

Target Language Output Related to Target Language Questioning Strategies

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Abstract

This study seeks to determine a relationship between the use of target language questioning strategies in the foreign language classroom and target language response. The null hypothesis states that there will be no relationship between target language questioning responses and target language response. The alternate hypothesis states that there will be a higher number of target language responses given to questions asked using the target language. Participants were enrolled in Spanish 2 during the 2017-2018 academic school year and randomly assigned to a treatment or control group. The treatment group received a target language questioning strategy, whereas the control group was simply questioned using the native language. Data collection occurred during individual teacher with student questioning activities, during which time their responses were tallied according to language used to respond. Information was then transferred into tables. The treatment group had a higher number of target language responses, with a mean of 27 total. The control group had a higher number of native language responses, with a mean of 27 total.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) recommends that language teachers work to create an environment within their classrooms that uses the target language 90% of the time in order for students to best develop fluency in another language (2017). The recommendation encompasses all facets of the classroom environment including teacher talk, reading activities, listening activities, writing activities, and most importantly, speaking among students. As this is the recommendation of the organization that guides how foreign language teachers conduct their classes, this is the goal that many foreign language teachers aspire to reach. As teachers work to reach this goal and guide students towards proficiency in another language, many challenges arise. Not only are there challenges for teachers to remain speaking in the target language to provide students with comprehensible input, but significant difficulty arises when teachers request students to speak in the target language during daily practice activities and assessments, producing comprehensible output. Input refers to the language spoken by the teacher in the classroom, what students are hearing during the class period and output refers to the language spoken by students.

ACTFL (2017) makes its recommendation based on many studies conducted that prove that language acquisition is most likely to occur if students receive continuous exposure to the language. Thompson and Harrison (2014) summarize research done about language that has found foreign language acquisition among students is positively correlated with the amount of target language used by students. In their research, Littlewood and Yu (2011) further expand upon why target language use from teachers is important in the foreign language classroom by making the point that while students are in a language class they are receiving the only source of

target in which they will be engaged throughout their day. The use of the native language, or code-switching during lessons in which the teacher changes from the target language back to the native language frequently, will have long-lasting detrimental effects on the language acquisition of students (Thompson & Harrison, 2014).

Overview

It is clear to foreign language teachers based on provided research and recommendations from an internationally accredited organization, such as ACTFL, that it is essential to provide students with as much target language input as possible to create an immersive environment within the classroom. The training and professional development provided for language teachers greatly focuses on strategies for using the target language in teaching students. Many times the importance of pushing for target language output from the students is entirely left out of professional development and training sessions. Though target language input and output are related, teachers need strategies and tools to use to elicit target language output from their students. Teachers should strive to push for student target language output because it is essential in language acquisition. As students are receiving target language input through listening and reading activities, they need to also be expected to use the linguistic structures they are hearing creatively on their own (Thompson & Harrison, 2014). It is important to have a balance between target language input and target language output not only for teachers to check for student progress toward language acquisition, but also essential for students to build confidence in speaking comprehensibly among each other (Weber-Fève, 2009).

Foreign language teachers struggle with eliciting target language responses from high school level language students. There are a variety of reasons students at this level are reluctant to use the target language and it is difficult to find the strategy that will best encourage and guide

students to using the foreign language successfully. As Littlewood and Yu (2011) describe, foreign language students will almost always revert back to their native language when they can, for example during group work or when talking to the teacher. As foreign language teachers strive to create environments that provide their students with as much target language input as possible, they should also work to encourage a high level of target language output. The research summarized by Thompson and Harrison (2014) clearly states that teachers have a large impact on the language being used by students and that through encouragement of target language use as well as classroom strategies to push for output, students will use the target language.

The lack of student target language output is widespread among world language teachers from various locations, as proven not only through discussions with teachers from other areas, but also in analyzing articles and research conducted in this area. Difficulty in eliciting target language response is directly related to both teachers and students reverting back to the native language (Thompson & Harrison, 2014). Littlewood & Yu (2011) summarize the causes of reverting back to the native language in their research: talking with students about problems, explaining difficult grammar points, discipline problems, chatting about general school matters, giving the meaning of an unknown word, explaining homework, giving directions and executing a practice activity. Littlewood & Yu further explain strategies for teachers to maximize target language use because the use of language from the teacher directly influences the language of the student. Teachers can work to maximize target language use by the teacher building their own determination and confidence in the foreign language through professional development, planning for communication strategies among students, and starting simple and working their way towards more difficult strategies. Therefore, it can be understood that though there is so much focus on the importance of using the target language and how it relates to the output

language of students, there is not a lot of professional development or strategies provided for teachers to elicit the target language output.

It is important for the foreign language teacher to work to guide students to develop the skills and confidence necessary to participate. Teachers have implemented a variety of strategies to work to encourage students to use the target language ranging from providing material incentives, to playing games, to assigning grades. Many foreign language teachers become overwhelmed with the workload associated with eliciting target language output from their students. Instead of focusing attention on these kinds of strategies that do not always work, there are small actions that can be taken by all language teachers to increase target language output, and questioning is among the leader of these small actions. Many foreign language teachers experience that students default to their native language, English, as much as they can get away with during class time and when it comes time for a speaking assessment, they will be unsuccessful due to the lack of practice. Using proper questioning strategies will provide students with the support they need to produce effective foreign language communication.

In support of the literature focused on language acquisition, it has been the feedback of all language teachers at a public high school in Baltimore County (Spanish, French, and Chinese) during department meetings that it is difficult to elicit a target language response from students of all levels of language study. This has been a common theme of discussion for the entirety of this academic school year. The world language department has worked constantly in an effort to use the target language both from teachers and elicit responses from students. Many strategies have been attempted, but often teachers discuss the complexity and difficulty in tracking student responses.

Eliciting target language output from high school foreign language students has always been a topic of focus and interest in the researcher's teaching career. It is a problem faced by many foreign language teachers in the classroom. It is common for foreign language teachers to experience that with each new strategy implemented in the classroom, there will be a positive impact for just a short period of time before it becomes ineffective and students lose interest. For the researcher, it became an area of specific focus during the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. Students returned to school from the summer break without having practiced their speaking Spanish skills. The students were extremely reluctant to respond to questions using the target language across all levels of foreign language within the foreign language department at a public high school in Baltimore County. As the department began to brainstorm solutions to the problem, the suggestions being made were very complex and in some cases far-reaching. The strategies were difficult to implement and required a lot of additional work for teachers. It seemed that a simplified approach would be more beneficial for the students, thus the idea of testing questioning strategies in order to increase target language output came about.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that students the high school level Spanish classroom fail to use the target language when responding to questions and default to their native language, English. It is the goal of this study to increase the use of the target language (in this case, Spanish) through questioning strategies in the target language. The study seeks to determine if there is a correlation between target language input and target language output through the questioning.

Hypothesis

Ho1 (Null): There will not be a difference in the number of responses in the target language to questions posed in the target language than in the native language.

Ho2 (Alt): There will be a higher number of responses in the target language to questions posed in the target language than in the native language.

Operational Definitions

Native Language- First language learned

Foreign Language- Language being learned

Language Acquisition- Learning of a foreign language and developing fluency

Target Language- Spanish

Input- Language received by students in the classroom through listening and reading activities

Output- Language produced by students through speaking activities

Questioning- Strategy used by the teacher to pose questions to students

Independent Variable- Target language questioning strategy used

Dependent Variable- Student response to questions posed using the questioning strategy

Extraneous Variables- Workload from other classes, extracurricular activity participation, home life, other students

Past Imperfect Tense- A form of the past tense used in the Spanish language to describe how things used to be in the past

Gustar-The verb in Spanish used for “to like”

Heritage Spanish Speaker- A person who was raised speaking Spanish in the home.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the high school Spanish language learning classroom, it is difficult to elicit target language use from native English-speaking teenagers. It is hypothesized that by increasing the target language input through use of target language questioning strategies, students will increase their target language output. In order to understand the relationship between target language questioning input and target language student output, it is important to analyze studies based on how individuals learn language, comprehensible target language input strategies, pushed output target language strategies, and questioning strategies for use in the target language.

Language Learning

Before discussing strategies for increasing target language output in the classroom, it is important to understand how the brain acquires a second language, otherwise described as L2. As summarized by Li and Grant (2016), in recent years, there has been a shift in the field of neuroscience as related to brain functioning. Brain functioning is no longer seen as modular, meaning individual portions of the brain are responsible for only certain aspects of a person, but instead is now viewed as “interconnected brain networks”. This has implications in the area of second language study. The brain networks idea suggests that various portions of the brain need to work together to successfully learn a new language. Studies have shown that those successful in language learning have brain activity in the frontal, temporal, and parietal regions of the brain when learning or using the second language. In previous years, language learning was isolated to only one portion of the brain. These areas are responsible for attention, memory, and cognitive control. This discovery provides some insight into why some individuals are successful in the acquisition of a second language and others are not, perhaps those who are have not been

successful have not been provided the tools to use this brain network appropriately. This discovery has implications in the language learning classroom, as it suggests that in order for an individual to learn a new language, they must activate this brain network by gaining and retaining the attention of the student (engagement), assisting in memory formation through practice and repetition activities, and allowing time to decipher and authentically use the language (cognitive control). Li & Grant discuss this as being a dynamic perspective to language learning which can be impacted by a variety of variables such as: timing of the learning (age), extent of learning experience, and the method of teaching (classroom, immersion, internet). It can be hypothesized that for individuals who lack the connectivity of these brain networks, learning language will be more difficult.

An understanding of brain networks opens the door for teachers of foreign language to see how students negotiate meaning and build vocabulary in a target language. In order to learn language, students must use their interconnected brain networks to negotiate meaning of the L2 to build their new vocabulary. This vocabulary will then develop into more complex linguistic structures. Similar to the interconnected brain network process described, Fuente (2002) describes negotiation of meaning as a process that opens the door for full language acquisition because it “connects input, internal learner capabilities (particularly selective attention), and output in productive ways” (p. 82). Negotiation is the process in which a language learner does not understand a given message, whether it be spoken or written, and the individual needs to use available resources to arrive at a meaning. This process activates the brain networks previously discussed. During this process, the language learner will need to use tools available to them to gain understanding of a message that may be above their present level of competence. Ultimately

this process will allow the learner to incorporate concepts they have negotiated meaning of into their L2 lexicon

These essential language learning processes occur through the use of target language input and output strategies. Neither brain network connections nor negotiation of meaning would be possible without it.

Target Language Output

Target language output is defined as what is produced by students in the language being learned in the classroom. For many foreign language teachers, this is the area where most difficulty is faced. It is extremely difficult to encourage native speakers of English to produce foreign language. As discussed by Levine (2003), this is due to a variety of reasons, but ultimately boils down to the fact that using the target language in front of peers and the instructor is anxiety inducing due to uncertainty and pressure placed on the student.

Many times, educators focus on providing students with as much target language input as possible and pushing students to produce language on their own gets pushed to the side. As Garbati & Mady (2015) summarize, many times language learning classrooms become lecture-based, when they really should provide various rigorous opportunities to speak in the target language throughout the session of class. Providing these opportunities to use the language they are hearing and focusing their learning on allows the students to reflect on the progress they are making in learning the language. Ultimately, the whole purpose for the student being enrolled in the language class is to learn to speak the language and have effective communication using the language, not just read and understand it. The only way to make progress in this area is to push for student output. Comprehensible input alone does not allow individuals to develop fluency in a second language, output is key, and the only way to increase output is to promote speaking

(Rondon-Pari, 2014). Rondon-Pari further summarizes a benefit of pushing target language that it shows the language learner any gaps that may be existent in their language learning process. This is because as students speak, they find that they may want to say things they have not yet acquired the learning to be able to do, in which case, they will be encouraged to work to learn these concepts.

There are many strategies that have been studied and proven to be effective in the foreign language classroom in eliciting student output in the target language. Garbati & Mady (2015) discuss providing authentic communicative encounters, such as tasks in which students need to speak in the target language together in order to gain some sort of information as one successful strategy that can be easily employed in any language classroom at any level. Along the same lines, she suggests role-playing of real-life scenarios to promote target-language output. Weber-Fève (2009) summarizes the input-output approach to increase student target language output. In her work, she outlines a sample lesson with the end goal of target language output. After a period of various modes of target language input, students receive a series of follow-up questions, pushing them to use the target language at an analysis level, which ultimately leads students to think critically and ultimately make discoveries on their own. This strategy in combination with vocabulary discussion will help build the comfort level of students and minimize the anxiety previously discussed that may be present by building confidence. Further developing the comfort level in the target language, the instructor and push students to a partner speaking activity relating to the theme of the lesson. The goal in this case would be to create more open-ended questions for students to ask each-other, therefore leading to a higher target language output.

Target Language Input

Target language input is described as the foreign language heard by the language learner, generally spoken or written by the instructor. Rondon-Pari (2014) summarizes theories from language linguists relating to target language use in the classroom in her study about target language input, output, and negotiation of meaning. As Rondon-Pari summarizes, it is a general assumption among the foreign language learning that in order for students to acquire fluency in the target language, they must receive as much input in the L2 as possible. ACTFL(2017) uses this idea in their recommendation that teachers speak in the target language at least 90% of class time in order to provide the students with as much of an immersive experience as possible. Target language input benefits students in that they hear pronunciation of the foreign language, builds familiarity with language structures unique to the foreign language, and lead to the important procedure of negotiation of meaning that is essentially in the development of fluency in a second language.

For many teachers it is difficult to develop effective strategies for using the target language in the classroom, especially in the beginning stages of their career. Bateman (2008) summarizes a study of student teachers through pre and post questionnaires, journal entries, and observations related to target language usage and offers suggestions for strategies on effective target language use in the classroom. New teachers of foreign language feel comfortable giving general directions and moving through daily routines with the target language but will experience difficulty in the area of discipline, timing, and rapport. Based on the conducted study and collection of questionnaires, Bateman found such strategies as anticipation of student resistance, discussion of rationale for target language use with students, using the target language for routines and welcoming the class, and having clear procedures for times it is appropriate to use the target language and when it is not.

ACTFL (2017) compares language learning to a skill such as riding a bike, in that it is best learned by doing. It is the role of the educator to facilitate learners in “doing” this skill by providing as much authentic target language exposure through speaking, reading, and writing within the classroom as possible. ACTFL discusses the benefits of target language use by referencing such theorists as Krashen and Vygotsky. ACTFL references Krashen by summarizing his idea that learners acquire language when the teacher uses material that is interesting, a little bit above their comprehension level, and not grammatically sequenced, all while in the target language. Rondon-Pari (2014) also references Krashen’s work by noting that all though it is the general assumption that maximum target language should be used in the classroom to encourage student output in the target language, it is not the case that all types of input benefit the language learning process and that the target language input should always be both meaningful and comprehensible for the students. For example, meaningful input during class time could be, as ACTFL summarizes the work of Vygotsky, situations in which students learn and negotiate meaning with others through group work (ACTFL, 2017).

Within the category of target language input, there are various strategies which educators can use to increase the input in the classroom. Erlam (2003) summarizes several in her study of the effectiveness of structured-input in pushed-output. One strategy is input flooding, in which the educator exposes students to as much of the target language as possible that may or may not include and focus on specific vocabulary or linguistic structures. Enhanced-input also aims to expose students to as much L2 as possible, but in a more organized fashion than the input flooding method. Enhanced-input focuses on exposing students to a specific linguistic structure while encouraging and expecting students to pick up on the structure independently. Both of these strategies are implicit, in that the educator does not explicitly state the vocabulary or

structure students are expected to learn, instead students are expected to pick up on those things on their own. Erlam then describes two kinds of explicit target language instruction, input-processing instruction and structured-input instruction. Input-processing focuses on altering natural-processing of language and focuses outright on grammatical structures and vocabulary expected of students. Structured-input instruction is a situation in which students are expected to work with the language while focusing on a specific target structure through various activities, such as listening, reading, and writing, they are not expected to produce the structure on their own, but instead focus on taking it all in.

With regards to target language use in the classroom, there have been studies into the effects of target language use on the sentiments of students in the classroom. For some students, it is anxiety-inducing for a variety of reasons, especially during the time in which the educator is establishing their classroom environment. Levine (2003) conducted a questionnaire study related to student and instructor beliefs regarding target language use, first language use, and anxiety. He summarizes that there are three overall causes of anxiety in students related to the target language, but that overall students generally seem content with the average use of target language versus native language. The situations in which students feel anxiety related to target language input are: in environments in which the educator has established the feeling that resorting to the native language (L1) is considered a “short-coming or lapse in appropriate behavior”, when students are required to use the target language in front of others because it could be embarrassing for the students, and when the target language is too many steps above their comprehension level because it becomes frustrating.

Taking into consideration the findings in these various resources, it is understood that use of the target language is beneficial, but it is important to have a balance and focus. As Rondon-

Pari (2014) summarizes in her study, it is important in considering target language input strategies that educators find ways to allow and encourage communication in the target language so as to engage students in using the language instead of solely listening to it. This points to the fact that although target language use is important in the language learning classroom, it is further important to incorporate opportunities for student foreign language output. One method for simultaneously increasing foreign language input while offering opportunities for student output is the implementation of questioning strategies in the classroom.

Questioning

Employing questioning strategies in the classroom has been one of the most successful ways in eliciting target language output from students. Studies have shown that after employing questioning strategies to increase target language output, oral test scores showed that students were able to communicate with significantly more extensive vocabularies and with more detail than they previously could (Rondon-Pari, 2014). As students gain more success in answering questions using the target language, they not only gain the confidence needed to continue using the target language, but also begin to work towards using learned words and structures more spontaneously, without being prompted by questions.⁴

In a study conducted in a foreign language classroom summarized by Rido (2017), various questioning components and strategies were measured for success. Two components of successful questioning are discussed: question-planning and question-controlling. In the question-planning component, the types of questions used by the teacher are discussed. The main purpose of these questions are to elicit responses from students and identify any problems in learning. These types of questions are typically open-referential, close-display, rhetorical, and follow-up. The question-controlling component deals with the ways in which questions are asked

and answered, whether it be to distribute turn-taking, encourage participation, para-phrasing, questions for specific students, or for the whole class. The study conducted by Rido found that teachers finding success with questioning strategies were creating a large number of questions in a variety of styles and levels of difficulty during their planning stages. During the question-controlling section, successful teachers also carefully varied their selections for answering questions. Sometimes a specific student was selected, others it was for the whole group. Ultimately this study found that it is a key questioning strategy to plan out questions ahead of time of various difficulty levels to match the pedagogical goal as well as to have a plan of how to vary student response. The study also summarized student feedback about the questioning strategies. The students expressed that they felt their speaking and critical thinking skills in the L2 improved as a direct result of the questioning. This feeling expressed by students is the exact goal of using the target language as input and pushing for the target language as output through questioning strategies.

As Wang (2012) briefly summarizes in his study on questioning strategies, in order to reach the goal of target language output in the foreign language classroom, raising questions in class will engage the students in the lesson and cause them to reflect about the target language. To facilitate this, teachers should use strategies relating to varying types of questions, wait time for response, and encouragement of feedback.

Summary

In order to access the abilities of students to develop fluency in a foreign language, it is important for teachers to guide students to making connections to various modes of communication. As described by Li & Grant (2016) this promotes retention of material due to the use of various brain processing strategies. This occurs in the language classroom through

target language input and output strategies guiding students to negotiate meaning. Studies have shown that regardless of teacher and student sentiment towards the use of target language input in the classroom, it is beneficial in pushing students to produce more target language output (Levine, 2003; Rondon-Pari, 2014). Questioning is an effective strategy, as it not only results in more target language output, but also increases the amount of target language input in the classroom. Through the strategies of question-planning and question-controlling, foreign language learning is successfully fostered because the brain is working to negotiate meaning in a variety of ways (Rido, 2017; Li & Grant, 2016).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

The design of this research is quasi-experimental. The participants in the study were assigned to a treatment group or a control group based on their Spanish class enrollment. The strategy used depended on which group was being questioned. Participants were questioned at three separate times during the study for data collection during one on one speaking activities with the teacher. The independent variable in the study is the question posed to the students, either through the use of the foreign native language. For those students in the treatment group, they were questioned using a foreign language questioning strategy. For those students in the control group, they were questioned without the use of a foreign language questioning strategy.

The questioning strategy used in the treatment group for this study was the exclusive use of target language questioning in which the teacher posed a question in Spanish and students were expected to answer in complete sentences in the same language. The questioning strategy used in the control group for this study was to use the native language, in this case English, in posing questions to students. Both groups received the same level of foreign language instruction prior to each questioning activity.

The dependent variable in this study was the response given by participants to the questions. Student responses were recorded as either in the target or native language. The dependent variable results will be compared between the control group and the treatment group in order to identify if there are differences between the language used to question students and the language students will use to respond.

The study was completed along with regular classroom activities within an existing unit.

It did not cause a disruption of instruction for students and the questions relating to the study fit seamlessly into daily activities. Data was collected at three various points using the same format during the course of a unit existing in the Spanish 2 curriculum. The unit selected to use for data collection was unit 4, which focuses on using the imperfect past tense to discuss childhood experiences.

Participants

The participants of this study were selected using purposive convenience sampling. Participants were students enrolled in Spanish level 2 for the 2017-2018 academic year. The sample was purposive in that the participants needed to be foreign language students, more specifically in a Spanish language classroom. The sample was convenience because students were assigned to a Spanish 2 class during the academic year, allowing the research to be conducted as a part of daily learning activities. Spanish level 2 was selected because it is during this level of study that students are increasingly required to use the target language while speaking in the foreign language classroom and often times they will resist. In order to select the treatment group and the control group, the class periods in which Spanish 2 were taught were written down and placed in a basket for random selection. The researcher identified the first class period to be pulled from the basket would be the control group and the second would be the treatment group. Next, a sample size of 20 students was randomly selected for data collection. Student names were written down, placed in a basket and the first 20 students from each class period selected became participants in the study. Both groups were comprised of mixed gender participants, students ranging in age from 14 to 16, and of various backgrounds. In the control group, eight participants were African American, five were Caucasian, three were English Language Learners from Pakistan, three were Asian, and one was Hispanic. In the treatment

group, 14 participants were of African American decent, four were Caucasian, and two were English Language Learners from Pakistan.

Instrument

During the study, a tally chart was used as the measurement instrument. As questions were posed to each group, either in the target language for the treatment group or in English for the control group, responses were tallied in a column corresponding to Spanish response or English Response. All participants were asked two questions and each response was tallied. Tally charts used in the study are illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Class surveyed: _____

Date surveyed: _____

Activity: _____

	English Response	Spanish Response
English Question		

Figure 1: Control Group Tally Chart

Class surveyed: _____

Date surveyed: _____

Activity: _____

	English Response	Spanish Response
Spanish Question		

Figure 2: Treatment Group Tally Chart

Each tally chart was created to correspond to the appropriate group being questioned. It was important for the tally charts to be simple and straightforward so that the researcher could easily track responses from participants. It was also necessary for the tally chart to accurately reflect whether the question was being asked in English or in Spanish so that data could be properly identified as the treatment group or the control group.

Information regarding the reliability and validity of this data collection method are not available because tally charts are intended to be a simple way to capture the participant responses based on the researcher's knowledge of the Spanish language. The researcher is a heritage Spanish speaker and also holds a Bachelor's degree in the Spanish language, therefore has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the target language.

Procedure

The first step in executing research was to select the unit of study during which data would be collected. Unit 4 in the Spanish 2 curriculum was selected because the topic of study lends itself well to various speaking activities. During this unit of study, students learn how to

use the imperfect past tense along with vocabulary related to childhood activities to discuss their memories. Once the topic of study was selected, the researcher was able to identify three times during which participants would be questioned for data collection. It was decided that data collection would occur after students had learned the verb “gustar”, to like, in Spanish, after learning the vocabulary, and last after learning the full formation of the imperfect. The timeline for data collection was evenly spaced from the beginning, middle, and to the end of the unit. It was essential for all participants to learn the material before conducting the questioning activities for data collection.

Once the timing of data collection was determined, the researcher developed the questions to be asked to each student during each time. The questions asked are listed in Table 1.

Table 1:

Questions Used for Data Collection

<u>Group</u>	<u>Data Collection 1</u>	<u>Data Collection 2</u>	<u>Data Collection 3</u>
<i>Treatment Group</i>	1. De niño, ¿Te gustaban las manzanas? 2. De niño, ¿Te gustaban las papas fritas?	1. De niño, ¿Te gustaba jugar con bloques? 2. De niño, ¿Te gustaban los carritos?	1. De niño, ¿Cómo eras tú? 2. De niño, ¿Qué actividades te gustaban?
<i>Control Group</i>	1. When you were little, did you like apples? 2. When you were little, did you like French fries?	1. When you were little, did you like to play with blocks? 2. When you were little, did you like toy cars?	1. When you were little, what were you like? 2. When you were little, what activities did you like?

Once the timeline was established and questions formulated, a random selection method was used to identify the class sections that would serve as the control and treatment group. Once the classes were identified, a random sample size of 20 participants was chosen. Therefore, for each class, data would be collected from 20 students, who would each answer two questions, providing the researcher with answers to 40 questions.

Prior to conducting each questioning activity, students were provided with time to review their notes from lessons that corresponded to the questions that would be asked. Participants were instructed to meet the teacher in the hallway when their name was called and respond to the questions based on their knowledge of the content, without the use their notes. Students were instructed to answer questions in complete sentences when asked. The activity took place in the hallway, right outside of the classroom, in order to minimize distractions from others during the speaking.

The researcher then posed the questions to each participant. No other dialogue was used during the questioning activity, the researcher only spoke when asking the question. Guidance or assistance was not provided while students were responding to the questions. For the treatment group, foreign language questioning strategies were implemented and students were asked questions in the target language and for the control group, foreign language questioning strategies were not implemented and students were asked questions in their native language, English.

As students provided answers, the researcher used the tally charts from Figure 1 and Figure 2 to track the participant's answers to analyze the data. If a participant responded using purely the target language, a tally was placed in the "Spanish Response" column. If a participant responded using either purely English, or a mix of Spanish and English, a tally was placed in the "English Response" column, as the response did not reach the goal of the activity, to answer questions using the target language.

The decisions made in planning the data collection were essential in ensuring validity. The researcher made sure all participants received the same lessons, activity planning

documents, time to prepare for the speaking, conditions in which to complete the activity, and questions asked.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The focus of the study is on the responses given to questioning strategies in the foreign language, Spanish, versus questioning strategies in the native language, English. The study seeks to determine if a higher number of target language responses are given to questions in the target language and if a lower number of target language responses are given to questions in the native language.

The treatment group received a questioning strategy in which the target language was used by the researcher while posing questions to students. Each of the 20 participants in the treatment group were asked two questions in the target language and the responses were recorded using the corresponding tally sheet. The control group followed a similar process during the data collection time frame, differing only in that the questions asked were in the native language. Data was collected from each group at three separate times during one unit of study in the Spanish 2 curriculum. The tables represent the findings from each of the three data collection sessions.

During the first data collection session for the treatment group, participants were posed questions in Spanish using previously learned vocabulary relating to food. Participants were expected to answer the questions in the target language using old vocabulary and the proper grammar structure of the verb “gustar”, to like. Figure 3 illustrates the completed tally chart

from the first data collection. The table that follows summarizes the findings.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (3A)
 Date surveyed: 4/13/18
 Activity: Vocab speaking activity

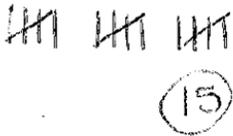
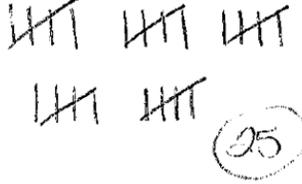
	English Response	Spanish Response
Spanish Question		

Figure 3 Treatment Group Data Collection #1 Tally Chart

Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the target language using previously learned food vocabulary. Out of the 40 questions posed to participants in the target language, 15 responses were in the native language, English (37.5%). The remaining 25 responses (62.5%) were in the target language, Spanish, and appropriately used previously learned food vocabulary and the “gustar” verb structure correctly.

Table 2

Treatment Group Data Collection #1

Spanish Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
De niño, ¿Te gustaban las manzanas?		
De niño, ¿Te gustaban las papas fritas?	15	25
<i>Total percent of responses</i>	37.5%	62.5%

During the second data collection session for the treatment group, participants were posed questions in the target language using new Spanish vocabulary. The new vocabulary focused on childhood activities and pastimes, such as games and toys. As participants answered questions, they were expected to use the new vocabulary along with the “gustar” verb structure to answer in the target language. Figure 4 illustrates the completed tally chart from the second data collection.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (3A)
 Date surveyed: 4/21/18
 Activity: Show & Tell Speaking Activity

	English Response	Spanish Response
Spanish Question	IIII IIII III (13)	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII II (27)

Figure 4 Treatment Group Data Collection #2 Tally Chart

Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the target language using recently learned vocabulary under the topic of childhood activities and pastimes. The questions also used the “gustar” verb structure. Out of the total 40 questions posed to participants in the target language, 13 responses were in the native language, English (32.5%). The remaining 27 responses (67.5%) were in the target language, Spanish, and used both newly learned vocabulary and “gustar” verb structure appropriately.

Table 3

Treatment Group Data Collection #2

Spanish Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
De niño, ¿Te gustaba jugar con bloques?		
De niño, ¿Te gustaban los carritos?	13	27
<i>Total percent of responses</i>	<i>32.5%</i>	<i>67.5%</i>

During the third data collection session for the treatment group, participants were posed questions in target language using newly learned childhood pastimes and activities Spanish vocabulary and grammar, the imperfect past tense. Participants were expected to synthesize all new learning from the unit of study to answer questions fully in the target language. Figure 5 illustrates the completed tally chart from the third data collection.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (3A)
 Date surveyed: 4/27/18
 Activity: end of unit 4

	English Response	Spanish Response
Spanish Question	IIII IIII I (11)	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII (29)

Figure 5 Treatment Group Data Collection #3 Tally Chart

Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the target language using recently learned childhood activities and pastimes vocabulary in combination with the imperfect past tense. Out of the total 40 questions posed to participants in the target language, 11 responses were in the native language, English (27.5%). The remaining 29 responses (72.5%) were in the target language, Spanish, and successfully used both newly learned vocabulary and the imperfect past tense.

Table 4

Treatment Group Data Collection #3

Spanish Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
De niño, ¿Cómo eras tú?		
De niño, ¿Qué actividades te gustaban?	11	29
Total percent of responses	27.5%	72.5%

During data collection sessions for the control group, participants were questioned in the native language, English. The questions asked by the researcher were the same as those that were asked to the treatment group, but instead used English. Although the questions were asked in English, participants were expected to respond in the target language, Spanish. During the first data collection session for the control group, participants were asked questions focused on previously learned food vocabulary and were also expected to use the “gustar” verb structure. Figure 6 illustrates the tally chart used to record student responses during the first data collection session.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (4B)
 Date surveyed: 4/18/18
 Activity: Vocab speaking activity

	English Response	Spanish Response
English Question	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII (33)	IIII II (7)

Figure 6 Control Group Data Collection #1 Tally Chart

Table 5 illustrates the responses provided by participants. Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the native language focusing on previously learned food vocabulary. Out of the total 40 questions posed to participants in the native language, 33 responses were in the native language, English (82.5%). The remaining 7 responses (17.5%) were in the target language, Spanish, and used previously learned food vocabulary and “gustar” verb structure appropriately.

Table 5

Control Group Data Collection #1

English Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
When you were Little, did you like apples?		
When you were little, did you like French Fries?	33	7
Total percent of responses	82.5%	17.5%

The second data collection session for the control group asked participants questions about activities they liked or disliked during their childhood. Participants were expected to use the new vocabulary recently learned related to this topic along with the “gustar” verb structure in a complete sentence using the target language to respond. Figure 7 illustrates the tally chart used to record student responses during the second data collection session.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (48)
 Date surveyed: 4/20/18
 Activity: Show & tell Speaking Activity

	English Response	Spanish Response
English Question	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII (23)	IIII IIII IIII II (17)

Figure 7 Control Group Data Collection #2 Tally Chart

Table 6 illustrates the responses provided by participants. Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the native language and expected participants to respond using recently learned vocabulary with the “gustar” verb structures. Out of the total 40 questions posed to participants in the native language, 23 responses were in the native language, English (57.5%). The remaining 17 responses (42.5%) were in the target language, Spanish, and used new vocabulary and the “gustar” verb structure properly.

Table 6

Control Group Data Collection #2

English Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
When you were little, did you like to play with blocks?	23	17
When you were little, did you like toy cars?		
<i>Total percent of responses</i>	<i>57.5%</i>	<i>42.5%</i>

The third data collection session for the control group asked participants general questions about childhood in the native language. Participants were expected to synthesize new vocabulary learned with the new imperfect tense grammar structure learned. Figure 8 illustrates the tally chart used to record student responses during the third data collection session.

Class surveyed: Spanish 2 (4B)
 Date surveyed: 4/26/18
 Activity: end of unit 4

	English Response	Spanish Response
English Question	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII I (26)	IIII IIII IIII (14)

Figure 8 Control Group Data Collection #3 Tally Chart

Table 7 illustrates the responses provided by participants of the control group during the third data collection session. Each of the 20 participants were asked two questions in the native language focusing on newly learned childhood activities and pastimes vocabulary as well as the imperfect grammar structure. Out of the total 40 questions posed to participants in the native language, 26 responses were in the native language, English (65%). The remaining 14 responses (35%) were in the target language, Spanish, and used new vocabulary along with the imperfect tense correctly.

Table 7

Control group Data Collection #3

English Questions Asked	English Response	Spanish Response
When you were little, what were you like?		
When you were little, what activities did you like?	26	14
<i>Total percent of responses</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>35%</i>

Table 8 summarizes the means of the data collected from the treatment group as well as the control group from all three data collection sessions. For the treatment group, in which participants were questioned in the target language, an average of 13 participants responded in the native language, English, and 27 participants responded in the target language, Spanish. In the control group, in which participants were questioned using the native language, an average of 27 participants responded in the native language, English, and 13 participants responded in the target language, Spanish.

Table 8

Means from Data Collection

Group	English Response	Spanish response
<i>Treatment Group</i>	13	27
<i>Control Group</i>	27	13

This chapter focused on providing a summary of the data collected from both the treatment group and control group. A brief description of the questions asked and task expected to be completed by participants was provided for each data collection session followed by the results from that same session. The results were organized by the number of English responses (native language) and Spanish responses (target language). After the data for each collection session was summarized, the overall mean of English responses and Spanish responses from each group was provided. The next chapter will discuss the implications of this data for the foreign language classroom.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected and summarized in chapter 4, the researcher believed there was enough evidence to support the alternate hypothesis. The alternate hypothesis stated “There will be a higher number of responses in the target language to questions posed in the target language than in the native language”. Data collection was conducted with the treatment group using a target language questioning strategy, in which questions were posed using the target language, Spanish. This group yielded the highest number of target language responses. Alternatively, the control group did not receive a target language questioning strategy and received questions in the native language, English, which resulted in a lower number of target language responses. Since the rate of target language response was higher for the treatment group, the data supports the alternate hypothesis.

Implications of Results

In the foreign language classroom, teachers strive to elicit target language response from students to build full fluency in the language. Fluency is determined by the ability to comprehend written and spoken foreign language input as well as produce written and spoken foreign language output. Not only is the constant use of Spanish from the teacher important in language development of language learners, but so is the use of Spanish from the students. According to ACTFL (2017), using the target language fully in the classroom is the key in developing the ability to communicate in another language. The struggle to push students to produce the target language in the classroom calls for the need of implementing various strategies to encourage participation in the language. In the search to find the most effective strategy, questioning techniques have been a common element to incorporate into the foreign language classroom.

The data collected in this study proves the success that target language questioning strategies have in pushing students to produce the target language. It also suggests target language questioning strategies be integrated frequently into the foreign language classroom. It is clear when analyzing the data that students will have a tendency to use the language in which the teacher poses the question to answer. The treatment group received target language questioning strategies in which questions were asked in Spanish, whereas the control group did not receive this strategy and were asked questions in the native language, English. For the treatment group, the participant response was highest in Spanish, with a mean of 27 Spanish responses out of 40 total responses. For the control group, the participant response was highest in English, with a mean of 27 English responses out of 40 total responses.

Based on these results, foreign language teachers should continue to follow the recommendation from ACTFL (2017) to strive for 90% target language use during the time students are in the classroom. Following this recommendation will guide students to develop not only the ability, but also the confidence to produce output in a foreign language, which is also a key element in developing fluency (Garbati & Mady, 2015). If students are simply learning about the foreign language externally, without the use of input, they will be less likely to produce output when it is requested of them because they lack the practice and confidence.

Further, the results of the study provide foreign language teachers with a trustworthy method to increase target language output that is both simple and versatile to plan and incorporate into daily lessons. While teachers are planning, they can very easily formulate questions in the target language relating to the topic of study during that particular lesson. The questions can be closed or open ended, as appropriate for level of language study. They can also occur multiple times during a class period at varying points in the lesson, such as during the daily

drill, pre-learning activities, post learning activities, and even incorporated into notes. Target language questioning can occur during whole group activities, partner activities, or a teacher/student activity. An added benefit is that teachers can easily differentiate questions for each student depending on their learning needs. Advanced learners can receive more complex open-ended questions, whereas low-level learners can receive a question on the same topic, but in a simpler, close-ended format.

As described, the study has positive implications for foreign language teachers that can be immediately implemented in the classroom for the benefit of student learning. When teachers incorporate target language questioning strategies in any of the ways described, the data suggests that they will see an increase in student target language output. If the strategy is implemented frequently, students will begin to gain confidence in using the target language.

Theoretical Consequences

This study resulted in a higher number of target language responses to questions posed in the target language, thus supporting the theoretical ideals presented by ACTFL (2017). ACTFL stresses the importance of students receiving target language input as a way of developing fluency in a foreign language. The data from this study can be used as evidence in future theoretical writing to support the claim that target language input is an important component to increasing target language output as well as developing overall foreign language competency.

The data from this study also serve as evidence of a specific age group and level of foreign language learning. Since the participants of the study were all secondary-age, low level foreign language students, the data provides a more detailed look at the influence the input language has on output language for students of this age. The study could suggest that students in this group are more likely to mimic the language used by the teacher, and therefore provide more

evidence for the importance of using the target language. This idea is important at all levels of language learning, and the study suggests it may be more important in the introductory and low levels as students have the tendency to mimic the language used by the teacher.

Threats to Validity

When working with students in a public school setting, there are several extraneous variables that could impact the outcome of the study and become threats to validity, both internal and external. Internal threats to validity include student attendance, scheduling, and class tracking.

Student attendance proved to be a constraint because it was important for all students to receive instruction on the material used in questioning prior to completing the questioning activity for data collection. If students were absent on days of instruction, it was necessary for them to review missed notes in order to be able to use the material for the activity. Further, they needed to be present in school for participation in the questioning activity. If a student participant was absent on a day of data collection, it was necessary for the researcher to create a time to complete the questioning activity.

Scheduling is a potential internal threat to validity because the two groups used to collect data because their class periods occurred during different periods of the day. The period of the day in which students have a class has a strong impact on learning and academic performance. The treatment group met for foreign language class during the 3rd period of A-days. The control group met for foreign language class during the 4th period of B-days. Period of the day is significant to the results of this study because during third period, students are more refreshed than during fourth period. Fourth period is the last period of the day. Therefore, students are more exhausted from having gone through three 90-minute periods and less likely to be able to

fully focus their attention on the notes providing the skills necessary to complete the questioning activities for data collection in the target language. Similarly, they may also be exhausted from working on academics all day when it comes time to complete the questioning activity that they may be reluctant to put forth the effort to answer questions using the target language. In addition, because fourth period is the last of the day, students are often shift their focus from academics to the end of the school day and going home or extracurricular activities. Since the third period class was selected as the treatment group and fourth period as the control group, student motivation due to time of the day could have impacted the results, causing the treatment group to have a higher rate of target language response.

Related to scheduling, data collection occurred on different days. The treatment group data collection occurred on A-days and the control group data collection occurred on B-days. Since the school operates on an A-day/B-day schedule, classes meet every other day instead of every day. With this class meeting organization, there are times in which classes do not meet for four days, spanning a weekend. These large gaps in target language instruction could impact foreign language acquisition, and therefore data results for the study if groups were questioned after one of the gaps.

Class tracking occurs starting in the elementary schools and continues through high school. From a young age, students are tracked together in classes of generally like-ability students. It is commonly understood that students are grouped as standard, honors, gifted and talented, advanced placement, or special education students. Though the Spanish 2 class does not have a standard, honors, GT, AP, or Special Ed designation, students are naturally grouped due to scheduling of other courses. As a result, the Spanish 2 class ends up having a high majority of standard, honors, GT, or AP students together. The treatment group happens to be made up of

more honors students, which could contribute to the data reflecting a higher rate of target language response for this group. The control group is made up of more standard level students, which could contribute to a higher level of native language responses in the data for this group.

In addition to internal validity threats, external validity threats also existed in the study. Due to the sample selection, the results can only be generalized to Spanish 2 courses in the same school. In order to be able to generalize to other schools in other regions, the sample size would have had to include students from each area. Further, results from the study can only be generalized for the unit of study in which the questioning activities occurred since the questions all centered around the same topic of childhood interests and activities.

Connections to Previous Studies and Existing Literature

Weber-Fève (2009), Thompson and Harrison (2014), Rondon-Pari (2014) and Garbati and Mady (2015) all emphasize the importance of target language output in their works. The results of this study relate to each of these works in that they support the usage of the target language in the classroom. For Weber-Fève, it is important to have a good balance of target language input and output in the classroom in order to check for student progress and understanding as well as to help students build confidence with speaking in the target language. Using the questioning strategy outlined in this study will help foreign language teachers achieve that balance between input and output, as well as lay the foundation for students to have the confidence to eventually hold their own creative conversations in the target language. Thompson and Harrison discuss the impact that the language the teacher uses has on student response in their study that determined if the teacher reverts to using the native language, students will do the same. The data from this study supports their findings because questions posed in the native language were more likely to result in a native language response. The work by Rondon-Pari and Garbati and Mady both

emphasize how important target language output is for the foreign language learner because it forces students to both reflect on what they have learned as well as helps them fill in the gaps of what they may still need to learn.

The national organization ACTFL (2017) and work by Thompson and Harrison (2014) both focus on the importance of target language input as a way to encourage target language output. ACTFL recommends that teachers strive to maintain 90% of interactions in the target language in order to best expose students to the target language and help them develop fluency. The organization states that if the student hears target language input, they are able to “learn by doing” and learn even more through target language output. This study provides a strategy for teachers to achieve these target language input and output goals. Thompson and Harrison (2014) conducted a study that resulted in the finding that there is a positive correlation between target language input and target language acquisition, similar to the results of this study in which the majority of target language responses were to the target language questions. Brain functioning also relates to target language input, as Li and Grant (2016) and Fuente (2002) found in their work. Li and Grant determined that the brain works through a series of interconnected networks with various portions that each need to be activated and work together in order to learn a language. Fuente expanded on these findings and determined that in order to achieve full language acquisition, each of these interconnected networks needed to be engaged. Fuente’s study found that negotiation of meaning through target language input successfully activates each of the networks. This study relates to the work related to brain functioning and language learning because it provides a way for target language input to occur and forces students to negotiate meaning before producing output, therefore activating various parts of the brain and contributing to overall language acquisition.

Garbarti and Mady (2015) and Wang's (2012) research relates to the strategy chosen to use in this study, questioning. Garbarti and Mady state that providing students with authentic encounters in the foreign language and opportunities to speak authentically are key in foreign language development. It not only provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their own language learning, but also helps them determine what else they need to grow linguistically. It further provides frequent practice in order to reduce stress and anxiety related to target language use. As the teacher continues to use target language questioning strategies, students can build up to answering more complex questions and eventually students will be able to use the language creatively on their own. This study provides data that supports Garbarti and Mady's findings because it uses target language questioning strategies. Wang's research on questioning strategies in the foreign language classroom relates to this study because, as Wang discusses, questioning increases student engagement and provides students with the opportunity and desire to grow (2012). In looking at the data from this study, the students in the treatment group were more so successfully engaged in the target language through questioning, providing them with a rigorous target language learning environment.

Implications for Future Research

It is clear from the data yielded in this study that a question posed in the target language will likely result in a higher chance of receiving a target language response. The data further supports recommendations to use the target language in the foreign language classroom and provides concrete proof of target language input as a way to increase target language output. The question that then arises is why does the target language question result in a target language response?

Future research in this area should investigate why participants, particularly at the lower level, mimic the language used by the researcher by looking at various factors that could impact the response. The relationship between level of foreign language study and the questioning strategies used could be studied. It could be the case that a lower level language learner would be more likely to mimic the language used in the question because they need the word clues in the question in order to formulate a target language response. When the target language is not used for a lower language learner, there are no word clues for them to use, and perhaps this is why they are more likely to default to the native language in this case. Future research could test this idea by questioning students from upper level language study using both the target and native language to determine if it has the same impact. Since upper-level language learners have a better knowledge base of the foreign language, they may not need to rely as much on the target language question for word clues on how to respond.

Summary

Based on information gathered from previously conducted studies and literature, it is clear that both target language input and output are necessary for successful foreign language fluency to be reached. Foreign language teachers often struggle with achieving target language output from students. This study sought to determine if using target language questioning strategies would result in a higher rate of target language responses from students in a low-level foreign language class. The participants of the study were students enrolled in Spanish 2 during the 2017-2018 academic year. Students were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group. Both groups received the same lessons leading up to questioning activities for data collection as well as the same conditions in which to complete the questioning activities. The treatment group received a target language questioning strategy in which the questions were asked in Spanish.

The control group did not receive a target language questioning strategy, and therefore the questions were asked in the native language, English. Both groups were asked the same two questions, the language used just changed based on the group. Data was collected during three separate points during one unit of study. The first data collection occurred at the beginning of the unit, the second in the middle of the unit, and the last one during the unit exam at the end of the unit. As students responded, the data collector used a tally sheet to record whether the response was in the native language, English, or the target language, Spanish. Data was then organized and analyzed to determine which questioning strategy achieved a higher rate of target language response. Overall, the treatment group data reflected a higher target language response with a mean of 27 target language, Spanish, responses versus the control group with a mean of 27 native language, English, responses. Therefore, based on the data, it is clear that target language questioning strategies will increase the chances of students providing target language responses, encouraging teachers to implement this strategy in their foreign language classrooms.

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