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Elaine M. Shenk

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Teaching Sociolinguistic Variation in the Intermediate Language Classroom: *Voseo* in Latin America

Elaine M. Shenk
Saint Joseph's University

Abstract: The acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by second language learners has gained increased attention. Some research highlights the value of naturalistic exposure through study abroad while other studies point out that classroom input can facilitate the acquisition of particular features of variation. Nevertheless, said attention to the intersection of sociolinguistic variation and second language acquisition is not always reflected in curricular content and pedagogy. As one example, Spanish language classrooms often do not cover *voseo*, which is defined as the use of the pronoun *vos* or the corresponding verbal morphology, even though learners are typically presented with other types of variation in personal forms of address. This article discusses reasons why *voseo* is typically excluded in the language classroom, offers a rationale for its inclusion at the intermediate level that connects with the objectives of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in Communication, Cultures, Comparisons, and Communities, and articulates a series of activities designed to help language learners recognize and respond appropriately to conversational *voseo* usage. The suggested learning units are framed within the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication and thus promote general language learning while specifically enhancing intermediate learners' sociolinguistic awareness of this particular dialectal feature.

Keywords: dialects/dialectos, L2 Spanish/español como una lengua extranjera (ELE), pedagogy/pedagogía, sociolinguistic variation/variación sociolingüística, *voseo*

Introduction

A significant challenge for language educators is to help students contend with the reality of sociolinguistic variation in spoken and written language varieties throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Spanish is an official language in more than twenty countries and is also spoken in Morocco, the Philippines, and the United States. Thus, it manifests significant variation at all linguistic levels. The acquisition of such variation by second language (L2) learners has increasingly been an object of study, particularly in the intersection of L2 interlanguage research with sociolinguistic variation research (Bayley 2000; Bayley 2005; Geeslin 2011; Howard 2012; van Compernolle and Williams 2012a, 2012b). Many studies have highlighted the value of naturalistic exposure through study abroad or other extracurricular experiences (Rehner and Mougeon 2003; Schmidt 2009). However, scholars are also recognizing that classroom input may facilitate the acquisition of particular features of sociolinguistic variation (Gutierrez and Fairclough 2006; Howard 2012).

Minimal exposure to sociolinguistic variation readily correlates with learners' lack of awareness and usage of these forms, as observed with French immersion students who made infrequent use of vernacular or informal variants but frequent use of formal and hyper-formal variants to which they were exposed through texts and teacher input (Nadasdi, Mougeon, and Rehner 2005; Mougeon, Nadasdi, and Rehner 2010). This research showed that teachers tended

to use formal variants and did not give feedback on nor carry out activities to help students become more aware of variants and how to use them. The adaptation of classroom input and activities into units that focus explicitly on differences between variants are one way to encourage student language acquisition and to capitalize on students' motivations to learn "everyday French" (Nadasdi et al. 2005: 558). Although L2 learners' ability to produce all possible variants is not likely or even necessary, receptive knowledge, accompanied by some level of productive knowledge of the most common variants, is indeed important for L2 learners (Nadasdi et al. 2005). Although this variation makes the L2 an even more complex object of study, students can and should be exposed to it, since successful language acquisition includes learners' familiarity with a range of variants in the target language, their use of these variants in comparable ways to native (L1) speakers of the target language, and an awareness of the linguistic and sociolinguistic constraints on these variants (Bayley 2000; Mougeon, Rehner and Nadasdi 2004; Nadasdi, Mougeon, and Rehner 2005).

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (2012) for speaking, those who have reached intermediate low proficiency are able to "handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations" (8). Textbooks at this level typically present some level of lexical variation, as do instructors who speak a different language variety from the one presented in the textbook. For this reason, teaching a sociolinguistic feature at the Intermediate level continues to develop students' basic communicative skills while expanding their receptive skills to appreciate the diversity inherent in spoken Spanish. This article focuses on the morphosyntactic phenomenon of *voseo* in Latin America, defined broadly here as the use of the pronoun *vos* or the morphological verbal endings corresponding to *voseo*. Specifically, this current study examines why language educators may not teach *voseo* at the intermediate level, offers a rationale for its inclusion, provides a brief overview of the phenomenon, and, finally, describes a series of classroom activities designed to help intermediate learners recognize and respond appropriately to conversational *voseo* usage.

A Rationale for the Inclusion of *Voseo* in the Classroom

By the intermediate level in the high school or university classroom, most students have been introduced to the concept of variation in personal forms of address. Textbooks routinely present the distinction between second person singular forms *tú* and *usted*, often as a variable of formality, and more rarely as variables of intimacy and solidarity, in order to make the choice between the two forms. Texts also typically present the second person plural forms *vosotros* and *ustedes*, although not all explanations of these verbal paradigms include how the two differ. Textbooks published in the United States and beyond often do not mention the fact that the pronoun *vos* and/or verbal *voseo* forms are another option for the second person singular in some parts of Latin America (Congosto 2004). Mason and Nicely (1995) surveyed thirty-seven first-year secondary and college texts and found that only sixteen percent referenced the *voseo*. Many students of L2 Spanish thus never encounter *voseo* in the language classroom. Increasingly, scholars have recognized L2 Spanish students' lack of exposure to this phenomenon and have called for further attention to *voseo*, especially given its role in the daily usage and identity for many Latin Americans (Angulo Rincón 2010; Congosto 2004). Aside from the obvious lack in the textbook presentations, there are other reasons why *voseo* has long been ignored. First, the phenomenon is present in some, but not all, of the Spanish-speaking world. Second, it is a complex morphological and sociolinguistic phenomenon, and is not easily simplified into one pattern. Third, some instructors of Spanish may be unfamiliar with the topic, since not all have lived in, travelled to, or made the acquaintance of someone from a region of Latin America where *voseo* is present. Fourth, as explored briefly below, *voseo* has been stigmatized in some regions,

particularly as a part of academic speech, and thus it may not be considered appropriate for the language classroom by some instructors. A fifth reason may be that some instructors question the inclusion of yet another topic to cover on an already crowded syllabus.

Yet these detractors should not prevent L2 Spanish students from being exposed to *voseo*. First, nearly every Spanish language classroom already exposes students to language variation in personal pronouns through the form of *vosotros*, even though this word and related verbal morphology is only used in a relatively small part of the Spanish-speaking world, a choice that privileges some language varieties of Spanish spoken in Spain over the varieties of Spanish spoken in other parts of the world. Secondly, educators regularly teach—and typically *simplify* for students' supposed benefit—other similarly complex phenomena, such as the use of *tú* and *usted*. The classic portrayal of *tú* as informal and *usted* as formal and reserved for older persons or lesser acquaintances is a simplification that overlooks pragmatic differences in usage between some parts of Latin America and Spain (Placencia 2005; Schwenter 1993); it also does not represent the reality of many Colombians who use *usted* in contexts where other Spanish speakers, including other Latin Americans, use *tú* (Rey 1994; Travis 2002). This usage of *usted* is also present in parts of Venezuela (Kany 1994 [1945]; Lipski 1994; Páez Urdaneta 1981; Rona 1967) and Costa Rica (Lipski 1994: Vargas Dengo 1974). Teaching the *voseo* helps to avoid another generation that does not recognize this feature yet who will almost certainly come into contact with *voseo* users in Latin America and in the United States.

In terms of the potentially stigmatized values attached to *voseo*, Gutierrez and Fairclough (2006) point out that sociolinguistic research has clearly challenged the ways in which a so-called "standard language" has often been identified as the only variety valid for language instruction (181). There is clearly significant, and some may argue excessive, material to cover at the intermediate level. Nevertheless as indicated above, language classrooms are increasingly called on to respond to sociolinguistic concerns whereby language forms and usage are embedded within particular communities and their cultures. Educating students about *voseo* clearly corresponds to several of ACTFL's 5 Cs. Learners improve their ability to communicate by recognizing and responding appropriately to the use of *voseo* (Communication). They also expand their understanding of the relationship between practices (the use of *voseo*, *tú*, or *usted*) and perspectives regarding what that usage references or indexes within the culture (Cultures). Learners compare the use of *voseo* and what it represents with their own language communities, and how intimacy, solidarity, informality, and formality are imagined, perceived, and expressed (Comparisons). The study of *voseo* also prepares students to engage speakers in person (Communities). Finally, teaching *voseo* in the intermediate and advanced classroom provides a brief introduction to the concept of dialectal variation and the field of sociolinguistics. The following section presents a brief overview of the geographical, morphological, and sociolinguistic variation seen in the phenomenon of *voseo*, followed by specific suggestions as to how to present this topic to Intermediate language learners.

Voseo: Geographical, Morphological, and Sociolinguistic Variation

Currently, *voseo* is a strictly American phenomenon, although pronominal *vos* did appear historically in Spain, having existed in Latin (Benavides 2003; Cisneros Estupinan 1996; Ferreccio Podesta 1993; Lapesa 1970; and Rivadeneira and Clua 2011). Some scholars suggest that regions with extensive contact with the peninsula (i.e., the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru) developed a *tuteo* system alongside that developing in Spain as opposed to the more isolated regions, where the use of *voseo* was maintained and reinforced (see, for example, Baumel-Schreffler 1995; Micheau 1991; Páez Urdaneta 1981). Benavides (2003) has suggested that other factors from the nineteenth century and forward, such as the arrival of European immigrants in the Río de la Plata region who did not hold stigmatized views on its usage, as well as independence

or antiforeigner movements, were also involved (619). Estimates of *voseo* usage—pronoun and/or verbal morphology—suggest that it is present in anywhere from two-fifths to two-thirds of Spanish-speaking America (Benavides 2003; Hammond 2001; Zamora Munné y Guitart 1988).

There have been extensive discussions of the geographic variation of *voseo* (see, for example, Angulo Rincón 2010; Hammond 2001; Lipski 1994; Morales 2003; Oviedo 2002; Páez Urdaneta 1981; Ramírez Luengo 2003; Rona 1964, 1973). *Voseo* is the most common form of second-person singular address in Argentina, and it is so generalized that *tuteo* is practically nonexistent (Fontanella de Weinberg 1970, 1995–96, 1999; Moyna and Vanni Ceballos 2008). *Voseo* exists alongside *tuteo* in many parts of Paraguay and Uruguay, although with some shifting taking place in the latter country towards the loss of *tuteo* (Weyers 2009). In Chile, *voseo* presents a complex case scenario with significant variation along geographic and social lines (Bishop and Michnowicz 2010; Granda 1978; Newall 2007; Rivadeneira and Clua 2001; Stevenson 2007; Sweeney 2005; Torrejón 1986, 1991; Uber 2004). *Voseo* is present in parts of the Andean region, and although Bolivia and Ecuador are perhaps most associated with *voseo* usage, it is also found in parts of Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela (Freites Barros and Zambrano Castro 2007; Montes Giraldo 1967; Ramírez Luengo 2003; Travis 2002). Both *voseo* and *tuteo* are common in much of Central America, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, with Panama as the main exception (Baumel-Schreffler 1995; Benavides 2003; Pinkerton 1986; Rojas Blanco 2003; Thomas 2008). Although Mexico is predominantly *tuteante*, parts of Chiapas are also *voseante*, where historical connections to Guatemala and much of Central America are likely relevant (Páez Urdaneta 1981: 76; see also Kany 1994 [1945]; Rona 1967). In the United States, speakers who would typically use *voseo* in their home country may begin to use it less frequently, particularly as seen in subsequent generations of speakers, due to dialectal contact and subsequent dialect leveling among speakers of Spanish from different regions, although it may be retained in regions with a concentration of immigrants from Central America (Baumel Schreffler 1994; Hernández 2002; Woods and Rivera-Mills 2002).

In addition to this geographic variation, *voseo* takes many forms. Scholars often refer to 'authentic *voseo*' as the use of the pronoun *vos* and corresponding verbal forms, 'pronominal *voseo*' as the use of the pronoun *vos* with verbal morphology corresponding to *tú*, and 'verbal *voseo*' as the use of *voseo* verbal morphology without the pronoun *vos*, a typology summarized in Table 1 (Benavides 2003).

Table 1. A Basic *Voseo* Typology for Verbs Ending in -AR

	Use of pronoun	Use of verbal form	Example
Authentic voseo	Yes	Yes	vos hablás
Pronominal voseo	Yes	No	vos hablas
Verbal voseo	No	Yes	tú hablás

However, significant morphological variation also exists within this basic typology. The most common pattern found in Argentina and in Central America makes use of verbal morphology *-ás*, *-és*, and *-ís* in the present tense for the three predominant verbal paradigms (*hablás*, *comés*, and *vivís*) (Benavides 2003; Fontanella de Weinberg 1997). Chilean *voseo* morphology, however, includes diphthongs in the *-AR* and *-ER* verbal paradigms (*habláis*, *coméis*) and frequently elides the final *-s*, yielding *hablái* and *coméi*. The verbal morphology *-ís* can also be heard in Chile and parts of the Andean region as part of the *-ER* paradigm (*comís*). Benavides (2003),

Fontanella de Weinberg (1997), and Uber (2004) provide nuanced explanations of the significant morphological variation of *voseo* in various parts of Latin America, as does the *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* of the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (2012). Where *voseo* is reflected in the verbal morphology, the present tense is always involved (Granda 1978; Morales 2003). The imperative and corresponding present subjunctive forms are typically also affected (e.g., *tomá*; *que lo tomés*). Although these forms may show less morphological variation overall than is seen in the present tense, geographical variation clearly does exist. For example, River Plate *voseo* does include some pronominal *voseo* to the extent that it uses *vos* along with verbal morphology corresponding with *tú* (e.g., *quiero que vos lo hagas*), but authentic *voseo* for negative command forms (*¡no lo hagás!*) (Fontanella de Weinberg 1979: 77). In Central America, this pattern can be reversed but speakers show some level of variation even within a particular region with negative imperatives employing the *tuteo* verbal morphology (*¡no lo hagas!*) and the present subjunctive using the voseo or the *tuteo* verbal morphology (*quiero que lo hagás/hagas*) (Hernández 2007; Ortiz 2000). Other tenses (e.g., future) generally do not differ from corresponding *tuteo* forms. Where *voseo* usage is reflected in the pronominal system, the subject pronoun *vos* is most evident; other pronouns are generally those used with *tuteo* (*te*, *tu*, *tuyo*) although some regional variation is seen with prepositional objects (*contigo* or *con vos*; *a vos*; *tu libro* or *el libro de vos*).

Adding to the complexity of the morphology of this feature is the exploration of what the use of *voseo* means within a particular cultural context. Numerous scholars have examined *voseo* in Chile and pointed to the influence of Andrés Bello, who argued strongly against the use of *voseo* (Benavides 2003; Cisneros Estupinan 1999; Lipski 1994; Newall 2007; Rivadeneira and Clua 2011; Stevenson 2007; Sweeney 2005; Torrejón 1986, 1991; Uber 2004). Bello's campaign in the *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1958) refers to *voseo* as unbearably corrupt, a prescriptivist move that has occasioned some resistance, especially by the country's youth who perceived *voseo* to be a sign of intimacy and solidarity in comparison with the verbal morphology for a pedantic and cold *tú* (Sweeney 2005). Indeed interlocutors in Chile have been shown to alternate between *tuteo*, *voseo*, and use of *usted* (Torrejón 1991). Nevertheless, *verbal voseo* unaccompanied by the pronoun *vos* remains the most common in Chile.

Whether *voseo* is encouraged or discouraged in a given region, it typically indexes a level of informality, intimacy, and/or solidarity. Pinkerton (1986) and Baumel-Schreffler (1995) describe the system in Guatemala, for example, as tripartite, including formal *usted*, informal *vos*, and an intervening level using *tú*. Although *voseo* is not stigmatized across the board, gender may be a variable somewhat correlated with usage. In Guatemala, for example, *voseo* has been found in some studies to be more common between men than between women or in mixed gender conversations, although this is subject to individual variation with some women using *vos* in spite of the overall pattern (Baumel-Schreffler 1995; Pinkerton 1986). In this context, *voseo* use is perceived by some speakers to be a masculine form of discourse, more appropriate for men than for women, and in parallel form, *tuteo* use by men is seen as effeminate, a perspective also identified in Costa Rica (Pinkerton 1986; Villegas 1963). Simpson (2002) points out that in regions of Colombia where both *voseo* and *tuteo* exist, there may be a particular avoidance of *tuteo* among men due to its use and association with romantic relationships or flirting. In Honduras, *voseo* is the unmarked norm for informal address at all social levels, especially when trust and a younger interlocutor are involved; the use of *tú* is rare in colloquial speech although it does appear in radio and television due to the provenance of these from Venezuela or México, and this contributes to its perception as something that is foreign, "artificial, afectado o demasiado refinado" (Benavides 2003: 619). Nicaragua and El Salvador both show a similar pattern to that of Honduras (Kany 1994 [1945]; Páez Urdaneta 1981; Rey 1994). In Costa Rica, although *usted* is perhaps the most clearly unmarked choice, *vos* is used for situations of trust whereas *tú* is seldom used (Thomas 2008). Vargas Dengo (1974) asserts that in Costa Rica "el tuteo no

constituye en este momento ninguna amenaza para el *vos*" (30), although Rojas Blanco (2003) states that education in Costa Rica tends to privilege the use of *tú*, sparking debates as to the importance of valuing students' dialect as a medium of social and cultural identity. Finally, just as *tú* and *usted* can communicate a variety of social meanings depending on the context, *vos* has been found to represent not only solidarity and intimacy but also can potentially index a derogatory reference (Rivera-Mills 2011).

Presenting *Voseo* to Intermediate Learners: Eliciting Prior Knowledge

It is clearly vital and logical to expose Intermediate learners to *voseo* in spite of its geographical, morphological, and sociolinguistic complexity, since, as we have seen above, pedagogical approaches to teaching a second language should be rooted in a sociolinguistic approach (Congosto 2004; Gutierrez and Fairclough 2006; Lyster 2007; Nadasdi et al.). Mougeon, Nadasdi, and Rehner (2010) suggest a reexamination of pedagogical approaches and materials, in their case, for French immersion programs, although the current study argues that the same process should apply in other L2 classrooms (see also Lyster 1994, 2007; Nadasdi et al. 2005). Congosto (2004) asserts that the Intermediate level is an appropriate level to explore basic differences related to *voseo* and that study of the topic at the advanced level can help students to further develop their understanding of its use in communicative contexts. In this section, I explore specific and practical classroom activities designed to achieve the objectives of exposure and recognition of the sociolinguistic feature of *voseo*. An effective pedagogy for teaching linguistic variation should include raising students' awareness of linguistic variation, exposing students to informal variants, and giving them opportunities to practice these variants through communicative activities that develop receptive and productive skills related to this topic (Nadasdi et al. 2005).

A helpful strategy when introducing an unfamiliar topic is to elicit prior knowledge. Students bring to the classroom a wealth of knowledge about language variation even though they may not have explored it previously in any systematic way. One way to introduce this topic in particular is through the variety of forms of address that we use when speaking to one another that are clearly dependent on contexts of use. Educators can clarify basic principles of linguistic variation by eliciting a variety of terms of address with examples in either the students' L1 or L2. The process of eliciting prior knowledge in the L1 or L2 depends on the learners' language level and may also be affected by the educator's preferences for classroom methodologies. Even when examples in the L1 are elicited, classroom discussion can still take place in the target language (i.e., L2 Spanish). As one example, to draw on students' prior knowledge in L1 English, the instructor might elicit a list of greetings (e.g., hey, yo, what's up, hi, hello, good morning) and ask the students to discuss when and with whom these greetings would or would not be appropriate. This can be supplemented with a second list of potential pronouns, names, and titles (e.g., you, y'all, girlfriend, Angela, Ms. Jones, Professor Iniesta, Doctor Martínez, and so forth). By encouraging students to consider which terms from the list of greetings can be combined with which pronouns, names, or titles, educators can move the class towards a greater understanding of the underlying concept of language accommodation and contexts of use.

Applying this L1 knowledge to L2 knowledge, students can then identify what they already know about appropriate forms of address by compiling a list of greetings in L2 Spanish, such as *qué hubo*, *oye*, *hola*, or *buenas tardes*, and a list of pronouns, names, and titles in Spanish, such as *tú/usted*, *vosotros/ustedes*, *cuate*, *Jorge*, *Doña Elvira*, *Señor Díaz*, or *la Señora Presidenta*. As with the students' L1 list, students should now be able to make hypotheses about appropriate or inappropriate combinations of the two lists. This initial exercise introduces the principles of language variation in terms of varying levels of formality according to the contexts of use and also helps students to show what they already know about the sociopragmatics of their L2 Spanish, providing an opener into another level of formality, intimacy, and solidarity found in

many dialects of Latin American Spanish to which they may not have been exposed previously. Subsequent classroom activities can explore the phenomenon through all three ACTFL modes including 'Interpretive' (non-participatory listening or reading activities designed to expose the student to *voseo* usage in naturally occurring contexts meant for a native speaker audience), 'Interpersonal' (interactive two-way communication designed for students to communicate actively with other interlocutors), and 'Presentational' (one-way, noninteractive essays, reports, letters in which they present their knowledge and investigation of the topic). Due to the complexity of the phenomenon and the central learning objective of helping students to recognize the feature in spoken Spanish, the majority of activities should focus on exposure to the phenomenon and understanding its use through activities in the Interpretive mode, as described below.

Interpretive Mode: Listening/Watching/Reading

Short movie clips and trailers are a rich source of data that provide contextually based examples of *voseo* within conversation, combining visual and aural input that is helpful for language learners. The Internet Movie Database (IMDB) provides clips, trailers, and summaries for a variety of films. The advanced search feature allows the user to browse through films by country and language for these purposes, looking for countries where *voseo* is frequently used. Short clips or trailers from films including *Camila* (1984, Argentina), *El hijo de la novia* (2001, Argentina), *La historia oficial* (1985, Argentina), *Un lugar en el mundo* (1992, Argentina), *El secreto de sus ojos* (2009, Argentina), *La Yuma* (2009, Nicaragua), and *Amor y frijoles* (2009, Honduras) can be juxtaposed with film clips where speakers use *tuteo* forms, so that students can hear the difference between the verbal morphology and identify who is using *voseo* and under what conditions. Using film clips that are readily available online enables them to function as the source of data for a classroom activity or for a homework assignment for viewing out of class.

As one example, in a short 2.5-minute clip from the end of the film *Un lugar en el mundo*, the narrator expresses nostalgia for a family member's absence. Prior to viewing the clip, students can prepare themselves for the content and topic of the clip by brainstorming a list of vocabulary items in Spanish related to possible reactions to a family member's or friend's impending relocation. Discussion questions could center on their own experiences of a family member or friend who moved away, such as the following:

1) ¿Se ha mudado algún(a) familiar o amigo(a) tuyo(a) a un lugar lejano?
2) ¿Cómo te sentías al no poder verlo/la regularmente?
3) Escríbele un mensaje a aquella persona para expresar lo que sientes.

These questions could also be assigned as homework prior to watching the clip. While watching the clip, students can be asked to identify the origin of the speaker, based on their understanding of where *voseo* is most frequently used, with a trigger like "Es probable que el narrador sea de. . . (Buenos Aires/España/los Estados Unidos/Cuba)." Students can also listen for specific information to complete phrases from the movie in which *voseo* is used. See the following examples:

1) Todavía le cuesta creer que _____ (vos no estés).
2) Habla _____ (de vos) con bronca.
3) A mí también a veces me da bronca no _____ (tenerte) al lado para poder hablar _____ (con vos) .
4) Terminé el primario en un colegio que tenía secundario _____ (como vos querías).

Such cloze exercises enable students to pay attention to the ways in which *voseo* is used in ordinary conversation both in terms of the pronouns (*te* and *vos*) as well as how the verbal morphology can differ from *tuteo* in the present tense (e.g., *estés*) but not in the imperfect (e.g., *querías*).

Depending on the students' language level, more or less information can be elided. Follow-up comprehension questions should ask the students to listen carefully, to respond to content, and to apply their understanding to the creation of new material. Some examples include:

1) ¿Cómo se siente el narrador? (¿feliz, enojado, triste, emocionado?)
2) ¿Qué significa encontrarse 'un lugar en el mundo'?
3) Con un(a) compañero(a) de la clase, escriban un diálogo entre los dos personajes. Utilicen el voseo en el diálogo.

Music is another resource for presenting *voseo* to intermediate language students. Several songs that incorporate pronominal and verbal *voseo* and that are readily available online are "Gorda" (by Enanitos Verdes), "Te Quiero" (by Mario Benedetti), "Sos bueno, vos también" (by Francisco Canaro), "Salió el sol para mí para vos" (by Fidel Nadal), and "Vos sabés" (by Los Fabulosos Cadillacs).[1] These songs can function either as in-class activities or homework assignments. The use of *voseo* is closely related to contextual features of interlocutors and location; thus, presentation of the feature should be embedded within the context. For example, contextual information for "Vos sabés" could include a discussion of what students know of the circumstances of their own birth, using a question like, "Describe las circunstancias (por ejemplo, la hora, el lugar, etc.) de tu nacimiento." While listening to the song, students should pay attention to verbal morphology and be asked to articulate geographical and interpersonal factors that influence this choice. The following questions could facilitate discussion: "¿Cuál es la conjugación del verbo 'saber' que se utiliza en esta canción?" and "¿Por qué se emplea 'vos' en lugar de otras fórmulas de tratamiento (e.g., Ud. o tú)?" As a follow-up activity, students could discuss the kinds of emotions that parents might feel upon the birth of a child or create a dialogue between parent and offspring about something in their childhood, using *voseo*, from the following question: "Por lo general, ¿cómo se sienten los padres cuando nace un(a) hijo(a)? ¿Habrá una mezcla de emociones? Explícales tu perspectiva a los otros miembros de tu grupo. Con un(a) compañero(a) de la clase, crea un diálogo entre un padre o una madre y su hijo(a) sobre algún acontecimiento que ocurrió cuando su hijo(a) era más pequeño(a). Incorpora el voseo en el diálogo."

For both song and film activities, a simple reference guide to *voseo* usage from a particular region and how to form the verbs in *voseo* is helpful. Intermediate-level students should focus on the most commonly used paradigm of present tense forms ending in *-ás*, *-és*, and *-ís* as used in Central America or Argentina (i.e., *vos hablás*, *comés*, *vivís*). Intermediate high students can go further to learn the imperative and present subjunctive endings (*hablá conmigo*; *quiero que me lo contés*).

In addition to aural and audiovisual input, students can also explore written resources as part of the interpretive mode. Mafalda is an excellent source of informal usage in which the *voseo* appears. Mafalda is the protagonist of a cartoon series by Joaquín Salvador Lavado, better known as Quino. As an outside homework assignment, students could be asked to search online for eight to ten Mafalda comic strips, analyze the types of pronouns and verbs she uses to address her friends and family members, and then summarize her typical concerns. Instructors can either give students several websites to get them started or assign an open-ended web search and ask the following: "¿Qué pronombre y/o formas verbales utiliza Mafalda para dirigirse a sus amigos y familiares?; Escribe tres oraciones donde aparezcan aquellos pronombres y/o las formas verbales correspondientes; ¿De qué clase de problemas se preocupa Mafalda?"

Another source of language data in which *voseo* appears is websites such as Word Reference. To use this website effectively, instructors will need to give students questions to guide their search. For example, students could be asked to define *voseo* by exploring the word's lexical entry. Word Reference provides not only dictionary entries (bilingual translations and monolingual definitions), but also includes an online forum in which participants can ask and find answers

to questions about grammaticality, meaning, and real-world usage. Asking language students to locate and interpret specific information from the forum entries enables them to engage in interpretive and even interpersonal ways with native speakers. As one example, two questions (among many) available in the forum options under the *voseo* entry as of the time of writing this article related to its usage in Costa Rica and in Chile. Forum respondents generally specify their native language, and although this cannot be externally verified, language students can read responses to the questions potentially written by speakers of that particular language variety. Thus, instructors can frame the websearch as an investigation of *voseo* within the framework of sociolinguistic variation in Latin America and explain that on this website, the student will find several threads about the phenomenon. The student is asked to search the *voseo* entry threads to find answers to the following questions and to bring the results to class: "¿Qué es 'el voseo'?; Según el sitio web de Word Reference, ¿se practica el voseo en Costa Rica? Explica.; Según uno de los hilos, el decir "vos" en Chile puede ser ofensivo. ¿En qué sentido?" These questions lend themselves to a classroom activity comparing the results of the students' explorations and coming to an agreement on how to answer them. Asking students to explore the use of the pronoun *vos* in Costa Rica or in Chile prompts them to read authentic material written by a native speaker of Costa Rican or Chilean Spanish regarding the use of the pronoun and advice as to when and how to use (or not to use) it in that country. Although this level of interaction is one step removed from having a conversation with the native speaker of Spanish, it provides the student with comprehensible input about the topic and enables him/her to sort through the complexity based on one person's opinions.

Interpersonal Mode of Communication

The above activities explore *voseo* through the interpretive mode of communication and can also be applied to follow-up activities designed around the interpersonal mode. The Mafalda assignment, for example, lends itself to the work of pairs or small groups in the classroom to collaborate on the creation of new dialogue for a Mafalda cartoon of the students' choice, using *voseo* to address interlocutors, with the following prompt: "Imprime una copia de una de las tiras cómicas de Mafalda que has encontrado. Escribe otro diálogo nuevo para acompañar los dibujos de manera apropiada. Incorpora el voseo en el diálogo."

Students visiting the Word Reference website to carry out an interpretive task can also be asked to pose questions of clarification in Spanish (in the forum itself) that would help them to further their understanding of the topic. Note that students will need to register (free) on the site in order to be able to post a query and request a reply from a native speaker.

After students have been introduced to the ways in which *voseo* is used in ordinary interactions by native speakers in many parts of Latin America, instructors can assign them interactive tasks to practice with a peer, such as asking and answering questions of a classmate about their typical weekend activities but using *voseo* instead of *tú* or *usted* (*Vos, ¿qué hacés los fines de semana?* and *Voy al cine, ¿y vos?*). To facilitate the contextual basis for this activity, students can be asked to roleplay a scenario where one student is an L2 Spanish student studying abroad and the other is a university student in Buenos Aires; they have just met and need to find out basic information about the other person (e.g., *¿Cómo te llamás?*; *¿De dónde sos?*; *¿Dónde vivís?*). It can be pointed out that this is most likely to happen in the Southern Cone region with a new acquaintance, although students may well encounter *voseo* usage in conversation with other Latin Americans they learn to know well.

For students who have access to native speakers of Spanish, either in person or online, an investigative activity about *voseo* as well as other forms of address could include conducting a short survey with different native speakers of Spanish about the forms of personal address each person uses, when, and with whom. Students could create a hypothesis about what they

will find based on the regions of origin of people in their community, and then report on and create a chart of their findings with the entire class, comparing these findings to their hypotheses. For students who do not have access to native speakers of Spanish, the instructor can invite a guest speaker to class to talk about personal address norms in his/her place of origin, thus incorporating both interpretive and interpersonal modes of communication into the classroom activities.

Presentational Mode of Communication

In turn, several of the interpretive and interpersonal activities described above could readily be adapted as presentational activities. Students can perform their dialogue from the follow-up activities, such as the film clip from *Un lugar en el mundo* or the conversation between an L2 Spanish student and *voseo* user. Another possibility is to report to the class on the results of their *voseo* query, to present the new Mafalda cartoon using a miniposter session format, or to present the results of the survey of native speakers of Spanish.

Assessment

Given the complexity of geographical, morphological, and sociolinguistic variation related to *voseo*, Intermediate language students should not be expected to master the extent of details on *voseo* usage. For example, asking students to identify the departments in Uruguay where *voseo* is not used (Fontanella de Weinberg 1992) or the multifaceted patterns shown by less educated speakers when speaking with their parents versus with other interlocutors in Chile (Torrejón 1991) is overly detailed for this level. The learning objectives articulated here are for students to recognize the phenomenon, to understand that it is a variant that typically demonstrates significant solidarity, informality, and intimacy, and to identify regions where it is used with some frequency. Students should be able to understand conversational partners who use *voseo*, and to produce verb forms from the most common paradigm *(-ás*, *-és*, *-ís*) if they decide to accommodate towards potential interlocutors who use *voseo* with them. Students should also be able to recgnize that convergence toward the interlocutor may not be appropriate depending on the interlocutor's and their own social identities. University students might readily converge toward the *voseo* used by peers of similar age, but should demonstrate awareness of potential asymmetrical address norms, in that their convergence towards the *voseo* of an older interlocutor may not be welcomed unless they have been specifically invited to do so, a form of linguistic competence that applies to other forms of address, as well. In general, students should understand the relationship between practices and perspectives, particularly the idea that usage is subject to regional, gender, and age-related variables. They should also compare and/or contrast this phenomenon to their own sociocultural norms. Students should be exposed to and assessed on the most commonly used verbs that they are most likely to hear, whether these are regular (*hacés*) or irregular (*sos*). A sample comprehension check that references geographic differences could ask students to identify whether a speaker who uses the phrase '¿Vivís aquí en la ciudad?' would most likely be from Argentina, Spain, or Puerto Rico. Assessment of written productive knowledge that focuses on one set of verb forms from a particular location, might ask the student to "translate" a question from one dialect to another. As another form of assessment, students can also be asked to write a short dialogue between two interlocutors that demonstrates their knowledge of *voseo* usage and forms. The assignment can also be used to assess a sociocultural understanding of *voseo*, such as the factors (place of origin, relationship) that might lead interlocutors to use *voseo* with each other. A short essay question could ask students to identify the different kinds of personal pronoun address forms available in Spanish, and to articulate their knowledge about how these forms might be used (or not) in a given region.

Conclusions

Latin America is a major point of connection for L2 Spanish students in the United States and in other countries. Educators who encourage students to study abroad, especially in Latin America, know that many will likely encounter *voseo*. This article addresses some common reasons why *voseo* is not always taught in the classroom and argues that *voseo* should be introduced to students at the intermediate level as one form of language variation that is found in the Spanish-speaking world. Specifically, it is argued that teaching *voseo* at the Intermediate level helps instructors to connect their classroom to four of ACTFL's 5 Cs—Communication, Cultures, Comparisons, and Communities. The article presents specific suggestions for activities that can be adapted within and outside the classroom and that are relevant for the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication. Given the wide range of dialects of Spanish spoken in the United States, it is particularly relevant for students of Spanish in the United States to be exposed to dialectal features such as *voseo*. Advanced students will also benefit from exposure and instructional activities relating to other kinds of sociolinguistic variation such as the use of *ser*/*estar* or subjunctive, indicative, and conditional forms with *si* clauses (Gutiérrez and Fairclough 2006). As highlighted in Gutiérrez and Fairclough (2006), such exposure can move from the awareness of variation to the eventual production of these features, which will strengthen not only L2 skills but also confidence in negotiating other kinds of on-site learning related to sociolinguistic variation.

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NOTE

[1] Videos available online for this and other songs vary in content. It is assumed that instructors will use their own discretion when showing clips or trailers, taking into consideration the students in their particular classrooms.

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