Students' perceptions of language variation in the teacher's talk and its implications on classroom language socialization.

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Advocates in the field of bilingual education recognize the linguistic and cultural repertoires as key mediation tools in the multicultural classroom. But, what is the meaning of linguistic knowledge if we, as teachers, do not apply it, and learn how to negotiate and capitalize the cultural and social values attached to specific linguistic forms? This research case study aims at exploring five Latino bilingual students' attitudes of language variation in the teacher's talk to identify implications for the classroom practice. Our working definition for attitude is 'a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event. By developing an audiovisual instrument sampling 4 teachers of different Spanish varieties doing a read-aloud of a wordless book, students engaged in semi-guided conversations around the use of language. Linguistic background questionnaires were gathered to draw connections between students' language awareness and linguistic sensitivity. Results found accent as a mark distinguishing language correctness, and a students' preference for a friendly and explanatory teacher's talk that they can empathize with and can follow. I hope the valuable insights gained help teachers negotiate language with their students to raise language awareness through a linguistic participatory learning process and to transform traditional power relationships.

Keywords: students' perceptions; attitudes; classroom language socialization; language variation; language awareness

Statement of the problem

Linguistic diversity requires special understanding from a sociolinguistic perspective, which might have not yet been sufficiently incorporated into teacher preparation programs (Davies, 2000).

From the personal and linguistic perspectives, as a speaker of the Andalusian Spanish dialect, my first exchanges with Spanish-speaking people of other varieties in New York City resulted in feelings of strangeness and miscommunication. The potential educational implications of these exchanges quickly arose: to what extend would

dialectal differences be an obstacle for student-teacher interactions in a multicultural classroom? And if they were, how could I overcome these obstacles? To answer these questions, I first filmed teachers of different nationalities in monolingual contexts and analyzed their discourse. To my surprise, their different teaching styles would be more decisive to constitute their discourse rather than their particular accents and dialects. But, the question to whether or not dialectal differences were an obstacle in the class remained unanswered for the students' voices were missing. If I asked them, what would they notice when exposed to linguistic variation?

From a pedagogical perspective, complex ideas need to be presented first in a familiar context and in a comprehensible or everyday language to construct meaning and diminish the complexity of language (Fradd and Lee, 1999; Krashen, 1987; Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Linik, 2004; Stepaneck, 2004; Warren et al., 2001). Thus, the acquisition of the academic language should build upon the student's already acquired linguistic competence. Yet, as shown by Lindholm-Leary (2005) "research on language use in classrooms demonstrates that children do not receive cognitively stimulating instruction from their teacher" (p. 21).

From an ideological perspective, teachers who are prejudiced and have stigmas on nonstandard dialects and its speakers are compromising students' academic achievement (Cross et al. 2001, Godley et al. 2006, Haig & Oliver 2003, Taylor 1983), and are seriously damaging the promotion of varied language behaviours for student participation (Cazden, 1986).

Linguistic differences do not need to be compensated but capitalized to enrich a linguistic and cultural repertoire deemed essential to fit linguistically diverse settings such as the bilingual classroom (Gurthrie & Hall In Trueba et al., 1981 Nieto 2010,

Hernandez 1997).

Background

The databases researched for this study are ERIC database, Education Full text, Education Index Retro, CLIO, and Google Search. The criteria to select the theoretical foundations of this study are based on the following features: evidence-based approaches, appropriate and varied methodology, and having a linguistic focus, when possible, on the Spanish language. My first attempt in assembling a body of literature representative of this project is to gain perspective of latent issues underlying this research such as language socialization, language variation, language attitudes, and language awareness.

Language socialization

Language socialization is a core foundation of our theoretical framework. In an educational context, it refers to the role language plays in the process of students and teachers becoming competent members of the classroom culture (Schieffelin & Ochs). What linguistic norms, habits, skills, and behaviours are desired and allowed in the classroom? In terms of Halliday's views of language as social semiotics (Halliday, 1978), what are the cultural and social meanings we, teachers, and students create around certain linguistic behaviours?

Research done by Jeff Siegel (1999a, 2007) around the use of creoles and minority dialects in formal education, demonstrates the detrimental effects for speakers of vernacular varieties when teachers allow the 'standard' as the only accepted form of language. Some of these obstacles reflect repression of self-expression, negative self-image of students, prejudice-driven teachers, etc.

Scholars such as Lisa Delpit or Sonia Nieto provide research demonstrating the occurrence of language discrimination in the classroom. Talking about students' thoughts on their schooling experience, Nieto (2010) informs of how students experienced language discrimination and a lack of language understanding from their teachers (p.182), or "a tremendous mismatch between students' cultures and the culture of the school" (Nieto, 2010, p. 166). For this reason, it is worth discussing research carried out by Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (1991) around the inclusion of students' cultural knowledge in the classroom practice. By interviewing 28 eighth- and ninth-grade students of different ethnic backgrounds and levels of academic achievement, the researchers aimed at establishing students' relationship between class content and their personal lives. Among their conclusions, students were found to minimally attach to the content of their classes.

When a classroom's contexts incorporate a colorful linguistic palette for diversity, the negotiation of language use has been at the core of our professional and personal concern. At the beginning of our research, priority was placed on how teachers were agents of socialization and communicators (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000, pp. 5-11) and from their position of power how they implemented their philosophy of language use.

Research done by Ernst-Slavit (1997) around discursive practices in a 1st grade English Spanish bilingual class in which the researcher examined how provided or denied access to learning, sheds light on the controversy embedded in the matter: "It illustrates the tensions in a linguistic market [the classroom] wherein the teacher has the power to reward or sanction what students say or how they say". The evidence found by the researcher shows how students while providing linguistically valid terms for 'pig' in

Spanish (cochino, marrano, chancho), the teacher who, instructionally, only validated 'cerdo' appreciated none of the students' linguistic suggestions.

The previous example is representative of a socialization process where "[T]he assymetrical distribution of knowledge and power influence the interactions in particular ways." (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 166). In addition, I experienced similar 'linguistic habitus' in conversations held with teachers of different Spanish varieties whose linguistic practices seemed to fall under a sort of universal principle in teaching the Spanish language, as they referred to in such practices. Thus, if we applied Bourdieu's 'linguistic habitus' (in Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) to these practices, we could infer a universal cultural propensity to say particular things in linguistic ways considered and/or assumed universally as embrassed as socially appropriate for a given community.

Language variation

Language variation is considered here as the expresion of the same thing in two or more different ways (Lavov, 1972). A composite sociolinguistic Spanish-speaking context adds complexity in designing programs for Spanish-speaking students in the U.S. (Merino et al. 1993), and concurs with assumptions on the uniformity and universality of language. Ofelia García (2007) partly identifies such complexity in the persistent predominance of European-based Spanish over Spanish teaching in America. Considering Spanish language varieties does not help in simplifying the debate around language variation. Labov's referential work in New York City English (1966) studying language in a social context demonstrates that when combining the dialects of a neighborhood, a town, or a region -- the [linguistic] system becomes progressively more

complex and inconsistent.

Although Labov (1972) contemplated linguistic variation from the sound system by expressing the same thing in two or more different ways, the purpose of this research requires expanding linguistic phonological variation to semantic and pragmatic variations.

Claudia Kunshack (2003) in a dissertation work on the relationship between language awareness and language attitudes in college students' L2, thoroughly reviews of the literature on language variation, showing us the intricacy of this concept. She travels along the three different waves of studies on language variation and depicts their major features, namely: the socioeconomic perspective advanced by Labov; the cultural and behavioral perspective advanced by Eckert; and the contruction of social meaning through (linguistic) practice (Berrruto, 1987 and Bierwisch, 1987 in Kunshack, 2003, p. 29).

Language attitudes

It is important to first establish our working definition for attitude. My analysis will borrow Ajzen's definition: 'a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event' (in Baker, 1992, p.11). Here, this could apply to students' attitudes towards the use of abundant sinonimia, or the slow pace of speech by their teacher.

We should not proceed without briefly looking at the multiple definitions that the study of attitudes has generated, as examined in Fishman's work (1970). Among the many definitions, Fishman distinguishes two major trends: the mentalist and the behavioral. The former describes attitude as 'a state of mental readiness' whereas the latter situates

'attitudes' within the sphere of behavior or responses. Mentalist authors like Allport or Green (in Fishman, 1970) would endorse attitude as a psychological constant composed by three types of elements: cognitive or knowledge; affective or evaluative; conative or action.

It is worth considering the scarce but most pertinent research done voicing students' attitudes toward language variations for they are those most likely to be affected (Baker, 1992). In other words, by focusing on students I am trying to see through the eyes of the participants on why it is important to study attitudes. This way I am able to follow Bernstein's recommendation that "if the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher" (Berstein, 1972, p. 149). In the front of research on students' attitudes, Gardner & Lambert (1972) found attitudes to be influential in the success of language learning. They were pioneers in approaching students' attitudes and motivation in second-language learning. While setting the ground for a sociopsychological theory of second/foreign language learning, they carried out different research studies based on the factor analysis procedure covering more than 50 distinctive motivation and attitudinal measures. Among their findings, non ethnocentric and "unprejudiced attitude toward foreign peoples and a favourable evaluational reaction to French-speaking people" stands out as one of the most influential aspects to affect comprehension ability (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 37).

In the existant literature around the study of language attitudes, Colin Baker's research (1992) targets the origin of attitudes in the youth culture to the indigenous languages in Wales, Ireland and Scotland. His approach recognizes the significance of cultural affiliation to favour or unfavour language attitudes. By using language attitude scales

and item-total correlations, her study of 797 teenagers in North and Mid Wales demonstrated that the more Welsh the language background, the more favourable the attitude to Welsh.

When discussing students' attitudes toward language, research led by Ramirez, Milk, & Sapiens(1983) from the University of California added insight to Mexican-American high school students' reactions to four varieties of Spanish (code switching, ungrammatical, dialectal, and "standard" Mexican Spanish) with regard to notions of appropriateness for classroom use or correctness . Their findings show a higher appreciation for Mexican Spanish with sex as an influential variable.

From the University of Arizona, Cynthia M. Ducar (2008) called our attention towards the absence of student voices to decide on what language variety of their preference to study. In surveying university students in Spanish Heritage Language Programs with close and open-ended questions, students manifested a clear preference for learning specific varieties such as Mexican, Mexican-American Spanish. Students also showed origin-neutral perceptions of their teachers' variety of Spanish, but only a small proportion of students related some teachers exclusively to an academic variety of Spanish.

In the research done by Claudia Kunschak (2003), she moves to consider the interplay of students' awareness and attitudes toward language variation among college students of German as a foreign language. By means of a variety of methods such as background questionnaires, Likert-type/Osgood semantic differential scales or interviewing, she could conclude a correlation between high/lower levels of linguistic variation awareness and positive/negative attitudes in L2. Overall, the participants supported the need to

learn about language variation in both L1 and L2.

Alternatively, Hertel and Sunderman (2009) shift our attention to how undergraduate students in Spanish courses at a US university perceived native (NSs) and nonnative (NNs) instructors. Students' responses to a quantitative questionnaire based on Likert scale items present a preference for having NSs for learning pronunciation and culture, but NNs with regard to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, contrary to the assumption that NSs are preferable. In the same way, but focusing on students' comprehension, Yuto G. Butler found no evidence as of a negative effect of nonnative English accent on Korean elementary students oral skills, despite the fact the students expressed more appreciation towards the American accented sample included in the matched-guise technique.

Language awareness

"Awareness, according to Al-Hejin (2004), causes a change in behavior or cognitive state and the person is able to report that they became aware and what they became aware of" (In Svalberg, 2007, p. 289).

Because bilinguals are thought to possess advantages in terms of metalinguistic awareness, Thomas (1988) guided a study to compare bilingual college students learning a third language with monolinguals learning a second language. As it appears from her findings, bilinguals students possesing explicit language training are metalinguistically more advantaged than bilinguals students who learned their second language informally because they may have acquired a conscious awareness of language as a system.

In the study of factors influencing growth of linguistic awareness, Bialystok (1986)

considered 2 language skill elements: the analysis of linguistic knowledge and the control of linguistic information processing. Presenting monolingual and bilinguals students between 5 and 9 years old tasks involving grammaticality judgement and correction, the results of his research demonstrated increasing ability to solve problems involving high levels of control of linguistic information for bilinguals.

Establishing a theoretical framework that encompasses language socialization, language variation, language attitudes and language awareness has been essential to deepen our understanding of the key notions that describe partly student-teacher interactions in a multicultural classroom.

Methodology

The goal of the case study was to explore fifth-grade Spanish-English bilingual students' attitudes toward language variation in the Spanish teacher's talk in conducting, on the one hand, semi-guided conversations around an audiovisual instrument sampling 4 teachers of different Spanish varieties doing a read-aloud of a wordless book, and on the other hand, open-ended interviewing strategies about teachers' use of language. The research questions guiding our study are the following:

- What are the most noticeable features of language variation for bilingual students?

- Do students show a preference for the teacher's linguistic behaviour in the classroom?

- What are some elements indicative of student receptiveness to language variation?

- Do the students' self-reported linguistic competence affect their language awareness?

Participants

Fifth-grade bilingual students were chosen from a dual-language education program in an elementary school in the Upper West Side of the City of New York. Additionally, the criteria in selecting the participants included a linguistic maturity in Spanish and a communicative competence similar to a monolingual or an ability to speak and understand Spanish with ease.

Data-gathering methods

1. <u>Multivoiced Read-aloud</u>: I developed an audiovisual instrument sampling 4 teachers of different Spanish varieties doing a read-aloud of a wordless book, ZOOM by Istvan Banyai (1995). The criteria in selecting this particular wordless book relies on its rich narrative as well as the opportunities it offers for many semantic fields. In selecting this support material, I expected the different speakers to display a greater language variation in terms of vocabulary in their selection of words.

Figure 1

	Spanish varieties
VOICE SAMPLES	Female Argentinian from Mendoza (Argentina)
	Female Colombian from Medellín (Colombia)
	Male Mexican from Guadalajara (Mexico)
	Male Spanish from Bilbao (Spain)

The elaboration of this instrument consisted of recording each teacher individually doing the complete read-aloud. Although the collaborating teachers were warned of time limitations, some of them took 9 minutes whereas others took 18 minutes. In response to this, I decided to edit a single video clip of 16 minutes by selecting representative passages of their individual presentations and blending them as a whole product to be viewed by the students. It is of my interest to provide the transcription of a passage of the instrument:

> 7:38 [Female Argentinian] Es un niño o un muchacho, ¿qué edad tendrá?
> 7:55 [Female Colombian] Y, ¿dónde está? ¿En un puente? Parece que está en una piscina.
> 7:58 [Male Mexican] Como que está cerca de agua, de una alberca, de una piscina, sí efectivamente.
> 8:05 [Female Argentinian] ¿En qué lugar está este niño? ¿está en la piscina, está en la playa? Está acompañado hay más gente.
> 8:15 [Male Mexican] Y tenemos una piscina donde están niños chapoteando echándose al clavado sumergiéndose en el agua y el muchacho, el muchachito…
> 8:30 [Male Spanish] ¿Qué véis aquí? Está el niño con su revista o su libro y hay otros niños otras personas y ¿qué están haciendo? Se están bañando están jugando en una piscina.

The selection of Spanish varieties was made based on availability of speakers, and degree of differentiation in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and usage. These features were necessary to appraise students' reactions to language variation. The Mexican and Argentinian varieties were assumed to be familiar to participant students with a Mexican and Argentinian background taking part in this study.

2. Background questionnaire & Interviews: The chosen measures for data gathering are exclusively direct:

DIRECT MEASURES		
	Questionnaire	**Interviews**
Content	Demographic items Linguistic background Linguistic competence	6 opened-ended questions
Analysis	Quantitative & qualitative	Qualitative

I chose to collect data using questionnaires to elicit background information about gender, birthplace, formal education and use of Spanish, language spoken at home, experiences in Spanish-speaking countries, and students' self rating of Spanish proficiency level.

Interviews were conducted to elicit attitudes toward Spanish linguistic variation, desirability of social contacts with Spanish-speaking cultures or language teaching practices, for example (see data analysis and annexes). By providing students with the opportunity to negotiate knowledge and share their answers in group, I left the door opened to attitudes that I would not have anticipated. Additionally, they didn't have to worry about recording their views in writing. But, interviewing presents disadvantages as influencing mood of the respondent. As part of my pilot research, I decided to implement two semi-guided videotaped interviews (30 minutes per interview) with the students, and one student-guided videotaped interview (25 minutes) to encourage the students to freely express their individual reactions, and diminish the researcher's psychological influence. The methodological disadvantage of taking the latter risk resulted in children taking longer than expected and consequently, not completing the

questions.

The selection of these measures poses a limitation to the study. While the measure is of an indirect nature, it suits my purpose for I was reticent to use scaled and weighted measures such as Likert/Differential Semantic or the Matched Guise Technique because they do not take into account the naturally occurring interactions in the classroom. The exclusive use of the above-mentioned scales had the potential to focus my data collection on an undesired depiction of stereotyped or affective-based impressions around speakers of Spanish varieties. Yet, there are some other limitations, some of which were mentioned before: selective editing of clips from the four read-alouds, interpretation of interview data as related to the psychological basis of the interview, respondent motivation, or the student reciprocal influence at answering. Despite these limitations, I adapted my research data-collection instruments and procedure by letting the students guide their own interview, or questioning and rethinking initial research questions.

Procedure

On one side, before recording the Multivoiced Read-aloud, teachers were given a brief profile of their 5th grade Spanish-English bilingual audience, and they were warned of a time limitation of 9 minutes to do their read-aloud.

On the other side, participant students were given specific instructions at the beginning of each session, first to complete the background questionnaires; second, to listen to the Multivoiced Read-aloud, end engage in a discussion around the use of langueg; third, to pursue a student-guided interview with provided questions. The procedure of conducting the interviews and discussions always included time for clarification of

potential misunderstandings or questions.

Data analysis and findings

The background questionnaires signaled that the students would speak Spanish at home with at least one of their parents, and they all had formally studied Spanish for more than 5 years. Their birthplaces varied from Argentina (Kyla) or Dominican Republic (Milagros) to the U.S.A (Massiel, with a Dominican background, and Edwin and Brianna with a Mexican background). From a qualitative analysis approach, the background questionnaires elicited information regarding students' self-evaluation of their Spanish linguistic competence (in reading, speaking, listening, and writing) as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Students' self-evaluation of linguistic competence
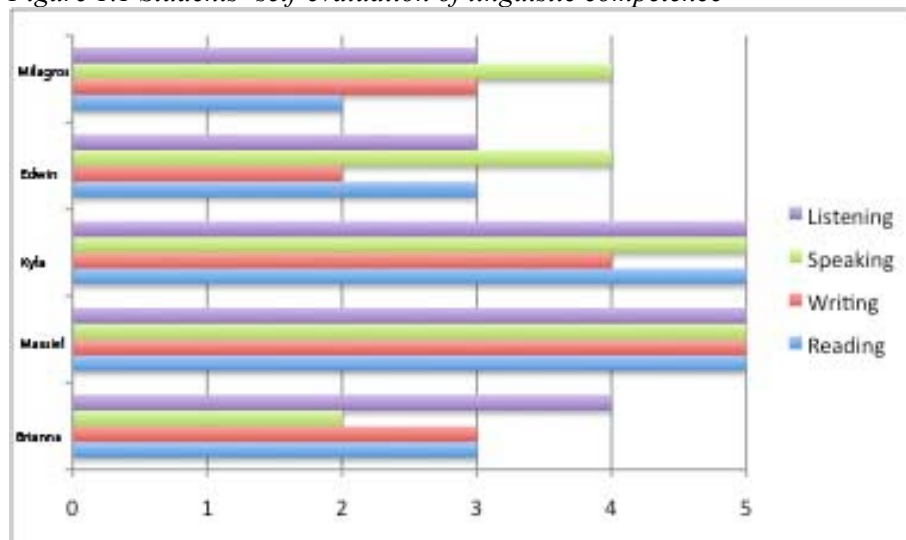

After comparing the previous data with the interview data in terms of number of contributions and linguistic features noticed by each student, we realized that there was not a direct connection between students' self-rated competence (from lowest level 1 to the higher level 5) and their linguistic awareness. Kyla (24 contributions and 3 linguistic features) and Massiel (16 contributions and 1 linguistic feature) rated themselves very

positively and had an active participation. Alternatively, Edwin, who rated himself lower made 21 contributions and identified 2 features of the language. These insights suggest that in order to establish a correlation between language awareness and language competence, student direct evaluation would be more suitable than student self-reported competence.

Finally, students answered to how many children from different nationalities they would invite to their birthday party. As Figure 1.2 illustrates, the fact that among ten different nationalities, all students included at least three different nationalities or more, is an indicator of openness and cultural tolerance. This finding can be related to the "unprejudiced attitude toward foreign peoples" that Gardner and Lambert (1972) found to favour linguistic comprehension ability (p. 37). Additionally, it was anticipated that students would include the nationality of their family background, as they all did. Moreover, I would like to remark that one of the students' contributions stating the reason why he had included 5 different countries was because they all spoke Spanish, which demonstrates the significance of cultural affiliation to favour language attitudes (Baker, 1992). Figure 1.2 is an indicator of student receptiveness to language variation.

Figure 1.2 - Students' cultural tolerance based on the number of children from different nationalities they would invite to their birthday party.
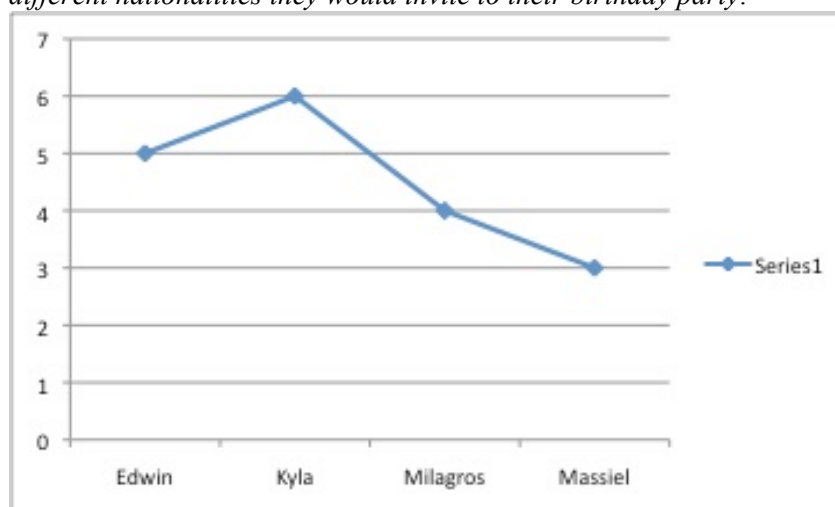
In the following lines, I will inform of a thematic analysis of those aspects, which were noticed and significantly discussed by the students during the interview after videoing the Multivoiced Read-Aloud.

High/Low Pitch Voice

I: Interviewer   K: Kyla   MS: Massiel   M: Milagros   B: Brianna   E: Edwin

17:24 I ¿Cuántos maestros habeis visto?
17:26 ALL Cuatro
17:31 I ¿Se parecen todos en su forma de hablar?
17:37 E Algunos tienen su voz como muy gruesa.
17:45 I ¿Quién tiene la voz muy gruesa?
18:00 K Y la niña, su voz era muy alta [la imita]
18:46 K Es muy bien en español pero su voz es muy bajo
18:57 B Que comparando con todas las voces creo que la de el es la voz mas baja.
19:16 MS Si, la mas profunda
19:17 K Ooooh [imita su voz gutural]
22:15 B Ella no tiene su voz baja, la tiene alta

Students expressed feelings of surprise, disapproval or strangeness toward voice pitch, the highest registered voice being prefered opposite to the lowest one. which was the first and most and excessively low/fast speech rate.

Accent

17:31 I ¿Se parecen todos en su forma de hablar?
17:42 K Emm, algunos también tienen como acento
17:57 I Y que mas diferencias?
18:13 MS Yo vi que algunos hablan mejor español
18:18 I Mejor español, ¿eso que significa?
18:20 M Que son dominicanos [los que mejor hablan español]
18:22 MS Que hacen acento
18:24 ¿Quién tenía mas acento?

18:27 M Ella [refiriendose a Monica, la argentina]

21:02 E Yo digo que no habla tan mal español. Habla normal, esta casi en el medio

21:30 I A quien te referias?

21:32 B A ella [a Monica, la argentina]

21:50 B Como ella habla mas con su acento

22:10 M Ella habla bien lento

22:45 K Ella habla muy despacito [refiriendo a Monica]

The accent was the first noticeable feature in the speakers. Other issues such as voice tone and speech rate of the teacher appear to affect students' attitudes. With relation to their insights around the accent, it is not clear whether they attach any positive or negative attitude to it, but the accent seems to be a mark distinguishing Spanish correctness. When asked who had the strongest accent, one student pointed out who she considered had the strongest accent and did not speak Spanish that well (the Female Argentinian). But, the other student who pointed out who she considered had the strongest accent and spoke better Spanish said the 'male Spanish'. These two varieties differ significantly from the Dominican variety spoke by the contributors. Next, students expressed feelings of strangeness and boredom or disapproval towards voice tone and excessively low/fast speech rate. Finally, the higher level of explanatory speech shown by the teacher was decisive in students' decision on the teacher they would prefer in opposition to the teacher who mostly asked questions to the students. This insights point at the balance teachers need to find between classroom questioning and teaching.

Speech Rate

22:50 I Y eso os gusta que el maestro hable despacio?

22:54 M Sí

22:55 K No, oh, my god, it's stuck

22:59 I Tú te pones nerviosa?

23:02 I Y a ti Massiel, que te gusta?

23:05 MS Por el medio, porque si habla muy rápido entonces no entiendes nada y no puedes saber lo que dicen y si habla muy lento también como que te aburre y te desesperas, pero por el medio esta bien .

The students' preferences toward slow/fast speed rate of speech appear to be very varied, but they all seemed to have a definitive opinion toward what best works for them. For example, some would alledge a slow speech would make them nervous and lost their attention, some would advance an excessive fast speech would render comprehension impossible.

<u>Descriptive Speech</u>

23:27 I Oye, cual quisierais que fuera vuestro maestro?

23:41 M Mss. Grafals

23:47 K Moni se parece a Mss. Grafals

23:52 K Tadada da da tadada da da [Imitando la entonación de su maestra Mss. Grafals]

24:07 B Porque ella explica mas sobre las fotos y que está pasando

24:23 E Ella no mas dice que es una estampilla, cuanto mas te dice que cosa es, pero no es tan especifico como Moni. Lo especifico es mas importante pa que usted pa que alguien sabe mas.

24:52 MS Entender

24:53 E Entender mas que na mas decir na. Como los Do Nows es casi especifico como te dice un poquito lo que tienes que hacer

25:11 I Entonces, todos estáis de acuerdo en que os quedáis con…?

25:15 ALL Moni

29:24 M Yo quiero decir que Moni va a ser la vendedora y la mujer del broche morado (Monica) seria la compradora porque que seria la vendedora habla mejor el español y ella también como dice Kyla, habla con sus manos y explica y la otra muchacha del broche morado ella tiene que aprender a hablar el español y tiene que aprender a explicar para poder ser una vendedora

Students were asked to be creative and imagine themselves in a market of words where they had to distribute roles among the teachers they had viewed: who would be the seller and the client? Among their answers, the most decisive aspect for a teacher to be a seller in a market of words seems to be his/her ability to explain. The use of gestures and body language is valued but elicited contradictory as a mark of lacking or

demonstrating verbal ability.

- Do students show a preference for the teacher's linguistic behaviour in the classroom?

Students answered to whether they would like to see their teacher talk as: a friend, a family member, a scientist, a foreigner, a stranger, or as a neighbor. Their answers demonstrate a preference for familiarity and proximity in their teacher's talk, which would ease interactions and make them more natural and confident. Students perceived fluency, pronunciation, and marking of accentuation as the most important qualities of a good speaker of Spanish.

Finally, other questions of the interviews involved the use of synonyms, or the elements that had made them unable to participate in a conversation. For the first questions, students´ overall responses highlighted their appreciation of the teacher when he/she provides synonyms and explains thoroughly the lesson. For the second question, students suggested that the more significant the content for them, the more they could understand in situations when they were lacking basic language skills (e.g., Despite her low English skills, Milagros said to have understood more English when she had to accompany her for the resident card decision).

Conclusions

Areas to further explore

This study of attitudes toward linguistic variation has been a complex process that having incorporated indirect measures would have more precisely estimated students' attitudes. However, I have gained a valuable insight into students' perceptions of linguistic variation and personally, found relief in discovering that there is much more

to teaching than an accent. Now, we are able to suggest that dialect based differences do not appear as influential as the teaching styles, or the expressive qualities of the speakers' voices.

Student's responses alligned with the need to provide with comprehensible input, which implies developing teacher's repertoires to navigate students' registers and use them as as a pedagogical resource. In the same way, the teacher's aid is ideally a language facilitator irrespective of their subject area (Baker, 2006; Richards, 2008), which requires the selection of cultural mediation tools (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Given the fact that students' identity is tied with their language, and that children acquire the basic beliefs, knowledge and skills, including language patterns, in their community through informal education, my research aligns with an additive formal education. If teachers are to meet their students needs, not only they must become familiar with both students' linguistic and cultural habits and repertoires, but use them as a departing point to expand their repertoires with the academic varieties.

I began to reflect upon the pedagogical language as part of my concerns as a future bilingual teacher in the US and a speaker of a regional Spanish variety (Andalusian). I have ambitiously tried many working hats on: the panhispanic language teacher, the documentalist, the linguist, the teacher, the bilingual education reformer. The humblest truth that has illuminated my research is that we cannot isolate language or transplant it from anywhere. It has to be built from the community we live and explicitly address it in the classroom arena with the specific student body we might have and taking into account their needs (e.g., among the suggestions of this study, to provide with further explanations and profuse use of synonyms). My claim is for teachers to have a plan to enrich their cultural and linguistic repertoires because students' achievement

encompasses transforming traditional power relationships and classroom language socialization into a true linguistic participatory process.

For the future, my goal is to extend this initiative research toward student-centered studies to reflect upon and elaborate possible pedagogical pathways to visualize and support non-standard varieties while expanding to more standardized language varieties.

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Appendix A

Background questionnaire

Nombre y apellidos: _____   Edad: _____

    Sexo:_____

Lugar de nacimiento:_____

Antecedentes étnicos y/o culturales de la familia:

Años que llevo estudiando español (rellena la opción apropiada):

O   Menos de un año

O   1-2 años

O   3-4 años

O   5 o más años

¿En qué lengua hablas con las siguientes personas?:

Padre_____ Madre_____ Hermanos/as _____ Abuelo/as

_____

Amigos/as_____ Profesores _____ Vecinos _____

Uso del español fuera de clase (rellena la opción más apropiada):

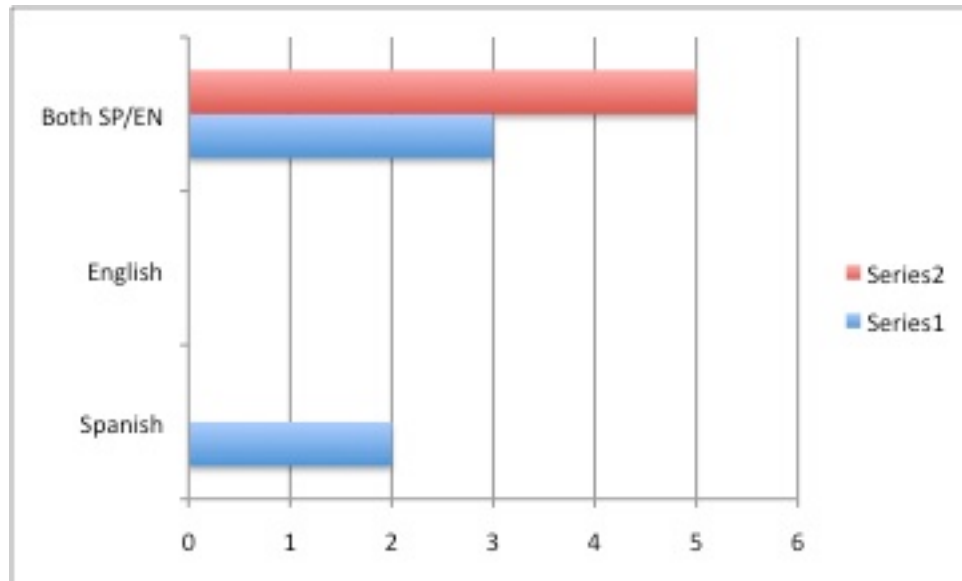O Diariamente   O A menudo   O A veces   O Rara vez   O Nunca

¿Qué países has visitado donde se hable español?

Autoevaluación (marca en cada caso el nivel que creas apropiado):

<u>Lectura</u>	Bajo	Aceptable	Normal	Bueno	Excelente
<u>Escritura</u>	Bajo	Aceptable	Normal	Bueno	Excelente
<u>Hablar</u>	Bajo	Aceptable	Normal	Bueno	Excelente
<u>Escuchar</u>	Bajo	Aceptable	Normal	Bueno	Excelente

Languages used at school and at home

Variables	*Brianna*	*Massiel*	*Kyla*	*Edwin*	*Milagros*
Age	9	11	10	10	10
Place of birth	U.S.A	U.S.A	Argentina	U.S.A	Dominican Republic (R.D)
Sex	F	F	F	M	F
Spanish language education	More than 5 years	More than 5 years	More than 5 years	More than 5 years	More than 5 years
Use of Spanish (SP) / English (EN)	Daily Father: ES Mother: ES Sibblings: ES Grandparents: ES Friends: ES/EN Teachers: ES/EN Neighbors: ES/EN	Daily Father: ES Mother: ES Sibblings: - Grandparents: ES Friends: ES/EN Teachers: ES/EN Neighbors: ES/EN	Often Father: EN Mother: ES Sibblings: - Grandparents: ES Friends: SP/EN Teachers: SP/EN Neighbors: SP/EN	Sometimes Father: ES/EN Mother: Sibblings: ES/EN Grandparents: ES Friends:ES/EN Teachers: ES/EN Neighbors: ES/EN	Daily Father: ES/EN Mother: ES/EN Sibblings: ES Grandparents: ES Friends: ES/EN Teachers: ES/EN Neighbors: ES/EN
Visits to Spanish-speaking countries	None	5 summer holidays in Dominican Republic	Lived in Argentina for 4 years and did 2-weeks	1 summer holiday in Mexico	Lived in Dominican Republic for 9 years.

			trips to Mexico, D.R, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico		
Self-evaluation of Spanish proficiency Reading: R Writing: W Speaking: S Listening: L	R: Normal W: Normal S: Acceptable L: Good	R: Excellent W: Excellent S: Excellent L: Excellent	R: Excellent W: Good S: Excellent L: Excellent	R: Normal W: Acceptable S: Good L: Normal	R: Acceptable W: Normal S: Good L: Normal

Appendix B

Open-ended questions

En tu opinión, ¿qué cualidades son importantes en un buen hablante de español?.

¿Por qué crees que los maestros nos dan varias opciones para una misma palabra (ej: cochino, marranito, cerdo; autobus, autocar)? ¿Te parece eso algo positivo en tu aprendizaje o, por el contrario, algo repetitivo e innecesario?

Si la clase fuera un mercado de palabras, ¿quién sería el vendedor? ¿y el cliente?. Razona tu respuesta.

Si pudieras invitar a 10 niños a tu compleaños, ¿a cuántos de cada país invitarías?

Puerto Rico   Nicaragua

Pakistán   Colombia   Bulgaria

India   México Brasil

Panamá   Estados Unidos Mongolia   Cuba   Haití

República Dominicana   Nigeria China Argentina   Canadá

Vietnam   Filipinas   Alemania

Kenia   España

¿Cómo te gustaría que se expresara el/la maestro/a? No olvides decir por qué.

a. Como un/a amigo/a tuyo/a

b. Como un miembro de tu familia

c. Como un extranjero

d. Como un desconocido

e. Como tu vecino

f. Como un científico

¿Crees importante que cuando el profesor se dirija a tí adapte su expresión a las palabras que tú utilizas cotidianamente? ¿Por qué?

Appendix C

Partial transcription of interviews

Transcripcion 1a observacion:
[La primera observación se utilizo para que los ninos comprendieran el material que se les estaba exponiendo. Por tanto, sus aportaciones durante la mitad del encuetro se basaron en la comprension del libro.
La transcripción empieza cuando los ninos responden a la pregunta que uno de los profesores en el video les ha formulado]
0:54 Edwin (E) [responde repitiendo exactamente las mismas palabras que el profesor mejicano Roberto] Yo iba a decir que es como algo lejos, acercarse o alejarse.
12:41 Kayla (K) And the rope, I think he is a cowboy
12:46 Interviewer (I) Escuchad, escuchad a ver si podeis escuchar algo de lo que dice el.
12:56 I Estais de acuerdo con lo que dice el?.
13:01 E Bueno, yo creo que, creo es un cowboy.
13:04 I Por que?
13:08 Porque los nativos americanos no tienen botas, porque no tienen pantalones
13:15 K And, and and he has everything that a cowboy would use in most cowboy movies they are in the desert and there is a Cactus
17:24 I Cuantos maestros habeis visto?
17:26 ALL Cuatro
17:31 I Se parecen todos en su forma de hablar?
17:34 ALL No no no
17:36 I Ah, no? Por que no?
17:37 E algunos tienen su voz como muy del.
17:42 K Emm, algunos también tienen como acento
17:45 I Quien tiene la voz muy del?
17:47 Milagros (M) El hombre que sale, que tiene la blusa negra
17:57 I Y que mas diferencias?
18:00 K Y la nina, su voz era muy alta (la imita)
18:06 I Y tu, has pensado en otra diferencia Massiel?
18:13 MS Yo vi que algunos hablan mejor español
18:18 I Mejor español, eso que significa?
18:20 M Que son dominicanos (los que mejor hablan español)
18:22 MS Que hacen acento
18:24 Quien tenia mas acento?
18:27 M Ella (refiriendose a Monica, la argentina)
18:30 MS Creo que fue el hombre que… cual es?
18:35 I A ver, vamos a ver…
18:36 K También, el senor vestido en blanco
18:40 A ver, cual de ellos, que pasa con este? Este es Haritz
18:43 K Oooooooh (Imita la voz grave del maestro)
18:44 I Ese tiene acento, pero que pasa? habla mejor o peor español según tu?

18:45 MS Mejor
18:46 K Es muy bien en español pero su voz es muy bajo
18:53 M El era del que yo estoy hablando (indicando a Haritz)
18:55 I Y tu ibas a decir algo mas Brianna
18:57 B Que comparando con todas las voces creo que la de el es la voz mas baja.
19:16 MS Si, la mas profunda
19:17 K OOOOooooh (imita su voz gutural)
19:28 I Si el dices que habla bien español, quienes de todos dices que habla un poco peor en tu opinión?
19:37 E En mi opinión, yo digo el otro senor o (refiriendo a Roberto, el mejicano… o maybe no, es que no habla tanto en el video
19:56 B Creo que la que habla menos bien español es la del pelo corto (refiriendose a Moni, la colombiana)
20:30 I Y por que te parece que ella habla peor?
20:32 B **Ininteligible**
20:33 M Ella también tiene la voz mas gruesa
20:37 B Creo que porque los otros…
20:58 I Alguien tiene alguna idea que le pueda ayudar a Brianna
21:02 E Yo digo que no habla tan mal español. Habla normal, esta casi en el medio
21:20 B Esa no es a la que yo me referia
21:30 I A quien te referias?
21:32 B A ella (a Monica, la argentina)
21:50 B Como ella habla mas con su acento
22:10 M Ella habla bien lento
22:15 B Ella no tiene su voz baja, la tiene alta
22:19 I Quien os parece que da mas sinónimos? Que explica mas
22:30 E El que explica mas es la de rosada Moni
22:45 K Ella habla muy despacito (refiriendo a Monica)
22:50 I Y eso os gusta que el maestro hable despacio?
22:54 M Si
22:55 K No, oh, my god, it's stuck
22:59 I Tu te pones nerviosa
23:02 I Y a ti Massiel, que te gusta?
23:05 MS Por el medio, porque si habla muy rápido entonces no entiendes nada y no puedes saber lo que dicen y si habla muy lento también como que te aburre y te desesperas, pero por el medio esta bien
23:27 I Oye, cual quisierais que fuera vuestro maestro?
23:41 M Mss. Grafals
23:47 K Moni se parece a Mss. Grafals
23:52 K Tadada da da tadada da da (Imitando la entonacion de su maestra Mss. Grafals)
23:58 I Por que decis a Moni? Porque se parece a Mss. Grafals?
24:01 ALL No
24:07 B Porque ella explica mas sobre las fotos y que esta pasando
24:20 I Y ella que hace (refiriendose a Monica)

24:23 E Ella no mas dice que es una estampilla, cuanto mas te dice que cosa es, pero no es tan especifico como Moni. Lo especifico es mas importante pa que usted pa que alguien sabe mas.

24:52 MS Entender

24:53 E Entender mas que na mas decir na. Como los Do Nows es casi especifico como te dice un poquito lo que tienes que hacer

25:11 I Entonces, todos estáis de acuerdo en que os quedáis con…?

25:15 ALL Moni

25:32 I Cual os ha resultado mas familiar?

25:39 K The guys whose voice is deep I think so

25:49 K If you don't think about the way his voice sounds, the way he talks is kind of…

25:58 I Entonces, os ha gustado su voz o no?

26:00 M No

26:01 B No

26:02 K I think that I don't really care what voice he has, but low is weird but it doesn't sound bad. To me it sounds like Barack Obama like 'Oh, listen to me' like like…

26:35 I Imaginaros y para esto quiero que seáis bien creativos Imaginaros que la clase fuera un mercado de palabras, quien seria el vendedor y quien seria el cliente?

27:09 B Creo que el vendedor seria no Haritz, el otro (refiriendo a Roberto) el otro hombre y el cliente seria ella (Monica, la argentina)

27:45 E Yo creo que seria Roberto el vendedor

28:11 MS Yes

28:12 E Y el que va a comprar, el cliente, creo que seria Moni. Bueno es la marqueta de palabras…(interrupted)

28:31 K When they talk, they talk in different ways but when Moni talks she is like (imitating her entonation) ra ra ra ra ra ra y ella habla con sus manos.

29:24 M Yo quiero decir que Moni va a ser la vendedora y la mujer del broche morado (Monica) seria la compradora porque que seria la vendedora habla mejor el español y ella también como dice Kyla, habla con sus manos y explica y la otra muchacha del broche morado ella tiene que aprender a hablar el español y tiene que aprender a explicar para poder ser una vendedora

30:15 I Estais de acuerdo con Milagros, Brianna?

30:17 B Si

30:18 I Y tu Kyla?

30:26 K Creo que MOnica seria la cliente y creo que Haritz, de la voz baja.

31:06 I Y tu Edwin, tu dijiste antes que Roberto seria el vendedor y quien seria la cliente?

31:12 E Moni pues como yo estaba diciendo como es un mercado de palabras, parece que como utiliza las manos esta agarrando palabras de diferentes espacios y que ella tiene que utilizar para hablar

Dia 2, 22 de noviembre

00:02 I Cuales son las cualidades de un buen hablante de espanol?

00:11 MS Tiene que decir algunas palabras todas las palabras bien para que los otros entiendan lo que esta diciendo.

00:29 E Si tu quieres hablar buen español tu debes decir las palabras que tienen acento y no acento (mueve la mano como indicando un acento).

00:39 K yes, they have to put the accent in the right place.

00:54 K But what I was going to say is that you have to have fluency

01:15 MS Como dice Kyla, a veces, el profesor no tiene la correcta fluidez, entonces esta así como em em em (imitando la falta de fluidez)

08:51 I Cuando hayáis respondido esta pregunta parais

08:56 E Parareis? Como usted dice pararas?

09:12 I Pararas?

09:13 E Porque yo escuche como usted lo dice pararías?

09:17 I Parais

11:46 I Yo os pregunto si alguna vez, Edwin, Brianna y todos, os habeis sentido fuera de una conversacion, en la que habeis comprendido poco o nada y sentiais que no podiais participar…

12:10 E Si es como ellos están diciendo algo en una conversación y yo como (gesticulando con las manos) porque no entiendo nada.

12:16 I Exactamente, si, no tienes como participar

12:20 I Si alguna vez os habéis sentido así, por que os habéis sentido así? Que era lo que os hacia que no pudierais participar.

14:43 K Cos I always focus on remembering the hard words

15:43 I Describe las cosas que te hacían que tu no pudieras participar

16:01 M Excuse me, excuse me Yo le voy a decir algo a usted porque yo no entendía el ingles pero cuando mi mama se fue conmigo a ver si le dan la residencia ella estaba hablando ingles y yo entendía algunas palabras.

17:35 I Vamos a leer la pregunta juntas: los maestros estudiados son de diferentes lugares geográficos y en algunos casos se puede observar que utilizan diferentes palabras para un mismo concepto

18:05 M Permiso, usted viene y dice lenguaje figurado

18:12 Bueno, el lenguaje figurado sirve para una misma idea, yo puedo decir los arboles baobas son muy grandes o también puedo decir los arboles baobas son como iglesias, tan grandes como iglesias y entonces eso es una forma de decir lo mismo con otras palabras que decoran, adornan el significado. Pero yo no me refiero a eso, ellos utilizaron sinónimos como cochino o marrano para cerdo, o por ejemplo, autobús o camión para autobús.

18:50 E Uh, I am not going to say that

19:01 I Entonces, yo aquí os hago una pregunta: te parece esto algo positivo el que te den muchos sinónimos o algo repetitivo, innecesario

19:15 MS Yo creo que me parece positivo por si en alguna ocasión dice una palabras y por ejemplo alguien dice 'que es eso?" y no sabes otra palabra para explicarle que es, entonces ellos van a poder entender que estas hablando.

19:39 I Entonces, tu crees que los maestros que has tenido o tienes utilizan mucho o poco los sinónimos?

19:52 MS Poco, si creo que poco Yeah, poco

24:59 I El sinónimo es una palabra que tiene un significado muy parecido a otro, por ejemplo, para autobús yo puedo decir gua gua, bus, buseta

25:16 E Autocar

25:17 I Pero todo ello se refiere a lo mismo, son como diferentes etiquetas para

una misma palabra, por ejemplo, para cerdo puedo decir marrano, puerco, cochino

25:31 M Perezoso

Dia 3, Miercoles, 30 de noviembre

Los ninos se entrevistan entre ellos en base a las preguntas que les ha dado el investigador pero sin contar con su presencia. A cada ninfo se le ha asignado una tarea para la correcta realización de la tarea.

08:57 K Si pudieras invitar a diez ninos a tu cumpleanos, a cuantos de cada pais invitaras? I first?

09:11 MS Raise your hand, remember, it's me Nobody is gonna raise his hand?(Two children raise their hands)

09:22 E I would choose from 2 kids from Mexico 2 kids from Brazil 2 kids from the United States 2 kids from Spain 2 kids from Puerto Rico

09:32 K I have a question, why?

09:33 E Cos, they speak Spanish (all kids laugh)

09:30 K Ok, this is what I did I picked 1 from Mexico 1 from Puerto Rico 1 from Cuba 4 from Argentina 2 from the United States 1 from China and, hold on I did because I can be with friends from where I am from and I could learn from different cultures Your turn

10:10 M Ok I picked 1 from Colombia 2 from Mexico 2 from the United States and 5 from the Dominican Republic

10:23 K Because you are from there and you love them the most

10:25 Yes, but I know

10:27 MS My turn

10:34 E Why did you choose that?

10:36 M So, I am going to say why because I have so many friends in Colombia Mexico and here but I got more than two

10:56 K Yeah, but you have to make up an amount, your turn

11:00 MS 5 from the Dominican republic 3 from Puerto Rico and 2 from the United States Why? I am from the United States and personally the United States is good somehow but then, they have a big problem with economy Ok, from the Dominican Republic coz I am from the Dominican Republic, I have a bunch of friends from the Dominican Republic, right? and from Puerto Rico, most Puerto Ricans are like have problems

11:40 E Ok, guys, next next

16:12 K Como te gustaría que se expresaran el o la maestra No olvides decir por que.

16:33 MS You go first

16:39 K I picked e. Com tu vecino porque no vive con mi maestra (all chillaren laugh) Em, nosotros sabemos la maestra mucho y habla con nosotros y es muy chistosa y nos enseña mucho , pero mi maestra es diferente porque es alguien que yo voy a ver hasta el fin de ano y no como toda mi vida y también mi maestra es un adulto y no puedo hacer cosas con ella como

17:17 E Pegarla (laughs)

17:20 K Como ciertas juegos como puedo hacer con mis amigos

17:26 E MIlagros

17:28 M Como un amigo porque cuando tu necesitas aprender algo y como el

amigo tuyo te puede traicionar Entonces como la maestra te puede ensenar también Un amigo nunca dura una eternidad por eso yo lo cogí como un amigo Ok Massiel

18:07 E No, it's my turn Yo escogí que el maestro o la maestra se conocerá como un miembro de mi familia porque los maestros y maestra son buenos con los estudiantes y nos pueden ensenar También es casi ellos su responsabilidad no tanto de nuestra responsabilidad de cuidarnos Pero es como si tu padre o tu madre te esta cuidando a ti y también si tu te metes en problemas te puede decir Oh que paso? Y luego tu le vas a decir lo que es incorrecto y luego ella te va a decir lo que es correcto

19:44 M I have a question

19:49 K Ok, but Mss. Grafals is like ok I know I shouldn't say this in front of you but whatever she is like our teacher and she is gonna give us bad grades for our shared writing and stuff

20:03 E I know, but sometimes

20:04 Yeah, but you gotta think about it you'll go to your teacher I don't like you or hey you are supposed to get me that doll for Christmas

20:16 E I know, but I didn't mean it that way I mean the other way round

20:20 M Yeah, why, por que yo se ya lo que tu dijiste ahí por que, pero por que para ti es como un miembro de la familia

20:33 E Bueno, a mi las maestras no son tan estrictos conmigo salvo algunas veces y algunas veces no

20:55 MS Bien como un amigo/a tuya porque así de alguna manera me siento mas cómoda con mi maestro o cualquier otra maestra you know why? Porque si es como mi amigo no me siento tan raro al estar al lado de mi maestra and that's wat I ave to say.

About to answer cuestión 3, Crees importante que cuando el profesor se dirija a ti adapte su expresión a las palabras que tu utilizas cotidianamente? Por que?

24:18 K We are half-way through. Allright, well to say that it's important that the teacher tells you to get like if you say like a lilly pad, you say pista de lirio but you could also say ninfa, but unless you usually say ninfa but another person doesn't understand ninfa and they only understand pista de lirio so, they also teach you pista de lirio and they tell you to do that daily coz everybody else understands it except from you, and you want everyone to understand it

25:00 MS I wrote kind of the same thing so I am not going to say it, I wrote Yes so I can really understand and everybody can get used to it

25:11 K I wrote Non as an explanation per se.