Theses/Capstones/Creative Projects   University Honors Program

5-2021

Service-Learning: A Translation of Documents into Spanish on Behalf of Learning for ALL

Aidan Posey
aposey@unomaha.edu

**Service-Learning: A Translation of Documents into
Spanish on Behalf of Learning for ALL**

Aidan Posey

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Honors Thesis

Advisor: Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch

May 3rd, 2021

Abstract

Learning for ALL (LFA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Omaha, NE. LFA offers resources to

adults in the community by offering a variety of classes in literacy, English language, and Adult

Basic Education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the learning at LFA has transitioned

to the online learning portal, Burlington English. However, the fact that Burlington English is

presented and written in English poses a large barrier to the accessibility of online learning

material. Current LFA management utilizes Google Translate to try and translate the steps to log

into this platform and while a valuable tool, Google Translate fails to capture the linguistic and

pragmatic details necessary for a quality and effective translation. Through collaboration with

Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch, Professor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages and

Literature, I translated the necessary steps for LFA students to be able to log into their classes

and have better access to learning materials. Lastly, the utility and effectiveness of service-

learning as a tool in language acquisition is explored due to the fact that service-learning is well-

renowned for helping students not only gain language skills, but to also broaden their cultural

awareness and their impact on the community.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The origin of this project stemmed from the need of the nonprofit, "Learning for ALL", to have the appropriate resources to be able to better serve their Spanish-speaking clientele along with my own passion for community service and helping those who seek to speak English as a second language. For two years, I have been an ESL instructor through another local non-profit, the Latino Center of the Midlands, so when Learning for ALL needed assistance with translation, the project was more than welcomed.

As some background, Learning for ALL aims to "[support] adults in our community to acquire the literacy and language skills necessary for them to thrive and achieve life goals" (Learning for ALL, 2021). The organization carries out its mission through offering three main programs: English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, and General Education Diploma via one-on-one tutoring, or small group classes. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were traditionally taught in-person. However, to mitigate the spread of the virus, Learning for ALL switched to remote classes, requiring their students to access their classes through their phones or computers via the software "Burlington English".

The population base of Douglas County, Nebraska, is made up of a total of 571,327 people, 12.9% of which is Hispanic, or approximately 73,701 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The demand for English classes and other services like the ones offered by Learning for ALL is extremely high. For this organization in specific, the majority of Spanish-speaking clients come from Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala. These factors were carefully considered during the translation of the materials to account for regional differences in vocabulary and pragmatics.

As mentioned previously, Learning For ALL made the change to online classes from the traditional setting due to COVID-19. However, this change in delivery presented new challenges in terms of access to the course and course material. Burlington English only offers its webpage in English, posing as a substantial barrier to the Spanish-speaking students of Learning for ALL. The organization has found it to be exceedingly difficult to be able to instruct its students in how to effectively and appropriately use the Burlington English software along with Zoom. Therefore, the scope of this project lies in translating the steps that Learning for ALL has set out for their students to log in to the website and access their classes through both phone and computer and translating important advice for how to utilize zoom. The focus and primary purpose of this thesis, apart from the actual translation, is to analyze how service-learning can foster language learning.

Service-Learning

The origin of this project started from a connection on behalf of the UNO Service-Learning Academy, a program which is instrumental in the education of many UNO students. Several of the foreign language classes offered through UNO have a service-learning component that is crucial to the students' ability to learn. It would be remiss to fail to talk about the importance of service-learning in foreign language acquisition and for the community.

Before diving into the details, it is important to understand how service-learning is used in a practical setting. A well-rounded and explanatory definition can be seen as "service-learning is an instructional approach that engages K-16 students in service-related activities while connecting the experience to course curricula so students have the opportunity to learn academic content while applying that knowledge in service to their community" (Bates et al., 2009). The primary purpose of this pedagogy is to give students an opportunity to practice skills learned in

the classroom in an authentic, real-world setting. In fact, many students have been seen with higher levels of self-efficacy and an increased interest not only in school but in their communities (Wade, 1995). Service-learning is a tool that is used across many disciplines including but not limited to teaching, foreign language, and business among others (Chambers, 2009).

Many of the foreign language classes at UNO tie in this component by having students work with local nonprofits and other organizations that aim to better serve the communities that they are in. For example, teaming up with the Latino Center of the Midlands to offer a variety of services such as ESL, tutoring, or even providing volunteer work for other programs. Another example is working with the Joslyn Art Museum to put together a cultural festival that celebrates Latin America and its people (L. Huntimer, personal communication, 2021). These are only but a few examples of the many different opportunities that UNO has to offer in terms of service-learning.

The most interesting part, however, is to see how these projects impact the lives and language acquisition of the students that partake in them. According to a literature review, the majority of studies examined captured a perceived language growth of 75% (Baker, 2019). With a number like that, it is obvious to note service-learning's potential on the academic career of all foreign language students. Baker's study further stated how the service-learning opportunities gave students the chance to be exposed to language and vocabulary that they would have never seen in the classroom and provided them with the space to connect classroom themes with an authentic interaction. Students at every level were noticed to have improved written and oral communication, but less-advanced students were found to have larger gains in writing than higher level students.

Yet, language is not the only result from these programs. Over the years, scholars began noticing service-learning's impact on cultural awareness and cultural understanding. Of the several studies that have been done on this topic, Long (2003) found that after tutoring Spanish-speaking students, coordinating Spanish story hours, and interpreting at a hospital, students expressed higher appreciation for other cultures. Wehling (2008) on the other hand, noted that after conducting site visits with Latinx migrants, her students move from cultural precompetence to cultural competence by addressing their own assumptions. The results are rather clear for the effect of service-learning on students in both language and in terms of cultural understanding.

Lastly, it is important to look at how these efforts can have an impact on the community. Since service-learning is part of a student's curriculum, it is considered volunteer work and therefore unpaid. This, however, becomes extremely advantageous for the community and the organizations that try and serve it due to the fact that they receive hours and hours of valuable service at no charge, allowing them to undertake and research community problems (Carleton College, 2021). Service-learning is a mutually beneficial tool that allows students to gain experience while still in college, but also gives back to the community and allows it to improve via access to new ideas, perspectives, and backgrounds.

Translation

In terms of this project in particular, the theories of translation and ethics come from Sonia Colina's book, "Introduction to Translation". Her models were used as the primary tool to appropriately translate the required documents, prioritizing the function of the text over the direct translation of the verbiage. Instead of merely translating for exactness, the text was translated to provide clarity and understanding to the reader. The source texts were listed in English, with the target text being Spanish. Every article was translated first by me, the honors student, and then

sent to Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch for review and verification before being resubmitted by the student as a final product. The situational features for this project are as follows:

- Function: Instruct users how to access their virtual classes

- Audience: Spanish speakers predominately from Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala

- Medium: Written text

- Motive: Individuals who do not read English well have been unable to log into the Burlington English program

- Time: For as long as LFA utilizes the Burlington English program

- Place: Phone and computer screens before logging in to English classes remotely

With the previous information in tow, I now present the work that I completed this semester. Below are the translated instructions sent to me by Learning For ALL, including some brief reminders about how to utilize Zoom.

Instructions for One Class

Si usted solamente tiene una clase, siga estas instrucciones:

Cómo iniciar la sesión desde un celular:

1) Descargue la aplicación "Burlington English" del App Store o Play Store.
2) Cuando la haya descargado, haga clic para abrirla. Introduzca su nombre de usuario y contraseña y seleccione el botón de "log in ('iniciar la sesión')".
3) Haga clic en "AT SCHOOL (que quiere decir 'en la escuela')" bajo la oración "I am using Burlington English('estoy usando Burlington English')".
4) Haga clic en el botón que dice "Virtual Class Scheduler ('horario de las clases virtuales')".
5) Haga clic en la "X" para cerrar la pantalla de ayuda.
6) Desplace hacia abajo el cursor para llegar a la fecha del día de hoy y la hora de la clase deseada. Haga clic en la caja que corresponde a su clase.
7) Haga clic en el botón verde que dice "Join Now ('unirse ahora')", y se conectará con el profesor!

Cómo iniciar la sesión desde una computadora:

1) Vaya a la página del sitio web www.burlingtonenglish.com.
2) Desplace hacia abajo el cursor y haga clic en la caja azul que dice "BE Login".
3) Introduzca su nombre de usuario y contraseña y haga clic en el botón de "log in ('iniciar la sesión')".
4) Haga clic en "AT SCHOOL ('en la escuela')" bajo la oración "I am using Burlington English ('estoy usando Burlington English')".
5) Haga clic en el botón que dice "Virtual Class Scheduler ('horario de las clases virtuales')".
6) Haga clic en la "X" para cerrar la pantalla de ayuda.
7) Desplace hacia abajo el cursor para llegar a la fecha del día de hoy y la hora de la clase deseada. Haga clic en la caja que corresponde a su clase.
8) Haga clic en el botón verde que dice "Join Now ('unirse ahora')", y se conectará con el profesor!

Instructions for Two Classes

Si usted tiene dos o más clases, siga estas instrucciones:

Cómo iniciar la sesión desde un celular:

1) Descargue la aplicación "Burlington English" del App Store o Play Store.
2) Cuando la haya descargado, haga clic para abrirlo. Introduzca su usuario y contraseña y seleccione el botón de "log in ('iniciar la sesión')".
3) Haga clic en "AT SCHOOL (que quiere decir 'en la escuela')" bajo la oración "I am using Burlington English('estoy usando Burlington English')".
4) Haga clic en el botón que dice "Virtual Class Scheduler ('horario de las clases virtuales')".
5) Haga clic en la "X" para cerrar la pantalla de ayuda.
6) Busque la palabra "Class ('clase')" en la parte central superior de la pantalla.
7) Haga clic en la flecha que apunta hacia abajo junto a la palabra "Class ('clase')".
8) Cuando aparezca el menú con las clases, haga clic en la primera clase que se ofrezca ese día.
9) Desplace hacia abajo el cursor para llegar al calendario, encuentre el día y la fecha de su clase, y haga clic en el nombre de la clase.
10) Haga clic en el botón verde "Join Now ('unirse ahora')".
11) Se conectará con su profesor!

Cómo iniciar la sesión desde una computadora:

1) Vaya a la página del sitio web www.burlingtonenglish.com.
2) Desplace hacia abajo el cursor y haga clic en la caja azul que dice "BE Login".
3) Introduzca su nombre de usuario y contraseña y haga clic en el botón de "log in ('iniciar la sesión').
4) Haga clic en "AT SCHOOL ('en la escuela')" bajo la oración "I am using Burlington English ('estoy usando Burlington English')".
5) Haga clic en el botón que dice "Virtual Class Scheduler ('horario de las clases virtuales')".
6) Haga clic en la "X" para cerrar la pantalla de ayuda.
7) Busque la palabra "Class ('clase')" en la parte central superior de la pantalla.
8) Haga clic en la flecha que apunta hacia abajo junto a la palabra "Class ('clase')".
9) Cuando aparezca el menú con las clases, haga clic en la primera clase que se ofrezca ese día.
10) Desplace el cursor hacia abajo hasta llegar al calendario; encuentre el día y la fecha de su clase, y haga clic en el nombre de la clase.
11) Haga clic en el botón verde "Join Now ('unirse ahora')".
12) Se conectará con su profesor!

Zoom Instructions

Instrucciones para la aplicación de Zoom:
En Zoom, existen varias herramientas que
usted puede utilizar.

Aquí está una captura de pantalla que sirve
como modelo para estas instrucciones.

Por ejemplo:

- Para silenciarse a sí mismo, haga clic
  en el botón de "Mute ('Silenciar')"
  que está por la parte inferior
  izquierda. Si hay una línea roja que
  cruza la imagen del micrófono,
  quiere decir que su micrófono está
  apagado. Para prenderlo, haga clic
  otra vez en la imagen del micrófono.

- Para apagar el video, haga clic en el
  botón "Start Video ('Iniciar el
  Video')" que está junto al micrófono.
  Si hay una línea roja que cruza la
  imagen de la cámara, quiere decir
  que su cámara está apagada. Para
  iniciar el video, haga clic otra vez en
  la imagen de la cámara.

- Si usted quiere mandar un mensaje al
  profesor o a un compañero de clase,
  haga clic en el botón de la parte
  inferior derecha que dice "More
  (más)". Después, en el menú, puede
  elegir la opción "Chat ('chatear')".
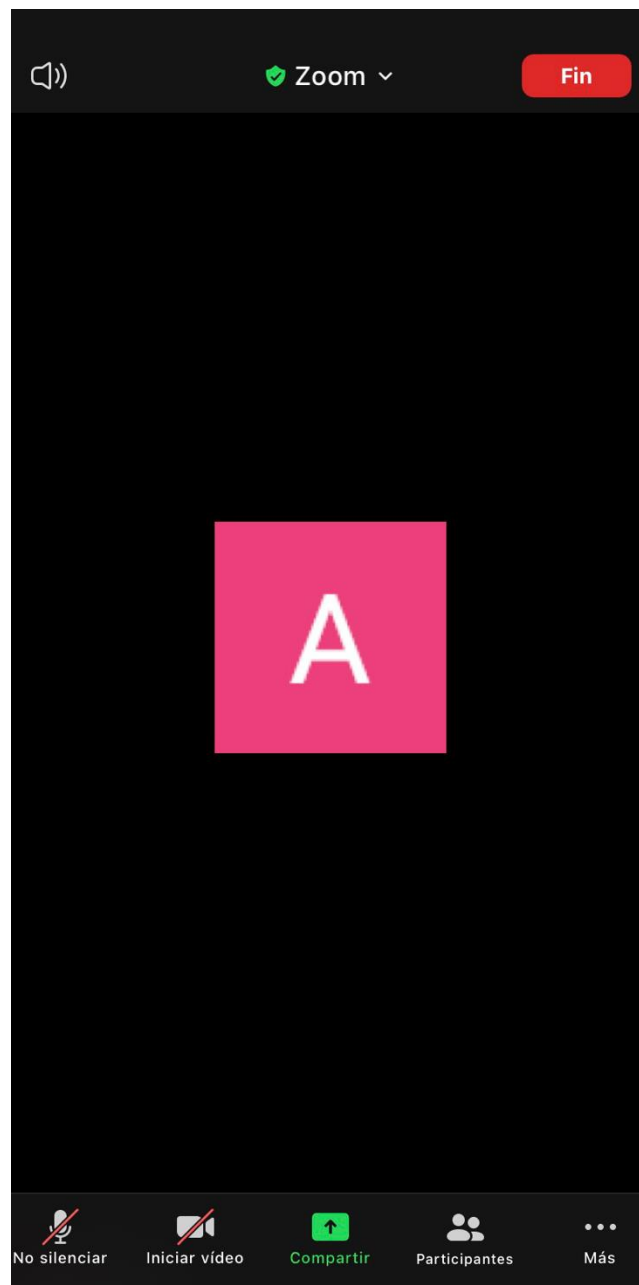
Discussion

In reflection of the project that I have undertaken, it truly was the perfect culmination of

my four years at UNO. I could not imagine a better way to summarize all of my efforts in

learning Spanish as a foreign language than being able to translate these documents for Learning

for ALL. As a citizen of Omaha, I am proud to be able to have done this work to help the

community continue to grow and to be able to give back. While the results for the community are

clear, in the sense that these translated documents are now available, I highlight the importance

of this project for me. Throughout this process, I thoroughly enjoyed being able to further my

understanding about the application of pragmatics in translation. It was fascinating to consider

the different possibilities of how words may be perceived based on the audience's nation of

origin, their education, and their ability to access the course materials. This project also allowed

me to grow as a Spanish speaker by forcing me to acquire new vocabulary in order to

appropriately complete the translation. After successfully translating these documents, I look

forward to the future with anticipation to be able to continue serving the community and to

practice my translation skills. And, I now have a great start to a collection of corpuses for

translation.

Conclusion

I am one of the beneficiaries of service-learning at the collegiate level, and after

submitting the translation to Learning for ALL, I know that they are very pleased with the

outcome of the project. Service-learning undoubtedly played a crucial role in the completion of

this thesis project since it was based on completing a task that would better the Omaha

community. According to Nelson and Scott (2008), service-learning is based upon reinforcing a

sense of service, leadership, and sensitivity to the community, and I am glad that one of my final

works at UNO could be important not only to me, but to the vibrant community of Omaha. This project was a very rewarding one for me personally as I was able to utilize classroom knowledge in a practical setting, and I would like to thank Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch for her guidance and mentoring throughout the entirety of this project.

References

Baker, L. (2019). Community-based service-learning in language education: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 7(1), Article 2.

Bates, A., Drits, D., Allen, C., & McCandless, P. (2009) Service Learning as an Instructional Strategy for the Preparation of Teachers. *Journal of Effective Teaching*, 9(1), 5-23.

Carleton College. (2021). Why Use Service Learning? Retrieved April 18, 2021 from https://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/service/why.html.

Chambers, T. (2009). A continuum of approaches to service-learning within Canadian post-secondary education. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 39(2), 77-100.

Learning for ALL. (2021). Our Mission. Retrieved April 18th, 2021 from http://golearnall.org.

Long, D. R. (2003). Spanish in the community: Students reflect on Hispanic cultures in the United States. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(2), 223–232.

Nelson, A. L., & Scott, J. L. (2008). Applied Spanish in the university curriculum: A successful model for community-based service-learning. *Hispania, 91*(2), 446.

U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts: Douglas County, Nebraska. Retrieved April 18th, 2021 from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/douglascountynebraska.

Wade, R. (1995). Developing active citizens: Community service learning in social studies. *Social Studies*, 86(3), 122-129.

Wehling, S. (2008). Cross-cultural competency through service-learning. *Journal of Community Practice*, 16(3), 293–315.