

[Home](#) > [Dissertations](#) > [686](#)[< Previous](#) [Next >](#)

Dissertations

Concept-Based Teaching and Spanish Modality in Heritage Language Learners: A Vygotskyan Approach

[Download](#)

Elena Guillermina Garcia Frazier, *University of Massachusetts - Amherst*

Date of Award
2-2013

Document Type
Open Access Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Degree Program
Hispanic Literatures & Linguistics

First Advisor
Eduardo Negueruela

Second Advisor
Patricia Gubitosi

Third Advisor
Theresa Austin

Keywords
Heritage Language, Modality, Sociocultural theory, Spanish, Subjunctive, Vygotsky

Subject Categories
Latin American Literature | Spanish Linguistics | Spanish Literature

Abstract
This study analyzed how six Heritage language learners at the university level gained conscious awareness and control of the concept of modality as revealed in student verbalizations (Vygotsky, 1998) throughout five different written communicative events. This work took place in the only course designed for Heritage language learners at a large public suburban university in the Northeast part of the United States.

Grammatical simplification in bilingual speakers is due to incomplete acquisition of Spanish, attrition or loss of an underused linguistic system

Included in

[Latin American Literature Commons, Spanish Linguistics Commons, Spanish Literature Commons](#)

[Commons, Spanish Literature Commons](#)

[SHARE](#)

Enter search terms:

Search

in this series [Advanced Search](#)[Notify me via email or RSS](#)[Browse](#)[Collections](#)[Disciplines](#)[Authors](#)[Author Corner](#)[Author FAQ](#)

(Lynch, 1999; Martínez Mira, 2009a, 2009b; Mikulski, 2010b; Montrul, 2007; Ocampo, 1990; Silva-Corvalán, 1990, 1994a, 1994b, 2003; Studerus, 1995). The result of the process of simplification is reduction or loss of forms and/or meanings.

In this work, I investigated in which ways Gal'perin's (1989) systemic-theoretical organized instruction promoted awareness, control and internalization of the concept of modality in three sets of data: definition, discourse and verbalization (Negueruela, 2003). In addition, I examined how the concept of modality emerged and proceeded.

By focusing students' attention in Negueruela's (2003) Concept of Mood in Spanish orienting chart in a top down fashion, students were able to strengthen their theoretical understanding in practical activity while still accessing empirical knowledge, and eventually generalizing its use in new contexts across nominal, adjectival and adverbial clauses.

At the definition level, Gal'perin's Systemic-theoretical instruction promoted emergence and progress of their conceptual understanding from perceptual to semantic. At the discourse level, students' theoretically based semantic understanding had a positive impact as revealed in student's discourse progress throughout tasks. At the verbalization level, semantic, abstract and systematic verbalizations showed students' emergence of awareness of the interrelated categories of modality. The conceptual category of anticipation was appropriately verbalized and contextualized 68% of the time. The absence of quality verbalizations referring to a specific conceptual category in some students lead me to conclude that students did not fully understand the meaning of some conceptual categories. On the contrary, their presence in any of the tasks showed emergence of conceptual meaning(s) in appropriate contexts, further appropriate recontextualization may provide full awareness and control.

Recommended Citation

Garcia Frazier, Elena Guillermina, "Concept-Based Teaching and Spanish Modality in Heritage Language Learners: A Vygotskian Approach" (2013). *Dissertations*. Paper 686.

http://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/686

This page is sponsored by the [University Libraries](#).

© 2009 [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#) • [Site Policies](#)