Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say

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Abstract

- This presentation will compare and contrast various elements of the English and Spanish languages.

- It will highlight some of the difficulties that individuals encounter when learning English or Spanish.
Getting Started...

- Let us start with an analogy:
  Do you use MapQuest or GPS?

They both have positive features but they work very differently ~ much like two different languages.
Second Language Acquisition Theory

- **BICS and CALP by Cummins (1979)**
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills ~ can be developed in 2 years
  
  Ex. at lunch, on the playground, before or after school: How are you?

- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency ~ can require 5 – 7 years
  
  Ex. vocabulary that is content specific: conjugate, compare, contrast
Another Second Language Acquisition Theory


- Common Underlying Proficiency ~ skills and concepts in one language transfer to the second language and do not need to be relearned.

- Literacy in one language, or lack thereof, can impact how one performs in a second language.
Prescriptive and Descriptive Language

- Language has prescriptive and descriptive grammars.

Prescriptive is what we are *supposed* to do. Ex. I am going to read a book.

Descriptive is what is actually done. Ex. I am gunna read a book.
Language Involves Four Skills

- Language involves 4 very different skills: reading, writing, speaking, AND listening

Ex. Have you ever been surprised by the writing that a student turned in because it demonstrated a very different level of language mastery than any of the other skills?

Ex. the b and v in Spanish
Ex. accent marks
Ex. lack of punctuation
Phonetics

- Spanish is a very phonetic language. Except for the letter “h,” if a letter is written, it is pronounced. Furthermore, Spanish tends to consist of open-ended syllables so that the words often become linked thus creating a rapid sounding language.

  Ex. Yo soy estudiante de español en la Universidad de Aurora.
  Ex. /yo-soi-es-tu-djan-te-des-pa-nyo-len-lau-ni-ber-si-da-de-au-ro-ra./

- On the other hand, English has more closed syllable words thus creating a choppy sounding language that requires a speaker to pause between words.

  Ex. I am a Spanish student at Aurora University.
  Ex. /l-am-a-Spa-nish-stu-dent-at-Au-ro-ra-U-ni-ver-si-ty./
Phonetics

- Spanish does not distinguish between the spoken pronunciation of the letters “b” and “v.”

Some words which include “v” may be difficult for native Spanish speakers to say or spell such as van, vegetables, view.

- Many words that begin with “s” in English begin with “es” in Spanish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Spanish Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td>escuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study</td>
<td>estudiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>estudiante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stupendous!</td>
<td>¡Estupendo!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vowels

- In Spanish, the five vowels are very pure and each one has one sound which is unlike English where we have what we call “long” and “short” syllabus.

- The five English vowels produce thirteen different sounds.

  Spanish: este, señor, leer, externo, coche
  English: eight, telephone, flower, house
Punctuation

- Spanish inverts question and exclamation marks at the start of a question or exclamatory comment to alert readers as to where intonations should occur.

  ¿Cómo está usted, señor Martinez?
  How are you, Mr. Martinez?

  ¡Qué padre!
  How awesome!

Without these “warning signs,” a native Spanish speaking student may have a difficult time knowing when to use intonations in a sentence, question or exclamatory phrase.
Punctuation

- Spanish has no written apostrophe mark. The language does have possessive pronouns, but it is very common to use a longer structure to denote possession in Spanish.

  John’s friends => the friends of John => los amigos de Juan

- Spanish uses a period in large numbers where English employs a comma.
  Ex. Spanish: 2.000 = English: 2,000
Punctuation

- The Spanish language employs written accent marks as a guide for pronunciation or as a way to differentiate between two words which are spelled the same and only distinguished by that written mark.

Sí, quiero mirar la televisión contigo el miércoles. (Yes, I want to watch t.v. with you on Wednesday.)

Native Spanish-speaking students enrolled in Spanish grammar classes sometimes struggle with accents. Native English speakers learn the accents with the words.
Verbs

- Spanish does not have the auxiliary verb “do.” This means that the Spanish present tense has three English translations.

  Nosotros hablamos español.
  We speak Spanish.
  We do speak Spanish.
  We are speaking Spanish.

Native Spanish speakers will not understand the need for the auxiliary verb and native English speakers might add an extra conjugated verb.
Verbs

- Spanish uses the infinitive form many times when English uses the gerund.

  Ex. Ver es creer.
  Ex. Seeing is believing.

  Ex. Es importante estudiar.
  Ex. Studying is important.

- Spanish uses the passive voice much more than English.

  Ex. El libro famoso, Don Quixote, fue escrito por Cervantes.
  Ex. The famous book, Don Quixote, was written by Cervantes.
Verbs

- Spanish uses more impersonal expressions.
  Ex. Se habla español.
  We speak Spanish.
  They speak Spanish.
  You speak Spanish.
  One speaks Spanish.

English uses the S_V_info formation for most sentences.
Capital or Lower Case Letters?

- Spanish does not capitalize days of the week, months of the year, or nationalities.

lunes, martes, miércoles = Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
enero, febrero, marzo = January, February, March
polaco, francés, alemán = Polish, French, German

BUT,

España, Los Estados Unidos, México
Adjectives

- Adjectives are placed before and after nouns in Spanish. Adjectives that limit quantity precede a noun while descriptive adjectives are placed after a noun.

- dos libros viejos = two old books
- mi coche nuevo y rojo = my new, red car
The Definite Article

- Spanish uses the definite article more frequently than English.

La libertad es un derecho importante.  
Liberty is an important right.

La señora Hatcher es loca pero muy amable.  
Mrs. Hatcher is crazy but very nice.
The Past

- Spanish has two past tenses. The preterit is used for completed and infrequent occurrences while the imperfect is used for habitual or repeated events.

Ayer llamé a mi hermana menor.
Yesterday I called my younger sister. (I called her once.)

Cuando era niña, siempre iba a la casa de mis abuelos.
When I was young, I used to go to my grandparents’ home. (This was a habit and happened frequently.)
Negative Words

- Spanish allows the use of more negative words in one sentence or question than English.

No, no tengo nada interesante para decir. No, I don’t have anything interesting to say.
To Be......

- The Spanish verb tener means to have. Spanish has many expressions with tener which translate into to be expressions in English.

  tener hambre = to be hungry
  tener sed = to be thirsty
  tener razón = to be right
  tener sueño = to be sleepy
  tener miedo = to be afraid
  tener ... años = to be an age

So, native Spanish speakers might use a form of the verb have with hunger, thirst, sleep, etc.
Using Numbers

- The order of expressions with numbers is different in English and Spanish.
  - Ex. 347 S. Gladstone Ave.
    - Gladstone Ave. 347 S.
  - Ex. dates
    - 21/6/2012
    - June 21, 2012
Prepositions

- Spanish sometimes has a preposition imbedded in a verb or expression
  
  Ex. pedir = to ask for
  buscar = to look for

Students may have difficulty knowing when to include or delete a preposition.
“Amigos Falsos”

- Sometimes words have very different meanings in English and Spanish, even if they look the same. These are known as “amigos falsos.”
  
  Ex. embarazada
tener vergüenza
molestar
pie
Languages Change

- Languages are constantly changing and evolving
  - Ex. davenport
  - pocketbook
  - trotar
  - hacer jogging
  - lonchear
  - hanguear
Some of My Thoughts

- As individuals, we speak and write in ways that are meaningful to us and that reflect our lived experiences.

Ex. All babies are born with the ability to make the same sounds......¡Qué rico!
My Thoughts

- Sometimes what is appropriate in one language might impede communication in another.

Ex. In Mexico a dog says «Guau guau.»
Ex. In Puerto Rico you use a guau guau if you don’t have a car.
My Thoughts

- Our life experiences impact what we know about language and how we use it.

- Overall, language is a developing, evolving entity and what works well for one on any given day might not be what is needed in a new setting, situation or language.
Questions?

What questions do you have?

Please feel free to share your ideas with me. I can be reached at dhatcher@aurora.edu

¡Gracias! And, thanks!