

Statement of Teaching Philosophy: Daniel Martín González

Growing up in a deprived neighborhood in Madrid (Spain), sooner or later you realize education becomes the only pathway to a defeat social inequality and provide your family with prospective better life conditions. Linked to social mobility, one understands that a country's most plausible solution to decrease high unemployment rates might be investing in research. Thus, understanding cognitive processing underlying human learning and acquisition processes becomes essential in achieving those goals. Besides, nowadays learning English in Spain is as essential as graduating from college in order to have access to the job market. For this reason, I decided to study my Bachelors in English Studies, and then I pursued an M.A. in English Linguistics, another M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language and a PhD in English Linguistics still in progress while I finish my second B.A. in Psychology and my third M.A. in Spanish Linguistics (as it is helpful to understand one's mother tongue in order to teach or learn how other foreign languages work). My personal take on language learning and teaching derives from my studies but also from several places where I have worked teaching foreign languages (mainly English for Spanish native speakers) during the course of the last 7 years: English in language schools, private tutoring, English at High School, English at Complutense University of Madrid, English at the Spanish Supreme Court and Spanish for beginners at Harvard University.

I hold on to Usage-based Linguistics as an approach to language teaching combined with tenets from Theory of Chaos. Thus, I understand that language knowledge and usage emerges from the interaction of different systems: students, resources, the contexts of learning or even the language itself. Interaction leads to frequency of exposure and frequency of use, which build up strong neural representations of the linguistic information dealt with. Thus, it is conceived that language development is emergent, since its acquisition is due to the interaction of students with other students but also with the language, the materials to learn and the content of learning. Thus, a complex-dynamic system approach is also at issue in this study, since it is understood that it takes all these different systems to interact in order to develop language learning.

Student success in learning a second language relies heavily on mapping both linguistic forms and functions onto the brain. For that purpose, frequency of exposure to the language together with language usage itself are needed in order to entrench these connections. Thereby, students must be exposed to real examples of linguistic pieces in the foreign language that allow students to interact with them and with other students as systems in a broader complex system. Students do not deal with speaking, listening, reading or writing skills in isolation when using their mother tongue in a real communicative event; thus, I like attempting to combine all of these skills when teaching. Regarding my teaching style, it is more implicit than what we are used to in nowadays classes. Both explicit and structure-based instruction have not proved any good conclusive results but only quick learning that vanishes quickly as soon as students do their quizzes and exams. Language development is dynamic, not linear, and it cannot be arranged into units in a linear way whatsoever -as most books present foreign language to learners. Students must be exposed to authentic samples of language through meaningful context exchanges in which students can identify the social functions underlying linguistic forms. For this reason, iteration is an essential

part of language learning -I get my students exposed to the same linguistic events over and over in my classes because they pay attention to different aspects each time (for instance in a listening activity, they might start by decoding the suprasegmental features, then segmental traits of the language, which work as different subsystems that compete to be processed).

Let me give you an example of the kind of activities I do in my classes. In an intermediate proficiency class, I select scenes from movies such as *Good Will Hunting* that deal with the communicative events and social functions I want my students to learn. We watch scenes twice, first without subtitles (so that they pay attention language as a whole, both suprasegmental and body-language aspects), then with subtitles in the foreign language (so that they understand segmental traits of what is being conveyed). Then, we discuss any linguistic aspects students do not understand and I emphasize the structures per se that we will be studying in class. Then students will write down a script or a language communicative event based on the one they have just seen in the movie (for instance, the script of Will in his therapy sessions). Finally, students perform the scene they write down in front of the class. If this is the final product to be obtained for the unit, then students might be required to assess other students' performances based on a rubric they are provided, whose grades will be compared to the teacher's in order to see how different the teacher and the students think, as listening can be understood as not just listening but interpreting phonemes and other phonological traits spoken by other students -and thus they are assessed in all their language skills.

The kind of methodology here described implies a different form of assessment as well. I assume that all language course must be content-based and not just language-based instruction, and cultural knowledge must be asserted in all exams. However, I do not believe in explicit questions asking students to facilitate knowledge learnt by heart as robots but real tasks as writing emails or performing real situation events with other students (as going to a doctor's appointment) in which students can show how well they have grasped grammatical, phonetic, linguistic and non-verbal communication aspects pertaining to the foreign language. Finally, the key challenge is preparing such an ambitious syllabus that can cover crossmodal real input in a communicative and interactive implicit approach, as it is time-consuming, but in my experience, students' high motivation towards such methodology proves it worthy.