

Spanish Oral Language Proficiency Assessments and Two-way Immersion Heritage Language Learners: Multimodal Language Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how multimodal scaffolds can assist in increasing Spanish oral language proficiency in two-way immersion heritage language learners. Spanish heritage language students in two-way immersion programs have varying access to Spanish outside of school leading to a range of proficiency levels despite participation in the two-way immersion program. This study presents students' language samples elicited using a Student Oral Language Assessment (SOPA) (Thompson, Boyson & Rhodes, 2006) from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). The assessment entailed a series of language production tasks with the intention of allowing students to produce their highest levels of proficiency (Thompson, et al., 2006). All assessments were recorded using video and audio and then the recordings were transcribed and analyzed using Systemic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) (Miller et al., 2011). The tactile, visual, and kinaesthetic nature of tasks during the study elicited different types of communicative strategies from the students suggesting that the use of multimodality in the classroom can foster language growth among linguistically diverse heritage language learners.

I. Introduction

The number of dual language immersion programs in the United States continues to grow as more Latino parents enroll their students in programs which aim to strengthen their home language and the societal language. This specific study focuses on a two-way immersion (TWI) program of Spanish and English. The students in this study, and in all two-way immersion programs, have various levels of access to Spanish outside of the school context. The continual growth of the Latino population in the United States is not due to immigration – it is due to a high birth-rate (Garcia & Sanchez, 2008). This growing number of U.S. born Latinos is increasing the need for more dual language immersion programs. Parents are enrolling their children in these programs to conserve the home language and to learn the societal language. This is something to keep in mind when students are being assessed on their level of language proficiency. Students who are considered to be heritage language learners of Spanish have different types of access to Spanish at home.

This study considers the range of proficiency levels in Spanish home language learners of Spanish. The purpose of this study is to explore how the inclusion of multimodal scaffolds in the classroom (i.e. tactile manipulatives, a graphic representation of the life-cycle of a butterfly, a picture book, and a kinesthetic game of Simon Says) can potentially increase Spanish oral language proficiency in heritage language learners. From Gardner's theory of multiple intel-

ligences, we learn that “human cognitive competence is better described in terms of a set abilities, talents, or mental skills” which can be composed of a variation of: musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, verbal-linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and/or visual-spatial intelligence (Gardner, 2006). For this study, the multimodal scaffolds that are examined mainly support visual-spatial intelligence and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

The data presented in this study is taken from a larger study which focused on linguistic diversity, student interaction, and differentiated scaffolding in a Spanish TWI third grade classroom (Young, 2015). The research questions for this paper are:

1. How does Spanish oral language production differ among linguistically diverse Spanish heritage language learners in a TWI program? (larger study)
2. How does SHL students’ linguistic complexity shift vis-à-vis visual scaffolds?
3. What does the visual-linguistic connection potentially reveal about SHL students’ investment in the heritage language?

2. Two-Way Immersion

Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs aim to allow students enrolled in them to learn two languages simultaneously and proficiently. Ultimately, both languages will be maintained over the long term (Christian, 2011). The TWI program discussed in this paper involve students who come from a majority language (e.g.: English) and a minority language (e.g.: Spanish). In such programs, all students learn the academic content together in both languages and, ideally, bilingualism and biliteracy development is the goal in both languages. Ideally, one language is not favored over the other and both languages are practiced to achieve the goals stated above.

Well-implemented TWI programs promote additive bilingualism, proficiency in both languages over time with an enriched approach, for all students (Christian, 2011, Cummins, 2000). This approach enhances the student’s proficiency in both languages with a sincere emphasis on bilingualism. To do so, these programs integrate language and content in the classroom (Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Orteíza, 2004). Students are immersed in both languages in academic contexts throughout the school day and throughout their years at school. The program this study examines follows a 90/10 Model from K-5th grade. Beginning in Kindergarten, 90% of students’ instruction is in the partner language (e.g.: Spanish) while 10% of students’ instruction is in the societal language (e.g.: English) (Christian, 2011). Throughout the students’ years of schooling, they are exposed to activities that integrate both languages in the classroom through various contexts. These well-implemented programs will eventually allow the students enrolled in them to perform academic and conversational tasks in both languages comfortably.

2.1. Heritage Language Diversity

It is extremely important to note the differences among heritage speakers of Spanish, or Spanish home language (SHL) students in TWI programs. Students who speak Spanish at home are considered heritage speakers of Spanish. Their Spanish language acquisition is often overlooked in TWI contexts for various reasons (Palmer, 2009, Montrul & Potowski, 2007). Teachers often believe these students have already mastered Spanish or they have reached an adequate level of proficiency, among other reasons (Young, 2015). Because heritage speakers’ Spanish ac-

quisition is often overlooked in TWI programs, these students may experience a “plateau effect” (Fortune & Tedick, 2015) meaning that their language proficiency does not develop beyond an intermediate level. In the TWI programs, between Kindergarten and Grade 2, heritage speakers experience higher levels of proficiency by the second grade. However, between Grades 5 and 8, there is no significant differences in levels of proficiency in the heritage speakers (Fortune & Tedick, 2015). It seems heritage speakers’ learning is not pushed enough for there to be a significant level of growth throughout the years in TWI programs.

Because of this plateau effect, SHL students may also develop non-native-like aspects in their Spanish and experience incomplete acquisition (Potowski, 2007). These students will be able to speak Spanish conversationally, but they might not be able to develop the same proficiency in academic Spanish that their native speaking peers from a Spanish dominant country may. Considering the plateau effect and incomplete acquisition, SHL students in TWI programs may not develop the same vocabulary as their native speaking peers around the world. They may use the word “eso/that” to describe an object instead of what the actual object is. For example, SHL students may replace “mesa/table,” “pluma/pen,” or “cepillo de dientes/toothbrush” with “eso/that.” Perhaps not because they do not know the vocabulary, but because they can get by without using the vocabulary in certain settings.

Still, the diversity among heritage language speakers is evident in the literature and it seems to affect students. SHL students have reported feeling insecure about their language abilities. Because of these insecurities, these students may choose to speak English depending on the group of students they are with, to avoid criticism by their peers (Abdi, 2011; Bartlett, 2007; Martin Beltrán, 2010; Monzó & Rueda, 2009; Young & Tedick, 2015; Zentella, 1997). Their investment in Spanish shifts depending on the peers they are with resulting in a potential shift in home language development.

2.2. Investment

“The construct of investment seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner’s desire and commitment to learn a language, and the language practices of the classroom or community” (Norton & Toohey, 2011). This shift that occurs in SHL students’ use of Spanish depends on the peers they are with, the activities they are doing, and the way they are being assessed. One way a student’s use of their home language, or of the second language, can increase is by promoting a bilingual identity. If students favorably invest in a bilingual identity, their Spanish use often increases (Young, 2015).

2.3. Author’s Positionality

I am a heritage speaker of Greek but I grew up in New York and went to a public school where I did not have the opportunity to learn academic Greek. When I am at my university’s Greek club, I feel intimidated by the other members of the club because they are from Greece and they grew up there. With them, my investment in Greek decreases and I often revert to speaking English. But, my goddaughter lives in Greece and since she only speaks Greek, I decided to write her a letter for every major holiday in the target language. Every time I sit to write her a letter, my investment level in Greek increases. My commitment to learning the language increases when I have an authentic communicative goal but it decreases when I question my bilingual abilities in those interactions with Greek-English bilinguals.

2.4. Multimodal Scaffolding

In addition to shifting investment toward a bilingual identity, teachers can possibly increase language acquisition through including multimodal scaffolding in the classroom. Thanks to Howard Gardner, we know our students have a variety of skills and that they all learn differently. Because of this, we have to move beyond the belief that meaning can only be extracted through written or oral language. Meaning has reached levels of modality which includes written language, oral language, visual representation, audio representation, tactile representation, gestural representation, feelings and emotions, and spatial representation (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). With these different modes of meaning, students can express their understanding in many different ways. Instead of limiting meaning to one mode, students can use a range of representations of their understanding and acquisition.

In a 2011 study, Beck found that TWI students who were given visuals (graphs) during testing scored higher on math assessments. By including visuals, students are given a scaffold to assist in their understanding. Beck found that educators should include visuals during instruction to increase scores on assessments and to aid in the learning process. TWI students can benefit immensely from multimodal scaffolds. Teachers can increase investment in TWI students by drawing on visual and tactile scaffolds (Cekaite, 2007; Sharpe, 2007).

3. Methodology

The data presented in this study is taken from video recordings that were part of a larger study focusing on linguistic diversity, student interaction, and differentiated scaffolding in a Spanish TWI third grade classroom. The school used in this study is part of a large, urban school district in a northern U.S. state that is a two-way Spanish/English immersion K-5 school following the 90/10 model. The classroom used in this study is a third grade classroom consisting of 27 students (24 in this study) consisting of a fairly even distribution between Latino, White, and African American students. Twenty-five percent of the students in the classroom are English Learners.

This study presents students' language samples elicited using a Student Oral Language Assessment (SOPA) (Thompson, Boyson & Rhodes, 2006) from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). The assessment entailed a series of language production tasks with the intention of allowing students to produce their highest levels of proficiency (Thompson, et al., 2006). All assessments were recorded using video and audio and then the recordings were transcribed and analyzed using Systemic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) (Miller et al., 2011).

For this study, four representative Spanish Home Language (SHL) students were chosen as focal participants. Two of the students (Xochitl and Katrina) scored in the advanced mid/high range in the SOPA Assessments and two of the students (Timothy and Joel) scored in the intermediate mid/high range. Xochitl has Spanish speaking parents at home, takes frequent visits to Mexico with her family, and is an English learner. Katrina has Spanish speaking parents and grandparents at home and she is an English learner. Timothy has a Spanish speaking father but he lives with his mother who speaks English to him. Joel has Spanish speaking parents and he lives with his mother who speaks English to him and he is an English learner. These four students were chosen because they are all heritage language learners in a TWI program but they are all at various levels of proficiency. During the SOPA Assessments, Xochitl and Katrina completed the tasks in the same recording while Timothy and Joel worked in the same recording.

One thirty minute SOPA assessment session was coded to identify nonverbal and verbal cues indicating student's investment in the specific task. We looked at the students' facial expressions, body language, and utterances during the various tasks to assess students' engagement with the task as well as language proficiency and investment level. Each session was additionally coded for lexical and syntactical complexity related to task type and investment. The SOPA Tasks include two different parts: 1. No visuals: Open-ended familiar questions (family, pets, school) and abstract questions (What would you do if...?). 2. With visuals: Academic task (describe the life cycle of a butterfly) or story retell (with a picture book). At the end of the tasks, there was a round of Simon Says, in Spanish, for all students to play.

4. Findings

In this section, I will explore the effect of various multimodal scaffolds on heritage language learners. The SOPA Tasks with no visual scaffolds asked open-ended familiar questions about family, pets, school, etc. and abstract questions (i.e. What would you do if....?)

4.1. Without Tactile Scaffolding: Nonverbal Communication

During these sections, Xochitl, one of the students who scored in the Advanced Mid to Advanced High range on SOPA and Spanish-speaking parents at home, made hand gestures while answering questions quite often. She often created her own "air visuals" while presenting numbers to the assessor and she moved her hands around (see Figure 1). Katrina, another student who scored in the Advanced Mid to Advanced High range on SOPA, physically slumped down in her chair when she had to wait her turn to answer the question and folded her arms. Joel, one of the students who scored in the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High range on SOPA, folded his arms and continuously played with the markers and the name tag he was given. Timothy, another student who scored in the Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High range on SOPA, used the tools in front of him to include a visual component in the activity such as the name tag and the marker he was given, his own fingers to show the amounts of things, and the camera that was recording the tasks (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. Air visuals with Xochitl (left) and Katrina (right)



Figure 2. Creating visuals with Joel (left) and Timothy (right)

4.2. With Tactile Scaffolding: Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

During the tactical portion of the assessment, Xochitl quickly reached for the toys placed in front of her, stood up to pick her favorite toy, and sat up straight while Katrina was answering a question. Katrina helped Xochitl take the toys out of the bag and stood up to find the correct toys to answer the questions she was being asked. Katrina filled in many of her answers with “um” while she was answering questions about the animals represented by the tactiles as she picked them up one-by-one. Joel stood up to take the toys out of the bag, he reached for his favorite toy, and he danced when he answered an answer correctly. When Joel knew an answer, he exclaimed, “Oh!” and stood up. Timothy touched the toys as soon as he began to answer questions about the animals they represented, he hit his head when he did not know the answer, and he helped Joel find the correct colored toy when the assessor asked to find the yellow toy. Timothy begins naming the animals as soon as he picked up the corresponding animal. When the activity was over, he said “bye!” to the animals as he helped Joel put them away.

4.3. Without Visual Scaffolding: Discourse Samples

When Xochitl and Katrina were asked to talk about their families, they used conversational Spanish but they did not use English during their conversations. As their conversation progressed, the utterances became longer but the verb tense remained the same. Excerpts from the conversation between the two girls reveals their sentence structure:

Excerpt 1: Xochitl and Katrina

Assessor: Pláticame de tú familia.

‘Tell me about your family.’

Xochitl: Yo tengo mis dos abuelos en México

‘I have my two grandparents in Mexico.’

Katrina: ¡Yo también!

‘Me too!’

Xochitl: No sé mucho pero creo que es de Nuevo México.

‘I don’t know much but I think they’re from New Mexico.’

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

Katrina: Nuevo México es igual a México, solo que se llama Nuevo. Es nuevo.

‘New Mexico is equal to Mexico, only it’s called New. It’s new.’

Excerpt 2: Xochitl and Katrina

Xochitl: A mí me encanta la ensalada cuando nosotros comemos pollo, siempre echo, algunas veces ayudo a mi mamá a hacer comida y echo un poquito más en mi plato ensalada.

‘I love sad when we eat chicken, I always do, sometimes I help my mom make food and I throw a little more in my salad plate.’

Katrina: Yo también echo ensalada en mi plato y también le ayudo a mi mamá con el cuchillo.

‘I also do salad on my plate and I also help my mom with the knife.’

During the open-ended question segment of the assessment, Timothy and Joel used similar verb tenses as Xochitl and Katrina but they were more likely to revert to English during the conversation:

Excerpt 3: Timothy and Joel

Assessor: ¿Te gustaría tener otra mascota?

‘Would you like to have another pet?’

Timothy: un poco yeah...pero I want, yo quiero uno “stace” un poco small because they’re so cute when they’re babies.

‘a little yeah...but I want, I want a ‘stace’ a little small because they’re so cute when they’re babies.’

Joel: Mi hermana tiene un chihuahua y a va a tener un o tres babies.

‘My sister has a Chihuahua and she’s going to have one or three babies.’

Timothy: My big dog could like eat a Chihuahua.

‘My big dog could like eat a Chihuahua.’

Excerpt 4: Timothy and Joel

Assessor: ¿Qué videojuego te gusta más?

‘Which videogame is your favorite?’

Timothy: Yo le gusta jugar videojuegos. Kind of fighting, kind of shooting.

‘I like to play video games. Kind of fighting, kind of shooting.’

Joel: ...yo tengo Halo Reach y mi, mi, mi guy se ve muy cool porque es un alien.

‘...I have Halo Reach and my, my, my guy looks very cool because he’s an alien.’

4.4 With Visual Scaffolding: Nonverbal Communication

During the SOPA Assessment Tasks, students were presented with two visual components. The first was a diagram of the life cycle of a butterfly and the second was a picture book of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” When the life cycle of the butterfly was initially presented to students, Katrina widened her eyes and opened her mouth revealing a surprised expression. She unfolded her arms and physically moved closer to both the life cycle of the butterfly and the picture book (see Figure 3). She would point to the diagram and the book when she was answering questions about them. Katrina imitated the facial expressions of the characters in the book when she was answering questions about them. Xochitl would follow the diagram with her eyes as the assessor moved it around the table and pointed to various parts of it. She sat up taller when the book and the diagram were presented. Xochitl would touch the diagram and the book when she was answering questions about them.

Joel moved his body closer to the table when the diagram was presented and he sat up taller in his seat when he was answering questions (see Figure 4). While Timothy was answering questions about the book, Joel was playing with his name tag and the marker in front of him. Joel would glance at the diagram and he played with his shirt when he was not answering a questioning. Timothy gasped when he saw the picture book and his eyes widened. He moved the diagram closer to him when he was answering questions about it and he pointed to various stages presented in the diagram. At one point during the picture book assessment task, Timothy stood up to get his watch from his backpack and he continued to play with his watch while Joel answered questions.



Figure 3. Xochitl (left) and Katrina (right) moving closer



Figure 4. Joel (left) and Timothy (right) appearing more engaged

4.5. With Visual Scaffolding: Discourse Samples

During the assessments with visual components, the utterances became longer for all of the focal students and the sentence structure became more complex. When asked about the life cycle of a butterfly in reference to the diagram, Xochitl and Katrina said:

Excerpt 5: Xochitl and Katrina

Assessor: Quiero que me expliques qué está pasando aquí.

'I want you to explain to me what's going on here.'

Xochitl: creo que está comiendo hojitas...yo sé que es una mariposa y después la mariposa hace un huevo y después el huevo como nace y está chiquito y come más comida y crece y se hace así.

'I think she's eating leaves...I know it's a butterfly and then the butterfly makes an egg and then the egg is born and it's small and eats more food and it grows and it's done that way.'

Katrina: ...y luego aquí están, ya están creciendo la mariposa, aquí ya salió la mariposa de la colmena y luego ya es una mariposa y pasa así alrededor alrededor.

'...and then here they are, the butterfly is already growing, here the butterfly came out of the hive and then it is already a butterfly and it goes around around.'

Their utterances were more complex with the picture book as well:

Excerpt 6: Xochitl and Katrina

Assessor: Vamos a ver literatura.

'Let's look at literature.'

Xochitl: ...primero probó el grande y se quemó, y la de, la de mamá, la de el mediano estaba muy frio y el del niño el chiquito estaba perfecto y se lo comió todo. Y después le dio a Ricitos de Oro sueño y...

'...she first tasted the big one and it burned, and the one of, mom's, the medium one was very cold and the small boy's was perfect and she ate everything. And then Goldilocks had a dream and...'

Katrina: ...y luego se acostó en la cama grande del papá oso. ...y estaba muy dura. Y luego se fue a la de mamá oso.

'and then she lay down on Daddy's big bed. ...and it was very hard. And then she went to Mama Bear's.'

Joel and Timothy's utterances in English decreased during the assessment portion with the visual scaffolds. Their sentences became more complex and predominantly Spanish:

Excerpt 7: Timothy and Joel

Assessor: Vamos a ver literatura.

'Let's look at literature.'

Joel: Hay algo aquí y él está comiendo y él está haciendo "¡ah!". Y ella está hacienda "¡ah!" también y su cuchara se cayó. ...Hay un niña mirando a un conejo y el conejo está mirando el niña y el ardilla está mirando a ella.

'There is something here and he is eating and going, 'ah!' And she is going, 'ah!' Also her spoon fell. There is a little girl looking at a rabbit and the rabbit is looking at the little girl and the squirrel is looking at her.'

Timothy: Ella está haciendo el jump rope en el silla más grande, está durmiendo un poco.

'She's doing the jump rope in the bigger chair, she's sleeping a little.'

Joel: Estaba haciendo aruñando y ella está comiendo el eso y ella tiene un panza grande.

'I was just doing it and she's eating that and she has a big belly.'

Excerpt 8: Timothy and Joel

Assessor: ¿Me explicas qué está pasando aquí? (Ciclo de vida de una mariposa)

'Can you explain what's going on here? (Life cycle of a butterfly)'

Timothy: Es morir porque está old, viejo, so este es un huevo, se empieza y después hace ésto y después hace el como...libélula.

'It's dying because it's old, old, so this is an egg, you start and then do this and then do the like...dragonfly.'

Joel: ...primero un huevo y va a ser grande y va a ser un capullo y después un mariposa.

'...first an egg and it's going to be big and it's going to be a cocoon and then a butterfly.'

4.6. With Kinesthetic Scaffolding: Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

When the game of Simon Says was introduced to the focal students, they reacted positively. Xochitl smiled widely when the assessor told her and Katrina they would be playing a round. Katrina put her arms in the air when the game was announced, she had a wide grin on her face, and she looked to Xochitl with a grin when they were prepared to play. When Timothy thought the assessment was over, he asked in a quiet voice, "Are we done?" The assessor told them they would be playing Simon Says as their final activity and Timothy smiled widely. Timothy stood up immediately when it was time to play. Joel also stood up rather quickly when he was told they would be playing Simon Says.

5. Discussion

When the focal students were answering open-ended questions without visual scaffolds, they often made their own visual scaffolds. This suggests that if students are not given visual types of support, they will make their own. Overall, during the assessment tasks without the visual scaffolds, students seemed less engaged. They slumped down in their chairs, they fiddled with the tools available to them and/or made their own, and they folded their arms. It is interesting that students seem to require a visual component to the communicative activity. When students were given visual components, (diagram of the life cycle of a butterfly and a picture book of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”) their physical reactions changed. Students moved themselves closer to the visual component, they unfolded their arms, and they touched the diagram/book. Students seemed more engaged when they were given something to engage *with*.

When students were presented the tactiles, (figures of animals) they also seemed more engaged. Students were eager to pick up the toys and when they answered questions about the various animals/colors present, they picked up the corresponding toys. It seems that having a physical representation of something they are discussing helps students complete their thoughts and utterances more coherently.

The first two discourse samples without visual scaffolds from Xochitl and Katrina reveal a limited use of Spanish verb tenses. The verbs underlined are primarily present tense and the sentence structure is not very complex. When given visual scaffolds, Xochitl and Katrina’s utterances increase and their sentences become more complex as new verb tenses are used. So it seems that even home language learners of Spanish require additional scaffolding to increase their linguistic complexity.

Without the visual scaffolds, Timothy’s responses are mainly in English. Because he does not speak Spanish at home, he may not have the same vernacular for a conversation that Xochitl and Katrina may have. Joel seems to have similar limitations when it comes to the open-ended questions without visual scaffolds. While Joel uses more Spanish than Timothy, his sentences are short and the verb tense remains present. He does include English words when he does not know the translation in Spanish. Timothy and Joel may not have the vocabulary for these types of conversations but because they have Spanish speaking parents, they may be overlooked in the TWI classroom because they might be expected to have this vocabulary already.

Timothy and Joel’s sentence structure during the visual component of the assessment suggests they have the academic language for Spanish. In excerpts 7 and 8, Timothy and Joel use no English filler words when they describe the life cycle of a butterfly or the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Timothy’s sentences were mainly in English during the non-visual component but now his sentence complexity has increased as has his Spanish. Joel and Timothy are taking more risks when they are given a scaffold to work with.

During the round of Simon Says, each focal student smiled and seemed excited to get up and play. This might suggest that giving students an opportunity to move around in the classroom increases their desire to be in the classroom. We want our students to want to be in our classrooms and we have to do what we can to make everyone’s time worthwhile.

6. Limitations

The findings of this study are preliminary and there is much more work to be done. There are several limitations to the study we conducted. We did not consider the gender of the focal

students in the study but it would be very interesting to note the differences in proficiency levels among SHL students across genders. It is also important to note that the size of our study is not very large and our results cannot guarantee the same results across the larger population. Because this study only examines four heritage language learners, a similar study should be repeated with larger groups of TWI students.

7. Conclusions and Further Implications

This study suggests that an inclusion of visuals and tactile features in a TWI classroom may increase student investment which, in turn, allows for greater risk taking in the language learning process. Because greater risks are associated with tactical and visual scaffolds, these scaffolds seem to also increase heritage language use and even more complex lexical and syntactical features. Visual and tactile scaffolds may also be used to tap into students' prior knowledge. For example, graphs/manipulatives can be used to accompany math concepts, picture books can be used to discuss reading comprehension, and scientific diagrams/illustrations can be used to accompany scientific lessons. While these scaffolds may be beneficial for many students in TWI programs, it is important to keep in mind that SHL students at more advanced levels might need even more scaffolds to push their academic language growth even further. Ultimately, teachers in TWI programs should be finding ways to increase students' investment level in the language learning process and visual and tactical scaffolds may assist in this.

Teachers in TWI programs should consider that every student has a different type of intelligence. When considering multiple intelligences, it is also important to keep in mind that students learn differently. For many students, visual representations will help them perform better on tasks and by taking away those visual scaffolds, students' ability to perform well decreases (Beck, 2011). In addition to providing more visual scaffolds in the classrooms, teachers in TWI programs may also consider including kinesthetic and tactical scaffolds. As Gardner suggests, some students are bodily-kinesthetic learners and they require some type of movement in the classroom (Gardner, 2006). By providing students with tactiles and physical activities, (perhaps toys, blocks, Simon Says, etc.) teachers will be accommodating the range of learners in their classroom.

In addition to the visual, tactical, and kinesthetic tactiles, teachers in TWI programs can group their students heterogeneously. Because of varying levels of investment during different activities, heritage language learners at varying levels of proficiency may limit themselves to homogeneous groupings. But when lower performing students are grouped with higher performing students, both students perform better on various tasks (Zamani & Huang, 2016). In a recent study by Zamani and Huang, it was determined that Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students were able to learn from the act of teaching others. Therefore, by placing students in heterogeneous groups, students will be able to learn more than they would if they were constantly grouped homogeneously.

The students in our classrooms are extremely diverse and we must consider their varying levels of proficiency when we create our lesson plans. If we want to increase the investment level of our students, we need to add new types of instruction in our classrooms. We must differentiate our lessons to meet the needs of our lowest performing students, our mid-range students, and our highest performing students. With the help of visual, tactical, and kinesthetic scaffolds in the classroom, students will learn effectively and succeed beyond our classroom.

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