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Research Article

Teaching and learning vocabulary as L2: Approaches in Spanish textbooks¹

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Abstract

This study examines the common pedagogical approaches of L2 Spanish textbooks that are currently used at the college-level in the United States, and investigates whether they embrace the notion of input as a key concept in aiding L2 learners in learning new vocabulary words through activities that guide them from input/comprehension to output/production in a meaningful way. The analysis revealed that the textbooks surveyed in this study overall exhibited the common organization and presentation of the new vocabulary words. Despite these apparent similarities of organization in presenting new vocabulary, the surveyed textbooks differed in the manner in which the input-based instruction and the output-based instruction were employed. More specifically, the activities found in the surveyed textbooks exhibited varying degrees of manipulation involved in both input and output-based tasks, and they also differed in the number of input-based and output-based activities as well as in the logical progression between the two types of activities. The findings of this study suggest that the surveyed textbooks showed a predominant tendency towards the output-based instruction of vocabulary, putting an emphasis on the production of new L2 vocabulary. This study provides further evidence that the input-based instruction, despite its effectiveness of teaching and learning L2 as demonstrated in many previous studies, is not systematically incorporated into most L2 textbooks, thus implying a gap between theory and practice.

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İkinci dil öğretiminde kelime öğretimi ve öğrenimi: İspanyolca ders kitaplarında yaklaşımlar

Öz

Bu çalışma, şu anda Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde üniversite düzeyinde kullanılan ikinci dil (L2) olarak İspanyolca ders kitaplarının ortak pedagojik yaklaşımlarını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma L2 İspanyolca kitaplarının öğrenme sürecinin başından sonuna kadar anlamlı bir şekilde rehberlik eden etkinlikler yoluyla yeni sözcükler öğrenme sürecinde L2 öğrencilerine yardımcı olmada girdi kavramını anahtar bir öge olarak benimseyip benimsemediklerini araştırmaktadır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda bu çalışmada incelenen ders kitaplarının genel olarak yeni kelimeleri ortak düzen içerisinde sunduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Yeni kelimelerin sunulma düzenindeki bu belirgin benzerliklerine rağmen, ankete katılan ders kitaplarının girdi-temelli öğretim ve çıktı-temelli öğretim uygulamalarında farklılık gösterdikleri belirlenmiştir. Daha spesifik olarak, ankete katılan ders kitaplarında bulunan faaliyetler hem girdi hem de çıktı temelli görevlerde çeşitli derecelerde değişiklik göstermişlerdir. Bunlar aynı zamanda girdi tabanlı ve çıktı tabanlı faaliyetlerin sayısı ve iki tip faaliyet arasındaki mantıksal ilerleme bakımından da farklılık göstermiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, incelenen ders kitaplarının, yeni L2 kelime hazinesinin üretilmesine önem vererek, çıktı temelli kelime öğretimi yönündeki eğilimi gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, daha önceki çalışmalarda gösterildiği gibi, L2 öğretim ve öğrenmenin etkinliğine rağmen, girdi tabanlı öğretimin çoğu L2 ders kitabına sistematik olarak dahil edilmediğine ve dolayısıyla teori ile pratik arasında bir boşluğa işaret ettiğine dair daha fazla kanıt sunmaktadır.

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Anahtar kelimeler
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Introduction

Vocabulary teaching and learning has drawn a growing number of researchers' attention as one of the most popular topics in language acquisition research (Ellis, 2009; López-Jiménez, 2013; Schmitt, 2019). Knowing words is an important and essential part of learning a language in order to understand others and communicate fluently, which Lewis (1993: 89) aptly puts as being "lexis is the core or heart of language". Previous research on second language (L2) vocabulary acquisition has suggested that learning words is a complex process (Schmitt, 2008) and requires mastery of different components of vocabulary knowledge (e.g., spelling, word parts, meaning, grammatical functions, collocation) (Nation, 2013). With the growing interest in finding a better way to teach vocabulary, researchers as well as educators have been searching for a means to teach and learn L2 vocabulary effectively, particularly when dealing with textbooks. From a pedagogical point of view, the activities and presentation of L2 vocabulary in textbooks are reflections of the methodological approach adopted in them; therefore, employing a certain textbook as a main resource of L2 teaching and learning will inevitably lead to both instructors and students teaching and learning a second/foreign language based on the overarching pedagogical principle of the textbook. Therefore, the role of the textbook in teaching vocabulary cannot be underestimated.

There has been an increase of interest in investigating vocabulary in L2 textbooks despite the limited availability of previous studies dealing with Spanish as L2. Studies on vocabulary in L2 textbooks have been manifested in sub-areas of topics such as reading materials as a main source of vocabulary learning (Gablasova, 2014; Matsuoka & Hirsh, 2010; Paribakht & Wesche, 1996; Schumm, 1991), frequency and vocabulary size to examine whether high-frequency vocabulary is most beneficial for L2 learners (Alsaif & Milton, 2012; Chujo, 2004; Mármol, 2011; Matsuoka & Hirsh, 2010; O'Loughlin, 2012; Sakata, 2019), descriptions of multiword units (Coxhead et al., 2017; Koproński, 2005; López-Jiménez, 2013), and an examination of vocabulary and other components in more specialized textbooks (for example, medical Spanish textbooks in Hardin, 2012; Spanish legal textbooks in Ramos, 2015; business English textbooks in Tajeddin & Rahimi, 2017, among others). Vocabulary activities and presentations themselves in textbooks, however, have not received much attention thus far as noted in Neary-Sundquist (2015). One of the few studies is found in López-Jiménez (2014), which examines the various ways Spanish L2 textbooks present new vocabulary (e.g., visual, list, definitions, translation, etc.) and also what types of activities are included in the textbooks (e.g., mechanical, communicative, and closed or open).

Approaches to L2 vocabulary acquisition: input-based and output-based instruction

While there may be different ways of carrying out the analysis of the activities and the presentation of the new vocabulary words presented in textbooks, the criteria for analysis would naturally reflect what researchers wish to look into, that is, whether or not the textbooks employ a desirable pedagogical approach that can enhance language learners' ability to communicate and understand the target language.

Input-based instruction

One of the pedagogical approaches that has been prevalent is the Input Hypothesis, beginning with the works of Krashen (1982, 1985), in which it is argued that L2 learners acquire vocabulary most efficiently by receiving enriched ‘comprehensible input’ so that they can make association between the meaning and the form of the word in context. For example, Krashen (1989) claims that L2 learners acquire vocabulary most efficiently by receiving comprehensible input while reading. The notion of comprehensible input, according to Krashen’s input hypothesis, is understood as one level above the L2 learner’s actual proficiency level, which is commonly known as “i + 1” in which “i” represents a learner’s interlanguage and “+1” indicates the next level of language proficiency. Its focus on the role of input has had important implications since then for teaching and learning vocabulary as L2, and consequently, for designing L2 textbooks according to this proposition (Azizi, 2016).

The notion of the comprehensible input has evolved to specify that textbooks should not only be comprehensible, but also be structured and manipulated so that L2 learners can pay attention to the target form and meaning that they are learning. One of the most widely adopted input-based instructions that reflects this notion of ‘structured and manipulated input’ is VanPatten’s model of input processing, or Processing Instruction (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 1993, 1996, 2002). Lee and VanPatten (2003: 142) define structured input as “input that is manipulated in particular ways to push learners to become dependent on form and structure to get meaning”. In this model, learners are exposed to written and/or aural input in which they are pushed to pay attention to the target grammar structure or new vocabulary in order to process them meaningfully in context and successfully complete the given activities. During this process, students are not required to produce any new vocabulary words or target structures as they are asked to show that they have simply understood the meaning of the target form. For example, choosing between two selections (e.g., appropriate vs. inappropriate) while they listen to the simple descriptions of clothing and the occasions in which they wear them (e.g., John wears shorts at an interview) is a comprehension activity in which learners have to understand the meaning of the target vocabulary (i.e., ‘shorts’ in this example). The key concepts that are involved in this model are “the manipulation’ of the input” and also the fact that L2 learners are “required to process” (Ellis 2012: 285).

Output-based instruction

While the notion of input has been gaining an important role in implementing better pedagogical models, there has been an opposing trend, namely the output-based instruction which emphasizes the role of the production in developing L2 proficiency (Krashen, 1985; Schwartz, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1995; Toth 2006). This approach does not necessarily reject the crucial role of input in the development of the L2 system. Yet, what is underscored in this proposition is the fact that input alone is not sufficient to help language learners to develop the linguistic system in order to ultimately attain the proficiency level they desire to reach (Rassaei, 2012). The underlying viewpoint of this output-based approach is similar to the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1980), which highlights the importance of the L2 learners’ efforts in finding meaning in authentic interactions of the target language while attempting to find what is lacking in their L2 abilities (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and so on). It is precisely this process of negotiating meaning and checking with the persons whom they

have interactions with that allows L2 learners to realize the gap in their knowledge, thus allowing them to produce L2 output. The crucial role of output has been laid out in the concept of ‘pushed output’ or Output Hypothesis proposed in Swain (1985, 2000, 2005), which claims that when ‘pushed’ to produce the language, language learners notice a gap between what they want to convey in their utterances and what they are actually able to say. This process can then force them to use the language and develop proficiency in the target language.

Importantly, some researches have shown that both approaches are equally valid and effective (Farley 2001, among others); however, other studies have also provided evidence for the effectiveness of input-based over output-based instruction (Benati, 2001; Benati & Tanja, 2015; Lee & Benati, 2007; Morgan-Short & Bowden, 2006; see Benati, 2016 for a detailed overview). Even if the purpose of the present study is not to evaluate the effectiveness of either approach in teaching and learning vocabulary as L2, this study aims at exploring the presentations and activities of the L2 vocabulary in Spanish textbooks to investigate the common trend and approach. More specifically, this study examines the common pedagogical approaches of L2 Spanish textbooks that are currently used at the college-level in the United States, and investigates whether they embrace the notion of input (more precisely, structured input) as a key concept in aiding L2 learners to learn new vocabulary words through activities that guide them from input/comprehension to output/production in a meaningful way (that is, the processing instruction which I will occasionally refer to the ‘instruction from input to output’ following VanPattern, 2002).

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the approaches to vocabulary instruction in college-level beginner Spanish textbooks for English L2 learners?
2. What are the common trends of the vocabulary activities in the textbooks that are based on the instruction from input to output and how do they differ from each other?

Methodology

Data and procedures

A total of 11 beginner-level college Spanish textbooks were initially selected among many others to determine the overarching pedagogical approaches adopted in each textbook (indicated in the preface of each textbook). While the selection of these textbooks was done through random sampling, there were two factors that were taken into account when selecting them: the number of the edition and the publishers of the textbooks. First, this study attempted to examine about an equal number of textbooks that were published for the first time (i.e., first edition), the second or third time (i.e., second or third edition), and more than three times (i.e., fourth edition and beyond). Out of the 11 beginner Spanish textbooks, four were published as first editions, three were published as either second or third editions, and four were published as the fifth, seventh, and ninth (2 books) editions. Some of them were the most recent editions while others were not due to the limited availability of the most current editions. In addition, as mentioned, there were textbooks that had been used for a long time with multiple editions as well as relatively new textbooks that came to market for the first time, thus allowing the

author to examine both types of textbooks equally. The reason for including different editions was that textbooks with multiple editions, for example, typically show their popularity and wide adoption in Spanish L2 classrooms, and thus are good indicators of what kinds of textbooks many Spanish L2 classes use. At the same time, textbooks that came to market for the first time can also show the pedagogical approaches that are employed in more recent textbooks. Therefore, examining both types of textbooks would provide better insight into the overall pedagogical trend of presenting vocabulary activities. On the other hand, this study also attempted to include a variety of textbook publishers in order to examine the overall trend of the pedagogical approaches adopted by different publishers and editorial teams. The 11 textbooks selected for this study were published by major textbook publishers in the United States such as McGraw-Hill (3 textbooks), Wiley (2 textbooks), Cengage Learning (2 textbooks), Pearson (2 textbooks), and Vista Higher Learning (2 textbooks) between 2012 and 2019.

The textbooks analyzed were all commonly used college textbooks designed for L1 English learners of L2 Spanish in the United States, and the level of all the textbooks examined was for beginning-level (1st year) Spanish which is typically covered throughout a year (i.e., two semesters). The beginning-level was chosen in order to examine the common approaches to teach new vocabulary to students who have not yet mastered a high level of vocabulary. The list of the beginning-level textbooks surveyed in this study is provided in Appendix. The names of the individual textbooks, however, will not be identified in the analysis and the discussion of this study since the purpose of this study is to examine the common pedagogical approaches to L2 vocabulary teaching, not to evaluate specific textbooks for their pedagogical effectiveness. Not all the beginning-level Spanish textbooks that are widely and popularly used in U.S. were included in the analysis since not all of them were available to the author.

Analysis

The analysis of the current study focused on the presentation of the vocabulary as well as the activities aiming at enhancing the vocabulary learning, and did not concern itself with the vocabulary-related activities presented in the grammar section that appeared within the same chapter. Even if some textbooks clearly used the grammar sections as an opportunity to incorporate the new vocabulary into their structure-oriented activities for reinforcement purposes, this was not uniformly the case for all the textbooks surveyed in this study. Therefore, this study left out the activities presented under the grammar section from the analysis so that the analysis of each textbook could be more comparable. Out of the 11 beginning-level textbooks that I initially examined, 6 textbooks remained for the detailed analysis of the input-based vs. output-based activities. The detailed procedures and the steps are explained below.

- The preface of each textbook was examined in order to find the overarching pedagogical approach employed in the textbook. The initial screening was aimed at narrowing down the textbooks that specifically mentioned the input-based approach or the instruction from input-to-output in the preface. Textbooks that mentioned a 'communicative approach' only without mentioning the input-to-output approach were included in the analysis of the general features of the presentation and activities (the 1st part of analysis), but they were excluded from the analysis of input-based and

output-based activities (the 2nd part of analysis). As the term ‘communicative approach’ could cover a broad range of approaches not necessarily limited to the processing instruction (i.e., instruction from input to output), this study separated 11 textbooks into two groups: i) the ones that specifically mentioned the term ‘input’ or an equivalent in the preface, and ii) the ones that did not mention it anywhere in the preface. This initial screening left 6 textbooks for further analyses for the second phase of analysis of input vs. output-based instructions while the remaining 5 textbooks out of the initial 11 textbooks were excluded from the second phase.

- As a second step, the table of contents for each of the 6 textbooks that was chosen was scrutinized to find the common topic (“clothing and purchase”) that is typically presented in the first-year Spanish textbooks. All of the 6 textbooks contained this topic as a theme of a chapter topic so that the comparison of the vocabulary presentation and activities could be more comparable.
- The chapter of each textbook dealing with the topic of “clothing and purchase” (or something similar) was analyzed for i) the presentation of the new vocabulary (i.e., the format such as pictures, list of Spanish words translated in English, vocabulary in reading passages) and ii) the activities (i.e., input-based and output-based).
- Input- and output-based activities were further analyzed for their formats (i.e., reading, conversation/speaking, writing, simple selections such as true/false, fill-in-the blank, among others) to examine the overall trend of activity types.
- The logical transition from input to output activities was also examined to find out if the progression of the activities was natural and helpful in exposing students to the new vocabulary and being able to use it eventually.
- The input and output activities were also quantified for the purpose of identifying the number of activities for either type. This kind of analysis is to examine whether there was a balance between two types of activities in terms of quantity.
- If a textbook provides different steps (*pasos* in Spanish) for one main activity, each step was coded and counted as if it were one independent activity. This consideration is important as many textbooks explicitly indicated several steps for one major activity in order to guide students from simple tasks (which are typically comprehension-based) to more complex ones (which are typically production-oriented).
- In order to increase the reliability of the analysis, each activity (or step) was manually marked and indicated as either input-based (“I”) or output-based (“O”), then the classification of both types was rechecked after a week.
- The new vocabulary embedded in the cultural reading, cultural video, speaking and writing activities, and final activities synthesizing what students have learned was not included in the analysis and the quantification of the input and output-based activities due to the inconsistent nature of those components in each textbook. Since not all the books under analysis recycled the new vocabulary in these cultural activities but many of them used new sets of words in relation to the theme (“clothing”), these cultural parts were excluded from the analysis for comparison purposes.

Results

Approaches to vocabulary instruction in college-level beginner Spanish textbooks for English L2 learners

As for the first research question addressed earlier, the initial screening of the prefaces of the 11 college-level beginning Spanish textbooks revealed that all of the 11 textbooks (in Appendix) mentioned or implied that the pedagogical approaches adopted in the textbooks are communicative approaches or approaches that enhance ‘communication’ and ‘communication skills’ (see Table 1, column #1), but the term adopted in each textbook did not necessarily mean the exact same notion of ‘communicative approaches’. Some adopted a rather broad term of communicative approaches to refer to the fact that the textbook highlights ‘communication’ (which actually could mean ‘production’); others used this term more narrowly in order to refer to the Processing Instruction, which guides language learners to move from sufficient input to produce output.

Six of them more specifically mentioned (or implied) the instruction from input to output, or at least the concept of ‘input’ that was adopted in teaching vocabulary as well as grammar (see Table 1, textbooks anonymously coded as ‘I-1’, ‘I-2’, etc., the ‘I’ representing ‘input’). Those textbooks were *¡Claro que sí!* (2015), *Dicho y hecho* (2012), *Exploraciones* (2019), *Gente* (2015), *Pura vida* (2014), and *Tu mundo: español sin fronteras* (2014) (in alphabetical order), and their activities will be analyzed in more detail below when discussing the second research question.

The prefaces of all of the remaining 5 textbooks that did not specifically mention the instruction from input to output or the role of ‘input’ in L2 learning (coded as ‘NI-1’, ‘NI-2’, etc., the ‘NI’ representing ‘no input’) still highlighted the notion of ‘communication’ in varying degrees: they emphasized “communicative activities”, “communication skills”, “communicative proficiency”, and “communicative objectives”, which L2 learners should eventually attain. The concept of communication, however, was not necessarily supported by the notion of negotiation of meanings laid out in the Processing Instruction (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 1993, 1996, 2002); instead, in 3 of these 5 textbooks (coded as NI-1, NI-2, and NI-3 in Table 1), communicative proficiency was described as an ultimate goal and achievement that comes at the end rather than as a part of the learning process itself (see Table 1, column #2). For instance, it was mentioned in one textbook that “practice begins with mechanical exercises” and progress through more meaningful activities to “end with communicative activities” in which students can produce personalized responses creatively. The similar point of view was expressed in two other textbooks, describing that the end result that should be achieved is “communication” and the vocabulary practice “wraps-up” with communicative activities as a “final set” of activities in which students can use vocabulary creatively.

On the other hand, a closer look at the vocabulary activities themselves in these 5 textbooks revealed that even if their prefaces did not specifically mention the notion of input, two of them (NI-3 and NI-4) actually appeared to follow the input-to-output progression in presenting vocabulary activities (see Table 1, column #3). This means that the notion of communication delineated in the prefaces of these two books could indeed refer to the structural input-to-output approach adopted in the activities; however, since this pedagogical approach was not clearly pointed out in the prefaces, this study excluded them from the

analysis of the second research question. It was also surprising to observe that many textbooks that mentioned the notion of input in the prefaces actually did not logically follow the order from input to output in the activities (see Table 1, column #3; textbooks I-1, I-2, I-4, I-6). Only two of those 6 textbooks followed through the progression from input to output when presenting vocabulary activities (see Table 1, column #3; textbooks I-3 and I-5). This will be discussed in more detail below when answering the second research question.

It should be noted that the most common methods in presenting new vocabulary in all of the 11 textbooks were based on pictures with Spanish captions below them (see Table 1, column #4) and lists of Spanish words translated in English (Table 1, column #5) at the beginning of each chapter. The end of each chapter in most textbooks (except textbooks I-1 and I-3) typically provided the summary of all the new vocabulary of the chapter as a list of Spanish words translated in English again (Table 1, column #6). Table 1 summarizes the findings thus far.

Table 1. Pedagogical approaches to vocabulary teaching and layout of the vocabulary presentation in L2 beginning-level Spanish textbooks (textbooks coded by a random order)

Textbook	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Input mentioned in the preface						
I-1	✓			✓	✓	
I-2	✓			✓	✓	✓
I-3	✓		✓	✓	✓	
I-4	✓			✓	✓	✓
I-5	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
I-6	✓			✓	✓	✓
Input not mentioned in the preface						
NI-1	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
NI-2	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
NI-3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NI-4	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
NI-5	✓			✓	✓	✓

Note: Textbooks coded as “I” (input) indicate that the concept of input was mentioned in the preface.
Textbooks coded as “NI” (no input) indicate that the concept of input was not mentioned in the preface.

Keys:

- #1: Notion of communication (preface)
- #2: Communication as an end product and achievement (preface)
- #3: Input to output vocabulary activities
- #4: Picture presentation
- #5: Word lists of Spanish-English at the beginning of each chapter
- #6: Summary of new vocabulary list at the end of each chapter

Input-based activities and production activities

In order to answer the second research question of this study (“What are the common trends of the vocabulary activities in the textbooks that are based on the instruction from input to output and how do they differ from each other?”), this study focused on the 6 textbooks that emphasized the importance of input in the preface and closely examined the activities included in the chapter dealing with a theme of clothing and purchase (or something similar). Those textbooks that are repeated here – *Claro que sí!* (2015), *Dicho y hecho* (2012), *Exploraciones* (2019), *Gente* (2015), *Pura vida* (2014), and *Tu mundo: español sin fronteras* (2014) (in alphabetical order)– were published relatively recently between 2012 and 2019, and included 2 textbooks that appeared for the first time (i.e., 1st edition), 2 textbooks in their 3rd edition, and 2 textbooks which have been published numerous times (7th and 9th edition, respectively).

In the preface of all the surveyed textbooks stressed the crucial role of input in one way or another. In Andrade et al. (2014: vi), it is mentioned that “the grammar and vocabulary are taught through comprehensible input as well as communicative activities”. Likewise, Potowski et al. (2012: xii) state that “numerous and varied input activities are required before asking students to produce output using a new structure or new vocabulary”. Blitt and Casas (2019: xiv) express a similar view as in “[vocabulary activities] will require you to speak minimally at first and then progress to more open-ended communicative activities”. The concept of the input is also refined in one of the surveyed textbooks: input can be defined as “meaningful, comprehensible input” based on “real-life events” which are introduced through meaningful stories (López-Burton et al., 2014: xxii).

All 6 textbooks (except one, I-4, in Table 2) included both input (comprehension) and output (production) activities in the chapter or sub-section of a chapter dealing with the theme of clothing even if they differed in i) type of activities, ii) the amount of input vs. output-based activities, and iii) the logical progression from input to output activities.

Types and nature of input vs. output activities

The most common input-based activity types included simple selection (e.g., logical/illogical, formal/informal, true/false), matching by relating columns (e.g., between logical conversation order, questions and situations, pictures and cloth descriptions, appropriate colors and clothing types), and reading short paragraphs or a list of simple sentences that served to guide L2 learners to a series of production-based activities in the next step. On the other hand, the common output/production-based activities found in these 6 textbooks included fill-in-the blank (to ‘complete conversations’ using the new vocabulary, for example), supplying words/making a list of words, question and answer, picture description, story narration/creations (between a customer and a store employee, for instance) which could be written activities as well as oral ones such as simulations or role-plays, uncontrolled spoken activities without prompts, and a guessing game involving the whole class, among others.

Overall, most of the 6 textbooks combined a variety of activities in terms of complexity, oral vs. written skills, and work done alone, in pairs, and in groups. Nevertheless, they somewhat differed in the nature of the input and output activities since some were more meaningful than others in the sense that students were to negotiate meaning when interacting and exchanging authentic information with other students, while other activities were less communicative, such as mechanical drills and writing a list of words for a given question.

For example, in textbook I-5, students are asked to indicate their preferences in regards to the selection of clothing and accessories as a structured input activity. For instance, students see *para los ojos* ‘for your eyes’ with two possible selections (*gafas* ‘glasses’ and *lentes de contacto* ‘contact lenses’), and they simply need to mark which accessories they prefer. This process guides students in connecting the meaning and the form (i.e., vocabulary) while exposing them to the meaningful, manipulated input of words (glasses and contact lenses). The following step would be comparing their preferences with classmates in groups, thus allowing the meaningful communications to occur through exchanges of authentic information (which is guided output). This kind of communicative activity differs from a more traditional, mechanical fill-in-blank type of activity in which students do not necessarily receive structured input; rather, they have to supply the target vocabulary words by recalling them rather than recognizing them.

Amount and logical progression of input-based and output-based activities

While the activities found in 6 textbooks exhibited varying degrees of manipulation involved in both input and output-based tasks, they also differed in the amount of input-based and output-based activities as well as in the logical progression between input and output activities as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of input and output tasks and logical progression from input to output in vocabulary activities for a chapter/section of clothing (textbooks coded by a random order)

Textbook	Input-based activities	Output-based activities	Logical progression from input to output
I-1	2	4	no
I-2	2	7	no
I-3	6	6	yes
I-4	0	7	no
I-5	11	14	yes
I-6	1	7	no
Range	0-11	4-14	
Average	3.7	7.5	

The amount of the input activities and the output activities ranged from 0 to 11 and 4 to 14, respectively, which shows a tendency to emphasize the production activities rather than input-based activities in L2 textbooks. As shown in Table 2, one textbook, for example, did not have any input activity (textbook I-4) and another had only one input activity (textbook I-6) in the surveyed vocabulary section (related to clothing and purchase) while there was a textbook (I-5) which contained notably abundant 11 input activities. The textbooks that did not offer any input activity or offered just one input activity, in contrast, provided much more production activities (7 activity in both textbooks). All 6 textbooks consistently had more output-oriented activities than input activities, except one (textbook I-3) which had an equal number of input and output activities. The average number of input-based activities was 3.7

while for output-based activities, it was 7.5, being approximately double the amount. It is notable that 2 textbooks (I-3 and I-5) offered a more balanced number of activities between input and output (6-6 and 11-14, respectively); however, the overall tendency observed in all other textbooks was geared toward production activities. This is contradictory in a sense since all of these textbooks suggested the input-based approaches in the preface, but the activities presented in 4 out of 6 textbooks did not necessarily reflect such approaches.

On the other hand, the amount of input vs. output-based activities itself seemed to show only a partial picture of how the vocabulary activities were structured and organized. In order to examine whether the textbooks reflected L2 learners' acquisition process, this study further analyzed the logical progression from input to output activities. A closer look at all the vocabulary activities, including their steps (often called *pasos*) within each activity, revealed that only 2 textbooks (I-3 and I-5) faithfully followed through the input-to-output progression while other 4 textbooks did not always follow this order. In fact, in both textbooks (I-3 and I-5), the importance of following this progression of input-to-out is highlighted in the prefaces, as shown in these examples: "Over 30 years of research in second language acquisition indicate that numerous and varied input activities are required *before* asking students to produce output using a new structure or new vocabulary" (I-5), and "When we learn any new skill, we need lots of structured input at the beginning as we begin to try out our fledgling abilities. As we become better at it, we produce more (output) and benefit from continued input (but less of it) as we refine our ability to do the task at hand" (I-3).

For example, smooth transition from input to output was found in textbook I-5 which presents a vocabulary activity "*¿Qué puedes ponerte?* (What can you wear?)". It includes various steps to guide students from input/comprehension to guided output/production. In the first step (input activity), students are to select the appropriate occasions and places in which each of the given cloth items could be worn (e.g., *sandalias* "sandals", *pantalones cortos* "shorts", etc. as examples of clothing/accessories and *la oficina* "the office", *una fiesta* "a party", etc. as examples of occasions/places). In this step, students are forced to comprehend the meanings of the new vocabulary words (i.e., clothing/accessories) in order to logically connect them with their associated places and occasions in which these items can be worn, thus encouraging them to learn the new vocabulary within cultural norms. Students do not need to recall or produce any new words at the beginning of the activity, so this first step serves as a structured input activity. In step 2, students are to compare their choices from step 1 in small groups in order to find similarities and differences. This step serves as an immediate output activity that can induce negotiation of meaning while communicating with peers about their choices. It also serves as a transition from input to output nicely because students need to listen to and comprehend the list and choices of their classmates (i.e., input) while they are also to produce words and simple sentences to explain their choices (i.e., output). Step 3, which is the final step of this activity, then asks students in the same groups to write the list of clothing/accessories and the appropriate occasions in which these items can be worn. This is a written output activity that reinforces the previous step (i.e., oral) in which students again can negotiate the meaning of the communication. All three steps in this activity are well connected and logically progress from comprehension to guided production activities that invite meaningful communication with classmates.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the pedagogical approaches that are reflected in vocabulary instruction in college-level beginner Spanish textbooks for English L2 learners. As for the first research question, this study found that the surveyed textbooks overall exhibited the common organization and presentation of the new vocabulary words, which consisted of both traditional/mechanical tasks and structured-input activities. It was common to find a similar way of presenting new vocabulary through chapter-opening pictures with Spanish captions, a list of new vocabulary in Spanish translated in English at the beginning of each chapter or section, and the final section of the vocabulary summary provided at the end of each chapter or sub-section of the chapter. Despite these apparent similarities of the organization in presenting new vocabulary, the surveyed textbooks differed in the manner in which they presented new vocabulary in the activities themselves. A closer look at the preface of each textbook revealed two diverging pedagogical philosophies about teaching and learning L2 vocabulary: 6 textbooks that intended to adopt the input-based approach (or the instruction from input to output) and 5 textbooks that only mentioned the importance of the communication, communication skills, or communication proficiency in rather broad terms without mentioning the role of the input. This appears to indicate that one of the most prevailing pedagogical approaches to L2 acquisition (that is, the Processing Instruction, the input-based instruction, and the instruction from input to output, all of which more or less denote the same concept), is not systematically incorporated into many current L2 Spanish textbooks that were surveyed in the current study.

This was even more apparent when closely examining the 6 textbooks that mentioned the role of input and/or the importance of gradual progression from input to output in developing L2 system (which constitutes the second research question of this study). Only 2 textbooks actually offered vocabulary activities that were based on the instruction from input to output with a balanced number of input and output activities. One of them in particular had abundant input as well as output activities that were thoughtfully designed with the Processing Instruction in mind. When quantified the activities in all the 6 textbooks that mentioned the role of input in the prefaces, it also revealed that there was no uniformity regarding the number of vocabulary activities that were included to help L2 learners master new words related to clothing. The abundant vocabulary activities presented in that chapter (or section) would definitely give instructors and students more options when choosing appropriate tasks while reinforcing what they have learned in various input-based and output-based activities. Nevertheless, this would not be the case for the textbooks that had a limited number of vocabulary activities (even counting both input and output-oriented activities), which might burden instructors to resort to other resources to 'borrow' materials or even create their own. In addition, the majority of the textbooks surveyed had vocabulary activities heavily based on production types, sometimes without including context, reminiscent of typical and traditional methods of teaching L2 vocabulary. The analysis of the logical transition from comprehension/input-based activities to production/output-based activities also revealed the similar trend: only very few textbooks followed a more natural progression without requiring students to recall and produce new words from the very beginning. Furthermore, the surveyed textbooks exhibited varying degrees of manipulation involved in both input and output-based

tasks: some activities were more meaningful than others while in most textbooks one can still find activities that were less communicative and more mechanical.

In spite of this general trend of approaches found in the current study (against the Processing Instruction), it should be noted that some instructors and students alike would actually prefer the pedagogical approaches that are based on traditional methodologies that emphasize production. It is partially because one prefers to learn and teach the way she/he has learned; in addition, the compounding factor is that there would be limited class contact hours and time for instructors to cover so much and they would want students to just learn new vocabulary words in a rush and sometimes on their own (through quizzes and tests).

A question must be raised as to whether it is the recognition (i.e., comprehension) or the recall (i.e., production) that poses more difficulty for L2 learners when mastering new vocabulary. Schmitt (2019), in discussing the key descriptor of vocabulary knowledge, pointed out that more research should be carried out in order to determine where the most teaching effort need to be placed: in moving “vocabulary knowledge from $\emptyset \rightarrow$ RECEPTIVE” (which is a stage of receiving input for the current study), or “from RECEPTIVE \rightarrow PRODUCTIVE” (which more or less corresponds to a production stage of applying more output than input in the current study) (Schmitt, 2019: 263). Schmitt (2019: 264) suggests that the research indicates that learning words to “receptive mastery” is relatively easier than increasing and strengthening that knowledge to “productive mastery,” which presents a greater challenge to language learners. For example, producing right words and using them appropriately in context when writing and speaking L2 (i.e., stage of production/output) would certainly be more challenging than simply comprehending a word when reading and listening (i.e., stage of input; receptive stage). This proposal seems to lead us again to reflect upon the old debate regarding the input-based instruction vs. the output-based instruction. While it seems true that output aids L2 learners to attain fluency of language (Rassaei, 2012; Swain, 2005) and enhance the grammatical accuracy of L2 in a more advanced level (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000), it is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether the role of output is secondary to the role of input, or the other way around.

At the same time, the analysis of the current beginning-level Spanish textbooks for L2 English learners has indicated a predominant tendency towards the output-based instruction of vocabulary. This very likely reflects the observations and research done regarding the essential role of output, which is to coexist alongside the enriched input that makes acquiring L2 vocabulary possible.

Implications and suggestions for further research

Textbooks are essential tools for foreign/second language instructors who heavily rely on their content, so that they do not have to invest their own time to teach new vocabulary properly. Therefore, it seems imperative to adopt a sound pedagogical approach in L2 textbooks in order to teach and learn vocabulary most effectively. At the same time, as stated in Demir (2013), one should admit that textbooks alone may not be enough “to equip students with necessary vocabulary knowledge” beyond a superficial level and also for the long term. The current study showed the current tendency of the L2 Spanish textbooks widely used in the United States, and it hopefully suggests to language educators to revisit the overarching pedagogical approach adopted in textbooks in order to teach L2 vocabulary more effectively. As

Schmitt (2019) accurately pointed out, “there are still large gaps in our knowledge of key aspects of vocabulary”. While the current study did not carry out the fine-grained analysis of the degree of manipulation exercised on the input-based activities, more studies in the future that examine the vocabulary activities of the L2 textbooks will be able to help researchers and educators gain a clearer perspective on the common pedagogical approaches adopted in L2 textbooks.

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Appendix: List of beginner Spanish textbooks analyzed

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- Blanco, J., & Donley, P. R. L., (2018). *Aventuras: Primer curso de lengua española* (5th edition). Vista Higher Learning.
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