

California State University, Monterey Bay

LING 392: Nature of Language and Language Acquisition

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## **Ariadna Thalía Sodi Miranda**

Ariadna Thalia Sodi Miranda better known as Thalia is a Mexican singer, songwriter, producer, actor, entrepreneur. She was born August 26th, 1971. She was born into a well-off family in Mexico City, Mexico, and is the youngest daughter of her parents. Her mother Yolanda Miranda, was a respected painter, and her father Ernesto Sodi Pallares was a scientist, criminologist, pathologist, and writer. Thalia is considered one of the most influential Mexican musicians to date. As a child, Thalia was a part of a kid's music group named 'Pac Man', and later in 1990 she released her solo album 'Thalia'. Her album was a chart-busting success, and since then she has released 12 studio albums and has gotten to a level of international recognition. Thalia is known as the "Queen of Latin Pop". She has won numerous awards, collaborated with famous musicians, and even sung in other languages besides Spanish. She has sung in English, French, Portuguese, and Tagalog. This Mexican icon even has her own clothing line named Thalia Sodi at Macy's.

### **YouTube Link**

For the collection of my language sample, I chose to use an interview between Thalia and Wendy Williams where she answers questions about her personal life as well as how she met Donna Summer. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MIGpSNky0w>

### **27 utterances of Thalia**

/plis/

1. No please, who doesn't love Donna Summer?

/plis/

2. Please, the musical Wendy it's fantastic.

/dees/ /da/

/dem/

3. Oh these are the Thalia Sodi collection, you can get them at Macy's.

4. The whole look is my collection, head to toe.

5. You have to keep going you have to invent yourself you have to uh keep it fresh and do

/sum/

things that just uh happen in your heart you know like it's if you have some intuition or something to do you just go for it and do it I think life is right now is happening and you

/ədventædʒ/

have to take it all over and take advantage of it.

6. I met her Wendy I met her.

7. Uh she was sweet fantastic beautiful and amazing person uh and it was a very crazy story how I met her.

8. Uhm one week before I got married with my husband Tommy Mottola eh he said to me who's...

9. So uh imagine that you know he asked me whos your favorite singer right and I said

Donna Summer hands down and he uh surprise → (surpised) me uh he surprise →

(surprised) me uh at the at the after the wedding we went back to the party.

/sodnli/

10. We had our dinner we cut the cake and then suddenly

11. Out of nowhere everybody everybody was like what is that real and we discovered Donna Summer walking into the stage.

12. Everybody was dancing everybody had the best time and I can → (could) never forget that.

13. Well you have to go to the show.

14. Well no

/paʃ un/

15. But you feel her because you feel the passion you feel her uh life through the songs

16. That song is my favorite and my son's favorite he's six years old he's six years old and he's just like the cake out of the rain.

17. Everything is in that musical.

18. That musical is very intimate but also its a big party.

/ɪs/

19. I cannot you cry you laugh you dance it's all of that together it's really incredible.

/lov/

20. Mexico City by the way i love your eyelashes I love it.

21. Im planning something with eyelashes soon.

22. I dont stop I don't stop.

/ɛn/

23. By the way uh im launching a new single eh on June 1st the new single is coming and i'm so excited it's really uh empowering for women uh its fun sexy.

24. I think it comes in waves you know like I remember in the Latin explosion back then not

/dis/ /wan/

/wan/

this one that is happening right now with Despacito no the previous one.

25. Uh I had this single with Fat Joe that it was like it was like number one eh I want you and

/dʒæst/

it was like one of those moments and i think it just comes and goes you have to just be you and embrace the moment of what is happening.

26. The queen of Novelas uh I don't know I have a lot of crowns.

27. We fall in love the moment when we met through Gloria and Emilio Stefan and it was a

/blænd/

blind date and it was like they kept telling me about this guy and they kept telling him

/gɛl/

/gɛl/

about this girl me and it was like hes like whos this girl like what she does she's a singer

he was like no way no no more singers and they said to me like what he's what he does.

Stop at 6:15

### **Analysis**

Throughout the sample collection, I was able to tell that Thalia had an accent. When she first began speaking in the interview, it was easy for me to understand her English, but I could also tell that English wasn't her native language. She spoke with a Mexican accent and I knew how to tell it apart because I am Mexican and when my parents or anyone on TV who is Mexican speaks I can hear the accent. Although Thalia did have an accent, she presents Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Thalia is able to speak sufficient English in conversations and in informal interactions. She seems quite proficient in English, considering it's her second language. Thalia does present some minor phonological, morphological, and semantic errors that demonstrate enough context for me to assume she hasn't quite achieved Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Thalia is indeed bilingual in both Spanish and English.

Phonetics is the study of human speech sounds, and phonology is the study of sound patterning. In sentence #1 and #2 Thalia pronounces the word please as /plis/ demonstrating the replacement of the consonant /z/ to an /s/. As well as in line #3 she pronounced the word them as /dem/ and the word these as /dees/ and the word the as /da/. This demonstrates that she replaces the sound th(ð) to /d/. This is a common error among all her utterances that require the sound (ð) to be pronounced. In addition, in sentence #5 Thalia says, “it’s if you have some intuition or something” and the word some she pronounces as /sum/ rather than /sʌm/. Her pronunciation of the vowel /ʌ/ a low back lax rounded vowel is replaced by /u/ a high back tense rounded vowel. Again in line #10 the vowel /ʌ/ a low back lax rounded vowel is replaced by an /o/. As well as in line #20 she pronounces the word love as /lov/ instead of /lʌv/. In addition, in line #5 she pronounced the word advantage as /ədʋæntædʒ/ when it should be pronounced as /əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ/. Thalia tends to replace the vowel sounds /a/ and /i/ for /æ/ a low front lax spread. So, a common error I am noticing is that she has a hard time pronouncing her vowels correctly in words. In line #19 she silences the consonant /t/ in the word it’s, and she pronounces it as /is/.

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words. I noticed that Thalia dropped past tense suffixes like -ed, and she also tends to state verbs in present tense. An example of this line #9 “hands down and he uh surprise → (surpised) me uh he surprise → (surpised) me uh at the at the...” In this example, Thalia is telling a story of her wedding day where she was surprised with Donna Summer, but instead of pronouncing the word surprised in past tense, she pronounced it in present tense. Furthermore, Thalia states verbs in present tense, like the verb can in line #12. “Everybody was dancing everybody had the best time and I can → (could) never forget that.” Thalia should have changed her tense from present to past instead of can, it should’ve been could.

Syntax is the study of the arrangement, and the form of words. In sentence #7 Thalia is missing the determiner “an”. “She was sweet fantastic beautiful and amazing person...” (7). Sentence #7 should have read “She was sweet, fantastic, beautiful, and /an/ amazing person.” In addition, Thalia tends to forget to use conjunctions like the word “and” in sentence #23. “It’s really uh empowering for women, uh it’s fun sexy” (23). Sentence #23 should have read, “It’s really uh empowering for women uh it’s fun, /and/ sexy” (23). I believe that she forgets to add conjunctions depending on the question she answers. When it is a question that she has potentially practiced more, she does add conjunctions, but when asked to describe something in detail she doesn’t add conjunctions or determiners. I am predicting this because in line #27 she does add conjunctions, and this could be because her response is more thought out.

Moreover, semantics is the study of the meanings of the phrases and sentences. In her interview, Thalia used filler words and repetition words such as “uh” and “like” quite often. The filler word “uh” can be noticeable in sentences #5, #7, #9, #15, #23, #25, and #26. An example of Thalia using the word “uh” is in sentence #23, “By the way “uh” im launching a new single eh on June 1st the new single is coming and I’m so excited it’s really “uh” empowering for women “uh” it’s fun sexy.” Thalia uses this word as a word she uses when she’s processing. She used the word “uh” three times in this sentence, but a total of fourteen times throughout the language sample. As a bilingual speaker, I can personally say that I use the word “uh” when I am giving a presentation, or I am speaking pretty fast. In the same way, Thalia uses the filler word “like” in sentences #5, #11, #16, #24, #25, and #27. A strong example of her using the filler word like is in sentence #27, “...and it was “like” they kept telling me about this guy, and they kept telling him about this girl, me, and it was “like” he’s “like” who’s this girl “like” what she does she’s a singer he was “like” no way no no more singers, and they said to me “like” what he’s what he

does” (27). In this specific sample, she used the word “like” six times, but throughout my language analysis she used the word a total of thirteen times.

Lastly, I’d like to emphasize that because Thalia is a native Spanish speaker and English is her second language, she does exhibit some characteristics of Chicano English (ChE) in her utterances. The first shared characteristic is that she devoiced some of her consonants, like the /t/ in the word /it’s/ she pronounced it as /ɪs/. Also, the consonant /z/ in please is devoiced into and /s/ making the word sound like /plɪs/. Furthermore, Thalia substitutes the sound /th ð/ for /d/ as in the word them (ðem) to /dem/. Thalia also deletes past tense suffixes when she says the word surprise she grammatically correctly was supposed to say surprised in sentence #9 The word can should have been could in sentence #12.

In conclusion, Thalia is a very fluent bilingual speaker. Because Thalia is bilingual, her native language impacts the way in which she speaks English. Thalia is able to form sentences correctly, as well as express herself in English. As seen through some of her phonological errors, Thalia does have an accent. Her way of speaking and forming sentences is a little different from Standard American English (SAE). Besides her slight errors, her English can be understood very clearly, and she displays Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). These errors are expected because English is her second language. I do notice throughout her interview that it takes her time to process her next words, which is why she has semantic errors. She also used the filler words “like” and “uh” all throughout her interview, which shows that she is thinking about her next words. I personally learned a lot about Chicano English (ChE) and how the minor semantic, morphological, phonemic, and syntactic errors in this language sample connect to Chicano English (ChE).



## References

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Thao, CSUMB class notes