Teacher-initiated talk and student oral discourse in a second language literature classroom: a sociocultural analysis

Joshua J. Thoms

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TEACHER-INITIATED TALK AND STUDENT ORAL DISCOURSE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE LITERATURE CLASSROOM: A SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

by

Joshua J. Thoms

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Second Language Acquisition in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

August 2008

Thesis Supervisors: Associate Professor Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro
Associate Professor Carol Severino
To Becky
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The context and the problem

Speaking in any language is a difficult task. A myriad of variables affects the way in which two or more people verbally communicate. Elements such as the social distance between interlocutors (e.g., formal vs. informal relationships), the subject matter under discussion (e.g., having or not having knowledge of a given topic), and the context of the situation (e.g., face-to-face discussions in a language classroom vs. talking on the phone) all affect the ways in which oral discourse begins, develops, and comes to a close. These components, when taken together, indicate that speaking in one’s first language (L1) is a complicated, multifaceted task.

Given the complexity of speaking in the L1, it is not difficult to understand that learning to speak in a second language (L2) entails developing a challenging set of skills. Not only are the same facets present as in L1 speech, such as those highlighted above, but there are additional elements such as L2 grammatical knowledge, pronunciation issues, register concerns, and culturally bound speaking events (e.g., formulaic greeting and leave-taking speech acts) that further complicate how one develops the ability to verbally communicate in a L2.

Therefore, developing L2 oral competency frequently entails many hours of practice with the formal linguistic conventions of the L2 (e.g., overcoming phonological challenges or grammatical issues) with a variety of interlocutors and in different contexts, such as formal or informal settings. Aside from the aforementioned cognitive, linguistic, and pragmatic hurdles inherent in L2 learning, learners are often presented with other difficulties that may impede the development of their L2 oral competency. For students studying foreign languages at the college level in the United States, the lower-level courses usually center on the development of speaking skills. However, as students progress through the sequence of foreign language coursework and continue their studies
in upper-level classes that primarily focus on the teaching of literature, they confront a variety of challenges that can hinder the ongoing development of their L2 oral ability (Byrnes, 1998). Instructors in upper-division (i.e., courses after the second year of language study) L2 literature courses at the college level in the United States typically place greater emphasis on the literary content of their courses than on language-related issues (Paesani, 2004). When instructors do dedicate class time to linguistic accuracy concerns, instruction tends to focus on students’ reading and writing abilities. The skill that is not explicitly targeted in most upper-level courses is students’ speaking ability (Byrnes, 2001).

This disconnect between lower- and upper-level courses with respect to consistent and systematic attention to students’ oral competency in a foreign language has led to a lack of understanding about how students in upper-level courses continue to develop their L2 speaking abilities. Furthermore, little is known about L2 classroom discourse and the potential effects of interactions between teacher and student in upper-level literature classes on students’ L2 oral competency. Additionally, no study has investigated students’ perceptions of how their participation in whole-class discussions affects their understanding of the texts they are reading in upper-level L2 literature courses.

Although some studies have researched the ways in which instructors facilitate or inhibit the development of students’ L2 speaking ability in beginning foreign language classes (Consolo, 2000; Hall, 1995, 2004), few have attempted to explore the underlying expectations held by both instructor and student in an upper-level L2 literature course with respect to students’ developing speaking abilities. Although a small number of studies have taken a broad look at typical interaction patterns established between instructor and student in L2 contexts (Hall & Walsh, 2002; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Wells, 1993), few (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Mantero, 2001, 2002) have carried out a fine-grained analysis of instructional discourse in a L2 literature classroom regarding teacher-initiated talk and the subsequent oral discourse of students in whole-class discussions.
Furthermore, many studies cursorily examine the way in which oral interactions between instructor and student unfold in L2 language classes from a purely linguistic or pedagogical point of view (Hall, 2004; Walsh, 2002, 2006). However, most do not attempt to discover the underlying expectations, goals, intentions, and perceptions espoused by instructor and student that may affect the way in which oral interaction is created, maintained, or discouraged in this particular type of upper-level course. To carry out this type of fine-grained analysis of oral discourse, researchers working in this area may employ socially oriented theories and ecological views of second language acquisition (SLA) to understand further the nature of whole-class discussions in L2 literature classrooms.

The arrival of socially oriented second language acquisition theories

Over the past three decades, SLA theory has contributed much to our understanding about the cognitive, social, and pragmatic variables that interact and potentially affect how learners acquire a L2. As this burgeoning discipline develops, hypotheses and research questions related to a variety of topics and skills continue to be investigated across a number of languages. The participants typically used in SLA research come from a variety of backgrounds and are acquiring a L2 in different contexts via diverse methods employed by instructors with varied backgrounds (experienced vs. inexperienced; native vs. nonnative speakers; expertise in linguistics, literature, or L2 education; etc.). Furthermore, studies in SLA, as in any other academic area, analyze data through a variety of theoretical lenses.

Recent debates within the field of SLA have argued for more research carried out via new theoretical perspectives on human cognition and the social processes that may affect how, when, why, and to what extent learners acquire a L2. Firth and Wagner (1997, 1998, 2007) assert that SLA research has traditionally been carried out and
defined by cognitively oriented theories that rely largely on quantitatively based analytical research methods. This cognitive orientation, they contend, has led to a skewed understanding of the processes of language learning and has not allowed for more socially oriented investigations to inform how learners acquire a L2. Although some researchers contend that cognitively oriented theories of SLA are best suitable for investigating the processes that make up acquisition (Gass, 1998; Kasper, 1997; Long & Doughty, 2003), others have recognized the importance of incorporating the social aspects and factors (Block, 2003; Hall, 1997; Johnson, 2004; Rampton, 1997) along with features of ecological contexts or L2 learning environments (van Lier, 2000, 2004) that may contribute to L2 acquisition.

Since the publication of the debate initiated by Firth and Wagner’s (1997) essay on the cognitive theoretical bias prevalent in the field of SLA, socially oriented theories and their constructs have increasingly been studied, empirically investigated, and used in contemporary SLA research in a number of L2 contexts. Over the past ten years, the proliferation of socially oriented theories of language acquisition has prompted many SLA researchers working within these paradigms to pose questions that necessitate the use of qualitative research methods and analyses. Although these methods will be addressed later (see Chapter 3, Methodology), it is worth noting here that these qualitative approaches have resulted in fine-tuned analyses of L2 acquisition as it originates in various language-learning contexts (e.g., formal and naturalistic language-learning environments). To date, many SLA researchers look to socially oriented theories to help account for the underlying processes and variables embedded within L2 discourse. Although scholars conduct research within a number of socially based theories and models, many researchers have made use of constructs inherent in one particular theory—Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory—to help build a framework to guide their analyses.
Vygotskian sociocultural theory

Based on the work of Russian cognitive psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1987), sociocultural theory (SCT) has influenced current SLA thought as indicated by recent volumes dedicated to SCT (Johnson, 2004; Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003; Lantolf, 2000, Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as well as a growing number of researchers who are now using its framework to guide their work. In contrast to cognitive models of SLA, SCT was born out of a different time period and outside of Western academic and Western intellectual discourse. One of the main distinctions between a SCT perspective and that of cognitively based theories of SLA is that SCT rejects the idea of separating language from the context in which it is acquired.

Whereas some researchers (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Gass, 2003; among many others) working within cognitivist or generative frameworks attempt to isolate language to better understand how learners acquire specific aspects or properties of the L2 (e.g., morphosyntactic issues such as the acquisition of past-tense morphological markers) without focusing on the environment in which acquisition occurs, researchers using a SCT theoretical perspective attempt to account for the social and cultural aspects and explain how those variables affect language learning as it happens in a particular context. Vygotskian SCT views language acquisition and use as having a dialectical relationship, in which competence and performance are intimately linked and cannot be separated. The development of human cognition (e.g., language learning) occurs simultaneously alongside performance and is not a result of it. It is in the performance or language use that acquisition happens.

Present study

With the arrival of SCT to the field of SLA, coupled with recent efforts to characterize and analyze language learning contexts via an ecology metaphor (Darhower, 2008; Miller, 2005; van Lier, 2000, 2004) researchers are now equipped with the
theoretical tools to investigate specifics related to oral interactions and their relation to L2 learning. Although some researchers working in this paradigm have applied SCT to classroom-based oral discourse between instructors and their students (Hall, 1995; Hall & Verplaetse, 2000; Walsh, 2006), little is known about how students perceive instructors' talk in whole-class discussions in upper-level L2 literature courses. Furthermore, no studies to date have accounted for these perceptions and how they affect the unfolding of whole-class discussions in L2 literature classrooms. Finally, few studies have provided an in-depth analysis of the linguistic infrastructure that allows whole-class discussion to become meaningful to all students in a L2 literature classroom. All of this is to say that previous research on L2 talk between instructors and their students has rarely been able to go beyond descriptive accounts of oral interactions and pedagogical activities. This dissertation research hopes to present a deeper, below-the-flow interpretation of L2 oral discourse as it unfolds in a college-level L2 literature classroom.

Given that one of the most pressing issues for L2 literature instructors is getting students to engage in discussion about the texts they are reading, this study seeks a better understanding of the various dimensions/layers of whole-class discussions in this environment with an aim to contribute to our knowledge of SLA processes in these contexts while also informing L2 pedagogy. Not only will this research contribute to our knowledge of the underlying variables inherent in whole-class discussions in a L2 literature classroom, but it will also allow instructors and students to become cognizant of these often unseen components that affect learners' participation in an understanding of discussion in the classroom. Analyzing these components and how they interact at a micro-level of discourse in a literature classroom may help instructors to improve their interactions with students during whole-class discussions. This knowledge will lead to a more productive and engaging educational experience for both students and instructors in the particular environment being investigated and may also be applied to other language-learning contexts.
Research questions

To understand the nature of whole-class discussions between an instructor and her students in a L2 literature classroom, this study investigated the following research questions:

1. What are the expectations, goals, and intentions of an instructor and her students regarding the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in an upper-level undergraduate Latin American literature course?

2. How are the tensions between student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse?

3. What types of affordance structures emerge in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under investigation in this study? How do the instructor and the students perceive and make use of the affordance structures?

The proposed research questions seek to understand oral discourse in an upper-level literature classroom from a variety of angles and perspectives. Following is a description of what each question seeks to investigate.

R1. What are the expectations, goals, and intentions of an instructor and her students regarding the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in an upper-level undergraduate Latin American literature course?

The first research question intends to investigate similarities and differences between the instructor’s views of the role of whole-class discussions in the context of talking about Latin American literature and the views of the students in the class. Similar to previous research that compares and contrasts instructor and student views about what to expect in upper-level undergraduate L2 literature courses (Donato & Brooks, 2004), the first question provides a general sense about how the views of all participants
regarding whole-class discussions (and other areas of L2 learning) do or do not coincide. This broad view of the expectations, goals, and intentions of the instructor and her students, as determined by data taken from an instructor interview and a student demographic questionnaire, is refined and focused in the second research question.

**R2. How are the tensions between student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse?**

Given the answers determined by the first research question, the second research question further examines how the expectations, goals, and intentions of both instructor and students play themselves out in the oral discourse of six class meetings where whole-class discussion is the primary activity. Specifically, research question 2 seeks to analyze how conflicting student and instructor goals, expectations, and intentions were mediated in oral discourse. To answer research question 2, whole-class discussions in six class meetings are broadly analyzed. Transcripts from the six class meetings are coded for two discourse patterns (i.e., interaction, response, evaluation or IRE sequences vs. interaction, response, feedback or IRF sequences). The aforementioned sequences either inhibit or promote student responses and influence how much students participate in whole-class discussion. In other words, this question invites a macro-level analysis of what motivates whole-class discussions to unfold in the particular classroom under observation. Macro-level views of discourse in this dissertation research include analyses such as comparing and contrasting the instructor’s and students’ ideas about the role of whole-class discussions as well as examining interaction patterns between speakers (e.g., who dominates whole-class discussion, the type and amount of instructor’s questions and the corresponding responses of her students, the length of students’ utterances when they do participate in whole-class discussion) at a global level without scrutinizing how and why these interaction patterns exist as they do (see Chapter 3 Methodology for more on macro-level analyses).
R3. What types of affordance structures emerged in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under investigation in this study? How do the instructor and the students perceive and make use of the affordance structures?

Research question 3 goes beyond a macro-level analysis of discourse (as investigated in questions 1 and 2) to provide a closer examination of how affordances (van Lier, 2000, 2004) materialize out of the interactions in whole-class discussions of a Latin American Colonial literature course. This research question specifically investigates the affordance structures that emerged through the interactions between an instructor and her students and how these structures allowed for lower-level affordances to become higher-level affordances. Affordances in this study are defined as any discursive moves between the instructor and student that allow for extended oral interaction or for meaning to be made available to a wider range of participants. Affordance structures are defined as moves in which first-level affordances become second-level affordances in whole-class discussions. More detailed information about the constructs of affordance and affordance structures is provided in Chapters 2 and 5.

Answers to research question 3 result in a categorization of the different kinds of affordance structures that surfaced in the whole-class discussions between the instructor and her students in the Latin American literature classroom while also providing analyses of how the affordance structures allowed for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances. Student and instructor perceptions about the emergence and use of the affordance structures are also examined.

Research question 3 provides a fine-grained examination of key moments in oral discourse between the instructor and her students and among the students. This micro-level analysis of the unfolding discourse between interlocutors results in an understanding of how participants interpret teacher-initiated talk, how speakers respond to others in this particular context, and how all of this affects the quality and amount of student participation in whole-class discussions. Research question 3 focuses on
particular episodes from the transcripts of selected class meetings where the instructor and her students are participating in whole-class discussions. It focuses on the nature of different kinds of affordance structures and how they arise out of whole-class discussions via micro-level analyses of specific episodes. The fine-grained analyses of the affordance structures and the affordances that are embedded within particular episodes in whole-class discussions are complemented by participants’ perceptions of what is being said. Verbal reports of how each interlocutor (i.e., selected students and/or instructor) perceives specific episodes of the unfolding talk help to determine the usefulness of affordance structures and the way in which they allow students to understand and participate in whole-class discussions. In this way, research question 3 presents multiple perspectives to understand talk in the Latin American literature course at a micro-level of discourse.

The micro-level views of discourse in this dissertation rely on analyses of talk typically used in conversation analysis along with insights gleaned from stimulated recall sessions about specific moments in the classroom discourse. When taken together, the three research questions provide macro- and micro-level analyses of classroom oral discourse and how the expectations, goals, and intentions of both instructor and students are enacted in whole-class discussions. Additionally, they investigate the theoretical constructs of affordance and affordance structure—how they emerge in talk, the various forms they take in discourse, and how interlocutors perceive their usefulness.

Addressing the above research questions relies heavily on qualitative data sources (e.g., interviews, transcripts of whole-class discussions and stimulated recall sessions) to comprehend the complex nature of whole-class discussions in a Latin American literature classroom at the college level. Some quantitative analyses are also used to identify recurring patterns and themes in the interviews, stimulated recall sessions, and whole-class discussions in six class meetings (see Chapter 3, Methodology). When taken together, this study provides a detailed account of language learning as it is embedded
within the fuzziness of emerging dialogic activity (Lantolf, 2006) from a sociocultural theoretical viewpoint.

The remaining chapters in this dissertation are organized as follows: Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature that highlights research in the areas of oral discourse, macro- and micro-level analyses of classroom talk, pedagogical concerns in lower- and upper-level foreign language courses in the United States, issues pertaining to whole-class discussions in foreign language classes, a discussion about what constitutes an ecological view of language learning, and an in-depth review of the major tenets of Vygotskian SCT. Chapter 3 offers details about the data sources and data collection procedures used in this study. It also provides a timeline about when and how data were gathered along with rationale about decisions behind the research methodologies employed in this research. Chapter 4 explains data analysis processes used to answer the first two research questions thereby providing the macro-level analysis of discourse in this dissertation. It primarily presents a quantitative analysis of the data. Chapter 5 explains the data analysis processes used to answer research question 3. Given the qualitative nature of the last research question being investigated in this study, Chapter 5 provides for a micro-level analysis of discourse. Chapter 6 discusses the significance of the data analysis while also addressing the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion about future research avenues regarding classroom talk in L2 literature courses at the college level.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature on the many aspects that make up the complex nature of classroom talk in a L2 literature course. I begin with a brief historical summary of how discourse has been understood from different linguistic theoretical perspectives. Next, I examine one particular kind of discourse, classroom talk, by highlighting research that looks at how factors such as the kinds of tasks presented to learners, the ways in which instructors prompt students to respond (e.g., teacher questions), and issues related to power relationships can potentially affect how discussions unfold in the L2 classroom. I then provide a review of existing approaches to college-level L2 instruction in the United States by defining and comparing lower-level language-based instruction with that of upper-level courses that focus on the teaching of L2 literature. A brief discussion follows about how classroom talk is traditionally observed from macro- and micro-analytical points of view. I end the first half of the chapter with an in-depth examination of ecological views of language learning and highlight the construct of affordance.

The second half of this chapter reviews research that targets the analysis of discourse in the L2 literature classroom. I then look at the role of interaction in SLA through a variety of theoretical lenses. Next, I highlight studies that analyze one particular kind of interaction in the L2 context—collaborative dialogue. I then provide a comprehensive overview of a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective on human cognition and language learning and describe how this framework is used in this dissertation. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary of what is known and not known about whole-class discussions between instructor and students in a L2 literature course and explains why this area merits investigation.
Discourse

This study, at its most basic level of analysis, investigates discourse. Therefore, it is important to define how this fundamental concept is understood theoretically before focusing on the specific issue being examined in this study—whole-class discussions between instructor and students in an undergraduate L2 literature classroom. Discourse can be defined in many different ways and can be investigated from a variety of angles depending on the underlying theoretical framework used. As a result, it is necessary to briefly visit the historical and theoretical evolution of discourse in the context of formal and applied linguistic research while also clarifying the way in which it will be understood in this dissertation.

Historically, formal linguistic theories, in one way or another, have investigated and defined the properties that make up language. Research carried out via formal linguistic approaches (e.g., Chomsky, 2002; White, 2003) typically involves isolating and breaking down language into its constitutive parts (e.g., syntax, morphology, phonology) to analyze how each component functions and how each one contributes to the classification or way in which one language works and/or differs from another. In a way, formal linguistic research often divorces language from the context in which it is used to better understand the linguistic system(s) by which it is bound. An example of a formal linguistic approach is that of structural linguistics.

The main goal of structural linguistics is to understand the form(s) of language and how they interact to produce grammatically correct sentences and phonologically appropriate utterances. One of structuralism’s founding and most influential theorists, Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the act of speech and the system of language within which it functions. Saussure’s (1959) focus on la langue, or form, permitted the structural linguist to search for the system of signs that make up a language while leaving aside the context in which the forms are used. This system is based on an analysis that “will try to isolate the underlying set of laws by which
these signs are combined into meanings” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 84). Once a structural linguist distinguishes the pattern of the forms of a language, the linguist can objectively analyze the linguistic system or framework that underlies and regulates it.

This synchronic approach promotes a descriptive view of language that does not allow the context in which language is being used to play a role in linguistic analysis. Although a Saussurian structural theoretical view of language does include a view of how language is used or spoken (i.e., *la parole*), it still privileges the underlying form of language and indicates that a speaker’s words are a representation of the underlying structure (*la langue*). In other words, analyzing discourse from this theoretical perspective can be characterized as viewing language as a system of linguistic properties that are only visible when separated from the context in which they are used. Discourse, from this particular theoretical linguistic viewpoint, is thereby understood as how the formal properties of a language interact and are combined to produce “correct” sounds, words, and sentences.

In response to Saussure’s (1959) structural linguistic definition of discourse as a system of linguistic forms disconnected from the context of everyday communication, the work of Bakhtin (1986) offered a new way to conceptualize discourse. Bakhtin argues that linguistic properties or forms cannot be isolated from their context of use. Instead, discourse is comprised of a dialectical relationship between linguistic form and social communicative practices (Hicks, 1995), not by the underlying linguistic forms or properties of language (as espoused by structural linguists and other formal, theoretical linguistic approaches to understanding language). For Bakhtin (1986), the most accurate way to examine language is via the unit of analysis of the utterance. Perhaps the best way in which to understand this view of discourse is in how Bakhtin (1986, p. 71) defines the utterance as a unit of social communication:
The terminological imprecision and confusion in . . . linguistic thinking result from ignoring the real unit of speech communication: the utterance. For speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects. Speech is always cast in the form of an utterance belonging to a particular speaking subject, and outside this form it cannot exist.

(italics in original)

In other words, analyzing linguistic forms or properties of a language provides only half of what constitutes discourse. One also needs to take into consideration who is producing the discourse (i.e., the speaker) and where it is occurring (i.e., the context). An utterance, according to Bakhtin (1981, 1986), represents linguistic forms in a particular context produced by a specific person.

While others have commented on the social aspects of language and how they are manifested or inherent in discourse (Bourdieu, 1991; Hymes, 1972; Vološinov, 1973; Vygotsky, 1987), Bakhtin (1986) first signaled that discourse could be categorized and analyzed via genres. Specifically, he indicates that particular speech genres are characterized by the context in which speech is used and by the speaker(s) who produce(s) language. He argues that all linguistic utterances are produced within spheres of communication. While utterances in a particular language share common linguistic traits (e.g., bound by the same syntactical, phonological, and morphological constraints), many of them differ due to their thematic, stylistic, and compositional aspects (Bakhtin, 1986). These latter characteristics, when taken together, are what define distinct spheres of communication or speech genres. Bakhtin indicates that “each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances” (1986, p. 60, italics in original). These utterances that are commonly used and produced in particular contexts are what Bakhtin calls speech genres.

Speech genres represent language that is typically produced by interlocutors in particular contexts. For example, speech that is produced in a religious environment (e.g., a church) will likely have linguistic characteristics that reflect the formal nature of talk.
that is normally produced in that context. That is, religious talk is partially bound by the context in which it is spoken and by the person producing the language. Similarly, speech that is produced between a husband and wife over lunch in their home will reflect the informal nature of the context in which the interaction is being carried out and the relationship between the two speakers. Bakhtin (1986) indicates that speech genres such as these may differ depending on a speaker’s individual style of communication and on a variety of other factors, such as the tone of a conversation or the relationship between the speakers. However, these communicative exchanges still have characteristics that are similar across contexts and thereby allow one to objectively study the language being produced within each speech genre.

While many of Bakhtin’s views of language fall outside the scope of this study, his conceptualization of what makes up discourse along with his analyses of speech genres contribute to the way in which discourse is understood in the particular context being investigated here—a L2 literature classroom. His work with speech genres helps to frame the way in which discourse between an instructor and her students is analyzed in this study. In other words, this research project seeks a thorough understanding of the utterances typical of one speech genre—talk produced in a L2 literature classroom.

**Classroom talk**

Given that spoken discourse is comprised of the linguistic elements of a language produced by a speaker in a given context, the environment affects the way in which discourse is created and maintained. Research focusing on talk that is produced in a classroom context has yielded insights about a variety of variables that work together to affect the way in which meaning is socially constructed between instructor and students. While research investigating talk has provided a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of discourse between instructors and students in L1 classroom contexts (Cazden, 2001; Hellermann, 2005; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995;
Miller, 2003; Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003), recent research on talk in L2 classrooms has also made similar contributions. Investigations about the nature of classroom talk in L2 classrooms have included issues such as anxiety (Frantzen & Magnan, 2005; Young, 1992), students’ perceptions of recasts (Morris & Tarone, 2003; Takahashi, 2007), equality and symmetry in dialogues (van Lier, 1998), students’ motivations (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994), pedagogical concerns (Antón, 1999; Hall, 1995, 1998) theoretical perspectives (Kern, 2003; Mantero, 2006), and assessment techniques (Antón, 2003; Poehner, 2005; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005), among other areas.

What binds all of these studies together is a basic understanding that language used between instructors and students in a classroom context is fundamentally different when compared to talk that occurs outside of the classroom. That is, language is at the center of all interactions in the classroom. Meaning is born out of social interactions between all participants in this context and talk is essential to the way in which learners build knowledge about the subject being studied (Zuengler & Cole, 2005). In other words, knowledge is socially constructed from interactions between instructors and students. In the formal context of the L2 classroom, language is both the mode by which instructors and students interact as well as the goal of the learning activity—acquiring the L2 (Swain, 1997). As such, oral interaction in L2 contexts acts as a cognitive tool to mediate human cognition (Vygotsky, 1987) in the form of language learning.

Language use in the classroom is not a simple tool for the communication of information, rather, it “involves complex social, cultural, political, cognitive, and linguistic processes and contexts—all of which are part of the meaning and significance of . . . using language” (Bloome, Power Carter, Morton Christian, Otto, & Shueart, 2005). However, many of these facets of talk in the classroom (e.g., social and cognitive aspects) are enacted and realized via interactions between instructor and student. Within the classroom context, instructors and students mutually construct knowledge about what is being studied while they simultaneously create the context for learning. Through oral
interactions instructors and students build an understanding about who says what, when, and how. It is through oral interactions that instructors and students establish their roles and relationships within the classroom (Hall & Walsh, 2002). This ongoing development of each speaker’s role in the classroom is created out of the frequency and quality of student opportunities to participate in classroom discussions with their instructors.

In traditional L2 classrooms, as in L1 classroom contexts, instructors assume a great deal of control over the kinds of interactions that develop with and among their students in their courses. Instructors make a number of decisions about how discourse unfolds in their classrooms. Many of these decisions are made in advance (e.g., lesson planning), whereas others are addressed while the discourse is unfolding in class discussions. Guided by the idea that students learn more by doing (Lee & VanPatten, 2003), communicative language teaching theories and methodologies along with current textbook activities have somewhat mitigated the oral dominance of the instructor by providing students a greater role in actively participating in classroom discourse. However, even when communicative methods and activities informed by socially oriented theories of SLA are made available, instructors ultimately determine how discourse develops and proceeds in their classes. In sum, instructors are the ones who decide who participates in classroom talk, how much, and when, as well as how the talk is structured.

Researchers have investigated how instructors’ decisions and the activities they implement in class affect the ways in which oral interactions in the L2 classroom are created, maintained and discouraged in a variety of classroom settings. In a recent study on L2 socialization issues in Spanish language classrooms, Hall (2004) analyzed the effects of a Spanish teacher’s interactions on her students’ developing oral ability over a nine-month period in a first-year high school Spanish class. She found that the way in which the teacher allowed her students to practice speaking over the course of an academic year was reduced to two activities—“listing and labeling of objects and
"concepts" and "lexical chaining" (Hall, 2004, pp.76–77). These two techniques resulted in students listing objects, ideas, or vocabulary words whenever prompted by the teacher. The repeated use of these two speaking activities throughout the course of the academic year resulted in students who were socialized into a community of oral practice that remained at a low level of cognitive and linguistic development. Hall (2004) concluded that because of the teacher’s almost exclusive reliance on uninteresting instructional routines, students in her class were not pushed to interact with her or with fellow students in the L2 in meaningful ways. In other words, the instructor’s pedagogical decisions about how to engage (or not engage) students in oral interaction constrained the way in which the students participated in the ongoing development of classroom talk.

In another recent study investigating L2 classroom talk, Ho (2006) examined how the social and cultural aspects inherent in Bruneian (a sultanate near Malaysia) society affect the pedagogical decisions made by English as a second language (ESL) teachers. While analyzing how ESL instructors interact with their students during whole-class discussions, Ho pointed to the impact of how Bruneian society conceptualizes the role of the typical classroom instructor on classroom talk. In Brunei, ESL instructors are viewed as people who are all knowing and whose role in the classroom is to transmit knowledge to students via recitation scripts (e.g., initiation-response-evaluation sequences) while rarely allowing students opportunities to dialogue with them or with each other in the classroom. Ho (2006) therefore indicated that classroom oral interactions between instructor and students in these contexts will often reflect the educational values espoused by the larger sociocultural structure in which the class or particular academic institution exists. Specifically, the pedagogical decisions made by the ESL instructor in her study with respect to oral interactions in the classroom were influenced by the Bruneian educational context in which she was teaching. This study illustrates how oral discourse between instructor and students inside the L2 classroom can be influenced by social and cultural forces at work outside of the classroom.
In addition to the work of Hall (1995, 1998, 2004) and Ho (2006), researchers have looked at various other pedagogical concerns that may affect how talk evolves between instructor and students in the context of L2 classrooms. One area that has seen considerable attention is that of teacher questions. Teacher questions in the L2 learning context have been researched, in some shape or form, since the 1960s. Some investigations have analyzed the effects of different kinds of questions such as the difference between display (Cazden, 2001) and referential questions (Long & Sato, 1983), the function of intonation when using tag questions (Ramírez & Romero, 2005), and information questions and clarification requests (Donato & Brooks, 2004), among other types. Although much of this research has yielded typologies of questions along with their resulting effects, some studies have focused on the use of teacher questions when embedded in specific interaction patterns.

Nassaji and Wells (2000) dissect the initiation, response, feedback (IRF) interaction sequence with respect to instructors initiating questions (I) and how instructors provide feedback (F), often in the form of a follow-up question, while reacting to students' responses (R). They indicate that although the first question posed to students can affect how students respond, the more important issue for teaching is the follow-up question that is asked in the third position of the IRF sequence. Specifically, they indicate that negotiatory questions (i.e., where the teachers do not know the answer to the question they pose) resulted in longer student responses. In contrast, they conclude that when instructors used known-information questions, students' answers were significantly shorter.

Working within a sociocultural theoretical perspective, McCormick and Donato (2000) propose that teacher questions should not take on the role of an elicitation device where instructors (who already know the answer to the questions they ask) elicit students' knowledge about the content of the discussion. Rather, they suggest that teacher questions need to be conceptualized as dynamic discursive tools that are used to build
collaboration and scaffold comprehension. Working within the same theoretical
paradigm, Hall (1995) and Hall and Verplaetse (2000) suggest that teachers’ questions
need not be questions that simply elicit a translation of vocabulary; rather, they need to be
embedded within a context that allows for students to engage in oral interactions that will
help push them to produce language that will ultimately aid in their L2 learning.

Other researchers have looked at the way in which native speaker (NS) instructors
differ from non-native speaker (NNS) instructors with respect to the kinds of questions
they employ in the follow-up move of the IRF sequence in whole-class discussions and
the effects of these questions on subsequent student discourse. Consolo (2000) found that
NS instructors in an English as a foreign language classroom provided more follow-up
moves when compared to NNS instructors. Overall, the NS instructors in her study
generated more student discussion. However, she also mentions that several other factors
may affect the amount and kind of oral discourse between teacher and student. Some of
these include: the methodology employed, the text or textbook used, the length of the
class session (e.g., 50 vs. 75 minutes), the overall goals of the instructor (e.g., reviewing
information from a larger lecture format or introducing new material), and the varying
proficiency levels of students in the same class (i.e., catering to a variety of students
whose L2 speaking abilities range from Novice to Intermediate High on the ACTFL
scale).

When taken together, these studies contribute to our understanding of how oral
interactions between instructor and students are created and maintained or, in contrast,
are in some way discouraged. Previous research also indicates that oral discourse in the
L2 classroom can be affected by a variety of factors both in and outside of the classroom
that ultimately shape how classroom talk evolves. However, one additional factor that
commonly influences the discourse created between instructor and student, thereby
affecting students’ ongoing development of their L2 speaking ability, has to do with the
The language-literature divide in college-level L2 instruction in the United States

Within many FL departments at post-secondary institutions throughout the United States in which both literature and basic language classes are offered, a division is created and maintained in the department between those who teach language courses and those who teach literature courses (Berman, 1996; Kern, 2002; Swaffar, 1999). Instructors teaching L2 literature tend to focus instruction primarily on the content of their courses, such as teaching students how to become critical thinkers of texts or getting them to understand the cultural and historical contexts in which literary works are conceived. For many L2 literature instructors, little time is devoted to providing opportunities for learners to develop their budding language skills (Byrnes, 2001). Similarly, instructors given the task of teaching beginning language courses concentrate more on the development of basic skills without presenting students sufficient opportunity to work with content or acquire analytical skills in the L2 such as critically analyzing authentic literary texts (Maxim, 2005).

These divergent teaching objectives and expectations placed on students in lower-level language courses and in upper-level literature courses have resulted in a divide in many FL departments. Davis (2000) attributes this current separatist mentality that exists in language departments to the creation of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in the late sixties. Prior to 1967, the Modern Language Association (MLA) was an organization equally dedicated to the teaching of literature as well as language(s). However, with the creation of ACTFL, the language teaching interests were segmented out from the MLA. From then on the MLA was and still continues to be known as an organization that focuses more on the research and teaching
of literature. Bernhardt (1995) and James (2000) affirm the effects of this momentous year on language and literature instruction. They suggest that an unintended consequence of the creation of ACTFL has been the division of labor that has become commonplace in many FL departments within universities and colleges throughout the United States.

Given the conflicting pedagogical objectives of instructors in lower-level language courses when compared to those of instructors of upper-level literature courses, students may encounter a gap in their L2 learning when they move from language- to literature-focused courses. After completing the lower-level language sequence (typically the first two years of coursework), students entering third-year courses (e.g., introductory L2 literature courses) find it difficult to understand and make sense of authentic L2 texts. Instructors teaching upper-level literature courses also commonly report that students are reluctant to speak in class (Kern, 2002). As a result, the pedagogical divide between lower-level language instruction and upper-level content-based instruction (e.g., L2 literature) in many FL departments in the United States has also given rise to a gulf in expectations of students’ performance between their last language course and their first literature course (Liskin-Gasparro, personal communication, December 13, 2006).

These two distinct contexts of learning, along with the divergent student expectations at each level, have prompted practitioners and researchers alike to think about and strive to articulate this gap in instruction. Some (Barrette & Paesani, 2004; Byrnes & Maxim, 2004) have proposed to address the language-literature divide by focusing on curricular reform. Similarly, others (Barnes-Karol, 2003) have suggested that we re-examine the kinds of students who are studying foreign languages and their reasons and expectations for language study. Barnes-Karol (2002) notes that the majority of undergraduate language learners in the United States do not pursue advanced-level coursework in language departments with the goal of specializing in L2 syntax or investigating a specific literary genre. Rather, many students choose to pursue a minor or double major in the FL to become proficient readers and speakers of a L2 while working
towards other academic and professional pursuits, such as careers in business, medicine, or law. In other words, continuing to emphasize the instruction and improvement of students’ linguistic skills in the L2 throughout the entire course sequence of language study (i.e., from lower-level courses through upper-level courses) would better ready students to use their L2 more effectively in their careers after graduating with their undergraduate degrees.

Although some FL departments have begun to address the language-literature divide by intermixing or spiraling lower-level language course objectives with those of upper-level content-based courses throughout the FL course sequence (Byrnes, 2002), research on how linguistic skills develop in upper-level classroom contexts is still lacking. Little research to date has focused on how ongoing skill development is accomplished in upper-level courses. Research in these upper-level contexts may help to inform SLA theories regarding how learners continue to develop their skills at advanced levels of acquisition. This kind of research may subsequently inform L2 pedagogies in content-based courses. Before reviewing research that looks at oral interactions in L2 literature classrooms, it is now necessary to examine how discourse is generally investigated and analyzed in L2 classroom contexts.

Analyzing oral discourse in the L2 classroom:

Macro-level analyses

Classroom interaction between instructor and students can be made up of a variety of patterns depending on a number of variables such as teaching style, topic of conversation, and L2 oral proficiency level of students. Interaction in the L2 language classroom, as we have seen, takes on an important role in that it is not only the tool through which learning takes place, but also the object of what is being learned or acquired (Swain, 1997). As such, interaction in the L2 classroom between students and their instructor fulfills several roles: (a) it provides input to learners; (b) it offers students
opportunities to produce output; and (c) it socializes students into their roles within the classroom. We also know that interactions in the L2 classroom serve to socialize students into understanding what counts as the official curriculum as well as inculcate in students ways of acting (or reacting) to the subject matter being studied (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Therefore, research indicates that the way in which an instructor interacts with her students in the L2 classroom can be powerful and influential with regard to how much language students are exposed to in addition to the way in which (and how much) students are able to freely practice and express themselves in the L2.

One of the most commonly studied interaction patterns found in the classroom is that of initiation, response, evaluation (IRE). Although frequently referred to as the recitation script or triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1990; Mehan, 1985), the IRE pattern is similar to the IRF (initiation, response, feedback) pattern in that it consists of three parts. However, the main difference between IRE and IRF sequences lies in the third turn. The IRE interaction pattern functions as follows: The instructor initiates the interaction by posing a question (I); a student is then typically expected to provide a response to the instructor’s question (R); the exchange ends with the instructor evaluating the response of the student by saying something such as Correct, Very good, or No, that’s not it (E). Thus, the instructor is the speaker in the interaction who is typically responsible for carrying out the first (initiation) and third (evaluation) turns of the exchange. The student is the participant responsible for the second turn (response) in the interaction pattern. Table 2.1 illustrates how teacher-student interaction typically unfolds within the IRE pattern.

The predetermined roles for both instructor and student within the IRE interaction pattern allow the instructor to act as an expert who guides or directs the interaction as she sees fit. Meanwhile, the student assumes a role that is dependent upon the instructor’s decisions about who participates when and how much interaction should take place between a particular student and the instructor. Therefore, the instructor’s role within the
IRE pattern is that of gatekeeper; that is, the person who controls the amount and type of interaction, input, or learning that takes place in the classroom (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Given these roles within the IRE interaction pattern, students’ ability to interact and respond in meaningful ways is dependent upon the opportunities given to them by the instructor.

TABLE 2.1 Sample IRE interaction pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>T</th>
<th></th>
<th>I</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>T: Entonces ¿qué pasa con el dueño de la mina? ¿Quién es el dueño de la mina? ¿Quién es? ¿Bueno, sí?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>T: So, what happens with the owner of the mine? Who is the owner of the mine? Who is it? Well, yes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S: Don Pedro.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>S: Don Pedro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T: Don Pedro—¡exactamente!</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T: Don Pedro—exactly!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The IRE pattern has been thoroughly investigated (Cazden, 2001; Hall, 1998; Mehan, 1979; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Nystrand, 1997; Wells, 1993). In general, it has been found to limit students from speaking freely about the topic at hand or having ample practice at using the language in extended discourse. Further results have shown that it does not allow for complex ways of communicating between student and instructor (Barnes, 1992). Others have suggested that the IRE sequence contributes to the asymmetrical discourse patterns typically found in language classrooms by preventing students from managing turn taking, developing the topic of conversations, or negotiating the direction of instruction (van Lier, 1998). In sum, the IRE pattern places the instructor at the center of oral activities in the language classroom and marginalizes students’ voices.
Given this analysis of the IRE pattern, some researchers have examined classroom discourse to investigate the presence and resulting effects of other kinds of interaction patterns between instructors and their students. Upon taking a closer look at the IRE pattern, Nassaji and Wells (2000) discovered that subtle changes to the third part of the IRE triadic exchange resulted in an increase in students’ participation in the discussion. The resulting discourse between instructor and student reflected more of a dialogic interaction, in contrast to an inquisitive session, such as that established by the IRE pattern. Specifically, Wells (1993) proposed a new pattern—Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF). As previously noted, the first two parts of the IRF exchange function as they do in the IRE sequence. Again, the instructor initiates the exchange (usually by asking a question) and then the student responds to the question. However, instead of evaluating students’ responses, instructors provide feedback. The feedback may include asking students to expand on their response by justifying or clarifying their opinions. Table 2.2 illustrates how teacher-student interaction typically unfolds within the IRF pattern.

TABLE 2.2 Sample IRF interaction pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Chapter 14. There is an important moment there. A lot of things happen here, right? For you all, what would be an important thing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Creo que cuando Ángel va y trata de ver a su familia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I think when Angel goes and tries to see his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y ¿por qué es importante?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>And why is it important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Porque él quiere visitar a su padre. Es un momento importante.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Because he wants to visit his father. It is an important moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Sí.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of Nassaji and Wells's (2000) conclusions is that the third part of the exchange in the traditional IRE sequence (i.e., evaluation) severely limits students' ability to respond in a meaningful way. In contrast, if the instructor provides the kind of feedback found in an IRF sequence, then students are afforded more meaningful opportunities to produce extended discourse. Nassaji and Wells (2000) also point out that the typical triadic exchange pattern found in classrooms is neither wholly good nor wholly bad. Decisions related to which pattern is used may simply depend on factors such as the activity being carried out, the interlocutors involved, or the purpose of the lesson.

While acknowledging that IRE and IRF interaction patterns are widely used in the L2 classroom and are therefore the most common ways in which instructors and students interact, some researchers have begun to argue for new pedagogical approaches to engage students in equitable, meaningful ways. Van Lier (1998) indicates that the third turn (feedback) in the IRF sequence has the possibility to lead students and instructors to "emancipatory forms of discourse" (p. 168). He suggests that instructors may be able to create discursive patterns of interaction between instructors and students when instructors ask meaningful questions in the feedback slot of the IRF pattern as suggested by Nassaji and Wells (2000). Van Lier (1998) argues that the IRF patterns (particularly the feedback slot) can act as a springboard that triggers conversations between instructors and students.
and promotes a shared inquiry rather than a question-and-answer session where the answer is already known by the instructor.

The kind of conversation that evolves out of discourse patterns that engage students on an equal footing with the instructor has the potential to lead to classroom interactions between instructor and students that are more symmetrical in nature. Van Lier (1998) indicates that issues such as equality and symmetry are at the heart of negotiation and the joint construction of talk between instructor and students in the language classroom. In addition, many of these same issues are also central components of socioculturally oriented language learning theories of SLA, which seek to discover specific points in discourse that represent the origin of how students cognitively attend to a specific grammatical form, idea, or concept. Macro-level analytical approaches that look at L2 oral discourse in this way are therefore not adequately equipped to capture these initial moments of language learning because they look at discourse from a broad view (e.g., IRE or IRF interaction sequences) and do not attempt to get underneath them to explore how the discourse takes on its shape. Research in this vein must therefore rely on micro-level analyses of oral discourse that are theoretically based on the construct of microgenesis.

Analyzing oral discourse in the L2 classroom:

Micro-level analyses

As we have seen, researchers employing macro-level analyses of oral interactions in L2 classrooms are able to consider various oral discourse patterns such as the previously mentioned IRE and IRF interaction sequences. Although macro-level analyses are helpful to observe features of oral discourse such as how and when the instructor assumes control of the discussion, the different types of questions being posed, or the length of student responses to instructors' questions, these analyses cannot entirely reveal the underlying forces that shape discourse in the classroom context. In particular, macro-
level analyses provide only part of the story of the inherent nature of this specialized kind
of talk. That is, a macro-level analysis offers an overall picture of the patterns of talk but
cannot fully examine any one episode and determine why it develops the way that it does.
More recently, researchers investigating classroom talk in L2 contexts are carrying out
fine-tuned analyses of talk between instructors and students and among students
themselves. These micro-level analyses of discourse have begun to offer a number of
insights about the multifaceted nature of L2 oral discourse in the classroom setting. In
contrast to macro-level views, micro-level analyses shed light on individual episodes and
offer insight into why patterns of talk evolve as they do. In sum, macro-level analyses
afford researchers breadth in their investigations while micro-level analyses offer depth.
When combined, these approaches allow for a thorough understanding of oral discourse
in the L2 classroom.

Before highlighting research that employs a micro-level analytical view of talk in
L2 classroom contexts, it is necessary to explain the theoretical construct from which
many finely tuned analyses originate. Werner (1956) is credited with introducing the term
microgenesis and described it as “any human activity such as perceiving, thinking, acting,
etc., is an unfolding process, and this unfolding, or microgenesis, whether it takes
seconds, or hours or days, occurs in developmental sequence” (p. 347, italics in original).
More recent interpretations of the construct have been offered by researchers influenced
by SCT perspectives of human cognition. Some have defined microgenesis as moments
in language learning that are principally “concerned with development over relatively
short time spans, as when . . . students internalize some aspect of a second language”
(Antón, DiCamilla, & Lantolf, 2003, p. 263). In other words, microgenesis represents the
theoretical moment when an idea or concept is born in the mind of the language learner.

Several microgenetic studies have been carried out that look at dyadic talk and its
role in L2 learning by attempting to pinpoint specific moments in the dialogue when
language learning takes place. Platt and Brooks (2002) adopt a microgenetic perspective
of L2 learning while investigating the construct of task engagement. The researchers analyzed transcripts of two separate dyads who were carrying out jigsaw tasks in their respective L2s (i.e., Swahili and Spanish). They were able to find particular moments in the transcripts of the dialogues of both pairs of learners when the participants collaboratively engaged in completing the jigsaw task. These moments, argue the researchers, represent the initial steps of internalization of L2 linguistic concepts, thereby suggesting that task engagement is a crucial part of L2 learning. Platt and Brooks conclude by citing Vygotsky (1978), who says that the microgenetic method of analysis allows the researcher to “grasp the process (of learning) in flight” (p. 68).

In sum, microgenetic analyses of data stem from Vygotsky’s (1978) ideas about the different domains of human cognitive investigation. The microgenetic domain of human cognition within Vygotsky’s SCT therefore represents development that occurs over short periods of time. An example of this kind of development in the L2 learning context is how learners first cognitively attend to linguistic concepts in the L2. Microgenesis thus provides the theoretical foundation on which micro-level analyses of discourse that are interpreted via SCT are based.

Recently, SLA researchers have made use of micro-level analyses of discourse to investigate learner talk in L2 classroom contexts. One such study that employs a micro-level analytical view of oral discourse in the L2 classroom is that by Mori (2002). In this study, the researcher closely analyzes students’ (i.e., American learners of Japanese) talk while they interact with a NS visitor in a Japanese language classroom. Although students had planned for the speaking activity well in advance, the actual exchange with the native Japanese speakers resembled an interview, with the students asking the questions and the NS of Japanese providing the answers when prompted. Mori’s fine-tuned analysis of the oral interaction between the two groups of speakers revealed that students’ spontaneous utterances throughout the course of the activity seemed to lead to more natural discussion when compared to what students had prepared in advance.
Mori’s (2002) micro-analytical perspective on the discourse in the classroom she studied leads her to suggest that the talk between the two groups in her study reflects the speakers’ perception of how classroom talk unfolds between NS visitors and NNS students in the L2 classroom. A macro-level analysis of the same transcripts would not have led to this kind of insightful examination of classroom talk. Furthermore, Mori’s (2002) study also indicates that certain tasks in the L2 classroom may reflect how speakers’ institutionalized view of talk within particular speaking activities will take precedence over the unfolding discourse regardless of the amount and kind of students’ pre-task planning.

Other studies have made use of specific kinds of micro-level analytical tools such as applied conversation analysis (CA). CA is a technique that analyzes discourse based on transcripts of the interactions between interlocutors and nothing more. The pure applications of CA suggest that meaning is found only within the transcripts themselves and that there is no need to talk to the participants directly or to triangulate the data by carrying out interviews or stimulated recall sessions. It is, in a sense, an inductive, atheoretical approach to investigating discourse.

Lazaraton’s (2004) study employs CA to understand an oral exchange between a nonnative ESL teacher and one of her students. The researcher analyzes a particular section of the transcript from a whole-class discussion and looks at how a nonnative ESL instructor teaching in a university setting responds to a student’s question about cheddar cheese. While justifying the use of CA, Lazaraton (2004) explains that the purpose of CA “is to discover the systematic properties of the sequential organization of talk and the social practices that are displayed by and embodied in talk-in-interaction” (p. 52). Although Lazaraton concludes that the nonnative ESL instructor provided a rather normal explanation of cheddar cheese for one of her students in the class, the contribution of her article is its detailed explanation of the benefits and drawbacks of using CA to analyze discourse in a classroom context.
Lazaraton’s (2004) rigorous application of CA is an example of how this micro-level analytical technique affords the researcher (and reader) a finely tuned analysis of discourse without allowing any predetermined ideas or notions about the talk and/or the interlocutors to enter into the analysis. Therefore, the benefit of CA is that it can take ordinary conversations and make them extraordinary. The way in which Lazaraton (2004) uses CA in her study suggests that it can be effective at deconstructing conversation to go beyond the surface level of words and turns to get at what lies beneath. Closely analyzing classroom discourse in the context of this dissertation research (i.e., whole-class discussions between instructor and her students in a L2 literature classroom) will be similar to the analyses that were carried out by Lazaraton (2004) and Mori (2002). However, additional data sources will also be used to triangulate the data and gain multiple perspectives on oral interactions between instructor and her students (see Chapter 3 Methodology for more). By examining particular moments of whole-class discussions, it is hoped that an understanding of talk-in-interaction in the L2 literature class context will be gained.

**Origins of learning: Affordances**

Although researchers investigating language learning from a SCT perspective view microgenesis as the theoretical point at which learners invest their attentional resources to acquire a L2, others (Darhower, 2008; Miller, 2005; van Lier, 2000, 2004) have proposed similar constructs that attempt to capture this particular moment of learning. Borrowing from Gibson (1979), van Lier (2004) defines the concept of *affordance* as “a relationship between an organism (a learner, in our case) and the environment that signals an opportunity for or inhibition of action” (p. 4). Although the construct of affordance is similar to microgenesis in that it offers the learner the opportunity to take further action in the context of his/her learning (e.g., understanding a grammatical structure or acquiring a vocabulary word), it is different from microgenesis
because it may also inhibit the learner from further understanding a concept. Van Lier (2000) goes on to explain that “an affordance affords further action (but does not cause or trigger it). What becomes an affordance depends on what the organism does, what it wants, and what is useful for it” (p. 252). An affordance, in an ecological sense, is like a flower in the context of a meadow. A human being may appreciate the flower for its aesthetic appeal and may cut it and display it in a vase. An insect might view it as a place of refuge during a heavy rain. A deer might see it as a source of food and eat its petals for nourishment. What remains unchanged are the physical characteristics of the flower and the context in which it exists. However, van Lier (2004) would suggest “that different properties are perceived and acted upon by different organisms” (p. 252).

In a similar way, language learners in a L2 classroom perceive utterances (e.g., the flower in the example above) differently and act on those perceptions in diverse ways in the context of a L2 classroom (e.g., the meadow in the previous example). That is, active learners who are engaged in activities in the classroom will perceive affordances and either use them to their advantage or ignore them. If the former occurs, then this can lead to further linguistic action by the learner himself/herself and/or by extended interaction(s) with the instructor.

Part of what is being investigated in this dissertation focuses on the affordance structures that allow for the emergence of specific types of affordances in whole-class discussions in a L2 literature classroom. It focuses on how the instructor co-constructs affordance structures with individual students in the context of whole-class discussion, thereby providing particular kinds of affordances to the rest of the students in the class, and how all participants perceive what is going on at specific moments in the discussion. As such, this study closely examines the affordance structures and the affordances that emerge in whole-class discussions via micro-level analysis. Before carrying out an in-depth review of the literature related to the affordance construct, it is first necessary to
understand how ecological views and socially based theories of language learning have developed over time.

The cognitive vs. social debate

As previously discussed, the field of SLA has witnessed a proliferation of theories and models since theory building began some four decades ago, and these theories have been adopted and used by researchers to explain the complex nature of language acquisition. Some (Long, 1997) have argued for a culling of theoretical approaches, advocating that carrying out research within one particular perspective will lead to a deeper understanding of SLA versus advancing multiple theoretical agendas that would slow the progress of the field as a whole. Others believe that inherent difficulties within the field are born out of the competing ontologies or “parallel worlds” (Zuengler & Miller, 2006, p. 35), in which distinct views about what constitutes SLA are in opposition. Recent debates (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007) have shown how this epistemological dissonance has resulted in dichotomous theoretical views (e.g., cognitively oriented vs. socially oriented research paradigms, competence vs. performance, langue vs. parole) of what represents language learning and corresponding methodological approaches (e.g., quantitative vs. qualitative, macro-level vs. micro-level analyses).

Firth and Wagner (1997) argued that the field of SLA has been dominated by a primarily cognitive orientation since the early 1980s. Given that cognitively oriented theoretical views in SLA assume that language acquisition is essentially something that happens inside the brain without much attention given to the social and contextual factors in which language learning takes place, Firth and Wagner (1997) asserted that SLA researchers and scholars have a skewed view of L2 acquisition. They stated that the predominance of cognitively oriented theories in SLA, along with the theoretical assumptions that are embedded within those views, have limited what we know about
language learning. They called for a broadening of the SLA field to encompass research that employed socially oriented theories that investigated social and contextual factors which, they asserted, were equally important to consider in addition to the mental processes taking place inside a language learner’s brain. In other words, they sought through their essay to expand the theoretical landscape of SLA by reconceptualizing how we view and research such concepts as *learner, native speaker,* and *situated learning,* among various other constructs and ways of thinking.

The Firth and Wagner (1997) debate has stirred the field of SLA in many ways in the decade since its publication. An example of its effect can be seen in the 2007 Focus Issue of *The Modern Language Journal.* The volume puts forth work that indicates how Firth and Wagner (1997) has affected the field and has led to an expansion in SLA research areas to include acquisition in multilingual contexts (Canagarajah, 2007; Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007), investigating SLA via more socially oriented theories of acquisition (Swain & Deters, 2007), incorporating sociolinguistic approaches and concepts (Block, 2007; Tarone, 2007), and articulating how SLA research can inform pedagogy and teacher education (Freeman, 2007; Lantolf & Johnson, 2007; Mori, 2007).

As socially based theories are used to explain how acquisition happens in a variety of contexts, new constructs are put forth that attempt to break away from a purely cognitivist view of SLA. Specifically, metaphorical terms such as *input* and *output* may perpetuate the notion that language learning is an information processing-oriented endeavor that happens irrespective of the context in which it takes place. In other words, the input-output metaphor commonly used in cognitivist approaches to SLA is one “in which mind and brain are seen as the ‘containers’ of both learning processes and learning products” (van Lier, 2000, p. 257). In the context of a L2 classroom, the input-output metaphor would view an instructor’s (i.e., ideally a native speaker’s) job as one in which language knowledge is imparted to the learners via input. From this perspective, the instructor is seen as an all-knowing source of L2 knowledge and the learner is often cast
as an isolated recipient whose brain processes the input and at some later point in time enables the learner to produce output (e.g., oral or written discourse). As a result, a continuous input-output-input processing loop is created, thereby resulting in the end product of acquisition. As one can see, the input-output metaphor of language learning rarely considers the social and contextual factors (e.g., power, intimidation, the role of participant identities) that are present in many formal (i.e., L2 classrooms) and naturalistic language learning settings.

While the input-output metaphor has contributed much to our understanding of SLA, and its various components and processes continue to be investigated (Ellis, 2003; Gass, 2003; Pienemann, 2003; VanPatten, 2004), it is still viewed by many as problematic in that its constructs (e.g., input) are reductionistic and fail to adequately account for the social and contextual factors that are inherent in all language learning environments or situations. Seeking to go beyond a cognitively oriented theoretical view of SLA, some researchers (Antón, DiCamilla, & Lantolf, 2003; de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Hellermann, 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Mori, 2007; Tarone, 2007; van Lier, 2004) have advocated additional ways of viewing and researching language learning. Many have looked to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987), while others have drawn on ecological views of psychology (Gibson, 1979; Neisser, 1993) to adapt and apply theoretical constructs that were originally investigated and used in other disciplines (e.g., cognitive psychology) to L2 learning contexts. One such construct is that of affordance.

Ecological views of language learning and the affordance construct

Affordance was first introduced in the SLA literature by van Lier (2000). Since then, van Lier (2004) has continued to argue for a reconceptualization of what constitutes language learning, challenging the input-output metaphor represented by a cognitivist
Van Lier (2000) advocates that an ecological approach to language learning challenges three premises on which cognitivist views of SLA are based:

First, it shifts the emphasis from scientific reductionism to the notion of emergence. Instead of assuming that every phenomenon can be explained in terms of simpler phenomena or components, it says that at every level of development properties emerge that cannot be reduced to those of prior levels. Second, ecology says that not all of cognition and learning can be explained in terms of processes that go on inside the head. Finally, an ecological approach asserts that the perceptual and social activity of the learner, and particularly the verbal and nonverbal interaction in which the learner engages, are central to an understanding of learning. In other words, they do not just facilitate learning, they are learning in a fundamental way. (p. 246, italics in original)

The three main differences between an ecological view of language learning and that of a cognitivist perspective are important to understand before examining how the affordance construct was manifested in the classroom discourse of the Latin American literature course under investigation in this study. Van Lier’s (2000) first idea aptly reflects the kind of work carried out by researchers using a sociocultural theoretical framework. Specifically, socioculturalists examine microgenesis via microanalyses. As we have seen, microgenesis represents key moments in language learning when the learner is beginning to acquire knowledge about a specific aspect of the L2. These moments are complex in that they emerge from a multitude of connections between learner and expert (or learner and learner), the prior talk, the task, the collaborative relationship between the two speakers, among other variables. An ecological view, in contrast to a cognitivist perspective, attempts to understand that which emerges from the moment rather than analyze separately the different variables that underlie the moment. Therefore, sociocultural and ecological views are similar in that they investigate specific moments to understand how language learning emerges in a particular context and with certain participants. Finally, it is also important to note that researchers working in ecological or sociocultural paradigms rarely look at learning over long periods of time.
The second difference mentioned by van Lier (2000) in the excerpt cited above states that from an ecological view, cognition and learning cannot completely be explained by what happens inside a learner's brain. In other words, the social context in which language learning happens is also a factor that needs to be considered when explaining SLA processes. This idea was also shared by Vygotsky (1987), who stated that all development happens twice; first in a social realm (termed the interpsychological plane), and eventually moving inward via internalization to an internal sphere (termed the intrapsychological plane). While language learning from this perspective does not negate mental processes that occur inside a learner's brain, it does account for the role in learning that is played by the social world in which those processes originate.

The final premise articulated by van Lier (2000) suggests that an ecological view incorporates aspects such as perception and gestures used by the participants in any given language learning context and views them as integral components to consider when investigating the language learning process. Research within cognitivist paradigms rarely considers perception or paralinguistic cues when analyzing acquisition. As previously stated, analyzing talk in whole-class discussions in this dissertation partly relies on how participants perceive what is happening during particular interactions with the instructor during whole-class discussions. These perceptions help to understand how the talk unfolds and gives rise (or not) to affordances.

Given the above understanding of language learning and how it contrasts with traditional cognitivist views in SLA, van Lier (2000) goes on to explain how an ecological perspective views the learner, who "is immersed in an environment full of potential meanings. These meanings become available gradually as the learner acts and interacts within and with this environment." (p. 246). From this perspective, we can see that the learner is not someone who enters into the L2 classroom intending to take in input to eventually produce output in the L2. Rather, the student is one of many organisms in a diverse classroom ecology where various factors (e.g., social,
psychological, and individual characteristics of the participants) are all interconnected and affect each other. In other words, language learning is not a lone endeavor that happens inside the brains of learners. Rather, language learning in a L2 classroom relies on the interconnections between participants within a social environment. It is important to note here that ecological approaches and Vygotskian sociocultural views of language learning do not seek to replace cognitivist views of SLA, but do attempt to connect cognitive processes with social processes. One of the central components of an ecological view of language learning is affordance.

Van Lier (2000) first borrowed the term *affordance* from the ecological psychologist James Gibson. According to Gibson (1979), affordances are embedded within an environment/ecosystem. Gibson stated that affordances are “what [the environment] offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill” (1979, p. 127, italics in original). He goes on to say that an animal’s awareness and perception of the affordances in the environment play a vital role when determining whether an affordance is helpful or not to the animal or if the animal makes use of it at all. As such, Gibson’s (1979) definition views affordances as characteristics that are part of the environment and is something that is picked up and used by an animal based on its perception of its usefulness to the animal at a particular moment.

Van Lier (2004) further clarifies Gibson’s (1979) definition and explains that affordances are not solely a feature found in an environment. Rather, affordances are born out of the interactions between an organism and its environment. Van Lier (2004) goes on to articulate how his view of affordance relates to language learning. He says that “the affordance perspective assumes an active learner establishing relationships with and within the environment. In terms of language learning, affordances arise out of participation and use, and learning opportunities arise as a consequence of participation and use” (Auyang, 2000, as cited in van Lier, 2004, p. 92). From an ecological view, a successful language learner wields a certain amount of agency over his/her environment.
It is out of a learner's social activity and awareness by which affordances arise in language learning contexts. These affordances are what can lead to participation and use and ultimately result in language learning. However, it is also important to note here that an affordance affords further action, but it does not cause or trigger it (van Lier, 2004). In other words, the value of an affordance is partly determined by how a participant perceives it and this affects his or her decision whether to make use of it or not at that particular moment.

Van Lier (2004) proposes that affordances may exist in four distinct levels in any given language learning environment. A first-level affordance is considered by van Lier to be “a direct (unmediated) relationship between an organism and some quality or property in its environment” (2004, p. 100). In the context of a L2 classroom, first-level affordances could be such linguistic features as voice quality, prosody, and gestures (van Lier, 2004). The L2 classroom/environment offers an abundance of potential affordances that may or may not be acted upon by the learner. This could also include all of the language that surrounds the learner in the L2 classroom, but he/she does not pick up on it or use it in any particular way. A second-level affordance is characterized as a “deliberate act of focusing attention, of noticing a linguistic feature . . . and may follow a first-level affordance . . . entering into new acts of making meaning” (van Lier, 2004, p. 100). Therefore, a second-level affordance is different from a first-level affordance in that the learner is more aware and engaged with the environment and notices linguistic features of the L2. A third-level affordance, in addition to noticing a linguistic feature, is characterized by a certain amount of active control of awareness that is present between the learner and the environment. An example of a third-level affordance is the ability to play or manipulate a linguistic expression “perhaps in story telling, acting out and acting up, creating puns, imitating others, and so on” (van Lier, 2004, p. 101). Finally, a fourth-level affordance adds a “critical perspective, in which the social and political aspects of
language are examined, including the use and abuse of power, the manufacture of public opinion, deception and moral use, and so on” (van Lier, 101–102).

Underlying van Lier’s (2004) four-level categorization of affordances and awareness is the important component of learner engagement. Learner engagement, according to van Lier, affects which first-level (potential) affordances become second-level or higher affordances. In other words, if learners are actively engaged in a L2 classroom (or in any other language learning environment or situation), then it is more likely that they will make use of the linguistic affordances in their environment (i.e., moving an affordance along through the four different levels) and use them for linguistic action.

At an abstract level, the affordance construct is attractive to many scholars carrying out research within socially oriented SLA theoretical paradigms. As we have seen, language learning that occurs out of the affordances in a given environment is a much different process than that which takes place by means of the input-output metaphor. Specifically, inherent in the affordance construct is the notion that language learning is not an isolated activity that happens as a result of the right amount and kind of input provided to learners. Rather, acquisition is a dynamic process that mandates that the learner be an active participant in the language learning environment and that he/she interact with other participants so as to notice and make use of the affordances in a particular setting.

While the idea of affordance is intriguing on a theoretical level within an ecological view of language learning, it has only begun to be discussed in the SLA literature, and researchers have found it difficult to define and examine empirically. As of this dissertation research, only two studies have attempted to operationalize the affordance construct in a L2 context. Miller (2005) defined affordances as feedback cycles between learner and instructor in the classroom via collaborative discourse. The feedback cycles that are established in a particular classroom are eventually able to
function on their own, thereby allowing learners to regulate their developing L2 writing abilities. Out of this self-regulation comes the ability of ESL learners to perceive and act on affordances to continue improving their writing abilities. Miller put forth the idea that through the construct of affordance, one can unite input, interaction, and output. Specifically, she indicated that feedback is a kind of input that the learner interacts with in order to change his/her writing via revisions. She also offered an analysis of two classrooms in her dissertation study; one of which was characterized as having an affordance-rich environment whereas the other was deemed as having an affordance-constrained environment. Miller described the affordance-rich environment as one in which there is organization, several feedback loops, and an abundance of learner agency.

Darhower's (2008) study analyzes the role of linguistic affordances in the context of a telecollaborative text-based chat. He defines linguistic affordance as “any discursive move that provides linguistic information to a learner, or that intends or appears to activate a learner’s awareness of specific language structures and/or lexical meaning.” His study analyzes the chat logs between native Spanish speakers and non-native Spanish learners as they addressed nine chat topics over a period of nine weeks. In short, Darhower provides examples in his study when native Spanish speakers provide linguistic affordances that are intended (or not) to pique learners’ awareness of various linguistic features of Spanish. Darhower outlines native speaker- and non-native speaker-generated linguistic affordances. Sample linguistic affordances determined by Darhower in his study include the following: checking comprehension, clarifying non-comprehension, providing information, providing translation, providing word meaning, reformulating implicitly, requesting help, requesting translation, using L1, among others. Darhower suggests that the chat environment may not be the ideal linguistic and social context for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances. He concludes that the text-based chat environment has the potential to provide language learners with various linguistic affordances (especially when interacting with native Spanish speakers).
However, the chat environment is also limiting in that other characteristics of virtual interaction (e.g., the creation of online social identities) may inhibit learners’ perception of linguistic affordances. As a result, learners may not become aware of the affordances, or they might also choose to ignore them in the chat environment.

While Miller’s (2005) and Darhower’s (2008) studies represent initial attempts to operationalize the affordance construct by investigating it within two different contexts (i.e., ESL writing courses and in text-based chat environments between Spanish native speakers and Spanish learners), both consider affordances to be similar to feedback. Specifically, both studies view affordances as the help that is provided by an instructor (in the case of Miller, 2005) or by a native speaker (in the case of Darhower, 2008) to learners. Miller’s (2005) work equates affordance to the feedback ESL students get on their written work from their instructors. This interpretation, at a theoretical level, appears to link affordance closely to feedback. This is problematic because feedback is commonly viewed as being part of a linear progression in learning. Specifically, the role of feedback in many writing contexts is to provide learners with information that will then somehow affect some kind of change. For example, in the context of an ESL writing class, a student (a) composes something, (b) gets feedback from the instructor, and (c) uses the feedback to revise the document and create a final product. Affordance described in this way (i.e., feedback) is viewed as a necessary component within a linear progression: A (composition of student) → B (affordance/feedback from instructor) → C (revisions to create a written product). Similarly, Darhower (2008) defined affordances as how both native speakers and non-native speakers provide linguistic cues to each other while interacting in a text-based chat. Moves that included such linguistic actions as checking for comprehension, providing the definitions for words, or reformulating another’s utterances (among others) were all defined as linguistic affordances. Darhower’s (2008) operationalization is unable to reveal the dynamic way in which
affordances emerge in discourse and (similar to Miller, 2005) likens them to feedback as part of a linear sequence of learning.

Therefore, this dissertation study looks to contribute to the nascent research in this area by offering another interpretation of affordance in the context of whole-class discussions in an undergraduate Latin American Colonial literature classroom. It hopes to move beyond a linear view of affordance by empirically demonstrating its dialectic nature and show how it materializes out of interactions between participants. While the operationalization of affordance in the context of this dissertation is presented in Chapter 5, it is now necessary to summarize the theoretical assumptions that are inherent in an ecological perspective on language learning. They are:

- Language learning is made up of both cognitive and social processes.
- Examining language learning without taking into consideration the social context in which it occurs only allows for a partial understanding of acquisition.
- All L2 environments are imbued with a wealth of potential affordances.
- Affordances emerge from the interaction between learners and their L2 environments.
- Learner engagement plays an important role in determining the usefulness of affordances in a given environment.

Analyzing discourse in the L2 literature classroom

Although both macro- and micro-level analyses of oral discourse in the L2 classroom have provided researchers and practitioners with a better understanding of the many components that make up this kind of specialized talk, research has generally focused on the L2 language classroom. Much of the SLA research on students’ speaking ability has been carried out primarily in lower-level language courses where the primary goal of instruction focuses on language development rather than on content knowledge.
(e.g., literary genres, cultural and historical perspectives). Until recently, research investigating oral discourse in upper-level, L2 literature classrooms had received scant consideration.

A closer look at the research literature reveals that recent studies carried out in college-level L2 literature classrooms have predominantly focused on L2 reading skill development (Bernhardt, 1995; Brown, 1999; Kern, 1994, 2000). Several of these studies have investigated issues such as how learners deconstruct, decode, and understand cultural differences and nuances in an authentic text written in the L2 (Kramsch, 1993). Other studies have focused on the accompanying metacognitive or metalinguistic processes and strategies typically employed by learners while reading literature in their L2 (Amor, 1994). In this sense, research conducted in the L2 literature classroom has primarily focused on the developing skill of L2 reading. Along with L2 reading research, L2 writing research carried out in literature classes has also received attention (Kauffmann, 1996).

As previously noted, research in the L2 literature classroom has rarely focused on students’ speaking ability or on the role of whole-class discussions on students’ understanding of the texts they are reading. While there is a dearth of information about the role of speaking on students’ learning in upper-level content-based L2 contexts, some researchers are beginning to articulate the gap between language and literature courses in FL departments by investigating how students continue to develop their speaking skills in L2 literature courses.

Donato and Brooks’s (2004) study represents initial attempts to better understand facets of oral discourse between instructor and students in a L2 literature context at the college level. The researchers examined transcripts of discussions between instructor and students in an advanced Spanish literature course to understand how these discussions allow students the opportunity to produce paragraph-length narrative and descriptive discourse characteristic of proficiency at the Advanced level on the ACTFL scale.
(Breiner-Sanders, Lowe, Jr., Miles, & Swender, 2000). Macro-level analyses revealed
that students rarely had opportunities to speak in turns longer than a single sentence and,
therefore, not at the Advanced proficiency level due to the instructor not capitalizing on
discourse openings in whole-class discussions with her students. That is, Donato and
Brooks (2004) suggest that the instructor did not allow students to continue to talk or
further articulate their views during the course of whole-class discussions and this is why
many of the student turns resulted in a single sentence in length.

Furthermore, the researchers indicate that the instructor in their study relied
heavily on an IRE interaction pattern, thereby limiting students’ opportunities to
participate actively in the literary discussions. Donato and Brooks (2004) suggest that to
allow students to develop levels of oral proficiency in upper-level contexts such as L2
literature courses, literature instructors need to be aware of when to allow students to
participate in whole-class discussions and “should make speaking expectations . . . clear
to students and . . . monitor student language use during discussions” (p. 183). This study
also indicates a mismatch between instructor expectations of student talk in upper-level
L2 literature classrooms and the reality of the limited occasions given to students to
further develop their ongoing L2 speaking abilities. Finally, the researchers conclude that
there is a “critical need for more research into the literary discussion and relationship to
developing functional language abilities at the advanced level” (p. 196).

In an earlier study, Mantero (2002) analyzes whole-class discussions between
instructor and students in a Spanish literature classroom at the college level. While
incorporating several different theoretical frameworks and rubrics into his overall
analysis of classroom talk, he found that students and instructor in the study engaged in
discourse that was fairly scripted. Specifically, macro-level analyses of classroom talk
revealed that students never posed a question in whole-class discussions during the
course of the semester-long Spanish literature course. This lack of student-initiated
questioning led to the instructor dominating classroom talk while posing questions to students that did not result in extended discourse between instructor and student.

Guided by an interactionist SLA theoretical perspective, Zyzik and Polio (2008) investigate the discourse between instructors and students in upper-level Spanish literature classrooms to analyze when and how often speakers focused on L2 linguistic forms (e.g., grammatical concerns) while talking about literary works. Over the course of a 15-week college semester, they discovered that instructors and students rarely addressed language-related concerns in classroom talk. Furthermore, instead of explicitly correcting students' grammatical errors during whole-class discussions, instructors overwhelmingly relied on recasts to keep the conversation focused on meaning. Survey results also indicated that both instructors and students were aware that students' speaking skills were lacking, limiting the manner and degree in which students participated in whole-class discussions. Finally, they found that although students had language-related goals upon enrolling in the Spanish literature course, the participating instructors did not report that students' linguistic development (e.g., speaking ability) was an intended course goal.

Zyzik and Polio's (2008) work, along with the Mantero (2002) and Donato and Brooks (2004) studies, are helpful in that they represent efforts to understand the nature of oral discourse in upper-level L2 literature classrooms. The results indicate that instructors dominate whole-class discussions while rarely allowing students to participate in meaningful discourse. When students do participate in discussions, it is usually in response to the instructor when allowed or prompted to do so. Finally, all three studies suggest that students' and instructors' goals for a literature course are often inconsistent with each other. Instructors typically do not focus on language-related issues and concentrate more on the literary content of the course. On the other hand, some students enter these courses seeking to improve areas of their L2 ability in addition to their content-related goals.
While the above studies provide some insight into the way in which oral discourse between instructor and students is created, maintained, or discouraged in L2 literature classrooms, much remains to be understood about oral interactions in this particular context. First and foremost, all of the above studies relied primarily on macro-level analyses to investigate L2 oral discourse. No research study to date has applied a micro-level analytical view of whole-class discussions between instructor and students in a L2 literature classroom. Carrying out a fine-tuned analysis of the way in which classroom interaction is created between instructor and student may help to shed new light on the way in which speaking is promoted, hindered, or co-constructed in this particular context. By employing this close view of discourse between instructor and students, this dissertation research hopes to reveal any underlying forces (e.g., student and instructor perceptions of classroom talk) that contribute to the shape of whole-class discussions.

As we have already seen in previous studies (Hall, 2004; Lazaraton, 2004; Mori, 2002), micro-level analyses of oral discourse in the L2 classroom have helped researchers understand the role of interaction in the processes of L2 acquisition. Given that interaction is a crucial component within many theoretical approaches and models of SLA, it is necessary to examine how interaction between instructor and students in a L2 literature classroom manifests itself in addition to its possible effects on students’ developing L2 ability. Before interaction in the L2 literature context is investigated in this study, it is necessary to take a closer look at the role of interaction in language learning from various SLA theoretical viewpoints.

The role of interaction in second language acquisition:

Input and interactionist theoretical perspectives

Over the course of the last 30 years, SLA research has, in some form or another, investigated the role of interaction in the process of language acquisition. Depending on the theoretical perspective, interaction is viewed as either being a crucial and necessary
component that facilitates language learning or one that has a more limited function. Given the multiple interpretations of the construct of interaction used in SLA research throughout its relatively short history, it is necessary to articulate how these perspectives are similar and how they differ and, more importantly, which perspective will be assumed in this research project. What follows is a description of the prominent theoretical views in SLA that focus on interaction in L2 acquisition. This brief overview will illustrate how the role of interaction is conceptualized differently within the theoretical perspectives outlined below.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the field of SLA was influenced by research utilizing information-processing models of language learning. The work of Krashen (1982, 1985) put forth the idea that language acquisition occurs when learners are presented with input. One of Krashen’s central hypotheses of language acquisition, The Input Hypothesis, suggests that if learners are presented with input that is comprehensible, they will then effectively acquire the language under study. Krashen defined comprehensible input as language that is heard or read and is slightly ahead of a learner’s current state of interlanguage development (Krashen, 1985). Given this hypothesis, researchers working within this particular theoretical paradigm assert that the role of interaction (e.g., the interaction between an instructor and his student) is to provide comprehensible input. From this theoretical perspective, the main purpose of interactions between teacher and learner is that one interlocutor (e.g., the instructor) feeds the other (e.g., a learner) input. The consumer of this input (again, the learner) therefore acquires language by taking in the input that is given to her. In short, interaction from this theoretical point of view functions as a way in which instructors or native speakers of a L2 supply learners with ample amounts of comprehensible input.

The theoretical work of Krashen (1982) prompted other researchers to expand on his original hypotheses about the nature and role of input in L2 acquisition. Some focused on the interaction between interlocutors and put forward ideas about how adjustments or
modifications to these interactions affected the kind of input being provided to learners. Long’s (1981, 1983) work expanded Krashen’s ideas of input and suggested that one way interlocutors make input comprehensible is through a variety of interactional modifications. He proposed that when a learner signals a lack of comprehension when interacting with the input provider (e.g., the instructor), the instructor is able to modify the way in which he is expressing an idea or naming an object to provide input to the learner that the learner can understand. Some of these modifications are themselves interactional in nature, such as confirmation and comprehension checks, clarification requests, reformulations, topic-focused and elaborated questions, and recasts (Long, 1981). As a result of the modifications, the learner is better able to comprehend the input, which promotes L2 acquisition. Long’s (1996) more recent work provides additional details about how interlocutors interact or negotiate for meaning and how this particular kind of interaction facilitates L2 acquisition.

Although the work of Long (1996) includes an interaction hypothesis that offers an explanation of SLA, he, like Krashen, views interaction as a way in which interlocutors are able to transmit language knowledge or competence. That is, interaction is viewed as a necessary means to an end. It is primarily conceptualized as a tool that facilitates the process of language learning and culminates in the end product of acquisition. Other researchers working in this area have suggested that interaction serves as a kind of priming device for L2 acquisition (Gass, 1997) and that it sets “the stage for learning, rather than being a forum for actual learning” (Gass, 2003, p. 235). Therefore, one can conclude that interaction from this perspective, while deemed useful, is not language learning per se. Rather, it takes on a facilitative role and its primary service is providing input to the learner so that language learning can then take place at some later point in time.
The role of interaction in second language acquisition: 

Sociocultural theoretical perspectives

The aforementioned input and interactionist theoretical views, while insightful, are narrow in their focus and do not provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of interaction in the process of SLA. As we have seen, interaction as understood from the above perspectives is closely associated with the delivery of input and assumes that language learning is a result or product of interaction(s) between interlocutors. Some SLA researchers have adopted theoretical perspectives that seek to broaden this view of interaction as defined by interactionist views of L2 acquisition (e.g., Long, 1996).

Based on her work with L2 learners in Canadian immersion schools, Swain (1985) initially proposed the idea that interaction between interlocutors allows for learners to push themselves to produce language. Swain and Lapkin (1995) assert that expressing themselves in the L2 in writing or speaking forces learners to engage in syntactic processing as they work to string together coherent sentences or extended oral discourse. Additionally, she signals that via interactions/output, the learner is able to notice gaps in her interlanguage, test hypotheses about the L2, and use the language created through these interactions to talk about language itself—what Swain terms a "metalinguistic" function (Swain, 1985, p. 248).

In her recent work (Swain, 1997, 2000, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001, 2002), Swain has adopted a Vygotskian sociocultural approach to language learning (see further discussion of this theory below), which provides a contrasting definition and theoretical perspective of interaction when compared to the work of Krashen (1982) and Long (1996). From this perspective, Swain (1997) argues that one kind of interaction, collaborative dialogue, not only facilitates the process of acquisition but is language learning as it happens. In contrast to cognitivist perspectives on language learning (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1996), learning from a SCT view is understood as that which
happens in the unfolding dialogic, collaborative, and social interaction, rather than being understood as a result of such interaction.

In another study investigating collaborative dialogue, Swain and Lapkin (1998) first review literature that indicates the benefits of analyzing dialogic interactions. They cite Goss, Ying-Hua, and Lantolf’s (1994) study that suggests that when two learners work through a linguistic problem (e.g., talking over or carrying out a grammaticality judgment task) and verbalize how they go about judging the grammaticality of a sentence in their L1, this talk allows the researchers a window into the mental processes, decisions, and rationales that are being collectively employed to solve the problem. Swain and Lapkin (1998) apply this insight to their analysis of the talk produced between two L2 learners of French, Kim and Rick, while they jointly carried out a jigsaw task orally and then collectively wrote out what they had just said to each other. Using the transcripts of the talk produced by Kim and Rick while writing out the narrative, the researchers analyzed several language-related episodes; that is, instances where students were talking about grammatical or lexical aspects of their L2. After analyzing the content of this collaborative talk between the learners, a post-test measure was given. This post-test asked Kim and Rick to respond individually to a certainty scale related to the grammar points that came up in their collaborative dialogue. Analysis of the language-related episodes showed that collaborative dialogue served as an occasion for L2 learning and enacted mental processes.

The same kind of analysis and conclusions are made in another study by Swain and Lapkin (2002). Similar to their 1998 study, Swain and Lapkin (2002) analyze the talk created by two different L2 learners of French, Nina and Dara, who are working through several linguistic problems while responding to a written reformulation of a narrative that they had written, based on a picture sequence/jigsaw task. After careful analysis of the transcripts of collaborative talk between Nina and Dara as they read through the reformulation provided by a native French speaker, Swain and Lapkin (2002) found
many examples of how collaborative dialogue serves as the site for L2 learning while both learners talk about issues related to grammar, vocabulary, and other language problems. Posttest measures in this study were comprised of having both Nina and Dara individually write their own narratives based on the reformulated text written by the NS.

The results indicate that collaborative dialogue was a significant factor in how Nina and Dara individually internalized concepts (e.g., specific grammar points) that they had talked about earlier in the study. That is, there was a strong correlation between what they talked about and what they ended up writing individually in the posttest measure. Furthermore, collaborative dialogue proved to be a powerful tool, even when it resulted in learners incorrectly internalizing a grammar point. Although the results overwhelmingly indicated that collaborative dialogue can be a helpful tool and inherently represents L2 learning as it happens, some learners are reluctant to let go of an internalized form that is grammatically incorrect (as in the case of one of the learners hanging on to the incorrect construction *du maison*).

Swain and Lapkin’s research, while using a SCT theoretical point of view, suggests that when two learners are presented with a cognitive problem to solve in their L2, engaging in collaborative dialogue not only aids in solving the problem, but also can facilitate L2 acquisition for each learner individually. In short, shifting the locus of L2 learning—from being a result or product of interaction—to now serving as the source of language learning, means that when viewed through a SCT lens, interaction has a more significant role in L2 learning than previously thought. In other words, interaction from this new perspective is not merely a means to an end, but rather is both the means and the end.

Swain’s work within a SCT framework has provided the field of SLA with new insights about the role of interaction in L2 learning. As we have seen, a particular kind of interaction, or dialogue, has been shown to serve as the site of L2 learning. Dialogue is just one of many constructs that make up a SCT theoretical perspective on L2 language...
learning. As such, the results of this study will be grounded in this particular theoretical view of SLA. What follows is an examination of the concepts and beliefs that provide the foundation for a SCT perspective on human cognition and L2 acquisition.

**Vygotskian sociocultural theory: Constructs and underlying assumptions**

Since its arrival in Western academic circles in the early 1980s, sociocultural theory (SCT), based on the work of Russian cognitive psychologist Lev Vygotsky, has influenced a variety of researchers working in diverse areas of specialization, such as linguistic anthropology (Heath, 1991), cultural-historical psychology (Chaiklin, 2001), and education (Kinginger, 2002; Wells, 1999, 2000). SLA is another field that has recently witnessed a significant increase of researchers making use of a SCT framework to account for the social and contextual elements that may or may not affect how a L2 is acquired.

Given the recent arrival and influence of Vygotsky’s ideas in Western institutions of higher learning, in addition to the proliferation of SLA studies employing a SCT perspective on language learning (Appel & Lantolf, 1994; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato & Brooks, 2004; Lantolf, 2000, 2003; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Swain, 2000, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001, 2002; Thoms, Liao, & Szustak, 2005), some SLA researchers (e.g., Kinginger, 2001) have noted serious misunderstandings of the constructs and assumptions found within SCT by Western scholars who carry out research using this theoretical paradigm. Some have attributed these misinterpretations or misconceptions of SCT to a lack of understanding of the cultural and historical context in which Vygotskian SCT originated (Ageyev, 2003). Because the results of this study will be interpreted using a SCT perspective, a close reading of Vygotsky’s work is needed to gain a thorough understanding of the underlying theoretical assumptions and constructs of SCT. What follows is a brief overview of some of the main tenets of this theory.
Where needed, these constructs will be further explained and connected to general L2 learning principles and to the specific focus of this dissertation.

Mediation

At the heart of Vygotskian SCT lies the idea that human beings do not act directly on the physical world; rather, we make use of symbolic tools and signs to mediate and regulate our relationships and activities with others and with ourselves (Lantolf, 2000). One of the more sophisticated symbolic tools at our disposal is that of language. From early on, humans learn to use language to mediate their physical and mental activity. An example of this would be when a child cannot reach a plate from a cupboard in a kitchen. The child will then ask someone taller (e.g., a parent) to get the plate for them. In this way, language assists the mediation effort and is an important mediational tool by which the activity is carried out.

Although all humans have symbolic tools and signs at their disposal, none of these tools and signs is identical and oftentimes they are used and valued differently between cultures and/or generations of people. Vygotsky (1978) signals that every culture possesses a different set of culturally constructed artifacts such as symbolic tools and signs. Within each culture, these tools and signs are passed down from generation to generation. The next generation may or may not change the use or value of the symbolic tools and signs within the culture. Regardless of how these artifacts are used or changed, the main task of psychology from a Vygotskian perspective is to “understand how human social and mental activity is organized through culturally-constructed artifacts” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1).

Vygotsky’s concept of mediation can be divided into human mediation and symbolic mediation. Human mediation, as defined by Vygotsky (1978), is the idea that every psychological function appears twice in development. It appears first in the form of actual interaction between people (referred to as interpersonal interaction), and then
again in an internalized form, or *intrapersonal interaction* (Kozulin, 2003). Thus, human mediation initially relies on the aid of another person. However, over time, the need for another’s help lessens (for specific activities) as learners are able to confront and solve a problem on their own.

When applied to the context of a L2 literature classroom, a SCT perspective posits that students are presented with a variety of cognitive problems to solve during each class meeting. Some of these problems are realized via linguistic puzzles in the L2, such as the learner’s ability to understand complex L2 grammatical structures used in poems, narratives, or plays. Other problems may lie in the learners’ inability to understand the historical context or genre within which the writer composed the L2 literary work, thus limiting learners’ understanding of the text. Regardless of the type of difficulty, the learner in a L2 literature classroom will initially rely on the mediation of others (principally the instructor) for guidance to construct meaning from a text. Eventually, she will be able to confront and overcome these problems on her own—via intrapersonal interaction.

What is important to underscore here for the focus of this research project is that a SCT view affirms that the development of higher mental functions or processes is first mediated by the aid of another person. In the case of analyzing whole-class discussions between instructor and student(s) in a L2 literature classroom, it is the instructor who will take on the role of chief mediator while guiding learners to mediate their own knowledge and cognition of the L2 text they are discussing. Therefore, it is important to understand the way in which instructors in these L2 contexts serve as effective mediators to help guide students through a variety of difficulties and eventually allow students to solve similar problems on their own in the future.

While human mediation involves the support of a human being, symbolic mediation relies on the assistance of symbols. Many of Vygotsky’s ideas are based on research analyzing the cognitive development of and learning by children. He proposes
that to understand children’s cognitive development, it is necessary to examine how children master symbolic mediators; that is, appropriate and internalize them in the form of inner psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998). It is not enough to present symbolic mediators or psychological tools to children without doing it within a focused context. They need to make use of these tools while having a goal in mind as they carry out an activity.

This concept can be illustrated further in the setting of a L2 literature classroom. Although learners in a college-level L2 literature classroom are not children from a biological standpoint, they are similar to children from a cognitive and linguistic perspective in that they are still mastering the symbolic mediators of the L2 and therefore do not fully understand them. For example, in the context of a L2 classroom, it is not reasonable to teach students the alphabet or writing system of the L2 and then expect them to produce coherent and grammatically correct texts. Rather, learners need to appropriate this symbolic system in the context of learning while also having a specific goal within an activity. It is out of this deliberate, focused action that the capacity of the mediators or psychological tools (in this example, the writing system of the L2) is fully realized and eventually becomes part of a learner’s cognitive arsenal (Kozulin, 2003).

When taken together, L2 learners make use of both human and symbolic mediational tools in order to help them develop and regulate cognition. Vygotsky (1978) explains the idea of regulation in the context of how children make sense of their physical environment via signs and psychological tools. Vygotsky indicates that as children develop, they are essentially becoming more sophisticated with regard to their sign and tool use. He illustrates this process by showing how the act of pointing eventually takes on more meaning. Specifically, in the initial stages of pointing, the child simply appears to be pointing and nothing else.

When the mother comes to the child’s aid and realizes his movement indicates something, the situation changes fundamentally. Pointing becomes a gesture for
others. The child’s unsuccessful attempt engenders a reaction not from the object he seeks but from another person (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56).

It is at this moment when a child starts to understand that pointing serves to get another person’s attention. When the grasping of the child’s hands changes over to the act of pointing, then the movement’s function changes from an object-oriented movement to a movement intended to get the attention of another person. As we have seen in the example above, that other person comes to help the child; this assistance aids in the child’s regulation of her environment. As the child matures and no longer needs to rely on the assistance of a parent or other caretaker, she will be able to regulate her own thoughts and will therefore be able to gain control over her own social and cognitive activities. Thus, all children must pass through the following three stages of regulation: (a) object-regulation—pointing at the object, (b) other-regulation—when another person helps the learner or child in some way, and (c) self-regulation—when the learner is able to regulate herself (Vygotsky, 1987).

This three-tiered analysis of children’s psychological regulation found within a Vygotskian perspective on human cognition is similar to processes or experiences that learners go through in L2 language or literature classrooms. Regardless of what they are studying (e.g., a grammatical structure or piece of L2 literature), many learners will not understand the linguistic concept or literary work and will not know how to seek a more knowledgeable person’s help (e.g., an instructor or a fellow student) during initial stages of language learning. Over time, learners slowly begin to ask for help from their instructor. Finally, learners are able to self-regulate their L2 development after having gone through the two previous stages.

To sum up this section, one of the core assumptions made within SCT is the idea that cognitive activity is mediated by symbolic tools and signs. Humans are born into cultures in which artifacts (e.g., language) within a particular culture are assigned specific meaning and value. In the same way, learners enter into L2 classrooms and quickly
understand the meaning and value of language and speech in these particular contexts via interactions with their instructor and with fellow learners. Learners in these contexts (like children) make use of both human and symbolic mediational tools to regulate themselves in the world that surrounds them. Thus, the development of higher psychological functions that comprise human cognition and self-regulation are first attained via social interactions with others (e.g., with instructors) and then eventually go inward via the process of internalization.

**Internalization**

Another assumption in Vygotskian SCT is that the process of internalization is necessary for human beings to develop and acquire higher psychological functions. To reiterate, human cognition and development evolve out of interactions with others. This kind of interaction within SCT is considered to be interpsychological. Again, learners make use of human or symbolic mediational tools when interacting with others in a social context. However, knowledge that is acquired in a social setting eventually becomes part of the individual learner and therefore is central to the learner's own knowledge-building processes. This, in essence, is internalization. Vygotsky's (1978) definition explains it further as “an operation that initially represents an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally” (pp. 56–57).

Via internalization, a learner acquires higher mental processes or functions. Examples of these processes and functions include voluntary attention, memory, and the formation of concepts (Vygotsky, 1978). All of these processes originate in a social context or interpsychological plane between humans. However, through the process of internalization, they go inward and are acquired and regulated by the individual learner on an intrapsychological plane. Although a learner is able to internalize processes and functions that are originally born of social interactions with others, this does not imply that the learner is able to carry out these processes and functions without mediational
support (Lantolf, 2000). Instead of relying on an external source, the support is now coming from within the learner.

Although the process of internalization appears to be straightforward, it represents a transformation that takes place over a long period of time or as a result of a series of developmental events (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, internalization is not an automatic result of social interaction between learners or between an instructor and her students. Rather, it is an ongoing process that slowly manifests itself over time and out of many interactions with others. It is also important to note here that not all external signs or tools become internalized as higher mental processes. “For many functions, the stage of external signs lasts forever . . . it is their final stage of development” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Thus, it is through internalization that learners acquire and develop higher mental processes and functions. Via the use of external signs and tools originating in social interactions with others, learners are slowly able to internalize these external signs and tools and use them on their own. Like mediation, internalization is another key component of a SCT perspective of cognition that underlies the theoretical framework used in this research project. As previously indicated, not a lot is known about how learners in a L2 literature classroom are able to develop the ability to internalize symbolic signs and tools used in the classroom via whole-class discussions over the course of a semester. Again, this insight could prove to be valuable to both SLA researchers and practitioners alike as they better understand how internalization facilitates learning in the L2 literature context. The processes of internalization do not happen in a void, however, central in many of these processes is the construct of speech.

Speech

In addition to being a construct in and of itself, the concept of speech as a primary mediator underlies many of the theoretical assumptions in SCT. Speech, in a variety of
forms, can be viewed within SCT as a necessary facilitator of human cognition. One particular form in which speech manifests itself is dialogue.

As we have already seen above with the concept of mediation and the processes associated with internalization, human cognition is fundamentally based on the social interaction between individuals. That is, via dialogue created between two or more humans, a learner transforms the knowledge produced out of that social interaction and internalizes it, thus making it her own. Throughout the process of internalization, the learner often carries out a dialogue with herself in a variety of ways. Within SCT, dialogue that is directed to oneself is realized as either private speech or inner speech (Lantolf, 2000). Although these two constructs are very similar, they are not synonymous. What follows is an explanation of how these two concepts differ and are defined within SCT.

Vygotsky (1978) indicates that one of the most important moments in a child’s life is when her practical activity (i.e., the way in which she moves about or plays) encounters speech. It is at this moment that a child’s development surpasses that of all other animal species. When the child is able to incorporate both speech and the use of signs into any action, then the action “becomes transformed and organized along entirely new lines” (1978, p. 24). In the context of solving a cognitively complex problem, Vygotsky (1987) indicates that many humans tend to verbalize their thoughts. He suggests that this verbalization is dialogue directed at oneself. He calls this private speech.

Inner speech is similar to private speech in that it is essentially self-directed dialogue intended to facilitate one’s ability to solve a problem or cognitive difficulty. However, in contrast to private speech, inner speech is not vocalized. In other words, as learners develop their cognitive abilities and are able to confront problems on their own, private speech becomes subvocal and eventually evolves into inner speech (Lantolf, 2000). Inner speech ultimately loses its formal properties and reduces itself to its pure
meaning or what some have termed a “cognitive black hole” (Appel & Lantolf, 1994, p. 438). This reduction of language from a complex system of signs to simplified/pure meaning within the mind of the individual learner is an example of higher forms of human consciousness or higher mental processes.

Although SCT distinguishes between inner speech and private speech, both are rooted in social processes and are dialogic in nature. Both private speech and inner speech serve as tools to facilitate L2 acquisition (Lantolf, 2006). SLA researchers have examined inner speech and private speech for a number of purposes including the investigation of L2 reading processes (Appel & Lantolf, 1994), the exploration of task effects on L2 learning (Swain & Lapkin, 2001), the analysis of how learners attempt cognitively demanding tasks in the L2 (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Centeno-Cortés & Jiménez, 2004), and the examination of issues related to advanced L2 learners (de Guerrero, 1999), among other topics.

Thus, SCT assumes that private speech and inner speech are two kinds of dialogue that take on a variety of roles that ultimately facilitate comprehension at its most basic level or help promote the development of higher mental processes and functions. In other words, private speech and inner speech have their origins in social speech (i.e., they are both dialogic in nature) but help the individual learner mediate her understanding or comprehension when presented with a problem or cognitive difficulty.

Zone of proximal development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is one of the most cited theoretical constructs of Vygotskian SCT. Although it is commonly studied and examined by SLA researchers, the ZPD is a concept that is often misunderstood and commonly misinterpreted. Many Western researchers and scholars have inaccurately equated the ZPD with constructs that are diametrically opposed to the theoretical underpinnings of SCT (see Kinginger, 2001). One of the ways in which to alleviate confusion surrounding
the ZPD is to understand how Vygotsky conceptualizes the relationship between learning and development.

One of Vygotsky’s predecessors studying children’s cognitive psychology was Jean Piaget. Although many ideas were put forth in the early twentieth century that attempted to illustrate the connection between learning and development, Piaget’s (1959, 1967) work is perhaps the best known and the most widely cited. He proposed that development and learning are essentially separate processes that do not actively interact or affect each other. That is, learning is viewed as an external process that “utilizes the achievements of development rather than providing an impetus for modifying its course” (as cited in Vygotsky, 1978, p. 79). Piaget hypothesized that development is a kind of prerequisite for learning. In other words, the amount and kind of learning that takes place is dependent on a child’s development, never the other way around. Piaget would never posit that learning takes place before or while a child is going through her developmental stages. In sum, a child develops first and learns second.

The underlying assumptions of the ZPD are inherent in Vygotsky’s conceptualization of the relationship between learning and development. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky puts forth the idea that a child learns first, and this learning then leads to zones of her proximal development. In order to further explain the construct of ZPD, Vygotsky (1978) provides details about the existence of at least two developmental levels. What follows is a brief description of each and how they help to define the ZPD.

**Actual developmental level:** Vygotsky (1978) explains that the actual developmental level of a child is “the level of development of a child’s mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles” (p. 85, italics in original). Therefore, when one attempts to determine a child’s mental age by using traditional or standard testing procedures, one is, in effect, always dealing with the actual developmental level. In other words, whatever a child can do on her own indicates the level at which she has developed. However, Vygotsky (1978) challenges
this concept and offers up the idea of measuring children’s (or a learner’s) ability via the assistance of others.

Potential/proximal developmental level: Under the guise of dynamic assessment, recent research carried out by language testers (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2002; Lidz, 1991) agrees with Vygotsky and suggests that via guided assistance, one is able to gain a better understanding or more insightful assessment of a learner’s mental development versus having learners carry out assessments on their own (e.g., as is done using traditional or standard assessments). Vygotsky (1978) illustrates this idea of measuring children’s ability through another’s assistance by describing how children in the same class (i.e., those who are all thought to be at the same mental phase/stage) perform differently when given assistance by their instructor. For example, two seven-year olds entering first grade often perform in divergent ways. One will perform at the eight-year-old level while another will perform at the six-year-old level with the help of others. Clearly, these two children are not the same. The mental difference between how a child performs alone compared to what he/she is able to do with the help of a more knowledgeable person is what Vygotsky calls ZPD. Specifically, he defines the ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

Thus, the actual developmental level represents those functions within the child or learner that have already matured or solidified. In contrast, the ZPD represents functions within the child or learner that are in the process of maturation. “ZPD development permits us to delineate the child’s immediate future and his dynamic developmental state, allowing not only for what already has been achieved developmentally but also for what is in the course of maturing” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87).

In the context of this research project, the construct of the ZPD (and, more important, how it is dynamically assessed) may provide some insight into how the
evaluator (in this study, the L2 literature instructor) interacts and dynamically assesses a learner in realizing her developing L2 oral ability to talk about literature. Although the instructor in this study will not be carrying out actual dynamic assessments in the classroom (i.e., with the intention of evaluating students' oral ability), she will interact with students during whole-class discussions and will prompt them to respond to or participate in dialogic exchanges. Studies related to the ZPD, coupled with practical considerations of dynamically assessing learners (Antón, 2003; Lidz, 1991), will help to inform analyses of how the instructor in this study uses language to interact with learners during whole-class discussions in the context of a Hispanic literature course at the college level.

Summary of SCT and collaborative dialogue in L2 contexts

As we have seen, the constructs and underlying assumptions of a Vygotskian SCT perspective have afforded SLA researchers valuable insight into the cognitive psychological processes involved with learners as they develop their skills in the L2. Specifically, the role of oral interaction, as defined by the constructs of speech and dialogue within a SCT perspective, has prompted SLA researchers to further examine the importance of speaking in the acquisition of a L2 (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Swain, 2000, 2005). Espousing the theoretical perspective that learning is a profoundly social process (as previously outlined), these researchers (Chaiklin, 2003; Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001, 2002; Wells, 1999) suggest that L2 learning is best facilitated via collaborative, co-constructed or dialogic talk. That is, instructors or more-knowledgeable persons (often termed experts) interacting with learners or less-knowledgeable persons (or novices) via oral discourse has been shown to facilitate language acquisition from a SCT perspective (Lantolf, 2006).
We have also seen that a further benefit of speech facilitates the acquisition of higher mental processes. In the context of a L2 literature classroom, these higher mental processes may include the ability to regulate one’s thoughts, problem-solve, hypothesize, or develop critical thinking skills in the L2 in relation to the literary texts being discussed. These kinds of speaking skills are indicative of higher mental functions that many learners studying a L2 seek to acquire. Although research analyzing L2 speaking as a mediating tool has primarily focused on students in lower-level or basic L2 language courses (Hall, 1995, 2004; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001, 2002), the use of literature in the L2 classroom has recently piqued the interest of SLA researchers working within a SCT framework (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Mantero, 2001, 2002) as they set out to examine the role of speaking in upper-level L2 literature courses.

Chapter 2 summary: What is known and not known

Students taking college-level L2 courses in the United States face a number of challenges with respect to developing their L2 oral ability. Given that instructors in upper-level L2 courses place an emphasis on content while also providing instruction intended to further develop students’ reading and writing abilities in the L2, whole-class discussions between teacher and student present learners with valuable opportunities to co-construct knowledge via meaningful dialogic exchanges. SLA researchers have indicated that this kind of interaction, when informed by a SCT theoretical perspective on human cognition and L2 learning, not only serves as a tool that supports L2 acquisition (as promoted by interactionist views), but also is language learning as it happens.

Although past research has examined the pedagogical use of literature in the L2 classroom in addition to analyzing interaction patterns used by instructors (e.g., IRE and IRF sequences) and the resulting effects on student oral discourse, no studies have employed a microgenetic analysis of teacher-initiated talk and subsequent student oral discourse in a college-level L2 literature course. Furthermore, none has attempted to look
at the underlying affective variables held by both instructor and student and how these factors influence the moment-by-moment unfolding of talk in a L2 literature classroom.

Therefore, this dissertation research seeks a detailed examination of these underlying components in order to provide insight about the nature of L2 oral discourse as it is created in a L2 literature classroom. Additionally, this study seeks to identify how students view the role of whole-class discussions and its role in their understanding of the literary texts they are reading in the L2. Finally, this study contributes to theory building by providing and analyzing data that illustrate how the affordance construct realizes itself in whole-class discussion and by offering a new construct termed affordance structure (see Chapter 5 for more). Via analyses of the empirical data presented within this dissertation, it is hoped that a better understanding of the complex relationships among linguistic factors, content knowledge, and expectations about the nature of teacher-initiated talk and its possible effects on student oral discourse in a L2 literature classroom will be realized.

The next chapter explains the methodologies that were employed in this dissertation in order to collect the various kinds of data needed to answer the research questions being investigated. It also provides details regarding the research setting, the instructor and students who participated in this study, along with specific information regarding how and when this research was conducted.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of the research literature about the multifaceted nature of oral discourse between instructor and students in a L2 classroom context. It also highlighted the components that make up a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical view on human cognition, along with how this theory can be used to investigate L2 learning. Data analytical approaches to investigating L2 oral discourse were also briefly highlighted and explained. This chapter clarifies details regarding data collection procedures that were used in this dissertation, including a description of (a) the research setting, (b) information about research participants, and (c) data sources and data analysis techniques used to answer the research questions under investigation. Finally, the timeline of how and when data collection was carried out, along with drafts of interview guidelines and student surveys, is provided.

The research setting

As explained in Chapter 2, research that analyzes instructors’ talk and subsequent student oral discourse has been carried out in L1 learning contexts (Cazden, 2001, Hellermann, 2005; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995; Miller, 2003; Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003). When similar studies have been conducted in L2 environments, researchers have more often observed oral discourse in lower-level language classrooms (Hall, 1995, 1998, 2004; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Ho, 2006). Few studies (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Mantero, 2001, 2002) have looked at L2 oral discourse in upper-level L2 literature classrooms. Given this imbalance in scholarly activity, a gap in the research literature exists about how students continue to develop their L2 speaking abilities in upper-level L2 literature courses along with the metalinguistic processes students engage in while participating in whole-class discussions. Given that many upper-level L2 literature courses rely heavily on whole-class discussions, this dissertation fills
the gap by investigating teacher-initiated discourse and subsequent student responses in a L2 literature course at the college level.

The course

The specific course observed in this dissertation was a Latin American literature course offered by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at a major research institution in the Midwest. This third-year course was offered to students who had fulfilled their language requirement for graduation (i.e., 4 semesters, or 2 years of lower-level courses) in Spanish and who had already taken a prerequisite fifth-semester bridge course within the department, such as Writing in Spanish, Introduction to Literary Analysis, or Readings in Latin American Literature and Culture.

The course used as the research setting in this dissertation was entitled Topics in National Literatures/Cultures: Narratives of the Conquest of Mexico. This course was chosen for a number of reasons. First, it was at the desired mid level of courses taken by Spanish majors or minors: not an entry-level Hispanic literature course or one of the highest-level courses required for Spanish majors. The majority of students taking this course had already taken at least one introductory literature course, and several students had taken one or more additional literature courses as well. Therefore, most students were familiar with reading, comprehending, interpreting and talking about Hispanic literature in Spanish. More information is provided below regarding students’ academic background and experience with Hispanic literature courses.

Second, this course was chosen for practical reasons. The courses offered during the semester of data collection were either introductory literature courses or were too large to expect that considerable class time would be devoted to discussion. Preliminary observations in introductory Hispanic literature courses offered in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese revealed that the majority of students in those courses were not able to actively engage in whole-class discussions with their instructors. Furthermore, it
was determined that students in introductory Hispanic literature courses were still struggling to comprehend the literal meaning of L2 literary texts and were often not linguistically ready to participate in whole-class discussions. Other courses at the appropriate level offered during the semester of data collection had too many students enrolled (some had as many as 40 students) and were eliminated as possible research settings due to the anticipated infrequent interactions between instructor and students via whole-class discussions in a large lecture setting.

Finally, the Latin American literature course used in this dissertation was chosen due to the fact that it largely focused on a single genre. While some L2 literature courses provide an overview of a variety of literary genres (e.g., poetry, prose, plays), this course focused primarily on narrative accounts of the Conquest of Mexico. It concentrated on “sixteenth-century text histories written by conquistadors, texts and codices produced by the natives, as well as seventeenth-century creole and mestizo accounts of the Conquest and the historical figures involved” (Student Information Services, retrieved on January 3, 2007). Although secondary texts from a variety of disciplines (i.e., literary, linguistic, and historical criticism) complemented the primary sources and helped to better explain the concepts being conveyed in the sixteenth-century primary historical pieces that were read, the majority of the readings that students encountered were narrative accounts (see Appendix A for the course syllabus). Because the primary focus of the course exclusively dealt with the narrative genre, it was hoped that this concentration would promote a kind of internal coherence that would allow for students to participate more in class discussion as the semester progressed. As such, this dissertation research is specific to a Latin American literature course whose readings were narrative literary pieces. Its findings are therefore specific to whole-class discussions based on narrative accounts and not on other literary genres such as poetry or plays.

The Latin American literature course being investigated in this dissertation met for 50 minutes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the Spring 2007 semester.
It was taught in Spanish, and all primary and a majority of secondary texts assigned to students were written in Spanish. Some of the secondary texts given to students were written in English. As previously noted, the course was not an introductory literature course, but neither was it an advanced literature course. It falls within the second tier of a three-tiered course sequence that students progress through when pursuing a major in Spanish at the university where this dissertation research was carried out. That is, students enrolled in the course had already taken at least one tier 1 course (e.g., those requiring no prerequisite other than completion of the lower-division language sequence). The course used in this study was a tier 2 course (i.e., prerequisite of one course beyond the completion of the lower-division language sequence) and served as a prerequisite for tier 3 courses (i.e., course taken by both undergraduate and M.A. students) according to the policies of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese (Undergraduate Program in Spanish, retrieved on January 13, 2007). In sum, the course used in this study was a tier 2 course that students chose to take sometime after they had finished lower-level language instruction in addition to at least one tier 1 course and before continuing to the most advanced courses (i.e., tier 3 courses) in the undergraduate Hispanic literature curriculum.

The classroom

Given that this dissertation research relies heavily on qualitative methods to gain a detailed understanding of the context in which talking emerged, it is necessary to describe the physical nature of the classroom and the orientation of participants with respect to the equipment used to collect data. Of the 19 students enrolled in the class, 18 agreed to participate in the study. According to the Office of the Vice President for Research Institutional Review & Human Subjects Office guidelines, the data collected on the one non-participant as an unavoidable product of the data collection procedures (e.g., this student's turns at talk in whole-class discussions) were not included in the study.
Additionally, this student was placed outside of the view of the video camera so that the student's image was not shown on tape. The following figure outlines where students, instructor, and researcher were positioned during class sessions. It also indicates where video and audio equipment was located over the course of the six class meetings whose recordings make up part of the data for this research.

As one can see in Figure 3.1, the physical layout of the classroom partially determined where students sat and where data collection equipment was placed. While every attempt was made to minimize the impact of having three video cameras and audio recording equipment placed in the room, it is not fully known how much the presence of these devices affected whole-class discussions. However, the researcher did not notice any differences in participation levels when comparing the final six observations (i.e., recording days) with the previous nine observations (i.e., without recording devices). The instructor also commented before her first stimulated recall session that she did not think that the equipment affected her students or their participation levels. Given the nature of this research, it is hypothesized that the presence of the recording equipment may have inhibited some students while it may have encouraged others to participate more, thereby having a neutral effect overall on interactions in whole-class discussions.

Participants

The instructor and students in the cooperating Latin American literature course are important sources to consider when analyzing and interpreting the data in this dissertation. Specifically, the participation in oral interactions between the instructor and her students is a significant part of what constitutes the context for learning in this study. Therefore, information regarding participants’ backgrounds, experiences with Spanish language and literature, along with their motivations for teaching or taking the course, respectively, are essential pieces to understanding the underlying forces that help shape the whole-class discussions being investigated in this research.
FIGURE 3.1. Description of classroom

FRONT

VC1
\ 
S
S S S S
S

S
VC2

VC3
R S S S S S S S

BACK

VC1 = Video camera (student angle 1) R = Researcher 
VC2 = Video camera (student angle 2) S = Students
VC3 = Video camera (instructor angle) I = Instructor

\ = door 
= table
= whiteboard
= audio equip.

Following is some background information about the participants in this study. This section first highlights demographic information about the students enrolled in the Latin American literature class used in this dissertation research. Information about students was collected via demographic questionnaires (see Appendix B) distributed by the researcher after the project was approved by the Office of the Vice President for Research Institutional Review & Human Subjects Office at the university where the study took place. Information about the instructor who taught the course was gathered by a recorded, face-to-face interview based on a series of interview questions (see Appendix
C). An in-depth description of the instructor and three focal students is provided in Chapter 5.

The students

A total of 19 students were enrolled in the Latin American literature course used in the study, and all but one student agreed to participate in this study. Therefore, a total of 18 students, their demographic information, and their turns at talk during the six class meetings were analyzed for this research project. No information was collected from the one student who declined to participate in the study. This student did not receive a demographic questionnaire and was not videotaped during the data collection phase of the project. Finally, this student’s turns at talk over the course of the six class meetings that were tape-recorded for this study were not used in any part of the final analyses.

The 18 students who took part in this dissertation research had diverse language learning backgrounds and represented a wide range of academic interests. Table 3.1 below provides an overview of students’ academic backgrounds and their language learning experiences. More information about the students is provided after the table. Demographic information about all 18 students was gathered via questionnaire. It is important to note here that the student demographic questionnaire was distributed to and filled out by students and then returned to the researcher before class recordings began. In addition, it is also necessary to mention here that all names that appear in this dissertation (names of the instructor and all of her students and references to other professors mentioned in student and instructor interviews and stimulated recall sessions) are pseudonyms.

Table 3.1 below indicates students’ pseudonyms, ages, and declared major or minor areas of study. It also accounts for the number of years they have studied Spanish in a formal learning context (not counting the course in which they were currently enrolled at the time of this questionnaire). For example, if students indicated that they had
studied Spanish in high school for 3 years and had taken 3 semesters (or 1.5 years) of college-level Spanish, then their total number of years of formal Spanish learning was calculated to be 4.5. Finally, the table also includes the grade point average (GPA) that students had reported on the demographic questionnaire. The university where this study took place uses a 4.0 scale when figuring students’ GPA. The student who indicates having a GPA of 4.1 therefore must have earned some grades of A+ in her undergraduate coursework. It is also necessary to note that one of the students in the classroom was a graduate student. While her participation in whole-class discussion was, at times, an important part of the dynamic of oral discourse in this context, this study will focus on the oral contributions to whole-class discussion of the 17 undergraduate students enrolled in the class. Finally, parts of this dissertation will focus exclusively on the oral participation of three focal students. These students are signaled in the table below.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the students in the Latin American literature class under study consisted of 5 males and 13 females. While their ages ranged from 19 to 44 years old, the mean and median age of the group was 21. Sixteen of the students were enrolled as undergraduates, one was a graduate student (Herminia), and another a non-traditional student (Alejandra) who was pursuing a second BA in Spanish. Fifteen of the undergraduate students were Spanish majors, and two were pursuing a Spanish minor. In all, two of the students were sophomores, eight were juniors, seven were seniors, and one was a graduate student. Grade point averages of the students ranged from 3.0 to 4.1 (on a 4.0 scale) with a mean GPA of 3.4 for the class.

Students also provided information regarding their language learning backgrounds and exposure to the Spanish language before enrolling in the Latin American literature course under study. All undergraduate students indicated having studied Spanish in high school over a period ranging from two to four years. When asked about the number of semesters of college-level Spanish they had taken before enrolling in the Latin American literature course under investigation, some students reported that they had taken only two
courses, whereas others indicated having taken up to nine courses. The average number of college-level Spanish courses taken before the course under study in this research project was 4.6 semesters while the median number was 5.

It is worth mentioning here that 2 of the 18 students reported that they had started their Spanish studies at the university where this research took place with courses in the lower-division language sequence (i.e., first four semesters). In other words, only two students had begun taking college-level Spanish courses in the lower-level course sequence (i.e., in courses that primarily focus on language-related issues vs. content-related concerns). In contrast, the overwhelming majority of students in this course had tested out of the lower-level language requirement and had been placed into higher-level courses upon arriving at the university or had accumulated enough credit at other institutions and then transferred them when they enrolled at the university where this research was conducted.

Additional questions about the students' previous experience with or exposure to the Spanish language and culture revealed that 11 students had been to a Spanish-speaking country. However, of the 11 students who had been abroad, only 2 had done a semester-long study abroad program. The other nine students indicated that they had only visited Spanish-speaking countries for vacation. Another question investigated students' exposure to Spanish outside of school. Thirteen of the students indicated that they had regular contact with Spanish outside of the traditional classroom setting. The contact with Spanish came in a variety of forms: speaking Spanish with co-workers on the job; watching television shows in Spanish; communicating with Spanish-speaking friends, significant others, and family members; reading books and newspapers in Spanish; attending religious services in Spanish; and listening to Spanish music.

In summary, the students in this class reflected an eclectic mix of learners who enroll in the intermediary level literature class at the university where this research was carried out. Almost all of the undergraduates in the class were Spanish majors while the
### TABLE 3.1. Student participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major (Minor)</th>
<th>Years/Spanish</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>English Literature and Spanish</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Nursing (Spanish)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Spanish and International Studies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Microbiology (Spanish)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia¹</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spanish and Nursing</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Journalism and Spanish</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Spanish and Elementary Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spanish and Portuguese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Spanish and Health &amp; Sports Studies</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>History and Spanish (Sociology)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Spanish and International Studies</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Herminia was the only native speaker in the class. She was also the only graduate student enrolled in the undergraduate Latin American literature course used in this study. Additionally, she did not provide information about the number of years she had formally studied Spanish on her questionnaire.

The rest were pursuing a minor in Spanish. Their previous coursework in Spanish, along with prior exposure to the Spanish language and Spanish-speaking cultures, reflects typical backgrounds of undergraduate students interested in pursuing academic degrees in
Spanish in the United States. Although students reported similar experiences and interest in Spanish, their motivations, expectations and goals for their Spanish learning were found to be different. In other words, the students who entered the Latin American literature course being investigated in this study came into the course wanting, expecting, and assuming different things from and about the course. Those heterogeneous needs are reported in Chapter 4. We now turn to some background information about the instructor of the course.

The instructor

Information about the cooperating instructor who taught the Latin American literature course being analyzed in this research study was gathered via a face-to-face recorded interview. This interview was conducted after the researcher had observed several class meetings and before audio and video recordings had begun. The questions posed to the instructor were based on a semi-structured interview format (Merriam, 1998) that allowed room for follow-up questions when needed (see Appendix C for the interview question guideline). Given that the instructor's talk, coupled with the interactions between her and her students, created the context in which learning took place in the course being investigated in this research, it is necessary to know her background as a language learner, a scholar, and an instructor in the Spanish language and literature classroom at the college level.

The instructor, who will be referred to as Ann, and her class were chosen to participate in this study for several reasons. As previously stated, Ann’s class was one of two tier 2 Hispanic literature classes being offered during the semester in which data collection was carried out. One of the other literature classes that was offered had 40 students enrolled in it and was eliminated due to the likelihood that there would be few opportunities for meaningful oral interaction between the instructor and his students. While this practical difficulty meant that Ann’s class would be the only one left to
observe, Ann’s track record as an instructor along with her willingness to participate in the study made the decision to observe and analyze her class an easy one. More information about Ann, her views about engaging students in discussion about Latin American texts, and how she responds to students’ contributions are presented in Chapter 5. However, it is worth highlighting here her teaching experience in the Latin American literature classroom.

At the time of this study, Ann had been teaching in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for six years (since 2001). Her title in the department was Visiting Instructor. She was a Ph.D. candidate in Colonial Spanish American literature at a major research university in the Midwest and was working on her dissertation, which focused on two figures in seventeenth-century Mexico. While pursuing her M.A., she taught lower-level language courses. In her position at the university where this study took place, she gained experience teaching a variety of upper-level courses including Writing in Spanish (a tier 1 course taught in Spanish), a culture-based course called Spanish American Civilization (a tier 2 course taught in Spanish), as well as literature courses such as Contemporary Spanish American Narrative (a tier 1 course taught in English), and Introduction to Literary Analysis (a tier 1 course taught in Spanish). It is important to note here that the Latin American Colonial literature course that was observed in this study was offered by Ann for the first time. Thus, Ann had a variety of experiences teaching many language and literature courses at the college level. Her experience was evident based on the researcher’s field notes during the 15 classes observed, students’ comments in the questionnaires and in the focal interviews about her ability to teach literature, and analyses of her interactions with students in the transcripts of the six class meetings under investigation in this study. Ann’s participation and role in the creation of the learning environment in her class is an essential component to consider in this dissertation and more details about how she went about creating that context are provided in Chapters 4 and 5.
Three focal students

In addition to the perspectives of all 18 students about their expectations of and goals in taking Ann’s Latin American literature course, their views on participating in whole-class discussions with Ann about the texts they were reading, and so forth, three students were asked to serve as focal students in this study. The three focal students provided information about their views and background as language learners via the demographic questionnaire (like all other students in the class), and in addition were invited to record a more in-depth interview with the researcher and were asked to carry out a stimulated recall while watching one of the six recorded class meetings and commenting on particular aspects or moments of whole-class discussion. Gaining a closer, micro-analytical view of discourse between Ann and the three focal students will help to understand how talk unfolds in this Latin American literature class and provide insight into how different students perceive different types of affordance structures and then act on affordances made available to them in the context of whole-class discussions. More information about how the three focal students were selected is presented in the sections below.

The researcher

Given that parts of this dissertation rely on qualitative analyses and observations in a Spanish American Colonial literature class conducted entirely in Spanish, it is worth commenting here about my role in this study and how my academic and linguistic background enabled me to carry out this project. With regard to my linguistic abilities, I have spoken and studied Spanish for 19 years and have taught Spanish language courses at the high school and college levels for 9 years. I hold a B.A. in Spanish with a Minor in Secondary Education and an M.A. in Spanish literature. I am currently finishing my Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition. I was recently given an unofficial Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) by a native Spanish speaker who was training to become an
ACTFL-certified OPI tester. The tester-in-training rated the speech sample at the Superior level on the ACTFL scale. This means that I can (a) participate as a full conversational partner in formal, informal, and professional conversations, (b) support opinions and hypothesize in extended discourse on a wide range of concrete and abstract topics, and (c) speak without patterns of error and with sufficient accuracy so as not to miscommunicate or distract attention of my interlocutors. This linguistic expertise allowed for me as the researcher to know what was being said in Ann’s class at all times. My expertise in Spanish also facilitated the process of transcribing all six class meetings analyzed in this study. As such, errors in students’ turns at talk in the whole-class discussions were noted in the transcribed segments that are presented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Finally, it is worth noting here that all research (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data analysis) is, in some way, subjective. Procedures can be used or implemented to ensure that data analysis is reliable and its results valid. While methods related to quantitative analyses carried out in this dissertation were used (see the following section), measures such as documenting my role as the researcher and providing information about my expertise in Spanish are necessary to ensure the reliability and validity of the qualitative data analyses reported in this study.

Data sources, data collection, and data analysis procedures

The following sections describe the various data sources for this dissertation research, how data collection was carried out, along with information about how the data were analyzed. After a detailed account of the data collection procedures and data sources, a table is presented that outlines the chronological order of data collection events carried out in the study.
Class observations

This study analyzes the talk that is created between an instructor and her students in a Latin American literature course at the college level. Given that the focus is on whole-class discussion in this particular context, one important data source is the observation of the class and the actions of the participants in it. In all, 15 class observations were carried out for this study. The initial nine were unrecorded, whereas the final six were audio and video recorded. For each observation, the researcher sat in a corner of the classroom and took field notes in an unobtrusive manner. Only one student addressed a comment or question to the researcher in the classroom over the course of the 15 observations. The student, who sat next to the researcher, asked why he was there. The researcher explained that he was a graduate student doing a project investigating interactions in a Hispanic literature classroom. Other than that brief interaction, the researcher never contributed to class discussions, nor did he participate in any small-group work over the course of the 15 class observations.

Field notes consisted of information regarding the sequence and type of activities that took place in each class, along with how long each activity took to complete. Another section of the field notes for each class contained information about which students participated in turns at talk during whole-class discussion, along with a calculation of the total number of turns taken by each student. It is important to note here that the researcher did not ask the instructor to modify her course syllabus or her normal teaching schedule in any way. To capture the nature of oral interactions in the classroom under observation, the researcher did not want to disturb the classroom culture or the existing rapport between the instructor and her students and among the students. While the presence of the researcher (and, eventually, of the recording equipment) most likely affected oral interactions on some level, care was given during the observations to be as discreet and inconspicuous as possible.
Class observations and focal students

The first nine unrecorded class observations and the resulting field notes helped to determine which 3 of the 18 total students would be invited to participate in the study as focal students. Given the nature of the study, the focal students needed to be active participants in whole-class discussions. This meant that students were to be chosen based on how often they spoke in class and how they responded to the comments of the instructor and of their fellow students while discussing the assigned texts. Initially, the researcher kept track of the number of times every student participated in whole-class discussions in the nine unrecorded class observations that were carried out at the beginning of the data collection phase of the study. The nine unrecorded observations took place before the six class meetings (i.e., whose transcripts were analyzed for this study) were recorded. Using the field notes that documented each of the nine unrecorded class observations, a participation ranking was determined. The number of student turns over the course of all nine unrecorded class observations was calculated to establish which students participated more in whole-class discussions. Table 3.2 indicates the participation ranking established based on the nine unrecorded class observations.

Along with the information displayed in Table 3.2, the researcher also consulted the instructor (Ann) in her interview before the six class recordings began to see which students she judged to be active participants in class discussion. Ann indicated that Nickie, Sheila, Eric, and Herminia were students who not only spoke a lot, but also thoughtfully responded to and often built on other students’ contributions. Ann’s responses, together with the information in Table 3.2, helped to determine who would be invited to serve as the focal students.

Herminia, the only graduate student enrolled in the course, was a native Spanish speaker. Given that this study focuses on the talk between instructor and typical undergraduate students in a Latin American literature course at the college level, Herminia was eliminated as a potential focal student. Sheila’s participation in class
TABLE 3.2. Student participation ranking after nine unrecorded class observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th># of turns at talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herminia*</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Graduate student
discussion over the course of the nine unrecorded observations, along with Ann’s comments about her contributions, indicated that she could possibly serve as one of the three focal students. However, Sheila’s active academic life beyond the course she was taking with Ann resulted in her declining to participate as a focal student. Therefore, the next five students who were most active in class discussion—Nicole, Janet, Nickie, Mitch, and Eric—were approached after the ninth class observation and before the final six recorded class meetings and were invited to serve as potential focal students. The five students met with the researcher in his office, where he explained that there was a possibility that not all of them would participate as focal students but that they might be invited to participate in that capacity.

Five students were selected to participate as focal students in order to account for such anomalies as absences, students who were not going to participate as much due to the recording equipment in the classroom, lack of interest in the new texts that they were going to read, and so forth. That is, the researcher did not know which students would contribute the most over the course of the six class meetings that were going to be recorded and whose transcripts now serve as the data in this study. In effect, inviting the five most active students was a way to ensure that three of the five students would somehow participate enough over the course of the six recorded class meetings to merit consideration as a focal student.

However, not all of the five students continued the active participation that had been observed regularly in the previous nine class observations once the recording of the final six class meetings took place. Of the five potential focal students, only Nicole and Janet continued to participate in class discussions as actively as they had in the previous nine unrecorded observations. While Nickie, Mitch, and Eric continued to be active in discussions, their participation levels in the final six recorded class meetings were much lower when compared to Jon (See Chapter 4 for more on individual participation levels.). Jon was a student who was not an active participant during the initial nine unrecorded
class observations. As indicated in Table 3.2 above, he spoke only six times over the
course of the nine classes and therefore was in the bottom half of the class with regard to
oral participation in whole-class discussions. However, in the final six recorded class
meetings, Jon’s participation in whole-class discussions drastically increased, at times
having the most turns at talk in three of the six classes.

It is important to note here that the researcher originally did invite four focal
students to participate (Nicole, Janet, Jon, and Mitch) after having observed their
participation in the six recorded class meetings. The researcher carried out individual
interviews with all four of them along with stimulated recall sessions. However, it was
decided that Mitch’s participation as a focal student would be eliminated due to his
limited participation in whole-class discussion when compared to the other three focal
students. In addition, his interview and stimulated recall session was carried out in the
early morning hours and his comments lacked insight about his perceptions of talk in
Ann’s class. As such, the researcher decided to eliminate Mitch’s data and focus solely
on the other three students. Therefore, the three focal students included in this study are
Nicole, Janet, and Jon. More information about each of them is provided in Chapter 5.

Questionnaires

All students agreeing to participate in this study and who were enrolled in the
Latin American literature class were presented with a demographic questionnaire at the
beginning of data collection (again, see Appendix B for the questionnaire). This
questionnaire was used to collect basic background information about the students,
including details about their previous experiences with taking college-level Spanish
courses, their reasons for studying Spanish, their year in college, their GPA, and so forth.
This information helped to get a sense of students’ backgrounds and to better understand
their goals in taking the Latin American literature course along with their thoughts about
their expectations and intentions to participate in whole-class discussions (among other
topics). Information provided by students based on their responses to the demographic questionnaire will be highlighted in Chapter 4.

Interviews

To understand the dynamic of L2 oral discourse and discover the possible underlying variables that enable or discourage it from unfolding between Ann and her students in the Latin American literature course under observation, an interview was carried out with the instructor. After piloting the instructor interview question guide with a fellow graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to make sure the questions were not confusing and that their sequence was appropriate, some adjustments were made to it before carrying out Ann’s interview. The interview with Ann took place after the sixth class observation. The interview guide was organized in such a way so that the questions followed a logical sequence and were somewhere between being open-ended and controlled (see Appendix C for the instructor interview guide). That is, for some questions, the researcher asked about particular pedagogical issues or beliefs espoused by the instructor with respect to encouraging students to participate in whole-class discussions in literature courses. For others, Ann had the opportunity to talk freely about any other topics related to teaching the literature course under analysis in this research. The researcher also took advantage of particular points throughout the interview that allowed him to ask Ann to provide more details. In all, the interview with the instructor lasted 90 minutes. The interview was transcribed for data analysis as outlined in the data collection timeline in Table 3.3 below. A complete transcript of Ann’s interview is also provided in Appendix D.

Subsequent interviews carried out for this study involved three focal student informants. The student interview guide (see Appendix E) was loosely based on the instructor interview guide. However, new questions were added to the student interview guide after careful analysis of the transcript of the instructor’s interview (see Appendix D
for the instructor interview). Certain questions and themes that evolved out of the instructor’s interview and that warranted a student’s perspective were incorporated into the student interview guide as needed. Additionally, the follow-up questions that were posed to students were not identical because some of the questions were based on individual student answers. Interviews for the three focal students were carried out immediately before each student’s stimulated recall session. Specifically, each focal student was interviewed for a period of one hour. He or she was given a 15-minute break and then asked to do a stimulated recall session for an additional hour and fifteen minutes (more information about the stimulated recall session is provided below). Therefore, each focal student did an interview, had a break, and then carried out a stimulated recall session, for a total of two and a half hours.

As previously stated, the three students who were invited to participate as focal students were primarily chosen based on how often they participated in whole-class discussions. All three student interviews were transcribed for analysis and are included as appendices (see Appendices F, G, and H for transcripts of the three student interviews, respectively).

Transcripts of class meetings

In all, six 50–minute class meetings were audio and video taped. All six meetings figure into parts of the data analysis and were also scrutinized and used for the stimulated recall sessions for the instructor and the three focal students. The class meetings that were closely analyzed in this study were chosen based on the kind of whole-class discussion that unfolded and the participation of students and instructor. That is, the last six class meetings were chosen to be audio and videotaped because (a) they represented typical class meetings such as those observed in the initial nine unrecorded classes, (b) the researcher wanted Ann and her students to become accustomed to seeing him observe their class and wanted his presence not to interfere with normal class interactions, and (c)
there were scheduling conflicts that determined that the six class meetings used in this study would be the ones recorded.

All class meetings were transcribed via the audiotapes (see Appendices I–N for transcripts of each class meeting in Spanish). The videotapes of the class meetings were used to (a) identify students who were speaking in class, and (b) provide triggers for the stimulated recall sessions. The transcriptions of the class meetings are straightforward accounts of the talk created in whole-class discussions and are not so detailed as to record students’ intonation patterns nor do they attempt to represent paralinguistic cues employed by the participants (e.g., facial expressions, gestures).

Stimulated recall sessions

After individual class meetings were audio and video recorded, and after interviewing both the instructor and the three focal students individually, stimulated recall sessions were carried out with Ann and the three focal students (Nicole, Janet, and Jon). It should be noted here that particular class meetings (i.e., three of the six recorded class meetings) were chosen for stimulated recall sessions based on observations carried out by the researcher. Specifically, the researcher first observed a class meeting while it was being recorded and took notes on who was saying what and how much each student in the class was participating in whole-class discussions. Therefore, whenever a class meeting was made up of several exchanges between the instructor and a particular student in the class (i.e., a focal student), then the researcher decided to use that class meeting as a reason to individually carry out a stimulated recall session with the instructor and the student who was participating the most in the specific class meeting. All instructor and focal student stimulated recall sessions took place within 24 hours of a particular class meeting. Ann participated in a total of three stimulated recall sessions, while the three focal students each carried out one stimulated recall session. In all, data from six stimulated recall sessions (i.e., three instructor and three student stimulated
recalls) were used in the analysis for this study. Five of the stimulated recall sessions occurred within 24 hours of the video-recorded class meetings while one student’s stimulated recall session occurred just seven hours after the class.

While scheduling conflicts made it difficult for the researcher to meet with participants shortly after a video-recorded class meeting, another difficulty was more technological in nature. In order to allow participants to view multiple angles of the whole-class discussions, several hours were needed to edit two of the video camera’s angles (i.e., one of the student angles and the instructor angle) on to one screen. That is, the researcher used software that allowed him to create a video that was split screen: One side contained the view of the instructor while she taught the course, and the other side showed the student angle that had a particular focal student participating in discussion in view. This editing process usually took many hours to complete and therefore all but one of the stimulated recalls occurred the day after a class was video-recorded.

As has been documented by a number of researchers (e.g., DiPardo, 1994; Gass & Mackey, 2000), introspective techniques such as stimulated recalls need to be implemented and carefully used to avoid inaccuracies and mitigate errors in the reporting of data. Specifically, studies that rely on data elicited by stimulated recalls need to gather such introspective accounts as soon as possible after an event so as to improve the reliability of participants’ accounts of what they were thinking or how they were processing particular events (in this study, how students and instructor alike were perceiving and interpreting what was said in whole-class discussions). Some researchers have found that if stimulated recall sessions are carried out within 48 hours of an event, then this will ensure a 95% accuracy rate (Bloom, 1954, as cited in Gass & Mackey, 2000). Therefore, the stimulated recalls used in this study were done well within the suggested 48 hour limit of the video-recorded whole-class discussion. All stimulated recall sessions were carried out within 24 hours to ensure participants’ accuracy when recalling their thoughts and perceptions of the talk between students and instructor.
In separate sessions, the instructor and each of the three students individually watched the video of a selected class meeting and were asked to comment on particular moments of a whole-class discussion along with any other aspects of the class that they felt merited reflection. Therefore, the protocol used in the stimulated recall sessions in this study gave participants the opportunity to address any aspect of the particular class meeting under analysis. The researcher did not choose to prompt participants to reflect verbally every time they were speaking in the video, due to some students’ multiple contributions to class discussion. In other words, not every instance of verbal participation by the interviewee required a comment during the stimulated recall session. In this way, the researcher did not want to limit participants’ insights or reflections about what was happening in the class to only those times when they were talking. Rather, prompting participants to speak when they were talking for extended periods of time in addition to those moments when they were not verbally participating in class discussion allowed for a more wide-ranging interpretation or reflection of classroom talk. While this unrestricted-like protocol used in the stimulated recall sessions might serve as a limitation, it did allow for students and the instructor to share a great deal of information about the co-construction of talk in specific class meetings. Finally, all stimulated recall sessions were audio taped and transcribed.

Compensation and timeline of project

The three focal students each received $30 in compensation for their participation in the interview and stimulated recall session. The instructor was paid $150 for her participation in the study (i.e., one interview and three stimulated recall sessions). At the end of the data collection period, 2 of the 18 students, selected by lottery, were compensated $10 for their willingness to fill out the demographic survey at the beginning of the study.
Table 3.3 indicates the participants and the data collection procedures used in this study.

TABLE 3.3. Participants and data collection procedures in study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection procedures</th>
<th>Ann (Instructor)</th>
<th>Nicole*</th>
<th>Janet*</th>
<th>Jon*</th>
<th>All students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 demographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 stimulated recalls</td>
<td>1 stimulated recall</td>
<td>1 stimulated recall</td>
<td>1 stimulated recall</td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

To better understand the data collection phase in this study, Table 3.4 provides a detailed outline of all data collection procedures carried out by the researcher. The sequence of events is presented in chronological order. As one can see, the data sources for this study come in a variety of forms and included class observations, interviews with participants, stimulated recall sessions, among other qualitative data collection techniques. The next section offers a description of the various approaches used to analyze the data.

Data analysis procedures for research questions

Given the above explanation about the data collection procedures and sources used in this dissertation, it is now necessary to see how the data sources were used and analyzed to answer each of the research questions being posed in this study. What follows is a restatement of each research question along with how it was addressed in the data analysis sections (reported in Chapters 4 and 5) of this study.
TABLE 3.4. Timeline for all data collection procedures during Spring 2007 semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates (2007)</th>
<th>Data collection procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Friday, January 12</td>
<td>Met with cooperating instructor to explain project and timeline of data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thursday, February 1</td>
<td>Submitted online application to the Office of the Vice President for Research Institutional Review &amp; Human Subjects Office for project approval after incorporating feedback from dissertation committee at prospectus meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Monday, February 12–Friday, March 9 (one month of observations)</td>
<td>With the instructor’s consent, began observing the class three times per week and taking field notes (i.e., after consulting the course syllabus with the instructor and determining which days were dedicated primarily to whole-class discussion).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Friday, February 23                                                         | • Visited class and distributed informed consent forms to students after receiving approval for the project from the Office of the Vice President for Research Institutional Review & Human Subjects Office.  
• Spoke with instructor to get her opinions about which focal students should be invited to participate as focal students.  
• Consulted field notes along with instructor’s opinions and tentatively determined which five students would be invited to potentially serve as focal students. |
| 5. Friday, March 2                                                             | Conducted a recorded interview with instructor (see Appendix C for the interview guideline).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6. Monday, March 5                                                             | Finished collecting student consent forms and distributed demographic questionnaires to all students who agreed to participate in the study. Some questionnaires were distributed by email while others were handed out via hard copies. Students returned the completed questionnaires to researcher either in person or via email.                                                                     |
| 7. Friday, March 9                                                             | Finished collecting student demographic questionnaires (before Spring Break).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 8. March 10–March 18 (Spring Break)                                           | Read over demographic questionnaires and began to compile data on all students.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 9. March 12–March 16                                                           | • No classes observed this week as students watched a movie entitled *La otra conquista* (Salvador Carrasco, 1999).  
• Invited five students to serve as potential focal students.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 10. Monday, March 26                                                           | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting (referred to as class observation #10, recording day #1).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 11. Wednesday, March 28                                                        | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting (referred to as class observation #11, recording day #2).  
• Invited Nicole to serve as focal student for study after class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 12. Thursday, March 29                                                         | • Conducted interview and stimulated recall session with Nicole while watching class observation #11, recording day #2.  
• Conducted stimulated recall session with Ann while watching class observation #11, recording day #2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
Table 3.4. continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 13. Friday, March 30 | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting. This observation will be referred to as class observation #12, recording day #3.  
  • Invited Janet to serve as focal student for study after class.  
  • Conducted interview and stimulated recall session with Janet while watching class observation #12, recording day #3. |
| 14. Saturday, March 31 | • Conducted stimulated recall session with Ann while watching class observation #12, recording day #3. |
| 15. Monday, April 2 | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting. This observation will be referred to as class observation #13, recording day #4.  
  • Invited Jon to serve as focal student for study after class. |
| 16. Tuesday, April 3 | • Conducted interview and stimulated recall session with Jon while watching class observation #13, recording day #4.  
  • Conducted stimulated recall session with Ann while watching class observation #13, recording day #4. |
| 17. Wednesday, April 4 | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting. This observation will be referred to as class observation #14, recording day #5. |
| 18. Friday, April 6 | • Observed & audio/video-recorded a class meeting. This observation will be referred to as class observation #15, recording day #6. |
| 19. Monday, April 9– Thursday, May 31 | Transcribed all audio/video-recorded class observations, instructor and student interviews and stimulated recall sessions. |
| 20. Friday, June 1 | Began data analysis. |

**R1. What are the expectations, goals, and intentions of an instructor and her students regarding the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in an upper-level undergraduate Latin American literature course?**

To answer the first research question, information about each participant’s expectations, goals, and intentions regarding their participation in whole-class discussions was gathered via surveys distributed to all student participants in the class. Data from the instructor’s interview is presented in subsequent chapters to investigate what her expectations, goals, and intentions are with respect to whole-class discussions in her class. Additionally, the course syllabus is also analyzed to help determine what the instructor’s goals were going in to the course and what she expected from students.
Insights gleaned from the course syllabus, instructor interview, and student survey responses helped to determine how the instructor and each of her students think they create and maintain whole-class discussions and what motivates their participation. The views of the instructor and her students are compared and contrasted to see how each participant’s expectations, goals, and intentions are similar or different in any way. Information presented to answer research question 1 is considered as data that make up a macro-level view of oral discourse in the Latin American literature class under observation.

**R2. How are the tensions between student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse?**

The survey and interview information provided by the instructor and her students was triangulated by taking a broad look at how whole-class discussions were structured. All of the turns in the transcripts from the six audio and video-recorded class meetings were coded as being part of initiation, response, evaluation (IRE) or initiation, response, and feedback (IRF) interaction sequences (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Nassaji & Wells, 2000), which were discussed in Chapter 2. This analysis continues to add to a macro-level view of how discourse is structured in the Latin American literature course under observation in this dissertation. Macro-level analysis in this study refers to broad views of how discourse is organized and how it unfolds between the instructor and her students during whole-class discussions, along with participants’ reported expectations, goals, and intentions of participating in whole-class discussion in the course. Thus, a macro-level analysis of discourse in this study does not entail getting at the underlying reasons as to why instructor or students engage (or not) in whole-class discussions. This first step to data analysis consisted of broadly looking at how discourse was structured based on IRE and IRF coding schemes.

The IRE and IRF coding schemes relied on the categorization of turns that made up whole-class discussions. Therefore, it is necessary to define what constituted a turn in
this study. A turn is defined as when the floor is transferred from one participant to the other. Specifically, a speaker’s turn could have consisted of a single word, a phrase, one sentence, more than one sentence, or any combination of the aforementioned. However, once the speaker allows a different interlocutor to start speaking and have the floor, then that is when the first speaker’s turn ends and the second interlocutor’s turn begins. The example in Table 3.5 illustrates how turns were defined and counted in this dissertation.

The first turn consists of a single question and a partial phrase. Speaker T’s turn is made up of lines 1 and 2. Speaker T’s interlocutor, S, then takes the floor and begins her turn in line 3. S’s turn consists of a single phrase. Speaker T then responds to Speaker S in lines 4–7, completing the third turn. Speaker S then responds in line 8 with the name of a character in the story under discussion, which represents the fourth turn in this exchange. The dialogue ends with a final turn in line 9. In all, the example below constitutes five turns.

With the two interactional patterns in mind (i.e., IRE and IRF), in addition to the idea of what makes up a turn, the transcripts for all six class meetings were coded to obtain a general sense (i.e., macro-level analysis) of how whole-class discussions are structured between the instructor and her students. First, the total number of turns in each class session was counted. Next, the transcripts were coded to determine the number of IRE and IRF sequences present in the oral discourse between instructor and students found in all class sessions. The percentage of turns that were coded as being part of IRE or IRF sequences was then calculated. This percentage was derived by dividing the total number of turns in each class session by the turns that were coded as initiation, response, or evaluation (i.e., those turns that were part of the IRE interaction sequence). The same calculation was carried out for the turns that made up IRF exchange patterns. Finally, a second rater calculated the total number of turns for each class session, coded the transcripts for IRE and IRF sequences, and calculated the percentage of turns that were coded as being part of IRE or IRF sequences. All of the second rater’s calculations were
TABLE 3.5. Example of five turns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T:</th>
<th>Y, ¿qué tiene que ver esto con esta idea de dinero? Que ella ha muerto y...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S:</td>
<td>Una herencia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Si, muy bien. Es una cuestión de herencia... que ambos hombres quieran recibir la herencia de ella. ¿Y quién lo logró? ¿Quién tiene la herencia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>S:</td>
<td>Don Igi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Muy bien.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T:</th>
<th>And, what does this have to with this idea of money? That she has died and...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S:</td>
<td>An inheritance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Yes, very good. It's a question of inheritance... that both men wanted to receive her inheritance. And who got it? Who has the inheritance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>S:</td>
<td>Don Igi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T:</td>
<td>Very good.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


be 100%. Table 3.6 below indicates how the percentages of turns in a sample class meeting were represented based on the coding of IRE or IRF sequences.

**TABLE 3.6. IRE and IRF sequence calculations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meeting</th>
<th>Total # of turns</th>
<th>Turns containing IRE sequences</th>
<th>% of turns coded as IRE</th>
<th>Turns containing IRF sequences</th>
<th>% of turns coded as IRF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/X= %</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Z/X= %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inter-rater reliability: Macro-level analyses

Transcripts for each of the six class meetings were coded for two kinds of interaction.
patterns; initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) and initiation-response-feedback (IRF).

While a detailed description of each of these interaction patterns was provided in Chapter 2, it is necessary now to address how inter-rater reliability was established regarding these coding procedures.

Similar to measures used in Donato and Brooks (2004), the researcher reviewed the transcripts of each of the six class meetings that serve as the data set for this dissertation research. After coding each of the six transcripts for both IRE and IRF patterns, another rater was asked to code the transcripts in the same way. This inter-rater reliability check ensured that the initial coding by the researcher was consistent. To establish inter-rater reliability with respect to the coding of the IRE and IRF interaction patterns found in the transcripts, the researcher created a document (see Appendix F) that contained instructions about how to code the data along with samples of both types of interactions. The researcher then recruited a native speaker of Spanish to serve as the rater to establish inter-rater reliability regarding the coding of IRE and IRF patterns. The rater was familiar with coding data similar to what that used in this study. His background and experience in coding qualified him as a good candidate to follow the instructions that were given to him. The researcher met with the rater and explained the two interactions to him and provided him with the instruction sheet. The rater asked questions to clarify how to code the data and also coded some sample data to see if his understanding of the coding schemes was accurate. After some clarifications, the rater then was given copies of the transcripts of the six class meetings and, by himself, coded the data as explained by the researcher.

After the rater finished coding the data on his own, he forwarded his work to the researcher and the researcher began to compare both sets of coded data. While carrying out this comparison, the researcher observed some differences between what he had coded and what the rater had coded. Therefore, the two met once again and discussed the disparities found in the two sets of data. After those issues were resolved, an inter-rater
reliability coefficient was calculated. This was done by counting the number of IRE and IRF interaction patterns coded in the transcripts by the researcher and comparing that to the number of IRE and IRF interaction patterns coded by the rater. This resulting number represents the inter-rater reliability coefficient for the coding of the IRE and IRF interaction patterns.

In addition to the coding and calculation of IRE and IRF sequences found across all six class meetings, further quantitative analyses were carried out. The total number of instructor and individual student turns at talk was calculated for each class and totaled across all six class meetings. The total number of words found in the instructor’s turns at talk was determined along with the mean number of words per instructor turn. Similarly, the total number of words in individual student turns at talk across all six class meetings was calculated in addition to the mean number of words per student turn. Collectively, the quantitative approaches to the data described above provided for an understanding of which participants dominated whole-class discussions, which participated very little and, more generally, added to a macro-level view of oral discourse in the Latin American literature classroom under observation. Table 3.7 illustrates how the calculation of turns at talk was determined for a sample class.

TABLE 3.7. Total turn, word, and mean number of words per turn calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class meeting</th>
<th># of I (Instructor) turns</th>
<th># of words in I turns</th>
<th>Mean # of words per I turn</th>
<th># of S (Student) turns</th>
<th># of words in S turns</th>
<th>Mean # of words per S turn</th>
<th>Total # of S &amp; I turns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B/A = C</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/X=Z</td>
<td>A + X = T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the researcher carried out the above calculations to determine who dominated whole-class discussion and how much participants were saying when they did
participate, inter-rater reliability procedures like those used in the coding of the IRE and IRF interaction patterns were applied in a similar way. Specifically, after the researcher counted the total number of turns, words, and determined the average number of words per turn for both the instructor’s and her students’ oral participation in whole-class discussions during the six class meetings, the native Spanish speaker rater was instructed to carry out the same calculations that were used by the researcher. Next, the researcher compared the two sets of calculations carried out independently by the researcher and the rater. After discovering some discrepancies in the total number of turns, words, and mean number of words per turn between the two calculations, the researcher met with the rater to discuss the inconsistencies. After discussing these issues, the researcher and rater arrived at a consensus regarding the differences and an inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated based on the comparison of the two sets of calculations. The inter-rater reliability coefficient for these calculations is presented in Chapter 4. In all, the rater received $40 for his time coding the data for interaction patterns and for calculating total number of turns, words, and the mean number of words per turn produced by the instructor and her students while participating in whole-class discussions over the six class meetings.

In all, the first two research questions relied on macro-level analyses of whole-class discussions (i.e., calculating the IRE and IRF interaction sequences, determining participants’ turns at talk, among other calculations) and then compared them to what the instructor and her students indicated in both the student surveys and the instructor interview. This comparison or triangulation of the data helped to complete the picture of how the conflicting expectations, goals and intentions of the instructor and of her students were born out in whole-class discussions.

**R3. What types of affordance structures emerged in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under investigation in this study? How do the instructor and the students perceive and make use of the affordance structures?**
Aside from the overall pedagogical goals of the instructor and the self-reported student motivations for participating in whole-class discussions, fine-tuned analyses of key moments of teacher-initiated talk and subsequent oral discourse of students in this particular context were employed to understand how and why the instructor and her students engaged (or not) in whole-class discussions. In other words, close analysis of the transcripts of the six class meetings was carried out to understand the nature of affordance structures and how they were created to facilitate the transition of first-level affordances to second-level affordances in the context of whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under observation.

Micro-level analysis of the unfolding discourse between the instructor and students along with an analysis of the various kinds of affordance structures found in the L2 literary course context resulted in an in-depth understanding of how participants perceived teacher- and student-initiated talk at particular moments in the discourse, how each speaker responded to the other at these precise moments, and how these moments affected students’ understanding of the talk in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature class under analysis.

To examine the talk in the six class meetings to answer research question 3, the researcher first read through the transcripts to analyze how oral interactions in whole-class discussions unfolded between Ann and her students. Particular attention was given to the discursive moves that allowed for extended oral interaction between participants. Once the initial examination of the transcripts had been completed, features of the extended interactions were noted. Categories were then established based on the features of each extended interaction. A second pass through the transcripts was then carried out to hone the categories and determine which interactions illustrated affordance structures as defined and used in this dissertation (see Chapter 5 for more on affordance structures).

To understand participants’ perceptions of what was being said at particular moments in whole-class discussions, stimulated recall sessions were carried out with each
of the three focal students and the instructor. In these sessions, the participant viewed a video-taped session of a particular class meeting and at strategic moments, was prompted to comment on what was being said and how he/she was interpreting and perceiving his/her or other participants' comments during whole-class discussions. As previously described, participants were also able to comment on any other facet of the whole-class discussion at any time during the stimulated recall session. This allowed for all participants to talk freely about all aspects of their participation (or non-participation) in talk at specific moments during whole-class discussion. It should be noted here that the affordance structures, as defined and described in this dissertation (see Chapter 5), were not identified until after the stimulated recall sessions were carried out. Therefore, the researcher was unable to follow up on these structures with participants during the stimulated recall sessions. This anachronism is a limitation of the study (see Chapter 6 for more limitations).

Each stimulated recall session was audio recorded and later transcribed. The focal student and instructor stimulated recall data was then used in concert with the information about the affordance structures found in the transcripts of the class meetings. Specifically, once the affordance structures were indicated in the transcripts (as explained above), data from the focal student and instructor stimulated recall sessions were examined to see how participants perceived and made use of the affordance structures that emerged in whole-class discussions.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that the kind of analysis of whole-class discussions that will be carried out in research question 3 is a micro-level analysis of discourse. This analysis differs from that which is carried out for research questions 1 and 2 in that it attempts to get underneath broad analyses of interaction patterns to better understand how expectations, goals, the intentions of participants, together with their perceptions of the affordance structures, affected the moment-by-moment unfolding discourse. Micro-level analyses therefore include getting at and identifying the
perspectives of four participants (i.e., the instructor and the three focal students) related to specific whole-class discussions from different class meetings about Latin American literature and the reasons why they act as they do (or do not).

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the rationale behind the various decisions made about the nature of data in this dissertation, an explanation about the procedures used to collect data, a chronological timeline of all data collection activities, and a description of data analysis procedures employed to answer each research question under investigation. As described above, both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the talk (i.e., whole-class discussions) contributed to our understanding of the nature of L2 oral discourse in whole-class discussions in the context of the Latin American literature course observed in this study. Two distinct sets of analyses—macro-level and micro-level views—were employed to comprehend participants’ motivations for and perceptions of talk in this context and will thereby help to understand the nature of the co-construction of knowledge via whole-class discussions.

Given the mixed-methods approach (i.e., quantitative and qualitative procedures) used to examine the data in this study, the following two chapters provide a macro- and micro-level view of oral discourse in the Latin American Colonial literature course under observation. Each chapter presents data analyses that help answer the three research questions under investigation in this dissertation. Chapter 4 addresses research questions 1 and 2 to gain a macro-level analysis of whole-class discussions between Ann and her students while Chapter 5 provides a micro-level view of classroom talk to answer research question 3.
CHAPTER 4: MACRO-LEVEL DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapter described the data collection procedures used to answer each of the research questions being investigated in this study. It also provided an overview of the different analyses used to understand the nature of a particular kind of talk—whole-class discussion—in a Latin American Colonial literature course at the college level. This chapter reports on the following: (a) the expectations, goals, and intentions reported by the instructor and her students regarding their participation in the construction of talk in whole-class discussions, along with their goals related to other skill and content areas; (b) the results of the quantitative analyses of the talk that makes up whole-class discussions over six consecutive class meetings; and (c) the results of the analyses of the significance of patterns of talk at a macro-level of discourse. The results of the aforementioned macro-level analyses of oral discourse are presented in this chapter in response to the first two research questions.

R1. What are the expectations, goals, and intentions of an instructor and her students regarding the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in an upper-level undergraduate Latin American literature course?

Understanding teacher-initiated talk and student oral discourse in the Latin American literature classroom under observation in this study not only involves analysis of the classroom talk, but also needs to include what the instructor and students enrolled in the class expected or intended to gain from either teaching or taking the course. In other words, talk that occurs in a L2 literature classroom not only is affected by the content being discussed and the linguistic hurdles confronted by students who are still improving their ability to speak in the L2, but it also is shaped in part by the goals, intentions, and expectations held by each participant. Specifically, an instructor whose principal goal is to convey information, interpretations, and insights about the literary
works and the historical and social contexts in which they are embedded might opt for an instructor-centered instructional style in which instructor lectures feature prominently. Conversely, an instructor whose course goals, intentions, and expectations center on the development of students' speaking abilities (or other linguistic skills) and/or who wishes students to arrive at their own interpretations of literary works with less direct instructor input will engage with students in such a way that the construction of talk and the talk itself will look different (Cazden, 2001; van Lier, 1998). Similarly, students' expectations, goals, and intentions when they enroll in a course can also affect how, why, and how much they participate (or not) in the construction of talk in the classroom.

Given that factors such as expectations, goals, and intentions espoused by both instructor and student can affect the nature of oral discourse in specific classroom contexts, it was necessary to gather this information from Ann and her students at the beginning of the data collection phase of this study. As explained in Chapter 3, the researcher collected this information from Ann via an interview and an analysis of her course syllabus as well as from her students through a questionnaire administered to them before audio and video recording of class sessions began.

Instructor expectations, intentions and goals

To understand how Ann approached teaching her Latin American Colonial literature course, the researcher asked her several questions about (a) her expectations of students' engagement with the material and their participation in whole-class discussions with her and their fellow students, (b) what goals she expressed in her course syllabus and in the day-to-day teaching of her course regarding what she wanted students to gain (i.e., skill- and content-related goals) by the end of the semester, and (c) her intentions about using specific pedagogical activities and strategies to get students to participate in whole-class discussions. In addition to Ann's interview data, her course syllabus was also examined to determine the expectations that she communicated to students and to better
understand her goals for the course. The results of Ann’s interview and analysis of her course syllabus are reported below.

Interview with the instructor

The researcher wanted to get a better sense about Ann’s course goals, expectations, and intentions before beginning video and audio recording of her course. An interview was scheduled after the researcher had observed Ann’s class on nine separate occasions and just before the recording of the final six class meetings. The purpose of the interview was to ask Ann specific questions about the way in which she interacted with her students, the kinds of techniques she used to engage students in conversation during whole-class discussions, and to better understand her goals, expectations, and intentions of the course and of her students.

The transcript of Ann’s interview with the researcher (Appendix D) was analyzed for themes that emerged from an examination of Ann’s responses. An initial pass of the transcript yielded a grouping of topics as goals for the course, her expectations of students, pedagogical techniques, and insights about the role of talk in student learning. These topics were partly determined by the questions that were asked of Ann and also by her responses to them. In other words, some of the topics were already embedded in the interview questions, whereas others, not anticipated by the researcher, originated in Ann’s responses.

After identifying the various topics mentioned in the transcripts of Ann’s interview, a second examination of the data established themes found within and across the different topic areas. The themes presented below therefore summarize Ann’s responses regarding her goals, intentions, and expectations for her course. It should also be noted that there was no numerical way to determine what constituted a theme. That is, if Ann expressed an idea regarding her goals, intentions, and expectations about her course only one time, it was deemed a theme (i.e., even if it was only mentioned once
during the instructor interview). However, some themes were established due to Ann mentioning an idea more than once. Therefore, there was no overt numerical criteria used to determine if an idea or insight was worthy of being a theme.

In all, the researcher found a total of five themes in the transcript of Ann’s interview: Reading-related goals and intentions; promotion of oral expression/developing critical thinking abilities and improving linguistic skills; promoting the subject matter; minimizing grammar and vocabulary; and uncertainty about expectations. Ann’s insights about the five themes will begin to help shape our understanding of how the instructor’s goals, expectations, and intentions affected classroom talk at a macro-level of analysis.

**Theme 1: Reading-related goals and intentions**

One theme that emerged frequently from Ann’s interview data related to her course goal of improving students’ reading ability in Spanish. She stated that one of her main goals was to help guide students through the process of carrying out a close reading of the texts while also helping them to understand the context in which the primary texts for the course were produced. Over the first part of the semester, students read Latin American Colonial texts such as *Cartas de relación* by Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, and the *Códice florentino*. In the second half, students read contemporary works that picked up on the themes presented in the aforementioned Colonial-era texts. Those readings included James Lockhart’s *We People Here*, Laura Esquivel’s *Malinche: una novela*, and works by Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, and several other authors and literary critics. Students were presented with two different kinds of texts (i.e., Colonial and contemporary) from the narrative genre over the course of the semester.

Ann indicated that by exposing students to a variety of texts written in a specific genre about the same topic (i.e., the Conquest of Mexico), they would become critical readers of Latin American literature. Ann said that she intended to walk students through
the process of how to read each text by teaching them what kinds of questions they should ask of the readings and how to read a text critically in relationship to the other works that students had read during the semester. Ann expressed that one way in which she addressed this goal was by explaining to students how one author’s perspective on an historical event differed from another author’s view.

Ann reported that she helped her students become critical readers of the texts by employing a variety of strategies to guide their reading. Early in the semester when students were reading the older Colonial texts, she said that she gave them questions beforehand to orient them while they read the texts outside of class. As the course progressed and students began reading more contemporary works, Ann indicated that this kind of scaffolding was no longer needed as students gained knowledge about the topics and themes that were found in many of the texts and due in part because they had become comfortable with the readings and had also become better readers in general as the semester unfolded. In short, Ann reported that one of her primary course goals was to help students improve their ability to read literary works critically and to assist them in that process.

**Theme 2: Promotion of oral expression: Developing critical thinking abilities and improving linguistic skills**

Another theme that emerged from Ann’s interview data was the goal of getting students to participate in discussions in class about what they had read in the texts by themselves outside of class, not just the narrative story line, but interpretations and analysis of the events and the characters. In other words, speaking in class about what students read was another course goal and expectation that Ann had for her students. When asked about the importance she placed on oral participation in her class, Ann stated that part of what she intended to promote with her students vis-à-vis whole-class discussions was their ability to speak critically in the public classroom forum about the
assigned segments of the texts that they had read on their own. In the interview, she said the following:

It is fundamental to not only develop their language skills, but also developing their critical abilities, the critical thinking. Because the process of speaking publicly, with a group, engaging with one another’s comments forces them to think and to speak in ways that they wouldn’t if it was a more writing-focused class. (See Appendix D for the complete transcript of the instructor interview.)

As we have seen by Ann’s comment here and the description of her goals above, she viewed students’ participation as a cognitive activity that required students to combine what either she or fellow students were saying about the texts they were reading. Based on what Ann expressed above, speaking in her class was qualitatively different from speaking in the entry-level upper-division course (i.e., Writing in Spanish) that she had previously taught, where the only goal for student participation in class discussion was for them to improve their speaking skills in Spanish. In other words, Ann’s intentions for getting students to participate in class discussion in her Latin American Colonial literature course were closely tied to the idea that integrating or responding to others’ comments during whole-class discussions would help students not only to develop their oral language ability in Spanish, but also (and more importantly) to develop critical thinking abilities through reacting critically and analytically to elements of course content. In sum, having her students speak publicly in her Latin American Colonial literature class would be, in effect, one way in which students were able to develop their critical thinking abilities.

The researcher wanted to know how Ann balanced the two purposes for having students talk in her course: to improve their linguistic abilities in Spanish (i.e., skill development) and to improve their critical thinking abilities by reflecting on and reacting to what others said about the texts they read. When asked about how she provides students with feedback regarding their participation in class discussions, she stated that she periodically gives each student written feedback that indicates their level of
participation via a point system. While students’ participation did count towards their final grade, she indicated that if it was not a problem for a particular student, then she did not focus on it because “I don’t want them to get caught up with the idea that they are being graded with what they are saying in class; especially if there’s a lot of good discussion” (Appendix D). Again, we see that Ann’s expectations of students’ participation in her class, while tied to a grade, are related to her stated belief that good ideas, even if they are not expressed well in the L2, are still important contributions to the discussion. That is, Ann did not explicitly say in the interview that one of her intentions was to correct students’ linguistic errors while they were participating in class discussions.

**Theme 3: Promoting interest in the subject matter**

Another goal expressed by Ann during her interview did not relate to developing students’ L2 reading and speaking skills or critical thinking abilities. Rather, she indicated that by teaching students to become critical readers, thinkers, and speakers about the subject matter found in the texts, students would become more curious about Latin American Colonial literature. She intended to pique students’ interest in this literary period by arousing their curiosity about the historical events, figures, and themes in the readings.

**Theme 4: Minimizing grammar and vocabulary**

While Ann’s course goals, expectations and intentions for her students expressed in her interview generally sought to promote students’ developing L2 skills (i.e., reading and speaking), content knowledge about Latin American Colonial literature, and critical thinking abilities, there were some areas of students’ learning that she downplayed. Another theme in Ann’s interview data related to topics of students’ L2 learning to which Ann did not give high priority. Ann stated that “I have encouraged the students from the beginning of the semester to not get too hung up on issues of comprehension of
vocabulary, funny grammar constructions that may be a little bit unfamiliar” (Appendix D). Ann went on in the interview to indicate that since her course was focused on literature, she did not feel that teaching vocabulary or explaining Spanish grammar structures were primary goals or intentions.

Based on the previous two themes found in Ann’s interview (i.e., reading-related goals and intentions and the promotion of oral expression: developing critical thinking abilities and improving linguistic skills), she made it clear that she wanted students to read critically, focusing their attention on understanding the themes in the texts and expressing their ideas in class discussions without letting grammar and vocabulary get in the way. Considering that students at the beginning of the semester were reading 16th century literary works in Spanish, which often contained archaic grammar constructions and vocabulary, Ann stated that it was important to minimize the teaching of grammar and vocabulary.

**Theme 5: Uncertainty about expectations**

Another theme found in the transcript of Ann’s interview was that of uncertainty. When asked to share some of her goals for her course, Ann said that since she was offering the Latin American Colonial literature course for the first time, she did not know what to expect from the students. In the interview, she stated the following:

I didn’t know how much material we would be able to get through, what kinds of discussions I would be able to expect them to have. So I really didn’t have terribly explicit ideas of what I wanted to accomplish because I wanted to kind of see what the group was going to be able to do.

As we have seen, Ann did not know with any certainty how much material she would be able to cover given the level of difficulty of some of the texts, and consequently could not anticipate the kinds of discussions that would unfold. She admitted not having an explicit idea of what she wanted to accomplish prior to the start of the semester because the course goals, in part, depended on the preparation of the students and how
their linguistic preparation and familiarity with reading literature in their L2 would affect the quality of the work they would be able to do.

In summary, we have seen that Ann began the semester not knowing for sure what class discussion would look like in her class, because she was not sure about how much or what kind of participation and preparation students would do or whether productive discussions would be possible. In addition, she did not know if her chosen readings would match the prior preparation level of students. However, despite these unknown variables, Ann expressed in her interview that an important course goal was to walk students through the process of carefully reading a text by showing them what questions to ask of a text, in addition to providing for them the historical and cultural contexts in which a text was written, and begin to question the inter-textual discourse between the Colonial and contemporary works they were to read. She also indicated that she wanted to get students to participate in class discussion to promote their critical thinking abilities and, to a lesser extent, help them continue developing their speaking ability in Spanish. As a result, Ann expressed the intention of piquing students’ curiosity about the content found in the literary works and related to the historical period in which many of the texts were written. She also said that she wanted to limit the amount of grammar and vocabulary instruction in order to focus on the topics and themes found in the literary works. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Ann did not express in her interview any goals, expectations, or intentions related to the writing or listening skills of students. However, it is now necessary to analyze Ann’s course syllabus to see what goals, expectations, and intentions were expressed to her students as they began her course.

Ann’s course syllabus

While Ann’s interview with the researcher has given us an idea about what her goals, expectations, and intentions were for her course, it serves as a partial view of what
she expected from her students. To understand how she intended to balance skill development with content knowledge, it was necessary to analyze her course syllabus. In doing so, the researcher wanted to see if what she shared in her interview regarding her course goals, intentions, and expectations of students coincided (or not) with what was outlined in her course syllabus. What follows is a summary of Ann’s course syllabus (see Appendix A).

As we saw above in the reporting of Ann’s interview, one theme that was not found in the transcripts was regarding the writing skills of students. Ann did not explicitly mention the development of students’ writing skills as a course goal during her interview. However, upon examining her course syllabus, it is clear that writing critically about the texts is an expectation Ann has for her students. Her syllabus indicates that students will write four critical summaries (called resúmenes críticos) during the course of the semester. For each critical summary, students were to write 1 to 2 pages about a secondary reading (i.e., an essay written by a literary critic) and explain its central argument. Each critical summary written by students was worth 50 points and together were worth 200 points (or 20% of a student’s final grade). In addition to the critical summaries, Ann’s course syllabus also specified that students needed to write 2 essays (each 4 to 5 pages in length) during the semester. Each essay would be written in stages: The first draft was worth 50 points and the final draft was worth 75 points, for a total of 125 points. When taken together, the two essays were worth a total of 250 points (or 25% of a student’s final grade). According to Ann’s course syllabus, 45% of students’ final grades would be based on writing activities.

Other writing-based assignments found in Ann’s syllabus included a midterm and final exam. Each exam was to be written in class and was “based on class lectures, readings – both from the primary and secondary texts – and other materials covered in class.” (Appendix A). The midterm and final exams were each worth 200 points (or 20%
of students’ final grades in the course). Taken together, they constituted 40% of the final grade.

Finally, an examination of Ann’s course syllabus reveals that a final course expectation that she had of students was their active participation in class discussion. Following is an excerpt from Ann’s syllabus regarding how she described “active participation” (Appendix A) in her course:

**Class Participation and Attendance:** The class meetings will rely on ALL students preparing close readings of the materials at home and coming to class ready to actively participate in a critical discussion of those readings. The class participation grade will be based on factors such as preparedness for class discussions, active participation in class activities, maintaining a positive and supportive attitude towards classmates, and speaking Spanish at all times. With a large class it is sometimes difficult for everyone to have a chance to contribute to the discussion during every class meeting. I will, however, do my very best to make sure all students feel welcomed and encouraged to participate and intervene in the daily class discussions. The depth and breadth of our class discussions will be directly related to the level of participation of each member of the class.

According to the above excerpt from Ann’s course syllabus, it was evident that she went into teaching the course expecting students to be active participants in whole-class discussions (along with other activities). She made it clear to her students that the quality of class discussions would be affected by the amount of their participation. In addition, students knew that 150 points (15% of the final grade) in the course would be based on their participation in class discussion. Her syllabus also revealed self-imposed expectations related to her job as the instructor. Specifically, she noted that she intended to create a classroom environment that would encourage students to participate and intervene in discussions.
In all, Ann’s course syllabus indicated that students’ written work (i.e., writing skills in Spanish along with their ability to critically argue their views) would be worth 45% of their final grade, students’ content knowledge of the texts and class discussions (in the form of a midterm and final exam) would equal 40% of their final grade, and active participation in class discussion would be worth 15%.

Summary of Ann’s course goals, expectations, and intentions (interview and course syllabus)

Ann’s goals, expectations, and intentions for her course were varied based on analysis of the interview transcript and her course syllabus. Of the themes found in the interview data, showing students how to carefully read a text and then getting them to critically analyze and discuss it in class in order to promote critical thinking abilities were the two primary goals for her course. While she did not express in her interview that improving students’ writing ability was an overt course goal, her syllabus indicated otherwise by constituting close to 50% of students’ final grade in her course. It is necessary to note here that Ann’s intention to include so much writing in her course was not an explicit attempt to improve her students’ writing skills in Spanish. Rather, her course syllabus, and more specifically, how she described the critical summaries and the essays (See Appendix A), served to push students to argue their points critically based in part on their reading of the text and were not just a way for students to improve their writing skills in Spanish. Similarly, the written midterm and final exams were not described in Ann’s syllabus as a way in which students could improve their writing skills. Instead, they were intended to check students’ understanding of what they read and were also based on class discussions.

Ann expressed that part of her course goals and expectations of students in her class was to get students to actively participate in discussions about the texts. In the course syllabus, 15% of students’ final grades was based on their participation in class
discussions. When compared to the written assignments, speaking carried much less weight towards the final grades. However, Ann expressed in her interview that one of her reasons for promoting students' participation in whole-class discussions was her belief that whole-class discussion was a way for students to develop their critical thinking abilities (and, to a lesser extent, improve their speaking skills in Spanish).

Explaining grammar constructions and teaching vocabulary to students during the semester were not among the course goals that Ann articulated. In addition to furthering students’ language skill development in Spanish (e.g., reading, writing, and speaking) and improving their critical thinking abilities, Ann also intended to get her students interested in the content of the course, (i.e., Latin American literature related to the Conquest of Mexico).

As previously noted, the amount and quality of oral discourse in any classroom is partly affected by the goals, intentions, and expectations espoused by an instructor before any class meeting is held. In this study, we have seen that Ann’s expressed course goals (i.e., in her interview and in her course syllabus) of allowing students to publicly share their insights about what they read in class discussion along with promoting students’ critical reading and writing skills were more important than developing students’ listening abilities or expanding their knowledge of Spanish grammar and vocabulary. However, we have also seen that another primary goal was to expose students to the course content so as to arouse their interest in the themes and historical period in which many of the texts were written. Ann’s goals, intentions, and expectations are therefore important pieces of information to consider in this dissertation study as they will play a partial role in how whole-class discussions evolve between Ann and her students and between students themselves. However, Ann is merely one organism in the complex ecosystem that makes up her classroom. Other, equally important participants to consider are her students.
Expectations, intentions and goals of students

Although classroom talk is partly affected by the expectations, intentions, and goals of the instructor teaching the course, it is also shaped by students who enter a class expecting a particular learning experience. Although many students intend or expect to gain an understanding about a particular literary time period in a L2 literature course (in the case of this study Latin American Colonial literature), their goals regarding skill development may be quite diverse. Some students may enroll in a L2 literature course wanting to improve their reading ability. Others may want to further their L2 writing skills. Therefore, students enter each classroom expecting or assuming different outcomes or have a diverse array of course goals. However, it is possible to see if students in a particular classroom collectively share common goals regarding why they enrolled in a course.

Given that students enroll in a course with a variety of personal goals, intentions, and expectations, it was necessary to investigate what Ann’s students wanted to gain from her Latin American Colonial literature course. In other words, it was necessary to see what students (collectively and individually) wanted to gain out of the class and compare that with what Ann wanted students to acquire. It was hypothesized that this comparison between what each entity (i.e., Ann and her students) wanted from the course would partially affect the nature and shape of whole-class discussions.

To gather information from students regarding their goals, expectations, and intentions for Ann’s course, the researcher distributed a demographic questionnaire that was filled out by all students who had agreed to participate in this study. The questionnaire was given to students at the midpoint of the semester. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to students after he had carried out nine classroom observations and before the video and audio recordings of the final six class meetings took place. Additionally, students had been taking Ann’s course for eight consecutive weeks before they filled out the questionnaire. By the time they filled out the
questionnaire, students were familiar with Ann and with each other and had established their own participation patterns in the course.

Ranking exercise in questionnaire

To investigate the expectations, intentions, and goals of students enrolled in Ann’s course, the researcher included several sections in the demographic questionnaire that, in various ways, sought to measure students’ ideas about their L2 skill development and content knowledge learning in Ann’s course. Some sections of the questionnaire contained open-ended questions that required students to write their responses, whereas others had students rank their goals for the course. The results for ranking the items are reported below.

One of the first sections in the questionnaire asked students to rank eight skill- and content-related goals they might have in taking Ann’s course. The goals ranged from improving reading, speaking, writing, and listening abilities to better understanding the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary works were written to improving students’ literary comprehension and interpretation skills in Spanish. Students were instructed to rank all eight goals from most important (1) to least important (8). Table 4.1 below shows the compilation of rank frequencies for the students in Ann’s class. It should be noted here that Herminia, the only graduate student and native speaker in the course did not do the ranking exercise correctly when filling out her questionnaire. Therefore, her answers were eliminated from the analysis of this particular question. Therefore, the data in Table 4.1 include responses from the 17 undergraduate students in Ann’s class.

As displayed in Table 4.1, the ranking of the eight goals by Ann’s students revealed that some students placed more importance on developing specific language skills, whereas others viewed content learning as a priority. Of the eight goals presented to students, improving listening comprehension in Spanish was collectively ranked as the
TABLE 4.1. Rank frequencies for course goals from student questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Ability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability (i.e., literal comprehension)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Historical &amp; Cultural Contexts of Texts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Comprehension &amp; Interpretation Skills (i.e., symbolic comprehension)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Ability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Ability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

least important goal. While 2 and 3 students indicated that it was their second and third most important course goal, respectively, the other 12 students ranked it in the lower half of the scale. The median ranking for listening comprehension is 5 (again, on an 8 point scale). Similarly, students as a whole indicated that improving their writing ability ranked next-to-last in order of importance to them. Besides improving listening comprehension, improving writing ability was the least important goal for students in Ann’s class. The median ranking of 5 for this particular goal indicates that it was a low priority for students when compared to the other six goals ranked higher on the scale.

The students ranked three other goals as being somewhat more important than the
lowest two. The next three goals that were indicated by students as being somewhat important (i.e., more important than listening comprehension and improving writing ability) were increasing vocabulary, improving literary comprehension and interpretation skills, and improving grammatical knowledge of Spanish. As can be seen in Table 4.1, the median ranking for all three of these course goals is 4. While the calculated means for grammatical knowledge, literary comprehension, and increasing vocabulary did vary (4.2, 4.5, and 4.7, respectively), the data suggest that all three of the goals were ranked in a similar way by the class as a whole (i.e., regardless of individual rankings found among the three different goals). It is also interesting to note here that students, based on the above frequency data, ranked improving grammatical knowledge on par with increasing vocabulary and improving literary comprehension and interpretation skills. Given the literary content focus of Ann’s course, it is noteworthy that students ranked improving grammatical knowledge as having nearly equal importance as improving literary comprehension and interpretation skills.

The last three course goals ranked by students as being more important than the five lower-ranked goals previously described were understanding historical and cultural contexts of the texts, improving reading ability, and improving speaking ability. The first of these goals, understanding historical and cultural contexts of the texts received a ranking of 1 or 2 by nearly half of the respondents (5 and 3 students, respectively).

The course goal ranked the second most important goal by Ann’s class was improving reading ability. Improving reading ability means that students wanted to improve the way in which they literally comprehended texts in Spanish versus the other course goal of literary comprehension and interpretation skills which means that students would have the ability to go beyond literal comprehension and attempt to get at a more symbolic level of understanding. The ranking exercise did not include additional questions to tease out why students expressed more of an interest in improving their reading skills in Spanish (i.e., literal comprehension of texts) as opposed to improving
their literary comprehension and interpretation skills (i.e., a symbolic level of understanding). Therefore, reasons for this difference among students cannot be determined based on the data collected.

Finally, improving speaking ability was ranked by Ann’s students as being the most important course goal. Six of the 17 students ranked it as the most important goal, whereas two students indicated that it was the second most important. Improving speaking ability therefore had a median ranking of 2 (on the 8 point scale). Collectively, Ann’s students came into her course with the goal of improving their speaking ability, improving their reading ability, and understanding the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary texts were written as their top three course goals.

While the ranking exercise in the student questionnaire begins to give us an idea about what students expected or intended to improve regarding their language skills and content knowledge, other items in the questionnaire gathered additional information regarding students’ participation in whole-class discussions. Students responded to several open-ended questions after completing the ranking exercise. We now turn to an analysis of their responses to gain a better understanding of students’ motivations for participating (or not participating) in discussions in Ann’s class.

Open-ended questionnaire responses

In one section of the questionnaire, students were asked a variety of open-ended questions to understand what motivated them to participate (or not) in whole-class discussions in Ann’s course. The responses to these questions allowed the researcher to understand the various forces that helped to shape oral discourse in the classroom context under observation in this study. That is, some questions sought to discover what might motivate students to participate, whereas others were posed to find out what might inhibit students from participating in whole-class discussions. The following student responses, coupled with the ranking of their course goals, will later be compared to Ann’s course
goals, expectations, and intentions to discover areas of conflicting or coinciding course
goals, which might then be reflected in the ways in which oral discourse between Ann
and her students evolved.

Open-ended question 1

The first open-ended question asked students to share their thoughts about their
participation level in whole-class discussion in the Latin American Colonial literature
course they were taking with Ann (i.e., the course under observation in this study). It also
asked students to provide the reasons why they participated in class discussions in Ann’s
course. Students’ answers to the first open-ended question varied. However, to
systematically analyze how students responded, all of their answers were compiled in one
document. The researcher then read through the responses and coded them based on
themes that emerged from the data. What follows below are a number of themes or
motives that were expressed by students along with information that helps to describe
each area.

Skill growth-based motivations

One theme that was found in students’ answers to the first open-ended question
was that of skill-growth based motivations. Specifically, some students commented on
the linguistic benefits of the act of speaking in Spanish. They believed that by speaking in
Spanish and participating in whole-class discussions, that this somehow resulted in an
improvement of their linguistic abilities in the L2. This theme was found in many student
answers in various forms. For example, one student said that she participated in class
discussions even if she did not feel confident about her speaking ability in Spanish
because “the only way to learn the language is to use it, so even if I’m unsure, I still try to
say something.” Similarly, a different student expressed the same sentiment when she
said that “I am comfortable speaking and participating and even making mistakes because
it helps me learn.” Another student expressed the same idea as he indicated that “I enjoy
participating a lot because it forces me to use my Spanish skills” while yet a different student commented that “it keeps my mind active and definitely helps me learn Spanish better.” Finally, another student said that her participation in class discussion specifically targets her speaking skills in Spanish as she expressed that “I enjoy participating because I get to actually practice my speaking.” The above responses illustrate that students believed that by speaking, they were improving their Spanish abilities and were therefore motivated to participate in whole-class discussion.

Interaction-based motivations

Another theme found in students’ answers to the first open-ended question revolved around the idea students chose to participate in whole-class discussions only if they felt that they had something positive to add, that they deemed worthy of saying, or if discussion was addressing a certain part of the text in which the student was especially interested. One student commented “I participate often and really only say something that is an important point.” In a similar way, another student indicated that she participated because “I feel I have interesting things to say and I like to see if others have the same ideas as I do.” Therefore, some students were motivated to participate in class discussions in Ann’s class as a way to contribute to the discussion and to see if their ideas were shared by others.

Knowledge growth-based motivations

Whereas the first two themes focused on making a positive contribution to whole-class discussion or somehow benefiting linguistically from their participation, another theme found in students’ responses to this question was related to the content of the readings being discussed. That is, some students were motivated to participate in whole-class discussions due to the content of the texts and students’ ability to understand that content. These knowledge growth-based motivations were expressed by one student who indicated that “I enjoy participating a lot because it forces me to . . . critically analyze the
text. I enjoy the historical context of the texts.” Similarly, another student expressed that she participated in class discussions to “help me broaden my ideas on the subject.” Finally, one student expressed that she liked participating in Ann’s class “so I can know if I am understanding the readings” and in a different part of her answer said that she was motivated to participate due to the fact that the “subject is fascinating.”

External motivations

The final theme that was found in students’ answers related to an external motivation such as students’ participation grade in the course. As we have seen above, Ann’s course syllabus indicated that 15% of students’ final grade would be based on their active participation in class discussions. This requirement, as seen in students’ answers to the first open-ended question in the questionnaire, motivated many students to participate. At the same time, some students indicated that their active involvement was also intended to show the instructor that they had done their homework. One student expressed that he was motivated to participate in class discussions because “the participation grade does hold some weight in my decision.” Another stated that “I feel obligated and encouraged to participate” while a different student said she was motivated to participate because “it is part of my grade.” Finally, some students expressed that their participation was tied to the idea that they wanted Ann to know that they had done their homework. One student said that “I . . . want the teacher to know that I have stayed on top of the coursework” while another indicated that her participation in class discussion was motivated by the desire “to show the instructor that I have both read and understand the material.”

Summary of themes in student responses to open-ended question 1

As we have seen, there were a number of reasons that motivated students in Ann’s class to participate in whole-class discussion. In all, there were four principal motives
that encouraged students to participate. One motive was skill growth-based and was
predicated on the notion that if students spoke, then they would improve their speaking
(and other linguistic abilities) in Spanish. A second motive found in the data was
interaction based, in that some students were motivated to participate in whole-class
discussions due to a desire to say what they thought and hear from others in class. For
other students, their participation was bound to a knowledge-based motive. They
indicated that they spoke in class because they felt that they would get better at
understanding the literature if they expressed their ideas aloud. Finally, several students
responded that their participation was affected by the external motive of a participation
grade. That is, they spoke in class because they wanted to get a good grade and were
motivated by Ann’s course syllabus that indicated that 15% of their final grade would
consist of their participation.

**Open-ended question 2**

Whereas the open-ended question 1 asked students to share their thoughts about
their participation level in whole-class discussion in the Latin American Colonial
literature course they were taking with Ann (i.e., the course under observation in this
study), open-ended question 2 served as a sub-question to the first question in that it
asked students what motivated them to participate or prevented them from participating
in class discussions. Open-ended question 2 was more specific in that it posed the
following two questions: “What *motivates* you to participate in class discussions in this
Latin American literature course?” and “What *prevents* you from participating in class
discussions in this Latin American literature course?” Therefore, the second question
allowed students to share even more information regarding what encouraged their
participation (vs. what they had expressed in the first open-ended question) and also gave
them the opportunity to address factors that inhibited their participation in whole-class
discussion in Ann’s literature course.
Many themes found in the first part of open-ended question 2 were similar to those found in open-ended question 1 reported above. Several students reiterated that one of the main reasons why they participated was due to the fact that a significant portion of their final grade in Ann’s course was linked to how much they spoke in class. They also echoed the idea that by participating in class discussions, they were somehow showing the instructor that they had done the assigned reading. In addition, some students reaffirmed the idea that the content of the course motivated them to engage with Ann and their fellow students in class discussion. Finally, some students again expressed in the second question that another motive was linked to the idea that participating in class discussion somehow translates into them improving their linguistic abilities in Spanish.

However, an additional motivation was revealed in the first part of open-ended question 2 regarding why students chose to participate in whole-class discussion in Ann’s class. It is worth noting here that Ann herself was a factor that affected some students’ decisions to participate in whole-class discussions.

Instructor-based motives
Another motive that encouraged students to participate in class discussions that was expressed by students in open-ended question 2 and not indicated in their responses to open-ended question 1 was the role of the instructor and the class environment. In addition to the aforementioned motives expressed in open-ended question 1 above, students indicated in open-ended question 2 that the role of the instructor and the atmosphere that she had established in the classroom were important factors that affected their oral participation in class. One student commented that “the instructor and the small class atmosphere really make it easy for me to participate. Ann really creates an inviting discussion where she helps lead into discussion.” Another student expressed the same idea when he commented that “I think Ann is a good teacher. She leads discussions well
and can adapt to a class. I feel like she deserves the effort.” Similarly, a different student said that the main thing that motivates him is “The material and most of all, the teacher.”

In a similar vein, other students mentioned that Ann did not overtly correct their grammatical or vocabulary errors while they were contributing to class discussion and that this was something that encouraged them to participate. This was apparent when one student indicated that “Ann does a very good job of mixing the proper amount of correction and just ‘understanding the point’ (overlooking your misuse of a word, etc.).” Similar sentiments about Ann and her ability to facilitate discussion were found in other students’ responses as some of the primary factors as to why they felt motivated to participate in class discussion. In sum, these comments suggest that for many students, the class environment and, more importantly, Ann’s ability to engage students in conversation about the texts were factors that also motivated students to participate in class discussion.

While open-ended question 2 yielded an additional motive as to why students in Ann’s class participated in whole-class discussions, it also revealed reasons why students did not participate in class discussion. We now turn to analyses of students’ responses to the second half of the open-ended question 2 to see what inhibited students to participate in whole-class discussion.

Perception of linguistic deficiencies

One of the themes found in students’ responses that inhibited their participation was related to students’ perception of their own linguistic deficiencies. One student indicated that her reading ability in Spanish negatively affected how much she was able to contribute to whole-class discussions. She stated that her lack of participation was due to the fact that “sometimes I have read but I haven’t understood very clearly the text.” Other students said that their lack of participation was partly due to them not understanding what Ann was asking in class. One student commented “When I don’t
participate it is because I do not understand the question/material or there is a
to the language/expression barrier.” While another said that she did not participate “If I don’t
know what the question is about.” In similar ways, other students indicated that their
perceived less-than-adequate speaking skills affected their participation level. One
student said she felt intimidated or afraid to participate due to her speaking ability in
Spanish. This was evident in her response when she said “I do not participate because I
cannot speak the language as well as my classmates.” Similarly, another student indicated
that he was prevented from participating at times in class discussion because of his
speaking ability and hesitations about making a grammar mistake. He indicated that his
lack of participation at times was due to “Not feeling up to the same level on the speaking
scale! I know that no one probably cares or notices when you use estar in place of ser,
but the thought of not being able to effectively communicate does impede my
participation.” Therefore, the perceived linguistic deficiencies of students’ skills (i.e.,
reading, speaking, and listening abilities) and Spanish grammar knowledge were
indicated as reasons that inhibited students’ participation in whole-class discussions.

Insufficient preparation

While some students expressed that their linguistic deficiencies in Spanish
hindered their participation in whole-class discussions, others said that their lack of
preparation for a particular class was another factor. One student commented “When I
don’t participate, it usually means that I am not prepared for class, i.e. I forgot to do one
of the readings,” while another student said “Sometimes if I am unprepared for class I
won’t participate.”

Inadequate response

Finally, some students said that their contribution or ideas about the content of the
texts also affected their participation. That is, students feared that their responses or
insights about the texts might not be good enough for Ann or fellow students and
therefore were reluctant to orally participate. “If I have nothing insightful to contribute, I don’t” answered one student while another expressed that she does not participate in whole-class discussion “if I don’t think others will agree with me.” Similarly, students’ answers to the second part of open-ended question 2 revealed that some students were hesitant to ask for clarification about an idea found in the text during whole-class discussion. One student elaborated and stated “The only other time that I don’t participate is when I really don’t understand something . . . When I don’t understand something, I try to ask but it can be embarrassing.” While it is not clear by the student’s response what exactly is embarrassing about her asking for clarification (i.e., due to linguistic deficiencies or due to a lack of understanding of an idea presented in the text), her response does suggest that her participation would be viewed by others as a kind of inadequate response.

Summary of themes in student responses to open-ended question 2

Students’ responses to open-ended question 2, a more specific subset of questions to open-ended question 1, revealed an additional motivation as to why students participated in whole-class discussion but also established factors as to why Ann’s students did not participate in discussion. We have seen that students expressed that the instructor and the way in which she facilitated discussion was another reason as to why they participated in classroom talk. We have also seen that students, when asked to specify what prevents them from participating in whole-class discussion, indicated that they were inhibited to do so because either: (a) they perceived their Spanish skills (i.e., reading, speaking, listening abilities, and knowledge of grammar) as being deficient; (b) they had not done the reading and therefore were insufficiently prepared to participate in whole-class discussion; or (c) they felt that their response was not worthy of sharing or was inadequate in some way.
Summary of open-ended questions 1 and 2

Based on students' answers to open-ended questions 1 and 2 in the questionnaire, we have seen that a number of factors motivated and prevented students from participating in class discussion in Ann's Latin American Colonial literature course. Table 4.2 below summarizes all of these aspects. Students' answers to open-ended questions 1 and 2 revealed that their participation in classroom talk was stimulated by skill-based motives. Specifically, students said that they somehow believed that their skills in Spanish would improve if they participated in whole-class discussions. Another motive that pushed students to participate in class discussion was interaction based and revolved around the idea that by sharing one's thoughts, ideas, or personal views about the texts they had read, that they would receive some kind of feedback from Ann or from fellow students. This feedback would then let them know if their thinking about the themes found in the texts was on track or not. Knowledge-based motives also encouraged students to participate in class discussions in Ann's course. Students expressed that this motivational factor encouraged them to participate so that they further understood the text and were able to critically analyze the texts under study. We have also seen that students participated in part due to external motives such as their participation grade. Finally, instructor-based motives were also mentioned as factors that allowed students to participate more in whole-class discussions. Students indicated that Ann's ability to create an inclusive atmosphere, coupled with her ability to facilitate discussion, were all reasons why some students actively participated in discussions.

Students answers to open-ended questions 1 and 2 also revealed reasons as to why students were inhibited or prevented from actively participating in class discussions. Students' perception of their linguistic deficiencies was indicated as one factor that mitigated their oral participation in Ann's class. Some students indicated that their reading, speaking, and listening abilities, along with their lack of Spanish grammar knowledge, prevented them from participating in discussions. Another inhibiting factor
was students' insufficient preparation for class. In other words, some students did not participate because they had not done the readings. Finally, students also expressed the fear that their contributions to class discussion would not be insightful or relevant, thereby rendering their response inadequate and limiting their participation.

TABLE 4.2. Factors affecting students' participation in class discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivating Factors</th>
<th>Inhibiting Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Skill growth-based motives (e.g., I want to improve my Spanish speaking ability)</td>
<td>• Perceived linguistic deficiencies (i.e., not understanding the readings, fear of displaying poor speaking skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interaction-based motives (i.e., to see what others think of my ideas)</td>
<td>• Insufficient preparation (i.e., I didn’t do the reading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge growth-based motives (i.e., I want to understand the reading better)</td>
<td>• Perceived deficiencies in literary interpretation (i.e., fear of making useless comments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External motives (e.g., to get a good grade)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructor-based motives (e.g., Ann is good at getting us to talk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 1 in this dissertation seeks to investigate the goals, expectations, and intentions of the instructor and of her students to see how each participant’s views coincided or conflicted before data collection began. By answering this first question, the researcher attempted to understand how participants perceived their personal intentions, expectations, goals, and participation in classroom talk. These expressed perceptions allow for an initial glance into how each interlocutor positions himself/herself with respect to what they wanted to gain by teaching or enrolling in the Latin American Colonial literature course.
In her instructor interview, Ann indicated that she entered into the course with two primary goals of teaching students to be critical readers of Colonial and contemporary texts about the Conquest of Mexico and allowing students ample opportunity talk in class in order to further develop students’ critical thinking abilities and, more generally, improve their speaking ability in Spanish. Similarly, students collectively indicated that their main goal in taking Ann’s course was to improve their speaking ability in Spanish. This was born out in the ranking exercise in addition to some of her students’ answers to open-ended question 1. They also collectively indicated (via the ranking exercise) that another primary goal was to improve their reading ability (i.e., literal comprehension) in Spanish. It appears that Ann’s and her students’ course goals coincided in that improving students’ speaking and reading abilities in Spanish were both expressed as significant goals. Based on this information, one would expect to observe in the transcripts of the six class meetings an instructor encouraging a number of her students to participate in classroom talk along with several students in class actively participating in whole-class discussion.

Another course goal expressed by Ann was to get students interested in the themes that emerged from the texts and teach students about the historical and cultural contexts in which the texts were written. Students also expressed this as one of their goals, intentions, or expectations of the course. They collectively ranked the course goal of understanding the content of the course (i.e., the historical and cultural contexts of a particular literary period) as one of their top three goals. Again, both Ann and her students expressed that this was another important part of what they expected to talk about in the whole-class discussions.

We have also seen that improving listening and writing abilities in Spanish were ranked very low by students as course goals in Ann’s course. In the same way, Ann did not explicitly mention these two skills as priorities for her when teaching her course during her interview. However, analysis of Ann’s course syllabus did reveal the
importance of developing students’ critical writing skills in Spanish as 45% of their final grade was based on four critical summaries and two essays. Although listening comprehension on behalf of students was inherent in the act of speaking or participating in class discussion, it was still not something that was overtly expressed by Ann (or by her students) as being a primary course goal. Finally, improving grammatical knowledge was ranked by students as being the fourth most important course goal while Ann indicated that it was not something that she intended to focus on nor did she expect students to worry about it when reading the texts in her class. This disparity between Ann and her students may affect how she interacts with them during whole-class discussion and might possibly influence the way in which students engage Ann and fellow classmates during class discussion. This will be investigated further in Chapter 5 when micro-level analyses of oral interactions are presented.

The information gleaned from the instructor interview and the student questionnaire have helped to begin to understand how Ann and her students approached the Latin American literature course with respect to how talk was to be constructed, what all participants sought to gain with respect to the improvement of content knowledge, skill development, and critical thinking abilities, and how the instructor and students would participate in whole-class discussions. As we have seen above, some of the goals, expectations, and intentions expressed by the instructor and her students have coincided while others have not. To observe how the expressed intentions, goals, and expectations related to oral discourse realized themselves in whole-class discussions, in addition to gaining a better understanding of oral discourse in the particular context at a macro-level of analysis, additional quantitative analyses of the transcripts were carried out.

**R2. How are the tensions between student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse?**

To understand the nature of whole-class discussions between Ann and her students in the classroom under observation, the transcripts of the six class meetings that
were video and audio recorded were analyzed. Macro-level analyses of oral discourse in this dissertation consist of: (a) Ann’s and her students’ expressed or perceived goals, intentions, and expectations (as investigated in research question 1), (b) calculations regarding the total number of turns, words, and mean number of words for Ann and her students found in the transcripts of the six class meetings that were video and audio recorded (investigated in research question 2), and (c) coding and calculation of interaction patterns found in the transcripts between Ann and her students in whole-class discussions of the six audio and video recorded class meetings (also investigated in research question 2). Before presenting data that address the interaction patterns investigated in research question 2, I first turn to the calculation of turns, words, and mean number of words produced by Ann and her students to understand the amount of talk that occurred in the six class meetings.

To determine who was contributing most and least to whole-class discussions, the total number of turns at talk was calculated for all participants along with the total number of words produced by both Ann and her students during whole-class discussions in each of the six class meetings that were audio and video recorded and analyzed for this dissertation. In addition, the mean number of words per turn for Ann and for her students was calculated. The following sections highlight which students in Ann’s class were taking the most turns at talk over the six class meetings and which students were participating the least in whole-class discussions. Along with the aforementioned quantitative analyses, a brief synopsis of the events that took place in each class meeting is presented to provide contextual information about the way in which interactions unfolded between Ann and her students.

Calculation of student participation levels in whole-class discussions

The following tables include information regarding the amount of participation of

Calculation of student participation levels in whole-class discussions

The following tables include information regarding the amount of participation of
Ann’s students in whole-class discussions over the course of the six class meetings under analysis in this dissertation. Each table summarizes the total number of turns, the total number of words, and the mean number of words per turn for each student in Ann’s class. This information indicates which students in Ann’s class participated the most and the least over the course of the six class meetings. Ann’s participation levels in each of the six classes will be indicated in the presentation of the information in each table.

As described in Chapter 3, a turn in this dissertation is defined as when one speaker (i.e., a student or instructor) has the floor and speaks without interruption. A turn can consist of one word, a phrase (i.e., 2 or more words), a sentence, or several sentences grouped together. As soon as another speaker interrupts or the speaker finishes his or her comments, the turn ends and a new turn for the other speaker begins. In other words, the end point of a turn for one speaker co-occurs with the start of a new turn for a different speaker. Finally, it is important to note here that collective responses by Ann’s students (i.e., those coded as Ss in the transcripts of the six class meetings) were, by definition, student turns. However, the calculations below have excluded those collective responses or turns (i.e., where the class as a whole responds and not an individual student).

It should also be noted here that the following calculations (i.e., those in Tables 4.3 through 4.8) were first carried out by the researcher. The number of turns, words, and words per turn for the instructor and students over the six class meetings were calculated based on the transcripts of whole-class discussions in the six class meetings. Once those calculations were carried out by the researcher, a second rater was instructed to count the same features of oral discourse (i.e., total number of turns, words, and words per turn for the instructor and her students over all six class meetings). Inter-rater reliability levels were then established between what the researcher calculated and what the rater had determined. In all, the inter-rater reliability percentage rate for the calculations of student and instructor turns, words, and words per turn was determined to be 100%. Therefore, the above calculations were deemed to be reliable.
As can be seen in Table 4.3, class observation #10/recording day #1 (Appendix G) indicates that all 18 students who agreed to participate in the study were present. Thirteen of the 18 students participated in whole-class discussions. Janet had the most student turns at talk with 12 turns and spoke a mean of 19 words per turn. Another student, Nicole, also had 12 turns at talk during this class meeting. However, the mean number of words in Nicole’s turns was 9. It is also interesting to note that Herminia had the third highest number of turns at talk with 9 in all. However, her mean number of words per turn was the highest in the class with 48 words. As mentioned earlier, Herminia’s academic profile (graduate student) and linguistic profile (Spanish native speaker) was significantly different from that of the other students in the class. The length of her turns may be attributed to one or both of these factors. The turns at talk of the rest of the students ranged from 7 to 1, and the mean number of words per turn ranged from 28 to 3 words. In all, Ann’s students had 67 turns at talk with a mean of 16 words per turn. Finally, Ann’s turns at talk for this class numbered 75. Her mean number of words per turn was 58.

Class observation #10/recording day #1 began with a review of the texts and topics students had read and discussed in the first part of the semester. During the first half of the semester, students read original Latin American Colonial-era texts (e.g., *Cartas de relación* by Hernán Cortés, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo) and during the second half during the semester read contemporary literary works that addressed the same themes/topics (e.g., *Malinche: una novela* by Laura Esquivel, *El naranjo* by Carlos Fuentes). Therefore, the first recording day was dedicated to summarizing what they had read in the first half of the semester but also concentrated on a film students had seen in previous class meetings that also addressed themes and topics first presented in the Colonial-era texts from the first half of the semester.

Class discussion therefore focused primarily on the movie *La otra conquista*
TABLE 4.3. Student participation levels for class observation #10/recording day #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th>Total # of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>1098</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

(Salvador Carrasco, 1999) that students had watched over three separate class meetings the previous week before audio and video recordings began. Ann and her students
analyzed the film’s perspectives about various historical events that occurred in the 16th century in Mexico. The discussion compared and contrasted how the film portrayed the historical events versus how the Colonial-era texts read during the first half of the semester represented them. The final part of Class Observation #10/Recording Day #1 consisted of Ann segueing into a short lecture about the Virgen de Guadalupe (a religious figure that was prominent in the film and was often a point of reference in the texts students had read earlier in the semester). The first class recorded meeting therefore began with a review about the topics and themes students had read in the first half of the semester, followed by a whole-class discussion about the film they had just seen, and ended with a short lecture by Ann about a religious figure.

Table 4.4 above shows student participation levels for class observation #11/recording day #2 (Appendix H). During this second audio and video recorded class meeting, 7 of the 18 students in Ann’s class did not participate at all in whole-class discussions. Of the 11 who did participate, Jon had the most turns at talk (14) and a mean of 14 words per turn. Nicole and Herminia each had 11 turns at talk, and averaged 14 and 9 words per turn, respectively. Janet had 8 turns at talk during class discussion. However, it is noteworthy that when she did speak, the mean number of words per turn for Janet was 30. The rest of the students in Ann’s class for class observation #11/recording day #2 had turns that ranged from 7 to 1 and whose mean number of words per turn ranged from 20 to 12 words. Ann had 63 turns at talk during this class and averaged 59 words per turn.

Class observation #11/recording day #2 began with a short lecture by Ann about the various contemporary literary works that students were reading in the latter half of the semester. A short, whole-class discussion ensued about how contemporary Mexican perspectives (e.g., art, literature) viewed indigenous aspects, projects, and representations. An example of a topic discussed during the first part of this class was how the Mexican flag contains images of indigenous (e.g., Aztec) cultures and peoples. After the first 25 minutes, whole-class discussion turned to an analysis of an historical
TABLE 4.4. Student participation levels for class observation #11/recording day #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th># of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>902</strong></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

figure (Gerónimo de Aguilar) who is omnipresent in the texts, films, and critical essays covered in the course. After a 10–minute review of the importance of this figure, the next
ten minutes of class were dedicated to a whole-class discussion of what students had read for class observation #11/recording day 2 (i.e., a short story by Carlos Fuentes called *Las dos orillas*). Ann then wrote down four questions to help guide students’ future reading of Fuentes’ text during the final five minutes of class.

Student participation levels for class observation #12/recording day #3 (Appendix I) were similar to those found in class observation #11/recording day #2 in that 7 of the 18 students did not speak in whole-class discussions. The 11 students who did participate had a total of 53 turns at talk and produced a mean of 18 words per turn. Janet had the most turns at talk with 10, and the mean number of words per turn was 17. Herminia was one of the most verbally active students as she produced 7 turns at talk and averaged 18 words per turn. Sheila had 6 turns at talk during this particular class and averaged 15 words per turn. The rest of the students who participated in class discussion had 6 turns to 1 turn at talk and had a mean number of words per turn that ranged from 30 to 19 words. Ann’s turns at talk for this class numbered 58 and she averaged 48 words per turn.

Class observation #12/recording day #3 began with Ann answering students’ questions for five minutes about end-of-the-semester projects for the course. The next twenty-five minutes consisted of a whole-class discussion that addressed the basics of the short story *Las dos orillas* by Carlos Fuentes. During the discussion, Ann and her students addressed topics such as personajes ‘characters,’ ambiente ‘setting,’ trama ‘plot,’ and estructura ‘structure.’ After this whole-class discussion, Ann divided the class into small groups of 3–4 students and had each group answer the following questions for their assigned chapter of the text: ¿Cómo se representa la conquista? ‘How is the Conquest represented?’; ¿Cómo se representan a los personajes? ‘How are the characters represented?’; ¿Dónde vemos la influencia de los textos coloniales? ‘Where do we see the influence of the Colonial texts?’ The small groups worked for a total of seven minutes to answer the three questions for their particular chapter. The final part of the class consisted of each small group reporting their analyses back to the rest of the class.
TABLE 4.5. Student participation levels for class observation #12/recording day #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th># of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>933</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

and discussing their ideas with Ann.
Table 4.6 indicates the student participation levels for class observation #13/recording day #4 (Appendix J). As can be seen in the table, 3 of the 18 students were absent and therefore were not considered in the calculation of students’ oral participation in whole-class discussion. Besides the three students who were absent, 6 of the 18 students did not take any turns at talk in class discussion. Jon was the student who had the most turns at talk in this class (9), and he averaged 22 words per turn. Nicole and Herminia had the second and third highest number of turns with 6 and 5, respectively. Their mean number of words per turn totaled 14 and 23, respectively. The other 6 students who spoke in this class meeting had turns at talk that ranged from 5 to 2, with a mean number of words per turn that ranged from 28 to 6 words. Collectively, student turns at talk for this class meeting numbered 39 and, on average, each student turn was calculated at 18 words per turn. Ann’s turns at talk for this class meeting equaled 43 (her lowest number of turns at talk over the six class meetings). However, her mean number of words per turn for this class was 71 (her highest mean number of words per turn).

The first three minutes of class observation #13/recording day #4 began with Ann introducing a book chapter written by Frances Kartunnen that students needed to read for the next class meeting. Ann then segued into a discussion about students’ homework for the day (i.e., finishing the short story *Las dos orillas* by Carlos Fuentes). After a few minutes of review, Ann presented a piece of paper to each student that had a few quotes from the Colonial-era text *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (by Bernal Díaz del Castillo) that students had read earlier in the semester. The quotes dealt with two historical figures Gerónimo de Aguilar and Gonzalo Guerrero. Each student read the quotes in silence for a few minutes. A whole-class discussion then took place where students talked about the representations of the two figures in Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s Colonial text and those found in the contemporary text written by Carlos Fuentes. This whole-class discussion of the quotes lasted for 17 minutes. Ann then put students into six small groups and asked each of them to discuss a different passage from
TABLE 4.6. Student participation levels for class observation #13/recording day #4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th># of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

the Fuentes short story *Las dos orillas*. Students discussed their particular passage in their small groups for 10 minutes. The final 20 minutes of the class consisted of members of
each small group taking turns to share their analysis of their assigned passage with the rest of the class. Ann facilitated this reporting and commented on each group’s analysis.

Student participation levels for class observation #14/recording day #5 (Appendix K) are presented in Table 4.7. Eight of the 18 students in Ann’s class did not have any turns at talk for this class meeting. Herminia (the graduate student) had the most student turns with 14 and, on average, spoke 22 words per turn. Janet and Nicole had the second and third highest number of turns at talk with 12 and 11, respectively. The mean number of words per turn for Janet was 11 while Nicole’s mean was 18. The other 7 students who spoke had a number of turns at talk that ranged from 6 to 1 and whose mean number of words per turn ranged from 32 words to 1 word. Ann had 68 turns at talk during this class meeting and, on average, spoke 48 words per turn.

The first three minutes of class observation #14/recording day #5 began with Ann explaining what students were to read for the following class. For the next nine minutes, Ann lectured about how the Conquest of Mexico was portrayed in the film La otra conquista by Salvador Carrasco and in the short story Las dos orillas by Carlos Fuentes. Ann then had students finish reporting on what they discussed in their small groups during the previous class meeting. The students in the remaining small groups shared their analyses of their assigned passages for a total of seven minutes. Ann then engaged students in a brief (i.e., 4-minute) whole-class discussion about the similarities and differences between older Colonial-era literary works, contemporary pieces such as Las dos orillas, and the critical essay written by Kartunnen (i.e., the work that students had read as homework for this particular class meeting) regarding how each interpreted history and portrayed the key characters, among other issues.

After the short discussion about the various texts they had read in the course, Ann presented students with a segment from Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s text (Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España) that described the historical figure Malinche. Students had read this segment earlier in the semester. However, Ann gave it
TABLE 4.7. Student participation levels for class observation #14/recording day #5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th># of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

to them to help them remember how Bernal Diaz depicted the *Malinche*. Each student spent time re-reading the segment. In all, this re-reading lasted around 15 minutes. For
TABLE 4.8. Student participation levels for class observation #15/recording day #6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th># of Words</th>
<th>Mean # of Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>695</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

the next 10 minutes of class, Ann divided the class into four groups and gave them a
question to discuss in small groups that addressed part of the segment that they had just
read individually. Students worked in small groups to answer their assigned question. The
last two minutes consisted of each small group quickly reporting back to the rest of the
class.

Table 4.8 reports on the student participation levels for class observation
#15/recording day #6 (Appendix L). Eight of the 18 students did not participate in whole-
class discussions in this class session. Jon had the most turns at talk with 12 and averaged
13 words per turn. Janet had the second highest number of turns at talk with 8 and
averaged 11 words per turn. Sheila had the third highest number of turns with 6 and
averaged 9 words per turn. Of the other 7 students who did participate in whole-class
discussions, their turns at talk ranged from 5 to 1 and their mean number of words per
turn ranged from 46 to 1. Ann’s total number of turns at talk for this class meeting was
56. When Ann did speak in this class meeting, she averaged 69 words per turn.

Class observation #15/recording day #6 began in a similar way as the previous
five class meetings. Ann spent the first six minutes of class introducing the next text that
students were to read for the following class meeting. The next 24 minutes were
dedicated to the different ways in which a number of literary texts referenced the
Malinche. This whole-class discussion was interrupted only once by Ann showing
students a small clip from the video documentary El espejo enterrado narrated by Carlos
Fuentes. In the clip, Fuentes talked about the representation and importance of the
Malinche in Mexican history. The last three minutes of whole-class discussion then
resulted in a summary of two critical essays (i.e., by Kartunnen and Townsend,
respectively). The last 10 minutes of class were dedicated to another overview of the
Octavio Paz piece that students were to read for the following class meeting. Ann
distributed a document to students that was intended to serve as a guide sheet to help
them with the Paz text.

Table 4.9 combines the information in Tables 4.3 to 4.8 to provide information
TABLE 4.9. Total turns, words, and mean number of words per turn for Ann and students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th># of I (Instructor) turns</th>
<th># of words in I turns</th>
<th>Mean # of words per I turn</th>
<th># of S (Student) turns</th>
<th># of words in S turns</th>
<th>Mean # of words per S turn</th>
<th>Total # of S &amp; I turns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4382</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3717</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3035</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3274</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3848</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>17,656</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>5391</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

about how much Ann and her students contributed overall to whole-class discussions in the six class meetings. In all, Ann produced 363 total turns and 17,656 words while participating in whole-class discussions. When Ann spoke over the course of the six audio and video recorded class meetings, she produced a mean of 49 words per turn. Ann’s students collectively produced 352 turns at talk for a total of 5,391 words in all. The mean number of words per student turn therefore was calculated to be 15. In other words, Ann’s turns were more than three times as long as those of her students.

It is also significant to note that the total number of instructor turns (363) for all six classes was almost equal to the total number of student turns (352) produced. These data begin to help us understand the way in which the participants in the Latin American Colonial literature course under study in this dissertation actively engaged (or not) in talk during whole-class discussions. However, more macro-level analysis of the classroom talk is needed to see which students spoke the most in class discussion.
Summary of calculation of student participation levels in whole-class discussions

When taken together, the above calculations helped to determine which students would serve as focal students. Specifically, the researcher had observed student participation in previous class observations (i.e., observations 1–9) and had a general idea about which students participated the most in whole-class discussions. However, a final decision about which three students would be invited to be focal students was also based on the analysis of oral participation of all students in class discussions over the course of the six class meetings. Table 4.10 indicates students’ total number of turns, words, and mean number of words per turn for all six classes.

As can be seen in Table 4.10, oral participation in whole-class discussions in Ann’s class over the six audio and video recorded meetings varied notably from student to student. Some students (e.g., Janet) consistently participated in class discussion and were among the handful of students who routinely produced the highest number of turns at talk across all six class meetings. Other students’ voices (e.g., Aaron, Alejandra) were rarely heard, as can be seen in their low number of turns at talk. Finally, some students (e.g., Mercedes, Cathy) did not orally participate in any of the whole-class discussions during the six class meetings.

To select who would serve as focal students in this study, the researcher wanted to choose students who actively participated in class discussion. Given the topic of this dissertation (i.e., teacher-initiated talk and student oral discourse) the focal students needed to be students who regularly orally participated in whole-class discussion. Therefore, Cathy and Mercedes were immediately eliminated due to their lack of participation in class discussion. Herminia’s total turns at talk across all six class meetings totaled 51 turns, producing 1193 total words spoken with a mean average of 23.39 words per turn. As a result, Herminia was the student who spoke the most in Ann’s class over the course of the six class meetings. However, given that Herminia was a
TABLE 4.10. Total number of student turns, words, and mean number of words per turn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Turns</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Words per Turn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herminia</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>23.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>17.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole*</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon*</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>14.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>8.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>23.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>17.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickie</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>17.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandra</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Focal student

graduate student and a native Spanish speaker, she was eliminated as a possible focal student for this study. The researcher wanted to analyze the nature of oral interactions
between Ann and undergraduate students whose Spanish was not native like. Additionally, the researcher wanted to invite students who participated often in whole-class discussions as these interactions would serve as data for the stimulated recall sessions that were carried out with each focal student.

Given the aforementioned criteria and observed participation levels of students in Ann’s class as seen in Table 4.10, the researcher invited the three students who participated the most (i.e., having the most turns at talk) in whole-class discussions (i.e., the next three students after Herminia) to be focal students for the study. The three students, Janet, Nicole, and Jon each were asked to participate as the three primary focal students in this study due to their individual participation levels. Over the six class meetings, Janet had 50 turns at talk and produced a total of 856 words. Her mean number of words per turn was calculated to be 17.12. Nicole had the next highest turns at talk with 47. In all, Nicole produced 742 words and therefore had a mean number of 15.78 words per turn. Finally, Jon had 42 turns in all and 613 words. His average number of words per turn was 14.59.

It should be noted here again that a fourth student, Mitch, was also invited to be a focal student for this study. As previously mentioned, Mitch was selected primarily based on his participation levels in class observations 1–9 carried out by the researcher (i.e., those that were not video or audio recorded). In addition, the researcher wanted to have two males and two females to act as focal students for this study. However, Mitch’s participation levels after the cameras and audio equipment were brought into the classroom fell off sharply when compared to his observed contributions in previous classes. In addition, his stimulated recall session and in-depth interview did not result in substantive insights. Therefore, he was eliminated from consideration as a focal student in this study.
Coding and calculation of interaction patterns in whole-class discussions

As we have seen, macro-level analysis of classroom-based oral discourse in this study consists of a variety of aspects. Investigating the goals, intentions, and expectations of Ann and her students (research question 1) along with quantitative analysis of student and instructor turns, words, and words per turn (research question 2) have provided a partial picture of the way in which oral discourse manifested itself in whole-class discussions. However, another important piece of a macro-level analysis of oral discourse in the observed classroom involves the examination of interaction patterns between Ann and her students. I now turn to the results of this examination to understand the nature of oral interactions in the Latin American Colonial literature course under study.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the transcripts from the six class meetings were analyzed to determine the kinds of interactions that were carried out between Ann and her students. Specifically, the transcripts of the six class meetings were coded for two kinds of interactions. The first interaction, Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE), consisted of three distinct turns. The first turn (I) is normally taken by the instructor and is usually in the form of the question. That is, the instructor initiates the interaction via some kind of question. The second turn (R) is typically the responsibility of the student who responds to the instructor’s question. The final turn (E) often is in the form of the instructor providing some kind of evaluation or evaluative comment regarding the student’s response in the second turn. The data segment below illustrates an IRE interaction pattern taken from one of the transcripts of Ann’s six class meetings. In the IRE interaction, the student’s response (R) is followed by the instructor’s evaluative comment (E), which closes out the interaction and does not lend itself to an extended interaction. As discussed in Chapter 3, IRE interaction sequences have been shown to severely limit students’ contributions to whole-class discussions and reflect more of a question and answer
session in comparison to meaningful dialogue (Hall & Walsh, 2002; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Nystrand, 1997).

In contrast, Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interaction patterns allow students more opportunities to participate in whole-class discussions. IRF patterns are similar to IRE patterns in that the instructor begins the sequence by initiating (I) the interaction via a question posed to the student. The student then responds (R) in the second turn to the instructor’s initiation (i.e., question). In the third turn, the instructor then provides feedback (F), usually in the form of a follow-up question. The third turn is the essential difference between IRE and IRF interaction patterns: In the IRF sequence, the instructor pushes students to follow up on their response (R) in the second turn. This interaction pattern allows for extended dialogue between the instructor and the student. The segment below illustrates a typical IRF interaction pattern that was found in the data taken from Ann’s course.

The primary difference between IRE and IRF interaction patterns is that the instructor’s third turn is either considered as an evaluative comment/evaluation (E), thereby ending the interaction with the student or it is considered feedback (F), which pushes the student to follow up the response in turn 2 with additional talk. The IRF pattern therefore provides students with opportunity to talk compared to the IRE pattern.
As such, the researcher wanted to carry out an analysis of Ann’s interactions with her students in whole-class discussions to see which pattern was more prominent.

As explained above, the transcripts from the six class meetings were coded for IRE and IRF interaction patterns. The researcher first coded the transcripts for the two patterns. Then, he met with another rater and trained him to code the transcripts (See Appendix F for the training guide). Once the second rater had coded the transcripts, the researcher compared the two sets of coded transcripts for discrepancies. The researcher and rater met a second time to talk about the differences and resolved all areas in question. The researcher then calculated the inter-rater reliability for the two sets of coded transcripts. Inter-rater reliability was determined to be 100% for the coding of IRE and IRF patterns found in the data.
Table 4.11 below highlights the total number of IRE and IRF patterns found in the transcripts of the six class meetings under analysis in this study. For each audio and video recorded class meeting, the transcripts were analyzed to determine: (a) the total number of turns found in each class (i.e., the sum of student and instructor turns that occurred during the whole-class discussions); (b) clustered turns that made up IRE interaction patterns; and (c) clustered turns that made up IRF interaction patterns. In order to determine the percentage of total turns for each class that were coded as IRE, the number of Is, Rs, and Es that were part of the clustered IRE interaction patterns were totaled. The total number of turns for each class was then divided by the total number of Is, Rs, and Es that made up the IRE interaction patterns thereby determining the percentage of turns that were part of the of IRE interaction pattern. The same calculation was carried out for the IRF interaction pattern. In a similar way, the total number of turns for each class was divided by the total number of Is, Rs, and Fs that made up the IRF interaction patterns. This determined the percentage of turns that were part of the of IRF interaction pattern.

It should also be noted that in addition to calculating the total number of instructor and student turns found in the transcript of each class meeting, moves were also calculated. Specifically, several individual instructor turns were coded twice. The beginning of some instructor turns were coded as E (i.e., as an evaluative comment) due to the instructor commenting on what a student had said in the student turn immediately before the instructor turn. However, the end of the same instructor turn was, when necessary, also coded as I whenever the instructor went on in the same turn to initiate a different interaction. The data segment below illustrates how some instructor turns were coded for more than one move.
I  T  ¿Qué dice en general sobre la capacidad de la Malinche de hablar con estos líderes aztecas, estos líderes náhuatl? Nicole.

R  S1  Parecía que la Malinche no tenía miedo de hablar con los hombres muy importantes. Y para mí, yo no entendí que hay varios niveles en Maya. Pero la lengua maya no era la original, la natural de la Malinche. Entonces ella no sabía las reglas para comunicarse con un líder pero no sé si fue intencional de ella o si solo fue su modo de comunicarse.

E/I  T  Bien. Para aclarar aquí su primera lengua—la lengua que aprendió cuando era niña—era qué?

R  S2  Náhuatl.

E  T  Y luego aprendió maya . . .

As can be seen in the above data segment, the instructor (T) had a total of three turns. The first turn was coded as I (i.e., Initiation move). The second instructor turn was coded as E for an evaluation move at the beginning of the turn in response to one student’s comment. However, as the same instructor turn continued, the instructor moved to initiate conversation with another student and therefore the final part of her turn was coded I.

Therefore, some of the instructor turns were coded twice in the data. This double coding is why the number of the total instructor and student turns reported in Table 4.11 is lower than the number of moves. In other words, the term moves was introduced to account for some instructor turns being coded twice. A move is therefore a comment (i.e., coded as either I, E, or F) within an instructor turn.
TABLE 4.11. IRE and IRF calculations for the six class meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Meeting</th>
<th>Total # of Instructor and Student turns (moves)</th>
<th>Moves containing IRE sequences</th>
<th>% of moves coded as IRE</th>
<th>Moves containing IRF sequences</th>
<th>% of moves coded as IRF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>150 (186)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80/186 = .43</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106/186 = .57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>125 (152)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45/152 = .30</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>107/152 = .70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>114 (144)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44/144 = .31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100/144 = .69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>83 (98)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26/98 = .27</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72/98 = .73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>133 (157)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51/157 = .32</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106/157 = .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>110 (134)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41/134 = .31</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93/134 = .69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>715 (871)</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>287/871 = .33</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>584/871 = .67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 indicates all IRE and IRF calculations carried out for each of the six class meetings. In all classes, the percentage of moves that contained IRF interaction patterns was higher than moves that contained IRE interaction patterns. The percentage of turns coded as IRF patterns (.57) in class meeting 10 was 14 percent higher than the percentage of turns coded as IRE patterns (.43). However, the percentage of turns coded as IRF was at least double the percentage of turns coded as IRE in each of the transcripts for the other five class meetings. In all of the 871 moves that were coded as being part of an IRE or IRF interaction pattern across all six class meetings, .67 of the moves were part of IRF clusters while .33 of the moves were part of IRE clusters. In other words, IRF interaction patterns in the six class meetings overall were twice as frequent as IRE interaction patterns.

From this quantitative view of whole-class discussions, we can say that oral interactions between Ann and her students relied to a large extent on Ann initiating
discussion, student(s) responding, and Ann providing some kind of feedback in the third turn of the interactional sequence. Students were therefore pushed to continue speaking by following up on their initial response to Ann. Although the data presented in Table 4.11 do not display the internal features of the IRE or IRF sequences, many of the IRF sequences were sustained over several turns, thus allowing students not only to follow up with an additional comment, but to continue conversing with Ann by adding a number of remarks about an idea or thought presented earlier in the IRF cluster.

Summary of macro-level analysis for research questions 1 and 2

In this chapter, macro-level data analyses of oral discourse in whole-class discussions, along with information regarding the goals, intentions, and expectations of the instructor and her students, have revealed that talk in Ann’s class was shaped by a number of factors. Ann entered the course with the intention of facilitating students’ ability to carefully read and understand the Colonial-era and contemporary texts about the Conquest of Mexico. Closely tied to that goal was her expressed intention to promote students’ oral expression, thereby helping students to develop their critical thinking abilities while also improving their L2 speaking ability in Spanish. Ann also expressed that she wanted to minimize the teaching of grammar or vocabulary in her course but did want to somehow promote the subject matter so as to arouse students’ interest in the course. Ann’s course syllabus also revealed that one of her expectations was to get students to write critically about the texts. To a lesser extent, her syllabus indicated that speaking was a part of the process of understanding the content of the literary works under analysis in her class.

On the other hand, Ann’s students entered the course collectively wanting to improve a variety of language skills. In the ranking exercise, they indicated the most
important goal was to improve their speaking ability in Spanish. Their next goal was to improve their basic reading ability (i.e., literal comprehension of texts), following by a desire to understand the historical and cultural contexts of the literary works being read in class. Their fourth expressed goal was to improve their grammatical knowledge in Spanish followed by the goal of improving their literary comprehension and interpretation skills (i.e., symbolic comprehension of texts). They ranked increasing vocabulary as their sixth goal, followed by improving their writing ability as the seventh goal. Finally, improving their listening ability in Spanish was their least important course goal.

In two open-ended questions in the student questionnaire, students revealed a variety of factors that motivate and inhibit their participation in whole-class discussion. Skill growth-based motives, such as the idea that speaking improves their overall Spanish ability, were expressed as something that motivates students to talk in class. Sharing their opinions or ideas to find out what other students think (i.e., Interaction-based motives) was also mentioned as a reason why students speak in class. Some students also expressed that knowledge growth-based motives (i.e., speaking to better understand the content/subject of the text) encouraged them to talk in class. External motives (e.g., grades) and instructor-based motives (e.g., Ann’s ability to facilitate discussion) were also mentioned as motivating factors for students to participate in discussion.

Students also expressed three inhibiting factors that affected their participation in whole-class discussion. Some students indicated that their participation in whole-class discussion was affected by their inability to understand the readings, understand Ann’s questions posed in class, or for fear of their own poor speaking skills in Spanish. Their perception of their L2 linguistic deficiencies therefore resulted in lower levels of participation. Other students stated their oral contributions to class discussion would not be adequate or insightful to others. Fear of an inadequate response, therefore, was yet another inhibiting factor expressed by students. Finally, some students stated that their
insufficient preparation for class (i.e., not having done the reading) reduced their participation levels in class discussion.

Research question 2 sought to fully understand how the competing and coinciding instructor and student goals, intentions and expectations realized themselves in the oral interactions between Anna and students in whole-class discussions. To further understand oral discourse in Ann’s class from a macro-level view, the transcripts of six audio and video recorded class meetings were coded and analyzed for two different interactional patterns. The transcripts were also examined to see which student was taking the most turns at talk, how many words were being produced in all, and to determine the mean numbers of words per turn for each participant. This quantitative analysis of talk revealed that Ann relied more an Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interaction with students versus an Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) interaction. The predominance of the IRF pattern allowed for an increased number of turns produced by students when interacting with Ann. Over all six class meetings, 67% of the coded moves in the transcripts were part of the IRF interaction pattern while 33% of the coded moves made up the IRE pattern.

Finally, calculation and analysis of the talk produced by students over the course of the six class meetings revealed that Herminia produced the most turns at talk (51) and total words (1193). However, given that Herminia was the only graduate student in the class and was considered to be the only native Spanish speaker, she was not invited to be a focal student. After Herminia, Janet produced the second highest turns at talk (50) and had the second highest number of words (856). Therefore, she was considered to be the most active nonnative-speaking undergraduate student in Ann’s course and was invited to be a focal student. Nicole had the third highest total of turns at talk (47) in the class and produced the third highest number of words (742). Given her participation levels in class discussion, she was also invited to be a focal student. Jon was considered to be the fourth most active undergraduate student in class discussion in Ann’s class. He had 42 turns at
talk and produced 613 words over the course of the six class meetings. He was therefore invited to be the third focal student in the study.

This chapter has begun to shed light on how whole-class discussions evolved between Ann and her students over the course of the six class meetings being analyzed in this study. Both the instructor and her students entered the course expecting similar and at times, different course goals. Analysis of the interaction patterns and individual participation levels has helped to reveal how the goals, intentions, and expectations of the instructor and student were realized in the oral discourse in Ann’s class. Chapter 6 (Discussion/Conclusion) will discuss what this means regarding how an instructor engages students in whole-class discussions whose focus is on Latin American Colonial literature. However, we now turn to micro-level analyses of oral interactions between Ann and her three focal students to understand the role and nature of the affordance structures and affordances (van Lier, 2004) found in this context and how they originated from the diverse classroom ecology under analysis.
CHAPTER 5: MICRO-LEVEL DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The previous chapter provided for a macro-level analysis of oral discourse observed in Ann’s class. Chapter 4 highlighted the goals, intentions, and expectations held by the instructor and the students in the course and also presented the amount and kinds of oral interactions that evolved between Ann and her students in whole-class discussions. In contrast, Chapter 5 presents a micro-level view of talk between Ann and three focal students that provides a different perspective on the oral interactions between participants in the Latin American Colonial literature course under observation in this study. This chapter first presents background information about each of the three focal students. The focal student information is taken from the demographic questionnaire that was distributed to all students at the beginning of the study. In addition, information from an in-depth interview carried out by the researcher with each focal student is provided. The second part of the chapter revisits the theoretical construct of affordance (van Lier, 2000, 2004) and the new construct of affordance structure put forth in this dissertation, and shows the constructs’ relationship to sociocultural theoretical views of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). The last section of this chapter addresses research question 3 through micro-level analyses of oral discourse between Ann and her students. The micro-level analyses deal with how affordances emerged in the discourse via different types of affordance structures. The analyses used to answer research question 3 are based primarily on segments taken from the transcripts of the six audio and video recorded class meetings, as well as on the stimulated recall sessions that were carried out individually with each participant.

Focal student background information

As mentioned in previous chapters, three focal students were invited to participate in this study. Given that this dissertation analyzes oral discourse in a L2 literature course,
the researcher wanted to invite students to serve as focal students who were actively participating in whole-class discussions with Ann and fellow students. Although Herminia was the most active student in whole-class participation in Ann’s class (i.e., having the most turns at talk and producing the highest number of words during the final six class meetings), her graduate student and native speaker status eliminated her as a focal student. The researcher wanted to invite undergraduate students to serve as focal students given that undergraduate students made up the majority of the class. (See Chapters 3 and 4 to read about how the focal students were selected.) To get to know the three focal students, the researcher interviewed them individually and asked them questions about their language learning background, their thoughts about other students and their participation in class discussion in Ann’s course, and their reasons or motives for talking in whole-class discussions in her course, among other topics (See Appendix E for the focal student interview guide.)

Methodology used to analyze focal student interview transcripts

The transcripts for each of the three focal student interviews were analyzed to discover themes in their responses. The transcripts were first read to discover common themes across the three focal student interviews. Given that the same interview guide was used with all three focal students, common themes arose out of the student answers that were partially based on the questions being posed to students and partially on their answers to those questions. Specifically, students were asked questions according to a predetermined interview guide (Appendix E). The researcher asked each of the three focal students the same questions in the same order as they appear in the student interview guide. However, there were times during the interviews when the researcher followed up with additional questions that were not in the guide. To see all questions that
were posed in the interviews, see Appendices F, G, and H for the complete transcripts of the focal student interviews.

Based on an analysis of the interview transcripts, the following themes were found in the answers of all three focal student interviews: (a) the role of whole-class discussion; (b) personal course goals; (c) pedagogical techniques in Ann’s course; (d) discussions and how they facilitate understanding of texts; and (e) context and participants in Ann’s course.

The theme of the role of whole-class discussion includes comments from students about how they view their participation in whole-class discussions in Ann’s course and their thoughts about the function of whole-class discussion with respect to their development of skills. Some student answers related to this theme will focus on how students perceive classroom talk affects their speaking ability, listening skills, and overall reading ability in Spanish.

Personal course goals relates to what each focal student wants to gain by the end of Ann’s course. Information from the student questionnaire data is used as a springboard to get students to reveal what they expected to achieve by the end of the semester, and also included overall language-learning goals.

Pedagogical techniques in Ann’s course is another theme that was closely tied to a number of questions in the student interview guide that intended to get students to describe how Ann approached whole-class discussions in her course and what techniques were more or less effective in getting students to participate in class discussion. Student answers related to this theme range from descriptions about how Ann facilitates discussion among all students, to the use of reading guide sheets, to the use of small-group discussions to promote or inhibit participation in whole-class discussions.

Discussions and how they facilitate understanding of texts was found in the transcripts of all three focal students. Student responses to this theme relate to how they
believed whole-class discussions helped them and the other students in the class to understand the texts at literal and symbolic levels of understanding.

The final theme found in the transcripts was context and participants in Ann’s course. This theme is related to student responses regarding the nature of student-student and student-instructor oral interactions that took place in Ann’s course. Information provided by students related to this theme also included the interviewees’ perspectives on what other students said in whole-class discussion, how much each focal student understood others’ contributions to whole-class discussions, and sociopsychological dynamics that were present in Ann’s class and how they affected students’ interaction with each other and with the instructor.

The following sections report on information about each focal student. Each section begins with background information about each student that draws on information provided in the questionnaire and in the student interview. Under each theme that is presented for each focal student, representative comments taken from the interview transcript are provided to highlight each student’s thoughts about the theme.

Focal student—Nicole

Background information

To gain an understanding about Nicole’s language learning background and to learn about the nature of her participation in Ann’s class, the researcher carried out an audio recorded interview with Nicole (see Appendix M for a complete transcript of Nicole’s interview). As indicated in Chapter 4, data taken from Nicole’s questionnaire indicated that she was in her sophomore year and was a Spanish and English double major at the time of the study. Nicole also reported in her questionnaire that she had a grade point average of 4.1 (on a 4-point scale) and that she was 20 years old. Although she said that she had never traveled to a Spanish-speaking country, Nicole did indicate that she engages with friends in conversation in Spanish on a weekly basis outside of the
formal classroom setting to practice speaking Spanish. In the final part of her student questionnaire, Nicole indicated that her primary motivations for majoring in Spanish were to (a) gain fluency in Spanish, (b) live and work abroad with the Peace Corps, (c) eventually teach Spanish in a high school setting, and (d) raise her children to be bilingual. Nicole’s answers in the student questionnaire helped guide the researcher when he carried out an in-depth interview.

Nicole stated in the interview that she had been learning Spanish since she was in kindergarten. Her class was part of a pilot program at her school that required the teaching of Spanish to students from kindergarten through sixth grade. Students were then offered the opportunity to continue learning Spanish in the seventh grade. Not only did Nicole choose to keep studying Spanish in the seventh grade, but she continued to take courses in Spanish throughout the rest of her high school career. It is also worth mentioning here that Nicole also chose to take the Advanced Placement Spanish Language Examination as a junior and then took the Advanced Placement Spanish Literature Examination as a senior in high school. In all, Nicole had been learning Spanish in a formal setting for approximately 14 years prior to the time of data collection for this study.

Given Nicole’s extensive language-learning background in elementary school and in high school, she was able to place out of the General Education foreign language requirement (coursework through the fourth-semester level) at the university where this study took place. Therefore, her first college-level course was a fifth-semester Introduction to Spanish Literature course. In all, she had taken four Spanish courses in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the university where this study was carried out before enrolling in Ann’s Latin American Colonial literature course. Three of the previous courses in Spanish focused on Hispanic literature, whereas the fourth was a sociolinguistics course.
When asked about the reasons she enrolled in Ann’s course, Nicole stated that there was no specific reason except that she needed a higher-level course to count toward her credit requirements for her Spanish major and that Ann’s course was one of the few that fit into her schedule. Nicole also indicated that the content of the course was not a deciding factor as to why she enrolled in Ann’s course. She stated in the interview: “I guess this topic didn’t interest me too much before I knew anything about it. But I figured any Spanish class would be good practice, so I guess that’s why I took it.” (Appendix M)

The role of whole-class discussion

The researcher posed questions in the interview that attempted to elicit Nicole’s ideas regarding whole-class discussions in Ann’s course and her thoughts about the role of talk in her own learning. In a response to a question regarding the kinds of knowledge that she was gaining in Ann’s course, Nicole revealed her thoughts about the function of class discussion. She stated:

I feel like through discussion we are sort of defining everything that we read. Not defining, but clarifying what we read. In that sense, we are taking the bits of the stuff that we read that we do understand and summarizing it into this kind of easier, sort of more of an outlining format of what we’ve been doing (Appendix M)

In another section of the interview, Nicole also commented that for her, class discussion serves as a barometer and is able to, in a way, measure her reading ability in Spanish:

I think when I’m reading alone, I always underestimate what I’m understanding. When I then show up in class and we start talking about it and I find that I suddenly have things to say, that’s when I realize “Oh, I did understand what I read” (Appendix M)

Nicole’s view of whole-class discussion is one that helps her to make sense of the literature that she is reading outside of class on her own. Whole-class discussion not only serves as a vehicle to learn more details found in the text that Nicole might not have otherwise seen, but it also serves as a way to confirm what she has been able to glean from the text on her own. Nicole was then asked what her reasons were for participating
in class discussion. She stated that one of her reasons was to ask a question to get it answered by Ann or by other students. Another reason Nicole gave for participating in whole-class discussions was that she would receive a grade for her participation and that it was also a class requirement. Finally, Nicole mentioned that she, at times, felt compelled to participate in order to avoid the awkwardness of silence in the classroom. “I always feel a little awkward when no one answers, and so I feel like I’d better raise my hand” (Appendix M).

As indicated in Chapter 4, Nicole was the second most active participant in whole-class discussion in Ann’s class. Of the undergraduate students enrolled in the course, she produced the second highest number of turns (47) and the second highest number of words (742) over the six recorded class meetings. Given her active participation in whole-class discussion, the researcher wanted to further investigate Nicole’s goals and what she wanted to gain by the end of Ann’s course.

Personal course goals

In the ranking exercise in the student questionnaire, Nicole ranked the following goals in order of importance (i.e., 1 = most important through an 8 = least important): (1) to improve my speaking ability in Spanish, (2) to improve my reading ability in Spanish, (3) to improve my listening ability in Spanish, (4) to improve my writing ability in Spanish, (5) to improve my grammatical knowledge of Spanish, (6) to improve my literary and comprehension and interpretation skills in Spanish, (7) to increase my vocabulary in Spanish, and (8) to better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary pieces were written.

Given that Nicole indicated in the questionnaire that she wanted to improve skill-related areas (e.g., speaking, reading, listening, and writing, respectively) in Spanish more than content-based areas of learning (e.g., the historical and cultural contexts of
Colonial literature), the researcher asked Nicole in the interview what she wanted to gain or improve by the end of Ann’s course. Nicole answered:

I guess what I feel like I’m already getting out of it is a better understanding of the history. I mean, I knew who Hernán Cortés was, but I didn’t know what he did or anything. In a general sense of my historical education, I guess, even if it wasn’t in Spanish, I think that it’s a valuable thing to know because I am studying Spanish. And I enjoy that. But I think personally, my primary goal is just to practice speaking and listening and whatever subject we’re using as a basis for that discussion doesn’t really matter to me. (Appendix M)

Although Nicole indicated in the interview that she was learning a lot about the historical contexts in which the Colonial-era texts were written, she reiterated that her primary goal in the course was to improve her language skills (i.e., primarily her speaking and listening abilities). Nicole’s desire to focus on her Spanish language skills versus becoming a content expert in Latin American Colonial literature suggests that she was a learner who primarily participated in class discussions to become an effective communicator in Spanish. While some extrinsic factors motivated her to participate in class discussion (e.g., participation grades, awkwardness of silence, wanting a question answered about the text), her responses in the in-depth interview indicate that the primary motivation of becoming a proficient user/communicator in Spanish is what often prompted her to participate in whole-class discussions.

Pedagogical techniques in Ann’s course

It is also worth mentioning here another topic that was addressed in Nicole’s interview. When asked to talk about Ann’s pedagogical techniques or activities that seemed to get students in her class talking about the texts, Nicole said that it helped her when Ann provided students with questions before and after they read parts of a text. Specifically, Nicole said that having and thinking about questions before reading helped her to focus on certain parts of the text and orient her reading in a more productive way.
This preliminary guidance, according to Nicole, helped her to better understand the text while reading and more adequately prepared her to participate in class discussion.

At the end of her answer to the same question, Nicole also commented on another pedagogical technique that she felt was ineffective in helping her to understand literary texts and talk about them in class. She stated that Ann often had students break into small groups of three or four at some point during the class and had each group discuss a specific part of the text or address question(s) about a character or theme found in the reading. Nicole said that she did not think that small group discussion was effective:

For me, I would rather just stay in the large group so that I could hear what everybody is saying. But I guess I’m not very shy in terms of speaking up. I always feel like “Oh great, we’re breaking up in small groups.” I think it is helpful, but I just don’t like it. I don’t know why. It’s not just this class either. I think actually part of it has to do with not having the authority of the instructor there to like . . . I always feel like I would rather hear what the instructor has to say rather than someone else. Although it’s nice to be able to sort of commiserate with other students and be like “I don’t get this.” or “What is this?” Sometimes we even speak in English too, like “What was that part . . . page 61.” (Appendix M)

Discussions and how they facilitate understanding of texts

In another part of the interview, Nicole was asked about how class discussions contribute to her understanding of what she was reading in Ann’s course. Nicole first commented about how class discussions helped to confirm what she thought she understood from the text when reading it outside of class on her own. Nicole also indicated that class discussions aided her literal comprehension of what was occurring in the text (i.e., what the plot was about and/or who the characters were). When asked if the discussions helped her to go beyond a literal understanding of the text and arrive at a more symbolic meaning of understanding or helped her to see the relationship between one Colonial-era text and another, Nicole said “I think this comes through a lot when Ann asks us questions like ‘How does this author represent this character vs. this author
representing this character?' And that makes us automatically start interpreting rather
than just comprehending” (Appendix M).

Context and participants in Ann’s course

In the final part of the interview, the researcher asked Nicole about the context of
Ann’s course and how other participants in that context affect her participation in class
discussion. Nicole stated: “I feel like it’s a comfortable setting. We all make mistakes and
we all speak kind of choppy when we’re trying to answer a question in class. But I don’t
feel like anybody is critical of that and so I think it’s sort of a welcoming environment”
(Appendix M). These same sentiments were reiterated in her comments in another section
of the interview where she said “I do feel comfortable. I think it’s because most of us are
non-native speakers. So I don’t think that anybody is expecting my Spanish to be perfect
or, you know, fast or anything like that. I feel confident that my speaking skills are just as
good as most other people in the class” (Appendix M).

Finally, the researcher wanted to know if Nicole had any difficulty understanding
Ann or any other student in Ann’s course when participating in whole-class discussions.
Nicole stated that she understood 95% of what Ann was saying in discussions and that
she understood the majority of students. However, she did admit to not understanding
Herminia (the graduate student who was a native Spanish speaker) at various times due to
the speed with which Herminia spoke and the vocabulary she used. Nicole stated the
following about Herminia:

I know that instructors decide which words to pick so that their students will
understand them. But I feel like she just talks because she can. She [i.e.,
Herminia] doesn’t have to worry about . . . because she knows that Ann will
understand her but I don’t know . . . maybe I’m the only one who has trouble
understanding her because I am across the room and maybe that has something to
do with it. (Appendix M)

The researcher followed up with a question that asked Nicole what she did during class
discussions when she did not know what someone else was saying, such as when
Herminia spoke and Nicole did not completely understand her comment. Nicole responded:

I try to pick up what she’s [i.e., Herminia] saying. Like I try to pick up key words and I listen to Ann’s response to her and usually Ann will kind of summarize what she said and then I kind of get it. I guess I don’t exactly zone out but I don’t worry about it. If I don’t understand what a student is saying I’m not really that concerned. But I still try to listen and I still try to follow her. (Appendix M)

Nicole’s response to the aforementioned question reveals that there are times when she does not know what some people are saying in class. Nicole speculated that her misunderstanding might be a result of her own linguistic deficiencies. In the case of Herminia, Nicole admitted that she, at times, was not able to understand what Herminia said in class discussions due to how fast Herminia spoke and also due in part to the vocabulary used in her responses. At those times, Nicole said that she relied on the instructor to unpack Herminia’s comments and make them accessible to her.

In summary, Nicole’s interview revealed that she was an atypical language learner at the university where this study took place in that she had began her college-level Spanish studies having had 14 years of formal instruction in the language. She had studied Hispanic literature before arriving at the university and also had taken three Hispanic literature courses at the college level before enrolling in Ann’s Colonial literature course. She was a motivated learner of Spanish who was one of the most active participants in whole-class discussions when compared to the other students in Ann’s course. Nicole often participated in class discussion to get a question answered, to gain participation points, and to avoid the awkwardness of silence during whole-class discussions. She also indicated that she did not understand all of what other students said in class. During those moments, Nicole said that she relied on the instructor’s summary of the student’s comments. Nicole also commented that Ann’s questions during whole-class discussion helped her to begin to interpret a text versus attaining a literal understanding. Finally, Nicole entered Ann’s class wanting to improve her Spanish skills
(i.e., speaking, reading, listening, writing) more than her knowledge of Spanish grammar or understanding of the historical or cultural contexts of Colonial-era texts.

**Focal student—Janet**

Background information

Another focal student who regularly contributed to whole-class discussions was Janet. Janet was invited to participate as a focal student because she had the most turns at talk (50) and produced the highest number of words (856), when compared to the other undergraduates in the class, over the course of the six class meetings analyzed in this study. Only Herminia (the graduate student and native Spanish speaker) had a higher number of turns (51) and total number of words spoken (1193) in the six class meetings.

In her questionnaire, Janet indicated that she was 20 years old and had a grade point average of 3.2 (on a 4-point scale) at the time of this study. She also indicated that she was a junior who had two majors, Spanish and Nursing. Janet stated that she had studied Spanish for four years in high school and had taken a total of four Spanish courses at the university where this study took place. Prior to Ann’s course, Janet indicated that she had enrolled in two Spanish literature courses thereby having some experience with literature in her L2. Janet also indicated that she had some limited contact with Spanish outside a formal classroom environment. She stated that she had traveled to Costa Rica and Nicaragua for two weeks. She also said that she tried to speak Spanish roughly three times per week with her undergraduate friends who were Spanish majors.

The role of whole-class discussion

In her interview, Janet revealed that one of the main reasons that she participated so much in class discussion was related to her final course grade. Specifically, she stated
that she actively participated so that she could get participation credit in the course. When asked if there were other reasons why she participated in class discussions, she stated:

I just want to broaden my ability to speak and be able to see that other people can understand what I’m saying. So that’s always motivation and gives you self-esteem so that you can talk more and stuff to just better my ability in speaking Spanish and understanding it. (Appendix N)

Janet went on to reflect on the other roles that whole-class discussion had in her learning. She expressed that speaking in class helps her to understand some of the vocabulary found in the texts. She also stated that speaking in class takes on a more interest-related role in that her participation “. . . keeps me alert. If I don’t participate at all, I just start zoning out” (Appendix N).

Personal course goals

In the ranking exercise in the questionnaire, Janet ranked her course goals as follows (1 being the most important goal through 8 being the least important goal): (1) to improve my reading ability in Spanish; (2) to improve my literary comprehension and interpretation skills in Spanish; (3) to improve my speaking ability in Spanish; (4) to improve my grammatical knowledge of Spanish; (5) to increase my vocabulary in Spanish; (6) to better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary pieces were written; (7) to improve my listening ability in Spanish; (8) to improve my writing ability in Spanish.

In the interview, however, Janet’s responses regarding what her course goals were in Ann’s course were somewhat different. She first stated that one of her goals was to “understand what happened with the Conquest of Mexico and just have a better understanding of historical information” (Appendix N). She then went on to say that another one of her goals was to become a better reader of Spanish. “I expect to be a better reader and understand the content of the text more” (Appendix N).
Pedagogical techniques in Ann’s course

When asked about what pedagogical techniques or activities used in Ann’s class were effective at getting students to speak in class, Janet indicated that the beginning of each class session was an important part of how class discussion evolved during the rest of the 50 minutes. Janet said that Ann often began class by posing a broad question to the class, such as asking them what they thought about the reading(s) that were assigned for the day. This general, open-ended question, according to Janet, then led to specific questions about the plot and the main characters.

Overall, Janet commented that Ann was an instructor who was encouraging and rarely made any of her students feel uncomfortable or pressured to speak. When asked about what Ann does when no one answers a question that has been posed to the group, Janet stated the following:

She just sort of says, “Okay, well, what happened was . . .” and she’ll just kind of answer it but then ask a really vague question after that so that anybody could pretty much answer it. She doesn’t make anyone feel bad. What she’s thinking is “Well, I must have asked a question that was hard to understand” and when no one is responding maybe she’s thinking that “I’ll just be happy and sort of answer it” (Appendix N).

Therefore, Janet expressed that Ann’s questions at the beginning of each class meeting generally started out being broad and open-ended and then gradually narrowed to focus on specific parts of the plot or character analysis as the class discussion evolved. We have also seen that Janet has stated that Ann is an encouraging instructor who rarely made students feel uncomfortable sharing in whole-class discussions. However, in one section of her interview, Janet expressed that, at times, she has not understood what Ann was asking during class discussion. Specifically, she indicated that when Ann asked a question about a certain part of a text, Janet would not know exactly what Ann was trying to get at or what she wanted students to see. Related to these instances, Janet also stated in her interview that when Ann asks a question and no one answers, that she (i.e., Janet)
feels awkward and compelled to fill the silence by contributing something to the discussion.

Discussions and how they facilitate understanding of texts

In another section of the interview, Janet was asked about how class discussions affected her understanding of the texts she was reading in Ann’s course. Janet stated that class discussions helped her to substantiate what she was feeling and understanding while reading the texts on her own. Janet stated that it was through fellow students’ comments during whole-class discussions that she was able to know that she was correctly understanding the plot and characters in the text. “It reinforces what I was feeling . . . then just during her classes other people saying what they thought it meant and stuff reinforces what I felt at that time” (Appendix N).

Context and participants in Ann’s course

Janet also commented about the context created in Ann’s class and the various participants who interact in it during class discussions. When asked about how Ann’s course (and, more specifically, how the interactions between Ann and her students, and between students) compared to other college-level Hispanic literature courses that Janet had taken, she stated that Ann was a good instructor who encouraged all students to participate and did not inhibit students’ contributions in any way. Janet stated:

So if I say anything, she’s going to support it and be like “Oh, yeah, that sounds good.” So I can pretty much say anything—that makes it encouraging to speak your mind and say what you want and learn something from what you say and from what others have to say about what your opinions are on the text. (Appendix N)

Janet also commented on how much she (mis)understood fellow students’ contributions to class discussion. When asked if she did not understand what other students in Ann’s class were saying during whole-class discussion, Janet indicated that she did not always understand Herminia’s contributions. She admitted that she nodded
her head and pretended to understand when Herminia was speaking and said that she simply spoke too fast for Janet to comprehend everything that Herminia said. At one point in the interview, Janet said that she did not feel intimidated by Herminia or other students who Janet believed spoke better than she did. She stated that those students motivated her: “They motivate me . . . I just say that I will try harder” (Appendix N). However, at a later point in the interview, Janet revealed that she only understood 30% of what Herminia said in class and that “I guess she does intimidate me with her talking” (Appendix N).

In summary, Janet’s interview revealed that she was a language learner who had studied Spanish several years in a formal setting at the high school and college levels. In all, she had taken two Hispanic literature courses before enrolling in Ann’s literature course and was therefore somewhat familiar with reading and talking about literature in her L2. Janet was the most vocal undergraduate student in Ann’s course by participating more frequently in whole-class discussions than any other undergraduate student. The only other student who had more turns at talk and produced more words was Herminia.

Janet was primarily motivated to participate in class discussion in Ann’s class due to a participation grade. However, Janet also said that she was motivated to participate in class discussion because she felt that it was a way to improve her speaking ability in Spanish. She also suggested that speaking in class also helped her to stay alert and prevent her from mentally tuning out of class. She also stated that she felt compelled to speak whenever there was silence after Ann posed a question to the class during whole-class discussions. She said she did this to avoid the awkwardness of those particular moments.

Finally, Janet admitted that she did not understand everything fellow students were saying in whole-class discussions and felt intimidated by Herminia’s fluency in Spanish. However, Janet also indicated that Ann created an inviting context where Janet felt comfortable sharing her opinions and actively participating in discussion. In addition
to improving her speaking ability in Spanish, Janet also stated in her interview that she contributed to discussion in order to see if other students understood the texts in the same way she had understood them.

Focal student—Janet

Background information

Jon was an undergraduate Spanish major who was in his junior year at the time of this study. Over the course of the six recorded class meetings, he was the third most active student in whole-class discussions in that he produced 42 turns at talk for a total of 613 words. In his questionnaire, Jon indicated that he had taken four years of Spanish in high school and eight college-level Spanish courses before enrolling in Ann’s course. Four of the college-level courses were Hispanic literature-based courses while the other four covered topics from Hispanic linguistics to courses that focused on cultural topics in Spanish-speaking countries. Jon also indicated in the questionnaire that he had a 3.2 grade point average (on a 4-point scale) at the university where this study took place and also stated that he could write, read, and understand spoken Portuguese with ease as he had previously taken Portuguese language classes at the college level and was also enrolled in a Portuguese Introduction to Literary Analysis course at the time of this study.

Jon indicated in his interview that he originally became interested in Spanish in high school and while volunteering at a homeless shelter. He said that he practiced his Spanish with some of the people who visited the shelter and found that those interactions were rewarding and motivated him to continue studying Spanish in college. Jon also stated that he had recently worked with Mexican immigrant workers who were landscaping his aunt’s property and who were surprised that he knew Spanish. Jon commented that he connected with the three men through his attempts to communicate with them on the job and that the experience piqued his interest in Spanish. At another point in his interview, Jon stated that he wanted to join the Peace Corps after college to
live and work in a Spanish-speaking country and then return to the United States to eventually work as a social worker with Spanish-speaking immigrants. In his questionnaire, Jon stated that his primary contact with Spanish outside of the formal classroom setting involved watching Spanish movies and interacting with Spanish speakers whenever possible. Jon indicated that he had been to Mexico for a period of two weeks but had not spent any other time studying or living in a Spanish-speaking country.

When asked about his reasons for enrolling in Ann’s course, Jon stated:

Ann’s class is more about being able to kind of help myself identify culturally with Mexican culture; seeing how the Conquest plays into it because all of the Mexican people that I’ve ever met have been just so impressed that I would be that interested in learning Spanish that they’re always eager to speak and are always eager to talk about. So I just kind of wanted to gain some perspective on that. (Appendix O)

Jon also went on to say that the instructor was another factor that motivated him to enroll in the course. He stated that he had already taken a course offered by Ann and enjoyed her teaching style. In all, Jon’s background revealed that he was a linguistically astute language learner whose career aspirations motivated him to study Spanish and to learn about Mexican culture.

The role of whole-class discussion

Jon stated in his interview that he is a critical reader and has a “good eye for detail” (Appendix O). He said that when he reads literary works, he tries to notice details that relate to or support the main themes or topics that evolve out of a particular text. After he determines what those details are when reading on his own, he then tries to mention them while participating in whole-class discussion. In this way, he feels that his contributions are able to bring up details that other students or the instructor might have missed. In other words, whole-class discussion is viewed as a platform where Jon can offer up insights about subtle details that relate to the bigger themes found in a text.
Similarly, Jon also said that whole-class discussions allowed him the opportunity to pose questions to the instructor and to his fellow students. Although he stated that his questions rarely focus on linguistic issues (e.g., grammatical constructions or the meaning of a word in a text), he only asks questions in class that may be of interest to other students. If Jon thinks that his question is too specific or is too vague, he will not ask it during class discussion and will wait to ask the instructor either before or after class.

Personal course goals

In the ranking exercise in the questionnaire, Jon indicated that his goals for Ann’s course were the following (i.e., 1 = most important through an 8 = least important): (1) to improve my speaking ability in Spanish, (2) to improve my vocabulary in Spanish, (3) to improve my listening ability in Spanish, (4) to improve my writing ability in Spanish, (5) to improve my literary comprehension and interpretations skills in Spanish, (6) to better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary pieces were written, (7) to improve my reading ability in Spanish, and (8) to improve my grammatical knowledge of Spanish.

The researcher asked Jon in the interview to talk about the ranking of his goals for Ann’s course. When the researcher reminded him of his rankings, Jon admitted that he misunderstood the exercise and thought that he was ranking his overall Spanish language learning goals versus his personal goals for Ann’s course. He stated that his overall goal when learning Spanish in college was to improve his speaking ability followed by the aforementioned ranking of goals. However, when he thought about the goals that he had for Ann’s course, he reordered his rankings in the interview and said that his primary goal in the Latin American Colonial literature course was to better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary texts were written. He then expressed that his second goal would be to improve his literary comprehension and interpretation skills followed by his desire to improve his speaking ability in Spanish.
Jon’s reordering of the ranking of his course goals appears to reflect a desire on his part to identify with Mexican culture through learning about the Conquest of Mexico to be able to relate to and interact with Mexican immigrants in his future job as a social worker. Specifically, Jon was a student who expressed that his primary goals centered on an understanding of the Mexican culture through Latin American Colonial and contemporary Mexican literature that focused on the Conquest of Mexico. It is necessary to mention here that Jon’s reordering of his course goals may have been affected by the presence of the researcher. Given that Jon identified with me as both a researcher and an instructor of Spanish, his reordering of goals might have been done to somehow try to please me versus tell me what he actually believed. As such, his new rankings might not accurately represent his personal goals like those that were expressed by his fellow students in the questionnaires that were carried out earlier in the semester.

Pedagogical techniques in Ann’s course

One of the pedagogical themes that evolved from the transcripts of Jon’s interview had to do with how he characterized Ann’s ability to interact with students and get them to participate in class discussion. At various times in the interview, Jon commented on Ann’s ability to guide discussions and encourage learners to participate. At one point in his interview, he stated that “the way she doesn’t call on people but manages to guide discussions always seems really well thought out and she seems to be really good at helping evoke ideas for people” (Appendix O). He reiterated this point in a different section of the interview and stressed the idea that Ann “leads discussions without calling on people” (Appendix O). In general, Jon’s comments revealed that from his perspective, Ann did not have to pose questions only for the sake of stimulating conversation. Rather, Ann took on the role of facilitator of class discussion where her questions were intended to incorporate students’ ideas in a way that made most students feel comfortable contributing to class discussion.
Jon also commented about the use of small-group work and how he thought it affected students' contributions to whole-class discussions. In his view, small-group discussion can either help or hinder students’ participation in the larger class discussion. To explain, he stated that group work often exposed the fact that one of the students in the group had not done the reading for a particular day. In those cases, Jon said that time is then spent trying to educate that person about what the readings were about versus talking about the question or task given to the small group by Ann. “It’s kind of like the chain is only as strong as its weakest link” (Appendix O). Therefore, the small-group time may inhibit the amount and kind of contribution students can make to the rest of the class during whole-class discussions.

However, Jon also suggested that when small-group discussions do work as planned (i.e., all students discussing what they had read and are actively engaged with each other), then the exchanges in the smaller format serve as a springboard for conversation in the whole-class discussion. In other words, the talk that occurs in the smaller group acts as a scaffold that allows students to participate in the whole-class discussion. Jon explained how this has happened in Ann’s class. “If we’re reading something interesting and everyone has read it . . . discussion just bounces off everyone. And when we come back to the group as a whole, everyone has a lot to add” (Appendix O). He went on to explain that he felt that there had been a few times when Ann was unable to control the students’ excitement and that whole-class discussion became quite active. He stated that “it’s really awesome and fun to be a part of when the class gets to discuss something so adamantly that she can’t control it” (Appendix O).

Discussions and how they facilitate understanding of texts

Like the other two focal students, Jon was asked how whole-class discussions affected his understanding of the texts that he was reading in Ann’s course. Jon said that once he has read a text, his understanding of it is set and rarely changes. However, he did
say that if Ann or another student “says something that totally gets me to change my understanding quite a bit from how I understood” that he will “go back and read again. But usually there is either no change in my understanding or a pretty drastic change because I’ve misinterpreted something” (Appendix O).

Jon also reported that class discussion did help him understand difficult vocabulary words in Nahuatl but did not increase his vocabulary in Spanish. He also indicated that class discussions aided his literal comprehension with respect to recognizing aspects of language such as sarcasm. Jon also said that class discussions in Ann’s course helped him to understand the historical and cultural background and contexts in which many of the Colonial texts were written. Having this background knowledge allowed Jon to go beyond a literal level of comprehension and interpret the texts at a symbolic level.

Context and participants in Ann’s course

Finally, Jon commented on the context of Ann’s course and talked about his fellow students. Jon reiterated the notion that Ann creates an environment that gives all students the opportunity to participate in class discussion. He stated that Ann’s Spanish is easy to understand and that she provides positive reinforcement to anyone who contributes to whole-class discussion. At the same time, Jon realized that not all students spoke. “It seems to me that people who discuss, discuss. And the people who don’t discuss, just don’t even raise their voices” (Appendix O).

Despite the praise that he expressed for Ann, Jon also raised a concern. When asked what he would change about Ann’s teaching with respect to class discussion, he stated that he thought that Ann was sometimes too relaxed and would let some students use English. He said that “she lets people speak English; not like a lot. But if she says something in English, then that will get students speaking in English. And then it gets harder to code switch and speak Spanish” (Appendix O). Although the researcher rarely
heard English being spoken in the whole-class discussion, he did observe times when the students spoke in English when engaged in small-group discussion. More comments are made regarding the use of English in Chapter 6.

Finally, at one point in the interview, Jon stated that he had already taken a course with Ann and knew her before enrolling in the Latin American Colonial literature course. When asked if this made any difference as to how much and the way in which he participated in class discussions, he stated: “Yeah, definitely. Because like now, I don’t call her Profesora anymore. I always call her Ann” (Appendix O). Jon went on to say that in his opinion, Ann related well with her students partly because of her young age. “It’s always one of those things having young teachers that makes that part easier [sic]” (Appendix O).

In summary, Jon was a student who had taken a number of Spanish literature, culture, history, and linguistics courses before enrolling in Ann’s course. He also had experience studying Portuguese language and literature. Jon’s primary goal for Ann’s course dealt with an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts in which the Colonial literature texts were written. He stated that this goal was related to his longing to identify with Mexican culture and was therefore tied to his future career goal of becoming a Spanish-speaking social worker who works with Mexican immigrants in the United States. His overall goal related to his Spanish studies is to improve his speaking ability and become an effective communicator in Spanish.

Jon also stated in his interview that he contributes to whole-class discussions primarily when he thinks he can share a detail that no one else detected while reading a text and that others would think is interesting to know. He said that Ann has created a context in which all students are given opportunities to contribute to whole-class discussions. Similarly, Jon indicated that Ann’s ability to guide and facilitate discussions helps students to actively participate in class discussion. He also reported that while many students do talk in class, many do not.
Jon stated that class discussions, at times, did aid his literal understanding of texts in that they helped him learn vocabulary words in Nahuatl and also facilitated his comprehension of sarcasm in Spanish. He also indicated that class discussions provided him with the necessary cultural and historical knowledge of the Colonial-era texts and that this somehow aided his ability to interpret texts on a symbolic level.

**Micro-level analyses of oral discourse**

Analyzing talk at a micro-level of discourse in this dissertation relies heavily on an ecological view (van Lier, 2000, 2004) of the L2 classroom. As discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical assumptions inherent in an ecological perspective on language learning involve the following:

- Language learning is made up of both cognitive and social processes.
- Examining language learning without taking into consideration the social context in which it occurs only allows for a partial understanding of acquisition.
- All L2 environments are imbued with a wealth of potential affordances.
- Affordances emerge from the interaction between learners and their L2 environments.
- Learner engagement plays an important role in determining the usefulness of affordances in a given environment.

Given the above theoretical understanding of acquisition and the importance of the interactions between organisms in particular context(s), it is important to note how various constructs that make up part of an ecological view of language learning are operationalized and analyzed in this study. Specifically, this dissertation involves the examination of the process by which affordances evolved out of the interactions between Ann and her students in whole-class discussions over the course of six class meetings. As we have seen, an ecological view of language learning centers on the construct of
affordance and how learners perceive and act on (or not) those affordances while in a particular environment or situation. The context or ecosystem in which this study examines oral discourse is Ann’s Latin American Colonial literature class. The participants in this environment include Ann and her students. Micro-level analyses of talk focus on the discourse structures that allowed specific affordances to emerge from the interactions between Ann and her students, with particular attention given to Ann’s interactions with the three focal students invited to participate in this study (i.e., Nicole, Janet, and Jon).

First-level affordances in this dissertation study are defined as anything in Ann’s classroom that has potential to be meaningful, but is not meaningful yet for one or more of a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons could be linguistic in nature (e.g., an utterance is too complex or is spoken too rapidly to be comprehensible) or could also be related to the content being discussed (e.g., confusion about how an utterance fits into the theme of the discussion at a given moment). First-level affordances can therefore include utterances that have potential for meaning (e.g., utterances whose propositional meaning is incomprehensible to one or more listeners), but they can also include any paralinguistic features of discourse (e.g., gestures, voice quality, prosody). This definition extends beyond van Lier’s (2004) view of first-level (potential) affordances (i.e., features in the environment such as voice quality, prosody, and gestures) and incorporates the propositional value of participants’ talk. Second-level affordances in this dissertation are defined as any utterances produced by organisms in a L2 environment that are meaningful to another organism(s). To be meaningful, the utterances are not only well formed (or nearly so), but are also accessible to other organisms in the L2 environment.

This dissertation study therefore analyzes specific moments where first-level affordances become second-level affordances in whole-class discussions in Ann’s Latin American literature classroom. Many of these moments were embedded within extended interactions between the instructor and her student(s). It is important to note here that this
study, in addition to defining and investigating affordance in the context of whole-class discussions in a L2 literature classroom, puts forth a new construct termed *affordance structure*. An affordance structure is defined as any discursive move (or series of moves) that emerges at particular moments in whole-class discussion that allows first-level potential affordances (i.e., utterances that are not meaningful) to become second-level affordances (i.e., utterances that are meaningful). Affordance structures can take a variety of shapes, but their function is to promote knowledge building among a wide range of students in the classroom. To put it another way, affordance structures are openings in whole-class discussions that allow for extended discourse among participants with an aim to afford opportunities to learners to build knowledge/meaning.

Analyzing affordance structures and the way in which first-level affordances become second-level affordances in this dissertation research is motivated by a number of reasons. First, a majority of Ann’s students, as revealed in their questionnaire responses (see Chapter 4), indicated that they entered the course with a primary goal of improving their speaking ability in Spanish. Although students indicated various reasons why they participated in whole-class discussions, it is still important to note that many of them wanted to be active participants in whole-class discussions. Second, Ann’s interview revealed how she viewed herself as a facilitator of class discussion and not as a question-and-answer drill sergeant. She also indicated that one of her goals in the course was to teach students critical thinking skills. She suggested that one of the ways to promote critical thinking skills was to get students to articulate their thoughts and ideas about the literary texts they were reading in whole-class discussion. When taken together, whole-class discussions (particularly extended oral interactions between the instructor and a student or students), represented possible moments when affordance structures emerged to allow first-level affordances to become second-level affordances. It is hoped that micro-level analyses of these moments will be able to fully illustrate the dynamic nature
of the affordance construct and not represent it as another kind of feedback (as defined in Darhower, 2008, and Miller, 2005).

R3. What types of affordance structures emerged in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under investigation in this study? How do the instructor and the students perceive and make use of the affordance structures?

Research question 3 complements a macro-level analysis of discourse (as investigated in questions 1 and 2) to provide an examination of how linguistic affordances evolved from the interactions in whole-class discussions in Ann’s class. This research question investigates the theoretical construct of affordance (van Lier, 2000, 2004) in the context of an undergraduate Latin American literature course. Similarly, it also investigates a new construct identified and described in this dissertation—affordance structures—and how different affordance structure types emerged in the discourse to transition first-level affordances to second-level affordances. Data analyses for research question 3 result in a categorization of the types of affordance structures that evolved out of the talk between Ann and her students. It also involves the analyses of participants’ perceptions of the emergence of affordance structures and how the various organisms in the environment made use of the affordance structures. The information gathered based on research question 3 enables a nuanced examination of how oral interactions unfolded between speakers in the context of a L2 literature classroom and help create a picture of an affordance-rich environment.

To examine the talk in the six class meetings, the researcher first read through the transcripts to analyze how oral interactions in whole-class discussions unfolded between Ann and her students. Particular attention was given to the discursive moves that allowed for extended oral interaction between participants. Once the initial pass through the transcripts was complete, features of the extended interactions were noted. Categories were then established based on the features of each extended interaction. The categories were refined after a second examination of the transcripts. The researcher then identified
and coded the interactions that illustrated affordance structures as defined for this dissertation.

It is important to note here that research question 3 seeks to illustrate the different types of affordance structures that resulted from the oral interactions in the context of Ann’s Latin American Colonial literature course. The researcher focused on oral interactions between Ann and her students that resulted in Level 1 (potential) affordances becoming Level 2 affordances as defined in this dissertation. As previously discussed, a first-level affordance is an utterance or utterances that are not meaningful to others at a given moment in the discourse. On a theoretical level, learners enter a particular L2 environment (in our case, Ann’s Latin American Colonial literature classroom) and are not only immersed in an ecology of “prosodic features, voice quality, and body language accompanying messages” (van Lier, 2004, p. 100), but also in an environment where utterances (e.g., words, phrases, sentences) surround learners. While all of these first-level affordances are universally available to learners, they remain devoid of meaning to particular learners in the environment. A first-level affordance becomes a second-level affordance when there is a “deliberate act of focusing attention, of noticing a linguistic feature” (van Lier, 2004, p. 100), thereby making an utterance meaningful to a specific learner or learners. A second-level affordance therefore entails a certain amount of awareness on the part of the participant to notice a feature in the linguistic environment and then act on it. This is similar to what Schmidt and Frota (1986) called “noticing the gap” (p. 310), when a learner realizes that the language in a given environment is different from her current language knowledge. As a result, the learner notices a gap between her current language (or content) knowledge and the linguistic (or content) feature that is found in her surroundings/environment. A second-level affordance can also be a result of a participant “drawing attention to something” (van Lier, 2004, p. 100). In this case, Student A notices the feature in the environment due to an instructor (or a fellow student) pointing it out. It is also possible that another learner’s attention (e.g.,
Student B) is drawn to something in the exchange even while the instructor is interacting with Student A. To reiterate, a second-level affordance in this dissertation is any utterance produced by organisms in a L2 environment that is meaningful to another organism(s).

In summary, research question 3 provides for (a) a classification of the various kinds of affordance structures found in whole-class discussions between Ann and her students, and (b) analyses of how these structures allowed for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances in this context. It is important to note here that the micro-level analyses of talk in this dissertation will focus only on the affordance structures that allow first-level potential affordances to become second-level affordances in whole-class discussion. Data analyses will not examine the affordance structures that allow second-level affordances to transition to third-level affordances or how third-level affordances become fourth-level affordances.

Affordance structure types

Analyses of the transcripts revealed different types of affordance structures found in the oral interactions between Ann and her students during whole-class discussions. This section reports on three types of affordance structures found in the data along with an illustration and analysis of how each one, at specific moments in the discourse, allowed for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances.

Funnel-effect structures

At various moments during whole-class discussions, Ann posed general questions to the whole class regarding the content of the literary texts under analysis. Some of the questions posed by Ann dealt with students' comprehension of factual information found in the texts (i.e., plot, names of characters, sequence of events). Other questions asked students to share their interpretation of a text (i.e., the symbolic meaning of events, or how students felt a text represented the historical context in which it was written). These
moments resulted in Ann posing a single question and a student (or students) immediately responding with a contribution. At other times, Ann would ask questions and no student would respond. In these cases, Ann would extend her conversational turn by posing additional questions on the same topic. When this happened, Ann would normally begin a question sequence with a broad question and, based on the non-reaction of students in her class, would continue to ask questions that were increasingly specific and narrow in their scope until a student would finally respond. The shape of the question sequence (i.e., starting with a broad question and working her way to a more specific aspect within a single instructor turn), constituted the funnel-effect affordance structure. The following example illustrates how a funnel-effect affordance structure emerged in the talk between Ann and her students.
In the above segment, the latter half of one of Ann’s (I) longer turns is provided, followed by a second turn produced by a student named Mitch (M). After Ann’s turn begins, she segues (lines 2–8) to talk about how traces of indigenous peoples and cultures that prominently figured in the Mexican Conquest manifest themselves in various facets of contemporary Mexican culture. She then focuses her remarks (lines 9–16) on a short story students had read for this class while also making connections to a film that students had watched the previous week. Up to this point in her turn, much of the discourse in the segment represents first-level affordances in that Ann’s talk is full of potential meanings in the L2 but they may not be intelligible to some students. In lines 17–19, Ann appears to be trying to focus students’ attention before posing a question. That is, she provides some preliminary information about the first approaching question by getting students to think about the movie they had seen and the critical essay written by Chorba that they had read for this class.

The underlined section of Ann’s turn (lines 20–31) is an example of a funnel-effect affordance structure. As can be seen in the underlined segment, Ann first poses a broad question (lines 20–22) that asks students the following: What comments does the movie offer regarding the effect of the Conquest on the culture? The first question posed

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1 The numbers in parentheses within the transcript indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; e.g., (.5) = one half of a second; (1) = one second.
by Ann is one that is (a) general, in that it allows for a wide-range of student answers or perspectives, and (b) can be classified as an interpretation question because an expected student answer would not involve factual information presented in the film but would most likely depend on how students interpreted the comments that the movie made.

We then see that there was a short pause (.5 seconds) after the first question was posed by Ann before she posed a second question in her same conversational turn. The second question (lines 20–28), is much longer than the first question. Ann attempted to re-phrase her original question by providing more detail in the hope of eliciting a student response. She restates the first question (i.e., asking about how the movie showed how the Conquest affected culture) but expands it by referencing the critical essay by Chorba that students had read. The second question is another general, interpretation question. However, instead of referencing only the movie, Ann also makes reference to the essay. However, Ann’s second question seems not to be comprehensible to students: No one responded, resulting in a two-second pause. When one of the focal students (Nicole) was asked in her stimulated recall (Appendix P) about what she was thinking during this segment of the class, she said:

Just now when I was listening to it [i.e., in the stimulated recall session], I was thinking *Is she talking about the present culture or the culture that was lost* . . . It was hard for me to distinguish between if she was talking about . . . a process that was happening way back then or the one that was happening now . . . It was a little confusing about which cultures she was referring to. (Appendix P)

Ann’s attempt to rephrase her original question by posing a second general, interpretation question did not help Nicole understand what was being asked. Realizing that students were not responding due to the two-second pause, Ann then re-phrased the question yet again (lines 28–29); this time choosing to narrow her question by asking *What does she* [i.e., Chorba] *focus on in her analysis?* While Ann’s second re-phrasing attempt of her original question narrowed the scope of the question and completely eliminated what appeared to be a confusing reference to culture (as mentioned by
Nicole), it still did not result in a student response. However, Ann’s third question is different from the first two questions that she posed in this sequence. While the first two questions were broad, interpretation questions about a topic in the film, the third question was specific and referred only to Chorba’s essay. However, a two-second pause results after asking the third question that no student fills.

Ann re-phrases her question again (lines 29–30) and shortens it to What aspects? in reference to the question that she had just posed (i.e., the third question). The fourth question is similar to the third question in that it is factual in nature, and it is specific in that it is asking for pieces of information from the essay. Once the fourth question is posed, a student (Mitch) responds (lines 33–35) and is able to continue the conversation. Ann then responds to Mitch’s answer (lines 37–43).

As we have seen in the above segment, Ann asked a series of questions to get students to talk about how the Conquest affected Mexican culture. The questions first asked by Ann in this series (i.e., questions 1 and 2) were both broad, related to the movie, and they were intended to elicit a student response that was interpretation based. She funnels her talk in such a way that her final two questions in the series (i.e., questions 3 and 4) are more narrow in scope than questions 1 and 2 and require students to give a specific, factual answer related to the critic’s essay. Given the lack of student response to the first three questions, she went through a re-phrasing process intended to clarify her inquiries. Eventually, she narrowed the focus of her question far enough so that a student could respond. In other words, she provided linguistic scaffolding through the re-phrasing of her question so that one of her students was able to offer an answer and continue the discussion. This process represents a funnel-effect affordance structure. Through Ann’s gradual narrowing of her broad original question to a concise question, she was moving a first-level potential affordance to a second-level affordance for some students (i.e., especially for Mitch). Upon seeing this segment, Ann commented in her stimulated recall
session on the number of times she was re-phrasing and explained what was happening from her perspective:

> It was sort of a broad question to begin with and then I tried to get at something a little bit more specific so that they could grab hold of an actual question that seemed a little bit more practical to deal with. (Appendix Q)

While it is unclear and impossible to know if this funnel-effect affordance structure helped all students in the class to “grab hold” (Appendix Q) of what Ann was asking, the more important feature of Ann’s discourse in this turn is the way in which she re-phrased her question to make it accessible to students. It is important to note here that Mitch’s response *The place that the indigenous has in the mestizaje and how it is part of the mestizaje* is factual information that he is recalling from Chorba’s critical essay. Therefore, his factually based answer did not directly relate to Ann’s initial interpretation-like question of *What comments does the movie offer regarding the effect of the Conquest on the culture?* In other words, Ann’s definition of an “actual question” (based on this exchange) appears to be a question that is narrow in its scope and one that requires an answer that is a fact rather than an interpretation.

As we have seen, a funnel-effect affordance structure is one that is made up of a series of questions in a single turn that begins with a broad question and works its way down to a narrow, specific question to get another interlocutor to participate in the talk and co-construct meaning. Ann, as the chief mediator of discourse in the funnel-effect affordance structures, changes the propositional content of her questions in addition to the scope of her questions so that learners are able to participate in the talk.

While the above funnel-effect affordance structure emerged at various points in the transcripts over the course of the six class meetings, it is worth mentioning here that there were times when variations of the funnel-effect affordance structure appeared. The segment below illustrates two funnel-effect affordance structures (i.e., the two separate underlined sections) that are slightly different than the one previously discussed.
571. También hay un índice en este texto. Si quieren buscar más referencias a Gerónimo de Aguilar aquí, pueden usar el índice. Entonces, tenemos el material para comenzar esta historia en el texto de Bernal Díaz y un poquito en el texto de Cortés. Ahora, si volvemos al texto de ficción de Fuentes, ¿cómo se representa a esta figura? (1) ¿Cómo se representa a Gerónimo de Aguilar en la versión de Fuentes? (1) Solo han leído cuatro de los diez capítulos—falta mucho para leer. (1) Pero, ¿cuáles son algunas impresiones que ustedes tenían de esta representación de Gerónimo de Aguilar que vemos en el caso de Fuentes, en el texto de Fuentes? (2) ¿Cómo es semejante, cómo es diferente de la versión que vemos en los textos coloniales? (1) ¿Herminia?

Herminia?:Para empezar, tiene un dominio del lenguaje increíble, bellísimo.

A casi como un novelista! [laughter]

Casi como un novelista. Pasa un poco de tres siglos—falta mucho para leer. (1) Pero, ¿cuáles son algunas impresiones que ustedes tenían de esta representación de Gerónimo de Aguilar que vemos en el caso de Fuentes, en el texto de Fuentes? (2) ¿Cómo es semejante, cómo es diferente de la versión que vemos en los textos coloniales? (1) ¿Anna?

Anna?: Tiene mucho orgullo. Creo que en este cuento Gerónimo de Aguilar, pienso que tiene una gran parte en la conquista.

Exacto, exacto. Es casi como el proceso de mitificación que vemos en Cortés,

¿no? Él es una figura central en estos eventos según la versión que tenemos de...

571. There is also an index in this text. If you want to look for more references to Gerónimo de Aguilar here, you can use the index. So, we have material to start this story in the Bernal Díaz text and a little bit in the Cortés text. Now, if we return to Fuentes's fictional text, how is this figure represented? (1) How is the figure of Gerónimo de Aguilar represented in the Fuentes version? (1) You have only read four of the ten chapters—there’s a lot left to read. (1) But, what are some of the impressions you all had with this representation of Gerónimo de Aguilar that we see in the case of Fuentes, in the Fuentes text? (2) How is it similar, how is it different from the version that we read in the Colonial texts? (1) Herminia?

Herminia?: To start, he has an incredible, very beautiful control of language.

Almost like a novelist! [laughter]

Almost like a novelist. I don’t know if you all remember, but I put for you on the board when we were talking about Gerónimo de Aguilar, I put for you on the board the quote from an editor who edited a very short letter by Gerónimo de Aguilar. And he said in this letter, the editor, that he wasn’t very smart—poor Gerónimo de Aguilar. So, we can suppose that this is a creative elaboration by Fuentes. Good. So, he completely dominates language. Good. He has the ability to express himself here. Good. Good, good, good. Other impressions? Anna?

Anna?: He is very proud. I think that in this story Gerónimo de Aguilar, I think that he had a big part in the Conquest.

Exactly, Exactly. It is almost like the mitification process that we see in Cortés, right? He is a central figure in these events according to Fuentes’s version.
According to his self-representation. Good, excellent. He has a very important role. He has control of language. 

What more can we say about his representation here in this Fuentes story? (3) How does he get along with the other important characters? (2) With Cortés for example? (5) And later we are going to see more about his very problematic relationship with the Malinche. (2) Other impressions? (4) Like Anna was saying, he is a very arrogant person in this version and he has problems with, for example, the Malinche. (5) And his relationships with those other people are much more problematic than what we see in the version by Bernal Díaz for example. (1) Other impressions in general of him? (1) Yes Hermínia?

Herminia?

It manifests itself, he calls himself ‘traitor’. And he justifies it saying that it is because he loves and respects those people from this town.

The above segment is taken from a transcript (Appendix H) where class discussion centered on a contemporary text written by Carlos Fuentes. Fuentes incorporates the names of real historical figures from the Mexican Conquest, but he fictionalizes the events to create a different outcome of the Conquest that contradicts the historical one. The discussion above begins with Ann (I) pointing out that the Fuentes text has an index of historical figures and events in his book (line 1). She then begins to direct the discussion to the particulars of the story (lines 2–6). She then poses a question to students (lines 6–8) that is a broad, interpretation query about how Fuentes portrays the historical figure Gerónimo de Aguilar. This initial question is followed by a very brief pause before Ann asks a second, related question (lines 8–10). Ann’s second question is

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2 The numbers in parentheses within the transcript indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; e.g., (.5) = one half of a second; (1) = one second.
very similar to the first question in that she again asks about how the figure Gerónimo de Aguilar is represented in Fuentes’s text. Again, the second question is a broad interpretation question but also elicits a short pause in the discourse. After posing the second question and briefly pausing, Ann comments on the fact that students had only read the first four chapters in Fuentes’s text (lines 11–12) before pausing and posing a third question in the same conversational turn. The third question (lines 13–16) is another reformulation of Ann’s original question and again asks what their impressions were of how Fuentes represented the historical figure Gerónimo de Aguilar. The third question, like the first two questions in Ann’s turn, is broad and mandates that students’ answers be an interpretation of the text. A longer pause (i.e., 2 seconds) results after Ann poses her third question. Finally, Ann offers a fourth question (lines 17–19). Her fourth question is still an interpretation-like question in that a student answer would be an interpretation of how Gerónimo de Aguilar was portrayed in the Fuentes text and how that is different from what students had read in a Colonial text written by Bernal Díaz. However, in contrast to the first three questions, Ann’s fourth question was much more narrow in that she provided students with suggestions as to what she was looking for by adding phrases such as how is it similar and how is it different. After a very brief pause, a student (Herminia) offers a comment (turns 22–24).

Again, we see that a funnel-effect affordance structure is created by Ann asking a series of questions that are initially broad in nature and, with successive rephrasing, become more specific. When Nicole was asked in her stimulated recall if she understood what Ann was asking in this segment, she responded:

I understood her question, but I hadn’t read. So I felt a little awkward the rest of class because . . . I think a lot of us hadn’t read. I heard a couple of different people say that they had read only a couple of pages or that they didn’t read it at all. (Appendix P)

While it is not clear if other students in Ann’s class were not responding due to not having read the first four chapters (as in the case of Nicole), we do see that Ann’s
discourse created a funnel-effect affordance structure that stimulated a student response. Ann was aware of what was happening while she spoke and said in her stimulated recall session that:

This is where I started getting the distinct impression that they had not done very much reading because since he is the narrator in the story, there is a lot to say about that. So it wasn’t a difficult question. Appendix Q

The discussion continued with two students (Herminia and Anna) each responding to Ann’s questions and Ann responding to their comments (lines 22–50). In the latter part of the segment, we see another long turn by Ann (lines 51–73) who again attempts to get students talking about how Fuentes characterizes the historical figure of Gerónimo de Aguilar. The second underlined segment represents another funnel-effect affordance structure, in which Ann poses a series of questions to the class. However, in contrast to the other funnel-effect affordance structures that we have seen, the one at this point in the talk is constructed in a different way. The first question posed by Ann in this sequence (lines 57–59) is a broad, interpretation question that asks what students have to say about the representation of Gerónimo de Aguilar in Fuentes’s text. Ann’s first question is then followed by a three-second pause. She then asks a second question (lines 59–61) that is more specific than her first question and that asks students to produce factual information from the text. We then see that this second question is followed by another pause (2 seconds) before Ann poses a third question in the sequence. Like her second question, Ann’s third question (line 61) narrows its scope and asks for specific, factual information about how Gerónimo de Aguilar got along with another character (i.e., Cortés) in the Fuentes’s text. Ann does not wait very long (.5 seconds) and at this point provides additional commentary about Gerónimo de Aguilar’s relationship with the character Malinche. After this brief commentary, a pause ensues before Ann resorts to a fourth question (lines 64–65). Here is where Ann’s funnel widens, in that her fourth question is broad and asks for an interpretation. This conceptual widening is followed by
the longest pauses (4 seconds) in the funnel-effect affordance structure. Ann continues in
the same conversational turn and adds another comment.

It is important to note here that in this particular comment, Ann refers back to a
student’s (Anna’s) contribution earlier in the discussion (lines 46–49) and restates what
Anna said. Ann’s strategy at this point in the discussion was revealed in her stimulated
recall. While watching this particular part of the discourse unfold, Ann said in her recall
session “Let’s go back to something that you could say!” (Appendix Q). A short pause
follows (.5 seconds) and then Ann again provides a comment that appears to provide
some additional context to students and how Gerónimo de Aguilar is portrayed in
Fuentes’s text in comparison to Bernal Diaz’s text. A one-second pause occurs before
Ann asks a fifth question in this sequence (lines 72–73) that is a broad, interpretation
question. A student (Herminia) raises her hand and offers a response (lines 75–78).

This second funnel-effect affordance structure in this excerpt, was similar to
others in that it started with Ann asking a broad, interpretation question (question 1) and
narrowing/funneling her way down to a specific question that demanded that students
provide factual information (questions 2 and 3 in the sequence). However, this example
illustrates that at this point in the discourse, and still within the same turn, Ann resorts
back to a broad, interpretation question (question 4), and ends the sequence with another
broad, interpretation question (question 5). As such, the shape of Ann’s questioning
resembled a misshapen funnel but did result in getting a student (Herminia) to respond.

As we have seen, funnel-effect affordance structures were present in the
transcripts of whole-class discussion. These structures involved the use of a series of
questions in a single turn to help transition first-level affordances to second-level
affordances for students by Ann. In other words, funnel-effect affordance structures gave
rise to second-level affordances in the course of whole-class discussion by gradually
narrowing or broadening a question’s scope, thereby affording some students the ability
to take the floor and participate in the discussion.
Accessibility structures

Another type of affordance structure found in the transcripts was an accessibility structure. While the funnel-effect affordance structure was built around a series of questions, accessibility structures were created from the comments made by students. Specifically, there were times in the discussion when some students spoke too fast for fellow students to follow or used complicated vocabulary or complex grammatical constructions in their contributions that inhibited comprehension. Other students’ contributions were confusing for other students to understand due the use of incorrect grammar and vocabulary, convoluted explanations of their points of view, or both.

In all of these cases, students’ comments remained as first-level affordances for some of their fellow students and were not able to become second-level affordances given the complexity or incomprehensibility of the contribution. At these particular moments in the discourse, Ann was able to make a student’s comment accessible to the rest of the class by correcting grammatical errors or lexical items and/or by re-phrasing a student’s contribution. These moments in which Ann intervened in a student’s contribution were identified as accessibility affordance structures. The role of the accessibility affordance structure, on a theoretical level, was to transition first-level potential affordances (i.e., a complicated or convoluted contribution from a particular student) to second-level affordances (i.e., where other students in the class were able to access what was being said).

The following excerpt illustrates an accessibility affordance structure found in the transcript of one of the recorded class meetings (Appendix H). The segment is taken from the initial part of a class where discussion focused on a section of a film students had seen the previous week that tied together many of the themes and characters students had read in the Colonial texts earlier in the semester. Discussion centered on the deconstruction of the film in an essay written by Chorba, a literary critic. Students had read the essay for this class and therefore were referencing the film in their arguments.
The transcript begins with Ann asking if any student had anything else to add to the discussion. This prompts a long interaction with one student (Janet).

I Bien, bien. Bien visto. ¿Algo más en general sobre el fin, sobre lo que dice Chorba, u otro . . .

J [raising her hand] Según lo que dice Chorba en su *escrito [lexical error] . . .

I En su ensayo.

J En su ensayo, la mención del fin *de que [grammatical error] fue ella criticaba el director *de que [grammatical error] fue un final muy *negativa [concordance error].

I Bien.

J Y *de que [grammatical error] no fue parte de su mensaje *de que [grammatical error] quiere mostrar. Pero no estoy de acuerdo con eso.

I Bien. ¿Por qué?

J Porque pienso que muestra que el sacrificio, si esto es lo que fue, no sé—que esto es parte de lo que pasó con la, no sé, *de que [grammatical error] los españoles *lo hagan [grammatical error] a las indígenas *de que [grammatical error] fue parte de la opresión y *de que [grammatical error] . . . oh, no, no, yo sé lo que quiero decir.

I Bien, adelante.

J Lo siento. Okay. So, entonces ella decía que él quería mostrar un final *negativa [concordance error] pero muestra un final *positiva [concordance error] y no pienso que es *positiva [concordance error], lo siento.

I ¿Y cómo ves tú el fin que no viste? [laughter]

J Yo *veo el fin que es negativo [syntax error] porque el fraile veía *esto

I Good, go ahead.

J I’m sorry. Okay. So, then she was saying that he wanted to show a *negative ending [concordance error] but shows a *positive [concordance error] ending, and I don’t think that it is *positive [concordance error], I’m sorry.

I And how do you see the ending that you didn’t see? [laughter]

J I *see the ending that is negative [syntax error] because the friar was seeing *this
Su muerte. Sí, su suicidio.

fue suicidio. Pero en vez de eso, vemos que fue un . . . muy triste porque él muere en el monasterio *de que* no fue su lugar indígena. Pero, es que, yo pienso que es más o menos triste porque el fraile *vea* como un *milagroso* *yo pienso* que él *muere* *yo pienso* que eso es lo que pasó y no es un milagro *yo pienso* que su Dios fue representado en esta imagen y no él, *yo pienso* que es que su Dios fue representado en esta imagen y no él, *yo pienso* que el no tenía nada más del imagen.

Porque esto es una pregunta muy importante—cómo ve él, cómo conecta él con esta figura, con esta estatua de la Virgen al final. Y este es un aspecto muy importante de la interpretación que hacemos de la película en general. Entonces según lo que dices tú, él veía en esta figura, en esta estatua Topiltzin y no la Virgen católica. Y en este sentido, no representa un milagro para el fraile, porque no hubo una conversión completa. Bien. ¿Podemos seguir un poco con esta idea? ¿Sí Sheila?

* Acto de su *muere* act of his dying *muere*... *muere*... I His death. Yes, his suicide.

* fue suicidio. Pero en vez de eso, vemos que fue un . . . muy triste porque él muere en el monasterio *de que* no fue su lugar indígena. Pero, es que, yo pienso que es más o menos triste porque el fraile *vea* como un *milagroso* *yo pienso* que él *muere* *yo pienso* que eso es lo que pasó y no es un milagro *yo pienso* que su Dios fue representado en esta imagen y no él, *yo pienso* que el no tenía nada más del imagen.

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* porque él no tenía nada más del imagen. because he didn't have anything more of the image.

* Porque esto es una pregunta muy importante—cómo ve él, cómo conecta él con esta figura, con esta estatua de la Virgen al final. Y este es un aspecto muy importante de la interpretación que hacemos de la película en general. Entonces según lo que dices tú, él veía en esta figura, en esta estatua Topiltzin y no la Virgen católica. Y en este sentido, no representa un milagro para el fraile, porque no hubo una conversión completa. Bien. ¿Podemos seguir un poco con esta idea? ¿Sí Sheila?

* Because this is a very important question—how he sees, how he connects with this figure, with this statue of the Virgin at the end. And this is a very important aspect of the interpretation that we make of the film in general. So according to what you say, he saw in this figure, in this statue Topiltzin and not the catholic Virgin, and not the Virgin of the Catholic Church. And in this sense, it doesn't represent a miracle for the friar, because there wasn't a complete conversion. Good. Can we follow a little bit with this idea? Yes Sheila?

*Okay.*

*Okay.*

The segment presented above captures the way in which talk was co-constructed between Ann and her student Janet, and it shows how an accessibility affordance structure emerged in the exchange. After Ann asks the class if anyone had anything else to add to the ongoing discussion about the themes presented in a film and in a critical essay by Chorba, Janet volunteers a comment. She begins by commenting on how Chorba criticizes the film's director and the negative way in which the film ended. We see in the transcript that in Janet's first turn, she uses an incorrect lexical item (escrito...
instead of *ensayo*) to refer to Chorba’s critical piece that students had read for homework for this particular class. Upon hearing this, Ann explicitly corrects her by providing the correct lexical item *ensayo*. In Janet’s next turn, she immediately incorporates the correction and continues on with her comment about how Chorba criticized the director for the negative ending of the film. Beginning in Janet’s second turn and continuing throughout almost all of her remaining turns in the segment, she incorrectly uses the conjunction *de que* and also makes other grammatical errors along the way. Despite the lexical and grammatical errors, Ann appeared to follow Janet’s idea that she did not agree with Chorba’s thoughts that the ending of the film was negative because at one point she says *Good* and then in a subsequent turn she says *Good*. Why? Janet continues the interaction by responding to Ann’s request to provide more information about her reasons for disagreeing with Chorba’s analysis.

At this point (i.e., Janet’s fourth turn), Janet starts to explain why she disagrees with the literary critic’s interpretation of the ending of the film. She puts forth a convoluted explanation by first talking about how the ending was a kind of sacrifice and then transitioning to an idea about how the Spaniards sacrificed the indigenous and that this was part of the oppression. It appears as though Janet did not know what she wanted to say because in the same turn she utters, at two different places, “I don’t know.” After a brief moment of silence while still holding the floor, Janet appears to collect her thoughts and finishes the fourth turn by saying “oh, no, no. I know what I want to say.”

As we have seen, Janet acknowledges that she did not know what she was trying to say. While Ann appeared to have understood what Janet was saying, Ann’s stimulated recall session revealed otherwise. When asked if she had understood what Janet was trying to say, Ann said:

No. And she was continuing to talk so I was trying to allow her to find her way. But I couldn’t really understand quite enough of what she was trying to say in order to help her along. But as long as though she was sort of continuing to push forward . . . and then when she said *Okay, this is what I want to say*, I thought
okay, now we can push forward. But that was certainly a case where . . . she rambled. (Appendix Q)

Ann was not the only one who was confused by what Janet was saying at this moment in the discussion. Nicole (one of the focal students) stated in her stimulated recall that she was able to understand that Janet did not agree with Chorba’s analysis that the ending was negative. However, Nicole also said:

I was a little confused. I think I was kind of following her word for word, but then I was forgetting what she had already said. It was hard for me to take in her statement as an entire idea. (Appendix P)

At this point in the discussion, Janet apologizes in her fifth turn and tries to clarify her comments regarding how Chorba analyzes the ending of the film. Ann follows with a turn that asks Janet about how she (i.e., Janet) viewed the ending. Janet then explains that from her perspective, she believed that the ending was negative due to a character viewing his own “act of dying” (Appendix H). Janet again creates a lexical error by using the word muere (i.e., he/she dies) instead of the correct word muerte (i.e., death). In the next turn, Ann implicitly provides Janet with the correct lexical item by saying Su muerte. Janet incorporates the word muerte in her next turn and also echoes Ann’s use of the word suicidio. In the same turn, Janet explains her interpretation of the ending of the film. She summarizes her thoughts and underscores her point that she disagreed with Chorba’s analysis that the ending of the film was a positive one. Janet continues to say that she feels that the ending was a negative one in that the friar’s death in a monastery with a statue on top of him represented the domination of the Spanish empire on the indigenous world in the Americas. She ends her comments in this segment by saying that this negative sentiment is somehow represented by the friar’s association of the statue with an indigenous deity Topiltzin and not with the Roman Catholic Virgin Mary.

After Janet’s last turn, we then see in the transcript that Ann attempts to summarize what Janet has been saying over the last several turns. The underlined portion of Ann’s final turn in this segment represents an accessibility affordance structure. We
have seen that up to this point in the interaction, several participants did not know what was trying to be conveyed. At one point in her contribution, Janet admits that she does not know what she is trying to say. We have also seen that a fellow student (Nicole) and Ann also were confused. While Janet attempted to clarify her interpretation by the end of the segment, the number of grammatical and lexical errors, coupled with the length of her exchange, made her contribution still confusing to other students. Nicole commented in her stimulated recall that “She spoke for a long time about this one small idea . . . she spoke a lot and she really didn’t need to speak as much as she did in order to get out that idea” (Appendix P). In other words, Janet’s comments remained as first-level affordances throughout her long contribution.

Given that Ann herself was initially confused, in addition to Janet indicating that she knew what she wanted to say but was having trouble expressing herself, the emergence of an accessibility affordance structure at the end of the exchange allowed for Janet’s comments to become accessible to the rest of the class. Ann’s last turn is considered to be an accessibility affordance structure because it concisely summarized Janet’s comments and made them accessible to the rest of the class. To reiterate, this segment illustrates how an accessibility affordance structure allows for first-level potential affordances to become second-level affordances by making the propositional content of a text (in this case, an extended spontaneous oral text by a student) comprehensible to other class members.

In this particular exchange, we see that the co-construction of meaning not only involved the explicit and implicit correction of lexical and grammatical items by the instructor but, more importantly, involved Ann allowing Janet enough space on the discoursal floor to eventually realize an (albeit fragmented) interpretation. It is also worth noting that Ann’s accessibility structures included local (i.e., corrections of grammar, provision of lexical items) and global (i.e., summary/restatements) mediation strategies. While it is impossible to know whether Janet herself or other students fully understood
her analysis by the end of Janet’s last turn, it is important to note that through the emergence of an accessibility affordance structure, Ann was able to make Janet’s comments accessible to others in the class.

In another stimulated recall session for a different class meeting, Ann commented on times when she needs to make students’ comments accessible to other students in the class. She stated:

What they say is sometimes not fully comprehensible because of problems with expression—where they get some goofy vocabulary or verbs that don’t make sense. I can understand what they’re saying, but maybe not everybody else can. Janet is someone who sometimes gets caught up in language problems like that, but yet she has a lot of interesting things to say. I don’t want to make her feel self-conscious about the way she speaks, so I try not to correct her directly in class. But at the same time, in order to help her connect her ideas to other peoples’ ideas in the class, I try to sort of re-phrase what she said and repeat what she says so that everybody can understand her. (Appendix R)

The above example of an accessibility affordance structure indicated how Ann was able to make first-level potential affordances (i.e., Janet’s interpretation) transition to second-level affordances by succinctly summarizing Janet’s comments and, when needed, correcting a student’s grammar and lexical errors. In other words, Ann was able to increase the comprehensibility of Janet’s comments, thereby making them accessible to other students. However, other types of accessibility affordance structures were also found in the transcripts.

The following segment, taken from the transcript of a different class meeting (Appendix I), illustrates a second type of accessibility affordance structure. The section below is taken from a part of whole-class discussion where Ann and her students are talking about the way in which Hernán Cortés is represented in a contemporary short story written by Carlos Fuentes. Various students are offering up their ideas about how Fuentes describes Cortés and how this contrasts sharply with how he is represented in Colonial-era texts. Ann has just responded to one student’s contribution and expands on it briefly. Then, another student (Herminia) offers her analysis.
Exacto. Y según su versión de los eventos que vemos en la Segunda Carta de Cortés, él está siempre en control de la situación, ¿no? Y él está siempre en control de estas conversaciones que tiene con los líderes indígenas. Aquí no. Aquí no. Está muy... se queda muy fuera de esta sociedad y depende completamente de la Malinche y de Gerónimo de Aguilar para funcionar en esta sociedad. Bien. ¿Herminia?

[raising her hand] En esta narración aparece Cortés como, como un hombre de casi buena voluntad. Él está siempre dispuesto a llegar a un acuerdo. Entonces, Aguilar encuentra una forma de aterrorizar para ponerles en contra. Herminia?

[raising her hand] In this narration Cortés appears like, like a man with almost good will. He is always willing to arrive at an agreement. So, Aguilar finds a way to terrorize in order to put themselves against everyone.


Mitch?

The student (Herminia) in the above segment is a native Spanish speaker. As has been previously mentioned, she was also the only graduate student in the classroom. She was the most active student in Ann’s class in that she produced the highest number of turns and had the highest mean number of words per turn. Herminia’s language in her turn in the above segment reveals a high level of Spanish. The use of lexical items like buena voluntad ‘good will,’ un acuerdo ‘an agreement,’ and aterrorizar ‘to terrorize,’ along with idiomatic expressions like estar siempre dispuesto a ‘to always be ready to’ or poner en contra ‘to create opposition,’ were standard features of her discourse. Given Herminia’s brief, yet high-level Spanish comment (along with her fast rate of speech, which is not represented in the transcript), it is possible to say that not every student understood what Herminia said. Therefore, Ann responded to Herminia’s comments by re-phrasing what she said by avoiding complex vocabulary words and difficult idiomatic phrases. Ann reiterates Herminia’s main point that the Cortés in the Fuentes text is not...
the one in Cortés’s *Second Letter* or in Bernal Díaz’s work by simply saying the Cortés in Fuentes’s short story is one who is *bastante débil* ‘quite weak’ (Appendix I).

To find out what another student thought about this particular exchange between Ann and Herminia, the researcher asked one of the focal students (Janet) if she knew what Herminia had said. Janet responded:

I understand a lot of what she says, but then there are certain vocabulary words that I don’t know that she uses. And then Ann, to try and make the rest of the class understand in a more lingua franca way, and then that helps [us] understand what Herminia says. (Appendix S)

For Janet, we see that she does not always understand what Herminia says during whole-class discussions. Therefore, many of Herminia’s contributions remain first-level affordances for some students in Ann’s class. Through accessibility affordance structures initiated by Ann, Herminia’s contributions can become second-level affordances. Janet’s comments about Ann’s ability to “make the rest of the class understand” represent the function of this particular affordance structure.

The researcher was curious to know if the instructor was aware of the difficulty level of Herminia’s contributions (for other students in the class) and how she reacted to them in light of the majority of undergraduate students in the class. Ann was asked to comment on the above segment in a stimulated recall session. Specifically, Ann was asked about how she responds to Herminia’s contributions to whole-class discussions. Ann commented that Herminia sometimes tried to take the discussion in a new direction by referencing authors and literary works from other disciplines (e.g., religious studies) and tried to incorporate them into the discussion. Ann stated that when that happens, she tries to “find a way to sort of cut her off and move back to the topic of discussion” (Appendix R). However, when Herminia is on topic (as she was in the above segment) and is working in the range of discussion that has been created by Ann and other students, then Ann treats her like as she would treat any other student. However, when Herminia contributes insights that are on topic, but uses language that is complex and not
accessible to the other students in the class, Ann provides a kind of linguistic mediation.

Ann reflects on Herminia and her contributions to whole-class discussion:

> And she’s better than other native speakers that I’ve had who are not self-aware at all [of] how rapidly they speak or what kinds of words they use. I can tell when the other students are not . . . they’re pretty visible in the way that they express their lack of comprehension. If I get any sense that somebody is not following, then I make an extra effort to summarize and repeat what they said—perhaps trying to re-phrase it so that it doesn’t sound like I’m just parroting them.

(Appendix R)

As we have seen, the accessibility affordance structure is created by Ann’s re-phraseing of a student’s contributions (in the above example, Herminia’s thoughts) that can be linguistically out of reach for other students in the class. The accessibility affordance structure in this sense takes complex language that is not understood by some students in the class (i.e., first-level affordances) and makes them accessible to them (i.e., second-level affordances) by re-phraseing the comments using simpler language.

**Dynamic corrective structures**

The third type of affordance structure found in the transcripts was labeled a *dynamic corrective affordance structure*. The structure emerged at moments in the discourse when a student’s utterance(s) contained some kind of linguistic error (i.e., a grammar or lexical problem), to which Ann reacted by providing some kind of correction in a subsequent turn. On a theoretical level, a student’s ill-formed utterance in Spanish in Ann’s course can be viewed as a first-level affordance in two ways. First, if the linguistic inaccuracies render the utterance incomprehensible to other students, then the student’s utterance can be considered as potentially meaningful, but not yet meaningful; it cannot contribute to the ongoing discussion until the other students comprehend it. Second, errors in a student’s utterance that do not impede comprehension can be considered first-
level affordances because they have the potential to draw attention of students (either the 
speaker or the listeners) to issues of linguistic knowledge, thus initiating individual 
thought or group talk about how certain meanings are expressed in Spanish. This 
phenomenon has been documented by Swain and Lapkin (1995), who found that 
moments when students have difficulties of self-expression are fruitful in helping them to 
“notice the gap” (Schmidt & Frota, 1986, p. 310) between what they want to express and 
their current linguistic resources. When Ann provides the student with a correction or 
supplies a word that the student needs to continue his or her thought, the first-level 
affordance becomes a second-level affordance for both the speaker and the other 
students.

It is important to note here that dynamic corrective affordance structures should 
not be equated with an instructor providing feedback to the student who made the error 
with the intention that the corrective feedback result in uptake (i.e., so that the learner 
realizes that he or she made an error and receives linguistic information in order to 
correct the error). This understanding of corrective feedback from the perspective of the 
Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) reflects the input-output metaphor of L2 learning: a 
learner produces an incorrect utterance, an instructor provides corrective feedback; a 
learner hears the correction, and processes the instructor input; thereby resulting in future 
output that will approximate the desired linguistic target.

In contrast, dynamic corrective affordance structures are ways in which the 
instructor provides corrective feedback to students but continues to move the 
conversation along by tying the correction to a propositional piece of the discourse in a
dynamic way. The following segment of whole-class discussion illustrates how dynamic corrective affordance structures emerged in the discourse:

1. I Bien, bien, bien ... ¿Cómo se representa Cortés aquí? ... ¿Cómo aparece? ¿Tiene un papel fuerte o no? ¿Es un personaje muy importante y muy central como en sus cartas o no? ¿Janet?

2. J [raising hand] No fue tan importante, pero él enfatiza *su barbo mucho [morphology error].


4. J Fue más viejo *que su apariencia [syntax error].


6. I Good, good, good ... How is Cortés represented here? ... How does he appear? Does he have a strong role or not? Is he a very important and very central character like he was in his letters? Janet?

7. J [raising hand] He was not so important, but he emphasizes his *beard a lot [morphology error].

8. I His beard. Good, his masculinity. Good.

9. J He was older *than his appearance [syntax error].

10. I than his age, exactly. You say that his beard indicates an older age than his real age. Good, good, good. Anything else about Cortés? He doesn’t have such a central role as Janet says. Good.

11. Herminia?

In the above segment, we see that Ann begins the exchange (lines 1–5) by asking the class several questions about the character of Cortés that is being portrayed in a fictional text written by Carlos Fuentes. Ann asks students about the physical appearance of the Cortés character and also inquires about how his importance is represented in the text. Janet raises her hand and responds (lines 7–8) by saying that Cortés was not very important but that his beard is emphasized in the text. In her contribution Janet commits a lexical error by saying *barbo instead of *barba ‘beard.’ Ann corrects Janet’s use of *barbo in line 10, but continues on with the discussion and offers an interpretation of Janet’s comment. After providing a correction of the wrong lexical item used by Janet, Ann continues her turn at talk, following up on Janet’s comment about the prominence of Cortés’s beard in the descriptions of him by interpreting it as emblematic of his
masculinity. In Janet’s next turn (line 12), she utters the phrase *fue más viejo que su apariencia* ‘he was older than his appearance.’ Following Janet’s (grammatically infelicitous) phrase, Ann’s subsequent turn (lines 14–17) consists of a corrective comment *más que sue edad* ‘than his age’ and immediately follows by recasting Janet’s whole statement with the error corrected. The discussion then continues (lines 17–18) with another student.

When asked about the way in which Ann interacted with her at this particular moment in the discussion, Janet responded in her stimulated recall:

> I was trying to say *barbo* and the correct word was *barba*. She didn’t make me feel stupid or anything, she just had a polite, subtle way of correcting it. She’s like *ah, su barba, sí*. And she knows exactly what every student is trying to say and really reinforces what our ideas are . . . She wasn’t “No, the correct word is *barba,*” etc. She’s just nice about it.

Janet’s response in her stimulated recall session provides information that helps to fully capture how dynamic corrective affordance structures work when compared to traditional definitions of corrective feedback such as recasts. Recasts, as defined in the SLA field (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Mackey & Philp, 1998), are the corrective feedback moves that instructors (or others) may provide to students when the students make errors while speaking. The intention of providing corrective feedback to learners is to correct learners’ linguistic inaccuracies. In other words recasts, as defined by cognitivists, are used to provide negative evidence to learners with the intention of having learners notice their linguistic error(s) so that they can address the problem(s) in their L2 linguistic system.

In contrast, the interaction that results from the dynamic corrective affordance
structure above is one that is very different from traditional views of corrective feedback. Janet’s insights reveal that she sees the dynamic interaction between recasting as corrective feedback and rephrasing as interpreting; in both the sense of turning it into comprehensible Spanish and in the sense of enhancing it from the perspective of content. Ann’s role in the segment above is not to only provide linguistic corrective feedback to Janet for the sole purpose of Janet somehow realizing that her use of the word barbo was incorrect or that her phrase He was older than his appearance was ungrammatical. Rather, Ann is mediating both language and content; she is integrating linguistic affordances with literary/content affordances. Meaning is being made on various levels: (a) Janet’s utterances are made comprehensible (lines 14–16); local errors are corrected (line 10); the literary interpretation value of what Janet says is enhanced (line 10, barba = masculinidad); and there is an agreement with what Janet says (lines 17–18), thus increasing its value.

As we have seen, a dynamic corrective affordance structure is one whose function is to make first-level affordances (i.e., the ungrammatical utterances of Janet in the above segment) become second-level affordances (i.e., grammatical utterances), but is also dynamically tied to the ongoing propositional content of the discussion. In other words, dynamic corrective affordance structures are unique in that they do not merely provide explicit linguistic feedback to students, but are also tied to the content of the discussion and help move the talk forward.

Summary of micro-level analysis for research question 3

This chapter has provided information about what constitutes an ecological linguistic view of language learning (van Lier, 2004). At a theoretical level, an ecological
perspective views language classrooms as environments in which organisms (i.e., learners and instructors) interact with each other and with the environment. It is out of the interaction(s) between the environment and the organisms by which affordances (van Lier, 2000, 2004) emerge and surround the participants in language learning contexts. This chapter therefore analyzed oral interactions between organisms (i.e., between Ann and her students) in one context (whole-group discussions in Ann’s Latin American literature classroom) to understand language learning at a micro-level of discourse. Research question 3 called for analysis of the ways in which first-level affordances became second-level affordances by exploring the nature of three distinct types of affordance structures that were found in the transcripts of six class meetings. In other words, research question 3 sought to analyze through micro-level analyses of particular oral interactions between Ann and her students during whole-class discussions how anything in Ann’s class that had a potential for meaning (i.e., first-level affordances) became meaningful (i.e., second-level affordances) for participants.

The analyses in this chapter revealed that while the shape of the three affordance structures varied, their function remained constant: to promote knowledge building among a wide range of students in the classroom. Each of the three affordance structures, in its own way, represented openings in the whole-class discussions that allowed for extended discourse among participants and afforded them opportunities to build knowledge.

As their name suggests, funnel-effect affordance structures took the shape of a funnel in the discourse and were built around a series of questions that were posed by Ann to the class. Ann would first pose a broad question and then subsequently (i.e., in the
same conversational turn), would continue putting forth questions that were successively narrower in their scope. The broad questions usually required that students express an interpretation of the literary text, while the narrow questions within the funnel-effect affordance structure were intended to elicit specific, factual information. This narrowing of the scope of questions constituted a funnel-effect affordance structure in the discourse that allowed first-level affordances to become second-level affordances. As a result, the affordance structure allowed some students to speak beyond their brief response to Ann’s final question in the funnel-effect affordance. At other times, it allowed students to briefly respond and then provided an opening for Ann to continue speaking.

Accessibility affordance structures were identified as moments in whole-class discussions where one student’s comments were somehow not accessible to other students in the class. We saw that at various points in the whole-class discussions, some students’ contributions were linguistically too advanced for others to comprehend (e.g., in the case of Herminia) while others’ comments had many grammatical and lexical errors that inhibited the comprehension of fellow students (e.g., in the case of Janet). At these moments in the discourse, Ann would rephrase a student’s contribution so that his or her comments would be accessible to fellow learners. Ann’s re-phrasing of students’ comments to make them available to a wider audience constituted an accessibility affordance structure.

The third affordance structure discovered in the transcripts was labeled a dynamic corrective structure. While Ann provided students with corrective feedback based on their ungrammatical utterances, she often embedded the feedback within the conversation by reformulating what students said but also tied it to the topic of the whole-class discussion.
In this way, the feedback provided by Ann was not just another component inherent in the input-output metaphor. Rather, corrections were dynamically tied to the ongoing development of discussion.

This chapter has provided in-depth information about the three focal students and the instructor who participated in this study. It has also revealed three distinct types of affordance structures that emerged in whole-class discussions in the six audio- and video-recorded class meetings. Information from the three students' and instructor's stimulated recall sessions helped to gain an understanding regarding how the three affordance structures allowed first-level affordances to become second-level affordances during the whole-class discussions over the course of the six class meetings. The following chapter (Chapter 6) addresses the significance of the findings for the three research questions under investigation in this study and addresses future avenues for research.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The two previous chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) have presented two different perspectives on teacher-initiated talk and student oral discourse in a second language literature classroom. Chapter 4 offered a macro-level analysis of talk in Ann’s Latin American Colonial literature course, while Chapter 5 presented a micro-level analysis of discourse. When taken together, both chapters offer data analyses that attempted to answer the three research questions that were posed in this dissertation.

This chapter discusses the significance of the findings for each of the research questions investigated in this study. The results are viewed from a sociocultural theoretical perspective on cognition but also draw on ecological linguistic views of language learning. In this chapter, the following are presented: (a) a synthesis of the findings for each of the three research questions investigated in this study; (b) a discussion about the theoretical implications of the results; (c) a discussion about the implications of the results for teaching practice; (d) limitations of the study; and (e) future avenues for research in this area.

Synthesis of findings

Research Question 1. What are the expectations, goals, and intentions of an instructor and her students regarding the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in an upper-level undergraduate Latin American literature course?

The first research question investigated the expectations, goals, and intentions of the instructor and of her students with respect to the creation of and participation in whole-class discussions in a Latin American Colonial literature course at the college level. It attempted to obtain information about what each participant wanted to gain from the course to discover if expectations, goals, and intentions of the students and the
instructor generally coincided or were in conflict with each other. To answer research
question 1, the researcher analyzed the transcript of an instructor interview and the
instructor’s course syllabus, along with student responses from a questionnaire.

The findings indicated that the instructor (Ann) approached the course wanting to
teach students how to carefully read Colonial-era and contemporary literary texts about
the Conquest of Mexico. An analysis of her course syllabus also indicated that she
expected students to develop their writing skills as a large percentage of students’ final
grades in the course (45%) were based on a number of writing assignments. However,
Ann expressed in her interview that she also wanted to create a context in which students
had the opportunity to orally articulate their ideas and thoughts about what they were
reading in class discussion. She said that by promoting students’ oral expression, she was
also helping to develop their critical thinking abilities and helping them to improve their
linguistic skills in Spanish. It is worth noting here that an analysis of Ann’s course
syllabus assigned 15% of students’ final grades to active participation in class discussion.
Additionally, Ann noted in her interview that she wanted to minimize the instruction of
grammar and lexical items in her course.

Ann’s students (collectively) indicated in a section of the student questionnaire
that their most important goal when taking Ann’s course was to improve their speaking
ability in Spanish. Their second most important goal was to improve their reading ability
in Spanish, followed by improving their understanding of the historical and cultural
contexts in which the texts were written, then improving their grammatical knowledge of
Spanish, followed by four other goals (see Chapter 4 for the entire ranking).
When taken together, we can see that the goals of both Ann and her students coincided to some extent, as both wanted to emphasize oral interactions in the course. The majority of students entered the course wanting to improve their speaking ability in Spanish. Ann expressed in her interview that she believed that one way to develop students' critical thinking abilities was to promote students' participation in class discussion.

Although these findings are somewhat limited due to the data sources used in this study, they do suggest that in the context of Ann's classroom environment, Ann's goal and her students' goal of improving students' speaking ability in Spanish coincided. As such, it was expected that the kinds of interactions between Ann and her students would be ones where students had the ability to take the discoursal floor whenever they wished, thereby exhibiting a certain amount of agency in their learning. Similarly, findings from research question 1 also indicated that the instructor would not resort to individually calling on students to engage in conversation. Rather, one would expect to see that coinciding goals between Ann and her students related to students' speaking ability would result in ample opportunity for students to speak and participate in the co-construction of talk in her class.

The findings for research question 1 also revealed that Ann intended to minimize the instruction of grammar and lexical items in Spanish in her course. Her students, on the other hand, indicated that learning grammar was their fourth most important goal in taking her course. This is an area where Ann's and her students' goals did not entirely coincide. Although it is difficult to see how the conflicting goals of Ann and her students regarding grammar and vocabulary affected whole-class discussion, it is possible to
observe what transpired in the discourse and compare that to each participant’s expressed
goals. Specifically, we have seen that Ann, at times, did correct students’ linguistic errors
over the course of the six class meetings. However, the way in which she embedded her
corrective feedback within the ongoing discussion related to the content of the course was
a dynamic way to correct student’s errors without interrupting the flow of conversation.
In other words, the way in which Ann corrected student’s grammatical and lexical errors
in whole-class discussions did not get in the way of the topic of the conversation (i.e.,
content based on Colonial literature). In this way, Ann’s goals of minimizing the
instruction of Spanish grammar and vocabulary held true.

While Ann’s students indicated that their fourth most important goal in taking her
course was to improve their understanding of Spanish grammar, there is little evidence in
the transcripts of the whole-class discussions that this was indeed a somewhat important
priority. There appears to be a disconnect between what students indicated in their
ranking of grammar as the fourth most important goal and what was observed in the
discussions. In other words, students were not actively inquiring about the grammatical
features of Spanish in the class discussions. Some students were observed posing
questions to Ann about various lexical items (e.g., words in Nahuatl or archaic spellings
of words in Spanish), but this was infrequent.

In all, the findings of the first research question indicate that Ann’s classroom
contained a number of organisms (i.e., Ann and her students) with expectations,
intentions, and goals that somewhat coincided, but oftentimes were in opposition to one
another. While some of what Ann and her students expressed as course goals were
observed to be realizing themselves in whole-class discussions, others were not overtly addressed.

**Research Question 2. How are the tensions between student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse?**

While the first research question attempted to analyze how the goals, expectations, and intentions of the instructor coincided or conflicted with those of her students, research question 2 intended to analyze the interaction patterns of whole-class discussions to understand how conflicting student and instructor expectations, goals, and intentions of talk were reflected in the interaction patterns of whole-class oral discourse.

To investigate the interaction patterns that were present in whole-class discussions between Ann and her students, transcripts of the six class meetings were coded for Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) or Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interaction patterns.

As reported in research question 1 above, Ann’s course goals and her students’ collective course goals rarely coincided. Table 6.1 below indicates the goals of Ann and her students. As the table suggests, Ann and her students entered the course with different course goals and intentions. With respect to reading, Ann’s students indicated in the demographic questionnaire that they wanted to improve their reading comprehension (i.e., literal comprehension of the text) in Spanish more than improving their interpretation ability (i.e., symbolic interpretation of the text beyond a literal level). Whereas Ann made no distinction between the two as she indicated that she wanted students to become critical readers of the texts (i.e., having a literal understanding of the
text and then moving beyond and having a symbolic interpretation of the text). As such, Ann’s goals did not coincide with her students’ goals regarding the skill of reading.

Similarly, with respect to writing skills, Ann and her students did not appear to have the same goals. Specifically, students ranked writing as the seventh (out of eight) important skill that they hoped to improve in Ann’s class. While Ann did not overtly mention writing as a course goal in her interview, her course syllabus revealed that writing had a high value as 45% of students’ grades in her course were based on essays and other writing assignments.

Another area where Ann and her students had discrepant goals was that of language or grammatical knowledge in Spanish. Ann’s students indicated that grammar and vocabulary were somewhat important areas for their learning in Ann’s course while Ann indicated in her interview that grammar instruction and vocabulary learning were not going to be emphasized in her course.

Ann and her students indicated that speaking was an important goal in the course. However, both had different views of what constituted the improvement of students’ speaking skills. Students said that speaking was their highest goal. However, many of them indicated that speaking was simply improving their ability to talk and converse in Spanish. On the other hand, Ann also indicated that improving students’ speaking skills was a high goal. However, Ann’s understanding of speaking went beyond a basic level of talk as she stated that she wanted students to find their critical voice through speaking.

Finally, the data indicated that Ann and her students agreed about one area of their learning in the course. Her students indicated that another important course goal was to improve their content knowledge about literature related to the Conquest of Mexico.
Similarly, Ann also said that she wanted to promote the course content in any way possible throughout the semester.

TABLE 6.1. Course goals for Ann and her students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students: literal comprehension &gt; literary interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann: No distinction made (&quot;critical reading skills&quot; includes both literal comprehension and literary interpretation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: highest goal (&quot;generic&quot; speaking skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann: high goal (find &quot;critical voice&quot; through speaking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: low value (7th of 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann: no mention in interview; high value in syllabus (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: grammar (4th of 8) and vocabulary (6th of 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann: goal is no emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: high goal (3rd of 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann: high goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it is difficult to clearly link the discrepancies found in research question 1 to research question 2, it is important to note that tensions existed between the course goals of Ann and of her students. That is, both Ann and her students entered the Latin American Colonial literature classroom with distinct sets of goals, intentions, and expectations. It is difficult to connect Ann’s and her students’ conflicting course goals
related to reading and writing to the oral interaction patterns in a rigorous and quantitative way. Additionally, the way in which Ann and her students had coinciding course goals related to content knowledge is also outside of the scope of this study. As such, the relationship between course goals related to reading, writing, and content knowledge and that of oral discourse cannot be fully explored in this study and therefore serves as a limitation of this project.

However, the conflicting course goals related to speaking and language or grammatical knowledge/development as reported in research question 1 can be linked to research question 2 via the interaction patterns found in the transcripts. In other words, by analyzing the interaction patterns between Ann and her students in whole-class discussions, it is possible to see how the conflicting course goals affected the oral discourse in the six class meetings. To do so, it is necessary to now reflect on the results of research question 2.

As presented in Chapter 4, 67% of all instructor and student moves over the course of the six class meetings were coded as being part of IRF interaction patterns while 33% of the moves were coded as being part of IRE interaction patterns. The predominance of the IRF interaction pattern in the transcripts, at face value, indicates that Ann was pushing students to back up their comments in class by asking them follow up questions after students shared their opinions in whole-class discussions. As such, students were able to gain access to the discoursal floor in Ann’s class and could also engage with her in extended discourse. Additionally, these findings suggest that students were able to exhibit a certain level of agency over their environment and were, for the most part, allowed to actively engage in talk in Ann’s course.
However, it should also be pointed out that 33% of all of the moves in the six class meetings were found to be part of the IRE interaction patterns. This percentage, while lower than that related to the IRF interaction patterns, is substantial. One possible reason that the IRE pattern percentage was so high may be its connection to one of the affordance structures identified in the transcripts. Given that the funnel-effect affordance structure was created out of a series of questions that initially started with broad, interpretation questions and gradually narrowed to questions that required students to provide factual information from the text, it essentially represented an IRE interaction pattern. While not all interactions that occurred within the funnel-effect affordance structure were IRE, it is possible that the emergence of this particular affordance structure may have inflated the number of moves associated with the IRE patterns.

As we have seen, the way in which funnel-effect affordance structures emerged in the data was quite dynamic. Ann tried to keep the discussion moving forward and attempted to do so by employing a series of questions to finally get students to “grab hold” (Appendix Q) of a question and participate in the talk. While the IRE interaction pattern was not as prevalent when compared to the IRF pattern in the transcripts, it is still worth noting that its presence served a purpose. As previously indicated, the IRE pattern was similar to the funnel-effect affordance structure in that both represented moments in whole-class discussion where tensions between Ann and her students were mitigated. Specifically, the differing views of and expectations for speaking, as indicated by Ann and her students were able to coexist within both the IRE and IRF interaction patterns. It is possible to state that the IRF interaction patterns allowed students to speak more, thereby providing them with abundant oral practice. At the same time, the IRF pattern
allowed Ann to push students to find their critical voice by, at times, challenging students
with a follow-up question to force students to fully articulate their argument(s). This kind
of speaking was a central component of what Ann wanted her students to achieve in her
course.

In all, both the IRE and IRF interaction patterns appeared to have diminished the
impact of the dissonant course goals between Ann and her students with respect to
speaking. The IRF pattern allowed students more time to practice the nuts and bolts of
speaking in Spanish while it also allowed Ann to press them to be more critical of their
responses in whole-class discussions. The IRE interaction pattern, which was similar to
the funnel-effect affordance structure, also helped to reduce the tensions between Ann
and her students with respect to speaking in that it allowed talk to emerge (albeit in a
more limited way compared to the IRF interaction sequence).

In sum, it is possible that some interactions that made up funnel-effect affordance
structures could be characterized as IRE interaction patterns. However, this finding
reveals that such coding schemes (e.g., IRE & IRF) provide only a partial understanding
of the way in which discourse unfolded. This is why the calculations for research
question 2 were presented as macro-level analyses; they were able to provide only a
general idea about the way in which oral interactions between Ann and her students were
realized. While recent attempts (Hall, 1998; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Nystrand, 1997) have
dissected the cellular nature of the IRE and IRF interaction patterns to illustrate how
subtle changes in the instructor’s questions in the different slots can affect the quantity
and quality of student responses in whole-class discussion, the IRE and IRF interaction
patterns by themselves are too small to show how shared purposes between an instructor
and her students are created over large stretches of discourse. Given the limited scope of the IRE and IRF patterns, new constructs, such as the affordance structures that are explored in this dissertation, are needed to understand better how conflicting course goals (i.e., with respect to speaking) between an instructor and her students are mediated through oral discourse.

**Research Question 3.** What types of affordance structures emerge in whole-class discussions in the Latin American literature classroom under investigation in this study? How do the instructor and the students perceive and make use of the affordance structures?

Research question 3 sought to go beyond a macro-level view of talk in Ann’s course and investigate oral discourse at a micro-level of analysis. To examine talk at this level, particular moments from the transcripts of the six class meetings were identified as times when affordance structures emerged from the discourse. Three types of affordance structures were determined as moments when (via the oral interactions between Ann and her students) first-level affordances became second-level affordances.

The three affordance structures found in the data (i.e., funnel-effect, accessibility, and dynamic corrective) illustrate the complex way in which talk unfolds in whole-class discussion. As we have seen in each of the three affordance structures, the instructor’s role was crucial to the way in which second-level affordances were born in the talk. The findings for research question 3 indicate that Ann was constantly guiding students through the talk via the different affordance structures. The segments of talk that were analyzed in this study help to underscore the job of the instructor in facilitating whole-
class discussion rather than reducing classroom discourse to a question-and-answer session that limits' students voices and gives priority to the instructor's contributions.

Each of the affordance structures found in the whole-class discussions was similar in its function. Specifically, all three affordance structures allowed students to understand the content of discussion and helped students to engage in conversation with Ann and fellow students. While the shapes of the three affordance structures were different, they *all allowed for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances in the context* of Ann’s class. As has been previously noted, the funnel-effect affordance structure paralleled the IRE interaction pattern in its function—to find a place in the discourse where whole-class discussion between Ann and her students could proceed. The accessibility affordance structure along with the dynamic corrective affordance structure did not resemble either the IRE or the IRF interaction patterns.

What is important to note here is the connection between research question 3 and research questions 1 and 2. As we have seen, Ann and her students had diverging course goals, intentions, and expectations upon entering the context of her Latin American Colonial literature classroom. Specifically, Ann and many of her students had differing ideas about what it meant to speak or participate in whole-class discussions in her class. Ann viewed speaking as a way for students to take a critical view of the texts they were reading. In contrast, a majority of her students wanted to simply improve their basic speaking ability in Spanish. The affordance structures therefore served as a way to mediate the tensions between Ann and her students around the course goal of speaking. In other words, the three affordance structures emerged in the oral discourse due to the diverging understanding or goals Ann and her students had with respect to speaking.
The affordance structures therefore represented sites where tensions between Ann and her students were moderated and multiple goals were met at the same time. This is not unlike how Wertsch (1998) describes mediated action. Specifically, he proposes an analytical framework that outlines 10 properties of mediated action. One property of mediated action is that there exists an “irreducible tension between agent and mediational means” (p. 25). The mediated action in the context of this dissertation study is that of the unfolding oral discourse between Ann and a student(s) within an affordance structure. Put another way, the agents (i.e., Ann, her students, and each of their differing course goals with respect to speaking) created tensions that were lessened via the affordance structures.

The affordance structures also served to address another property of mediated action put forth by Wertsch (1998). Wertsch states that mediated action typically has “multiple simultaneous goals” (p. 32). If viewed as mediated action, the affordance structures addressed the various goals that Ann and her students shared or did not share. The aforementioned findings, with respect to affordance structures and the way in which they emerged in the discourse to manage multiple simultaneous goals and the resulting tensions between Ann and her students, provide a fuller understanding of the affordance construct and help to build on an ecological view of language learning in a L2 literature course.

**Implications for theory**

The results of this dissertation, while limited in their scope, represent an attempt to build our theoretical understanding of how oral interactions unfold in L2 literature classrooms. As discussed in Chapter 2, this study adds to a long line of empirical work
that has analyzed classroom discourse in L1 and L2 learning contexts. However, few studies have investigated the nature of discourse in L2 literature classrooms where the focus of instruction is on delivering content versus facilitating students’ ongoing development of L2 linguistic skills (in our case, students’ L2 speaking abilities).

The findings of research question 3 in this dissertation study add to the limited amount of empirical work that has been carried out to investigate the affordance construct (van Lier, 2000, 2004) in the context of L2 learning environments. As we have seen, Darhower’s (2008) and Miller’s (2005) studies represent initial efforts to define and examine the affordance construct in two different language learning contexts (i.e., one in the context of a text-based chat and the other in an ESL writing course). While the two studies are significant in that they shed light on how a theoretical construct is enacted in second language instructional contexts, both of them fall short of illustrating the dynamic nature of how affordances emerge out of the interactions between organisms and their language learning environments.

At a theoretical level, the operationalization and investigation of affordance in this dissertation do not cast the construct in the same light in which Darhower (2008) and Miller (2005) do. Specifically, we have seen that first-level affordances, as defined in this dissertation, represent anything in a language learning context (in our case, Ann’s Latin American literature classroom) that has potential to be meaningful, but is not meaningful yet for one or more of a variety of reasons. While this definition is wide ranging, it allows for the affordance construct to be defined as something other than a kind of feedback, which was the case in both Darhower (2008) and Miller (2005). To reiterate, the way in which first-level affordances became second-level affordances via Ann’s interactions
with her students in whole-class discussions in this study helps to illustrate the dynamic nature in which affordances emerge in the context of a L2 literature course. The findings for research question 3 shed light on the way in which affordances are born out of unfolding discourse between interlocutors in a given context and can serve as the site for linguistic and literary knowledge construction for all students in the environment.

It is worth mentioning here that the empirical work carried out in this study (i.e., how first-level affordances become second-level affordances) is similar to the Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical construct of microgenesis (Vygotsky, 1987). Microgenesis represents the theoretical moment in which knowledge is born in the mind of a language learner. In a similar way, the emergence of affordances in language learning contexts can also be defined as sites of knowledge building for learners. However, affordances do not emerge on their own, nor are they traded back and forth between instructor and student as if they were bits of feedback (i.e., as described in Darhower, 2008, and Miller, 2005).

This study has also proposed a new theoretical construct, the affordance structure. An affordance structure is defined as any discursive move (or series of moves) that emerged at particular moments in whole-class discussion that allowed first-level affordances (i.e., utterances that were potentially, but not actually, meaningful) to become second-level affordances (i.e., utterances that were meaningful). We have seen that affordance structures are the necessary components found within discourse that allow for first-level affordances to become second-level affordances. In the context of this study, the instructor was primarily in charge of building the affordance structures by which second-level affordances emerged for students. The affordance structures manifested themselves in multiple shapes in the discourse (i.e., funnel-effect, accessibility, and
dynamic corrective affordances). We have also seen that the affordance structures identified in this dissertation served as sites where tensions between the instructor’s and her students’ course goals were mediated and minimized in order to allow for oral discourse to unfold. The data presented in this study therefore will help to build our understanding of the nature of the affordance construct and how it manifests itself in the context of a L2 literature course.

**Implications for practice/pedagogy**

The emergence of affordances (especially second-level affordances) relies heavily on the amount of learner engagement and how active an organism is in his/her environment (van Lier, 2004). All three focal students invited to participate in this study were the most active participants and were able to reflect on how Ann’s talk at particular moments in the discourse represented the realization of affordance structures. For these particular students, the affordance structures allowed for a more complete understanding of the talk and the content of the course.

Analyzing the affordance structure, and the way in which it emerges in whole-class discussion, may have pedagogical implications for instructors who teach undergraduate L2 literature courses. Presenting analysis of the affordance structures to L2 literature instructors and having them reflect on how they engage students in whole-class discussion could help improve the way in which classroom talk evolves and the way in which students participate in class. Given that students and instructors enter their courses with diverse course goals, expectations, and intentions with respect to speaking (among other areas of L2 learning), we have seen that affordance structures serve as sites where conflicting goals can coexist together in discourse.

Ann spoke at length in her interview about the importance of providing learners with many opportunities in class discussions to share their opinions about the texts.
However, we have also seen that in her course syllabus, speaking was weighted as 15% of students’ grades. The disparity between the two data sources, with respect to how Ann valued the importance of speaking in her class, merits further discussion. This discrepancy regarding how Ann values and incorporates speaking into her course could possibly reflect the difficulty of assessing speaking in the context of an upper-division literature course. Given that the emphasis of instruction in L2 literature courses often is placed on the delivery of the course’s content (and not on further developing learners’ language skills such as speaking ability), instructors in these contexts may not feel comfortable nor inclined to assess students’ speaking abilities. This is therefore an area of L2 learning and assessment where applied linguists and their research may be able to address possible difficulties for students and instructors alike.

Similarly, there is little research regarding how foreign language programs prepare graduate students to teach upper-level undergraduate courses (e.g., a L2 literature course). Most foreign language programs offer methodology courses that prepare graduate students to teach lower-division language, but not upper-division literature or culture courses. Given the dearth of research regarding how these upper-level literature and culture courses should be taught, this area is particularly rich for empirical investigation and subsequent production of materials for graduate students, the great majority of whom will teach such courses in entry-level faculty positions.

We have also seen in this study that the three focal students preferred listening to Ann transmit information about the readings directly to the class or engage the whole class in discussion about the readings, rather than work in small groups with fellow students. All three indicated that listening to Ann was better than small-group work because they considered Ann the expert and the “most knowledgeable person in the room” about Latin American Colonial literature. Implications for practice then would involve ways in which instructors in L2 literature courses manage their time so that students had ample opportunities to participate in whole-class discussion and practice
their L2 speaking ability. However at the same time, it is necessary to mention here that small-group work can be more effective as a learning tool if tasks are structured in certain ways, and if measures are taken to deal with the problems that the three focal students identified—students not doing their readings, wasting time in small groups, and speaking in English. This is clearly an area that merits further investigation. The following empirical question could be examined: Is it possible to design small-group activities that students will judge effective in promoting their understanding of the readings and effective in giving them speaking practice?

It is also necessary to keep in mind that the three focal students were the three most active undergraduates in Ann’s class. They were all motivated language learners and some had extensive formal educational experiences with Spanish and reading and dealing with other kinds of Hispanic literature. Therefore, it is very likely that small-group work was helpful (and desired) by other students in Ann’s class who either (a) lacked the linguistic skills of the three focal students, (b) had never taken an Hispanic literature course before and relied on fellow students’ sharing of their interpretations of the texts to help guide their understanding of what was happening in the texts, or (c) were too shy and/or felt intimidated to speak in front of their peers or Ann in the whole-class discussion format.

We have seen that through the ecology metaphor, a variety of competing intentions and goals were mediated in class discourse via the affordance structures identified in this study. While the affordance structures primarily targeted the competing speaking goals of both Ann and her students at a local level, a wider concern regarding conflicting course goals between an instructor and her students in the L2 literature course has also been signaled based on the data presented in this dissertation. Specifically, we saw in this dissertation how tensions arose between the instructor and her students regarding course goals, expectations, and intentions. Students entered Ann’s class wanting to improve specific aspects of their Spanish language ability. As this dissertation
has revealed, the majority of Ann’s students wanted to improve their basic speaking skills in Spanish, improve their reading ability (i.e., literal comprehension), and understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the Latin American Colonial-era texts were written. A recent report (Geisler, Kramsch, McGinnis, Patrikis, Pratt, Ryding, & Saussy, 2007) indicated that only 6.1% of college graduates in the United States, those whose major is a foreign language, will continue working to attain a doctoral degree. This relatively low percentage, coupled with the reported student goals in Ann’s class in this dissertation, signals larger professional tensions beyond the context of this study. If students in undergraduate L2 courses principally want to become fluent in the language and learn about the cultural aspects of the L2, then instructors will need to adjust their course goals accordingly.

The report goes on to suggest that students pursuing a L2 language major at the undergraduate level in the United States should successfully complete the program by acquiring “translingual and transcultural competence” (p. 237) as a result of their studies. Being translingual and transcultural does not translate into students becoming experts in L2 literature or L2 linguistics. Rather, the authors of the report suggest that the goal of L2 education in the future needs to take into consideration that many undergraduates do not want to pursue M.A. or Ph.D. degrees after graduating from undergraduate L2 programs. Instead, the goal should be to educate students “to function as informed and capable interlocutors with educated speakers in the target language” (p. 237) and to also “reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture” (p. 237). While some L2 literature courses do offer students the ability to improve their various language skills and L2 content knowledge based on the literary texts read in class, perhaps instructors could include even more activities that promote students’ speaking ability and allow them to become more engaged with the instructor and with fellow students in a whole-class discussion format. Before any activity or pedagogical technique is introduced, it may be more useful to first allow instructors to reflect on the way in
which they teach L2 literature and suggest how they might be able to structure activities that enhance students’ translingual and transcultural competence in the L2.

Limitations of study

As with any empirical research project, limitations need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the significance of the results. This dissertation was no different and it is now necessary to address the limitations of this study. First and foremost, the affordance and affordance structure constructs were incorporated and investigated near the end of the study. Therefore, stimulated recall sessions, the instructor interview, and the focal student interviews were carried out without specifically investigating key moments in the discourse that targeted these constructs.

On a related note, the stimulated recall sessions often did not involve the learner commenting about his/her own interaction between the instructor and the student (as is most often the case when stimulated recalls are used in L2 research). Segments from the stimulated recall sessions were primarily used to ascertain a participant’s perspective about what he/she understood was happening at given moments in the discourse.

The findings of this study are limited to the context of Ann’s class and the whole-class discussions of six audio and video recorded class meetings. Given the qualitative nature of some of the findings in this study, it is impossible to generalize the results to other contexts and different participants. The conclusions are therefore limited to the analyses of the talk that evolved between Ann and her students.

A secondary student questionnaire distributed at the end of the semester would have allowed for the measurement of how students’ course goals and intentions changed over the course of the semester. It would have also allowed students the opportunity to reflect on their initial goals and compare it to what they actually did in class. Similarly, a second instructor interview would have been good to carry out at the end of the semester
to also allow Ann to reflect on the comments she made at the beginning of data collection and to see if her course goals had changed in any way during the course of the semester.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of discourse in this dissertation focused exclusively on teacher-initiated talk. This research did not carry out any analysis of student-initiated talk in the whole-class discussions. The latter could have revealed more ways in which students were able to obtain agency in Ann’s class and may have helped to see how specific students’ goals were realized.

**Future avenues for research**

The ecology metaphor and its constructs, along with a SCT understanding of human cognition, have provided the theoretical foundation on which this dissertation rests. One of the main contributions this study makes to the SLA field is its work with the affordance construct and its definition of the new construct of an affordance structure. Future avenues therefore could explore the identification and description of additional types of affordance structures found in whole-class discussions in L2 literature courses. Similarly, more investigation and identification of affordance structures found in small-group discussions among students in L2 literature courses could also yield insights about how students internalize their instructor’s talk and use of affordance structures and appropriate them in small-group discussions with fellow students.

Analyzing affordance structures in other L2 literature contexts (e.g., in poetry courses) and at different proficiency levels (e.g., learners in immersion-like environments or in their last semester of language study at the undergraduate level) may also provide insight as to how these structures function outside of the L2 literature class investigated in this study. Another possible avenue would be to analyze the affordance structures alongside the use of gestures to see how they work in tandem to allow for the emergence of second-level affordances in whole-class discussions.
Finally, as L2 programs at the undergraduate level in the United States begin to move away from the language-literature course sequence and start to offer curricula that reflect students’ L2 course goals, expectations, and intentions for language study (i.e., combining language, literature, and culture components from early on in a learner’s program of study), it will be worth investigating how instructors strike a balance between language-related and content-related concerns. Specifically, as speaking and whole-class discussions continue to be at the center of how many of these future courses will be delivered to students, more research will be needed to understand the optimal way in which an instructor’s and her students’ course goals are met via discourse. Affordances and the structures that allow them to emerge (i.e., affordance structures) will be fruitful ways in which to make sense of competing goals and how they are realized in classroom talk. Ecological views and SCT accounts will need to be expanded to meet these various research agendas. Hopefully this dissertation contributed something useful to that endeavor.
APPENDIX A: ANN’S COURSE SYLLABUS

NOTE: To protect the privacy of the cooperating instructor, any personal information that would reveal the instructor’s identity, or the identity of the university where she taught, has been removed from this course syllabus.

Topics in National Literature/Culture:
Narratives of the Conquest of Mexico
Spring Semester, 2007

Instructor: Ann
Office Hours: MWF 8:45-9:15 am & 12:30-1:00 pm (and by appointment)
Course Description: The period of the Conquest of Mexico from 1519-1521 is a touchstone for the historical and contemporary articulation of Mexican cultural identity. In this course we will read a selection of colonial texts which narrate the Conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés, his Spanish troops, and Amerindian allies from a variety of vantage points. We will look at sixteenth-century histories written by conquistadors as well as texts and codices produced by the natives. In the second half of the semester, we will look at examples of essay and fiction from the twentieth century which represent events and figures from the Conquest. These primary texts will be read in conjunction with secondary materials which highlight issues such as the depiction of violence, examples of resistance, the political nature of the texts, representations of gender and sexuality, and discussions of cultural nationalism.

Required Texts:
Hernán Cortés, Cartas de relación
Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España
James Lockhart, We People Here
Laura Esquivel, Malinche: una novela
Additional materials will be available by electronic reserve on ICON.

Requirements and Evaluation:
The final grade will be based on the total number of points accumulated on a 1000 point scale. The requirements are as follows:

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<td>Active class participation</td>
<td>150 pts</td>
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<td>970-1000</td>
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<td>Critical summaries (4)</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Essays (2)</td>
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Class Participation and Attendance: The class meetings will rely on ALL students preparing close readings of the materials at home and coming to class ready to actively participate in a critical discussion of those readings. The class participation grade will be based on factors such as preparedness for class discussions, active participation in class activities, maintaining a positive and supportive attitude towards classmates, and speaking Spanish at all times. With a large class it is sometimes difficult for everyone to have a chance to contribute to the discussion during every class meeting. I will, however, do my very best to make sure all students feel welcomed and encouraged to participate and intervene in the daily class discussions. The depth and breadth of our class discussions will be directly related to the level of participation of each member of the class.

You are allowed three absences. The fourth absence, and every absence thereafter will result in your course grade being lowered by 10 points. Three late entrances add up to one absence. The only cases in which more than three absences will be accepted are for representing the University in a University-sponsored function (documentation required), serious illness (documentation by a medical provider required – i.e. no self-excuse forms) or a religious holiday. Please let me know no later than the third week of the semester if you will miss any classes due to a religious holiday.

Critical Summaries (1-2 pages): For this assignment students will write a one to two page, succinct analysis of four of the secondary readings. You will write two resúmenes críticos on texts marked (A) in the first half of the semester and two resúmenes críticos on texts marked (B) in the second half of the semester. Please follow the deadlines for the critical summaries for each specific text. In this paper, students will present a summary and analysis of the essay’s central argument. The critical summaries should follow all requirements for written assignments and each is worth a possible 50 points.

Essays (4-5 pages): There will be two essay assignments, one in the first half of the semester and one in the second half. I will give you several options for topics which will ask you to analyze specific themes or issues. You will turn in two versions, but the first will not be considered a “rough draft”: version one is worth 50 points and version two is worth 75 points. I will make comments on the first version and the grade for the second version will be based in part on how well you respond to those comments and suggestions.

Requirements for Written Assignments:
All written assignments must be written in Spanish. Under no circumstances will written assignments be accepted by e-mail, either as an attachment or in the body of the message. Type your name, date, course number, and the name of the assignment on the upper right hand corner of the paper. All written assignments must be typed in 12 point font, double-spaced, with one inch margins, and printed in black ink on white paper.
Assignments of more than one page must be stapled together. Assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due (leave them on the desk as you enter). Assignments will not be accepted late except in cases of excused absences (illness, representing the University in a University-sponsored function, observance of religious holiday). If you are unable to turn an assignment in to me during class or during my office hours, please leave it with the receptionist in P. Hall. Make sure my name – Ann – is clearly visible on the first page of the assignment. Assignments which are not turned in are counted as zero.

**Midterm exam and Final exam:** Both exams are partial exams and will be taken during class time and during our final exam period, respectively. The exams will be based on class lectures, readings – both from the primary and secondary texts – and other materials covered in class.

**Notes on Student Rights and Concerns:**

1. I will do my best to address concerns or complaints you may have about this course and the class environment. If, after talking to me, the situation is not satisfactorily resolved, you should contact the Chair of the Department, Professor Tony. Appointments with Prof. Tony may be made with the receptionist in the main office.

2. I need to hear from anyone who has a physical or learning disability, which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me within the first week of the semester, during my office hours.

3. This course is given by the College of L. This means that class policies on matters such as requirements, grading, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are governed by the College of L. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive the approval of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

4. The plagiarism and cheating guidelines for this course follow the guidelines set by the College of L., which are summarized here and also available on-line. The College of L. considers academic fraud, dishonesty, and cheating serious academic misconduct. All forms of plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not really his or her own are considered academic fraud. Academic fraud includes these and other misrepresentations:
   - presentation of ideas from any sources you do not credit;
   - the use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to the source;
   - paraphrasing information and ideas from sources without credit to the source;
   - failure to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research;
   - downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation;
   - submitting material created/written by someone else as one's own, including purchased term/research papers.
Cheating on examinations and other work also interferes with your own education as well as the education of others in your classes. Academic cheating includes all of the following, and any other activities that give a student an unfair advantage in course work.

- copying from someone else's exam or work;
- allowing someone to copy or submit your work as his/her own;
- submitting the same paper in more than one course without the knowledge and approval of the instructors involved;
- using notes, text messaging, cell phone calls, or other materials during a test or exam without authorization;
- not following the guidelines specified by the instructor for a "take home" test or exam.

The minimal penalty for academic dishonesty will be a grade of F (0%) on the assignment or exam, with the possibility for more severe penalties as individual cases may merit.

**Class Schedule**

T = required text (available at the bookstore)
ER = electronic reserve (available on website for our course)
HO = handout which will be provided in class

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**1ª semana**

**15 de enero (lunes)**
Día festivo – Celebración de MLK, Jr.

**17 de enero (miércoles)**
Introducción al curso

**19 de enero (viernes)**
Leer: Burkholder y Johnson, “The Conquest of Mexico” (HO); Augusto Monterroso, “El eclipse” (HO)

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**2ª semana**

**22 de enero (lunes)**
Leer: Hernán Cortés, “Segunda carta de relación” (T)

**24 de enero (miércoles)**
Leer: Cortés (T)

**26 de enero (viernes)**
Leer: Cortés (T)

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**3ª semana**

**29 de enero (lunes)**
Leer: Cortés (T)

**31 de enero (miércoles)**
Leer: Cortés (T); Beatriz Pastor, “Hernán Cortés and the Creation of the Model Conquistador,” 50-63 (ER)

**2 de febrero (viernes)**
Leer: Cortés (T); Pastor, 63-79 (ER)
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<td><strong>5 de febrero (lunes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Pastor, 80-100 (ER)</td>
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<td>Entregar análisis crítico (A1) - Pastor</td>
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<td><strong>7 de febrero (miércoles)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leer: Francisco López de Gómara, Historia general de las indias (HO); Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España (T)</td>
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<td><strong>9 de febrero (viernes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Bernal Díaz (T)</td>
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<td>Leer: Bernal Díaz (T)</td>
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<td>Leer: Bernal Díaz (T)</td>
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<td><strong>19 de febrero (lunes)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leer: Rolena Adorno, “History, Law, and the Eyewitness Protocols of Authority in Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España” (ER)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21 de febrero (miércoles)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Serge Gruzinski, The Conquest of Mexico, “Painting and Writing,” 6-33 (ER)</td>
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<td>Entregar análisis crítico (A2) - Adorno</td>
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<td><strong>23 de febrero (viernes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Gruzinski, 33-69 (ER)</td>
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<td><strong>26 de febrero (lunes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Códice Florentino, “Libro 12” en Lockhart, We People Here (T)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entregar análisis crítico (A3) - Gruzinski</td>
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<td><strong>28 de febrero (miércoles)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Códice Florentino (T)</td>
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<td><strong>2 de marzo (viernes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Códice Florentino (T)</td>
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<td>Entregar ensayo 1, versión 1</td>
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<td><strong>5 de marzo (lunes)</strong></td>
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<td>Leer: Códice Florentino (T)</td>
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<td><strong>7 de marzo (miércoles)</strong></td>
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Visita a la biblioteca para ver copia facsimile del Códice Florentino: Nos encontramos en el 3er piso, Special Collections
9 de marzo (viernes)
Examen Parcial

9a semana

12 de marzo – 16 de marzo: Spring Break

10a semana

19 de marzo (lunes)
Ver: La otra conquista (Salvador Carrasco, 1999)
21 de marzo (miércoles)
Ver: La otra conquista (1999)
Entregar ensayo 1, versión 2
23 de marzo (viernes)
Ver: La otra conquista (1999)

11a semana

26 de marzo (lunes)
Leer: Carrie Chorba, “Exploring Mexican National Identity in Salvador Carrasco’s Film, La otra conquista” (ER)
28 de marzo (miércoles)
Leer: Carlos Fuentes, “Las dos orillas,”11-28 (ER)
Entregar análisis crítico (B1) - Chorba
30 de marzo (viernes)
Leer: Fuentes, 28-44

12a semana

2 de abril (lunes)
Leer: Fuentes, 45-61
4 de abril (miércoles)
Leer: Frances Kartunnen, “Doña Marina, La Malinche” (ER)
6 de abril (viernes)
Leer: Camilla Townsend, Malintzin’s Choices, “Pelican’s Kingdom” (ER)
Entregar análisis crítico (B2) – Kartunnen

13a semana

9 de abril (lunes)
Leer: Octavio Paz, El laberinto de la soledad, “Los hijos de la Malinche” (ER)
Entregar análisis crítico (B3) - Townsend
11 de abril (miércoles)
Leer: Paz (ER)
13 de abril (viernes)
Leer: Paz (ER)

14ª semana

16 de abril (lunes)
Leer: Margo Glantz, “La Malinche: la lengua en la mano” (ER)

18 de abril (miércoles)
Leer: Glantz (ER)
Entregar análisis crítico (B4) - Glantz

20 de abril (viernes)
Leer: Laura Esquivel, La Malinche: una novela, cc 1-2, 1-35 (T)

15ª semana

23 de abril (lunes)
Leer: Esquivel, c 3, 39-56 (T)

25 de abril (miércoles)
Leer: Esquivel, c 4, 59-77 (T)
Entregar ensayo 2, versión 1

27 de abril (viernes)
Leer: Esquivel, c 5, 81-103 (T)

16ª semana

30 de abril (lunes)
Leer: Esquivel, c 6, 81-103 (T)

2 de mayo (miércoles)
Leer: Esquivel, c 7, 133-165 (T)

4 de mayo (viernes)
Leer: Esquivel, c 8, 169-186 (T)
Entregar ensayo 2, versión 2

10 de mayo (jueves)
7:30-9:30 am
Examen Final
APPENDIX B: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire
(Please Print/Write Legibly–Thanks!)

Part A. Background information
1. Name ______________________  2. Age ______
3. Email ________________________  4. Gender: Male / Female
5. Native language(s) _______________  6. Approximate overall GPA _____

7a. Do you speak any languages other than English and Spanish?
   _____ Yes  _____ No

   7b. If you answered yes, please list any additional languages and briefly describe how well you know them (e.g., your speaking, reading or writing abilities):

8. Year in school (e.g., junior) __________________________________________________________

9. What is (are) your major(s)? ________________________________________________________

10. What is (are) your minor(s)? ______________________________________________________

Part B. Language learning information
11a. How long have you been learning Spanish? ______ Years in high school

   _____ Semesters in college/university

   11b. Please provide more details about your previous Spanish learning experiences at this university (i.e., all courses prior to the current course in which you are enrolled during the Spring 2007 semester) in the following table:

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<tr>
<th>Approximate Date(s)</th>
<th>Course name(s)</th>
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12. Have you ever traveled to a Spanish-speaking country?

_______ No  _______ Yes

If yes, please provide more information in the following table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># of Months</th>
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13. While in the United States, do you currently have (or have you had in the recent past) any contact with Spanish that is not related to Spanish courses in school or in college (e.g., Spanish-speaking friends or family, watching movies in Spanish, reading Spanish-language newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs)?

_______ No

_____ Yes

If yes, please provide more details about the kind of Spanish language contact you have outside of the traditional classroom setting such as what you do and how often you do it:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What you do (i.e., the kind of activity)</th>
<th>How often you do the activity (once a week, once a month, etc.)</th>
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14. What are your goals in studying Spanish at this university? Check all that apply.

_____ I am a Spanish major.

_____ I am a Spanish minor.

_____ I will probably major in Spanish, but I have not declared a Spanish major yet.

_____ I will probably minor in Spanish, but I have not decided yet.

_____ My major is not Spanish, but it requires that I take Spanish courses beyond the General Education Program level. [My major is ____________________ .]

What are your reasons or motivations for doing a major or minor in Spanish, or for majoring in a subject that requires advanced Spanish courses (please be specific and avoid broad statements such as I like it.). If you are not majoring or minoring in Spanish, go on to the next question.

15. Have you ever taken a college-level literature course in English (or in your native language, if your native language is not English) before? If yes, how many courses?

_______ No

_______ Yes  ⇒  ______ # of literature courses taken

16. If you checked YES to question 15 above, then answer the following question: Given your previous experiences taking college-level literature courses, in your opinion, what are the major differences between taking literature courses in English (i.e., your native language) vs. taking literature courses in Spanish? Besides the language difference, is there any difference between the two environments such as how you participate in class discussions or how you go about understanding the readings? Please explain any/all differences.

17. What other Spanish classes are you taking this semester (if any)?

Part C. Latin American literature course

18. Please rank the following goals or objectives that you have in taking this Latin American literature course:
NOTE: Please rank all of the goals 1 through 8 with 1 = the most important goal or objective and 8 = the least important goal or objective.

______ To improve my reading ability in Spanish.

______ To improve my grammatical knowledge of Spanish.

______ To improve my literary comprehension and interpretation skills in Spanish.

______ To improve my speaking ability in Spanish.

______ To increase my vocabulary in Spanish.

______ To better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which the literary pieces were written.

______ To improve my listening ability in Spanish.

______ To improve my writing ability in Spanish.

19. Please rank the four skills to indicate which ones are your strongest and which ones are your weakest (in your opinion):

NOTE: Please rank all of the skills 1 through 4 with 1 = your strongest skill in Spanish and 4 = your weakest skill in Spanish.

______ reading  ______ writing  ______ speaking  ______ listening

20. When your Latin American literature instructor (i.e., the one in this 35:147 course) tries to engage the class in discussion about the texts you are reading, how much do you participate? How do you feel about participating? What reasons do you have for participating or for not participating? Please explain your feelings and actions on the topic of discussions in this class.

21a. What motivates you to participate in class discussions in this Latin American literature course?
21b. What prevents you from participating in class discussions in this Latin American literature course?

22. In your opinion, do you think that discussions in class help you to understand the readings for this course better? If so, how do they help you? If not, why not? Please respond in as much detail as possible.

23. What are some of the challenges that you have encountered so far in this Latin American literature course (specific difficulties with the readings themselves, understanding the instructor when she speaks, class discussions, working with other students, etc.)

24. Is there anything else that you would like to comment on about this course?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Instructor Interview Guide

NOTE: Questions A–E are meant to be warm-up questions.

A. What’s your name?
B. What’s your first/native language?
C. What’s your second language?
D. Have you studied any other languages?
E. Tell me about your language-learning history. (Follow up with the following: when were you first interested in Spanish, what experiences helped to improve your speaking skills, etc.)

End of warm-up questions

1a. Tell me a little bit about your educational background (i.e., degrees, institutions, and years).

1b. What are your areas of expertise?

2. How long have you been teaching at this university?

3. What is your title at this university?

4a. How long have you been teaching Spanish?

4b. Have you had any experience teaching Spanish elsewhere?

5a. Could you tell me a little bit about the kinds of Spanish courses that you are teaching now and that you have taught in the past (e.g., Latin American culture/civilization courses, language courses)?

5b. How long have you been teaching courses on Hispanic literature?

6a. What’s the name of the Latin American literature course that you are currently teaching (i.e., the 35:147 course) and could you tell me a little bit about the course (e.g., what genres it covers, what writers, primary or secondary texts being used)?

6b. What would you like students to have gained by the end of this semester after taking your literature course (e.g., specific skill development, specific content knowledge)?
7a. What do you think your students’ goals are upon enrolling in this course? In other words, what do you think they intend to get out of this particular Hispanic literature course?

7b. What are the specific types of knowledge and/or abilities that students should possess after taking your course (e.g., critical thinking skills, acquisition of vocabulary, better reading skills, development of speaking skills)?

8a. What are some of the techniques that you use to teach Hispanic literature?

8b. Tell me what you typically do in a 50-minute teaching period.

8c. How do you get students to understand or talk about literature in your class (i.e., during class)?

8d. How do you get students to understand or talk about literature outside of class (e.g., what kind of help do you provide them in your office hours)?

8e. Are there any particular activities that you use with students that are done outside of class that are effective at getting students to talk during class? In your opinion, what is it about these activities that are more effective?

8f. Are there any particular activities that you use with students in class that are effective at getting students to talk? In your opinion, what is it about these activities that are more effective?

9a. As far as participation goes, how would you describe a student who actively participates in whole-class discussion?

9b. When you ask a question in class, how do you decide what/when to ask?

9c. Do you ask questions to check for understanding of what you’re saying or what the main ideas are in the text?

9d. Do you ask questions that give students the opportunity to reflect/share their interpretations of the text?

9e. Which do you think you ask more of: comprehension-type questions (i.e., checking to see if students understood words, moments, actions in the text) or personal interpretation questions (where students are reflecting on their understanding or the symbolic meaning of the text)?

9f. When you ask a question and no one responds, what do you normally do?
9g. How do you think students should respond to your questions? Do you have any expectations about the ways in which they should answer (e.g., bringing in personal interpretations, focusing on more basic issues such as a work’s content)?

9h. What kinds of questions do students ask in class?

10. If I asked a student in your class to describe the way in which you talk about literature, what would he or she tell me?

11a. In your opinion, are your students capable of having a meaningful discussion about the literary piece(s) that they read for class? Why or why not?

11b. Why do you think this is? In other words, what factors (both in and outside of the classroom) possibly contribute to how students participate in whole-class discussions about what they are reading?

11c. How does discussion go/work when you are reading texts from different genres? Is there anything different? If so, what are the differences?

11d. In your opinion, what does it mean to say that a student in your literature class has “understood” a specific literary text?

12. What are some of the challenges and/or problems that you have faced in teaching this Latin American literature course thus far?

13a. From an instructional/pedagogical perspective, what would make it easier for students to be able to have meaningful discussions about literature?

13b. Is there anything that you would change about your students and the way in which they participate in whole-class discussions?

13c. What would an ideal whole-class discussion look like in your opinion?

14. Have you enjoyed teaching this Latin American literature class thus far? Why or why not?

15. Would you like to add any other comments or reflections about the Latin American literature course that you currently teach?
APPENDIX D: TRANSCRIPT OF INSTRUCTOR'S INTERVIEW

Instructor's Interview
March 2, 2007

R= Researcher

R: What's your name?
Ann: My name is Ann.
R: What is your native language?
Ann: English.
R: And your second language?
Ann: Spanish
R: Have you studied any other languages?
Ann: I have. I've studied classical Latin, classical Nahuatl, and Portuguese. And then also while in high school, for a brief period of time, I studied Japanese and Russian. But I honestly don't remember much of those languages.
R: Where did you study Nahuatl?
Ann: I took two summer courses at Yale; one was a beginning course and one was an intermediate course.
R: What got you interested in Spanish?
Ann: Well, I started studying Spanish as a freshman in high school as did most people. And the summer of my junior year I went to San Sebastián, Spain for a summer and I loved it. I absolutely loved it. So, when I first went off to college I wasn't sure what I wanted to study, but I knew that that was something that I really enjoyed. So I continued taking Spanish classes and then at some point I just decided that that was what I would major in. So I majored in Spanish as an undergraduate and just continued through graduate school.
R: Can you tell me a little bit more about your educational background; degrees, institutions, etc.
Ann: Undergraduate degree from the University of O. and my Master's from the University of W. and my PhD will be from there as well.
R: So what's your area of expertise?
Ann: Colonial Spanish American Literature. And my dissertation deals with 17th Century Mexico; two figures from that Century/period, but more broadly Colonial Spanish American Literature.
R: How long have you been teaching here at this university?
R: So what's your title right now?
Ann: My title now is Lecturer. And before I was a Visiting Instructor. So, essentially the same job; three courses per semester. But now I have a three-year contract instead of just one.
R: In all, how long have you been teaching Spanish.
Ann: Well, I started graduate school in the Fall of '94. I spent two years doing my Master's. So for those two years I was teaching language classes; from first semester
through fourth semester-language courses. And then, I was in Mexico for about a year and a half and came back to M. and was there another two years again teaching language classes. And then it wasn’t until I got to this university that I started teaching classes beyond the first four required semesters.

R: Tell me a little bit about the courses that you’re teaching this semester. We’ll talk a little bit more in-depth about the one that I’m observing, but tell me a little bit about the other ones.

Ann: Starting at 9:30, I’m teaching Writing in Spanish, the composition course. It’s a fifth-semester course intended for students who have just completed the fourth-semester language class. That’s not always the case, there aren’t always students that are in that situation, but that’s the idea and it’s not really a content course it’s just a writing course. And the second one is Spanish American Civilization class. The Civilization class is more of a history class taught in Spanish. We have a textbook and we follow that looking at Spanish America from pre-Colombian times up through the present. And then I supplement the textbook with other things—films and other activities. And then the class—Narratives of the Conquest of Mexico.

R: So you’ve been teaching Latin American literature for the last four years then here at this university?

Ann: I think it has been three years in all.

R: Okay. So let’s talk a little bit about the course that I’m observing. What’s the name of it and if you could just give me a general description of the genres that you’re covering, what you’re trying to do, what you’re reading in the course—primary and secondary texts, etc.

Ann: Sure. So Narratives of the Conquest of Mexico. I emphasize that because we are not looking at poetry, we’re not looking at theater. We’re looking strictly at narrative, beginning with historical narrative; looking at primary texts from the period of the Conquest and the Colonial period dealing with the Conquest of Mexico. So beginning with Cortés’ letter and looking at Bernal Díaz Castillo’s text and finishing with the Florentine Codex. In addition to those texts we’re reading some secondary material to give students a little better sense of the place of those texts in the period. That’s the first part of the semester. During the second part of the semester we’ll be looking at ways in which these events are narrated in contemporary texts. So looking at a couple of short stories, essays and then finishing with a novel that deal with the same set of events that we’ve been looking at so far from a contemporary, literary perspective, more explicitly fictional instead of historical.

R: What are some of your goals then in teaching this course?

Ann: This is the first time that I’ve taught this course and I wasn’t really sure what to expect from the students. I didn’t know how much material we would be able to get through, what kinds of discussions I would be able to expect them to have. So I really didn’t have terribly explicit ideas of what I wanted to accomplish because I kind of wanted to see what the group was going to be able to do. And it turns out that it’s a very talented group, a very hard-working group. And we’ve been able to read the texts very closely in the context in which they were written and have a lot of comparative discussions about the texts as well. So it’s really more than I hoped that we were going to be able to do but with the focus being on reading the primary texts and discussing the
contexts in which they were produced. But they have just been able to push it to a slightly higher level than I was expecting.

**R:** So, what do you want students to gain by the end of the course in terms of the Conquest of Mexico.

**Ann:** Part of the idea with this class was to give them materials—both older materials and newer materials. So looking at both colonial texts and contemporary texts to get a sense of the different kinds of genres, different kinds of styles of writing that one can speak of in relationship to this very broad topic of the Conquest of Mexico. So I wanted to give them a variety of texts to look at from those two different periods and just walk them through reading those texts—especially the colonial texts because they are a little bit more rigorous and just walk through with them how to read a text like that, what kinds of questions to ask, how do go through the process of reading a text critically in relationship to other texts (inaudible) and broader questions in general.

**R:** What do you think your students’ goals are in terms coming into this course. I know that you knew some of them before and you might know what their motivations are as language learners or Spanish majors or minors, but what do you think they come in wanting to get out of this class?

**Ann:** I think that’s a great question, and it’s a question I asked them on the first day of class when I gave them a little handout and tried to get a little more information, especially from the students that I really didn’t know. And most of them at that point said that they were interested in learning more about the history of Mexico, specifically the history of the Conquest of Mexico. So, most of them were interested in this historical angle rather than the literary angle. And many of them have taken a class with me or with another professor in the Department who teaches about Colonial Literature or with someone in the history department and they have some exposure to these events and discussion of these events. But yeah, it’s a question that I’d like to ask them again at the end of the semester and ask them to think about what it was that they were hoping to get out of the course and what it was that they did get out of the course. Because I think many of them were expecting it to be more of a history class. But I don’t think they’re disappointed. But I think that was some of the curiosity that they were coming into the class with . . .

**R:** The historical context?

**Ann:** the historical context in general, right.

**R:** You talked a little bit about what students will get out of taking this course in terms critically looking at texts from these two different perspectives. What are some of the specific types of knowledge or abilities that you would hope that students would come away from this class having?

**Ann:** Well I think reading any literary text…it’s important for the students to learn how to read the text closely. And so, that’s something that I definitely encourage in the classroom activities and in their assignments as well; to do close readings of specific passages or to do close readings looking for specific themes or topics. So broadly speaking, that’s something that I would very much hope that they would get out of class. Just a better understanding and more practice with reading the text closely—particularly looking for a specific set of themes or a specific set of issues. As well, I would also hope that their curiosity for texts from the colonial period is piqued a little bit and that they’ll be interested in taking more courses in that area because I think it’s great stuff.
R: So what are some of the techniques that you use to teach this—a literature that can be challenging—to do a close reading and have a critical view of the texts. How do you go about unpacking that for them?

Ann: That’s a good question. And that’s another question that was really going to depend heavily on the students and what the students were going to be able to do. With this class, I have not been having to do as much coaching as I thought I would. Generally speaking, I try to ask a series of broad questions of the different texts that we look at to create a continuity in the discussion. I have encouraged students from the beginning of the semester to not get too hung up on issues of comprehension and vocabulary and funny grammar constructions that may be a little unfamiliar. And I’ve tried to pitch the issues at a more general and more broad level; looking at questions about presentation, and re-construction of events in different ways, doing a lot of comparison and contrast between the texts to create a dialogue between the texts. But I have found that they are generally willing to do more than I expect that they will be able to do.

R: Why do you think that is? Is this because this is a higher-level course (i.e., a tier two course), it’s the highest course that you’ve taught?

Ann: It’s the highest course that I’ve taught but it’s by no means the highest course in the sequence.

R: Right.

Ann: They come to the class with different backgrounds certainly. Some of them have taken a number of upper-division classes, sort of senior-level classes and then they’re taking this course to fulfill more general requirements. And others haven’t taken anything above this level. So there’s definitely a broad spectrum of experiences in the classroom. And I think it’s pure luck (laughter)

R: Are you paying them (more laughter)?

Ann: I really don’t know for sure why they are so enthusiastic. A course like this hasn’t been offered before on this specific topic. And I think, generally speaking, there’s a lot of interest in Mexico. I think that, you know, outside of that I really don’t know what brought this particular class together.

R: Tell me what you typically do then in a 50-minute teaching period. I know you do a lot of different things, but what would be a snapshot of a typical/regular class.

Ann: And I do try to have a lot of variety because I know as a student I did and then as someone doing student-like things now, I do get bored if there is a complete repetition of the same model of the class day in and day out. So I do try to have variety in the activities. But, generally speaking, I try to start the class with some sort of broad question that can engage all of the students. And this may be review of material that we looked at the previous day or some kind of broad comparison question to get the students just to think about the material again. Because, though they are bright, talented, and engaged, I’m sure they don’t spend their whole life thinking about this class. So I ask a question just to get them back into the mood and get them back into the discussion. And then we usually spend anywhere from 5-10 minutes talking about the broad question. And then we move into a more specific activity. For instance, today in class we looked at a series of passages and I put them into small groups and they looked at the passages closely thinking about a specific series, and then together we all go over those comments that they come up with. And then I try to do some kind of wrap-up at the end. Though
sometimes, many times, we have so much discussion in the second part that we don't quite get to the wrap-up part. But that's kind of the general outline.

**R:** In terms of participation, what importance do you put or place on participation by your students in class—whether how you weight it in the syllabus, or just in general in terms of your philosophy, etc.

**Ann:** Sure. In this class, and in all of my classes, participation is a very important factor. In this class it's 15% of their final grade. And that's what I use in my Civilization class as well. So I think it is fundamental to not only developing their language skills, but also developing their critical abilities and their critical thinking. Because the process of speaking publicly with a group, engaging with one another’s comments, forces them to think and speak in ways that they wouldn’t if it was a more writing-focused class or something. So participation in class is very important. With this class I have not had to do anything, any kind of arm-twisting or teeth-pulling to get students to participate. But that’s not always the case, unfortunately. And I do, in order to promote participation, I do give them updates periodically throughout the semester giving them some idea of where they stand in terms of their participation. And then sometimes I just simply have to regañarlos and tell them that they’re not up to par and that they need to start being more actively involved in the class or their grades are going to suffer. Fortunately with this class I don’t have to do that. But in all of my classes I think that it’s really important.

**R:** How do you go about giving them those updates or feedback, do you send them an email or just talk to them directly?

**Ann:** I give them little slips of paper and I have different categories for different ranges of grades and I do my grades based on a points system, so I’ll give them a certain number of points and they’ll have some indication of how well they’re doing. And I’ll also indicate at that point if they’ve missed a lot of classes and if they have a lot of tardies. But if it’s not a problem, I usually don’t focus on it because I don’t want them to get caught up with the idea of being graded for what they are saying in class—especially if there’s a lot of good discussion.

**R:** So how would you describe a student who actively participates, how would you characterize that person in whole-class discussions particularly?

**Ann:** In terms of how many times they say something?

**R:** You could use that as a criteria, or it wouldn’t have to necessarily be the number of times a student speaks, it could be the quality of his/her response, etc.

**Ann:** Those are all factors. Certainly the most obvious thing is not speaking English in class. And then putting their hand up and speaking in class. And then engaging in other students in a positive and supportive way—these are all equally important. So someone who is just absolutely fabulous in terms of participation is raising their hand, participating, but then also feeding off of what other students are saying in the class. Because ideally they are all responding to one another and they’re not all just engaging with me. So in an ideal situation, and this happens many times in the Narratives of the Conquest of Mexico class, I’m facilitating rather than running the discussion. Now again, that doesn’t always happen. If it doesn’t then I have to push a little bit harder and call on people and all that kind of stuff.

**R:** So at this point in the semester in the class that I’m observing, could you name a couple of different students who you think are actively participating or engaged. Who would they be if you had to choose a couple and why do you think they are so good?
Ann: I think that there are so many that are actively participating. But I think Nicole is a really good example of someone who not only puts her hand up, participates, and speaks, but also tries to feed off of what other students do. Eric as well. Sheila is very good. Sometimes she gets a little too keyed into me and trying to create a conversation with me. She’s fabulous, but she’s not quite as responsive to the other students as Nicole and Eric. And Herminia as well—she’s the native speaker, graduate student in the class so one would have higher expectations of her participation. But she can also get a little bit too focused on me sometimes too. And then there are some that are a little bit quieter but they’re prepared to speak when called upon and they do occasionally intervene in the discussion. So there are some who don’t speak as often, but I think that they are just as engaged.

R: But they are actively listening and tuned in?

Ann: Yeah, which is important too; active listening is an important skill as well because we can’t all be on center stage all the time.

R: On the flip side of that, who are some of the students who you don’t hear from and maybe why?

Ann: Cathy on the far left. Mercedes. I think Cathy has some inhibitions because of language, her language skills are not as strong as many other students in the class. When I go and listen to them in their small group discussions, she is certainly participating and contributing and responding to the discussions going on. But I think she’s much more shy about doing that in general, whole-class discussions. And Mercedes is essentially a native speaker so language is not a problem. She’s someone who I’ve had in other classes as well and she’s just a little bit shy. It’s hard for her to be more assertive and interject in the discussion.

R: Do you think Herminia being a grad. student and being a native speaker and engaging a lot, do you think that affects the dynamic of class discussion at all in any way?

Ann: That’s something that I have to be careful about because it certainly could. She could become a dominant voice and she could cause the other students to feel a little bit nervous about speaking.

R: Had you sensed that even before I came in and started observing?

Ann: Sure, from the first day. She’s very interested in the material and she’s very excited about this stuff. From the first day, she was certainly participating a lot. I think that she’s somewhat self-aware and that she does catch herself when she is speaking too much or when we have too much of this sort of question-and-answer. On a couple of occasions I’ve sensed that the other students, even the very good students, have become a little bit bored with her lines of inquiry. I have not really sensed that anyone has become inhibited because of her language skills. And her background really isn’t any more than the other students even though she is Mexican. I think some of the other students who have taken a class with Willow have a much better background in this material than she does. The first day of class I was nervous that she was going to be a problem. But she really hasn’t turned out to be so much. Although sometimes I just have to kind of move the conversation along. But I’m always hesitant to make anyone feel unwelcome to make a contribution because I think students very quickly pick up on that and then they aren’t quite sure at what point they need to be quiet. So I try to be very gentle when I do have to keep things moving, but it hasn’t been a problem.

R: How do you get students to talk about literature in class?
Ann: There are certainly different strategies, different kinds of activities. One thing that I do, like we did in class today, I select specific passages that I think are important or pertinent to the discussion and have them do a close reading of that passage. Other times I'll have them look at sections of the text and I like to do a lot of group work. Group work doesn't always work effectively, but with this class it's working well...so in the groups doing a close reading of a passage or a particular section of a text or some kind of broader question about themes or topics of a text or compare and contrast between a couple of different texts. So those are, I think, are really the basis of any kind of effective analysis of literature in the classroom. And then on top of that, and what we've been able to do in this class—and that's something that we don't always get to do—is moving the discussion to a broader level where they're able to discuss all of the different texts that we've looked at simultaneously and think about issues from different perspectives and different points of view. And then occasionally, although I haven't done it in this class, is having them do short in-class writing assignments is especially useful if it's a really big class or if there is not a lot of active participation. That's something that's always a good fall-back.

R: I also notice that you often write questions on the board. Is that intentionally something that you always do, or just because of the readings in this course, to kind of help students to focus?

Ann: I think that's something that I always do. When we started this project, I knew that you would get me to think about things that I just haven't necessarily been self-conscious about. But I think it helps focus everyone's attention if there's a question up on the board or if there is any information of any sort up on the board, and make everyone feel like they are sort of on the same page. So, yeah, that is certainly something that I do. Sometimes I'll put those questions on a handout on a piece of paper.

R: So that's a lot of stuff that happens in class, is there anything that you do outside of class—whether it's homework or assignments—that would help students to contribute to class discussion?

Ann: With this class, in terms of assignments that they do at home, there's not a lot. But they do have some short assignments where I've asked them to do a critical summary of some of the secondary materials that we've been looking at. And that I think has certainly helped them discuss those materials in class. But in terms of ongoing, small assignments, I don't send them home with study questions necessarily. I do put questions, as you say, up on the board for them to think about as they're reading the text. At the beginning of the semester, I did give them some guided study questions, but I began to feel that I could do just as well by putting questions up on the board. So it's really a combination of things.

R: And how about office hours, do you have students who come for help outside of class from this particular class?

Ann: Not really. A couple of them have come, and a couple of them have come when they've been absent. But no, there's really not a lot of conversation going on outside of the classroom.

R: Let's talk a little bit about the types of questions that you use to get students to talk and engage. In general, what kinds of questions do you think you pose in class? Is it based mostly on looking at the content/comprehension, or are you asking questions to invite interpretation?
Ann: I think the questions emerge, generally speaking, out of close readings of the texts. And the questions that I do ask are certainly intended to promote close readings of the texts and avoid generalizations based on some very general and vague understanding of what's going on with the texts. So I would say that all of the questions emerge out of the text and they are intended to make the students to go back and look closely at the texts. Now having said that, I don't want them to get too caught up in the minutiae of the texts...so even though I want them to look closely at the text, I want them to think about broad issues related to the text. So that's why I focus on a set of themes and issues that we look at in the different primary readings that we've been doing and the different parts of the texts that we've been looking at to create that kind of continuity and discussion. But again, close readings is definitely one of the most important things that they can learn from reading literature at this level; looking at the text closely and avoiding generalizations and making sure that they can justify whatever comments they have about the texts.

R: When you do ask a question in class, how do you decide what and when to ask?

Ann: There's so much of the process of teaching at this point in our careers that is just intuitive. To actually think precisely about how and when I do what I do is hard. But, I go in with a lesson plan and it's sort of like a grocery list because it helps me to think about how I want to organize each class, but then again, I don't necessarily look at it all the time. It just helps me to put the ideas on paper. So if I do go in with a lesson plan, I do occasionally have specific questions that I want them to deal with. And then, honestly, especially with a class like this, I feed off of the kinds of insights that they are coming up with and just try to solidify and further investigate the lines of inquiry that they come up with in their reading. So I do have sort of a broad schematic, sometimes with specific activities in mind. But then I also try to be ready and willing to go with what they're interested in. And this class again has been very insightful so I've been able to feed off of them a lot in class. This also means that I have to be prepared myself. So this is not a class that I wouldn't do the reading beforehand or I wouldn't, you know, open the book beforehand and prepare to talk about any passage on any page. They certainly keep me on my toes in the best sense. But some classes I can really decide what it is what we're going to talk about and they don't really deviate from that. But this class, they've certainly come up with ideas and observations and lines of inquiry that I haven't anticipated and I just try to let that conversation develop within the broad idea of the class.

R: So you basically ask questions based on a close reading of the text to gauge their understanding but also allowing them space to share, to react to one another, etc.?

Ann: Yes. I try to engage their general comprehension of the text but then also moving into a more analytical plane and thinking about the text in broader analytical terms. And it's at that point that we've really been able to create more of a dialogue amongst the students and amongst the students with me. Because sometimes when we get to that analytical point in the discussion, they come up with insights that I had not necessarily anticipated that they would come up with—or questions for that matter which can be their own sort of insight. And I think that we've been able to develop the discussion in ways that I didn't necessarily have marked down on my lesson plan.

R: When you do ask a question and no one responds, what do you do?
Ann: Reframe. I reframe until I get somebody to say something. And in this class that certainly has happened a few times. Where the question may be a little bit too hard, or too vague, or they’re just not quite in class yet—they’re distracted thinking of something else. But I usually only ask a question that I think is an important question to be asked. And so if they don’t instantly respond, then I reframe the question. And then if they don’t respond after that, then I’ll give them a little lead, give them a little suggestion. If they don’t respond after that, I ask them to get a piece of paper out (laughter) and we turn it into a quiz (laughter). I haven’t had to do that at all with this group. But that’s kind of the progression of things.

R: Do you have any expectations about how students should respond to your questions?

Ann: That’s a good question and that’s an important question to keep in mind because I certainly have some sense of how I want them to respond, but especially when talking about comprehension questions and dates and names and facts and what not, there is specific information that needs to be clarified or needs to be put on the table and I’m looking for that specific information. But with the analytical questions I really try not to fish. And that’s something that we as literature professors have to be careful about not doing. Because it’s tempting to go in and have a clear idea in my mind about what I think is important and what should be discussed and be pulling that out of the students and if they don’t give that to me, then you know, continue to fish for it. I actively try not to do that. I try to frame questions in a way that will allow for multiple responses and interpretations and dialogue amongst those responses. So, you know, sometimes I’m more successful than others. But that’s certainly not something where you want just one single answer and then move on. That defeats the purpose.

R: Do you think the type of literature that you’re looking at, these narratives, this historical narrative, do you think that has anything to do with the way in which you’re discussing or talking about the literature vs. other types of genres like short stories, or novels, etc.

Ann: Absolutely. The question of genre is very important. And since this is a course that just deals with narrative, it’s a genre that the students are more familiar with and are more comfortable with. I would say that any average student on any average day would be more interested reading a 16th Century historical narrative vs. a 20th Century poem. And some people are very effective at teaching poetry, but narrative is just more natural to them and I don’t think they are intimidated by it in the same way that they can be by other genres. But certainly the issue of genre is important. And I’ve decided not to go too in-depth about the different historical genres that these different texts are a part of because I don’t think that’s necessarily essential to having the discussions that we’re having. But we’ve certainly discussed these texts as history, as historical texts as opposed to fictional texts. So I think that issue is important to clarify, especially when one is teaching a course where you’re teaching different genres, you really need to make sure that the students have a basic grasp of the basic features of whatever genre you’re looking at.

R: Would you say then that when you start talking after Spring Break, looking at contemporary views that focus in on the same time period, are you saying that because it’s the same genre, do you think that discussions will evolve kind of like they are now when you are looking at and reading these historical narratives?
Ann: We’ll have to see, because the contemporary stuff that we’re going to be looking at is really quite different from the 16th Century that we’ve been looking at, so we’ll have to see how they respond.

R: How are they different?

Ann: Many of them are fictional texts. And as I’ve mentioned in class a couple of times with the students, many of these texts deal with aspects of the experience of the Conquest that we simply don’t know about; say the history of the Malinche and her own personal experience and her own personal feelings about her experiences in the conquest. So many of these texts pick up where the historical texts leave off in terms of offering explanations of aspects of these figures or experiences that aren’t necessarily explained in the earlier texts. But they’re fictional or they are in an essay form that has a much more political set of issues going on with it. So the commonality through all of the texts is that they are dealing with the same set of events that comprises the conquest of Mexico. So we’re looking at the same kind of plot line—to put it in those terms—in the early texts and then in the contemporary stuff as well.

R: It will be interesting to see if there is a difference.

Ann: Yeah, I will also be interested in seeing if there is a difference. And when we get there, I may need to adjust some of the ways in which we do the class, some of the ways in which I ask questions, have them think about the text and what not. But I’m pretty confident at this point that they’re going to continue be interested in the material.

R: A few minutes back we were talking about when students pose questions to you and how that can sort of stimulate the conversation for others. What kinds of questions do they ask you?

Ann: It depends on the material that we’re looking at. And sometimes it may be a basic comprehension-type question. Like, “I didn’t understand this certain passage on a certain page.” And that may not necessarily lead to a fruitful discussion. And then other times it may be, and Herminia does a lot of this—where she’ll ask background questions; questions that aren’t directly related to the text that we’re looking at at that point but rather the context in which it was produced, or a question about the author, a question related to the period, etc. And some of those can be productive in terms of offering a broader context in which to discuss the material. So there’s certainly a variety of things that they come up with.

R: Besides Herminia, is there any other student who maybe poses more questions than others?

Ann: Nicole again does that and I think she does it quite effectively. And this is something when I taught the Introduction to Literary Analysis class, I tried to get the students to realize just how important it is for them as readers to be asking questions of the text and of the material. And all of those questions are completely valid. Now many of those questions they are going to be able to resolve on their own as they read the text, but perhaps not all of them. So I think, as I’ve said before, those questions can be the beginning of a productive discussion or a productive set of inquiries, though not always. Sometimes it’s something that I can resolve very quickly and then move on. But I do like to leave plenty of space for the students to ask questions because I want them to feel as fully engaged with the activities as possible.

R: If I asked a student in your class to describe the way in which you talk about literature? What would he/she tell me?
Ann: You’re going to have to tell me later (laughter)! This is one of those things that I’m not sure I’m in a great position to answer that now because we really, and I wish there were more of a tradition of this, but we really don’t tend to, as literature professors, we don’t tend to talk a lot about pedagogical issues or just how we’re teaching certain texts, what we’re emphasizing and what we’re not. So, I don’t necessarily know how someone else would go about teaching the same kind of course; even with my husband who teaches very similar material but I know that he has a very different approach to teaching than I do. So that’s a question that I’d love to know the answer to just out of pure curiosity, but I don’t really know that I can give an answer myself.

R: What factors, both in and outside of the classroom, possibly contribute to the way in which students talk about literature?

Ann: Just generally speaking, with this class and with other classes as well, I think it’s important to introduce the text, do some sort of pre-reading activity—it doesn’t necessarily have to be a set of questions—but some kind of activity that’s going to get the students familiar with the kinds of topics or issues being addressed in the text and then also the general jist of the text. So familiarizing them with the text to some extent before they actually open the page I think is important. And then giving them some kind of broad, though clear sense of what it is that I as an instructor hope that they’ll be able to get out of the text. And with this class that you have been observing, but I’ve been doing with all of the different 16th Century versions of the Conquest that we’ve been looking at, is looking at a similar set of issues—representations of the different characters, of the different historical figures involved, representations of different events—and sort of bringing a continuity to the class. Now if we were doing some other kind of course, I might create that continuity by looking at issues related to genre and how different texts are examples or deal with different aspects of or different features of the different genres. So I think it’s important to create some kind of continuity in the discussion from one day to the next and one week to the next and then also make sure that the students get some kind of introduction to the text before they open it.

R: In your opinion, what does it mean to say that a student in your class has understood a text?

Ann: Well, certainly with these 16th Century texts we’ve been looking at, there are so many different levels of understanding that can be attained. And I’m certainly not...they don’t need to be giving me insights that I would be expecting to hear at a specialists’ conference in the area. So, understanding definitely needs to be understood in the context and I think that I would go back again to some of these broad issues that I try to bring up repetitively with the different texts. And if they are able to speak fluidly and confidently about issues around representation of historical persons or events in the different texts, then I feel like they’re getting what I want them to get out of it. Certainly if this were a graduate class, the expectations would be different and if this were a panel at a conference, the expectations would be different. But for them I try to keep the expectations focused around a set of fairly broad issues for them to think about.

R: Would you say that part of that understanding then would also be the ability to articulate that or share that or not necessarily?

Ann: Absolutely, absolutely. That’s certainly part of the process. And I realize that some students are more verbal than others. Some students feel much more comfortable speaking openly and making interventions than others. But I think the ability to articulate
an insight and share that is important for developing analytical skills, but also for developing language skills—particularly in this context. And I think the two very much go hand in hand because I’m certainly asking them to think analytically about texts in Spanish and discuss those ideas in Spanish. So they really are paired in an important way those two skills.

R: Have there been any challenges that you have faced while teaching the content of this course so far?

Ann: I wouldn’t say any big challenges. When we started, and this was in the first week or so, long before you first started coming to the class, we started with Cortés’ second letter and I felt at that point that they really needed some more specific guidance in terms of what aspects of the text to read closely at home and how to speak about the text in class. So I gave them handouts and worksheets and more paper to look at, and more questions to think about and that I think really helped because there was a clear interest and curiosity, but I think it took them a few weeks to develop some level of confidence in reading 16th Century Spanish. By the time we got to the Bernal Diaz texts, I really didn’t feel that was necessary; I didn’t feel like they need that kind of hand-holding. But it’s challenging material and I was expecting to need to do more of that, I was expecting that I would need to give them more worksheets and handouts and guided activities. I haven’t as much as I thought I would. But I would say that was the only real challenge per se.

R: From an instructor’s/pedagogical perspective, what do you think would make it easier for students to have meaningful discussions about literature?

Ann: Class size I think is really important. And this is a very reasonable class size. There are 19 students. But the course that I taught in English, a couple of times I taught it with 30 students and I feel that once you get over 25, there’s a portion of the class that just feels anonymous and it’s much more difficult to get everyone involved in the discussion. So class size is important. Then of course, you just hope that the students will have done their homework. And that’s something that just really varies from class to class and day to day. But it’s a lot easier if they’ve done their homework, if they’ve thought critically about the material at home, if they’ve asked themselves a series of questions that perhaps they don’t have the answers to that they want to pursue in class. So basic interest and engagement is helpful.

R: Compared to the other classes that you’ve taught, have you taught that were more than 50 minutes.

Ann: I have not, I have not taught on the Tuesday-Thursday schedule. And I think that there would certainly be advantages of that. Well actually when I was teaching the language class I was teaching at night. But the format was so different that it’s really a fair comparison. But I have not taught on the Tuesday-Thursday schedule. I think it would be useful to be able to delve further into discussions to have a little bit more time. But by the same token, it only meets two days per week. And to go from Thursday to Tuesday, is a really long time. I think there would be pluses and minuses with that. And I don’t think the students would be interested in an hour and a half three times a week.

R: A number of these students that you have in class right now, you’ve had before in other classes. Do you think that has contributed to the way in which they participate and fell comfortable with others in the class or not?

Ann: I think so, definitely; especially at the beginning of the semester because over half of them knew me—I felt comfortable with them and they felt comfortable me; I knew
their names right away and there wasn’t that kind of getting-to-know each other period with the majority of the students in the class. And many of them knew one another too. So I think the ice-breaking period was much easier and much shorter than it is normally. But I wouldn’t say that the students that are participating the most that are the most engaged are just the ones that I’ve had in other classes. Some of them are, but not all of them. But I think that there was an environment created from the very beginning where there was a high level of comfort between instructor and students and perhaps that has helped things get going a little bit more vigorously.

R: Is there anything that you would change about your students and the way in which they participate in whole-class discussions at this point?

Ann: Really no. There are a couple students that I would like to participate more certainly, but they are pretty much the minority. I am delighted with how the class discussions go and I feel that they are very productive, that we are able to get to a pretty high level of analysis for this level of class. And some of these students I’ve had in other classes where they’ve spoken in Spanish and I think because there’s a high level of enthusiasm in the material and a high level of interest, I think their Spanish is stronger too because they are just more engaged and they are wanting to say more. And so no, I don’t think that there’s anything that I would change except to bring a couple of more voices in.

R: And because they are more engaged and passionate about the topic...in the last couple of weeks that I’ve observed, I don’t really see class discussion focusing on linguistic issues. Has that been typical of the rest of the semester, that these students, when they do talk, are not dealing with linguistic issues?

Ann: No, I have to think that, even if they are not sure they know how to say something...because the level of conversation is working up here (indicating with her hand at a high level), they are a little bit embarrassed to ask a vocab. question, which is fine with me. And actually the one who asks me the most is Herminia; which is sort of odd because she’s a native speaker.

R: I was just thinking about pronunciation issues because some of these terms in Nahuatl are difficult.

Ann: Yeah, and they wrap their tongues around them. Again, some of the students that I’ve had in other classes in Spanish haven’t necessarily performed as well in other classes. So I think, you know, and this is something that you can only understand as an instructor—the students I don’t think really have a very good idea about this—but there is a class vibe and a class dynamic that develops. And with this particular group, it’s a move forward, keep the discussion going forward at a very high level and that’s how all of them intervene in the conversation.

R: That being said, when students do struggle—if they say something that is just grammatically not correct—what do you do normally?

Ann: It hasn’t happened that much with this class, but it has happened. Sometimes it’s very minor things that they are struggling with, where they are searching for a word and I can kind of anticipate what they are trying to say and I feed them a word. And then other times, and this is more common in my 103 Composition class, where half of what comes out of their mouths is just garbly-gook and I can’t understand it. So many times in those situations, I try to re-frame what they say and then ask them to let them now if that’s really not what they are trying to say. Or I’ll make a small correction, although I don’t
like to do a lot of grammar correction when they are talking—say they continue to speak in the ‘yo’ with the third-person singular verb form. But I really haven’t had to do a lot of that with this class. Sometimes somebody will get frustrated and they’ll be looking for something and I’ll try and help them find it, but I haven’t had to do a lot of interpretation.

**R:** So you want to focus more on the content of what they are saying rather than addressing linguistic issues.

**Ann:** Yeah. And I really do think that if they get enthusiastically involved in the discussion about the content, that some of the inhibitions about language fall away and they get into that Spanish-speaking mindset. Their Spanish may not be completely correct or without problems, but I think they are able to express themselves more fluidly if they’re excited about what they are saying. And this is something that I’ve noticed in the lower-level classes in the composition class, students are just more self-conscious. They question themselves a lot more in terms of what comes out of their mouth. And I do think that if you’re able to engage them just on a pure content basis and kind of bypass the linguistic stuff, that they are somehow able to do that without so much struggle.

**R:** What does an ideal whole-class discussion look like to you?

**Ann:** I realize that with a group of 19 students plus my voice, not everybody can be speaking multiple times during the hour. But in an ideal whole-class discussion, at least half of the class is actively involved in speaking more than once, making multiple interventions and they are responding to one another and the rest of the class is making smaller contributions and then also being involved in thinking about what’s going on. I have to say, I feel like I’m bragging about my children or something, but with this group, I leave the class feeling satisfied. I leave feeling that Wow, we were able to do some real intellectual work here. And that doesn’t always happen. In fact, that’s sort of the rare treat in most classes at that level. But they’re right there, they’re definitely engaged and interested.

**R:** So you thoroughly enjoy teaching this class so far?

**Ann:** I do thoroughly enjoy this. Some people—friends who work at other universities, people I meet at conferences—they ask me about the students at this university. And at each class that I teach, there are at least a couple of really, really strong students who, I would say, would feel perfectly comfortable participating in a class at Harvard or Yale or the University of Chicago. And this class, there are a lot of students like that. There just happen to be a lot of students in this class that are bright, and intuitively intelligent, but who also take the learning process very seriously. And those are not necessarily character traits that always go hand in hand. Sometimes you can have very bright students who are very lazy or very motivated students who just aren’t very talented. But with this group there are a lot who, I would say, would be perfectly fine in an Ivy League school and I’m glad to have them here.

**R:** I think that’s pretty much it. Any other comments that you’d like to make?

**Ann:** No, no. As I mentioned to you before as we first started talking about this, it’s interesting to me to have a forced reflection on teaching because there is so much of it that happens on an unconscious level where these are techniques that I’ve been developing for years now and many of them are inspired by professors that I’ve had and instructors that I’ve had from the time when I was an undergraduate.

**R:** Did you have a methods course that you took while at UW-Madison?
Ann: We did, but it only focused on teaching language and not literature. Pedagogy for teaching more advanced courses—culture and literature courses—I think that there is definitely room to help promote that from your standpoint and just the mentoring that happens between professors and graduate students. I think there’s more of that happening now because there are more of these lecture courses, and so graduate students are working as TAs for professors. So they get more hands-on experience teaching literature than they would if they were just teaching language classes.

R: Did you have any kind of similar teaching/mentoring experience?

Ann: No, I didn’t when I was in graduate school. You know I was always very conscious about what aspects of professors’ instruction I thought were particularly effective and just made mental notes about those kinds of things and I’m sure that’s part of the arsenal that I draw upon now. But I never did that in a concrete way and certainly never looked at any kind of pedagogical research behind teaching more advanced content courses. But I think it would be a very useful thing for graduate students to do.

R: Thank you.
APPENDIX E: FOCAL STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student Interview Question Guide
(for three focal students)

NOTE: Questions A–E are meant to be warm-up questions.
A. What’s your name?
B. What’s your first/native language?
C. What’s your second language?
D. Have you studied any other languages?
E. Tell me about your language-learning history. (Follow up with the following: when were you first interested in Spanish, what experiences helped to improve your speaking skills, etc.)

End of warm-up questions

1a. Tell me a little bit about your educational background (i.e., high school or any other Spanish language learning experiences) as well as your areas of academic interest as an undergraduate.

1b. How long have you been a student at this university?

2a. How long have you been studying Spanish at this university?

2b. Have you ever taken any Spanish or Latin American literature courses before this one?

2c. If so, what have you taken?

2d. And how does this one compare?

3. From your perspective (i.e., a student’s perspective), what do you want to get out of this particular literature course by the end of this semester?

4. How has this experience been so far in terms of getting to know your instructor and/or getting to know other students in the class?

5a. What do you expect to know when you finish this course?

5b. What skills do you expect will improve as a result of taking this course?

5c. How much time outside of class do you spend to prepare for each class meeting? (i.e., what are your preparation patterns or routines outside of class)
5d. Do you have a particular pattern in your work for this course outside of class? Is there a certain routine you always follow to help you understand what you are reading and prepare for class? Tell me [more] about this.

5e. Do you have any particular activities or ways of studying outside of class to help you get ready to participate in class discussions? If so, please explain.

5f. Why do you participate in class discussions?

• for participation points?
• to ask a question?
• to comprehend a text’s meaning?
• to understand a vocabulary word?
• to figure out a linguistic problem?
• to further understand your own interpretation(s)?
• to voice opinion about the instructor’s or another student’s interpretation(s)?

5g. Do you understand everything that the instructor and the other students say during class discussions?

5h. If, at some point, you don’t understand what is being said during a class discussion, what do you do?

6a. What are some of the techniques or activities that your instructor uses in class discussion that seem to get students to talk about what they have read? What are the techniques or activities that help you the most? Why?

6b. Do you feel comfortable participating in class discussions? Why or why not?

6c. Can you remember any one time in this Latin American literature class when you felt uncomfortable participating in class discussions? Please explain. Why did you feel uncomfortable?

6d. Are there any activities that the instructor has the class do that make you feel uncomfortable sharing your opinions in class discussions? If yes, what are they?

6e. Have you ever felt shy or not confident about sharing your interpretations during a class discussion? Say more.

6f. Have you ever disagreed with your instructor’s interpretations about a particular text? If so, what do you do?

6g. If you had to describe the way in which your instructor talks about literature to a friend who is thinking about taking this course next semester, how would you describe her approach(es)? [NOTE: If students don’t understand approach, re-word the question and ask about the instructor’s technique(s).]
7a. How much chance do you have to speak Spanish in this course?

7b. How does this course compare to other Spanish courses you have taken at this university as a way to work on improving your speaking ability in Spanish?

8a. Based on your experiences in this particular Latin American literature course so far this semester, how do class discussions contribute to your understanding of the readings? [NOTE: I will then break down what the student interprets as “understanding” in this question in the following subset of questions to get at different levels of “understanding”.

8b. Do whole-class discussions help you to better understand vocabulary words in the readings?

8c. Do whole-class discussions help you to understand the literal meaning of portions or sections of the readings?

8d. Do whole-class discussions help you to understand the literal meaning of the entire reading?

8e. Do whole-class discussions aid your ability to interpret a reading’s meaning? That is, do discussions help you to go beyond a literal level of understanding and connect a reading’s meaning to the social or historical context in which it was written? If so, how does this happen?

9a. Are some texts more difficult to talk about than others? If so, can you give me an example from this class? What makes/made it difficult to talk about that particular text?

9b. When you get to the point when you “understand” a specific literary text, what exactly does that mean to you?

10a. Do you understand everything that your instructor says in class?

10b. Do you understand all of the questions that your instructor asks in class? If not, what do you do when you don’t understand? By “understand,” I mean literally comprehend the questions she is asking, and also understand what she is getting at by her questions.

10c. When your instructor asks the class a question and no one responds or there is silence for a few seconds, how do you feel? What do you normally do in these situations?

11. What are some of the challenges or problems that you have faced in participating in class discussions in this course?

12. Do you talk to your classmates about this course? What kinds of things do you talk about? What do other students say to you about the course?
13a. From your perspective as a student in this course, what would make it easier for students to have more meaningful discussions about literature?

13b. If you could change anything about this course with respect to speaking, what would it be?

13c. Is there anything that you would change about your classmates and/or instructor and the way in which they participate in class discussions?

14a. What is your overall opinion of this course?

14b. Tell me more (based on what is said in 14a).

15. What are your goals in studying Spanish? (e.g., what is/are the most important thing(s) that you want to get out of your Spanish studies in college, and why?)

16. Would you like to add any other comments or reflections about the Latin American literature course that you are currently taking or about speaking skills development in upper-level Spanish courses (i.e., courses that are beyond GEP requirements)?
APPENDIX F: CODING DOCUMENT FOR RATER

Coding Guide Document for Rater
Inter-rater Reliability: Macro-level Analyses

IRE vs. IRF patterns

- All turns (i.e., instructor and student turns at talk) in all six class meetings need to be coded.
- Not all turns will fit nicely into an IRE or an IRF sequence. Some students may pose a question or simply make a comment without the instructor initiating the sequence. In those cases, please mark them as “R” but also put an asterisk (*) next to it in the margin.
- If you have any questions that come up while coding, please let me know.
- OJO: Some instructor turns can be both an E or an F but might also include an I (for the next episode)

1. IRE (Initiation, Response, Evaluation):

These triadic sequences or episodes usually start out with the instructor (1) Initiating dialogue with students—usually in the form of a question, then a student (2) Responds to the instructor with some comment, then the instructor (3) Evaluates the student response and closes out the exchange with that evaluative comment. Here’s an example of an IRE sequence:

I: . . . que no han visto antes. Bien, excelente. Entonces esta idea del poder de los caballos, sobre todo en el contexto de pensar en los españoles como dioses. Es muy importante. Excelente. ¿Algo más vieron—Alejandra, Marisol, Anthon—que no ha comentado Nickietodavía? Y si no...sí Natalie C.

Natalie C.: También, como los textos coloniales hablan de un división entre los indígenas y también una división entre los españoles; ese es muy importante en la conquista porque hay lados aquí y lados allá.


Eric: Pues, el texto tiene mucha semejanza en la representación de nuestra parte...tiene mucho que ver con Moctezuma en la primera parte y después con la Malinche. En la primera parte la descripción de Moctezuma es más semejante a la descripción en el Códice Florentino. Hay mucha énfasis en las creencias religiosas de Moctezuma y este efecto que tenían sus decisiones y su interpretación de la situación y todo. Y como ya hemos discutido ya en la clase, no sabemos si esta es una creación mucho después del hecho como dice el Códice Florentino o el análisis que es en el libro de . . .

I: Flockhart.
Eric: ... Flockhart.
I: Exacto.
Eric: O si es algo que es real. No sabemos y tenemos que cuestionarlo así.
I: Bien. Pero no es un hecho.
Eric: Sí. No sabemos.
I: No es un hecho histórico. Y eso sabemos ahora. A lo mejor no sabe Fuentes de eso.
Pero lo sabemos nosotros. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, mucha influencia del Códice Florentino en cuanto a la imagen de Moctezuma y sus creencias, sus supersticiones, etc.

2. IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback):

These triadic sequences or episodes usually start out with the instructor (1) Initiating dialogue with students—usually in the form of a question, then a student (2) Responds to the instructor with some comment, then the instructor provides (3) Feedback to the student and, in effect, pushes the student to follow up his/her comment. In contrast to an IRE sequence, the IRF exchanges can last multiple turns. However, the final comment by the instructor will be an E (in order to close the exchange and move on to another topic). Here’s an example of an IRF sequence:

I: ¿Algún comentario más sobre este artículo o sobre la película? Jon.
Jon: Um, algo que me sorprende es cuando Tecuichpo está en la cárcel y dice “Mi hijo no es tuyo, es de mi sangre.” ¿Carrasco quiere establecer algún semejanza con la Virgen en Tecuichpo? O, porque la hijo que lleva tiene mucho mucho importancia a los indígenas y pienso que es tan conveniente ser un coincidencia.
I: Bien. ¿Qué piensas tú? ¿Qué fue tu reacción?
Jon: No sé porque Tecuichpo definitivamente no era un virgen y no sé si eso es como un INAUDIBLE sobre las creencias católicas de la virginidad o si hay algo que quiere decir Carrasco.
I: Bien. El punto que me interesa de lo que acabas de decir es que sugiere tal vez, y eso podríamos ver no, si ampliaras un poco el argumento, creo que es algo que podrías sugerir, que esta escena se sugiere como un paralelo a la historia de la Virgen en esta mujer, en este personaje Tecuichpo. No es un paralelo exacto como dices.
Jon: Sí, sí, sí.
I: Pero sí es interesante, sí. Es algo que podrías elaborar tal vez en un ensayo en unas semanas. No es algo que trata Chorba en su artículo, pero me parece muy interesante porque sería parte de un análisis más general de la película que sí desde el comienzo, sugiere estos mundos paralelos, estas prácticas religiosas paralelas.
APPENDIX G: CLASS OBSERVATION #10/RECORDING DAY #1

Class Observation #10
Recording Day #1
Monday, March 26, 2007

Ss = All Students

Ann: ¿Alguien puede contarnos la última parte de la película que vimos la semana pasada...¿No? Les voy a decir qué pasó porque como les dije el viernes, no es exactamente correcto. Pero les voy a decir exactamente qué pasa en esta última escena, en los dos minutos básicamente que tenemos al final de la película que cortaron en la versión que vimos en clase el viernes. Pero vamos a comenzar primero con la tarea para miércoles porque el miércoles vamos a comenzar con las lecturas de la segunda parte del semestre. O sea, las lecturas del siglo 20 comenzando con un cuento de Carlos Fuentes que se llama “Las Dos Orillas”. ¿Cuántos reconocen el nombre de Carlos Fuentes? Algunos. ¿Han leído algo de él en algún momento o por lo menos reconocen el nombre? Es uno de los escritores más conocidos de México. Todavía está vivo, viejo, pero todavía está vivo. Escribió este cuento como parte de un libro que se llama El Naranjo. “Las Dos Orillas” tienen que ver con la experiencia de Gerónimo de Aguilar y su narración de los eventos de la conquista. Entonces va a ser bien interesante porque como vimos en los textos coloniales, hay muy poca información sobre Aguilar. Entonces, Fuentes crea en su mundo creativo esta versión según Aguilar de los eventos de la conquista. ¿Qué recuerdan ustedes de Aguilar...de lo que si leímos? ¿Dónde, cuándo aparece en Cortés, Bernal Díaz? ¿Pueden recordar ya hace casi dos meses que comenzamos esta conversación? Sí, Ellen.

Ellen: Aguilar sobrevivió un shipwreck?
Ann: Sí, naufragio, naufragio. Exacto. Era un naufrago que encontró Cortés. Y él llegó a ser importante. ¿Por qué? Era un naufrago, y pasó muchos años en una comunidad indígena hablando qué lengua?
Ss: Maya.

Ann: Maya, exacto, exacto. Entonces, él hablaba español y maya. Y llegó a ser muy importante en la conquista para Cortés porque él ayudaba con la interpretación, con la traducción. ¿Con la ayuda de quién?
Ss: La Malinche.


Nicole: Que al principio de encontrar a Aguilar los españoles no conocían se ve como un indígena.

Ann: Exacto, exacto, exacto, exacto. Y él había estado por varios años por una comunidad indígena hablando maya. De hecho, hablaba muy mal el español al principio de este...al principio después de este re-encuentro. Bien. Entonces, no lo reconocen como español. Bien. ¿Qué más sabemos de él? ¿Tenemos más información sobre él en la versión de Cortés o en la versión de Bernal Díaz?
Ss: En Bernal Díaz.
Ann: La versión de Bernal Díaz, no, fácil. Recuerdan lo que dice Cortés, ¿dónde aparece el Gerónimo de Aguilar en la narración de Cortés? Lo menciona una vez, nada más una vez.

Sheila: Mira como un esclavo.

Ann: Bien, bien. Casi como decía Nicole—su aspecto físico era muy diferente, ¿no? Y no se veía como español, para nada. Bien, bien. Pero Cortés básicamente solo lo menciona en el contexto de mencionar también a la Malinche. En la parte que tiene que ver con la masacre en Cholula. Y solo tenemos esta mención muy breve a él. Pero en la versión de Bernal Díaz, tenemos más información, ¿no?, sobre su aspecto físico, sobre su papel. Bernal Díaz lo menciona no solo una vez, sino varias veces. Entonces, vemos, por lo menos en la versión de Bernal Díaz que él es una figura muy importante. Gerónimo de Aguilar es una figura muy importante sobre todo al principio. Sobre todo al principio del proceso de llegar a Tenochtitlán. Entonces, el cuento para miércoles tiene que ver con esta figura. Traten de pensar, recordar un poco más los detalles que menciona Bernal Díaz en su descripción de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Tenemos mucha información más en el cuento de Fuentes. Pero como sabemos, esta es una versión ficticia que se basa en la ficción. Pero es una representación muy interesante de los eventos, de los personajes, que ya hemos visto en textos históricos y también en una película que miramos en viernes. Entonces, en la película y también en el cuento, juegan un poco con la idea de la perspectiva. La perspectiva de la cual se narra, la perspectiva de la cual se cuenta la historia de la Conquista. Si pensamos en la perspectiva que ofrece la película, ¿qué es? ¿Cómo la podemos describir? ¿Cómo la podemos contrastar por ejemplo con la perspectiva que ofrece “Captain of Castile?”, esta película que miramos justo antes de las vacaciones. Solo vimos unos minutos, pero ustedes agarraron la idea de “Captain of Castile”. ¿Cómo son diferentes? Janet.

Janet: Nos da cuenta de que los indígenas sufren mucho con la dificultad de transferir las culturas y la religión y todo eso en el Capitán de Castile.


Sheila: Las transferencias entre culturas no eran pasivo.

Ann: Bien. No pacíficas. Bien, bien. Entonces, hubo una conquista militar con violencia física pero también vemos ejemplos de violencia de otro tipo—no espiritual tal vez en “La Otra Conquista”. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de la perspectiva que ofrece? ¿Algo nuevo que ofrece?

Nicole: En… ¿qué fue el nombre de la película?

Ann: Captain of Castile.

Nicole: Captain of Castile. En eso los indígenas fueron representados más temidos.

Ann: Eran más temidos, sí, sí.

Nicole: y en “La Otra Conquista” fueron más enojados.


Sheila: Hay más foco en la familia de los indígenas.
Ann: Hay más información de la sociedad indígena en general en “La Otra Conquista”. Bien, son dos versiones muy distintas de la Conquista. Bien. Entonces, pensando en esto, pensando en esta perspectiva que ofrece la película, quiero repasar brevemente lo que pasa. Tenemos básicamente tres actos en esta película. Comenzando en el año 1520, luego pasamos al año 1526 y terminamos en 1531? Esta es una fecha muy importante y vamos a hablar sobre de la razón por qué en unos minutos. Pero primero, ¿qué pasa en 1520...en la película o en la Historia también?
Karen: La masacre en el Templo Mayor.
Ann: Exacto. Exacto, exacto. La masacre en el Templo Mayor. Y para refrescar un poco las memorias, en esta masacre, ¿la mayoría de los indígenas que se murió era de qué tipo? ¿Cómo los podemos describir?
Nickie: Eran los nobles.
Ann: Exacto, los nobles. Los nobles, exacto. El Pipiltin; las personas de la clase alta de la sociedad. Entonces Topiltzin es un ejemplo de una persona que estaba allí durante la masacre. Y como aprendemos después, él si es parte de la élite de la sociedad, él es parte de la clase alta. ¿Cuáles son indicaciones de esto, de su estatus social en la película?
Anna: Pensando en el INAUDIBLE.
Ann: Exacto. Exacto, exacto. Y como sabemos por la lectura de Gruzinski, las personas que escribían estos códices pertenecían a la parte alta de la sociedad. Eran parte de la élite. Otra indicación es su padre ¿Y su padre es quién?
Ss: Moctezuma
Ann: Exacto, exacto. Entonces, él es un ejemplo de una víctima en esta masacre. Él sobrevivió, pero su madre, muchos de sus amigos, mucha de su familia, se murió en este evento. Entonces, este evento establece más o menos el tono de la película. ¿Recuerdan lo que pasa justo después de esta primera escena? Tenemos la escena en el punto mayor, después de la masacre. Y justo después se corta, ¿no? It cuts. ¿Se corta a qué?
Karen: Topiltzin es como...
Ann: Está escribiendo.
Karen: sí...su códice.
Aaron: Hay un hombre que está muriendo.
Ann: Exacto, un hombre que está muriendo y sabemos—lo conocemos mejor después—y es el fray viejo. Exacto. Pero está al final de su vida en esta escena. Entonces, es otro momento, es otro año mucho más adelante. Pero él está pensando, está recordando sus experiencias con Topiltzin, ¿Recuerdan algo de esta escena de la impresión que tenía de este hombre, del fray Diego?
Nicole: Fue um...haunted, no sé. Él sufría de imágenes de Topiltzin y el problema de convertirlo.
Ann: Bien, y no es algo completamente resuelto para el fraile.
Ellen: Él paró a comer y probablemente quiere morir.
Ann: Exacto, exacto. Está justo al final de su vida, quiere morir, va a morir. Pero tiene todas estas memorias, todos estos recuerdos de Topiltzin y su intento de convertirlo. Vamos a regresar a esta escena, al final porque tenemos que contrastar un poco esta escena del fray Diego con lo que pasa al final de la película. Bien. Entonces tenemos estas dos escenas importantes—la masacre en el Templo Mayor, y después la muerte del
fray Diego. Ahora, luego en el año 1526, si comenzamos con la imagen de Topiltzin haciendo su códice. ¿Cuáles son otros eventos importantes que pasan en este segundo acto, en esta segunda parte de la película? Tenemos la producción del Códice.

Ellen: El sacrificio.
Ann: Bien. ¿El sacrificio de quién? No tenemos nombre, pero ¿cómo podemos describir a esta persona?
Nicole: una virgen.
Ann: ¿Perdón?
Nicole: Una virgen.
Tiffany: Para la mujer es un acto de honra. No es que ella está forzada.
Ann: Bien.
Tiffany: Quiere ser sacrificada.
Sheila: Hay una combinación de climax.
Ann: ¿Del climax?
Sheila: Climax de cómo matar...la matan. Pero cuando los españoles matan, rápidamente toman la decisión.
Janet: Con el sacrificio, también vemos Topiltzin dando comentarios a la Virgen, la mujer. Y para darle confianza de que está haciendo, dice que es para una cosa buena. Esto nos da su lado de lo que está haciendo en vez de un acto barraboso.
Ann: Exacto, exacto, exacto. Y como dices, el comentario que ofrece Topiltzin en ese momento, es básicamente un comentario para nosotros, ¿no? Para los que están viendo la película para explicar la escena. Bien, excelente. ¿Algo más en cuanto al sacrificio o otros eventos que tenemos en esa segunda parte? Entonces justo después del sacrificio como dijimos, vienen los españoles. ¿Y ellos reaccionan cómo a esta escena?
Ss: Con horror.
Ann: Sí, están horrorizados. Completamente horrorizados. No pueden creer lo que están viendo ellos. Y vemos en este momento la distancia entre las dos culturas y lo poco que tienen en común en este evento en cuanto a eso. Justo después de eso, después de esta reacción, después de matar por ejemplo a la abuela--¿Qué hacen con la estatua de Tonanzin?

Anna: Es la destrucción de ella.

Ann: La tiran, la destruyen, y ¿la reemplazan con qué? Con el INAUDIBLE de la estatua de la virgen. Y eso establece el tema central de la película. Todo esto pasa en los primeros 10 minutos, ¿no? Pero en los primeros 10 minutos, tenemos mucha información sobre el pasado, la experiencia de los indígenas en el proceso de la conquista y también lo que va a pasar después. Lo que va a pasar después tiene que ver con esta batalla interior de Topiltzin entre sus creencias indígenas representadas en la figura de Tonanzin y luego las creencias de la fé católica y el intento de convertir a Topiltzin al cristianismo. Entonces, esta escena es muy importante para establecer las tensiones que vienen después en la película. Bien. Sí...

Herminia: ¿Se supone que esto es la estatua de la Virgen María?

Ann: La que ponen en, o sea....

Herminia: Con la que reemplazan Tonanzin. Es rubia, de pelo largo. Yo recuerdo haber leído que hubo seis representaciones de la Virgen que fueron traídas a la Nueva España. Pero no recuerdo cuáles eran las tres eran nombradas de formas diferentes.

Ann: Sí. Sí. Y para aclarar eso porque es muy importante. Para aclarar eso, todas estas versiones de la Virgen, son ¿qué? ¿Puedes explicar un poco más de eso Herminia?

Herminia: No entiendo la pregunta.

Ann: O sea, para los que no entienden por qué hay tantas versiones de la Virgen. Virgen morena, Virgen rubia, ¿por qué hay tantas versiones?

Herminia: A este punto, en los primeros años después de la conquista, este, nada más es...hay una decisión que se hace de que el punto de la Virgen es algo que puede ayudarlos INAUDIBLE. Ahora, en México y en otros países siendo colonizados, de alguna forma, tratan de hacer que la comunidad local se identifique con las imágenes de la Virgen. Entonces, algunas tiene piel morena, como en el caso de la Virgen Guadalupe. Pero en este punto del film, lo que vemos es una de...sé que hay como seis Virgenes, y...

Ann: Y cuál es esta.

Herminia: ¿Cuál es esta? Todas tienden a ser, claro, blancas, con pelo rubio. La diferencia es INAUDIBLE, etc.

Ann: Claro, claro. Y no sé decirte cuál es. Pero, como dices, lo importante es que esta es una versión con una rubia, muy blanca su piel, etc. Lo que quería aclarar aquí es que hay varias manifestaciones de la Virgen María. Entonces, todas son representaciones de la Virgen María pero la representan de varias maneras. Esto va a ser importante porque en el artículo, y también indirectamente en la película, hay un comentario en cuanto a la Virgen de Guadalupe. Y vamos a hablar un poco más de eso en unos momentos, pero la Virgen de Guadalupe es otra manifestación de la Virgen María. Y es la que es muy importante en México—no solamente en el sentido religioso, sino también en un sentido cultural. Bien. Entonces, ¿algo más que recuerdan en esta segunda parte antes de pasar al fin?

Anna: Los españoles destruyen el códice.
Ann: El Códice. Exacto. Y ¿cómo lo hace? Eso es importante. ¿Cómo destruyen el códice que había hecho Topiltzin?
Ss: En el fuego.
Ann: En el fuego. Exacto. Entonces, simbólicamente. Ellos ponen este códice en el fuego y se quema menos una parte que vuela al aire. Y alguien recoge esta parte pequeña del códice. ¿Quién recoge esta parte?
Ss: Fray Diego
Ann: Vemos esta parte del códice también en otro momento de la película. ¿Alguien recuerda?
Sheila: En la muerte del fraile.
Ann: Exacto. Entonces, en esta escena que viene al principio pero supuestamente es algo que pasó después. Justo cuando se estaba muriendo fray Diego, otro fraile entró en su cuarto y estaba viendo su Biblia y encontró en la Biblia esta parte del códice. Entonces, el códice tiene una función simbólica importante aquí.
Herminia: No sé si te acuerdas, pero en una de las escenas de la película, como en la mitad de la película, vemos al Fray Diego que está tratando de convertir a Topiltzin. Y tiene en sus piernas un ejemplar de Utopia de Thomas Moore. Mi interpretación de todos estos pequeños detalles donde Fray Diego rescata este pedazo del códice, y donde vive atormentado, estaba al punto de morir y estaba atormentado, y estas imágenes y los eventos en la Nueva España. Pienso que la conexión tiene que ver con este fraile y las influencias intelectuales que el fraile tenía en cuanto a la religión y la conquista. En La Utopía de Moore, encontramos que hay en este mundo utópico-perfecto que se propone, la religión es una cuestión personal. Todas las religiones son respetadas y INAUDIBLE en La Utopía. Y si este fraile tenía este conocimiento y probablemente más de conocimiento, tal vez era parte de su entendimiento de la religión.
Ann: Claro, claro.
Herminia: Fue muy difícil para él ver la forma tan violenta y en la que se llegaron los españoles.
Ann: Claro, claro. Hay referencias indirectas impícitas aquí a todo un debate que ocurriría en cuanto a justificación de la conquista y cómo hacer la conquista. Entra también el libro de Moore, de Utopia como modelo para reestablecer la sociedad de los indígenas. Entonces, hay comentario y referencias a estos debates y las ideas que circulaban en la época. No se desarrolla muy bien qué tiene que ver el libro de Thomas Moore con lo que estaba haciendo Fray Diego. Pero, sí es una referencia indirecta que aparece.
Herminia: No entendí cómo, que este hombre vivió torturado porque él creía en un mundo utópico donde los seres humanos tenían la libertad de elegir a quien o la religión que quisieron y la utopía fue de ser esclavos. Todas las religiones proponen algo positivo y por eso deben ser aceptadas. Él obviamente vivía tormentado por la denuncia y por el abuso que se hizo. Y él fue parte de ello que era la parte más difícil para aceptar para él.
Ann: Claro, claro. Y eso nos puede ayudar tal vez interpretar lo que pasa con este fraile al final. Pero como digo, no hay un desarrollo completo, simplemente una referencia por allí. Ahora, en la última sección, en el último acto en 1531, ¿qué pasa en esta parte? Se comienza con la imagen de Topiltzin ¿dónde? Ella se ha mudado a...el monasterio. Ha entrado en el monasterio. Se ha cambiado completamente su look se ha cambiado completamente su apariencia. Y él ya es parte de este monasterio y es supuestamente cristiano en este momento. Entonces, en esta última parte, tenemos la continuación
también de esta lucha interior que sufre Topiltzin en cuanto a sus creencias. Si él ha convertido o no. Es la pregunta que tenemos hasta el final de la película, y hasta qué nivel se ha convertido al cristianismo. ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de puntos específicos cuando vemos esta tensión interior que tiene él en cuanto a sus creencias religiosas?

**Mitch:** Su relación con su hermana.

**Ann:** Bien. La relación con la hermana por ejemplo. Bien. Sí, sigue...

**Mitch:** Porque ellos quieren a, a, a extender la línea de Montezuma.

**Ann:** Exacto. Exacto, exacto. Pero es indecente, ¿no? porque son medio hermanos. Exacto, exacto. Bien. Entonces, es un ejemplo muy importante porque él, él en este momento quiere seguir con una tradición pre-colombina que no tiene nada que ver con el Cristianismo. Pero sigue siendo importante. Bien, excelente. ¿Otros ejemplos de esta tensión que siente Topiltzin? Si pensamos por ejemplo en la estatua de la Virgen otra vez. Porque él tiene una relación muy peculiar, muy rara con esta estatua. ¿Qué recuerdan de esta relación que él tiene con la estatua? ¿Cómo se relaciona con la estatua.

**Janet:** Cuando él lo veía después en el monasterio, estaba mirando entre las puertas en el portal.

**Ann:** Bien, bien.

**Janet:** Y estaba mirando a la Virgen como, y tenía antes de esto, después de esto en el monasterio alucinaciones de ella subiendo, no subiendo, ah...

**Ann:** Cayendo.

**Janet:** Cayendo, sí, con el bebé y todo de eso.

**Ann:** Exacto.

**Janet:** Y pienso que su tormento que comenzaba con el fuego en sus pies. Y con el...

**Ann:** Látigo.

**Janet:** Látigo, y todo de eso, comparten en esto. Y también posiblemente el conversión de su mother goddess.

**Ann:** De Tonanzin.

**Janet:** Tonanzin en ella.

**Ann:** Bien, bien, bien, bien. Y eso es muy importante porque hay un cruce aquí entre Tonanzín, la figura de Tonanzín y la Virgen. Y vemos eso en varios momentos de la película, sobre todo en esa última parte. Si reemplaza la figura de Tonanzín con la Virgen María con la estatua de la Virgen y la figura de la Virgen. Pero, ¿hasta qué punto representa la Virgen para Topiltzin es algo que tenemos que preguntar, ¿no? Porque de alguna manera sigue siendo una representación de Tonanzín. Entonces, hay un cruce complicado aquí entre estas dos figuras—entre la figura de Tonanzín y la figura de la Virgen. ¿Más eventos que pasan en esta última parte? ¿Algo más de importancia?

**Ellen:** Doña INAUDIBLE Tecuichpo y Doña Isabel. ¿Se suicidó?

**Ann:** ¿Perdón?

**Ellen:** ¿Sucidió? ¿O no?

**Ann:** Ah ¿Qué piensas?

**Ellen:** Probablemente murió INAUDIBLE por las fuerzas de INAUDIBLE.

**Nicole:** Eso es lo que dice Chorba.

**Ann:** Exacto. Es lo que dice Chorba y es lo que se puede suponer también. No hay una imagen directa de eso, de la matanza de ella. Pero se puede suponer que él la mata, que él la mata que Tecuichpo la mata a Doña Isabel. Bien. Entonces tenemos la muerte de ella.
Esto también afecta mucho a Topiltzin y también es parte de este proceso de Topiltzin en esta última parte, ¿no? La parte de entenderse a sí mismo por medio de estas imágenes, estas representaciones de las dos creencias—la creencia indígena, la creencia europea a Tonanzin y luego a la Virgen María. ¿Algo más? Y el fin. Ahora, ¿qué pasaba cuando se paró la película el viernes. ¿Recuerdan? Topiltzin salió de su celda. Se fue a... ¿Eric recuerdas?

Eric: Sube al techo ¿al sacristo?
Ann: En la sacristía.

Eric: en la sacristía para hacer algo con la estatua suponemos, pero no sabemos.

Janet: Yo estoy confundida con la representación del fray.
Ann: Del fraile.

Janet: Oh, ¿el fraile Diego? Oh...
Ann: Ah, es simplemente la palabra. Sí, sí. Entonces si hablas en general, es un fraile, ¿no? como sustantivo. Pero si quieres nombrar a una persona específica es Fray Diego, Fray Martín, Fray José, etc.

Janet: Pero al comienzo cuando él está torturado en frente de muchas personas y en frente de la imagen de la Virgen y el fra... ¿es el fray Diego quien muere a esto tiempo con el código con parte del código? ¿Pero es el fray diego en el monasterio también?
Ann: Ah, ella había regresado a España, está en La Coruña. Está en una parte de España cuando se muere. Entonces no está todavía allí en México. Pero me alegro que hayas señalado la diferencia entre las dos escenas. Porque la reacción inmediata de Fray Diego a la muerte de Topiltzin es que es un milagro. No es algo positivo. Pero al final de la vida él se cambia de idea aparentemente porque al final de la vida él recuerda los problemas con la conversión de Toninzin. Y no simplemente el milagro de Topiltzin con la estatua de la Virgen. Bien. Entonces, hay un contraste allí. Muy bien. Quiero hablar muy brevemente de la Virgen de Guadalupe. La Virgen de Guadalupe aparece por primera vez
en 1531. Por eso, este año no es casual. Es una referencia importante a algo que sí pasó en la historia, por lo menos la historia de la iglesia en México. La Virgen de Guadalupe, supongo que todos han visto una imagen de ella. Si van por ejemplo a Hy-Vee y van a la sección de comida mexicana, van a ver velas, muchas velas. Y siempre hay una vela con la imagen de La Virgen de Guadalupe. La Virgen de Guadalupe también es un ícono cultural en México. Es una imagen importante de alguna manera religiosa, pero también simplemente en la cultura. Muchos mexicanos, sobre todo los hombres, tienen tatuajes de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Aparece en las camionetas, in the trucks, ¿no?, como en este país hay muchas banderas americanas en esas camionetas grandes. En México ve una imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Entonces, es una figura que es muy importante por varias razones en la sociedad. Aparece por primera vez en 1531 y le aparece a un pobre Macigual que se llama Juan Diego. “Macigual” si recordamos quiere decir ¿qué? ¿Alguien sabe la fecha precisa? Es una fecha muy importante en México. Herminia seguramente sabe. Pero ¿alguien más? Es una fecha en diciembre.

Nicole: Macigual es lo opuesto.

Ann: Lo opuesto, exacto. Las personas de la clase baja. La gente común en la sociedad. Entonces, Juan Diego es un pobre Macigual. Un pobre Macigual que ve la imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe en la colina en Tepeyac. Y si ustedes van a México y tienen interés en esa figura, en esas prácticas, pueden ir a la Basílica de México que ahora está en Tepeyac y pueden subir esta colina de Tepeyac? y ver una re-creación básicamente de este encuentro entre la Virgen de Guadalupe y Juan Diego. Es muy estilo Disneyland, pero es interesante como movimiento popular. Entonces, ella le aparece a Juan Diego en esta colina en Tepeyac. ¿Alguien sabe la fecha precisa? Es una fecha muy importante en México. Herminia seguramente sabe. Pero ¿alguien más? Es una fecha en diciembre.

Tiffany: ¿El ocho?

Ann: ¿No? El 8 más 4. El 12 de diciembre. Como ustedes seguramente saben, el 5 de Mayo no es una fiesta importante en México en realidad. Pero el 12 de diciembre sí es muy importante. Las celebraciones para la Virgen de Guadalupe, son celebraciones muy importantes cada año. Entonces ella le aparece el 12 de diciembre en 1531 a Juan Diego en la colina de Tepeyac. Y él, para dar prueba, él lleva una tilma se llama en Nahuatl y es una parte de su ropa. Y él le muestra esta tilma y ella se pone su imagen en la tilma de Juan Diego. Supuestamente, la imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe que está en la Basílica de México, es esta imagen que ella impusó en la tilma de Juan Diego este día en 1531. Entonces, ella es una figura muy importante. Y también es un figura que también representa hasta un punto el sincretismo de las dos religiones de las dos creencias en México. El lado indígena es representado por Juan Diego y era un macigual, hablaba nahuatl, no hablaba español, y luego hablaba europeo claro por la Virgen. Entonces hasta un punto ella es una figura sincrética y trata de incorporar las creencias, las prácticas indígenas en las tradiciones europeas en el catolicismo. Entonces, este también es un tema importante que vemos en la película. El artículo de Chorba que ustedes leyeron para hoy tiene que ver con esta cuestión del sincretismo, el mestizaje. Y según ella, Carrasco el director trata de cuestionar estos aspectos de la cultura mexicana y de la identidad mexicana también. Entonces, presenta ella un argumento en cuanto a cómo esta película cuestiona, problematiza ese aspecto de la cultura—el sincretismo y el mestizaje. ¿Recuerdan algo de ese aspecto de su argumento?
Mitch: Ella dice que los indígenas como Topiltzin no pueden INAUDIBLE de su mestizaje. Um, well, por ejemplo Topiltzin no puede ser parte de esta indentidad entre sí excepto en la, um, ah, la mezcla con la Virgen.

Ann: Bien, bien. O sea, él tiene que perder parte de su cultura para seguir.

Mitch: Asimilarse.

Ann: Para asimilarse. Bien, bien. Excelente, excelente. ¿Algo más, una continuación de ese aspecto o otro aspecto?

Nicole: La idea de orfandad. Que hay tanto perdida. Tanta pérdida.

Ann: Tanto pérdida. Tanta pérdida.

Nicole: Que pasó a los indígenas como la pérdida de muchos vidas y de Tonanzin para Topiltzin. Entonces los indígenas y Topiltzin eran huerfanas. ¿Huerfanos?

Ann: Huérfanos.

Nicole: Y necesitaban otra madre.

Ann: Bien. Bien. Y en este análisis de la orfandad enfatiza ella la idea de la pérdida que mencionó también Mitch como aspecto importante de esta película. En el análisis de ustedes, no tiene que estar de acuerdo con el análisis de Chorba. Pero en el análisis de ustedes, ¿él pierde completamente su identidad indígena al final de la película? Claro, no vieron el final de la película, pero les narré brevemente el final. Entonces, pensando en lo que sí vieron, en lo que les dije de los últimos minutos, ¿él pierde completamente su identidad indígena o no? ¿O sea, hay una conversión completa o no? Jon.

Jon: Pienso que no porque él quita su ropa de fraile y...


Jon: Y se viste en su...ah....

Ann: En su uniforme indígena. ¿Alguien sabe lo que se llama esa cosa? Es un tabalabos. Solamente es una descripción de la función de la cosa. Pero no es ropa europea. Como dices, se quita esta ropa europea. Casi de manera virtual. Bien. Entonces, eso que dices tú es parte del apoyo del argumento de no pierde completamente su identidad indígena. ¿Más ideas?

Ellen: Su palabra final—Tonanzin.


Eric: Yo creo que él no afortunadamente perdió toda su identidad pero no lo hemos visto pero en lo que nos has dicho.

Ann: Si me confían en mí.

Eric: La estatua estaba encima de él después de todo simboliza algo que si todos los nativos de los Nahuatl de esta época quizás no pierde, no perdían su identidad. Pero últimamente como vemos ahora, se muere porque el tiempo pasa y el tiempo pasa con el poder ahora en las manos de los españoles era una cosa que no podía parar en ese momento. Y para Topiltzin, no perdía su identidad pero....


Herminia: Pero le quitan la corona a la Virgen. Creo que esto también es importante.


Sheila: Lo siento. Representa su identidad cultural porque es como un martirio de los indígenas con su muerte.
Ann: Bien. Bien, bien. Y eso también aparece en el análisis de Chorba. Claramente es algo que quiere a sugerir Carrasco al final con su muerte. Es una suerte, un tipo de martirio como dices. Excelente. Muy bien. ¿Comentario último antes de terminar hoy? Para el miércoles, si quieren, si tienen interés en escribir y pensar más sobre el artículo de Chorba y también las películas, pueden entregar el análisis crítico para su ensayo, para el ensayo de Chorba. En la segunda parte del semestre vamos a tener cuatro opciones para análisis críticos. Entonces si no seleccionan este ensayo, va a ver tres opciones más. Pero si tienen tiempo extra esta tarde si no tienen planes por ejemplo, pueden sentarse afuera y releer el artículo, apuntar ideas y luego terminar uno de los análisis para la segunda parte del semestre. Allí vamos a terminar. Seguiremos el miércoles con el cuento de Fuentes.
APPENDIX H: CLASS OBSERVATION #11/RECORDING DAY #2

Class Observation #11
Recording Day #2
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

I= Instructor
Ss= All Students

I: La lectura que hicieron para hoy era los cuatro primeros capítulos. Pero los números comenzaron a número diez y luego baja a nueve, ocho, y siete. Vamos a hablar un poco de esta estructura—por qué él da estos números así a los capítulos. Pero primero vamos a hablar un poco en general sobre la idea del nacionalismo cultural en México. Porque en esta segunda parte del semestre, nosotros vamos a enfocar en una película y varios textos que tienen que ver con la conquista de México. Pero son textos escritos en el siglo 20, o sea, textos contemporáneos. Estos textos tratan eventos, personajes, etc., de la conquista y de alguna manera estos textos representan un esfuerzo para realizar una identidad nacional. La idea del nacionalismo cultural en México depende mucho de este legado indígena. ¿Qué quiere decir legado? Legado en Inglés es...?

Sheila: Legacy.

I: Legacy, exacto. Entonces el legado indígena en México es muy importante para llegar a esta identidad nacional. Es un país mestizo supuestamente. Esta es una idea que problematiza de alguna manera Chorba en su artículo y vamos a hablar un poco más de eso en unos momentos. Pero pensando en general, ejemplos de la cultura en general que dan muestra de este mestizaje entre las dos culturas son, para comenzar, lo que vimos el otro día con la Virgen de Guadalupe, ¿no? Ella es una figura religiosa muy importante pero también un ícono cultural muy importante en México. ¿Pueden pensar en otros ejemplos—tal vez los que están en la clase de Civilización de este nacionalismo cultural?

Alejandra: Los artistas como Diego Rivera y los muralistas.

I: Exacto, los muralistas. Los muralistas mexicanos. Exacto. Por ejemplo, Diego Rivera, Orozco, Siquieros, etc., bien. ¿Más ejemplos?, y después vamos a volver a esa otra cosa.

Sheila: Posada.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, conectado con los muralistas, pero Posada, José Guadalupe Posada para los que no conocen, vino antes, antes de Diego Rivera y los otros muralistas. Y Posada hizo grabados. Grabados en Inglés son engravings. Y estas imágenes ya son parte de la imagen folclórica que vemos en México. Por ejemplo imágenes que vemos durante el Día de los Muertos. Entonces, el efecto de Posada también es importante como dice Sheila, hay elementos del mundo indígena allí también. ¿Otros ejemplos?

Alejandra: ¿La danza folclórica?

I: Sí, en el baile. El ballet folclórico. Exacto, exacto. Toma mucho de estas tradiciones culturales de varias partes de México. Pero hay una influencia muy importante de lo indígena allí. ¿Qué tal la bandera—la bandera mexicana? ¿Cómo es ejemplo la bandera misma de esta influencia que todavía podemos notar de este legado indígena?

Nicole: No es muy importante el original más o menos con el caracol.

I: El águila.
Nicole: El águila.
I: El águila.
Nicole: ¿Pero ahora tiene serpiente?
I: Exacto. Exacto, exacto. Entonces, para refrescar las memorias—la imagen de la bandera mexicana tiene en el centro un águila con un serpiente en la boca. Y luego, ¿este águila está dónde? Eso también es importante. ¿Está encima de...?
Ss: Un nopal/cactus.
I: Un nopal. Exacto. Un cactus, está bien. Nopal, cactus, está bien. Encima de este nopal de este cactus. ¿Y esto, como decía Nicole, es una señal que tenían quiénes para fundar qué? ¿que tenían los Machica para fundar...Tenochtitlán, exacto, cerca del lago de Texcoco. Entonces este emblema azteca ya es parte de la bandera mexicana entonces es un punto de referencia muy importante en la idea de la cultura mexicana. Excelentes ejemplos. ¿Algo más que recuerdan? Entonces, en el baile, en el arte visual, en la política, en el cine como hemos visto, y en la literatura, vemos mucho esta influencia indígena. También, vemos mucho en la literatura en estas otras formas. Vemos mucha influencia a la conquista. La conquista como momento formativo para la nación, para el país. Un ejemplo que vamos a comenzar a ver hoy es el cuento de Fuentes. Pero otro ejemplo también es la película que terminamos la semana pasada, y de que hablamos un poco en lunes, esta película también visita de nuevo estos eventos, personajes de la conquista, como parte del proyecto cultural. Ahora, si pensamos de nuevo en la película, o tal vez en el artículo que leyeron sobre la película—este artículo de Chorba—¿qué comentarios ofrece esta película en cuanto al efecto de la conquista en la cultura? Si tratamos de ver la película en un sentido más amplio en cuanto al efecto de la conquista para la cultura en términos más amplios, en términos más generales, ¿pueden pensar en un comentario que ofrece la película o un análisis tal vez que hace Chorba en cuanto a eso? ¿En qué se enfoca ella en su análisis? ¿En qué aspectos?
Mitch: El lugar que tiene la indígena en el mestizaje y como es parte del mestizaje.
I: Bien, bien, bien. Entonces ella se enfoca mucho en esta idea del mestizaje y cómo se trata el elemento indígena dentro del mestizaje en México. Bien, bien. ¿Podemos seguir un poco más con esto, es un tema central? ¿Qué más dice ella?
Jon: El proceso de establecer el mestizaje no era un proceso pacífico, era tan violento como muestra Carrasco en la película.
I: Exacto. En la película, exacto, exacto. Entonces, esta idea de un mestizaje sin violencia, fácil, no es algo que se muestra en la película. El mestizaje ocurre de una manera muy violenta en la película. Bien, excelente.
Sheila: Representa dualidad de la muerte de Topiltzin y las interpretaciones de la conquista, las interpretaciones de muchas maneras—como como ella puede entender la mestizaje, la mezcla armónica.
I: Armónica, una mezcla armónica entre las dos culturas. ¿Es algo que se apoya o que se problematiza?
Sheila: Problematiza.
I: Exacto. Exacto, exacto, exacto. Seguimos un poco más con lo que decía Jon. Se problematiza esta idea de mestizaje armónico, sin violencia, etc. Bien. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de su análisis o una crítica tal vez de su análisis. Marisol.
Marisol: Creo que ella hace una referencia a una contradicción y dice que las verdaderas intenciones del director...
I: ...Carrasco...

Marisol: ...Carrasco, que él quería mostrar las influencias de los indígenas aztecas pero al final es como no... como INAUDIBLE.

I: Exacto. Y según ella hay una contradicción en lo que hace, sobre todo con la estatua encima. Y disculpen de nuevo que no vimos juntos esta última escena. Pero sabemos que se muere el protagonista al final. Se muere Topiltzin al final. Y ella [Chorba] interpreta esta muerte como, como dice Marisol, como una indicación del fin de la influencia indígena, ¿no? De la muerte alegórica del mundo indígena al final. ¿Eso intentaba Carrasco según lo que dice en su artículo o según lo que vieron ustedes en la película? Sheila.

Sheila: Posible el fin representa la realidad de contradicciones entre el mundo de la conquista y como la gente percibe la conquista como completa pero la contradicción entre la visión de la muerte y cómo el fraile habla con una conversión es representada en realidad.

I: Bien. Entonces hay tal vez un elemento central de lo que acabas de decir. Es que hay mucho pasando en esta última escena, en esta última parte que vemos en la muerte de Topiltzin pero también en lo que dice el fraile al final. Y hay varias interpretaciones que podemos hacer de esos eventos. Sí Nicole

Nicole: Pienso que Chorba dice del fin de la película que es una aniquilación de la identidad mexicana y de toda la gente, pero claro yo no vi el fin.

I: A pesar de no ver el fin [laughter]. Pero te describí más o menos.

Nicole: Sí. Con la información que tengo...

I: Sí, tienes la información—eso es lo importante.

Nicole: Entonces, a mí, me parece, pues, es más o menos un sacrificio también. Y entonces, él está continuando su tradición. Y también en la tradición católica cuando se muere, se junta con el mundo religioso más o menos, el mundo eterno. Para mí, es una continuación de dos.

I: Bien, interesante. O sea, se podría interpretar esta muerte no como fin, como dice ella, sino como continuación de estas tradiciones indígenas por medio de un sacrificio simbólico que hace o por medio de esta idea de la vida eterna que logra él después de la muerte. Bien, interesante. ¿Más crítica de ella o más comentarios sobre su artículo?

Jon: Chorba dice que Carrasco dijo que quería mostrar la muerte de Topiltzin como el sacrificio que hizo Jesucristo pero él suicidio es un pecado, ¿no?

I: Sí. Sí, claro. Dentro de la iglesia católica, es cierto. Lo que no sabemos con precisión es cómo se muere. No hay indicación de suicidio, pero tampoco hay explicación médica ni alguna indicación clara de por qué o cómo se muere al final. Pero sí, eso se tendría considerar como parte de este análisis. Sí.

Jon: Pero la única razón que no estoy seguro que era un suicidio era porque fray Diego no fuera tan feliz si era un suicidio porque él reconociera que era un suicidio.

I: Bien. Bien, bien. Entonces, tú dices según la reacción del fraile...

Jon: No era suicidio.

I: no era suicidio.

Jon: Pero no digo que era completamente un acto cristiano. Pero...

I: No era por lo menos suicidio.

Jon: Sí.

I: Por lo menos no era suicidio obvio.
Jon: Sí.
I: Bien, bien. Bien visto. ¿Algo más en general sobre el fin, sobre lo que dice Chorba, u otro ....
Janet: Según lo que dice Chorba en su escrito...
I: En su ensayo.
Janet: En su ensayo, la mención del fin de que fue ella criticaba el director de que fue un final muy negativa.
I: Bien.
Janet: Y de que no fue parte de su mensaje de que quiere mostrar. Pero no estoy de acuerdo con eso.
I: Bien. ¿Por qué?
Janet: Porque pienso que muestra que el sacrificio, si esto es lo que fue, no sé—que esto es parte de lo que pasó con la, no sé, de que los españoles lo hagan a las indígenas de que fue parte de la opresión y de que... oh, no, yo sé lo que quiero decir.
I: Bien, adelante.
Janet: Lo siento. Okay. So, entonces ella decía que él quería mostrar un final negativa pero muestra un final positiva y no pienso que es positiva, lo siento.
I: ¿Y cómo ves tú el fin que no viste [laughter]?
Janet: Yo veo el fin que es negativo porque el fraile veía esto acto de su muerte...
I: Su muerte. Sí, su suicidio.
Janet: fue suicidio. Pero en vez de eso, vemos que fue un...muy triste porque él muere en el monasterio de que no fue su lugar indígena. Pero, es que, yo pienso que es más o menos triste porque el fraile lo vea como un milagroso y eso no pienso que fue, yo pienso que fue que él muere y eso es lo que pasó y no es un milagro de que...yo pienso que su dios fue representado en esta imagen y no él,
I: Okay.
Janet: porque él no tenía nada más del imagen.
I: Porque esto es una pregunta muy importante—cómo ve él, cómo conecta él con esta figura, con esta estatua de la Virgen al final. Y este es un aspecto muy importante de la interpretación que hacemos de la película en general. Entonces según lo que dices tú, él veía en esta figura, en esta estatua Topiltzin y no la Virgen católica, y no la virgen de la iglesia católica. Y en este sentido, no representa un milagro para el fraile, porque no hubo una conversión completa. Bien. ¿Podemos seguir un poco con esta idea? Sí Sheila.
Sheila: Y también hay un tema especifica con la prefiguración de la sobrevivencia de la cultura indígena. Primero con el códice y el fraile como el códice sobrevive.
I: Bien. Y ¿cómo sobrevive esta cultura, esta prácticas religiosas, indígenas después de la conquista en este mundo colonial. Si pensamos en los ejemplos que acabas de mencionar, el códice, y también la estatua de Topiltzin, ¿cómo continúan estas imágenes si interpretemos de una manera general lo que pasa al final?
Nicole: En lugares no muy obvios, como caves.
I: Cavernas. O cuevas.
Nicole: Lejos de las ciudades centrales.
I: Bien. Y el fraile visita una de estas cuevas en un momento. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Qué otros ejemplos tenemos de esta continuación—es una pregunta tal vez demasiado obvia. Pero si grita al final Tonanzin y no Virgen María, esto representa—o podría representar—que él ve en ella, en esta estatua como decía Janet. Que él ve en esta estatua
una representación de sus creencias precolombinas. Ve una representación de Tonanzin y no de la Virgen María, ¿no? Entonces, eso tiene una implicación interesante—que estas tradiciones, estas creencias sobreviven en la iglesia católica en la forma de estas virgenes de la iglesia, en la forma de estas estatuas, de estos íconos, etc. Otra indicación tal vez que tenemos de eso es lo que encontramos en la Biblia que tenía el fraile cuando se estaba muriendo si recuerdan en esa escena que viene al principio pero supuestamente pasa después. Cuando se abre esta Biblia, sale una parte de este códice que había hecho Topiltzin. Entonces otra vez hay esta mezcla, ¿no? de estas dos prácticas, de estas dos sistemas religiosos. Es una posible interpretación, pero hay seguramente otras. Tal vez lo que tiene Chorba, o otras que ustedes han creado en sus propios análisis. ¿Cuántos escribieron un análisis sobre este artículo. Wow, muy bien, muy bien. Entonces, dejen antes de irse lo que escribieron en una de estas mesas y leo siempre con cuidado y con gusto lo que escribieron sobre este ensayo. ¿Algún comentario más sobre este artículo o sobre la película? Jon.

Jon: Um, algo que me sorprende es cuando Tecuichpo está en la cárcel y dice “Mi hijo no es tuyo, es de mi sangre.” ¿Carrasco quiere establecer algún semejanza con la Virgen en Tecuichpo? O, porque la hijo que lleva tiene mucho mucho importancia a los indígenas y pienso que es tan conveniente ser una coincidencia.

I: Bien. ¿Qué piensas tú? ¿Qué fue tu reacción?

Jon: No sé porque Tecuichpo definitivamente no era un virgen y no sé si eso es como un INAUDIBLE sobre las creencias católicas de la virginidad o si hay algo que quiere decir Carrasco.

I: Bien. El punto que me interesa de lo que acabas de decir es que sugiere tal vez, y eso podríamos ver no, si ampliaras un poco el argumento, creo que es algo que podrías sugerir, que esta escena se sugiere como un paralelo a la historia de la Virgen en esta mujer, en este personaje Tecuichpo. No es un paralelo exacto como dices.

Jon: Si, si, si.

I: Pero sí es interesante, sí. Es algo que podríamos elaborar tal vez en un ensayo en unas semanas. No es algo que trata Chorba en su artículo, pero me parece muy interesante porque sería parte de un análisis más general de la película que sí desde el comienzo, sugiere estos mundos paralelos, estas prácticas religiosas paralelas. Vemos cuentos e historias paralelos desde el comienzo de la película. Entonces, podrías hacer una observación muy interesante. ¿Algún comentario más sobre virgenes, Tecuichpo, sacrificios? Bueno, entonces a lo mejor vamos a regresar a esta película después de hablar más de esta lectura de Fuentes para comenzar a comparar estas representaciones de estos eventos y personajes de la conquista. Quiero repasar brevemente, antes de hablar del texto de Fuentes, quiero regresar brevemente a lo que sí hemos visto de esta figura Gerónimo de Aguilar. Era náufrago como sabemos. Era náufrago y también intérprete para Cortés. ¿Él interpretaba entre qué idiomas?

Sheila: Maya y español.

I: Maya y español supuestamente. Fuentes añade a esta historia en su versión de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Porque en su versión, Gerónimo de Aguilar se representa como el intérprete más importante para Cortés. Y también el intérprete que interpretaba entre Montezuma y Cortés. Entonces, este texto, esta versión de Gerónimo de Aguilar que vamos a ver en el texto de Fuentes, es una elaboración creativa de la información que tenemos. Pero lo interesante de esta figura—también de la Malinche—es que no sabemos
mucho de ellos. No hay mucha información. Pero podemos imaginar que sus experiencias eran muy interesantes y representan excelente material para crear una historia más amplia. Eso es lo que hace Fuentes con este texto y también es lo que hace Laura Esquivel con su novela acerca de la Malinche. Entonces, hay suficiente información para comenzar la historia, pero Fuentes y también Esquivel elaboran una historia ficticia—tal vez un poco más interesante de lo que vemos en los textos coloniales. Esto es una cita que vimos ya hace más de un mes, ya hace mucho tiempo—la Malinche. Esta es la mujer a que se refiere pero no tenemos mención de su nombre específico en el texto. [reading from the quote on the board] “Lo dijo aquel, Gerónimo de Aguilar, lengua que hube en Yucatán.” ¿Quién dijo eso? “Que yo hube, por mis propias fuerzas...”

Ss: Cortés.

I: Tiene que ser Cortés. Y es básicamente la única mención que tenemos de Gerónimo de Aguilar en el texto de Cortés a pesar de que Gerónimo de Aguilar y también la Malinche eran figuras super importantes en su proceso de conquistar México. Ahora, ¿qué más recuerdan de esta figura, de Gerónimo de Aguilar, de los textos coloniales que vimos juntos? Básicamente no hay más información en Cortés, pero en Bernal Díaz sí tenemos más información. ¿Qué recuerdan de lo que narra Bernal Díaz en cuanto a esta figura de Gerónimo de Aguilar? Si no recuerdan datos específicos, en general, ¿qué aspectos de esta figura trata él en su texto?

Jon: ¿El texto de Bernal Díaz?
I: El texto de Bernal Díaz.

Jon: Su barba grande.
I: Bien, la barba, el pelo, sus apariencias. Cuando lo vieron los españoles por primera vez, bien. No se veía nada como un español. Tenía una apariencia de un indígena. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, este re-encuentro es una parte muy importante en el texto de Bernal Díaz y hay mucha descripción de este re-encuentro entre Gerónimo de Aguilar y los españoles. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Qué más? ¿Qué más recuerdan de él—en esta descripción larga o en general en el texto? ¿Lo menciona poco, mucho? ¿Qué podemos decir de cuándo y cómo aparece Gerónimo de Aguilar en el texto de Bernal Díaz? Eric.

Eric: Al principio, me parecía que él no quería ir con ellos y su marida estaba muy enojada.

I: Lo estás confundiendo con el otro español que estaba con él. ¿Alguien recuerda el nombre del otro?

Jon: Guerrero.

Jon: Él es cacique, ¿no?
I: Él es cacique. Exacto. Gerónimo de Aguilar no llegó a ser Cacique, ¿no? Era el equivalente a Macigual en esta comunidad; era esclavo. Pero Gonzalo Guerrero tenía una vida bastante cómoda y no la iba a dejar para nada. Tenía sus hijos, su esposa, su posición en la sociedad, etc. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más que recordamos de Aguilar?

Nicole: ¿En Bernal Díaz?
I: En Bernal Díaz.
Nicole: Para mí, Díaz menciona a la Malinche más que Cortés y algunas veces en el diálogo los indígenas hablan directamente a la Malinche y Díaz incluye esto en vez de hablar directamente a Cortés.

I: Pero como dices, la función del intérprete se enfatiza mucho más en la versión de Bernal Díaz que en la versión de Cortés.

Nicole: Sí.


Herminia: No olvida nunca que es religioso.

I: Pero eso no se puede casar, supuestamente.

Herminia: Y cuenta que cada vez que ha tenido la oportunidad de hablar sobre Cristo o esta gente INAUDIBLE siente que esta parte INAUDIBLE.


Herminia: Pero no dice Fuentes que Bernal Díaz de Castillo menciona como 84 o 85 veces.

I: ¿No dice 58?

Herminia: Tal vez soy disléctica.

I: Sí, yo también soy pésima con los números.

Hayee: 85 o 58, uno de los dos.

I: ¿Alguien recuerda? 58 creo.

Herminia: Pero muy, muy...

I: Sí, muchas veces. Pero si contamos simplemente el número de veces que lo menciona en esta primera parte, no, hay muchos allí. También menciona en este texto de Fuentes que Bernal Díaz lo menciona a Gerónimo de Aguilar al final en su lista de muertos. Para los que trajeron a clase el texto de Bernal Díaz, tengo una copia aquí, al final de su texto—en la página 571—y tenemos una cita casi exacta de lo que vemos aquí en el texto de Bernal en el texto de Fuentes. Dice Bernal “Y pasó un buen soldado que se decía Gerónimo de Aguilar. Este Aguilar pongo en esta cuenta porque fue él que hallamos en junta de Tepochle—que sabe el poder de indios y fue nuestra lengua. Murió de mal de uvas.” Entonces, se cita directamente de este pasaje en el texto de Fuentes.

Herminia: ¿Qué página es?

I: 571. También hay un índice en este texto. Si quieren buscar más referencias a Gerónimo de Aguilar aquí, pueden usar el índice. Entonces, tenemos el material para comenzar esta historia en el texto de Bernal Díaz y un poquito en el texto de Cortés. Ahora, si volvemos al texto de ficción de Fuentes, ¿cómo se representa a esta figura? ¿Cómo se representa a Gerónimo de Aguilar en la versión de Fuentes? Solo han leído cuatro de los diez capítulos—falta mucho para leer. Pero, ¿cuáles son algunas impresiones que ustedes tenían de esta representación de Gerónimo de Aguilar que vemos en caso de Fuentes, en el texto de Fuentes. ¿Cómo es semejante, cómo es diferente de la versión que vemos en los textos coloniales. Herminia.

Herminia: Para empezar, tiene un dominio del lenguaje increíble, bellísimo.

I: ¡Casi como un novelista! [laughter]

Herminia: Casi como novelista.

Anna: Tiene mucho orgullo. Creo que en este cuento Gerónimo de Aguilar, pienso que tiene una gran parte en la conquista.

I: Exacto, exacto. Es casi como el proceso de mitificación que vemos en Cortés, ¿no? Él es una figura central en estos eventos según la versión que tenemos de Fuentes. Según su auto-representación. Bien, excelente. Tiene un papel muy importante. Tiene un dominio de la lengua. ¿Qué más podemos decir de la representación de él aquí en este cuento de Fuentes? ¿Cómo se lleva con los otros personajes importantes? ¿Con Cortés por ejemplo? Y después vamos a ver más sobre su relación muy problemática con la Malinche. ¿Otras impresiones? Como decía Anna, es un tipo mucho más egoísta en esta versión y tiene conflictos él con, por ejemplo, la Malinche. Y sus relaciones con esas otras personas son mucho más problemáticas de lo que vemos en la versión que nos da Bernal Díaz por ejemplo. ¿Otras impresiones en general de él? Sí Herminia.

Herminia: Se manifiesta, se llama a sí mismo ‘traidor’. Y lo justifica diciendo que es porque él ama y respeta esa gente de este pueblo.

I: Y eso es muy interesante. Creo que esto esta cita es parte de la lectura para viernes si no me equivoco.

Herminia: Solo llegué a la página 28.

I: ¿O sí?, ¿Te lo juras? [laughter] Bien, bueno. Sí, sí. Él se llama a sí mismo traidor y elabora eso en las páginas después. Eso es muy interesante porque representa a una imagen de un traidor de una traición de la conquista que no fue hecha por un indígena, por la Malinche por ejemplo—la última traídora en México, o también por las Tlaxtaltecas. Porque los Tlaxtaltecas también se consideran traidores. Pero juega Fuentes aquí con esta idea de la traición, y del traidor y anuncia que Gerónimo de Aguilar es el traidor y no tanto la Malinche, no tanto los Tlaxtaltecas. Bien. ¿Algo más? ¿Otras impresiones?

Tiffany: ¿Qué es la Noche de Sanipolito? No sé. Hace varias referencias a...


Ss: Más fácil.

I: ¿Más fácil dicen todos? ¿Interesante? Yes please! [laughter] Vale la pena ver este cuento por lo menos por tres días. Bueno, quiero terminar con tres preguntas que vamos a comenzar a ver hoy. Y quiero que piensen en estas preguntas mientras están leyendo para el viernes. [writing them on board] Primero, una pregunta que hemos visto muchas veces—“¿Cómo se representa los eventos de la conquista? Al igual, ¿cómo se representan a los personajes? Segundo, ¿Dónde vemos influencia de los textos coloniales? A esta cita, por ejemplo de Bernal Díaz, menciona el texto de Bernal Díaz, pero también hay otras influencias más implícitas, más indirectas—por ejemplo al Códice
Florentino. Entonces, piensen un poco en eso. Y para terminar, regresando un poco a esta pregunta que hicimos a la película que vimos que tiene que ver con este nacionalismo cultural ¿Qué comentarios se sugiere, qué comentarios se hace del papel de la conquista en México en esta idea de la cultura, de la identidad cultural, de la identidad nacional? ¿Qué posible comentario sugiere Fuentes allí? Entonces, tres preguntas no muy difíciles pero importantes. Piensen en estas preguntas mientras están leyendo para el viernes. Pero también quiero pensar, por lo menos un poco, en estas preguntas hoy. Comenzando, tal vez, con número dos. Hemos hablado algo de número uno. Influencias de estos textos coloniales. Aparte de Bernal Díaz, notaron en las descripciones de personas, de eventos, influencia de las descripciones que vimos en los tres textos coloniales; en Cortés, en Bernal Díaz, y también en el Códice Florentino—en el libro 12 sobre la conquista. ¿Notaron algo cuando estaban leyendo aparte del texto de Bernal Díaz? Si no notaron algo en la lectura para hoy, piensen más en esta pregunta para el viernes. Porque me parece interesante la manera en que incorpora Fuentes elementos de esta descripción en su versión ficticia de esta figura y de estos eventos. Entonces, piensen en la presencia, en ecos que pueden identificar, a estos textos que vimos antes. ¿Alguna pregunta sobre las preguntas? Entonces, para viernes, ustedes van a leer estas páginas 28-44. Vamos a comenzar el viernes con un repaso breve de los elementos básicos narrativos básicos que vemos en la lectura para hoy; la lectura también para el viernes. O sea, los personajes, el ambiente, la trama que pasa. Y después vamos a avanzar a un análisis de estas preguntas y otras preguntas en cuanto al cuento en general. Si no hay ninguna pregunta o comentario por el momento, lo vamos a dejar allí y luego el viernes continuaremos con Fuentes y Gerónimo de Aguilar. Que pasen bien este día triste y gris y nos vemos en viernes.
APPENDIX I: CLASS OBSERVATION #12/RECORDING DAY #3

Class Observation #12
Recording Day #3
Friday, March 30, 2007

I= Instructor
Ss= All Students

NOTE: The first 4-5 minutes of class discussion was dedicated to talking about details regarding the latter half of the class (e.g., details about the final exam).

I: Ahora, vamos a regresar a este cuento de Fuentes que comenzamos a ver el miércoles. Quiero comenzar con preguntas bien básicas sobre el cuento acerca de los personajes, el ambiente, la trama—qué pasa, y también la estructura. La organización de este cuento es un poco interesante y vale la pena hablar un poco de esto también. Comenzando con los personajes; ¿quién es alguno de los personajes centrales? Son personajes que hemos visto en otros contextos también, ¿no? ¿Quiénes son algunos de ellos? Tiffany.

Tiffany: Doña Marina.


Ss: Gerónimo de Aguilar.

I: Gerónimo de Aguilar. ¿Qué más?

Ss: Montezuma, Cortés.

I: Cortés, Montezuma. Bien. ¿Alguien más? El otro hombre que estuvo con Gerónimo de Aguilar.

Nicole: ¿Guerrero?


Janet: ¿Cuahatemoc?

I: Cuahatemoc. Sí. ¿Y él dice “Cuahtemozin” o algo así?

Janet: Sí.

I: Cuahtemoc; el último emperador de los Aztecas, de los Machica. Bien. ¿Alguien más? Estos, de verdad, son los personajes más importantes en lo que ustedes han leído en el cuento y en el cuento en total en realidad. ¿Qué podemos decir de cada uno de ellos? Hablamos un poco el miércoles de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Pero ¿cómo podemos decir de Doña Marina? ¿Cómo se representa? ¿Cómo es ella en esta versión? Nicole

Nicole: En alguna manera, para Gerónimo, ella le robó su profesión.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Le robó la profesión, su puesto en toda esta actividad, en todos estos eventos. Se caracteriza de una manera bastante negativa aquí. Bien. ¿Qué más podemos decir de ella, de la manera en que se representa?

Tiffany: Hay un manipulación de que los indígenas dice y que ella dice que los indígenas dicen.

I: Bien. Hay mucha manipulación aquí. Manipulación por parte de la Malinche, pero también manipulación por parte de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Se enfatiza en este cuento el
poder de la lengua, el poder de las palabras. Y ellos dos manipulan las palabras por sus propios propósitos. Bien, excelente. Hay una manipulación. ¿Qué más podemos decir de ella?

**Janet:** Y también el autor enfatiza su relación con Cortés como una revelación de su poder.

**I:** Bien, bien, bien. El otro poder que tiene como una mujer. Exacto. Y su relación con Cortés es muy importante en el poder que ella llega a tener en este contexto. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más sobre ella, sobre la Malinche? Veremos más, explícitamente pasajes, donde vemos descripciones de ella. Pero por el momento, vamos a pasar a unos de estos otros personajes por ejemplo Cortés. ¿Cómo se representa Cortés aquí? ¿Dónde aparece? ¿Cómo aparece? ¿Tiende un papel fuerte o no?

¿Es un personaje muy importante y muy central como en sus cartas o no? Janet.

**Janet:** No fue tan importante, pero él enfatiza su barba mucho.

**I:** Su barba. Bien, su masculinidad. Bien.

**Janet:** Fue más viejo que su apariencia.

**I:** que su edad, exacto. Dice que su barba indica una edad más que los años que tiene. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más de Cortés? No tiene un papel tan central como dice Janet. Bien, Herminia.

**Herminia:** Aparece como el objeto de la manipulación constante de la lengua y de los deseos de los dos traductores.

**I:** Exacto. Exacto, exacto. Y este es un cambio muy importante de lo que vemos en los textos coloniales. Aquí, la persona que tiene el poder no es Cortés sino la Malinche. Y eso se ve claramente. Si Mitch. Tienes una expresión de comentario.

**Mitch:** Porque es un análisis sexista.

**I:** Sí, claro, claro. Estoy completamente de acuerdo.

**Mitch:** Y colonialista también.

**I:** ¿En qué sentido?

**Mitch:** Porque los indígenas son...tienen la poder en la situación y están usando los españoles por sus...

**I:** por sus propios propósitos.

**Mitch:** ...propósitos.

**I:** Bien, bien. Volveremos a esta idea del aspecto colonialista que se podría llegar aquí. Pero el elemento sexista no es tan difícil de analizar. Y es algo que vemos en las descripciones pero también en general, en la manera de representar a esta mujer aquí. Estoy completamente de acuerdo. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de estos elementos de la Malinche—de esta descripción de ella o su relación con Cortés? Sí, Sheila.

**Sheila:** Cortés es representado como un extranjero o un outsider...

**I:** Exacto.

**Sheila:** de la cultura. Y los textos coloniales lo representa como un INAUDIBLE.

**I:** Exacto. Y según su versión de los eventos que vemos en la Segunda Carta de Cortés, él está siempre en control de la situación, ¿no? Y él está siempre en control de estas conversaciones que tiene con los líderes indígenas. Aquí no. Aquí no. Está muy...se queda muy fuera de esta sociedad y depende completamente de la Malinche y de Gerónimo de Aguilar para funcionar en esta sociedad. Bien. Herminia.
Herminia: En esta narración aparece Cortés como, como un hombre de casi buena voluntad. Él está siempre dispuesto a llegar a un acuerdo. Entonces, Aguilar encuentra una forma de terhibesar para ponerles en contra.


Mitch: Sí, quiero decir también que el sexismo de este texto no es tan diferente que el sexismo de la idea en general que la Malinche, la mujer, es una traidora. Que es una idea que existe mucho más que en este cuento.

I: Sí. Exacto, exacto. O sea, esto no es creación de Fuentes; la idea de la Malinche como traidora. La traición de la Malinche es una parte super importante en la cultura mexicana. Él juega un poco con esta idea. Y por eso es interesante porque según este cuento, ella no es la única traidora. Tenemos otro traidor; la persona de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Y sí es nuevo. Y eso sí nos hace pensar en otras posibles traiciones en otros aspectos de lo que hizo la Malinche, lo que hizo Gerónimo de Aguilar por ejemplo. Bien. Buen punto. ¿Algo más en cuanto a...? Sí.

Herminia: Esto tiene que ver más con el uso de Fuentes de esta idea de la Malinche como la traidora y hace lo que hace por sí mismo. Yo pienso que gracias, y gracias entre colmillos, los escritores como Carlos Fuentes, que estas ideas perpetúan. Y los novelistas...

I: Claro. Claro, claro, claro. Y esto es algo que vamos a ver también en el ensayo de Paz. Porque la Malinch figures también como personaje central en su interpretación de estos eventos de la Conquista en el ensayo de ella. Pero como sigue siendo una figura tan importante—un ícono tan importante en la cultura mexicana—es interesante y importante también, ver cómo la tratan los escritores, novelistas, ensayistas como Paz como la tratan en el cine, etc. Pero sí, hay un tratamiento muy problemático como ustedes han señalado. También la semana que entra, vamos a leer unos ensayos escritos no por novelistas, no por ensayistas, sino por una lingüista y también una historiadora sobre la Malinche. Entonces, vamos a ver la Malinch mucho en esta segunda parte del semestre desde... muchos puntos de vista. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más de ella o Cortés? ¿Algo que podemos decir brevemente de Montezuma; de cómo representa a Montezuma aquí? Y si no en este momento, vayan pensando un poco de eso mientras estamos hablando del cuento hoy y también el lunes. Cuahtemoc también aparece—no mucho—pero sí figura en este cuento. Y como ya dijimos, es el último líder, el último emperador de los Machica. Gonzalo Guerrero también figura aquí. En las partes que tienen que ver con Gonzalo Guerrero en el cuento, Fuentes toma mucho del texto de Bernal Díaz si ustedes no notaron eso. Van a reconocer que hay lenguaje muy semejante en el cuento de Fuentes en cuanto a la descripción de Guerrero al lenguaje que vimos en el texto de Bernal Díaz. Entonces, hay mucha conexión ahora en lo que vimos en los textos coloniales y los que estamos viendo en este cuento y en lo que vamos a leer en otras interpretaciones después. Bien. Entonces, Personajes Importantes. Ambiente. ¿Qué podemos decir del ambiente? Simplemente pensando en los elementos narrativos muy básicos, muy generales. Aquí, el cuento tiene lugar cuándo y dónde? [no one responds] Una pregunta muy fácil. ¿El cuento tiene lugar en...?

Nicole: En Nueva España.

I: En Nueva España, ¿no? Y trata básicamente estos eventos de la conquista. Al principio del cuento; y como saben, comenzamos con el capítulo 10—pero al principio del cuento,
¿cuál es la situación? ¿Qué está pasando muy al principio? ¿Cuál es la descripción del escenario, de la experiencia de este personaje central, del narrador, de Gerónimo de Aguilar?

Herminia: Está muerto.


Janet: La destrucción de sus ídolos indígenas y también el masacre en Cholula.

I: Bien, bien, bien. La destrucción de ídolos, ¿no? Dijiste ‘sus ídolos’. Esto es importante porque él se identifica mucho con los indígenas en esta versión en este cuento. Y la masacre en Cholula es un evento muy importante en su narración. Bien. ¿Algo más?

Janet: Él estaba tratando de tener una semejanza con ellos porque tenía resistencia al empiezo para estar con los españoles, o, ¿por qué?

I: ¿Dices su relación con los indígenas? ¿Por qué se identifica tanto con los indígenas? Hablaremos más de eso, pero ¿qué piensas tú?

Janet: Yo pienso que él está tratando de para narrar en una manera más impresionante, pero no sé si...mira que él...mire que él está al lado de los indígenas más que los españoles.

I: Sí, mucho más, mucho más. Y por eso, él es supuestamente traidor de los españoles como la Malinche es traidora de los indígenas. Entonces, si juega con esta idea de la función de Gerónimo de Aguilar. ¿Tenemos una indicación en los textos coloniales que Gerónimo de Aguilar era amigo de los indígenas? ¿Pueden pensar en algo?

Herminia: Toda la romantización de los indígenas y su conexión a la tierra.

I: Ah, sí en este cuento. Pero, en los textos coloniales, ¿hay una indicación de eso? Para nada. Esta es pura ficción, es pura invención de Fuentes. Ahora, no sabemos mucho de lo que pensaba Gerónimo de Aguilar en el momento. Pero lo que hace Fuentes es cambiar, modificar esta persona a un personaje muy diferente. Un español que se identifica con los indígenas a un nivel, que simplemente no vemos en los textos coloniales. Entonces, juega mucho con la información histórica que tenemos. Bien. Sí.

Janet: Pero, es la sola...es el solo hecho que sabemos que Gerónimo de Aguilar fue representativo de los indígenas y que él tenía un apoyo de sus sentimientos, es de que ¿él tenía resistencia de ajuntarse con los españoles sabemos más de los textos coloniales?

I: ¿Si resistía él al regresar a los españoles?—eso me preguntas o...?

Janet: O simplemente la invención de Fuentes ¿es simplemente de que él se va con la idea de que tenía resistencia de ajuntar con ellos porque tenía resistencia al empiezo para....no sé...?

I: Bueno. ¿En la versión de Fuentes o en...? Sí, en la versión de Fuentes, su relación con los españoles es muy diferente de la versión que vemos en los textos coloniales. Y sí él se identifica más con los indígenas que con los españoles. Pero en los textos coloniales,
sobre todo en Bernal Díaz, no tenemos indicación de eso. Gonzalo Guerrero sí es
difereste. En el caso de Gonzalo Guerrero, él sí quería quedarse con su familia, con sus
hijos, con su esposa indígena. Pero Gerónimo de Aguilar, no. Entonces, allí sí juega un
poco Fuentes con esta idea. Bien. Y antes de hablar más específicamente de lo que
leyeron para hoy, quiero hablar más brevemente de la estructura de este cuento. Se comienza
con el capítulo 10 y luego vamos a 9, 8, etc., etc., Vamos a hablar más de eso el lunes,
pero quiero saber si hay algunas impresiones o ideas por qué hace eso Fuentes. ¿Qué
propósito tiene o qué efecto tiene; el hecho de que comienza al revés? Comienza con 10 y

Caleb: Posiblemente el mismo efecto de un countdown a la destrucción de los indígenas.

I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, se comienza con esta imagen de la destrucción de
Tenochtitlán y luego tenemos la explicación de cómo llegó a pasar eso. Bien. Excelente.
¿Algo más en cuanto a esta estructura? Entonces, piensan, continúan pensando en la
función de la estructura porque es un tema que vamos a tocar de nuevo el lunes. Ahora
vamos a regresar a las preguntas que les di el miércoles. Las preguntas de análisis.
“¿Cómo se representa la conquista? ¿Cómo se representa a los personajes?” Y ya hemos
hablado un poco de eso, pero con más detalle vamos a hablar de ejemplos específicos.
“¿Dónde vemos influencia de los textos coloniales?” Y también, si tienen ideas, si tienen
tiempo, “¿Qué comentarios se hace de la conquista y su papel en México?” Esta es una
pregunta más amplia, más general que vamos a ver cuando terminemos el cuento el lunes.

I: Comencemos con los dos primeros capítulos 10 y 9. ¿Qué podemos decir de estos
capítulos en cuanto a la representación de la conquista y también la influencia de los
textos coloniales? ¿Cuáles son algunos puntos que pueden señalar? Karen, Tiffany, Janet,
Herminia, Mercedes.

Karen: La conquista es, está representado como una lástima. Hay muchos devastación y
enfermedades y los malos son los españoles.

I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, se narra aquí una versión de los eventos que enfatiza
la destrucción y el sufrimiento de los indígenas. Bien. ¿Más? Herminia.

Herminia: Finalmente hace una evaluación de que la derrota fue compartida y no fue una
conquista.
I: Sí. Eso fue una idea interesante, ¿no?; que los dos lados fueron afectados por esta experiencia. No simplemente ganaron los españoles y perdieron los indígenas, sino que los dos fueron afectados de unas maneras semejantes. ¿Te convence esta idea?

Herminia: No.


Tiffany: Se caracteriza a sí mismo como las indígenas como “mis propios hermanos”.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Hay mucha enfasis en eso, ¿no?, en su conexión con los indígenas, como llegó a ser parte de su familia, de su sociedad, etc. Bien. Y tantos textos coloniales—¿vieron muestras de textos coloniales en los dos primeros capítulos?

Tiffany: Pienso que en el contenido [i.e., contenido], es semejante al Códice Florentino. Pero el tono es muy diferente.

I: El tono es muy diferente. Y ¿en qué sentido hay semejanza entre el Códice Florentino y el contenido de este cuento?

Tiffany: Que los indígenas son los protagonistas y que la conquista es una lástima para ellos.

I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. O sea, la perspectiva; el punto de vista tiene mucho que ver con el Códice Florentino. ¿Algo más que pueden comentar en cuanto a muestras de textos coloniales que vemos aquí? Si se les ocurre algo más después, levanten las manos. Pero por el momento vamos a pasar a los dos próximos capítulos 8 y 7. ¿Qué podemos decir de la representación de la conquista aquí y luego los textos coloniales/muestras de los textos coloniales?

Natalie C.: Pienso que esta parte de la Historia de las Fuentes es más semejante a los textos coloniales a diferencia que vienen después en su historia o relata.


Natalie C.: Porque luego desarrolla más con detalles que no hemos visto pero en esta parte dice cosas como vemos en Bernal Díaz.

I: Bien. ¿Puedes pensar en un ejemplo o unos ejemplos de eso?

Natalie C.: Como discutimos hace unos minutos...

I: ...para recordar... [laughter]

Natalie C.: sobre los caballos y es interesante porque él dijo que los caballos iban a probar la inmortalidad de los españoles como dioses. Porque obviamente no son dioses y pueden morir. Pero los caballos son más grandes y fueron una ventaja para los españoles y por un momento parecen como dioses porque estos animales que no han visto los indígenas antes...

I: ...que no han visto antes. Bien, excelente. Entonces esta idea del poder de los caballos, sobre todo en el contexto de pensar en los españoles como dioses. Es muy importante. Excelente. ¿Algo más vieron—Alejandra, Marisol, Anthon—que que no ha comentado Nicki todavía? Y si no...si Natalie C.

Natalie C.: También, como los textos coloniales hablan de un división entre los indígenas y también una división entre los españoles; ese es muy importante en la conquista porque hay lados aquí y lados allá.

Eric: Pues, el texto tiene mucha semejanza en la representación de nuestra parte...tiene mucho que ver con Moctezuma en la primera parte y después con la Malinche. En la primera parte la descripción de Moctezuma es más semejante a la descripción en el Códice Florentino. Hay mucha énfasis en las creencias religiosas de Moctezuma y este efecto que tenían sus decisiones y su interpretación de la situación y todo. Y como ya hemos discutido ya en la clase, no sabemos si esta es una creación mucho después del hecho como dice el Códice Florentino o el análisis que es en el libro de...

I: Flockhart.

Eric: ...Flockhart.

I: Exacto.

Eric: O si es algo que es real. No sabemos y tenemos que cuestionarlo así.

I: Bien. Pero no es un hecho.

Eric: Sí. No sabemos.


Sheila: Hay un punto de vista de los indígenas como el Códice, pero también hay un tono de los indígenas como diabólico...

I: Diabólicos.

Sheila: ...como la Malinche y su uso de sexo para ganar poder y mucho de las...

I: Mucho, mucho, mucho. Bien. Y lo ves como un reflejo de todos los indígenas o simplemente con ella?

Sheila: No. Es como ella. No es una representación de todos los indígenas. Pero también hay una referencia a la culpa de los Tlaxcaltecas y una referencia a la traición...

I: ...traición de ellos. Y esta idea de la traición es muy importante en todo el cuento. Y hace referencia a los Tlaxcaltecas y el papel de los Tlaxcaltecas en la conquista. Pero también hay una comparación explícita entre Gerónimo de Aguilar y la Malinche por todo el cuento como acabas de decir. Bien. ¿Algo más? Eve.

Eve: Sí con la Malinche, casi tiene el poder de Cortés porque ella...la mujer de Cortés y también la primera en vez de Aguilar....donde anterior él el primero...

I: O sea....

Sheila: ...intérprete.

I: Ah, bien. Bien, bien, bien. Que él era el primer intérprete; era el único, ¿no?, de importancia al principio. Pero ella le quita eso, le roba eso como dijo antes Nicole Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Seguiremos con este análisis de la Malinche un poco más en lunes, pero si quiero terminar con los últimos dos capítulos que leyeron para hoy—4 y 3. ¿Qué podemos decir allí? Caleb.

Caleb: Una posibilidad para la influencia con el Códice es porque en el capítulo 4 hay una descrepancia entre la Malinche y Gerónimo de Aguilar sobre la masacre en Cholula.

I: Bien.
Caleb: Y el Códice, por ejemplo el Códice... el Códice da influencia a la idea que el masacre no era necesario.
I: No era necesaria.
Caleb: Posiblemente. Las personas eran pasivos.
I: Bien. Entonces, pero si la masacre de Cholula es un evento importante en el Códice Florentino, también en los otros textos que leímos; pero de una manera un poco diferente. Bien. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de eso—de el Códice Florentino, la masacre en Cholula, o otros aspectos de esos capítulos que vieron?
Anna: Con la masacre en Cholula, hay manipulación de Cortés.
I: ¿Perdón?
Anna: Manipulación de Cortés.
I: Sí.
Anna: Porque la Malinche inventó el cuento de la vieja y sus hijos, los planes de los Cholutecas, y hay un tono un poco amargo porque Cortés creía en la Malinche y no en Gerónimo.
APPENDIX J: CLASS OBSERVATION #13/RECORDING DAY #4

Class Observation #13
Recording Day #4
Monday, April 2, 2007

I= Instructor  
Ss= All Students

I: Vamos a comenzar. Para el miércoles, les van a tener una lectura de una lingüista no es novelista, no es ensayista, es lingüista, y ella escribió un artículo sobre la Malinche—doña Marina, la Malinche. Su perspectiva es muy interesante porque ella se enfoca en la cuestión de lengua y los poderes de la Malinche como intérprete. Este ensayo es parte de un estudio que hizo ella que se llama Between Worlds. En este texto, ella comienza con la Malinche y luego trata otros ejemplos de otros intérpretes que funcionaban, que tenían que negociar entre dos mundos; por eso el título. Su perspectiva es muy diferente de la perspectiva de Carlos Fuentes en cuanto a representación de la Malinche. Y vamos a tratar de contrastar estas dos versiones de ella. A ella le interesa esta cuestión del intercambio cultural y las figuras que están en medio de dos culturas. Eso también es algo importante en el cuento de Fuentes, sobre todo en las dos figuras de los españoles—Gerónimo de Aguilar y Gonzalo Guerrero. Como vieron al final en los últimos capítulos de este texto, de este cuento, él se enfoca en estas figuras, como figuras subversivas, supuestamente. ¿Cómo cambia Fuentes el fin de la conquista en este texto? Según él, al final de este cuento, tenemos el fin de la conquista no en México, sino ¿dónde? Nicole

Nicole: No sé si lo entiendo correcto, pero Fuentes introduce la idea que Guerrero se hace el conquistador y él se mueve desde México a España para recon...revencer.

I: Exacto. Exacto, exacto, exacto, exacto—para conquistar España, ¿no? Entonces, este es el cambio dramático que tiene Fuentes al final de la historia. Sabemos que nada como eso ocurrió. Pero él juega con los hechos históricos y según este cuento Guerrero, después de la llegada de los españoles a México, Guerrero se va no solito, sino con una tropa de indios a España para conquistar España. Entonces, tenemos este fin. Así que él se enfoca mucho la figura de Guerrero y también en la figura de Gerónimo de Aguilar como personas que están en medio—personas que están en medio de dos culturas, de dos lenguas, de dos sociedades, etc. Por eso, me parece importante regresar brevemente al texto de Bernal Díaz para recordar—ya hace tiempo que no hablamos de él—para recordar lo que dice él de estas dos figuras. Fuentes, como vamos a ver, toma directamente de estos pasajes e incorpora los pasajes en su cuento de una manera original. Quiero que releen rápidamente—tomen un minuto—brevemente para releer estos dos pasajes. El primero tiene que ver con los mensajeros indígenas que encuentran Aguilar y Guerrero. Y la segunda parte, el segundo pasaje, tiene que ver con este encuentro, este re-encuentro entre Aguilar y los españoles. Entonces, releen rápidamente lo que dice Bernal Díaz y luego vamos a comparar esta información, esta versión con lo que vemos en el caso del cuento de Fuentes.
¿Un resumen de lo que pasa? ¿Diferencia de la descripción que tenemos en Fuentes? ¿Quién o quiénes encuentran a Gonzalo Guerrero y a Gerónimo de Aguilar? No es Cortés, sino—como vemos aquí—dos indígenas. ¿Y ellos comunican el mensaje de los españoles por qué medio? Llevan...

Herminia: Cartas.

I: Cartas, exacto. Llevan cartas para darle el mensaje a Gerónimo de Aguilar y luego a Gonzalo Guerrero. Entonces, Gerónimo de Aguilar reacciona de una manera muy positiva. Está muy claro que él quiere irse con los españoles. En el caso de Gonzalo Guerrero, no. ¿Por qué? Y luego tenemos esta cita tan preciosa donde dice “Hermano Aguilar. Yo soy casado y tengo tres hijos, y tienenme por cacique y capitán cuando hay guerras; idos con Dios, que yo tengo labrada la cara y horadadas las orejas. ¡Qué dirán de mí desde que me vean los esos españoles ir de esta manera! Y ya veis estos mis hijitos cuán bonicos son.” Entonces, Gonzalo Guerrero ya tiene una vida en esta sociedad; ya tiene una posición en esta sociedad, ya está acomodado en esta sociedad. ¿Cuál era la situación de Gerónimo de Aguilar? Era una situación muy distinta. Gonzalo Guerrero era parte de los poderes de esa sociedad indígena. Pero Gerónimo de Aguilar era...

Ss: Esclavo.

I: Esclavo, exacto. Era esclavo. No tenía por qué querer quedarse. No tenía por qué querer defender los indígenas. Pero en la versión de Fuentes, tenemos otro Gerónimo de Aguilar—un Gerónimo de Aguilar que se hace amigos de los indígenas y sí quiere ayudarles a los indígenas. Pero es importante recordar esas referencias porque Fuentes toma elementos de estos pasajes y los inserta en su texto. Por ejemplo si vemos en la página 45, también en la página 46—dice en la página de 45—“Así me vieron: Moreno, trasquilado, remo al hombro, calzando viejísimas cotaras irreparables...” etc., etc. Este pasaje es básicamente lo que encontramos según el pasaje aquí de Bernal Díaz y la descripción de Gerónimo de Aguilar. Cuando él se encontró de nuevo con los españoles y cómo era él, cómo eran sus apariencias en este momento. Pero Fuentes manipula estas citas. Fuentes manipula estos pasajes para crear otro mundo, otro Gerónimo de Aguilar, y otro Gonzalo Guerrero. Luego en la página 46 [de Fuentes], vemos aquí un cambio muy interesante en cuanto a la función y el papel de Gonzalo Guerrero. En estas páginas, 46-47, tenemos una conversación entre Gerónimo de Aguilar y Cortés, lo cual no pasó, lo cual no pasó y eso sabemos por la versión de Bernal Díaz. Pero en esta versión de Fuentes, ellos tienen una conversación y está allí también la figura de Gonzalo Guerrero. Pero como se ve como indígena, Cortés no habla directamente con él, sino con Gerónimo de Aguilar. Entonces, hay modificaciones aquí de lo que vemos en la descripción de Bernal Díaz. Pero como podemos ver, usa Fuentes como base esta descripción de Bernal Díaz y luego elabora otra situación, otro mundo, otras posibilidades. ¿Alguna pregunta sobre lo que pasó según Bernal Díaz con estos dos hombres? Entonces solo para recordar porque tenemos muchos cambios en la versión de Fuentes, solo para recordar en la versión de Bernal Díaz, Gerónimo de Aguilar se va de inmediato con los españoles y está muy a gusto con eso. No resiste para nada irse con los españoles. Mientras que Gonzalo Guerrero se queda definitivamente con los nativos. No tiene ningún interés en irse con los españoles. La versión que tenemos aquí es muy distinta.
Mitch: ¿Hay una indicación en la versión de Bernal Díaz que Guerrero tenía una hostilidad a los españoles?

I: No, pero muchos sospechan. Muchos sospechan, pero no hay prueba. Muchos sospechan que él participaba en guerras contra los españoles después. Pero no hay prueba de eso, no hay ninguna información clara acerca de eso. Pero como era guerrero en esta sociedad, y esto indígenas en esta parte del Yucatán, se supone que él sí participaba en eso. Buena pregunta. ¿Algo más? Entonces, es importante recordar lo que pasa, lo que narra en Bernal Díaz cuando hablamos de lo presenta aquí Fuentes. Esta intertextualidad entre los textos coloniales y este texto del siglo 20 es algo que vemos en todo el texto—comenzando al principio con referencias directas o indirectas al texto de Bernal Díaz, también al Códice Florentino. Entonces, este es un aspecto interesante de este texto de Bernal Díaz—esta intertextualidad. Cómo él incorpora elementos de estos textos coloniales pero modifica completamente a la narración y el cuento. Bien. Entonces pensando un poco más en estos últimos capítulos que leyeron par ahí, ¿cuál es la relación entre Gonzalo Guerrero y Gerónimo de Aguilar según Fuentes, según este cuento? Nicole

Nicole: Los dos querían trabajar más o menos para los indígenas. Y es que Guerrero trabajaba dentro de los indígenas y Aguilar trabajaba afuera.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Él se fue con los españoles pero de todas maneras, quería ayudarles a los indígenas en su función como intérprete para los españoles. Y ¿cómo intentaba ayudarles a los indígenas por medio de su interpretación, según lo que vemos aquí? ¿Qué hizo en estas conversaciones?

Jon: No tradujo las mismas palabras a Cortés.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Cambió, modificó completamente lo que decían los indígenas. Y él lo hizo con el propósito de ayudarles a los indígenas. También según él, según Gerónimo de Aguilar, la Malinche hizo lo mismo. Ella también cambió las palabras en su interpretación pero con el propósito de ayudarles a los españoles. Entonces, ahora tenemos otra vez estos dos traidores—la traición como un tema central en en cuento. Bien. Entonces, hay esta colaboración entre Gerónimo de Aguilar y Gonzalo Guerrero y ellos, con esta colaboración, ¿quieren hacer qué al final? Y allí tenemos que, simplemente, disfrutar de esta irrealidad que presenta aquí. Marisol, ¿qué quieren hacer?

Marisol: Conquistar España.

I: Exacto. Sí. ¿Y lo hacen según Gerónimo de Aguilar? ¿Lo hacen con éxito? Sí, sí. Tenemos un paralelo interesante, importante aquí. Si vamos al final a la página 57, en el capítulo zero—ya hemos llegado al capítulo zero. En este último capítulo, en la página 57, comienza “Yo vi todo esto, la caída de la gran ciudad Andaluza.” ¿Les recuerda de algo, otra parte del cuento tal vez, que vieron al principio? Si vamos a la primera página, el capítulo 10 en la página 11, comienza en el primer párrafo “Yo vi todo esto...” igual “la caída de la gran ciudad azteca...” Entonces, como los españoles conquistaron la gran ciudad azteca de Tenochtitlán, Gonzalo Guerrero con los indígenas conquista esa de una manera paralela. Eso implica, eso insinúa qué va a pasar Fuentes al principio en el epígrafe que usa de Amos Oz “Como los planetas en su órbitas, el mundo de las ideas tiende a la circularidad.” Entonces, esta idea de los ciclos, de los tiempos, de la circularidad de las experiencias históricas, es lo que trata de representar Fuentes aquí en este cuento. ¿Está claro lo que pasa al final? ¿Hay una pregunta sobre lo que pasa en los últimos capítulos? Ahora quiero analizar con más detalle unos pasajes, ya no de Bernal...
Díaz, sino de Fuentes viendo en estos pasajes los temas importantes que vemos en el cuento. Entonces, hay seis pasajes aquí. Ustedes van a dividir en seis parejas básicamente, grupos muy pequeños ahora para leer de nuevo el pasaje que les toca y luego ver el contexto en que aparece. Ustedes van a buscar de nuevo en el texto donde aparece el pasaje, qué está pasando antes y después de este pasaje porque son pasajes bastante breves, bastante cortos. Y luego van a analizar la importancia de este pasaje dentro del contexto del cuento pensando en temas centrales—tal y como—pero no tienen que limitar de esta lista—la traición, el mestizaje, el poder del lenguaje, el colonialismo, el imperialismo, el género sexual, la sexualidad, la identidad racial, la identidad cultural, la identidad nacional, la circularidad del tiempo. Estos son unos ejemplos de temas importantes. Si ven algo más y quieren añadir a la lista, está bien. Claro, no todos los pasajes dan muestra a todos estos temas. Pero estos son temas que aparecen por todo el cuento. Entonces, con los seis, vamos a dividirnos en seis grupos. Entonces, enfóquense en el pasaje que les tocó pensando en estas preguntas de Aguilar. Un análisis cuidadoso del pasaje. Tomen unos ocho minutos.

[The instructor divided the class up into six groups and each group discussed their assigned passage and looked at how the specific passage related to/evoked the different themes that she had given them. This small-group work lasted ~8 minutes.]

I: Comenzando con el primer pasaje, las páginas 12-13, ¿qué podemos decir primero sobre el contexto en donde aparece para que tengan una referencia general los demás de la clase? ¿Dónde aparece este pasaje? Herminia.

Herminia: Al principio, es entre el establecimiento de su autoridad como testigo y allí es mencionado por Bernal Díaz INAUDIBLE y la otra es en la conclusión al final donde dice “No hubo ganadores. Lo que tenemos aquí es el principio de algo nuevo.

I: Exacto. “La derrota compartida” como dice.

Herminia: Y se comparte la tierra, se comparte la mortalidad, se comparte la cultura y se hace algo nuevo.


Tiffany: Lo de el nacional... de...
I: del nacionalismo. La idea de la nación.

Tiffany: Sí.

I: Bien. ¿Cómo construye una idea de la nación este pasaje?

Tiffany: En la última frase, habla de un mundo compartida... no sé... no sé exactamente si es una mezcla. Pero... porque Herminia....

I: ¿Tiene otra opinión?

Tiffany: Sí. [nervous laughter]

I: Está bien. No todos tienen que estar de acuerdo. Bien, bien. Y no está claro aquí que se refiere a una mezcla cultural, pero sí comparte la derrota por lo menos estas dos culturas. Bien. ¿Algo más en cuanto a eso? ¿Tiffany, Janet? Sí tiene que ver con esta idea de una nación insipiente, ¿no? de la emergencia de una nueva nación. ¿Algo más; otro tema más que vemos aquí que quieren comentar?

Herminia: Yo decidí verlo por la lente del colonialismo.
I: Bien. ¿Cómo?
Herminia: No hizo una novela. No hay una parte totalmente definitivamente que era Náhuatl. El que viene a conquistar, sale conquistado por estas mezclas que va a ver dentro de la cultura y nuevas formas de vivir. Y él ha sido conquistado y los dos pierden en el camino algo.
Jon: Es sobre la llegada de los españoles a Velasco. Y es sobre la reacción de Montezuma.
I: Bien.
Jon: Primero, Nickie y yo vemos una semejanza al Códice Florentino porque habla sobre los presagios.
I: Bien. Sí, sí.
Nickie: También tiene que ver con el error de pensar en que los españoles eran dioses porque los indígenas habían esperando...
I: Estaban esperando.
Nickie: ...estaban esperando su dios Quetzalcoatl.
I: Quetzalcoatl. No, no. Lo dijiste bien, lo dijiste bien.
Nickie: Y cuando llegaron los españoles tenían rasgos diferentes como eran rubios y tenían barbas. Entonces, pensaron que son, eran dios, que se ven diferente.
I: Bien. Y se ven como los dioses deben ser; blancos con barbas largas, etc. Y eso, como señalaron bien, es algo que vemos claramente en el Códice Florentino. ¿Recuerdan algo más de la lectura del Códice Florentino—y sobre todo lo que dice el editor, lo que dice James Lockhart—acerca de estos presagios mencionados en el texto del códice?
Nickie: ¿Habían ocho?
Nickie: ¿Hay algo en...hay un texto que dice definitivamente que los indígenas pensaron que Cortés era Quetzalcoatl?
I: En realidad, la primera vez que aparece este argumento, es en el Códice Florentino. Y si recordamos, ese texto fue escrito varias décadas después de la conquista, en una sociedad colonial, en una sociedad muy diferente. Y no hay indicación antes del Códice Florentino de esta idea, de que Cortés era Quetzalcoatl, es algo que viene mucho después. Y el argumento de Lockhart es que es parte de una manera de entender de lo que pasó y echar la culpa a Montezuma porque Montezuma no era suficientemente inteligente en reconocer que Cortés no era Quetzalcoatl. Pero es una muy buena pregunta. ¿Algo más? Sí, Nicole.
Nicole: Una pregunta. Cuando los españoles llegaban...llegaron a la Nueva España, ¿es fue la primera vez que los indígenas veían los caballos?
I: Sí.
Nicole: Entonces, esto posiblemente añadía a la...
I: ...al poder.
Nicole: de los dioses.
I: Claro. Sobre todo la imagen de un hombre encima de un caballo. Es una imagen muy poderosa.
Nicole: ¿Y creían que estaban atadas?
I: Sí, exacto. Exacto, exacto, exacto. Ahora, otra vez, no tenemos textos escritos por los indígenas que participaban en la conquista o que vivían durante ese tiempo. Solo tenemos historias que pasaron por las generaciones y se documentaron después. Los indígenas eran muy inteligentes. Tenían una sociedad bien sofisticada, creo yo, y muchos otros también que podían ver que el caballo era un animal diferente del hombre que estaba encima. Pero parte de la imagen de la retórica que existe alrededor de la conquista es que ellos pensaban que el caballo y el hombre eran uno y que ellos pensaban que Cortés era Quetzalcoátl. Tendríamos que cuestionar esto un poco pero sí tienes razón—es importante ver que hubo diferencias entre los dos grupos que reconocían. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algun comentario más porque estas son preguntas muy importantes porque estas son ideas muy fuertes; no solo en México sino en los Estados Unidos también—cuando aprendemos de la conquista de México, normalmente aprendemos estas historias. Jon.
Jon: Algo que me interesa un poquito más es la elección de la palabra ‘magos’ para los consejeros de Montezuma porque sería más fácil decir ‘emisarios’ o ‘consejeros’ o algo, pero el uso de ‘magos’...
I: Tiene una connotación muy distinta. Y ¿por qué te parece interesante?
Jon: Porque ‘emisarios del gran Montezuma’ parece como el mismo sistema de gobierno porque el rey tenía aconsejeros y recibía el mismo tipo de ayuda de su consejeros y es una manera de...de....
I: ...crea una sociedad más exótica...
Jon: Sí, de diferenciar entre la español y la indígena.
Marisol: Aquí vemos que él tiene coraje con la Malinche, um, Aguilar. La nombra ‘la hembra diabólica’ y todo eso. Es como un lado machista de él, de su parte.
I: Bastante. Bastante.
Marisol: Solo porque aprendió español.
I: Bien. Pues, no solo porque aprendió, sino porque...¿eso quiere decir qué? Si ella aprendió a hablar en español....él....ya no era importante. Y por eso se molesta tanto; que le robó su trabajo, le robó su puesto en este grupo. Bien, bien. Tenemos lenguaje muy agresivo, muy agresivo aquí. ¿Qué podemos decir de temas que aparecen aquí?
Aaron: Podemos identificar esta actitud de y coraje con... las frases y con la identidad nacional y cultural como frases cuando dice...
I: Bueno, somos adultos.
Aaron: Cuando dice ‘Hijos de la Chingada.”
I: Y vamos a hablar de eso porque eso es una idea central en en ensayo de Paz. Entonces, sí vamos a hablar de palabrastras en esta clase. Y aquí se usa algo semejante también para hacer referencia a ella. Entonces en este sentido, Fuentes no crea una versión nueva de la
Malinche, sino, como dices, él toma de la cultura y cómo ella está representada en la cultura mexicana y no cuestiona, en realidad, esta representación de ella. Bien. ¿Algo más que notaron en cuanto a la representación de ella? Hablaremos mucho más de ella el miércoles, y a lo mejor hablaremos más de este pasaje y otros pasajes que tienen que ver con ella en este cuento. Bien. Pasando a número cuatro “En cambio…” Ustedes, ¿no?

**Mitch:** Es interesante con quien es Cortés y Guerrero identifican. Y especialmente que Guerrero es el líder de los indígenas en la conquista que sugiere que los indígenas no tienen la habilidad de conquistar si la ayuda de España.

**I:** Bien, bien. Esto es muy importante observar. El líder, el organizador, el que tiene la idea para conquistar España no es una indígena sino Gonzalo Guerrero. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más?

**Eric:** Hay mucho que tiene que ver con la identidad racial contra la identidad cultural. Es muy interesante de ver que tenemos dos hombres que son racialmente españoles que se han cambiado completamente. No sé. Culturalmente son indios, indígenas y…no sé…

**I:** Bien, bien. Entonces, esta idea de definirse racialmente o culturalmente como español o indígena, es un tema muy central aquí—sobre todo en el caso de Guerrero, también en el caso de Gerónimo de Aguilar.

**Eric:** También doña Marina.

**I:** También doña Marina. Exacto, exacto, exacto. ¿Cómo podríamos extender un poco esta idea para pensar en ella? ¿Cómo se define ella en cuanto a estas identidades posibles?

**Eric:** Pues, según su papel en este trabajo [i.e., Fuentes’ text], se identifica mucho con los españoles. Ella, según Fuentes aquí, es la gran traídora que vemos en muchos...

**I:** En toda la Historia…en todos los problemas, ¿no? Sí. Exacto. Bien. ¿Algo más que podemos comentar en cuanto a eso—la formación de una identidad? Sí Jon.

**Jon:** Fuentes habla de la identidad cultural más adelante, pero es interesante la formación de la identidad cultural de España como un país cristiano porque hacía menos de un siglo que España no era solamente cristiano y la identidad cultural de los indígenas era formada por siglos a diferencia de la identidad de España.

**I:** Bien. Eso es algo que podríamos cuestionar un poco más, ¿no? Porque, claro, no existía una identidad indígena.

**Jon:** Sí, sí.

**I:** De esta manera, simplifica mucho Fuentes la experiencia del mundo indígena. Como sabemos, existían rivalidades entre grupos que hablaban la misma lengua, que tenían prácticas culturales en común. Y luego existían tensiones grupos étnicos, grupos de diferentes lenguas. Entonces esta idea de un grupo indígena homogéneo es problemático. Sí...

**Jon:** Sí. Sí. Pero, lo que quiero decir es que esta misma idea en España, que no había una identidad homogéneo, en este tiempo sí porque España se unió, pero...

**I:** …pero unas décadas antes. Para recordar la referencia que haces, en 1492 los castellanos conquistan a la última ciudad de los musulmanes, la última ciudad mora, de Granada. También, tenemos el exilio de los musulmanes, de los judíos. Y este intento de crear una cultura cristiana y castellana. Pero como dices, es algo frágil. Eso algo nuevo. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Un puntito más? Ya estamos llegando al fin de la hora. Entonces, el miércoles vamos a comenzar con los últimos dos pasajes y luego vamos a hablar también del artículo de Kartunnen. Sigan pensando en algunas de esas ideas. Ustedes han
señalados unos puntos bien importantes que vamos a investigar con más detalle el miércoles y el viernes.
Class Observation #14
Recording Day #5
Wednesday, April 4, 2007

I= Instructor
Ss= All Students

I: Vamos a comenzar, para el viernes, como saben, vamos a continuar la discusión que vamos a comenzar hoy sobre la Malinche. Van a leer el primer capítulo de un libro recién publicado por una historiadora. El texto se llama Malintzin’s Choices. Es una historia de la Malinche, pero escrita de una manera literaria más o menos. Vamos a hablar del estilo en que se escribe este texto. Pero Camilla Townsend si es una historiadora hispanoamericana y su texto se enfoca en la Malinche tratando las fuentes primarias, indígenas y también españolas para tratar de llegar a una narrativa de su vida. Entonces es un texto interesante; solo vamos a leer el primer capítulo—“Pelican’s Kingdom”.

También si quiere para el viernes, van a entregar el segundo análisis crítico posible para la segunda parte del semestre. Hay dos opciones más. Entonces si no quieren escribir sobre el ensayo de Kartunnen, van a tener dos opciones más. Una de estas opciones es el ensayo de Townsend. ¿Alguna pregunta sobre la tarea? Quiero comenzar con una pregunta amplia, general sobre la conquista de México, el tema de esta clase. La Narrativa sobre la Conquista es el título de la clase, pero quiero problematizar un poco esta idea de la conquista, ¿no?, pensando en los dos ejemplos contemporáneos que hemos visto—la película de Carrasco y también este cuento de Carlos Fuentes. ¿Hasta qué punto cuestionan, problematizan estos dos a la idea de la conquista de México? ¿Hubo o no una destrucción completa de la cultura indígena? ¿En qué sentido? Entonces, si hablamos de una manera general sobre esta idea de la conquista de México, ¿hasta qué punto podemos hablar de una destrucción de la cultura indígena, pensando en la película y en el cuento? Sí Mitch.

Mitch: Creo que los dos sugieren que fue una destrucción porque los indígenas necesitaban asimilarse en la cultura española para ser parte de la cultura y esta es una destrucción, la asimilación es una destrucción.

I: Bien. La asimilación es una destrucción. ¿Están de acuerdo los demás de que hay una destrucción? Pensando en la película, ¿hay una destrucción completa, definitiva, de la cultura indígena? ¿Sí? ¿No? Otras opiniones siguiendo con lo que decía Mitch.

Herminia: Creo que no existe una destrucción completa de la cultura indígena. Lo que sucede es una destrucción en las instituciones más importantes de la cultura indígena.

I: Bien. O sea, la sociedad, el gobierno.

Herminia: Pero la cultura, las costumbres, sobreviven hasta el presente.


Sheila: El, la parte del códice.

I: Ah, bien. El códice. El pedazo, el fragmento del códice
Sheila: Es un fragmento de su cultura.
Nicole: El deseo que existe en la mente de los indígenas. Para mí, es un fragmento de la sobrevivencia.
I: ¿Y el deseo de qué; el deseo para qué?
Nicole: De continuar sus tradiciones y para enseñar a sus hijos, no sé. Cuando Toquichpo es ella en el cárcel y estaba embarazada...
I: ...embarazada...
Nicole: ...ella habla de su sangre. Entonces, si el deseo de continuar su cultura estaba allí...
I: Pero...
Nicole: No sé. La estructura...las instituciones de la sociedad indígena eran destruidos, pero...
I: Pero un deseo de continuar con la cultura continuaba, sobrevivía. ¿Otros ejemplos de eso? Janet.
Janet: También hay la idea de que rogaban o piensan en sus dioses en vez de la Virgin.
I: Bien. ¿Y cómo vemos eso? ¿En qué sentido vemos que ellos siguen pensando en sus dioses precolombinos?
Janet: Porque el fin, como dices, cuando él está subiendo...
I: ...bajando...
Janet: ...bajando en el rope...
I: ...en la cuerda...
Janet: dice de su...¿cómo se dice su...?
I: de Tonanzin, grita Tonanzin...
Janet: ...en vez de Virgen.
I: En vez de Virgen María. Bien. Entonces, es una señal, es una muestra de este deseo por lo menos de seguir con las prácticas culturales. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de la destrucción? Porque sí como decía Mitch, hay una destrucción de la sociedad; si no es completa—es una pregunta que podemos hacer. ¿Pero, otras muestras de destrucción de esta cultura, de destrucción de esta sociedad? Ellen.
Ellen: No podían hablar en su lengua nativa.
Nicole: Montezuma y todos de sus otros líderes se mueren, entonces los indígenas no tienen líder.
I: Bien. No tienen líder. Todos los líderes se mueren; Montezuma, Cuahtemoc al final. Es parte la destrucción de la sociedad, del gobierno, etc. Bien. ¿Algo más en cuanto a la destrucción o sobrevivencia? Ahora, en el cuento de Fuentes—claro, hay más elaboración creativa de estos eventos históricos en el cuento de Fuentes, pero ¿qué sugiere él en su cuento en cuanto a la destrucción o la sobrevivencia de la cultura indígena? ¿Qué trata de sugerir, recordando, reconociendo que es una versión ficticia; no se pasa completamente en la Historia? Él sugiere sobrevivencia o destrucción en su cuento y en qué sentido? Jon.
Jon: Sobrevivencia en el sentido de Gonzalo Guerrero trae la conquista a España con un escuadron...
I: ...escuadra...
Jon: ...escuadra de barcos...
I: ¿De quiénes?
Jon: De indígenas.
I: De indígenas, exacto. Bien, bien. Entonces, esta conquista de España es hecha por los indígenas pero también por Gonzalo Guerrero. Bien, como un ejemplo de sobrevivencia. Bien. ¿Otra interpretación que podemos dar en cuanto a lo que hace él aquí? Una sobrevivencia. ¿Cómo podemos analizar eso de otra manera; no simplemente de sobrevivencia de la cultura indígena sino una dominación de la cultura europea? Como mencionaron Eric y Mitch el otro día, el líder de esta expedición es quién?
Ss: Gonzalo Guerrero.
I: Gonzalo Guerrero, un español. Un español que se ha asimilado de alguna manera la cultura indígena, pero de todas maneras es un español. Entonces, podríamos interpretar de varias maneras la representación de la conquista en el texto de Fuentes, también en la película. Pero si quiero que ustedes vayan pensando un poco más en estas preguntas; en cuanto a la representación en general—si vemos más destrucción o sobrevivencia de la cultura indígena. Hablaremos más de eso en en el contexto de otros ensayos que leemos también. ¿Algún comentario más sobre esta cuestión de la conquista de México? Ahora quiero regresar a lo que veíamos el lunes con estos pasajes. Faltaban dos si me acuerdo bien. Cinco y seis creo. Entonces, la idea general de esta actividad era primero hablar un poco del contexto donde aparece el pasaje y luego analizar los temas centrales en el pasaje. Entonces pensando en número cinco, ¿qué podemos decir del contexto, dónde aparece en el texto, qué está pasando, y luego, los temas. Caleb, Cathy, Eve.
Caleb: El contexto, pues el objeto Aguilar y Guerrero. Y es la parte antes de capítulo 0.
I: Bien.
Caleb: Y vemos por lo menos tres temas centrales. Vemos el poder del lenguaje cuando dice “el poder, pues la palabra era el poder que compartían los dioses y los hombres.
I: Bien.
Caleb: Y tenemos la idea de la circulidad del tiempo.
I: ...la circularidad, bien.
Caleb: Sí. Cuando dice los mayas podían renovar sus vidas y las del mundo entero.
I: Bien.
Caleb: Y tenemos también la idea de traición cuando dice “la caída de los imperios liberaba a la palabra y a los hombres de una servidumbre falsificada.”
I: Bien. Muy bien, tres temas muy importantes. ¿Hay algo más que podemos decir de estos temas? ¿Cómo se elaboran aquí o en otras partes en este capítulo o al final del texto? Lo que dice él del lenguaje, el poder de la palabra es una idea muy romántica, el poder de la palabra la que presenta aquí. ¿Algo más que podemos decir?
Eve: Sí. Al final es interesante las palabras “más allá del mar”. Decimos que es como un foreshadow...
I: ...anticipa lo que...
Eve: ...de que pasa. Y...
I: Y ¿qué anticipa, qué evento, o qué...? 
Eve: Acciones. La pérdida de los imperios y los indígenas.
I: Y a la vez, en la versión de Fuentes, la caída también de los españoles, el imperio castellano, etc. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más en cuanto a estos temas o a estas ideas?
Eve: Y también pienso que un tema central es el colonialismo o el imperialismo aquí.

Anna: Aparece al fin del cuento y los temas centrales son las identidades porque ellos están queriendo INAUDIBLE el nuevo mundo porque es una cultura esclava y los reyes católicos quieren solamente una sociedad INAUDIBLE.
I: Exacto, exacto, exacto, exacto. Va completamente en contra de esta idea de la pureza de sangre que buscaban y que querían los reyes católicos; en términos religiosos y en términos raciales también. Bien, bien, bien, bien. Entonces, tenemos una mezcla aquí de culturas, de razas—no solo en la Historia europea sino ahora también se añade los elementos indígenas, ¿no?, a esta mezcla. Bien. ¿Algo más?

Ellen: También la circularidad del tiempo en cómo la historia de europa y también de la nueva España y con la mezcla de razas.
I: Bien. Con la mezcla de razas, también con esta nueva conquista que tenemos, que hay como un ciclo de eventos aquí repetidos. Bien, bien, bien. Sí Sheila.

Sheila: Establece una justificación de la misma influencia de los judíos y los musulmanes. Representa una visión de Europa en correspondencia...
I: Bien. Que corresponde con un poco a la idea de la mezcla en las Américas, ¿dices?

Sheila: Sí.
I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más? Entonces, si pensamos en general en este cuento, esta idea, este tema, de la mezcla cultural, es un tema muy central, que es parte importante del cuento que presenta aquí Fuentes y de la manera en que él representa estos eventos de la conquista. También estas ideas son muy importantes en cuanto a la idea de la identidad nacional y la mezcla de las culturas. Él juega con esta idea de origen en de México que se encuentra en la conquista porque él añade otra conquista aquí; también añade la conquista de España. Pero esta idea de la mezcla de culturas como origen de la identidad mexicana, de la identidad nacional, es un elemento muy importante de este proyecto, de este cuento que vimos. ¿Un comentario más en cuanto a estas citas, en cuanto a estos pasajes? Pensando un poco en general sobre lo que hemos visto en el cuento de Fuentes, y sobre lo que ustedes leyeron para hoy en el ensayo de Kartunnen, quiero recordar brevemente que hay varias maneras de ver estas figuras—sobre todo las figuras de Gerónimo de Aguilar y la Malinche porque no tenemos no tenemos indicación directa de ellos, de sus experiencias durante la conquista. Entonces, hay que imaginar mucho lo que pasó con ellos. Entonces si pensamos en lo que hemos visto en cuanto a ellos, hay las fuentes primarias, los textos coloniales—sobre todo el texto de Bernal Díaz de Castillo, también el Códice Florentino, también un poco el texto de Cortés, el lienzo de Tlaxcala también. Entonces, tenemos varios textos coloniales que nos dan la base para entender quiénes eran estas personas y por qué eran importantes. También tenemos interpretaciones de ellos. Tenemos interpretaciones más académicas como lo que leyeron en el ensayo de Kartunnen. Luego tenemos interpretaciones creativas como lo que hemos leído en el cuento de Fuentes. Estas interpretaciones se basan, de maneras diferentes, se basan en estos textos principales—en estos textos coloniales. Entonces hay mucha
comunicación entre los textos coloniales y la manera de representar y analizar estas personas y estos eventos en el siglo 20, 21. También tenemos la cultura popular. Entonces, si pensamos por ejemplo en la Malinche, la manera en que se representa ella en la cultura popular en México, ¿cuáles son las palabras, los términos que se asocian con ella o las ideas que se asocian con ella?

**Janet:** Traidora.

**I:** Traidora, la traición, con ‘t’ mayúscula. Ella es símbolo de la traición. Es la traidora de los indígenas. Sí.

**Herminia:** En cuentos como La Llorona, o en historias como La Llorona, ella aparece comparada... como si fuera La Llorona.

**I:** Bien. En este sentido, es una figura un poco más trágica; no simplemente la traídaora, sino una mujer que ha perdido a sus hijos.

**Herminia:** Una pregunta.

**I:** Sí.

**Herminia:** ¿Sabe de dónde viene esta referencia?

**I:** ¿La referencia a qué?

**Herminia:** La referencia a la Malinche como La Llorona.

**I:** Es algo yo no sé, no sé si hay un momento específico cuando se establece esta conexión. Pero muchos dicen que la inspiración para la idea de La Llorona se encuentra en la Malinche. Y para aclarar, ¿qué es La Llorona? ¿Puedes explicar brevemente Herminia quién es ella?

**Herminia:** Es una de las legendas más famosas de la colonia en México. La Llorona es una mujer que es en una relación con un español. Hay varias versiones.

**I:** Hay varias versiones. Pero lo importante de ella es que ¿es La Llorona por qué?

**Herminia:** Porque llora.

**I:** Porque llora, grita, etc.

**Herminia:** Unas versiones dicen que ella mató a sus hijos para que no se los llevaran los españoles. Otra versión dice que el español—principalmente el hombre—llevó a sus hijos a vivir en una casa donde tenía una esposa. De cualquier forma es problemático porque mata a sus hijos para que no sean parte de la cultura española. Ahora, nadie te dice en ningún momento si la Llorona es una indígena o española.

**I:** Y como dices, no hay una conexión muy directa entre la Malinche como figura histórica esta leyenda de la Llorona. Pero se inspira, creen muchos, en la experiencia de la Malinche.

**Herminia:** La idea es que su alma pena.

**I:** Su alma pena, y en este sentido es una versión un poco diferente de la idea de que ella es la traídaora y símbolo de la traición porque hay que tener simpatía por la Llorona por su situación. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Sí.

**Herminia:** De hecho, más de simpatía, es una historia que cuentan a los niños para aterrorizarlos.

**I:** ¡Sí!

**Herminia:** Eso es cómo yo la aprendí.

**I:** Exacto. Bien. Es una figura espantosa. ¿Otras ideas en cuanto a la representación popular de ella? Mitch.

**Mitch:** ¿Hay muchas conexiones con la sexualidad de ella en el cuento de Fuentes?
I: Sí, sí, sí, sí, sí, sí. Eso tiene que ver con la idea de la traición. Él no es el creador de eso para nada. Bien. Excelente observación, pregunta, o los dos. ¿Algo más en cuanto a las representaciones populares que les viene a la mente? Ya hemos hablado del cuento de Fuentes y ya hemos hablado de la película de Carrasco. Hemos hablado también bastante de los textos coloniales. Pero para refrescar un poco las memorias, vamos a volver a lo que dice Bernal Díaz de la Malinche como hicimos el otro día con Gerónimo de Aguilar. Tengo aquí unas citas—hay más información de lo que aparece aquí, pero estas son las referencias tal vez más importantes a la Malinche y la historia que se presenta de ella.

Entonces, hay dos partes. La primera parte tiene que ver con este regalo que hacen los indígenas a Cortés de las veinte mujeres. Y luego tenemos la información sobre la historia de esta mujer. Relean rápidamente esta hoja subrayando los elementos más importantes de esta historia—lo que han visto en el ensayo de Kartunnen, lo que sale también en el cuento de Fuentes; ¿cuáles son los elementos más importantes de la información de la descripción que presenta aquí Bernal Díaz. Tomen unos minutos para leer rápidamente.

I: Pensando en el texto de Fuentes, y luego en el ensayo de Kartunnen, ¿cuáles son los elementos de esta descripción que llegan a ser más importantes en las representaciones contemporáneas de esta mujer? Tenemos mucha información aquí, y como hemos mencionado, la mayoría de la información que sabemos de la Malinche viene del texto de Bernal Díaz. Ella no escribió nada, no dejó nada, ninguna muestra de quién era ella, menos lo que hizo durante la conquista y también sus hijos. Pero ¿cuáles son los elementos más importantes aquí? ¿Qué toma Fuentes de esta descripción de esta información? ¿Cuáles elementos de esta descripción? O ¿cuáles elementos parecen ser más interesantes, más importantes a ustedes de esta descripción? Sheila.

Sheila: La referencia a la Malinche como ‘dona Marina’ es la representación de excelente mujer.


Janet: Sí.


Janet: ¿Puedo comentar del ensayo de Kartunnen o...?

I: Sí, ¡claro!

Janet: Pienso que en la segunda parte la historia de doña Marina como dice que ella fue tratada como propiedad en su vida y hay la cuestión de que si yo no fue su decisión para continuar con esta vida, o simplemente todavía está diciendo que tienes que ir con estas personas y ella lo haga...

I: ...es esclava...

Janet: ...el mejor.
I: Bien, bien. Y como dices, ella hace lo mejor que puede hacer con las circunstancias, ¿no? Pero como dices, y como dice Kartunnen, no tiene la opción de decidir si va con este hombre o no. Bien, bien. Herminia.

Herminia: También Kartunnen menciona un pasaje donde hay una conversación entre Cortés y Montezuma. Y ella no usa el lenguaje que tendría que usar para referirse a Montezuma hablando con él. Pero lo hace de una manera plana quitándole toda la autoridad. Y eso fue su iniciativa propia. Entonces ella tenía...un bias.

I: Sí. Bueno, da muestra de su poder en su función como intérprete. El análisis de Kartunnen se basa en el texto de Bernal Díaz, en textos coloniales. Pero su perspectiva, su interés, el estudio de ella cómo intérprete, es un estudio lingüístico de alguna manera. Ella habla bastante, escribe bastante de su función como intérprete y su manera de utilizar varios registros—registers—de la lengua Náhuatl. ¿Qué dice ella antes de hacer este análisis de la conversación con Montezuma? ¿Qué dice en general sobre la capacidad de la Malinche de hablar con estos líderes aztecas, estos líderes nahuatl? Nicole

Nicole: Parecía que la Malinche no tenía miedo de hablar con los hombres muy importantes. Y para mí, yo no entendi que hay varios niveles en Maya. Pero la lengua maya no era la original, la natural de la Malinche. Entonces ella no sabía las reglas para comunicarse con un líder pero no sé si fue intencional de ella o si solo fue su modo de comunicarse.

I: Bien. Para aclarar aquí su primera lengua—la lengua que aprendió cuando era niña—era qué?

Tiffany: Náhuatl.

I: Y luego aprendió Maya ¿en qué contexto—no en la escuela?

Ss: Cuando era esclava.

I: Cuando llegó a ser esclava. ¿Y por qué llegó a ser esclava ella?

Jon: Por su familia.

I: Por su familia. ¿Por qué? No es una familia pobre que tenía que vender esta niña, sino ¿qué? ¿Cuál era la situación?

Nicole: Pienso que su padre murió.

I: Su padre murió.

Nicole: Y su madre se casó otra vez y ellos tuvieron un hijo.

I: Exacto. Tuvieron un hijo juntos y este hijo era el hijo que iba a heredar el cacicazgo y la tierra de esta familia. Entonces tuvieron que deshacerse de esta mujer, de la Malinche. Por eso, le dieron como una esclava.

Herminia: Pienso que eso es indicativo de que las mujeres tenían poder. Ella había podido recibir la cacicazgo. Entonces, tuvieron que deshacer de la Malinche es porque...por la ley natural de los mayas, era ella la que estaba a cargo del cacicasco. Entonces, para que pudieron tomar el trono, ellos tuvieron que desaparecerla.

I: Sí. Y esta es una manera de interpretar eso; que si ella tenía la posibilidad de ser cacica con este nuevo hijo, y si hubo una disputa complicada, sucia, entre ellos, mejor dar ella a otro grupo, mejor deshacerse de ella. Bien. Entonces esta es la situación en la cual pese la Malinche. Por eso, sabe la lengua Náhuatl y la lengua Maya. Uno de los puntos importantes de este análisis de Kartunnen es que ella no simplemente habla la lengua Náhuatl de los Macihuial, de la gente común, sino que sabe hablar otro registro—el registro de los nobles, de los poderosos, de los líderes. ¿Recuerdan algo algunas
características que menciona ella en cuanto a este registro que usaba por ejemplo Montezuma cuando hablaba? ¿Cómo era diferente?

Jon: Es como no se habla directamente a la persona hasta el punto que no se defiere a su objeto en sí.

I: Bien, bien. Era muy complicado entender exactamente qué decía la persona porque no se habla directamente. También se invertía a veces el argumento o las ideas que quería expresar. Entonces, es una manera de hablar muy diferente. No es simplemente una cuestión de saber las palabras, ¿no?, conocer la gramática, sino saber utilizar este registro, ¿no? Ella, parece, tenía experiencia con este registro—ella sabía funcionar así. Pero la gente común—los Macihuali—no sabían comunicarse con un líder como Montezuma de esta manera; de esta manera oficial. Entonces el análisis que hace Kartunnen es interesante porque ella utiliza estas fuentes, estos textos coloniales para construir un análisis de las capacidades de la Malinche; no simplemente diciendo que ella era inteligente porque aprendió rápidamente el español, sino por medio de hacer un análisis de sus capacidades lingüísticas en estas negociaciones con los pueblos que hablaban Náhuatl. Bien. ¿Algún comentario más o alguna pregunta más en cuanto a la Malinche como figura histórica, como una intérprete, cómo la analiza Kartunnen? ¿Algo más? Ahora, preguntas generales en cuanto a este ensayo. Hay cuatro en la pizarra y vamos a seguir hablando de este ensayo también el viernes cuando hablemos del ensayo de Townsend. Pero preguntas generales. Por ejemplo, si están pensando en escribir un análisis crítico, podrían pensar en estas preguntas y contestarlas en el ensayo. ¿Cuál es el propósito del ensayo? ¿Qué quiere hacer ella? ¿Cómo construye el ensayo? Y eso es interesante, su manera de organizar su presentación de la Malinche y su análisis de la Malinche. ¿Qué dice? Ya hemos hablado un poco de eso, pero podemos decir un poco más. ¿Cómo difiere ella en su representación de la Malinche de la representación que vemos en Fuentes? Entonces cuatro preguntas básicas pero importantes. Tomen dos minutos, rápidamente, rápidamente para pensar en estas preguntas. Pueden enfocarse en una de ellas si quieren y hablar con la persona que está cerca, en parejas. Rápidamente, dos minutos, piensen un poco en estas preguntas o una de ellas; si hay una pregunta más interesante, sobre el ensayo de Kartunnen y sobre su análisis de la Malinche. Dos minutos rápidamente para pensar y hablar sobre lo que dice ella.

[students then got in pairs and discussed Kartunnen’s article and the questions that the instructor had just outlined for them.]

I: Como dije, vamos a continuar con estas preguntas el viernes. Hablaremos de temas semejantes en cuanto a la presentación que hace Townsend de la Malinche también. Entonces, ¿cuál es el propósito del ensayo? ¿Qué quiere hacer ella con este ensayo? ¿Qué pretende hacer con este ensayo? Janet.

Janet: Ella hace básicamente una sumario...un resumen...

I: ...un resumen...

Janet: ...de la conquista en términos de la INAUDIBLE que daba la Malinche a los...como intérprete y traducir y cosas así.

como vemos en Fuentes. Pero mayormente es un resumen excelente de los eventos de la conquista y su papel en estos eventos. Bien. Nicole
Nicole: Para mí, ella creó el resumen para mostrar que los eventos habrían imposibles...
I: ...habrían sido imposibles...
Nicole: ...habrían sido imposibles si el intérprete no estaba aquí.
Nicole: Sí. Y yo pongo qué planes tenía Cortés si no...
I: What was his backup plan? Plan B. [laughter] Sí, bien. Y no hay una indicación de eso porque él básicamente no reconoció a la Malinche. Pero sí esto sería un cuento interesante—imaginar la conquista sin la Malinche. O sí, por ejemplo, hubiera muerto más temprano y no después de los eventos. Bien. Bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más en cuanto al propósito o la estructura de este análisis? Entonces ella toma como Fuentes toma como Townsend toma del texto de Bernal Díaz y otros textos coloniales. Pero construye una versión alternativa de la Malinche en la cual ella se ve como una figura bastante poderosa, una figura muy impresionante y no simplemente una traidora de los indígenas sino una figura mucho más complicada. Bien. ¿Algún comentario más en general sobre el ensayo, sobre lo que acaban de decir? Sí Sheila.
Sheila: Malinche es como un método para ganar el final de... o hay diferentes... perspectivas diferentes porque es positiva y negativa.
I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Y en este ensayo se podría interpretarla de las dos maneras. Bien. Comenzaremos el viernes de esta idea; de estas versiones positivas y negativas de la Malinche y las características que ella tiene en los dos sentidos. Entonces, que disfruten este día de primavera y nos veremos el viernes.
I: ¿Cómo están? ¿Cansados? Ya estamos llegando al final. Después de hoy, faltan cuatro semanas, cuatro. Ahora en las últimas dos semanas, vamos a concentrarnos en una novela de una escritora que se llama Laura Esquivel. ¿Cuántos de ustedes reconocen este nombre? Literatura “light” como decimos en español. No es nada serio lo que vamos a hacer al final del semestre. La última lectura difícil que vamos a hacer es el ensayo de Paz que viene de *El laberinto de la soledad*. Y vamos a hablar algo de este ensayo al final de la clase hoy para introducirlo porque es un texto difícil. Paz era poeta y ensayista y el lenguaje que él usa en sus ensayos es lenguaje poético en el sentido en que él convence mucho la expresión. Utiliza imágenes en vez de argumentación en sus ensayos. Entonces, el estilo del ensayo es un poco difícil. Es un ensayo que se publicó en un libro que se llama *El laberinto de la soledad* en el año 1950—ya hace más de cincuenta años. Es un ensayo viejo, pero sigue siendo un ensayo importante, ¿no? Es un punto de referencia importante. Es un ensayo muy criticado como todo el libro, pero como digo sigue siendo un punto de referencia importante. Entonces, nos vamos a enfocar en este ensayo el lunes, miercoles, y viernes. Y como digo, al final de la clase, vamos a hablar un poco de Paz, un poco de su proyecto, y les doy una hoja, unas hojas de ello para facilitar la lectura. También les quería decir que van a pasar una película en el Bijou. ¿Alguien ha ido al nuevo Bijou? Eric, ¿si? Y ¿cómo es? ¿Es como teatro como dicen? Eric: No he ido a ver una película, pero solo he ido para verlo.
I: Y ¿cómo es? ¿Bien?
Eric: Sí.
I: Si quieren visitar el Bijou para ver el espacio y para ver una película interesante, este fin de semana—comenzando este fin de semana y la semana que entra—van a pasar una película alemana de Herzog. ¿Algunos reconocen este nombre? Es un director interesante. Esta película tiene que ver con una figura que se llama Lope de Aguerra, un conquistador español que en el siglo 16 trató de conquistar parte de sudamérica y buscaba El Dorado, como todos los conquistadores, buscaba riquezas, oro, etc. Pero era un hombre medio loco y él también independizó de España y del rey de España. Entonces es, Lope de Aguerra como figura histórica es interesante y el tratamiento de esta figura de Herzog, desde mi perspectiva—ya es una película vieja—pero desde mi perspectiva, es uno de los intentos más interesantes de captar la experiencia de un conquistador europeo en el mundo nuevo. Entonces, si son aficianados del cine, sobre todo el cine clásico ya, les recomiendo mucho que vean esta película de Herzog. Bien. Para hoy, vamos a comenzar con la Malinche. Primero con los tres nombres [signalling to the three names that she has written on the board—dona Marina, Malintzin, Malinche], porque hay básicamente tres variaciones del nombre de esta mujer. Ahora, primero, comenzando con
los ensayos de Kartunnen y Townsend, ¿qué podemos decir de cada uno de estos nombres? ¿Qué importancia tiene? ¿Qué expresa cada uno de estos nombres? ¿Qué dicen ellas—Kartunnen and Townsend—de estos tres nombres de la Malinche?

**Herminia:** En cuanto a *Malintzin*, Kartunnen lo menciona que la parte *tzin* es una parte honorífica.

**I:** Bien. Exacto. Entonces para imitar la parte de *doña* que vemos en el nombre español, en el nombre europeo. ¿Qué más dice Kartunnen de las transformaciones que se ven en este nombre? Jon.

**Jon:** Que los Nahuatl no pudieron decir el ‘r’.

**I:** Exacto. Entonces la ‘r’ se convierte en ‘l’.

**Nicole:** Pero también los españoles no pudieron decir el ‘tz’.

**I:** -*tzin*. Y por eso, tenemos otra transformación de -*tzin* a *che*.

**Nicole:** Y también los indígenas eran ….no sé, pero no decían, no pronunciaban el último ‘n’ de Malintzin entonces ‘Malintzi’ y los españoles escuchaban ‘Malintzi’, entonces...

**I:** Bien. Entonces, el sonido de este ‘n’ al final era un sonido débil que no escucharon los españoles. Entonces como dices, por eso se pierde también la ‘n’ al final de la nueva versión. Entonces hay tres versiones, pero es la misma mujer. ¿De dónde viene este nombre—*doña* Marina? Hay todo un debate acerca del nombre de la Malinche, el nombre original. Sí.

**Jon:** Sí. Algunos creen que ella tenía un nombre indígena al principio de su vida pero no hay evidencia.

**I:** Y este nombre ¿recuerda...?

**Jon:** Mali-mali.

**I:** Mali-mali. Exacto. Pero las dos, Townsend and Kartunnen, dicen que eso no era el caso. Y ¿por qué arguyen en contra de que ella originalmente era Mali-mali. Sí Sheila.

**Sheila:** Porque Mali-mali representaba algo ‘mal’.

**I:** Exacto, exacto. Tiene connotaciones muy negativas como nombre. Entonces, no es un nombre que le hubieran dado a una niña. Exacto. ¿Qué es otra explicación? Tiffany.

**Tiffany:** Que los españoles no…pidieron que su nombre así no…no usan tanta….tanta...

**I:** Claro.

**Tiffany:** Sí.

**I:** Sí, sí. Entonces los españoles no les preguntaban de sus nombres originales. No conversaron de cómo se llamaban, quiénes eran, de dónde eran, etc., etc., A los españoles no les interesaba esta información. Entonces ellos renombraron a estas veinte mujeres que recibió Cortés como regalo. Y el nombre que recibió la mujer que llegó a hacer el intérprete era el nombre de Marina—una variación de un nombre muy importante en el mundo católico—María. Y luego tenemos estas transformaciones de estos nombres; de Malintzin—esta es una versión que vemos en el Códice Florentino por ejemplo, y luego la Malinche—que es el nombre más conocido para esta mujer hoy en día. Ahora, este nombre Malinche tiene una serie de connotaciones muy negativas. Pero la connotación principal ¿es qué? ¿La Malinche es un símbolo de qué?

**Ss:** La traición.

**I:** La traición. Ella es traidora. Ella es traídora. Fuentes, si se acuerdan, Fuentes juega también con estos tres nombres en su texto, en su cuento. Sí tienen el texto, en la página 42. Si no tienen el texto no hace falta. En la página 42, dice él “Se llamaba Malintzin, que
quiere decir *Penitencia.*" Eso no es. No es el caso, pero es parte de su representación de ella. "Ese mismo día el mercedario Olmedo la bautizó *Marina,* convirtiéndola en...cristiana." Bueno, vamos a decir nombre cristiano. El nombre que le dieron cuando la bautizaron. Y luego al final dice "Pero su pueblo le puso *La Malinche,* la traidora. Entonces él aquí en este cuento juega con las connotaciones, los significados posibles de estos tres nombres. Sabemos por los estudios de Kartunnen y Townsend que hay una historia lingüística detrás de estos nombres. Pero Fuentes trata de crear otra interpretación de estos nombres. Quiero seguir un poco con eso con un video que hizo el señor Fuentes en los años '91-'92. ¿Cuándo escribió el cuento que leyeron ustedes? Al final dice que se terminó en '91-'92. Entonces él escribió el cuento a la vez que estaba haciendo este proyecto de *El Espejo Enterrado;* The Buried Mirror se llama en inglés. Era una serie que salió en 1992 ¿para conmemorar qué? ¿1992 para conmemorar...? Ss: Colón.

I: Para conmemorar la llegada de Colón en 1492. Entonces es una serie de 5 o 6 videos que trata la historia hispana. España, toda hispanoamérica, viene con un libro y el libro...algunas universidades lo usan como texto para sus clases de Civilización. Pero es un proyecto problemático como el texto que leímos de Fuentes como muchas obras de Fuentes. El proyecto de *El Espejo Enterrado* es un poco problemático pero interesante porque él muestra más que las académicas, más que Kartunnen y Townsend, Fuentes muestra el lado popular de la importancia de esta mujer. Entonces vamos a ver dos minutos, es una parte muy, muy breve donde él explica la importancia de esta mujer. También en esta parte, él va a visitar un edificio público en México donde hay un mural hecho por José Clemente Orozco. José Clemente Orozco, con Diego Rivera, era uno de los muralistas grandes e importantes que apareció después de la época de la revolución mexicana. Entonces, Fuentes enfoca su análisis en una discusión breve de este mural de Orozco. Entonces, disfruten. Disfruten esta figura de Fuentes. Como saben, ya ha pasado 15 años, ya es un poco mayor. Pero les va a dar una idea de su personalidad.

[here they watch the video for ~2 minutes]

I: Muy breve, como dije. Entonces, quería darles una idea de este hombre. También quería que vieran esta imagen de Orozco, este mural de Orozco porque Paz en su ensayo también analiza brevemente este mural, esta imagen de la Malinche. Pero también quería abrir un poco la discusión sobre la importancia del nombre. ¿Cómo difiere Fuentes de su descripción del nombre de la Malinche de lo que vemos en el trabajo académico de Kartunnen y de Townsend? Hay una discusión, hay un análisis de la historia del nombre de esta mujer en Townsend y en Kartunnen. Pero lo que da Fuentes es algo diferente. ¿Qué podemos decir de estas dos versiones, estos dos acercamientos al nombre de la Malinche? ¿Y qué importancia tiene su nombre como una manera de entender a esta figura? ¿Algunos comentarios generales? Sí Ellen.

Ellen: Para mí, el artículo de Kartunnen más positiva en como...para mí es una luz que ella necesita sobrevivir y ella tenía muchos nombres pero ella era la intérprete y es el punto más importante.

I: Es el punto más importante. Bien, bien. Su trabajo como intérprete es el punto más importante y Kartunnen le quita toda esta connotación negativa de traidora de esta mujer. Entonces, te parece un análisis más positivo de ella. ¿Algo más que podemos decir de
eso, en cuanto al artículo de Kartunnen, o también lo que presenta Townsend en su ensayo, un aspecto más positivo? ¿Cómo es negativo lo que hace Fuentes? ¿Qué hace él para representar a esta mujer, a esta figura como una figura negativa para la historia de México?

Ellen: Para Aguilar, ella robó su trabajo y como es Aguilar, Aguilar es un main character...
I: ...un personaje central...
Ellen: un personaje central, y entonces es...ooh, es mi enemigo.
I: Bien, bien. Ella es enemiga completa de Gerónimo de Aguilar en el cuento de Fuentes. Bien, bien. ¿Qué más podemos decir de eso?

Herminia: Es una versión creativa. Realmente, no podemos decir que es un historiador.
I: Para nada.
Herminia: Tenemos que entender que está creando un mito más exagerado, está perpetuando un mito muy negativo—no solamente de la Malinche, sino de la mujer en general. Creo que ese tipo es un misógeno. Siempre en sus obras la mujer es objectificada.
I: Objetificada. Bien, bien. Mujer como objeto. Sí, eso es un problema que se encuentra en este cuento que vimos pero en otras obras de Fuentes. Su tratamiento de la mujer en general es problemático. ¿Qué más podemos decir específicamente sobre ella?
Sheila: Yo pienso que las perspectivas negativas son representada como traición...
I: ...traición...
Sheila: ...traición como un escoja.
I: Que era una decisión.
Sheila: oh, decisión y no forzada por los españoles.

Jon: Um..Kartunnen...no...Townsend dice que hay distintos niveles de mujeres esclavadas...
I: ...de esclavas...
Jon: ...de esclavas, decía que la Malinche, Malintzin no fuera de los niveles más bajos. No es una descripción que da poder a la situación, pero muestra que ella no era esclava en el sentido de que nosotros tenemos hoy en día.
I: ...de lo que tenemos hoy en día. ¿Cómo es diferente el sentido de ‘esclava’ en el contexto de siglo 16 en la costa de México?
Jon: Ella tenía quehaceres domésticos y otros cargos, pero no tenía que trabajar en el campo, ¿sí?
I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, hay diferencias en cuanto al trabajo que tenía y derechos que tenía en una manera eran diferentes también.
Jon: Sí, sí.
I: Bien, bien.
Nicole: Pienso que Townsend mencionó que las esclavas podían comprar más o menos su libertad, después de un tiempo. Y INAUDIBLE que sus hijos no eran ile...gítimos...
I: ...ilegitimos...
Nicole: ...ilegitimos. Y los hijos no eran nacidos en la esclavitud.
I: en la esclavitud.
Nicole: Sí.
I: Bien, bien. Entonces, eso es importante en cuanto a sus poderes y derechos dentro de la sociedad. ¿Qué más dice del hijo en el contexto de analizar a la Malinche; el hijo de la esclava? Si una esclava tiene un hijo, en esta sociedad, en este contexto, ¿qué implicaciones hay? Y eso incorpora ella en su análisis general de la Malinche. Janet.
Janet: Tienen tiempo para recuperar...¿es la palabra?...
I: ¿Recuperar?
Janet: like, ¿recover?
I: Sí, recobrar o recuperar.
Janet: Oh, ...de recuperar de su nacimiento de su niño y para dar tiempo al bebé y cosas así.
I: Bien, bien. El nacimiento se veía casi como una guerra. Así que veía a la mujer como valiente, como un guerrero, ¿no?, por estar embarazada y también por dar la luz a niños. ¿Algo más que podemos decir del niño?
Jon: Y si una mujer muera cuando está dando luz al bebé, su muerte es reconocido el mismo como un soldado en la guerra.
I: Exacto. Exacto, exacto, exacto. Entonces, hay valentía, ¿no?, en esta función de la mujer, que solo tiene la mujer en esta sociedad. Bien, excelente. Un punto más que hace ella, que es importante en su análisis de la Malinche, es que en esta sociedad en este contexto, si una esclava tiene un hijo, ella no va a salir de este grupo de este lugar. Por eso, podemos suponer que la Malinche no había tenido ningún hijo antes de irse con los españoles. Este es un ejemplo del estilo de Townsend. Ella trata de presentar una narrativa casi como una historia, casi como un cuento. Hay un intento literario muchas veces en su lenguaje. No siempre tiene éxito; ella no es poeta, ella no es novelista. Pero ella intenta presentar una versión narrada como historia, como cuento, como novela, de la vida de la Malinche. Y toma su información de fuentes, de investigación histórica, en fuentes primarias, también en análisis secundarios. Pero pone toda esta información de la investigación en las citas al final, in the foot notes. Y lo que presenta en el texto, lo que presenta en el capítulo que leyeron ustedes, es que Malintzin no es importante en el momento en que ella recibió este nombre, porque es su nombre eterno. Townsend presenta la idea de, o pues, el ejemplo de un hijo que en unos años va a ser el rey de la sociedad, pero...y desde el principio tiene su nombre de rey, pero no lo gana hasta una edad específica. Pero hay la idea que el nombre, no sé, es su nombre eternamente. Y para la Malinche, la INAUDIBLE es que Malintzin no es importante en el momento en que ella recibió este nombre, porque es su nombre eterno.
I: Exacto. Exacto, exacto, exacto. Entonces, el nombre que tenía antes, el nombre que tenía antes de llegar a estar con los españoles, no es importante en realidad. Se ha perdido por toda la historia, por toda la eternidad este nombre, no vamos a conocer este nombre de ella. Pero como dices, según Townsend, en realidad no importa porque su función, su
importancia en la historia, viene después de su encuentro con los españoles y después de estar dada este nombre de Marina. En este sentido, hace la comparación con el rey Carlos, ¿no?, que también recibe su oficio de rey cuando nace pero no ocupa este oficio hasta muchos años después. Claro, no es una comparación exacta que se puede dar allí porque la Malinche no tenía ninguna de las posibilidades, ninguno de los poderes que tenía el rey Carlos V. Pero ella sí comienza con esta comparación. Sí Alejandra. ¿Tenías comentario o pregunta?

Alejandra: No.


Sheila: Hay todo...en Townsend como las circunstancias de económicas y las alian... I: ...las alianzas...

Sheila: ...las alianzas y cómo afectan Malinche y sus circunstancias como un esclavo y una traídora.

I: Bien, bien, bien. Y el análisis que presenta ella de la Malinche es semejante al análisis que encontramos en Kartunnen. Pero hay diferencias importantes, ¿no?, sobre todo la cuestión—y eso tiene que ver un poco con las alianzas que acaban de mencionar—con la cuestión de cómo llegó a estar con los españoles. ¿La versión que tenemos en Bernal Díaz es qué? ¿La explicación que da Bernal Díaz de cómo llega a estar con la Malinche con los españoles es qué? Janet.

Janet: Que su madre...um...casa...

I: ...se casa...

Janet: ...yeah...con un otro hombre cuando su padre murió y que ellos tienen la necesidad de quitarse con ella porque fue competencia a su hermano o algo.

I: Exacto.

Janet: Pero Townsend dice que esto interpretación puede ser creativo de Fuentes porque... I: de Bernal Díaz.

Janet: sí, pero que...porque él estaba mencionando textos u obras literarios de ese tipo de situación.

I: Bien. Bien, bien, bien. Entonces, podría ser una historia completamente inventada. Y eso es lo que sugiere Townsend. ¿Qué dice Kartunnen en cuanto a este momento cuando la Malinche llega a estar con los españoles? ¿Siguió la descripción de Bernal Díaz o presenta otra posibilidad como hace Townsend?

Nicole: Pienso que Kartunnen enfocó en la idea de la Malinche coronado, pero no sé si está de acuerdo con Bernal Díaz?

I: Bien. Y no enfatiza otra posibilidad. Ella simplemente dice, o repite, lo que dice Bernal Díaz; que ella llegó a estar con los españoles porque era parte de una familia noble, pero su papá se murió, y etc., etc., etc. Entonces, Kartunnen básicamente repite la versión que vemos en Bernal Díaz, pero Townsend ofrece otra posibilidad o otras posibilidades. ¿Recuerdan cuáles eran las otras posibilidades? Si no llegó a estar con los españoles porque su padre se murió, su madre se casó de nuevo, tuvo un medio hermano, y competencia para el caciquecasco, ¿cuáles son otras explicaciones?

Herminia: ¿De Townsend?

I: De Townsend.
Herminia: Dice que probablemente era la hija de una concubina menor y si la madre murió, pudiera haber sido el caso de que la concubina más importante o la primera, pudiera haber INAUDIBLE. Es más difícil pensar que la madre le hubiera INAUDIBLE. ¿No?, y había una situación un poco problemática y salió de la familia. ¿Cuáles son otras explicaciones que da?

Jon: Que era forma de tributo para establecer el paz.

I: Para establecer paz, exacto, entre dos grupos indígenas. Y después entre los indígenas y los españoles. Entonces por la misma razón, este grupo indígena le dio a Cortés las veinte mujeres como tributo como gesto de paz, ella fue dada de su familia a otro grupo indígena—también para crear la paz entre grupos. Entonces, hay varias posibilidades que ofrece. Lo que hace ella que es interesante y nuevo, es sugerir que la versión que vemos en Bernal Díaz no es la única posibilidad; hay otras posibilidades también. Bien, excelente. ¿Algo más? ¿Un comentario más acerca de la Malinche y cómo llegó a estar con los españoles? Ahora, como dije, quiero hablar de Paz, pero antes de hacer eso, quiero resumir de alguna manera lo que hemos visto en estos dos ensayos de Townsend y Kartunnen sobre la representación de la Malinche y la perspectiva que ofrecen ellas en sus ensayos. Si pensamos en los dos ensayos, hay un estilo semejante. Como ya hemos dicho, en el ejemplo de Townsend, ella trata de narrar la historia de la Malinche de una manera casi literaria poniendo toda la investigación al final en las citas pero tratando de presentar una historia de esta mujer. ¿Qué podríamos decir del estilo, de la escritura, la organización del ensayo de Kartunnen? ¿Cómo es semejante o diferente? Anna.

Anna: Es una resumen de la conquista con la perspectiva lingüística y el poder de ella.


Nicole: ¿En los registros?

I: En los registros. Bien.

Nicole: En los registros de Náhuatl y Maya.

I: Bien. Los registros de las lenguas que hablaba la Malinche. Y ella manejaba no simplemente el registro más común, sino este registro elevado que usaban los líderes como Montezuma. Y desde la perspectiva de Kartunnen, el hecho de que ella habla este registro más alto ¿es indicación de qué?

Janet: Su riqueza con su nacimiento.

I: Exacto. Su riqueza, el nacimiento, el hecho de que ella probablemente venía de una familia privilegiada en esta sociedad, de una familia noble. Bien. Bien, bien, bien, bien. ¿Algo más que podemos decir en cuanto al estilo? Jon.

Jon: Cuando ella traducción de Cortés a Montezuma, usaba el registro de los Maciwalí. Y por eso, ella tenía que ser...um...brave.

I: Valiente.

Jon: sí, para usar este registro inferior con Montezuma.

I: Bien. Y lo que dice Kartunnen es que ella hizo eso no porque no conocía el otro registro, sino ¿con qué intento? ¿Con qué propósito?

Jon: Como....parecer insolente Cortés.
I: Insoliente y para parecer más aliada con Cortés y no obediente al poder de Montezuma. Es una manera de insultarle en realidad, no hablarle de la manera oficial, formal que se requerían estas conversaciones. Bien, excelente. ¿Algo más en cuanto a los estilos de los ensayos o la importancia de la lengua de la Malinche, su manera de manipular la lengua. Hablaremos más de ella en la semana que entra. No vamos a dejar hasta el fin del semestre. Si están frustrados con la Malinche, pues van a estar mucho más frustrados después de cuatro semanas más. Entonces, hablaremos del ensayo de Paz la semana que entra, después hablaremos dos días de un ensayo de una escritora, también novelista, también ensayista mexicana, se llama Margo Glantz; otra vez de la Malinche y Cortés. Y luego terminaremos con la novela de Laura Esquivel. Y la novela se llama: La Malinche. Bien. Entonces, Paz. Paz, Paz, Paz. Tengo casi un libro para ustedes.

[instructor distributes handouts for students to help guide their reading of Octavio Paz’s work that they will look at starting next week.]

Hay varias páginas, pero en la mayoría de las páginas tienen vocabulario. En las dos primeras páginas, hay información introductoria de este señor de Paz. Y luego hay preguntas de análisis que deben preparar para el lunes, para el miércoles y para el viernes. Entonces como ven en la primera página y media, hay información y luego listas largas de vocabulario. Le tengo que agradecer al profesor Gollnick por este trabajo; yo no hice este trabajo. Y a lo mejor, dos de ustedes van a reconocer el material reciclado, pero el reciclaje es algo que tenemos que hacer todos. Entonces lo vamos a hacer aquí. [laughter]

Pero es super-útil esta lista de vocabulario. En este texto, más que en otros textos que hemos visto, hay palabras que no van a conocer. Paz era poeta y tenía un conocimiento profundo de la lengua de español. Y él utilizaba muchas palabras que la gente normal simplemente no usaba. Entonces, usen...hagan referencia a estas listas de vocabulario mientras están leyendo. Como dije al principio, el estilo de Paz es un estilo que puede ser un estilo un poco difícil de entender. Como era poeta, no presenta análisis académico como vemos por ejemplo en el ensayo de Kartunnen y en el ensayo de Townsend. Ellas son académicas que tratan de presentar un estilo más literario del tema. Pero de todas maneras, son académicas. No hay este estilo de argumentación académica en el ensayo de Paz. Él tiene interés en explorar lo que es lo mexicano. Después de la revolución mexicana, hay un intento en el país de entender qué es lo mexicano, quiénes somos nosotros, cómo nos podemos definir, cómo nos podemos definir. Y el proyecto de Paz, El Laberinto de la Soledad, es parte de este proyecto del nacionalismo cultural, de encontrar una identidad nacional. Para hacer esto, él se enfoca en varios aspectos de la cultura. El ensayo que vamos a leer nosotros, tiene que ver con la Malinche, “Los Hijos de la Malinche” se llama y es uno de los ensayos más conocidos en este texto. Otros ensayos siguen siendo leídos, pero no tanto como los ensayos sobre la Malinche. Entonces, él es parte de este proyecto de llegar a un sentido de nacionalismo cultural que ocurre después de la revolución mexicana. Para refrescar las memorias, ¿la revolución mexicana comienza en qué año?

Ss: 1910.
I: 1910. ¿Termina más o menos en....?
Ss: 1920...1936.
I: 1920. En 1936 tenemos la guerra civil en España. Bueno, hay muchos eventos importantes. Pero en México, la revolución comienza en 1910 y termina básicamente en 1920. Es una historia super, super, super complicada; muchos nombres, muchos asesinatos, muchos cambios de poder—no vamos a hablar sobre la revolución mexicana menos el hecho de decir que es un punto de referencia importante en el ensayo de Paz. Él construye este proyecto en este ambiente después de la revolución cuando hay un intento de crear una identidad nacional diferente de lo que existía antes. El trabajo de José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, Siquieros, los tres muralistas grandes, es trabajo que aparece después de la revolución y da ejemplo, da otro ejemplo de un intento de crear una identidad nacional. Entonces, Paz es parte de esta tradición. Fuentes de alguna manera también es parte de esa tradición, pero viene después. Entonces, mientras están leyendo, recuerdan que este ensayo es parte de un texto, y el texto es parte de un proyecto más grande de definir la identidad mexicana; quién es el mexicano, qué es lo mexicano.

Hablaremos de la manera en que hace él eso el lunes. Para el lunes, ustedes van a leer nueve páginas. Nueve páginas no es mucho, pero enfóquense en las dos preguntas que tengo aquí en la primera hoja. Busquen una cita donde él construye una idea del misterio alrededor de la idea de lo mexicano que presenta aquí. También habla mucho de “nosotros”; quiénes son “nosotros”, cómo se caracteriza el “nosotros” que vemos aquí al principio del ensayo. Hay básicamente dos partes del ensayo. Lo que van a leer para el lunes es la primera parte y luego vamos a dividir en dos la segunda parte. Sí Nicole

Nicole: ¿Paz es de México?
I: Sí, Paz es de México. Es uno de los autores más conocidos de México. Él ganó en 1990 el Premio Nobel de la literatura. Es el único mexicano que ha recibido este premio. Entonces es un intelectual muy reconocido en México y en la literatura de México. Es cien por cien mexicano. Entonces, para el lunes comenzaremos con Paz y pasaremos lo demás en la semana que entra con él. Que pasen bien este fin de semana.
Focal Student Interview—Nicole
Thursday, March 29, 2007

R= Researcher

R: What is your name?
Nicole: Nicole.
R: What do you consider your native/first language?
Nicole: English.
R: And your second language?
Nicole: Spanish.
R: Have you studied any other languages before?
Nicole: No.
R: Tell me a little bit about your language learning history with Spanish—such as why you chose Spanish and when you started studying it.
Nicole: Well we had classes from kindergarten through elementary school that were pretty much required. I mean, it was probably like three times a week for twenty minutes when we were really young and it didn’t go beyond colors, animals, and stuff like that. And then in middle school—in fifth grade and sixth grade it was still required that we had Spanish and then seventh grade we had a choice. We could stop or we could decide between continuing with Spanish or to take German. And I just liked Spanish; I felt like I had a basis in that language so I decided to keep taking Spanish.
R: Where did you go to school?
Nicole: O., Minnesota.
R: Is that way up north?
Nicole: No, it’s like thirty minutes west of the Twin Cities. And my grade, the class of 2005, were the only ones who had it from kindergarten through middle school. It was kind of like a guinea pig thing. For most other people it wasn’t every day. It wasn’t throughout all the years or anything. And in high school, I just liked Spanish. By that time—my brother is three years older than me—so I knew that most colleges wanted you to have language classes and so I thought that I might as well keep taking Spanish. As I got into my junior and senior year, I started thinking maybe I really want to study this as a major in college and so I took AP language my junior year and then did an independent study my senior year doing AP Spanish literature.
R: Who did you do your independent study with?
Nicole: Well, we looked at sort of like the AP test guides and they gave us a whole list of authors and the different stories and things that we should read. I wish I could remember it now, but it was a broad range of...like we read parts of Don Quijote, and we read lots of poems, and we read Lazarillo de Tormes, etc.
R: So did you end up taking the AP Literature exam?
Nicole: Yes.
R: That’s a tough exam.
Nicole: Yeah.
R: So you came to this university thinking that you were going to major in Spanish.
Nicole: Right. I knew.
R: And then, in your questionnaire, I think you said that you’re majoring in English as well, right?
Nicole: Yes.
R: So when will you be graduating then?
Nicole: I don’t quite yet know yet because I’m planning on getting my secondary education license so that I can teach either subject. I just applied to the College of Education in March so I’m waiting to find out if I get in. So I’ll graduate in one or two more years. I’m a sophomore now. I mean, two or three more years.
R: So you started here at this university in the fall of 2005?
Nicole: Yeah.
R: Why do you want to go into teaching?
Nicole: I always really enjoyed...well, my high school experience was pretty amazing. I thought that my teachers were absolutely wonderful and I had a lot of fun and I kind of wanted to do the same thing I guess as how what my teachers did for me; I want to be able to give that to somebody else too. I also kind of felt like I didn’t want to stop learning; I didn’t want to be done with education after I was done with college. I think that’s why.
R: That’s encouraging. That’s a good thing. So you started in 2005 and you took Spanish that very first semester?
Nicole: Yep.
R: So before this course that you’re taking now with Ann, you’ve taken literature courses before in Spanish, right?
Nicole: Yes.
R: Which ones have you taken?
Nicole: There’s a big auditorium class with Prof. Tony with his Peninsular Spanish—like “Readings in Culture” or something like that. That was the first one that I took that fall. That was the only Spanish class that I took. But I also took a class with Ann that was in English but it was Latin American literature that was translated into English. And then that Spring I took Sociolinguistics and Latin American Literature Fantasy with Prof. Hsu.
R: So focusing in on the literature courses, how does this one compare to the Prof. Hsu course or the course with Prof. Tony as far as teaching style, as far as students talking about literature. Any kind of differences or similarities compared to Ann’s course that you’re taking right now?
Nicole: I feel like this one is definitely—well it’s a higher course number but it’s also more advanced in what students are saying. I feel like the discussion is more sophisticated. I think Ann asks us a lot of questions that help us to...I mean, when we answer the questions, we are participating in the discussion. It’s not like she’s just asking plot-based questions or something like that. And in the auditorium class with Prof. Tony, it was all lecture. However we did meet once a week in small sections. And that was a little bit of discussion but it was more like Yes or No answer type of questions that our teaching assistant would ask us/ask the class to participate.
R: So the discussion...
Nicole: Definitely there’s more discussion with Ann’s class that I’m in right now. And with the fantasy class; that was almost...it was kind of like the professor didn’t seem to
expect much from us. He wanted us to participate and we would call on us and he would ask a question. But he also seemed content also to just kind of talk about it. And it was very interesting; I enjoyed that class a lot.

R: But the participation was maybe different compared to Ann’s current class?
Nicole: Yeah, definitely.

R: From your perspective (i.e., a student’s perspective), what do you want to get out of this particular literature course by the end of the semester?
Nicole: I guess what I feel like I’m already getting out of it is a better understanding of the history. I mean, I knew who Hernán Cortés was, but I didn’t know what he did or anything. In a general sense of my historical education, I guess, even if it wasn’t in Spanish, I think that it’s a valuable thing to know because I am studying Spanish. And I enjoy that. But I think personally, my primary goal is just to practice speaking and listening and whatever subject we’re using as a basis for that discussion doesn’t really matter to me.

R: Because in your questionnaire you indicated that speaking was your number one priority.
Nicole: Absolutely.

R: Would you say that in general, you take courses (like taking this course) thinking that you wanted to further develop your skills versus getting into the content. Is it 50–50 or how would you balance those two areas?
Nicole: Honestly I took this class just because I’m trying to work up towards the higher course numbers because we have to take three 170 courses before we graduate. And I hadn’t taken anything higher than 130 and so I was thinking that I should try and take harder stuff. So I think inherently I knew that it would demand more of me. But it was really just a matter of something that I hadn’t taken yet and something that fit into my schedule. I didn’t really think that it would be…I don’t know. I guess this topic [of the course] didn’t interest me too much before I knew anything about it. But I figured any Spanish class would be good practice, so I guess that’s why I took it.

R: How has this experience been in taking the class with Ann as far as getting to know her and getting to know other students? Did you know any of the other students before you took the course? And how do you see the classroom dynamic unfolded?
Nicole: I’ve been in class with a couple of different students, but I really didn’t know them personally. And I feel like it’s a comfortable setting. We all make mistakes and we all speak kind of choppy when we’re trying to answer a question in class. But I don’t feel like anybody is critical of that and so I think it’s sort of a welcoming environment. As far as getting to Ann, I think…I don’t know. She let’s her personality out a lot and I think that’s really, I like that a lot. And she’s very enthusiastic and I appreciate that. But I haven’t really had discussions with the other students besides what we’re doing in class.

R: Nothing outside of class?
Nicole: Not really. I mean, if I see them walking around I’ll say hi, but nothing else.

R: In terms of what specific types of knowledge, what do you expect to know by the end of the class?
Nicole: I guess…

R: For example, what knowledge do you want to have in terms of the course’s content.
Nicole: Well, I guess what the class is about, the history of the Conquest [of Mexico]. Just being able to name people and events that happened—not necessarily be able to…I
feel like through discussion we are sort of defining everything that we read. Not defining, but clarifying what we read. In that sense, we are taking the bits of the stuff that we read that we do understand and summarizing it into this kind of easier, sort of more of an outlining format of what we’ve been doing. So I think I will understand key events and key people that were in the Conquest, but I will have forgotten details of the literature I think just because reading it is still a challenge. It’s almost like, because it takes longer to read, you can’t spend too much time focusing on every little bit, and looking up all of the words that you don’t know.

R: So how about skills? What skills do you think will improve by the end of this class?
Nicole: I think writing definitely because...Well, I thought it was kind of funny when Ann said that it wasn’t a writing intensive class. But I’ve written four essays so far and the midterm exam was all written and so I think it’s writing-intensive. I think that I am becoming more efficient when I write in Spanish and I am developing more of an argumentative vocabulary to use when I’m writing those critical analyses. I think speaking too has probably improved a little bit. I think that improves slower just because I only speak...I only ever speak Spanish in class, for 50 minutes three times a week...well I have two Spanish classes right now. But I’m not immersed in it so I feel like that’s kind of like a slower progress. But I think writing and speaking...probably listening too. I feel like listening is one of my stronger skills.

R: How much time on average do you spend outside of class preparing for this class?
Nicole: Two hours maybe. When we were reading the earlier texts it was more like three hours because the earlier writing style was hard to get used to. But I would say two to three hours on average; it depends on if there’s a writing assignment due.

R: As far as the preparation that you do do outside of class—barring any writing assignments—is there any type of routine or pattern that you go through to help you prepare; whether it’s reading, whether it’s taking notes, etc., anything outside of class that helps you to participate more in class?
Nicole: Well, when it’s a text that we bought, I usually have a pen and I circle stuff—even if I never look it up. But I still circle words that I don’t know. And I write question marks by stuff or underline things that I think are important. Or I just underline the parts that I don’t understand. But I generally don’t take notes on what I’m reading just because I have to get through it. It slow me down so much if I just stop every paragraph and take notes. She has a lot of articles that we read online. And I generally don’t print them out; I just read them on my computer. And in those instances I take even less notes. But I don’t usually read it all at one time. The story that we’re reading now I think is like sixty pages. And I’m reading it in about fifteen- to twenty-page increments.

R: Is this the Fuentes text?
Nicole: Yes.

R: Are there any activities that you do outside of class that specifically help you to participate in class discussion? I know you don’t take many notes, and you circle things, but is there anything that you do that would somehow help you to talk about the text or no?
Nicole: I don’t think so. I mean, I do the readings. I guess I must read pretty thoroughly and then that’s how I make up for not taking notes. I take lots of notes—well, not lots—but I do take notes in class. And then sometimes, especially if Ann introduces a text, I take notes while she’s introducing it and then I look for that kind of stuff that she talked
about while I’m reading. Sometimes I jot down a couple of questions or something that I
don’t understand. But it’s really just reading I think.
R: So, why do you participate in class discussion? What are some of the reasons why you
speak up?
Nicole: Sometimes it’s to get a question answered. Also, it’s a requirement for the class;
we’re supposed to participate. I always feel a little awkward when no one answers, and so
I feel like I better raise my hand.
R: How often do you feel like that?
Nicole: Not so much in this class, because I feel like there is pretty good participation
among the students. But in other classes, I notice that I am always the one raising my
hand.
R: And so you ask questions. And do your questions tend to involve getting at the
meaning of the text, at vocabulary, or at a particular linguistic problem that you’re
having, or all of the above?
Nicole: Usually it’s more the meaning of the text. I try to solve the vocabulary problems
on my own. Although she sometimes hands out a piece of paper with quotes on it and we
break up into small groups and if I don’t know what something is saying I’ll raise my
hand and ask her ‘What’s this word mean?’ Sometimes with lengthier passages or
lengthier sentences, where I kind of lose what’s going on—like I forget who the subject is
or something like that—that will be a part of the text that I am confused about. So I guess
that might be a linguistic kind of a thing or a syntax thing.
R: When you say subject, do you mean...
Nicole: Like the subject of a sentence.
R: Ok.
Nicole: I mean, that’s just like an example. But with Cortes in his account of the
Conquest, we would go on for like this much [signaling a lot of text] in the book and we
would be like ‘What is he talking about’?
R: Do you think that you respond to other students’ contributions or do you mostly key in
on what Ann is saying or how do you see yourself participating?
Nicole: Mostly it’s in response to what Ann is saying, but if a student raises her hand and
says something that makes me think “Oh, I had this reaction to the text or yes I agree
with her”; if I agree with what the student is saying, I probably wouldn’t raise my hand.
But if I disagreed or if I had a question about what that student was saying, I would
definitely raise my hand.
R: Do you understand everything that the instructor or other students say when they are
talking?
Nicole: I would say that I understand 95% of what Ann is saying. Most of the students I
can understand them, but a few of them—Herminia, I can’t always understand her. And I
think she’s the only one who I can remember who I have any difficulty with.
R: Why is that?
Nicole: She speaks really fast, I feel like her vocabulary is...she doesn’t...I know that
instructors decide which words to pick so that their students will understand them. But I
feel like she just talks because she can. She doesn’t have to worry about...because she
knows that Ann will understand her but I don’t know...maybe I’m the only one who has
trouble understanding her because I am across the room and maybe that has something to
do with it. Sometimes when other students aren’t speaking loud enough, I can’t hear them. But I feel like I understand almost everything.

R: If you don’t understand what they’re saying, what do you do? Like with Herminia, do you zone out or…?

Nicole: Yeah, sometimes I do. I try to pick up what she’s saying. Like I try to pick up key words and I listen to Ann’s response to her and usually Ann will kind of summarize what she said and then I kind of get it. I guess I don’t exactly zone out but I don’t worry about it. If I don’t understand what a student is saying I’m not really that concerned. But I still try to listen and I still try to follow her.

R: Can you describe Ann’s techniques or activities that she does in class that seem to get everyone talking about what you have been reading?

Nicole: Well, she gives us questions to think about as we read and they are pretty basic questions usually. Like “How does this author represent these characters vs.…”; we do a lot of comparisons between texts—I think that’s sort of the point of the class. So because of that comparison technique, we always have some kind of a basis as to how to judge the next piece of the new piece of the text vs. something that we’ve already read. We kind of have a little bit of background history. So I think that kind of helps because in the new text we’ll see a name or reference to something that we’re familiar with. So then we can come to class prepared to talk about it. Like I said before, she does ask us a lot of questions and I think she expects us to answer. And then she does break us up into small groups quite frequently. I think her intention in doing that is that for those students who don’t speak up very often so that in a small group they might feel more comfortable discussing the text. For me, I would rather just stay in the large group so that I could hear what everybody is saying. But I guess I’m not very shy in terms of speaking up. I always feel like “Oh great, we’re breaking up in small groups.” I think it is helpful, but I just don’t like it. I don’t know why. It’s not just this class either. I think actually part of it has to do with not having the authority of the instructor there to like… I always feel like I would rather hear what the instructor has to say rather than someone else. Although it’s nice to be able to sort of commiserate with other students and be like “I don’t get this.” or “What is this?” Sometimes we even speak in English too, like “What was that part… page 61.” I don’t know, it’s really just her asking questions, us speaking in small groups. Sometimes we’ll do sort of like brainstorming activities like… she’ll have a category written on the board like “Characters that are important”. And then we’ll just sort of raise our hand and say “Montezuma” or “Cortés”, etc. So I think that’s more like a review kind of thing, but it helps to reinforce it.

R: Do you feel comfortable participating in discussion? Why or why not?

Nicole: I do feel comfortable. I think it’s because most of us are non-native speakers. So I don’t think that anybody is expecting my Spanish to be perfect or, you know, fast or anything like that. I feel confident that my speaking skills are just as good as most other people in the class, except for the native speakers. I don’t know if Herminia is a native speaker or not. But some of them seem like they have better control or have been raised more bilingually. So I think it’s mostly the environment—just in comparison with everybody else—we’re all at the same level.

R: Ok.
Nicole: I’m planning to study abroad and I feel like I’ll be much more intimidated then when I’m in a classroom in Chile or Mexico. So I’m not sure how that’s going to affect me.

R: In your questionnaire, you indicated that you’re an English major so you’ve obviously taken English literature courses here before.

Nicole: Yeah.

R: And you talked a little bit about foreign language literature courses and how they “meander less from the topic and there are less tangents.” Can you talk a little bit more about those two differences?

Nicole: Maybe it’s just a characteristic of English professors vs. Spanish professors, but in some of my English classes, I’ve experienced like, we’ll be talking about literature and then we’ll just start talking about something that’s kind of related and then it gets farther away and farther away. And I feel like if that happened in a Spanish classroom, students would be very confused because it’s easy to miss a word or a sentence here or there; especially if you’re listening and taking notes at the same time—it’s hard to focus on both things. So if a professor just started like...or even if a student started talking about something unrelated and kept going in that direction, it would be detrimental to our discussion and our understanding of the text. So it seems to me that in Spanish classes it’s much more focused because just basic reading comprehension isn’t taken for granted. So that’s less advanced or a less advanced aspect of Spanish literature classes vs. English literature classes. I always kind of appreciated that aspect because I feel like we’re very focused during the whole classroom time.

R: How does your participation level differ from an English literature course that you’ve taken at this university vs. Ann’s Spanish literature course? Is there any difference that you see in terms of your participation or are you the same in both contexts as far as participating in whole-class discussion?

Nicole: I mean, I participate a lot in English classes too...probably my comments are more in-depth or maybe I speak for a longer amount of time in my English classes than I would in Spanish. Like in Spanish, I have two or three sentences that I want to say and then I’m done. In English it might be more of a minute or two dialogue between me and the professor. Like having a mini-discussion within the class discussion about a specific element.

R: Is that mostly because of linguistic factors?

Nicole: What do you mean by linguistic?

R: Like do you think you say less because you don’t have the ability to say more or do you say less because it is so focused?

Nicole: Oh. I think I say less because I feel like I speak slower in Spanish and I am more self-conscious of, you know, everybody’s eyed in on me...kind of like I’m struggling what I want to say and I don’t want to take up a lot of class time just saying something that might not be that important. I mean, maybe because it’s more focused too. But mostly it’s just like I have this one idea and I have to remember how to say it. So I have to get that out.

R: But you’re not inhibited in any way because...because you said that because you are all non-native speakers and everyone is kind of participating and making mistakes and even if you are making mistakes you’re still trying to get your idea out.
Nicole: Yes. But I think there’s still pressure because you don’t want to have to say it in English.
R: Would that be pretty embarrassing for you to have to resort to English?
Nicole: I really try not to. Once in a while there’s just a word and I’ll say that in English. It wouldn’t be embarrassing, but it would be sort of disappointing to myself I think because I really want to speak well. I’ve been told over and over again that you just have to practice, you just have to try.
R: Can you remember any one time in Ann’s class when you felt uncomfortable participating?
Nicole: I feel more uncomfortable in the small groups I think than in the large group. Not necessarily uncomfortable but awkward because it suddenly becomes a student-led discussion versus an instructor-led discussion and I never really know how to judge how seriously the other students in the small group are wanting to discuss this one topic. So it’s kind of like, “Should we really do what we’re supposed to do or should we just kind of mention a couple of things and be done.” So I guess it’s a little more awkward with just peers speaking in Spanish and speaking about the subject.
R: Alright. So have you ever felt shy or not confident about your interpretations and sharing those in class?
Nicole: Not shy, but I have felt not confident about what I had taken from the text and what I have understood. And in those cases, I would probably pose my comment as a question and be like “Is this what happens?” instead of “This is what I think happened.” Generally, I feel pretty easy-going and confident.
R: Have you ever disagreed about Ann’s interpretations about a particular text?
Nicole: I don’t think so. I mean, she necessarily doesn’t make her opinion that clear; like it’s the one right answer. And when somebody else suggests something, she’s always open to that and says “Absolutely, that’s a possibility.” And when some people are just misunderstanding something, she will say something like “I don’t think so, because I think you’re misunderstanding this element.” But I pretty much accept her interpretations because I figure that she is more of an expert than me.
R: Do you ever disagree with other students’ interpretations?
Nicole: Yeah, I think so.
R: Do you vocalize that?
Nicole: Not always. But when the forum is open for discussion, I think I would say “Well I thought this” etc. In the last class we were talking about the ending of the movie—whether or not it was...well we had read that article about what that one critic thought of it and we were just kind of disagreeing with her or arguing with her [i.e., the critic] and I think I said something about how I had interpreted it in a different way.
R: If you had to describe the way in which Ann talks about literature to a friend who’s thinking about taking the same course the next semester, how would you describe her approaches.
Nicole: I would say that she’s very enthusiastic and she makes sure that her students know what’s going on and what the text is about. I’ve never felt that I’m really floundering in that class. It’s also a fun environment—we laugh and it’s a nice place.
R: So let me just summarize what you have said. In comparison to other Spanish literature courses that you’ve taken, with respect to speaking and practicing talk and
improving your speaking ability, you would say that this one probably rates higher vs. the other two that you’ve taken.

Nicole: Yes. The first one that I took, which was the lecture and then the small group discussion, I think we did discuss quite a bit in the small-group discussion. But I don’t think that we were talking about as advanced issues. And then in my other Spanish literature classes, I think the amount is less with what students are saying. I mean, in Ann’s class it’s more than in previous classes.

R: Based on your experience in this course so far, how do you think class discussions contribute to your understanding of what you’re reading?

Nicole: A lot! I think I feel much more reassured after...like if we have an assignment over the weekend and we haven’t discussed this text at all, I’ll usually be very frustrated reading it because I am unsure of what to focus on or if I don’t know some of the vocabulary that I just have to skip over...if that’s like key to the understanding of it or anything. And then once we discuss it in class, it always sort of confirms what I thought I understood was right and I’ll say, “Yeah I was right.” So I think in class we do kind of do a sort of elementary plot summary and character analysis.

R: So you would say that class discussion helps you to help you better understand vocabulary?

Nicole: Not really vocabulary, because we don’t really bring up specific words in the class. But I think it helps me understand the context of everything. It helps me to focus on which parts of the text are the most important because sometimes she will even have us open to a certain page and we’ll read a passage out loud and I’ll remember “Oh yeah, that’s something that I really think about.”

R: So we could say that it helps you with comprehension of particular passages.

Nicole: Yes.

R: How about interpretation; does it [class discussion] help you to kind of go beyond that comprehension level and get you to start maybe relating a text to different things...

Nicole: other texts...

R: or other contexts...?

Nicole: Yeah, definitely. I think this comes through a lot when Ann asks us questions like “How does this author represent this character vs. this author representing this character?” And that makes us automatically makes us start interpreting rather than just comprehending. It feels like it is a little more elementary in the analysis and the interpretation vs. my English classes. But at the same time, I definitely feel challenged. I mean, if this class was conducted in English, I think it would kind of seem weird. I don’t know, definitely discussion helps with the interpretation of the texts.

R: Are some texts more difficult than others to talk about? And if so, could you give me an example of one?

Nicole: I think when I’m reading alone, I always underestimate what I’m understanding. When I then show up in class and we start talking about it and I find that I suddenly have things to say, that’s when I realize “Oh, I did understand what I read.” So I think discussion is not usually...I haven’t noticed any huge differences and difficulty discussing one text vs. another. But there have been texts that we’ve read in English, but that didn’t necessarily make the discussion in Spanish any easier because we still had to think about how we were going to say it in Spanish in order to participate. It seems like the discussions, to me at least, are always about the same in difficulty.
R: Okay. So when you get to the point when you ‘understand’ a particular text, what exactly does that mean to you?

Nicole: I think it means that I would be able to explain it to somebody who hasn’t read it. When I talk to my friends who aren’t in the class about what we’re reading. I mean, I talk to them in English, I feel like I must understand it because I’ve read it in Spanish and I’ve discussed it in Spanish but I can talk about it in English pretty easily. I think when I write about a text, it forces me to understand it more deeply because I have to look for evidence and I have to form and argument about it. Usually at the beginning, when start reading a new text, I feel the most uneasy about what I understand and what I don’t understand. And then three or four days into it I feel pretty confident.

R: Do you understand everything that Ann says? I think you said that you understand 95% of what she says, right?

Nicole: There are some expressions and phrases that I might not know. Last time I noticed that she said en cuanto a several times. And I was like “What is en cuanto a?...Like ‘in terms of’?” And I kind of figured it out...I mean, I didn’t even look it up. It didn’t stop me from understanding what she was talking about but there are definitely words that I don’t pick up on. But I don’t think that there would ever be a full thought that I wouldn’t understand.

R: How about all of the questions that she poses in class. You said that she asks a lot of questions. Are there any times that you didn’t understand what she was asking?

Nicole: Yeah, definitely. In those times, I think she kind of notices because nobody raises their hand. And then she’ll sort of re-phrase it or she’ll simplify her question. And then we’ll start talking. And then maybe after that we kind of gradually make our way up to what she was really trying to get at. But there are definitely times when she asks a question and either I don’t have an immediate answer because I have to look at it or I have to look back at the text or something like that. I usually just kind of think about it and sit there, but I don’t raise my hand at those times. I don’t know if anybody has ever asked her to clarify what she means, but...

R: So when there’s silence like that, how does that make you feel? Do you look down, do you think that maybe I should try to respond?

Nicole: Well I wouldn’t want to just try to say something.

R: Just to fill the void.

Nicole: No, I wouldn’t do that. I probably avoid looking directly at Ann just because I don’t want her to call on me. Or I might even look confused and then that might be a signal to her that we don’t get it. Or I might start looking through my notes or something like that to see if I can figure out what she is talking about.

R: Are there any challenges or had to face with respect to participating in discussion in this class? Are there any things that have prevented you to maybe not participate?

Nicole: I don’t think so.

R: From a student’s perspective, what would make it easier for students to have meaningful discussions about literature? Is there anything else that either you could do as a student, or that Ann could do as an instructor that might help get people talking?

Nicole: Are we assuming that people understand what they’ve read?

R: Not necessarily. It could be something that would maybe help them to read better, more critically.
Nicole: I think Ann might do this a little bit already, but I especially appreciate when she starts off class with a little bit of a summary of what we read. And she just sets the basis and just talks and sort of gets us into that thinking mode of the text so that we’re just not coming from a different class and sitting down and being like “What? Oh yeah, Cortés.” So I guess it would be helpful to maybe do a little bit of review each time at the beginning of class before jumping into discussion. The other thing I was thinking of is before we do a reading assignment, to have a list of either vocabulary that will be very important for us to know as we read. I mean, that seems pretty impossible to do that once you get into the lengthy assignments; like you can’t tell the students what each weird verb is going to be.

R: Sort of like a reading guide or a vocabulary guide?

Nicole: Yeah, actually like a reading guide. I don’t know if you’ve seen those Shakespeare editions where on one side it’s the text and on the other side it’s...like at the beginning of each scene they have a really brief summary of what happens in that scene. So I think with the text it would be nice to have, maybe every chapter or every ten pages or something like that, yeah, sort of like a reading guide. “This is what happens.” I don’t know, I mean, that seems like cheating almost because some students wouldn’t even read. But it would be more so that you would have some sort of reference point to know how things are progressing.

R: If you could change anything about this course regarding class discussions, what would you change, if anything?

Nicole: Um....

R: Would you maybe get rid of the small group?

Nicole: I would do less of it. I feel like some students do probably benefit from it. I mean, I know I benefit from it, but it’s just kind of a pain. I would do less small group. I would really enjoy just more of a lecture from Ann sometimes too. That’s when I get the most out of....I really enjoy hearing an expert’s interpretation of something. And that’s what I really enjoy about my English classes too. And I think that I said that in Spanish, in this course, it’s more focused on the bare bones of the text. Like we are trying to comprehend it and then, if we have time, we jump into more in-depth analysis. So I guess I would just like hear more from Ann, especially about the historical things that we might not know. I guess I would just like to have her lecture more.

R: Is there anything about your classmates’ participation in class discussion?

Nicole: Well some of them never really speak; I would like to hear them. I’m sure they’re smart and I’m sure that they know what’s going on. I would like to hear what they have to say.

R: Why do you think that some of them don’t participate?

Nicole: I don’t know.

R: Maybe you don’t know them very well.

Nicole: I don’t know them at all. I mean, I have kids in my English class who don’t participate ever. So I don’t think it’s just a language thing.

R: Are there some students who don’t participate in Ann’s class in whole-class discussion who you have seen in small group talk more.

Nicole: Yeah. I sit next to Anna. She doesn’t speak much in class, maybe once or twice every class period. But in small group discussion she’s just as active as anybody else. So I guess I would just like to hear other people speak more.
R: What’s your overall opinion of this course?

Nicole: Very high I think. I’m trying to think very objectively about it. I mean, not objectively necessarily but it’s hard to evaluate it when there’s a lot of work to do. But I think that I’ve already learned a lot about the conquest of Mexico and although I am working hard, I know it’s good for me. I do feel like I’m becoming a more efficient reader even though I’m a slower reader in Spanish than in English. I feel like I’m becoming more efficient and I’m becoming a more efficient writer. So, like on a scale of one to ten, probably an eight and a half or nine.

R: What are your goals in studying Spanish? You talked a little bit about being a teacher and I think you are also interested in the Peace Corps, but ultimately what do you want to do with your Spanish studies?

Nicole: Well, my main concern is just speaking well and listening well and just being able to communicate. And I think my secondary goal is literature because that’s just something that interests me I think. And I’m not always sure which one... I mean, do they both develop? Like my skill in reading and my skill in speaking, do they develop at the same time or should I focus on one first and the other second? So definitely my goal is to become more fluent in speaking. I want to live and study abroad before I graduate for at least a semester. I’d like to do more but with the double major it will be hard to do that.

R: Where? You said Chile or Mexico?

Nicole: I’m not quite sure, I’m looking at Chile and Mexico because from what I have researched, the programs that this university has in conjunction with them, those countries have the best literature-based programs. I mean, I could go to Costa Rica, but I would then have to study biology or something. And after I graduate, I have thought a lot about teaching abroad; either teaching English to Spanish-speakers, or... I don’t know. I know I want to teach and I know that I want to really learn Spanish and feel like it’s a true second language instead of just something that I’m studying. But definitely communication is my number one goal.

R: Any other comments or reflections about this Latin American literature course or the development of your speaking skills? You get the last word.

Nicole: Okay. I think that one of your first questions that you asked me was why I decided to take this course. I would really like to be able to take courses that focused more on language development. I’m also in advanced composition right now. And I feel like that’s been helping me a lot with grammar and vocabulary and stuff. But, you know, those grammar-based and language comprehension classes kind of stop at the 116 level and I kind of want... [the tape ended here].
Focal Student Interview—Janet
Friday, March 30, 2007

R= Researcher

R: What is your name?
Janet: Janet.
R: And your native language would be?
Janet: English.
R: And your second language?
Janet: Spanish.
R: Have you studied any other languages?
Janet: No.
R: Tell me a little bit about why you got interested in Spanish? Why Spanish?
Janet: My Spanish teacher from high school was really energetic and always really positive about learning Spanish and always made it a lot of fun and that really influenced me to keep going with it. So I took four years in high school and just thought it would be applicable to today’s society with whatever career I chose. I like speaking the language and rolling my ‘rr’s.
R: Was there any other language offered in your high school or just Spanish?
Janet: There was German, but I always thought that Spanish was more appealing for some reason.
R: Tell me a little bit about some of your academic interests here at this university; like what are you studying, what’s your major, etc.
Janet: I’m currently just a Spanish major but I’m taking prerequisites for the MSN program—Master’s in Science and Nursing. And I’m not doing like undergrad. Nursing, I’m just taking Anatomy, Microbiology, Chemistry, and stuff like that because I want to be a Nurse Anesthetist and hopefully move somewhere in Latin America or Spain or somewhere Spanish-speaking and work in a hospital there. I think that would be awesome.
R: Would you do that with the Peace Corps or are you looking to do that on a more permanent basis?
Janet: On a more permanent basis. I was thinking about doing Peace Corps sometime during my undergraduate time, but that sort of went away. But I’m going to study abroad this summer in Valladolid, Spain. I just bought tickets like two minutes ago with a friend.
R: So when did you begin your studies at this university?
R: You said that you took four years of high school Spanish, so how long have you been studying Spanish?
Janet: I took Intermediate II here—that was my freshman year, second semester. That was my first class. During my sophomore year, I took Writing in Spanish the first semester and then I took Readings in Spanish American Literature with Prof. Brandon and then the summer before that I took Spanish Love Poetry with Prof. Hsu which was
awesome. And then during this past fall semester I took Modern Spanish literature. Right now I’m taking Literary Analysis and Ann’s class.

R: So in all, you’ve been studying Spanish now for seven years, right?
Janet: Yes.

R: So, you’ve taken the Modern Spanish Literature. Who taught that?
Janet: Prof. Tony.

R: And then Prof. Brandon taught the Reading in Spanish American Literature course.
Janet: Yeah.

R: So comparing Ann’s course that you’re taking now with maybe the Literary Analysis course that you’re taking right now as well, and also to Prof. Brandon and Tony’s class, how does this one compare in terms of interaction in the classroom and discussion?
Janet: With my Literary Analysis class, it’s obviously a lower level of Spanish so it’s easier for me to fully understand what the text is about. With Ann’s class, it’s a little bit blurry, but I can still sort of communicate. Ann’s a really good teacher, so if I say anything, she’s going to support it and be like “Oh, yeah, that sounds good.” So I can pretty much say anything—that makes it encouraging to speak your mind and say what you want and learn something from what you say and from what others have to say about what your opinions are on the text. But in my Literary Analysis class, I feel like whenever I say something I know exactly what’s going on and there’s not really any confusion. And so, I like how in this class students can feel comfortable speaking.

R: So, your level of participation in this class compared to other classes depends more on the content or would you say that your participation is the same in terms of discussion and your ability to speak up and share your opinion?
Janet: I think I’m more confident in the Literary Analysis class because it’s obviously easier and it’s a lower-level class. But with Ann’s class, she is still encouraging enough that I’m at a level to communicate. But I feel like other students are definitely understanding the material better than others.

R: From your personal perspective, what do you want to get out of this particular course by the end of the semester?
Janet: I just want to be able to understand what happened with the Conquest of Mexico and just have a better understanding of historical information and also being able to read better.

R: And do you think that your reading ability has improved?
Janet: Yeah, I think so. It was really hard at the beginning. We would kind of get a big chunk of reading to do for every time that we had class. And it sort of seems like a slap in the face a little bit—like oh my gosh, I have so much to read. But as we have progressed throughout the semester, I think that I have been able to handle it better.

R: So your primary expectations would be to understand information about the Conquest of Mexico—sort of the historical context in which the texts were writing—, and your reading ability.
Janet: Yeah.

R: Anything else?
Janet: Probably my writing too.

R: Okay. And how has this class been in terms of knowing your instructor—because you haven’t taken a course with her before, right?
Janet: No.
R: So how has it been getting to know her and also interacting with other students; maybe even in comparison with other classes?

Janet: Oh, I never got to my comparison to the Literary Analysis class. Both of these classes—Ann’s class and Prof. Esther—they both focus on doing group participation which is really good I think so that everyone can share their opinions and understand the other perspectives that might be happening and relate to those. But I think with Ann’s class, I really like the way she teaches and also I think I sort of have a handle on what different students’ perspectives are and their view, and how they see different things.

R: Any particular students in mind?

Janet: Maybe, like Sheila. Is that her name? She sits in the front.

R: In the middle and right next to Joshua?

Janet: Yeah.

R: Yes, that’s Sheila. What do you think of her perspective?

Janet: I understand what she’s saying as opposed to Ellie, or is it Elisa—who sits in the corner sort of closer to the door.

R: Herminia.

Janet: Herminia. She’s like really fluent in Spanish, so I’m like “Si” [i.e., pretending to understand]. But with Sheila, she’s more advanced than I am, but I understand what she’s saying.

R: Do those two, or anyone for that matter, intimidate you in terms of when they are speaking as far as intimidating you to speak up?

Janet: They don’t intimidate me to the point of me not speaking up. They motivate me and I’m like “I want to be like that some today.” I’m not someone who says “Oh, that sucks, I won’t be like that.” I just say that I will try harder. But with Herminia, I’ll never be that good.

R: She’s a native speaker.

Janet: Oh, okay.

R: Any other insights or perspectives about how students in this class interact compared to other classes?

Janet: As far as how much we speak?

R: Yeah. In terms of different voices you hear and how it compares to other classes; whether you hear more people talking in this class vs. other classes.

Janet: I feel that there’s more participation in her class than other classes. I think she has a good way of getting people to speak up and hearing what they have to say.

R: What do you expect to know then when you finish this course?

Janet: I’m not really good with history and stuff, so I’m hoping to better my history and also with geography; sort of like where the Conquest happened. I just think it will make me a more cultured, well-rounded person.

R: And what about any specific skills, in terms of developing those by the end of the class?

Janet: Since we’re going to be at a whole bunch of different texts about la Malinche and her the way that she is perceived by different authors and people that were part of the Conquest, I think that will help to see how many different opinions there are and how that shapes History.
R: That’s more along the lines of content. When I say skills, I mean things like listening, reading, writing, or speaking. I know you touched on some of this before, but any skills that you expect to improve as a result of taking Ann’s course.

Janet: I expect to be a better reader and understand the content of the text more. Sometimes, like with the verbs, I get confused and have to look up a whole bunch of stuff. But just like accumulate those kinds of words, etc.

R: How much time outside of class do you spend on average to prepare for each class?

Janet: Probably two hours. One and a half to two.

R: Do you have any kind of pattern that you follow outside of class; what’s your routine in terms of those two hours? What do you do to prepare for class?

Janet: I look over the notes that I took from the last class and refresh my memory and just start in on the reading that was assigned and highlight words and look them up; not too many though because there are a lot that I don’t know and I wouldn’t get through all of them.

R: Are there any of those activities or anything else that you do outside of class that particularly help you to participate more in class than others?

Janet: When I underline certain things that were important to me—like the most moving thing from the text—I just raise my hand and say something about that if the topic comes up.

R: So you underline parts of the text and talk about them usually?

Janet: Yes. Or else if I just had a broad idea of it and she brings something up or a classmate brings something up, I share.

R: What are your reasons for participating in class discussion?

Janet: First of all, to get participation credit.

R: Do you know how much Ann counts for participation?

Janet: 150 points out of 800.

R: Alright. So participation points are one motivation. Anything else?

Janet: Also, I just want to broaden my ability to speak and be able to see that other people can understand what I’m saying. So that’s always motivation and gives you self-esteem so that you can talk more and stuff to just better my ability in speaking Spanish and understanding it.

R: Would you say that speaking helps you to understand the texts?

Janet: Yes.

R: Does it also help you to get at some of the words that you didn’t know in the text somehow?

Janet: Yeah. But it also keeps me alert. If I don’t participate at all, I just start zoning out.

R: Your mind starts wandering, huh?

Janet: Yeah. So it keeps me more active.

R: Do you ever participate to somehow try to ask a question about a linguistic problem that you saw in the text or in the reading or is it mostly just vocabulary?

Janet: Like if there was a paragraph or something that I didn’t understand?

R: Yeah.

Janet: Yeah, or if it’s a weird verb or something. Do you ever ask a question about that in terms of understanding the text better? I have a couple of times, but it’s not as common for me to do. Most of the other students, I feel like they ask more questions about the content as opposed to specific linguistic issues.
R: When Ann is talking and/or when other students are contributing to the discussion, do you understand everything that everyone says generally?
Janet: Not always.
R: Like with Ann—can you give it a number—like do you understand 90% of what she says or 95%?
Janet: Probably 95%. But I feel like she tones down speaking fast and stuff, but with Herminia and Eric, they are both really fluent and fast talkers and I sometimes don’t understand them.
R: So with Herminia, how much do you understand of what she says?
Janet: 30% maybe? Not very much. I guess she does intimidate me with her talking actually. Not Sheila so much, but Herminia does.
R: And Eric, how much do you understand what he says?
Janet: Maybe 70%, I guess I understand him a lot more than Herminia.
R: You understand him more and he doesn’t intimidate you?
Janet: A little bit.
R: Any other students that you don’t understand or is it mostly Eric and Herminia. Sheila you said that you understand fairly well.
Janet: Yeah. There’s one girl that I understand really well. She sits in the back row. She participates a lot.
R: Nicole?
Janet: Yeah, Nicole—I understand her.
R: You understand her fairly well and pretty much everybody else?
Janet: Yeah.
R: At some point, if you don’t understand what is being said in class discussion, what are you thinking and what are you doing? Whether it’s something that Ann says or Herminia says something, what do you normally do?
Janet: I always think, wow. I didn’t understand the readings as much as this person and that I better look at it some more and prepare better for class and read over things a little bit more and look up more words or something.
R: Do you ever zone out or do you try to decode what they are trying to say?
Janet: Pretty much always trying to decode it. Sometimes I look at the clock and say “Oh gosh, I’m not understanding.” But I’m usually trying to understand everything.
R: What are the some of the activities or techniques that Ann uses in class or uses in class discussion to seem to get students talking about the readings?
Janet: Usually at the beginning of class, she just says “How is the reading” and then she tries to ask about what the plot was about, and who the main characters are and breaks down the readings so that we understand it more. And then she breaks down the chapters into pages, and then divides us into groups so that we can discuss them. And then she’ll ask a set of different questions and then we all have to answer it for those different sections of the text.
R: For you personally, which activities or techniques help you the most, and why?
Janet: I think as a class, I get more out of it. For some reason, I’m not a big group person; that is, working in small groups. I always feel like there’s conformity within it somehow—like “Oh, we’re not really going to talk about it and that we’re all just sitting there doing nothing.” It just depends, I kind of go with the rest of the group.
R: When you’re in small groups, do you often stay in Spanish?
Janet: Yes. I try to.
R: For others, do you think everyone tries to speak in Spanish while in small groups?
Janet: In this class, yes. But in my Literary Analysis class it seems like students will start speaking in English whenever they can’t think of the word in Spanish.
R: So whole-group work/discussion is better than small-group work for you?
Janet: Yes.
R: Do you feel comfortable participating in class discussions?
Janet: Yeah.
R: Why do you think that is?
Janet: Just because if I’m going to raise my hand, I pretty much know that I came to a conclusion what I think would be reasonable to the class.
R: And you talked a little bit about the Literary Analysis and other Spanish literature courses, again, would you say that your participation in Ann’s class is about the same or more vs. those classes?
Janet: At the beginning of Ann’s class, I wasn’t that comfortable with speaking up. But now that the semester has progressed and I’m more comfortable with reading the amount and type of information that we’re reading, it’s been easier to get up to the level that I participate—like how much I participate in the Literary Analysis course. It’s not quite equivalent, but it’s a little bit less than Lit. Analysis.
R: You haven’t taken any English literature courses, right?
Janet: No.
R: In general, even if it wasn’t English literature—any course taught in English, Biology or Chemistry or whatever—when there is a whole-class discussion element as part of the class, would you say that you are generally the same in terms of your participation in those courses when it comes to discussion vs. this course with Ann? I know that in the hard sciences that they rarely have a whole-class discussion format.
Janet: Yeah, not really in those courses. But I did take a Rhetoric course. Is that similar?
R: Yeah, that would work—whenever you’re talking about texts in English.
Janet: And my Interpretations of Literature course too?
R: Yeah, that would work because those were all taught in English, right?
Janet: Yes. I pretty much spoke up as much and maybe a little bit more.
R: That’s just kind of who you are as a student as far as your participation level—it’s pretty much the same?
Janet: Yeah.
R: Can you remember any time in Ann’s course when you felt uncomfortable participating in class discussion or maybe uncomfortable while you were discussing or participating?
Janet: Sometimes I get confused about a part of the text and then I’m like—if she’s like “Do you guys have any questions?” and then I’m like “I have a question.” And maybe sometimes she doesn’t quite understand what I’m trying to ask but I really know what I’m trying to say in English. When I try to say it in Spanish it doesn’t quite make sense to her and then my question doesn’t quite get answered the way I intended it to because I didn’t word it correctly.
R: What do you do in those situations? Do you ever follow up and say “No, now I understand” and try and clarify or do you just say it and she interprets it?
Janet: It sort of depends upon the signals that I get from her—if she wants to go on to the next topic and what I’m asking about is petty. If she really didn’t understand what I was saying and just wanted a little further explanation, I’ll give that just see if she understands. But if not, I’ll just be “Okay, that’s good.”
R: So would you ever say that you feel uncomfortable?
Janet: No.
R: Any activities that the instructor does that make you feel uncomfortable?
Janet: No.
R: Have you ever felt shy or not confident sharing your interpretations in class?
Janet: No.
R: Have you ever disagreed with Ann’s interpretation of a text?
Janet: No.
R: Why not?
Janet: I feel like her interpretations of the text are really reasonable and vague—not really vague, but just something that pretty much everyone would agree with. She’s not too opinionated one way or the other or like critical of the texts. But obviously, when we’re talking about Cortés and that he’s a selfish man, we’re all pretty much going to say, “Yeah, he is.”
R: So you pretty much go along with what she says?
Janet: Yeah.
R: Have you ever disagreed with another student’s interpretation?
Janet: No.
R: If you had to describe the way in which Ann talks about literature to someone who is thinking about taking her course next semester, what would you say to that person?
Janet: She brings a lot of life to what we’re talking about even though it’s from such a long time ago and could be considered a little dull at times. I don’t know, I think it’s interesting. But she brings it to life in a way and is just really excited about teaching it and brings it to the present time and answers any questions that we have about it.
R: Would you say that she encourages students to ask questions?
Janet: For sure, yeah.
R: And so you feel comfortable asking questions.
Janet: Yeah.
R: Do you feel like you have lots of opportunities to speak Spanish in this course?
Janet: Yeah. If I ever have anything to say, I always get an opportunity. She always leaves big pauses—well, not big pauses, but just enough time for questions.
R: With respect to your speaking ability, how does this course compare to other courses that you’ve taken in terms of development of your speaking or your ability to share?
Janet: Probably about equivalent to that of Modern Spanish Literature but maybe with the group setting it’s a little bit different. Prof. Tony didn’t quite do that—the organized groups as much as Ann does. But I feel like her class is really organized and she knows exactly what she wants students to answer and just follows a really strict format. But she does it in a good way, a fun way. We get in a lot of stuff and it’s really worthwhile.
R: Based on all of your experiences so far in Ann’s class this semester, how do class discussions contribute to your understanding of the readings?
Janet: If a student brings up a point, or a phrase or something that they didn’t understand and they didn’t know who was talking or whatever it was, or if they didn’t understand the
context of the situation, and I understood it possibly, or I didn’t understand it and agree with them, it helps to be able to infer with them and figure it out by yourselves and share each other’s opinions about what it meant.

R: So it’s positive and it helps you to build meaning?
Janet: Yes.
R: Do you think whole-class discussions help you to understand vocabulary better?
Janet: Yeah.
R: How so?
Janet: If a student asks what a word—it’s not often that it happens—but like “what is a cacique”, she’ll write it out on the board and write another Spanish word for it or the English word ‘leader’.
R: Do you think class discussion helps you with a basic understanding of the text in general?
Janet: Yeah.
R: How about class discussion with respect to interpretation? That is, taking it beyond a literal level, beyond a literal understanding of the text and maybe connecting it to an historical or cultural context in which a text is written. Do you think class discussion gets to that analytical, or interpretive level?
Janet: Yeah, I think so. We do get to sort of a maybe superficial of a level. I’m not sure, but I don’t think I would be able to get it past that anyways. But I think that we do to some extent. But the level to which we do that sort of reinforces whatever I was sort of feeling at the time when I was reading it. Because sometimes I’m not sure if I’m interpreting it correctly or if the situation—if I’m supposed to be happy that he’s saying this to these people or am I supposed to be confused, like is he doing the wrong thing, whatever the situation might be. It reinforces what I was feeling, probably what I was thinking sort of if I looked at the words and read it, I’m probably getting the right idea and then just during her classes other people saying what they thought it meant and stuff reinforces what I felt at that time.
R: How often to you think that class discussion gets to that level, where you are looking at the significance of a text in relation to History for example?
Janet: I think we do a lot.
R: Are some texts more difficult to talk about than others? If so, can you give me an example?
Janet: I feel like that the essays are easier to read than the actual texts themselves?
R: What do you mean by essays?
Janet: The essays that different writers have written about the historical texts, like about Cortés’ text.
R: Oh, secondary sources. So, those are easier?
Janet: Yeah.
R: Why?
Janet: Just because they are sort of repetitious and they’re like,—this is what I felt this author was trying to say. And you’ve already read that book so it just usually goes with the same argument throughout the whole thing. With the different historical texts, there are different things that happen with a lot of different characters. You’re just learning about them for the first time and you’re reading it in a foreign language.
R: So of the historical texts that you have read—Cortés’ Letter, Bernal Díaz, Códice Florentino—which one of those was more difficult?
Janet: I think Cortés’ Letter was the most difficult; probably because it was the first one, but also because we read really big sections out of it right at the beginning of the semester. I wasn’t quite sure what the whole, what the different indigenous situations were and stuff like that. But after that book, I sort of knew what was going on with the Bernal Díaz text.
R: So you kind of had a framework with the Cortes text and that helped to understand Bernal Díaz’s text and the Códice Florentino.
Janet: Yeah.
R: So what do you think about the Fuentes’ text and the more contemporary works?
Janet: I think it’s interesting, but maybe a little far fetched though.
R: But is it easier do you think?
Janet: Yeah, just because it’s narrated and it’s story-like.
R: When you get to the point when you understand a text, what does that mean for you?
Janet: I get excited and want to read more of it because then everything just sort of starts to click. And it’s different in Spanish when you’re able to understand something than it is in English because it’s sort of a given that you can understand it in English. When you are able to in Spanish, it’s a whole new level and it makes you realize how you’re getting a lot more use of the language.
R: So you understand the literal meaning of it. Would you say that understanding a text for you also gets back to the cultural and historical context of a work?
Janet: Yeah.
R: I know we kind of touched on this before, but do you understand everything Ann says in class?
Janet: About.
R: You said about 95% of it, right?
Janet: Yeah.
R: How about all of the questions that she asks?
Janet: Probably less than the amount of stuff like when she’s just saying “Well, this is what happened” and is just summarizing what happened in whatever we read for that day. I understand that really well. But sometimes when she’s like “What do you think that this meant in the text?” Sometimes I’m not quite sure what she wants.
R: So when you don’t understand, like when she’s asking that question and you don’t understand what she’s going for or maybe you don’t understand the actual question or a word or something that she uses, what do you do at that point?
Janet: If she’s talking to the whole class, then sometimes I just back off and figure it out once somebody else answers it, just what she’s trying to ask. But if it’s more of a group-oriented thing, I’ll just try and ask another student “I’m not quite sure, can you help me figure it out?”
R: What does Ann normally do when she asks a question and nobody answers? Do you kind of know what she does?
Janet: She just sort of says, “Okay, well, what happened was...” and she’ll just kind of answer it but then ask a really vague question after that so that anybody could pretty much answer it. She doesn’t make anyone feel bad. What she’s thinking is “Well, I must
have asked a question that was hard to understand” and when no one is responding maybe she’s thinking that “I’ll just be happy and sort of answer it.”

R: When she asks a question and there’s silence, how does that make you feel?

Janet: A little awkward, like I should be answering it, but...

R: What do you normally do when there is dead silence?

Janet: Participate if I understand.

R: You do? So you feel compelled to fill the silence and participate?

Janet: Yeah.

R: What have been some of the challenges or problems that you have faced with respect to participating in class discussions in Ann’s course? Have there been any challenges that you’ve confronted?

Janet: Going back to the idea of me knowing what I want to ask, but it’s a confusing thing already if I’m not sure what’s going on in the text. So, if I’m trying to ask Ann a question, it’s more confusing when I can’t communicate the idea that I want to ask at a superficial level in English. Like it’s already kind of confusing in that way, like if I was just reading the text in English. But you have to add the language barrier. So that makes it difficult. Just asking questions where I’m already confused, it makes it difficult to ask and it makes it a little awkward when the rest of the class is like “What is she talking about?”

R: So, would you say that there are some linguistic hurdles that maybe sometimes impede you to ask a question and to participate or no?

Janet: Yeah, but not too much where I’m not understanding anything.

R: So they [i.e., linguistic problems] wouldn’t keep you from asking or participating?

Janet: No. Or if they really did then I would go after class and go like “Can you help me with it?” because she talks in English after class. So, if I was really confused I would talk with her then.

R: Do you talk to classmates about this course, like outside of class at all?

Janet: No.

R: Do you have any friends in this class that you socialize with outside of class?

Janet: Mercedes. Mercedes and I see each other before and after class and we see each other on the street and we’ll say “Hey, did you get the reading done?”

R: But other than that, there’s nothing else?

Janet: No. And then Sheila I see sometimes like at the Java House or something. But that’s it.

R: What are either Mercedes or Sheila’s thoughts about the course?

Janet: Mercedes is always positive and she really likes it; she’s had a lot of classes with Ann. She’s like, “this is interesting” and not ever like “I hate it, this reading sucks.” She’s not like that. And Sheila, I really don’t know her very much at all.

R: From your perspective, what would make it easier for students to have meaningful discussions in this class or in general about literature?

Janet: I think it’s a good thing because it broadens everyone else’s perspectives about what we’re reading and it helps you to understand what’s going on if you dive into it a little bit further.

R: Is there anything that would make it easier do you think?

Janet: I’m not quite sure.
R: Like any activities or techniques that you think would help students to participate more in general in a literature course?
Janet: Maybe if at the beginning of class, we all just wrote something down on a piece of paper and then read it to the rest of the class and ask them to comment on what we wrote. If we just focused on a significant part that we found significant in the text and wrote anything that we wanted and then the rest of the class could participate and comment on it.
R: If you could change anything about this course with respect to speaking or class discussion, what would it be?
Janet: I guess more in-class writing a little bit. I don’t know, or like assignments a little bit because it’s usually just like—read, do the group work, and then have whole-class discussion. I feel like it would cement it a little bit more for me. Like I write notes and stuff during class, but if we were to be graded a little bit more on writing beyond the critical summaries and stuff.
R: Is there anything that you would change about your classmates or instructor and the way in which they participate in class discussions?
Janet: No.
R: What’s your overall opinion of this course?
Janet: I think it’s a really good class and all of the students are really cool and nice.
R: What are, again, your ultimate goals in studying Spanish?
Janet: I want to be really good, understandable and just have a full understanding of some of the history and a broad vocabulary and ability to speak and be understood.
R: Anything that you would add about this course?
Janet: No.
Focal Student Interview—Jon
Tuesday, April 3, 2007

R= Researcher

R: What is your name?
Student: Jon.
R: And your first language would be what?
Jon: English.
R: And your second language would be?
Jon: Spanish.
R: And I saw on your questionnaire you’ve studied Portuguese before.
Jon: Yeah, and I’m still studying it. This is my third semester taking it because the only sections they offer in Portuguese are accelerated, so it’s like two semesters in one semester for each one. So even though I’ve taken two semesters of beginning and intermediate Portuguese, that was the full four semesters. So I could also meet a foreign language requirement in Portuguese. And now I’m on my third semester which is Intro. to Literary Analysis.
R: What’s your major?
Jon: Spanish.
R: Tell me a little bit about why you started studying Spanish?
Jon: Originally, it kind of fell in my lap because I hate Math. I can deal with Science because it’s like, you can find answers to stuff and it’s kind of cool. But I really, really dislike Math and Science in general. It was always easier for me in Spanish, just always. I was always winning all of the review day games and once I finally figured out that I was good at it, I just decided that that was what I wanted to study in college with no idea of what I want to do once I graduate. But since I had an idea of what I wanted to do when I got here, I’ve gotten to take lots and lots of classes. So originally it started out as the easiest thing to do. And ever since I’ve started taking it, I’ve become more interested in the literature and the culture and it’s been a lot easier to keep going.
R: But you don’t know what you want to do afterwards? Do you want to teach it?
Jon: No, I don’t think that I want to be a teacher. I don’t think I want to be an interpreter or a translator. My mom is a librarian and I’ve thought about being a Latin American Studies librarian like Mary down at the library. And I got a chance to work with some guys over Spring Break and like seeing their situation made me kind of want to be a social worker or something where I get to help those guys. I feel like we need all the English speakers we can learning Spanish because it’s only going to get more useful. But I think Spanish speakers coming here are the ones who need help. And that’s what my aim is after this.
R: How long have you been a student here at this university?
Jon: This is my second semester of my junior year. This is my sixth semester.
R: And so you’ve been taking Spanish ever since…
Jon: Freshman year of high school.
R: As far as this university goes, fall of 2004 was your first semester.

Jon: Yes.

R: You’ve taken a few different Latin American literature courses before this, can you just kind of summarize and tell me a little bit about which ones you’ve taken.

Jon: There’s this one that is ‘Colonial Spanish American Literature’ with Willow and it was different from Ann’s class because we didn’t just read about Mexico, we read about all of Latin America. But we did read Cortés, we read Colón before that and then we read ‘Los Infortunios de Alfonso Ramírez’. I think that one is supposed to be regarded as the first American novel because the guy shipwrecked in Florida, so it was technically the first American novel. But then we read ‘Naufragios’ by Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. And it was really more in-depth, longer and harder readings. But it was a way higher course number. It was a 170 or above that that you need in order to graduate. And then ‘Spanish American Civilization’ is the other one that Ann teaches and it’s a little lower level than this class [i.e., the one that he’s taking with her now] with a much broader focus. We read Cortés in that class too. We read some of the same readings as far as Mexico, but then we also read essays by Alma Guillermoprieto and other essays about Latin American identity and stuff like that—kind of the same stuff that we’re doing in Ann’s class, but it’s different.

R: So how does Ann’s class to maybe Willow’s course—the content is different—but in terms of discussion; what are the differences between that one and maybe the Dolan course with respect to class discussion.

Jon: Dolan was a really nice professor. When I had him, it was his last semester before he retired. And so he was always real jovial and joked around. Discussion in that class—you could tell that people weren’t doing the readings or didn’t understand them a lot of the time because people would be intimidated to answer questions. And then he would have to start calling on people; and then people wouldn’t know. And then it was the deal that ‘If you guys aren’t going to read, I’m going to give you quizzes.’ Once he started giving quizzes, people started doing the reading. After that, towards the end, it really geared up and we got into some more interesting novels towards the end. Participation ended up being a lot more active once he started threatening people with classes and the content of the class got more interesting. With Willow’s course, I would probably say that it was probably the hardest Spanish class that I have taken since I’ve been here. I had no idea of that when I signed up for it. I really don’t think it was a mistake or anything, but it was just that the readings were so monotonous and tedious and it was in that old Spanish. It’s harder to read than Old English because English is my first language. And so reading Old Spanish is even harder. A lot of the students in there were seniors and they had already studied abroad. There was a girl who studied in Costa Rica and a girl who had studied in Ecuador that I remembered vividly and they seemed to be a lot more interested in talking about the cultural aspects of texts because they had been to places that the text—maybe if it didn’t name specifically—would give them a better idea than me of how it worked. That was the big difference in that class that I noticed, that a lot of people had already studied abroad. I thought that it was a little intimidating, even though I might have spoken better than they did, they had already studied abroad and I felt like they had more real-world knowledge than I had.

R: How about Ann’s class then in comparison? What’s the difference there?

Jon: I don’t really think there is a difference at all.
R: Is there anybody in the class that you feel maybe has had a study abroad experience and who intimidates you or no?

Jon: No. Marisol and Mercedes are both in my class. I’ve had them both in other classes with me, and so I’m pretty good friends with them. Usually it can be intimidating to have someone who, if they’re not a native speaker, speaks in the home at some point—that can be a little intimidating. But with them, I know them so well that I don’t really find it to be a problem. Sometimes it seems like it goes a little slow because people have understood the readings but don’t know exactly how to say what they want to say. But Ann is really good about figuring out what they want to say and asking them what they want to say and not just letting it go kind of open-ended and not clarified. That is what I’ve noticed is the biggest thing about discussion in her class is that there are a lot of people who don’t talk. I don’t know if I’ve ever heard their voices. Usually it just seems like they don’t know how to say what they want to say.

R: Even though they might have done the reading and know the content of the text, but they just don’t have the linguistic ability to know how to say what they want to say?

Jon: Yeah.

R: So for you personally, what do you want to get out of this course by the end of the semester; whether it’s content, whether it’s linguistic goals?

Jon: I would say that it’s more cultural goals for me. I’m going to study in Barcelona in the fall and right before I officially decided, I was kind of like—maybe I don’t want to study in Spain, maybe I want to study in Mexico. And it’s too late now, I’m going to Barcelona and it’s not like I’m not going to manage to have fun when I’m there or anything. But when I worked with these guys [i.e., over Spring Break] they were from Sinaloa, they were so nice and so cool and were like “You have to go to Mexico. You have to go to Mexico.” And they were telling me about all of these places to go. They even gave me the name of really small town that they thought that I would like in the mountains. But for me, Ann’s class is more about being able to kind of help myself identify culturally with Mexican culture; seeing how the Conquest plays into it because all of the Mexican people that I’ve ever met have been just so impressed that I would be that interested in learning Spanish that they’re always eager to speak and are always eager to talk about. So I just kind of wanted to gain some perspective on that. I also knew that Ann was an awesome teacher and that also helped me to decide to sign up for the class.

R: How about linguistic goals? Because at some point in your questionnaire, you wrote down something about—when you had to rank the kinds of things that you wanted to get out of the course—you said speaking. Is that still kind of hold true about speaking, and then vocabulary.

Jon: Oh, I must have read it wrong, because overall, by far, my greatest desire is to improve my speaking abilities. But for Ann’s class, it’s definitely to better understand the culture. That really changes all of these answers because I didn’t realize that it was just Ann’s class.

R: So this is generally speaking all of your Spanish studies and not so much Ann’s course?

Jon: Yeah, this is just studies in Spanish in general.

R: So how would you change that then if this was ranking your goals just in Ann’s course?
**Jon:** Like I said, I would move way up ‘To better understand historical and cultural contexts’ and ‘To improve my literary comprehension and interpretation skills in Spanish’. But that’s just as far as this course because I feel really comfortable when I write and when I listen. It’s just that I don’t have as much confidence speaking as I would like. And I’m only going to get that with more speaking. Ann’s class is mostly a discussion class, but speaking isn’t my main goal for the class. My main goal for the class is by far to understand the context of the Conquest as it relates to Mexican culture.

**R:** So, how has this experience been as far as getting to know Ann and the other students in the course? You said that you knew Marisol and Mercedes before, anything else about the way in which you interact with other students in Ann’s class that you’d like to comment on?

**Jon:** I went to high school with Nickie. There are like 20 kids who graduated from my high school.

**R:** Where did you go to high school?

**Jon:** Roosevelt high school in Des Moines. And so there are a lot of kids from there here and so we always sit together whenever we have classes, which isn’t rare at all. And then I sit by Aaron in my ‘Arab Presence in Spain’ class. Mitch is in that class too. He’s also in my Portuguese class. I’m a pretty sociable guy so I’ve gotten to know everyone who sits immediately around me. I talk to Karen all the time in and out of class. As far as Ann goes, I had her for class during the second semester of my sophomore year.

**R:** Do you think that has made any difference on the way in which you participate in this class?

**Jon:** Yeah, definitely. Because like now, I don’t call her ‘Profesora’ anymore; I always call her Ann.

**R:** Did that start with this class?

**Jon:** Yeah. But I don’t know why I always did it, but I guess in my English classes I don’t say ‘Excuse me teacher’, I always address them by their name. I don’t know why, I was kind of like surprised why I did it. It always seems to me that Ann really relates well to the students. It’s always one of those things having young teachers that makes that part easier. Like on my last homework, I thought that the video we watched was really helpful and I really liked the way that she related it to the class. And the fact that she had a bad copy of it shouldn’t make her not show it the next time she teaches the course. I told her that it would be really important that she include it because it was so good and that it was just such a nice way to come back from break. On my paper she said ‘Thank you for this commentary; I’ll keep it in mind.’ So I got the feeling that she valued my comments. You’re not used to teachers doing that. Some teachers are so set in their ways, but I thought that it was really cool that she took my commentary to heart like that.

**R:** I think we’ve answered the next couple of questions, but I’ll ask them anyway. What do you expect to know when you finish this course?

**Jon:** How the Conquest relates to modern Mexican culture. And that’s what we’ve been talking about lately; the religious conquest and how it relates to culture. I know that of the two guys that I worked with [i.e., the guys that he met during Spring Break], one of them had a Virgen de Guadalupe shirt and one of them had a Virgen hat; and he always wore the same hat. And I like seeing how those things that are so old play into culture today. Now it’s nice because we’re getting 20th century takes on what we just learned. It was nice because at first I got to formulate my own opinions after we had read everything...
and now we’re getting to see other modern opinions and I can now line up or compare my opinions with them.

R: And what skills do you expect will improve as a result of taking Ann’s course?

Jon: Definitely it has helped my reading skills. Because whenever you read that much...like I noticed that if I...the readings for her class are...each author is very stylized in their own style and the longer you read them, the more you get out of their text as it goes on. Like Cortés, you can sit and read for the first two hours and not penetrate anything of what he’s saying and not get any information out of it. But after a while, it’s really easy to get into his voice and figure out how to read. I mean, this was the third time that I had to read that book, but it always just helps to get into it like that and to read older Spanish. But it’s also nice to get to read modern stuff like the Fuentes that we just finished.

R: On average, how much time outside of class do you spend preparing for each class?

Jon: Probably an hour before each class the night before.

R: Do you have any particular patterns that you do in terms of preparing or always doing something that helps you to get a better understanding of the reading and helps you to participate in class?

Jon: Unless there’s a word that I absolutely cannot understand out of context or out of anything, I look it up. Otherwise, I draw a little line over to the margin from a word that I can’t understand and then read through the entire reading of whatever I have to read, and then go back and fill in all of the margin lines and then just skim over it really fast and see if it changes my understanding of anything that I had read the first time.

R: Do you think that helps you to participate in class discussion at all?

Jon: Oh yeah. If I feel like I understand something well, then I will discuss it to the end just so—it’s like ‘Alright, I’m going to get my discussion points here because I know exactly what I want to say and I know exactly what the author is saying and I know exactly how I want to address it or digest it.

R: That leads us into the next question; why do you participate in class discussions? What are the reasons?

Jon: I have a really, really sharp memory and a really good eye for detail. I also sometimes notice things that a lot of people won’t notice. You know, there might not be anything there, but it might be a really good thing to tie into a paper. I usually keep an eye out for details that can go back and exemplify themes or address the text as a whole. Or like, the movie we watched, one of the characters is pregnant and says “This baby is not yours, it is of my own blood.” And so I asked Ann—and it was an indigenous woman who was pregnant—and I asked her if she thought that that could be a shot at the Virgen Mary in some way because she was really, really closely related to this movie and images of her were all over the movie. And Ann never thought of that and so if I notice things like that, I like to bring them up and discuss them and see what other people think about them.

R: So any insights that you have, you like to share them with the class?

Jon: Yeah.

R: You also said that you participate for participation points; kind of on a practical level, right?

Jon: Yes.

R: Do you also bring up questions?
Jon: Oh yeah.
R: Any questions that you have, do you feel comfortable asking them to Ann or other classmates? How does that work?
Jon: If it’s something that I know that the other kids aren’t going to get out of it, and it’s just kind of like....like I had this question for her....the story that we just read was by Carlos Fuentes. And he narrates a movie we watched in Ann’s Civilization class. And so at the end of the class, I went up and asked her “Wasn’t Carlos Fuentes the guy who narrated this movie?” And she said, yeah it was, good job remembering it. But I knew it wasn’t something that the entire class wouldn’t be interested in because they probably all haven’t seen the movie. So I just waited until the end of class to ask it. But if it’s something that I think that even one other person might be wondering in class, then I’ll ask it.
R: So if it’s something about the text that everyone’s reading, you’ll definitely ask her about it?
Jon: If there is something that I absolutely can’t understand that is critical to the understanding of the text, then I’ll ask.
R: Do you understand everything that Ann says and/or other students in the class when they are talking?
Jon: Yeah, I would say pretty much. Ann is really easy to understand, and no one in the class speaks so fast that we can’t understand them. So, I would say that I pretty much understand everybody.
R: If, at some point, you happen to not catch everything that someone says and you don’t understand—as far as what’s being said—what do you normally do?
Jon: Lean over to Nickie.
R: Do you?
Jon: All the time.
R: What do you do?
Jon: Usually I probably ask her in English. Because if I say, “What did she say?”, Nickie can be like “She said that the book was written in 1521” instead of like “Ella dijo que….,” and it will just take a while. And so I usually just lean over to Nickie or Karen and ask them in English straight away and then take back off with the discussion where we left off.
R: Is there any time when you would raise your hand and ask Ann directly or no?
Jon: Oh yeah. Um, I mean, if it’s because I misheard a word or something, I’ll lean over to Nickie. But if I think that she was using...if I misinterpreted the sentence...I don’t know, and thought that what she was referring to was the subject and I interpreted it as the direct object and it just seems really out of place to me, I’ll raise my hand and say “Is this what you meant to say?” and she’ll say “No....”
R: What are some of the techniques or activities that Ann uses that seem to get students talking about the text? Can you describe some of what she does?
Jon: Yeah. Well, sometimes kids just don’t want to discuss and it’s just impossible to make them. And she’ll say just “Did you like it or did you not like it?” And that’s when you know that discussion is in trouble.
R: How so?
Jon: Well, if not one person is willing to discuss the reading, then either no one read it or no one is sure enough about it to raise their hand and comment about it. So if she has to
say “What did you think about the characterization of Gerónimo de Aguilar?” And everyone is just like “Uhh....” And so she says, “Alright, did you like it or did you now like it?”

R: That’s a signal to you that things aren’t going well.

Jon: It’s not just in Ann’s class, it’s like the signal in every class.

R: Any other activities or techniques that help get students talking?

Jon: When everyone has read the material, putting us in small groups is really helpful because kids share their ideas and form and reform their opinions and then come back to class and discuss as a whole. But otherwise,....

R: In your questionnaire you said that when someone in the small group hasn’t read, that it’s really detrimental to that activity.

Jon: To that one small group. Because the person will be like “Oh, I didn’t do the reading—what happened?” And then they [i.e., the rest of the small group] have to waste their time saying what happened and asking about how they would interpret it since they don’t really make their own interpretations since they didn’t read it. And it’s kind of like the chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

R: So small group in general helps...

Jon: If we’re reading something interesting and everyone has read it, it’s always helpful. Discussion just bounces off everyone. And when we come back to the group as a whole, everyone has a lot to add. There have been a couple of times in Ann’s class where she’s wanted to lead discussion and I’ve noticed that it had kind of got out of her hands because everyone is so excited to discuss it. And at that point, you know, you just run with it. You don’t say “Oh, well, I want to direct you guys this way” because she just wants everyone to speak and wants everyone to discuss. That happened with the movie; when I noticed it the most. Discussion was pretty active and she wasn’t always able to direct it exactly how she wanted it. But I made a comment—I don’t remember exactly what it was—but I remember that she asked me a secondary follow-up question and it was geared toward another subject that she was going to move to...like it related to both that I would address her and she knew that if I answered the way she was expecting, she would be able to lead it into the next thing. So she really managed to direct the discussion, but it’s really awesome and fun to be a part of when the class gets to discuss something so adamantly that she can’t control it.

R: Why do you think that discussion was so active after watching the movie? Because it was a movie and not a literary piece or because it was a nice synthesis of what you all had already read so that you could clearly see things/ideas in the text?

Jon: Yeah, it was definitely....people already read Cortés and Bernal Díaz and el Códice Florentino and so they pretty much knew both sides of the Conquista. And then this follows up right after it. And so we assume what’s going on right after it. And then a lot of people can apply it to modern religious beliefs today. It had a really, really open ending, and so it was really easy to make your own interpretations and so there were a lot of differing interpretations. And so someone would comment, and then someone would add on to that, and then someone else would disagree with him and it just made for a really, round and circular discussion that kept on going.

R: Any other techniques or activities that personally help you the most that Ann does to get you to participate in discussion?
Jon: I like it when, not just her, but when all teachers hand out a guide sheet—not necessarily of the points that we need to take notice of and not necessarily questions where we need to write in answers. But just kind of ‘Keep this in mind.’ I had a teacher who had given us a brief commentary on a reading by someone else and what they say. That always helps.

R: Before you read?

Jon: Yeah.

R: And so you use that as kind of a guide?

Jon: Yeah. Not necessarily at all something that you would use and base all of your interpretations off of, but it just helps to note what other people notice about the text so that you can notice it too. But then that always makes for interesting discussion. If you completely miss something and then someone else notices it and talks about it, then you think “Oh, I’ve never thought about it like that. But that doesn’t happen at all if you get a guide sheet. So there are definitely pros and cons to each because it’s kind of fun to realize that once you’ve read it back at class. But it is also really helpful to know before you read.

R: So she’s done that in class?

Jon: Ann has done it with “Painting the Conquest”; where we had to go to the library and look at the things that she had on reserve. Not when we went to see the Códice Florentino when we went to the rare book room. But there was something that she had on reserve that had other pictures of codexes that we got to look at and she gave us a little sheet of stuff to keep in mind when looking at it and it was pretty good, it was helpful.

R: In general, do you feel comfortable participating in class discussions?

Jon: Yeah.

R: And why?

Jon: Because I wouldn’t say that there’s anyone who speaks so well and I’m intimidated to speak with them. There doesn’t seem like there is a lot of disparity between the students and their speaking abilities and so it always seems really easy for me to talk and just say my opinions without having to worry about what anyone else thinks because we are all the same.

R: Can you remember any one time in Ann’s class where you felt uncomfortable participating?

Jon: With the movie, we were talking about the Virgen Mary and I was talking about how I had noticed that maybe there was this comparison of this indigenous woman with the Virgen Mary. I asked about what this could mean and it just seemed like I was treading on ground that I didn’t want to be treading on because I’m not really religious at all. And so, I felt like what I was saying might have been offending some people. And I wasn’t saying anything wrong at all. I guess I didn’t know if someone didn’t want me to be saying it and I didn’t want to be saying it if someone didn’t want me to just because INAUDIBLE.

R: Have you ever felt shy or not confident about sharing your interpretations during class discussions?

Jon: No. We haven’t had anything that I thought was so hard that it was impenetrable that I thought that I couldn’t understand it.

R: Have you ever disagreed with another student’s interpretation or Ann’s interpretation of a text? If you have, what do you do?
**Jon:** If I disagree I raise my hand and bring up my counterpoint. I’m trying to remember an exact time. I remember one time when Herminia said something and I thought that her interpretation was a little off-base; but I don’t remember exactly what it was. But if I disagree with someone, I’ll raise my hand and give my interpretation of it. I’ll just go back and forth until we figure out where the difference in our opinions comes from.

**R:** If you had to describe the way in which Ann talks about literature to a friend who was going to take her course in the fall, how would you describe the way in which she does that or her approach to it?

**Jon:** Like a student. She would say “I know that this is kind of boring, but it’s imperative that you read this and understand this for the class and that you know what it means.” And she doesn’t just say “This is important because…” We read it and then we discuss it and we get through it. And if it’s something that’s not fun, we try to go through it as fast as we can. But when it’s some of the modern even more interesting stuff, she….I’d say she generally leads discussions without calling on people. Having here there…when she’s lecturing and teaching, it’s really personable and she’s not one of those “Oh, I won’t stop to answer your question, I’ll stop when I get done.” It’s nice how she’ll do that just to clarify if there are any problems.

**R:** How about her talk or her speech? How would you describe it to someone else?

**Jon:** Very easy to understand. Sometimes I’ve had teachers who spoke with really thick accents that made it kind of hard to understand. But I would say that she is one of the easiest teachers to understand that I’ve ever had. She’ll always slow down if you need her to slow down or repeat something. She’s really helpful.

**R:** We kind of touched on this at the beginning of the interview, but how does this Spanish course compare to other Spanish courses you’ve taken here at this university with respect to improving your speaking ability specifically?

**Jon:** I took Spanish sound structure. And every week we had an oral homework where we had to record ourselves reading a passage and we would focus on a different type of character or letter every week. Like we would focus on nasal consonants one week and fricatives another week and that class was just like all speaking. So if you spoke wrong, the teacher would correct you.

**R:** How about in comparison to other literature courses?

**Jon:** Oh, lit. courses. It’s all pretty much the same. The teachers are much, much more interested in your interpretation of the literature rather than your speaking or grammar. And so, you won’t find a teacher stopping and correcting you. Usually teachers won’t call on you if discussion is moving smoothly. So you never have to go in there, like if you’re just like “Man I really don’t feel like participating today for whatever reason.” You won’t have to participate but you can still get the information that the class is getting.

**R:** Based on your experiences in Ann’s class this semester, how do class discussions contribute to your understanding of the readings?

**Jon:** I feel like once I go into class, once I’ve read it, my understanding is pretty much set. There are things that I might have Ann clarify. But again, sometimes it will happen where I’ve missed something and someone says something that totally gets me to change my understanding quite a bit from how I understood. When that happens, I’ll go back and read again. But usually there is either no change in my understanding or a pretty drastic change because I’ve misinterpreted something; which really hasn’t happened in Ann’s
class since I had already read Cortés three times and my Cartas de Relación has so many notes in it that there’s no way I can go wrong on it the fourth time.

**R:** So do class discussions help you better understand vocabulary words?

**Jon:** Yeah, especially words in Nahuatl that we don’t even know. But otherwise, if there is a word that I don’t know, I can usually find it in my dictionary. If not, I go to the Internet; you can find pretty much anything on the Internet. If I can’t find it in a dictionary, I Google it and look for context clues in all of my Google searches that come up. Usually if there’s a word that I really don’t understand, I take the time to look it up rather than wait for Ann to tell it to me.

**R:** Do class discussions help you to understand the literal meaning of text?

**Jon:** Yeah, just like what it’s saying in general?

**R:** Yeah, just comprehension or understanding about what a text means.

**Jon:** Yeah they are good to like reinforce what I’ve read just to make sure that I know how I read the text was right. Sometimes in Spanish for me it’s hard to pick up on certain literary devices. The one that I’ve noticed for me is the hardest to pick up is sarcasm because... when you think about it to any other speaker, it’s hard to recognize sarcasm in a language that’s not your native language just because the speech is no different. I recall one instance where I was reading, it was a chapter/excerpt from Don Quixote and this guy was being sarcastic and I had no idea and totally misinterpreted the entire thing because I didn’t interpret the sarcasm. But when we got to class it was brought up and then it just like clicked for me and I was just like “Okay, now this is how I have to line everything up” and it made sense after that. But class discussions definitely reinforce my comprehension.

**R:** How do class discussions aid your ability to interpret—to kind of going beyond a literal understanding of the text and connecting it to historical and cultural contexts in which they are produced? Are they helpful in that way?

**Jon:** Yeah. And that’s what Ann’s class is pretty much all about; understanding the historical context of the Conquest. Or even beyond the Conquest, it’s important to understand what had happened in Spain right before the Conquest because now they are coming here and it’s important to understand and usually Ann brings up all of those things in discussion and so when they are relative, yeah, her discussions help to understand them.

**R:** Are there some texts that are more difficult to talk about than others in this particular class that you’re taking this semester?

**Jon:** No, I would say that they have all been equally easy to discuss.

**R:** So the Fuentes piece—the contemporary views that you’re reading this week—is that easier, more difficult, or are on par with the Bernal Díaz or Cortés texts?

**Jon:** I would say that Fuentes is just a little easier to discuss because it was written recently. And now that we know about Gerónimo de Aguilar and all of those people who were so important who he wrote about in that text, that that makes it a little easier to interpret and understand its meaning. And I would say that Cortés is a little harder to understand. But I would say all in all, I would say that they are pretty much on the same level.

**R:** Is Cortés’ text more difficult from a linguistic standpoint, because it’s older?

**Jon:** Yeah. It’s really funny because a lot of the things that make his Spanish different as he writes it is that there are similarities to Portuguese; a language that I know. And so, it
helps me interpret what he wants to say, like there are some contractions that you do in Portuguese that you don’t do in Spanish and when he uses those contractions, I can understand that ‘no’ right in front of a place is a combination of INAUDIBLE and a masculine article. But Cortés’ text has several linguistic differences that make it different. Once I started taking Portuguese, it definitely helped. It wasn’t impossible because all of the nouns and verbs are virtually the same. So I could interpret what was going on and I could understand what was happening. But taking Portuguese definitely gave me a fuller understanding of the text and I could therefore understand what all was happening.

R: When you get to the point where you understand a specific literary text, what exactly does that mean to you?

Jon: It feels good maybe. The lesser version of maybe like climbing a mountain, or like accomplishing a task that should be hard and that a lot of people couldn’t do; it’s gratifying.

R: Would you say that you understand all of the questions that Ann poses in class?

Jon: Yeah, definitely.

R: Or any time when she asks a question and you say “What did she just say?”

Jon: Oh, no.

R: When Ann asks a question in class and no one responds and there’s complete silence, what do you do and how does that make you feel?

Jon: If I don’t have an answer, I don’t make eye contact with Ann because if I do have an answer and I glance at her, she’ll say “Jon”. She seems to know when I have an answer when no one else says anything. Then I’ll always say it because I’m always happy to be the one who gets the ball rolling like that when she can’t do it.

R: What are some of the challenges or problems that you’ve faced in participating in class discussion in this class? Anything?

Jon: Nothing sticks out that I can think of. I guess just like the same problem that I have and is my problem in all of my studies; is that if I don’t know exactly what I want to say, I usually...if I don’t know how to say it in a way that she’ll be able to understand, usually I won’t because it’s easy to get misunderstood if I can’t say exactly what I want.

R: From your perspective as a student in this course, what would make it easier for students to have more meaningful discussions about literature?

Jon: Ummm...

R: Anything else that either she does or something that you do that would maybe help to include some of those people who are quiet?

Jon: I have one teacher who says that for those students who don’t participate, that she’ll give everyone a chance to go around the room and say one thing about the text that we read and that might not be the biggest thing; but pretty much any little thing that people say to get them involved into discussion is just like getting your foot in the door of the bigger discussion. It seems to me that the people who discuss, discus. And the people who don’t discuss, just don’t even raise their voices. It seems that whenever she gives people the opportunity to raise their voice even just a little bit, then that helps make them want to discuss more. It seems like that promotes discussion for people who don’t usually discuss.

R: If you could change anything about this course with respect to speaking or class discussion, what would it be?
Jon: Definitely Ann’s laxness—she lets people speak English; not like a lot. But if she says something in English, then that will get students speaking in English. And then it gets harder to code switch and speak Spanish.

R: Are you talking about in whole-class discussion or when she comes to small groups does she speak English? When does it happen?

Jon: It’s more... when someone’s talking in Spanish and they say a word in English because they don’t know it. I think it’s way more helpful when teachers pretend they don’t know what you’re talking about and make you express it in abstract terms because you can’t do that to a Spanish-speaker. That’s the main problem that I’ve found; I do that a lot. But when you talk to people who don’t speak English and they only speak Spanish, that’s not going to be a way out for you. It’s just a crutch that Ann lets people use, but I don’t think it might be the best for the student.

R: Anything that you would change about your classmates and the way in which they participate in class discussion?

Jon: No. Our classroom isn’t round, but all students can see each other and no one is really looking at the back of each other’s head. But it seems like discussion... no, I don’t think I’d change anything.

R: I think you touched on this at the beginning of the interview, but in general, what are your goals for studying Spanish?

Jon: I want to help the Spanish speakers who come here and need help. I’m interested in living out of the country for a while and somewhere where I can speak Spanish. I want to join the Peace Corps when I graduate. Other than that, my main interest is staying here and helping Spanish speakers and try to end the stigma that comes with Spanish-speaking immigrants who come to our country.

R: Would you like to add any other comments or reflections about Ann’s course that you’re currently taking with respect to speaking skills or class discussion?

Jon: I just think that Ann leads discussion really, really well and the way she doesn’t call on people but manages to guide discussions always seems really well thought out and she seems to be really good at helping evoke ideas for people.

R: One last question, did you say that you’ve taken English literature courses here at UI?

Jon: Yeah.

R: Do you think that you participate in the same way in English literature classes vs. Ann’s class as far as your participation in class discussion? Is it the same or is it different in any way?

Jon: I’d say it’s pretty much exactly the same. I have an eye for detail so I look for things that people aren’t going to notice and bring them up. I rarely misinterpret something I feel in English. Even if it’s really hard to understand, I can devote enough time to it where I can figure it out. But I’ve taken several English literature classes here too. I don’t have to go through it twice [i.e., English literature] like I like to with Spanish. Otherwise, I’d say that it’s pretty much identical.

R: Okay, that’s it for the interview.
Nicole’s Stimulated Recall
Thursday, March 29, 2007

While watching:
Class Observation #11
Recording Day #2
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments on turns 17–20

Nicole: I didn’t understand at first what she was talking about, what examples. Maybe I just wasn’t paying attention because when I listen to it now I know what she wants.
R: But at that time you didn’t?
Nicole: Yeah. I think maybe it was because I had just walked into class and I didn’t know what she wanted when she was asking for examples of the ‘mestizo de la identidad’, but I caught on.

Comments on turns 33–38

R: What did you say right there el...?
Nicole: Pájaro.
R: Okay.
Nicole: Also, I was thinking of... I think I said something like la bandera original because earlier in class we had looked at this map, an indígena map of Tenochtitlán and then the European version and there was definitely this eagle and that was the image that I had in my mind. And so I was thinking was that their flag? They didn’t have a flag, but that was kind of what I was talking about and I think that Ann figured it out.
R: When did you look at the map?
Nicole: During the first or second week of class.

Comments on turns 56–60

R: So what are you thinking here when she’s asking these questions and no one is responding?
Nicole: Just now when I was listening to it, I was thinking Is she talking about the present culture or the culture that was lost. Because when she was talking about... I don’t know; it was hard for me to distinguish between if she was talking about just the mestizaje como... like it was a process that was happening way back then or the one that was happening now because the movie was made recently and so... yeah, it was a little confusing about which cultures she was referring to.
Comments on turns 90–92

Nicole: I always notice a few students in the class when they speak, I can tell that their pronunciation isn’t that wonderful—and I don’t think mine is wonderful either—but I feel like there are some students, like when she (Sheila) was speaking, it just sounds like she’s saying the Spanish word kind of like ‘gente’. I don’t know, especially with the ‘r’ sounds, I feel like it’s kind of... I mean, I always can understand what she’s saying but it’s kind of alarming to my ear.

R: When Sheila is talking here, she’s talking quite a bit. Are you following everything or is the pronunciation getting in the way?

Nicole: No, it’s not getting in the way. The space between words kind of makes me think Wait, what are you saying? That makes it harder to follow. I suppose her pronunciation is a little distracting, but it doesn’t really inhibit my understanding of it.

R: What she’s trying to get across.

Nicole: Right.

Comments on turns 90–96

R: So was that a good summary do you think; when Ann was trying to summarize?

Nicole: I still didn’t know what Sheila was trying to say I guess. I guess I was pretty distracted... I don’t know, I didn’t feel like she was making complete sentences really. I thought what Ann did was really general in terms of... like when she was trying to rephrase what Sheila said, I felt like it was kind of... I don’t think she quite understood herself either.

Comments on turns 97–107

R: So is that your interpretation or the interpretation of Chorba or?

Nicole: That was mine, because I disagreed with what Chorba said.

R: What did she say again?

Nicole: She said that when the main character died at the end of the movie that what that showed in the movie was that an annihilation of everything Mexican; he wasn’t fighting anymore for his own culture or his own traditions. But that statement seemed to contradict the rest of her argument which preceeded it because she was saying how the main character converged the Virgin Mary with his mother goddess. And so if, at the end, he died with the image of the Virgin saying the word, saying Tonantzin—which was his mother goddess—that wasn’t an annihilation to me, that was something else. It was either him kind of accepting both fates or just using the Catholicism sort of as a tool to be able to hang on to his own faith.

Comments on turns 126–136

R: Were you following what Janet was saying there?

Nicole: I followed that she didn’t agree that it was negative, I think. I was a little confused. I think I was kind of following her word for word, but then I was forgetting what she had already said. It was hard for me to take in her statement as an entire idea.
Comments on turns 136–149

R: Any thoughts about this point.
Nicole: She spoke for a long time about this one small idea, well, not small idea, but it could have been condensed more. I think if she had been writing it down, she would have known what to say. But she sort of meandered a little bit before she found the words. When she says *Okay, now I know what I want to say*, then, at that point, I was able to follow her. But I feel like she used a lot of...she spoke a lot and she really didn’t need to speak as much as she did in order to get out that idea.

Comments on turns 206–216

R: So was that little summary helpful to you at all? Were you following everything?
Nicole: Yeah. I almost was kind of confused why she was having us talk about Gerónimo de Aguilar because we had had that same discussion a couple of days earlier—like what do we remember about him, what did we learn from Cortés and Bernal Díaz—and I felt like we did that again this time, so I was like why are we doing that now? But it was helpful...maybe it wasn't helpful, but it certainly wasn’t confusing.
R: But you’re not sure about why she brought it up again?
Nicole: I think she wanted us to just review, but I would rather have had her talk about this story specifically a little bit more.

Comments on turns 226–228

R: Did you understand that question?
Nicole: Yes.
R: Did you remember?
Nicole: I think...I remembered a few things; just like the description of the characters he was talking about and the fact that he had appeared more often. But there would be general things about what I remembered about the text. I understood her question.

Comments on turns 254–260

R: Could you summarize the point that you just made?
Nicole: I didn’t say what I tried to say. I wanted to say that La Malinche was more important than Gerónimo de Aguilar. Not just the fact that Bernal Díaz mentioned the translators more than Cortés did, but I wanted to talk about how Gerónimo was somehow undermined by La Malinche in the text, but I don’t think that was what I emphasized necessarily.

Comments on turns 262–266

R: Did you understand there everything that Herminia was saying? That comment?
Nicole: No, not really much of it at all.
R: So did you understand her question?
Nicole: I understood her question but I hadn’t read.
R: Okay.
Nicole: So I felt a little awkward the rest of class because…
R: Because everybody was kind of quiet except maybe Herminia.
Nicole: I think a lot of us hadn’t read. I heard a couple of different people say that they had read only a couple of pages or that they didn’t read it at all. So I don’t know if Ann knew or caught on, but I think I would have answered her question if I had read.

Comments on turns 302–306

R: So are you reading there, are you looking at the text?
Nicole: No, the text was on my computer. I was just fiddling; I think there were rocks in my shoe. I just tried not to look like I had an answer.
R: To lay low?
Nicole: Yes, exactly.

Comments on turns 308–310

R: So what are you thinking right there when there is silence?
Nicole: I’m thinking that nobody read.
R: There’s definitely silence.
Nicole: I’m thinking ‘uh-oh’. I hope somebody raises their hand. I feel like I could get something out of this discussion if other people discussing and they might have a better basis to start reading, but I don’t know. I felt bad. I mean, I didn’t intentionally not read, I had just forgotten because we had the other assignment.

Comments on turns 330–333

R: What do you think, is it easier to read this contemporary text versus the colonial texts?
Nicole: Yeah, I think so. I think that just the fact that it sounds more like how we speak now vs. the 1500s, it is easier. And just the way that it’s set up in shorter paragraphs is also easier to follow too. But at the time I didn’t know that. But yeah, I would agree that it’s easier.

Closing comments at the end of watching the video

R: Any other comments about this class?
Nicole: I think the workload is pretty consistent and so I know about how much to expect. And I like the pattern of how we do things, I guess. That makes me feel like I know what I need to do to be prepared for discussion.
R: Anything about this particular class that we just watched? It seemed like a lot of people didn’t read because you had that other assignment to hand in.
Nicole: I think if we had read, that second half would have been a lot more alive. I think we would have offered something to say. But otherwise, I think it was pretty typical. I think that during the interview you asked me if I pretty much understood what other people are saying, and I answered that I did. And I realized when I was watching this that it is harder for me to follow what some of the other students say at times. The guy who sits next to me...

R: Jon?

Nicole: Jon, yeah. I can always understand him; he has really good grammar and he seems to speak very well. But Sheila and Janet, I had trouble understanding and Eric a little bit because he speaks pretty softly. And Herminia is also hard for me to understand her—partially because she speaks softly and she’s across the room. And in terms of understanding the professor, I still agree with my statement that I know which word she is saying and I understand what she’s saying all the time but I sometimes can’t answer her question because I don’t understand the concept necessarily. I understand the diction of her question but not...I don’t know. The same thing happens in English too—you understand the words but you’re not exactly sure what they’re asking. So I think that happens sometimes. Because I know that she was saying the words *identidad* and *cultura*, etc., but I didn’t know what she wanted.

R: Thank you very much.
APPENDIX Q: ANN’S STIMULATED RECALL—CLASS OBSERVATION #11

Ann’s Stimulated Recall

While watching:
Class Observation #11
Recording Day #2
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments on turns 55-60

Ann: Phrasing, re-phrasing!
R: So you re-phrase the question.
Ann: Let’s see, how many times!? It’s partly because it was sort of a broad question to begin with and then I tried to get at something a little bit more specific so that they could grab hold of an actual question that seemed a little bit more practical to deal with. So that, I think, is much me as them in terms of my framing the question too broadly at first. But eventually we get somewhere.
R: Okay.

Comments on turns 61-67

Ann: So that was a slow start, and this is ideally what I would like to see all the time; where one student makes a comment and then somebody else is able to feed off of it and then they are responding to one another as much as they are responding to me.
R: You said yesterday that the Chorba piece was difficult or they just didn’t read it?
Ann: The Chorba article they had read, it was the Fuentes story. So they sort of had two assignments yesterday. One was to write a critical review of the Chorba article that’s about the movie and then the other assignment was to start the Fuentes story. And I think from bits that I heard before class and the sense that I was getting from them during class, many of them hadn’t read much of the Fuentes story. But they had read the Chorba article carefully so we were able to milk a good discussion about that...so that’s where the focus sort of ended up being.

Comments at turn 83

Ann: Another thing that was nice about the way this discussion developed was that starting up with Mitch’s sort of general, though important insight, we were able to build off of that and get to a pretty thorough and detailed analysis of the ending of the movie and how Chorba looks at it. And I thought that they did an excellent critique of her analysis. So Marisol is sort of moving it more towards that...that specific analysis of specific elements of Chorba’s article and then linking it back to the movie.
Comments on turns 109–125

**Ann:** This was kind of interesting because this was a case where I wasn’t quite sure where Jon was going with this and so I tried to kind of re-phrase what he had said in a general sense about it and the commentary of suicide within the Catholic tradition. But he clearly had an interesting point to make. I just noticed how he was sort of jiggling his leg impatiently waiting for me to finish so that he could clarify his point.

**R:** To clear up what he was saying.

**Ann:** Exactly. *I actually had something interesting to say*...[saying it as if she were Jon]. But then he did a very good job of clarifying of what he wanted to say the second time. So sometimes, and there were a couple of instances of this during this class, I wasn’t exactly sure if the students had a precise point to make or if they were just sort of saying something or a general comment. And a couple of times I tried to kind of re-frame what it was they finished saying. This was a case where I tried to re-frame it and he said *No, that’s actually not what I was trying to say.*

Comments on turns 125–137

**R:** Where you following her?

**Ann:** No. And she was continuing to talk so I was trying to allow her to find her way. But I couldn’t really understand quite enough of what she was trying to say in order to help her along. But as long as though she was sort of continuing to push forward...and then when she said *Okay, this is what I want to say,* I thought okay, now we can push forward. But that was certainly a case where...and then she rambled.

**R:** At times I heard you try to come in and try to shut her down.

**Ann:** Right, or try to give her a little bit more guidance. Many students, especially in a second language, if they get frustrated or get in a bind, they’ll say never mind, they’ll just kind of shut down. But as long as there is some movement forward where the student is trying to clarify what they are saying just in their mind...as long as it doesn’t become too distracting. But she certainly rambled a bit and it was almost to that point where everyone was starting to get distracted.

Comments on turns 138–140

**Ann:** And then she self-corrected with a little prompting from la final to el fin, which I wasn’t conscious of when we were talking but she says it.

Comments on turns 146–147

**Ann:** There she gave me something.

Comments on turns 150–154

**Ann:** So I caught myself there...I was getting my -zins confused.

**R:** So you were just summarizing what she was trying to say?
Ann: Right, especially what she said at the end, because part of what she was saying was a little bit rambly and wasn’t really presenting anything new to the discussion. But at the end she sort of focused on the statue of the Virgin and what Topiltzin—the protagonist—saw in this statue of the Virgin. And that was something that we had not yet touched on, that was connected to these other ideas, but...So I was trying to catapult that part of her commentaries to another level.

Comments at turn 201

R: Do you think that this discussion is in any different than—because it’s based on the movie/film—do you think there was any difference at all between this discussion and previous discussions when you talk about texts?
Ann: Certainly one difference is that when we do discussions of texts, they have the material right in front of them. So when we are doing a discussion of a film, and even to some extent the article—we weren’t analyzing the article page by page—so they don’t have the material right in front of them. They had watched it carefully and had very clear recollections of it so that certainly helped. But that would be sort of the practical difference. In terms of the way the discussion develops—the way we’re not focusing on textual analysis per se—it’s not radically different. It’s essentially the same as analysis or discussion about a text. But when we do read a text, I do like to have them read the text closely and talk about specific passages and stuff like that.
R: I just realized that Jon has been kind of quiet the last couple of weeks that I have been in there observing, and then this time he is speaking five and six times in a row and is participating a lot in class discussion.
Ann: Jon is really bright, but I don’t think that he’s always prepared...and that’s okay. But when he does prepare and when he does get interested in something, he can come up with really insightful observations. Like all of us, there are certainly some things that are going to be or some texts or some material is going to be more interesting to one student and some to other students. But yeah, he’s a much stronger voice in this particular discussion than he is on average. Some of the other ones that I often hear from, like Eric...if he said anything it wasn’t very elaborate. And there may have been a couple of others who usually do have something to say but then didn’t say anything about this.

Comments at turn 260

R: So, one quick question: Geronimo de Aguilar appears in the Fuentes piece again?
Ann: Yeah, he’s the protagonist and it’s written in first person and he’s describing his experiences during the Conquest. So by way of introducing that text...
R: You tried to connect it to what they have already seen?
Ann: ...what they’ve already done and what they’ve already seen.

Comments at turns 288–293

Ann: This is where I started getting the distinct impression that they had not done very much reading because since he is the narrator in the story, there is a lot to say about that. So it wasn’t a difficult question.
Comments on turns 308–310

R: So again with that question, if they would have done the reading they would have been able to answer the question.
Ann: Yeah. It wasn’t a difficult question. But that’s okay.

Comments on turns 310–313

Ann: Let’s go back to something that you could say!

Closing comments at the end of watching the video

R: Any last comments about the discussion in this particular class?
Ann: Sure. I think, in general—and maybe this is just because I am watching it—but even my impression right after class, is that I spoke especially in the second part, I spoke more than I like to because there was a lot of empty space.
R: It’s kind of hard when they are not responding.
Ann: Right. So...and that’s okay, they did a good job in the first part of the class. But in the second part of the class I don’t like to dominate the class that much. So that would be a general comment. Like I mentioned to you yesterday, the idea was to introduce sort of this broad theme of cultural nationalism in Mexico, tie that into the film as a way of summarizing comments on the film, and then use that as a segue into the story and then come back around to that broad theme in the context of the story at the end. But we didn’t quite make it that far; we’ll get there on Friday. But we got caught up in the discussion with the film which is fine. So the structure of the class changed a bit. I had wanted to go through a more detailed analysis of the four chapters that they read for yesterday and go through some more specific questions about the structure of the text and then get to these broader, thematic questions. But I sort of had to revise once it was clear that there wasn’t the level of preparation that I needed in order to have that kind of discussion.
R: I think that’s it. Thanks.
APPENDIX R: ANN’S STIMULATED RECALL—CLASS OBSERVATION #12

Ann’s Stimulated Recall

While watching:
Class Observation #12
Recording Day #3
Friday, March 30, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments made before watching video

Ann: Yesterday was, I think, an all-around sort of low-energy day on the students’ part and on my part as well.
R: It didn’t seem like it.
Ann: Oh no? I’m glad. That’s why I’m kind of interested to watch it again today because I felt a little bit on the tired side and there were a lot of tired eyes out there and I’m glad it didn’t seem like it was just nap time. There were some interesting and unexpected comments, and I’m sure we’ll get to them, overall comments about the text.

Additional comments/clarifications at the beginning of this stimulated recall

R: One quick thing—Gerónimo de Aguilar. Is he Spanish?
Ann: He was Spanish and he was part of an expedition eight years before Cortés’ trip from Cuba to the mainland and he was shipwrecked with another guy named Gonzalo Guerrero. Gerónimo de Aguilar became a slave essentially of an indigenous group on the Yucatan. Gonzalo Guerrero became part of the community, he married into it, and he became a cacique and he has three children that he talks about. But Gerónimo de Aguilar was always sort of at the bottom of the temple. But he learned Maya during that time—Maya Yucateco. So when Cortés arrived, he was able to help translate and help interpret. And then with the help of the Malinche, they were able to interpret between the Nahuatl speakers and Cortés because she spoke Nahuatl and Maya and then Gerónimo de Aguilar spoke Maya and Spanish.

Comments on turns 73–77

R: When you respond, particularly to Herminia, how do you go about responding to her with feedback? Is it in a natural way, just talking with her or do you try to do it in a different way?
Ann: Well, sometimes it’s tricky because sometimes she takes the question in directions that I don’t think are useful for the class. I don’t know if she did it during this particular class so much…and I think she tries to be self-aware, but sometimes she takes the discussion in another direction. For instances, a few classes ago, she wanted to talk about Thomas Moore and Utopia, but I thought that maybe some of the students will have
reference for this, but it’s not at all useful to the bigger discussion. And that was a time when she was going on and on and developing these ideas in her mind and I was trying to find a way to sort of cut her off and move back to the topic of discussion. So when she is staying on topic, and sort of continuing to work within the range of the discussion that we have established, I interact with her as I do with any of the other students where sometimes I’ll sort of repeat what they said to make sure that everybody understands it and then try to connect that to other possible points that could be made. But other times when she takes the question in directions that just aren’t helpful, I try to find a way to politely, though clearly move things along.

R: How about linguistically—she’s a native speaker and sometimes when she speaks other students might not catch everything, do you try to do a summary of what she says?

Ann: I do. And she’s better than other native speakers that I’ve had who are not self-aware at all how rapidly they speak or what kinds of words they use. I can tell when the other students are not…they’re pretty visible in the way that they express their lack of comprehension. If I get any sense that somebody is not following, then I make an extra effort to summarize and repeat what they said—perhaps trying to re-phrase it so that it doesn’t sound like I’m just parroting them.

R: Is there any other student in your class that you have to do that with?

Ann: Well there’s the other end of the spectrum, where what they say is sometimes not fully comprehensible because of problems with expression—where they get some goofy vocabulary or verbs that don’t make sense. I can understand what they’re saying, but maybe not everybody else can. Janet is someone who sometimes gets caught up in language problems like that, but yet she has a lot of interesting things to say and so I don’t want to make her feel self-conscious about the way she speaks so I try not to correct her directly in class. But at the same time in order to help her connect her ideas to other peoples’ ideas in the class I try to sort of re-phrase what she said and repeat what she says so that everybody can understand her.

Comments on turns 78–92

Ann: Re-watching this and thinking about this again, I think that this is certainly a point at which I think I could have better connected what Herminia said to what Mitch had just said because they were two similar ideas. You know, I don’t think there was necessarily a problem understanding what she said linguistically, but just to make more connections in the discussion with the ideas.

Comments on turns 110–111

R: You just said Una pregunta muy fácil—it was?

Ann: Yeah, where did the story take place.

R: So they should have known?

Ann: Yeah. And since sometimes with questions that are obvious and easy like that, they think well maybe there’s a trick. And I think that this was one of those cases where they, of course, knew the answer because they had shown me already that they had read the story and that they had read it carefully. But this was one of those questions where I just wanted the basics—where does it take place?
Ann: And this is another example where...and this is something...the other approach if this happens is for me to just tell them what it is that I want them to talk about because it’s not that essential and it’s not really analysis, it’s just kind of *Okay, let's make sure that we all understand what the basic setup is here.* Looking at it now...the pace of the class does really slow us down when we have these hanging questions. And I think if I had just laid out quickly what it was that I wanted them to think about in terms of the setting and the plot and then moved on to the next activity, that would have been more efficient.

R: Do you normally do this when you start a text—go over the basics on the board with them.

Ann: Yeah, and I think that’s helpful generally to make sure that everyone understands essentially what is going on in the text. And it also, by asking such broad questions...and if it’s a difficult text—and this one really isn’t—but if it’s a difficult text, it allows them to ask *I didn’t really understand what happened at this point, or I really didn’t understand exactly who this character is or something.* And so I, in general, like to start the class off with something broad enough so that everybody can be involved.

Comments on turns 118–126

R: Did you understand what she was trying to say initially?

Ann: I did. Linguistically I understood it. But I think that she sort of mis-apprehended a little bit what had happened in the story.

R: How so?

Ann: The idea that he resisted going back to being a Spaniard is not really something that is happening. There is a sense of betrayal. Actually what she said was fine. I was trying to think of a way to *matizar* to add nuance to that idea so that...because one of the distinctions in the story and then also in the historical texts is between Gerónimo de Aguilar and Gonzalo Guerrero. So Gonzalo Guerrero stays with his family, stays with his wife, stays with his mestizo children, etc., and Gerónimo de Aguilar leaves. So when you think of resistance by a Spaniard who was part of this indigenous community, Gonzalo Guerrero would be the example that would come to mind and not Gerónimo de Aguilar. Linguistically, I think she was making sense.

Comments on turns 131–134

R: Do you understand what she was trying to get at?

Ann: At the very beginning, no. But then she went back to this idea of resistance. And looking at it now, I should have been much more clear and saying *Well, he doesn’t really resist joining up with them, but what he does do is try to help them and there’s no indication of any of this in colonial texts.* So I should have been much more, really the first time that this came up, I should have nipped it in the bud and just clarified that for them before because that is an important point and I’m not sure that I was aware of just how consistently that she was thinking in that direction.

Comments on turns 148–153
R: How often do you think you do that as far as if students are going off track, do you think you... because you give a lot of positive feedback and you keep things going and everybody is participating. Like in this instance when someone is going off track, is it hard for you to just say No.

Ann: I don’t really have a problem with... I have a very gentle touch definitely because I do recognize that it’s hard for them to have these discussions. But I think this is a point where I just wasn’t seeing how clearly she was going off in another direction. Like I say, it’s not a huge mis-reading, but it’s a small mis-reading that could be problematic and could hinder her understanding of the text. But if I had seen that clearly, I think I would have just clarified No, actually what he does do is... etc., and then making sure she understood that and then the rest of the class. But this was a point where I just wasn’t focusing on what was going on and didn’t really pick up enough on the direction that she was going.

R: At the end of her turn she says something like No sé.

Ann: Yeah, and she thinks out loud; which is fine. But when somebody does think out loud like that, it’s especially incumbent on me to make sure that it’s clear what kinds of ideas are being worked. In seeing this again, I think I could have responded much more directly to what she was thinking and clarified—No, actually, no se resista—he does not resist going back to the Spaniards. But what does happen is that he aligns himself essentially with the indigenous and he tries to help them. And in the context of the colonial texts, we don’t have any indication of either one of these things. So it would have been a very easy thing to clarify that wouldn’t have hurt ego at all. It would have been a small clarification, though important. In watching this again, I think it was just a moment where I wasn’t focused on what she was saying.

Comments at turn 170

Ann: Looking at this again, we spent way too much time on the introduction. And that was me; I could have told them exactly what it was that I wanted them to remember what I think was important about a couple of those points. There was a lot of good discussion about the characters, but then once we moved beyond that, it really slowed down and that was certainly something that I could have dealt with differently to keep the pace moving along.

Comments after turns 191–222

R: How do you think small group work helps with whole-class discussion?
Ann: I think... in this class, it’s not such a problem, but usually what happens is that there are a couple of people who feel comfortable speaking consistently in whole-group discussion and then the majority of the class is reluctant to do so unless called on directly. In this class, there are quite a few students who participate regularly. So it’s not such a problem to get the quieter ones involved. But I think when it works well it forces all of the students to speak, to use language skills, to use analytical skills and to discuss the particular topic instead of just sitting passively. And sometimes it helps, in a practical way, to deal with the whole text by dividing it up. In this case, we were able to divide up what they had read into two chapters a piece which is very manageable to look at in just a
few minutes. And then other times I’ll give them a series of passages to analyze and focusing on a particular passage helps to build a discussion of different aspects of the text that they wouldn’t have time to all look at during the 15 minutes. When it works well, I think that it can be really good tool. But for it to work well, the students have to come to class prepared, they have to be willing to talk with one another, they have to be collegial with one another and sometimes that doesn’t always work. This is a good group and they are all fairly committed and they are respectful of one another.

R: With Mercedes, I’ve only heard her speak in small groups a couple of times. Do you know anything else about her?

Ann: This is her fourth class that she has taken with me.

R: Has she always been so quiet?

Ann: The first class she took with me was a long time ago and it was the 103 class, and I don’t remember her being particularly vocal. It was a very rowdy class and she was very shy. At the time I didn’t make much of it because she was sort of shy in the corner, but she’s a native speaker INAUDIBLE. And then the other class was in English and I don’t remember her participating much in that class either. She’s very shy. She’s very attentive. She’s one of those students who, if I make eye contact with her, she always smiles; she’s a very pleasant person to have in the class. And her written work is good. She’s not the best student in class, but she’s very solid. She’s not a C student. She’s an A or B student. But she’s very, very quiet. She’s someone who I would like to be able to draw out more because I think she would have something interesting to add to the class.

Comments on turns 247–259

R: Do you think that other students were able to understand what he was saying? He speaks fast.

Ann: He does speak very fast. For a non-native speaker he speaks really well. I think so. This was sort of getting towards the end of class and eyes were starting to glaze over. So it might have to do with the point in the class. But the broader point that he was making is a fairly obvious one about the way Montezuma is presented is very closely tied to the way he’s represented in the Florentine Codex. I don’t know to what extent I try to follow up and emphasize that because we are starting to get to the end of the hour, but it’s certainly an important point and one that I would, should have if I did not, made sure that the other students understood as well.

Comments on turns 286–287

Ann: And this was a point where Caleb was getting stuck, and I wasn’t quick enough to sort of help him. I certainly could have fed him a little bit of something to help him continue the process.

Closing comments at the end of watching the video

R: Any closing comments about this class?

Ann: Like I mentioned at first...and now I’m seeing sort of why that was my impression right afterwards that it didn’t quite gel for me—the introductory part was way too drawn
out. That certainly could have been more efficient and more effective in setting up the story and then segueing into the analysis of the story. And there were moments where I could see where I wasn’t focused enough on what was going on in the classroom to really be able to just facilitate—what I like to do.

R: How does this class compare with class discussion with the last class with regard to talking about Fuentes.

Ann: In terms of participation, there certainly more voices participating this time; in part because of the small group work which always helps to warm people up to say something in the full group discussion. But the level of analysis was not as deep as it was in the previous class. That could be just because we haven’t finished the story yet, it could be because they don’t like the story as much as they like the movie perhaps, it could be because it was Friday afternoon, so there are different explanations. I would say that the discussion wasn’t as in-depth as it has been.

R: Thank you.
Janet’s Stimulated Recall
Friday, March 30, 2007

While watching:
Class Observation #12
Recording Day #3
Friday, March 30, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments on turns 8–21

Janet: She has a good way of reinforcing whatever somebody says. Right here she says oh, yeah, the last emperor. It just really helps everybody have a better understanding of what happened and the way she breaks it down before class; the plot, the characters, the structure, and the setting and everything. That really helps everyone understand what happened—even if you are a little bit confused—it gives you a better understanding of what happened.

Comments on turns 42–44

R: Any thoughts there?
Janet: I was trying to say barbo and the correct word was barba. She didn’t make me feel stupid or anything, she just had a polite, subtle way of correcting it. She’s like ah, su barba, si. And she knows exactly what every student is trying to say and really reinforces what our ideas are.
R: So even though you used an incorrect word, you...
Janet: Yeah, I wasn’t afraid. She wasn’t—No, the correct word is barba, etc. She’s just nice about it.

Comments on turns 47–48

R: Did you just understand what Herminia said?
Janet: Yeah, I understand that. Sometimes she just gets a little fast.

Comments on turns 52–59

R: Did you understand everything that Joshua said?
Janet: Yeah, more or less.
R: What do you think of his Spanish? Do you always understand him?
Janet: No, not always.
R: Why not? Is it his accent, or something else?
Janet: I don’t know...yeah, maybe his accent.
Comments on turns 73–75
R: So when Herminia said that there, did you follow everything?
Janet: I understand a lot of what she says, but then there are certain vocabulary words that I don’t know that she uses. And then Ann, to try and make the rest of the class understand in a more lingua franca way, and then that helps understand what Herminia says.

Comments on turns 99–100
R: Did you have a response about the question about Montezuma?
Janet: No.
R: Because no one said anything. Why do you think that was?
Janet: I don’t know. That’s not something that really stuck out to me when I was reading this.
R: This is Fuentes, right?
Janet: Yeah.
R: So he has all of these characters in there. So you don’t think that it’s important?
Janet: Yeah it is.
R: I’m not just asking you, but no one responded and I’m wondering why.
Janet: I don’t know.

Comments on turns 110–111
R: She just said es una pregunta muy fácil. Was she being sarcastic or was it an easy question?
Janet: I think maybe a little sarcastic. I don’t know. Well I think she was being sarcastic because it really was an easy question—not like a really hard question.
R: So she’s trying to prompt you all to talk.
Janet: Yeah.

Comments on turns 131–132
R: So were you commenting and embedding a question in there?
Janet: I wasn’t really sure what I was doing.

Comments on turn 133
R: Is that what you wanted to ask?
Janet: Yeah.

Comments on turns 135–137
R: Any comment there?
Janet: I just got confused about how I was forming my question.
R: What was it that was tripping you up?
Janet: I wanted to say that if we pay attention to the way that he wants to identify himself with indigenous people instead of the Spanish, instead of los españoles; it was like an important thing to note. The question that I asked before that in the comment/question hybrid thing, I was just trying to ask...I don’t know, I guess I was just kind of confused as to whether or not his reason for fighting with the indigenous people was viewed from the perspective of Bernal Díaz—where they were saying that he was resistant to join the Spanish side as opposed to if he would be a traitor or not. Or if that’s how the narration of Fuentes was being centered around—that single fact or what. I wasn’t sure if that was the whole creation of Carlos Fuentes or not.

Comments on turns 148–150

Janet: That was the part where I asked that [i.e., what she just commented on above] and not the other one.

Comments on turns 152–153

R: Any comment there?
Janet: I don’t really know. I wanted to just ask if Carlos...I realized while I was saying it that it was really confusing, so I was like no sé.
R: That’s why you said no sé at the end?
Janet: Yeah. But I was just trying to ask if Gerónimo de Aguilar was trying to...like what his reason for fighting with the indigenous was and if our only reason for knowing that he was going to do that was because he had reasons from the beginning to join the españoles. I don’t know. I just wasn’t sure if it was his [i.e., Fuentes’] creation or not, like all of his creation or if there were tidbits of information that we already knew.
R: Tell me a little bit about Gerónimo de Aguilar. Was he an indigenous or was he Spanish?
Janet: I’m not quite sure. He spoke Mayan...no, he was Spanish and he spoke Mayan and I don’t know.
R: Mayan and Spanish. So he’s kind of like the Malinche’s equivalent but he’s Spanish and not indigenous.
Janet: Yeah. So he’s viewed as a traitor to the españoles and the Malinche was viewed as a traitor to the indigenous.
R: And your question again was what? Can you say that one more time?
Janet: I was just wondering if our only reason for inquiring that he was more sided with the Spanish for Fuentes’ base for his narration; if that was because of the resistance that he had—that Gerónimo de Aguilar had to join with the Spanish or not, to be an interpreter for the Spanish and the indigenous people in Mayan.

Comments on turns 154–159

R: So did she answer your question and clarify things?
Janet: Yes.
Do you find that small group work is productive or not?
Janet: Yeah, I do. I just, for some reason, with all of the class because when I get confused with something, she’s always able to answer it directly. But if I’m in a group, I feel like the other students aren’t quite sure where I’m coming from. But Ann really knows what the texts are about and knows what I’m trying to say, even if it’s not coming out like I want it to. The other students might be confused about something that I’m confused about too and then if I’m not speaking clearly, it might not make any sense at all.

Do you understand what Herminia said there.
Janet: Yeah.
R: What did she say?
Janet: She was trying to say that....I don’t really know.
R: You don’t know because of her Spanish?
Janet: I don’t know, I get kind of intimidated and sort of block it out.

When someone else is talking from another small group like right here, are you always listening?
Janet: Yeah. I’m always like writing notes or something.

Are you following everything there that Eric is saying?
Janet: Not quite. Like I’ll sort of start to understand what he’s saying and what he’s alluding to and then when he’s talking about, I’m not quite following.
R: Is it just too fast?
Janet: Yeah.

Any closing comments about this class?
Janet: I just think that we make really good use of the time. And whatever I read and wasn’t sure about, it usually gets clarified in class.
R: A couple of more questions and then we’re done. If you had to name one or two students who participate in class discussion, who would they be?
R: And who would be a couple of the students who don’t participate as much.
Janet: Mercedes, who sits by me. I don’t know why she doesn’t participate, but she always has good stuff to say during small-group work and she always knows what’s
going on. Maybe she should participate more. There are a couple of girls that don’t participate.

R: Thank you.
APPENDIX T: JON’S STIMULATED RECALL—CLASS OBSERVATION #13

Jon’s Student Stimulated Recall
Tuesday, April 3, 2007

While watching:
Class Observation #13
Recording Day #4
Monday, April 2, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments on turns 7–8

Jon: Right here, I am finishing the last two pages of the story because I had to work early and didn’t have a chance to finish. But I had it all done, and I just remember that right there...that’s why I look so pensive.

Comments on turns 15–16

Jon: Right here, it’s obvious that that girl understands exactly what she read, but it seems like she’s stumbling. She obviously wants to say that Guerrero makes himself the conquistador and goes to Spain, but it seems like it’s a sentence that was obviously thought of in English and then was switched to Spanish...not like she had tried to form the sentence in Spanish because I think that she probably would have formed it differently. And it seems like she’s trying to talk at the same time as she’s trying to put the sentence in Spanish.

R: Did you understand what she wanted to say?
Jon: Yeah.
R: Did you notice that it was jumbled?
Jon: Yeah, well the little pauses...what she wanted to say exactly is that Fuentes introduces the idea that Guerrero makes himself the conquistador but she faltered a little bit trying to switch it from English to Spanish.

Comments on turn 17

Jon: So, right there, when Ann says “Exacto, Exacto, para conquistar España”, she...it’s a really quick and easy way to make sure that if anyone missed what that girl said, Ann just clarified it so that everyone could hear it and that’s really helpful.
R: Para conquistar España...so she just basically kind of rephrased what the student was trying to say real quickly in a nice, gentle way.
Jon: Exactly.

Comments on turns 23–25
Jon: This is another helpful thing that Ann does...is that she passes out the sheets of excerpts so that we can...and then she put us into small groups. But the excerpts make it that much easier so that we don’t have to bring books and we don’t have to flip through books when she lines it up. It’s almost like the guide sheet that I was talking about (i.e., in his interview)...the same idea, but different.

Comments on turns 28–30

R: So what are you doing right there?
Jon: I am looking up a word in the dictionary, because Nickie leaned over to me and asked me what a word meant. I’m sure she asked me in English.
R: So you’re checking it out for her?
Jon: Yes. I’m trying to remember what the word was though. I believe it was a word in the text and not something that Ann had said. And I remember that it meant woman, but it wasn’t mujer or any other word that I had heard before.
R: I actually think that later on, we’ll see that Nickie asks you the word, and I think it’s in reference to a different passage, but the word is *hembra*.
Jon: Yeah, that’s exactly it.

Comments on turns 33–34

R: So, when you’re reading these passages in class—and I’m not sure how often she does this—how helpful is that?
Jon: It’s really helpful that she hands out those little excerpts so that we don’t have to get the book out and so that we don’t have to do anything with it; we get to breeze through these excerpts instead of having to flip through and possibly miss... I mean, it’s just as easy to write... it’s just as easy to type the full excerpt rather than write “start with the third paragraph that begins like this and ends like this.” And so, it’s really helpful when she does that.

Comments on turns 48–49

Jon: So right there, she’s been...earlier she was talking about the two shores and how that’s the name of the story. So then she said...she said like “We know about Gerónimo de Aguilar, how is it with Gonzalo Guerrero?” And then she read the quote and then said “So we know that he already has a life.” She says how the quote was important and then asks the class for how that differs from Aguilar and that seems to me like a really good way to...now that we’ve introduced this duality of Spain in the new world, and we know this guy wants a new world, and we know that Gerónimo de Aguilar wants to go with the Spaniards, how does this make us think about Aguilar. I think that’s what she just said. But she does a really good job of like setting this duality and opening it up for discussion right there.

Comments on turns 66–67

R: Are you still reading or something here?
Jon: No. Right here I’m looking at the text to visualize what she’s saying...because I’m just fine listening to her and reading at the same time. I was just reading the story to see exactly what she was talking about because I had to read through it kind of fast.

R: Are you reading the Fuentes text or the handout that she gave to you?

Jon: The Fuentes text. Because that’s what she’s talking about...because I wanted to make sure I understood their conversation because I didn’t get to read through it a second time like I like to when I have time.

Comments on turns 76–80

Jon: This was one instance where Mitch beat me to the question I was about to ask, because I was about to ask her if there was ever any evidence that Guerrero did rise up against the Spaniards. It was so obvious that the story that we were reading was fiction, that I was wondering exactly how much of it was based on facts and I wanted to ask that, but Mitch just beat me to it.

Comments on turns 91–92

Jon: So right there, she [Nicole] used the verb *trabajar*...and it seems like that is something that someone who had been speaking or studying longer wouldn’t have done. It seems like that is, at least to me, it seems like there are so many other obvious verb choices. *To work for* might make more sense in English than *trabajar* would in Spanish, according to how she wants to use it.

R: Does that bother the way in which you interpreted what she said?

Jon: No, because it’s one of those things where it’s like...when you put it into English, it will make sense just fine. So when I was thinking about it in English, I thought—oh, that’s obviously what she wanted to do. But then Ann came back and said *Se fue para ayudar*... and I would have used *ayudar* from the beginning. So it’s just helpful when Ann says that to clarify that she’s doesn’t mean that he wanted to work for the Spaniards—like he wanted to go and help them build a cathedral and put sweat and blood into a cathedral. But so it helps when Ann...

R: When she re-phrases what students say?

Jon: Yeah.

Comments on turns 94–96

R: Did you understand what she just asked there?

Jon: Oh yeah. I’m trying to think if there was anything that I could say about it. From writing all of the papers that I’ve had to write, I knew *según* would mean ‘according to’. So I knew that she’s talking about how does he use it even though this is fiction.

Comments on turns 98–99

Jon: I suppose I could have clarified more what they said. I remember thinking about *manera subversiva*, or something to say that he did it intentionally to damage Cortés. But
it was just kind of one of those spitfire answers that I just tried to come up with quick, so I didn’t think about it at all.

Comments on turns 104–107

Jon: It seemed like she just called on Marisol right there. But I have to believe that Marisol probably looked at her like she knew what she was talking about or something because it just seems like Ann would never call on someone like that if she didn’t have to. She will always wait for someone to raise their hand.

R: Kind of giving her a signal?

Jon: Yes.

Comments on turns 109–112

Jon: And it’s really helpful when she gives like building progressive hints like that. If no one wants to answer. She’s like ‘¿Recuerdan?, al principio... and then just kind of like leads in so that she doesn’t have to say it, but she will lead up to it until the exact point when a student will take the lead for the discussion.

R: So she gives you little bits and pieces?

Jon: Little bits until a student...

R: Grabs on?

Jon: Yeah, exactly.

R: And that’s something that you think helps people feel comfortable?

Jon: Yeah. It helps...if someone knows they want to say something but aren’t sure if they’re right, then the little progressive hint, whichever one will be like—okay, yeah. And so that’s a good technique that helps promote discussion.

Comments on turns 134–136

Jon: I made a comment right here..when Ann came up and talked to me...I said something like ‘Man, I wish we would have gotten a better passage’ because I thought that our passage was a little boring.

R: What was your passage about?

Jon: It was about Cortés and the Spanish arrival. So we talked about intertextualities with the Códice Florentino. There was something I noticed about it, but I can’t remember what it was. Oh, it was the use of this word magos instead of using aconsejeros. But I don’t know if it’s really important.

Comments on turns 164–166

R: Do you understand everything that Herminia says?

Jon: Yeah, pretty much always. I don’t recall exactly what she said right there, but I never am at a loss to understand Herminia.

Comments on turns 178–180
Jon: It seems like there’s a lot of stigma around how hard Nahuatl words are to pronounce. But it’s always like—they’re words in Nahuatl. If you can’t pronounce them exactly right, it doesn’t seem like a big deal. I did a report on Topiltzin, Quetzalcoatl for a Civilization class with Ann. From that, I had to learn so many Nahuatl words, that I got fairly decent at pronouncing it. So I am never worried about pronouncing them. But you can see Nickie hitting me because she wanted me to say it.

Comments on turns 187–189

Jon: So right here, I was kind of waiting for Ann to do her little hint-by-hint strategy because I knew that they’re now pretty sure that that whole story line was made up; about the eight omens. But I didn’t remember that it was Lockhart who we had read who said it. So, if she had been able to lead into that, I was ready to participate and discuss about that but I didn’t because she...once she said ‘los españoles crearon...’, I immediately knew that it was the idea that I wanted to say, but I didn’t get a chance because she didn’t hint by...because if she had hinted-by-hinted, then I would have known what she was trying to lead into and then I would have commented on it.

R: So since she didn’t give you sort of a lead, you didn’t know if you should comment?

Jon: Yeah.

R: How does the word ‘crearon’ signal that you shouldn’t comment or participate?

Jon: Because if she would have said ‘Lockhart, acerca los presagios, dice que los españoles hicieron...’, then I would have said something like ‘Creaban el mito de los presagios’, or whatever I would have said. But once she said ‘Crearon...’, I knew that she was going to run with the idea instead of waiting for a student to come to the answer.

R: So you were prepared to participate, but since she said ‘crearon’, you knew that she was going to go on with the idea and not wait for someone to comment?

Jon: Right.

R: Let’s go back and listen to it again. [we go back and listen to turns 188-189]

Jon: Do you get what I’m saying? So if she would have been like ‘Según Lockhart, los...’

R: Or, ‘¿qué dice Lockhart?’

Jon: Well, it was because she was asking us to remember it from Lockhart saying it. But I would have remembered if she said ‘los españoles hicieron qué con los presagios’...or if she would have been referring to the actions of the Spanish...

R: And she wouldn’t have said Lockhart, then you would said...

Jon: Then I would have said something about them being made up. I didn’t remember the idea from Lockhart saying it, I remembered it from her saying it...it being known that the Spanish had done that. So the fact that she referred to it through Lockhart....and didn’t lead into it a little more slowly, I would have gone into it and discussed.

Comments on turns 226–230

Jon: So the first time I paused, was because I was debating whether to say decisión or elección for his word choice. But right there, I wanted to say mistificar. But it was just one of those things that didn’t come to me that quick.
**R:** How about your overall comment. Can you kind of summarize in English what you just said?

**Jon:** I said that the choice of the word *magos* was interesting because earlier they used the word *emisarios*, which is emissaries which would be similar to a deposition of a person in the Western Royal European court. But the fact that he uses the word *magos* shows like a more mystified, magical way of determining the events of what happened and giving advice. And I thought that the difference between that way and the way that the advisors the Spanish king would use, was probably ancient Greek logic and not magic since the duality that we have been talking about all class with—las dulcerías(?)—and the idea that these are two separate worlds. And that way of determining of what advice to give.

**R:** So *magos* is a word that you would associate it more with...

**Jon:** It means 'mage', so it would be like...

**R:** So you’re arguing that a Spanish perspective would never use that word because it’s...

**Jon:** Maybe if they were talking about like Merlin or something, but not someone who would be assisting the emperor like those guys are. In Spain, those guys wouldn’t be called *magos*, they would be called *aconsejeros*.

**Comments on turns 256–269**

**Jon:** So right here, it’s really helpful that she’s taking the ideas that they are talking about—about racial identities—and applying them to the whole text and all of the characters and not just the ones that are mentioned in that passage. That really helps to broaden the scope of what we’re investigating in that one passage.

**Comments on turns 274–279**

**Jon:** Right here, Ann kind of corrected...this is one of those things where I didn’t say exactly what I wanted to say because...well, I started out with two ‘ums’ because she had said what I really wanted to say. She had said something about ‘anything else as far as these national identities?’ And then I wanted to say, when we’re reading this, the historical context of the history of Spain is really important as it is in all of the conquest. So I wanted to say that when we were thinking about the formation of this indigenous identity—when we’re coming from seeing how Cortés acts in his actions—it’s important to compare Spanish history to the indigenous identity that we’re talking about. But I said ‘indigenous identity’ when there are obviously are so many more than one. I didn’t mean to make it sound uniform at all. But I did by only saying ‘la identidad indígena’ not ‘una gran variedad de indígenas’. So I meant to say that there was a plurality of indigenous identities, but it didn’t come out that way.

**Comments on turns 285–286**

**R:** What did you just say there?

**Jon:** I said that what I want to say is that there are similarities that, in a manner of speaking, they were...that the Spanish identity was not as formed as Fuentes makes it seem—it was just recently formed in 1492. Since I said that, I think she suspected that the
entire class probably hadn’t taken a course on Spanish history and so she wanted to tell them what happened. But it was obvious that she understood where I was going and liked the points that I was making.

Closing comments at the end of watching the video

Jon: No, I think we pretty much talked about all of it.
R: Thank you.
APPENDIX U: ANN’S STIMULATED RECALL—CLASS OBSERVATION #13

Ann’s Stimulated Recall

While watching:
Class Observation #13
Recording Day #4
Monday, April 2, 2007

R=Researcher

Comments at turns 33–34

**Ann:** So this is just, as I said before, just trying to kind of recall for them some of the specifics from the Bernal Diaz text about these two figures and then clarify some of those references in these texts.

Comments on turns 52–53

**R:** So in the Fuentes pieces, he introduces these two figures again?

**Ann:** Yes. And at the end of the text he sort of plays around with them a lot eventually. The trick at the end of the text is that Gonzalo Guerrero leads a whole group of Indians to conquer Spain. So it’s sort of interesting and sort of silly. But, he uses a lot of the descriptions that we find in the Bernal Díaz text but he plays around with them and he modifies them and re-contextualizes them, and then he completely changes the ending.

Comments on turns 98–100

**R:** Are far as the different texts go, how do you think that the Fuentes text differs in terms of difficulty and how that affects conversation?

**Ann:** Well it’s something that’s sort of interesting because it’s—and I asked them on the first day that we talked about it if they thought it was more difficult or easy—and they all said it was easier. But the discussion has been a little bit less animated than with the colonial texts. In some ways, I think, that if they are more challenged, they do closer readings. The Fuentes text also isn’t really good—it’s sort of cheesy, and it’s very sexist, and there is this kind of colonialist element as Mitch was pointing out in class the other day. There’s, where the white guys are the ones who have to save the Indians. So, it is, you know, it’s not high literature. So that may be part of the problem. What’s interesting about it is the way that he plays with these colonial texts that we looked at previously. So I thought it would be a nice bridge to more contemporary texts—and they do a fine job with it. But, it’s obvious that they are not as animated about this text as the colonial texts which are certainly much more difficult linguistically, conceptually—you have to think at a much higher level with those texts.

**R:** How about the number of pages that they are reading? Is it comparable?
Ann: It’s comparable. I really pushed them with the colonial texts and they did fine. They were reading around 15 pages a day with the colonial texts, and that’s about the same with this. So, it’s been sort of interesting. You know, it’s also a different point in the semester and that could possibly factor in—but I don’t think that’s the only explanation. I also think that since it’s not quite as challenging, they weren’t quite as engaged with it. It’s just one of those interesting things.

Comments on turns 153–156

R: So Tiffany there was saying something in contrast to what another member in her group was thinking
Ann: Well, I think that’s what was going on because she kept glancing over at Herminia and I thought—maybe she’s looking for an idea that they had talked about. But then it was clear that she was disagreeing, which she is perfectly capable of doing, but it was sort of interesting. And fortunately Herminia did not interrupt and intervene, which she has enough sensibility to let Tami continue and express her thoughts. But it was sort of funny.

Comments on turns 222–231

R: Can you summarize what he was saying?
Ann: One thing that was kind of interesting about this series of exchanges developed is that we went from a broad analysis of the texts and the questions that I had given them to what he [Jon] is doing here which is really close analysis looking at each word and the connotation of each word. So he was pointing out that Fuentes uses the word magos in reference to the people who were telling Montezuma about these presagios, or the indications or signs that the Spanish were going to come. And so Jon was pointing out that instead of using a word like consejero, or like he was saying aconsejero—which I decided not to correct because he was sort of ‘in the moment’—he uses the word mago which creates a different sort of relationship and a different sort of figure associated with Montezuma that is more exotic and less like what the Spaniards would recognize as some kind of government advisor or what not. I think he arrived at that by, I doubt it was something that they talked about when they were just talking together. But I think that because we had spent so much time talking about the passage and going back to the Florentine Codex and talking about this idea of these signs and then the confusion between Cortés and Quetzalcoatl and stuff, he went back to the text and looked really closely at the text and how Fuentes actually constructs the image of Montezuma at that point. Though we spent a lot of time focusing on that passage, I think it was productive because by the end of the comments on that passage, at least one of the students—and hopefully other students too—were looking very closely at the language that they writer was using to construct the different characters and so on.

Comments on turns 274–277

R: And his comment there?
Ann: And this was another case where he then went on to clarify what it was that he was trying to say. But what I thought he was saying was that there was—and this is the part that he was actually more interested in—that there was not really a monolithic culture in Spain at this point; this was just a couple of years after the end of the Reconquest, and that the Moorish and Jewish elements of the culture were still, to some extent, present, though the Catholic Monarchs were trying to eradicate those elements and trying to create a more ‘pure’ society vs. the native side where this is... What he said that I was sort of trying to push it a little bit, was that on the native side these cultures had been in existence for centuries and so... So I thought that he was sort of saying that on the native side there’s more of a fixed sense of identity, more of a fixed sense of culture. But then he has this follow-up comment that clarifies that what he’s really interested in saying is that there wasn’t a monolithic culture in Spain in the early part of the 16th century because this is right on the heels of the Reconquista. And these are interesting points that really have more to do with the last passage that I had given them that we didn’t get to talk about in class yesterday and that we’ll talk about tomorrow—where Fuentes emphasizes all of these different cultural elements in Spain in the New World and all of this kind of cultural exchange that happens on both sides of the ocean. So he’s really anticipating that particular discussion. And I’m not—and we were sort of getting to the end of the class and this was something that I could have cut off and, you know. We really didn’t have time to go into the next passage through, so this was sort of a way to end class.

R: It seems interesting—I don’t know if he did a closer reading than other students...

Ann: Sometimes his [Jon] brain just turns on. He’s very bright and I don’t think he pushes himself very hard. But when he gets interested in something, he’s capable of making observations and connections that a lot of other students don’t necessarily make intuitively. And this particular aspect of the text seems to be something that really intrigued him.

R: He’s been speaking more vs. the first few weeks that I was in class observing.

Ann: Yeah, he has. He sort of moves in and out, you know. He reminds me a lot of my youngest brother, who’s also very bright but also not always wholeheartedly committed to what he’s doing. But when he gets really into something, he gets really into it.

Closing comments at the end of watching the video

Ann: I think as we get closer to the end of the semester, there’s this pattern of—when you give them that little clue of ‘okay, we’re done with class’, the backpacks open, and they start packing.

R: Anything else about this particular class?

Ann: Like I mentioned at first, I talked a lot more—especially at the beginning of class—just to clarify a few things.

R: And so tomorrow you read the Kartunnen piece?

Ann: So tomorrow we’ll talk about the Kartunnen essay, and we’ll start off by finishing up with this. So we may end up spending half of the class with the Fuentes text, which is fine because the Kartunnen essay has to do with the Malinche and the text that we’ll be reading on Friday also has to do with the Malinche, so if we read them together that’s not a problem.
R: Thank you.
REFERENCES


