

Linguistic case study of adriana



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1. Introduction

The Spanish language is currently spoken by almost 500 million people. This includes native speakers and individuals that speak Spanish as a second-language. It is the official language of 21 countries which includes Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Cuba, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, and Equatorial Guinea.

The Spanish language derived from a Latin dialect, which originated in the Southwest region of Europe known as Iberian Peninsula (Penny, 2000). The Spanish language emerged as a new dialect following years of invasions and settlements of the Iberian Peninsula, which is now modern day Portugal and Spain. During the late 6th century, this land was settled by Iberians and Celts. Through their mingling, the people developed their own native tongue and were known as the Celtiberians. In 19 BC, the Iberian Peninsula was taken under Roman rule and acquired the name Hispania. The natives learned Latin through traders, soldiers, and other Romans. Once the Roman's Latin was mixed with the language of the Celtiberians and previous settlers, a new language was formed called Vulgar Latin. Under Roman rule, Latin remained the official language of Hispania; however, centuries later the region was overturned by the Moors and the Christian Church were the language continued to progress in remote territories.

During the 16th and 17th century, the Spanish language was brought across the Atlantic by Spanish explorers. Even though Spain is the birthplace of the Spanish language, it does not have the largest Spanish speaking population.

Mexico and Columbia have the largest group of native Spanish speakers. Native Spanish speakers often struggle with many aspects of the English language. Some common linguistic errors include struggling with vowel sound positions, aspiration, voicing, sentence stress, and falling intonation (Penny, 2000). Due to linguistic differences, Adriana, the subject of this case study, demonstrates similar discrepancies in her speech.

2. Case Study Participate Background

Adriana is a 24 year old student that currently lives in Moultrie, Ga. Adriana was born in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, the capital of a northern state in Mexico. Adriana was born to a Mexican mother and father. Her parents had been married for 15 years and bore 6 children. Adriana's parents lived in Mexico their entire life. Adriana's father and mother worked at a fabrication shop for a combined 30 years. Adriana's mother stopped working three years after Adriana's birth due to a back injury. Adriana's father and eldest brothers provided for the household during her adolescent years.

Adriana is the youngest of the six children. Adriana's father died two years ago due to a terminal illness. After the death of Adriana's father, Adriana, her mother, and two younger siblings moved to the United States to live with her mother's brother. Adriana's uncle lives in Moultrie, Georgia as a migrant farm worker. His family relocates often according to the local agricultural needs. Her uncle's household consists of Adriana and her family, her uncle and his wife, and their three children. Adriana is the only adult in the household that speaks English. Her three younger cousins are bilingual.

Since Adriana moved to the United States, she has enrolled in a nearby ESOL program. Adriana has been enrolled in the program for a year now. Prior to

enrolling in this course, Adriana learned English from her cousins, co-workers, and peers. Adriana is highly motivated to learn English. She wishes to pursue a degree in pharmaceutical medicine once she has master the English language.

Even though Adriana is highly motivated to learn English, she is not ranked very high on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) scale. Adriana is demonstrates an intermediate proficiency level. Adriana can create language by asking and answering simple questions about familiar topics. When holding a conversation with Adriana, she can be understood; however, she has to repeat herself often. Adriana also has difficulty following specific directions, reading for comprehension, and writing, which would indicate low achievement in Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).

Despite Adriana lexical difficulties, she is highly motivated to learn and studies the English language often, which demonstrates a low-level affective filter. I believe Adriana's motivation to learn the English language stems from her desire to further her education in medicine. Adriana will be the first in her family to pursue higher education.

3. Experts in Linguistics

Learning a new language can be difficult for an adult learner. Some believe that it is easier to learn a new language as a child than it is as an adult (Ausubel, 1964). However, there are other aspects that can be considered when describing factors that influence English Language Learner's (ELL's) ability to learn a new language.

Ferrari (2013) suggests that ELL's that develop a social bond within groups

are more likely to continue learning the second language. In Ferrari's study, "social participation was the driving force for sustaining motivation" (Ferrari, 2013). It is clear that social encounters gives the ELL a sense of social identity and motivates them to learn the new language. Adriana has demonstrated sustained motivation throughout her educational endeavors so, is social participation the reason for her sustained motivation? Adriana attends ESOL classes twice per week and describes the classroom environment as a "home". She described her classmates as being similar to her: motivated and eager to learn. Adriana and her classmates are like-minded and have built a social community, which may be the cause of her continued motivation.

Motivation seems to be a major factor in Adriana's endeavors to learn the English language. According to Faulk (1978), students are more successful at learning a second language when they "like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which the language is used." This is described as integrative motivation. These learners are motivated to learn the language because they want to know the people that speak that language. Adriana appears to admire the English language and the culture of Americans. Adriana currently works at a local Mexican restaurant and travels with her co-workers and peers often. She detailed their visit to Savannah for St. Patrick's Day, Orlando on the fourth of July, and New York on New Year's Eve. Adriana submerges herself in American culture, which may contribute to her desire to learn the English language.

Adriana is not only motivated by her social interactions with English speakers, but she is also motivated by more practical reasons. According to <https://assignbuster.com/linguistic-case-study-of-adriana/>

Hudson (2000), Adrian's desire to learn English to meet the requirements for school or university graduation is described as instrumental motivation.

Adriana aspires to be a pharmacist and discusses attending Emory University. Adriana's desire to further her education and obtain a degree suggests that instrumental may have aided in her persistence in learning English.

4. Methodology and Procedures for Case Study Subject

Finding an informant was not difficult. I will be working at an elementary school in Moultrie during the 2019-2020 academic school. Moultrie is an agricultural community and has one of the largest migrant populations in South Georgia. I was able to collaborate with one of the ESOL teachers at the elementary school, and she was able to help me find an informant.

She provided me with a list of five ELL's that ranged in ages from 19 to 67. I was able to interview each ELL briefly prior to choosing one as an informant. Three of the ELL's were beginning learners of English and could not speak full sentences. I did not choose them as an informant because it would have made the linguistic error analysis impossible to perform. The fourth ELL was too advanced, which made me choose Adriana as an informant. Adriana had been learning English for two years, so she was not advanced but had learned enough of the English language for me to analyze her linguistic errors.

Part II. Analysis

4. Linguistic Error Analysis

In the following sections, I will discuss the linguistic errors of Adriana's speech. The material used to analyze Adriana's speech was a recipe for <https://assignbuster.com/linguistic-case-study-of-adriana/>

guacamole. Adriana uses this recipe daily at work and recited it from memory. The Standard English transcript was not corrected to be grammatical and is instead written as it was spoken by Adriana.

Phonetic Transcript Example

1). dʒu:ju:ztu: tu: tri: ,æbəθ'kɑ:dəθ. dʒu: esku:p ðə fru:t avt æn pʊt in bəθ. ju: æd wʌn tʃɒp ʌnjən, wʌn tʃɒp təmə:təθ, wʌn espu:n ,kɒriændə, wʌn espu:n hɑ:. ləpeɪ. njoʊ, tu: espu:n səʊə kri:m, tu: espu:n lemən ju:s, wʌn espu:n tʃɒp gɑ:lɪk, æn wʌn espu:n hɒt sɔ:s. dʒu: æd wʌn tʃɒp gri:n tʃɪli æn lɪtl sɔ:l.

2). tɛn təgeðə mɪks ɪt.

3). tʃɪl ɪn ku:lə. wɪt tʃɪp vɛr gʊd.

Standard English Transcript

- 1). You use two to three avocado. You scoop the fruit out and put in bowl. You add one chop onion, one chop tomato, one spoon coriander, one spoon jalapenos, two spoon sour cream, two spoon lemon juice, one spoon chop garlic, and one spoon hot sauce. You add one chop green chili and little salt.
- 2). Then together mix it.
- 3). Chill in cooler. With chip very good.

5. Phonological Variations

There were several errors in Adriana's pronunciation. The most noticeable error was Adriana's pronunciation of words beginning with a "y". There is no /j/ sound in the Spanish language, so Adriana substitutes the /j/ for /dʒ/. In example one, the word "you" sounds like "jew" for this reason. Adriana even uses the /j/ and /dʒ/ interchangeably and pronounces "juice" with a /j/ sound.

In Spanish, there are no words ending with more than one consonant (Penny, 2000). For this reason, Adriana drops the second consonant in the words “bowl”, “and”, “salt”, and “very” and pronounces the words as bəʊ, æn, sɔ:l, and vɛr. Adriana also adds the vowel “e” in front of words that begin with a “s”. According to the Language Files textbook (Department of Linguistics, 2016), the Spanish language does not have “s” words that are followed by a consonant. For this reason, Adriana adds an “e” in front of the words “scoop” and “spoon” in example one.

Another phonological variation was Adriana’s production of words. Adriana does not pronounce the *n* in words such as “three” and “then”. *n* is not a familiar sound in the Spanish language, so Adriana drops the *n* and only pronounces the *t*.

One other error was Adriana’s pronunciation of the word “avocado”. Adriana pronounces the *a* as a as it would be pronounced in Spanish. This pronunciation error was not as obvious as others. I had to have her repeat the word “avocado” several times. I made Adriana aware of the pronunciation error, and she stated that in Spanish, *a* is pronounced as a .

6. Morphological Error Variation and Grammar Errors

Adriana produced several grammatical errors in her speech. There were several incidents when she should have used an article such as “a” or “the” but did not. In example one, she says “add little salt” instead of “add a little salt”. Her speech was very choppy without words such as “a” and “the” placed in the appropriate position.

Adriana also did not write words in the correct tense. There were several words that should have been written in past tense that were written in

present tense instead. In example one, Adriana described how to prepare guacamole. She continued to say add “ one chop...” instead of “ one chopped ”. There were also instances of missing prepositions and pronouns such as “ of” and “ it”.

7. Variation in Syntax

During Adriana’s interview, there were two incidents where syntax was problematic. In example two and three, Adriana described how to mix and chill the guacamole. In example two, instead of saying “ then mix it together” she said “ then together mix it”. In example three, instead of saying “ it is very good with chips” she said “ very good with chips”.

According to the *Language Files* textbook (Department of Linguistics, 2016), Spanish has more flexibility when it comes to word order, which may be why Adriana sentence structure is not grammatical in English.

Suprasegmental Effects in Learners

Stress and intonation were problematic in Adriana’s speech as well. There were no noticeable patterns of stress on words as she spoke. As she detailed the recipe for guacamole, there were moments where it sounded as if she posed a question instead of a statement. Similar to English, in Spanish, changing the placement of stress changes the meaning of a sentence. So, Adriana’s inadequate use of word stress was unexplainable.

Adriana’s intonation was accompanied with by the inadequate use of word stress made interpreting the true meaning of each sentence. If I didn’t already know she was detailing a recipe, I would have been difficult to interpret the meaning of her words. Adriana’s continuous rise in tone at the beginning of each sentence, and the unpredictable stress placement

would've made one think she was asking for confirmation as she detailed each ingredient.

8. Idiomatic Speech and Vocabulary

In terms of idiomatic speech, Adriana was only familiar with one figurative language phrase. I provided several examples and she did not understand any of them except “ it’s raining cats and dogs”. Adriana stated that her Uncle used this phrase often when he wasn’t able to work because of bad weather. I also presented the phrases “ flat broke”, “ move up in the world”, and “ kill two birds with one stone”. However, Adriana comprehended each phrase as a literal interpretation.

As for vocabulary, Adriana’s vocabulary varied greatly depending on what we were discussing. If it was a topic she was interested in, she would employ more vocabulary than she did with a topic she wasn’t interested in. When we discussed college, she was able to use a wide range of vocabulary. However, when I asked her about the football team in Moultrie, she paused often and was short in her response.

10. Effects of Language Contact in Learner Speech and Socio-Cultural Feature

Adriana’s family is very religious and family oriented. Adriana comes from a low-context culture, which focuses on the group more than an individual. Adriana is not supported very much by her family in her endeavors to learn English. Adriana claims that her family doesn’t think she needs to learn English at her age; however, Adriana’s desire to further her education motivates her to continue her learning the English language.

11. Discussion of Findings

Adriana is highly motivated to learn the English language despite the sociocultural barriers she faces. Even though Adriana struggles with the linguistic difference between Spanish and English, her desire to attend college motivates her to continue learning the language. The English Adriana has learned from ESOL courses, cousins, co-workers, and peers has provided a platform for Adriana to continue her linguistic journey. Adriana appears to be confident speaking English and has her peers, cousins, and co-workers to correct as she continues to develop English language skills. Adriana continues to take ESOL courses to improve her speech.

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