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Interactional competence in academic spoken Spanish: Examining Level 1 and 3 Spanish
undergraduates' use of interactional resources.

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Abstract

This dissertation is a social investigation carried out at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine campus that seeks to explore the relationship between interactional competence and oral proficiency in second language acquisition. It focuses on examining the use of interactional resources in co-constructed conversation assessments of level one and three Spanish undergraduates to gain insight on how interactional competence is interrelated with second language learners' oral proficiency. Two students of year one and two of year three were chosen to be examined during their Spanish conversation assessments. The assessments were video-recorded and transcribed and conversation analysis was used to examine them. The research investigation uses primary research to quantitatively as well as qualitatively examine four interactional resources: *quantitative dominance*, *goal orientation*, *gestures* and *repair*. The findings have implications for our understanding of the relationship between these interactional resources and the oral proficiency of second language learners.

Key words: Interactional competence, interactional resources, conversation analysis, competence, interaction, proficiency.

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Introduction:

Studies that explore the topic of second language acquisition have multiplied throughout the past decade and a half. This expanding body of research has begun extensively investigating interactional competence as it relates to second language acquisition. However, research on the process by which second language learners develop their interactional competence is still lacking (Galaczi, Taylor, 2018) and therefore second language learners' proficiency as it relates to interaction remains an untapped area of research. This study therefore seeks to explore interactional competence through the means of interactional resources to draw further conclusions on second language acquisition. Interactional competence implies the ability to mutually coordinate our actions (,) and therefore have greater mastery in conversation. It can be argued, therefore, that while other features may be a factor in second language acquisition, interactional resources can be used as a reliable indicator of oral proficiency in second language learners.

The study takes place at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, during the academic year 2019-2020, and examines year one and three Spanish majors use of interactional resources in a conversation assessment setting. It aims to analyze their use of interactional resources alongside their oral proficiency in conversation assessments to reveal the strength of utilizing interactional resources as a measurement for oral proficiency in second language acquisition. Oral proficiency in this study will be indicated by their grade at the end of the examination, which will be marked by a trained teacher. This research can possibly aid foreign language teachers in more easily identifying students' levels of oral proficiency in a classroom setting and aid those who are struggling with second language acquisition.

This research is of a social genre and as such, it utilizes conversational analysis as its core investigation tool. Conversation analysis is a method of investigation that began over 40 years ago in the field of sociology. Its focus has been primarily narrowed to studying how social interaction is organized and by extension, the topic of competence (Joan Kelly Hall, John Hellermann and Simona Pekarek Doehler, 2011).

The methodology used to carry out this investigation relied on primary data that was collected in the form of video-recording conversation assessments in a class setting. The data retrieved from these video recordings were transcribed and then analyzed in a mixed-method format (qualitative and quantitative) with the use of conversation analysis. For the quantitative aspect of the analysis, the video-recorded conversation assessments were transcribed, and conversation analysis was used to quantitatively examine the four interactional resources selected for this study: *quantitative dominance*, *goal orientation*, *gestures* and *repair*.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Measured by</i>
<i>Quantitative Dominance</i>	The amount of words spoken
<i>Goal Orientation</i>	The amount of topics initiation
<i>Gestures</i>	The amount of distinct hand motions and facial expressions used
<i>Repair</i>	The amount of speech errors self-corrected

Table 1.

Interactional resource variables for conversation analysis

Table 1 shows how each of these interactional resources were quantified in the analysis. *Quantitative dominance* refers to the number of words spoken by the

participants and *goal orientation* refers to the number of topics initiated by each participant (Nakatsuhara, 2011). *Gestures* in this study refer to the number of hand and face movements observed during active conversation while *repair* refers to the number of times participants self-corrected their speech errors.

For the qualitative aspect of the study, the researcher conducted both pre- and post-assessment qualitative research. For the pre-assessment research, the researcher observed the four participants in their respective classroom sessions. An observation checklist (*see appendix*) was used to determine how the students participated and if they used interactional resources when doing so. This observation was followed by a short interview containing three short answer questions (*see appendix*) to gain insight on the participants' comfort levels interacting in a classroom setting, their knowledge on the topics discussed in class and their confidence in their academic spoken Spanish.

For the post-assessment research, one-on-one interviews were conducted where participants were questioned about oral assessment to gain insight on their unique uses of the interactional resources being examined (quantitative dominance, goal orientation, gestures and repair) that each participant was observed using during the assessment.

This study contains three chapters. Chapter 1, *Literature Review*, briefly examines previous research relevant to the foundational aspects of this study. The second chapter, *Findings*, reveals the results of the investigation conducted and the third chapter, *Discussion*, explains the results revealed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 1: Literature review

This chapter seeks to review three scholarly works pertaining to interactional competence, interactional resources and second language acquisition. The works being reviewed are *Interactional Competence: Conceptualisations, Operationalisations, and Outstanding Questions* (Evelina Galaczi & Lynda Taylor, 2018), *L2 Interactional Competence and Development* (Joan Kelly Hall, John Hellermann and Simona Pekarek Doehler, 2011) and *Effects of test-taker characteristics and the number of participants in group oral tests* (Fumiyo Nakatsuhara, 2011).

Defining interactional competence and highlighting its challenges are two important topics that can provide insight for further research into language acquisition. Galaczi and Taylor (2018) attempt to do exactly this in their research, delving into a historical perspective of the influences that conceptualized interactional competence as it pertains to spoken language.

In their research into the historical factors that influenced the theoretical conceptualization of interactional competence, Galaczi and Taylor note that “the construct of interactional competence in L2 [second language learner] assessments became broader and more nuanced, expanding to a more social view where communicative language ability and the resulting interactional performance reside within a social and jointly constructed context” (Galaczi, Taylor, 2018). That is, research into second language learning assessment recognized that competence was not just manifested within an individual, but between them. According to Galaczi and Taylor, this realization brought awareness to interactional resources, leading to the view that speaking is both cognitive and social, and therefore collaboratively co-constructed by individuals taking part in the conversation. This supports that interactional resources are a

fundamental element of speaking and therefore, can rationally be used to indicate one's language competence.

Individual oral tests, which had been around since 1913 and became more universal in second language learning assessments from the 1950's, were therefore found to be limited. This catalyzed further conceptualization of interactional competence (Galaczi, Taylor, 2018) and led to the development of paired and group oral assessments, leading to greater possibilities with interaction and conversational management. Examining a paired assessment, as done in this study, is therefore a great option for observing interaction since pair assessments allow a more natural flow of conversation and wider range of interactional resource prospects.

While Galaczi and Taylor (2018) provide a critical insight into the history of the conceptualization of interactional competence and how this affects our present perspective, their perspective is based entirely from secondary research and is therefore limited to asking more questions than it answers. Their research leaves a gap in practically analyzing these conceptualizations through primary research methods such as the one done in this study to answer the questions presented.

Nakasuhara (2011), on the other hand, examines interactional competence as it pertains to group test-taking on a practical level. Galaczi and Taylor's research (2018) is similar to Nakasuhara's (2011) in the belief that "Group tests, like paired tests are capable of eliciting richer language functions from test-takers than interview tests, providing a great potential to assess communication ability" (Nakatsuhara, 2011). However, Nakatsuhara (2011)'s study offers a primary data examination of second language learning oral assessments, instead of Galaczi and Taylor (2011)'s primary research approach. Focusing on second language assessment tests with groups of three and four, he attempts to explore how extraversion and oral proficiency

influences conversation styles and, by extension, “the co-constructed interaction in group oral tests” (Nakatsuhara, 2011).

Two methods of data analysis are used in Nakatsuhara (2011)’s study: qualitative and quantitative. Essentially, participants are given varying tasks in a group examination setting and data is collected by trained teachers and researchers via video-recording and transcribing data following conversation analysis conventions. In conducting this unique research, Nakatsuhara (2011) not only raises new information on the topic of interaction, but also gives a detailed template on how to conduct conversation analysis in an examination session in a modern classroom setting. This research also shows that conversation analysis, although thought to be “hostile towards specific coding and quantification” (Nakatsuhara, 2011), can be used to quantify aspects of interaction in a second language learner’s conversation assessment to form new conclusions on the topic.

Nakatsuhara’s research (2018), however, seeks to address the specific question of if extraversion and oral proficiency levels influence conversation style. In doing this, it fails to reveal new information on the broader topic of interactional competence, how the oral proficiency levels were achieved and how the interactional resources attained in the data collection affected the participants results. The extensive information collected in the study could have alternatively been used to form a much more far-reaching conclusion than the aspects of interaction ultimately focused on.

Hall et al. (2011) have a similar research approach to Nakatsuhara (2011). Like the previous works reviewed, they explore the link between interactional resources and interactional competence and second language acquisition in interpersonal scenarios with the use of conversation analysis. They explore interactional competence and language acquisition from the

perspective that “the objects for analysis of language learning are considered to be co-constructed phenomena, practices for the management of the regularities and contingencies that are necessitated by face-to-face interaction” (Hall et al., 2011). That is, all aspects of language analysis are inherently interrelated. On this basis, it can be deduced that examining the link between oral proficiency and interactional resources is just another exploration of the interrelated aspects of language.

Hall et al. (2011)’s work being examined for this research explored *The Development of Second Land Learner Interactional Competence* where they examined the link between interactional resources and the development of interactional competence in second language acquisition through a primary research investigation. They indicated in practice with aid of conversation analysis, how the link between language learning aspects can be investigated to draw new conclusions.

Considering that “for conversation analysis research that seeks to contribute to studies of longitudinal learning, the most difficult issue may be finding objects for learning on which to focus an analysis that we can call context independent” (Hall et al., 2011) and that “finding comparable actions in comparable contexts at different points in time in the interaction of language learners has proven to be particularly challenging” (Hall et al., 2011), they chose to investigate the interactional resource practice *repair*, as conceptualized by conversation analysis. In doing this, they found that learners varying uses of repair at different points in time during their data collection was conclusive evidence of the development of interactional competence in second language learners. This study therefore further indicates the possibility that interactional resources can be used to measure varying aspects of co-constructed conversation.

However, by focusing on only one interactional resource, it is difficult to conclusively make a generalization on interactional competence. A more extensive range of interactional resources could have been used in their investigation format to form a broader conclusion.

In summary, this chapter examined three works relevant to this study. These works were: *Interactional Competence: Conceptualisations, Operationalisations, and Outstanding Questions* (Evelina Galaczi & Lynda Taylor, 2018), *L2 Interactional Competence and Development* (Joan Kelly Hall, John Hellermann and Simona Pekarek Doehler, 2011) and *Effects of test-taker characteristics and the number of participants in group oral tests* (Fumiyo Nakatsuhara, 2011). It was found that all three of the research papers examined agreed that interactional resources and language acquisition are strongly interrelated, and that conversation analysis is a reliable method of studying this relation. Nakatsuhara (2011) and Hall et al. (2011) also found that interactional resources could be used to draw different conclusions on second language learners' competence and style in their second language. However, the research was limited in their execution and drew very specific conclusions that still leave room to the larger question of if interactional resources can be used to indicate oral proficiency in second language learners. The following chapter, *Findings*, will explore the results of the investigation carried out in this research in detail.

Chapter 2: Results

This chapter will explore in detail the results of this investigation, revealing the quantitative analysis results: the number of interactional resource variables found to be used in the oral assessment and oral proficiency scores. This will be followed by qualitative results: in-class observations, the short answer interview and student comments on behaviors observed in the assessment.

Quantitative Results

Table 1 showed the interactional resources being assessed in this study, i.e. the variables being examined during the oral assessment with the use of conversation analysis and the measurement by which these variables are quantified. *Quantitative dominance* is measured by words spoken, *Goal orientation* by topics initiated, *Gestures* by hand motions and facial expression observed and *Repair* by speech errors self-corrected. As seen in the table, they are each measured *quantitatively* by the amount of times they are used in conversation during the oral assessment.

The results of their measurement in the assessment are seen in Table 2.

	<i>Quantitative Dominance</i>	<i>Goal Orientation</i>	<i>Gestures</i>	<i>Repair</i>
Group 1: Level one Spanish Conversation assessment				
<i>Test Taker 1</i>	449	7	16	7
<i>Test Taker 2</i>	275	5	4	2
Group 2: Level three Spanish conversation assessment				
<i>Test Taker 3</i>	587	5	13	11
<i>Test Taker 4</i>	823	5	26	12

Table 2.

Quantity of variables used by group 1 and 2 test takers in the oral assessment.

Table 2 shows the quantity of variables used by each Test Taker (henceforth TT along with their assigned numbers 1 to 4) during the oral assessment. The results of the Group 1 assessment reveal that TT1's use of all four variables was higher than TT2's. TT1's *Quantitative Dominance* was greater than TT2's by 174. That is, TT1 was responsible for 62.02% of the total words spoken during their assessment. With regards to *Goal Orientation*, TT1 initiated 2 topics more than TT2. That is, TT1 was responsible for initiating 58.34% of the topics discussed in conversation. TT1's use of *Gestures* exceeded TT2's by 12. This means that TT1 was responsible for 80% of the gestures observed in Group 1's assessment. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that TT1 self-corrected errors in speech 5 times more than TT2. TT1 was therefore responsible for 77.78% of the *Repairs* observed during their oral assessment of Group 1.

Group 2's results as seen in Table 2 reveal that TT4 scored higher in than TT3 in three out of four of the variables assessed. That is, TT4's *Quantitative Dominance*,

Gestures and *Repair* scores were greater than that of TT3's, while both TT3 and TT4 held equal scores in *Goal Orientation*. With regards to *Quantitative Dominance*, TT4 scored 236 points higher than TT3. That is, TT4 was responsible for 58.37% of the words spoken in Group 2's conversation assessment. In *Goal Orientation*, both TT3 and TT4 obtained a score of 5. That means that both TT3 and TT4 initiated an equal number of topics during the assessment.

TT4's *Gestures* score exceeded that of TT3's by 13, meaning TT4 was responsible for 66.67% of the hand movements and facial expressions observed in Group 2's assessment. Lastly, TT4's *Repair* score exceeded that of TT3's by 1. TT4 therefore carried out 52.17% of the repairs observed in TT3 and TT4's group assessment.

That Overall, between all four participants, TT4 received the highest scores in *Quantitative Dominance* (823), *Gestures* (26) and *Repair* (12) while TT2 received the lowest scores in *Quantitative Dominance* (275), *Gestures* (4) and *Repair* (2). Furthermore, TT1 was seen to have the highest score in *Goal Orientation* (7), while TT2, TT3 and TT4 all have equal scores of 5 in *Goal Orientation*. Their oral proficiency scores are revealed below.

	<i>Oral Proficiency Score</i>	<i>Oral Proficiency Score %</i>	<i>Interaction Score</i>
Group 1: Level one Spanish conversation assessment			
<i>Test Taker 1</i>	34	97%	7
<i>Test Taker 2</i>	31	88.6%	6
Group 2: Level three Spanish conversation assessment			
<i>Test Taker 3</i>	32	91.4%	6
<i>Test Taker 4</i>	35	100%	7

Table 3.

Oral proficiency and Interaction scores.

The rating scales that were used by instructors to assess participants' oral interaction can be found in the Appendix

Table 3 shows the oral proficiency scores of test takers who participated in the level one and three Spanish conversation assessments that were analyzed in this investigation. The results show that in Group 1, TT1's score was 3 points higher than TT2's. This means that TT1 scored 8.4% higher in oral proficiency than TT2. TT1 also scored 1 point higher in their interaction

score than TT2. It is seen therefore that TT1 has a higher level of oral proficiency as well as interaction than TT2.

In the Group 2 assessment, it is seen that TT4 scored 3 points more than TT3 in oral proficiency. That is, TT4 scored 8.6% higher in oral proficiency than TT3. With regards to their interaction score, TT4 scored 1 point more than TT3 in this category. Therefore, it is seen that TT4 has both a higher level of oral proficiency as well as interaction than TT3.

Overall, TT4 scored the highest in oral proficiency (35) while TT2 scored the lowest (31). TT1 and TT3 held the second and third highest scores in oral proficiency, 34 and 32 respectively. In Group 1, TT1 held the higher score for interaction (7) and in Group 2, TT4 held the higher score for interaction (7). It should be noted that interaction scores were calculated differently for year one and year three assessments (*see rating scales in appendix*) and therefore interaction scores will not be cross analyzed between Groups 1 and 2.

Qualitative Results

Pre-assessment:

Prior to the conversation assessments, Group 1 and Group 2 were observed in their respective level one and level three classroom settings. After the observation, both Group 1 and Group 2 were asked the three interview questions seen in Table 4 (*see appendix*).

In observing Group 1, TT1 actively volunteered to answer questions and used eye contact and facial expressions while doing so. However, TT1 did not participate much in discussion and debate, was not observed asking questions and did not story tell. TT2 was observed actively participating but was not very expressive and did not offer anything to the discussion and debate. Furthermore, TT2 was not observed asking questions and did not story tell.

After the classroom session, both TT1 and TT2 were asked the three short answer interview questions seen in Table 4. Both TT1 and TT2 answered yes to being comfortable interacting in a classroom setting and to being knowledgeable of the topics discussed in class. For question three, both TT1 and TT2 again had the same answer, stating that they were only “somewhat” confident in their academic spoken Spanish.

In observing Group 2, TT3 was seen actively participating in classroom conversation, volunteering to answer questions, adding to discussions and debate, asking questions and storytelling. While TT1 made eye-contact, they were not observed being very expressive. T4 was also observed adding to discussions, answering questions, storytelling and actively participating in class. TT4 was very expressive but was observed making less eye contact than TT3. When the classroom session was over, both TT3 and TT4 were interviewed with the same three short interview questions seen in Table 4 (*see appendix*).

To question one on feeling comfortable in a classroom setting, TT3 answered, “More comfortable than a real-life setting. It’s easier to remember what I learned there than in real life situations.” To question number two on being generally knowledgeable about the topics taught in the Spanish conversation class, TT3 answered, “Generally, yes.” To question number three on their confidence in their academic spoken Spanish, TT3 answered, “Yes, though everyday Spanish could use some work.”

To question one, TT4 answered, “Yeah, I feel comfortable in a classroom setting.” To question number two, TT4 answered, “Sometimes. But if I’m not I try to improvise or relate the topics to things I know about.” To question three, TT4 answered, “Generally I am, but there are some context-specific topics where I lack vocabulary.”

Overall, the pre-assessment revealed that in Group 1, TT1 participated more in class than TT2 even though they both felt the same with regards to their comfort in interacting in class, knowledge on the topics discussed and confidence in their spoken Spanish. In Group 2, TT3 and TT4 were both actively participant in the classroom setting but differed in their use of expression and eye-contact with TT3 displaying more of the latter and TT4 more of the former. To the interview questions, both TT3 and TT4 were comfortable in a classroom setting, generally knowledgeable about the topics discussed and confident in their academic spoken Spanish.

Post-assessment:

The researcher was unable to interview the chosen participants of Group 1 post-assessment due to complications arising with Covid-19. This will henceforth be considered a limitation to the qualitative aspect of the study.

After the conversation assessment, group two was questioned about *Qualitative Dominance* and *Gestures* with regards to how they were observed using these interactional resources during the assessment. Both TT3 and TT4 were asked if they noticed their extensive use of hand movements during conversation and if they knew why they did this. T3 explained, "That's just how I talk. No matter the language." TT4 said, "I always use my hands a lot when talking. It helps me visualize what I'm saying." TT4, having the highest score in *Quantitative Dominance*, was asked why they spoke so extensively and if they were aware of it. TT4 answered, "Honestly, I didn't think that I was talking that much."

Overall, the post-assessment research revealed that both TT3 and TT4 related their use of *Gestures* as a norm for them during conversation. With regards to *Quantitative Dominance*, TT4 was unaware of their extensive use of this interactional resource.

To summarize this chapter, the quantitative results of the investigation showed that the four participants of the conversation assessments had varying scores of *Quantitative Dominance*, *Gestures* and *Repair* and similar scores in *Goal Orientation*. With regards to oral proficiency and interaction scores, those who scored higher in their respective groups in oral proficiency and interaction also scored higher in the interaction variables, excluding *Goal orientation*. The qualitative research on the observations made of the students' participation in the classroom session revealed that those in Group 2 participated more than those in Group 1, with TT2 being the least participative of the four. Additionally, the short answer interview results revealed that all the participants felt comfortable in a classroom setting and knowledgeable about the topics discussed in class. However, members of Group 2 felt confident in their academic spoken Spanish while the members of Group 1 only felt somewhat confident. The following chapter, *Discussion*, will explore the implications of these results.

Chapter 3: Discussion

In this chapter, the implications of the results presented in *Findings* will be discussed. This will include both the quantitative results found in conversation analysis of the oral assessments and the qualitative results found in observation and short interviews.

The quantitative results of the investigation showed that in both Group 1 and Group 2 of the investigation, those with higher scores in *Quantitative Dominance*, *Gestures* and *Repair* also scored higher in oral proficiency. These results implicate that the variables *Quantitative Dominance*, *Gestures* and *Repair* scores are closely related to oral proficiency scores. This is further implicated in that the participant who scored the highest in these interactional resources out of all four participants also scored the highest in oral proficiency overall, while the participant who scored the lowest in these variables out of all four participants also scored the lowest in oral proficiency overall. This is strongly indicative that one's oral proficiency in a second language is closely interrelated to those three interactional resources.

However, it can be noted that TT1 had higher scores in *Gestures* and *Goal orientation* than TT3 but lower scores in *Repair* and *Quantitative dominance*, yet TT1 had a higher oral proficiency score than TT3. Since both participants were dominant in two interactional competences respectively, it is inconclusive why one scored higher than the other. This gives implications that perhaps some interactional resources have higher merit in than others in indicating oral proficiency.

Furthermore, *Goal Orientation* seemed to be insignificant to the link between interactional resources and oral proficiency since there was very little variation in this resource between all four participants. This could indicate that only certain interactional resources are related to oral

proficiency while others are not. Nakatsuhara (2011) noted in his work that more topic initiation was seen in participants “especially when they were grouped with less extraverted and less proficient members” (Nakatsuhara, 2011). This could be true in Group 1, where TT1 scored significantly higher in oral proficiency and was seen to subsequently initiate more topics. Also, TT1 was much more active in the classroom setting, implying higher extraversion levels compared to TT2 and therefore a higher score in *Goal Orientation*. It could also explain Group 2’s *goal orientation* results, in that their participation in the classroom setting was found to be less varying to each other’s than that of TT1 and TT2’s (i.e. TT3 and TT4’s extraversion levels may have been similar), and therefore *Goal orientation* became less of a varying factor for them in conversation.

With regards to the interaction scores, these revealed that in Group 1, TT1 scored higher in both oral proficiency and interaction and in Group 2 TT4 scored high in both oral proficiency and interaction. This again strongly indicates a correlation between oral proficiency and interaction. The qualitative results reveal in the pre-assessment review that although T1 and T2 both felt comfortable interacting in classroom setting, knowledgeable about the topics discussed and somewhat confident in their academic spoken Spanish, TT1 was seen using more interactional resources in classroom than TT2. This implies that being comfortable interacting, knowledgeable about a topic or confident in one’s ability to speak have no relation to one’s active use of interactional resources in a classroom setting. However, this finding does not disprove Nakatsuhara (2011)’s work, since the results of his investigation showed that *extraversion* did affect interaction and this factor was not considered in this investigation. Nakatsuhara (2011)’s theory would be a good indication of why TT1 was possibly more interactive than TT2.

Furthermore, in the post-assessment review, TT3 and TT4 both agree that their use of *Gestures* is something they were used to doing in their native language. Taking this into account, TT2 used notably less *Gestures* than the other participants and had the lowest oral proficiency score while TT4 had highest oral proficiency score with the highest score in their use of *Gestures*. These findings indicate that a higher oral proficiency score means that the participants were better able to interact with *Gestures* while speaking in a second language the way they would in their native language, further implicating a link between oral proficiency and interactional resources.

Overall, the findings strongly indicate a relationship between oral proficiency levels and the use of *Quantitative dominance*, *Gestures* and *Repair*. However, it does not indicate a relationship between oral proficiency and *Goal Orientation*. Furthermore, one's comfort, knowledge and confidence are implicated to have no relationship to their willingness to use interactional resources in a classroom setting. Lastly, *Gestures* seems to be uniquely interrelated to one's oral proficiency in that a high use of this resource can indicate that one feels as comfortable speaking a second language as they do their native language. The following chapter, *Conclusion*, will reiterate the purpose of this research, reflect on its findings and discuss limitations.

Conclusion

This study was done through a primary research investigation, assessing the interactional resources used in conversation assessments alongside the oral proficiency levels of participants. It aimed to examine the relationship between interactional competence and oral proficiency to determine if interactional resources could be a reliable indicator of oral proficiency levels in second language learners.

This research ruled out three context-specific variables of conversation class that may have conflicted with the study. These were: comfort interacting in a classroom setting, knowledge of the topics being discussed and confidence in one's academic spoken Spanish. They were found to be irrelevant to the results.

The investigation revealed a strong implication that the interactional resources *Quantitative Dominance*, *Gestures* and *Repair* are directly interrelated with oral proficiency. However, it found no strong link with regards to *Goal orientation*. The study also found implications that *Gestures* are used when one closely relates their second language conversation to that of their first. This further implies a link between interactional resources and oral proficiency.

However, the study faced a few limitations such as it only selected a sample size of four and only examined four interactional resources. These two factors restricted the potential of the results. *Eye contact* was intended to be examined alongside the other variables but a change in examination setting (virtual classrooms instead of in-person classrooms) made this interactional resource difficult to analyze. Furthermore, there was a gap in the post-assessment qualitative research which would have shed further insight on why these resources were used. Overall, these

limitations leave room for further research into this investigation to better conclude that the use of interactional resources can reliably indicate oral proficiency in second language learners.

Works Cited

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- Nakatsuhara, Fumiyo. "Effects of test-taker characteristics and the number of participants in group oral tests." *Language Testing*, 2011, pp. 483–504., doi: 10.1177/0265532211398110

Appendix

	Test Taker 1	Test Taker 2	Test Taker 3	Test Taker 4
Facial expression				
Eye contact				
Participation				
Storytelling				
Discussion and debate				
Asking questions				
1. Are you comfortable interacting in a classroom setting?				
2. Are you knowledgeable about the topics discussed in class?				
3. Are you confident in your academic spoken Spanish?				

Table 4.

Observation checklist and pre-assessment interview questions.

Table 4 shows the worksheet used by the researcher during observation. It contains an observation checklist and interview questions. This worksheet was taken into the classroom and used solely by the researcher to document findings.

Transcription #1: Group 1 Conversation Assessment

The name of the teacher was replaced with “Profe” (P) and the participants’ names were replaced with TT1 and TT2 to maintain confidentiality.

Profe (P) - ok entonces primero les voy a preguntar sus nombres.

Me pueden decir sus nombres por favor?

TT1: [TT1]

TT2: [TT2]

TT1: y [TT2]

P: Ok y entonces, de que van a hablar? De que tema van a hablar?

TT1: Um, vamos a hablar sobre el salud y la religion.

P: Ok, quien habla del salud? Tu primero? O? La reli-?

TT2: La religion primero

P: Ok adelante. Si. Voy a apagar mi microfono y ustedes pueden mantener la conversacion.

TT2: Si

TT1: Go ahead

TT2: (unintelligible) se llama “que tan importante es la religion para las personas pusieron sus hijos en escuelas religiosas.” [TT1], estabas en una escuela religiosa?

TT1: Si, fui a una escuela primaria musulmana y era muy religiosa y estricta.

Por ejemplo, habia una- un tiempo establecido para orar a la hora del almuerzo. Y tu [TT2]?

TT2: Asisti a una escuela secundaria catolica y fue bueno pero tenian misa? a menudo y mucha oracion.

TT1: Pues, [TT2], que es la religion para ti?

TT2: La religion para mi es la creyencia y la adoracion de un ser superior o dios.

TT1: Si entiendo pero no entiendo por que debe adorarse a un ser superior que nisiquiera se ha demostado que sea real. Soy atea por lo tanto no creo que dios exista.

TT2: A, si [TT1]. Que es el ateismo?

TT1: El ateismo es la falta de creyencia en los dioses y me gusta esta creyencia porque no es como un-una religion donde hay reglas establecidas y es una forma de pensar libremente. Que piensas de esto, [TT2]?

TT2: Si, pienso que el ateismo es la incredulidad o la falta de creyencia de en la existencia de dios. Sin embargo, hay muchos beneficios de seguir una religion. Le da un un proposito y le da la vida u mayor significado. La religion tambien puede unir a la sociedades.

TT1: Uh, si, reconozco algunos de estos beneficios pero creo qye la religion crea mas divisiones y conflictos que unir a las personas. Por ejemplo, uh, es la base de muchas guerras politicas como los estados unidos contra el medio oriente.

TT2: Si, si

TT1: Ah, la – el segundo tema que estamos discutiendo es el salud. Ahora (risas) el video que escuchamos es la tercera video sobre el corona virus sobre myelearning.

Y este video discute la diferencia entre la gripe y el corona virus. La diferencia principal es un dolor de garganta y es una característica definatoria del- de la gripe y no del corona virus

TT2: Ademas, el video muestra formas de evitar su racion? Como desinfectar a su mismo y a los objetos.

TT1: [TT2], que opinas de los remedios naturales como los que se usan para tratar la gripe?

Crees que podria funcionar para el corona virus?

TT2: Creo en remedios naturales para la gripe pero no para corona virus. Y tu [TT1]?

Que piensas?

TT1: Para mi, tampoco creo en los remedios naturales. Opino que

los profesionales medicos deben manejar ambos porque hay muchos remedios falsos que cualquier persona puede difundir en los medios

TT2: Si

TT1: Asi Gae, como te hacen sentir las noticias virales sobre el corona virus?

TT2: La semana pasada,

vi fotos de hospitales en Italia donde hay muchas personas que reciben tratamiento para corona virus. Tambien vi una foto de velos de ataudes donde personas movieron por el virus y sus familias ni siquiera pudieron asistir a su funeral. Eso es tan triste. [TT1]?

TT1: Si, es muy triste. Mi padre me mostro un video similar en linea de las miles de personas muertas por el corona virus siendo transportadas en un camion del ejercito en Italia y esto realmente me sorprendio y me asusto de que tanta personas pueden-puedan morir por el corona virus- por el corona virus en tan poco tiempo.

TT2: Es muy horrible

TT1: Si

TT2: Si

P: Y- y -y como piensan ustedes que - como lo ha afectado ustedes coronavirus aqui en trinidad?

Por ejemplo eh- que cosa de su vida normal ha cambiado?

TT1: Pues, debemos quedar en casa - quedarse en casa. Porque el gobierno-

TT2: Y desinfectar mucho

TT1: Y, uh, tenemos que- que cocinar en casa en vez de comprar la comida rapida por ejemplo

TT2: Si

TT1: Asi hay muchos cambios en el-estilo de vida

TT2: Si. No sali en-no salir a la playa o el parque. Quedar en casa.

P: Correcto. Si. Y- por ejemplo- ejm- tu crees – ejm—quedarte en casa ha afectado tu vida- ritmo de tu vida normal? Te sientes mas...?

TT2: Si

TT1: Si porque no podemos ir a

la universidad por ejemplo y tenemos que hacer nuestros exámenes en línea y ah-

TT2: Si, es nuevo para todos

P: Y con tus amigos, tus amistades, que haces?

TT1: Es muy difícil , ah, mantener los amistades porque- uh- tenemos que usar solamente nuestros teléfonos móviles y el-

TT2: y los redes sociales

P: Y, eh, bueno, eh, con respecto a la mmm.. Eh, es por ejemplo en

la semana pasada, ustedes tuvieron – estas semanas pasadas que han ocurridos, eh, que- se acuerdan de alguna cosa así que les haya – me contaron de los muertos verdad?

Que tu papa te conto todos los muertos etcetera. Habia mas que les haya impresionado?

Que estaba ocurriendo?

TT1: Uh, si, en los estados unidos es muy extraño que, uh, hay personas que estan manifestando contra la ley de quedarse en casa

P: En casa, si

TT2: Si, muchas personas sal-salieron a su casa para – para visitar a sus amigos y-

P: ir a la playa

TT2: ir a la playa, si. Ir a la playa.

P: si, esto que esta ocurriendo es raro

TT2: Si

TT1: Si

P: Bueno.

Transcription #2: Group 2 Conversation Assessment

The name of the teacher was replaced with “Profe” (P) and the participants’ names were replaced with, TT3 and TT4 to maintain confidentiality.

Profe: Ok, como estan? Buenas tardes- buenas dias, perdon.

TT3: Buenos dias

TT4: Buenos dias

P: Y de que tema van a conversar ustedes- les gustaria? A- perdon- me puedes decir tus nombres primero?

TT4: Ah, mi nombre es [TT4]

TT3: Y yo soy [TT3]

P: Ok, perfecto, entonces, diganme, de que tema van a conversar? De que les gustaria hablar?

T2: Um, van a hab- vamos a hablar del arte y la etica.

P: okok, adelante, muy bien

T4: Umm (risas) pues uno de los temas de que estabamos hab-ummm-hablando essss ummm...eh, pues, el problema de etica con videos de YouTube y fotos de Instagram cuando, como, una celebridad ummm no se, utiliza o usa un foto queeee alguien- pues- que la celebridad no toma el foto pero usa el foto en su perfil yyyy el problema es que necesitan dan publicidad a la persona que toma-tomó el foto. Entonces ahora por ejemplo Jlo-Jennifer Lopez- esta en un caso donde tiene que pagar, como, cien cincuenta mil dolares creo a una persoma que tomó la foto de ella aunque es una foto de ella , no se, es loco

T3: Además es una cuestión del uso de música en videos de baile. Por ejemplo, oh, saben que en youtube, um, hay algunas personas que, su trabajo en youtube es comentar o reaccionar de- um de películas o series etc etc pero hay un límite de de- del contenido original que pueden usar en sus videos y algunos de estos youtubers umm- algunos de estos youtubers reciben casos de copyright aunque um están en este límite de contenido que pueden usar y no es justo porque no es un fracaso-no no no fracaso-que quiero decir? (pausa) Mmm es como los um personas de youtube-es como no (pausa) no paga mucho atención del casos en que reciben este comentario sobre el copyright y hacen lo que hacen pero no cuentan-puestan-no puestan mucho atención en el caso.

P: sí, no prestan, no prestan mucha atención, es cierto, ujuj. Si [TT4].

T4: A mi aviso, creo que-pues, están siempre desafiando los límites del copyright um, en favor de- por ejemplo en el caso de jlo, no creo que es mala cosa usar una foto de tu mismo-o su mismo- y entonces eso parece como si la persona que- la fotograf-la fotografía? O la persona que tomó la foto está tomando-no se- parece un poquito injusto y está usando la oportunidad de ganar dinero de una celebridad porque saben que ella tiene el dinero . Por ejemplo si yo uso una foto que es de mí nadie va a preguntarlo porque no soy famosa y no tengo dinero para darles entonces creo que eso es como una empresita (risas) ahora porque otras celebridades como ariana grande también tenía que pagar dinero a personas que toman fotos de ella

T3: Oo encontró una broma en línea (risas) sobre si tu video pornográfico está en línea, usa música de disney porque disney va a-aa

T4: OHHHH ok

TT3: va a removerlo a causa de copyright

P: Uhuh. Pero usan videos pornográficos con música de disney. Eso es lo que estás diciendo?

TT3: Si porque mucha gente su um videos de sexo que era priva-muy muy privado entran en linea sin su-que es la palabra?-sin su ... permission-sin permiso

P: sin permiso. Correcto. Si

TT3: sin permiso. Entonces para combatirlo, se recomienda usar musica de disney porque disney va a removerlo a causa de copyright

TT4: oh my god

P: ahhhh ok no por-

TT3: Es una broma pero tiene sentido

P: ok no lo van a remover porque es contenido pornografico sino por la musica

TT4: si

TT3: la musica es copyright

P: exacto. Si pero no entiendo por que recomiendan eso porque eh, lo van a remover.

TT3: eh si

P: es raro. Si hay-hay como-si- no se. Es algo de etica. Entonces como usted estan hablando de etica y arte, ustedes les parece que, eh, las-no existe como una especie de codigo de etica o sea que las personas en el mundo, en el cine o en el arte o, no se, los que hacen videos-usted estan hablando de youtube y instagram-, quizas estos artistas l-explotan a los artistas porque no hay un codigo de etica o sea la gente se aprovecha . Es mas o menos la idea que estan-es eso que ustedes resaltaron?

TT3: existe este codigo de etica pero en el caso de um, pues casos cuando personas um reportan algunas de esos youtubers creo que las-um-los jefes de youtube no realmente puestan mucho atencion en el caso porque por ejemplo si, um, yo reporto a [TT4] porque [TT4] usa um, escenas de mi pelicula sin mi permiso

P: ah ok

TT3: pero [TT4] puede usar 20% de mi película sin permiso 20 al-por máximo 20% de mi película sin mi permiso even though es copyright, si ella usa más-es copyright

P: si es copyright

TT3: pero hasta 20 está bien y ella usa menos de 20% pero los jefes de youtube no investigan completamente, solamente reciben mi, mi um report

P: ok ok tu reporte si. Ya entiendo el punto

TT3: y su video termina demonitizado a causa de

P: devaluado

TT3: devaluado, gracias

P: pierden dinero, si devaluado

TT3: devaluado a causa de esto y esto es el problema cuando falta una investigación en estos casos

TT4: pues, yo creo que um, con ética siempre hay cuestión, siempre hay opinión, siempre hay una persona que va a decir que eso no sirve porque es muy difícil que-que una regla sirva a todos a la misma vez y (risas) estaba diciendo a zoe un caso en mi trabajo donde durante la vacación yo trabajé en una oficina de mensajería y teníamos que trabajar horas muy locas pero ah, eso no fue el problema. Entonces estamos en el trabajo como algunas veces 40 horas o doce horas al día y había un día que yo tenía que ir al médico entonces yo planeé-pues-no se- yo planeé ir al médico antes del trabajo pero teníamos que ir al trabajo antes que el trabajo todos los días entonces no estaba en el trabajo como 2 horas mientras que los otros trabajadores estaban en el trabajo preparando y, yo dije eso a mi um, como se llama-

P: jefe

TT4: gerente, si

P: gerente

TT4: y ella estaba como, no se, like, no creó que yo tenía que ir al medico y por eso um, yo tenía que tomar mi hora de uh, almuerzo, um, al fin de-al fin del dia como despues de todos mis otros um, compañías del trabajo y eso es-eso es loco porque estaba enferma, estaba en el medico y despues, um, estaba castigada por ir al medico

P: por ir al medico, si

TT4: si

TT3: tengo-

TT4: y no habia otro tiempo para ir al otro tiempo porque estabamos trabajando por todo el dia, todos los dias um, domingo a domingo, entonces si

P: si exacto, eso ocurre mucho, eh, la falta de etica profesional como tu has dicho em, este-y que si el jefe no entiende-no entienden eso

TT3: Tengo una historia sobre la falta de etica en el trabajo, pues, um trabajé en um, el año pasado en una llibrería y las horas entre lunes y viernes era 7:30 hasta creo que a las 5 pero los sabados trabajabamos 7:30 hasta creo que 2:30. Pero un sabado um un sabalo-un sabado teniamos mucho trabajo entonces um nuestro jefe nos pregunta-preguntó si podemos-si podríamos trabajar tiempo extra. Y lo hacemos y nuestra- nuestra jefe de esta rama del trabajo preguntó a la otro jefe por nuestro dinero porque-

TT4: que? (risas)

TT3: um esta jefe nos prometó que recibimos dinero para este tiempo extra y nos dijo- nos dijo que todavia trabam-trabajamos y reciben pago extra porque aunque trabajamos para-hasta diez y media que es mas corto que los otros dias recibimos el mismo pago

P: pago

TT3: de los otros días. Entonces aunque nos prometió que recibimos para el tiempo extra no

P: no pagó

TT3: no quiso pag-pagarnos y entonces no nos pagó

P: aunque-aunque les prometió-les prometió eso, no?

TT3: nos prometió, nos prometió, si

P: no quiso pagar?

TT3: mjm

P: Y no pagó al final?

TT3: mjm

P: eso es demasiadooooo inmoral, falta de- eso no esta correcto

TT3: realmente creo que si no era la ley reci-recibiamos-um almuerzo

TT4: muchos empleados en trinidad no te dan empleo um formalmente asi que pueden hacer cosas asi entonces yo estaba trabajando no tenia que firmar algo q dijó que soy empleada y muchos empleos hacen eso creo en el primero como año que trabajas asi que si hay problemas, no hay problema real.

P: realmente, legalmente no te van a um - digamos- tu no puedes hacer nada legalmente para protejerte

TT4: si

P: y no – si – es es es malo – esta mal – esta mal esta situacion. Wao si de que hagan esto. Y bueno, si pero la etica es algo que quizas en muchas empresas especialmente e n trabajos informales – porque tu trabajo era informal, zoe ? Era un trabajo informal? [TT3]

TT3: Si

P: si, hay-creo que es donde mas se aprovechan como dijo [TT4]. Es cierto. Mhm. Y tu trabajo [TT4], era formal o informal? Tu tenias un contrato ?

TT4: Informal

P: Y te pagaron horas extras?

TT4: Ah no, pues nos pagamos-nos pagamos pues nos pagaron um por los horas extras que trabajamos pero no um del rato que debemos recibir entonces cuando yo trabajo mas que 8 horas deben pagarme como hora y media o algo asi pero estaban pagando una hora por cada hora extra a los empleados en mi nivel y los de-del nivel mas alto estaban recibiendo el hora y media

P: y media ok. Entonces habian diferentes tipos de pagos para – dependiendo del contrato de la persona si. Si tenia o no tenia contrato.

TT3: al menos recibió pago por las horas extras

P: al menos. Algo-

TT3: al menos recibió

TT4: oh tambien (risas) hay otro caso ...em...en el banco un-como sr llama- como un psicologo que estaba trabajando en el banco que habla con los trabajadores estaba diciendonos que habia una persona que estaba trabajando en el banco pues todavia trabaja en el banco y el fue secuestrado-asi se dice? Secuestrado ?

P: secuestrado

TT4: y um mientras que estaba en el carro con los criminales estaban diciendo que querian matarle y la persona-el que estaba conduciendo el carro dijo que no no no yo acabo de limpiar mi carro entonces no puedes-no puedes matarle en mi carro entonces ellos um le llevaron – lo llevó?- a um chancellor hill y le empujó y él-él sobrevivió pero estaba como en las montañas por un dia o algo asi y encontró a alguien y-todo eso pasó y al fin cuando volvióaal trabajo um perdió

su puesto en el trabajo porque ellos le dijo que tenia que como, resolver sus problemas mentales en 2 meses y no podia hacer entonces perdio su puesto

P: wao si si si

TT4: todavia esta trabajando pero no en el mismo puesto

P: igual me estas-

TT3: muchas trabajos en trinidad y tobago no tienen en cuenta la cuestion de la salud mental que es no es algo fisico entonces no podemos observarlo en una manera concreta pero es algo muy real

P: y esta pasando con el corona virus – con el corona

virus mucha gente han perdido puestas de trabajo como ustedes dicen , en este momento.

Bueno.

Rating Scales utilised to assess participants' interaction during the speaking test

SPAN 1002 Rating Scale

	1	3	5	7
Interaction (Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production)	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. Can handle very short social exchanges, even though s/he can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going her/himself. Can ask and answer simple questions about likes, and dislikes.	Can ask and answer simple questions about things in the past. Can ask for and give opinions, agree and disagree, in a simple way. Can describe past activities, events and personal experiences. Can summarise simple stories s/he has read, relying on the language used in the story.	Can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life. Can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. Can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book/film and describe her/his reactions.	Can start a conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest and can help to keep it going by expressing and responding to suggestions, opinions, attitudes, advice, feelings, etc. Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time. Can compare and contrast alternatives, discuss what to do, where to go, etc.

SPAN 3002 Rating Scale

	1	3	5	7
Interaction (Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production)	Can converse spontaneously without much sign of restricting what s/he says. Can reformulate ideas in different ways to ensure people understand exactly what s/he means. Can keep up with a discussion and express her/his ideas and opinions clearly, precisely and convincingly. Can give clear, well-developed, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to her/his interests and to topics of course, expanding and supporting her/his ideas. Can summarise information and arguments from those given by other speakers, highlighting significant points.	Can keep up with animated discussions on abstract and complex topics related to the course with a number of speakers and can participate effectively even when people start talking simultaneously. Can understand and exchange complex, detailed information on topics with which s/he is not personally familiar, pinpointing key areas where further explanation or clarification is needed. Can give a clear, well-structured presentation on a complex subject related to topics of course, expanding and supporting points of view with appropriate reasons and examples.	Can easily keep up with and contribute to an extended debate on abstract and complex subjects related to topics of course, even when these are unfamiliar to her/him and when people start talking simultaneously. Can formulate a convincing argument and respond to questions, comments and complex counter arguments fluently, spontaneously and appropriately. Can summarise orally information given by other speakers, selecting the most salient and relevant ideas, and reconstructing arguments in a coherent presentation.	Can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. When arguing for or against a case, can convey finer shades of meaning precisely in order to give emphasis differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. Can argue a case on a complex issue, adapting the structure, content and emphasis in order to convince particular listeners of the validity of her/his argument. Can give a smoothly flowing, elaborate presentation on a complex topic, and can handle difficult, unpredictable and even hostile questioning.

Please refer to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), (Council of Europe, 2001). http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

EAQUALS Bank of Descriptors. EAQUALS/ALTE Portfolio Descriptor Revision Project

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