and hybrid classes produced small or statistically insignificant results regarding speaking proficiency (Blake et al., 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Scida & Jones, 2016; Thoms, 2014). Therefore, Rubio (2008) encouraged researchers to go beyond contrasting and rather assess "what" we teach and "how" we teach.

Mizza & Rubio (2020) also advocated for the use of "noncomparative research," which could reveal the "diversity of factors" involved in creating a positive learning environment. They advised the use of student and instructor feedback, as well as a focus on individual learning factors. Although this study did not focus on the individual learning factors in the hybrid course, it aimed to analyze student feedback, as well as to observe the class factors involved in developing speaking proficiency. Because of the wide variety of hybrid course design patterns, this ethnographic study might help explain better which variables are more likely to contribute to a more unified version of how a hybrid language course should be designed.

In addition, the literature review indicated a gap in the study of language courses at a community college level in the US; most of the research was done at four-year universities. This study planned to observe how a hybrid Spanish course was taught at a US community college with a specific focus on student-teacher and peer interaction and how this interaction led to the development of students' speaking proficiency. It used a mixed-method approach using the triangulation method of analyzing multiple data sources such as class observations, course content, questionnaires, and student interviews.

The reason why a mixed-method approach was chosen was to narrow down specific elements in hybrid courses that either enhance or hinder speaking proficiency development in first-year language learners, such as discussion boards, student-teacher interviews, and other elements. The descriptive statistics were used to present the frequency of certain class activities, Spanish versus English input, as well as the type of errors students made during oral assessments. The qualitative analysis went deeper into gems of conversations to show the process students go through when developing their speaking proficiency. The literature review in the field pointed to this need to use "qualitative methods help us to make an in-depth investigation on why IT works or does not work, and how it affects both students' language learning processes and teachers' instructional processes." (Murday et al., 2008, p. 126).

This longitudinal study focused mainly on the students enrolled in their first year of Spanish. This was a unique subgroup of students who chose to attend a local community college because of its affordability and oftentimes because they were older than the average college student who wanted to either get a college degree or focus on another career altogether. More often than not, these students do not continue taking a foreign language course at the community college level, mainly because they are only required to take one semester of a humanities course. Besides, those who enjoy the language might choose to transfer to a four-year university to continue their learning.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this analysis was to assess whether students enrolled in hybrid Spanish courses were able to reach the expected level of speaking proficiency by the end of their first and second semesters of Spanish despite the reduced F2F time with their instructor. Intertwined with this general objective was the need to use data from a population not often

observed: the community college student. The reason data were collected at a US community college was that many of the previous hybrid Spanish course studies were conducted at research-based institutions that chose well-designed courses taught by trained instructors with extra resources to support students in their learning, such as a lab for communicative activities, or tutors (Anderson, 2018; Gleason, 2013; Rubio, 2014).

The highest degree a student can obtain at a US Community College is an associate degree, after which the student must transfer to a four-year university to complete a bachelor's degree. For this reason, Spanish classes are mainly offered at an elementary and intermediate level. There were several reasons why students chose to take Spanish classes: to fulfill a humanities requirement, to enhance their employment eligibility for professional programs (business, hospitality, nursing), or to fulfill a personal need to communicate with friends and family members. Students could also receive a Spanish certificate after completing 16 hours, mainly four classes (Elementary Spanish I and II and Intermediate Spanish I and II). Because many students attending a community college work and/or have families, the administration asked that Spanish language classes become hybrid to make them more appealing and cost-effective. Since this might be the only chance students had to study a foreign language, it was imperative for their experience to be positive and for learning to occur, especially to encourage them to continue studying a foreign language beyond course requirements.

This study used a naturalistic (nonparticipant) approach to analyze behaviors that occurred naturally in the hybrid language learning environment. Because of the adopted etic perspective, the researcher did not try to interfere with students' natural language development, nor engage with the instructor in course content preparation. The triangulation method allowed for the analysis of various course elements such as discussion boards, in-class interactions, and oral assessments.

The interpretivism research approach was chosen because very few studies (Gleason, 2013; Isabelli, 2015; Rubio et al., 2018) focused on how language, particularly Spanish, was taught outside research-focused institutions. The researcher strove to maintain a neutral, unbiased perspective during the data collection, not conducting personal interviews with the students but keeping a distance and merely observing what happened. The main objective was to see how fluently students in a hybrid course were able to speak in relation to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview scale, as well as to conduct an error analysis of specific oral assessments.

Because of the scarcity of research at the community college level in the US regarding how Spanish is taught as a foreign language, this study aimed to open a discussion about how to improve support for part-time faculty, create an accountability process, as well as to provide clear guidelines on how to help students achieve the necessary language skills needed for the workplace.

1.4 Hypotheses and Research Questions

Several hypotheses were identified in this study:

- Students' overall success in the hybrid course is closely connected to good speaking proficiency.
- Discussion boards are effective in increasing speaking proficiency.
- Class discussions reveal different students and instructor interactions in the target language.
- Assessments such as student interviews and group WebQuests can demonstrate students' speaking proficiency.

Based on these hypotheses, research questions were formulated to obtain the results and conclusions:

1. How does the hybrid modality affect overall Spanish oral proficiency?

2. How do discussion boards support the development of Spanish speaking skills?
3. What type of interaction occurs between students and the instructor in a hybrid course?
4. What do hybrid class assessments reveal about students' speaking proficiency levels?

The first research question focused on how the hybrid modality influences students' speaking proficiency. As noted in the literature review, the definition of a hybrid course was open-ended, and there were a variety of interpretations of how the hybrid course could be developed. (Anderson, 2018; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2018; Rubio & Thoms, 2014). Reflecting this ambiguity of definitions, during this study, the hybrid modality changed from one semester to another. In the first semester, students met F2F only for one hour on Zoom with their instructor, and the rest of the work was performed online, whereas in the second semester, they met twice per week F2F in person, and the rest of the class work took place online.

For the second research question, a close analysis of discussion boards was performed to determine whether they supported the development of speaking skills. This was performed because research has shown that a key element of a successful hybrid course is the pedagogical design of course content to support language development (Bañados, 2006; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Rubio, 2014).

The third research question aimed to analyze the interaction that occurred during the in-person class meetings. Based on the literature, in hybrid language courses, more time should be dedicated to communicative activities such as role-play, and group work, where students could learn how to negotiate meaning and interact with a native speaker (i.e., Gleason, 2013; Thoms, 2014; Young, 2008). Class conversation gems were chosen to analyze specific second language (L2) interaction resources as depicted by Young (2011): identity, turn-taking, repair, and boundaries. These interactions could expose how learners moved from the typical artificial class

conversations to deeper, more meaningful ones about language and how this related to themselves as individuals. It could also reveal how speaking proficiency was developed slowly through trial, error, and perseverance.

The fourth research question focused on how well students ultimately mastered speaking in Spanish at the end of their semester or year of study during their oral evaluations. An error-analysis approach in combination with the ACTFL OPI standards for beginner L2 speakers was performed to discover students' speaking proficiency levels. Since both the ACTFL and Common European Framework for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020) guidelines were broad and not focused specifically on the grammatical and lexical elements a first-year student of Spanish must master, the error analysis was meant to offer a more detail-oriented analysis of these assessments. The checklist was drawn from the course syllabus and the curriculum used to develop the courses observed.

1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 placed this study within the body of literature, specifically focusing on hybrid/blended language teaching. First, it presented the theoretical framework by showing how the hybrid/blended courses were connected to specific Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles. After a historical perspective on how technology was incorporated into Spanish language courses throughout different SLA periods, it described four theories closely connected to the hybrid/blended language teaching.

The first was the interactionist theory (Elola & Oskoz, 2014) which claimed that students need to interact both in class and with online materials through collaborative discussions where they can negotiate meaning, receive comprehensible input, and learn how to internalize the language. For the hybrid environment this was key because students needed to learn how to interact

both in and out of class, as well as bridge the gap for the reduced F2F class time. The second was the cognitive theory that considered that the student needs to develop certain cognitive mechanisms to be successful in language acquisition such as transfer, automaticity, overshadowing (Ellis & Wulff, 2019). There are both external and internal factors that contribute to language development. In the hybrid course, the pedagogical approach was key for students to successfully acquire the language, especially if it focused on motivating students and teaching them how to become independent lifelong learners. Thirdly, the sociocultural theory focused on the social aspect of studying a language, by fostering communication, and engaging with the language not only with peers, and instructors, but outside of class. Lastly, constructivism was key to hybrid/blended courses because it places responsibility on the language learner. By offering a variety of input through online elements such as apps and digital activities, students can contextualize and engage with language in individualized manners.

In addition, the literature review chapter included definitions, trends, and perspectives in the field of blended/hybrid language teaching in general, narrowing it down to studies specifically performed in the field of hybrid Spanish Language Courses by presenting benefits such as improved pedagogy (Laster et al., 2005, Mizza & Rubio, 2020), flexibility and autonomy (Blake, 2014), increased rates of student engagement (Bernard et al., 2014), to name a few. Lastly, the literature review moved to a presentation of various oral proficiency assessment approaches. It especially focused on an explanation of why an interactional competence analysis was applied to analyze gems from class observations. It finished by explaining the different approaches in the error analysis chosen for oral evaluations.

Chapter 3 presented the methodology used for data analysis. First, it described how the study was devised, the participants, details about the courses observed, and instruments used in

assessing data. It included a pilot study conducted a year before this research to analyze whether first-year students were able to internalize the verb tenses presented during their hybrid first-year Spanish courses. This data was introduced to show that students can advance more during their hybrid courses than what they were able to do during the classes analyzed for this study. Although instructors were different, the curriculum was the same, as well as the institution where this study was conducted. However, in the observed classes for this doctoral research, there was no data regarding how verb tenses were internalized because the instructor did not engage in a comprehensive interview at the end of the second semester of Spanish, as expected.

Chapter 4 offered a detailed data analysis using a mixed-method approach. First, an analysis of student grades as a measure of success in a hybrid setting was conducted, since students often connect their progress to grades received in class. This analysis also investigated how many students from the first semester chose to continue with the hybrid modality in the second semester, which showed they felt successful in the hybrid environment. The analysis then moved to a qualitative analysis of discussion boards and whether they supported oral proficiency development successfully. Secondly, a quantified analysis of class observations focused on the type of activities that took place in class and how they were related to speaking skills development. The analysis moved from deductive statistics in the form of a percentage-focused analysis of the different types of speaking class activities to a qualitative analysis of class interactions using the interaction competence parameters set by Young (2011) to show how conversations occurred in the observed hybrid courses. The data analysis chapter continued with an error analysis of two oral assessments: end-of-the-semester student interviews and cultural WebQuests group presentations that ultimately revealed the speaking proficiency students were able to master by the end of their respective

semesters. Lastly, a qualitative analysis of students' evaluations with a focus on how they perceived speaking activities in class was performed.

Finally, chapter 5 discussed the results focusing on how this analysis contributed to the body of research by looking at interpretation, implications, limitations, as well as further studies that could be conducted to deepen the research.

2. Theoretical Background

Undoubtedly, technology is immensely beneficial, especially in the realm of foreign language teaching (Hermosilla, 2014; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2021). Foreign language students can receive an enhanced language input, being exposed to native-like audio and visual input, revisit information whenever needed, and work on complex grammar and pronunciation elements at their pace. At the same time, language instructors can use technology to give individual feedback to students, help them work on their linguistic errors more effectively (Rubio, 2014), and make class time more engaging using real-life materials.

But incorporating technology alone in foreign language classes does not transform the environment into a blended or hybrid one. Hybrid language courses need an explicit pedagogical focus that dictates the selection and use of technological tools (Goertler, 2014; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Sharma, 2017).

This chapter presents an overview of the second language acquisition principles that have impacted the development of hybrid language courses, defines the terminology, offers perspectives related to hybrid/ blended teaching, and the technologies proven to be most successful, narrowing down on the hybrid trends in the Spanish foreign language contexts. This literature review aimed to place this research endeavor in the field's current state and explain the need for an ethnographical approach to analyzing foreign language courses.

2.1 SLA Principles in Blended/Hybrid Language Learning Environments

The key to a successful hybrid language course is the intentionality of creating assignments based on current research and linguistic theories that point toward efficient language development. Goertler (2014) recommended creating online activities taking into account second language

acquisition (SLA) theories which he categorized into linguistic, cognitive, and social, therefore avoiding drills, and mechanical practice; but rather encouraging interactive communicative activities with peers and/or native speakers. This is not an exhaustive, comprehensive review of the entire SLA literature, but rather attempted to pinpoint key concepts that have impacted the development of hybrid language courses.

A quick historical review of how SLA theories transformed over the years offered a good background for understanding which ones have influenced hybrid language courses. The focus of this section was mainly on SLA studies conducted using the Spanish language as a basis, but it also extrapolated critical theories from the English as a Second Language realm since they are interconnected.

2.1.1 History of Spanish SLA Research in the United States

When analyzing the Spanish SLA research in the US, Lafford (2000) pinpointed four distinct periods, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

Lafford's Spanish SLA Periods (2000)

Period	Name	Years
First	Translation-focused Language Teaching	1900-1944
Second	Post Second World War Empiricism	1945-1965
Third	The Rise of Rationalism	1965-1979
Fourth	Language in its Social Context	1980-1999

The first period was based on 19th century Historical Linguistics (1900-1944), focusing on descriptive approaches to language teaching as dictated by phonologists and grammarians, relying mainly on translations of literary texts. Although old-fashioned and hardly used nowadays, the

influence of this period can still be seen in some of the technologies used nowadays, relying on learning a language through translation, such as Duolingo.

The second period Lafford identified is Post Second World War Empiricism (1945-1965), influenced by Behaviorist Psychology and Structuralist linguistics. Studies used the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, according to which L2 errors could be predicted by contrasting native language (L1) or first language and L2. Many studies focused extensively on the syntactic, morphological, and phonological structures of English versus Spanish. During this second period, scientific studies were developed in the Spanish applied linguistics field, focusing on topics such as tense/aspect, clitics, adjectives, and syntax word order (Lafford, 2000, p. 715). The audio-lingual method was developed during this time, based on Skinner's behaviorism, and emphasized memorization of language structures with a focus on intonation and correct pronunciation, through positive reinforcement, but not focused on grammar and communicative elements. It was the first time that speaking proficiency became the main focus of instruction, and some of the drills and assignments can still be found today on online language learning platforms.

The third most prolific SLA period, titled "The Rise of Rationalism" (1965-1979), was based on Chomsky's transformational generative grammar and the idea that language learning is a creative process. Sanz (2015) considered this a "confusing" period especially, because of Chomsky's ideas that explicit language feedback did not influence L2 development, which showed a disconnect between theory and practice. During this period, computers started being used for educational purposes. Therefore, a new field of SLA research emerged, the precursor of online and blended language courses: computer-assisted language learning (CALL). This period was considered "structured and restricted" (Sykes, 2015) because it used mainly closed drills and repetition; it was when linguists and practitioners discovered the asset of technology for language

development. Nowadays, hybrid language courses have adapted this style of repetition for online grammar exercises.

The fourth period of Spanish SLA identified by Lafford (2000), "Language in its Social Context" (1980-1999), focused on two fronts. On the one hand, it continued the trend of error analysis studies. On the other hand, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory inspired several studies in naturalistic and classroom environments. Language started being studied in different social contexts, looking at how a learner internalized language structures both in a native and classroom setting.

Although morphology, syntax, and phonology studies continued, new SLA perspectives started to develop from pragmatic studies, focusing on conversational L2 skills, communication strategies, transferring of L1 pragmatic competences into L2, etc. In the 1980s, cognitive linguistics also started taking shape with studies on Input and Output processing and other mental language learning processes. This is when CALL entered an experimental phase using various methods such as total physical response (TPR), suggestopedia, the silent method, and community language learning (Sykes, 2015).

With the advent of the communicative approach to teaching language based on Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach theory (1983), the emphasis was put on research based on classroom language acquisition. This period in CALL was named "Communicative and Open" (Sykes, 2015) because of the appearance of online communicative exercises influenced by the socio-cognitive linguistic theory.

In the late 1990s, researchers started analyzing the role of technology in language development. New studies on the usefulness of computer-mediated communication (CMC) were conducted to see whether e-mail, chat rooms, or the Internet could help learners better acquire an

L2 (i.e., Blake, 2000; Lafford & Lafford, 1997). With the turn of the century, studies on technology became more prevalent and numerous, primarily because of the accessibility of video and audio content. This "Integrated and Integrative" period (Sykes, 2015) developed practices that are still the benchmark for what is used in blended or hybrid courses. This was when WebQuests, online workbooks, and other communicative tools were created, among other activities.

Although Lafford (2000) stopped the historical review of Spanish SLA at the turn of the century, we now see a new period titled "Complex Multi-perspectives" in which cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistics studies were knitted together to explain the language acquisition process. Ellis (2021) noted the development of the "Complex Dynamic Systems Theory" that focused on the highly individualized language learning process, which is unpredictable and hard to research empirically because it cannot include all the L2 acquisition variables that the theory presents. He stated: "I see Complex Dynamic Systems Theory not as a testable theory but as a useful metaphor of the wholeness of L2 acquisition." (Ellis, 2021, p. 195).

Nevertheless, Lacorte and García (2014) pointed out that the methodology for teaching Spanish in the US differs from the European one that has adopted a stricter communicative approach, while the US communicative approach was more "flexible or eclectic." There seemed to be a clash between concepts such as affective filter, comprehensible input, and output with the traditional teaching of grammar and culture.

This last period in CALL, titled "Social and Collaborative" (Sykes, 2015), represented a significant transformation in how languages were taught. Especially since the impact of COVID-19, there has been an intentional trend of moving language learning online through collaborative technologies, digital games, and simulations. Although online platforms, especially for teaching Spanish, were not universally accepted, especially in US community colleges, and the traditional

F2F teaching method was still preferred, the need for blending and hybridizing language courses was increasing.

This need was reflected in Spanish SLA studies that recently focused more on how technology impacted language development (Arispe & Blake, 2012; Blake et al., 2008; Isabelli, 2013; Rubio et al., 2014) drawing from "interactionist, cognitive, and sociocultural theories" (Elola & Oskoz, 2014). Since these theories should represent the basis for a successful hybrid language course, an overview will be provided below.

2.1.2 Interactionist Theory

Derived from Krashen's Input hypothesis (1985), Swain's Output Hypothesis (1995), and Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), the interactionist theory focused on how language is developed through communication when learners interact with their instructor, peers, and native speakers. For language acquisition to be successful, the learner needs not only to receive clear input but also to be put in a situation to negotiate meaning, use language in context (output), and receive constructive feedback.

In a hybrid language course, input must be well planned so that it is covered in both the online and F2F environments. Online, students can individualize input by choosing how much time they want to spend watching, listening, and doing the practice. F2F time should be spent encouraging learner output through interactive activities:

This access to structured, input-based practice can be balanced with an active and interactive approach in the F2F sessions, during which learners produce output by negotiating meaning and, with the help of immediate feedback, make adjustments to their language to fill in any necessary gaps in communication. (Mizza & Rubio, 2020, p. 14).

However, it is essential to not only limit interaction to class time but also to encourage it while students engage with the material online through discussion boards, interviews, or form-focused closed tasks. One of the most successful modalities has been the use of synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) or chat rooms where students engaged in collaborative discussions by using the target language communicatively. The written modality has been proven to be more effective (González-Lloret, 2008; Pelletieri, 2000; Salaberry, 2000) than the oral one, mainly because students could see the language produced and could reflect on form, as well as on meaning.

Pelletieri's study (2000) on the written SCMC developed for Intermediate Spanish learners demonstrated that the students who engaged in online chat discussions that ranged from open discussions to closed tasks (piecing the facts together through communication, similar to a puzzle) were able to negotiate meaning by using the target language successfully, by self-monitoring, and realizing either their own mistakes or their peers' mistakes. The online modality facilitated the focus on form because students had to type their answers rather than speak.

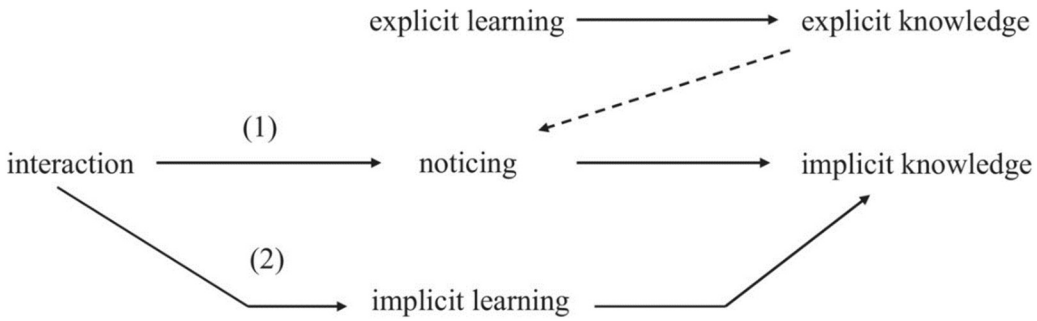
Another study conducted by González-Lloret (2008) on SCMC in the development of language pragmatics among second-year Spanish language students showed the advantage of using chatting with a native speaker to learn the pragmatic norms of interaction. The study revealed that pragma-linguistic change only occurred after multiple interactions with the native speaker and revealed the need to expose the learner to multiple opportunities to learn the same concept.

Moreover, Sykes (2015) considered that online resources such as digital games and simulations could be used for creative interactive assignments. For example, students could be exposed to native speakers from different cultural backgrounds and learn to understand the variety of Spanish dialects.

The reason why it is important for hybrid courses to offer ample interaction activities is that this is how explicit knowledge can be internalized and transformed into implicit knowledge. Through interactions, learners "notice" (Ellis et al., 2019) linguistic forms to which they were exposed through explicit input, and the repeated interaction with these external environments can help learners internalize forms and progress, as shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1.

Explicit vs. Implicit Learning in Interaction. (Ellis et al., 2019)



The hybrid environment is an ideal place where the student can be exposed to the same language concept through various modalities that give feedback on his/her output including the chance to revisit the comprehensible input offered by the learning management system. The focus of studies based on cognitive theory was on how a student mentally constructed the information received through input.

2.1.3 Cognitive Theory

Based on cognitive theory, second language acquisition represented a conscious process using specific learning strategies that focused on how information is processed, comprehended, and retained. It first appeared as a reaction to behaviorism that considered language acquisition an automatic process.

According to Ellis and Wulff (2019), two key assumptions were found in cognitive studies: L2 learning was "usage-based" with a communicative goal, and language learning cognitive mechanisms were not unique. Students were taught how to use widely used linguistic constructions that ranged in complexity and abstraction, such as word order, morphemes (i.e., nominalizations, plural creation, etc.), lexicon, etc. Acquisition success depended on certain factors such as "frequency of experience, salience of form, significance of meaning, prototypicality, redundancy versus surprise value, and contingency of form and function." It also depended on cognitive mechanisms such as "learned attention, automaticity, transfer, overshadowing" (Ellis & Wulff, 2019, p. 44).

These elements were found through the analysis of interlanguage, an individualized target language (L2) system based on the learner's first language (L1) and understanding of variations and patterns in L2. Initial studies focused either on external factors (i.e., classroom environments, pedagogical approaches) or internal factors (i.e., aptitude, motivation) in language development. More recent ones analyzed how specific external and internal factors interact (Sanz, 2015).

In Spanish language acquisition, cognitive studies focused on a variety of elements such as the process of acquisition of certain language aspects (*ser* and *estar*, tense and aspect, gender, pragmatics), pedagogical interventions (explicit versus implicit instruction; input type; task-based learning), processing instruction, and individual differences, among others (Sanz, 2015).

A study conducted by Rosa and Leow (2004) examined Spanish advanced learners' use of specific target structures after being exposed to a computerized task, revealing that explicit feedback had a more significant impact on the retention of language structures, as well as on accuracy. This study also proved that the online environment offered an advantage for task-based learning because the learner could receive immediate feedback.

Payne and Ross (2005) focused on how individual differences in working memory affected oral production in chatroom discourse in third-semester Spanish learners by analyzing repetition and relexicalization. Results proved that certain types of learners developed their language proficiency better in an online environment, especially those with a low phonological working memory because of a "reduced cognitive burden." They were able to produce more elaborate constructions than in a F2F setting.

Other studies focusing on individual cognitive differences pointed out that conscientiousness plays a vital role in successfully navigating a hybrid language course (Arispe & Blake, 2012). A debatable variable, aptitude, has also been the focus of research in cognitive linguistic studies. For example, VanPatten et al.'s (2013) grammatical sensitivity study offered conflicting results because, although students showed an aptitude for grammar, their language performance did not necessarily improve. However, other studies need to be conducted to extrapolate this conclusion to other language courses since language form is highly dependent on social interaction (Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2013).

2.1.4 Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

The sociocultural theory (SCT) focused on learning as a social process, highly interactional, that shapes our cognitive language learning process. Although some have debated whether the SCT theory fits into SLA because the latter emphasized the "automatic processing of linguistic input" (Antón, 2015), rather than a collaborative, social process, it became more and more ingrained in SLA studies focusing on communication and cognition (Fazalehag et al., 2020; Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2013; Lantolf et al. 2020).

Lantolf (2013) argued that the linguistic development process was perceived as different in SCT and SLA. In SCT, because of the mediation process that learners engage in with their

instructors, peers, and others, the development was rather a socially individualized process, and not just focused on production accuracy. In contrast, in SLA, acquisition stages can be predicted, and all learners were believed to follow the same paths in acquiring a particular linguistics form.

Similarly, Lantolf criticized Krashen's comprehensible input (i+1) theory because it assumed that all learners were at the same developmental level focusing mainly on linguistic performance (Lantolf et al., 2020) rather than on the impact that social interaction has on language development such as the mediation between instructor and language learner.

Embedded in SCT was the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Vygotsky in 1978, which encouraged the learner to move from "the actual development level" toward the "potential developmental level" through scaffolding and assistance from both the instructor and peers. The goal was to help the learner function independently. One advantage of hybrid learning was that instruction could be individualized since each student has his/her personal ZPD. With the help of technology, instructors could assist learners through scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) by first modeling language use through video instruction, breaking tasks into smaller parts, offering coaching through the process, and encouraging cooperative learning among peers through discussion boards, for example. The focus was on helping students internalize the language concepts they aimed to acquire and making them independent learners. Although at first, the internationalization process was other-regulated (teacher recast, metalinguistic explanation) and object-regulated (technology feedback of right or wrong), the "locus of control" (Lantolf et al., 2020) was for the learner to self-regulate and function independently.

The Activity Theory, also derived from SCT, offered a better foundation for SLA studies (Antón, 2015) because it focused on specific language activities. Learner's actions became central to the understanding of language development, being analyzed from different perspectives by

using an activity triangle (Engeström, 2001) where social rules, tools, and participants worked in a community of learning (as in Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2013)

While the activity could be technologically mediated, the learner still needed to abide by linguistic structures, but at the same time, build cultural awareness through dialogue. This led to task-based second language learning research (Gutiérrez, 2006; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) that showed that collaborative discourse helped students restructure their interlanguage. Swain and her colleagues documented how classroom learners of second languages, including immersion learners, pushed linguistic development forward by talking, either in the L1 or L2, about features of the new language (Swain, 2009; Swain & Lapkin, 2002).

Another key element in ZPD was the type of language instruction. The Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI) (Gal'perin in Lantolf et al., 2020) proposed a systemic-theoretical instruction different from the traditional one in the sense that it provided memorable and graphic explicit instruction about a concept that students then acquired by first verbalizing the concept and then applying it in activities such as role-plays, reading and writing activities, etc. Derived from SCT, the C-BLI was researched in areas of L2 grammar and pragmatics (Lantolf et al. 2020) and could be used as a basis for analyzing how instruction in hybrid/blended courses could be offered, especially in a flipped classroom, where students were expected to engage with language form before coming to class.

In addition, the assessment types to see the concept internalization level could be mediated through dynamic assessment, another critical element of ZPD. In a hybrid course, assessment can be mediated by technology, especially when the learner tries one exercise several times until he/she arrives at the correct answer. A study in dynamic assessment of Spanish language majors' writing and speaking abilities (Antón, 2009) showed the importance of allowing the use of objects

(dictionaries and reference grammar), as well as examiner consultation, to help students improve their skills.

In conclusion, the socio-cultural theory can inform the development of hybrid language courses. It can show an instructor how to use C-BLI to create engaging content through explicit teaching. It can incorporate dynamic assessments where students receive immediate feedback on their work and can try an activity multiple times. It creates spaces where meaning can be mediated through social interaction with peers and native speakers.

2.1.5 Constructivism

A reaction to behaviorism and derived from Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, constructivism was a crucial concept in hybrid course development because it put the student at the center of learning. The instructor was no longer the manipulator of learning but rather a facilitator combining his/her efforts through technology. As Blake (2013) stated: "Only social forces (i.e., teachers and students working together) can create curriculum change and innovation." (p. 132), thus pointing to the idea of building a language curriculum that would accommodate students' needs and learning styles.

A reflection of Bloom's taxonomy, constructivism encouraged the use of higher order thinking skills. Sykes (2015) pointed out that the constructivist learning environment was especially central to CALL; it can be found in apps or digital games using "modeling, contextualizing, and metacognitive activities" (p. 249) to help students become independent learners.

Mizza and Rubio (2020) also put the constructivist theory of learning as central to the blended environment because of the need to develop tasks that intentionally required collaboration and interaction between students. For example, students could engage with both form and content

through asynchronous online discussions without having the stress of performing in a F2F situation on the spot. The asynchronous modality offered the necessary time to reflect and gather thoughts and vocabulary about the topic. Using online exercises to practice form also freed up F2F time to create engaging tasks that encouraged students to use their oral skills to solve real-life problems, such as ordering in a restaurant.

Ultimately, a blended course aimed to create an autonomous learner who could identify what helped him/her understand and acquire the language better and faster. This critical thinking when studying a foreign language for the first time was extremely important in the long run. If the student discovered that he/she could be successful at learning a language, he/she could become a lifelong learner. There are too many students who gave up on studying a language because of a lack of a pedagogical construct that helped them become confident and self-sufficient.

2.2 Definitions, Current Trends, and Perspectives of Hybrid/Blended Teaching

Traditional courses have always used F2F instruction, with technology being only a complementary tool, whereas "blended" or "hybrid" courses referred to a combination of online (or computer-mediated instruction) and F2F instruction (Bonk & Graham, 2006, p. 4; Drysdale et al., 2012; Sharma & Barrett, 2007; Smith, 2001; Young, 2002), with the online component replacing some of the instruction time.

The terms "blended" and "hybrid" have been used interchangeably (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Dziuban et al., 2018; Parsad et al., 2008; Rubio & Thoms, 2014) to refer to this combination of online and F2F instruction with the former term being more widely adopted. The term "blended" was first used to represent all contexts in which learning was taught through various instructional methods or modalities, being adopted from the business world where employees blended their work time with training courses (Driscoll, 2002; Graham et al., 2003; Sharma & Barrett, 2007).

Then, it became a bridge between distant asynchronous learning environments and live synchronous F2F models, trying to use the strengths of each model to create a more productive learning environment.

Other scholars took a more liberal approach to the terminology by referring to blended courses as those that did not mix the online and F2F instruction but rather incorporated a variety of teaching elements such as "lecturing and coaching, self-paced-instruction, and simulations, formal and informal instruction" (Reynolds & Greiner in Bonk & Graham, 2006, p. 216). Moreover, Ross and Gage extended its definition to include blended programs or degrees (in Rubio, 2014, p. 156), showing again the broad range of pedagogical realities covered by the term "blended." The US Department of Education took a more pragmatic approach to define blended courses, focusing on the "reduced in-class seat time for students" (Parsad et al., 2008, p. 1).

With the advance of technology and its widespread availability, the traditional course has been transformed, integrating more and more technology-enhanced elements into its curriculum, with blended learning no longer being at the "intersection of the two archetypes" (Bonk & Graham, 2006, p. 7) (traditional and distant learning environments) but rather moving toward a fusion of the two environments. In the 21st century, the term blended has become ingrained to refer to the mix of online and traditional teaching. It has been used interchangeably with "hybrid," "partially online," and "mixed courses," with some advocating for a particular terminology (Driscoll, 2002; Graham et al., 2003). Osguthorphe & Graham (2003) prefer the term "blended" rather than "hybrid" because of their original definitions. Since the term "hybrid" referred to new species derived from two other species, and the term "blended" denoted mixing in a harmonious, well-balanced way, they preferred the latter term that fit better with their view of blended learning as a harmonious and balanced blend of traditional and online instructional methods.

Because of the preference for the term "blended," the following discussion focused mainly on how blended learning has been categorized, with the understanding that many of these elements had a similar impact on hybrid learning.

Graham (2006, p. 13) categorized the blended learning systems by focusing on their primary pedagogical purpose:

- *Enabling blends* provide learners with flexibility, access, and convenience by using a different modality.
- *Enhancing blends* preserve the learning environment (traditional or online) but supplement it with additional resources, bringing "an incremental change to pedagogy."
- *Transforming blends* radically transform pedagogy through technology by making learners active participants in constructing knowledge.

This categorization focused mainly on how the blended learning environment could improve the learner's experience, creating a rather business-like model catering to students' needs.

Horn & Staker (2011, p. 3) adopted this student-focused perspective when defining blended learning as well:

> Blended learning is any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace.

Although their focus was on K-12 education in the US, their typology of blended courses was creative and could easily be adopted in higher education settings. It included six different styles of blended learning: face-to-face driver (traditional classroom where online materials were used to supplement and remediate on a case-by-case basis), rotation (students rotated on schedule between traditional F2F interaction and online, self-paced learning), flex (most of the curriculum was online, with teachers providing personal support when needed through tutoring or small group

sessions), online lab (all materials were online, and students were only supervised while they were on computers, with very little content help), self-blend (students chose to take online courses to supplement their traditional school catalog, with no supervision, making this rather a blended program), and online driver (learning took place on an online platform, where the teacher and students interacted remotely, with optional F2F interaction outside of the online platform). Once more, this typology portrayed the wide variety of approaches to blended learning.

Another definition of blended learning focused on the learning context: the space blend, where virtual and physical spaces were interconnected; the time blend, where specific elements could be taught either synchronously or asynchronously; the media blend, where learning tools and resources were offered through different technological means; and the activity blend, where activities varied depending on outcomes and teaching context (Littlejohn & Peglerin, 2007). The four components could be mixed to create an individualized blended learning environment to meet diverse learning needs and goals. Its beauty was that the focus was not on the learner or the instructor but rather on the process of learning and the end result, which is mastering the material.

Despite all taxonomies, the blended model was still "weakly defined" (Dziuban et al., 2018), primarily because of the broad spectrum covered by the term "blended" in both academic and business environments (Graham et al., 2003). This is why there was an increasing need to differentiate clearly between hybrid and blended learning environments. Some scholars (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Anderson, 2008; Smith & Kurthen, 2007) defined hybrid and blended learning environments by focusing on percentages. For example, Smith and Kurthen (2007) considered a blended course one offering up to 45% of the material online, whereas a hybrid course would incorporate 45-80% of the course content online. Along the lines of percentage use, Anderson (2018) considered a blended course the one in which 25-90% of F2F instructional time was

replaced by online activities, which was a rather broad spectrum, again revealing the need for a better definition for blended and hybrid courses.

The institution where this research was conducted, a community college in Southwestern Michigan, used percentages to differentiate between hybrid and blended courses, as presented in the 2018 Course Schedule[1]. While both used a combination of F2F and technology-enhanced instruction, in the blended course, the instructional time was less than 75% online. In contrast, in the hybrid course, 75-99% of the course was to be delivered online, with less synchronous interactions and more time spent on asynchronous activities where students were independent learners. However, when COVID hit, the definitions were reconsidered, and the blended learning modality was replaced by a Flexible Learning Environment[2] where a student could attend the class session in-person, remotely on Zoom, or watch the recorded class session, and the Hybrid modality, which represented a combination of remote, online, or F2F teaching.

However, percentage-based definitions represented only one element of the course design. Some scholars called for a need to focus the definition based on students' learning experience (Mizza & Rubio, 2020), hence a need for more comprehensive and extensive studies (Dziuban et al., 2018) that looked in detail at the different instructional models of blended and hybrid learning, and how students experienced them.

Laster et al. (2005) presented a more comprehensive definition of hybrid courses as those "that integrate online with traditional face-to-face class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner; and where a portion (institutionally defined) of face-to-face time is replaced by online activity." (as cited in Rubio, 2012, p. 2). This definition presented how well online and F2F activities were integrated into class, based on pedagogical considerations focusing on enhancing

[1] https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/sites/default/files/2018_fall_class_schedule.pdf
[2] https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/mylmc/records/schedule

the learning experience. Along these lines, Mizza and Rubio (2020) pointed out that blended learning should provide unique "content, skills, and strategies" that would not be otherwise available in a traditional classroom (p. 10). In other words, technology should not be used for technology's sake but rather in a purposeful way to improve and even transform the learning process. Just adding technology to a traditional course does not make it hybrid or blended. Course designers should pay attention not to create a "course and a half" by just adding online elements (i.e., digitalized slides, video materials, website links) to the traditional way of teaching a subject (Mizza & Rubio, 2020, p. 9). Intentional pedagogy and optimization of both F2F and online elements were seen as keys to a successful blended or hybrid course.

This study hoped to offer more material for researchers who want to differentiate between hybrid and blended modalities by presenting the elements introduced to traditional elementary Spanish courses to transform them into hybrid ones. It also reflected on the students' learning experience and how well they developed their FL speaking skills in the process.

2.2.1 Benefits of Hybrid/Blended Courses

Blended courses have been proven to be effective by offering "meaningful learning experiences" (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham and Bonk, 2006), flexibility (Mizza & Rubio, 2020), autonomy (Blake, 2014, Goertler, 2014), individualization (Kim, 2013), cost effectiveness (Anderson, 2018; Graham & Bonk, 2006), among other benefits.

A more hidden but probably the most important benefit observed was an improved pedagogy through technology (Elola and Oskoz, 2014; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Nuruzzaman, 2016; Rubio et al., 2014). The use of innovative technology tools could enhance learning experiences with the purpose of creating community and collaboration. Technology allowed for a more dynamic way of interaction with other learners and the educator, instant feedback, and active

learning where the student chose the amount of time to interact with the material until it was mastered. All this led to better retention rates and mastery of knowledge (Graham & Bonk, 2006). However, pedagogy must be continuously re-evaluated to see whether the use of technology fits course objectives, enhances learning opportunities and should be adjusted based on new developments and student needs (O'Byrne & Pytash, 2015).

A survey conducted at various postsecondary institutions in North America revealed that among the top three pedagogical techniques instructors planned to use in a blended environment were collaborative tasks, problem-based learning, and discussions, with guided learning, lecturing, and modeling being among the less frequently used (Bonk & Graham, 2006, p. 556). Language courses used a combination of such techniques to enhance language input and encourage student speaking proficiencies.

Authentic learning activities (Bonk & Graham, 2006, p. 503) represented another element of good pedagogy since they integrate constructivist learning theory, task-focused, virtual role-playing leading to performance-based learning. These authentic activities were critical in the acquisition of language, with students needing to engage in genuine conversations with native speakers, negotiate meaning, and learn how to defend themselves in a target-language environment. This type of immersion and enculturation could be attained using mixed and virtual reality programs (Kirkley & Kirkley, 2006, p. 534). These programs helped actualize teaching materials that could be updated by incorporating the latest target language media, podcasts, etc. The ultimate purpose was to create independent learners who could use the different outlets presented in class to engage with the language outside the classroom settings.

However, this autonomy could not be achieved only through technology (Blake, 2014; Goertler, 2014). This is where the blended model became valuable. While the receptive skills of

listening and reading could be improved in an online environment, where students can access information by clicking on links, pausing, and rewinding, or reading a transcript. The productive skills of speaking and writing needed a teacher's evaluation and feedback (Sharma & Barrett, 2007, pp. 11-12). The idea was not to layer one learning environment on top of another but rather integrate and connect all activities, resources, and experiences to create just one learning environment (Nicolson et al., 2011, p. 13).

Other institutions, such as Capella University, considered the F2F instruction a supplement, and the online learning experience the more important element. They portrayed the need to develop online discussions conducive to effectively acquiring complex concepts and skills (Offerman & Tassava, 2006). With the development of the flipped classroom model, more content was relegated to the online medium, making the F2F time a moment to conduct collaborative learning projects, discussions, and hands-on assignments.

Regarding blended/hybrid courses, Helms (2014) advocated for the use of both asynchronous (through discussion boards) and synchronous (i.e., chat) communication through technology, which could be connected to teacher presence on both platforms.

Besides instructional elements and environmental factors, studies focused on the effectiveness of blended environments should also consider the student's characteristics as one of the variables (Lee, 2000, in Bonk & Graham, p. 132). In this light, early studies in blended environments showed increased rates of student engagement and successful learning outcomes (Boyle et al., 2003; Burgon & Williams, 2003). In addition, a meta-analysis of blended learning research across disciplines in higher education pointed out that student achievement was greater in blended environments when compared to traditional ones (Bernard et al., 2014). Although there was no perfect profile for the blended/hybrid class student, it was important to note several

essential characteristics: self-motivation, good study skills, curiosity to learn, and ease of engaging with technology.

Another great benefit emphasized in research was student satisfaction (Arispe & Blake, 2012; Grgurovic, 2017; Owston et al., 2013; Poon, 2013). A Canadian study revealed a strong correlation between student grades and their satisfaction with the blended learning environment (Owston et al., 2013). In contrast, Grgurovic's metastudy revealed satisfaction over time, with students getting more comfortable with the blended format. Poon's (2013) study made a connection between students' expectations and satisfaction. If expectations were unrealistic, students developed a negative attitude toward blended learning. Therefore, students should be helped to create goals when working in a blended environment, especially if they have no prior experience and have not been taught how to work independently (Arispe & Blake, 2012; Sharma & Westbrook, 2016). Mizza and Rubio (2020) also pointed to the need to ease time and spatial constraints in blended courses by offering flexibility and easy access to learning materials to have positive retention rates.

Teaching presence was another key element to student satisfaction in blended learning. A study conducted by Bezboruah (2019) linked student engagement and academic performance to teacher presence not only for cognitive learning but also for social reasons, demonstrating the importance of creating community in a hybrid environment. This reaffirmed the results of an earlier study where participants in a hybrid environment preferred the F2F instruction to be the center of instruction, and the online activities as support elements (Hanson & Clem, 2006). This could impact how content is delivered in a blended course and through which medium, whether flipped or traditional.

Student satisfaction also depended highly on the interaction level with the instructor and peers, pointing again to the need to design solid online interaction assignments (Owston et al., 2006). In the same study, 57% of students considered that blended courses took more time and effort than traditional ones, with the perception of working more derived from the higher amount of interaction. However, in a later study, high achievers were the most satisfied with the blended environment since they found it "more convenient" and "more engaging" (Owston et al., 2013, p. 38), which points out that interaction is essential to a well-developed blended course.

The need to develop courses that satisfy learner needs is essential, especially for the future of language programs, since most online courses, including the blended/hybrid courses, are developed for first and second-year students (Murphy-Judy & Johnshoy, 2017). Unless students had a positive experience, they would not continue with a major or minor in a foreign language. All these factors tie into the idea of having a very well-defined pedagogical construct when building a hybrid course, and availability of the needed resources for those developing them, which brings into discussion their cost.

Several research studies have pointed out the cost-effectiveness of blended/hybrid courses (Elola & Oskoz, 2014; Graham, 2019; Thoms, 2012;). This is more of an institutional benefit than a pedagogical one (Anderson, 2018, p. 2), but it plays an important role when considering the initiative to transform traditional courses into blended ones. Once designed, a blended or hybrid course could be used by various instructors across the years, often with a few adjustments and individualization of sections. A well-designed course can reach a significant number of students at a reduced cost, especially in lower-division language courses (first and second year) where similar language structures are introduced and taught.

Nevertheless, blended language courses were not perceived as cost-effective when analyzing the hidden costs of technological support for cost design (Godev, 2014; Moskal et al., 2013). More studies need to be conducted to explore the reality of cost-effectiveness (Anderson, 2018). The reality was that the effectiveness of blended/hybrid courses was closely connected to institutional support (Dziuban et al., 2018; Koç & Boboc, 2022) both for faculty and experts in the design and delivery of courses.

Considering the widespread use of hybrid/blended courses, the focus should be moved from the cost, whether effective or not, to its benefits of student success and satisfaction, reduced withdrawal rates, better use of resources, improved student engagement, widespread access, and instant and authentic assessment (Moskal et al., 2013, p. 23).

A study conducted at the University of Central Florida that offered such administrative support analyzed the efficiency of fully online, mixed mode, or blended courses and face-to-face courses, revealing that blended courses offered success rates equal to or higher than the other F2F or online courses, and that the withdrawal rates in blended courses were generally similar to those in F2F classes (Dziuban et al., 2006). A similar study conducted by the Department of US Education comparing online, blended, and traditional courses revealed that students in blended courses performed the best (Means et al., 2010). Another study conducted across 20 US Colleges and Universities analyzed the performance of blended courses created based on a "Blended Learning Kit," trying to analyze the impact of blended learning beyond the University of Central Florida to see if blended learning could be scaled. Based on the results, 60% of the students were satisfied with the blended courses, mainly due to the flexibility and convenience of the blended course (43%). Although the success rate was not as great as at UCF, this study proved that institutions play a key role in blended learning success. (Moskal & Cavanagh, 2014).

Institutions should also purposefully evaluate blended courses by collecting evaluative data on student, faculty, and institutional impact (Graham et al., 2013). Most institutions evaluated by Anderson (2018) did not actively pursue this approach with a focus on foreign language blended courses. The advice was not to use evaluation to judge instructors but to assess elements that were successfully implemented, and which could be improved or changed to create a better and more holistic blended course (p. 138). The importance of institutional training and support was emphasized by other researchers such as Bonk & Graham (2006), Drewelow (2013), and Nissen and Tea (2012).

The complaint that there is not enough research in this field (Halverson et al., 2014; Wu, 2015) appeared to be based on a lack of a clear general definition of blended learning (Mizza & Rubio, 2020); lack of faculty identifying their courses as blended, since it has become so natural to include technology in their teaching methodology; and lack of mechanisms to incorporate information on blended courses in college databases (Picciano et al., 2014, p. 3). However, the many studies quoted above displayed a great range of elements that pinpointed the benefits of blended or hybrid environments. Ultimately, the main benefits of blended language courses are improved pedagogical objectives, learner satisfaction, and flexibility (Poon, 2013). Positive results can be achieved only when instructors base their curriculum choices on second language acquisition (SLA) theories and concepts (Elola & Oskoz, 2014; Goertler, 2014; Mizza & Rubio, 2020) as described in the first part of this chapter, as well as on research conducted specifically on hybrid or blended foreign language courses.

2.2.2 Foreign/Second Language Research in Hybrid Learning Environments

Early studies conducted on specific foreign and second language hybrid or blended courses were comparative in nature, looking at the differences between hybrid and traditional courses.

Although results showed no statistically significant differences so far, studies pointed out that students in blended/hybrid courses had comparable results to their peers in traditional language classrooms (Blake et al., 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Echávez-Solano, 2003; Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2018).

Based on an analysis of 25 comparative studies (Grgurovic, 2007), hybrid CALL (computer-assisted language learning) classes proved to be as effective as or, in some cases, even more effective than traditional ones when analyzing language development. Another study comparing an online and blended English for Academic Purposes course pointed out that student completion was higher in the blended courses, whereas the other variables, such as academic progress and student satisfaction, were comparable (Harker & Koutsantoni, 2005).

An early comparative study conducted by Sanders (2005) revealed that the hybridization of a Spanish course can successfully reduce costs, increase enrollment (85%), and raise pay for instructors. However, when analyzing the proficiency levels, students enrolled in the traditional classes scored better in writing and speaking than those enrolled in a hybrid course. However, these results seem to contradict the more extensive body of research that followed, showing positive results in hybrid courses. The author recognized that a combination of prior student and instructor experience might influence results. Analyzed hybrid courses were taught by graduate students with minimal experience (1 year or less), whereas traditional courses were taught by instructors with two or more years of experience.

Different results appeared from another study on two hybrid elementary Spanish courses, where Scida and Saury (2006) compared the success of the hybrid courses with the traditional ones by looking at grades and an exit survey. Their model combined 3 hours of F2F with two hours of required online practice using the Mallard web-based tool that offered a variety of exercises. The

results demonstrated that technology use had a thoroughly effective impact on student learning, mainly because it allowed for autonomy in learning. Student surveys showed increased confidence in vocabulary and improved listening and reading comprehension due to the use of technology that made learning enjoyable and allowed the instructor to focus more on communicative activities in class.

A study that compared the F2F, online, and blended Spanish learners' speaking skills concluded there was not a significant difference between them, mainly due to the key interactive activities developed for the course; the teacher's effort and methodology being more significant to student success than the course format (Blake et al., 2008). A similar comparative study focusing on aural skills in an intensive English program, which collected data from multiple sources (student surveys, teacher interviews, and class and language lab observations), revealed a good integration of F2F and online environments (Grgurovic, 2011), and pointed to some advantages in the hybrid environment, but results were not statistically significant.

Despite no statistically significant differences, Rubio (2014) discovered that students in a comparative study of first-year Spanish at a university level developed better fluency in the blended course. He argued that it might be the type of assessment used (based on the ACTFL Proficiency guidelines), which is rather holistic but did not show more significant differences, suggesting researchers should develop more detailed quantitative analyses to identify differences.

Similarly, a more recent comparative meta study by Grgurovic (2017) explained that studies had shown no statistical difference between learners in blended versus F2F language courses because of the difficulty of controlling all variables (i.e., technology use, institutional environment, student motivation, etc.) in the two learning environments (Anderson, 2018; Blake, 2014; Grgurovic, 2017; Sharma, 2017; Wu, 2015). However, it pinpointed that one of the problems

was the lack of proper technological and pedagogical training for instructors engaging in blended environments, inferring that with better-trained instructors, blended classes could be more successful (Grgurovic, 2017; Rubio et al., 2014).

The above results were corroborated in a 2021 meta-analysis (Dixon et al., 2021) that aggregated results from 11 studies on hybrid language courses and demonstrated that the lack of "nonsignificant differences" (p. 800) between hybrid and F2F language courses revealed that hybrid courses can be extremely effective. When narrowing down how well students developed their speaking skills in the respective studies, results showed that they were similar to those in F2F courses, which points out that "reduced F2F time in hybrid courses does not necessarily jeopardize the development of speaking skills" (p. 801).

Since the comparative or contrastive approach has not revealed significant results, researchers started to focus on analyzing blended courses as "coherent wholes" (Anderson, 2018, p. 10) by looking at the specific learning environment and the connections that exist between course design, learning outcomes, pedagogical principles, assessment, and technology (Anderson, 2018; Goertler, 2014). Along the same lines, Rubio (2014) encouraged researchers to assess "how new modes of delivery meet the needs of a changing student population, in terms of both facilitating their linguistic gains and addressing their social and cognitive needs" (p. 5).

This is how several qualitative studies analyzed how the blended format impacted both instructors and students (Mizza & Rubio, 2020). One such example was Scida & Jones' (2016) analysis of the "rehybridization" of elementary-level Spanish courses with the purpose of improving student learning outcomes. Results showed that the updated hybrid courses had an overall positive effect on student learning outcomes. The study also stressed how offering a good

amount of homework online for students to practice form and vocabulary can lead to better scores and performance.

An earlier study (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008) of a blended course that used an online workbook to complement the F2F meetings showed the advantage of the online element in the grammar and vocabulary acquisition process. The main advantage of online exercises was the immediate and individualized feedback students received, as well as the multiple chances to fix their errors and learn the concepts. However, more than half of the 245 beginner Spanish students had adverse reactions toward using the online workbook because it was time-consuming, highlighting the importance of choosing engaging online exercises requiring a minimum time commitment.

Several other studies focusing on student perspectives on blended language courses (Isabelli, 2015; Grgurivic, 2017; Jochum, 2011) presented positive results when students perceived that the online platform offered them confidence and more time to prepare for aural activities. Although Isabelli's quantitative data (2015) showed no significant differences between hybrid and F2F students when it came to oral and written production, reading and listening comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition, the qualitative data showed that students preferred the hybrid modality, despite the extra time needed to work on the course, because of its flexibility. The hybrid students also proved to be "more motivated, self-disciplined and responsible for their learning" (Isabelli, 2015), which showed that successful hybrid learners share similar characteristics.

Another study focused solely on student personality analysis to see whether specific characteristics made a student more likely to succeed in a hybrid language course. Using a mixed approach to gathering data, Arispe and Blake (2012) analyzed students' personalities, verbal intelligence, and learning preferences in a hybrid environment where students met F2F twice a

week combined with interactive online activities and an online chat session. Not surprisingly, their results revealed that "low-verbal learners" prefer working online rather than in a traditional classroom, which is to be expected from those who are shy or insecure around peers.

A further result was that conscientious students did better in a hybrid environment, which was again predictable since conscientiousness represents a characteristic of successful learning in any learning environment, whether online, hybrid, or traditional. However, the reason most students decided to take a hybrid course was either because that was their only option, or because their schedule did not allow them to attend a F2F class. Only some students realized that their personality might impact their overall class performance and language acquisition. This study (Arispe and Blake, 2012) was limited in that it mainly used the final grade to measure success. It also revealed the need for a more in-depth analysis of students' preferences and personality characteristics.

Anderson's (2018) comprehensive study focused on current foreign language practices in US blended courses at the college and university level by delineating trends and themes meant to bridge the research literature to higher education practice using a large-scale survey, as well as instructor interviews, student surveys, and analysis of syllabi. The majority of the instructors taught Spanish (78) and French (24), followed by other foreign languages that are not taught as much in the US, such as Italian, German, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and Polish. Most of the blended courses involved traditional F2F sessions of 2-3 hours a week, with only 12 instructors using synchronous online sessions (i.e., web conferencing or text chat). When students were asked about their main goal for the language class, the desire to speak and converse in the target language was the top one (56%), followed by language in general, with grammar scoring third place and culture fifth.

Based on the analysis of blended courses, two models were mainly used in blended language learning: one using prepackaged materials that accompanied the textbook, prepared by the publisher, focusing more on speaking and communicative activities in class, and a second one where the interaction and communication took place mainly in the online environment, with the class time dedicated to presenting and explaining language elements, the latter used more by less-taught foreign languages (i.e., Chinese, Vietnamese, and German). The fact is that many of the online activities derived from publisher websites throw a negative light on the communicative approach that foreign-language classes should adopt because of their intrinsically incompatible pedagogical goals with such an approach. Most of these online activities are form-focused rather than communication-focused.

When analyzing interaction, it was surprising to note the low level of interaction with classmates or native speakers. Students primarily interacted with the computer, suggesting that classroom time is not being replaced by oral or written interpersonal communication as it should be (Anderson, 2018, p. 88). Another essential factor revealed in Anderson's study was that instructor satisfaction with the blended learning environment increased with practice (number of years of teaching blended courses), whether they chose to teach blended courses, and had received institutional training and support (pp. 110-111). This study also analyzed student satisfaction and revealed that 50% felt positively toward blended courses, 17% had mixed feelings, and 33% had negative ones. Among the negative elements perceived by students were the increased amount of homework, the lack of or delay in feedback, the reduced in-class time for teaching and practice, and the lack of interpersonal communication, among others (Anderson, 2018, p. 115).

The importance of the instructor's role in developing student satisfaction and learning autonomy was revealed in several studies (Bijeikienė et al., 2011; Comas-Quinn, 2011; Enkin &

Mejias-Bikandi, 2017; Murday et al., 2008; Nicolson et al., 2011). Through quantitative and qualitative data, Murday et al. (2008) analyzed students' and teachers' perspectives based on French and Spanish hybrid courses. The first time online courses were taught, there were no statistical differences in satisfaction between hybrid and traditional courses. However, the Elementary II and Intermediate II online courses showed higher or equal satisfaction the following semester. These results indicated that students who get used to the hybrid learning methodology can be highly satisfied with it. This satisfaction was reflected in their performance, which was similar to the performance in traditional courses. Instructors in hybrid courses felt that they were able to connect and know their students better because of the individualized meeting once a week for 15-20 minutes. One notable conclusion was the need to set "realistic student expectations" for hybrid students and offer them more motivation during the semester.

In a qualitative study performed at an Open University (Nicolson et al., 2011), French, German, and Spanish beginning students enrolled in blended courses were asked to complete a guided learning experience log each month in which they listed the positive experiences and challenges, how they overcame them, and the support received. The blended course used synchronous and asynchronous sessions, F2F group tutorial sessions, support from a personal tutor, and self-study materials. In this case, students were given the autonomy to choose the materials that best suited them and were encouraged to set individualized goals. One 44-year-old student focused more on the audio materials, organized her study time in short time slots throughout the day, and was motivated by good assessment scores and instructor feedback. Still, she only engaged in a group activity to prepare for the final course assessment. On the other side of the spectrum, a 55-year-old student focused more on the online synchronous tutorial sessions and the asynchronous conferencing facility by engaging with peers. Although her work took more

time than planned, she felt motivated by her peers and tutor. However, she struggled more because she did not strategize her learning nor reflected critically on her learning needs.

Murphy and Hurd (2011) advocated for the instructor's role of advising learners how to maximize their time by prioritizing and becoming fully autonomous in their language learning by using the elements of the blend that best fit their needs. Similarly, instructors should use their pedagogy to "facilitate both the cognitive and social presences" (Koc & Boboc, 2022). This could be done by offering students additional resources and providing valuable feedback.

Nevertheless, not all instructors view blended learning as a positive experience, especially because it takes time to prepare and teach a hybrid course. A study focusing on teacher time spent in the blended versus traditional environments in a beginning Spanish class revealed that blended class teachers spent more time and effort in hybrid classes than believed because of engaging in online activities, grading, teaching, and communicating with students (Godev, 2014).

Drewelow's (2013) study surveying 15 teaching assistants of Spanish blended courses pointed out that online technology was perceived as being an external tool and not integrated into the course. This finding pointed out the need to train language instructors in how to understand the use of technology from a pedagogical standpoint.

Gleason's ethnographic study (2013) focused on how both language instructors and students of Spanish perceived their learning experience in an online hybrid versus a F2F blended course. Some students stated that they enjoyed the hybrid course because they felt less bored, could move faster through the material, and it fit better with their heavy schedule.

Conversely, the online-hybrid modality revealed several problems deriving from the curriculum design and participant observation, such as the lack of or limited time for fun activities, insufficient time to answer student questions, and not understanding the teacher without visual

cues. When addressing these issues, Anderson proposed that instructors use office hours for Q&A rather than eliminating fun activities such as games, creating spontaneous speaking assignments online by pairing up students, and incorporating video for online teaching materials (Anderson, 2018, p. 134).

In their mixed study, Enkin and Mejias-Bikandi (2017) analyzed the design of an advanced online Spanish grammar class and discovered that students created community through discussion boards and group projects. However, they also enjoyed access to their instructor by receiving prompt email responses and attending virtual office hours. Although this was not a study about a hybrid language course, these results can inform hybrid course designers about the importance of teacher engagement and the creation of stimulating group projects.

Similarly, in their comparative study of teaching presence and student participation in Spanish blended courses, Rubio et al. (2018) revealed that students who actively engaged in online activities had better grades, showing a strong correlation between student engagement with the online content and language proficiency. They presented that the instructor engaged students in more activities that relied on collaboration and communicative activities during the blended course. In contrast, in the F2F course, the instructor used more time for organization and course design.

In their overview of foreign language programs re-designed into blended or hybrid formats through funding from the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) between 2007-2010, Young and Pettigrew (2014) noticed that the F2F sessions in the hybrid courses used “an oral and interactive communicative approach to FL instruction” (p. 104) focusing on collaborative oral communication, such as lifelike tasks that involved meaningful communication. This points

out that hybrid courses can successfully manage oral proficiency development, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.

Studies on Hybrid Spanish Language Courses (2000 - 2022)

Study	Hybrid Weekly Format	Assessment	Results
Sanders (2005)	2 F2F 65-minute classes + online homework + student-student and student-teacher CMC (computer-mediated communication)	BYU WebCAPE (Brigham Young University Web-based Computerized Adaptive Placement Exam) OPIs & WPTS by ACTFL Final Grades	Significant differences between traditional and experimental students when comparing OPI and WPT. Students in traditional classes scored better in writing, especially.
Scida & Saury (2006)	3 F2F hours + 2 hours online using Mallard	Final Grades Student and Teaching Assistants Surveys	The median Grade for students was higher in the hybrid course. Technology had a positive impact on student learning outcomes.
Chenoweth, Ushida, and Murday (2006)	1 F2F hour with instructor + one-on-one 20-minute F2F chat with a teaching assistant or the instructor + 1-hour synchronous task-focused chat sessions.	Quantitative and qualitative data. Multiple measures to compare oral & written production, reading & listening, grammar, and vocabulary	Similar progress for hybrid and traditional classes at the elementary level. Statistically significant differences in Elementary Spanish I and II. (Offline students outperformed in certain course sections in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading comprehension when analyzing final grades. However, there were no

			differences in oral production.)
Sagarra & Zapata (2008)	4 F2F hours + online work using the Angel course management system	Language background questionnaire, proficiency test before treatment; two; final exams after 2nd and 3rd semester; students' attitudes survey.	Significant increase in grammar scores. No statistically significant difference for vocabulary and reading. Listening scores decreased from the 2nd to the 3rd final exam, possibly due to the difficulty level of the exam.
Young (2008)	2F2F hours + online work (emphasis was put on CHAs, collaborative asynchronous written assignments)	Midterm and Final Exam grades Contextualized Reading and Listening Assessments pre- and post-tests. Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI)	No statistically significant differences for reading and listening. Hybrid students outperformed traditional students in oral proficiency.
Blake, Wilson, Cetto & Pardo-Ballester (2008)	3 F2F hours (twice a week) + 7 hours of study via technology (including required synchronous chat sessions)	Versant proficiency test	No statistically significant differences: students in the hybrid class scored similarly to those in the traditional and online courses
Thoms (2014)	3 F2F hours + 1-hour online work	Speaking and writing samples in weeks 2 and 15 were completed in a lab.	No statistically significant differences in oral production. Hybrid students outperformed traditional ones in the writing task.
Arispe & Blake (2012)	2 F2F for 50 min + 30-60 min chatting tri-modally + 7 hours	Two tests & survey (with four components: personality,	Conscientious learners do better in hybrid language courses, as well as low-verbal learners.

	using *Tesoros* online multimedia materials	cognition, learner preferences & open-ended questions) Final grades were correlated with the personality and cognition test results.	No statistically significant differences between online chatting and final grades.
Gleason (2013) Comparison of two hybrid models	Two hybrid models: 3 F2F 50-minute lessons + 1 hour lab of synchronous chat + 10 hours required online. 2 F2F - 50-minute lessons + 25 minutes synchronous chat + 10 hours required online	Qualitative analysis using systemic functional discourse analysis.	Mixed feedback, but several students reported positive outcomes in the hybrid environment.
Rubio (2014)	2 F2F 50-minutes + 2 "virtual" days with computer-mediated individual and collaborative work	Oral and written tests at the beginning and end of the semester.	F2F and hybrid-class students showed significant oral gains, but no significant difference between groups was noted.
Isabelli (2015)	2 F2F 50-minute lessons + 7 hours online Flipped course model	Multiple measures: Versant, BYU placement test scores, final exam scores, and final grades. Student and instructor feedback.	No statistically significant difference between hybrid and traditional classes. Qualitative data points to the need for continuous technical support and the fact that hybrid students are more motivated, self-disciplined, and responsible.
Scida & Jones (2016)	3 F2F hours + Mallard LMS for online practice and quizzes	Pretest and Posttest (final exam) in listening comprehension and linguistic knowledge. Course Evaluations	Positive results for the hybrid course

Rubio, Thomas, Li (2018)	2 F2F hours + 2 online using the *Nexos* textbook	A qualitative study focusing on teaching presence and student participation	Strong correlation between active participation online and final grades. In the blended course, the instructor engaged in more meaning-focused and collaborative activities.
Moneypenny & Aldrich (2018)	Online class using MySpanishLab (no F2F meetings required)	Comparison of Pearson Versant Test results with the ACTFL benchmarks.	No statistically significant differences in oral proficiency between online and F2F students in the first semester.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of studies conducted in relation to hybrid language teaching but rather a list of studies conducted on hybrid Spanish courses at higher education institutions.

An overview of all studies mentioned above points out the wide variety of hybrid definitions and approaches to teaching a foreign language. This wide variety of what hybrid means for Spanish elementary classes might be the reason for the lack of statistically significant results in comparative studies. However, this lack of statistical correlation points out that hybrid courses can be successful in helping students achieve the same level of proficiency as in traditional courses. The next section explains more in-depth how speaking proficiency was evaluated in hybrid language courses.

2.2.3 Hybrid/Blended Trends in a Spanish Foreign Language Context

Foreign language classrooms started to move toward a blended approach in the 1950s with the introduction of tapes and videocassettes that could improve listening and pronunciation skills (Mizza & Rubio, 2020). Since then, technology has developed at a fantastic speed, therefore encouraging foreign language classes to adopt a blended/hybrid approach early on.

In their overview of multi-section foreign language programs, Young and Pettigrew (2014) presented various ways in which the blended learning model was implemented in Elementary and

Intermediate Spanish courses. The focus was on reducing F2F time somewhere between 50-20%. This reduction was made differently, from case to case, either in days (i.e., five days to three), or in minutes (i.e., a 75-minute session became a 50-minute one), or based on contact hours (two semesters of three days per week were condensed into one semester with five days per week).

However, there was still a lack of consensus about whether this F2F reduction model should be considered blended or hybrid. In the Spanish language classroom environment, Blake (2013) differentiated between blended learning as involving technology as "a supplement to classroom instruction" and hybrid as offering instruction "both in class and online." Based on these definitions, hybrid learning was considered a better fit for language instruction since it allowed the student to connect with a teacher face-to-face and enjoy the individuality of learning.

Carrasco and Johnson (2015) created their taxonomy based on Rubio and Thomas (2012) by differentiating between the hybrid and the blended language course. The blended course used unreduced F2F contact hours and complementary online homework tools. On the other hand, the hybrid course was one in which students split their credit hours between F2F and online. However, the exact proportion of time spent in a real classroom versus online varied, ranging from having only a small portion of a face-to-face classroom complemented by online activities to a majority of the course being offered online.

Hermosilla (2014) preferred the term blended and described three types of such courses: one where F2F was combined with online work; one where class time was combined with lab work; and the last where class time, lab work, and online activities were all combined.

Other Spanish linguists preferred the term hybrid (Carrasco & Johnson, 2015; Elola & Oskoz, 2014; Rubio et al., 2014), defining it as a mix of online tools with F2F learning. Carrasco and Johnson (2015) differentiated between blended and hybrid courses in terms of how online

tools were used. In blended courses, online learning complemented the F2F learning environment, whereas, in hybrid courses, instructional delivery was offered both F2F and online. They considered "hybrid pedagogy," a new method of teaching language using online resources, "a new methodology, and a new way of thinking about the role of teacher and student" (p. 3). Elola and Oskoz (2014) based their definition on Laster's et al. approach (2005), which defined a hybrid environment as one that integrated online elements in a F2F environment by pedagogical design.

More recently, Mizza and Rubio (2020) reflected on the different terminology of blended, hybrid, mixed, and e-learning courses. The main difference between blended and hybrid courses was noticed in the definitions provided by US Universities that focused mainly on the percentage of time students spent in a physical classroom or online. Ultimately, they preferred the term blended learning, defining it as a "learning experience that includes a multiaccess, balanced, guided and monitored instructional environment" (p. 12) that combined F2F with synchronous or asynchronous elements, as well as incorporated interaction and collaboration between students, their instructors, and their peers.

In Spain, the term blended learning was considered "ambiguous" by Verde and Valero (2021), distinguishing between hybrid and blended teaching, mirror classrooms (students spaced out in a classroom), and online guides (the teacher was online while students were in a classroom setting). Hybrid represented a synchronous teaching modality where half of the students were physically present in a classroom, while half were online. The "semi-presential learning" blended system was the one where F2F and online were combined to reduce contact hours and allow students to work individually on parts of the curriculum.

The term "hybrid" was preferred during this research since it was included in the definition of the observed courses and accepted by the institution that offered the IRB approval. In this case,

it referred to a class that provided language instruction both in class and online 75-99% of the time. The hybrid courses observed were unique because the F2F instruction was delivered through Zoom, with online learning activities offered online, and students met with the instructor physically only once a month.

2.2.4 Studies of Oral Proficiency in a Hybrid Environment

Several studies showed that hybrid language courses helped students improve in different areas such as vocabulary (Arispe, 2014; Bañados, 2006; Chenoweth et al., 2006), grammar (Bañados, 2006), speaking proficiency (Blake, 2008; 2013), and listening comprehension (Gleason, 2013).

Bañados (2006) presented a blended-learning pedagogical model for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in which online practice was combined with face-to-face conversations not only in class but also with native English speakers. The online platform used elements such as negotiation of meaning and automated feedback based on real human conversation, thus designing elements that were interrelated in F2F and online platforms. Students showed significant gains in listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar after using the blended pedagogical model, proving that technology implemented with clear pedagogical goals can support students in their oral proficiency development.

Although Sanders's (2005) comparative study did not reveal oral proficiency gains in Spanish elementary hybrid courses, the differences were not that marked. The use of CMC helped students improve their oral skills and perform almost at the same level as their peers. As noted in the previous section, a significant factor in the results was the instructor's lack of experience and pedagogical training when teaching a hybrid course.

Young's (2008) comparative study demonstrated the same oral improvement for students enrolled in an intensive Spanish course that combined two semesters into one. It helped students advance faster to the second year of study since they already had two to three years of high school Spanish. While there were no significant differences between traditional and hybrid students for listening and reading comprehension skills, the oral skills of hybrid students showed a wider variety of vocabulary and higher adaptability, since students could complete more oral tasks. One important reason was that instructors purposely used class time for "communicative and interactive tasks," while the focus-on-form work was done online, helping students develop their speaking proficiency. Students in the hybrid course came more prepared to class since they were required to complete exercises online, which gave them the needed material for communicative tasks. In a follow-up study, an important variable was revealed: instructor experience, since lecturers taught the traditional courses and graduate teaching assistants the hybrid ones this time. Since teaching assistants had less experience and were less pedagogically informed, it might explain why the follow-up study did not reveal the same results, with students in traditional classes scoring significantly higher in the final exam than the ones in the hybrid sections.

Thoms's comparative small-scale quantitative study (2014) also revealed that a Spanish hybrid course could show similar or even better results than a traditional one. Data were collected during the last semester of an Elementary Spanish II course in both a hybrid and a traditional course. Students in the hybrid course met three times F2F in a week, and the fourth time was replaced by online practice. However, the hybrid course was part of a three-year Spanish language pilot program, whereas Elementary Spanish II would be taken in the second year of study if the student successfully completed Elementary I during the first academic year. Although it was unclear whether students studied Spanish for the same number of years, this difference might be

an important factor to clarify. Oral and written proficiency was tested during weeks 2 and 15 in a computer lab. Based on data analysis, students in the hybrid and traditional courses tested similarly for their oral proficiency. However, the hybrid students outperformed the traditional ones in writing, primarily because in a hybrid course, they needed to engage in more writing activities to make up for the reduced F2F time. The speaking test was graded based on five criteria: "thoroughness, ease of expression, use of appropriate vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and correct pronunciation" (p. 187), but students were only allowed to speak for 35 seconds for each question. This seems a very limited time at the intermediate level, and students could have scored even higher if allowed to speak for at least one minute. Despite its limitations, this study pinpointed that the hybrid environment has the potential to be successful when it comes to speaking proficiency.

Gleason's qualitative study (2013) analyzed two types of blended Spanish courses (F2F-blended and online-hybrid), the latter using more technology than the former. In the F2F blended course, students met three times a week F2F for 50 minutes, and, one time, they met in the lab where they completed synchronous computer-mediated communication tasks. Students were also expected to spend ten hours on online assignments and evaluations weekly. While the ten-hour online work expectation was the same for the online-hybrid students, they only met F2F twice a week for 50 minutes and were expected to engage in synchronous conversations, 25 minutes per week, through Adobe Connect, a web-based chat platform similar to Zoom. Although no quantitative analysis was performed, Gleason used systemic functional discourse analysis to see how students and instructors perceived the two blended models.

Results pointed out the importance of using technology wisely to scaffold students' listening and speaking skills since, in an online-hybrid course, students do not have as many visual

cues such as gestures or facial expressions. The instructor interviewed in the study used the chat box for pronunciation feedback, for example, and did not engage in a F2F conversation. This study also pointed out that introverted students preferred the online-hybrid environment because they could speak without fear of being judged. They could also listen better to the pronunciation of words without being distracted by what was happening in the classroom. Some students on the other spectrum did not feel as comfortable speaking online and preferred the instant feedback of peers by looking at their facial expressions. Gleason (2013) recommended the use of more synchronous online speaking activities to respond to the needs of both types of students.

These results were similar to a previous study conducted by Blake et al.in 2008 when they compared oral proficiency in three different class formats: online, traditional, and hybrid. They indicated that students could attain the same proficiency levels, especially in introductory language courses, when using the Versant phone-delivered and computer-graded test. However, when comparing the hybrid course in the 2013 study, there was a reduced type of F2F time to twice a week, with seven hours of online studying. This may raise the question of why the F2F contact was increased in the 2013 study from two to six hours. One success factor for both online and hybrid courses was that students were required to engage in synchronous written and oral chat communications, which was correlated to positive oral proficiency gains (Payne & Ross, 2005).

Likewise, Rubio (2014) points out that how technology was integrated into the course design played a key role in oral and written proficiency development. In his comparative study of 79 students enrolled in Beginning Spanish II, the students in the blended learning environment were exposed during F2F meetings mainly to communicative activities, whereas grammar and vocabulary were acquired by doing online work. Both oral and written proficiency were analyzed through pre- and post-tests. The oral test consisted of nine prompts ranging from beginner to

advanced levels delivered in English, and students had between 1 minute (for lower levels) to 90 seconds (for advanced) to answer in Spanish, with a prep time ranging from 15-30 seconds. Although both groups showed highly significant gains in their oral proficiency at the end of the semester, there was no significant difference between them. However, the F2F students showed a higher level of syntactic complexity, whereas the hybrid students showed more lexical diversity and fewer errors in their speech, showing superiority in "high-order features of oral fluency." This advantage may be due to the individualized feedback that hybrid students received, as well as the higher amounts of writing performed, making the learner a more active and engaged learner internalizing the linguistic concepts studied.

Although Moneypenny and Aldrich's (2016) study did not focus on a hybrid Spanish course but rather on an online one, the same lack of statistical difference was perceived when analyzing the different factors of oral proficiency, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence formation, and fluency. However, those taking online Spanish had a higher mean score than those in the traditional course, pointing to the effectiveness of online strategies to improve speaking. The downside was that they did not analyze specific language gains to see what the online students mastered better than the F2F students by using a pre-test to compare to a post-test.

In a 2018 study at a small regional campus, Moneypenny and Aldrich also assessed oral proficiency for students who completed either their first- or second-year Spanish by comparing the Pearson Versant Test results with the ACTFL benchmarks. Students could enroll in either all Online or all F2F courses or take a mixed format of one course online and one F2F. According to the study, 42% of first-year students "met or exceeded" their speaking proficiency level, and 27.5% of second-year students scored at the Intermediate-Mid level. Although the Intermediate students, in particular, did not meet their speaking proficiency as expected, it might be because students

needed one more year of exposure to language, as pointed out by ACTFL, which recommends four to six semesters to reach the right level of proficiency. It also depends on other factors such as student motivation, attitudes, and L2 learning experience. A thought-provoking element of this research was that online students did not engage in live class work, such as conversation sessions, that represented 10% of their grade as much as they should have. This indicates that the hybrid model would more effectively motivate such students to engage in speaking, a key element in L2 language acquisition. One element of concern that Moneypenny and Aldrich brought was the workload of the language instructor in an online/hybrid course. In their study, a course assistant was employed, similar to a graduate teaching assistant, who helped not only grade but also held weekly conversation sessions, helping students with pronunciation and oral production, and providing immediate and frequent feedback. However, this is not always possible, especially at a small university or a community college.

A comparative study conducted by Chenoweth et al.(2006), researched the effectiveness of hybrid online French and Spanish courses versus traditional ones, used multiple measures to compare oral and written production, reading and listening comprehension, as well as grammar and vocabulary acquisition. For the oral production, they conducted two audio-taped interviews, one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester, that they analyzed using Payne and Whitney's (2002) oral production rating scale that focuses on five elements: comprehensibility, fluency, vocabulary usage, syntax and grammar, as well as pronunciation. The Elementary I students were given three oral tasks (role-play, picture description, and storytelling) to complete with their peers, while Elementary II students were asked to engage in two tasks (discussing a situation and a picture). Although statistically significant differences were noticed only at the intermediate level, at the Elementary II level for the French cohort, the hybrid online students had

higher scores in all areas (comprehensibility, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, and pronunciation). One of the most important elements that could contribute to oral production is how the hybrid modality is defined at the institution. In this case, hybrid courses met only one hour per week F2F, as compared to others that met 2 or 3 times per week F2F. Students were also required to meet F2F with their instructor or a language assistant for 20 minutes per week and engage in one-hour-long weekly task-focused chat sessions.

Since synchronous computer-mediated learning can be an integral part of a hybrid course, an analysis of the studies performed in this reality can also inform how audio and video conferencing can be used adequately in class. Unfortunately, there were not enough studies to provide a clear or systematic picture.

Research in this area [oral interactions in SCMC] has had scattered results, focusing variously on learners' perceptions (Lee 2007), power to enhance L2 writing (Oskoz & Elola, 2013), the development of pragmatic features (Sykes, 2005), and using audio tools to give feedback to learners (Yanguas, 2010). (Elola & Oskoz, 2014, p. 227)

Payne and Whitney's 2002 study analyzed how the synchronous online environment can impact interlanguage development, focusing on how the synchronous CMC builds language automaticity, lowering the Working Memory load. The written chat conversation positively impacted students' oral proficiency since it allowed students time to process language without having the stress of simultaneous conversations. In addition, they could engage with the language more than in a face-to-face conversation because they did not have to wait for their turn to speak while paying more attention to grammatical accuracy, as well as raising their awareness of "gaps in their linguistic knowledge" (p. 24). Although these findings did not diminish the importance of

real-time conversation, they infer that students in the hybrid environment can acquire L2 skills by engaging with the language online.

Sykes' 2015 study analyzed the acquisition of a particular speech act (refusal of an invitation) in three types of synchronous oral interaction: written chat, oral chat, and F2F discussion. Although the written chat showed more complexity and variety, the oral one was the least complex.

Guillén and Blake (2017) analyzed the use of two CMC activities in a hybrid course to measure fluency and complexity development in Spanish intermediate students. One of the activities was an asynchronous video forum, and the other was a weekly synchronous tandem chat with a native speaker (25 minutes in Spanish and 25 minutes in English). The qualitative analysis of data revealed that the asynchronous discussions led to improved linguistic skills, especially in the realm of syntactic complexity, whereas the tandem chats led to improved fluency and language automaticity, especially when students received explicit feedback or clarification. Therefore, oral proficiency can increase in a hybrid environment, especially when the curriculum design offers specific activities to students to engage with language either synchronously or asynchronously.

Since vocabulary plays a central role in speaking proficiency, research in this area can inform practitioners about how to include pedagogically savvy techniques. Arispe (2014) proved that the use of a language robot titled LangBot could help Spanish beginner and intermediate language students improve their lexical acquisition. This Intelligent CALL tool was used as a "pedagogical scaffold" to offer students translations with examples in context, frequently used L2 words, and quizzes based on the student's level. Results showed statistically significant vocabulary growth, mainly when students used the bot to send messages and queries. The intermediate

students even had a better semantic understanding of words in context, thus gaining "vocabulary depth."

Murphy and Hurd (2011) pointed out that speaking practice in a blended language learning environment could be both motivational and frustrating. If students started developing negative emotions and anxiety when performing in a foreign language, they could choose not to continue beyond the required year of foreign language study. Therefore, curriculum designers and instructors need to develop assessment tools that would both objectively assess language development and motivate the learner, minimizing negative emotions such as frustration and anxiety about language performance.

2.2.5 Oral Proficiency Assessment Approaches

Language assessment practice has been influenced by Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence model comprised of four elements: grammatical (i.e., rules and lexic), sociolinguistic (contextualized language use), strategic (using language appropriately), and discourse (coherent and cohesive language use). Bachman and Palmer (1996, as cited in Bordon & Liskin-Gasparro, 2015) further divided strategic competence into topical or real-world knowledge, language knowledge, and personal learner characteristics (education level, native language, etc.), all influenced by the affective schemata, which referred to the learner's experiential and emotional knowledge.

Bordon and Liskin-Gasparro (2015) emphasized two different assessment approaches: "performance-oriented" and "ability-oriented." The performance assessment focused on completing a task in a simulated situation, while the ability assessment focused on the student's linguistic ability acquired in the classroom.

In Spanish, there exist several performance-oriented assessments to assess Spanish oral proficiency. The official and most reliable one is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which uses a scale ranging from Novice to Superior. The highest levels are reserved for speakers who can offer an extremely well-articulated, educated, and persuasive discourse on global topics using abstract and hypothetical language.

As seen in Table 3, the description uses general terms and does not identify specific elements that a student should be able to accomplish at a specific level.

Table 3.

Assessment Criteria - ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, Speaking. (ACTFL, 2012)

Proficiency Level*	Global Tasks and Functions	Context / *Content*	Accuracy	Text Type
Superior	Discuss topics extensively, support opinions and hypothesize. Deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation.	Most formal and informal settings from concrete to abstract perspectives. *Wide range of general interest topics and some special fields of interest and expertise.*	No pattern of errors in basic structures. Errors virtually never interfere with communication or distract from the message.	Extended discourse
Advanced	Narrate and describe in major time frames and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. *Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.*	Understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-sympathetic speakers.	Paragraphs
Intermediate	Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. *Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.*	Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to interacting with language learners (sympathetic listener).	Discrete sentences
Novice	Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases.	Most common informal settings. *Most common aspects of daily life.*	May be difficult to understand, even for speakers accustomed to interacting with language learners.	Individual words and phrases

The Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels were further divided into Low, Mid, and High proficiency, ending with the Superior and Distinguished levels. The descriptions for the different novice level, which are pertinent to the classes observed in this study, offered more detail, but they did use a rather general description without using can-do statements regarding what a student should be able to accomplish during the interview (see Table 4). The expectation was for students to score in the novice mid by the end of the first semester, and the novice high level by the end of the second semester of their language study.

Table 4.

ACTFL OPI Descriptors for the Novice Level (ACTFL, 2012)

Novice Level	Description
Novice Low	"Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange."
Novice Mid	"Speakers at the Novice Mid sublevel communicate minimally by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may say only two or three words at a time or give an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Novice Mid speakers may be understood with difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics and perform functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence."
Novice High	"Speakers at the Novice High sublevel are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to successfully manage a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predict able topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects, and a limited number of activities, preferences, and immediate needs. Novice High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions." "Novice High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their language consists primarily of short and some times

	incomplete sentences in the present, and may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since their language often consists of expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes sound surprisingly fluent and accurate. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax may be strongly influenced by the first language. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence-level discourse."

Besides the traditional OPI, ACTFL also developed a computerized OPI (OPIc) that has proven to be as efficient as human testers. Although its reliability has been verified by numerous studies (Surface & Dierdorff, 2003), this test can be costly since only certified instructors can administer it, and it is not always accessible to community college students. Besides, the ACTFL test does not analyze "small increments of proficiency improvement in beginners" (Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2016, p. 128).

While ACTFL was mainly used in the US, DELE (*Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera*) was offered by the Spanish government to assess all skills at six different levels: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and reflected the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2020). The oral part of the test ranges from 15-20 minutes, depending on the difficulty level. However, the same financial challenge exists for this test to be used for a regular community college course, as well as showing small language gains. Furthermore, the CEFR test starts assessing from a Novice High level compared to the ACTFL rating (see Table 5), which is the level obtained after one year of foreign language study. Given that this study observed mainly what happens in the first year of language study, CEFR would not be the appropriate assessment tool to assess progress.

Table 5.

ACTFL vs. CEFR (Goethe Institute, n.d.)

Productive Skills

2. SPEAKING AND WRITING

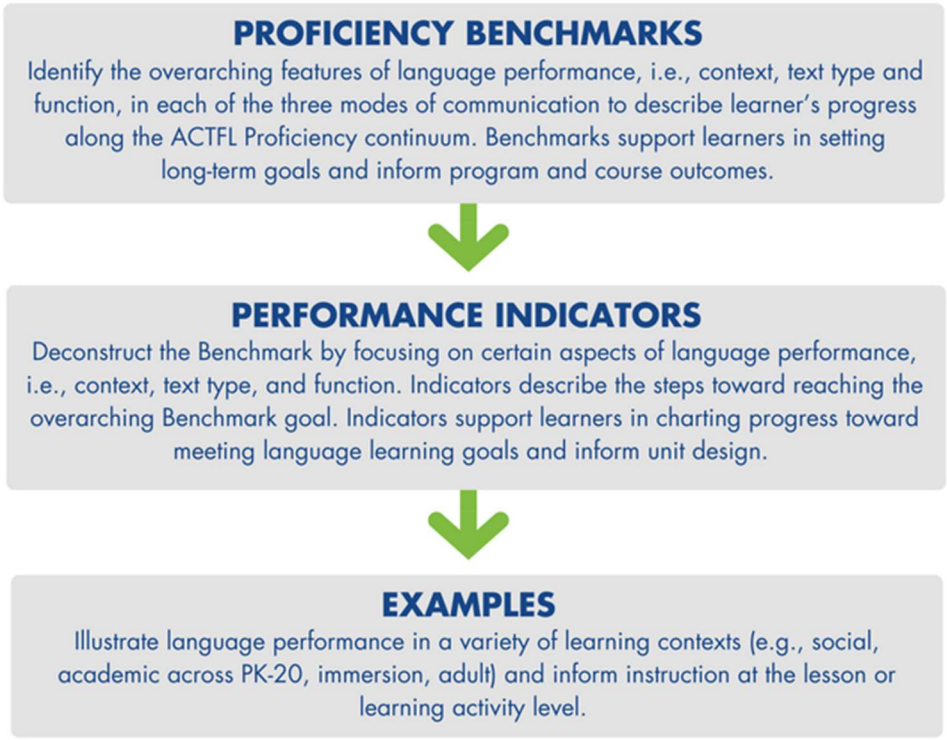
OPI, OPIc or WPT

ACTFL Rating	CEFR Rating
Superior	C2
Advanced High	C1
Advanced Mid	B2.2
Advanced Low	B2.1
Intermediate High	B1.2
Intermediate Mid	B1.1
Intermediate Low	A2
Novice High	A1
Novice Mid	
Novice Low	

A helpful tool for assessing speaking could be using NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-do Statements (2017) for Novice learners. They were also organized based on three levels: low, mid, and high, but they used performance benchmarks followed by indicators and examples of what students could do to show their knowledge (see Figure 2 below). Proficiency benchmarks were based on the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. It also added two intercultural communication competence elements: investigation and interaction. Speaking could be assessed in two of the three modes of communication: interpersonal and presentational. The examples could be adapted based on context to fit the assessor's needs.

Figure 2.

NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (2017)



Pearson developed an online, automated Spanish oral proficiency test named Versant that has proven reliable and accurate, and, according to the Pearson company, "highly correlated with the OPI and other human-scored tests of oral proficiency" (Versant, 2012). This test was used in several studies focusing on the elementary level of Spanish teaching (Blake, 2013; Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2018). Blake (2013) used it for a large-scale Spanish hybrid teaching study. Versant's oral proficiency test was based on Levelt's (1989, as cited in Blake, 2008) model of speech production and comprehension that combined listening (hear utterances, extract words, get phrase structure, decode propositions, contextualize, infer demands) with speaking (articulate responses, build clause structures, select lexical items, construct phrases, select register, decide on responses). The test asked students to read aloud, listen and repeat sentences, answer open-ended questions, and retell stories, among other things, to gauge comprehension and language automaticity.

Although the costs were lower for the Versant test, it was not used for this research because of a desire to notice oral proficiency in interactions with native speakers.

In a comprehensive study of 144 SLA articles analyzing how proficiency was measured in SLA research (Tremblay, 2011) in three journals: *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (76 studies), *Second Language Research* (61 studies), and *French Language Studies* (7 studies), more than one-third of the studies (53/144) used a performance-based, independent test to assess proficiency. Only 14 of these studies assessed oral proficiency using either an oral interview based on ACTFL standards or accent ratings. Although this comprehensive study did not focus on Spanish studies but relatively general SLA and L2 French studies, it showed a need for more studies to assess oral proficiency in various ways. Tremblay (2011) used a written cloze test (a test where students needed to provide the word in a blank space) to assess proficiency for intermediate to advanced levels. She suggested that an objective assessment of aural proficiency could be conducted using an oral test combined with a cloze test for reading ability.

The studies surveyed focusing on Spanish as L2 revealed a variety of methods of assessing oral proficiency. One of the popular choices for hybrid courses was Versant because it could be independently administered by phone or online (Blake et al., 2008; 2013; Isabelli, 2013). Moneypenny and Aldrich (2018) used both OPI (ACTFL) and Versant to assess oral proficiency, whereas other studies opted for an individualized type of assessment such as instructor-led interviews and role-play, as in Chenoweth et al. (2006).

Rubio (2014) first started using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines based on their four criteria: accuracy, content/context, functions, and text type, when analyzing first-year Spanish learners, but soon realized that these holistic tools cannot represent marked differences between speakers at the same level, especially when a small sample is used. To present differences among

L2 speakers, several quantitative measures of fluency were used, focusing on low-order features (words per minute and fluent runs) as well as high-order features (lexical diversity, mean length of utterance, and percentage of error-free clauses).

In a 2016 study, Bowden used a Spanish-elicited imitation task correlated (based on Ortega et al., 1999) with a simulated oral proficiency interview (OPI) to assess L2 oral proficiency in students ranging from low to advanced levels, showing that it could also be a reliable tool to measure oral proficiency. The elicited imitation task asked students to repeat thirty sentences of increasing length to see whether they had internalized specific language structures. This type of assessment assumed that students can only imitate accurately what they comprehend and master from a grammatical point of view. The results from the elicited imitation task were compared to an independent Spanish oral proficiency test (SOPI) developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics using the ACTFL speaking proficiency guidelines. Comparative results showed that the elicited imitation task is a reliable and valid way of assessing oral proficiency.

While these types of summative assessments are needed in research, since they are reliable and accurate, they are less needed for assessing first-year Spanish learners. Rubio (2015) decried the fact that the past use of such assessments in comparative studies has not portrayed any statistically significant differences because instruments were not made to analyze such small progress made during the first year of study, when students are still processing language issues, and concepts are still in the process of moving from short-term to long-term memory. Instead, a mix of formative and summative assessments should create a clearer picture of what they acquired during the first year of study in a hybrid course.

Besides, the assessment tools when assessing oral proficiency should be different based on the teaching modality of the course. Teachers could use video-taped synchronous conversations

between students or between a native speaker and a student to analyze the "spontaneous oral production" (Rubio, 2015, p. 407). Students themselves could self-evaluate their interactions or use peer evaluation to engage in a metacognitive process of assessing their language proficiency.

Arispe and Burston (2017) advocated using performance-based assessments to create learner autonomy by having them analyze their own recorded video presentations using the ACTFL can-do standards. The goal was to create awareness of their language progress, reflect on how they can improve, and consciously set goals to help them achieve the desired level of success. This type of assessment empowered the learner to go beyond just teacher-imposed requirements and work harder to attain the needed proficiency. However, this type of assessment, required at the advanced level, may not be the best choice at the elementary level, where students are barely starting their language learning journey.

Murphy and Hurd (2011) believed that students have increased "affective demands" in a blended language environment because learners deal with not only new L2 linguistic demands but also technical issues. They advocated for creating autonomous language learners by considering the students' needs, interests, and contexts, helping them set personal goals, and offering a choice in task performance, such as listening and speaking before reading (p. 49). Considering the language anxiety that first-year language learners face, a diverse set of assessments could help ease the anxiety and motivate them to push against barriers and reach success.

Inspired by Bachman (2007), Bordon and Liskin-Gasparro (2015) advocated for a rather interactionist-focused assessment, since language use occurs in discourse where the speaker can use both linguistic and pragmatic skills to negotiate meaning with an interlocutor. Through co-constructed discursive practices, the focus was not on the individual L2 learner's ability to function in a different social context but rather on the "resources" that "are employed mutually and

reciprocally by all participants in a particular discursive practice" (Young, 2011, p. 428). This type of "interactional competence" (a term first coined by Kramsch in 1986) should be adopted as a framework for language tests (Bordon & Liskin-Gasparro, 2015).

Young (2011) identified seven resources used in L2 interactions that could be assessed: identity (i.e., heritage learner, experienced L2 learner, novice L2 learner); linguistic resources [further divided into register (pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar), and modes of meaning focusing on the interpersonal, experiential and textual construction of meaning]; interactional resources (speech acts and turn-taking); repair (how students troubleshoot problems that appear in an interaction); and boundaries (the opening and closing of interaction). Young further distinguished between interactional competence (IC) and communicative competence by stating that "IC is not what a person *knows*, it is what a person *does* together with others" (p. 430). In a classroom situation, this is even more noticeable since students and instructors alike learn from each other, engage in the creation of meaning, and draw from each other's resources.

However, the challenge in analyzing interactional rather than communicative competence was that having a "one-size-fits-all" assessment type is complex. When interacting, speakers depend on each other's abilities, which are different based on the contexts of use, thus making individualized assessment challenging (Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019). The other challenge identified when analyzing L2 interactions was the focus on academic communication, overlooking that communication could occur despite problems in grammar, syntax, and even pronunciation as long as the goal was achieved. Actually, most L2 curricula often expose learners to artificial conversations that lack the natural flow.

Studies on interactional competence have mainly focused on intermediate to advanced learners' interactions with native speakers (i.e., Burt, 2020; Yagi, 2007). Besides, most studies have

focused on ESL or German (Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019); therefore, there was a need to focus on Spanish. Despite its limitations in a beginner foreign language class, using "guided tasks" (Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019) could expose learners early on to social interactions despite the limited linguistic resources.

This study attempted to assess the interactional competence of elementary Spanish students in their class environment, focusing on how students troubleshoot conversation challenges while paying attention to the language form.

2.2.6 Error-Analysis in Oral Assessments

Besides focusing on interactional competence, this study also embarked on an error-analysis process to track student progress in language learning. Learner's errors reveal not only how the language is acquired, i.e., the cognitive process a learner is going through to arrive at the right rules of the target language, but also what feedback to provide, and if the teaching method is efficient. Often, errors indicate the transition a learner goes through to acquire the right form. There have been many studies in L2 error analysis since the 1970s (i.e., Carrió-Pastor & Mestre, 2010; Corder, 1981; Richards, 1980, Sifontes & Rojaz-Liziana, 2013). A difference needs to be made between error analysis and contrastive analysis, the latter looking just at the error source as being a negative transfer of the native language, which is not always the case.

Taylor (1986) identified several sources for errors: psycholinguistic (based on the L2 knowledge system and problems producing the right structure), sociolinguistic (difficulty to adjust language based on social context), epistemic and discourse structure (difficulty in creating a coherent L2 text). For beginning-level students, the problems are mainly psycholinguistic.

Richards (1980) categorized errors into three broad categories: interference (structures wrongly transferred from L1 to L2), intralingual (faulty generalization, rules applied partially,

overgeneralizations, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules; false hypothesis), and developmental errors (they occurred when L2 hypotheses were based on the limited use of language).

There were limitations to such an analysis because it focused too much on the negative rather than on what learners can do correctly and their development. Another negative aspect was the absence of "comprehensive taxonomies" that could explain errors (Sifontes et al., 2013). Sossouvi (2009) pointed out that error analysis does not consider the students' avoidance strategies and the context in which they make errors.

Nevertheless, error analysis points to an inevitable developmental step in language learning and can help professionals make informed decisions about how to improve teaching methods and help students in their learning process. Carrió-Pastor & Mestre (2010) explained this need: "Error analysis has helped in the understanding of error not as merely an unwanted phenomenon in language, but as a source of information which helps improve learning and production in an L2." (p. 186).

According to error analysis studies, first-year students normally commit errors in the concordance grammatical system. Sifontes and Rojas-Lizana's study (2013) focused on determining such concordance errors made by beginning Spanish students and discovered that the most frequent ones agreed in gender, number, and person. When looking at errors in adjectives, definite articles, nouns, possessive adjectives, and verb concordance, results pointed out that the verb concordance was the one that Spanish students mastered the least. Thus, errors occurred first in the morphosyntax and only then in the syntactical and morphological realms. The main causes were intra-lingual mechanisms (hyper generalization of grammar rules and false analogy) and

inter-lingual mechanisms since the concordance feature was less productive in English than in Spanish. However, their data were based on written test analysis, not oral production.

A study conducted by Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) focused mainly on verb placement by L2 learners of Spanish. They discovered that although students often place the verb in the right place, they "fail to morphologically mark the verb for person and number correctly," pointing toward a disconnection between syntax and morphology. The reason was the weak agreement in English compared to Spanish, where verbs are fully inflected, with a rich morphology. Spanish conjugations are considered regular, and the majority of exceptions form well-defined subsystems (Azevedo, 2005, p. 127). Verbs are part of the open word classes to which new elements can be added based on the expressive needs of speakers.

The morphological pattern of Spanish verbs follows the following formula: radical + thematic vowel (-a, -e, -i) + tense/aspect (i.e., -ré for future, -ría for conditional) + person/number (i.e., -mos for first person plural). But even this formula presents variations, as in the case of the present tense of -er and -ir verbs, where the thematic vowel is -e for both groups except for the first and second person. Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) further pointed out the "non-negligible number of homophones" (p. 488) that makes the acquisition task even more complex, especially in a hybrid language class.

Bruhn de Garavito's (2003) study analyzed L2 students' understanding of Spanish verbal morphology and syntactic structures of verb raising in Spanish. Their results demonstrated that agreement errors happened more during production than recognition tasks. One reason for such discrepancy was due to the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Lardiere, 2000, as cited in Guijarro-Fuentes y Larrañaga, 2011), according to which L2 learners knew the L2 grammar morphology theoretically, but they had problems "mapping abstract features to the corresponding

surface morphology" (p. 496). However, for first-year students of a foreign language, error analysis should not be focused only on verb forms but rather take a holistic approach by analyzing pronunciation, lexical, and morphosyntactic errors to both reveal the students' proficiency level, and improve the learning process.

When analyzing errors at the pronunciation level, Collins & Mees (2013) placed them into three categories:

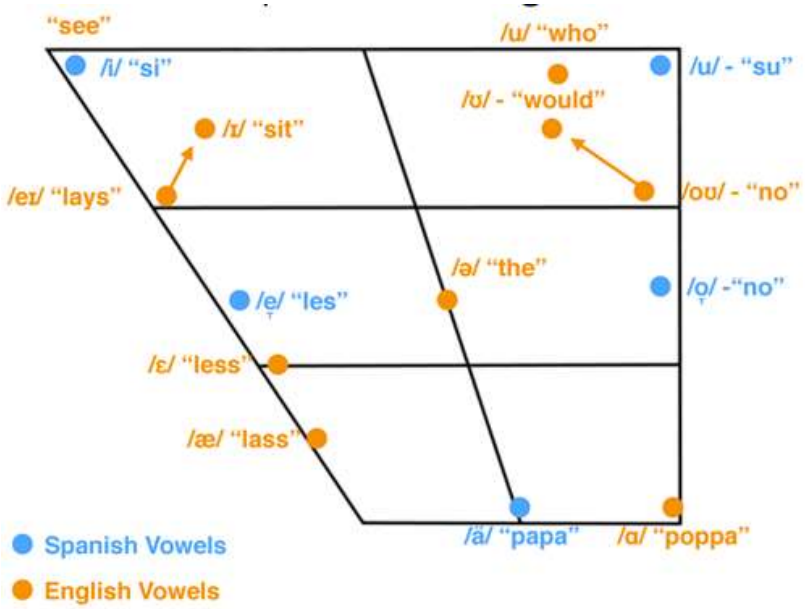
1. Errors that may lead to a "breakdown of intelligibility" (p. 215). These errors constituted a high priority and should be worked on early with L2 learners.
2. Errors that gave rise to irritation or laughter. These errors represented a low priority because they did not prevent the L2 speaker from being understood.
3. "Errors which provoke few such reactions and may even pass unnoticed" (p. 216). These errors were usually connected to the L2 speaker's accent, but since they did not prevent them from being understood, they were not a priority in teaching. In this category, there were intonation errors, among others.

For English learners of Spanish, several errors constituted a high priority in teaching since they could prevent them from being understood by a native speaker:

- **The vowel system**. American English has approximately thirteen vowel sounds (Collins & Mees, 2013, p. 101), whereas Spanish only has five vowel sounds. Spanish learners struggle with the vowel system mainly because in Spanish, there are no checked vowels such as /æ/ as in *pat*, or free vowels such as /iː/ as in *see*, /uː/ as in *flu*, /ɛː/ as in *her*, /ɑː/ as in *spa*, /ɝː/ as in *burr*, /ɔː/ as in *law*, and the central ones are especially challenging as seen in Figure 3. Students often confuse the vowels /e/ and /i/, as well as /a/ and /e/. They also tend to read the initial "u" (i.e., *universidad*) using the diphthong /ju/.

Figure 3.

Spanish versus English vowels (Ness, 2019)



Azevedo (2005) also pointed out that in Spanish, the length of tonic and atonic vowels is a matter of emphasis, and that in standard pronunciation, they have the same length, whereas, in English, the length is dictated by the position of the vowel in a word. Moreover, the diphthongs /au, ai, oi/ in "*causa, váis, soy*" also differ in length from their English equivalents: /ai, ɔi, au/ in examples such as: "*bye, toy, bow*" (p. 101). However, the errors in the pronunciation of these vowels lead mainly to the second category of errors pointed out by Collins and Mees (2013).

The one that may be more problematic is the fact that in English, speakers reduce vowels by replacing them with the schwa /ə/, and if they do the same in Spanish with atonic vowels, important contrasts may be missed, such as the masculine and feminine /o/:/a/: "*abuelo, abuela"* (Azevedo, 2005, p. 101).

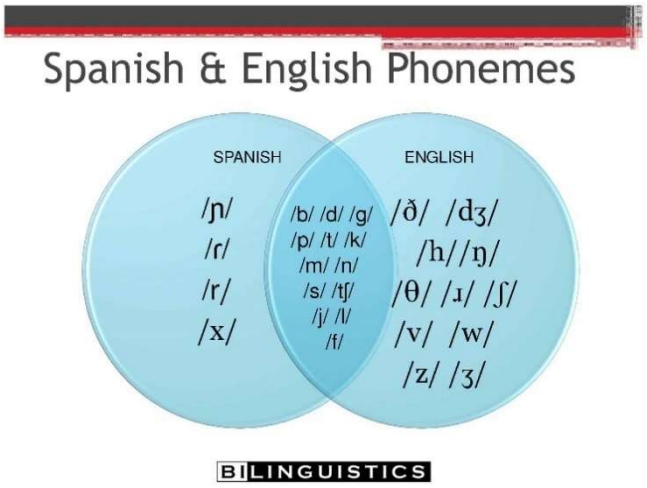
- **The consonant system**. Although the consonant system does not pose as many problems as the vowel one, there are a few elements that Spanish learners struggle with. First, it is the fact that "h" is always mute in Spanish. Especially when pronouncing words similar to English, such as "hotel," students often forget to mute it. Another element is the "z" consonant that in Spanish is pronounced as a voiceless alveolar fricative /s/, but L2 beginning learners of Spanish voice it as /z/, such as in *azul*.

  Although in Spanish there are not many unique consonants, it does have several that students struggle with, as seen in Figure 4 below: ñ pronounced as /ɲ/, and /r/ that in English is post-alveolar while in Spanish it is an alveolar tap /ɾ/ when in the middle of a word *caro* or an alveolar trill when in the beginning of a word or a double r as in *rato* or *carro*. There is also the voiceless fricative sound /x/ in words such as *género*, *giro*, and *caja*, which students often pronounce as /h/, an accepted regional variance in Central America (Azevedo, 2005, p. 273), that English learners of Spanish still tend to pronounce as /dʒ/.

  One last challenging sound is the voiced lateral palatal /ʎ/ written as ll in Spanish, such as in *llamar, calle*. Some beginner students tend to forget the pronunciation rule and pronounce it as /l/ or /li/.

Figure 4.

Consonants in Spanish versus English. (Prath, n.d.)



- **Word stress**. In Spanish, there are clear rules on where to put accents on which syllable, and when the rule is not respected, an acute accent is written on the vowel of the respective syllable. Word stress also helps differentiate between homographs with various grammatical functions. For example, the phonetic sequence /esta/, if stressed on the first syllable /ˈ*esta*/, is the demonstrative feminine singular pronoun *this*, but if stressed on the last syllable /*es*ˈ*ta*/, it becomes the present tense of *estar* in the third person singular *está, it is*. Beginner students of Spanish often do not notice the acute accents and mispronounce words. It can also happen with words that are written the same in English and Spanish, such as *general,* but pronounced differently. In English, the stress is on the first syllable /ˈdʒenərəl/, whereas in Spanish, it is on the last syllable /xeneˈral/, or /heneˈral/.

Therefore, error analysis should consider all possible aspects of language: morphological, phonological, syntactic, and morphosyntactic.

2.3 Conclusion of the Theoretical Background

This literature review provided a comprehensive and critical analysis of the existing research in the field. The analysis of the different concepts, theories, and empirical studies pinpointed the need for a direct observation study. Currently, no studies have analyzed how Spanish is taught at US community colleges, the majority being done at research-based institutions. Therefore, this study can inform researchers whether the findings of previous studies can be correlated to the current one.

This literature review included relevant studies on the hybrid teaching of foreign languages, focusing on hybrid Spanish language courses. Although it tried to incorporate the most recent studies, it pinpointed older studies critical to data evaluation. The studies presented were meant to validate the current research endeavor and reflect the ongoing trends in the field.

3. Methodology

Many comparative studies (i.e., Blake et al., 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Gleason, 2013; Rubio et al., 2018; Scida & Jones, 2016) have shown the advantage of using a hybrid approach when teaching a foreign language, but they were conducted at four-year universities where full-time language faculty trained part-time instructors and developed the curriculum by using cutting-edge technology to support students in their learning.

This study aimed to analyze how students develop their speaking proficiency during their first year of Spanish in a hybrid flipped environment at a US community college. It adopted a naturalistic approach in analyzing four hybrid Elementary Spanish sections taught at a US community college with the purpose of filling a gap in the specialized literature by showing how and what elements were taught at the Elementary level. Not only was it important to assess whether students attained the same needed oral language proficiency to fulfill their foreign language requirement as in a traditional course, but also the type of comprehensive input they received as well as the pedagogical support from their instructor and the designed course content.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the material used for this study (participants and language sections observed), as well as the methodology (study design and instruments). But first, it describes a pilot study whose data had to be included herein because it offers key information regarding students' speaking proficiency levels after two semesters of studying Spanish that could not be elicited during the current study.

3.1 Pilot Study

The current study was based on a previous pilot study conducted in the Spring of 2018 with the researcher as a participant, being the instructor of the hybrid Spanish courses at the same

community college. The same LMS system, textbook, and course content were used to teach the students as described in the above study and aimed to analyze whether students internalized the verb tenses covered during a full year of hybrid Elementary Spanish courses.

This study was included because of its data. The pilot study elicited data focusing on tense acquisition, whereas the current study just observed students' class performance without specifically narrowing it down to one category. The two data types complement each other, demonstrating what speaking proficiency elements students can master at the end of their first year of Spanish studies, especially since the current study did not find much data connected to tense acquisition. Moreover, the pilot study was expanded because it had a small number of participants (8), and the researcher was also the instructor, which could bring bias into data gathering and analysis.

These Elementary I and II hybrid courses also met online through Zoom once a week for an hour and a half, with only four in-person meetings during the semester. Much of the learning was individualized and independent. Grammar concepts were self-learned through online materials, whereas class time focused on communicative activities and troubleshooting elements that students needed help understanding from their self-study. This study addressed Sossouvi's (2009) criticism and considered the context in which the students acquire language structures.

Data were collected in the form of an interview at the end of the semester without prior practice and preparation of students. The purpose was to have students take a short but comprehensive interview to see which verb tenses were retained. Students were asked about their routine (to check for the reflexive structure use), about their summer plans (to check for the ir + a + infinitive structure), and about their past plans (to check for the use of preterit and/or imperfect).

There were a few cases where not all questions were asked because students diverted the conversation to different topics or because they were not able to produce the desired structures.

Before the interviews, students were asked to give their consent to participate in the pilot study. Of the ten persons interviewed, eight were selected because the other two were heritage speakers and had a good mastery of the Spanish verb system. Out of the eight interviews analyzed, one was with a heritage speaker with a low bilingualism level.

3.2 Current Study Participants

For this study, a total of 40 (n = 40) students were enrolled in the four hybrid sections observed, 25 female and 15 male participants. During the Fall 2018 semester, there were 19 students enrolled in the two hybrid Elementary I Spanish sections. During the Spring 2019 semester, there were 11 students in Elementary I and 10 in the Elementary II hybrid section. It was interesting to note that the dropout rate in the hybrid sections was very low. Of the 40 students, one never attended, and one stopped coming after the first meeting. Four others submitted only some assignments and eventually received a failing grade, but they did not drop the class. The students who eventually dropped the class had a Hispanic background, having been raised in a Spanish-speaking family, and must have realized that the class was too basic for their knowledge.

When analyzing the students who continued the second semester by taking Elementary Spanish II, we observed that only six continued, and the majority (five) came from the hybrid courses taught in the Fall semester. During the Fall 2018 semester, there was also a traditional section of Spanish with an enrollment of 18 students, and only one student continued with the hybrid Elementary II section. Four other students were not enrolled in the Fall in any of the Elementary Spanish I sections, but they were able to enroll in the hybrid Elementary Spanish II because they tested at that level.

Each participant was asked to sign an Informed Consent Form per the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. The informed consent offered the necessary information about the study, told the students they would remain anonymous, and had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also informed that their relationship with the instructor would not be affected in any way during the study.

After the first month of the semester, when students were used to the class and the rate of dropping or adding a class diminished substantially, they were asked to complete a questionnaire to report their previous language experience. Some filled out the questionnaire through a Google Form, whereas others filled out a paper questionnaire when meeting in class with the instructor.

The majority of the students were college students pursuing at least an associate degree. There were a couple of persons who were taking Spanish for their personal interest. One was a retiree, and the other was an accountant who wanted to communicate better with his Hispanic clients.

When asked whether they had any previous language experience, five stated that they had studied French before, and two said they had studied Japanese. Knowing how to study a foreign language is important because the student is aware of the tools needed to learn a foreign language successfully. Two of them were heritage speakers. One heritage speaker was enrolled in both Elementary Spanish I and II, whereas the second was part of only the Elementary Spanish II course.

Among the Fall students who self-reported their previous Spanish-learning experience, an average of 62% of students had never taken Spanish, whereas 38% had previously taken Spanish in high school. The average was 2-3 years of high school, but several had taken it many years before enrolling in the observed Spanish courses. Among the Elementary I students enrolled in the

Spring semester, 54% had taken Spanish in high school (6 out of 11), and 45% had never taken Spanish before (5 out of 11).

The instructor was a native Spanish speaker with a Master's in Spanish, therefore qualified to teach at the community college. She had previous experience teaching Spanish both at the university level, as well as for elementary schools. She started teaching at this community college the year before the research data were gathered and thus was familiar with the *Arriba* textbook (Zayas-Bazan et al., 2015) and the MyLab and Mastering online platform. However, this was her first time teaching a hybrid course using the new structure with modules, discussion boards, and Zoom meetings.

3.3 Observed Courses

Four hybrid sections of Elementary Spanish were observed during the entire academic year: two elementary Spanish I courses in the Fall, one Elementary Spanish I in the Spring, and an Elementary Spanish II in the spring. All courses were four credits, requiring around 12 hours of weekly study time. Traditionally, these courses would meet four hours a week in person, but when they were transformed into hybrid courses, the face-to-face time was reduced. The Fall hybrid sections were drastically reduced to 50 minutes weekly, with the rest of the coursework transferred online. However, because the instructor perceived that it was too little to cover the course content, the meeting time was increased to two 50-minute weekly sessions for the Spring hybrid sections. It is important to note that the hybridization of courses occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic when Zoom was still new in academic circles, and this was the first time the adjunct instructor used the videoconferencing platform.

At the time of this research, no full-time instructor was teaching Spanish at the community college where classes were observed. The administration had relied on adjunct instructors (part-

time faculty) to teach Spanish courses for many years. One or two part-time faculty would normally teach courses during the academic year. During the 2018-2019 year, when research data were gathered, one instructor taught all the hybrid Spanish Elementary courses.

In the Fall, there were three sections of Elementary Spanish I scheduled, two hybrid and one traditional. Because the study focused on analyzing hybrid language courses, the traditional section was not observed. Nevertheless, it was important to note the enrollment numbers for these courses. The traditional course had a maximum enrollment capacity of 25 students and an actual enrollment of 18 students. The hybrid courses had a maximum enrollment capacity of 15 and had an enrollment of 11 and 8, respectively.

Both hybrid courses were scheduled to meet face-to-face once per week, with the expectation that the rest of the work would take place online. Most of the meetings occurred via Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. However, because the institution required hybrid courses to have some presential meetings, the class met in person once a month, for a total of three times during the semester, and students had to take their tests on campus at the Testing Center.

As mentioned before, in the Spring, the F2F meeting time was increased since the instructor noticed the need for more F2F time for in-class practice and activities for hybrid courses. Therefore, in the Spring, both Elementary I and II sections met twice a week, one hour each time in person. Zoom was not used during the Spring semester, which was an instructor choice, not dictated by the institution, which highly valued the instructor's input.

There was a marked decrease in enrollment from Fall to Spring, and, from three sections of Elementary I, only one section of Elementary II took place. However, this was common at this community college because most associate degrees only require one humanities course or one semester of a foreign language.

Table 6 presents how many students were enrolled in each class, the student gender, as well as details about the course modality and the observed number of classes:

Table 6.

Fall and Spring Elementary I and II sections.

Class Section	Details	Enrolled students	Student Gender	Class Observations
Fall Elementary I – Hybrid Zoom I	On Zoom, once a week, 50-minutes	11 students	7 female 4 male	8 meetings observed 10 hours and 39 minutes
Fall Elementary I – Hybrid Zoom II	On Zoom, once a week, 50-minutes	8 students	6 female 2 male	9 meetings observed 9 hours 15 minutes
Spring semester – F2F Hybrid Elementary I	2 F2F hours per week	11 students	7 female 4 male	5 meetings observed 4 hours 8 minutes
Spring semester – F2F Hybrid Elementary II	2 F2F hours per week	10 students	5 female 5 male	6 meetings observed 4 hours 54 minutes

During the Fall semester, although it was supposed to be a 50-minute meeting per week, based on the class schedule, the instructor spent more than one hour teaching students online. From the start, the time offered for teaching the class felt too short, according to the instructor, but because of a shortage of certified language instructors (a Master's degree in the subject to be taught) to meet the demand for the class at this community college, it was scheduled for only one hour per week. However, the instructor generously offered to teach longer, in agreement with the students' schedule, and thus took a longer time in class to explain the necessary concepts. For the hybrid course with fewer students (Hybrid II), the instructor spent an average of 28 minutes more in class per week, the longest being an hour and 41 minutes and the shortest being one hour and 10 minutes. The hybrid course with more students (Hybrid I) could not generally meet for a longer

time because the students' schedule did not allow it; however, there were four instances when classes were 20-25 minutes longer.

Since during the Spring semester the hybrid courses met twice per week, one hour each, class time was no longer lengthened, and the instructor had enough time to teach the course content needed. In addition, because the Elementary I section in the Spring semester used a similar structure to the Fall semester sections, fewer classes were observed. The goal was to find differences between the instructional methodology when the class was delivered in person compared to the Zoom classes before assessing students' speaking proficiency. Since this was not a comparative study, and by the Spring semester, the instructor's methodology was clear for the F2F hybrid modality, fewer classes in Elementary Spanish II were observed as well, mainly to collect data on oral assessments and see the organization and flow of in-class activities.

3.4 Course Content

3.4.1 General Course Content

All Elementary Spanish hybrid sections used the same curriculum and content. Elementary I was meant for students with no background or limited knowledge of Spanish. The focus was on teaching basic vocabulary and grammar concepts, combined with elementary conversation dialogues and cultural elements of Spanish-speaking countries. Elementary II built on the elements taught in Elementary I, and, although most students took it after completing Elementary I, some could test into the second semester of Spanish.

The Elementary I and II courses were developed based on the ACFTL World-Readiness Standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, and the focus was communication, as presented in the course syllabus: "The five C's of the National Standards

for Foreign Language Learning are incorporated into the text, and the class structure. The focus of instruction is on developing communicative competency. Therefore, communication and student interaction in Spanish in the classroom are essential to success and strongly encouraged." The syllabus also pointed out what skills students should expect to achieve by the end of both semesters:

- "LISTENING: The student should understand most Spanish if spoken more slowly than normal pace, understand some Spanish spoken at a normal pace, and develop skills and coping strategies for filling in the gaps of imperfect comprehension.
- SPEAKING: Students should be able to ask and answer questions about a variety of everyday topics, describe people and places, narrate recurring (present) events, and start to achieve some ability in narrating past events. They should also be able to perform many daily routines such as greeting and departing, telling time, asking for and giving prices, and so on.
- READING: Students will read Spanish-language portions of the print materials contained in the program and any supplementary materials requested by the instructor, including newspaper articles and information from the internet. Students will read and understand what their instructor, classmates, and others have written. Students will read and understand several types of Hispanic literature with the help of contextual clues and a dictionary.
- WRITING: The writing skills that students develop will often be the same as the speaking skills, that is, the ability to describe and narrate in the present and, to some extent, in the past.
- CULTURE: Finally, the student will gain a wealth of cultural knowledge and awareness about the areas of the world where Spanish is spoken.
- GRAMMAR: The student will be familiar with the rules of grammar, with an emphasis on those rules that are important to communication.
- PRONUNCIATION: The student will be familiar with the rules of pronunciation, stress, and accentuation. The student will practice pronunciation as he/she communicates in Spanish." (Course Syllabus)

The first and second-semester content had been previously developed to fit the hybrid model at the request of the institution that wanted to fit into the increasing trend of hybrid college courses. The courses were developed by another part-time faculty a year before the research data

were gathered. The part-time faculty had received in-house training on how to create and teach an online course, and once the course was designed, it had to receive the approval of the chair department, the dean, and the curriculum design specialist. The observed instructor was also required to take a specific course on how to teach an online or hybrid course. Before teaching the hybrid courses, she received basic instructions on how to use the online material, and this was the first time she had taught a hybrid course with the updated course content. All the course modules, discussion boards, unit projects, and grammar PowerPoints had been created for her. However, she was encouraged to adapt and personalize any content she saw fit according to her teaching style.

The course was developed using the Pearson textbook ¡*Arriba!: comunicación y cultura,* edited by Zayas-Bazán, Bacon, and Nibert (2015). The textbook, available either in print or digital, was accompanied by MyLab and Mastering, an online learning platform that offered many practice exercises focusing on vocabulary, grammar, as well as reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Since research has pointed out that reading comprehension is better when using printed material (Russell & Judy-Murphy, 2021), students were encouraged to buy the textbook, despite the high cost, but not required.

The course content was organized into modules accessible through the Canvas Learning Management Content platform. Each module represented the work that needed to be completed during a week. A learning guide mapped out the week's activities and had five main parts: learning goals listing what students would be able to do by the end of the week; learning resources, which listed the textbook pages, as well as any additional materials such as PowerPoint presentations, and/or video links or other resources; learning activities which represented the MyLab and Mastering homework assignments, the weekly discussion question, as well as a self-assessment

tip, and the lesson evaluation, a recap of all the activities that needed to be completed both on MyLab and on Canvas.

Weekly homework assignments represented a combination of practice exercises on MyLab and Mastering, where students could try an exercise several times until they got all the answers right, and Canvas assignments. While the Pearson exercises were more form-oriented, the Canvas ones were more communicative in nature, focusing on various written and oral projects.

The Elementary I course was developed to fit the flipped modality because it also included short PowerPoint presentations mainly focused on the grammar structures covered during the semester that were posted for each module, accessible to the student before class time. Students were advised at the beginning of the semester to watch these videos before class and to consult the videos available on MyLab and Mastering. However, no test was offered to check who used the module's additional resources before class time.

The Elementary I course covered the first four chapters of the *Arriba* textbook (Zayas-Bazan et al., 2015), and the Elementary II course covered the following four. In Elementary I, students learned vocabulary related to personal life, school, descriptions, family relationships, telling time, numbers, seasons, and question words, among other things. The grammar focused mainly on teaching the simple present tense for both regular and irregular verbs, adjective-noun agreement, subject pronouns and possessives, direct object pronouns, and demonstratives. In Elementary II, students learned to speak about daily routines and hobbies, likes and dislikes, food, cooking, shopping, and sports. In grammar, they were taught about reflexive verbs, comparisons, present progressive, indirect object pronouns, as well as preterit and imperfect tenses for both regular and irregular verbs.

Using an online platform produced by a publisher to match the textbook used in class for drill-type activities online and presentations of grammatical aspects was very common in hybrid courses (Hermosilla, 2014, p. 2). This offered a clear frame of reference matching the expectations of course transfer while allowing the instructor-led F2F time to engage students in conversation, role-playing, and problem-solving activities.

Students were expected to spend at least 10 hours on the online course during the 15-week semester, as directed by the instructor. The syllabi for both Elementary I and II announced that the class used the flipped model, where the student first read the theory and then tried to apply it through multiple exercises and activities. The Zoom or class meetings were meant to reinforce the studied concepts through cooperative activities, monitor oral practice and other types of interaction between students and the instructor. The on-campus meetings were also designed for group projects, conversations, and clarifications of concepts.

Assignments were created using three modes of communication (Russell & Judy-Murphy, 2021):

- Interpersonal communication (through discussion boards) where students could share opinions, reactions, and information.
- Presentational through individual or group assignments such as cultural presentations, speaking about the family, or the ideal university.
- Interpretative, where students were asked to interpret different cultural elements after watching videos either in class or at home, as well as by reading about the varied Hispanic cultures.

Although most of the assignments in the Elementary I and II sections were written, part of the grade was offered for oral assignments. For the Elementary Spanish I hybrid course, the

activities that engaged students in speaking practice were cultural presentations and interviews. The instructor also asked students to read out loud some of their written assignments in class, such as: "*Soy reportero*" (I am a reporter) and "*La universidad ideal*" (The Ideal University).

For Elementary II, students had several oral assignments: present the steps in Spanish to a Hispanic dish (i.e., guacamole, rice with chicken), present a web quest with trip preparations to a Hispanic country, write and read a children's book, and two oral quizzes as part of their unit tests. Because the study focused on speaking and not written proficiency, the assignments where students merely read their assignments but did not engage in free conversation were eliminated.

When oral quizzes were performed for the hybrid F2F sections, the instructor used group work in class; the recording quality of the student interviews in Elementary Spanish II was very poor for a just analysis to be conducted. Eventually, the two types of assignments analyzed from the course assignments were end-of-the-semester student interviews for Elementary Spanish I, and cultural WebQuests for Elementary Spanish II.

3.4.2 Discussion Boards

For hybrid courses, discussion boards are an essential part of course content because they create community among students, make up for the reduced F2F time, and offer students a non-threatening space to engage with the new language concepts and learn from their peers. The discussion boards analyzed were designed so students would be graded based on completion, not on their grammar and vocabulary sophistication, allowing for freedom of expression. Aligned with the weekly textbook topics, they were meant to elicit opinions, reactions, and cultural information. See Table 7.

Table 7.

Elementary I Discussion Board Topics

Topic	Language Used	Written or Oral
Why Spanish	English	written
Mi música	Mix (one sentence in Spanish)	written
Guantanamera	Mix (Read the poem in Spanish, reflect in English)	written
Hispanos famosos	Spanish	written
El mundo hispano	Spanish	written
¿Qué te gusta hacer?	Spanish	oral
Mi mejor amigo	Spanish	written
Learning games	English	written
Eres-Café Tacva	Spanish	written
¿Cómo es?	Spanish	written
Tu familia	Spanish	written
El día de acción de gracias	Spanish	written
Tu pasatiempo favorito	Spanish	written
Un sabelotodo	Spanish	written
Conclusiones	English	written

For the Elementary I course, discussion boards started with an English-focused discussion on why students chose to study Spanish but then moved toward encouraging students to use only Spanish in their responses. In the beginning, these responses were one sentence long, but by the end of the semester, they were short paragraphs of 3-4 sentences, all in Spanish.

As far as the themes were concerned, discussion boards started by asking students to write about themselves, their families, and their likes and dislikes, as well as to delve into the Hispanic culture by listening to Hispanic music, exploring the life of famous Hispanics, and looking at touristic places in Hispanic countries, among others.

For the Elementary II course, the discussion boards ranged from personal topics such as favorite food, sports, and daily routine, to watching the news in Spanish and reflecting on the experience, exploring the Central America culture, Peru, and Ecuador, among other topics. Of the 14 topics, only the first one was oral, but when given the choice of either posting an oral or written assignment, all students chose the latter variant, as noted in Table 8 below.

Table 8.

Elementary II Discussion Board Topics

Topic	Language Used	Written or Oral
¿Quién eres?	Spanish	oral
Mi rutina	Spanish	written
Música: Los Rabanes	Spanish	written
América Central	Spanish	written
Tu comida favorita	Spanish	written
Adiós	Spanish	written
Una historia chistosa	Spanish	Either (students chose to write)
Tu opinión	Spanish	written
Noticias	Spanish	written
Facebook or Twitter	Spanish	written
Tu deporte favorito	Spanish	written
Vamos de compras	Spanish	written
Perú y Ecuador	Spanish	written
Tu tema de discusión	Spanish	written

3.5 Study Design

This longitudinal study analyzed the hybrid beginning Spanish courses taught during the 2018-2019 academic year. Since it is a community college, it did not offer a wide variety of

sections. Elementary Spanish I had three sections in the Fall (one traditional and two hybrid) and one hybrid section in the Spring. There was only one hybrid section in the Spring semester for the Elementary Spanish II course. Since this was not a comparative study, only the hybrid courses were observed and analyzed.

The study received the Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval for the Protection of Human Subjects. Students enrolled in the course were contacted by email if the class was on Zoom or in person, and they were offered an informed consent form to read and sign if the class was on campus (Appendix A). They were informed that their participation was voluntary, that the information would be confidential, and that no part of this study would interfere with their course grade or relationship with their instructor. Students who received the form by email were contacted through Adobe Acrobat Sign, a cloud-based e-signature service that confidentially sends and manages the signature process. Students were then offered a background questionnaire to see whether they had any prior foreign language experience.

All Zoom classes were recorded for analysis, as well as most of the F2F meetings with the students. Due to technological issues, not all F2F meetings were recorded for later analysis, but enough classes were recorded to give a clear picture of students' oral proficiency. Since half of the class activities were supposed to take place on an online platform, the researcher also analyzed the different types of assignments and work submitted by the students during the semester, focusing on oral assignments.

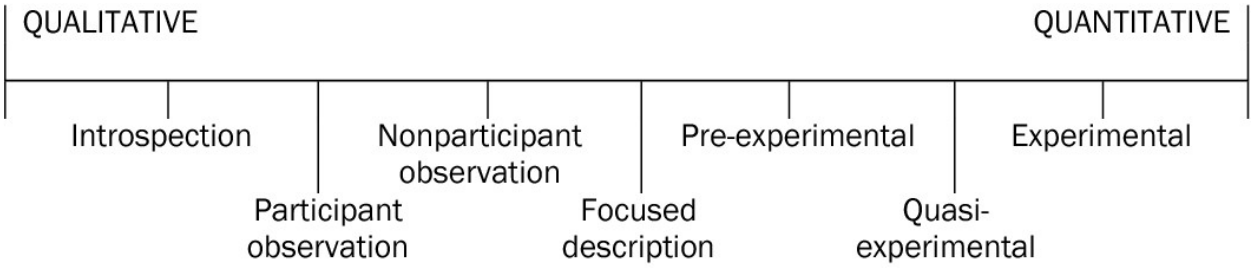
A mixed-method approach to data analysis was chosen using a convergent approach to data collection. While class observations were conducted, an analysis of the course content also took place to search for oral assignments that could contribute information to the research project.

Courses were observed to analyze how formal instruction helps students acquire the necessary L2 linguistic elements for oral communication.

As seen in Figure 5 below, the nonparticipant observation was placed on a continuum between qualitative and quantitative research methods by Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991), although closer to the qualitative end than the quantitative one. This also indicated that a mixed-method approach would be more appropriate in this case.

Figure 5.

Qualitative-Quantitative Continuum of Research (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014)



Class observations produced both numerical and non-numerical results. Descriptive statistics were used rather than inferential to present facts and characteristics linked to the classes observed, mainly because the analysis was performed on a particular sample population. They aimed to describe how classes were organized and the target language's input and output quality. The quantified data analysis revealed frequencies of class activities based on the interaction between the teacher and students, as well as the type of skill targeted during class.

The qualitative approach examined how interaction occurred in class and showcased how language learning occurred through repair, boundaries, and identity discussions. Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches complemented each other, the former informing the latter, going into more intricate detail about how students learned and understood language.

3.6 Instruments

This study collected data using various instruments such as questionnaires, class observations, oral assessments, and student feedback.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The students were asked to fill out a survey of 5-7 minutes toward the end of the semester that elicited information about their previous foreign language learning experience, their learning style preference, their engagement with the class materials, as well as an assessment of whether the hybrid modality was effective in their opinion (see Appendix B). This questionnaire helped create a clear picture of who the students were and how much their previous language experience influenced learning Spanish. The findings were reflected in the description of the study participants, as well as in understanding the development of their oral language proficiency.

3.6.2 Grade Distribution Analysis

Analyzing final grades could be debated as a measure of success. However, ultimately, grades have the potential to motivate a student to continue studying or move to another subject of study altogether, especially since the grade point average (GPA) system is a common admission factor to certain programs. In the community college where the classes were observed, many of the students taking Spanish were interested in the Nursing program that was highly competitive and where GPA plays an important role in the decision-making admission process. In addition, final grades were analyzed in several hybrid Spanish course studies as a measure of student success (i.e., Isabelli, 2015; Rubio et al., 2018; Scida & Saury, 2006; Young, 2008); therefore, they were considered in this study as being tied to proficiency as perceived by the instructor and students themselves.

In all sections analyzed, grades were distributed using the scale: “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “E," or “W,” an “A” being the best grade. No minuses or pluses were offered to students during the semester classes observed. An “E” meant that students failed the class. A “W” represented official withdrawal from the course before a grade was assigned. For students to enroll in the next semester of a foreign language, they needed to receive at least a “D.” However, most students who did not excel in the class did not continue with a second semester, especially since this was not a graduation requirement for an Associate’s degree for most programs.

For the purposes of this study, “student success” referred to those students who earned a grade of “A,” “B,” or “C” for the semester; the data was revealed in the data analysis chapter. “D” grades were eliminated because they represented students who only mastered very little of the course content, not enough to warrant success.

3.6.3 Class Observations

Since the Fall hybrid courses took place on Zoom, the instructor was asked to record all class meetings and share them with the researcher. The Spring classes that were F2F were video recorded using an iPhone by the instructor. The researcher also attended some of the F2F classes and took field notes.

A total of 28 hours and 52 minutes were recorded, and variables were extracted from the raw data to analyze the specific class activities that led to speaking proficiency, as well as the type of teacher-student interaction and peer-to-peer collaboration. See Table 9.

Table 9.

Minutes Recorded for Each Spanish Section Observed

Class Section	Minutes Recorded
Hybrid Elementary I Zoom – Tuesday – Fall	10 hours and 39 minutes
Hybrid Elementary I Zoom – Thursday – Fall	9 hours 15 minutes
Hybrid Elementary I F2F - Spring	4 hours 8 minutes
Hybrid Elementary II F2F - Spring	4 hours 54 minutes

The recordings for the Spring classes were fewer because the instructor allowed the recording of only specific classes. However, since classes consistently showed a similar structure throughout, patterns could be observed and analyzed.

Once classes were recorded, variables were extracted from the raw data to see which ones led to speaking proficiency development. An Excel document was used to register the codes and field notes. An example of the Excel document headlines used for analysis can be seen in Table 10 below:

Table 10.

Codes for Class Observations

Codes	Examples
Course Date and Time	September 18, 2018 (1 hour and 10 minutes
Activity Focus	Organization, teacher presentation, student practice, etc.
Activity Topic	Months of the year Personal Pronouns
Minutes	It recorded how long an activity lasted.
Type of Activity	Vocabulary, Grammar, Cultural

Interaction	Teacher-led, Peer-to-peer
Language	English, Spanish, Mix
Conversation Gems	Word-by-word transcript of specific conversations.

The following codes were extracted once all classes were observed: organization, teacher presentation, student practice; breakout rooms (for Zoom classes) or group work (for F2F classes), individual work, technical issues (mainly for Zoom classes), in-class quizzes or oral assessment, and student presentations. Minutes were registered for each of these codes, and then an average for each section of Spanish was formulated. Since not all codes appeared in each section, those missing were eliminated. Table 11 below shows how data were recorded for each section. The minutes spent on each activity were recorded during that specific class period. Averages for each section are reflected in the data analysis chapter.

Table 11.

Sample of Raw Data Averages

Hybrid Zoom II Course	**9/6**	**9/20**	**10/04**	**10/11**	**10/18**	**11/01**	**11/08**	**12/06**	**12/13**	**Average**
Organization	22.5	17	15	9	14	7	8	15	12	13.28
Presentation	20.5	18	14	16	18	35	37	36	10	22.72
Teacher-led Practice	7	35	25	36	29	31	18	33	28	26.89
Individual Work	0	0	8	0	9	5	0	0	0	2.44
Oral Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1.11
Student Presentations	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	1.67

After analyzing the time spent for each in-class activity, student practice was evaluated based on the skills that the specific class activity primarily required, and the minutes dedicated to that particular skill were recorded for each class observed. For example, if the activity was to listen

to an audio or video, it was marked as a listening activity. If students had to write sentences, it was marked as a writing activity. It was considered a speaking activity if students had to utter various sentences using vocabulary or grammar concepts. When students had to read a text or dialogue, it was marked as a reading activity. Averages for each skill were created for each section observed. Afterward, a more in-depth analysis of the types of activities engaged in class was conducted by looking at whether they were vocabulary, grammar, or cultural activities.

Because the instructor mixed English and Spanish often in class, the need arose to quantify the percentage of how much English versus Spanish was used in class both by the instructor and the students. Therefore, for each section, 1-2 classes were selected, as seen in Table 12, and a word-for-word transcription was performed to identify the percentage of how much Spanish was used compared to English. Not all classes were transcribed word-by-word because of their time-consuming nature and because the results were consistent. Rather, the researcher focused on extracting types of interactions, focusing on specific ones related to L2 speaking proficiency.

Table 12.

Classes Transcribed Word by Word

Section	Class Time
Hybrid Zoom II (10/04)	60 minutes
Hybrid Zoom II (11/8)	77 minutes
Hybrid F2F Elementary I (03/26)	60 minutes
Hybrid F2F Elementary II (03/27)	48 minutes
Hybrid F2F Elementary II (04/03)	50 minutes

At first, the Happy Scribe[3] website that offered transcription services for audio and/or video files was used for the transcription, but because it could only transcribe into one language, and the

[3] https://www.happyscribe.com/

files were bilingual, the researcher had to revise the transcript and considerably clarify the content. Eventually, the researcher transcribed other files without any other software help. For the percentage calculation of how much the instructor spoke in class versus the students, and how much L1 was used versus L2, a Python program created mainly for this purpose was used. The Spanish words used in class were transcribed using italics (see Appendix C for a sample of one transcribed page).

Because the study did not focus solely on analyzing interactional competence but looked at specific interaction elements led to native-like interactional competence, the transcription code was simplified and did not follow all the coding suggested by Jefferson (2004). Table 13 describes the specific conventions used during transcription:

Table 13.

Transcription Conventions

Transcription conventions	Explanation
?	➢ rising intonation for a question
(0.3) (0.5)	➢ a pause of three seconds or more
(..)	➢ a pause of two seconds or less
Mhm	➢ agreement in English with the speaker
Ajá	➢ agreement in Spanish with the speaker
(xx)	➢ unintelligible talk
//	➢ indicate phonetic transcription
*	➢ next to a word to indicate a grammar mistake
^	➢ next to a word to indicate a pronunciation mistake
%com	➢ transcriber's comments

In addition, during the process, conversation gems were identified during in-class student presentations or conversations and analyzed using an interactional competence approach

developed by Young (2011). Therefore, these conversation gems were categorized based on the different resources that the instructor and students brought to the classroom space: identity resources (i.e., previous or no previous experience learning a foreign language), interactional resources (turn-taking, repair, how students troubleshoot problems that appear in an interaction), and boundaries (the opening and closing of interaction). The linguistic resources that students and instructors used appear embedded in different conversations connected to identity, repair, and boundaries; therefore, they would not be analyzed separately in connection to interactional competence assessment.

The different conversation gems were considered through the interactional competence lens because it was important to show what participants did in the classroom social context. Moreover, classroom dialogue provided good samples of how discourse occurred in the classroom and the instructor and students' expectations in constructing meaning. The manner in which students opened and closed interactions, expected to be called when their turn came in class, or allowed their identities to be revealed, were important in the process of learning a language and its cultural background.

3.6.4 Student Interviews

For both Hybrid Zoom I and II classes, the instructor conducted interviews at the end of the semester to evaluate speaking proficiency. These interviews were based on a list of 75 questions that the instructor shared with the students prior to the interviews. During the last semester's class, she assigned question numbers to the students, offered them a few minutes to prepare their answers, and then asked each student the question numbers assigned. After the second interview, she shared the screen to point to the questions, as well, so that the students understood exactly

what was being asked of them. In the Hybrid Zoom I class, there were nine student interviews, and in the Hybrid Zoom II class, there were five student interviews, for a total of 16.

The following checklist in Table 14 was created to assess whether speaking interviews effectively assessed the curriculum used in class:

Table 14.

Topic Checklist Based on Curriculum

	Checklist
Vocabulary	Introductions (Spelling name) Personal descriptions (birthday, origin) Dates (days, numbers, months) Seasons Telling time Interrogative words Colors Classroom objects School subjects Hobbies & Preferences Family relations and descriptions Routine
Grammar	Present tense verb conjugation - Regular verbs - Stem-changing verbs - Other (*ir, hacer, tener*) Gustar and similar verbs Expressions with *Tener* Determiners and Adjectives - Gender/number agreement - Possessive Adjectives - Demonstrative adjectives Direct objects - Ser vs. *Estar*

For the overall assessment, two rubrics were created by combining the ACTFL OPI descriptions and the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-do Statements (2017) for Novice learners since speaking could be assessed in two of the three modes of communication incorporated in the performance benchmarks: interpersonal and presentational. The former was assessed in the end-

of-the-year student interviews, and the latter was assessed in the WebQuest presentations students made in the hybrid Elementary Spanish II course. The rubric used for analyzing students' interpersonal communication can be seen in Table 15:

Table 15.

Interpersonal Communication Rubric

Interpersonal Communication Rubric	
Level	**Description**
Novice High	• Student can successfully manage uncomplicated communicative tasks and speak about familiar topics. • Student can use original sentences by combining words and phrases, mainly using the present tense. • Student can be understood well by a sympathetic interlocutor. • Student can express, ask about, and react to preferences, feelings, or opinions on familiar topics, and interact with others about basic needs and routine most of the time.
Novice Mid	• Student can respond to some direct questions using a mix of memorized words and phrases, simple sentences, and questions. • Student can be understood with some difficulty by a sympathetic interlocutor. • Student can speak about some preferences and feelings, basic needs, present information about interests, activities, etc.
Novice Low	• Student relies heavily on memorized words and phrases. • Pronunciation may often be unintelligible. • They have no real functional ability. • Can only exchange simple greetings, give their identity, and name isolated objects from the immediate environment.

3.6.5 WebQuest Analysis

One of the specific Canvas assignments that elicited oral responses from Elementary Spanish II students was a WebQuest titled Weather (*El clima*). This WebQuest required students to choose a Hispanic country and organize a trip to that country. They had to get information about the weather, the seasons, the clothes they needed to pack, and the amount of money for the trip,

among other things. After the WebQuest, students had to present their findings with their classmates through a PowerPoint presentation. It was meant to be a comprehensive evaluation and have students connect vocabulary (clothes, weather, numbers) with grammar (present tense, direct/indirect objects) and culture.

Their presentations were analyzed using both the ACTFL standards and an error analysis (syntactic, lexical, phonological, and morphological structures).

Table 16 presents the rubric used for the overall assessment of the presentations that students created for the Elementary Spanish II hybrid course:

Table 16.

Presentational Communication Rubric

Presentational Communication Rubric	
Level	**Description**
Novice High	• Student can present using full sentences in Spanish. • Student includes all the information requested in the assignment with engaging details. • Student uses good syntax, shows vocabulary knowledge, and pronounces words well. • Student can answer others' questions about their presentation.
Novice Mid	• Student reads the full presentation in Spanish but cannot speak freely about the topic. • The information is there but is not connected in a coherent presentation. • There are a few pronunciation and grammatical errors. • The student hardly engaged the class in a discussion based on the presentation.
Novice Low	• Student mixes English and Spanish words. • Some of the information requested is missing. • There are serious pronunciation and grammatical errors. • Student did not engage the class in a discussion.

3.6.6 Error Analysis of Students Speaking Samples

Since the overall ACTFL-based analysis was too general, an error analysis was conducted to offer clearer evidence of which language structures are mastered by students for both interviews

at the end of Elementary Spanish I and the WebQuest presentations made towards the end of Elementary Spanish II.

First, the different pronunciation and grammatical errors were classified based on their cause:

- Interlingual - L1 influence or the interference of another foreign language the student might have been exposed to.
- Intralingual error - based on the L2 structure itself.

For intralingual errors, the taxonomy compiled by Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana (2013) was further adopted:

- Hyper generalizations (i.e., conjugating an irregular verb as a regular one)
- Hyper correction (i.e., using the exception instead of the rule)
- Influence of the dominant form (i.e., using the infinitive rather than the conjugated verb form)
- Neutralization (i.e., using masculine instead of feminine)
- False analogy (using a word that looks similar but with a different meaning: *fui* vs. *fue*)
- Incomplete rule application (i.e., not changing the possessive adjective in the answer)

The error analysis also focused on students' pronunciation and narrowed down to the first category that Collins and Mees (2013) identified as errors that make speech intelligible:

- Vowel confusion (i.e., pronouncing /i/ instead of /e/, or /e/ instead of /a/; reversed vowels)
- Consonant confusion (i.e., pronouncing /n/ instead of /ɲ/ for the letter <ñ>; pronouncing <h> instead of muting it)
- Word stress
- Syllable issues

- Completely mispronounced words

Although the other two error categories were present in the beginning Spanish students, they were not included in this analysis because they are normal, especially at the novice language level. As expected, students still struggled to pronounce /r/, /t/, and /d/, but these elements did not prevent intelligibility and were not part of the analysis.

3.6.7 Student Feedback

With the instructor's permission, end-of-the-semester course evaluations were analyzed to see whether students made any remarks regarding the hybrid modality of the course and how this related to their speaking proficiency development. An analysis of a discussion board that requested students' feedback on specific course activities they enjoyed was also conducted since the information provided was key for clarifying students' perception of their oral proficiency.

In conclusion, the use of multiple instruments and angles offered a clear picture of how participants' oral proficiency was developed, and what they achieved by the end of the course.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis starts with an overview of overall student success in the hybrid Spanish courses observed by examining final grades, especially since students' perception of success is deeply ingrained in grades, and this element has been identified as an important factor that can be connected to language proficiency development (Enkin & Mejias-Bikandi, 2017; Owston et al., 2013; Rubio, 2018). The core of the analysis, though, is based on class observations, moving from descriptive statistics to a more qualitative assessment to reveal the speaking interactions between instructor and students. It finishes with an error analysis of two oral assessments focused on speaking proficiency.

4.1 Grade Distribution Analysis

For the purposes of this study, "student success" referred to those students who earned a grade of "A," "B," or "C "for the semester. Table 17 presents the fact that students were highly successful across the hybrid modalities based on grade distribution:

Table 17.

Percentage of A, B, and C Grade Distribution in Hybrid Courses

Course	Percentage of A, B, C grades
Traditional Elementary I - Fall	72%
Hybrid Elementary I Zoom – Tuesday – Fall	81.81%
Hybrid Elementary II Zoom – Thursday- Fall	75%
Hybrid Elementary I F2F - Spring	90.90%
Hybrid Elementary II F2F - Spring	80%

This comparison was made with the only traditional F2F course taught in the Fall. Since the instructor played a crucial role in grading, the sections selected above were all taught by the same instructor. When comparing the hybrid courses with the only traditional one, we noticed that the success rate for the traditional course was the lowest, 72%, and the "A" grades represented only 22%, with a majority of Bs and Cs, whereas the Hybrid Elementary I taught in the Spring had the highest success rate. The smaller number of students per section in the hybrid course who received individualized help from the instructor may have contributed to the success rate for hybrid courses (see Table 18).

Table 18.

Grades for Hybrid and Traditional Courses

Courses	Grade Frequency				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Traditional Elementary I - Fall	4	6	3	2	3
Hybrid Elementary I Zoom – Tuesday – Fall	5	5	2	0	2
Hybrid Elementary I Zoom – Thursday – Fall	2	4	0	0	2
Hybrid Elementary I F2F - Spring	3	5	2	1	0
Hybrid Elementary II F2F - Spring	4	3	1	0	2

An analysis of grade distribution revealed a similar pattern for both traditional and hybrid courses. As and Bs represent 70.68% of the total grades, which might account for a positive experience in the language courses. When analyzing the students who received a failing grade of "E," we notice that the majority were students who never engaged with the class or only came once and then disappeared. Two of the students who appeared as if they failed, enrolled in the

Zoom Thursday class, were Spanish heritage speakers who did not attend the course and never went through the withdrawal process.

On the negative side, an analysis of the students who decided to continue to take the Elementary II hybrid course in the Spring semester revealed that only one student from the traditional class (5.55%), two students (18%) from the Zoom I course, and three students (37.5%) from the Zoom II course, continued taking Spanish courses.

It was hard, though, to draw a correlation between the traditional and hybrid modalities and demonstrate that the reason why students did not continue was that they did not connect with the hybrid modality. Traditionally, the Elementary II Spanish courses have had low enrollment compared to the Elementary I ones mainly because students are not required to take more than a semester of a Humanities course at this community college. Others transferred to 4-year universities where they might continue with Spanish courses.

If outliers are removed (non-attending students), the analysis of the Hybrid Zoom II students revealed that 50% of those attending during the first semester continued taking the hybrid Elementary Spanish II. The low number of students engaged in class (6 students) helped the instructor offer individualized instruction and make students feel comfortable with the modality. When comparing the traditional versus hybrid sections, we noticed that only one of the 18 students in the traditional class chose to continue with the hybrid modality, whereas the percentage was higher for hybrid courses. This demonstrated that students became comfortable with the hybrid modality and wanted to continue engaging with it.

4.2 Class Content

For the Elementary I and II hybrid course, the final grade represented a combination of written assignments (20% and 25%, respectively), oral assignments (15%), chapter tests, and quizzes in a multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blanks format (25%), MyLab and Mastering homework (20%), discussion boards (10%) and attendance (10% and 5% respectively). The only difference observed in the way grade percentages were distributed was that the attendance percentage decreased from 10% to 5% in the second semester. In contrast, the written assignments received an increase from 20% to 25%.

A marked difference emerged when comparing the grade distribution between the hybrid and traditional Elementary I sections. Because of the increased F2F time in class, discussion boards were eliminated, chapter tests and quizzes represented 35% of the grade, and written assignments decreased to 15%, with attendance being 15%.

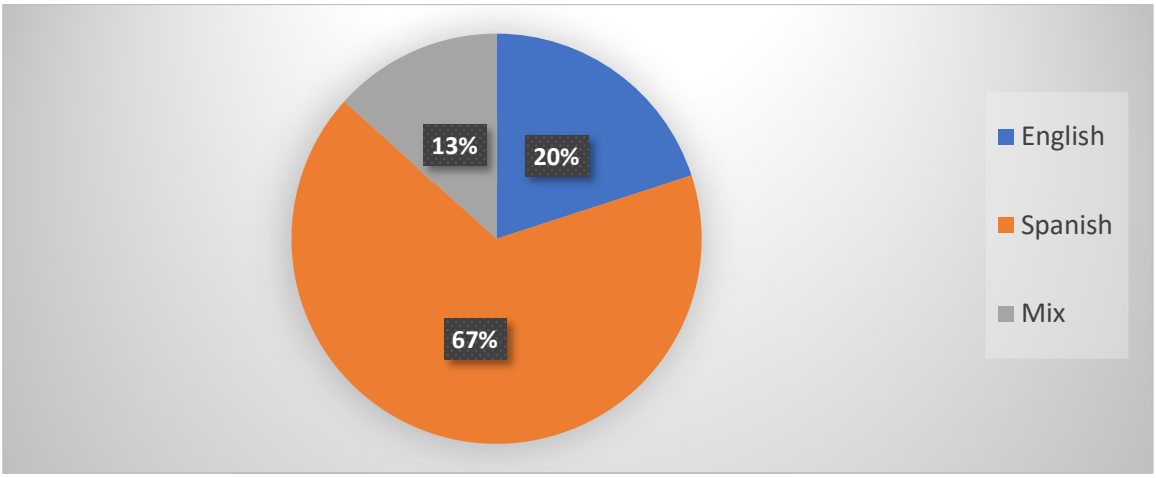
Because MyLab and Mastering assignments were mainly focused on the written form, except for pronunciation exercises that asked students to repeat, no analysis was performed on MyLab assignments.

4.2.1 Discussion Boards

Of the 15 discussion boards developed for the hybrid Elementary Spanish I sections, only one was oral, and even for that one, some students had technical difficulties and wrote their answers instead of recording them. When offered the choice of oral or written answers, all chose to write instead of to speak. When analyzing the language used, 20% were in English, 13.33% a mix of English and Spanish, and 66.67% in Spanish, as seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6.

Language in Discussion Boards



Before data gathering, the expectation was to find at least a couple of oral discussion boards per section, especially in a hybrid course where students should be intentionally offered a space to practice conversations. Although data was scarce, a short analysis of the oral answers was conducted.

The oral discussion board for the Hybrid Zoom I section had a total of 18 submissions. The prompt asked them to share their hobbies, which they did in short sentences. Of the six original posts, three were recorded and three written. Of the 12 replies, only three were oral. The students who submitted a written answer claimed they could not record their voices because of technical difficulties. The instructor did not get involved in the discussion, allowing students to respond only to each other.

Only the oral submissions were analyzed. For example, student I said: "*Me gusta trabajar en el jardín y me gusta vender rendendos**." Apart from the last word mispronounced with an alveolar approximant American English /r/, the answer was grammatically correct. This type of mispronunciation is a common difficulty among beginners of Spanish. The student probably referred to *verduras* (vegetables)

Another male student said: "*Me gusta jugar videojuegos en el invierno y me gusta jugar béisbol en la primavera*." He had excellent pronunciation and only made a mistake by not including the preposition "*jugar al béisbol,*" which is understandable at the elementary level. The third student with an oral submission had a strong accent and spoke some unintelligible words: "*Mi* gusta hacer arte y ditalius* escribir accione**." That might be why there were no comments on his submission from peers. The instructor did not get involved in this discussion to help the student clarify his meaning.

The Hybrid Zoom II section had a total of 23 submissions (7 original and 16 replies) for the oral prompt. Of the seven original posts, six were oral. One was more than a sentence long and extremely well-articulated except for some interference from the English sounds: *bisbol* instead of *béisbol* or *películas* where U was pronounced /ju/ instead of /u/. Here is an example (1) of a coherent and grammatically correct answer:

> **(1)Student T**: *A mí me gusta leer, también me gusta jugar baloncesto, tenis y bisbol* con mi familia. Me gusta ver películas con mis amigos también.*

The other students also engaged in answering orally to their peers, for a total of 5 oral replies. Although answers were connected to the topic, a couple excluded the preposition "a" needed for the negative expressions using indirect object pronouns: *A mí también* o *A mí tampoco,* as shown in example (2).

> **(2)Student M**: "*Mí* también, me gusta correr*."
> **Student D**: "*Mí* tampoco, no me gusta escribir*."

Despite the incomplete application of the indirect object pronoun rules, it was important to note that students understood the context difference between *tampoco* and *también*.

While in the Hybrid Zoom I section, the instructor did not get involved in the discussion, she was an active participant in this section, either affirming what students said or continuing the conversation. However, her answers were written and not oral.

The hybrid Elementary I F2F Spring section discussion was less active than the previous ones. Only three students submitted their oral answers, and there were six replies, all oral. The conversation was on the topic, and students showed engagement with no mix of English and Spanish, as seen in example (3).

(3) Student T: *Me gusta jugar fútbol y me gusta escuchar música.*
Student M: *A mí también. Mi encanta escuchar música.*
Student J: *A mí tampoco. A mí me gusta el fútbol.*
Student M: *A mí me gusta jugar al deportes y me gusta caminar en el verano.*
Student T: *A mí también. Fútbol es mi favorita.*
Student J: *A mí también. Mi me gusta caminar.*
Student J: *A mí me gusta leer y me gusta escuchar.*
Student M: *A mí también. A mí me gusta leer.*
Student T: *No me gusta leer.*

The instructor was not involved in this discussion, although some clarification about how to respond to likes and dislikes would have been helpful. For example, Student J should have said: "*A mí no me gusta"* instead of "*A mí tampoco"* when speaking about listening to music. The latter expression affirms a negative response, whereas the former shows a difference of opinions.

There are some other errors with articles (*jugar al deportes* should be *jugar a los deportes*) or gender agreement (*fútbol es mi favorita* should be *fútbol es mi favorito*), but the conversation flowed well, and the meaning came through, which is important. These discussion boards were meant to be spaces where students could engage with the language without fear of being penalized for errors, and they were graded for completion and not accuracy.

4.3 Class Observations Quantitative Data

Classes were observed to analyze how speaking proficiency was developed at the Elementary Spanish level, as described in the Methodology chapter. The first analysis was of the activities that took place during class time. Figure 7 presents the different types of activities encountered during the Hybrid Zoom I meetings. Unique elements encountered were technical issues with Zoom, a quiz the instructor gave the students during one of the class meetings, and group work that only occurred once during the observed classes.

Figure 7.

Hybrid Zoom I In-class Activities

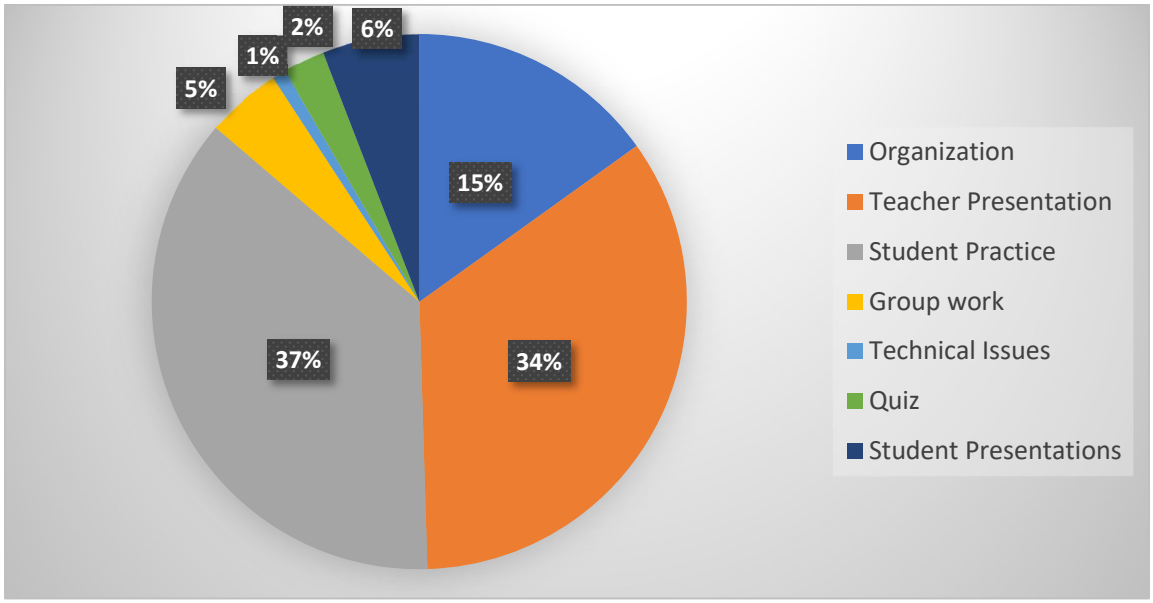
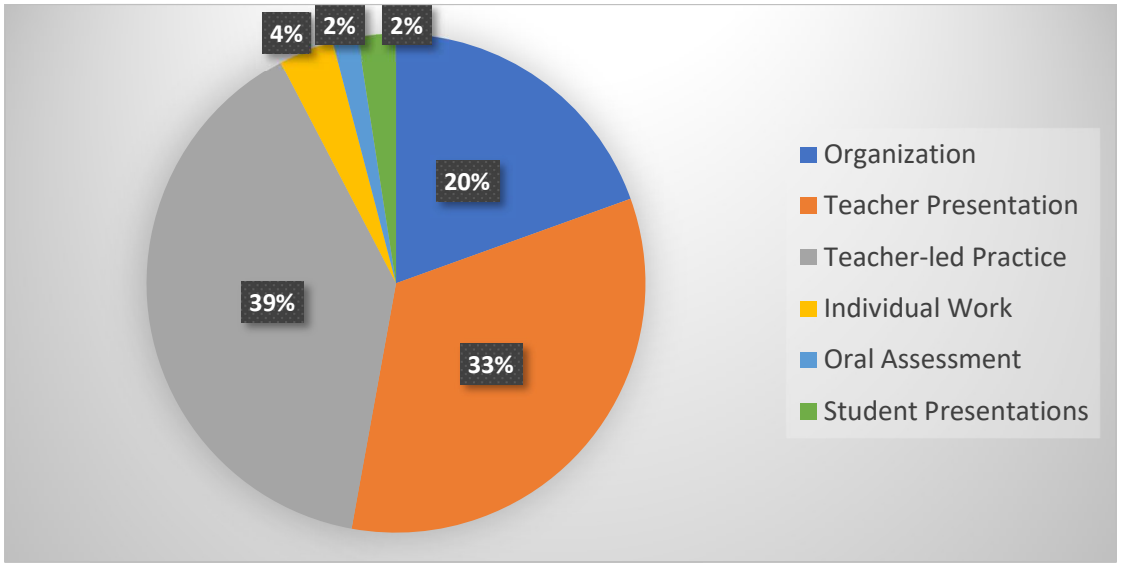


Figure 8 presents the in-class activities that occurred during the Thursday class meetings, and the unique element was that the instructor offered more time for individual work, although sparingly.

Figure 8.

Hybrid Zoom II In-class Activities



When comparing the Hybrid Zoom classes, Figures 7 and 8 demonstrated that the student practice time and the time spent by the teacher presenting a grammar or vocabulary concept are very similar in length. The percentage for student practice was slightly higher for the Hybrid Zoom II classes because it had fewer students enrolled, and the instructor had more time to engage them in practicing the concepts introduced in class. The lower number of students attending the Hybrid Zoom II class (on average, six students) explains why there were no breakout rooms. The only class where the instructor tried some breakout rooms was the Hybrid Zoom I section, but it was not an every-class occurrence. Since each Hybrid Zoom section met only once per week, the majority of the time was spent on either new-concept presentations or practice.

At the beginning of the semester, the instructor announced that this was a flipped class and that students had to watch the PowerPoint presentations or video resources before class, presenting the vocabulary or the grammar concept. However, there was no accountability process to check whether students watched those presentations before class, such as quizzes or exercises. Although

the instructor occasionally asked students whether they watched the videos, it was unclear how many did. She still traditionally presented the vocabulary or grammar concept in class, which does not happen in a flipped environment. For the class to be flipped, the students must first read or watch a presentation about the concept before coming to class. Then, during class, the instructor troubleshoots what students need help understanding, helps clarify, and leads students into practice. Therefore, no analysis was performed regarding the flipped environment.

No new codes emerged for the F2F hybrid courses when the modality moved from fully online to in-person teaching. The only difference is that there were no technical issues, and the code was eliminated. Some class categories encountered in the other hybrid sections were eliminated in the Hybrid Elementary I F2F section because they did not occur when classes were observed, such as in-class quizzes and student presentations. However, based on the conversations with the instructor, these activities did take place in other class periods that were not observed.

Figures 9 and 10 below present how class activities were distributed for the hybrid Elementary I and II F2F sections. Figure 9 shows an increase in student individual work and a decrease in teacher presentation time. It also shows a decrease in organization time, compared to the hybrid Zoom courses, more likely due to the fact that students met more often F2F, and the instructor could answer their questions before and/or after class meetings.

Figure 9.

Hybrid Elementary I F2F In-class Activities

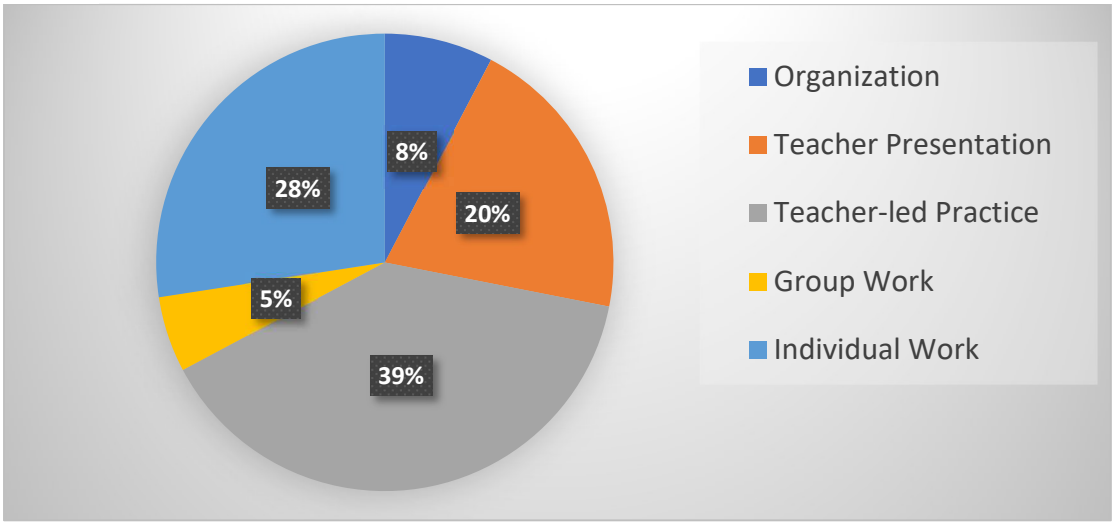
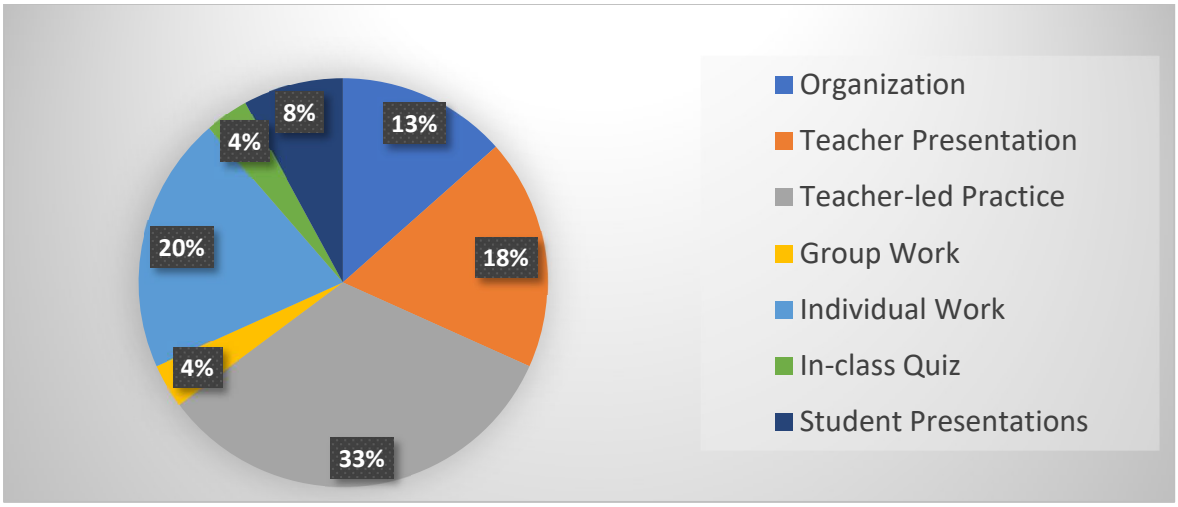


Figure 10 shows the different in-class activities encountered during the Hybrid Elementary II F2F courses. There was a variety of activities such as group and individual work, in-class quizzes, student and teacher presentations, as well as a considerable amount of practice.

Figure 10.

Hybrid F2F Elementary II In-class Activities



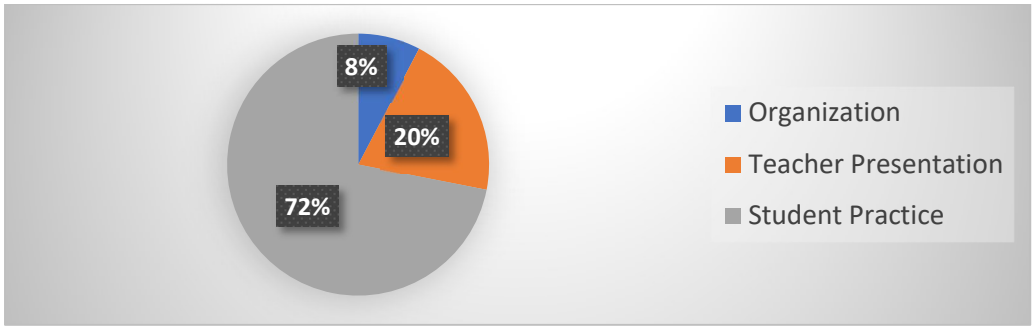
When comparing the numbers for teaching presentations, we noticed that they were similar to the ones in the Hybrid Zoom sections: 39% and 33%, respectively. Although a considerable decrease in teacher-led practice in the F2F sections compared to the Zoom sections was observed, the numbers were similar, considering that the instructor used more individual and group work. When adding the percentage of teacher-led practice, group work, and individual work, there was an increase in student engagement with the language: 72% in the Hybrid Elementary I F2F section and 57% in the Hybrid Elementary II F2F activities.

Furthermore, since student presentations and the in-class quiz took place only during one class period observed, they represented an outlier. When those class activities were removed, and charts were recreated to analyze the regular class time that contained grammar or vocabulary presentations, with student practice (whether individual, group, or teacher-led), percentages changed, as seen in Figures 11 and 12.

In the F2F Hybrid Elementary I condensed in-class activities (see figure 11), the student practice grew to 72%, whereas the organization occupied only 8% of the time. This could be explained by the fact that the instructor may have used time to explain assignments and answer students' questions before and after class when the recording was not turned on. Peer help could be another reason for the decreased organization percentage. In addition, given that students met twice a week, they were able to connect with peers and receive help to understand assignments better.

Figure 11.

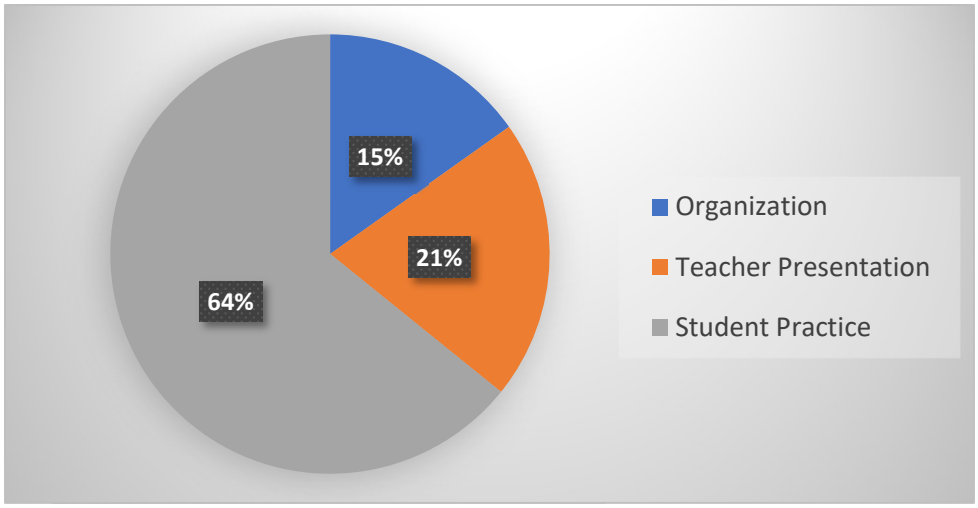
F2F Hybrid Elementary I Condensed In-class Activities



The F2F Hybrid Elementary II condensed version of in-class activities also revealed an increased percentage of student practice, with only 21% of teacher presentations (see Figure 12).

Figure 12.

F2F Hybrid Elementary II Condensed In-class Activities.



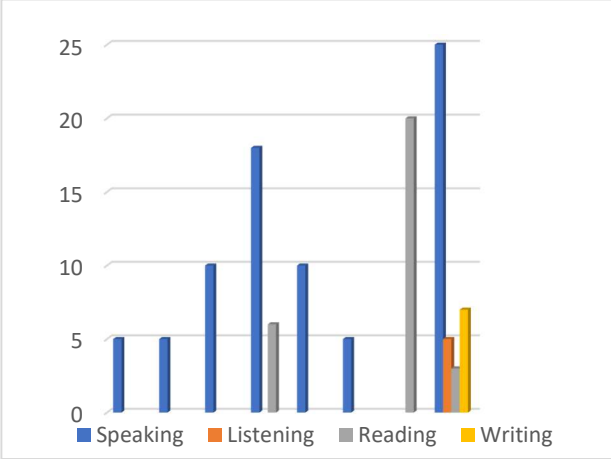
Overall, the percentages in Figures 11 and 12 indicated that students were involved in practice, which is closely tied to developing their speaking proficiency.

Another analysis considered the language skills targeted during class time. Minutes spent on each skill were recorded, and then an average was created to show how much time was dedicated to each skill.

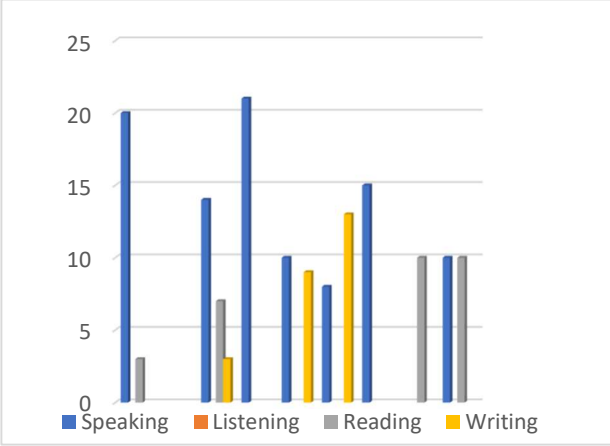
Figure 13.

Skill-focused Analysis for all Hybrid Spanish Courses

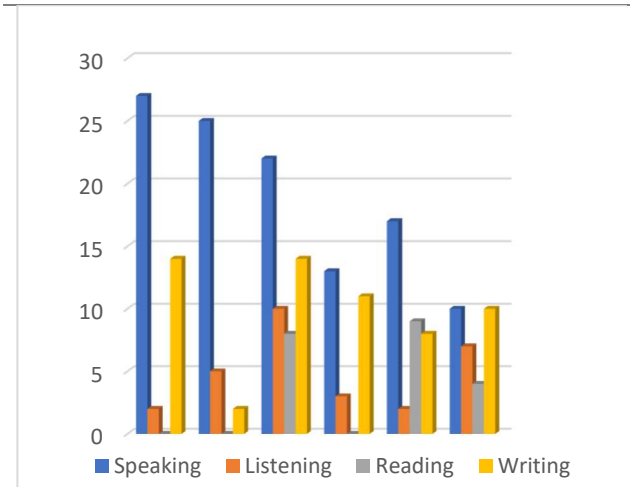
Hybrid Zoom I



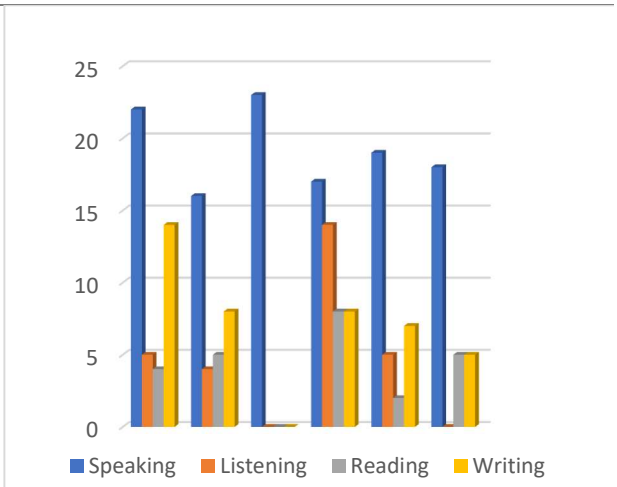
Hybrid Zoom II



Hybrid Elementary I F2F



Hybrid Elementary II F2F



As seen in Figure 13, speaking was the main skill students practiced during their meetings with the instructor. A noticeable difference was when comparing speaking to other activities. For

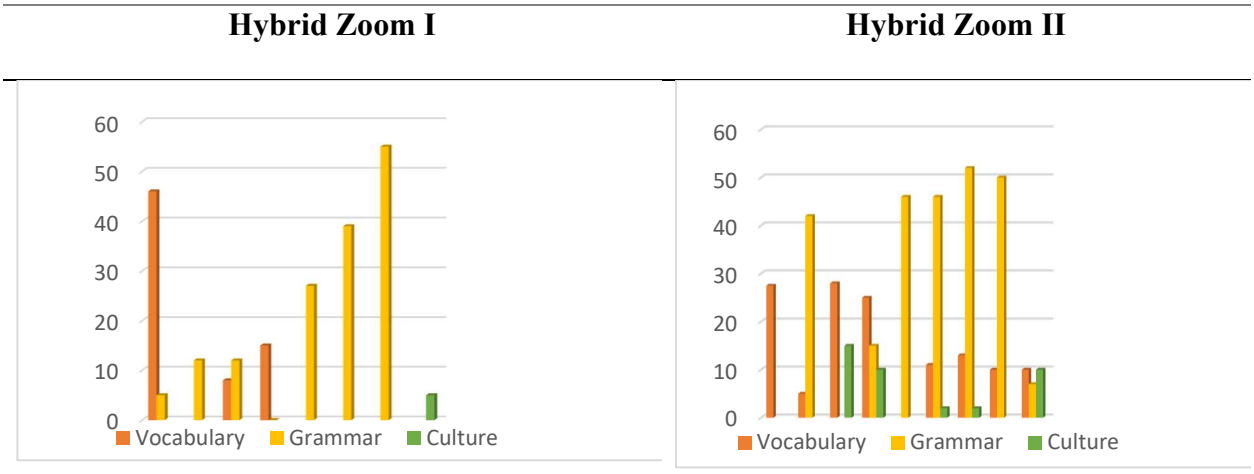
example, in the Hybrid Zoom I class, students mainly engaged in speaking and reading. Only in the last class observed did the instructor include some listening and writing activities. Nevertheless, in the Hybrid Zoom II, we noticed more writing in combination with speaking and reading.

The Hybrid F2F sections, whether Elementary Spanish I or Elementary Spanish II, also had speaking as the main skill practiced in class. However, most classes observed combined the four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The instructor was more comfortable with the F2F modality than the Zoom one and was able to incorporate a wider variety of activities in class.

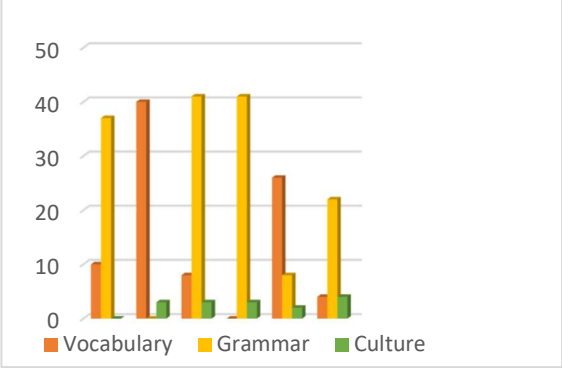
Another element analyzed for each class observed was the focus of the activity students engaged in, whether grammar, vocabulary, or learning about the diverse Hispanic culture. Although some of the activities had a mixed purpose of exposing students to both grammar and vocabulary, the main focus of the activity was what defined it. Minutes were recorded for each class period that students were either taught or practiced the concept (Figure 14).

Figure 14.

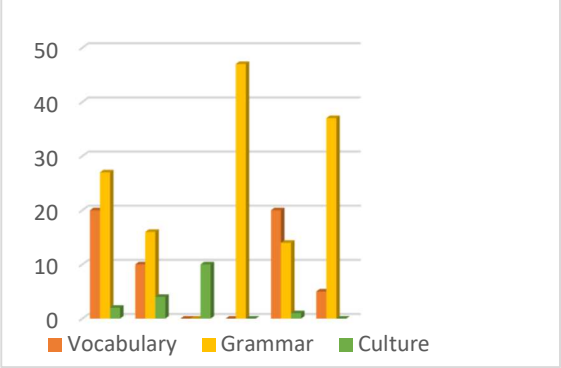
Vocabulary, Grammar, or Culture Activities



Hybrid Elementary I F2F



Hybrid Elementary II F2F



As expected, the majority of the class time was spent on vocabulary and grammar exercises, with grammar taking a predominant place. The Hybrid Zoom courses started with vocabulary exercises in the first two weeks but transitioned quickly into grammar concepts, which remained the main focus throughout the semester. The F2F Hybrid courses, although observed more in the middle of the semester, also showed a pivoting towards grammar elements more than vocabulary and culture. Cultural elements were taught tangentially in Elementary I courses. The instructor focused more on cultural elements in Elementary II, and they were more integrated into the assignments. There was a cultural assignment for the Elementary I courses for which students had to create a PowerPoint about a Hispanic holiday. Since this activity was not part of the observed classes and was mainly in English, it does not appear in the charts above.

Despite the coding performed to see what activity was more prevalent during class time, it could not analyze the quality of speaking students engaged in. Moreover, the instructor used a mix of Spanish and English either during concept presentations or exercises, prompting the need for a more in-depth transcription of specific classes. Table 19 shows the results generated by the Python software regarding the percentage of Spanish versus English words used in class:

Table 19.

Percentage of Spanish versus English Words in Hybrid Classes

Section	Hybrid Elementry I Zoom October 4	Hybrid Elementary I Zoom Nov 08	Hybrid Elementary I F2F March 26	Hybrid Elementary II F2F March 27	Hybrid Elementary II F2F April 03
Total class time	60 minutes	77 minutes	60 minutes	48 minutes	50 minutes
Total Use of Spanish in Class	39% (1245 words out of 3169)	34% (2135 words out of 6276)	34% (1754 out of 5110)	30% (952 out of 3217)	34% (1023 words out of 3016)
Teacher Use of Spanish	33% (756 words out of 2270)	28% (1304 words out of 4731)	32% (1404 out of 4341)	33% (649 out of 1983)	33% (785 words out of 2401)
Students' Use of Spanish	54% (489 words out of 899)	54% (831 words out of 1545)	46% (350 words out of 769)	25% (303 out of 1234)	39% (238 words out of 615)

During the Elementary II March 27 course, the instructor asked one of the students to speak about a trip to a Hispanic country, and they engaged in an English-only conversation about it for five minutes at the end of the class. Therefore, this conversation was eliminated from the percentage analysis, especially because some students chose to leave the classroom while the instructor and the student spoke about the experience with the very few classmates who remained.

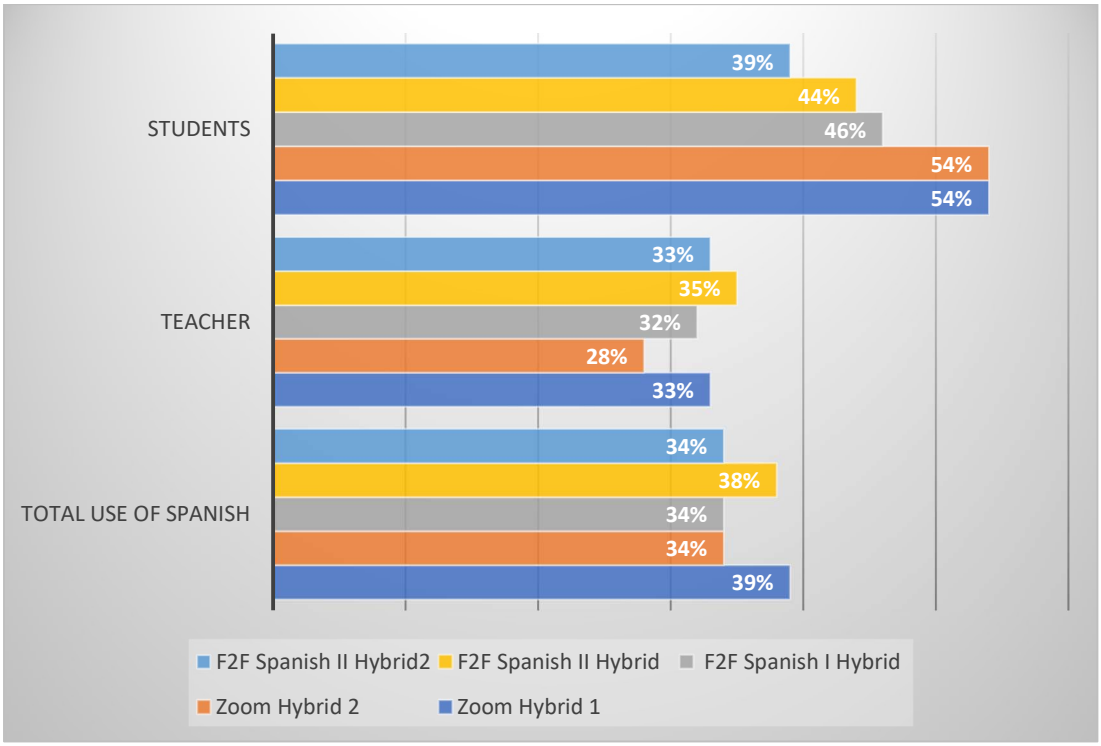
When eliminating the English-only conversation, numbers improved in the use of Spanish, as expected during the transcription process, matching the other classes:

- Instructor used 1819 words, of which 645 were in Spanish (35%).
- Students used 696 words, of which 303 were in Spanish (44%).
- In total, the class used 2515 words, of which 948 were in Spanish (38%).

Figure 15 presents a combined comparison of the percentage average of Spanish spoken during the specific classes transcribed.

Figure 15.

Percentage of Spanish Spoken in Class



A comparison of percentages revealed that the instructor was consistent in the amount of Spanish versus English used in class, with an average of 32.2%. When analyzing the amount of Spanish students used, we notice a higher percentage, mainly because when the instructor asked them to speak, it was to produce the language. Therefore, students used Spanish an average of 47.4% in class. It was surprising to note that as students advanced in their study of Spanish, their use of the target language decreased instead of increasing. This may be because they started mixing Spanish and English more, similar to the instructor's manner of teaching. Therefore, there was a marked difference from 54% in the Zoom Elementary I classes to 39% during the last Elementary II class observed.

4.4 Interactional Competence Qualitative Analysis

Since much language acquisition hinges on the type of input and interaction between the instructor and students or between students themselves (Hellerman, 2008), this study also analyzed how interaction occurred during classroom time by focusing on specific gems of conversation that would offer a perspective on how speaking occurred in the target language in a hybrid environment. This section analyzed examples of identity, turn-taking, repair, and boundaries.

The initial expectation at the start of data gathering was to discover a lot of peer-to-peer interaction in the form of role-play or question-answer interaction. However, data revealed more instructor-student interaction because of the traditional manner in which the hybrid classes were taught. In her interactions with students, the instructor used the name-calling (or cold call) technique to give everyone engagement opportunities. Transcriber comments are highlighted using the code *%com* and do not occur during the interaction.

4.4.1 Identity

Conversations about cultural elements inevitably arise in language classes, often interspersed throughout teaching moments. They could be connected to lexical savviness, but ultimately, these cultural conversations are about identity.

In the conversation below, extracted from one of the Elementary II hybrid classes (file img_2279), which started with students repeating expressions of amazement such as *fabuloso, fantástico,* and *estupendo*, the instructor continued to present other regionalisms. Thus, she forefronted her Venezuelan identity by teaching an informal expression of surprise ¡*Qué chévere!* mainly uttered in certain South American countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and some Caribbean Hispanic countries.

In that context, the instructor alluded to an experience with her students at a restaurant where the waitress, also Venezuelan by origin, used this expression. The conversation then moved to another focus of identity as perceived by learners of Spanish who may feel in-between worlds when engaging with a new culture. Although they have some vocabulary and grammar knowledge and wish to function when speaking to native speakers, they find themselves unable to connect. One big reason is that there is often a disconnect between the Spanish taught in class in comparison to the one spoken by natives. One element of difference is speed. Student C stated she only understood a few words, here and there, when listening to her instructor engage with the Venezuelan waitress mainly because of how fast they spoke. When the teacher explained that they spoke about their kids, another student said she only understood a name pronounced in English but hardly anything else, as in example (4) below.

(4) Teacher: [0:09:28] And there are three expressions that we use not everywhere, in South America or in Central America, but a few of them. *¡Chévere!*
Students: *¡Chévere!*
%com: students repeat after the teacher
Teacher: We use it in Venezuela, in Panama, a few islands in the Caribbean, we use *chevre*, too. *¡Que bárbaro!*
Students: *¡Qué barbaro!*
Teacher: And in México, they use *¡Qué padre!*
Students: *¡Qué padre!*
Teacher: *O, padríssimo*, to say, to express that something is really nice, or you like it a lot. ¡*Qué padre o qué barbaro o chevre*! We use a lot. Oh, remember the lady from the restaurant? She used *Qué chevre* several times. *Oh, ¡qué chevere!*
Student R: What is *chévere*?
Teacher: Like cool.
Student R: Cool?
%com: several students speaking at the same time in the background
Teacher: *Ajá,* That's so nice, that's so cool. We're gonna use *¡qué chévere!*. You know, it's a positive expression.
Student B: Honestly, I couldn't understand half of what she was saying 'cause she was talking so quickly.
Teacher: She was talking really fast, I know.
Student B: And I wanted to tell her like slow way down for a minute.
%com: teacher laughs

This frustration of being unable to connect with Hispanic native speakers because of the language barrier is common among language learners, especially beginners. The instructor could have addressed this frustration as normal, and that there is a process moving from being completely separated as a language learner to finally connecting to native speakers. Unless the process is intentional, learners could be frustrated with the process and get discouraged with language learning. However, Student B did identify a solution for connecting with native speakers by asking them to "slow way down."

Identity issues also surface when heritage speakers are enrolled in Elementary Spanish courses. The conversations below appeared to be lexical in nature, but they had as a starting point the heritage speakers' Spanish knowledge and their experience with the language in their homes. Oftentimes, these heritage speakers had limited knowledge of the language rules and may have even developed interlanguage errors that have fossilized.

The conversation below (from file img_2279) was between a Spanish heritage student and her instructor in the same Elementary II class mentioned above. This student tested into Elementary II and did not need to take Elementary I classes. However, her Spanish proficiency was relatively low, and she had only an intuitive grasp of the language based on what she had heard in her home. This conversation occurred while students were asked to work individually and to write sentences about the weather. While the others were working, the student started talking to the instructor without raising her hand. She always sat in the front of the class, on the first bench, which gave her direct contact with the teacher. Notice how the moment she started talking, the instructor was in tune with her question, although she was taking attendance on the computer when the student started talking:

(5)Student C [26:58]: I used to think that *tiempo* meant just time.
Teacher: *No, puede ser clima. Puede ser* weather. It could be weather, too.
Student C: Oh.
Teacher: Mhm, *mal tiempo. Está haciendo mal tiempo* means that the weather is bad.
Student C: Oh.
Teacher: We have two words. *Tiempo y clima.* Both can be related to weather.
Student C: Ok. (0.5) Is there another word for *tiempo*?
Teacher: *Hora*. You're talking about *¿A qué hora?*
Student C: Yeah. (…) Can't you also say *¿Qué tiempo es?* like What time is it?
Teacher: Well, Could be *tiempo* like *¿Cuánto tiempo te toma de tu casa a la universidad?* like how long it takes. But if you're talking about time, *¿Qué tiempo es?,* the right question to ask *¿Qué hora es?*
Student C: Ok.

In example (5), the student wondered why the word *tiempo* (time) expresses weather, not the hour. Like many heritage speakers, she transferred the English meaning to the Spanish word. She acknowledged her misconception: "I used to think that *tiempo* meant just time." After the instructor clarified her question, I noticed a 5-second pause, after which she asked if she could use another word to express time. The instructor then clarifies that the native-like expression is *"¿Qué hora es?"* while the noun *tiempo* is used in a different context referring to "how long." Then the instructor gave an example: "*¿Cuánto tiempo te toma de tu casa a la universidad?"*

Although in this interaction, the student's identity as a heritage speaker was covert, the native speaker instructor understood her question right away and was able to address it.

Example (6) presents another interaction that is related to identity. This conversation takes place in the Hybrid Zoom I class (file 09/18) between a heritage student and the instructor. Although this student's father was Hispanic, his knowledge of Spanish was low, but enough to understand simple conversations and basic pronunciation. Interestingly, he identified himself as Mexican, even if he was born and raised in the US, with low Spanish proficiency. He explained how he was taught the pronunciation of "ll." Another student who was not a heritage speaker but took Spanish in high school corroborates his explanation:

(6) Student N [0:05:55): I have a question real quick […] When you say like *ellos, ellas,* you say with a "j" but I was always taught that the double "ll" sounds like a "y".

Student B: Yeah, me too.

Student N: Is that just regional?

Teacher: Yes, that's it. Depends on the person you are talking with. It's gonna be a little bit different. Because if you are talking to me, that I am from Venezuela, that's the way we pronounce. *Ellos* /eʒos/, *ellas* /eʒas/. Kind of the same as *yo* /ʒo/. Well *yo* /ʒo / is a little bit softer. But it depends on who you are talking to. And then we have the people from Argentina in South America, they're gonna say instead of how I say *yo* /ʒo/, I, they will say *yo* /ʃo/ more like sh sound in English. The same with double ll. It's more like sh. So, yeah, that is regional.

Student D: How would you say, N, *ella* /eʒa/?

Student N: I would say *ella* /eya/. A couple of lls is a Y. 'Cause I am like Mexican, we tend to be a little lazy in pronunciation.

Teacher: Yeah. Every region has their own pronunciation.

Student N: Even here [state name] is more Mexican-based, I would say. […] *Ella* /eya/, *ellos* /eyos/, *como se llama* /yama/.

Student B: You're not the only one that learned it that way.

The student was used to using "*yeísmo,*" the palatal fricative /y/, whereas the instructor used the "*zheísmo*" /ʒ/, a voiced palatal velar, because it was more common in Venezuela. She also mentioned the Argentinian voiceless /ʃ/ sound, a phenomenon called "*sheismo*." There were several occasions in the course where the instructor asked the student to repeat after her, and the students with previous Spanish exposure used *yeísmo*, whereas the students first exposed to Spanish through the instructor's pronunciation adopted "*zheismo*." This discussion about Spanish dialects and regionalisms exposed the other students to the varieties of Spanish pronunciation, which was a great cultural lesson in itself.

The instructor also used the *seseo* for the letter combination *ce, ci* pronouncing them /s/ rather than /θ/ as in Spain. No student adopted the Spanish /θ/ sound, which points again to the instructor's South American heritage and students' previous exposure to Spanish through instructors with a Latin American background.

It also demonstrated that students usually assimilate the sound they are first exposed to, especially if they consider it easier to pronounce. For instance, Student B, who continued with the

hybrid Elementary Spanish II, preferred the /y/ sound throughout rather than the instructor's /ʒ/ sound, despite being exposed to it during a full year of Spanish. Example (7) from the F2F Elementary Spanish II class (file img_5022) portrays this assimilation:

> **(7) Student B**: [0:16:45] *Hoy, sábado, llegó el actor puertorriqueño Benicio del Toro a la capital. Llegó*
> **Teacher:** [0:16:54] *Muy bien. Muy bien. Llegó es pretérito. Llegó* comes from what?
> %com: Teacher pronounces /ʒ/ for ll.
> **Student B:** [0:17:00] *Llegar.*
> %com: Ll – student pronounces /y/ sound for ll.

Another identity-focused conversation was found in example (8), extracted from the Hybrid Zoom I section (file 09/18). Student B remembered an expression from one of her high school Spanish classes, and when she asked for an explanation, the teacher allowed the heritage student N to answer. He explained the term "*mijo*", "*mija*" as slang. He recognized that it should be "*mi hija,*" separating the two /i/ sounds, but that Mexicans contract that to form the word "*mija*."

> **(8) Student B**: [0:51:54] I remember for *mi hija* it was like *mija*.
> **Teacher**: (laughs)
> **Student N**: That's another regional term. […] It's more like slang. *Mi hija* is the correct pronunciation, but like I said, Mexicans get lazy so we say "*mija*", just combine the words.
> **Student X**: I always heard "*mija*." What is that? Like little daughter?
> **Student N**: It's like my daughter or my son.

The instructor allowed the heritage speaker to explain and only affirmed his answer but did not engage in further explanations in an attempt not to confuse the other beginner Spanish students. However, this points out how ingrained the Hispanic identity is in those with at least one Hispanic parent, such as the case of Student N. Although his Spanish speaking proficiency was low, he could understand the spoken language and its regionalisms.

4.4.2 Turn-taking

In the Elementary I hybrid classes, there were not many turn-taking instances between students. The interaction was mainly hierarchical, initiated by the instructor through questions, with the student responding with short answers. However, the samples below illustrate how turn-taking occurred in the classes observed.

The interaction below took place in the F2F Hybrid Elementary I class, in the middle of the semester (file IMG_2273), when students were reviewing for the exam. The instructor engaged each student by giving him/her the opportunity to respond to a question directed to him/her. In this conversation, the teacher looked at how students used the verb *estar* in context to describe feelings. Students first had these questions in a review package that the instructor distributed ahead of class time. Secondly, the instructor gave them time to work on their answers in pairs before eliciting answers.

In the transcript, pauses were marked by how many seconds passed from the moment the question was asked till it was answered. Pauses of more than two seconds were marked because they represented more than the normal time of understanding a question and creating an answer. Although two seconds may be too short in a real-time conversation, given that students had time to figure out their answers both individually and in conversation, they should have had a mastery of their answers when elicited. Lines were numbered in this interaction because of its length.

This was a conversation that the instructor initiated. Although she asked students to work in pairs, the majority worked individually. We should note that the instructor did not seek information through a typical question: "*¿Cómo estás a la medianoche?"* but instead pointed to the exercise number, calling out a student's name. Later, she even changed the question and asked *¿Cómo te sientes?* rather than *¿Cómo estás?,* although the purpose of the exercise was to use one

of the Spanish verbs *to be (estar)* in context. Despite this change, students understood what they needed to answer and used *estar* in their answers.

Students waited patiently for the instructor to address them rather than offer the information by raising their hands. It was a typical manner of acting in the observed language classes. The instructor moved from bench to bench to be closer to the student to whom she addressed the question, as seen in example (9) below:

Example (9):

1. **Teacher**: [0:15:03] *¿Listos? Ok, número uno*, M.
2. **Student M**: *Estoy muy cansado a la medianoche.*
3. %com: The teacher does not correct the lack of gender agreement. Since it is a female student, it should have been *cansada.*
4. **Teacher**: *Muy bien. Número dos*, W.
5. **Student W**: (0.6) I don't know.
6. **Teacher**: *Si tu estas con una persona especial. ¿Cómo te sientes: triste, feliz, nervioso, enojado, contento?* (0.3) If you are with someone special to you.
7. **Student W**: *Contento?*
8. **Teacher**: *Contento. Exactamente. J, número tres. En clase, ¿cómo te sientes en clase?*
9. **Student JM**: Mmm, *estoy en clase ¿aburrido?*
10. %com: The word order is not right, but the instructor does not correct him.
11. **Teacher**: *¿Aburrido?* I hope it's not in my class. Mmmm.
12. **Student JM**: *No, no, no*.
13. **Teacher**: Ok, *con Alejandro Sanz*, C. You know, with a celebrity, *¿cómo te sientes?*
14. **Student C**: *Estoy muy aburrido con Alejandro Sanz.*
15. %com: mechanical voice.
16. **Teacher**: Ok, *está bien.*
17. %com: They both laugh.

In the conversation with student W (starting line 4), we noticed that the student was not able to answer the question. First, he hesitated, then waited, and finally admitted in English, "I don't know." (line 5). He did not resort to the Spanish saying, "*No sé*." The instructor tried to elicit an answer by giving the student more context and examples of different adjectives he could use. However, before allowing the student to answer in Spanish, she explained it further in English: "If

you are with someone special to you." (line 6). The student hesitatingly answered "contento" by raising his intonation, showing his uncertainty. The instructor then validated his correct choice.

Student C's choice of adjective *aburrido* when referring to a celebrity raises the question of whether he understood the context or, rather, chose an adjective he was familiar with that might work in many other contexts. The instructor did not follow up on whether he felt this way because he did not like the singer or did not understand the question, but rather laughed softly and moved on.

Example (10) presents the continuation of the conversation, in which the instructor was still in control of the conversation. However, we notice that there was hardly any mix of Spanish and English as in previous conversations, but rather a sustained use of the Spanish language.

Example (10):

1. **Teacher**: *Número cinco, K. Cuando hay mucho trabajo, ¿cómo te sientes? Tienes mucho trabajo.* You have a lot to do, a lot of work. *¿Cómo te sientes?*
2. **Student K**: (0.3) *¿Ocupado?*
3. %com: The student hesitates and does not use the verb *estar*. She uses the English sound of /jʊ/ rather than the Spanish /u/
4. **Teacher**: *Me siento ocupado. O estoy ocupada. Mhm. Samantha, número seis. En una ciudad grande.*
5. %com: The teacher indirectly corrects the agreement because the student is female and there should be an agreement between the noun and adjective.
6. **Student S**: *Estoy nerviosa.*
7. **Teacher**: *Estoy nerviosa. Perfecto. J, número siete, ajá. En el hospital.*
8. **Student JF**: *Estoy enferma.*
9. **Teacher**: *Estoy enferma. E, eee, lejos de la familia.*
10. **Student E**: *Estoy contenta.*
11. **Teacher**: *Contenta, ok. Exacto, porque tú eres mujer, ¿verdad? Contenta. Excelente.*

There was only one instance where the answer seemed not to match the question, and that was when the instructor asked a student how she felt far from her family. When she said she was

happy, it made you wonder whether she understood the question. The instructor did not follow up on that but rather pointed to the good agreement between the speaker and the adjective form.

Just as in previous conversations, students waited to be invited to speak. They were usually called upon and did not normally interfere in conversation unless the teacher addressed them. Although this is not what happens in real conversation, it did offer them stability and clarity as to what was expected of them at this initial stage of learning. However, students should be encouraged to move from this cold call technique to a group dynamic where they could learn how to engage in turn-taking in Spanish.

Example (11) portrayed two students conversing about their favorite pastimes during the F2F Elementary Spanish hybrid class (File IMG_5017). Student C was a heritage speaker, while the other was a student who took one of the hybrid Spanish courses the first semester on Zoom, and was now back in the F2F hybrid class:

Example (11):

1. **Student M** [00:50] *¿Vas a un partido?*
2. **Student C** [00:53] *Sí, vamos a veces vamos al parque, o a la playa. ¿Tú vas a ir a una discoteca con los amigos?*
3. **Student M** [01:10] *No.*
4. **Student C** [01:12] *Yo tampoco. Yo nunca voy a la discoteca.* It's kind of annoying, and I don't drink.
5. **Student M** [01:24] Oh, you're not twenty-one yet.
6. **Student C** [01:31] I'm not gonna even start.
7. **Student M** [01:35] No?
8. **Student C** [01:36] No. Not even a little bit. *¿Te gusta ir a los conciertos de música rock?*
9. **Student M** [01:45] *Sí.*
10. **Student C** [01:51] I've only been to classical music concerts. So, like choir. My dad likes to take us sometime because he's a musician. He plays a lot of stuff, mainly like brass instruments. He was a director. Now he works in a factory making instruments. He likes building them, he knows how to fix pianos, too.
11. **Student M** [02:50] Awesome.
12. %com: Another group asks for help and the teacher goes to discuss with them.
13. **Student C** [02:55] *¿Ves películas extranjeras?*
14. %com: They speak in English for one minute.

15. **Student M** [03:18] So, how do you say sometimes?
16. **Student C** [03:21] *Algun vez?* Or *a veces.* Yeah, sometimes. *Siempre* is always, *nunca* is never and *a veces* I think that's sometimes.
17. **Student M** [03:44] Ok, *gracias*.

Although they started in Spanish, notice how the heritage speaker reverted to English in line 4 when she explained why she never went to the disco. This reverted the conversation to English for three lines, but then student C refocused on the activity and went back to Spanish, which shows how she often functioned at home. Student M did not speak many words in Spanish but rather kept the simple answers *Sí* or *No,* showing that she did not feel ready to engage in a deeper discussion in Spanish yet. They re-engaged in an English conversation of one minute that was not transcribed here about different movies they enjoyed watching while they should have been speaking in Spanish. This could be the influence of the instructor who often switches from Spanish to English and vice versa.

Gestures are often a natural way of negotiating meaning, especially in beginner language classes. Example (12) presented an instant when the instructor used gestures to help a student continue the conversation:

(12) Teacher [00:37:54] *Muy, muy bien. Excelente* W and M. *Muy, muy bien.* Let me ask, this is for everybody. *¿Por qué quiere agua fría, Silvia? ¿Por qué quiere agua fría? (.) Ella tiene frío o tiene calor?*
%com: Teacher uses gestures.
Student [00:38:14] *Calor.*
Teacher [00:38:16] *Tiene mucho calor, mucho calor, mucho calor. ¿De qué tiene ganas Patricio y por qué? ¿De qué tiene ganas Patricio? (..) ¿Qué quiere tomar Patricio? C.? ¿Qué tiene ganas Patricio? ¿De qué tiene ganas?* (….)
Student [00:38:50] *¿Tomar café?*
Teacher [00:38:52] *¿Por qué?*
Student [00:39:02] Ammm (…) *¿Algo de sueño?*
Teacher [00:39:04] Mhm. *Porque tiene sueño, ¿verdad?*

Once the instructor showed what *calor* versus *frío* means, the student understood and was able to continue the conversation. When the student said, "*algo de sueño,*" he continued the flow of conversation in Spanish without reverting to English, which his classmates often did.

4.4.3 Repair

Repair in conversation could be triggered directly or indirectly. The instructor used indirect repair, especially in Elementary I courses, but moved toward more direct repair as concepts were explained in Elementary II.

Here is a conversation in Elementary I Zoom II where the instructor used the indirect repair approach through questions to help the student figure out the answer:

> **(13) Student:** [01:01:29] *¿Dónde estás tu tarea?*
> %com: Hesitation before *tu*.
> **Teacher:** [01:01:32] *Ajá. ¿Es dónde estás o dónde está tu tarea?*
> **Student**: *Estás* 'cause they use *tu*.
> **Teacher**: But this *tu* doesn't have an accent. So is your, ok?
> **Student**: Ok.
> **Teacher**: [01:02:00] Your homework. And we're talking about it. So, it's *la tarea*. Or *ella*.
> **Student:** [01:02:03] *¿Dónde es…* so *está* instead of *estás*?

Although the student reached the right form, he still seemed confused between the possessive *tu* (your) and the subject pronoun (*tú*), but learning had occurred. When students figure out answers on their own, they have the potential to remember such learning moments.

In this conversation in Elementary Spanish II (example (14) extracted from file img_5017), the instructor asked students to talk about their routine. One of the students used the formal *Usted* verb form instead of the informal *tú* form:

> **(14) Teacher** [00:08:30] […] *A ver*, ask a question to N.
> **Student R** [00:08:40] *¿Sale con los amigos los domingos?*
> **Teacher** [00:08:45] Yes, if you want to use the form *Usted*. But with a classmate, use *tú*.
> **Student R** [00:08:50] *¿Oh, sales con los amigos los domingos?*

When the instructor pointed out the register mistake, the student immediately understood and self-corrected. This time, a direct repair approach was chosen.

Although the instructor often initiated repair to address a mistake a student made explicitly, there were moments when students also sought clarifications about some implicit knowledge of Spanish acquired previously. Here are two interactions, both taking place in the Hybrid II Zoom section (file 11/08/2018), when students searched to clarify elements they vaguely remembered from previous Spanish classes.

The first one was during a practice with the conjugation of the verb *hacer*:

> **(15) Student D:** [00:32:05] I have a question about that.
> **Teacher:** [00:32:07] Go ahead.
> **Student D:** [00:32:08] So, I remember in high school like in my Spanish class, I always remember the phrase *Hace^ muy frío*, so like it's very cold. So, *hace* and *hacer* are separate. That's not.
> %com: Student pronounces H.
> **Teacher:** [00:32:24] The phrase (..) *hace mucho frío*. *Es* yeah, is like a phrase that we can use when is very cold. It's kind like the same word, but yeah, let's think like that, it's two different words. *Hacer* like to do or to make and *hace.*
> **Student D**: It is, maybe.
> **Teacher**: It's a phrase, let's keep in mind as a phrase. *Hace mucho frío*.

The student remembered using the verb *hacer* with a different meaning than the teacher presented in class as "to do" or "to make." Since her question was for a more advanced level, the instructor did not attempt to explain too much, probably not to confuse the rest of the beginner students. The student understood that in the context of weather, *hacer* is linked to a "to be" English expression: "It is cold" (*hace mucho frío*). Therefore, the instructor encouraged the student to memorize it as a phrase. In this case, whether the repair had occurred was questionable, which points to the dilemma of having slightly more advanced foreign language learners combined with true beginners.

In a second instance in the same class, another student exposed to Spanish before this beginner class had a question about the verb *estar*, as seen in example (16):

> **(16) Student R:** [00:51:16.43] Yeah, *profesora* if I'm understanding it correctly, then *estar* is used for kind of a temporary condition?
> **Teacher:** [00:51:30] Yes, yeah.
> **Student R:** [00:51:33] In a location temporarily? Or you are sad temporarily. Something like that? The other "to be" would be permanent?
> **Teacher R:** [00:51:44] Exactly, R. Oh, that's a great way to look at it. Because when we're talking about *ser* is more like permanent things. Um.
> **Student:** [00:51:53] So, would I… I'm confused a little bit. So, would I say *estoy* or would I say *soy*?
> **Teacher**: *Soy.*
> **Student R**: *Soy viejo*.
> **Teacher:** [00:52:10.06] It's gonna depend. Let's say if we are talking about that my car is old *está viejo*. And I need a new one. Or we could say *soy viejo* like I'm very old. It's going to depend a little bit, but in general you use *ser* for something and *estar* for something. It's not like you can use either of them 95% of the time. You do not either, you just use one.
> **Student R:** [00:52:45] Ok. Thank you.

The student had in his implicit memory a common explanation about how to differentiate between *ser* and *estar*, the former being connected to permanent things and the latter to temporary elements. Although this dichotomy does not fully explain the differences, and other expressions do not abide by the rule, it is common for beginner Spanish lessons. However, the instructor chose to approach the teaching of the concept from a different angle, which made the student question whether his understanding was correct. His question was again for a more advanced level of Spanish, and the instructor's explanation did not seem to fully explain the differences since "to be old" does not seem so temporary to him. Nevertheless, the student politely accepted the explanation without going into more detail.

The same dilemma appeared later in a practice exercise with the same student who tried to use *estar* connected with location, which would be correct. However, in the sentence, the meaning

was more like "to occur," which relates to *ser*. In example (17), the instructor told the student that both choices were correct, but as a native speaker, she would rather use *ser*:

(17) Student R: [01:13:20] *La cena es a las siete y.*
Teacher: [01:13:24] Ok. *Y* R, blank *en el apartamento de Ricardo*.
Student R: [01:13:34] *Y ¿está en el apartamento de Ricardo?*
Teacher: [01:13:38] *Está en el apartamento de Ricardo*. Could be *es* or *está* in that case. *A ver. Y está en el apartamento de Ricardo. Y es en el apartamento de Ricardo.* Um. It could be *está en el apartamento o es*. I would go for *es* ok? But I understand it could be *está* too. I'm gonna go for *es*.

In this next conversation in the same Elementary II class, heritage student C asked for help with an assignment where students had to change a sentence from present to past tense and use the direct object pronoun. As seen in the example (18) below, the student had difficulty understanding the preterit tense, especially because of having a feel for the language, and the same sentence in other contexts could be used with a different tense.

(18) Teacher: [0:09:50] According to the questions, it says: *Siempre puedo encontrar a la entrenadora en el gimnasio, pero ayer*, you have to use *puedo* in past tense.
Student C: [0:10:06] Oh, *¿yo podría?*
Teacher: [0:10:07] No, past tense. You have to use them all in past tense. Here is present tense, you have to use the same verb. That's what we're practicing.
%com: Teacher shows her the textbook.
Student C: [0:10:22] *¿Pude*?
Teacher: [0:10:25] Mhm, *ayer no pude encontrarla*.
Student C: Ok.
Teacher: *Ayer no pude encontrarla.* Or *Pero ayer no pude encontrar a la entrenadora.*
Student C: So, *¿no tenieron noticias?*
Teacher: [0:10:46] *No tuvieron.* Let me see. *Todos los días tenemos. Tener.* (0.10) *Ayer no las tuvimos.* This one is in the first *preterito* that we have in this book. *Ajá, no las tuvimos.*
%com: Teacher points to the textbook.
Student C: Ok.
Teacher: [0:11:29] So you have to use all of those verbs *en preterito.*
Student C: Yeah, It's hard because I can't flip between the pages very quickly, I have to like search for them.
Teacher: [0:11:36] Yeah, I understand. Maybe we can put that in front of you so you guys can see it.
Student C [0:11:50] It's a very tiny screen. So, it's hard.
%com: Student uses an e-book from her phone.

The instructor tried to repair the student's knowledge by first pointing to the tense: "No, past tense […] that's what we're practicing." The student then looked at the book and used the correct tense. Then the student showed that she still has not understood the irregular preterit forms because she used the incorrect form *tenieron* instead of *tuvieron*. Her error in the verb form came from overgeneralizing, thinking that *tener* could be conjugated as a regular verb. This time, the instructor used a direct repair approach, asking the student to use the textbook. The student, who used the e-textbook on her phone, expressed the frustration of not being able to see the forms clearly on her screen and, therefore, not doing the exercise well.

In example (19), the instructor repaired in a direct manner, but she did so in a manner that felt indirect:

> **(19) Teacher**: [0:25:20] *Perfecto, excelente. Número tres, M.*
> **Student MF**: So I just, I, for this one, I kind of wanted to say like they told me, my parents told me that, too. So I said *Mis padres los* dijeron no asistían* a los partidos*. Is that right?
> %com: Student keeps reading j as in jaguar; strong accent; not good direct object use; double conjugation.
> **Teacher:** [0:25:46] Oh, ok. Let me read the statement first: *Todos los días mis padres quieren asistir a los partidos, pero ayer.*
> **Student MF**: I said *Mis padres los* dijeron no asistían* a los partidos*. Does that make sense?
> **Teacher:** [0:26:03] Could be that *mis padres me dijeron*, they told me.
> **Student**: Oh, yeah.
> **Teacher:** [0:26:08] *Me dijeron*, no, the word *asistir, me dijeron que no*, it's a little bit more complicated. But you can say *mis padres me dijeron que no asista*.
> %com: Instructor does not explain it is subjunctive, since it is too early for students to know.
> **Student MF**: Ok.
> **Teacher:** [0:26:22] Or, the easiest way is *Pero ayer no quisieron asistir*, using the same words that we have, just a little bit different, could be too.

Although the student's answer was wrong because he used double conjugation and the wrong indirect object pronoun, the instructor broached the correction with the hedge "could be," as if to lessen the impact of the correction and boost the student's confidence. This was also a

returning student from the Hybrid Elementary Zoom I section struggling with some grammar concepts but working hard to understand them and do better. Although the student was still confused, the instructor offered the solution: "The easiest way is." However, this made the listener wonder if learning did occur in this instance. While the hedge can boost confidence in language repair, it would have been better for the student to be helped to build the sentence himself.

Although there were many instances of repair throughout the classes observed, the samples above indicate how repair occurred either directly, indirectly, or not at all, depending on the instructor's choice.

4.4.4 Boundaries

Boundaries refer to the way conversations are opened or ended. Normally, the instructor was the one to initiate and close conversations in the classes observed, and students were comfortable with that style.

Example (20) revealed how the instructor would start her class. This excerpt was from the F2F Elementary II Hybrid course (file img_2330):

Example (20):

1. **Teacher**: So, let's start. *Buenos días.*
2. **Students**: *Buenos días.*
3. **Teacher**: *¿Cómo están?*
4. **Students**: *Bien*.
5. **Teacher**: *Buenos días, T.*
6. **Student T**: *Buenos días.*
7. **Teacher**: *¿Cómo estuvo el fin de semana?*
8. **Student T**: How was your weekend?
9. **Teacher**: [nods]
10. **Student**: *Bien*.
11. **Teacher**: *Bien. ¿Sí, B.? ¿Bien?*
12. **Student B**: *Más o menos.*
13. **Teacher**: *T. ¿Cómo estuvo tu fin de semana?*
14. **Student T**: *Bien.*
15. **Teacher**: *R?*

16.**Student R**: *Bien ocupado*.
17.**Teacher**: *Bien ocupado.* Were you working on taxes? *¿Impuestos? ¿Muchos impuestos?*
18.**Student R**: *Sí.*
19.%com: Teacher laughs.
20.**Teacher**: *Muy bien. M. ¿cómo estuvo tu fin de semana?*
21.**Student M**: *Bien.*
22.**Teacher**: *¿Trabajaste?*
23.**Student M**: Did I work?
24.**Teacher**: *Sí.*
25.**Student M**: Yeah, I worked Friday, Saturday and yesterday.
*26.***Teacher**: *Mi madre, ¿todo el fin de semana. N?*
27.**Student N**: *Así, así.*

Although students should be able to sustain a simple conversation about their weekend activities by the time they are in Elementary Spanish II, they still seemed to have difficulty. While some had internalized typical answers such as *Así, así*, or *Bien*, others resorted to English to check whether they understood the question: "How was your weekend?" (line 8) or "Did I work?" (line 23). Student MF, previously enrolled in the Elementary I - Hybrid Zoom II section, preferred to continue in English. The instructor made no effort to redirect him to Spanish, although the student could answer with a little nudging fully in Spanish. This may reveal that the Spanish oral proficiency was not as high as expected at this level in the middle of the second semester of Spanish.

Although the instructor initiated the beginning of class conversations, there were a few instances when other students opened them. Example (21) presented how an older student, older than the instructor, politely asked permission to initiate a conversation right before class started (Elementary Zoom I, File 11/1).

(21) Student R [0:00:04]: *Profesora.*
Teacher: *Dígame,* R.
Student R: *Antes de* we start class, I just have a quick comment for my fellow students. And I had to look this up in Spanish, 'cause I didn't know the Spanish. *Recuerda votar el lunes.*
Teacher: *Muy bien, R.*
Student R: Remember to vote on Tuesday.

Teacher: Yes, we have to. All of us. It is our duty to our country. *Gracias, R. Muy bien.*

Student R initiated the conversation in Spanish, but because he had a hard time continuing, he reverted to English. This type of Spanglish (a mix of Spanish and English) was often used by the instructor to explain different grammatical elements in class, therefore, students did not have a sustained level of expression only in Spanish.

When he presented the sentence in Spanish, he made a mistake in the days of the week saying Monday, when he meant Tuesday, and the teacher did not notice the lapse. She only used Spanish to give him positive feedback and thank him. However, we noted his confidence and desire to use Spanish, as well as to go beyond the assigned vocabulary.

Conversation initiation did not happen only at the beginning of classes, but also in the middle after a group or individual activity. The instructor would normally re-open the conversation using expressions such as "*Listos.*" Other times, she would refer to the page and exercise number, such as in example (22) from the Elementary Spanish II class (file 04/03):

(22) Teacher: [16:16] Ok. *Vamos a ver. Número (.) Aplicación siete veintidós. Una superestrella está en Puerto Rico.* So, let's start reading. Let's start with B. Read, *Lee la primera oración* and tell us if you underlined something on that.

Often, instructions would be given both in English and Spanish. Here is another example (23) from the Hybrid Zoom I class:

(23) Teacher: [00:39:55.40] *Bueno*. Ok. *En* this *actividad*. *Ajá*. Let me start with T. We have *número uno* over here. We have several verbs over here. They are already conjugated for us either *Hacer o ir*. So *número uno* says ¿blank *tú la tarea?* Which of these will you choose to complete that question?

Class time would close with a mixture of Spanish and English, such as in example (24) from the F2F Hybrid Elementary I.

(24) Teacher: [01:00:13] *Ok, nos vemos el jueves*, and remember to go over your module for this week before coming to class. *Nos vemos el jueves. Feliz tarde.*

In conclusion, boundaries were often marked by a mix of Spanish and English, to help students ease into their activities.

All these samples of interaction during class reveal how students and their instructor communicated, but they did not represent an assessment tool. They just showed how learning takes place, how students negotiated meaning, reverting often to English, and how they clarified ideas about their identity.

4.5 General Analysis of Hybrid Class Oral Assessments

For a more summative type of evaluation of students' oral proficiency, end-of-the-semester interviews and WebQuest class presentations were selected, and a close analysis was performed to check for speaking proficiency levels.

First, interviews were analyzed using the rubric found in the Methodology chapter (Table 14) based on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview guidelines and the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. Samples of student interviews can be seen in Appendix D. Based on the rubric, Table 20 presents how many students scored at what level:

Table 20.

Results based on ACTFL OPI Standards

	Hybrid Zoom I	**Hybrid Zoom II**	**Total**
Novice High	0	0	0
Novice Mid	4	7	11
Novice Low	1	2	3

By the end of the first semester of a foreign language, students are expected to test mainly at a Novice Mid-level. Based on the rubric, students met the expectations since approximately 79% scored at the Novice Mid-level and 21% at the Novice Low level. However, interviews were not

conducted in an Oral Proficiency Interview format; rather, students were asked short questions and had to repeat a memorized answer.

Therefore, an analysis of the vocabulary and grammatical elements tested was performed to see how comprehensive these interviews were, and whether they were challenging the students to reveal the true knowledge of the Spanish they had acquired (see Table 21).

Table 21.

Frequency of Class Content in Interviews

	Checklist	Frequency in Interviews		
		Zoom I	**Zoom II**	**Total**
Vocabulary	Introductions (Spelling name)	1	5	6
	Personal descriptions (birthday, origin)	4	5	9
	Dates (days, numbers, months)	3	7	10
	Seasons	1	1	2
	Telling time	2	2	4
	Interrogative words	1	0	1
	Colors	3	2	5
	Classroom objects	1	3	4
	School subjects	1	2	3
	Hobbies & Preferences	6	7	13
	Family relations and descriptions	5	7	12
	Routine	0	1	1
Grammar	Present tense verb conjugation			
	- Regular verbs	2	6	8
	- Stem-changing verbs	0	1	1
	- Other (ir, hacer, tener)	1	2	3
	Gustar and similar verbs	1	5	6
	Expressions with Tener	1	2	3
	Determiners and Adjectives			
	- Gender/number agreement	4	3	7
	- Possessive Adjectives	3	3	6
	- Demonstrative adjectives	0	0	0
	Direct objects	0	0	0
	Ser vs. estar	4	2	6

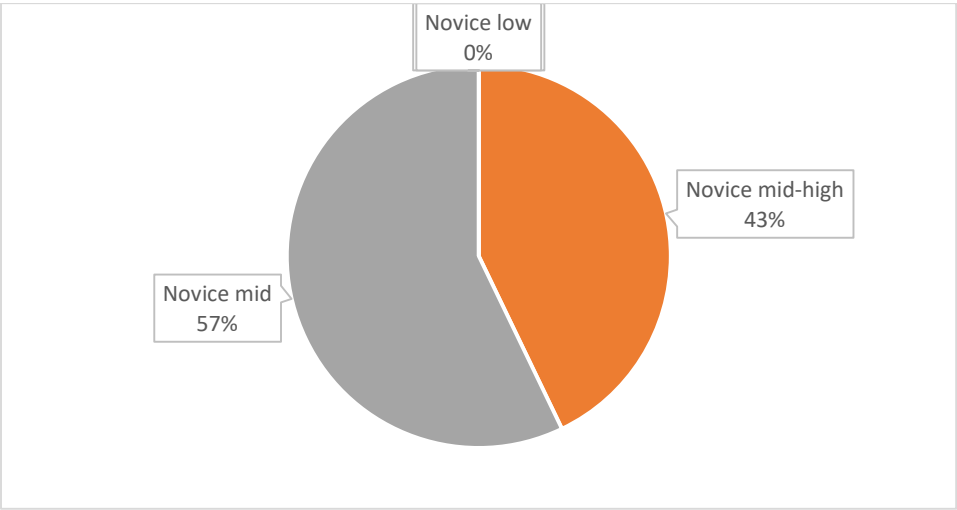
As observed, the most common topics covered were introductions, dates, which included holidays, preferences, and descriptions of themselves or their families. When looking at the

grammatical structures encountered, the focus was mainly on regular verbs, with hardly any irregular verbs. There were also many instances where students were given opportunities to use other structures, such as adjective agreements, possessive adjectives, and the verb "to be" in different contexts. However, these elements were not purposefully tested but rather just appeared during the interviews. Therefore, conversations remained at a Novice Low to a slightly Mid-level most of the time.

For the WebQuest presentations performed in the hybrid Elementary II section, the analysis used the Presentational Communication Rubric (see Figure 16) based on ACTFL standards. It revealed that most students remained at a novice-mid level. Four students were novice-mid, while the others were between mid and high. No student reached the novice high level.

Figure 16.

Presentational Communication Rubric Results



One novice mid-high student was a heritage speaker who could speak quite well but still struggled to remember simple words such as *quinientos*, *enero*, and mixed noun gender in cases such as "*el temperatura máximo*" or "*muchos playas*." At the same time, she was able to create native-like structures, mainly as in the example below where she used diminutives such as *ahorita*

and *poquito*: "*El tiempo allí ahorita está nublado y fresco. Hay un poquito de viento y (.) es (..) sí, (..) es como (..) casi mismo que aquí.*"

The other student who seemed close to the novice high level, but not quite, was student R who was enrolled in both Hybrid Spanish I and II and had previous Spanish experience. His presentation was well articulated, with good pronunciation, but he read the whole time and did not engage in a free discussion about his topic. He hardly mixed any English words during his presentation, but some structures were still emerging, such as adjective agreement, numbers, and superlatives, as seen in example (25).

> **(25) Student R**: *"La temperatura alta normal es noventa* Farenheit *en julio o agasto^. La temperatura baja normal* es sesenta y cinco* Farenheit *en enero o febrero. La más máxima* temperatura de alguna vez* fue cientos* y dos en julio y la más mínima fue cuarenta y uno en inero^.* […] *Vamos a usar^ camisetas todos los días. La* Havana^ *es la ciudad más cara de Cuba pero no es caro* como las ciudades del Norteamericana*.*

Because students mixed some English in their presentations, a percentage analysis was performed to see how much Spanish students spoke during their presentations, as seen in Table 22.

Table 22.

Percentage of Spanish Used in WebQuests

Student Presentations	**Spanish Words Students Used**	**Percentage**
Webquest 1	244 words in Spanish out of 458 total	53%
Webquest 2	171 words in Spanish out of 437 total	39%
Webquest 3	363 words in Spanish out of 495 total	73%
Webquest 4	395 words in Spanish out of 502 total	79%
Webquest 5	498 words in Spanish out of 663 total	75%

The first two WebQuests have a lower percentage because presenters translated what they were saying into Spanish rather than keeping a steady pace only in Spanish. For the last three

WebQuests, there were mainly hesitations and very few instances of translations. There were several instances where students could not remember a phrase or expression in Spanish and asked for their instructor's help, but otherwise, they mainly spoke in Spanish. The last presentation was longer because it was performed only in front of the instructor and not the entire class. Therefore, the student did not need to translate, and the instructor also offered more help with pronunciation issues and expressions.

4.6. Error Analysis of Oral Assessments

Because the general analysis of the student interviews did not reveal clear details about what students have assimilated during the semester, an error analysis was conducted. First, the pilot study results are presented, and then the results of the current study.

4.6.1 Error Analysis of the Pilot Study Student Interviews

For Elementary Spanish II, the instructor did not conduct end-of-the-semester interviews, relying more on written assessments. Because it is important to analyze what students have learned at the end of a second semester of Spanish, pilot study results were incorporated into the analysis. In this pilot study, interviews were conducted in a Hybrid Elementary Spanish II class taught on Zoom a year before this study, at the same community college, with the researcher as the instructor. The focus of this study was the acquisition of the Spanish verb tense system.

Based on the eight interviews, the tense that students were the most comfortable with was the present tense. Some were comfortable using the past tense (preterit more than imperfect), whereas all speakers omitted the future tense. Figure 17 presents the number of times the tenses were used correctly during the interview.

Figure 17.

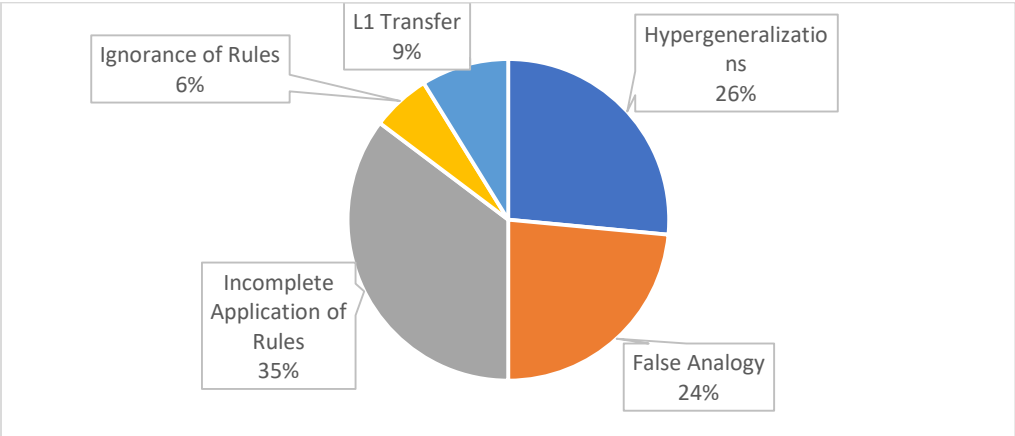
Correct vs. Incorrect Verb Tense Use

It was clear by looking at the above graph that students were in the process of mastering the Spanish present tense, but they were still confused about its forms. It is important to note that the only heritage speaker present in the study used nine of the twenty correct forms of the present tense and half of the past tense forms, although with some hesitancy.

As for the category of errors encountered, the majority arose from an incomplete application of rules, followed by hyper generalizations and false analogies. It was surprising to note the few errors linked to interlanguage (see Figure 18).

Figure 18.

Error Cause in Verb Tenses



When analyzing the type of errors made in the use of the present tense, we noticed that the most common one was the use of the 3rd person for 1st person, which represents an intralingual error (an incomplete application of the rule which states that Spanish verbs need to be conjugated), and that it happened with irregular verbs such as *ir*, as seen in example (26):

(26) Teacher*: ¿Cómo es tu rutina diaria?*
Student J*: … Levanto mi cama y… desayuno… y va a escuela… y va a mi casa…*

Some students started using the regular 1st person form, but they did not have a sustained use, and the form broke, such as in example (27), where the person changed tenses: present – past – present. This may represent an interference error where the students literally translated "I put" as a past tense "me puse," followed by an intralingual error ("lleva" instead of "llevo"):

(27) Student H2*: Me despierto a las cinco y media de mañana y me puse a la … a mis scrubs para el trabajo y llevar… to take.. lleva mi perro a afuera.*

Another student used the non-finite form of the infinitive instead of the 1st person finite form, as noticed in example (28). This may be an interference error since the base form of the verb is used in English to express first-person actions without any flexional ending:

(28) Teacher*: Muy trabajadora. Y cuéntame un poco de tu rutina, ¿qué haces en un día?*
Student M*: Des…. Des… Desucho y levanto y ma… me maquillar … I cannot speak about this…*
Teacher*: Está bien*
Student M*: Maquillo Y como la desayuno y ir a la escuela*

There were also some instances where the verb was completely missing from the structure: "*Mi familia loca*" instead of "*Mi familia está loca,*" which indicated a struggle at the syntactical level, the student omitting the nucleus of the verbal syntagma despite the similar structure in English. Another error at the syntactic level was when the student made a false analogy, considering that the verb *ser* is always followed by an adjective, disregarding the instances where

another speech part, such as a noun or a verb, can follow it. The correct structure should have been, "*Mi plan es trabajar.*"

The oral interview also focused on reflexive constructions since they were an important part of the Spanish curriculum, and students learned how to talk about their routines. These pronominal verbs required added abstract mapping since students had to focus not only on the flexional suffix when conjugating the verb but also on the reflexive pronouns. As the name points out, reflexive verbs express an action that the subject performs on itself. Semantically, we consider that the verb has the same agent and patient. It represents a challenging structure, especially for English learners, since they must pay attention to the place of the pronoun, the verb form, and the meaning of verbs. For example, they cannot lexically equate "self" with a reflexive pronoun in Spanish. (i.e., I take a shower = *Me ducho*).

When looking at the number of correct uses of reflexives, we noticed that the students were in the process of acquiring the structure but were still struggling with it. In example (29), the student started by using the correct structure of the reflexive but not the right verb form. After she self-corrected, she was able to produce a correct structure:

> **(29) Student R**: *A… rutina… A…. cada día me levanta a las seis- siete…. Levanto… me levanto a las siete y… me cepillo los dientes y mi cabella …. Y…. camio… camino con mi perro cada día.*

In another student's case (30), the reflexive was still a dormant structure. He could produce it well in form-focused activities but not in regular conversation. The error was that of a false analogy, the learner using the possessive determinant *mi* instead of the reflexive pronoun *me*. Although the construction may be grammatical, it is not logical in the context of the conversation:

> **(30) Teacher**: *¿Cómo es tu rutina diaria?*
> **Student J**: *… Levanto mi cama y… desayuno… y va a escuela… y va a mi casa…*

Several questions focused on the use of the past tense as well. Compared to the use of the present tense, there were only a few instances of the correct use of the past tense, and when asked about how they spent their Spring holiday, two of them avoided the use of the past tense altogether. It was obvious that less teaching time was dedicated to the past tense, and that the structure was still not clearly mapped in the students' minds. It was even more challenging since students also need to learn to differentiate between imperfect and preterit tenses in Spanish.

One student self-corrected while processing the tense by double checking the meaning using English, showing that he was aware of the rules and was in the process of acquiring them (see example 31):

> **(31) Teacher**: *Sí. ¿Qué hiciste durante la vacación de primavera?*
> **Student M**: So, am I going on vacation in the Spring?
> **Teacher**: *No. ¿Qué hiciste?*
> **Student M**: Oh, when did I go on vacation? *No…*
> **Teacher**: *¿No? ¿No tuviste vacación de primavera?*
> **Student M**: *Yo trabajo… trabajé mucho* in the Y… in the YMCA.

As for the past tense errors, the most common one was the use of the 3rd person instead of the 1st person, an interlingual error portrayed in example (32).

> **(32) Student H**: *Muchas…. Yo… fue mi novio casa por la Navidad de la mañana… Y entonces de la tarde fue a mi abuelas.*

In example (33), although the verb form and tense were correct, the type of verb used was wrong. The student should have used *ser* instead of *estar*. It may be an interference error since in English, only one verb is used for "to be," whereas, in Spanish, there are two.

> **(33) Teacher**: *Muy bien. ¿Qué hacías cuando eras chiquito, pequeño… qué hacías?*
> **Student J**: *Estaba atlético, y más o menos inteligente.*

The one that had the most consistent tense use was the heritage speaker (see example 34). However, there was an agreement error when using an expression that suggested collectivity:

"estaban como un campo de niños." Instead of using the verb "*haber*," she used a literal translation with the verb "*estar*." She also mixed Spanish with English (a type of Spanglish), sometimes struggling to maintain a sustained conversation in Spanish. It pointed towards an unstable, residual bilingualism. An interesting fact about this heritage speaker was the fossilization of structures that were not solved through instruction, and it revealed again the need for sections focused only on Hispanic heritage speakers who could work on specific structures they struggle with. Even when telling the story, the recount was full of hesitations, interruptions, and interspersed with English words:

(34) Teacher*: Cuéntame un día interesante de tu vida.*
Student D*: …*
Teacher*: Algo que te pasó en el pasado, que te marcó.*
Student D*: ….* Sorry*….Fui para… Un día fui en vacaciones a Florida y* I was*… estaban como un campo de niños y …. Estaba jugando con mis amigos que conocí allí y aa…. como un avión pasó por la…. Por el cielo… y tenía como una …* like this*…* like fun *…. Una cosa curiosa … no sé como explinar, explicarlo … curiosa…*
Teacher*: Ajá, algo curioso… ¿Y se rieron mucho?*
Student D*: Sí.*

The question about the future summer plans was present only in five of the interviews. However, a few of the errors were analyzed to check whether the students interviewed understood the future tense. Interestingly, when asked about summer plans, not even one used the entire periphrastic structure (*ir* + *a* + infinitive) but rather used the infinitive alone without the auxiliary *ir,* as noticed in example (35). The lack of use of the future tense may be because it was taught in the Fall semester and used sporadically during the Spring semester.

(35) Teacher*: ¿Qué vas a hacer?*
Student M*: A… visitar Chicago, y ir a la playa,* too.
Teacher*: Ok, muy bien. ¿Qué planes tienes para el verano? ¿Qué vas a hacer durante el verano?*
Student J*: Trabajar mucho. Y …* hopefully *…. Viaje.*

The omission of the future tense may be explained as a regression since students focused more on the past tenses before the interview, forgetting the structure learned in the middle of the academic year.

This pilot study demonstrated that interviews could elicit information about key structures studied throughout the semester if they are well planned. These findings were included in this current study mainly because tense information did not appear in the summative assessment for the F2F Elementary Spanish II hybrid section.

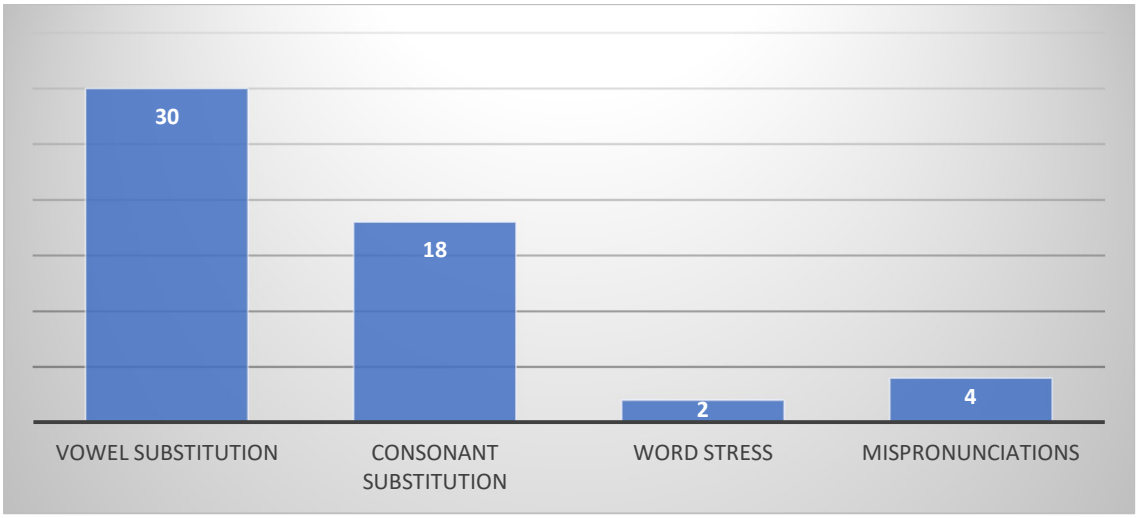
4.6.2 Error Analysis of Current Study Student Interviews

Data from the sixteen interviews collected from Hybrid Zoom I and II sections were combined to see what errors students tended to make in their end-of-the-semester evaluations.

When analyzing pronunciation (see Figure 19), the most common errors were in the vowel and consonant realms, as expected for beginning language learners (see Appendix E for a detailed list of errors). The vowel system proved to be the most challenging, even though in Spanish there are only five vowel phonemes, with the most common issues being /a/ read as /e/ (i.e., /nedar/ instead of /nadar/) and /e/ read as /i/ (i.e., /lio/ instead of /leo/). The consonants that were the most challenging were <ñ> that students read as /n/ instead of /ɲ/, such as in the nouns *cumpleaños* o *mañana*, and <ll> read as /l/ not /ʎ/ such as in *ellos*, *amarillo*. There were also a few instances where /s/ was read as /z/, again an L1 transfer issue such as in the word *visitar* or *televisión*.

Figure 19.

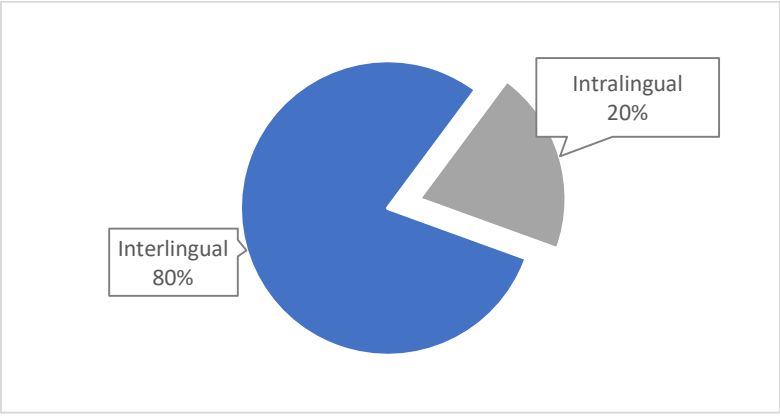
Type of Phonological Errors in Student Interviews



When analyzing the type of error, data revealed the interlingual as the most numerous when it came to pronunciation, as seen in Figure 20. Although L1 (American English) had the strongest influence, there were a couple of instances where there was an influence of other Romance languages, such as Portuguese and French, that students had been exposed to previously.

Figure 20.

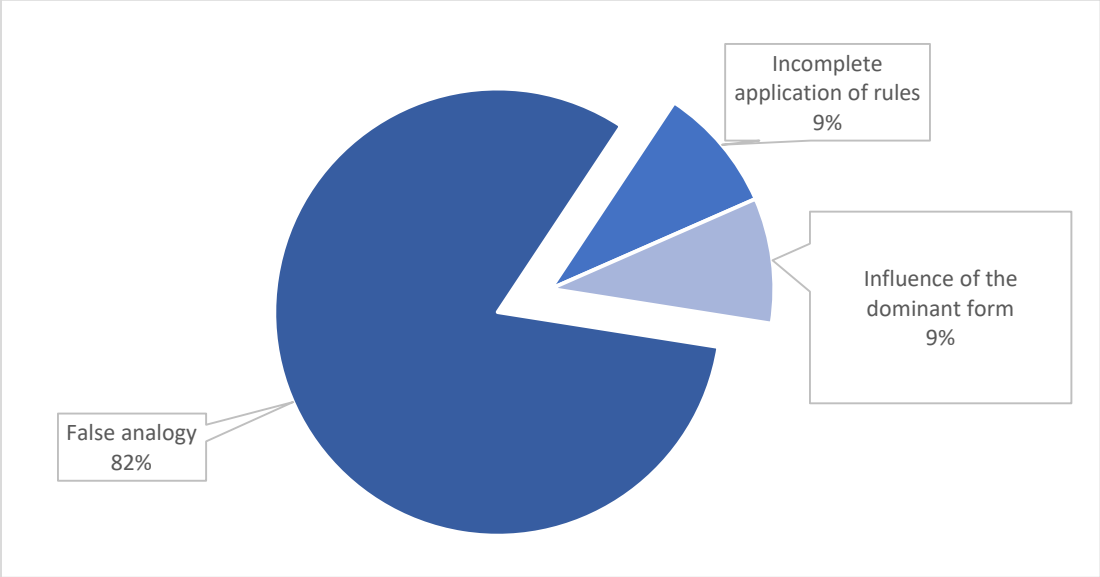
Interlingual vs. Intralingual Pronunciation Errors



Among the intralingual pronunciation errors, the most common ones were those done through false analogy, as seen in Figure 21. One example of a false analogy was pronouncing *veinticinco* as *vienticinco** by switching the vowels ei." This analogy comes from learning numbers derived from *diez*: *dieciocho*, *diecinueve*, etc., and thinking that the same letter order applies to numbers derived from *veinte*. Another example is when a student read *mochias** instead of *mochilas*, confusing the rules for the letter L with LL.

Figure 21.

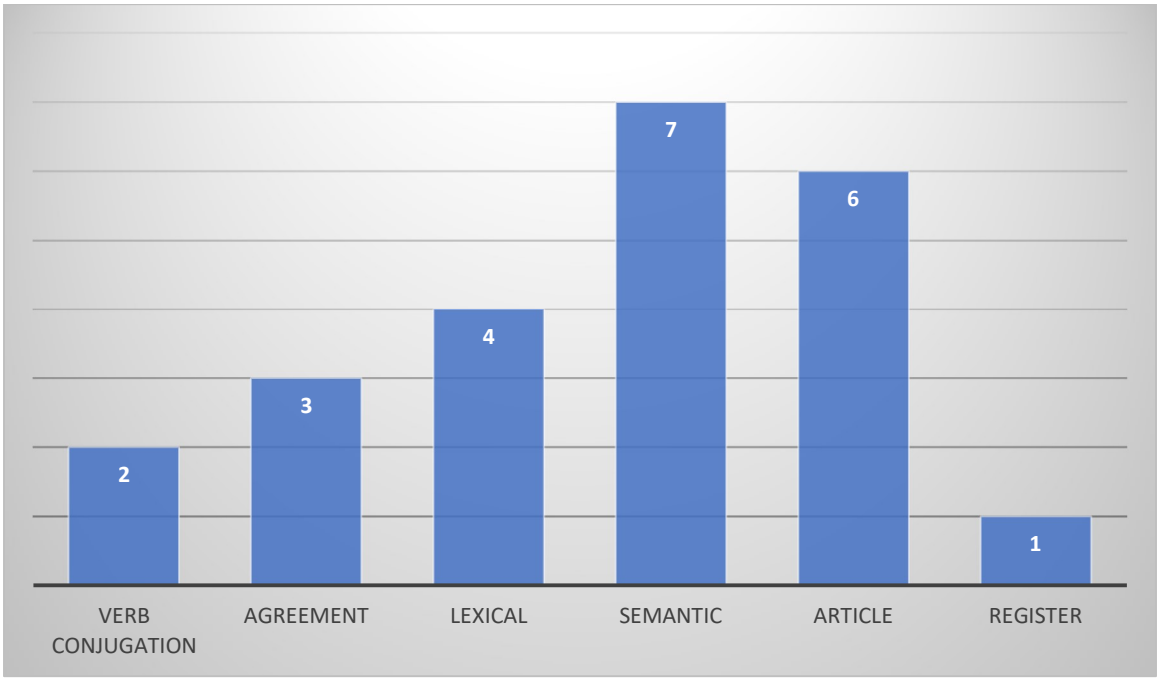
Intralingual Pronunciation Errors in Student Interviews



Besides pronunciation errors, an analysis was conducted on grammatical errors. Based on this analysis, the most common were semantic errors, followed by article, lexical, and noun agreement errors (See Figure 22).

Figure 22.

Grammatical Errors in Student Interviews



The semantic errors were connected to utterance meanings. Although the sentence structure was grammatically correct, the answer did not fit logically with the question asked. In example (36), when the instructor asked: *¿Qué estudias?,* the student answered by using the copula verb *ser* instead of *estudiar*:

> **(36) Student Sh**: *Soy* química, español y sociología.*
> **Teacher**: Ok, but I'm asking you, *¿Qué estudias?* You have to use the same verb that I'm using. *¿Qué estudias?* It's gonna be *yo*...
> **Student Sh**: *Yo* (0.2) *es, esta*…
> **Teacher**: Estudio.
> **Student Sh**: *Estudio química, español y sociología.*

When the instructor pointed out that the student needed to use another verb, the student struggled to find the right form, although it was a regular verb that should be familiar to her. When the instructor gave her the form, she repeated it back, completing the right sentence. Still, the

student had not mastered the conjugation in the present simple of regular verbs, a key concept taught during the entire semester.

The copula verbs *ser/estar* represent a difficult semantic concept to master, and errors often occur beyond the beginner level mainly because there is only one copula verb, "be," for all situations in English. The two elements were in connection with the question *"¿Cómo es…?"* which refers to personality characteristics. Although the answer "*es bueno"* was grammatically correct, in the context, it was incorrect. Example (37) showed a conversation in which the instructor tried to receive clarification about context:

(37) Teacher: Ok, *Muy bien. ¿Cómo es tu hijo*?
Student R: *Mi hijo es ¿bueno?*
Teacher: Mhm. Can you say anything else about him?
Student R: (.) *Mi hijo es bueno y (…) muy ocupado* ahora.*

The answer showed that the male student still needed to internalize the difference between *ser,* used for personality description, and *estar,* used with temporary conditions and emotional states. The same happened in example (38) with another male student from the same Hybrid Zoom II section, who answered very similarly by using *ser* instead of *estar:*

(38) Teacher: *¿Cómo es tu papá?*
Student M: *El e^ bueno y cansado*.*
Teacher: *Oh, ¿siempre está cansado?* Like he's always tired?
Student M: Like he's good, but he's tired.
Teacher: *Ok, él está cansado. Muy bien. ¿Puedes describirte?*
Student M: *Soy alto y delgado.*

When the instructor tried to get clarification, the student meant that his father was doing well *está bien* and not that he was intrinsically good. Actually, *estar* should also be used in connection with *cansado,* which is no longer ambiguous, but the student must still understand the difference.

Semantic errors also occurred at the interrogative word level. In one conversation, the instructor went off script, and instead of asking *¿Cuándo es Halloween?,* she asked *¿Qué haces en Halloween?* The female student (Student H) from the Hybrid Zoom II class, who had previous Spanish experience, did not focus on the question, but rather answered what she had prepared: *Treinta y uno de octubre*. This happened a second time in the interview (see example 39) when the student pointed out that the instructor assigned her a different question number and was not functioning on the spur of the moment, as expected in a regular conversation:

> **(39) Teacher**: *¿Cómo es tu clase de español?*
> **Student H**: Wait, I thought you gave me thirty four.
> **Teacher**: Yeah, thirty four, *treinta y cuatro*. Oh, Sorry. *¿Qué día es tu clase de español?* You're right. *¿Qué día es tu clase de español?*
> **Student H**: *Es el martes.*
> **Teacher**: Exacto. *Es los martes, ¿ok?* Because it's every Tuesday. So, *es los martes.*

The fact that the student refused to go off script and answer a simple question about how the class was instead of when the class was indicates that students' speaking proficiency may not be at the expected levels yet.

An example of an article error combined with a semantic error was when the instructor asked *¿Cómo eres?*, and Student I said: "*Soy estudiante y la madre y la abuela."* First, the student misunderstood the question to ask what, not how she is. Then, although she started with good syntax by not using the article, she hyper generalized and added the words as memorized from a vocabulary list.

Another example was when another student was asked to name class objects, and this time, the student missed the plural definite article in "*los libros*" and used the singular article as in the other singular words she enumerated: "*la computadora*, *el libros* y el lápiz*."

In terms of lexical errors, there was a mix of L1 transfer (*decimo tercera* instead of *el trece de* when speaking about dates), false analogy (*muy* instead of *mucho*), and influence of the

dominant form (*y inteligente* instead of *e inteligente*). An interesting lexical issue was when one student used the adjective *bova** (correct *boba*) to describe her daughter, not realizing that this is a negative adjective, rather pejorative. She actually meant to say her daughter is energetic: *activa* o *loquita*. This is a common issue with language learners who do not understand how to use a dictionary or rely on the unpredictable Google Translator.

Gender and number agreement of adjectives with nouns was another important element taught at the beginner Spanish level, and students seemed to have learned this concept quite well, with only three mistakes in the sixteen interviews.

A surprising example came from the heritage student N, who made the same error twice in the sentence: *Mi* ojos son marrón** for both the possessive adjective pronoun and a descriptive adjective. Instead, he should have said, *Mis ojos son marrones*.

However, there were other instances where the agreement was present, especially with descriptive adjectives: "*Ella es alta, delgada y joven."* or in the sentence *"Mi madre es muy bonita y muy baja y feliz."* Both students had previous Spanish experience in these instances, and the instruction received during these class observations might have cemented the concept. Nevertheless, one of them did have an issue with an article agreement in the same interview when saying *No tengo un* profesora de matemáticas*. This revealed the fact that agreement was emerging but not stable yet.

It was surprising to note that morphological errors were less frequent than semantic ones. The main reason was that answers were prepared in advance for these interviews, and the topics were simple. The morphological errors were connected to verb conjugation and *ser/estar* differences. A common error was the hyper generalization of conjugation, students thinking that they always needed to conjugate the verb no matter its position in the sentence. For example, one

student said: "*Me gusta hacer juego basketball*, *ir a gimnasio, ver una películas, ver unas películas*." instead of saying: *Me gusta jugar al basketball*. This was a heritage speaker with a low level of bilingualism who sometimes mastered the structure extremely well, and, at others, seemed confused by all the grammar rules. He understood that he should use an infinitive after the structure *Me gusta*, but the next verb was conjugated again.

Another morphological error occurred in the interview with a female language student who was never exposed to Spanish classes and was in her 50s.

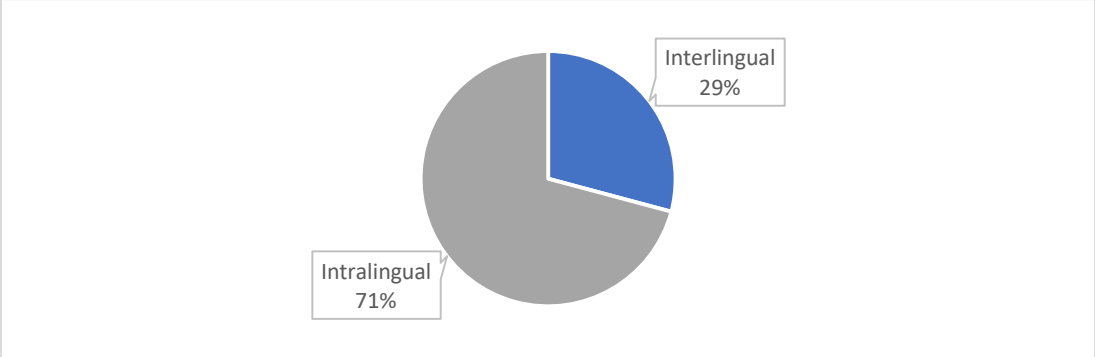
(40) Teacher: *¿Qué haces en las noches?*
Student I: *Hago* ver la ... hego^ ver la televisión^.*

In example (40), the student answered by conjugating the same verb *hacer* that appeared in the question, which was a common recommendation when answering questions. However, in this case, the verb *hacer,* represented an exception the instructor emphasized in class. It was interesting to note that the student did not use an L1 transfer since the manner of answering the question would be the same in English, but rather used the L2 language rules but erroneously.

When analyzing the cause of grammatical errors for first-semester Spanish students, Figure 23 reveals that the intralingual errors were more numerous than the interlingual ones, unlike pronunciation errors.

Figure 23.

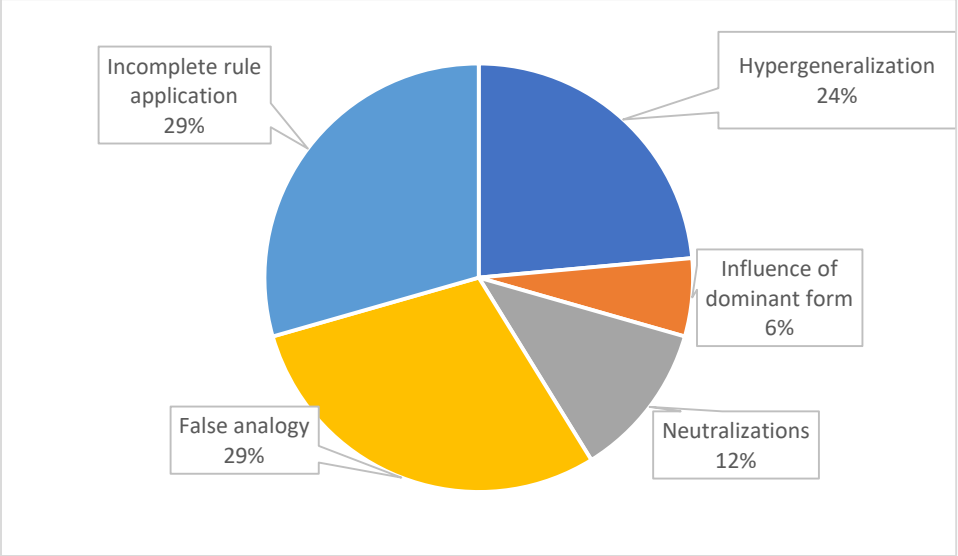
Grammar Error Types in Student Interviews



The most common explanations for grammar errors were either false analogies or incomplete application of rules, followed by hyper generalizations (see Figure 24).

Figure 24.

Types of Grammatical Intralingual Errors in Student Interviews



Most false analogies occurred in the semantic and lexical fields, whereas the incomplete rule application was linked more to article issues and, in one instance, register. Example (41) portrayed the register error that occurred during an interaction between the instructor and a student.

Although the instructor did not correct the student, it was considered an error because the register is important in social interactions between speakers, and the student should have shown deference to the instructor in this case by saying ¿Y Usted?.

(41) Teacher: *Buenos días, T. ¿Cómo estás?*
Student T: *Estoy más o menos. ¿Y tú*?
Teacher: *Estoy bien*.

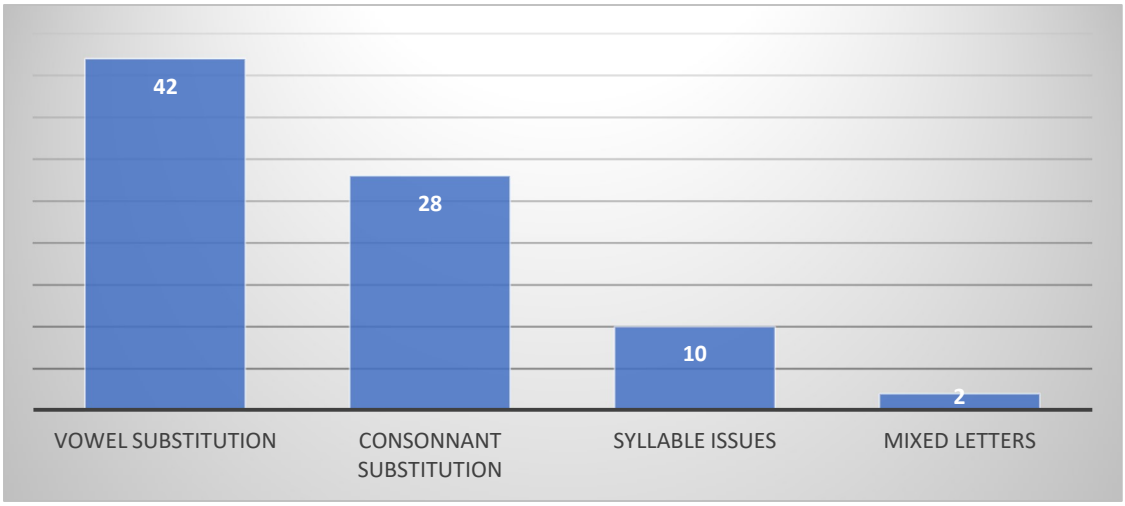
4.6.3 Error Analysis of Student Presentations (WebQuests)

Since WebQuests represented the comprehensive oral evaluation for the hybrid Elementary Spanish II course, an error analysis was also performed to see if students improved compared to their performance in Hybrid Zoom sections.

Regarding pronunciation (see Figure 25), issues with vowels were still the highest, representing 51% of the errors, followed by consonant problems, 23%. We did notice more problems at the syllable level where some students either added extra syllables or deleted them in pronunciation, although the word written in the PowerPoint slide was correctly spelled. One such example was the syllable deletion of certain words, such as *oceánico* pronounced as *oceano* or *temperatura* pronounced as *tempetura*. There were also syllable additions, possibly due to false analogy with other words, such as in the case of *invierno* pronounced *invereno* or *inverano*, or the word *puerto* mistaken for *eropuerto*. For a more detailed list of all pronunciation errors identified in the WebQuest presentations, please see Appendix G.

Figure 25.

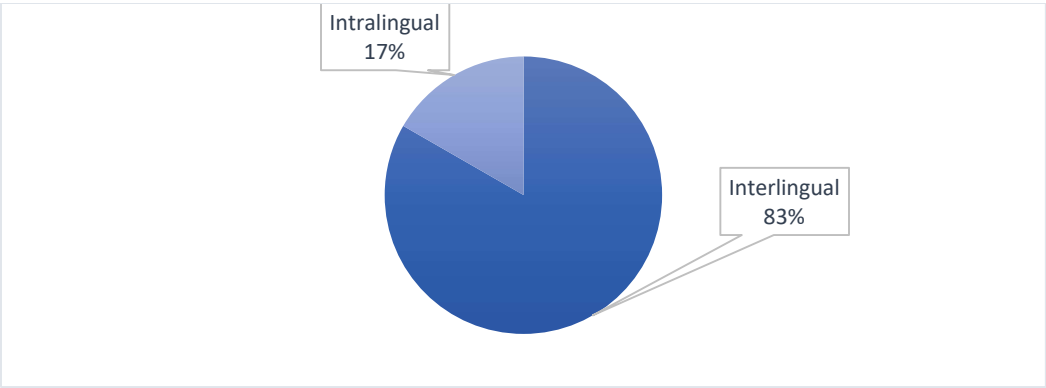
Phonological Errors in WebQuests



The most common vowel substitution was the <e> read as /i/, while the most common consonant issue was reading the letter H, which is usually muted in Spanish. As for the type of error found in pronunciation, the majority were interlingual, as observed in Figure 26 below:

Figure 26.

Pronunciation Error Type in WebQuests



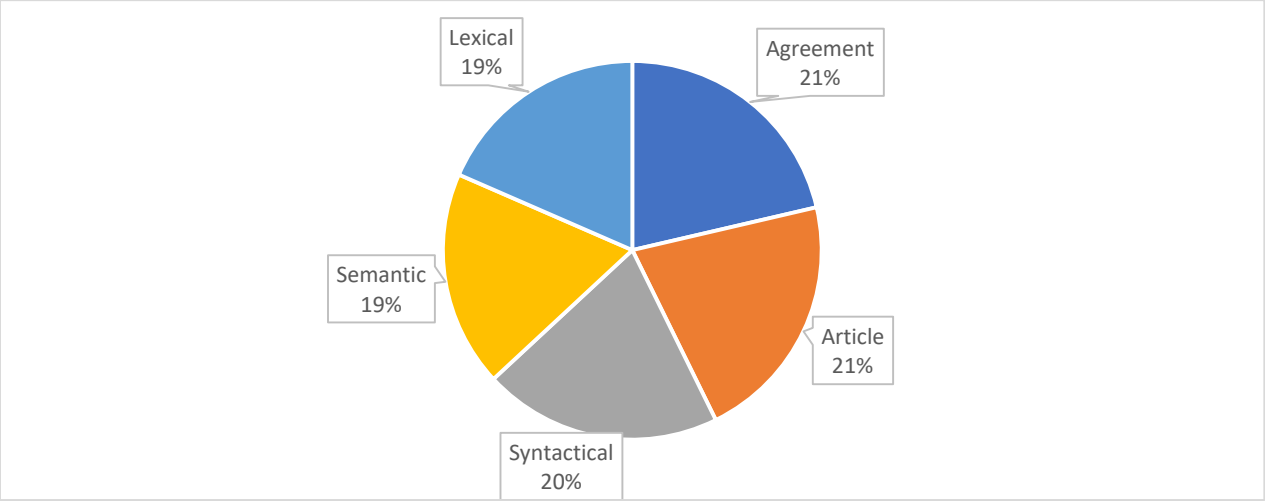
Although the number of intralingual errors was small, most of them were due to false analogy, as in the case where a student pronounced *avril* instead of *abril,* mistaking the rule that

says that the letter <v> should be read as a voiced /b/, and instead thinking that the letter <b> should be read as /v/.

The grammatical analysis of errors revealed a more complex taxonomy than the one for Elementary Spanish I (see Figure 27). Although the article and agreement errors were still high, there were also syntactical errors that emerged, followed by semantic and lexical ones.

Figure 27.

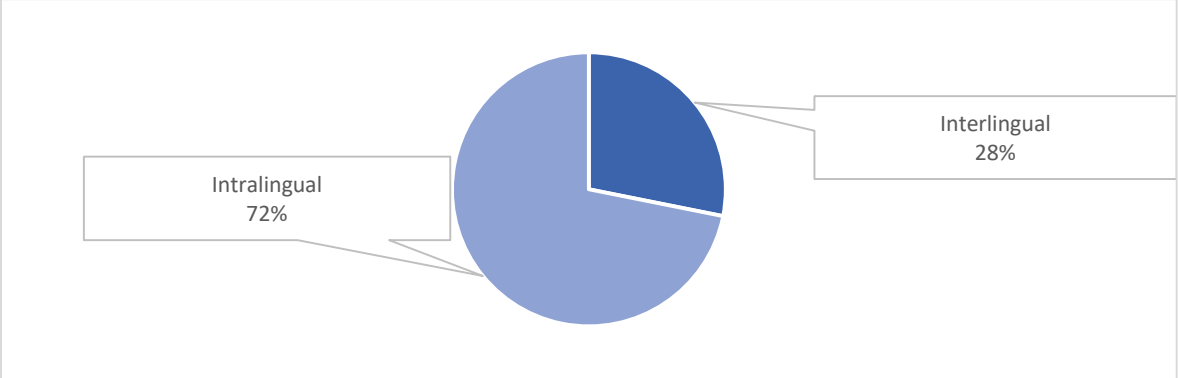
Grammatical Errors Types in WebQuests



The main cause of the grammatical errors was still intralingual (Figure 28) mainly, because of the different grammatical structures of the languages analyzed. The interlingual errors happened mostly at the syntactical level, where students forgot to put the adjective after the noun, for example, or at the semantical level, especially when using the copula verbs *ser/estar* (See Appendix G for a more detailed list of grammatical errors.)

Figure 28.

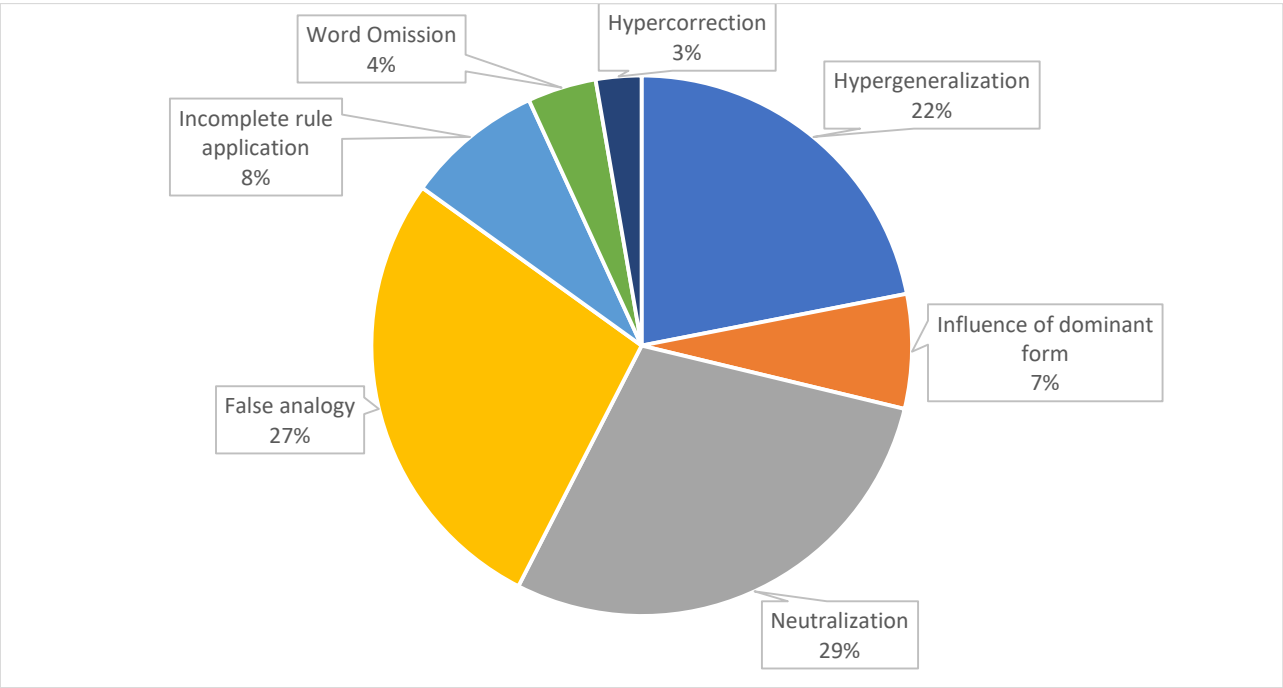
Cause of Grammatical Errors in WebQuests



The intralingual errors portrayed in Figure 29 showed a variety of causes, with neutralization and false analogy being the main ones, followed by hyper generalizations. The neutralization occurred mostly at the gender level, with the preference for the masculine instead of the feminine (i.e., *muchos* actividades* instead of *muchas actividades*). The false analogy transpired when the student mistook the word function for a similar one such as in the example where the adjective was used instead of the adverb: *ves el sol más frecuente** instead of *más frecuentemente.*

Figure 29.

Types of Grammatical Intralingual Errors in WebQuests



Verb omissions, although few, were part of syntactical errors. It was surprising to notice them since the verb is an essential part of the sentence structure in English. However, it is common for beginning language learners to struggle with sentence structure in a new language.

For example, student T, speaking about the weather in Spain said: "*El mejor momento para visitarla es en la primavera porque no* mucho caliente.*" He omitted the verb *ser*: "*no es muy caliente."*

Another common mistake was the confusion between *mucho* and *muy*. While both are adverbs, *mucho* can also be an adjective or pronoun. The confusion occurred mainly because of the weather idiom: "*Hace mucho calor,*" whereas the student used the expression "*es muy caliente,"* which was closer to the English structure. This type of error is expected and normal at the level of Spanish the student had been exposed to.

Syntactical errors occurred mainly because students were still mastering the Spanish sentence structure, which can sometimes differ from the one in L1.

One such instance was when student R spoke about currencies that can be used in Cuba: *"Pero dólares canadiense* pueden usar.*" A more native-like structure would be: "*Pero pueden usar dólares canadienses*." Another example was when student B explained about things to do in Spain: "*Y hay muchas,* what's that, (laughs) *cosas hacer* en, en mayo,* (0.3) *muchas cosas* (0.2) *en la primavera es* en mayo*." In this case, the student hesitated, trying to figure out how to express herself, but had difficulty explaining it properly. Simplicity is always better than a sophisticated structure: "*Hay muchas cosas para hacer en mayo*."

Student N2, who did not previously take any of the observed Hybrid Zoom courses, wrote several structures correctly in the PowerPoint but read them incorrectly. For example, he wrote "*Es una tradición de la ciudad*," but he read *"Es un tradición*." Another example was when he read "*los edificios tiene"* instead of "*tienen muchos colores*."

Although students were introduced to other tenses besides the present simple, there were very few instances where students were asked to use the past. In one instance, student M used the imperfect tense instead of the preterit one: "*Mis visitas eran en febrero y marzo.*" She was referring to visiting Peru previously, and since the action was already completed, the preterite would have worked better.

Regarding semantic errors, there are still a couple of instances where the students are confused between *ser* and *estar*, which is to be expected: "*Y las montañas son un hora.*" Instead of "*Y las montañas están a una hora*." There are also literal translations where the Spanish word does not correspond to the English word: "*clima frío promidio"* should be "*el promedio de los*

meses más cálidos." A Google Translate search revealed the wrong structure, which makes one wonder whether the student relied on it when creating the presentation.

It was interesting to see that one student used pragmatic fillers in his speech to avoid silences, which is a sign of learning how to negotiate meaning and speak more like a native speaker. For example, he said: "*El Gran Vía es una* lugar para comprar cosas diferentes: ropa o comida, no sé*." Student T was also able to answer questions directly in Spanish when the instructor asked something unrelated to the presentation.

Overall, the student presentations, although still full of errors, showed progress in students' language acquisition, albeit incrementally small.

4.7 Student Feedback

An analysis of course evaluations revealed that students were overall content with the instructor's teaching methodology, as well as with the course content. Students expressed an appreciation for the instructor being available, ready to explain, and even engaging them in conversation. One student expressed how helpful the "Zoom calls and in-classroom meetings" were.

In the evaluations for the Hybrid Elementary Spanish II, two students expressed the fact that they would enjoy more collaborative activities where they could engage in speaking (see examples 42):

> **(42)** "The instructor could definitely do more cooperative things in class between students, not necessarily group projects but maybe more peer communication than what is currently happening."
>
> "Additional oral discussion might help our pronunciation."

Besides course evaluations, students also offered feedback either in class or in a specific discussion board assigned to Hybrid Zoom courses at the end of the semester, where they were asked to write about the assignments they enjoyed the most, as well as advice on what could be improved.

Based on feedback, students enjoyed the following elements: the Pearson lab homework, group cultural presentations, the mock interview of a famous person, and reading about Latin American culture. The last positive element was noted by student R (see example 43), who was previously exposed to Spanish:

> **(43) Student R**: "I think I enjoyed most reading about some of the culture, artists, or historical aspects of various countries. At least in my background, I had little formal education in Latin American culture/history. It also makes learning Spanish more meaningful reading about traditions, culture, or history."

Among the drawbacks, students mentioned the lack of clear deadlines, the need for more speaking opportunities in class, and the reduced F2F time. It was interesting to note that these drawbacks were all from students enrolled in the Hybrid Zoom II section.

Student SH insightedly mentioned in example (44):

> **(44)** "The meeting once a month kinda screwed with my schedule a little bit and it didn't give anyone enough time to practice speaking the language. I mean you and I did great and so did others, but there were some who struggled with it and I think that if we would have met up with each other more that everyone would have learned to speak the language better."

It was interesting that she noticed the struggle of students who were true beginners of Spanish and needed more time to engage in speaking activities.

Similarly, student B, who later continued with Hybrid Elementary Spanish II noted (see example 45):

> **(45)** "Another challenging thing was only meeting roughly once a month in person. I don't feel like it gave us adequate time to actually practice the language with each other or give us a chance to really be able to interact with each other. Though meeting online gave us some chance to practice actually speaking the language, I feel that they didn't give for much

> time to practice actually speaking with each other. We practiced more vocabulary than actually communicating with each other."

In example 46, a third student, student HK, agreed with the limited F2F time, and expressed the need for more preparation for the times student met in person, which occurred once a month for Zoom classes:

> **(46) Student HK**: "I think that the most challenging thing is that we only met every once in a while in person and also meeting once a week. I think that when we met once a week we were under prepared."

Although this discussion did not occur in the Hybrid Elementary II section, there was one student who had previously been enrolled in a traditional Elementary Spanish I, and stated in one of the classes observed the challenges of the hybrid course (see example 47):

> **(47)** "Last semester I had double the time that I have this semester. And I think it was so much easier, more class time."

These students revealed an intrinsic necessity for more classroom speaking opportunities to master the target language better and communicate with native speakers.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes key results from this study and then moves into interpretations and implications, clarifying what results meant in the context of specialized literature. It highlights the unexpected results and weighs whether they support the study hypotheses. Lastly, it acknowledges the limitations while still underlying the validity of the results and presents the need for further research in the field.

5.1 Summary

This study aimed to analyze how Spanish speaking proficiency was developed in a hybrid environment at a US community college during the first year of study. The analysis was approached from different angles based on a questionnaire, class observations, course content, and final grade distribution. Course observations were further analyzed based on teacher-student and peer-to-peer interaction and oral assessments that occurred during class times.

The study also emphasized that the type of hybrid environment adopted did not necessarily influence results. Two types of hybrid courses were identified in the study: hybrid Zoom and hybrid F2F (in-person). The hybrid Zoom class met once a week; the rest of the time, students had to work online using a Canvas website, and Pearson MyLab and Mastering. The hybrid F2F met twice a week using the same platform the rest of the time, where students could practice their vocabulary, grammar form, and listening. Besides the lab section, the learning management system offered students presentation videos as well as other learning resources for students to engage in. Although classes were comparable regarding the use of online resources, it was surprising that students did not necessarily grow more during the second semester with the double meeting time.

This could be linked to the type of instruction students received, which was more form-focused than communicative.

However, the grade distribution analysis indicated the highest student success in the F2F hybrid environment. Besides, the hybrid environment was the most effective when comparing grade distribution in the hybrid sections with the only traditional class taught by the same instructor. One reason could be the instructor-to-student ratio since the hybrid sections had a lower enrollment, allowing for a higher rate of individualized instruction and feedback.

Although the grade distribution revealed student success in the hybrid environment, and student retention for the modality, it did not reveal the level of speaking proficiency students could master. Therefore, the analysis moved to a course content analysis focusing on discussion boards. Despite expectations, the analysis did not generate satisfactory results since only approximately 5% of the discussion boards were oral, and even then, not all students participated. This suggests that course designers must be more purposeful in including meaningful oral assignments where students can thrive speaking in the target language.

Class observations offered a richness of data regarding course organization and activities. Students were engaged in a good amount of practice, including individual and group work. When eliminating outliers, that is, activities that did not occur regularly every class period, such as oral assessments (group presentations, student interviews, etc.), the class period fit with the expectations of a hybrid class where most of the time is dedicated to practice (i.e., an average of 68% of the time for the hybrid Zoom classes observed). When narrowing down the analysis to the skill mostly used in class, speaking was the one that occurred the most in every hybrid section observed.

Nevertheless, the speaking activities were traditional in nature (i.e., fill-in-the-blanks or multiple choice), with hardly any collaborative work, role-play, or problem-solving activities, but focused predominantly on vocabulary and grammatical concepts.

The analysis of how much Spanish versus English was used showed that the quality of the speaking activities in class differed from ACTFL standards, where 90% of the class conversations should be in the target language, with only 10% of the native language being used. In the classes observed, the total use of Spanish was approximately 35%, and although students' use of Spanish was higher (47%), it was mainly because of repetitions and reading assignments. This was reflected in students' interactions either with their instructor or with other peers.

Despite these findings, an analysis using Young's interactional competence (IC) demonstrated that students engaged in the negotiation of meaning, asking and giving information, taking turns, repairing errors, and discovering boundaries in conversations, as well as their identity, albeit mixing Spanish with English. This qualitative analysis revealed that the cold-call technique was the most common in interactions, with the instructor initiating the conversation. There were also instances of group dynamics, but students often mixed Spanish and English during their interactions and were not able to have a near-native experience where they had to function in a Spanish-only environment. The instructor used more indirect repair in the hybrid Elementary I sections, with more direct repair instances in the hybrid Elementary II section.

Since the Hybrid Zoom sections were more limited in time, the instructor focused more on teaching grammar aspects, and there was very little group work. In the F2F hybrid sections, the instructor used more pair and group work, engaged in more cultural explanations, and exposed students to a wider variety of listening activities. She also used more gestures, showing she was more comfortable teaching in a F2F environment than on Zoom.

The analysis of oral assessments suggested that students achieved a novice-mid level by the end of the first semester of Spanish but could not move to a novice high level by the end of the second semester. Four of the ten students enrolled in Elementary Spanish II could be placed between novice-mid and novice-high levels. However, they did not reach the novice-high level because they still relied on English to express themselves, their sentence syntax was still emergent in Spanish, and their beginner-level vocabulary still needed to be grounded. The two heritage speakers present in class still struggled with concepts such as noun gender, articles, and vocabulary by the end of the year. This may be due to a range of factors: the traditional exercises performed in class, the content of summative assessments that did not elicit more structures presented in class, and the mix of Spanish and English both for input and output.

The error analysis of oral assessments focused on both pronunciation and grammatical elements. The areas of concern concerning pronunciation were mainly vowel and consonant substitution, especially because of the L1 and L2 differences. The grammatical analysis pointed out several areas that were still emerging and not fully developed, such as adjective gender and number agreement, as well as articles at the Spanish II level. Surprisingly, the semantic mistakes at the Spanish I level were the highest, followed by the article and lexical errors. The fact that verb conjugation did not appear as one of the errors students made was mainly because the interviews elicited simple answers that students prepared for in advance that did not elicit a wide variety of verbs.

As expected, most of the pronunciation errors were at the interlingual level due to the L1 influence, whereas the grammatical errors were mostly at the intralingual level, mainly due to false analogy, incomplete rule application, and neutralization. The mix of English and Spanish during the interview and presentations may account for several of the errors encountered. If students learn

to immerse themselves and focus on content rather than form, they will likely have a more sustained use of the target language.

Because the data from the oral assessments did not include enough information about the tense acquisition at the Elementary Spanish II level, a small-scale pilot study using the same course content and at the same institution but with a different instructor was added to prove that different tenses can be acquired in a hybrid environment. However, results showed that students were still at a novice-mid level, even regarding Spanish tense use. Students were still hesitant about the present tense forms, produced only a few instances of the past tense without being able to recount a full story, and omitted the use of the future tense. The omission of future tense may be a regression since students focused more on the past tenses before the interview, forgetting the structure learned in the middle of the academic year. The study corroborated previous studies that showed that verb morphology is challenging to the English learner of Spanish, who often needs to conjugate the verb based on person and number.

Lastly, an analysis of student feedback suggested that students intuitively knew that the Zoom hybrid modality did not offer enough time in class to engage in meaningful conversation and felt the need for more communicative tasks.

5.2 Interpretation

The general objective of this study was to see whether students at a US community college developed the appropriate speaking proficiency in a hybrid language environment, as current studies suggest (i.e., Anderson, 2018; Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2018; Rubio & Thoms, 2014). The triangulation method revealed that the students were able to attain a novice-mid speaking proficiency by the end of the first semester, but they were not able to reach the novice-high to intermediate-low level by the end of the second semester, as would normally be expected.

Therefore, contrary to what most studies suggested (Rubio, 2014; Thoms, 2014; Young, 2008), the hybrid model was not as efficient in developing students' speaking proficiency in this current exploratory study. This discrepancy was especially noticeable during the second semester of Spanish when students could not advance to the novice-high or intermediate-low level, despite several of them having had previous Spanish experience before taking the observed Elementary Spanish classes. A significant contributing factor could have been the mix of Spanish with English during input and output, as is further discussed in the specific objectives.

The deeper interpretation of results was structured based on the specific objectives formulated as questions prior to the study.

5.2.1 How does the hybrid modality affect overall Spanish oral proficiency?

Based on the grade distribution analysis, the section with the highest student success was the Elementary Spanish I hybrid section, which met in person. This could be interpreted that meeting twice a week with the instructor was better than once a week because students benefited from engaging in more practice and more detailed explanations. Data also indicated that the instructor was more comfortable with the F2F hybrid modality than the Zoom one because she incorporated more listening and cultural activities during the F2F meetings. However, this study did not compare the effect of the modality: hybrid in-person versus hybrid Zoom on student speaking proficiency. In conclusion, student success was mainly due to the fact that in-person meeting times doubled weekly compared to the hybrid Zoom sections.

Nevertheless, the use of two hybrid modalities led to an important conversation about the great diversity of hybrid definitions encountered in the literature review in relation to Spanish language courses. This diversity made it hard to objectively compare the studies and point out how

effective a hybrid course is versus another when one course uses 25% of in-person instruction, whereas the other uses 50%.

The current study demonstrated that meeting just for one hour during the week (25%) is not enough for students to feel comfortable speaking the language. Their comments at the end of the first semester displayed a desire for more in-person communicative opportunities. Except for the studies conducted by Moneypenny & Aldrich (2018) and Chenoweth et al. (2006), all the hybrid courses analyzed in previous studies demonstrated that the hybrid modality was as successful, if not more so than the traditional one, which had two or even three hours of F2F interaction. For instance, the study conducted by Chenoweth et al. (2006) required students to meet with an instructor or teaching assistant for a 20-minute F2F chat and then a 1-hour synchronous task-focused chat session per week. Therefore, one hour per week of F2F interaction was too little for a hybrid language course.

If one hour is all that the student can receive, then some type of communication with a native or near-native speaker outside of class time should be required. Similar to the example stated above, Arispe and Blake (2012) and Gleason (2013) required a synchronous chat lab that varied from 25 to 60 minutes in addition to the in-person meetings. It is particularly important to create this special time when students can speak only in Spanish without worrying about form but focusing on fluency and meaning.

However, adding a lab where students could communicate only in Spanish could be quite challenging in small community colleges where there are no graduate students who can oversee the lab, and a part-time faculty or an adjunct instructor runs the whole course. Although there are solutions (i.e., websites that provide a native speaker as a speaking partner), it adds to the course cost, which is already high because of the textbook and the lab provided by the publisher. Despite

these challenges in small colleges, the recommendation is that such a conversation lab should take place. Students need an open space to practice communication from the early stages of language learning.

The other surprising element in data analysis was the amount of Spanish used when teaching (34%) compared to the ACTFL standards (90%). This reflects the comprehensive input received during hybrid courses. Since class time was drastically reduced to one hour during the first semester of Spanish, and most classes were offered online through Zoom, the teacher often relied on English for explanations. Moreover, data indicated a heavy focus on grammar structures when teaching, which can be difficult to explain using only the target language to students who understand very little Spanish.

Although the use of English mixed with Spanish was understandable at the beginning of the Hybrid Zoom courses observed, it should be slowly decreased until Spanish becomes the main input during class. Data revealed that the mix of English and Spanish impacted negatively as students moved to the Elementary Spanish II course because, instead of speaking more only in Spanish, they mixed their presentation more with English. During the oral assessments in the second semester of Spanish, the majority of the students, both in the pilot and current study, resorted to English to either explain the elements they were presenting or to understand the questions. Even during regular courses, there was a marked decrease of approximately 27% in students' use of Spanish in class.

This is why pedagogy plays a crucial role in developing hybrid courses. In a previous study on a blended language course (Anderson, 2018), most students perceived oral communication as more difficult to achieve in a blended format. However, the author questioned whether adding more face-to-face instruction would make a real difference in communicating in the target

language. Rather, she believed the lack of more aural development was just due to the speed of basic language courses and encouraged instructors to focus on creating meaningful, interactive, contextualized communication activities using authentic language online (Anderson, 2018, p. 149).

5.2.2 How do discussion boards support the development of Spanish speaking skills?

The course content generally focused more on the written language format, with only 15% of oral assignments. Because most assignments were presented in class, they were included in the oral assessment evaluation. The fact that students submitted very little oral work online indicates the need for a drastic change in the course structure. To encourage student production, at least 40-50% of discussion boards should be oral, especially in a hybrid environment. Studies have shown that asynchronous activities, such as discussion boards, can help students develop better speaking skills by offering more thinking time and encouraging peer interactions (Sharma & Westbrook, 2016).

Moreover, students who work asynchronously to prepare oral presentations (individually or in a group format) can improve tremendously in speaking proficiency. They could use those asynchronous oral submissions to engage in peer reviews and improve both their speaking and listening abilities.

The course content analysis was narrowed down to discussion boards with the expectation that it would ask students to engage in several oral submissions. However, the discussion board analysis generated little data. Only one discussion board elicited oral responses from students, and even then, not all students submitted their answers orally.

The content analysis also revealed two big needs: coaching students on technology use and instructor involvement in discussion boards. One of the reasons why some students submitted a written rather than a spoken answer was because they did not know how to work with the technology. The instructor needed to take time to help students learn how to interact with technology for their success.

Although the instructor was partially involved in the discussion boards, her answers were written. The instructor's oral response would have encouraged the students to do the same and elicited their listening skills. Additionally, discussion boards offered more hours outside of class time for students to interact: "More is always better, and students need more and more in order to reach just functional proficiency (600+ hours), as well as a more advanced state of bilingualism" (Blake, 2014, p. 14). Students should be encouraged through positive feedback to engage in such discussion boards fully.

5.2.3 What type of interaction occurs between students and the instructor in a hybrid course?

Based on data analysis of class interactions, the instructor was the main initiator of interaction and communicative activities. The in-class activities had a relatively balanced structure between teacher-led practice and presentations in the hybrid Zoom. For the F2F sections, the practice percentage was higher than the presentation of concepts. This supported the literature that stated that hybrid courses should be structured around contextualized communication activities using authentic language online (Anderson, 2018, p. 149).

However, in the hybrid Zoom, the percentage of group work was extremely small, and this agreed with the pedagogical fallacy encountered in Anderson's 2018 study when 80% of instructors of hybrid courses discussed online activities in class, and 34% used class time to explain

online activities, but did not dedicate enough time for peer-to-peer interaction. Unlike Anderson's study, which showed a low level of interaction with peers and rather more interaction with the computer, students in this study did engage in many speaking activities, although form-focused and not authentic communicative ones. The instructor encouraged student participation in class, and the organization time used to explain online activities was considerably less (an average of 17.5% for hybrid Zoom courses and 10.5% for the F2F hybrid section).

An interactional competence approach (Young, 2011) was adopted to conduct a qualitative analysis of the different class interactions, focusing on aspects such as identity, turn-taking, repair, and boundaries. Data collected for the identity aspects revealed interesting aspects concerning heritage speakers. They represented a small but significant part of the observed beginner language courses, and they had a basic knowledge of Spanish but not enough to test into a second year of Spanish. Most of the issues encountered were lexical and phonological in nature. The phonological ones were connected to the instructor and heritage students' different Hispanic backgrounds. Studies (Muñoz-Basols & Hernández Muñoz, 2019) have shown a perceived disconnect between the language taught in class and the one spoken in the heritage speakers' homes, which was also encountered in the interactions regarding identity. Another area of concern revealed here was that heritage speakers struggled with connecting grammar terminology with their intrinsic language knowledge. For example, the heritage speaker did not understand how to use the preterit form in one activity. In addition, both speakers had passive fluency, where they could understand a lot of the language but could not speak it without mixing it with English. Because the instruction combined the two languages, they were not able to improve their fluency in the target language.

This brings into discussion the role of heritage speakers in beginning language sections, where they could be used as resources and partners to help the other students speak in authentic

circumstances. At the same time, it also revealed the need for individualized interaction with such learners in beginning classes, particularly if paired up and encouraged to work on their own language learning needs.

The turn-taking analysis revealed a hierarchical process where the instructor mainly asked students to answer questions. Although this approach offers predictability and might help put students at ease during class activities, it should be balanced with peer-to-peer interactions that lack predictability and force students to internalize language structures. The lack of language production in communicative contexts revealed a clear need for structuring in-person hybrid courses to prioritize them.

5.2.4 What do hybrid class oral assessments reveal about students' speaking proficiency levels?

The results of in-class oral assessments also supported the concept that oral proficiency must be developed intentionally through authentic conversations, particularly in hybrid language courses. The oral interviews conducted at the end of the first semester indicated that students achieved a novice-mid level, which is quite a good level for students, especially considering the limited in-person class time. However, additional growth was insignificant by the end of the second semester. Most students scored between novice mid and high levels but did not reach the novice-high level because of their mix of English and Spanish. According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), first-year language students should attain the Intermediate Low level (IL), which means that they are able to maintain a basic conversation about daily routines, their family, tastes, as well as complete simple tasks such as when shopping or eating out. Compared to this standard, the language learners observed in this study could not function fully independently in these contexts.

Heritage students did not advance as much in their language learning regarding fluency, either. Although they had the potential, none reached the novice-high level because of their continuous mix of Spanish and English.

The analysis of the interview structure at the end of the first semester presented several challenges, as well. First, interviews were comprised of a list of questions students were asked to prepare in advance. They did not follow a logical conversation style or show clearly how much students had retained. This may explain why the summative assessment results at the end of the first semester could be inconclusive. Students could have achieved higher or lower levels of proficiency, but the lack of spontaneity during the interview did not reveal what students can actually do with the language if put in a setting with a native speaker.

The error analysis revealed two important areas that instructors need to stress more when teaching first-semester Spanish: how to use the dictionary to select the appropriate word (semantics) and how to understand the use of the article. For second-semester Spanish learners, the key focus areas should be agreement between nouns and adjectives, the use of the article, and the syntactical aspect. Students still struggled with word order and structuring the sentence in Spanish. This confirmed earlier studies (i.e., Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana, 2013) that identified the most frequent errors were in the agreement of gender, number, and person.

However, this study did not reveal many errors with verb conjugations, which was surprising given the many studies pointing out verb conjugation as being one of the most common errors encountered during first-year Spanish (i.e., Guijarro-Fuentes & Larrañaga, 2011; Sifontes & Rojas-Lizana, 2013). This could be explained based on the structure of oral assessments. For the interviews, students were only asked to conjugate a verb and not contextualize it, whereas, for

WebQuests, students used simple structures and had time to prepare in advance, using translation and spell-check tools.

The syntactical errors that emerged more in the second semester were in sync with students' Spanish language level but also revealed an earlier need to help students pay attention to the smaller speech parts such as word order, prepositions, and connectors.

In terms of pronunciation, vowel errors predominated in both first and second-semester Spanish students' speech. This was explained by the marked differences in the vowel system between English and Spanish and indicated a need for a more targeted approach to help students understand the differences.

In conclusion, the results of this study suggested that hybrid Spanish courses are not always as successful as research has pointed out. Although students revealed a good experience in their course evaluations with the hybrid course in general, the detailed analysis of their speaking performance showed that they had yet to meet the novice-high level generally required by ACTFL by the end of their first year of Spanish.

5.3 Implications

This unique study analyzed the hybrid courses at a community college that did not have a full-time Spanish instructor but relied fully on adjunct instructors to deliver hybrid or traditional courses. Although the instructor who participated in the study received the shell of the online course with several resources and the textbook with the publisher's online lab, she did not receive any specialized training on how to teach a language course in a hybrid environment. This indicates the need for better teacher training in various modalities (traditional, hybrid, and online). At this community college, adjunct instructors did not have any funding for professional development and were not regularly observed in their classes to receive constructive feedback regarding

methodology. Since pedagogy is key to a successful hybrid course, instructors, especially adjuncts, need more support from their institutions.

In contrast, the literature review revealed that most studies on hybrid Spanish teaching were conducted at four-year universities that can offer bountiful support to their instructors. They usually added a lab to a language course where students could engage with the language either with a native or near-native speaker. Even the one study conducted at a small regional campus (Moneypenny & Aldrich, 2018), analyzing oral proficiency in an online Spanish course, used a course assistant who would help students with pronunciation and conversations.

These resources were unavailable for the courses observed, but they would have considerably enhanced students' speaking proficiency. Despite the constraints offered by the more limited resources at a community college, instructors should discover ways to encourage their students to participate in more conversations. For example, they could encourage students to find a Hispanic in their community whom they could interview a couple of times during the semester. Black (2012) encourages the use of synchronous chat, stating that it should be "de rigueure" (p. 23) for hybrid courses.

Warnecke and Lomine (2011) believed that instructors should prioritize speaking activities in the synchronous blended context so they could "maximize learners' exposure to L2 and facilitate speaking practice by providing opportunities for interaction among groups" (p. 139). It is key to allow students to have uninterrupted conversations with peers or native speakers that they can record and upload online. Once the instructor observes a common error, he/she can explain it during the in-person class.

The creation of a sense of community is key to the improvement of speaking proficiency, as pointed out by Goertler (2014):

> The teacher's role is to set up community platforms for the course, introduce existing online communities, be an active member in the class community, and strategize and debrief with students on how to become a legitimate member of online communities. (p. 36).

These online communities could help learners communicate with native speakers and slowly learn how to negotiate meaning and find a voice in a new culture. Although this is done more at advanced language levels, it could also be slowly introduced at elementary levels, even in an artificial environment with simple conversations about age, family, and hobbies. Therefore, speaking activities should occupy a primary role in developing a hybrid language course.

Secondly, results suggest that the teaching at this institution used a traditional approach focusing more on grammar structures and vocabulary following a textbook using a prescriptive approach to language acquisition. Despite the use of technology, audio, and visual elements that enhanced language learning, the focus in the classroom was still on form. The hybrid Zoom classes were even more limited in terms of F2F collaboration and student interaction. They had fewer cultural discussions than the F2F hybrid section, where the instructor had more time to engage in cultural presentations. The data analyzed confirmed Lacorte and Garcia's (2014) claims that the methodology of teaching Spanish is still very traditional in many US higher-ed institutions, focusing mainly on grammar and vocabulary. This heavy focus on form was also noticed in the analysis of summative assessments with their instructor. Students demonstrated memorization of language form and vocabulary but could not engage in conversation flow when new questions arose, or they turned to English for explanations.

This is why pedagogy becomes even more crucial in a hybrid environment where time is more limited. The Spanish language course must be redesigned to purposefully include online and in-person communicative activities where students can negotiate meaningfully in native-like contexts. The focus should be more on teaching Spanish to reach out to their Hispanic communities

and in the workplace (i.e., hospitals, factories, migrant fields). Since language is normally studied for "social practices" (Hellerman, 2008) to engage in conversation with people from a different culture, the focus of instruction should shift from the development of grammatical competence to incorporating grammatical elements to teach which language forms are appropriate in what type of social interaction. Even at Elementary levels, students can engage in learning dialogue and combine pieces together in a regular conversation with a native speaker.

Thirdly, the study raised a question about the best type of hybrid system for teaching Spanish. Two types of hybrid environments were encountered during this study: hybrid Zoom (1 hour per week) and hybrid F2F (2 hours per week). The fact that the class moved from one hour to two hours showed an increase in more listening and cultural activities in class but not an improvement in speaking proficiency. Based on the analyzed oral assessment, students who took the hybrid F2F for Elementary Spanish II could not reach the novice high level. This connected to Anderson's (2018) question of whether adding more F2F time to the hybrid model made a marked difference in speaking proficiency in the target language. Based on her study, the majority of the students perceived oral communication as more difficult to achieve in a blended format. Therefore, she recommended developing more interactive, contextualized communication activities using authentic language, whether in person or online (Anderson, 2018, p. 149).

Another implication was that although the hybrid sections analyzed presented themselves as flipped, the model was not reflected in how the class time was organized. There was little time used for cooperative learning or group discussions. The grammar presentations were offered to students on the online platform, but the grammar point was still presented during the in-person meetings, and there was no accountability for students to show whether they watched the presentations before class.

Hybrid or blended language courses could benefit from using the flipped learning model, which means making the instructional material available to the student to engage with before class and using the class time for practicing the concepts studied at home. The Flipped Learning Network (2014) defines flipped learning as a "pedagogical approach" that transfers the "direct instruction" from the group to the individual, thus transforming the classroom into "a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter." In a language class, this means that the F2F time would be used to work on collaborative projects, apply the language concept in context, and troubleshoot elements that the student misunderstood while engaging in meaningful conversations using the language in context. Based on Bloom's Taxonomy, in a flipped hybrid environment, the instructor focuses more on students remembering and understanding rules. Students work at the upper levels of the taxonomy (creating, analyzing, synthesizing) during their homework assignments.

Anderson (2018) believed that instructors should help students learn how to study grammar autonomously, and instructors should not "give into the temptation to explain the grammar in class" (p. 93) but rather use scaffolding in-class activities to develop such knowledge. This would free the class time to encourage more role-play and conversations.

The analysis of oral assessments also suggested the need for a more rigorous system of assessing Spanish oral proficiency. The ACTFL standards did not fit the textbook-dictated curriculum, heavily relying on teaching grammar. It was hard to find a checklist of what students should master during each of their first semesters of Spanish independent of the textbook. The error analysis mainly revealed several areas where students needed more help to improve speaking proficiency, but it did not elucidate whether students reached the needed proficiency after one year of language study. Blake (2014) remarked that it is hard to test linguistic proficiency in first-year

student populations because of the limited time for instruction and homework. Since the hybrid environment reduces the instruction time even more, it is even more questionable whether students are able to engage for 200 hours (Blake, 2014, p. 19) with the L2 to be considered intermediate. Therefore, there was a need for better assessment tools to track students' progress, especially in terms of their speaking proficiency.

The error analysis presented key areas where students could benefit from more instruction, such as semantics and article use in the first semester and adjective-noun agreement and sentence structure in the second semester. The article was an issue for both first and second-semester students, which is understandable given that in Spanish, objects are either masculine or feminine, unlike in English. This points out the need to revisit language structures on a regular basis in language classes. Hendrickson's (1992) old advice is still valid today in terms of teaching using a spiral rather than a linear process, recycling certain language structures, and helping students move them into their long-term memory.

In conclusion, this study delved deeper into how speaking proficiency was developed in a hybrid environment, whether on Zoom or F2F. It revealed that using a traditional approach in teaching a hybrid course does not offer the best results. It confirmed what the research has been saying: incorporating technology into a traditional course is not enough (Anderson, 2018; Blake, 2014; Mizza & Rubio, 2020; Sharma, 2017). Although students developed their speaking proficiency, the fact that they did not meet at least half of the time in person and did not engage in conversations in Spanish outside of class prevented them from reaching their full potential.

5.4 Limitations

Although this study produced interesting results regarding students' oral proficiency in a hybrid environment, it has several limitations concerning the number of participants, type of data collection, and the methodology.

First, this study was exploratory in nature because of the relatively low number of participants in each section. Although the total number of participants was forty, it represented a combination of four sections spread across two semesters. In addition, there was only one instructor whose classes were observed. Even though the descriptive statistics were thorough in nature, the results cannot be generalized and applied to a broader population of L2 learners. To understand whether these results can be generalized, more studies need to be conducted at similar community colleges with different instructors.

Secondly, because the researcher chose not to be involved with the students or the instructor, it is unclear whether students could have produced better language samples during their summative evaluations if the approach had been different. For example, the student interviews at the end of the first semester did not generate many errors at the verb conjugation level as expected and encountered in the pilot study because of the nature of the questions. For future studies, the researcher could collaborate more with the instructor and suggest a more comprehensive interview at the end of the semester.

Moreover, the methodological choices were constrained by the error analysis approach for oral assessments because it focused more on the negative than the positive. There were only a few instances where positive elements were presented through a qualitative approach. Other studies could analyze positive performance rather than adopt an error analysis approach in their evaluation.

Another limitation was in connection to data gathering. The number of recordings for the hybrid F2F courses during the second semester was lower than for the hybrid Zoom courses. Because the study was not comparative in nature but rather wanted to observe how speaking occurred during class, and the content taught was the same as the previous semester, at the time of data collection, it seemed insignificant to have more recordings. Although the classes recorded generated comparative results with the hybrid Zoom courses in terms of the class activities and percentage of Spanish used in class, the numbers could vary if more classes were recorded for the second semester.

Additionally, another limitation was the equipment used to record classes. Since an iPhone was the only piece of equipment available to the researcher, the microphone could not reach the entire class. The instructor tried moving the camera around to the different groups, but the sound quality could have been better. There were also instances when students engaged in group work, and only one group could be clearly understood based on the camera angle. For future studies, better equipment could be used to dive deeper into the students' group conversations, especially if it is a class that heavily focuses on role-play and conversations. Since the classes observed were traditional in nature, with very few group conversations, the data were consistent with what was observed in the hybrid Zoom courses.

Lastly, data were collected before the COVID-19 crisis, and some of the study results might be different if data were to be collected nowadays, especially given that the instructor had limited knowledge of teaching on an online platform at the time of data collection. Despite this limitation, the data are still valid, demonstrating that not all hybrid courses are successful. Success depends greatly on the curriculum design and delivery, among other factors.

5.5 Further Studies

This mixed-method research generated a lot of data and discussion regarding speaking proficiency in a hybrid environment. Several recommendations for further studies could be derived from the current one.

As a researcher, I would first like to engage in a comparative study of the different types of hybrid modalities to see which is the most efficient. The most common one is 50% in-person and 50% online, but as seen both in the literature review and this current study, there are many other types of hybrid or blended models. When the current research started, the hybrid model was hybrid Zoom for one hour a week, but then it was unexpectedly increased to two hours F2F per week because the instructor wanted to meet more often with the students. Because the study had already been designed and goals laid out, it did not shift to a comparative approach, but a comparative study with a pedagogical focus could add depth to the field.

Another approach is to analyze how the textbook package supports students' spoken proficiency. Because the oral exercises selected for students in the package were mainly repetitions of what students listened to and did not have a communicative component, the assignments in Pearson MyLab and Mastering were not included in this study. However, other hybrid courses use the communicative exercises in the publisher lab package, which could be analyzed to show how they support and improve students' proficiency.

Class observations generate a wealth of data, among others, the type of feedback an instructor offers students and how this impacts their proficiency. A qualitative analysis, where both students and the instructor reflect on the feedback received or given, could increase awareness and improve accuracy.

The error analysis approach has been used for more than 60 years in the field, and, although it indicates which areas instruction should focus on more, there is a need to develop better measuring instruments specific to foreign language hybrid courses that could be used across institutions to compare results and evaluate success. A measuring instrument focusing on positive elements occurring both in class and during evaluations could benefit further investigations.

This longitudinal study stopped after the first year of Spanish, mainly because most students at a community college often transfer to four-year universities. It would be interesting to analyze how many students who took foreign language at a community college continue their journey and how their knowledge transfers, whether they have to re-take Elementary Spanish I or can successfully manage in Elementary Spanish II.

Lastly, this study could be expanded to include other community college hybrid Elementary Spanish courses and analyze both the pedagogy, as well as students' proficiency to see what elements differ and what elements they have in common. It is important to keep investigating how Spanish is taught at various institutions, both research and teaching-focused sites.

5.6. Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to show how speaking proficiency is developed through a mixed-method approach, analyzing four sections of Elementary Spanish I and II taught at a US community college. It adopted naturalistic observation of class meetings to examine the type of class activities that developed speaking, as well as the summative evaluations that highlighted aural language use. The purpose was to fill a gap in the specialized literature by showing how and what elements are taught at the Elementary Spanish level in a hybrid course to develop speaking proficiency.

Results showed a discrepancy concerning what previous studies found about hybrid Spanish courses. Although previous studies revealed small or statistically insignificant results

concerning speaking proficiency (Blake, 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2006; Scida & Jones, 2016; Thoms, 2014) when comparing traditional and hybrid Spanish courses, they argued that their results show that the hybrid modality can be successful in developing students' speaking skills despite the reduced in-person meeting time.

This study revealed that the hybrid modality did not have the expected results in students' speaking skills because, by the end of the second semester, students were not able to reach the novice-high to intermediate-low levels expected at the beginning of the second year of Spanish. The study also emphasized that the type of hybrid format adopted (hybrid Zoom or hybrid F2F) did not influence results. The fact that more time for in-person meetings did not help students improve orally could be due to the lack of more communicative activities and the heavily grammar-focused curriculum. This proves again how important pedagogy is, especially in prioritizing speaking-focused activities in hybrid language learning environments.

However, the study showed potential for hybrid courses, especially when analyzing grade distribution. The hybrid sections for Elementary Spanish I were the most successful when comparing grade distribution across sections, including one traditional course taught by the same instructor, in the same fall semester. The reason students did better overall can be accounted for by the lower enrollment in the hybrid sections, which allowed for more individualized instruction and feedback.

More studies are needed in the field, especially to analyze different types of hybrid courses and narrow down on the most successful ones, instructional approaches, and population types. Although this was a mixed-methods study, there is still a great need for more qualitative approaches that could increase awareness about the learning process involved in developing Spanish speaking proficiency.

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Appendices

A. Informed Consent Form for Participants

Main investigator: **Daniela Ortiz**
Project title: **Speaking Proficiency in a Hybrid Flipped Environment**
A Qualitative Study of Spanish Beginner Classes

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to observe how a hybrid Spanish course is taught with a specific focus on the student-teacher and peer interaction, and how this interaction leads to the development of students' speaking proficiency.

You are invited to participate with no obligation in a research study. Your participation in this study is *voluntary* and you may withdraw at any time. Your participation or withdrawal will not affect your grade. The results of the research study will be used as part of a doctoral research project, and all your information will be confidential.

Who is doing the study?

The researcher is Daniela Ortiz, a doctoral student at the Polytechnic University of Valencia. She will not interact personally with you. Your instructor will record the classes and offer the recording to the researcher. The researcher will have access to Canvas assignments to analyze Discussion Boards or speaking assignments, these will have no impact on your grade.

What will I be asked to do?

If you choose to participate in this research study, you will only be asked to complete one short questionnaire with multiple choice questions, at the end of your language class. The questionnaire will ask questions about any prior foreign language experience and class tools you found useful. The questionnaire is sent by email and can be completed in 5 minutes.

All audio recordings and files will be kept on an encrypted flash drive locked in a drawer when not used. They will be kept until the doctoral dissertation is submitted and defended. The audio recording will not interfere with your course grade, or relationship with your instructor.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report or publication.

Benefits

You are not likely to have any direct benefit from being in this research study. This study is designed to learn more about speaking proficiency in a hybrid environment. However, it is based

on studies such as this one, that language curricula are improved, and other students may benefit from your experience.

Risks

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing in the class have no more risk or harm than those involved in an ordinary day in the classroom. There is no extra credit or other incentive for participating; therefore, you will not be adversely affected in any way if you choose not to participate. If you are interested in the results, you can communicate with the researcher to receive a summary when the study ends.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call Daniela Ortiz. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact … (confidential information)

Agreement

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign the form below. A signature will indicate agreement to participate, and have your voice audio recorded. Your signature below also indicates that **you are over the age of 18**. (If you are under 18, please have the following page signed by your parent/guardian.)

Participant's Name: (Print)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

B. Language background questionnaire for Spanish learners

Participant research ID number: _____ Initials:_____

Age: _____ Sex: MF

I. Personal Data

1. What is your highest level of education completed? (please circle):

   some high schoolhigh schoolsome collegecollegegraduate

2. Country of origin: _____

3. If you were not born in the U.S., how long have you lived in the U.S. for? _____

II. Your Linguistic History

3. Have you studied any other foreign language before? Circle one:

Yes No

If Yes, which one? _____

4. Have you studied Spanish in the past? Circle one:

Yes No

5. If your answer is **Yes**, please check the boxes that apply below

How long?	1 year or less	1-2 years	3-4 years
Where?	In class in high school	Online program (i.e. Rosetta Stone)	At home or with friends.
How often?	Once a week	2-4 times	5 or more
How long was your class time?	30 minutes	50-60 minutes	2 hours or more

5. Rate your knowledge of ENGLISH grammar

1. I don't know English grammar well
2. I am somehow familiar with English (i.e. I understand what a subject and verb is)
3. I am familiar with English and know most grammar parts.
4. I am comfortable with English grammar.

7. Rate your language learning skill. In other words, how good do you feel you are at learning new languages, relative to your friends or other people you know? (circle one)

1 = Very poor
2 = Poor
3 = Limited
4 = Average
5 = Good
6 = Very good
7 = excellent

III. Learning Style (Check all that apply)

8. In class, I like working ... □ Alone □ With a Partner □ With a Small Group
□ With the Class □ With the Teacher
□ Other: _____

9. In class, I like using a ... □ Textbook □ Workbook □ Teacher Hand-out
□ Video □ Audio □ Software
□ Computer □ Tablet/iPad □ Smart Phone
□ Dictionary □ Other: _____

10. In class, I like to practice... □ Conversation □ Listening
□ Pronunciation
□ Reading □ Writing □ Grammar
□ Other: _____

11. I learn best when (you can choose more than one):

a. I listen to the information
b. I visualize the information
c. I read the information
d. I do hands-on activities
e. I work with somebody else.

IV. Classroom Tools and Activities. Rate your language learning skill.

1 = Very poor
2 = Poor
3 = Limited
4 = Average
5 = Good
6 = Very good
7 = excellent

12. I used these tools when studying:
- Textbook
- MyLab and Mastering
- Powerpoints and Additional Resources on Canvas
- Personal resources (links I found, etc.)

- Relied on class presentations

6. Rate your current overall language ability in SPANISH
1 = do not know Spanish at all
2 = understand a little but cannot speak
3 = understand some and can speak with great difficulty
4 = understand and speak but with some difficulty
5 = understand and speak comfortably, with little difficulty

C. Transcript Sample

Elementary I F2F Hybrid

March 26, 2019 class video IMG_5015 (8 students present)

(Students are seated in a class, one student per desk, each facing the teacher. At the beginning of class there are 6 students present in class. Two have laptops open and looking at them. Two are looking at an open book. One student that arrived seconds late is just now taking materials out of his backpack.)

Teacher: [00:00:00.12] So we are going to talk about *tener*. And *tener* I mentioned when I explained that the first time that we use *tener* when we're talking about possessions, ok? But we also use it for several other situations or moments. So let's go over the powerpoint. So let's open the book at *página ochenta y seis*. *Página ochenta y seis.* W. hello, how are you? Welcome back.

Student W W: Thanks

Teacher: [00:00:59.00] Are you ok?

Student: Yeah.

Teacher: [00:01:00.00] *Muy bien*. I am happy you are here today. Let me know if you have any questions about the material that we covered last week. I think we got over that online.

%com: Another student entered class.

Student W: [00:01:15] Yeah.

Teacher: [00:01:16.33] If you have any questions, I'd be happy to help you.

Student W: [00:01:18.83] Ok, thank you.

Teacher: [00:01:30.00] *Página ochenta y seis.* Are you with me there? [00:01:40.00] Be honest with me. Did you watch the videos online for this module? *Sí, S, muy bien, M. muy bien.* Ok, I don't want to sound so picky and you know, but you need to watch the videos before coming to classes. This is a hybrid class. It's not a regular face-to-face class. That's why we are seeing each other just two hours a week. But your class is four credits, so that means we should be seeing each other two hours every time we meet or an hour every time four days a week. We're not doing that so.

%com: No reaction, rather apathic attitude.

Teacher: [00:02:48] So *verbo tener* means, a, we're gonna use it when we're showing or telling something that we possess. It means to have or to possess. It is a irregular verb, because the *yo* form ends in -go, and also it's a stem-changing verb. Can anybody tell me what stem-changing verb means?

%com: Go pronounced as in English.

Student K*:* [00:03:16] So like the main part of the verb changes.

Teacher: [00:03:18] The stem as well changes. *Muy bien.* As you can see, *tener* ends in -er, and *tengo* for *yo*, but then, *tú, Usted, él o ella, nosotros, Ustedes* and *ellos* and *ellas* has a stem change. The stem also changes. Ok, so I could say talking about things that I have to express possession, I can say *Tengo muchos amigos,* but also, we're gonna use it with something that we have to do, ok? Like an obligation or something that you have to do. Like *tener que*, like *tener* plus *que* plus an infinitive. So if I'm using that, I'm gonna use

%com: Teacher writes on the board.

Teacher [00:04:20] What is an infinitive?

Student [00:04:25] A verb.

Teacher [00:04:26] A verb that .. What's the difference between any verb conjugated and an infinitive?

Student S: [00:04:30] The infinitive is not conjugated.

Teacher: [00:04:38] *Excelente*, S., the infinitive is not conjugated. So, if I have this construction to express something that I have to do, I have *tener* plus *que* plus an infinitive. What do I do if I want to say *yo* (..) I'm gonna throw all those markers in the garbage *porque no están funcionando*. I'm gonna get another one. If I have the *yo* form, what I'm gonna use for *tener*? What's the *yo* form for *tener*?

Students [00:05:13] *Tengo.*

Teacher: [00:05:14] *Yo tengo, ¿verdad?* And then, I'm just following my formula over here *tengo que* and what could be an infinitive to add over here? *Yo tengo que* what?

Student [00:05:36] *Comer.*

Teacher: [00:05:37] *Comer*. Everybody has to eat. *Yo tengo que comer.* OK? Or*, Yo tengo que estudiar. O yo tengo que cuidar.* I have to take care of my kids. *Tengo que estudiar*. All of you have to do this one. Ok? Not this one? Nobody has a kid, I mean you don't have to take care of anybody, but this is something that you really have to do, this is your job. Ok? You have to study. *Tengo que estudiar. Sí?* And as you can see, we do not drop or add anything. This is the infinitive, the big name of the verb: to eat. This is what *en español*, I mean *en inglés*, to eat, to study, to take care of. *Sí?* So this is another way we are going to use *tengo* when we're talking about things that we have to do. We are going to use *tengo* when we're talking about possession, and *tengo que* plus infinitive when we're talking about, about what?

%com: Teacher writes on the board.

D. Student Interview Sample

This interview is an example from the Hybrid Zoom I class. This female student is young, without prior experience studying Spanish.

TEACHER: Sh, *¿cuándo es tu cumpleaños?*
STUDENT: *Mi cumpleaños es * veintidós de enero.*
%com: Student does not use the article.
TEACHER: *El veintidos de enero. O, muy pronto*. Soon, *pronto*.
STUDENT: *Sí*.
TEACHER: *¿De dónde eres*, Sh?
STUDENT: *Soy de los Estados ¿Unidos*?
%com: Student shows some hesitation by raising the intonation.
TEACHER: *Muy bien. ¿Puedes describirte?*
STUDENT: (…) *Soy* (..) *activo*
%com: no agreement with the noun described
TEACHER: *Activa.* (…) *¿Qué más?* Can you give me dos adjetivos más to describe yourself.
STUDENT: (0.6) *Un momento*. (0.20) *Soy*... let's see (0.4) I walk a lot. (0.4) And (0.2) Oh, crap. I forgot how to say run.
%com: Student laughs to hide embarrassment of forgetting the verb in Spanish.
TEACHER: You forgot how to say what?
STUDENT: Run. Like I run.
TEACHER: *Me gusta correr.* Is that what you wanna say?
STUDENT: Yeah.
TEACHER: *Ok, me gusta correr, muy bien. ¿A qué hora es tu clase de español?*
STUDENT: *Mi clase de español es a las diez de la mañana.*
%com: Good pronuciation; speaks fast and fluently.
TEACHER: *Muy bien. ¿Qué estudias?*
STUDENT: *Soy* * *química, español y sociología.*
%com: Student pronounces well; she should say "estudio"
TEACHER: Ok, but I'm asking you, *¿Qué estudias?* You have to use the same verb that I'm using. *¿Qué estudias?* It's gonna be *yo*...
STUDENT: *Yo* (0.2) *es, esta.*
TEACHER: *Estudio*.
STUDENT: *Estudio química, español y sociología.*
TEACHER: *Química, español y sociología. Muy bien. Excelente trabajo.*

The interview below takes place in the Hybrid Zoom II classroom. This is a student in his 60s that had been previously exposed to Spanish.

Student R [23:52] I'll be the guinea pig if you want me to go first.
Teacher: *Muy bien*, R, go ahead. *Primera pregunta es: ¿Puedes deletrear tu nombre?*
STUDENT R: (..) *Sí, puedo deletrear mi nombre. Are^-o-be-e-are-te-o.*
%com:*Are should be ere, the rest is well done.
Teacher: *Muy bien, R. Excelente. Muy muy bien. Próxima pregunta*. It says: *¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños?*

STUDENT R: (…) *Mi cumplianos^ (.) es (..) el doce de septiembre.*

%com: *cumplianos*: does not read the ñ; very good pronunciation of *septiembre*; alveolar tap R

TEACHER: *El doce de septiembre, perfecto. Número 15: ¿Cuál es tu color favorito?*

STUDENT: (..) *Mi color favorito (.) es azul.*

TEACHER: Ok, *Muy bien. ¿Cómo es tu hijo?*

STUDENT: *Mi hijo es ¿bueno?*

%com: Silent H; not sure if he understands the question.

TEACHER: Mhm Can you say anything else about him?

STUDENT: (.) *Mi hijo es bueno y (...) muy ocupado* ahora.*

%com: Not clear about verb *ser* and *estar*; *es bueno* can work if it describes personality; but the correct version is *está ocupado*; He might also mean *está bien*. The teacher did not correct him.

TEACHER: Ok. *Muy, muy bien. A ver… ¿Qué hora es, R?*

STUDENT: *Son las diez y media.*

TEACHER: *Excelente. Muy, muy bien. Muy bien, R*. Wow. *Muy bien.*

E. WebQuest Presentation Transcript Sample

Webquest 3

File IMG_2334 (3 minutes and 4 seconds)

Presentation by Student T, a male student with a good accent. Student B, a female student, is a returning student who was also enrolled in one of the Hybrid Spanish courses.

* indicated grammar issues

^ indicates pronunciation issues

Words pronounced in Spanish are in italics, and those pronounced in English are in regular font.

Student T: *Nuestro* ciudad es* Madrid.

%com: agreement with noun; Madrid pronounced in English

Student T: Ok. So, *El país es* al lado de Francia y Portugol^ y*

Teacher: *Portugal*

Student T: *Portugal y no tiene un mar* or *mantañas^ pero la concha de Sebastian es la playa y es acerca cuatro y media horas de la ciudad.* So it's four and a half hours from the country.

%com: Good pronunciation in general. Very sure of himself. Good R and T.

Teacher: *San Sebastian* you mean?

Student T: Yeah, so it's four and a half hours, *una playa famosa.*

Teacher: Ok

Student T: *Y las montañas son un* hora.*

%com: una hora

Teacher: *A una hora de allí*

Student T: Yeah, *de Madrid y cosas para hacer*. *El Gran Vía es una* lugar para comprar cosas diferentes: ropa o comida, no sé. Y el maso^*

%com: Good pragmatic filler: no sé; maso – museo.

Teacher: *Museo*

Student T: *Museo nacional del Prado es mirar pinturas de* how do you say it, *de, pinturas de…*

Teacher: *Artistas famosos, muy bien.*

Student T: *Artistas famosas*. San Miguel Marqueta* es un lugar para comprar comida. Comidas diferentes. Tápanes, comida famoso*. En España, el Palacio Real de Madrid es la casa de la familia royal* de España y Santiago Bernabeo es el estadio de, del equipo Real Madrid.*

%com: market – mercado; agreement with comida missing; real not royal.

Teacher: Is that your *equipo*?

Student T: *Mi equipo segundo.*

%com: Both teacher and student laugh.

Teacher: *¿Cuál es el primer equipo?*

Student T: *El equipo* Chelsea FC en England, *el mejor de todo del* mundo.*

Teacher: *Bueno*.

[Student B starts speaking here. She hesitates and pauses a lot during her presentation.]

Student B: *En octubre, noviembre, una festival otoño**, (..) I couldn't find a whole lot of information about the last one so. And what is it, *y (..) feria del libro es de mayo a junio y hay muchos* actividades* pero like I said, I couldn't find much.

%com: Student laughs.

%com: Video was cut and a new one restarts.

IMG_2335 (4 minutes and 41 seconds)

Student T: *Tiempo hoy. Sesenta grados en* la mañana pero en la noche es…*

%com: Por la mañana.

Student B: *Cuarenta y nueve.*

Student T: Yeah, *cuarenta y nueve grados y tiene todos* los* estaciones pero es una ciudad muy fresca para* la primavera y otoño y* invierno, está este* temperatura, pero en el invierno es muy calor*.*

%com: Agreement with the feminine noun "las estaciones."

Teacher: *Es muy caliente*.

Student T: *Es muy caliente*

Teacher: Or *hace mucho calor*.

Student T: O *hace mucho calor. El* temperatura es más de ochenta grados*.

%com: noun gender – la temperatura

Student B: *En promedio, la temperatura máxima es ochenta y ocho grados y la temperatura mínima es sobre* treinta y siete grados en (0.2) enero y (.) ochenta y ocho grados en agosto.*

%com: Good pronunciation, and grammar; sobre – literal translation; más de…

Teacher: *¿Nieva en Madrid?*

Student T: *A veces, pero no mucho.*

Teacher: *No mucho, exactamente.*

Student T: *El mejor momento para visitarla es en la primavera porque no* mucho caliente.*

%com: Verb omission.

Teacher: *No es muy caliente.*

Student T: *No es muy caliente.* Aa..

Student B: *Y hay muchas*, what's that, (laughs) *cosas hacer* en, en mayo*, (0.3) *muchas cosas (0.2) en la primavera es* en mayo.*

Teacher: *Ok. Muy bien.*

Student T: *La ropa depiend^*

Student B: *Dependiento.*

Student T: *Dependiendo del día puedes llevar pantalones o pantalones cortos, pero no se necesita ropa de invierno porque,* I don't know.

%com: He looks to his partner for transition.

Student B: (0.3) *Tengo que empacar los anteojos del* sol, posiblemente trajes de baños*, las toallas*, las camisetas sin mangas, los* shorts *y los vestidos del sol.*

%com: Overgeneralization *baños; del sol*.

Teacher: ok

Student T: *En Madrid, en España es una* país en* ropa y ellos usan…*

%com: Hesitation when saying *usan*; gender: *un país*.

Teacher: *Sí*
Student T: *Es usan? Ellos usan el* euro*
%com: Euro pronounced in English.
Teacher: *El euro.*
Student: *Euro y…*
%com: Looks at his partner for the next slide.
Student B: *Lo siento. Necesitaremos gastar mucho dinero en comida, transporte y regalos que poda^ que podamos* querer para nosotros o para otros.*
%com: Literal translations; use of subjunctive
Student B: Y personally, I didn't do the math first, but I probably should have. *Voy a gastar (0.2) cinco cientos* dólares en Espan, en España que es sobre* (.) cuatro cientos cuarenta y cinco euros.* It's about four hundred forty-five euros, five hundred dollars in our money. It's about 445 dollars. It was like 89 or 90 cents per US dollar.
%com: Quinientos
Teacher: So, the *euro* is more expensive? Or…
Student B: No, the euro.
Other Student: Yeah, the euro is more expensive.
Student B: Sorry.
Student T: That's it.
Teacher: Ok, *muy bien.*

F. Errors in Student Interviews for First Semester Spanish

PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

Error Category	Error	Correct	Type	Cause for Intralingual
Vowel Confusion				
O read as /a/ not /o/	*Calor* Nambre Hanesta	Color Nombre Honesta	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
A read as /e/	*Le mejor* *El* Meior Dies E Nedar Trebajo Espegutis	La mejor Al Mayor Días A Nadar Trabajo Espaguetis	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
E read as /i/	*Il cuatro* *De* *Mi* *Mi* Cumplianos Lio, lii, limos, Lis, lin Lio Di Mi	El cuatro De Me Me Cumpleaños	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
I read as /e/	Necolas	Nicolás	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
U read as /ju/	*Universidad* Universidad		Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Reversed vowels	Vientecinco	Veinticinco	Intralingual	False analogy
Double vowel substituion A read as /e/ and A read as /i/	Trebijar	Trabajar	Intralingual	False analogy
Consonnant Confusion				
ñ read as /n/ not /ɲ/	*Cumpleanos* *Manana* Cumplianos Otono	Cumpleaños Mañana Cumpleaños Otoño	Interlingual	L1 transfer
z not read as /s/ but as /z/	*Azul* Azul		Interlingual	L1 Transfer

S read as /z/	*Ez* *Vizitar* *Televizon*	Es Visitar Televisión	Intralingual	False analogy
ll read as /l/ not /ʎ/	Elos, elas Silas Amarilo	Ellos, ellas Sillas Amarilla	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
L read as /i:/	Mochias	mochilas	Intralingual	False analogy: l/ll
H not muted	Hijo	H should be mute	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
/*ʧe*/ instead of /s/	*Doce*	Doce - che	Intralingual	False analogy
/e/ instead of /es/	-hoy e -él e bueno	Hoy es Él es	Interlingual	French Transfer
Other pronunciation errors				
Word stress	*Aprende* *Lápiz*	Accent on last vowel Accent on last syllable not first	Intralingual	Influence of the dominant form (the infinitive)
Syllable Issues	Emorados	Enamorados	Intralingual	Incomplete application of rules
	De verdade	/de/ instead of /d/	Interlingual	Portuguese transfer
Mispronounced	*Enlacicios*	Ejercicios	Intralingual	False analogy
	Basketball	Baloncesto	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Ioi	Yo	Intralingual	False analogy
	Cojarme	Quejarme	Intralingual	False analogy

Italics – errors from Zoom I ; Regular Font – errors from Zoom II

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

Error Category	Error	Correct	Type	Cause
Verb conjugation	*Me gusta hacer juego basketbol* *Hago ver la televisión* *Yo es, esta*	Me gusta jugar… Yo estudio	Intralingual Intralingual Intralingual	Hyper generalization (conjugate every verb you see) Hyper generalization Incomplete rule application
Agreement	*Mi ojos son marrón*	Mis ojos son marrones	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Simpatico	Simpática	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Mi padres	Mis padres	Interlingual	L1 transfer
Semantic Ser/estar	Mi hijo es bueno y (…) muy ocupado ahora. El e bueno y cansado	Mi hijo está bien y muy ocupado ahora Está cansado	Interlingual Interlingual	L1 Transfer L1 Transfer
Semantic	Soy química	Estudio	Intralingual	False analogy
Semantic	Encontrados	He means contradicting	Intralingual	False analogy
Semantic	¿Cómo eres?	Soy estudiante	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
Semantic	¿Qué haces en Halloween? H: *Treinta y uno de octubre*	Answer and Questions do not match	Intralingual	False analogy
Semantic	Voy a la universidad cualquier otro día.		Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Lexical	Bova	She describes her daughter with a pejorative term. She means *activa* o *loquita*	Intralingual	False analogy
Lexical	Décimo tercera	El trece de…	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Lexical	Y inteligente	E inteligente	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
Lexical	Muy	Mucho	Intralingual	False analogy

Article	Veintidós	Missing article for date	Interlingual	L1 transfer
Article	La doce	Las doce (time)	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
Article	Soy… la madre y la abuela	No article needed	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
Article	El libros	Los libros	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
Article	La clase es el martes	Los martes	Intralingual	Incomplete application of rules
Article	Un profesora	Una profesora	Intralingual	Neutralization
Register	T: ¿Cómo estás? Student: [11:30] *Estoy más o menos. ¿Y tú*?	Student should use Usted with instructor	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application

G. Errors in WebQuests for Second Semester Spanish

PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

Error Category	Error	Correct	Type	Cause
Vowel Substitution				
O read as /a/	Agasto Mantañas Praximo Dalares Can	Agosto Montañas Próximo Dólares con	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
A read as /ə/	Normal /ˈnɔrməl/ Portugol	/nor`mal/ Portugal	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
A read as /e/	Estes Eropuerto Pera (2) He Cene Hores	Estás Aeropuerto Para Hay Cena Horas	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
E read as /i/	Inero Chili Ociano Promideo Naturaliza Ociano Viaji Di Priso Di Mi In	Enero Chile Océano Promedio Naturaleza Océano Viajé De (preposition) Precio De (prep.) Me En	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
E read as /a/	Asta Traja	Está Traje	Intralingual	False analogy
U read as /ju/	Usar Usa Húmedo Usando	Usar Usa	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
U read as /a/	Autobas	Autobús	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
I read as /a/	Aia Saito	Isla Sitio	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
I read as /e/	Vestas Aque	Vistas aquí	Intralingual	False analogy

Reversed vowels	Viente	Veinte	Intralingual	False analogy
Double vowel substituion A read as /e/ and E read as /a/	Vieja	Viaje	Intralingual	False analogy
Vowel deletion	Vista Surfer Recordó novembre	Visita Surfear Recuerdo Noviembre	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Consonant Substitution				
ñ read as /n/ not /ɲ/	Montanas	Montañas	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
z not read as /s/ but /z/	Marzo Marzo		Interlingual	L1 transfer
Ce read as /z/	Haz Hazar	Hace Hacer	Intralingual	False analogy
S read as /z/	Vizitamos Paraízo naturaliza	Visitamos Paraíso	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
ll read as /l/ not /ʎ/	Lueve Maraviloso	Llueve Maravilloso	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
H not muted	Habana (4x) Historia Húmedo Hotel Hermoso Haz He Humedo Hay Hotels Heza Hazar Hacer Hice Herba Hacer Helado	H should be muted for all the words. The list on the words shows that students pronounced the <h>.	Interlingual	L1 transfer
/b/ mistaken for /v/	Avril	Abril	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Syllable Issues				
Syllable Deletion	Tempetura Maso Priso Oceano	Temperatura Museo Precio Oceánico	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Syllable addition	Cosista	Cosita	Intralingual	False analogy

	Visisitas Pascura Entonoces Eropuerto invereno	Visita Páscua Entonces Puerto Invierno		
Mixed letters	Clia frima	Clima frío	Intralingual	False analogy
	Meiaflores	Miraflores		

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

Error Category	Error	Correct	Type	Cause
Agreement Errors				
Agreement	Estos mesas*	Estos meses	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
	Muchas* turistas	Muchos turistas	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Muchas* edificios	Muchos edificios	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
	Muchas* días	Muchos días	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	La ciudad… no es caro*	Cara	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
	Las ciudades del Norteamericana*	Las ciudades norteamericanas OR de Norteamérica	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	Dólares canadiense*	Dólares canadienses	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	Buenas mesas*	Meses buenos	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Otro* gastos	Otros gastos	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Nuestro* ciudad	Nuestra ciudad	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Artistas famosas*	Artistas famosos	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
	Comida famoso*	Comida famosa	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Todos* los estaciones	Todas las estaciones	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Muchos* actividades	Muchas actividades	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Este* temperatura	Esta temperatura	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Una estación muy muy húmedo*	Una estación muy muy húmeda	Intralingual	Neutralization
	El* temperatura máximo*	La temperatura máxima	Intralingual	Neutralization
	En la temperatura mínimo*	La temperatura mínima	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Muchos* playas	Muchas playas	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Otras* lugares	Otros lugares	Intralingual	False analogy
	Muchos* nubes	Muchas nubes	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Todos* la ciudad	Toda la ciudad	Intralingual	Neutralization

Syntactical Errors				
Syntactical	La alta* temperatura	Noun + adjective	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Pero dólares canadiense pueden usar	Pero pueden usar dólares canadienses	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Una* festival otoño	Un festival de otoño	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	No* mucho caliente.	No hace mucho calor	Intralingual	Omission
	Cosas* hacer	Cosas que hacer	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Muchas cosas en la primavera es* en mayo.	Muchas cosas ocurren en mayo en la primavera.	Intralingual	False analogy
	Un país * en ropa	Un país donde se usa ropa	Intralingual	False analogy
	Ves el sol más frecuente*	Más frecuentemente	Intralingual	False analogy
	Si yo fuería*	Si yo fuera	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	La tempretura* tras* todos* del año	La temperatura durante todo el año	Intralingual	False analogy
	En* una ciudad muy interesante	Es una ciudad….	Intralingual	False analogy
	*Más frío	Hace más frío	Intralingual	Omission
	Mis visitas eran* en febrero	Mis visitas fueron…	Intralingual	False analogy
	¿Cuánto dinero vas a gastar en mi* viaje?	¿Cuánto dinero vas a gastar en tu viaje?	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	Cosas divertidas que heza*	Cosas divertidas que quisieras hacer	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Un hermoso* pasillo marítimo	Un paseo marítimo hermoso	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	La temperatura en febrero es las altas* siete, setenta y ochenta	La temperatura en febrero es alta. Entre setenta y ochenta grados.	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	En mi próxima visita en febrero es la alta* setenta y ochenta.	En mi próxima visita en febrero, la temperatura va a estar entre setenta y ochenta	Interlingual	L1 Transfer

Verb conjugation	Los edificios tiene* (Writes it well but does not read well)	Los edificios tienen	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	Necesitos* cinco	Necesito	Intralingual	False analogy
	Múseo nacional del Prado es mirar pinturas	En el museo…se pueden ver	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Semantic Errors				
Semantic	Una casa que* H. vivió	En la cual/ donde vivió	Intralingual	Neutralization
Ser/estar	El país es al lado	Está al lado	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Ser/estar	Y las montañas son un* hora	Están a una hora de allí	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Clima frío promideo	El promedio de la temporada fría	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Clima calor	El promedio de los meses más cálidos.	Intralingual	False analogy
	La más máxima temperatura	La temperatura máxima	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	De alguna vez	De la historia	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Quiero necesitar	Necesito OR Pienso que necesito	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	No hay buenos	No son buenos	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Está este temperatura	Hay esta temperatura	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Es muy calor	Es muy caliente OR hace mucho calor	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Sobre treinta y siete grados	Más de	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Necesitaremos gastar mucho dinero […] que podamos* querer para nosotros	No need to use “que podamos querer” – literal translation: we would need	Interlingual	L1 transfer
	Es Diciembre a avril	Es desde diciembre hasta abril	Intralingual	Omission
	El San Juan ha estado protegiendo la	San Juan protegió …	Intralingual	False analogy

	ciudad de los piratas			
	El dinero usando	El dinero usado	Intralingual	False analogy
	También* los restaurantes no son demasiado caros.	Los restaurantes no son tampoco demasiado caros	Intralingual	False analogy
	Sentarme en la herba^ con camelo*.	A comerlo	Intralingual	False analogy
	Mi amo muchos	Yo amo mucho OR Me encantan	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
Lexical Errors				
Lexical	Hace septiembre	Hasta septiembre	Intralingual	False analogy
	Por	Para mi viaje	Intralingual	Influence of Dominant Form
	El mejor de todo del mundo	El mejor de todo el mundo	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	En la noche	Por la noche	Intralingual	False analogy
	Es una ciudad fresca para* la primavera	Durante la primavera	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Cientos y dos	Ciento dos	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Marqueta	Mercado	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Royal	Real	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Y invierno	E invierno	Intralingual	Influence of dominant form
	Trajes de baños	Traje de baño	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Cinco cientos	Quinientos	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Es sobre	Es aproximadamente	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	Specifico	Específicamente	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	El costa	El costo	Intralingual	False analogy
	Cinco cientos	Quinientos	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Inverano	Invierno	Intralingual	False analogy
	Demás	Además	Intralingual	False analogy
	Uno crepe	Un crepe	Intralingual	False analogy
	También	Tampoco	Intralingual	False analogy
Article Errors				
Article	En* las* es la *más* calor	Es cuando más calor hace	Intralingual	Hyper correction

	Lo* mejor estación	La mejor estación	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Pero *turistas usan	Los turistas usan	Interlingual	F1 transfer
	Un* tradición	Una tradición	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Un* hora	Una hora	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Una* lugar	Un lugar	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Una* festival	Un festival	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	*Feria del libro	La feria del libro es…	Intralingual	Incomplete rule application
	El* temperatura	La temperatura	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Anteojos del* sol	Anteojos de sol o gafas de sol	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Tengo que empacar trajes de baños*, las* toallas, las camisetas…	Tengo que empacar trajes de baño, toallas, camisetas…	Intralingual	Hyper correction
	Una* país	Un país	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	El* ciudad	La ciudad	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Los* estaciones	Las estaciones	Intralingual	Neutralization
	Un* semana	Una semana	Intralingual	Neutralization
	El* San Juan	San Juan	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Un* sobrilla	Una sombrilla	Intralingual	Neutralization
	El* presentación	La presentación	Intralingual	Neutralization
	La capital del* Perú	La capital de Perú	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	Un* mil	Mil	Interlingual	L1 Transfer
	De la* autobús	Del autobús	Intralingual	Hyper generalization
	La* mar	El mar	Intralingual	Hyper generalization