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Instruction in derivational morphology in the Spanish L2 Classroom: What do teachers believe and do?

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Understanding derivational morphology (DM) is beneficial for vocabulary acquisition and reading in a second language (L2) since it facilitates word recognition and retention. Despite this, intermediate Spanish L2 learners tend to show limited explicit knowledge of DM. One of the questions that this raises is how DM is taught in the classroom in the case of a morphologically rich language such as Spanish, and what teachers' beliefs and practices about this topic are. Five L2 Spanish teachers working at a US university were observed and interviewed. Vocabulary episodes (VEs), that is, speech events where a word or several words were the focus of instruction, that occurred during the observations were transcribed and tallied. From those, less than 10% explicitly dealt with DM. Instruction was mostly unplanned, and, on occasion, ambiguous. Teachers emphasized the meaning of the stem over the whole word and its affixes. The findings of the study provide a basis for encouraging teachers to reflect on their beliefs and practices about teaching DM in their classrooms.

Keywords: vocabulary; instruction; L2 Spanish; derivational morphology; morphological awareness

1. Introduction

Vocabulary learning is a complex process. First and foremost, there are several aspects a learner needs in order to *know a word*: its spoken, written, and morphological form, its meaning, and its use (e.g., Nation, 2001). Specifically, awareness of

morphological forms, or better said, awareness of derivational morphology (DM), that is, of lexical affixes and roots, such as in the Spanish word *trabajador* ("worker"), where the knowledge of *trabaj-* ("work") and *-dor* (similar to *-er*) can facilitate word learning. This happens in three ways: (1) by helping learners infer the meaning of unknown words (e.g., Haastrup, 2008), (2) by allowing better memorization of new forms (Hu & Nassaji, 2012), and (3) by aiding the recognition of a word's lexical category (e.g., Zyzik & Azevedo, 2009). Such awareness also helps in second language (L2) reading by facilitating the decoding of words (see Koda, 2004; Kuo & Anderson, 2006).

The need to teach DM is obvious, considering that intermediate learners of Spanish tend to show limited explicit knowledge of derivational affixes, whereas their knowledge of inflectional suffixes, a frequent topic of instruction in the Spanish classroom, is much more developed (see Marcos Miguel, 2012; Salazar García, 2010; Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2013; see also Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002, for a similar situation in English L2). Teachers can play a fundamental role as a source of input and make learners aware of structural features through their discourse (e.g., Denman, 2011; Toth, 2008). Considering teachers as mediators in the language learning process (e.g., Gibbons, 2003; Johnson, 2009), this study aims to understand how teachers of L2 Spanish at the tertiary level integrate DM into their discourse, and what their beliefs and practices about this topic are. Thus, attention will be targeted towards teacher-led discourse (TLD).

2. Literature review

2.1. Derivational morphology (DM)

Spanish is a rich morphological language with very productive DM (e.g., Lang 1990; Varela Ortega, 2005). There are over a hundred affixes in Spanish (RAE, 2001) with various degrees of productivity and regularity. Although not all probable words are possible words, due to lexical blocking and other constraints, speakers form new derived words and understand them by attaching an affix to a base, e.g., *chatear*, "to chat", from *chat*. Whereas prefixes do not change the word category, suffixes tend to do that. Suffixes can also change a word's grammatical gender. For its instructional benefits, there have been calls to draw attention to DM in the Spanish L2 classroom (e.g., Serrano-Dolader, 1997-2014). Still, DM is only superficially incorporated into Spanish textbooks (e.g., Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2014; Robles García & Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2016).

An approach to introducing DM in the classroom does not relate to formal or functional theories of linguistics, but rather to pedagogical ones. For example, Tyler and Nagy's (1989) seminal study offers a good overview of DM. The learning

of DM involves three aspects: *relational* (i.e., words with the same stem are related: *camión*, "truck", and *camionero*, "truck driver"), *syntactic* (i.e. suffixes mark word category: *-miento* marks substantives, and in the case of Spanish, they also indicate grammatical gender); and *distributional knowledge* (i.e., not every affix can be attached to every stem: *-ero* is only attached to nominal stems). *Receptive knowledge*, that is, recognizing the affixes in the L2 (Roy & Labelle, 2007), should be added to these three. These four areas deserve classroom attention since they develop in first language (L1) speakers with time and through schooling (see Kuo & Anderson, 2006).

2.2. Vocabulary and derivational morphology (DM) in the classroom

There are not many observational studies that have discussed the teaching of vocabulary in the foreign language classroom. Sanaoui (1996), and Swain and Carroll (1987) are two of these. Sanaoui observed 10 adult L2 French classes, whereas Swain and Carroll observed 10 sixth-grade L2 French immersion classes. Planned and incidental teaching of vocabulary coexisted in the classrooms. This is beneficial given that learners' uptake of vocabulary can take place under both conditions (e.g., Dobinson, 2001). However, Swain and Carroll, and Sanoui concluded that teachers did not make the most of vocabulary instruction. Teachers confined themselves to teaching meaning rather than form, that is, word structure, and "lexical items or expressions rather than generalizable features of the lexis of the target language" (Sanaoui, 1996, p.187).

Variability among teaching styles should also be considered. For example, Folse (2010) followed the same group of learners during one week in an upper-level intensive language program. Rather than being based on the syllabus, the decision on whether to include explicit teaching of vocabulary and DM in the course was made by the teacher. Therefore, teachers' beliefs and practices need to be acknowledged when analyzing instruction of DM. In fact, there have been calls to further explore teachers' beliefs and practices regarding vocabulary instruction (Borg, 2006), where DM instruction is included. For example, in a survey study about the teaching of Spanish L2 vocabulary (De Miguel García, 2005), around 80% of 40 teachers from Spain reported never or very rarely letting students memorize affixes, roots and compounds. Despite the lack of emphasis on memorization, around 50% of the respondents claimed to teach students to recognize DM, that is, they worked on *generalizable features*, or better said, strategies.

Instructors' main reasons for not discussing DM in the classroom are the fallible nature of word formation rules as well as the presumably high language level required in order to benefit from such instruction (e.g., Zhang, 2008). A source of their practices and beliefs might be related to whether they had training

in DM instruction or not. Additionally, native and non-native Spanish teachers might have different perspectives on this issue, due to their schooling and learning experiences. Furthermore, textbooks tend not to include many activities dedicated to the practice of DM, either as a strategy or as independent learnable items (e.g., Brown 2010; Neary-Sundquist, 2015; Robles García & Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2016; Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2014).

However, studies providing explicit instruction of L2 DM suggest that this kind of training is effective. For instance, *pushed-output-based* (e.g., Swain, 1985) activities, that is, those generating derived forms, and *input processing-based* (e.g., VanPatten, 2007) activities, that is, those matching suffixes with pictures, turned to be similarly beneficial for learners of L2 English (Friedline, 2011). The input processing activities were conceived to draw learners' "attention to morphological forms within meaningful contexts" (p. 134), whereas the pushed-output activities were supposed to generate deeper processing and more long-term learning. Similar benefits of DM were provided through instruction in the Spanish L2 classroom in Morin (2003, 2006), Marcos Miguel (2011), and Sánchez-Gutiérrez (2013). In Morin (2003, 2006), the training was based on developing learners' discovery strategies: "analyzing parts of speech, analyzing affixes and roots, and using a bilingual dictionary" (2006, p. 175). Marcos Miguel (2011) followed a similar approach without relying on metalanguage for explanations, whereas Sánchez-Gutiérrez (2013) emphasized explicit instruction. It is important to remember, however, that gains in DM knowledge do not necessarily lead to an increase in vocabulary size. In fact, there are usually low correlations between these two constructs (see Schmitt, 2014). Nevertheless, learners at different proficiency level might benefit in a different way from DM instruction. Intermediate and advanced learners might make the most of DM instruction, whereas beginner learners will still need to increase their vocabulary size before they can take full advantage of it (see Milton, 2009; Morin, 2003, 2006; Sánchez-Gutiérrez, 2013; Schmitt, 2014).

Teacher-led discourse (TLD) seems to be an important factor influencing DM acquisition. For example, Toth (2008) demonstrated how targeted TLD fosters better learning of a morphosyntactic structure such as the anticausative *se* in Spanish. In fact, interaction between teacher and learner is a facilitative mechanism for learning, especially through negotiation, feedback and recasting (see Mackey, 2012). Still, it is unclear how teachers introduce DM through their TLD.

3. Research questions

It could be argued that DM does not need the same pedagogical treatment as inflectional morphology. However, derivational suffixes also establish meaningful

differences, e.g., *trabajar*, "work", versus *trabajador*, "worker", not so easily recognized by L2 learners (e.g., Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002; Whitley, 2004; Zyzik & Azevedo, 2009). The observational and instructional studies mentioned in the literature review focused on planned and unplanned, explicit vocabulary instruction. This study contributes to their findings by narrowing the analysis to DM, and, at the same time, broadening it by investigating teachers' perspectives. From that standpoint, different techniques for effective teaching of DM might be devised.

To that end, the progression of courses within a university Spanish language program was analyzed to illustrate the kind of instruction L2 learners might go through as they move from beginning to advanced level of language proficiency. Thus, this study aims to: (a) offer an overview of trends across language levels in a language program, (b) suggest in which levels more attention to DM is given, and (c) describe a probable instructional path of a regular Spanish L2 learner. The following research questions were examined:

1. What are teachers' beliefs about the teaching of DM?
2. Is the teaching of derivational morphology (DM) integrated in the TLD of the Spanish L2 classroom?
3. If so, what kind of vocabulary episodes (VEs) related to DM can be found in a classroom?

4. Method

4.1. Participants and their classes

The study was conducted in the Spanish language program of a large US university. As is usually the case in such institutions, the instructors were graduate students conducting their PhD studies in literature. By email or in person, the researcher approached nine of those instructors. Out of those, five instructors volunteered to be interviewed and observed for the time that it took to finish a textbook chapter, approximately two weeks of classes. These participants did not know that the focus of the study was on DM, but they knew it was about their teaching practices. Table 1 summarizes their main characteristics, namely the language level they were teaching, their L1, and the number of years they had been teaching Spanish. All the names are pseudonyms.

The classes were comparable given that all of them relied on the textbook and on a common syllabus across sections. The second, third and fourth semester classes were especially similar since they were general Spanish courses focusing on the four skills. All instructors were also trained to follow the communicative approach and had taken at least a foreign language methodology course. These five instructors, also called Teaching Assistants, can be considered

representative of Spanish language teachers working at PhD granting institutions in the US since they very well fit previous descriptions in the literature (e.g., Allen, 2009; Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010).

Table 1 Teachers' profiles

Teacher's name	Level teaching	Number of observed classes	Teacher L1	Experience teaching L2 Spanish	Discussion of DM in pre-observation interview
Juan	2nd semester	7 (50 min each)	Spanish	First semester	No
Sally	3rd semester	4 (75 min each)	English	Over four years	Yes
Fred	4th semester	4 (75 min each)	English	Over four years	No
Rosa	5th semester (Conversation)	4 (75 min each)	Spanish	Over four years	No
Pablo	5th semester (writing and grammar)	5 (50 min each)	Spanish	Over four years	No

Out of all the chapters covered during the observations, only the one in Pablo's textbook (Canteli Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011) focused on DM, namely on the prefixes *des-* and *in-*. In his textbook, each chapter included a reading, a grammatical section, a lexical section, and a section on stylistics. The third and fourth semester classes, Sally's and Fred's classes respectively, had a very similar structure since they used the same textbook (Blanco & Colbert, 2010), that is, an introduction to vocabulary, three grammatical points, some review time, and, depending on the instructor's interest, there was time for discussing a reading or a short film. Juan's class was similarly structured to Fred's and Sally's, albeit using a textbook from another publisher (Castells, Guzmán, Lapuerta & García, 2012). Rosa's class, the conversation one, was the most different since topics were organized around several readings and a short film, but also included a grammar section and vocabulary boxes (Blanco, 2010). In brief, in all the classes, the main vocabulary goal set by the textbooks and syllabi was to help students link form and meaning. Except for Pablo's class, the teaching of DM could only come from the instructors as potential curriculum-developers (e.g., Shawer, 2010), whether as planned activities or in an impromptu manner.

4.2. Research design

In order to better comprehend teachers' classroom practices and their understanding of the role of DM in vocabulary acquisition, several factors, that is, schooling, professional coursework, classroom practices and contextual factors (Borg, 2003), were analyzed. Classroom observations and interviews were part of the research design since it is fundamental to include both in the case of research on teacher cognition (e.g., Borg, 2006) (see Table 2).

Table 2 Research design

Instrument	Content	Purpose
Pre-observation Interview.	Semi-structured interview; asking about beliefs and practices about vocabulary as well as other background information (e.g., Borg, 2006).	Instructors' profiles.
Classroom observations.	Observing and recording the classroom during the teaching of a book chapter (around 300 minutes, over two weeks).	The vocabulary episodes (VEs) were transcribed. From these data, a system of codes was devised. Different themes were observed.
Post-observation Interview.	Semi-structured interview; exploring teachers' thoughts/motivations on the VE.	These data complemented the instructors' profiles as well as the classroom's observations.

4.2.1. Pre-observation Interview

A semi-structured interview was used to elicit a profile of each teacher's educational background, language education, teacher education and teaching experience and, specifically, their views on the teaching of vocabulary. The interview was based on the model used by both Borg (1998, 2003) and replicated by Zhang (2008). In this model, language teacher cognition is a multifaceted construct where schooling, professional coursework, and classroom practices play a main role in its shaping. For Juan, Sally and Fred, the pre-observation interview was carried out before the observations, whereas, due to time constraints, Rosa and Pablo were interviewed in the same weeks that they were observed. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

4.2.2. Classroom observations

These teachers were observed during a minimum of four teaching sessions (between 50 to 75 minutes per session), that is, the equivalent of teaching a book chapter (around 300 minutes) (see Table 1). Each session was audiotaped, and all *vocabulary episodes* were transcribed. A VE was defined as a speech event where a word or several words were the focus of instruction. Within a VE, such as, for example, working on a textbook vocabulary activity, there could be other episodes. Next, *morphology-related episodes*, that is, related to DM, were explored. Two main categories of such episodes emerged: *incidental* (i.e., the teacher was *unaware* of this instructional focus) and *intentional* (i.e., the teacher was *aware* of it). Both terms, *incidental* and *intentional*, are frequently used in L2 pedagogy related to vocabulary acquisition, especially from written input (see Hulstijn, 2001, for a review).

Focusing on the learners, incidental episodes had the potential of raising learners' awareness of DM through interaction and without using metalanguage or explicit comments on the affixes and/or the word-family. This term is derived from the literature on vocabulary instruction, where "incidental learning is learning which accrues as by-product of language usage, without the intended purpose of learning a particular linguistic feature" (Schmitt, 2010, p. 29). Therefore, learners might incidentally learn DM by being exposed to input where DM is present. Intentional episodes incorporated explicit comments on DM and/or word categories in TLD, which implies that even though the instructors are aware of their instructional focus at that specific moment, they might not have planned teaching of this kind in advance. A complete taxonomy appears in Table 3 since more detailed subcategories were established once the incidental episodes were separated from the intentional ones.

4.2.3. Post-observation Interview

After all the observations took place, the teachers met with the researcher for a second semi-structured interview to discuss the VEs. Participants were shown the episodes' transcriptions and were asked questions about what they did, for example, why they chose this activity, what their goals were, etc. The researcher also presented her interpretations of the episodes and asked the teachers whether those were accurate.

5. Results

5.1. Vocabulary episodes (VEs)

Figure 1 shows an overview of VEs and morphology-related episodes (*incidental* versus *intentional*) by teacher. Episodes not related to morphology, which dealt mostly with words' meanings, were also tallied. It was decided to calculate the numbers rather than to measure percentage of time devoted to each episode given the overlap between some VEs, that is, a long vocabulary activity taken from the textbook could have generated several smaller VEs. In fact, planned activities took longer.

The number of morphology-related episodes varied by teacher and did not seem to be dependent on the level and content of the class. The quantitative results of Figure 1 are complemented by the description of the themes of the VEs in Table 3. On the right side, there is a list of the teachers who participated in those episodes.

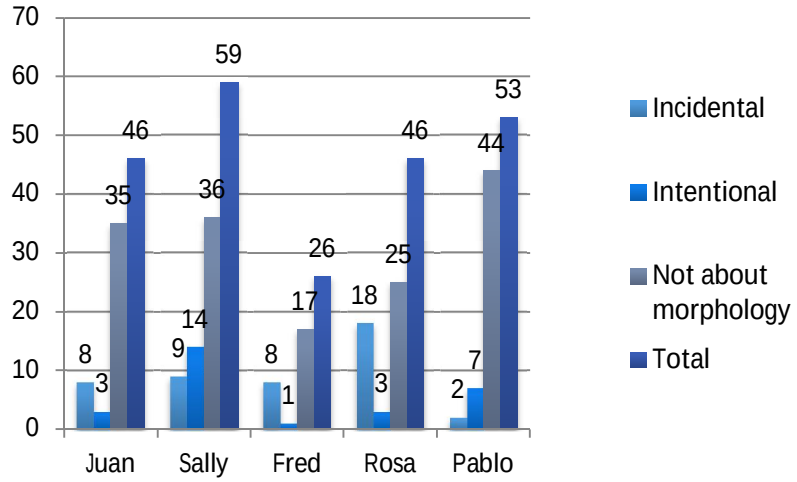

Figure 1Summary of VEs observed

Table 3 Themes in Morphology-related Vocabulary Episodes (VEs)

Theme	Morphological episode	Present in classes taught by
Gender Marking (Section 5.1.1.)	*A. Incidental* (e.g., giving the article with the noun, error correction)	Juan Sally Fred Rosa
	B. Intentional (e.g., expanding on the gender marked by the suffix, error correction)	Fred (e.g., *-ma*) Sally (e.g., *-ma*, *-ista*, *-ción*)
Word labeling (Section 5.1.2.)	*B. Intentional* (e.g., using metalanguage) B.1. Content words B.2. Function words	Juan Sally Fred Rosa Pablo
Introducing word-families (Section 5.1.3.)	*A. Incidental* A. 1. Word meaning *and* structure A. 2. Error correction (word structure *over* meaning) A. 3. Word meaning *over* structure	Juan Sally Rosa Fred Pablo
	B. Intentional (e.g., root awareness, word category)	Sally Rosa Fred
Planned activities (Section 5.1.4.)	*Intentional* Prefixes *in-* and *des-*	Pablo

The following sections will elaborate on representative examples of morphology-related episodes linked to the themes of Table 3.

5.1.1. Gender marking

A. Incidental

Incidental-gender marking episodes had the potential to raise learners' syntactic awareness, that is, making them aware that suffixes mark word categories, and nominal suffixes mark gender. This kind of episode could be just an elicitation or a recast, as the following example from Juan's class shows. Given that most nouns ending with the suffix -a are feminine, which requires that the preceding article agrees with that gender,Juan corrected a student saying *un$_{_masculine}$ ladera$_{_femenine}$, "a hillside", (line 1) by providing the right grammatical gender in the article una$_{_feminine}$ ladera$_{_feminine}$ in his feedback turns (line 2-4).

(1)

1 *Student*: [...]sobre un$_{masc}$*ladera*
2 [on a$_{[wrong\ gender]}$ hillside]
3 *Juan*: *Ladera*, sobre una$_{fem}$...
4 [*Hillside*, on a$_{fem}$]
5 *Student*: No sé.
6 [I don't know.]
7 *Juan*: *Ladera*.
8 [*Hillside*.]

Gender marking episodes are borderline episodes between the teaching of inflectional and derivational morphology since suffixes such as *-a*, *-e*, and *-o* can be inflectional and derivational. When *-a* changes the word category, then it is a nominal suffix, such as *march-a* from *marchar* (Varela, 2005, p. 49; see RAE, 2009 for more examples of *-a* as a derivative, nominal suffix). In (1), it is still possible to see its relationship with the word *lado* (side), that is, making it a recognizable derived word.

B. Intentional

Intentional-gender marking episodes could also be triggered by learner error. For example, Sally, the most morphologically-aware teacher, introduced a longer, impromptu explanation of the gender characteristics of a few high-frequency suffixes. Sally would revisit the gender category marked by *-dad, -ción* and *-ma*, always feminine.

5.1.2. Word labeling

A. Incidental

Word labeling was always intentional.

B.1. Intentional: Content Words

All the teachers labeled words. By doing so, they focused on word categories. In turn, this labeling had the potential to raise learners' awareness of word-families and of word structure. For instance, in (2), Sally presented the structure tan and tanto, "so much/many", and labeled cómodo, "comfortable", as an adjective versus comodidad, "comfort", as a noun.

(2)

1 *Sally*: [...] porque el avión no es tan cómodo como el carro. [*Blackboard*]
2 Entonces en este caso, ¿cuál es el punto de comparación entre el avión y
3 carro? ¿Sí?
4 [*because the train is not as fast as the car.' Then, in this case, which is the*
5 *comparison point between the plane and the car?*]
6 *Student*: la comodidad
7 [*Comfort*]
8 *Sally*: Sí, exactamente. Es un adjetivo en este caso, entonces usamos *tan* porque no
9 podemos contar descripciones, no podemos decir un *cómodo*, dos *cómodo*, ¿no?
10 No tiene sentido.
11 [*Yes, exactly. It is an adjective in this case, then we use as because we cannot count*
12 *descriptions. We cannot say a comfortable, two comfortable, right? It does not make*
13 *sense.*]

In her explanation, Sally expounded on what it means to say that a word is an adjective and not a noun: "Nouns can be countable; adjectives can never be". Sally provided negative evidence to the learners by exemplifying what an inappropriate syntactic frame for an adjective would look like (line 6). Nevertheless, she did not make any explicit comment about the differences in meaning of the suffixes, *-dad* and *-o*, combined with the stem, and about the word categories they marked.

B.2. Intentional: Function Words

Both Juan and Sally had to cover the usage of function words such as algún, alguno, "some/any". Although learning function words falls in between grammar and vocabulary, function words were always indexed as grammar in the textbooks. When these teachers approached the subject as a matter of assigning word category, those episodes were coded as VEs. If the teachers, however, dealt with the phrase structure of the function word, they were not coded as VEs.

5.1.3. Introducing word-families

The most frequent way of introducing DM to the learners was the use of more than one word of the same word-family in a VE. That is, in the same sentence and/or turn, these five teachers would consecutively use two, or more, members. Interestingly, all the teachers commented in the post-observation interview that they were mostly unaware of this.

Comprehending the syntactic and semantic differences between word-family members was not possible in all VEs. For example, in some cases a learner could easily contrast the noun with the verb, such as *bloquear*, "to block", with *bloqueador*, "sun block" (see example 5), whereas, on other occasions, there was almost no room for disentangling the syntactic and semantic differences (see example 7). Without enough evidence to contrast the forms and their meanings, using more than one word-family member could be unhelpful or, as a worst-case scenario, detrimental to learning DM and the word.

In brief, VEs related to the theme *Introducing word-families* exemplify how these two aspects, meaning and structure, can be almost independently taught. There were instances where the stem's meaning prevailed over the word structure (example 7) and vice versa (example 6); and there were other examples where the teacher equally highlighted meaning and structure (examples 3, 4 and 7).

A.1. Incidental: Word structure and meaning

When introducing a new word as in (3), words of the same family frequently followed. Thus, in (3), word structure and meaning were at the same level because there was no conflict in the way they were presented, i.e., the syntactic patterns of the noun, *título*, and the verb, *titulaste*, were representative of these word categories.

(3)

1 Juan: Dar un *título*$_{masc.nom}$. ¿Cómo *titulaste*$_{past.imp.2ndperson.sing}$ tu composición?
2 ' [To write a *title*. How did you *title* your composition?]

In particular, this pattern reoccurred when giving definitions. In (4), Sally used the verbal form *bloquear,* not only to elicit the noun from the learners, but also to exemplify the meaning of the new word. Once the word was found, she would also use the two words of the word-family together.

(4)

1 *Sally:* ¿Qué tiene que llevar para no quemarse, para no quemarse bajo el sol? ¿Alguien
2 sabe? [*Silence*] Como para, a ver, uy, para *bloquear* el sol, ¿qué debe llevar?
3 [What do you have to take with you not to burn yourself, not to burn yourself under
4 the sun? Somebody knows? [*Silence*]. So for, let's see, *to block* the sun, what does one

5 need?]
6 *Student*: [*Incomprehensible*]
7 *Sally*: Sí, *bloqueadorsolar*, ¿no? [*Blackboard*]. Bien, una crema que se pone para no
8 quemarse, para *bloquear* el sol.
9 [Yes, *sun block*, right? [*Blackboard*] Good, a cream that one uses not to get burned, to
10 *block* the sun.]

A.2. Incidental: Word structure over meaning (error correction)

There were instances where learners produced the inappropriate form from a word-family. Because of the nature of the teacher feedback, the structure rather than the meaning was the most highlighted aspect in the VE. Because of this lack of emphasis on meaning, these episodes were labeled word structure over meaning.

In (5), Fred elicited an unsuccessful correction of the form of the word (paciencia, "patience", instead of paciente, "patient"). When he provided the right answer, the learner was then able to process this formal change (line 6).

(5)
1 *Fred*: ¿Hay alguna cosa más?
2 [Is there something else?]
3 *Student*: Preferimos una persona que haya tenido *paciente*$_{adj}$.
4 [We prefer a person that has had *patient*$_{adj}$.]
5 *Fred*: Que haya tenido...
6 ['who has had...']
7 *Student*: *Paciente*$_{adj}$, "has patience"
8 [*Patient*$_{adj}$*, has patience (in English in the original)*]
9 *Fred*: Ok [...] una persona que haya tenido *paciencia*$_{noun}$.
10 [Ok, somebody who has had *patience*$_{noun}$.]
11 *Student*: *Paciencia*$_{noun}$. (Talking to her group)
12 [*Patience*. (Talking to her group)]

A.3. Incidental: Word meaning over structure

Contrary to the previous case, VE classified with word structure over meaning, there were also frequent episodes were the instructors accentuated meaning at the expense of word structure when introducing members of the same word family. For instance, synonym and antonym activities were prototypical activities for this category. These activities might cause formal mismatches if no reflection on word categories is incorporated into the activity and members of the same word-family are successively presented without a syntactic frame to distinguish them.

Only the textbook chapter of Rosa's conversational class included this kind of activities. In (6), the students sought a synonym of the word descubrimiento, "discovery", Rosa drew attention to the stem, descubr-, and not to other elements of the words:

(6)

1 *Rosa*: Número 4, sería, Ok, *descubrimiento*. ¿Cuál sería para la palabra
2 *descubrimiento*?
3 ['Number 4, it is, Ok, *discovery*. What is the word for *discovery*?']
4 *Student1*: [*Incomprehensible*]
5 *Rosa*: Eso es una consecuencia de un *descubrimiento*. Pero por ejemplo, "yo
6 tuve un *descubrimiento* muy grande, supe el secreto de la felicidad."
7 ¿Qué es un *descubrimiento*? O "yo *descubrí* un secreto"... ¿no?
8 [That is a consequence of *a discovery*. But for example, 'I made a great
9 discovery, I found out the secret of happiness' What is a *discovery*? Or 'I
10 *discovered* a secret'...no?]
11 *Student2*: ¿*Enterarse*?
12 [*To find out*.]
13 *Rosa*: *Enterarse*, ese es el significado. La palabra es *revelación,*
14 [*Blackboard*] *revelación*, la *revelación*. Mmm. La *revelación*.
15 [*To find out*, that is themeaning. The word is *revelation,* [*Blackboard*]
16 *revelation*, the *revelation*. Mmm. The *revelation*.]

Student 2 provided a verb, *enterarse* (line 7), as a synonym for the noun *descubrimiento*. Rosa might have prompted the mistake since she exemplified the meaning of the stem *descubr-* using a verb, *yo descubrí un secreto* (line 6). Rosa told the student that he correctly understood the *stem* meaning*, ese es el significado*, "That is the meaning"(line 8). Next, Rosa gave the right answer, using the noun form *revelación* (line 8). However, she did not reflect on the sentence *ese es el significado* and what it entailed, that is, that the nominal and the verbal form share the same meaning because of their common stem. By saying *ese es el significado* without any further explanation, she implied that a word can be defined by the meaning of its stem, disregarding its syntactic function and causing a mismatch between a word structure and its meaning.

B. Intentional: Word structure and meaning

The main difference between incidental and intentional episodes introducing word-families lies in the labeling of word categories. When labeling words, a greater balance between the teaching of meaning and structure was achieved since labeling might facilitate noticing the word category (see example 2). Furthermore, labeling of this kind is motivated by teachers' awareness of the complexity of learning word categories, as Sally and Juan pointed out in their interviews.

Sally, as the most morphologically-aware teacher, initiated some episodes of this kind. In one outstanding episode, she intentionally defined the stems of the verbs *aterrizar*, "to land", and *despegar*, "to take off", without using metalanguage, but instead drawing learners' attention to morphological complexity.

(7)

1 *Sally*: ¿Qué hizo el avión? ¿Sí?
2 ['What did the plane do? Yes?']
3 *Student1*: *Aterriza*.
4 ['It *lands*.']
5 *Sally*: Bien, *aterrizó* [*Blackboard*]. Ok, *aterrizó*, que es de *tierra*. Cuando llega de
6 nuevo a la *tierra*, ¿Ok? ¿Cuál es el opuesto de *aterrizar*, *Student2*?
7 ['Good, it landed [*Blackboard*]. Ok, it *landed*, that comes from *land*. When it
8 arrives again to the *land*, ok? What is the opposite of *to land*, *Student2*?']
9 *Student2*: *Despegar*.
10 ['To take off.']
11 *Sally*: *Despegar*. Ok [Blackboard]. *Despegar*. Es como...¿saben qué quiere decir
12 'pegar'? Como lo que hacen con cintas, o por ejemplo, es *pegar*, ¿no? Entonces,
13 *despegar* es como *uuffs* [*Gesture separating her hands*]. The plane literally *unsticks*
14 itself from the ground. Ok, muy bien. Ok, ¿y número 6, qué hace? [...]
15 ['*To take off*. Ok. [*Blackboard*]. *To take off/unstick*. It is...do you know what *to stick*
16 means? Like what you do with tape, or for example, *to stick*, right? Then, *unstick* is
17 like *uffs* [*Gesture separating her hands*]. [*In English in the original*] The plane literally
18 *unsticks* itself from the ground. Ok, very good. Ok, and number 6, what is she doing?']

Sally explained that *aterrizar* was related to the noun *tierra*, and she paraphrased the meaning of the verb using the word *tierra* too (lines 3-4). When illustrating the meaning of *despegar*, Sally discussed one of the main meanings of the verb *pegar* and made a prefix and stem connection with an English example, *unstick* (lines 6-9). This was a very clear example for the learners, supported with her hand gesture. During the post-observation interview, Sally even commented that she was not sure whether *unstick* was a verb in English. This makes the event even more noteworthy since Sally was clearly paying attention to the Spanish prefix and verbal stem by matching them with two English equivalents.

5.1.4. Planned activities

All planned activities are, by definition, intentional and not incidental.During the observed lessons, only the advanced textbook in Pablo's class included morphology-related activities. Pablo and his learners had to talk about the prefixes *in-* and *des-*, which are English cognates (*in-*, *de-*).

When introducing the prefix *des-*, Pablo indicated its distribution by pointing out that all words in the example were verbs. Therefore, there was extra information about the distributional characteristics of this suffix. The practice activity consisted in filling the blanks with the right derivative form. In most of the sentences, the textbook included a word with the suffix and one without. This format had the potential to help learners in recognizing the semantic and distributional characteristics of the suffix.

In the following lesson, there were again planned activities dealing with the suffix *in-*. The format was changed, though: it was now a fill-in-the-blank activity. This format was, however, not as enlightening as the fill-in-the-gap activity for *des-*. This activity was purely about filling the gap with a word carrying the prefix *in-*, and there were no other morphologically-related words in the sentence to fill in. Pablo went over the prefix *in-* by focusing only on its meaning. When talking with Pablo in the post-observation interview, the researcher asked him why he did not comment on the orthographic differences among allomorphs. Pablo commented that he probably should have added that information, but he did not think of that at the time of the activity. Once more, meaning was more prevalent than formal characteristics.

5.2. Summary of teachers' degree of morphological awareness

Through the observations and the interviews, the main beliefs and practices of these five teachers became apparent. Apart from labeling words, Juan and Pablo did not stand out as very morphologically-aware instructors. For Fred, morphological awareness was not a priority either. However, these teachers spent time on other linguistic features. For example, Fred discussed the present perfect subjunctive with its conjugation, relative pronouns and sentences, and the neuter *lo* (Chapter 9, Blanco & Colbert, 2010). Juan's class, a second semester class, placed greater emphasis on verbal forms: preterit and imperfect, subjunctive, and conditional (Chapter 12 and Chapter 13, Castells et al. 2012). Pablo, in his fifth semester class, also discussed subjunctive and conditional forms (Chapter 6, Canteli Dominicis & Reynolds, 2011).

Rosa's class, a conversational class, stood out for the amount of vocabulary activities included in every lesson. The textbook, however, never focused on DM, and Rosa was not very intentional in raising her students' morphological awareness either. Even though there were many instances of incidental episodes where words of the same word-family were introduced, there were few instances of word labeling and frequent episodes of formally ambiguous presentations of word categories. Nonetheless, other linguistic features were reviewed in the book chapter, such as preterit and imperfect.

Unlike the other instructors, Sally appeared to be a very morphologically-aware instructor, who included unplanned, intentional episodes. Those episodes were integrated into the teaching points of the lesson and, therefore, enhanced them. Moreover, the incidental episodes, especially those involving paraphrasing the meaning of a word, also promoted the learners' morphological awareness. This class should be a good environment for raising learner awareness. All in all, the learners of Sally's third-semester class were those most exposed to DM in an

intentional way. In the class, there was also exposure to inflectional morphology since the subjunctive was reviewed (Chapter 5, Blanco & Colbert, 2010).

When comparing Sally with Fred, it is clear that being a second language speaker of the target language or sharing the same textbook are not necessarily sufficient criteria for being a morphologically-aware teacher. According to the interviews, professional training does not seem to delve into vocabulary instruction. Their common belief about vocabulary instruction was that new words should be always contextualized and meaningful for learners. In reality, as Sally stated in the post-interview, her own experience as a morphologically-aware second language learner is what triggered her way of raising learners' awareness about morphology. Given that all these teachers are successful second language learners, it appears that not all language learners consider DM knowledge equally useful.

6. Discussion

The goals of this study were to analyze: (1) what teachers' beliefs about the teaching of DM were; (2) whether teaching of derivational morphology (DM) was integrated in the TLD of the Spanish L2 classroom; (3) given that the answer to that second question was positive (see Table 3 and Figure 1), in what way it was integrated, that is, what kind of episodes related to DM can be found in the classroom.

Since learning vocabulary includes several layers (e.g., Nation, 2001), it is not possible to offer an exact percentage of the time that should be devoted to DM in the classroom. Nevertheless, given that the teaching of DM has been encouraged as part of regular classroom instruction (e.g., Nation, 2001; Morin, 2003, 2006; Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002), the results show that there is little planned and unplanned instruction of DM in the Spanish L2 classroom (see Figure 1). Instruction of DM is not included in the curriculum, and teachers do not prioritize it. Even so, instruction of DM still appears in the classroom, for example, when teachers correct lexical errors or define new words (see Table 3). On those occasions, the emphasis on affixes and/or word-families is significant. For example, morphological errors pertaining to word form were promptly corrected (see 1 and 5). Since lexical errors are corrected around 80% of the time (Lyster, 1998), this is a constant way of introducing DM in the classroom. Additionally, although not all kinds of definitions include word-families, there was an abundance of definitions based on word-families. A problematic issue is, however, that the emphasis of activities related to synonyms and antonyms, was always on meaning, and never on word structure (see 6). At times, incidental episodes of this kind generated mismatches between form and meaning when the word structure was pushed into the background. Intentional episodes, on the other hand, sought a balance between structure and meaning by labeling words or commenting on the affixes and stems.

This study concurs with previous observational studies in the French L2 classroom (Sanaoui, 1996; Swain & Carroll, 1987), which have pointed out that meaning is prioritized over form during incidental and intentional vocabulary instruction. Going back to Borg's framework (2003, 2006), some explanations can be offered for this situation, especially in regard to professional coursework, contextual circumstances, and teachers' schooling. First, according to Sally, Fred, Juan, Pablo and Rosa, their previous and ongoing professional training emphasized that vocabulary is about *meaning*, that it should be contextualized, and that it should not be translated into the L1. That is, there was no reflection on morphological awareness, at least that they remembered, in their training. Thus, pedagogical frameworks of aspects included in word learning, such as Nation's (2001), which comprise form, meaning and use, are not common knowledge. Second, the textbooks used can be included as a main factor contributing to the contextual circumstances influencing these teachers. The majority of their vocabulary activities dealt with meaning, not with word structure. Of the chapters covered, only the text used in Pablo's class included any practice of DM, a lesson on prefixes. This was probably due to the advanced level of the class, a fifth semester class, because it seems that if DM is present, it will be in textbooks designed for advanced learners (e.g., Brown, 2010). Nevertheless, as discussed in the literature review, Spanish DM can and should be addressed at all levels; for example, some suffixes mark only one gender category, and this is very important for beginner, intermediate, and advanced learners to know. From the interviews, it is clear that the textbooks set the *vocabulary curriculum* in the L2 classroom. For this reason, textbook authors should also reflect on the several aspects that can be considered when working with lexis. Third, in terms of their own schooling, the five teachers had similar experiences: all of them had learned a foreign language and spent time abroad. Pablo and Juan stressed how their study abroad helped them in learning vocabulary. Not the classroom, but the study abroad *taught* them vocabulary. Sally, however, was the only one who reflected on how DM helped her in learning her L2 in and outside the classroom.

All in all, contrary to the teachers' interviewed in Zhang (2008), who considered teaching rules of word formation as not very reliable, Rosa, Pablo, Fred and Juan did not have any special motivation for not working more with DM. Basically, the influence of their own schooling, their teacher training, their own experience learning foreign languages, and the fact that it does not tend to be included in their textbooks seem to be the reasons why DM was not explicitly explored in their classrooms.

Raising awareness of and systematic teaching of DM are not the only aspects to address when working with vocabulary. However, these should also be considered in a *vocabulary curriculum* planned by teachers and their supervisors. For example, overemphasis on a stem's meaning might reduce learners' ability

to notice affixes. In general, even minimal attention to DM should help learners remember words more easily, reduce problems in word category assignment, and give learners a good tool to autonomously infer and learn new words. Given that Spanish and English show cognate affixes, such as, for example, *-oso*, and many other similarities in word structure, introducing Spanish DM for L1 English-speaking learners might not require much.

As Folse (2010) suggested, instruction of vocabulary mostly depends on teachers. Thus, pedagogical interventions should address these mismatches between word structure and meaning in TLD and seek a balance between meaning and structure, such as in example (7). The problematic nature of these mismatching episodes can be understood under the framework of processing instruction (PI) that Friedline (2011) used in his instructional study. This methodology aims to "manipulate learner attention during input processing or manipulate input data so that more and better form-meaning connections are made" (VanPatten, 2005, p. 272). Although PI is discussed mostly with respect to inflectional morphology, these ideas can also be applied to DM as well. As seen in the examples, teachers provided input in a way where form-meaning connections were not optimized.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that teachers do not always introduce new words within a proper syntactic frame, which can hinder the learner's ability to build a form-meaning relationship. For example, associating a stem's meaning with the whole word causes misunderstanding, as in example (6) where *descubrimiento* and *descubrir* were both defined through their common stem. In this metalinguistic activity (i.e., finding synonyms) Rosa forgets to explain why the noun *revelación* is the correct answer, and not the verb *enterarse*. The learner might wonder if both have the same meaning or what the difference between them is. By providing a proper syntactic frame, learners should have enough information to infer and/or process the word's meaning-form, not just the meaning of the stem. This is a mere confirmation of the well-known principle of *contextualizing vocabulary* that all teachers in this study mentioned. However, context is not just the thematic and/or situational context, but also the phrasal context.

As mentioned in the literature review, teachers should raise learner awareness of DM by working on relationships between words of the same word-family, and also by pointing out words carrying the same suffix, never forgetting the syntactic frame. For example, in a brainstorming activity, known words related to the lesson topic could be organized according to their suffixes and stems, as in *professions*: *zapato*, "shoe",*zapatero*,"shoemaker",and *mesa,* "table", *mesero*, "waiter"; *appliances*: *ventilar*, "to air", *ventilador*, "fan", and *aspirar*, "to vacuum", *aspirador*, "vacuum cleaner", etc.

In brief, planned activities could also be easily incorporated in the classroom, such as Morin's (2003, 2006) learners' discovery strategies. Nevertheless,

introducing one productive affix at a time, and using stems known to the learners can facilitate learners' recognition of its syntactic, distributional, and semantic characteristics and avoid overwhelming them. Visual representations of word formation rules and word-families' *paradigms* could be used as clarifying tools.

Given that vocabulary instruction is constant in the Spanish classrooms across levels, raising awareness of DM can effortlessly be included in the curriculum. A refined approach to vocabulary instruction needs to regard the formal characteristics of a word, and not only its meaning (e.g., Nation, 2001). If teachers are aware of DM and include an intentional focus in their TLD, learners can increase their arsenal of derivational affixes. Nevertheless, learners should also be made aware of the limitations of relying on DM. For example, not all words following distributional and semantic morphological rules exist in a given language, and, when guessing the meaning of a word, context analysis should follow to corroborate a plausible morphological hypothesis.

7. Conclusion

In general, teachers and textbooks tend to prioritize teaching stems' meanings. This can be detrimental for learners when establishing a connection between the form of an affix and its semantic and syntactic characteristics. This paper calls for teachers to pay attention to the way they introduce DM in the classroom through their TLD, both when it is planned and unplanned. Especially when it is unplanned, teachers should be aware of their discourse so that it is as unambiguous as possible. Additionally, teacher trainers should reflect on the training they give on how to teach vocabulary and DM. This paper also contributes to the extensive literature on morphological acquisition by highlighting teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices about DM. Future studies about morphological acquisition should also take into consideration the kind of training learners are exposed to. By looking at the lack of emphasis on DM, it does not seem surprising that the inventory of derivational affixes that Spanish L2 learners know is limited.

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