

Web-Based Teaching Unit  
Enhanced Audio and Video Input: A CALL Component of Spanish 301  
Jesse S. Gleason  
Iowa State University

Professor Volker Hegelheimer  
Engl 510: Computer Methods for Language Teaching  
December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Please find this web-based teaching unit at the following URL:

<http://jgleas.public.iastate.edu/espanol301/homepage.html>

## 1 Theoretical rationale

“The likelihood of learners acquiring linguistic input increases if their attention is drawn to salient features” (Chapelle, 2003; 40). For this reason, this multi-modal unit will offer students the opportunity to notice and attend to particular discourse features, which directly apply to the compositions provided in one of their course texts, *Hacia niveles avanzados*. Currently, the students in Spanish 301, section 1A and 1B in the Spring of 2009 at Iowa State University use two texts: (1) the *Manual de Gramática* (Dozier & Iguina, 2008) and (2) *Hacia niveles avanzados* (Stiegler & Jiménez, 2007). The *Manual de Gramática* has many opportunities for students to use computer-assisted language learning (CALL) outside of class, including access to an online version of the text, grammar tutorials, podcasts and a verb conjugator. However, *Hacia niveles avanzados* has only an audio CD to supplement six activities within the book itself. *Hacia niveles avanzados* has a uniquely important place in the curriculum, since it guides students through the writing process from start to finish. For Spanish 301 students, this is essential since most likely their past classroom Spanish experience has consisted primarily of courses that focus on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Since these students will probably be taking more advanced Spanish courses in the future and be expected to read and write more complex texts in Spanish, understanding the composition is paramount. Therefore, the objectives of this web-based teaching unit center on how to improve students’ understanding of four text genres by using enhanced CALL input in the form of audio-visual support.

It is postulated that many students of Spanish 301 already understand the grammatical rules of the language and may even be able apply them in the micro-context activities provided by the *Manual de Gramática*’s online activities. However, when students are faced with a text like *Hacia niveles avanzados*, which delves deeper into composition, they may have more difficulty applying these concepts. It is for this reason that this web-based teaching unit will help them to draw

connections between the grammar they learn in the *Manual de Gramática* and the compositions they read and eventually produce. To draw these connections, before-reading, while-reading, and after-reading activities were created for each of four texts corresponding to the following text genres: news reports, narration, exposition, and argumentation. For the before-reading activities, students are presented with a video clip featuring proficient native and non-native Spanish speakers discussing an issue related to the corresponding text in their *Hacia niveles avanzados* course book. The videos are followed by a comprehension check activity with feedback. Subsequently, students are directed to a modified version of the same video with enhanced input in the form of captions, subtitles and transcripts in order to give students the option to view the material in both a visual and verbal mode (Jones, 2003). The transcripts include salient features, which allow students to check their own answers from the previous comprehension check. Grgurovic and Hegelheimer (2007; 61) state “offering transcripts in addition to subtitles is likely the best solution because it provides learners with a choice”. For this reason, both the transcripts with salient input and videos with enhanced, salient input in the form of captions and subtitles were used.

The *Manual de Gramática* includes some podcasts on grammar and pronunciation, but they are all in English, thus not providing students with increased opportunities to receive Spanish input. Rosello-Aguilar (2007; 477) states “Podcasting provides access to authentic materials which, as well as the potential for learning about aspects such as the history, culture, and politics of the areas where the target language is spoken, provide opportunities to notice vocabulary and grammatical structures”. By creating opportunities for students to listen and follow along with the different compositions that appear in *Hacia niveles avanzados*, they can increase the time each day that they are active listeners of Spanish. Thus, in addition to the audio version of several texts that students read for homework, there are introductory videos that present students with issues that relate to the text’s theme. Students are also given the choice of reading while listening along with the audio version of the text. By providing the audio version, students have the opportunity to interact with the text on various occasions by simply downloading it to their mp3 player. In this way, busy students can listen to the reading on the go, two or even several times, increasing their exposure to the aural input and giving them the advantage of hearing how the words in the article are pronounced in context.

Another aspect of this web-based teaching unit is the cultural component. Bateman (2002) suggests that interviewing native speakers of the target language is a good way to promote openness and positive attitudes toward learning the language. In this way, this unit includes four short videos, which feature native speakers from Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia. Not only do these people talk about themselves, but they also make references to pertinent cultural aspects of their countries and lives. One speaker gives her account of the cultural heritage of Colombia by sharing her personal experience with the Barranquilla Carnival, a major cultural event that displays the Afro-Latino heritage of the region. Other

speakers share their favorite Hispanic authors and talk about how their work has influenced Latin American literature. This direct contact with speakers of the target language provides students with intrinsic motivation to continue studying the target language (Shevidy, 2004). In another instance, two Spanish teachers, one native and another non-native discuss best teaching practices and how to motivate their students by including culture into the curriculum. By providing instances for students to relate to the characters in the videos, they are more likely to find the material meaningful and useful to their individual lives. Giving students the opportunity to reflect on the role that Spanish is playing in the globalized world makes them more likely to value their lessons and be motivated to work harder to understand and produce the language. Lastly, by drawing connections between the speakers in the videos and their texts, students can find meaning and importance in the written word.

## 2 Context-setting description

### 2.1 Target audience

The target audience for this web-based teaching unit project is for a specific section of Spanish 301 at Iowa State University. The creator of the unit is also the instructor for this section and hopes to integrate it during Spring semester, 2010. The students in Spanish 301 are expected to have varying levels of experience and motivation to learn Spanish. Some will come in as freshman (first-year students) having passed an entrance exam that allowed them to skip the first two introductory levels (Spanish 101/102 and Spanish 201/202). Other students will have taken one or more semesters of Spanish at Iowa State.

### 2.2 Proficiency level

Although Spanish 301 is a 300-level course, students inevitably bring with them varying levels of proficiency. Likewise, they have different reasons for studying Spanish, some to fulfill specific academic requirements and others due to a more personal or internal motivation. Students also have varied levels of exposure to technology and therefore, may need some instruction as to how to approach the web-based teaching unit.

### 2.3 Skills and objectives

The objectives of this unit are the following:

- 1) Students will be able to use this web-based unit to supplement their other course materials, specifically that of the text: *Hacia niveles avanzados: composición por proceso y en contexto* (Stiegler & Jiménez, 2007)
- 2) Students will learn about Spanish-speaking cultures and current event issues relating to the importance of Spanish in the world today. Students will have the opportunity to meet native-speakers of various Latin American countries through audio and video recordings

3) Students will be able to directly develop listening skills in Spanish while reading and listening to four types of text: news reports, narration, exposition, and argumentation. There will be three stages to this process of reading a text: before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities.

Spanish 301 students will need to apply their grammatical knowledge to reading and listening to Spanish composition. They will be asked to write short introductory compositions in response to a question pertaining to the topic, as well as a follow-up journal reflection describing what they've learned in the unit. These two writing activities will serve as a pre and post-test for each of the four units. Students will be confronted with before, during, and after-reading activities. The readings will correspond to pages in their *Hacia niveles avanzados* course book and their written form will not be provided in the unit, since the students will have purchased this text as part of the Spanish 301 course requirements. However, students will have the audio version of the texts as part of their during-reading activities. They will be able to follow along with proficient native and non-native speakers of Spanish as they impart the text out loud.

It is expected that the more students have the opportunity to interact with a text, the better they will understand it. This enhanced, elaborated CALL input in the form of before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities will support learners in their endeavor to understand a text and its genre.

### 2.31 Before-reading activities

In addition to the pre-test, the before-reading activities in this unit include an introductory video with proficient native and non-native Spanish speakers. Students begin from the main page, select the text genre that they are interested in, and are taken to the main page for the activities. Here, they complete the pre-test and click on a picture in order to open up a new browser window with the introductory video. The video in some way relates to the overall theme of the reading and gives examples of issues mentioned in the text. This video is the first opportunity for students to attend to and interact with the text's theme. To test learner's comprehension, a short Hot Potatoes (HP) activity (quiz, matching, jumbled sentence) follows the video. After the HP activity, students are given the opportunity to go back to a more highly elaborated version of the video, including headings, subtitles, and captions, which allow them to improve their grasp of the ideas discussed. In addition, the video script is made available with the answers to the HP activity made salient in a div-tag box. Students can pass their cursors over the salient parts of the script in order to check their answers to the HP activity. Finally, students are expected to close the new-browser box and return to the main page in order to complete the during-reading activities.

### 2.32 During-reading activities

The during-reading activities include a audio version of the text in *Hacia niveles avanzados* for students to follow along with. After listening, students click to open a new browser where their comprehension is tested with a HP quiz. Since there is an additional browser window open, students can go back at any time to review portions of the audio to help them answer the questions. Finally, students are brought to a “thank you” page, where they are told that they have completed the activity and they can self-close the additional browser window. In addition, the “Thank you” page serves as a self-correct page and directs students to the corresponding page and paragraph number in their book where the answers to the HP quiz can be found. This component was added as a last minute feature after the usability test was performed on the suggestion of one learner. It is postulated that the “thank you” page will be very useful to students who do not fully understand the reading and are unsure why their answers to the quiz are incorrect.

### 2.33 After-reading activities

The after-reading activity includes a post-test journal reflection, where students have the opportunity to write for 10 minutes about issues that were discussed in the pre-reading and while-reading activities. Students are also presented with a relevant quote by a Spanish-speaking author to inspire their writing. For future projects, it would be useful to include a timer to count down 10 minutes, making the reflection activity much more interactive.

### 2.4 Technology requirements

In order to succeed in this unit, students will have to have a basic comprehension of technology and how to use the Internet, how to navigate through web pages, and how to access audio and video multi-media using Quicktime. Students will need to have access to a computer with a sound card or headphones. They will need access to the Internet and a browser such as Firefox or Safari.

Links:

- Quicktime
  - Windows:
    - <http://free-get.info/>
  - Mac:
    - <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- Firefox
  - Windows and Mac
    - <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/personal.html>
- Safari
  - Windows and Mac

- <http://www.apple.com/safari/>

### 3 Teacher's manual

In the calendar for Spring semester 2010, one can see that roughly one month can be spent preparing for each composition (January: news reports, February: narration, March: exposition, and April: argumentation). It is recommended that the teacher find a place for this web-based unit somewhere within the calendar, preferably bit-by-bit rather than all at once. That is to say, that for the CALL activities to become 'normalised' (Bax, 2003), they need to become an integral part of the daily teaching curriculum rather than used as a once a week model. In this way, students can be assigned the pre-reading activities as homework on the day before the reading, the while-reading activities the day of the reading, and the post-reading activities the day following the reading. For each composition, this may correspond to the following dates:

#### News reports

- Before-reading: January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- During-reading: January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010
- After-reading: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

#### Narration

- Before-reading: February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- During-reading: February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- After-reading: February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010

#### Exposition

- Before-reading: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- During-reading: March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- After-reading: March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010

#### Argumentation

- Before-reading: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010
- During-reading: April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- After-reading: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Clearly these dates are flexible and meant to be taken as a suggestion to the teacher. All activities are designed to complement the *Hacia niveles avanzados* course book, and the student should first attempt these activities individually outside of class. In the class session following any given assignment, the teacher should go over the activities as homework as well as use them as a base for in-class activities, such as role-plays, class discussion, pair and group-work, or for whatever other means the teacher deems appropriate. The web-based teaching unit is designed to be flexible as well as to bring up examples of how each of the readings might be applied in other contexts. They should serve as a bridge for the students to

relate their own lives and experiences to those presented within the short video clips and activities. Students can further draw connections with the free-writing journal reflections following each reading, which may also lead in nicely to the writing of their own compositions. In other words, the free-writing reflections may be used as brainstorming activities for the outline of their composition rough drafts following each genre. The following schema outlines the web-based teaching unit.

Español 301 Introductory page gives four options at the top →

- Unit 1: New reports (El reportaje periodístico)
- Unit 2: Narration (La narración)
- Unit 3: Exposition (La exposición)
- Unit 4: Argumentation (La argumentación)

Each of these units has its own introductory page with a pre-test activation activity to test students' knowledge of the topic presented as well as the following three options at the top →

- Antes (de leer)
- Durante (de leer)
- Después (de leer)

These sections correspond to the before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities respectively. The before-reading activities include the following:

- An introductory page with directions on how to click on the image to create a new browser window
  - A new browser window with a video on the topic of the reading
  - A Hot Potatoes comprehension check activity
  - A page with an input-enhanced version of the video and corresponding transcript with salient language markers and div tag text box for students to check their answers to the previous activity

Each of the while-reading activities include →

- An introductory page with directions on how to listen to the audio version of the text corresponding to the readings from *Hacia niveles avanzados*. A link to a new browser window
  - A new browser window with a Hot Potatoes comprehension check activity
  - A "thank you" page, which thanks students for their participation and allows them to close the created browser window
  - The "Thank you" page also includes salient language markers with a div tag text box for students to check where in the original text the HP quiz answers can be found

Each after-reading activity includes →

- A post-test that provides the students with a chance to reflect on the knowledge they have learned during the before-reading and during-reading activities using a form element text box to be used in a journal-entry format. The teacher may also wish to have students write in their notebooks so as to be able to share their thoughts with the class or as a for-credit homework assignment

More specific characteristics of the following units are detailed here:

- Unit 1: New reports (El reportaje periodístico)
  - Before-reading activation question: ¿Qué sabe usted sobre el tema de la diversidad de Colombia? (What do you know about the theme of diversity in Colombia)
  - Before-reading video: An interview with Colombian author, Angélica Reina about her new book “El carnaval de Barranquilla” and its importance to the preservation of Colombian national heritage
  - During-reading audio: “Un canto a la diversidad” (A tribute to diversity)
  - After-reading question alternatives to write about:
    - (1) stereotypes that you have of Colombia
    - (2) ideas about the value or danger to the cultural diversity within the country
    - (3) possible parallels between the cultural diversity in Colombia and that of the English-speaking world in the United States
- Unit 2: Narration (La narración)
  - Before-reading activation question: ¿Qué sabe usted sobre la literatura hispanohablante? (What do you know about Spanish or Latin literature)
  - Before-reading video: Four Spanish speakers (Adolfo, Mercedes, Jorge, and Héctor) talk about their favorite Spanish-speaking authors
  - During-reading audio: “La literatura hispanohablante” (Spanish and Latin American literature)
  - After-reading question alternatives to write about:
    - (1) a good book you have just read
    - (2) a movie based upon a literary text that you have recently seen
    - (3) your first experience reading literature in English
    - (4) your first experience reading literature in Spanish
- Unit 3: Exposition (La exposición)



- Before-reading activation question: En su opinión, ¿Cuál es la mejor manera de enseñar las lenguas? Usa su experiencia como alumno para contestar. (In your opinion, what is the best way to teach a language? Draw on your experience as a student to answer.)
  - Before-reading video: A conversation between two teachers of Spanish discussing why it is important to teach language through culture and how to best motivate students
  - During-reading audio: "Dimensión intercultural en la enseñanza de las lenguas y la formación del profesorado" (The intercultural dimension to the teaching of languages and the training of teachers)
  - After-reading question alternatives to write about:
    - (1) your experiences studying culture in your Spanish classes
    - (2) your studies of culture in other disciplines such as English or History
- Unit 4: Argumentation (La argumentación)
    - Before-reading activation question: ¿En qué lugares y para qué fines es útil hablar el español hoy en día? (In what places and for what purposes is it useful to speak Spanish these days?)
    - Before-reading video: A dialogue between two Spanish speakers about the importance of speaking Spanish in addition to English in the United States today
    - During-reading audio: "El español y el mundo profesional" (Spanish and the professional world)
    - After-reading question alternatives to write about:
      - (1) your experience using Spanish in the workplace or outside school
      - (2) your ideas about how to use Spanish in your future professional career

#### 4 Usability report

The usability test was very useful for diagnosing minor glitches in the web-based teaching site such as spelling mistakes, poorly formatted elements, and Hot Potatoes evaluation errors.

First, the student who voluntarily progressed through the activity recommended that all videos start automatically with the opening of a new browser window, thus making fewer clicks necessary to continue with the activity. Once I implemented it this way, I realized that the student was correct. It was much more interactive to have the video begin automatically when the student clicks on the image and a new browser window pops up. This is especially true since the student is given a warning that a new browser window will be created. In the case that the

student needs more time to prepare himself, there is the option to put the video on pause or re-start it as needed.

Second, it was suggested that javascript be added to the image in the before-reading activity that created a new browser window. In this way, it was easier to determine how to access the new browser. This was also a good recommendation because before the javascript was added, it was not entirely clear where one needed to click in order to proceed. With the javascript tag, the image comes to life with a red border and the cursor changes to a little hand when placed over the image. This small detail was implemented in order to avoid confusion about how to continue.

Next, the exposition audio version of the text needed correction, which was done using the podcast option in the Apple Garage Band application. The audio track had mistakenly been 37 minutes long, much too long for a student to be willing to listen to as a homework assignment, much less listen to again to check his answers. With a small adjustment, the audio was formatted to be 17 minutes. This is another example of how the usability test caught the minor glitches that might have otherwise been overlooked.

One of the most important changes to result from the usability test involved a change to the “thank you” page on the during-reading activities. The volunteer student drew my attention to the lack of feedback provided after the during-reading HP quiz activities. Unlike the pre-reading activities, which included a follow-up video with answers to the questions from the HP quizzes highlighted in a div box, the during-reading activities, which included an audio version of the book and follow-up Hot Potatoes quiz, left the students without any way to correct their mistakes other than to listen and read the entire text again. This is something that many students are unlikely to do. However, by providing students with the page number and paragraph in which the answer can be found, students are more likely to revisit the text, and perhaps its audio version, in order to self-correct any mistakes. In addition, this option makes the “thank you” page much more interactive.

Another issue I would have liked to address had I more time to investigate, was a timer connected to the after-reading free-writing activity. The after-reading reflection activity was the least interactive of all the activities and one way to improve this would have been to include a 10-minute countdown timer when students placed their cursors over the form elements text box to begin writing. However, the only timer that was available to me at the moment was a countdown timer with some future date as a point of reference. The type of timer appropriate for the after-reading activity would have had as a point of reference the moment when the student put his cursor over the text box and the 10-minute countdown would begin.

## References

- Bateman, B. (2002) Promoting openness toward culture learning: ethnographic interviews for students of Spanish. *Modern Language Journal* 86 (30); 318-331
- Bax, S. (2003) CALL – Past, present and future. *System* 31; 13-28
- Chapelle, C.A. (2003) The potential of technology for language learning. *English Language Learning and Technology*. John Benjamins Publishing: Amsterdam; 35-68
- Dozer, E. & Iguina, Z. (2008) *Manual de gramática: Grammar Reference for Students of Spanish*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Thomson Heinle: Boston
- Grgurovic, & Hegelheimer, V. (2007) Help options and multimedia listening: Students' use of subtitles and the transcript. *Language Learning and Technology* 11 (1); 45-66
- Jones, L. (2003) Supporting listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition with multimedia annotations: The students' voice. *CALICO* 21 (1); 41-65
- Shedivy, S.L. (2004) Factors that lead some students to continue the study of foreign language past the usual 2 years of high school. *System* 32 (2); 103-119
- Stiegler, B.N. & Jiménez, C.J. (2007) *Hacia niveles avanzados: Composición por proceso y en contexto*. Thomas Heinle: Boston.

D Input channel indicators The channel component of the current input signal is displayed (page 21). Playback features. Settings.â Connecting audio and video components Determine the connection types depending on the jacks available on this unit and your external components. The symbols in the following table correspond with the symbols described in âCables used for connectionsâ (page 12). HDMI IN 1.â Before operating the following steps, select this unit as the video input on your TV. p p. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, Department of Modern and Classical Languages Fairfax Associate Professor of Spanish 2003-Present Assistant Professor of Spanish 1997-2003 Visiting Assistant Professor 1996-1997 Responsibilities: Professor of Spanish: Taught and developed courses at graduate and undergraduate levels.â Web-based Instructional Environments: Tools and Techniques for Effective Second Language Acquisition, in Cantos, P. and Prez, P. (Eds.): New Trends in Computer Assisted Language Teaching/Learning. International Journal of English Studies.â Used the Destinos video series to teach Spanish at basic and intermediate levels at GMU. 9.2. As teacher trainer. Language Learner Perceptions of Technology-Based Tasks Using Wimba Voice: L2 Oral Proficiency, Motivation, and L2 Selves. Jesse Gleason and Ruslan Suvorov Iowa State University Antwerp CALL 2010: Motivation and beyond August 19, 2010. Agenda. Introduction Literature Review Slideshow 2930496 by...â Jesse Gleason and Ruslan Suvorov Iowa State University Antwerp CALL 2010: Motivation and beyond. Share Presentations. Email Presentation to Friend.