The Relationship Between L2 Instruction, Exposure, and the L2 Acquisition of a Syntax-Discourse Property in L2 Spanish

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Abstract

This article uses the Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) construction in L2 Spanish to investigate whether generative SLA has valuable insights to contribute to language teaching. Although CLLD is a structure that is commonly used by native speakers, as reported anecdotally and in at least one corpus, we found that native-Spanish and native-English teachers of Spanish have little metalinguistic knowledge of it. Crucially, we also found that CLLD does not appear consistently in Spanish textbooks. Additionally, it appears to be infrequent in the classroom input that learners receive, as we found in three lectures we recorded and tallied for CLLD usage rates. At the same time, results of Leal, Slabakova, and Farmer (2016) show that the construction is learnable. Study abroad, that is, exposure to naturalistic input, appears to be a significant factor. Based on these collective findings, we suggest that learners at intermediate proficiency levels should be exposed to CLLD and that generative SLA is valuable to teachers in identifying such gaps in instruction.

Keywords: Clitic Left Dislocation, L2 Spanish, study abroad, generative SLA, naturalistic input

Introduction

Although the experimental findings of Generative Second Language Acquisition (GenSLA) have always had the potential to translate into practical implications for language teaching, this work has only recently been embraced in earnest (e.g., Whong, Gil, & Marsden, 2013). In fact, this untapped potential has been a source of grievance with the paradigm from researchers of other approaches (see de Bot, 2014). Additionally, in some circles there exists the belief that GenSLA has little to offer language teachers in terms of L2 pedagogical practices (Slabakova, 2016). In this article, we aim to highlight one way in which GenSLA researchers can bridge this gap in a productive fashion for all parties involved. Although GenSLA, like many other SLA approaches, has independent aims from pedagogy (White, 2003), there are benefits to be reaped from researchers exploring the pedagogical implications of their research (Bruhn de Garavito, 2013b; Whong, 2013; VanPatten & Rothman, 2013). This exploration has the potential to benefit both GenSLA researchers and language teachers.

Researchers are in a unique position to translate insights from linguistic theory and experimental studies to instruction. Analogously, language teachers are uniquely positioned to identify language-learning problems for research. However, for this partnership to succeed, both parties may need to adjust some deeply entrenched positions that have traditionally encumbered collaboration. Here, by discussing the results of a study focusing on a structure that is represented in naturalistic speech but rare in classroom input, we endeavor to find the implications of our experimental findings in terms of teaching practices. Additionally, we turn to teachers and language instructional materials to find out how this structure is treated in the classroom.

The lack of connection between experimental research and teaching practices is not an issue that affects GenSLA alone, or even L2 research. For instance, educational research has experienced a pushback (or, more accurately, waves of pushback) from teachers on several grounds. Focusing on the use of research in practice, Kennedy (1997) highlighted four reasons behind the lack of connection between research and (teaching) practice, reasons we believe are prevalent to date. First, Kennedy noted that teachers do not find research compelling because they see it as neither persuasive nor authoritative. Furthermore, she explains that teachers do not find research relevant because, traditionally, it has not answered—or at times even addressed—teachers' questions. Another common complaint is that teachers do not think research findings are accessible to them because results are often not expressed in plain, comprehensible terms. Finally, Kennedy notes that teachers often believe that the education system is inflexible and "unable to engage in systematic change" (p. 4). These issues remain an open question to date, although some researchers (Mills, 2003) have suggested that involving teachers in research practices (action research: teachers-as-researchers) might be part of the solution.

L2 acquisition teaching practices have also experienced waves of change that have been linked to SLA theory and research. After the communicative language teaching (CLT) revolution of the 70s and 80s, Kumaravadivelu (2006) noted the existence of two crucial changes in language teaching methodologies. The CLT revolution, whose impact is still felt today in instructional materials, followed on the heels of Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which was loosely based on a Chomskyan model of language acquisition. In Kumaravadivelu's view, the first crucial change was the shift from CLT to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Crookes & Gass, 1993).[1] The second change was the turn from method-

[1] Tasks are "work plans" designed to push learners to process language and reach outcomes that can be assessed by whether the propositional content has been communicated (Ellis, 2003).

based language teaching to post-method pedagogical teaching practices. This shift involved a change from finding *the best* language teaching method(s) to a quest for finding *a combination* of methods best suited for instruction. Kumaravadivelu (2006) termed this view a "macrostrategic framework," which included different macrostrategies (e.g. maximizing learning opportunities, facilitating negotiated interaction) and provided language teachers with basic operating teaching principles. Under post-method views, teachers are responsible for formulating their own pedagogical practices, allowing them freedom and autonomy in terms of choosing methods, while also placing a significant amount of responsibility on them. This state of affairs is analogous to teaching developments in other areas, where teachers have turned to action research (teachers-as-researchers) in order to better understand their own teaching practices and create/enact positive change in their own classrooms (Mills, 2003).

Implicit in these discussions is the usefulness of traditional classroom instruction on acquisition outcomes (Gass & Selinker, 2013). For teachers, the bottom line is often whether (and, if so, how) classroom instruction, interaction, and exposure to the language can aid the L2 acquisition process. In this regard, L2 research has offered solid evidence that explicit classroom instruction can be helpful for acquisition (Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada & Tomita, 2010). The question, again, is *how*. In this regard, we propose that GenSLA can be helpful in translating research findings to better help teachers develop effective instruction practices. Parallel to this proposal, we believe that it is also helpful for teachers to know when *not* to focus on explicit classroom instruction, in the case of those properties that are acquired through exposure alone because instructors could instead focus on offering students more authentic materials (not designed for L2 instruction specifically).

In this paper, we focus on one such structure: Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), exemplified below.

(1) Estos libros, Juan **los** leyó ayer.
these books Juan CL-3pl read yesterday
'These books, Juan read yesterday.'

CLLD is a structure at the so-called external syntax-discourse interface, involving both (morpho)syntactic and discourse constraints. The most important condition is that the moved, or dislocated, object [*Estos libros* in (1)] has to be known to the speaker and hearer, or sufficiently salient in the preceding discourse. Spanish CLLD is somewhat frequent in naturalistic input (Quesada, 1997; Slabakova, 2015) although this frequency does not seem to be echoed in classroom instruction. Foreshadowing our results, we see that most of the teachers that we surveyed did not teach the structure in the classroom. Furthermore, we found that, although most instructional L2 Spanish-language textbooks devote sections within one or more chapters to present properties of accusative clitics, (e.g. placement and interpretation), only a select few present any explanation or even exemplars of CLLD. Additionally, we found that advanced Spanish content lectures contained fewer CLLD samples than naturalistic speech. Thus, there is a disconnect between classroom speech and naturalistic speech in this respect. Before outlining these findings, we turn to another relevant (dis)connection: the relationship between GenSLA and language pedagogy.

GenSLA and language pedagogy

Historical context can show that the perceived disconnect between GenSLA and classroom research is not altogether accurate. Indeed, the value of instruction was vigorously debated in the late 80s and 90s by GenSLA researchers (see, e.g. Flynn & Martohardjono, 1995). In a widely-cited critique, White (1987) addressed Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which essentially proposes that L2 acquisition proceeds straightforwardly from exposure to comprehensible input if and when external barriers (e.g. the affective filter) can be lowered. White argued that a crucial flaw was that the hypothesis neglected to acknowledge the learners' system-internal factors, which could drive acquisition. White was concerned with the potential interpretation of "comprehensible" as "simplified," showing examples of instances when it was the *incomprehensibility* of the input that drove interlanguage development. White offered examples such as "The book was read by John," which can only be interpreted if the learners' grammar includes a passive rule. If learners were guided by word order alone, this sentence would mean that books read people. Since this meaning is pragmatically implausible, White reasoned, it signaled an alternative interpretation, driving changes in the grammar.

An additional example of GenSLA-instruction connections comes from a string of classroom-based studies focusing on the acquisition of English by young Quebecois-French speakers (White, 1991, 1990/1991; Trahey & White, 1993). White examined whether classroom-based L2 learners benefited from explicit classroom instruction (negative evidence). French and English differ in terms of the position of the main verb in the clause, and hence in terms of adverb placement, negation, and question formation. French verbs display obligatory movement over adverbs and negation, whereas English verbs do not. Thus, the order Subject-Verb-Adverb-Object is grammatical in French yet ungrammatical in English. This linguistic contrast was explained by a parameter with two settings: verb movement or no verb movement (Pollock,

1989). White (1991), the effects of explicit instruction were limited: L2 English learners accepted both ungrammatical orders along with grammatical ones.

White (1990/1991) set out to test whether explicit instruction could have a positive impact on the acquisition of English adverb placement. The learners in this study were divided into two intact groups. The first received focus-on-form instruction specifically targeting adverb placement (negative-evidence group). The second group also received instruction on *wh*-questions but not on adverb placement (positive-evidence group). Learners completed two delayed posttests. Perhaps not surprisingly, results showed that the negative evidence group (who received explicit instruction) showed greater gains than the positive evidence group (whose input was focused on *wh*-questions) when tested at two weeks and then five weeks post-intervention. Yet the gains were fleeting. When learners were tested a year later (White, 1991), no such gains were reported. While we cannot measure the effect that these studies had in GenSLA research, the fact is that not many GenSLA researchers followed up with similar studies, citing instead the results of White's work as evidence that instruction did not have lasting effects.

In retrospect, the results of White's studies are not entirely surprising: Interventions vary in their effectiveness due to their duration and to the type of instruction. Although it is hardly encouraging that the intervention in White (1990/1991) failed to have a lasting effect, more research was needed in order to determine whether different instruction techniques brought lasting benefits or whether these skills required maintenance. That maintenance of skills is required should not be surprising, given that the benefits of ongoing practice are largely uncontroversial (see DeKeyser, 2007). Thus, concluding that instruction had no long-lasting effects after a relatively short intervention might have been premature.

In this respect, Whong's (2013) agenda should be useful for GenSLA researchers. Whong advocates two routes that could positively impact pedagogical practices: First, she suggests looking outside of the generative paradigm and engaging with other approaches. Second, Whong urges GenSLA researchers to "reconsider" GenSLA's aims with regard to acquisition and learning. Importantly, she advocates for developing linguistic expertise among teachers. In our research, we engaged with Spanish teachers directly to ask them about their knowledge of the structure under investigation. Our findings, as we will see, show that teachers were not familiar with this structure in explicit terms, although they accepted it as grammatical. Following Whong, this could be a good area for GenSLA researchers to further develop linguistic training for teachers.

While GenSLA researchers have only rarely engaged with classroom instruction research, there has been more research in some areas than others. Namely, although syntax (Rankin, 2013; White, 1990) and morphology (Bruhn de Garavito, 2013a) have been explored, with the exception of Valenzuela and McCormack (2013), very few researchers have explored the potential pedagogical implications of research focusing on discourse interface properties. This shortage of research is a bit surprising because, in the last decades there has been a significant increase in investigations focusing on discourse-dependent structures and issues of learnability regarding structures that involve discourse constraints.

Undoubtedly, the most important catalyst of this research has been the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006), which posits learnability difficulties associated with certain structures. Specifically, it predicts that properties involving both syntax and non-linguistic factors ("external" interfaces) will be harder to acquire than those that involve linguistic factors

alone (termed "internal" interfaces).[2] Thus, external (e.g. syntax-discourse) but not internal interfaces (e.g. syntax-semantics) are hypothesized to pose a problem for bilinguals. To date, some research has provided support for the hypothesis while other research outcomes have shown that its predictions do not obtain for some learners and linguistic constructions (Rothman, 2009; Slabakova & Ivanov, 2011). The emerging picture suggests that not all external-interface structures posit the same degree of difficulty. However, research in this area has rarely explored any pedagogical implications of the findings.

One notable exception is Valenzuela and McCormack (2013), who offered a reanalysis of a large-scale study focusing on syntax-discourse properties (Valenzuela, 2005). This study is valuable in the context of the foregoing because it focused on syntax-discourse constructions and how the results of the research could be used to change in L2 teaching practices. The original data was drawn from Valenzuela (2005), who conducted a bidirectional L2 investigation (English→Spanish, Spanish→English) examining CLLD and English-style topicalization. For the purposes of comparison, we will only focus our review on the results of the L1 English-L2 Spanish group, which was of very advanced proficiency.

In Spanish, as we exemplified above in (1), topicalization can be expressed through CLLD, whereas in English topicalization takes a different form. (2) is an example from *Chicago Tribune* (April 5, 2012):

(2) "There was one man I knew. My uncle. *That man* I still see around—whenever I see him I feel afraid."

[2] GenSLA researchers subscribe to a view whereby language is constituted by distinct linguistic modules (e.g. syntax, morphology, semantics, etc.) and their interfaces—the sites where modules meet and interact (e.g. Chomsky, 1995).

Note that just as in the Spanish example in (1), a phrase (*That man*) has "moved" to the left from its canonical object position after the verb.[3] Dislocated phrases (usually referred to as "topics") must have been previously mentioned or else be sufficiently salient in order for the utterance to be felicitous. English differs from Spanish in that it does not "resume" the moved phrase morphologically. If the phrase is repeated with a pronoun, the result is ungrammatical (*That man I still see *him* around). Thus, a contrast exists between English and Spanish.

The participants in Valenzuela's study completed an oral sentence selection task and a written sentence completion task. Importantly for our purposes, both tasks tested specificity.[4] In Spanish, dislocated topics are only resumed with a clitic when the dislocated element is specific, as in (3). This example is taken from Valenzuela (2005), where study participants chose the most appropriate continuation out of four options (a-d).

(3) (Context in Spanish)

Lola is doing her homework. However, she just noticed that she is missing some important class notes. Lola looks in the library, in her room and in the classroom but...

a. Esos apuntes, no encuentra.

those notes NEG find.3sg

b. Esos apuntes, no los encuentra.

those notes NEG CL find.3sg

"She can't find those notes."

c. Neither a. nor b.

d. Both a. and b.

[3] Compare with the non-moved utterance: "I still see [that man] around."

[4] A specific noun phrase is one whose referent is known to the speaker but not the hearer.

The expected answer is (3b) precisely because the dislocated element (*esos apuntes*) is specific, which means it can be "doubled" by a clitic. Note, however, that specificity adds a layer of difficulty to the task, because it involves semantics as well.

Valenzuela's results showed that, overall, L2 Spanish learners were accurate in their performance when supplying clitics in [+specific] contexts. Interestingly, learners also *over*supplied clitics in [–specific] contexts, doing so at a significantly higher rate than native speakers. Valenzuela and McCormack (2013) proposed that the tendency to overproduce clitics was related to over-instruction. Similarly, the learners' native-like performance in [+specific] contexts was also explained as a byproduct of classroom instruction (a beneficial one, in this case).

Although this conclusion seems reasonable, many questions remain. While L2 Spanish learners do receive explicit instruction regarding dislocated animate objects, which are specially marked,[5] the possibility of clitic doubling is not always explained in terms of [±specific] features while almost always in terms of [±human] features. Furthermore, it was unclear to us whether instructors were generally aware of CLLD as a separate construction or whether CLLD was a topic of classroom instruction. In order to find this out, we asked Spanish teachers, native and non-native speakers, both in Mexico and the U.S., whether they were aware of the restrictions of CLLD and, moreover, whether CLLD was included in classroom instruction. To complement these results, we also set out to review a series of instructional materials and recorded lectures in order to determine whether CLLD was represented in the classroom. Finally, with regard to learnability issues, we surveyed evidence from previous research (Leal et al., 2016) indicating

[5] Within the literature, this phenomenon is known as the "personal *a*." The fact that animate and specific direct objects are marked by the preposition *a* while others are not is referred to as Differential Object Marking (DOM). It seems that DOM and CLLD are intricately related, although they need to be separated for analysis and instruction. See below for more discussion.

that several aspects of CLLD (not specificity) can be acquired through positive evidence. Because Leal et al. (2016) investigated the interface of syntax and discourse but *not* semantics, it is a good complement to Valenzuela's (2005) results and a suitable source of evidence regarding what should be taught and what can be learned through exposure.

Asking teachers about CLLD

To examine whether CLLD was the subject of instruction in the classroom, we decided to ask a group of teachers, both in Mexico and the U.S., whether they were familiar with CLLD. We also asked them to judge its grammaticality. Additionally, we were interested in knowing whether they thought CLLD was a frequent structure and whether they had taught it (and why or why not). We conducted our survey in Mexico with two groups: teachers of Spanish that had finished their M.A. in applied linguistics in Mexico or American teachers who were currently pursuing an M.A. in Teaching Spanish during a summer program in Mexico (through a U.S. institution). The survey, which was administered in Mexico, included 9 questions focused on CLLD as well as a short, seven-item, grammaticality judgment task. Table 1 displays participant demographics.

Table 1. Means (and SDs) for the demographic information of the teachers by group.

	L1 Spanish	**L1-English/L2-Spanish**
N	11	10
Women	5	7
Age	31.5 (7.9)	33.1 (6.9)
Years of exposure	NA	13.5 (6.5)

Proficiency scores	NA	40.3 (2.54)
Years of teaching Spanish	8.35 (6.73)	9.2 (7.06)

Table 1 shows that our L2 Spanish teachers were of high proficiency, as measured by the independent test. Based on benchmarks established in the literature, 8 out of the 10 would fall under the rubric of "advanced" learners. Average years of exposure were 13.5 years—a considerable amount.

The tokens included in the short grammaticality task were relatively simple, although some included multiple dislocations. Example (4) is taken directly from the judgment task.

(4) A mi Jimena nunca me da dinero.

to me Jimena never CL gives money

"Jimena never gives me money."

All teachers (native and nonnative) accepted every instance of CLLD, although some teachers from the L1 Spanish group had some interesting prescriptive comments. When we asked "Do you believe that this structure is used frequently in conversation?", about half of the respondents (6/11 in the L1 Spanish group, 7/10 in the L2 Spanish group) commented that they thought it was. Interestingly enough, only two respondents—one from the L1 Spanish group and one from the L2 Spanish group—reported having taught the structure before (although only one could name the structure). The teacher from the L2 Spanish group noted teaching the structure only in contrast to the English equivalent and only on a couple of occasions, as a response to student inquiries.

When we asked teachers why they didn't teach the structure, answers were elucidating. Four native speakers reported that the structure was used in informal speech and was therefore

not suitable for instruction. Two more added that the object pronoun was "redundant" or thought it was not "correct" to use it, although both speakers accepted its grammaticality in the judgment task. Another instructor commented that the structure was only used to "contrast" two things and was "perhaps too advanced" to be included in instruction for intermediate Spanish students. Finally, one teacher from the L1 Spanish group said that this was not covered in the textbook that was used in class.

These results are in broad agreement with Valenzuela and MacCormick's (2013) conjecture that instructors might perceive CLLD as a more difficult structure. The authors go on to add that instructors "would realize the importance of not judging a structure as 'difficult' simply because it has a seemingly more complex rule (i.e. add clitic to fronted object NP)" (p. 112). Nevertheless, as we found out from our survey, not many of the instructors we contacted viewed CLLD as something worthy of instruction time and, importantly, some thought it was more difficult than the non-dislocated version. Thus, although we cannot generalize based on this small sample, it seems safe to assume that many instructors do not explicitly teach CLLD in the classroom. In fact, some native-speaker instructors thought it was unworthy of instruction because they perceived it as "informal."

One of the responses piqued our curiosity: CLLD's lack of representation in teaching materials. To verify this was the case, we explored whether textbooks indeed covered this particular structure.

CLLD in Instructional Materials

In order to get a second data source of CLLD representation in the classroom, we examined college-level Spanish textbooks in search of examples or explanations of CLLD. For

each book, we examined the table of contents and focused on units centered on dative and accusative clitics, sections devoted to "personal *a*", or any other mention of "objects" or object functions (for communicative textbooks). Then we examined each section carefully and searched for any examples of dislocations and, if present, any explanations included along with the examples. Within these sections, we searched for any accompanying exercises for examples of dislocations. Because the editions we reviewed were "Instructor Annotated Editions", we also reviewed the marginalia for instructions or examples. In our sample, we did not include content-based textbooks nor textbooks focused only on grammar. We reviewed a total of 18 textbooks: nine beginning, eight intermediate, and one advanced. We based these categories on the explicit descriptions provided by the publishers in the preface (see Appendix A for a list of the textbooks surveyed).

Our review revealed that all of the textbooks we surveyed, with one exception (intermediate-level), included a separate section devoted to object pronouns (direct/indirect). Out of these, all of them addressed clitic-ordering restrictions ordering, both when occurring alone with the verb and in clusters (dative + accusative). Except for two, all textbooks presented accusative clitic pronouns first and indirect object clitics second. One more textbook presented the information from indirect and direct object pronouns in the same section (intermediate-level).

With respect to CLLD, out of all the textbooks, none of them explicitly referred to CLLD as a separate structure. Thus, no explanations of its discourse-appropriateness were included. In terms of exemplars of CLLD, two beginning textbooks included examples of CLLD when discussing object pronouns. These two textbooks explicitly draw attention to the possibility of dislocations with examples featuring Differential Object Marking (called "personal *a*", see note 5). The explanation was in terms of syntactic function:

> Because Spanish has flexible word order, the *a* reminds you that even if a noun appears before the verb it may not be the subject! Note that when an object appears before the verb, the corresponding object pronoun must also be used. (VanPatten, Lee, & Ballman, 2000: 125, *¿Sabías Qué?)*

This explanation was followed up by a processing-instruction exercise (VanPatten, 1996), where students were asked to identify the syntactic function of the dislocated phrase.

In the more advanced textbooks, only one (advanced-level) included examples of CLLD in a single exercise. This exercise focused on indirect object pronouns and included a variety of structures, including psychological verbs (verbs like *gustar* "to like" in Spanish). Although no explanation of dislocations was provided, students were asked to translate the sentences into English, which could, in principle at least, prompt some students to ask instructors about word-order differences in English and Spanish. However, given that students are exposed to psych verbs from very early in their instruction, it is likely that students simply completed the exercise without paying much attention to the dislocated forms.

Thus, based on the teacher surveys and our review of the textbooks, we found that CLLD is a rare occurrence in the Spanish L2 classroom, at least in the U.S. In the next section, to get a more direct measure of CLLD incidence, we turn to examining authentic classroom exposure.

CLLD in classroom input

In order to gauge CLLD representation in the input that classroom learners receive, we recorded three complete class sessions where Spanish was used to deliver content. Classes were all of over an hour in length (average 98 minutes in duration) and were recorded at an American Western university. These classes were elective and required courses in the literature B.A. and

M.A. tracks. We chose our data-collection dates after contacting the respective instructors because we were expecting them to lecture on their class topics (Spanish Golden-Age Literature, Medieval Spain, or Latin-American Theater), rather than to focus on group work or on other student-led activities (e.g. student-led presentations or collaborative learning activities). Thus, we were hoping to record primarily monologic tasks, rather than dialogic/group ones.

We also chose these particular classes because of the high proficiency of the students. All classes were either graduate or so-called "split" courses, meaning that only four-semester undergrads majoring in Spanish and first- and second-year graduate students were admitted. In fact, there was substantial overlap among the students, with several of them being enrolled in all three classes (n=6). Furthermore, as Table 2 shows, classes included a fairly even mix of second language learners, heritage speakers, and native Spanish speakers who were schooled in their home countries.[6] We wanted to record classes with high-proficiency students because we expected that these classes would have the highest incidences of CLLD use by instructors and, perhaps, students. This expectation was driven, in part, by the findings from our questionnaire and given Valenzuela and MacCormick's (2013) suggestion that CLLD might be perceived as a more complex structure.

The three instructors were full-time, tenured or tenure-track, experienced professors with a mean teaching experience of 23.7 years (SD=12.9). Table 2 shows a brief overview of demographics. Two instructors were female, one male. Two were (Mexican) native Spanish speakers, English bilinguals. Both were sequential bilinguals whose first contact with English

[6] We should note that the university's demographics are quite diverse (40% of students being racial minorities and almost 20% of Hispanic/Latino origin). This is particularly true in the World Languages department, where 50% of Spanish majors self-identify as being Hispanic/Latino. This fact must be taken into consideration because it is not the typical make up of classes in the U.S. To wit, these classes are likely to have an overrepresentation of native Spanish and heritage speakers as compared to other, less diverse, college populations.

came after puberty. The third was an L2 Spanish speaker who was a late L2 learner (L1 English) and came in contact with Spanish after puberty.

Table 2

Demographic information per class (instructor and students)

	Class 1	*Class 2*	*Class 3*
Instructor sex	male	female	female
Instructor L1	Spanish	English	Spanish
Instructor's age of exposure to the L2 (either English or Spanish)	16	14	19
Instructor years of teaching experience	20	38	13
Number of students in the class	9	14	22
Percentage of graduate students	100	100	36
Percentage of L2 learners	44.5	28.6	40.9
Percentage of heritage speakers	22.2	28.6	45.5
Percentage of Native Spanish speakers	33.3	42.8	13.6

We recorded classes using a Tascam DR-05 Digital Recorder positioned at the front of the room, nearest to the instructor. A backup recording, collected using a computer equipped with the software Audacity, was also gathered at a different location in case the instructor moved about the room and a second recording would be needed to verify the content of the original one.

Recordings were transcribed by one of the authors using conventional spelling. Sections where students or the instructor read out loud from the text under discussion were not included in the word count or the analysis. Part of the rationale to exclude these instances was that these samples included examples in English or in medieval Spanish, where clitic position was, unlike

in modern Spanish, post-verbal for finite verbs. Likewise, segments in English were transcribed and not included in the word count unless these were intra-sentential switches consisting of single words or phrases (e.g. noun phrases or verb phrases). Full sentences in English were not included either in the word count or in the subsequent analyses.

Finally, in order to determine CLLD rates, we calculated the number of T-units (terminable units, as operationalized below) in each transcription. Although measures of spoken language can be notoriously problematic given the elliptical nature of spoken language, especially in the case of L2 speakers (Foster, Tonkyn, & Wigglesworth, 2000), we chose the T-unit because this particular set of data had less interactions/interruptions than a conversation (classes were in a lecture format), and there were relatively few instances of ellipsis in the data. Following Young (1995), we took a T-unit to be based on a clause along with its subordinate clauses. Instances of fragments that were reduced by ellipsis were also counted as T-units. Again, following Young, we counted coordinate clauses joined by *and, so,* or *because* as two distinct T-units. Back channeling cues and discourse boundary markers (such as *okey* "OK", *bueno* "well", *este* "this", *claro* "of course", or *vale* "sure") were not included in the tally. Finally, we integrated false starts into the following T-unit, excluding those that were fragments. Imperatives were also counted as T-units.[7]

Table 3 shows the results of our analysis. We documented number of words, T-units, and T-unit length. We also tallied dislocations, including CLLD but also other dislocations (e.g. Clitic Right Dislocations (CLRD), Fronted Focus, and Hanging Topic Left Dislocations (HTLD).

[7] Foster and colleagues (2000) noted that Young's (1995) operationalization of a T-unit is closer to C-units, which "answers to questions which lack only the repetition of question elements to satisfy the criterion of independent predication" (Logan, 1966, cited in Forster et al., 2000). However, we did not, strictly, use C-units in our analysis. For instance, a single-word answer to a yes/no question was not counted as a T-unit. Instances of fragments reduced by ellipsis were only counted when a single word (the elided word) was needed to fit the definition.

As evident from Table 3, the use of dislocations in our small corpus, consisting of 27,050 words, was quite infrequent. In the whole corpus, we found twenty-seven T-units with instances of dislocations (21 of which were CLLD instances) which means that the rate of dislocation use, when all three classes were combined, was less than 1% (.9%). Overall, the rate of CLLD use (i.e. T-units with CLLD) was .72%. Recall that these were high-proficiency classes, wherein we expected that instructors would use less accommodations (i.e. teacher-talk), although clearly not equivalent to the input that native speakers receive. Slabakova (2015) notes that although it is regularly claimed that CLLD is not all that infrequent, actual tallies of CLLD are scarce. Based on an existing corpus specifically created to study Information Structure (Brunetti, Bott, Costa, & Vallduví, 2011), Slabakova reported that CLLD and Fronted Focus dislocations amounted to 1.35% of all finite clauses. Thus, although the two speech samples do not constitute equivalent corpora (one measured in "segments" and the other in T-units),[8] our reported incidence of CLLD fell short of the Brunetti corpus rates.

Table 3

Tallies of T-units and dislocations in the corpus

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Recording time (in minutes)	95 min.	125 min.	75 min.
Number of words	8517	12,217	6316
Number of T-units	848	1390	686
Number of T-units per minute	8.92	11.12	9.15
Mean T-unit length in number	8.66	6.90	8.24
of words (SD)	(4.8)	(3.76)	(4.91)
Number of T-units that	10	4	7
included CLLD (percentage)	(1.18%)	(.29%)	(1.02%)

[8] Segments were defined as being clauses or verbless phrases.

Mean T unit length for T-units with CLLD in number of words	13.55	11.25	10.43
Number of T-units that included CLRD (percentage)	2 (.24%)	0 (0%)	2 (.29%)
Number of T-units that included Fronted Focus (percentage)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (.15%)
Number of T-units that included HTLD (percentage)	0 (0%)	1 (.07%)	0 (0%)

Interestingly, however, the rate of CLLD use may be influenced, at least partially, by the instructors' L1. Class 2, where the instructor was an L2 Spanish speaker, produced a much lower rate of CLLD (.29%), whereas the other two classes produced CLLD at a more comparable rate to the Brunetti corpus (1.18% and 1.02%, respectively vs. 1.35%), if still at lower rates. Given that these three classes included similar rates of L2ers, native speakers, and heritage speakers, it seems logical to consider whether the instructors' L1 could be implicated. Additionally, as noted earlier, most of the language was produced by the instructor in a monologic fashion. Analogously, the mean T-unit length (in words) for Class 2 was also lower than for the other two classes (6.90 vs. 8.66 and 8.24). This finding is worth noting because, in every class, mean CLLD T-unit length was much higher than T-unit length without CLLD (Class 1: 8.66 vs. 13.55, Class 2: 6.90 vs. 11.25, and Class 3: 8.24 vs. 10.43). Class 2 reported shorter T-units, which might be related to a lower CLLD rate.

However, although L1 status may play a role in this data, other factors could also be at play so further research is needed in order to determine whether this finding holds for other

populations. For instance, Class 1 (male Spanish NS instructor) seemed to have less questions and interruptions from the students than the other two classes (female instructors), a fact that might have affected the T-unit length rates. Additionally, it is important to note that we recorded a single L2 instructor, which means that there are a host of other potential individual differences which may have impacted the CLLD production rates.

Overall, these results are largely compatible with our teacher surveys and review of instructional materials, showing that although CLLD is a rare occurrence in the classroom, it is not altogether absent, at least in upper level and graduate classes. Recall that although most instructors did not report teaching CLLD in the classroom, a couple did. Similarly, although CLLD was rarely represented in the instructional materials, at least three books showed some exemplars. Overall, however, the rates of CLLD instantiation were lower than those found in native speaker (non-classroom) corpora (Brunetti et al., 2011). Additionally, the data unveiled the existence of substantial individual variation among instructors in terms of the rates of CLLD that are produced in the classroom. Although this variation appears to have a relationship with L1 status, more investigation is needed to determine other potential factors that could affect these rates.

In summary, the previous sections documented that teachers generally do not teach CLLD; this construction does not appear systematically in Spanish textbooks; and CLLD is rare in classroom exposure. This omission of CLLD from the positive input learners are exposed to could lead us to believe that learners do not acquire CLLD. This is a contention that we examined more closely in our previous research.

A Previous investigation: Leal, Slabakova, & Farmer (2016)

As an example of how research in the GenSLA framework can benefit pedagogical practices in the classroom, we offer the case of a previously-reported investigation focusing on CLLD. As mentioned earlier, CLLD is a relatively frequent structure that alters canonical word order. Successful comprehension and production of CLLD, involving as it does both discourse and morphosyntax, requires not only knowledge of clitics (placement, agreement) but also considerations of discourse-felicitousness.

The participants in the Leal et al. study were 93 adult learners of Spanish (85 women), and 37 monolingual speakers (24 women). Based on a proficiency test, using benchmarks from the literature, the study included 56 advanced (37 women) and 37 (24 women) intermediate learners. Participants completed a variety of tasks, including a clitic-knowledge test, and a self-paced reading task. The test of clitic knowledge was a multiple-choice test of clitic-placement. In Spanish, clitics appear before finite verbs or, in cases where there is an auxiliary, either before the first auxiliary or attached to the second verb (gerund or infinitive). Spanish clitics have additional ordering restrictions whereby dative clitics precede accusative clitics. Thus, given that clitic knowledge is required for CLLD, we needed to exclude any participants who didn't have this requisite knowledge.

The self-paced reading task was designed to determine whether learners could predict that a clitic would occur downstream after being exposed to a left-dislocated phrase. In this task, sentences were presented in a word-by-word moving window display, so that we could determine the time that learners spent reading each word.[9] The experiment comprised two conditions. In the first condition (*Clitic Present*), the sentence included an expected clitic (expected because a dislocated phrase had previously appeared). In the second condition (*Clitic*

[9] The reader is referred to Leal et al. (2016) for a more detailed account of the task and how these items were modified from the ones used in the original investigation, Pablos (2006).

Absent), the expectation for a clitic was (momentarily) violated because the clitic did not appear before the first verb (clitic was delayed). Although all experimental test sentences were grammatical, in the Clitic Absent condition, the required clitic appeared later, before the second main verb.[10] Leal and colleagues predicted that those speakers who would generate an expectation for an upcoming clitic after encountering a topicalized phrase would also exhibit processing difficulty (measured by longer reading times) upon encountering the main verb when the clitic was absent, compared to when it was present.

As predicted, native Spanish speakers read the verb significantly faster when it was preceded by a clitic, thereby demonstrating that they were expecting a clitic in that position. Learner data also displayed the same behavior. Crucially, however, this effect appeared as a function of the proficiency scores for the learners. Specifically, advanced learners read verbs preceded by a clitic (compared to those not preceded by the clitic) *faster* than the intermediate learners did. Thus, results showed that higher proficiency learners (like the natives) displayed a larger difference in reading times on the first verb when the expected clitic was missing (unexpected), relative to when the clitic was present (expected).

We further explored the influence of previous Spanish exposure and study abroad.[11] L2 learners reported the amount of time they had spent learning Spanish (overall), as well as the amount of time that they had studied or lived abroad in Spanish-speaking countries. Importantly, months studying Spanish was *not* a significant predictor of native-like behavior, while months of study abroad in Spanish-speaking countries did constitute a significant predictor. The contrast suggested the *quality, not just quantity* of linguistic experience matters. In this regard, our

[10] In order to satisfy the requirements of the online processing task, the test items were considerably more complex than the single-clause dislocations presented in this article.
[11] We refer readers to the original article in order to view exact statistics, including an analysis on the spillover region.

investigation is in broad agreement with other research suggesting that naturalistic exposure may lead to native-like processing (Pliatsikas & Marinis, 2013).

Thus, the results of this investigation showed that CLLD is learnable and successfully acquired by advanced learners. Why should we teach it, then? This is something we explore in the next section.

Overall Discussion and Conclusions

As we have argued elsewhere (Slabakova, Leal & Liskin Gasparro, 2014), we propose that GenSLA researchers can (and should) act as mediators between linguists and language teachers (Widdowson, 2000). Furthermore, we have noted that such mediation is profitable for all parties: GenSLA researchers can translate insights from linguistic theory to instruction, while teachers are singularly positioned to identify language-learning problems for further research. In the case of CLLD specifically, we have two suggestions for mediation.

First, when we asked language teachers about CLLD, we found they did not have explicit knowledge of this structure and many had overly prescriptive notions regarding its acceptability (although they judged CLLD as grammatical). In this regard, Whong's (2013) suggestion to "develop teacher expertise by raising the level of understanding of language itself" would be helpful. Although we would ideally want to insert these insights into teaching materials, we are aware that the inclusion of pedagogical innovations in textbooks is notoriously difficult. Alternatively, we suggest that researchers attend conferences that foster dialogue between teachers and researchers, where GenSLA researchers could help develop linguistic expertise of a given structure. In Europe, groups like the *Meaning in Language Learning Network (https://millnetwork.org/)* have sought to foster such dialogue.

Additionally, we agree with Valenzuela and McCormack (2013) in that we would like to urge teachers not to discourage the inclusion of CLLD in teaching materials because of its perceived difficulty. In fact, we would advocate that CLLD be included in examples early in the teaching of accusative and dative clitics—even when teaching agreement, the examples could come from CLLD rather than from isolated and/or decontextualized question/answer pairs, as is customary. L2 Spanish instructors should be aware not only of the syntactic properties of CLLD (e.g. agreement between the dislocated element and clitic) but also of the discourse-felicity conditions of CLLD (e.g. the dislocated element should be a topic).

Secondly, we saw that, although CLLD is relatively frequent outside of the classroom, it is infrequent in the classroom and only very rarely taught. While our previous investigation shows that explicit instruction might not be necessary for successful acquisition, it is clear from the results of Leal et al. (2016) that naturalistic exposure is crucial. First, we should note that the learners were very advanced—the advanced group had, on average, over 15 years of exposure. Crucially, however, mere exposure did not correlate with CLLD acquisition, perhaps because, as we have seen through questionnaires, analysis of classroom materials, and of recorded classroom discussions, CLLD is not robustly represented in the input classroom learners receive. In this regard, we believe that if CLLD were included in classroom instruction and/or instructional materials, it is quite possible that acquisition could proceed earlier. Thus, in terms of the pedagogical implications of this particular study, we argue that these results underscore the need to expose intermediate and advanced L2 Spanish learners to naturalistic input given that the learners in the Leal et al. study acquired CLLD from naturalistic exposure. Furthermore, acquiring CLLD earlier in the developmental process aids successful comprehension of natural Spanish on the ground. Because this construction appears in a considerable proportion of Spanish

sentences, it is beneficial for learners to be able to parse and understand it as soon as they acquire clitics.

Hence, we advocate the inclusion of authentic materials including dislocations early on. This is not an uncontroversial suggestion, as the inclusion of authentic materials has been hotly debated in the pedagogical literature (Gilmore, 2007). However, based on our findings we believe that the best way to include CLLD in the classroom is through access to authentic materials (e.g. print or video). These materials could be used alongside teacher-created materials including CLLD as well. We must note that some instructors do avoid using authentic texts because these are perceived to be too difficult (Peacock, 1997)—the debate on the matter is ongoing. In spite of the findings that show the ways authentic materials can be helpful (e.g. Baltova, 1999), increasing on-task behavior, motivation, concentration, and involvement in the target activity (Peacock, 1997), the use of authentic materials is not widespread. Because CLLD is a structure that is relatively frequent "in the wild," we have good reason to believe that exposing L2 Spanish learners to materials that contain CLLD could be beneficial.

Finally, we close by drawing the focus again to the researcher-teacher specialist relationship. We believe that it is the job of researchers to find avenues to communicate the results of empirical investigations directly to teachers. Moreover, researchers are also responsible for communicating these outcomes in terms that are both relevant and clear to teachers. Ideally, this communication would result in classroom instruction research that takes into consideration both the goals and the experience of classroom teachers. This research is necessary in order to test whether these implications actually work in the L2 classroom. We are aware that this is a rather lofty and labor-intensive goal to achieve. Indeed, there is much work to be done in terms of mediation. However, given the enormous potential of these collaborations for both teachers

and researchers, we believe the time is right for GenSLA researchers to follow Widdowson's (2000) directives and start this fruitful dialogue.

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Autobiographies

Tania Leal (Assistant Professor; University of Nevada, Reno) received her Ph.D. in SLA (specialization Linguistics) from the University of Iowa. She studies how L2 learners and heritage speakers acquire and process syntactic, pragmatic, and morphological phenomena. Her work has appeared in *Lingua*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Language Acquisition*, *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, and *Applied Linguistics*.

Roumyana Slabakova is Professor and Chair of Applied Linguistics at the University of Southampton, UK, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Iowa. Her research interest is in the second language acquisition of meaning; more specifically phrasal-semantic, discourse and pragmatic meanings. Her monographs include *Telicity in the Second Language* (Benjamins, 2001) and *Meaning in the Second Language* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2008). She co-edits the journal *Second Language Research* (SAGE). Her textbook entitled *Second Language Acquisition* was published by Oxford University Press in 2016.

Appendix A: (List of textbooks reviewed)

Name	Publisher	Authors	Level
Identidades: Exploraciones e Interconexiones	Pearson Prentice Hall	Elizabeth E. Guzmán (Author), Paloma Lapuerta (Author), Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro (Author), Matilde Olivella Castells (Author)	Intermediate
Imagina: Español sin barreras	Vista Higher Learning	Jose A. Blanco (Author) and C. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch (Author)	Intermediate
¡Avance!: Intermediate Spanish	McGraw Hill	Mary Lee Bretz (Author), Trisha Dvorak (Author), Carl Kirschner (Author), Rodney Bransdorfer (Author), Constance Kihyet (Author)	Intermediate
Vistazos: Un curso breve	McGraw Hill	Mary Lee Bretz (Author), Trisha Dvorak (Author), Carl Kirschner (Author), Rodney Bransdorfer (Author), Constance Kihyet (Author)	Beginning
¿Sabías qué?: Beginning Spanish	McGraw Hill	Bill VanPatten (Author), James Lee (Author), Terry L. Ballman (Author), Andrew Farley (Author)	Beginning
Vistas: Introducción a la lengua española	Vista Higher Learning	Jose A Blanco (Author)	Beginning
Más allá de las palabras: Intermediate Spanish	Wiley	Olga Gallego (Author), Concepción B. Godev (Author), Mary Jane Kelley (Author)	Intermediate
Alianzas: Español Intermedio	Cenage Learning	Sheri Spaine Long (Author), Maria Carreira (Author), Sylvia Madrigal Velasco (Author), Kristin Swanson (Author)	Intermediate
Dicho y Hecho	Wiley	Kim Potowski (Author), Silvia Sobral (Author), Laila M. Dawson (Author)	Beginning
Investigación de gramática	Heinle	Patricia V. Lunn (Author), Janet DeCesaris (Author)	Advanced
Punto y aparte	McGraw Hill	Sharon W. Foerster (Author), Anne Lambright (Author)	Intermediate

¿Qué tal?: An Introductory course	McGraw Hill	Thalia Dorwick (Author), Ana María Pérez-Gironés (Author), Marty Knorre (Author), William R. Glass (Author), Hildebrando Villarreal (Author)	Beginning
Anda: Curso Intermedio	Pearson Prentice Hall	Jean W. LeLoup (Author), Glynis Cowell (Author), Audrey L. Heining-Boynton (Author)	Intermediate
Protagonistas: A communicative approach	Vista Higher L	Charo Cuadrado (Author), Belen Gaudioso (Author), Pilar Melero (Author), Enrique Sacristan (Author), Jan Underwood (Author)	Beginning
Encuentros	Harcourt	Emily Spinelli (Author), Marta Rosso-O'Laughlin (Author)	Beginning
Visión y Voz: A complete Spanish course	Wiley	Vicki Galloway (Author), Angela Labarca (Author)	Beginning
¡Claro que sí!	Houghton Mifflin	Lucia Caycedo Garner (Author), Debbie Rusch (Author), Marcela Dominguez (Author)	Beginning
¿Qué te parece?	McGraw Hill	James F. Lee (Author), Dolly Jesusita Young (Author), Rodney Bransdorfer (Author), Darlene F. Wolf (Author)	Intermediate

Appendix B: Teacher Questionnaire

Cuestionario de Entrada / Entrance Questionnaire

Por favor, conteste las siguientes preguntas. Esta información se recauda con fines estadísticos únicamente. / Please answer the following questions. This information is used for profiling statistical purposes only.

Por favor, consulte con el investigador antes de contestar, si no está seguro cómo contestar. / Please consult with the researcher before answering, if you have any questions.

PARTE I. / PART I

1. *¿Qué tipo de hablante es? /* What type of Spanish speaker are you?

( ) Hablante nativo de español / Native Speaker of Spanish
( ) Hablante de herencia / Heritage
( ) Casi nativo / Near-native
( ) Avanzado / Advanced
( ) Intermedio / Intermediate
( ) Novato / Novice

2. *¿Cuál es su nivel de escolaridad? Escoja una opción.* / What is your education level? Choose one.

( ) Primaria / Elementary
( ) Secundaria-Preparatoria / High School
( ) Universidad / College
( ) Posgrado / Graduate

3. *¿Habla otros idiomas además del español o el inglés? Explique*
Do you speak any other languages besides English? Explain

4. *¿Cuál es su edad?* / What is your age?

5. *Es usted /* Are you...
( ) *Hombre* / Male
( ) *Mujer* / Female

6. Tiene que ser (o haber sido) maestro de español para continuar. ¿Ha enseñado español? / To continue, you must teach (or have taught) Spanish. Have you taught Spanish?
( ) *Sí* / Yes
( ) *No* / No

7. *¿Por cuántos años ha enseñado español? Puede usar el espacio para explicar si es necesario.* / How many years of Spanish teaching experience do you have? You can use the space below to explain if necessary.

PARTE II. / PART II

8. *Ahora va a leer unas oraciones en español. Por favor, indique si son oraciones que son posibles en español (aunque Ud. personalmente no las use). Puede usar el espacio para explicar si es necesario. /* Now you will read some sentences in Spanish. Please indicate if these sentences are possible in Spanish (even if you wouldn't say that yourself). You can use the space below to explain.

	Es posible	No es posible
A Juan lo vieron ayer.		
A mi Jimena nunca me da dinero.		
Recuerda que las patas de la mesa las debemos doblar con cuidado.		
La casa la limpié yo.		
A Julián no lo pude encontrar en todo el día.		
Que fumas lo sabemos todos.		
A Teresa no le he regalado nada.		

9. *¿Cree que estas estructuras se usan frecuentemente en conversación?* / Do you believe that these structures are used frequently in conversation?

10. *¿Recuerda haber estudiado esta estructura en alguna clase de gramática?* / Have you studied this structure in grammar class?

11. *¿Conoce el nombre de esta estructura?* / Do you know what this structure is called?

12. *¿Ha enseñado esta estructura en sus clases?* / Have you ever taught this structure?

13. *¿Por qué o por qué no?* / Why or why not?

14. *Puede escribir cualquier comentario sobre el cuestionario (o las oraciones en la tabla de arriba) aquí. ¡Gracias por su ayuda!* / Please write any comments about the questionnaire (or the sentences in the table above) here. Thank you for participating!