

# Incorporating interactional competence into the Spanish heritage classroom

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## Abstract

Research in heritage language (HL) teaching has shown the benefits of developing language awareness. This prepares heritage language learners (HLL) to adjust speech and linguistic choices according to social practices in different linguistic communities. This chapter aims to guide HL educators to raise HLLs awareness about the social nature of linguistic varieties through the development of interactional competence (IC) in different registers, particularly in professional settings. Whereas communicative competence focuses on the capacity of the individual language user, IC is understood as a shared internal context or sphere of inter-subjectivity (Kramsch 1986). This chapter reviews the theoretical foundation of IC and describes the need for IC methodology and pedagogical approaches for HL instruction. This chapter also includes two detailed activities that provide instructors with pedagogical ideas to integrate IC into the HL classroom. Activity 1 studies interaction in the home variety (D1) as well as awareness of language variation; and Activity 2, guides students through the development of IC in professional interactions (D2). Lastly, instructors will also explore ideas to design and implement IC-based assessment instruments.

**Keywords:** language awareness, heritage language, interactional competence, linguistic register, communicative competence, language variation.

### Resumen

Las investigaciones en el campo de la enseñanza del español como lengua heredada (ELH) han mostrado los beneficios que tiene el desarrollo de la conciencia lingüística. Esto prepara a los estudiantes de lengua heredada (LH) para adaptar su discurso y opciones lingüísticas de acuerdo con las prácticas sociales en las comunidades lingüísticas donde interactúan. Este capítulo busca guiar a los profesores de ELH para ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar conciencia sobre la naturaleza social de las variedades lingüísticas a través del desarrollo de la competencia interaccional (CI) en diferentes registros lingüísticos, particularmente en entornos profesionales. Mientras que la competencia comunicativa se centra en la capacidad del usuario para usar lengua de manera individual, la CI se entiende como un contexto interno compartido o esfera de intersubjetividad; (Kramsch, 1986). Este capítulo revisa la base teórica de la CI y describe una clara necesidad de una metodología y enfoques pedagógicos alusivos a la CI en la ELH. Este capítulo también incluye dos actividades detalladas que brindan a los instructores ideas pedagógicas para integrar CI al aula de herencia. La Actividad 1 estudia la interacción de la variedad lingüística materna, en el ámbito familiar, así como la conciencia sobre la variación del idioma en general; y la Actividad 2 guía a los estudiantes a través del desarrollo de la CI en interacciones lingüísticas profesionales (D2). Por último, los instructores también explorarán ideas para diseñar e implementar instrumentos de evaluación basados en la CI.

**Palabras clave:** conciencia lingüística, lengua heredada, competencia interaccional, registros lingüísticos, competencia comunicativa, variedad lingüística.

## 1. Background

Recent research in heritage language (HL) education has shown the benefits of having a sociolinguistically informed HL curricula to encourage critical language awareness (e.g. Martinez 2003; Leeman 2005; Leeman and Serafini, 2016; Holguin, 2017). Benefits involve the development of language awareness and critical thinking by fostering HL learners' profound understanding of language variation (Martinez, 2003; Leeman and Serafini, 2016). Developing critical language awareness also implicates understanding the social, political, and ideological dimensions of language practices which are important for students to make linguistic choices when moving in and out of linguistic communities (Del Valle, 2014). Thus, HL learners are able to adjust speech according to the social practice.

Drawing upon the idea of understanding language as a product of embodied social practices (Pennycook, 2010), this teaching approach aims to guide HL educators to raise learners' awareness about the social nature of linguistic varieties (Showstack, 2010) through the development of interactional competence (IC) in formal registers, particularly in professional settings. The term IC was introduced by (Kramsch, 1986) as a shared internal context or sphere of inter-subjectivity that is built through the collaborative efforts of interactional partners. IC is not only what a person knows, but also what a person does together with others in a specific context (Young, 2011; Young 2014). As explained in Young (2011), IC can be observed in discursive practices (Tracy, 2002; Young 2009) which he describes as episodes of social interaction in context, episodes that are socially and culturally significant to a community of speakers. Context is much broader than the time and place of interaction; it involves a combination of physical, spatial, temporal, social interactional, institutional, political, and historical circumstances in which participants do a practice (Young, 2011).

The field of interactional competence (IC) has been developing in second language (L2) research for almost three decades (see Hall, 1993; Kramsch, 1985). L2 researchers (see Betz and Huth, 2014; Huth 2014; , Barraja Rohan, 2011) have bridged the gap between research and L2 pedagogical practices (Salaberry and Kunitz, 2019). As described by Showstack (2010), in the field of HL, there has been very few attempts to include the study of interaction and

its implications on the development of critical language awareness (e.g. Leeman, 2003; Leeman and Serafini, 2016). There is a clear need for IC methodology in HL instruction and pedagogical approaches should be developed. The present method for HL teaching is adapted from L2 IC-based methodologies, and seeks to prepare teachers for the implementation of IC into HL classroom.

Creating an effective heritage language curriculum that incorporates IC and critical language awareness requires a deep understanding of who students are and the existing linguistic profiles and competencies that they bring to the classroom (Fairclough, 2016). Fairclough (2016) explains that many learners join HL programs mastering the language varieties typical of the speech community they belong to, which usually differs from the standard language, in part because learners have been exposed to colloquial speech only. HL educators cannot expect students to show competencies in a formal register when they have not been exposed to dialects other than their home variety (Potowski, 2005). Fairclough (2016) compares the acquisition of new varieties with the acquisition of new languages, which gives language users more communicative options. She highlights that there will be contexts where the standard dialect will be needed and others where the home variety will be necessary.

In order to study interactional practices in formal registers of Spanish, students should first be guided to develop conversational analysis (CA) awareness in discursive practices of local dialects (D1). Villa (2003) argues that home varieties constitute learners' primary discourses" and that they should be incorporated into the language classroom. He suggests that maintaining home varieties is an excellent bridge to developing secondary discourses". Learners should be introduced to standard varieties only after they understand their own. CA examines talk in natural occurring conventional practices to illuminate the generic properties of talk and social action through which the constitutive nature of social reality is maintained (Arminen, 2005). In other words, CA delivers the substance that IC is made of, and offers language instructors a wealth of knowledge that can make IC more pedagogical sound (Wong and Waring, 2010). IC-based materials can be designed by teachers who are not experts in CA. Salaberry and Kunitz (2019) suggest that teachers who are involved in IC-based research develop a better understanding of how IC works. This understanding helps them to achieve the goal of teaching and testing IC in the best way suited to their own students.

In institutional interactions, such as professional conversation, research

(e.g. Drew and Heritage 1992a) shows that the role of CA is to disclose and specify the verbal practices and interactional arrangements through which the institutional practice is carried out. Arminen (2005), describes that in institutional interactions the participants orient to an institutional context such as medical, legal or educational, in and for accomplishing their distinctive institutional actions. Being aware of the distinctions between everyday talk and institutional interactions will empower learners to become interactionally competent by using the HL in contexts outside their primary discourses such as academic and professional settings.

### **Summary of basic concepts**

**Interactional competence (IC):** pragmatic relationship between participants employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the contexts in which they are employed. (Young 2011, p. 428).

**Dialect:** Way of speaking a language associated with a particular region or social group. (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015), P. 403. D1 refers to home dialects and D2 refers to new dialects.

**Register:** A way of speaking a language which is associated with a particular occupational or activity group. (p. 415)

**Variety:** Particular way of speaking associated with a particular region or group of speakers; see dialect. (p. 420).

**Context:** is larger than the place and time of interaction and includes the network of physical, spatial, temporal, social, interactional, institutional, political, and historical circumstances in which participants do a practice (Young, 2011).

**Critical language awareness:** engaging students in the examination of how ideologies, politics, and social hierarchies are often embodied, reproduced, and naturalized through language (Leeman and Serafini, 2016).

## 2. Description

This section gives detailed guidelines to include interactional competence (IC) into the HL curricula. It also shows instructors what they need to know before designing IC lessons as well as how IC activities, such as the activities proposed in this approach, should be conducted during the instruction.

General aspects of interactional competence (adapted from Young, 2011): a) IC focuses mainly on spoken interaction. However, nonverbal semiotic resources (gesture, gaze, posture, etc.) play an important role in the study of interaction. b) The relationship between the forms of talk chosen by the participants (pragmatics of interaction) and the social context where the discursive practice occurs are fundamental to IC. c) IC is the construction of a shared mental context through the collaboration of all interactional patterns. d) The context of an interaction goes beyond the place and time of conversation. It is important to understand that context involves social, institutional, political, and historical circumstances. e) Most proficient HL learners already have IC features in the HL. Classroom IC activities should help them be aware of those competencies so that they understand how these are important for effective communication in a specific practice.

IC activities in HL instruction could be: (1) activities to study interaction in the home variety (D1) and (2) activities to develop IC in new varieties of the language (D2). IC also gives opportunities to teach other aspects of language. Learners develop IC in conjunction with other competences like linguistic (language skills, spoken grammar, new lexicon, etc.), pragmatic, and intercultural, for example.

The present teaching approach includes three IC student-centered activities that can be adapted to any proficiency level. These activities are described below (see appendixes)

**Activity 1: AWARENESS RAISING.** The purpose of this lesson is to help students develop awareness of existing IC in their home varieties. This activity also helps students to understand that their home dialects have value and that they are as important as prestige varieties in communication. Learners bring to the classroom family interactions that are analyzed.

**Activity 2: PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION AT WORK.** This activity follows an instructional model for teaching interaction (adapted from Barraja-Rohan, 1997, 2011; Betz and Huth, 2014; Huth, 2014). This model

allows the teaching of communicative features of practices in new varieties/registers (D2) (e.g. conversations in professional settings).

1. *Reflection of how language in action works*: In this step students see language as action and understand that grammar alone does not get successful communication done (Betz and Huth, 2014). The discussion in this step can be made in the student's dominant language.

2. *Contrastive analysis of D1 and D2 structures on the specific learning target*. Students bring their interactional experiences and knowledge in home varieties to the classroom. They become aware of how interactional features in their D1 are similar or different than those used in the D2 discursive practice.

3. *Analysis of D2 structures based on authentic transcripts and/or audio-video material*: Students analyze the use of the new interaction structures. Before introducing the new interaction structure, teachers make sure that students understand the content of the interaction. The study of new interaction features can be accompanied by lexical, grammatical, listening comprehensible and any other tasks that facilitate the acquisition of the new structures. All activities in this section should be carried out in small groups and answers are always discussed with classmates before being shared with the whole class.

4. *Practice of D2 structures in speaking and writing*: In this step students use the new structure in context through a role-play.

5. *Translingual/ transcultural discussion and reflection*: Students reflect on how the use of specific structures depends on the social and situational context of the interaction. They realize that interactional, pragmatic, and linguistic aspects are linked to the discursive practice (e.g. professional conversations are different than casual interactions and involve different aspects). Being aware of this difference will help them make the right choices.

### 3. Implementation

This section is a detailed guide for teachers to incorporate IC into the HL classroom. Included are three components: input, filter and competence. Input describes material, content, procedures, and instructional aspects that have an

essential role in IC instructions. Filter addresses possible issues during the application of the present approach and provides concrete plans to overcome these difficulties. Competence describes all competencies that students develop along with interactional competence (IC) with this method.

## **INPUT**

### **Authentic data**

Authentic spoken language data is essential to create IC oriented teaching materials. It is recommended that the authentic data chosen contains the interactional structure to be taught and provides opportunities to teach other aspects of language (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, etc.). The following are sources of authentic data and ideas of conversations that could be used with this teaching approach:

- Video and/or audio-recorded natural occurring interactions: casual conversations between native speakers of the same (e.g. Argentinian Spanish) or different varieties (e.g. Argentinian and Cuban Spanish); student family spoken interactions in home varieties; formal interviews; institutional talks (e.g. doctor-patient, employer-employee, bank manager-client, interactions with colleagues at work place, etc.). Instructors can record these interactions. Likewise, there are several corpora with natural occurring conversations available online (e.g. *Columbia corpus de conversaciones para E/LE*), and YouTube videos that contain natural occurring interactions with native speakers that can be used in the classroom.
- Scripted interactions: native speakers are given a prompt with situation-resulting conversation. These conversations could be any kind of interactions including, but not limited to, casual and professional conversations/institutional talks.
- Scripted data from the internet: This includes casual or formal conversations on YouTube, interactions on radio or TV programs (e.g. the news, morning shows, etc.); video clips from movies, TV series or soap operas.



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**IC content**

As described in the background section of this approach, conversational analysis (CA) informs how speakers of a particular community interact and provides instructors with tools for the teaching of IC. The aspects of IC that teachers incorporate into the HL curricula depends on learners proficiency level. Some relevant IC features include:

- *Turn-taking system*: (e.g. how and when to take the floor, gaze, intonation, etc.) involves the role of participants, and how their roles have implication in the conversation.
- *Adjacency pairs*: question-answer; offer-acceptance/rejection, greeting-farewell, etc.
- *Sequencing practices*: inviting, requesting, complementing, storytelling, disagreeing, etc. For instance, native speakers use linguistic (e.g. grammar and vocabulary) and interactional strategies to accept or refuse a request in their home variety that might be different than those used in professional contexts.
- *Intersubjectivity*: How interlocutors make meaning to each other and display common understanding and knowledge.
- *Topic managements*: To know how to initiate, change and exit topics smoothly. In conversations in formal settings, there are transition words that speakers use to facilitate topic management. Being aware of these IC features, will also allow students to relate linguistic aspects to these practices.
- *Context*: is created by the participants, their utterances, and actions, which reflect their relationship (e.g. how they address or greet each other). For example, in Mexican Spanish, the use of titles in professional settings is very important. Students can explore the cultural, social, political, historical reasons behind this way of addressing among interlocutors.

**Procedures**

- Finding interactional teachable objectives is the first step to create IC activities. It is important to know what students are capable of doing during interactions. Beginner HL students are more bicultural than bilingual, so

they will need to learn aspect of casual conversations before being exposed to more professional interactions. In case of intermediate and advanced students, it is recommended that they are guided to develop awareness about existing IC strategies in their home language (see *Activity 1* for pedagogical ideas) before being exposed to IC features in new registers/varieties can be introduced (see *Activity 2*).

- Once the interactional structure has been selected, the objectives are clear and the authentic document is chosen, teachers can choose an instructional model. As included in the *Description* section of this method, Barraja-Rohan (1997, 2011); Betz and Huth (2014); Huth (2014) provide a framework that can be adapted to HL instruction.
- Activities should allow linguistic comparisons among varieties and registers as well as reflections during and after the instruction. Reflecting is crucial for students to develop critical language awareness.
- Adopt an inductive methodology to teach new interactional and linguistic structures. Guide students to discover language use through scaffolded steps to generalize about systematic patterns of language use. (Tao, Salaberry, Yeh, and Burch, 2018). You can use input enhancement techniques to foster awareness and encourage students to notice the pattern.
- Once the given interaction structure has been explored, students start working on using them. Examples of these activities are: role-plays and writing dialogues. Learners can test their explicit knowledge of the new feature by correcting errors in their classmate s written production.
- Assessment is the final step of the instruction. This is the right time to provide students with feedback and make sure they have developed linguistic and interactional competencies. (See *Conclusion* section for more details).

### **Instruction**

- IC-based activities should be student-centered. Activities should involve pair and group interactions where students negotiate meaning and work together to reach the learning goal.

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- Teachers become facilitators and monitor students progress during the instruction.
  - Although it is recommended that errors are not corrected and teachers do not have to provide feedback during the instruction, it is suggested to use strategies for noticing accurate ways to use the new structures or forms.

### **Timing**

- Since interactional competence development occurs gradually, it is suggested to include IC lessons regularly throughout the semester. The new structure should build on the existing interactional skills. You can incorporate IC activities twice a semester, every month or at the end of each unit. The recommended allotted time for IC lessons is 50 minutes, but they could be longer, if necessary.
- When planning activity duration, keep in mind students proficiency level. Beginner students might need more time than more advanced students to accomplish tasks. Consider that using authentic data can be time consuming.

### **Students Learning Outcomes**

During and after the IC instruction, students will:

- Reflect on existing interactional strategies and their role in primary and secondary discourses.
- Explore how interactions are co-constructed by participants and how context determines the pragmatic and linguistic aspects that accompany interactional strategies.
- Analyze and use linguistic (e.g. syntactic forms, lexicon/phrases) and discourse strategies appropriate to the specific discursive practice.
- Develop and use critical language awareness to make linguistic and discursive choices in their home and new varieties of the HL.

**FILTER**

An element to consider during the application of this method is filter. Van-Patten and Williams (2009) describe Krashen's theory of affective filter mentioning that students who have positive attitudes toward language learning have their filters low, which easily allows language acquisition. On the other hand, a stressful environment can cause students to block their processing of input. (p. 28). The following section addresses possible difficulties that can arise during the implementation of the present method. Additionally, it gives instructor instructions on how to create a comfortable and positive atmosphere for students.

**Overcoming possible problems with authentic data and IC content**

- Authentic material can be challenging for students. Not being able to understand the content of the conversation can make the analysis of linguistic and conversation patterns difficult. Before getting to language analysis, teachers should include tasks that focus on meaning. Some activities include: listening comprehension, reading comprehension (using transcripts), syntactic and lexical activities.
- Language proficiency is not an obstacle to teaching language use and interactional competencies. Even if their linguistic repertoire is not extensive, students can still acquire IC strategies. However, using long audios and transcriptions can increase students anxiety and affective filter which could lead to withdrawal from the activity.
- It is recommended to begin with short interaction in low levels and increase the length of the conversation as students become more proficient.
- Although CA facilitates IC instruction, teachers need to be careful not to make the HL classroom a linguistics class. It is recommended to include clear and simple transcripts that students can easily read.

**Overcoming possible problems with procedures and instruction**

- Provide written feedback based on students assessment practice and reflections<sup>1</sup>. Avoiding explicit corrections during the instruction helps stu-

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<sup>1</sup>It is recommended to provide feedback after class

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dents build confidence to use the HL outside their home linguistic community.

- IC-based research mentions that being exposed to language is not enough to develop IC (Betz and Huth, 2014). Students have to reflect to become critical thinkers and develop language awareness. For example, if the lesson aims to teach sequences and discursive techniques in an interview, and the assessment instrument is a mock interview with the professor, students can provide a critical reflection of the discursive practice as part of their evaluation.
- Although guided induction could be time consuming, it is recommended to include as many steps as possible to help students discover how the new structure is used. This will help students to understand it and later incorporate it to their linguistic repertoire and conversational abilities.

#### **Overcoming possible problems with timing**

- Plan the number activities based on the allotted time. Rushing students can affect their development of language awareness. Avoid including many aspects of CA. Studying one structure at the time gives students enough time to analyze and use the new structures.

#### **COMPETENCE**

While developing interactional competence (IC), HL learners also develop components of communicative competence (CC). According to Savignon, (1998) CC involves four main components:

1. *Grammatical competence*: Grammar can easily be incorporated into the IC lesson. Learners recognize how grammatical features are related to the context of conversation.

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2. *Discourse competence*: The structure of syntactic utterances. Students apply grammatical features and vocabulary to produce cohesive and coherent written and spoken interactions (role-play conversations, discussions, written dialogues, etc.)

3) *Sociolinguistic competence* (also described by Young, (2014) as interactional resources ): Knowledge of the rules of interaction according to context where the discursive practice takes place. For example, in *Activity 1* (see appendix A), learners study the role of code-switching as a communicative strategy that is linked to the use of language in home varieties. In *Activity 2* (see appendix B), students learn IC features (e.g. sequential organization in the conversation-questions- and how interlocutors use titles to address each other) involved in an institutional interaction (professional conversation).

4) *Strategic competence*: how to overcome difficulties during communication. Role-plays with classmates and language consultants (see *Activity 2*) prepares students to use IC strategies along with other components of CC to solve any possible problem during the real-life interactions.

The implementation of IC also includes the development of pragmatic and intercultural competence. This is the ways in which participants construct interpersonal, experiential, and textual meanings in a practice (Young, 2009, 2011, 2014).

IC involves knowledge and employment of these resources in social context (Young, 2011, 2014).

#### 4. Recommended activities

This method includes two activities that provide instructors with pedagogical ideas to integrate IC into the HL classroom. *Activity 1* studies interaction in the home variety (D1) and *Activity 2*, guides students to develop IC in professional interactions (D2).

| ACTIVITY 1. HOME VARIETY IC AWARENESS RAISING |   |
|---|---|
| <b>PROFICIENCY LEVEL</b>                      | Although this IC activity is intended for ad- |

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|-------------------------|--|
|                         | vanced students, the tasks included can be modified to be used with lower proficiency students (beginner and intermediate) of heritage and mixed classes.  |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>     | See handout (appendix A)   |
| <b>GOAL</b>             | Students will develop awareness about existing interactional features in home varieties  |
| <b>COMPETENCE:</b>      | <p><b>Written:</b> Students will develop awareness about the use of code-switching as conversational strategy by writing a dialogue.</p> <p><b>Oral:</b> Students will discuss IC features (e.g. code switching) in their home dialects and will analyze how other HL speakers use these features to convey meaning.</p>   |
| <b>MATERIALS</b>        | Handout and audio/transcription of casual conversation with family members.  |
| <b>PROCEDURE</b>        | *See handout for details on procedure.   |
| <b>VARIATION</b>        | <p>This activity can be adapted for lower-level HL classes.</p> <p><b>Beginner:</b> Focus on one IC feature (e.g. strategies used make a request in conversations with parents). They discuss the strategies used. Questions in Task B and task C should also be simplified. The discussions are conducted in English.</p> <p><b>Mixed:</b> HL students bring the family conversations and work with a non- HL student to analyze the interaction.</p> |
| <b>HANDOUT PROVIDED</b> | YES  |
|                         |  |

| <b>ACTIVITY 2: CONVERSATION AT WORKPLACE</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>PROFICIENCY LEVEL</b>                     | Although this IC activity is intended for advanced students, the tasks included can be modified to be used with lower proficiency students (beginner and intermediate) of heritage and mixed classes.  |
| <b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>                          | *See handout ( <i>appendix B</i> )   |
| <b>GOAL</b>                                  | <p>Develop awareness of how language and IC features play an important role in conversations in formal registers.</p> <p>Analyze and use questions as a discursive strategy in institutional conversations.</p> <p>Explore ways in which participants address each other in interactions and how this is linked to the institutional context.</p> <p>Implement conversational strategies in role-plays of professional settings.</p> |
| <b>COMPETENCE:</b>                           | <p><b>Written:</b> students will analyze their language and what needs to be improved by writing a reflection of their interaction with a native speaker during the role-plays.</p> <p><b>Oral:</b> students will discuss the new IC features; students will implement the new communicative strategies learned in the lesson through role-plays with classmates and native speakers.</p>  |
| <b>MATERIALS</b>                             | Handout and Video of conversation.   |
| <b>PROCEDURE</b>                             | *See handout for details on procedure.   |
| <b>VARIATION</b>                             | <p>This activity can be adapted for lower-level HL classes.</p> <p><b>Beginner:</b> Simplify activities. In Task A, focus</p>  |



|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
|                                 | <p>on IC features that are more appropriate to their level. (e.g. how to open and end the conversation, fillers, questions and structure of questions, etc.). Students can write dialogues before moving to the role-play.</p> |
| <p><b>HANDOUT PRO-VIDED</b></p> | <p>YES</p>   |

**5. Conclusions**

The following section is divided in two parts. The first part offers suggestions for assessment, the last step in this approach. The second part includes achievement and further directions for the use of IC in HL pedagogy.

**Assessment**

The last step of this method is assessment. Testing students allows instructors to determine if students have achieved the competence required to be a participant in an interaction (Salaberry and Kunitz, 2019). Young (2011) mentions that the test instructors decide to use should reflect with discursive practices in the real world where context plays a crucial role. It is recommended to provide feedback along with rubrics. Rubrics can include elements to assess interactional and linguistic patterns studied in class. Kley (2019) suggests that in order to create rubrics instructors should take into consideration the general IC objectives of the course and the specific goals in each IC lesson.

The selection of the evaluation instrument will depend on the IC feature previously taught, competencies developed (linguistics, pragmatic, etc.) and context. Evaluation tasks for advanced HL course can include (1) professional conversation role-plays; (2) professional conversations with native speakers abroad with similar academic background (see sample activity) (3) mock interviews (students find a job post related to their majors, create a CV and cover letter in Spanish, and then the instructor takes the role of recruiter and interviews the student). Other types of assessment include written exercises and analysis of transcriptions.

### **Achievements and further directions of IC in HL teaching**

The implementation of this method demonstrated that instructors successfully helped increase HL learners critical language awareness. Students were able to 1) reflect on existing interactional strategies and their role in primary and secondary discourses; 2) develop awareness on how interactions are co-constructed by participants and how the context determines linguistic pragmatic and linguistic aspects that accompany interactional strategies; 3) analyze and use linguistic (e.g. syntactic forms, lexicon/phrases) and discourse strategies appropriate to the specific discursive practice.

I encourage HL instructors to collect and transcribe your own data. Written transcription will help you get an overview of the context in which the interaction takes place and will provide you with ideas about a particular interactional, linguistic or pragmatic feature that could empower learners to become interactionally competent using the heritage language in contexts outside their primary discourses. Similarly, I suggest you to acknowledge the value of the language varieties that students bring to class during the implementation of this method. This will help learners gain confidence to add new varieties and registers to their repertoire.

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**APPENDIX A****ACTIVITY 1 - AWARENESS RAISING**

**Teacher s note:** Previous to this activity, students have to voice record and transcribe a casual conversation with a family member (parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) Students need to bring the transcription to class. Students do not have to transcribe the whole conversation, but make sure they have the beginning and end.

**TASK A.** *El español de mi casa*

**Step 1. (10 min)** In pairs, students share their conversations and discuss the following questions. Try to pair up students with classmates who speak a different variety of Spanish (Cuban, Mexican, Colombian, etc.), so that they become aware of variation.

- a) How did the conversation begin and end? What words were used to begin and end the conversation?
- b) What was the main topic of conversation?
- c) Was there any request during the conversation? How did it get solved?
- d) How was the level of formality during the interaction? Why?
- e) How is this interaction different from those Spanish conversations with other family members or friends?

**Step 2. (5 min)** Students share with the rest of the group what they found interesting from their classmate s interaction and how his interaction

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was different from theirs.

**Step 3. (5 min)** Ask students to imagine that you, the instructor, will attend a party where all their friends and family will be at. Individually, students provide concrete examples (lexical, grammatical, intonation, etc.) of how the instructor has to adjust, linguistically, to fit in and sound like a member of the family/community

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**Step 4. (5 min)** In groups of three, students discuss the following question:

Would it be correct if the instructor uses formal language in that context?

**TASK B. (10 min)** In pairs, students read the following the transcription of a conversation between a formal heritage learner of the class, then they discuss the questions below:

**Alberto:** Ah all my friends are going to Orlando for Joe's birthday. Can I go mom?

**Mother:** ¿Sí?

**Alberto:** Yeah

**Mother:** ¿Y dónde se van a quedar?

**Alberto:** Ah tal vez en bueno ellos tienen like apartments there and all that stuff

**Mother:** Sí, porque los hoteles yo no creo que estén trabajando

**Alberto:** No, I mean they have places to go. It's like in two weeks.

**Mother:** ¿Y con quién te quedas vos? ¿Con Guillermo?

**Alberto:** Ah yo me puedo quedar con Guillermo o lo que sea. I don't know. I just to spend some time and party.

**Mother:** Aha

**Alberto:** You ok with that?

**Mother:** Sí

**Alberto:** Ok. Yo me cuido ahí

**Mother:** Eso es. Exactamente. ¿Con quién te vas a ir?

**Alberto:** Tal vez Luis, o uno de los Luises.

**Mother:** Está bien

- Look carefully at how Alberto combines languages in his utterances. Why does he use this strategy? (examples: to add emphasis, mitigate a request, change topic, etc.).
- What strategies does the mother use before responding to the request? Why did she need this information before deciding?
- Alberto has an advanced level of Spanish. What are the possible reasons behind his decision to switch languages in this conversation?

### TASK C. PRACTICA

**Step 1. (5 min).** Students think about the last conversation that they had with a family member. Write an example for each of the following aspects:

- Topics were involved in the interaction:
- Communicative strategies used (request? questions? Etc.):
- Reasons to use such strategies:
- Languages involved in the interaction:

- Reasons for switching languages:

Students share your ideas with a classmate.

**Step 2. (10 min).** As a final step, students work with a different classmate to create a dialogue that involves code switching. They are asked to provide the linguistic and social context in which the switches occur along with the reasons for lexical and syntactic choices.



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## APPENDIX B

### **ACTIVITY 2. PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS AT WORK**

#### **PREVIOUS TO THIS LESSON**

In the previous class, students work on the following tasks:

#### **TASK A: Reflection**

**Step 1.** Students work in groups of four and discuss the role of questions/answers in the following contexts and the levels of formality involved when using the questions:

- a) Doctor's visit
- b) Conversation with parents
- c) Job interview

#### **DURING THIS LESSON**

#### **TASK A: Analysis of the conversation**

**Step 1. (7 min) LISTENING COMPREHENSION.** Students listen to the conversation and complete the exercise. After listening, students share their ideas with a classmate and then with the rest of the class.

- What is the main topic of the conversation?
- Where does this conversation take place?
- What kind of conversation is this interaction (e.g. casual, informal, etc.)?

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- What is the relationship of the speakers?

**Teacher's note:** Tell students that the conversation is between two agricultural engineers working for a public institution. Mirsa is the director of the institutional and Jorge works under her supervision. Every month they have to send a report with information about people with lands and crops. Jorge has not been able to complete the report and Mirsa questions him about the progress of the report because it needs to be submitted by 3 pm today.

**Step 2. (6 min) TECHNICAL VOCABULARY.** In pairs, students look at the words in bold in the transcription. They use the internet to find a suitable definition for each word.

*Solventaciones:*

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*Parcelas:*

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*Predios:*

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*Bodegas:*

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*Granos:*

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*Recibas:*

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Once students have found the definitions, the following questions are discussed:

- What is the role of these words in the interaction? Why are they relevant in this conversation context?
- How do we know that both speakers know what these words refer to?

### Conversación Mirsa y Jorge

- A**
1. **Mirsa:** Ingeniero Jorge, ¿puede venir tantito por favor?
  2. **Jorge:** Sí, permítame. Inge. (.) Necesita lo del informe, ¿verdad?
  3. **Mirsa:** Sí, por favor, para checarlo. Eh con respecto a, las **solventaciones** que tenemos del avance de este mes, ¿Cómo
- B**
4. vamos ingeniero? ¿Qué le han dicho?
  5. **Jorge:** Mire, como ve, puede observar allí en el informe, este los técnicos del norte están teniendo
  6. problemas en la verificación de las **parcelas**, de los **predios** de los productores ya que se han presentado en esa zona una
  7. cantidad considerable de precipitaciones y a la vez, se han presentado una serie de inconvenientes al entrar a los **predios**.
  8. No así en el caso de la zona sur. Los productores acá me manifiestan que han podido entrar, pero se han presentado
  9. lluvias. No tan significativas como en el norte. Esa es la información que me faltaría en el informe para poderlo llevar a
  10. cabo pues esta tarde, o a medio día, más o menos.
- C**
11. **Mirsa:** Oiga ingeniero eh, ¿por teléfono no hemos podido tratar de contactar a los productores, las **bodegas**, algo para
  12. tener la información de esto?
  13. **Jorge:** Mire, la idea de eso ya lo hice. El detalle es la pandemia, que se ha venido presentando en esto últimos días

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14. meses, a mí me ha pues ahora sí que impedido contactar a los encargados de las **recibas** de **granos**. ¿por qué? Porque
15. una, no están o no los dejan entrar a la zona de trabajo y obvio, pues se presenta una serie de inconvenientes al momento
16. de levantar esa información. O sea, no los dejan llegar al área de trabajo y los están haciendo trabajar desde casa por eso
17. es la falta de la información en ese rubro.
- D** 18. **Mirsa:** ¿Algo en que podamos agilizar esta esta información? Porque sí necesitamos mandarla hoy antes de la tres de la
19. tarde. No sé ¿algún correo, algún comunicado, algo que podamos ?
20. **Jorge:** Mira, estoy tratando contactarme con los dueños de las **recibas** mediante correos electrónicos, WhatsApp, pero
21. unos me dicen que una, no están y que me comuniqué con el encargado y ahí es donde se presenta una controversia de
22. que cuál es en realidad la situación. Si me da la oportunidad de hacerlo, yo se lo tendría para más tardar a la una o dos de
23. la tarde. Más menos, vaya.
- E** 24. **Mirsa:** Oiga ingeniero, y lo que comentaba de la zona norte. ¿cuántos días cree conveniente para poner en el reporte que
25. sea este darle tiempo para poder tener acceso a ir a las **parcelas** e ir verificarlas?
26. **Jorge:** Mire, esa información, los técnicos encargados de cada uno de los CA-DER comentan que si acaso entre dos a tres
27. días podríamos tener ya el termómetro. Ahora sí que ya más apegado a la realidad para tener esa información. De
28. momento, le reitero, no se puede. No puedo tener la información. Si me da la oportunidad, le digo, para una o dos de la

- F
- 29. tarde se la podría tener.
  - 30. **Mirsa:** Ok. Mándeme esto por favor a mi correo para yo mandarlo de mi correo personal del correo oficial y este tener
  - 31. el informe pues a esa hora y decir que nos comprometimos a que en el transcurso después de las tres de la tarde le tenemos
  - 32. la información al ingeniero
  - 33. **Jorge:** Ok. Muchas gracias. Pues déjeme se lo escaneo y se lo envío.
  - 34. **Mirsa:** Gracias ingeniero.

\*CADER: Centro de Atención y Desarrollo Rural

**Step 3. ROLE OF QUESTIONS IN INSTITUTIONAL INTERACTIONS.**

- a. **(7 min)** Teacher guides students to notice how this conversation is structured by six pairs of turns. In pairs, students analyze the role of the lexicon and the question as a discursive strategy in turns A-E and the possible reason behind the choice.

| <i>MIRSA</i>                             |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Question as a discursive strategy</i> |   |  |
| <i>Turn pair</i>                         | <i>Function/purpose of the question</i> | <i>Possible reason to use the question</i> |
| <i>A</i>                                 |   |  |
| <i>B</i>                                 |   |  |
| <i>C</i>                                 |   |  |

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|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| <i>D</i> |  |  |
| <i>E</i> |  |  |

*Why did Mirsa ask more questions than Jorge? How does that reflect her position of power?*

**Teacher's note:** During this activity, teacher monitors students' work. Make sure that students understand that Function /purpose of the question refers to the function that each question has in the conversation (e.g. request information, give advice, greeting, etc.) while possible reasons to use the question refers to the reasons that moved her to use a question instead of a direct statement, command, etc. Notice that, in some questions, she uses the first-person plural instead of second person singular.

- b. (5 min)** Students present their findings with the rest of the class. Teacher summarizes the discussion.

**Step 4. (10 min) *WAYS TO ADDRESS.*** In groups of three, students go back to the transcription. Teacher asks them to pay attention to the way speakers address each other in the conversation. Students look at **a)** the titles<sup>2</sup>, and **b)** how interlocutors convey formality during the interaction (tú? or usted?) while addressing each other.

- a. **Titles:** In lines 1, 2, 13 and 29 speakers use titles to address each other:
- i. Why do they use titles instead of proper names?
  - ii. Mirsa uses the title more than Jorge. Jorge uses a shorter version of the title. How are these two ways of using titles different?

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<sup>2</sup> Underlined in the transcription

What would be the reasons behind using titles instead of their names?

- iii. What does it tell us about the adjustment of language (words) to the context (institutional conversation)?

**b. Formality:**

- i. How do interlocutors convey formality?
- ii. Is the level of formality in this conversation similar to the level of formality you use to talk to your family?

**TASK B. PRACTICE.** Students work in pairs to role-play a situation that takes place at the Office of International Students in their college.

**Step 1. (5 min)** Students read the situations in the following role-play. Then, they have to work with their partner to make a list of words that can be useful in that context.

**Student A:** You are a student-worker working at the office of international students. Your supervisor asked you to organize the data base with information of all international students in the university. You need to organize the students and their information by nationalities. You have not completed the task.

**Student B:** You asked the student-worker to organize the data base with information about all international students in the university three weeks ago. He/she has not been able to complete the task. The director of the office needs the information ready by tomorrow.

**Step 2. (10 min)** Students act out the role play using vocabulary from the list in Step 1 and the discursive strategies learned in this lesson.

**Teacher's note:** You can include any role-play situation that suits your HL or mixed class. It is recommended that the role-play gives opportunities for students to apply the new structures and their new awareness of interaction strategies.

**HOMEWORK: ASSESSMENT AND PRACTICE.** For homework, students have a role-play activity with a language consultant. This activity could be used as formal assessment (oral exam). Students are given the situations. They prepare for the role-play with vocabulary relevant to their fields of study, discursive strategies, syntactic forms appropriate to the context, etc.

**During and after the role-play:** Students record their interactions with the language consultant and write a critical reflection about their performance during the interaction. They submit their reflection along with the role-play recording.

**Situation (sample)**

**FIELD: PSYCHOLOGY**

**Psychologist:** One of your patients, a college student, comes to your office. She/he feels very stressed with the workload at college. She/he often feels depressed.

- Find the reason for her/his visit.
- Ask relevant questions according to the patient's testimony
- Give recommendations to the patient. Some recommendations could be:
  - Exercise (mention the specific exercise)
  - Activities to develop self-esteem (ways to address self-critical tendencies)
  - Establish objectives that will help the patient overcome depression.
- Give any other recommendations.

Remember to make the necessary linguistic adjustments according to the context. Use conversational strategies learned in class.



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**Patient:** You are a freshman college student. You have a lot of work at school which makes you feel depressed and stressed. You live in the university dorms and miss your parents and your high school life. Here are some of your thoughts:

- You are the first family member to attend college and are very afraid of failure.
- Sometimes you feel tired and feel like crying and do not feel capable of dealing with college life.
- You don't want to go out of your dorm and don't feel like socializing
- Sometimes you miss class due to depression and don't want to talk to anybody
- You have been tempted to quit college and go back home.

Ask the psychologist any questions that you consider relevant.

**Teacher's note:** Create a situation based on students' field of study. It is recommended to create a realistic asthenosphere. For example: if using the situation above, bring a coat, chairs, name tags, or other items that can simulate a real conversation. If you do not have access to language consultants (tutors), students can carry out these activities with the teacher, or with other native speakers on campus.