THE IMPORTANCE OF LINGUISTIC VARIATION IN SPANISH IN A MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL WORLD

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Resumen: En respuesta a los eventos políticos del 11 de septiembre, la Asociación de Lenguas Modernas (MLA) propuso recientemente un nuevo modelo sobre el aprendizaje y la enseñanza de idiomas, llamado la competencia translingüística y transcultural (TTC). Después de la II Guerra Mundial, el ejército también sugirió una revisión completa del currículo, la cual fracasó a la hora de desarrollar la competencia lingüística de los estudiantes. Después de situar el modelo TTC en su contexto histórico, se defiende que si este llega a tener más éxito que los que fueron implantados después de la II Guerra Mundial, tanto los estudiantes como los instructores necesitarán un conocimiento lingüístico de las variedades del español en el mundo de hoy (Arteaga y Llorente, 2009). Se concluye que tal enfoque servirá de puente entre las clases de lengua y las de contenido literario o lingüístico.

Palabras clave: Competencia lingüística y cultural, currículo al nivel universitario en los EE.UU., métodos de la enseñanza, variación dialectal y sociolingüística.

Abstract: The political events of 9/11 have spurred the Modern Language Association (MLA) to propose an entirely new model of language learning and instruction, namely Translinguistic and Transcultural Competence (TTC). While such a curricular revision was also spearheaded by the military during WWII, it ultimately failed to develop linguistic and cultural competence in students. After placing the TTC in its historical context, it is argued that if the MLA's new proposal for language learning is to meet with greater success than those implemented after WWII, both instructors and students will need a linguistic understanding of regional and social variation as it exists in the Spanish language today (cf. Arteaga & Llorente 2009). Finally, this work concludes that such a focus will serve naturally as a bridge between lower division and upper division courses.

Key words: Linguistic competence, curriculum at the university level, teaching methods, dialectal and sociolinguistic variation.

Resumé: Pour répondre aux évènements politiques du 11 septembre, l'Association des Langues Modernes (MLA) a proposé un nouveau modèle d'apprentissage et d'enseignement de langues étrangères, la Compétence Translinguistique et Transculturelle (TTC). Après la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, l'armée avait également préconisé une révision totale du curriculum qui a n'a pas réussi à faire développer chez les étudiants une compétence linguistique. Après avoir situé le modèle TTC dans son contexte historique, nous prétendons que pour que ce dernier ait plus de succès que les modèles précédents, et les étudiants et les professeurs auront besoin d'une connaissance linguistique de la variation qui existe en espagnol aujourd'hui. On conclut que telle concentration servira de pont entre les cours de langue et ceux de littérature ou de linguistique.

Mots-clés: Compétence linguistique, programme d'études au niveau universitaire aux E.U., méthodes de l'enseignement, variation dialectale et sociolinguistique

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0. Introduction

In an era of budget cuts, with the concomitant hiring of more part-time instructors and graduate students (Teaching Assistants, TAs) to teach language classes, the issues of language learning and instruction have never been more important. This is particularly the case in Spanish, the choice of the vast majority of foreign language students in the United States. The didactic model which should be implemented, in our view, must be one which can educate students and future instructors to be both multilingual and multicultural.

Our paper begins with a brief overview since WWII of student learning outcomes and the teaching methods designed to achieve them.[1] These include the Grammar-Translation (GT) method, the Audio-lingual (AL) method, the Communicative Approach (CA), and finally, the Focus on Form Approach (FF). We then consider the MLA's recommendations regarding language learning and teaching broached in recent position papers by their Ad-hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (Pratt et al, 2007, 2008). We review their TTC proposal, whose goals are to produce language students who can not only converse with educated native speakers but also slip into another country's cultural viewpoint. Following Arteaga & Llorente (2009), we maintain in this paper that neither of these objectives can be achieved in Spanish without educating both students and instructors regarding linguistic variation as it exists in the Spanish language today.

1. Background

At the turn of the last century, the dominant method of instruction was the Grammar/Translation (GT) method, which is quite different from the approaches in vogue today. Foreign languages within the GT method were viewed as an abstract field of study, on par with, for example, Latin or even Chemistry. Language production, specifically speaking, was not a goal of this method. Indeed, the focus of instruction was on abstract knowledge, on grammar as a theoretical notion. In other words, the GT method prized *metalinguistic* knowledge (i.e., knowledge *regarding a* language), as opposed to linguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge *of* a language). For example, it was viewed as essential for a student to be able to list the various uses of the imperfect tense rather than for him/her to produce the correct verbal aspect *vis à vis* the preterit (or other) verb form.

Foreign language instructors were trained to present, in a deductive grammar, prescriptive grammar (i.e., grammar language as it «should» be in some idealized notion) of the language in question. Fluency was not required of instructors, as courses were

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[1] See Cook (2007) and Arteaga & Llorente (2009) for a detailed historical overview of teaching methods.

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normally taught in English. A sample exercise in a GT text would be the following (adapted from Sacks, 1951:38):

(1) Translate the bolded italicized words:[2]

1. **Our** *tíos* 2. **My** *prima* 3. *Ana* **is** *sick*. 4. *Juan* **is** *mi amigo*. 5. *Nosotros* **are** *franceses*. 6. *El inglés* **is difícil**. 7. *Pablo es un* **good** *vecino*.

The exercise given above in (1) is quite different from those found in textbooks today. The utterances, as they stand, are not part of natural language. Further, not only is it a translation exercise, not typically found in beginning language textbooks, but it also gives the impression that one language «plugs in» to another. Moreover, the message to the student seems to be that the «real language» is English. Finally, there is no context given for the exercise. It seems to test simultaneously *ser*/*estar* 'to be,' agreement of possessive adjectives, and agreement of adjectives.

The GT was largely abandoned after the outbreak of WWII, as this political crisis triggered the need for communicating with allies and the enemy in languages other than English. In other words, academic knowledge about a language was not only unimportant, it was irrelevant (Huebner, 1945). Foreign languages went from being an almost arcane, academic subject, to being one of the most important skills that military personnel could possess (Mapes, 1943:538). At this time, the GT method came under (largely negative) scrutiny, for its failure to produce students with the skills needed by the armed forces (Kurz, 1943:209). What was essential during the war was practical knowledge, particularly the ability to produce or comprehend a language with enough accuracy to either communicate with, or to pass for, a native speaker.

An immersion program was developed, for which members of the armed services were selected on the basis of their language-learning aptitude. This method largely met war-time goals, even though its applicability to university settings was not seen as feasible (Pargment 1945:201). On one hand, many instructors themselves were unable to conduct an immersion class as they were not orally proficient in the target language, and on the other, it was not feasible for universities to permit only select students to enrol in foreign languages courses.

Following the war, the Audio-Lingual (AL) method was developed, which took advantage of the nascent technology of the era. Inductive grammar presentations were preferred, and the target language was used in classrooms. The goals of the AL were to develop conversational proficiency, yet its behaviorist approach (cf. Bloomfield 1933) prevented it from achieving its aims. Students memorized dialogues and learned to produce phrases that were narrowly limited to a model. For example, in learning the

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[2] (1) 'Our uncles' (2) 'My cousin' (3) 'Ana is sick.' (4) 'John is my friend.' (5) 'We are French.' (6) 'English is difficult.' (7) 'Paul is a good neighbor.

imperfect aspect, students would mimic the sample response, making a simple change to the utterance. Consider (2) below:[3]

(2) Sample audiolingual exercise

Instructor cue: *Cuando **era** niña, **iba** todos los veranos a la playa.* 'When I was a child, I used to go to the beach every summer.' (nosotros)

Student response: *Cuando **éramos niños, íbamos** todos los veranos a la playa.* 'When we were children, we used to go to the beach every summer.'

In such an exercise, the students would hear a «trigger,» such as *nosotros*, and be expected to come up with a drill response, in this case, changing the subject from singular to plural. Although the AL method is no longer used, its focus on the four skills of language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), as well as the use of dialogues, are still found in textbooks today.

But like the GT method, the AL method failed to meet the stated objectives of foreign language learning in the era, namely to educate students to produce spontaneous utterances in order to converse with native speakers. The joke of the era was that when students traveled abroad, they found that native speakers did not «know» their part of the dialogue! This perceived inadequacy of the AL method led to the Communicative Approach of the 1980s, which placed a premium on student interaction as a means to learn and teach language.

In this approach, pair work was used extensively so that all students could participate. The instructor's role was de-emphasized, and basically consisted of roaming throughout the class, monitoring speech for accuracy. Another characteristic of this method was the use of authentic texts, such as actual menus from a restaurant or a subway map from a major city, whose purpose was either to spearhead conversation or to help students learn to read. The emphasis on grammar decreased significantly. Many books put grammatical topics either in a footnote, or in chapters that students were to master at home.[4] A sample exercise in the CA would be the following:

(3) With a partner, play the roles of a shopkeeper and client. Follow the model given below, replacing the bold words with those found after the exercise; make all other necessary changes:[5]

Student A: *¿Buenos días. ¿Qué le pongo?*

Student B: *Buenos días. A ver. Déme un kilo de **naranjas** y medio kilo de **cerezas**.*

Student A: *Está bien. ¿Algo más? **Las manzanas** están muy **frescas**.*

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[3] See the textbook *Modern Spanish*, published by the MLA in 1973 (Turner, 1973), for an example of an AL text.

[4] See *Dos Mundos* (Terrel et al, 2009) for an example of a CA textbook. for an example of a CA textbook.

[5] Student A: 'Good morning. How can I help you?'

Student B: 'Good morning. Let's see, give me a kilo of oranges and a half kilo of cherries.'

Student A: 'Something else? The apples are very fresh.'

Student B: *No, gracias. Es todo. ¿Cuánto le debo?*
Student A: *8 euros.*
Student B: *Aquí tiene. Muchas gracias.*
Student A: *A usted.*
(1) *uvas / melón / duraznos* (2) *peras / limones / melocotones*
(3) *limas / mandarinas / toronjas*

Positive aspects of the CA include the contextualization of its exercises. Moreover, it allowed students to actively practice vocabulary. All students, instead of those few called on by the instructor, were given the opportunity to speak. The pair work setting also made them less self-conscious regarding language production. However, the CA also had several limitations. For one, students failed to master the grammar of their target language. Two, the exercises given to students invariably entailed one student (here the shopkeeper), playing a role that s/he would never play in the real word. Finally, the method, with its model response, echoed the exercises found in textbooks using the AL method.

In the 1990s, another approach was proposed, namely a Focus on Form (FF). In this method, grammar was accorded great importance, but it was taught in the target language in a generally inductive method. Many Canadian studies proposed the use of FF, as it was found that in immersion contexts, in which all courses were taught in the target language, students tested far below native speakers on speech accuracy (cf. Lyster and Ranta, 1997, Lyster, 1998, and Panova & Lyster 2002). They stressed the importance of incorporating grammar not only in language courses, but also in so-called content courses, such as Chemistry. This method aimed to transform *intake* or the presentation of grammatical forms into *uptake* or the internalization of correct forms by the student. (Mitchell & Myles 2004).

Generally speaking, there are three forms of correction of an erroneous student utterance: metalinguistic, recasts, and negotiation. These are illustrated by (4):[6]

(4) Student utterance: **Yo fuiste al cine.*

1. Instructor: Metalinguistic response: *El sujeto es* **yo**. *La primera persona singular del verbo* **ir** *es* **fui**.

Student B: 'No thank you. That's all. How much do I owe you?'
Student A: 'Eight Euros.'
Student B: 'Thank you.'
Student A: 'Thank **you**.'
(1) 'grapes/melon/peaches'
(2) 'pears/lemons/apricots'
(3) 'limes/tangerines/grapefruit'
[6] The asterisk indicates an ungrammatical utterance, in other words, an utterance that no native speaker would utter under any circumstances.

2. Instructor: Recast: *Yo fui al cine.*
3. Instructor: Negotiation
Instructor: *Tú fuis— al cine.*
Student: *Tú fuiste al cine.*
Instructor: *Bien. Ahora, Yo _____ al cine.*
Student: *Yo fui al cine.*

Of the three correction types, negotiation was found to be more effective by scholars such as Lyster and Ranta (1997), and Pica et al (1987). One positive aspect of the FF method (when used with negotiation) is that it resulted in greater grammatical accuracy by students (e.g., Doughty, C., & Williams, J., 1998, Ellis, 1993). However, similarly to methods that preceded it, the goals of the FF approach are rather narrow, in that its recommendations are basically limited to immersion programs, and do not address cultural competence.

Such a framework does not always translate readily to language classes taught three to four hours a week even at the university level, as is the norm in the United States. Signficantly, alongside the FF approach, during the 1990s, the integration of culture was recommended by other scholars, including Omaggio Hadley (1993), Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes (1991), and Shanahan (1997). However, it became clear in the next decade that the FF approach, even combined with a cultural focus, did not prepare students to be multicultural.

In response to the fact that theretofore no teaching method was successful in making students sensitive to the culture of others, the Ad-hoc Committee on Foreign Languages of the MLA, in two position papers (Pratt et al, 2007, 2008), proposed a very ambitious overhaul of language instruction in the U.S. Their recent sweeping proposal is a radical change of focus regarding all levels of Spanish instruction, at both the high school and college levels. It will necessitate a complete revision of all university courses. As they note, the impetus for their recommendation are the events of September 11, 2001.

In this way, as discussed above, September 11 mirrored the effect that WWII had on language instruction more than six decades ago, although the current concern is only partly to produce students who are able to interact with native speakers of another language, overcoming the nation's «language deficit»(Pratt 2007:1). Its comprehensive goals are for the society at large to cease to be monolingual and monocultural. The MLA claims that the current curriculum in language programs does not result in this kind of competence. In other words, the objective is to produce students who can cloak themselves in both another cultural viewpoint and its language.

With respect to a society that is largely myopic both to the importance of knowing a language other than English, but also with respect to foreign cultures (cf. Yankelovich 2005), the MLA places the responsibility for change squarely on the shoulders of higher

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education. For one, this is the context in which future K-12 language teachers (i.e., current undergraduate students) and future professors (i.e., current graduate students) are prepared. According to the MLA report, the dominant method for teaching language in the U.S. at present, is, in fact, rather behavioristic in that it views language as a skill (cf. the AL method).

The solution lies, according to the MLA, in completely restructuring foreign language departments so that culture is integrated at all levels. They argue that their current organization contributes to a disconnect between the first two years of language instruction and upper division content courses. They note that graduate students trained to teach in such an academic environment will not know how to avoid this split focus when they become faculty members. Finally, a complete reorganization is needed if language students are to make a seamless transition from K-12 to the university, which is not the case in the current system.

Another factor which leads to the dichotomy of language *vis à vis* upper division courses and lower division courses, as well as those which train our graduate students to teach is the fact that invariably, the faculty who teach the former courses are tenured university professors, whereas the bulk of the latter are taught by lecturers, graduate students, and part-time instructors. Indeed, it is well known that TA coordinators have no political clout within a department, because they are typically Assistant Professors, or not tenure-track at all. They must tread very lightly among the mine fields of the department if they are to keep their positions and to receive tenure. [7]

For these reasons, the MLA argues that change must begin with those who teach upper division content courses, and must also provide a revision of departmental governance. As they note, the instructors who teach first and second year languages experience an «antagonism […] not towards the study of literature […] but toward the organization of literary study in a way that monopolizes the upper-division curriculum, devalues the early years of language learning, and impedes the development of a unified language-and-content curriculum across the four-year college or university sequence» (Pratt et al, 2007:3).

One important modification that is recommended for all classes is no longer to expect from students a native speaker's competence, which will never be obtained by those who learn a language after puberty (see Lenneberg, 1967, Hawkins & Franceschina, 2004, Herschensohn 2000, among others). Rather, the goal is multicompetence, which Cook (2007) defines as the ability of language students to manipulate the target language effectively in ways that meet their personal and professional goals. The MLA further suggests that students need to become aware of the fact that they are English-speaking

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[7] See also Byrnes (2008) for a discussion of the role of the faculty in the TTC model.

Americans, who exist in conjunction with many other languages and cultures.

With respect to upper division courses, the MLA recommends not only the integration of courses like interpretation and translation, but also those focusing on topics such as film, and indeed, literature, which they define as «cultural narratives» (Pratt et al, 2008:4). They contend that these should be taught in a focus that emphasizes cultural context as well as language expression. Other courses which naturally marry both linguistic competence and a multicultural focus include those taught by linguists (e.g., dialectology, second language acquisition, history of the language). Unfortunately, such upper-division offerings constitute at present curricular foxholes isolated from other classes in foreign language departments.

However, even such a revision, in the view of the MLA, is not sufficient, because it fails to provide a solution for the lack of cohesion between the first two years of language instruction and the upper division sequence. As they claim, this may only be addressed through the active participation of tenured faculty who teach advanced content courses in the design and implementation of first and second year language courses, currently the exclusive purview of language coordinators. In their view, it may be necessary to hire new faculty who can bridge this divide.

The MLA's report also suggests separate course sequences, at least at the beginning levels, for heritage speakers, who grow up speaking another language but who lack knowledge of the academic register (i.e., level of formality). In Spanish, this is particularly important, as 52.2 % of heritage speakers speak Spanish at home (Furman et al 2006). Without a separate sequence of courses, these students often fall between the cracks as their knowledge is too advanced for first-year language courses and too limited to succeed in the upper division courses, which require a grounding in academic Spanish. While we generally agree with the TTC approach, in the next section, we show that in order to bridge the divide among all courses in the department, students and instructors must have an understanding of dialectal variation in Spanish.

2. TTC AND VARIATION IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE

In our view, the MLA's tandem goals of transcultural and translinguistic competence are impossible to implement in Spanish without incorporating the linguistic notion of variation from the earliest levels. One of the defining characteristics of Spanish today is its pluricentrism (Teschner, 2000, Arteaga & Llorente, 2009). In other words, Spanish, like English, has several dialects that are considered prestigious from a sociolinguistic point of view. In this way, Spanish differs from a monocentric language like French, where Parisian French is the considered the only standard. A speaker from Mexico City would no more adapt his or her language to that of someone from Buenos Aires than

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a native of Australia would adopt the speech of someone from London. To put it succinctly, the term Spanish encompasses its dialects, and is, in itself, an abstract notion. The pluricentric nature of Spanish has ramifications for our university-level students and must be acknowledged in a TTC framework.

As pointed out by the U.S. census of 2000, Spanish speakers in the U.S. are from vastly different origins (Guzmán, 2001: 2). Although the majority (59%) is Mexican, Hispanics from all Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America and Caribbean are represented in the total population. This means that our students will definitely interact with speakers of different dialectal groups. Some of these native Spanish speakers will not be able to adapt their speech to a neutral dialect, by which we mean a dialect of Spanish that is understood across geographic areas. The ability to do so is often a function of a given speaker's linguistic experience, and to a large extent, education. If a native speaker has not traveled to other Spanish speaking areas, or studied language in a school setting, his/her knowledge of the linguistic aspects of other dialects may be limited. It is up to our students, therefore, to at least understand other regional variants of Spanish.

Moreover, it would be impossible to argue that the culture, say in Peninsular Spain, agreed in every aspect with that for example, in Cuba. Vastly different political events (i.e., the rise and death of Franco *vis à vis* the take-over of the communists) have shaped both countries. Hispanic culture is not a monolinguistic. One important way for students and instructors to see this variation is to view each country as unique, reflected, in part, by the dialects of Spanish spoken there.[8] For example, consider the Anglicisms of Spanish spoken in Northern Mexico and in the Southwest United States. Terms such as *daime* 'dime' and *balún* 'balloon' have great currency in this dialect (Cotton & Sharp, 188:283).

One source of other lexical differences among the dialects of Latin America is the indigenous languages spoken in the various regions at the time of the Spanish Conquest. For example, Maya has left its mark in the Yucatán Peninsula, with borrowings such as *papagayo* 'kite' (cf. *barrilete* or *cometa* in other areas). In Spain, on the other hand, the dialects have integrated far more terms from Arabic, including *alijama* 'slum' (cf. *barrio de Moros* in other areas), and *alheña* 'privet' (cf. *arbustro* in most other areas).

Other differences among Spanish dialects are phonological, or, belonging to the sound system of a language (popularly known as «accent»). Here we agree with Arteaga (2000) and Arteaga & Llorente (2009) who argue in that students must be exposed to different pronunciation variants, if they are to communicate with native speakers from varying countries. It is well-known, for example, that in the Spanish of coastal areas,

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[8] This discussion roughly follows that by Arteaga & Llorente (2009), Chapter 4.

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syllable-final s is often aspirated to [h] or deleted entirely, so that the utterance *las casas* would be homophonous with *la casa*. Other differences include the distinction found in North Central Spain, according to which the words *caza* 'he hunts' and *casa* 'house' have different intervocalic consonants, namely the *th* sound (represented phonetically by [T]) and the 's' sound ([s]). This is in contrast to the *seseo* found in Latin America, in which the intervocalic consonant in question is pronounced [s] in both instances.[9]

Another difference between Peninsular Spanish and that of the Americas is the use of *vosotros*, which is found only in the castellano dialect (that spoken in the area around Burgos) of Peninsular Spanish.[10] In this variety of Spanish, *vosotros* is used for the informal plural of *tú*, as in the following, and *ustedes* is the formal plural of *usted*:

    (5) a. *tú trabajas* 'you (singular/familiar) work'

    b. *vosotros trabajáis* 'you (plural/familiar work'

    c. usted trabaja 'you (singular/formal) work'

    d. *ustedes trabajan* 'you (singular/familiar/formal) work'

No dialect of Spanish outside Spain uses the *vosotros* form, instead substituting that of *ustedes*, which therefore has a dual function, as the plural of both *tú* and *usted:*

    (6) a. *tú trabajas* 'you (singular/familiar) work'

      b . *usted trabaja* 'you (singular/formal) work'

      c. *ustedes trabajan* 'you (singular/familiar/formal) work'

The reason for the lack of *vosotros* is historical. It is a subject pronoun, deriving from Latin *vos+alteros* 'literally, you all others.' It was not yet widespread in Andalusia, as many settlers at the time of the conquest hailed from that area, which is the reason that it never took root in Latin America (Cotton & Sharp 1988).

On the other hand, the majority (two-thirds) of the dialects of Latin America evince a verb form no longer found in Spain, that of *vos*, which either alternates, or replaces *tú* depending on the dialect in question:

    (6) *vos trabajas/trabajáis/trabajas* 'you (singular/informal) work'

Again, *voseo* can trace its origins to the Spanish conquest of the Americas. At that time, *vos* was no longer used in Spain except to address social inferiors. This is why it was used with the indigenous peoples of Latin America, who were near the bottom of the caste system that the Spaniards instituted, followed only by Africans. (Bulmer-Thomas et al, 2005: 261)

It is clear from the above discussion that not only is extensive regional variation a characteristic fact of Spanish spoken today, it is inextricably linked to culture, often

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[9] For a more complete discussion of phonological regional differences, see Barrutia & Schwegler (1994), Teschner (2000), and Arteaga & Llorente (2009).

[10] As noted by Arteaga & Llorente (2009), the dialect of Andalucía may also evince *vosotros* and be used with either its corresponding endings or those of the *ustedes* form.

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though the history of the language. If the goal is indeed to develop in students a translinguistic and transcultural competence, the notion of dialectal variation must be integrated into Spanish instruction at all levels. Indeed, for students to truly be able communicate with a variety of Spanish native speakers from different regions, they must be aware of dialectal variants.

Their instructors (and ideally, textbooks) must therefore be a source of information regarding these dialectal differences. Too often, a prescriptive view of regional variation in Spanish is found in foreign language classrooms. From such a perspective, one dialect is viewed as superior to another, although the vocabulary taught is usually a hodge-podge of various dialects, such as teaching *carro* for 'car' (used in Latin America; *coche* in Spain) and *bolígrafo* for 'ink pen' (used in Peninsular Spanish; *pluma* in Latin America).[11]

Arteaga & Llorente (2009) argue that in addition to dialectal variation, instructors and students must come to be familiar with sociolinguistic variability of Spanish, if they are indeed to become multicompetent. In other words, they must be able to understand a variety of registers, or levels of formality of speech. They must further learn how to engage, at the upper levels of language instruction, in style-shifting, in the sense of Biber (1995). All languages have contexts in which either formal or informal speech is natural. Here we differ from the MLA's TTC proposal, in that we advocate that Spanish language learners must not only know how to communicate with an educated native speaker, but also one with little or no formal education. After all, many Hispanics who come to the U.S. lack formal education (García, 2001). If our students are to interact with these speakers, in a work setting for example, they must be able to understand a variety of registers even if they do not themselves use them.

An example of sociolinguistic variation in the Spanish spoken today in the U.S. would be the use of regularized past participles such as *cubrido* 'covered' for *cubierto* and *hacido 'done'* for *hecho*. [12] Although students should be advised against using such forms, because they are not neutrally received by educated speakers, they must nonetheless understand them. However, it should be pointed out to students that these forms are examples of analogy, or making exceptions fit the dominant pattern by regularizing them, which exists in all natural language, including English (e.g., *breaked* for *broke*). Oftentimes, forms used in dialects are archaisms, or forms used at an earlier stage of the language, like *haiga*. Again, by making students aware of the history of such verb forms, they can come to appreciate the relationship between language history and sociolinguistic variation. This, in turn, will allow them to be open-minded about such forms and those who use them, which is necessary if they are to develop multiculturalism.

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[11] This topic is discussed in detail by Arteaga & Llorente (2009).

[12] See González Pino & Pino (2000) and Arteaga & Llorente (2009).

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Sometimes lexical choices can also signal an informal register, such as *gilipollas* 'jerk' for *estúpido* (neutral term). Informal vocabulary can also be at the junction between both regional and sociolinguistic variation. Dialectal variation is important with respect to vocabulary choice, as, for example, *pololo* 'boyfriend' is informal for Chilean Spanish but does not exist outside this geographical region. Finally, students, given their young age, will most likely engage in informal communication with native speakers. It does them a disservice if we do not explain the sociolinguistic characteristics of a range of registers. [13]

In our opinion, an understanding of, and appreciation for, variation in Spanish, both regional and sociocultural, must be one of the themes carried over from the beginning two-year language sequence up through graduate seminars, if we are to meet the goals of the TTC. In other words, dialects and language in context, as they inevitably reflect culture as well as linguistic knowledge, can be a touchstone for discussion in classes from beginning Spanish to a survey of literature course at the undergraduate or graduate level. Through a descriptive view of Spanish dialects and sociolinguistic variation, which discusses language as it exists synchronically, not as it is seen in an idealized dialect, students will come to appreciate the diversity found both in the Spanish language and the cultures it reflects. Such a non-judgmental view is essential if students are to communicate with native Spanish speakers from a variety of regions within informal and formal registers and to have cultural insight beyond our borders.

3. Conclusion

This paper has considered a variety of foreign language instructional models used during the past century. It argued that WWII, like September 11, 2001 produced a need for language speakers who could effectively communicate in the target language. However, the events of 9/11 also brought home the fact that Americans are largely ethnocentric. Both political events spearheaded a proposed revision of teaching methodology. In the case of WII, it was short-lived, replaced, in the 1960s, by the AL method, many tenets of which are still in existence today, particularly the notion that language is a «skill.»

The recent MLA position papers stress the need for L2 learners of Spanish to become «transliterate and transcultural,» which will, in their view, necessitates a complete overhaul of both the curriculum and the culture of language departments, including their power

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[13] There are also phonological characteristics of the informal register, such as *probe* for *pobre* 'poor.'. Here we follow Arteaga & Llorente (2009), who argue against actively presenting such pronunciations, as they are not accepted in the formal registers.

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structure. However, if this goal is to be realized, the lessons from the 1940s must not be forgotten, as teaching methodology fell back into a behaviorist mode once that political crisis had ended. We argue in this paper that in order to meet the professed goals of the TTC focus in Spanish, students and instructors must come to understand linguistic variation. This must encompass, in our view, both regional and social aspects of Spanish as a world language.

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