The study of second language acquisition (SLA) and its pedagogical practices for fostering learner development are underscored by theoretical premises that reflect both general learning theory and SLA-specific theories. While there is overlap in terms of the basic premises of the theories and their implications for Spanish educators (e.g., constructivism and sociocultural theory), each has uniquely contributed to investigative and instructional practices. In considering the lines of theoretical and applied research that prevail in SLA (and related fields), three general strands impact how we design both our curriculum from the beginning to more advanced levels and individual sequences/tasks. The consideration of curriculum design issues along with (particular) task design issues necessitates an understanding of not only how Spanish educators establish the linguistic and sociolinguistic foundations of communicative competence but also how we promote advanced communicative abilities. The lines of research are (1) the general learning theory of constructivism, (2) psycholinguistics and cognition, and (3) social and sociocultural cognition.

1.0 Constructivism

Up until the late 1970s, the traditional learning theory that informed curricular and classroom practices was objectivism, which assumes that the essential elements of instruction are communication and deduction. The objectivist approach to education supposes that new knowledge is delivered to learners. Once a construct has been (properly) explained to learners, they are to infer its application to both concrete and abstract phenomena. In many educational settings this approach to instruction is termed teacher-centered education (cf. Shane 1986). The cognitive code method is one of the best examples of the manifestation of objectivist principles of learning in the second and foreign language classroom. This method normally encourages teachers to present grammar rules to students in the clearest fashion and allow for ample, controlled practice; the premise is that once this information becomes catalogued in learners’ minds, they—helped by their powerful, innate language-processing abilities (Boey 1975)—will be able to extrapolate the applications of those rules (Chastain 1969). Textbooks contained exhaustive descriptions of, say, the uses of por and para, which were followed by largely decontextualized practice items in which students were to infer which preposition was most appropriate.

In the 1980s constructivism—the theoretical antithesis of objectivism—became increasingly important in dialogues on educational practice, as researchers brought
forth studies showing the benefits of taking into account a learner’s background knowledge (Ausubel 1968) and the importance of linguistic negotiations (be it with peers in group activities or instructors in Socratic discussions/lessons; Bruner 1996) on knowledge development. This paradigm shift proposed that learners must be active agents in the knowledge acquisition processing, building new stores on top of and in relationship to their linguistic, encyclopedic, and experiential knowledge stores to acquire new knowledge (McGroarty 1998; Spivey 1997). As agents they must explore new concepts from multiple perspectives to increase the likelihood that their previous knowledge stores interface with how they uncover new concepts. Reading tasks began to incorporate advanced organizers to maximize comprehension and facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary. Problem-solving tasks began to emerge in lesson plans, in which, for instance, learners were to design and present a synthesis of the week’s important news items in Spanish.

If one broadly interprets the constructivist movement as a shift to viewing the learner as an agent rather than a recipient of knowledge, we see the context in which Krashen essentially translates a constructivist model of reading to the FL classroom, postulating that acquisition will result from listening-comprehension and reading activities that are interesting to learners (i.e., for which they have background knowledge) and are a bit beyond their current level of development (i.e., i + 1 input with which the learner can add to what he or she already knows). Additionally, proficiency-based approaches to instruction (stemming from the assessment role of the Oral Proficiency Interview, or OPI) stressed the importance of interpersonal communication. It became less important that a student could describe a grammatical construct; rather, the recognition that acquisition stems from agency coincided with the widespread incorporation of assessment measures (such as the OPI and the popularity of role-play “oral exams”) that gauged whether a learner could employ that (or like) constructs (Kramsch 1986). At this time, role-play activities began to replace oral tasks that only entailed a question-answer format.

Constructivist tenets of knowledge development probably continue to be so pervasive in second language education because, even in general learning theory, language skills (i.e., syntactic, morphological, phonological, discourse, pragmatic) are the primary means by which the learner takes control of his own development (Bruner 1983). Approaches to instruction that involve apprenticeships, problem-based learning, and student collaboration are direct manifestations of the constructivist philosophy (Brown and King 2000). Indeed, as will be seen below, these instructional strategies are built into the fabric of output-oriented approaches to SLA and task-based instruction.

Nevertheless, while constructivism signals a broad, general paradigm shift in education, its most frequently studied construct is situated learning, which occurs when learners experience how a particular knowledge construct is useful in problem solving that is often real-world in nature (Brown, Collins, and Duguid 1989; see also Salaberry 1996). SLA pedagogues have spoken of the need to involve learners in task-based activities or assignments where they not only employ the target language but
also work toward some nonlinguistic goal (Crookes and Gass 1993; Long 1997; Nunan 1989). Task-based activities impose real-world goals on learners; they must use the target language to relate meaning, and successful task completion is measured against outcomes-based criteria rather than linguistic criteria (Skehan 1998). The types of tasks that have worked their way into the curriculum range from information gaps, where learners individually depend on their own background knowledge to help each other solve a problem (e.g., jigsaw), to shared tasks, where students assist each other in bridging some learning problem (Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun 1993). Those tasks that allow learners to converge on how to achieve a task (and therefore converge on the immediate knowledge that they use and the conclusions on which they draw to achieve task completion) yield more negotiation of meaning than divergent tasks such as a debate (Doughty and Pica 1986). In a convergent task-based activity, groups of learners might converse in Spanish to, say, design a menu for a theme restaurant they own.

The focus of the research on the efficacy of task-based instruction has been on its ability to foster the development of learners’ morphosyntactic knowledge. The research to date clearly suggests that task-based activities will only promote the development of specific constructs in tasks where learners’ attention is specifically drawn beforehand to the presence and/or function of the construct (e.g., through some consciousness-raising precursor). After that is established, the focus of the task for the learner can be on its nonlinguistic goal (Ellis 2000). Rosa and Leow (2004) present research indicating that a task that requires the use of the si conditional construct is better at promoting the construct’s noticing when learners receive explicit pretask instruction about the si conditional. Pelletier (2000) examines the types of negotiations that occur in different Spanish CMC activities, finding that those that require more attention to form and coherence lead to more negotiations that require the repackaging of messages with different morphosyntactic configurations; conversely, open-ended tasks lead to negotiations that involve alterations in lexical choice.

Task-based activities will more likely promote fluent speech if they are highly structured (e.g., where the steps that the learner takes are essentially sequenced over time, such as in a cooking activity); they are more likely to promote accuracy and complexity if learners have a chance to plan their output under structured conditions (Foster and Skehan 1999). What is most interesting about the research that has examined the effects of goal-oriented activities on learner performance is that, contrary to the prediction that accuracy will decrease when attentional resources are directed at meaning (as learners cannot divide their attention between accuracy and relating meaning; cf. VanPatten 1990), tasks requiring learners to attend to relating a coherent message (such as a narrative) may well lead to more accurate performance (Salaberry and López-Ortega 1998).

A special note is necessary here about the influence of constructivist tenets on the design of computer-assisted language learner (CALL) activities. The growth of computer and web-based instruction in the 1990s led many educators to question the efficacy of objectivist models of instruction on learning in general, and considerations
of constructivist principles of learning have become especially popular in attempts to
devise successful computer learning environments. Educators affirm that electronic
collaboration may force learners to interact and problem solve in ways that are com-
patible with the constructivist principles of two or more learners strategizing, shar-
ing knowledge and experiences, linking new to old knowledge, and contextualizing
learning (Bonk and King 1998; Bonk and Cunningham 1998). The premise is that
electronic environments require learners to take an active role and be agents in their
own learning (de Verneil and Berge 2000). Salaberry (1996) challenges CALL educa-
tors to abandon drill-and-practice tasks and to consider the benefits of FL software
that encourages situated cognition. De la Fuente (2003) presents evidence indicating
that CALL environments are equally effective at promoting the acquisition of recep-
tive knowledge of new Spanish vocabulary as face-to-face task-based (quasi-role-
play) activities. Lafford and Lafford (2005) outline task-based activities that lend
themselves to participation and interaction in a CMC (computer-mediated commu-
nication; e.g., text-based network chats) environment using a combination of wired
and wireless technologies.

Nunan (2004) outlines a framework for the development of a syllabus that is
designed around task-based principles and activities. To promote SLA, these activi-
ties involve evoking students’ relevant schemata for a linguistic construct, giving stu-
dents controlled practice with the construct, exposing them to the construct in some
input activity, consciousness-raising activities, role play, and convergent decision
making and consensus building. Salaberry et al.’s (2004) textbook Impresiones is one
of the first serious attempts to infuse the Spanish language market with a curriculum
and materials that encourage learners to engage in task-based activities. “One of the
foundational principles for the design of Impresiones activities,” the authors state, “is
the assumption that to achieve functional communicative abilities in a second lan-
guage, communication requirements must be established first” (xi).

Clearly the constructivist influence on education has been widely felt. To be sure,
upon examination of its core principles of learner agency and interactivity, it becomes
evident that interactionist theory and sociocultural theory are highly compatible with
constructivist tenets. Interactionist theory, nonetheless, is more of a reaction to
strong claims about the efficacy of input-oriented approaches to instruction that rely
heavily on cognitive psychology, and so I treat its role and influence on instruction in
the next section. Sociocultural theory stems directly from Vygotsky’s influence on
learning theory in general, which I explore in a separate section.

2.0 Psycholinguistics and Cognition

Psycholinguistic and cognitive perspectives on how to promote acquisition have
focused on the development of the L2 cognitive machine and the ways that external
data (from reading and aural sources as well as from interlocutors) interact with such
growth. During the 1980s the importance and popularity of Krashen’s monitor model
of acquisition and the natural approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983) led to a marked
rejection of the cognitive code method. Many Spanish curricula were employing Dos
mundos (Terrell et al. 2002). This focus on meaning (FonM) approach exposed students to vast amounts of aural and textual input while largely abandoning a focus on forms (FonFs) syllabus (i.e., one that organizes the curriculum around the segmentation of various grammatical structures; Long and Crookes 1992) that expects learners to synthesize (extrapolate in the objective terms) their communicative uses. Dos mundos, which is still popular in university curricula, required learners to read many articles and short stories and listen to lengthy listening comprehension segments and narratives. The first edition contained few grammatical explanations and did not provide exhaustive descriptions of any given verb paradigm (e.g., providing information and practice with only the first-, second-, and third-person singular preterit forms).

FonM approaches were not providing suitable results. Canadian immersion programs were reporting that learners’ grammars were deficient (see Sanz 2000). Even Terrell (1991) acknowledged that comprehensible input was not sufficient for the acquisition of many structures. Psycholinguistically speaking, it was generally agreed that learners could not, on a consistent basis, simultaneously attend to the messages they were reading/listening to and that input’s formal features (VanPatten 1990). Schmidt (1990) asserted that input alone was not adequate and that learners needed to “notice” important formal properties in input so that they might become intake, that is, so that these forms could be incorporated into the learner’s underlying competence. The theoretical proposal that ensued emphasized that noticing forms in input leads to their intake, which in turn leads to their acquisition. Out of this grew the Focus on Form (FonF) movement, entailing reactive interventions to breakdowns in comprehension that encourage the noticing of some linguistic feature such as an inflection or a functor (Long and Crookes 1992).

The FonF approach is a subset of the FonM approach to the extent that it occurs when learners are focused on communication; it distinguishes itself in that it is transitory (e.g., aside in a communicative lesson), not directed at any particular grammatical element, and overall unplanned and reactive (Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen 2001). Nonetheless, in a meta-analysis on FonF research Norris and Ortega (2001) conclude that FonF is only as effective as the traditional FonFs approach in promoting linguistic development. It is generally accepted that FonF can only be effective if planned interventions are built into the task.

Various approaches to improving FonF exist today. Interactionist research (e.g., Long 1996) specifically set out to understand the types of linguistic strategies that one interlocutor can use with a learner so that the student becomes aware of (i.e., notices) particular shortcomings in his or her own competence. This line of investigation uncovered the benefits of tasks requiring students to “negotiate for meaning” Swain (1993), and Swain and Lapkin (1995) conclude that pushing students to generate output in communicative activities encourages them to notice gaps in their competence, and that pushed output is particularly effective at promoting the acquisition of complex syntactic structures. The ramifications for this perspective are that, while input-oriented tasks may well be appropriate for the initial stages of development, they will,
at best, need to live side by side with tasks requiring output. The research on Spanish—apart from the CMC investigations reported above—indicates that negotiations of meaning involving jigsaw activities are effective at promoting the negotiation of meaning (Brooks 1992) but that instructors must carefully plan such tasks since breakdowns into the L1 may be common (Brooks 1991). In general, the Spanish curriculum has continued to embrace production tasks alongside input-oriented ones like those espoused by Krashen. Students are asked to engage in role-play activities in Spanish and information-gap exercises in which one student sees graphic representations of half of a narrative and the fellow student sees graphics for the other half of a narrative, which they co-construct orally.

Nonetheless, many researchers surmise that noticing and intake in communicative tasks involving the negotiation of meaning foster morphosyntactic and grammatical development essentially by chance (i.e., because they are essentially reactive and transitory), and so they are not the best ways to spend class time. Several responses to this criticism have arisen. Consciousness-raising tasks increase learners’ awareness of a targeted structure before using or confronting it in some authentic input or output activity (Fotos 1994). Doughty and Williams (1998) advocate planned lessons directed at specific linguistic constructs that will subsequently be necessary in some communicative activity. The most popular approach within the Spanish curriculum is an entirely input-oriented approach developed by VanPatten, who has developed a model of acquisition and a methodology informed by the model whose strategies and activities take into account how learners process grammatical information in input (Lee and VanPatten 1995; VanPatten 1993).

VanPatten’s processing instruction (PI) considers that (1) learners prioritize the few attentional resources they possess depending on whether their current language task is to derive meaning or notice formal properties, and (2) learners have biases, largely based on their L1, about where they look for information in a sentence and in particular words (e.g., automatically interpreting the first noun of any Spanish sentence as its subject). Accordingly, PI seeks to train learners to process input differently so that they will notice more morphosyntactic information when listening to or reading Spanish. For example, VanPatten and Cadierno (1993) note that English speakers process most first nouns of sentences as subjects (due to the inflexible English predicate structure of subject + verb). They often interpret a sentence such as  Lo come

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**Figure 3.1 The relationship between focus-on-form, processing instruction, and grammatical development (adapted from VanPatten and Cadierno 1993)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on Form: draw attention to forms causing comprehension breakdowns</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>input</td>
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**Processing Instruction: focused practice to alter processing mechanisms**
'You/he/she eat(s)' as "He eats." PI trains students to process first nouns differently, allowing them to be either subjects or objects.

PI research has generated dynamic dialogue—with differing interpretations of data, construct validity, and ecological validity—over the past ten years. Nevertheless, it has also been practical in nature. This research enterprise has outlined cognitive principles to which teachers should adhere and has developed teaching practices that promote the acquisition by L2 learners of Spanish of such constructs as object pronouns (Salaberry 1997; VanPatten and Cadierno 1993), the preterit (Cadierno 1995), the subjunctive (Collentine 1998, 2002; Collentine et al. 2002; Farley 2001), ser/estar (Cheng 2002), and conditional verb forms (DeKeyser and Sokalski 1996). VanPatten, Lee, and Ballman's (1996) ¿Sabías Que...? is a textbook that considers the cognitive processing principles identified by VanPatten and his students and incorporates numerous PI activities with copious amounts of input.

A point that has gone relatively unexplored in the acquisitional and instructional literature is that even these FonF approaches that reactively or intentionally (prior to some communicative task) help learners to notice formal properties in input may not be effective with all types of structures. Robinson (1996, 1997) posits that complex linguistic phenomena require different methodological interventions than relatively simple linguistic phenomena. Specifically, learners are more likely to develop knowledge for complex rules under "enhanced learning" conditions (Robinson 1997). Enhanced learning involves tasks where a learner is instructed to get meaning from some type of input while some heuristic modification to that input attempts to draw the learner's attention to a targeted grammatical phenomenon (e.g., underlining or colorizing a subordinating conjunction). Collentine et al. (2002) present evidence that such an approach—coupled with PI techniques in a CALL environment—can positively affect the syntactic environments where they employ the subjunctive. They used various coloring and aural techniques to help students learn the logical relationships encoded by various conjunctions (e.g., cuando, que, si) and to associate the subjunctive with que.

As psycholinguistic perspectives of morphosyntactic processing have continued to inform both research and pedagogy, general psychological theories of memory have had important impacts on the Spanish curriculum, especially as it relates to the preterit/imperfect distinction. Activities that involve learners' episodic memory and cognitive "scripts" (e.g., advanced organizers) facilitate the acquisition process because they add new memories to related, rather than isolated, bits of information (McLaughlin 1987). Additionally, linguists have dedicated a great deal of their efforts to understanding the role of lexical aspect (Comrie 1976; Vendler 1957) and discourse theories (Dahl 1985; Hopper 1982) in the distribution and functions of the preterit and the imperfect in narratives. According to Montrul and Salaberry (2003), the research indicates that at the beginning stages of acquisition learners of Spanish generalize the preterit to all instances of the past, and that as learners progress in their development there is a general tendency to depend on lexical aspect rather than discourse function when determining which tense to employ.
(e.g., using the imperfect for all instances of stative verbs; the preterit for all achievements).

Interestingly, while the linguistic research on the “grammar of the narrative” indicates that the preterit’s function is largely one of marking foreground events and the imperfect backgrounds events, there is no evidence in Spanish suggesting that students can develop their preterit/imperfect abilities if they learn these discourse functions. Nonetheless, textbooks such as Puntos de Partida (Knorre et al. 2005) now include allusions to these theories in their student presentations (e.g., completed events versus background). Most important, the general acceptance by Spanish educators that these two paradigms do more than comment on the past and that they are the primary tools for telling stories has changed preterit/imperfect instruction: for the most part, preterit/imperfect activities ask learners to complete a narrative or produce one, especially in oral interviews.

At the same time that researchers have been incorporating psycholinguistic principles into curricular and task design, there has emerged a general understanding that complex constructs are not acquired in their entirety; rather, many constructs that are explainable within a single lesson evidence themselves in learner performance in various steps (Ellis 1990; Hatch 1978). Indeed, Pienneman (1998) has studied in depth the notion of “learnability,” which assumes that certain linguistic phenomena can only be acquired when the developing system is ready (e.g., learners will only begin to master the L2’s subordination strategies once they mastered its coordination strategies). Currently, Pienneman terms this hypothesis processability theory to reflect the fact that learners gradually develop the ability to process—given their limited attential resources—morphosyntactic information over long distances, which explains why, for instance, learners do not denote interclausal relationships well (e.g., distinguishing between the indicative and the subjunctive in subordinate clauses) until they have relatively mastered the syntax of simple clauses. We now have ample evidence that constructs such as ser/estar (Geeslin 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Guntermann 1992b; Ryan and Lafford 1992; VanPatten 1987) and por/para (Guntermann 1992a; Lafford and Ryan 1995) emerge in stages (over the course of several years, the semantic and pragmatic functions of these phenomena become increasingly diverse). Research has shown that the subjunctive is not simply acquirable; rather, learners must previously have developed a certain broad linguistic base in Spanish as well as certain requisite syntactic knowledge (Collentine 1995). It is not uncommon for Spanish textbooks today to sequence the presentation of these constructs over the course of a year’s worth of curriculum (cf. Terrell et al.’s Dos Mundos [2002] and Knorre et al.’s Puntos de Partida [2005]).

The last relationship between psycholinguistic/cognitive research and instructional practices does not arguably result from any developmental theory. Instead, it is an offshoot (if not a logical progression) of the interactionist investigations, namely, the research into communication strategies and pragmatics, since negotiating meaning entails not only lexicogrammatical knowledge but also paraphrasing, lexical avoidance, and self-repairs, as well as appropriately requesting information
from one’s interlocutor. Regarding communication strategies, Liskin-Gasparro (1996) argues that they appear in learner interactions during a narrow range of development, namely, after the initial stages of acquisition (when the learner does not have a productive repertoire) up to more advanced stages (when they are unnecessary). However, it may be that students will need a repertoire of communication strategies to interact in synchronous, non-face-to-face communication. Lee (2001) examined the use of communication strategies by foreign language learners of Spanish in a CMC environment, producing evidence that across proficiency levels students use a variety of strategies (e.g., comprehension checks, clarification checks, requests, and self-repairs). Interestingly, this research has not been limited to the traditional, at-home classroom but has also been extended to consider study abroad contexts. Lafford’s (2004) research shows that study-abroad learners tend to use fewer communication strategies when they have much interaction with native speakers of Spanish and their host families. As the learner progresses in his or her development grammatically and lexically, the ability to problem solve increasingly complex linguistic and social negotiations is as valuable as the linguistic rules that a learner has in his or her own armament. The effect of this research is readily felt in materials available today. Current textbooks contain sections that provide activities that promote the development of a lexical repertoire for employing communication strategies and pragmatically appropriate speech.

3.0 Social and Sociocultural Cognition

Sociocultural theory asserts that language is the primary cognitive tool for achieving complex cognitive calculations and abstract thought (Vygotsky 1978). Language processing and production is not a reflection but rather a mediator of thought (i.e., a type of cognition as important or more important than, say, processing procedural knowledge), and raising the L2 to such a status should be the goal of instructed SLA (Lantolf 2000). Indeed, sociocultural theory privileges the role of output in that it rejects the premise that communication is reflected in the standard communication theory metaphor of encoding → output → input → decoding (see Firth and Wagner 1997). Interlocutors communicate by creating and converging on new meanings (sometimes referred to as “understandings,” in layman’s terms), implying that sociocultural theory supports activities where learners negotiate for meaning.

There are various factors that will convert the learner’s L2 into a mediator of thought, which will in turn lead to greater levels of proficiency. Like constructivism, sociocultural theory predicts that apprenticeship fosters L2 acquisition. According to Vygotsky (1978), learners operate in a “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD), where slightly more advanced peers with whom a learner interacts have an important, necessary role in the development process. Two peers can often achieve greater convergence since they share more background knowledge for any physical, cognitive, or linguistic task than do the learner and the teacher. This does not imply that the teacher has no role (indeed, the teacher is a necessary magister in the development process); instead, group work is predicted to be necessary for fostering development.
The use of private speech, or self-directed oral or written expressions in the L2, also fosters acquisition (Frawley and Lantolf 1985). Consistent with the notion that language mediates thought, a learner employs private speech to regulate learning and intake. Private speech is, however, anarchic, in that it contains a multitude of grammatical tenses rather than a coherent discourse in the present or past, and elliptic, that is, incomplete (e.g., Yo voy a... tengo que... ah bueno... esa es la cosa) (Roebuck 1998). Private speech may also entail language games such as producing neologisms (e.g., Voy a la libreria y a la *comideria [sic = supermercado]... ¡ja ja!) and repeating key phrases to oneself (Lantolf 2000). Interestingly, the sociocultural perspective does not see L1 usage in activities as counterproductive (e.g., Brooks and Donato 1994).

The sociocultural understanding of SLA has not necessarily led to the design of sociocultural-specific teaching strategies and curricular design. Instead, it has largely validated the inclusion of task-based activities in the classroom (see above). Language games, problem-solving tasks, and cooperative learning activities are highly compatible with this theory’s tenets. Antón, Dicamilla, and Lantolf (2003) suggest that the L2 is more likely to become a mediator of thought if the learner uses the L2 with authentic participants or authentic contexts, such as in a study-abroad or an immersion setting. Since sociocultural theory believes that thought emanates from interpersonal communication, language cannot be divorced from its social properties and functions. Grabe (1999) examines lexical development from a Vygotskian perspective, presenting some evidence that the denotations (i.e., the meanings) that study-abroad learners assign certain emotive words (e.g., felicidad, amor, muerte, tener miedo) are much more commensurate with native speakers than are the denotations that classroom learners assign such words.

Even researchers who take a decidedly psycholinguistic approach to SLA recognize the importance of considering the external conditions where acquisition occurs. Chaudron (2001) observes: “The increasing effort seen in the 1990s to document the details of classroom interaction with respect to linguistic and social features is encouraging, but it will have to be coupled with a well developed social and pedagogical theory” (65). Researchers are taking a renewed interest in understanding the particular role that study abroad has on acquisition (Collentine 2004a; Collentine and Freed 2004; Lafford 2004).

**4.0 Conclusion**

The shift to learner-centered teaching practices that constructivist principles encouraged had a broad impact on Spanish SLA research and pedagogical practices. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the initial issue with which Spanish educators struggled was whether to adopt an input-rich environment, which was premised on Krashen’s theory of L2 acquisition, or foster proficiency, which was essentially a description of observable behaviors learners should exhibit at various stages of their development. When the input-oriented approach did not produce the desired results, researchers advocated the development of more principled input and output oriented approaches
to learner development. The virtues of both approaches continue to be debated today, which will be ultimately healthy for instruction since both input and output approaches are highly scrutinized in the SLA research. Alongside this dynamic, the consideration of the sociocultural conditions where acquisition occurs has become a valid focus of research and materials development.

Spanish L2 instruction has changed dramatically in the past twenty-five years. We understand much better what to introduce and when. We also have a greater appreciation of what it means to acquire an L2, which is not exclusively a mapping of lexical items onto grammar. That said, comparatively speaking, there is very little research available today on the acquisition of vocabulary. Even less effort has been invested in improving the types of activities that foster lexical development, and it will surely be a focus of future research. Additionally, language does not live separately from its surrounding society. This becomes surprisingly evident upon consideration of what learners do and do not acquire in a study-abroad context. The effects of the context of learning on development will undoubtedly need more attention in a (post–September 11) world in which international borders are breaking down digitally and physically.

Notes
2. The interactionist approach is also in line with nativist perspectives on SLA to the extent that it presumes that negative feedback—in the form of feedback, recasts, clarification requests, and so on—is often necessary to disprove erroneous learner hypotheses about the nature of the L2 (Mackey 1999).
3. Most of the research stemming from Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis spotlights grammatical development. The scope of the research completed on vocabulary development is vast; nonetheless, it has had no appreciable impact on the shape of the Spanish curriculum, on the design of vocabulary activities, or on textbook design. A cognitive theory that is increasingly referenced in research on lexical development is connectionism, which combines key premises of neurology and semiotics to predict how vocabulary will be acquired and incorporated into the learner’s competence. See LaFond, Collentine, and Karp (2003) for a comprehensive view of vocabulary research in the context of Spanish SLA.
4. Collentine (2004b) conducted a meta-analysis of the PI research. His data indicate that the PI research produces effect sizes that are high for both PI and so-called traditional approaches to grammar instruction, effect sizes that are much larger than those found for FonF and FonFS research in general reported by Norris and Ortega (2001). That is, similar to the findings of Norris and Ortega, the data-collection instruments used in PI research have essentially shown that both PI and traditional approaches can yield positive results in promoting grammatical development.
5. See Koike, Pearson, and Witten (2003) for a comprehensive review of Spanish SLA research and pedagogy relating to pragmatics.
6. See Antón, Dicamilla, and Lantolf (2003) for a comprehensive review of sociocultural theory and Spanish SLA.

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