

Lesson adapted from Language Variation and Style-Shifting for Fifth Graders curriculum

Target Audience

This lesson was originally written for Spanish-English bilingual 5th graders in the US, although it can be adapted for other levels of students (and other languages). If necessary, review parts of speech with students (verbs, adjectives, nouns, pronouns, adverbs).

Rationale

In this lesson, students compare and contrast grammatical patterns in their two languages to increase metalinguistic awareness. This makes explicit what students may have only known implicitly before: the two languages each achieve the same communicative goal. Students recognize that the two languages have similarities and differences in the grammar, and one grammar pattern is not inherently superior to the other.

Objective

Students will compare and contrast grammatical patterns in English and Spanish to increase metalinguistic awareness.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4a

Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

For teacher: chart paper or whiteboard

For students: Language patterns worksheet

Procedure

Warm-up and introduction of objective

1. Explain to students that both of their languages (in this case, English and Spanish) can communicate the same idea, although they do it differently. Explain that in this lesson, students will compare and contrast the grammar that both languages use to communicate the same idea.

Communicative Function: Questions (Whole Group)

2. Start with a communicative function: Questions. Begin with a discussion of the students' native language (in this case, Spanish). Ask the students what words often appear in a question in Spanish (¿Quién? ¿Dónde? ¿Qué? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo? ¿Cuándo?), and list these on white board or chart paper.
3. Ask students if Spanish speakers can ask a question without using one of those words (Yes). Ask for examples, and list them on board (¿Estás feliz? ¿Estás lista? ¿Quieres comer? etc.).
4. Ask the students what they notice about these questions in Spanish that do not use a question word. Do they follow a pattern? (verb + adjective, verb + verb, etc.?) Track questions and patterns on board. Ask the students to identify the pattern (e.g., verb + adjective) and list more examples.
5. Ask students to translate these questions to English. Do the questions follow the same (verb + adjective) or (verb + verb) pattern? Ask the students what looks different, and what looks the same. Again, ask students to identify the pattern in English and list more examples. For example, in Spanish, sometimes the pronoun does not appear [e.g., ¿Están listas **ustedes**? vs. ¿Están listas?]. In English, the pronoun usually appears, but not always (e.g., Are **you** ready?).

6. Ask students to consider the two grammatical patterns they have just uncovered using linguistic data from their experiences as speakers of the two languages. Ask students if linguistically speaking, one grammatical pattern is superior to another. If students say yes, ask them to explain their answer. If students say no, ask them to explain their answer. Explain that the science of linguistics has determined that one grammatical pattern is not superior to another, and one language is not superior to another. In this case, the two patterns complete and fulfill the same communicative function of Questions.

Communicative Function: Describing (Independent or Pair Work)

7. Explain to students that English and Spanish have many more grammatical patterns. More grammatical patterns appear when we describe things using adjectives. Give students an example in Spanish (e.g. *una casa azul*) and give the translation in English (*a blue house*). Alone or in pairs, ask students to identify the grammatical pattern in each language and provide 2-3 more examples that follow that pattern. (English: adjective + noun; Spanish: noun + adjective). Review student examples and list these on board. Once again, ask students if one grammatical pattern is superior to another. Ask students to justify their answers (both patterns fulfill the communicative function of describing).

Closure

8. Ask students what grammatical patterns can be used to ask questions in English and Spanish.
9. Ask students what grammatical patterns can be used to describe things in English in Spanish.

Homework/Extension Activities

10. Ask students to identify the grammatical pattern in a communicative function you provide (e.g., hypothesizing, talking about the past, commands, etc.) and bring examples to class.
11. Ask students to create a "Pattern Puzzle" for their peers. Students list 3-5 examples that follow the same pattern and a partner must identify the pattern.

Handouts

Grammar Patterns



Created at the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, University of Oregon

For more information

- Charity Hudley, A. H., and Mallinson, C. (2011). *Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- West Brown, D. (2009). *In Other Words: Lessons on Grammar, Code-Switching, and Academic Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wheeler, R.S. & Swords, R. (2006). *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.