Teaching Portuguese to Spanish Speakers through readings

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Abstract

- This workshop aims at familiarizing teachers with our project *Teaching Portuguese to Spanish Speakers through readings.*

- In the first part, we will present the theoretical framework on which this project is based, and in the second part we will pilot the activities in small groups and follow up with discussions about their implication to the Portuguese classroom.

Motivation for this project

- ☐ Great interest in learning Portuguese among Spanish speakers

- ☐ Lack of appropriate available didactic material

Motivation for this project

- There is a chronic lack of material for teaching Portuguese as a foreign language. There is even a greater need for materials that suit the specific needs of learners who speak Spanish.

- Because this particular group of learners can build on their previous knowledge of Spanish in their learning of Portuguese, they can rapidly reach high levels of proficiency in the target language, provided that suitable teaching materials are used.

Aim of the project

This project addresses such a need, as it proposes to develop a variety of input-based activities that will consist of

a) a compilation of authentic texts from the Internet
b) the development of tasks that will explore these reading materials to provide the learner with rich language input and, at the same time, draw their attention to Portuguese structure, focusing on the grammatical aspects that differ from Spanish.

The material can be used to complement currently available textbooks.

Spanish speakers in the US

- There are currently 34,600,000 speakers who use Spanish at home in the United States. (Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2007". *United States Census Bureau*, retrieved on 4/11/09).

- Hispanic students comprised 12 percent of full-time college students (both undergraduate and graduate) in 2007, up from 10 percent in 2006, according to U.S. the Census Bureau (2009).

- In addition to students who speak Spanish as their first language or their heritage language, thousands of college students acquire Spanish as a foreign language.

- Thus, a significant portion of students attending post-secondary institutions have Spanish in their linguistic repertoire, an invaluable national resource.

MLA guidelines

- By capitalizing on these students' bilingual repertoire and on their ability to build on this repertoire to develop Portuguese proficiency, our institutions will be responding to the guidelines for foreign language teaching that were proposed by the <u>Modern Languages Association.</u>

MLA guidelines

These guidelines emphasize the need to help students have a " deep translingual and transcultural competence".

and advises institutions to

broaden the range of languages taught. In particular, add locally spoken languages to the curriculum. Seek out heritage learners and design a curriculum that meets their needs. Encourage heritage speakers to learn additional languages.
(http://www.mla.org/flreport)

Portuguese for Spanish Speakers

- ☐ Istitutions that offer Portuguese for Spanish speakers have experienced steep increase in enrolment in Portuguese courses.
- ☐ At the University of Arizona, for instance, enrolment has raised from approximately 70 students per year in 1997 to 500 in 2008-2009.
- ☐ This is due to our program's offering special classes for Spanish speakers and recruitment of the Spanish-speaking population.
- ☐ Currently, several other institutions in the US offer Portuguese for SS.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ Why do we study the acquisition of Portuguese by Spanish speakers?
- ☐ What justifies this sub-area inside SLA?
- ☐ What makes the acquisition of similar languages unique?

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ A faster acquisition process.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ High competence in receptive skills from the very begining.

  (both listening and reading)

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ Easiness of communication from the very begining.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ High motivation, lessening of affective filter, decreased anxiety level.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ A great amount of positive transfer.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ A great amount of negative transfer

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

- ☐ Transfer is a cognitive phenomenon that plays a crucial role in the acquisition of Portuguese by Spanish speakers.

- ☐ Appropriate techniques need to address both positive and negative transfer of knowledge from one language to the other.

How do we justify "Portuguese for Spanish Speakers?"

☐ Frequent and sucessfull transfer episodes lead to early fossilization

Early fossilization

"O indesejável do portunhol é o seu congelamento num dado patamar (em geral baixo, embora comunicativamente suficiente na percepção do usuário), gravando a interação com o ônus extra para o interlocutor falante-padrão que tem que filtrar continuamente os ruídos do sistema da interlíngua estacionária" (Paes de Almeida Filho 1995)

Methodology

- ☐ Methodological consequences: do we need a specific method to teach similar languages?

- ☐ How can we capitalize on positive transfer and combat fossilization at the same time?

Cross linguistic interference (transfer)

- We base this project on the assumption made by De Angelis and Selinker that all linguistic systems present in the speakers' mind may be simultaneously <u>interacting</u> and competing in interlanguage production, allowing for both positive and negative transfer.

Cross linguistic interference (transfer)

- ☐ Positive transfer
- Jensen (1989)-studied the degree of listening comprehension in Portuguese among Spanish speakers with no previous knowledge of Portuguese, and reports that they could understand more than 50% of what was being said.
- Henriques (2000)- reading comprehension test- Henriques found that Spanish speakers with no knowledge of Portuguese can understand up to 94% of an academic text in Portuguese.
- Lexical congruence - This transparency of meaning is due to a very high level of lexical similarity between these two languages, which is estimated to reach around 85% (Ulsh 1971, Green, 1988).

Positive transfer

- The current proposal takes into consideration the positive transfer between Portuguese and Spanish, typologically very close languages, to introduce Portuguese to the Spanish-speaking through readings of authentic texts.

Negative transfer

- Linguistic congruence, which allows for a great deal of positive transfer, paradoxically creates a very strong tendency for negative transfer as well .

- As explained in Faerch and Kasper (1987), negative transfer in the acquisition of a similar language is a consequence of a cognitive process by which the learner erroneously perceives a very high possibility of success in transferring first language (L1) knowledge to second language (L2) production and reception.

Types of transfer

- Klein (1986) argues that, in SLA in general, there is more possibility for phonological transfer, but also lexical and syntactic, and less possibility for morphological transfer.

Types of transfer

- ☐ Simões e Kelm argue that phonological differences are more difficult to be acquired, because as there are semantic false cognates, there are also phonetic false cognates.

Types of transfer

- Lombello, El-Dash e Baleeiro consider that the lexicon is more likely to be transfered in the acquisition of Portuguese by Spanish speakers, based on an error analysis, and conclude that "um curso de falantes de espanhol não precisa de muita ênfase na estrutura, mas deve colocar mais ênfase no vocabulário"(1983, 122), an opinion shared by Ponzo Peres (1999) e Takeuchi (1984).

Types of transfer

- Ponzo Peres (1999) adds that tranfer strategies are favored due to morphosyntactic similarities: because the structures are very similar, learners are encouraged to "portuguesize" lexical items, i.e., borrow L1 lexical items and adapt them to L2 morphology.

Types of transfer

- Pletsh de García argues that it is more difficult to learn sounds, meanings and sequences that present subtle differences between L1 and L2, while the most salient differences are more easily remembered, in a way that Spanish *novia* and Portuguese *noiva* present "linguistic traps" (Schmitz 1970).

The role of typology in the development of transfer patterns

L3 Acquisition

- ☐ Odlin 2003

- ☐ Ringbom 1992

Cross linguistic interference (transfer)

- □ "Formal similarity between languages, whether native or non-native, has been repeatedly reported as one of the key factors in the amount of influence likely to occur in <u>interlanguage</u> production"(De Angelis and Selinker 49)

The role of typology in the development of transfer patterns

- "Still have considerable interference from French. My French helps and interferes simultaneously in both reading and speaking. If in doubt about a word, I experiment by using the French word with a Spanish pronunciation and/or morphology. Occasionally it works. Why do I sense little interference from English or German?" (Schulz e Elliot 2000, 111)

The role of typology in the development of transfer patterns

☐ Carvalho & Silva 2006

1. How do learners of Portuguese as L3 go about selecting a L2 item over a native item (or vice-versa), and what role typological distance plays in this selection process.

2. To what extent can think-aloud and retrospective recall data contribute to the answering of question 1.

Carvalho & Silva 2006

- During a present subjunctive task, both L1 English and L1 Spanish showed tendencies to transfer from Spanish.
- The only difference is that L1 English use more metalinguisic awareness while L1 Spanish refer to their intuition more often. Thus, L1 Spanish made more structural mistakes.
- During the future subjunctive task, both L1 English and L1 Spanish speakers transfered from Spanish, but L1 Spanish speakers made more mistakes due to transfer from non-congruent Spanish structures.

Carvalho & Silva 2006

- We concluded that typological similarity overides order of acquisition, since L1 English used Spanish transfer a lot more than English.

Ongoing research

- ☐ Pragmatic acquisition
- ☐ Sociolinguistic variation
- ☐ Linguistic attitudes
- ☐ Automatic transfer patterns
- ☐ Specific methodology

Searching for a specific methodology

- In search of a specific methodology because we need to call the learner's attention to "sentido de diferenciação que se anestesia no confronto de línguas próximas," (Paes de Almeida Filho 18).

Searching for a specific methodology

- Given the role of linguistic transfer and the advantages of metalinguistic awareness during the acquisition of Portuguese by Spanish speakers, we argue that a specific teaching methodology needs to be developed.

- An important aspect is the need to motivate learners to develop awareness of the subtle differences between Spanish and Portuguese.

Pedagogical suggestions

To postpone oral production (Grannier)-

"O adiamento da produção oral espontânea para uma segunda fase na aquisição de português por FE é desejável, portanto, para evitar a transferência indiscriminada da L1 para a L2 e permite o foco na pronúncia através de atividades com uma produção controlada."

Pedagogical suggestions

Postponing of oral production (Grannier 2004):

"O adiamento da produção oral espontânea para uma segunda fase na aquisição de português por FE é desejável, portanto, para evitar a transferência indiscriminada da L1 para a L2 e permite o foco na pronúncia através de atividades com uma produção controlada."

☐ "A produção espontânea oral por qualquer aprendiz (estimulada dentro da abordagem comunicativa) leva a validar fases iniciais de interlínguas, minimizando o *foco na forma*"

Pedagogical suggestions

Writing activities

Grannier (2000) argues that we prioritize written production, because writing activities "permitem ao aluno dar-se tempo para refletir [...] e permitem ao professor, indicar, sem perturbar a expressão do aluno, os pontos que exigem mais reflexão."

In 2003, Grannier once again suggests that "as atividades devem conduzir o aprendiz da observação à reflexão e, desta, à aquisição das particularidades da nova língua".

Pedagogical suggestions

- **L1 teaching methods:** Santos (1998) argues that we should recycle methods currently being used in L1 teaching.

- **Bidialectal education**

Pedagogical suggestions

- **Self-evaluation:**
- Cariello (2000) notes that the errors caused by transfer are not perceived by Spanish speakers, and points out the importance of providing learners with the necessary tools to learn how to notice Spanish interference.

Development of metalinguistic awareness

- ☐ Most authors emphazise the need to develop metalinguistic awareness about congruent and divergent structures between Spanish and Portuguese.

- ☐ Material developers should bare this need in mind.

Development of metalinguistic awareness

- Focus on form actitivies (glossaries) (Leiria 1998)
- Grammar explanations followed by written structural activities (Jensen 1999),
- Translation (Cariello 2000),
- Writting activities that include copying structures found in authentic texts (Júdice 2000)
- Reading actitivies that reinforce the perception of sounds (Akeberg 2002)
- Individual and group correction of oral and written texts (Almeida Filho 1995).

Development of metalinguistic awareness and meaning

- "Integrar el trabajo gramatical en un enfoque comunicativo [en la enseñanza de español a hablantes de portugués], sin sacrificar el eje temático de los programas, ni el material auténtico, ni la primacía de la función comunicativa supone una alta exigencia para un docente. Delinear técnicas que no caigan en la ejercitación mecánica que, sabemos, no redunda en la conección de la producción libre, es un desafío mayor aún. En eso estamos." (Berlotti 2000)

The role of attention in L2 acquisition

- A great amount of SLA research has shown that, contrary to Krashen and Terrel's assumption (1983), comprehensive input is not sufficient and explicit teaching does lead to acquisition.

The noticing hypothesis

- Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 1995 and 2001) - conscious processes are a necessary condition for some aspects of L2 learning, or are at least a facilitative one.

The noticing hypothesis

- ☐ In his view, for the L2 input to be processed for acquisition, it must first be noticed.

- ☐ Pedagogical interventions that make the L2 input salient increase the chance of L2 acquisition.

Noticing vs. understanding

- Schmidt (1993) distinguishes between noticing and understanding. He explains that noticing refers to the registering of the simple occurrence of some event, for example, what linguistic material is stored in memory. Understanding, on the other hand, involves recognizing a general principle, rules, or patterns, i.e. how the linguistic material is organized into a system.

Noticing vs. understanding

- For example, when a Spanish-speaking learner of Portuguese first encounters the phrase 'a ponte' (the bridge), 'noticing' may occur when the use of the feminine determinant 'a' as opposed to the masculine 'el (the) in Spanish, as in 'el puente' (the bridge), becomes perceptually salient for the learner. In contrast, 'understanding' would occur at the moment the learner reasons that the use of 'a' with 'ponte' is due to 'ponte' being gender-marked as feminine in Portuguese. At this point, he hypothesizes that gender-marking in Portuguese and Spanish may diverge and looks for a possible rule to account for it .

Noticing vs. understanding

Thus, <u>understanding</u> refers to the learner's recognition of a principle, rule, or pattern behind the use of a linguistic feature.

Noticing vs. understanding

- ☐ Schmidt argues that the acquisition of some L2 features may require more than a simple exposure to input, and that in this case an approach that aims to raise the learners' consciousness at the level of explicit knowledge may be beneficial for acquisition.

Noticing vs. understanding

- For him, consciously paying attention to linguistic features of the input and attempting to analyze their significance in terms of deeper generalizations are highly facilitative.

- The simple exposure to input is <u>unlikely</u> to be sufficient for second language acquisition of sometimes opaque or <u>non-salient linguistic forms</u>.

The role of attention to form in the teaching of Portuguese for Spanish speakers

- In the field of Portuguese for Spanish speakers, there is been a strong consensus among scholars about the pedagogical importance of developing awareness of the differences between Spanish and Portuguese with the aim of counteracting negative transfer

The role of attention to form in the teaching of Portuguese for Spanish speakers

Carvalho & Silva 2006b support the idea that in the field of acquisition of similar languages, there is no significant learning without attention to form.

We, with DeKeyser, believe that it is necessary to call learners' attention to the target language's formal aspects, especially the subtle ones, so that they will notice the new form that are too 'similar' to be acquired implicitly.

The Project

- ☐ Gathering of authentic texts that contain target forms (newspapers, magazines, comic strips, blogs, recipes, short stories, essays, book/movie reviews, jokes)

- ☐ Developing focus on <u>form</u> activities but <u>in context,</u>

- ☐ Aiming at exposing the user to a gamut of authentic readings allowing for great cultural input,

- ☐ Developing and enhance the users' reading skills in Portuguese right from the very beginning of instruction

The Project

- Each activity focus on a specific grammar point, and all the elements of each activity (input, guided practice, and more open-ended practice) are designed to reflect the specific learning characteristics of Spanish-speaking learners of Portuguese.

- The grammar structure in focus dealt with throughout the activity in direct connection to the meaning explored in the selected authentic reading passage.

The Project

- Authentic reading passages provide learners with the opportunity to use cross-linguistic (Portuguese-Spanish) knowledge to facilitate processing for meaning.

- When appropriate, the target grammar structures appear enhanced (highlighted, bold-faced, underlined, etc) to draw learners' attention to them.

- An oral version of the text is available. Learners have the chance to stop the audio and listening to it several times, which prevent them from reading the text "in Spanish" and provide them with the opportunity to make connections between the written language and native Portuguese intonation and sounds.

The Project

- In summary, the activities capitalize on Spanish speakers' early ability to read Portuguese texts and provide them with a range of learning tasks that are structured to help the learners make the necessary connections between form and meaning in Portuguese

The project

The collection of authentic readings accompanied by activities presents a rich source of learning and teaching materials that capitalize on English-Spanish bilinguals' repertoire to build reading skills in a third language, while simultaneously drawing attention to structural aspects of Portuguese that are essential for the development of proficiency in this language.

The project

- The challenge in developing these activities is to find authentic texts that contain these target forms so that the activities will

1) focus on <u>form</u> but <u>in context,</u>

2) expose the user to a gamut of authentic readings allowing for great cultural input, and

3) develop and enhance the users' reading skills in Portuguese right from the very beginning of instruction.