

¿Vera o Verra? Using principles of task-based language teaching to practice Spanish rhotics

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Rationale

Research on task-based language teaching and learning (TBLT) has demonstrated that tasks may encourage second/foreign language development, specifically by facilitating conditions believed to engage processes that are important for second language acquisition to occur (Robinson, 2011; Skehan, 2014). Recent studies conducted by Solon, Long, and Gurzynski-Weiss (2014, 2015) have demonstrated that tasks designed to make pronunciation task essential do encourage learner attention to pronunciation, and increasing task complexity leads to greater accuracy in the production of the Spanish vowels [o] and [u]. This micro-teaching lesson, inspired by Solon et al., will showcase a task designed to make the pronunciation of the intervocalic tap /ɾ/ and trill /r/ task essential, in an effort to facilitate classroom learners' attention to and practice of these segments within meaning-based interaction.

Task Objectives

- (1) Nonlinguistic outcome: To determine with whom to pair each member of the conversation club
- (2) Linguistic outcome: To draw student attention to the production of the tap /ɾ/ and trill /r/ between vowels

Task

- (1) Review instructions with students.

Instructions: You and your friend have been selected to serve as co-chairs of the Spanish conversation club! At the beginning of each semester, it is the task of the co-chairs to match club members with a conversation partner based on their interests. You and your friend previously informed club members that they would receive the name and contact information of their conversation partner tomorrow. However, half of the club members emailed their interests to you, and the other half emailed their interests to your friend (the co-chair). You and your friend decide to call each other to quickly decide who to pair with whom based on their interests.

- (2) Arrange students in pairs. One student (Student A) in each pair will receive notecards containing pictures and interests for *Lara*, *Larra*, *Iván*, *Alan*, and *Dante*. The other student in each pair (Student B) will receive notecards containing pictures and interests for *Vera*, *Verra*, *Dora*, *Dorra*, and *Hugo*.

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Lara <i>ir de camping</i> 	Larra <i>coleccionar tarjetas de béisbol</i> 	Ivan <i>pasear en el barco</i> 	Alan <i>jugar a las damas</i> 	Dante <i>leer libros de espías</i> 
Vera <i>jugar al ajedrez</i> 	Verra <i>leer libros de aventura</i> 	Dora <i>montar a caballo</i> 	Dorra <i>hacer surf</i> 	Hugo <i>coleccionar sellos</i> 

(3) Allow students 3-4 minutes to complete the task.

(4) Debrief as a class. With whom did students pair each conversation club member? Why? What aspects of the Spanish language did students need to attend to in order to complete the task?

Task Follow-Up

(5) More students have joined the conversation club, and again you have name and interests of some members and your friend (the co-chair) has the name and interests of other members! Call your friend to assign conversation partners based on their interests. Notice this time that each new member has provided two activities that interests him or her, so be sure to assign conversation partners carefully!

(6) Arrange students in different pairs. One student (Student A) in each pair will receive notecards containing pictures and interests for *Luis, Aarón, Darra, Tomás, and Dara*. The other student in each pair (Student B) will receive notecards containing pictures and interests for *Lora, Lorra, Kera, Kerra, and Axel*.

<p>Luis</p> <p><i>bucear, practicar esquí acuático</i></p> 	<p>Aarón</p> <p><i>andar en bici, hacer jogging</i></p> 	<p>Darra</p> <p><i>jugar a videojuegos, ver Netflix</i></p> 	<p>Tomás</p> <p><i>decorar el apartamento, pintar</i></p> 	<p>Dara</p> <p><i>esquiar, patinar sobre hielo</i></p> 
<p>Lora</p> <p><i>pescar, ir a la playa</i></p> 	<p>Lorra</p> <p><i>patinar, jugar al frisbee</i></p> 	<p>Kera</p> <p><i>mantener un blog, ir al cine</i></p> 	<p>Kerra</p> <p><i>coser, ir de comprar</i></p> 	<p>Axel</p> <p><i>jugar al hockey, comer helado</i></p> 

(7) Allow students 5-7 minutes to complete the task.

(8) Debrief as a class. With whom did students pair each conversation club member? Why?

References

Robinson, P. (2011). Task-based language learning: A review of issues. *Language Learning*, 61(s1), 1-36.

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