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The acquisition of pragmatic competence: compliment response strategies in learners of Spanish

James Bryant Smith
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

THE ACQUISITION OF PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE: COMPLIMENT RESPONSE STRATEGIES IN LEARNERS OF SPANISH

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James Bryant Smith
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the faculty and students, past and present, of the Interdepartmental Program in Linguistics at LSU.

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ABSTRACT

The areas of Pragmatics and Second Language Acquisition have existed separately in the field of Linguistics for some time. Their connection, however, has more recently seen a great deal of study by researchers like Scarcella and Brunak (1981), Rintell (1981), Brown and Levinson (1987), Koike (1992, 1996), Saito, Beecken (1997), Félix-Brasdefer (2003, 2006) and Huth (2006). A common thread in these studies is the effect of language transfer or cross-linguistic influence that the first language has while learners are attempting to acquire the pragmatic and politeness principles that are central to the target language and culture.

One speech act that is particularly of interest to researchers is compliment responses because they require a great deal of pragmatic insight by the speaker and therefore are often rich with data. The present study attempts to bring together the research that has been done on this speech act and clarify it using data from American learners of Spanish in a foreign language classroom at the university level. Although collecting data from learners is not a new concept, this cross-sectional study of learners at three (beginning, intermediate, and advanced) stages of learning will help to fill a void in the research that exists on the role of language transfer in pragmatic acquisition, as well as the correlation between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence.

Results from a compliment response survey administered to American native English-speaking learners of Spanish at a large American university from varying levels will be analyzed and compared to control data from native English and Spanish speakers. This research will illustrate that in the second language classroom, pragmatic accuracy in the second language often does not simply emerge with grammatical instruction. Instead, these data will show that explicit instruction might be a better tool for pragmatic accuracy in compliment responses. Results will indicate that with more Spanish instruction, students will be able to produce more grammatically

correct compliment responses, but there will be little variation in their pragmatic content through the levels. These results have pedagogical implications since pragmatic competence largely remains an overlooked aspect of second language acquisition in the language classroom.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.2 Background of Study

The act of learning a second language (L2) is a complex and arduous process. The novice learner often enters the university-level language classroom naively assuming that the language will simply be absorbed through exposure throughout the semester, or that by strenuous memorization of vocabulary and grammar, s/he will become a successful speaker of the L2. As many language students have learned the hard way, mastering a second language involves much more than lexical and grammatical memorization. Despite teachers' and students' best intentions, many language learners ultimately fall short of their linguistic goals. While it is impossible for a language student to be prepared for every possible situation that s/he will face while using the L2 in the target-language cultures, many significant aspects of culturally significant components of language are absent from language-teaching methodologies and these bits are left to the student to acquire on his or her own. Throughout the 20th century, traditional language-teaching approaches have focused on rote memorization of grammatical and lexical components of language, and not surprisingly, these methods have largely been unsuccessful in accomplishing their goal: helping language learners become effective language users (Savignon, 1997).

These grammatically driven approaches were effective in creating translation-savvy students, but since real language use is a dynamic, creative, culturally sensitive, communicative endeavor, they were ultimately unsuccessful. One reason for the failure of this type of approach is that they favor only the technical and mechanical side of language learning. These approaches ignore many of the numerous components of language that one needs to be a successful language user. Although in recent years educators and linguists have better identified these components of language by recognizing a number of areas of competence other than the grammatical and lexical

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that a successful language user should control, instruction of many of these components is still lacking in the language classroom. One of these areas of competence that continues to be overlooked, despite its importance in second language acquisition (SLA) literature, is pragmatic competence. Pragmatic elements of language, such as the social and cultural phrases and terminology involved in appropriate ways for language users to apologize, make a request, or respond to a compliment in a certain way, have long been assumed to simply emerge with increased grammatical and lexical instruction. Research such as that presented in the present study will add to the growing body of literature that demonstrates that grammatical and pragmatic competences emerge separately, and that if pragmatic behavior that is appropriate in the L2 culture is to be reached by language learners, then explicit pragmatic instruction is needed.

The connection between pragmatics and SLA has seen a great deal of study by researchers including Scarcella and Brunak (1981), Rintell (1981), Brown & Levinson (1987), Koike (1992, 1996), Saito, Beecken (1997), Félix-Brasdefer (2003, 2006) and Huth (2006). These studies and many others will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two, a common thread in these studies is the effect of language transfer or cross-linguistic influence that the first language has while learners are attempting to acquire the pragmatic and politeness principles that are central to the target language and culture. A question that remains, however, is "do language learners acquire pragmatic principles alongside grammatical and lexical items?" One speech act that is of particular interest to researchers is compliment responses (CR), because they require a great deal of pragmatic insight by the speaker and therefore are often rich with data that reveal the cultural orientation of language learners. In many languages, compliment responses require the language user to walk a delicate line between appearing too boastful or ungrateful depending on the way s/he responds to the compliment. As comparative studies, such as those by Huth

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(2006) and Warga and Scholmberger (2007) have shown, different cultures often vary in the way speakers are expected to respond to compliments based on various socio-cultural factors as well as the status of the discourse participants. Also, research will be presented in the following chapter that will highlight the gap that exists in language-learning materials on the topic of pragmatic acquisition, as well as the importance of pragmatic instruction in the L2 classroom.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study has several parts: first, the CR strategies that L2 users utilize at various stages of instruction will be examined. The goal for studying these strategies is to better understand the underlying processes involved at each stage. The relationship between CR strategy use and grammatical instruction will also be better understood, as will the differences between these two competences. This study will show that pragmatic and grammatical competences develop separately. The CR strategies used by English native speakers (NSs) in response to compliments from a number of interlocutors will help shed light on the effects of social variables of both the participant and the interlocutor. This study also seeks to further illuminate differences between the ways in which second language users respond to compliments. While this study serves to highlight attributes of both English and Spanish CRs, it does not claim to represent the totality of all possible CRs in these languages. I hypothesize that data from native Spanish speakers will expose gaps and discrepancies in the CR behavior of the two groups of students (English and Spanish NSs). Also, data collected from native speakers of English will also shed light on the CR cultural orientation of this group. Cross-cultural variation is one area that needs further research in the literature, which is one of the central aims of the current study.

The present study attempts to bring together the research that has been done on this speech act and clarify it using data from native English-speaking learners of Spanish as a foreign

language at the university level. As will be discussed in chapter three, the non native speaker (NNS) participants in this study are students who come from a range of proficiency levels, and also bring to the study their own unique social and cultural characteristics, which will be discussed in chapter three. Although collecting data from learners is not a new concept, this cross-sectional study of learners at various stages of acquisition will help to fill a void in the research that exists in the area of pragmatic acquisition, the correlation between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence, as well as the difference between English and Spanish CR behavior. This study will also expose the need for pragmatic teaching materials since an overview of current L2 teaching materials will reveal a substantial gap in L2 curricula that centers around the teaching of pragmatics. This study will also add to the body of literature which challenges the long-held assumption that pragmatic aspects of language do not require directed instruction.

1.3 Rationale

While research exists on the CR behavior of language learners, these studies mostly focus on Asian languages and their differences with English. Although contrastive studies have been carried out which compare pragmatic aspects of language use in English and Spanish, these studies largely focus on speech acts other than compliment responses. Few studies have examined the CRs of language learners, instead focusing on sociolinguistic components of NS CR behavior. The present study is distinct because it examines the role of social factors on the language use of students, with focus on the strategies of the learners and how these compare to those of native speakers. The findings here are of interest to many because the investigation goes beyond comparing native speaker data to that of non natives, it gives researchers and educators a glimpse into "the processes involved in the production of these speech act utterances by nonnative speakers" which is an aspect of L2 research that "is still lacking," according to Cohen

and Olshtain (1993). The present study contributes to a better understanding of not only how students of Spanish learn to use CRs, and also how these CRs might differ between the two languages; more broadly, it adds to the research on CRs and SLA and proposes pedagogical implications that follow from the results as well as further areas of study. It will be shown that pragmatic instruction is lacking in L2 teaching materials and that these types of activities are needed so that pragmatic differences between English and Spanish can be highlighted and pragmatic components of language, such as how to respond to a compliment in the L2, can be acquired by language students. Since this study will show that pragmatic competence and grammatical ability emerge separately, these activities are vital.

1.4 Organization of Study

Following this brief introductory chapter, chapter two will highlight various studies that have influenced and guided this dissertation. This literature review will describe research done in various areas of linguistics that relate to this study, primarily the areas of Speech Act Theory, Pragmatic Acquisition, pragmatics in current L2 teaching materials, and language and culture. The third chapter will feature the pilot study upon which this dissertation is based. The ways in which the methods and procedures proved successful will be discussed, as well as changes that were instituted due to flaws in the pilot study design and implementation. In chapter four, I will discuss the research methods employed in this study, which include the study participants, research tools, data collection procedures, data calculation, and a number of other aspects of the methodology used herein. Chapter five will illustrate the results of my data in tables and text. Categories of results include the use of CR based on interlocutor, CR strategy use at participant proficiency levels, and classification of English and Spanish CRs according to interlocutor characteristics. Finally, in chapter six, I discuss the ramifications and implications of the data collected in this study. I particularly highlight topics for further study and pedagogical issues that

can be used in the language classroom to aid in pragmatic acquisition. I also acknowledge some possible limitations of the present study.

1.5 Summary

To summarize, this dissertation will analyze the CR strategies used by American English speaking students of Spanish to disambiguate the connection between grammatical and pragmatic development. These strategies will be compared by participants' proficiency level in an attempt to clarify how CR strategies vary as NS English students of Spanish progress through their foreign language classes. To better understand the "cultural orientation" of the participants, their social characteristics, as well as those of their interlocutors, and the relation of these variables to the CR strategies used, will be examined. These results will reveal that L2 students of Spanish use their L2 grammatical competence to mimic the CR behavior of their L1. Finally, the strategies of the English-speaking students will be compared to those of native Spanish and English speakers to see how closely students' responses approximate the native responses.

By better understanding the development of CR strategies, specific speech act-centered activities can be tailored to the students' needs and administered in the L2 classroom. These CRs will also be compared to the CRs of native Spanish speakers to illuminate any underlying socio-cultural differences that might exist between the two speech community cultures. This type of contrastive study, although common between other languages, is needed for English and Spanish if pragmatics-centered classroom-appropriate activities are to be implemented in the L2 classroom so that students can learn CRs that are appropriate in many of the cultures where Spanish is spoken.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study has been informed by previous research that has been conducted in pertinent areas of applied and theoretical linguistics, including second language acquisition, pragmatics, and speech act theory. While the present study is empirical with pedagogical implications, it also relates to these theories and they will be briefly discussed. This chapter will also highlight studies on variation in speech acts according to language. Studies that compare speech acts in English and Spanish will also be presented, as will studies on pragmatic acquisition in the L2. While few studies exist on areas such as compliment responses in Spanish and pragmatic acquisition of Spanish by English NSs, these gaps will be discussed. A review of the inclusion of pragmatic material, or lack thereof, in materials popularly used in L2 Spanish classrooms will be discussed.

While not meant to be exhaustive, this chapter addresses relevant literature to provide a descriptive overview of research that will guide the reader through major works done in various fields that molded the present research. Finally, the need for the present study, as shown by the research presented in this chapter, will be established.

2.2 Speech Act Theory

Since the present study is concerned with the speech act of a compliment response, it is important to highlight major works relating to Speech Act Theory, including critiques to this theory in Spanish. Later in this chapter, several studies that have studied speech act variation in different languages, including English and Spanish, will be discussed.

2.2.1 Austin and Searle

Modern speech acts can be traced to Austin, whose *How to do Things with Words* (1962) would go on to influence countless philolinguists and continues to be considered a pivotal work in the field of linguistics. Austin proposed the term "speech act" as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (Searle, 1969). Austin was never completely satisfied with his speech act classification, mainly because certain verbs could belong to more than one act. Linguists such as Geoffrey Leech (1983) would later criticize Austin for what became known as the 'Illocutionary Verb Fallacy,' or Austin's theory that verbs corresponded with a particular speech act on a one-on-one level. Austin proposed many revolutionary linguistic concepts other than speech acts but was aware that much of his work needed further study. The most famous expansion of Austin's work was done by John Searle who proposed what came to be known as Speech Act Theory.

Searle (1975) wrote that Austin's classification "needs to be seriously revised because it contains several weaknesses" (7). He departed from Austin by proposing his own set of speech acts and additionally proposed the opereation of felicity conditions which must be performed for a speech act to be successful. Searle's taxonomy of speech acts includes representatives/assertives ("telling people how things are"), directives ("trying to get people to do things"), commissives ("committing ourselves to doing things"), expressives ("expressing our feeling and attitudes"), and declarations ("bringing about changes through utterances") (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005:24). Mey (2001) writes that Searle's proposal "is more oriented [than Austin's] towards the real world, inasmuch as it takes its point of departure in what actually is the case, namely that people perform a speech act whenever they use language, irrespective of the 'performative' criterion," yet notes that both sets of speech acts definitely share similarities (125).

2.2.2 Criticisms of Speech Act Theory

Problems with Speech Act Theory often stem from the fact that it was conceived, as Mey writes (2001: 112), from a "philosophical-semantic [point of view]; it is based on strict reasoning and certain basic principles of logic" that did not easily translate into actual language situations. A pragmatic perspective is more concerned with actual, real-life realizations of these speech acts and authors such as Wierzbicka (1983) have questioned their application to languages and contexts other than English, and have noted the lack of a cultural variation component in Searle's theories.

Blum-Kulka and House (1989: 1) write "one of the most compelling notions in the study of language use is the notion of speech acts. Their modes of performance carry heavy social implications … and yet, cultures have been shown to vary drastically in their […] modes for speech act behavior." A growing number of research studies, such as those which will be highlighted in this section, have examined how speech act theory related to languages other than English. Studies by researchers such as Haverkate and Koike attempted to shed light on the complexities of speech acts in Spanish and how they relate to the original speech act theories posed by Austin and Searle.

2.2.3 Responses to Speech Act Theory by Hispanists

Since the present study examines the CRs of L1 English students of Spanish, works done on speech act theory applied to Spanish will be discussed in this section. These studies include both reactions to SAT, as well as possible variations that deal with Spanish.

A number of Hispanists, or specialists in the Spanish language, have studied Austin and Searle's speech act theories and their applications to the Spanish language with various results. Haverkate is a central figure in Spanish pragmatics and has proposed his own set of speech acts (1979) which refer to the speaker and include utterance act, referring act, predicating act,

illocutionary act, and allocutionary act, as well as the hearer's interpretation acts (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005:42). These include interpreting reference, predication, interpreting illocution, and interpreting allocution. (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005:42). Haverkate (1979) also pays special attention to impositions, which are a subclass of directives that serve as an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to perform an action that is aimed at benefiting the speaker. Haverkate's (1984) work on mitigating (reinforcing) strategies in impositive speech acts, as well as his inclusion of interpretation acts in his own speech act taxonomy reinforces the role of the hearer in the speech act. Although Haverkate's Spanish-based speech acts are more highly descriptive than Searle's, they have failed to replace the original Speech Act Theory did, although they are commonly referenced in speech act studies in Spanish.

Guariglia (1996) proposed a set of speech acts in Spanish which include five global categories and seventeen subcategories. Márquez Reiter and Placencia write that Guariglia, "following Searle, to arrive at this classification, considered preparatory and sincerity conditions of speech acts; their illocutionary point and the 'direction of fit'" (2005: 48). They note, however, that this classification of Spanish speech acts has never really gained prominence in the field of pragmatics and "has not had much impact in the world of Hispanists" (48). These works represent a portion of the corpus of data that exists on the application of speech act theory to Spanish. Although responses to Speech Act Theory are plentiful, no treatment by Hispanists has succeeded in replacing Austin and Searle's classifications and it would appear that the majority of studies on Spanish pragmatics are based on traditional speech act theory, not a reformulation done by a Hispanist. This can be problematic, since as Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones (1989: 181) note "even…(if) a named speech act can be translated, one cannot assume that what appears to be the same situation will result in the same speech act" . Although cross-linguistic application of

speech act theory is controversial, it seems to be the most common method of studying Spanish pragmatics.

The typologies of speech acts proposed by Hispanists like Guariglia propose an important issue in cross cultural speech act theory: do these more elaborate schemas help clarify the differences between the realizations of speech acts cross culturally, or do they just complicate the issue? Cross linguistic data presented in this paper tends to show that differences in speech acts are often realized not in unique speech acts that only exist in certain languages, but rather in culturally-relevant manifestations of established speech acts that appear to exist in some form in all languages. Proposing different typologies of speech acts for each of the many communities where these languages are spoken complicates matters more than it would clarify them. A single theory of speech acts is beneficial, as long as cultural differences and variations of the actual realizations these speech acts are carefully examined.

2.2.4 Speech Act Discussion

The research discussed above has shown that there does exist a great deal of variation among speech acts across languages and cultures and social situations of use; many authors acknowledged that further empirical evidence is necessary. The theories presented above have examined data that helps reaffirm the importance of recognizing the importance of the cultural orientation of the person using the speech act and the problems that arise when one assumes language use is universal. Problems arise when a philosophical language theory such as speech act theory is applied to the different languages and cultures of the world. The theories proposed by Austin and Searle do not capture the cultural intricacies that arise in actual realizations of speech acts, they can be useful tools in categorizing human language, as long as a these cultural variations are carefully considered. The speech act of responding to a compliment is one that varies by cultures and the differences between English and Spanish CRs are at the heart of this

dissertation. In the following section, another formal theory of language use, maxims, will be discussed, as will its relation to the present study

2.3 Universal Maxims (Cultural Variation)

As with speech act theory, the concept of maxims proposed a universal classification system for human language. The present study is concerned with language variation as it applies to two languages and the countless speech communities where these languages are used. This study also seeks to understand how users of one language acquire the linguistic and pragmatic principles of another. Many of the critiques of maxims and speech act theory center around the importance of the context of the utterance and the role of culture and language. These ideas are also central to the present study since learners often bring their own cultural orientation from the L1 culture into the L2 culture which hinders communication. Discussion of Grice's theory of maxims, as well as some responses that have been highlighted in the following section illustrate the importance of recognizing cultural variations of human language and the problems that can arise when one assumes that components of language are universal.

In his 1968 lectures entitled "Logic and Conversation," Grice sought to bring a philosophical, formalist approach to human language by proposing a series of terms that have become mainstays in the field of linguistics and in other areas. One of the most important ideas posed is that of conversational implicatures, which are ideas implied in conversation, and are "cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least mutually accepted directives" (307). From these implicatures arise the ground-breaking cooperative principle, or the idea that the main goal of any conversation is communication, and the participants must be cooperating to achieve this goal. Grice elaborates on this, saying that a vital part of the cooperative principle is to "make your conversational

contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (307).

Grice expands this cooperative principle with distinct maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Each of these maxims is understood to be obeyed by participants when successful communication occurs. Grice proposes that these ideas are aspects of human communication that are utilized subconsciously in conversation. When communication breaks down, however, it is due to a violation of one or more of these maxims. These violations can be either be a simple violation (such as a lie), an "opt out" (e.g., refusing to answer a question), a "clash" (failure to fulfill one maxim without violating another), or "flouting," which Grice defines as to "blatantly fail to fulfill" a maxim (310).

Grice's work on conversational implicatures formed a general theory for human communication that has largely been accepted as universal and applicable to any language. However, there exists a great deal of debate over the cross-cultural implications of Grice's maxims and since their introduction, many authors have felt that he ignored a cultural component which makes its application to certain non-Western languages and cultures difficult, and as some have proposed, impossible. Since its conception, many scholars have taken issue with the generalized aspects of Grice's theories as well as with other linguistic methodologies such as Speech Act Theory, mainly because of how they relate to other cultures and languages. The present paper will show some of the works by major critics of Grice's maxims and their alleged universality.

2.3.1 Critiques of Grice's Maxims

One of the most influential critiques of Grice's "universal" implicature theory is by anthropologist Ochs who examines "Grice's analysis of conversational maxims and implicatures (…) in the light of Malagasy language and ways of speaking" (67). In her 1976 article "The

universality of conversational postulates," Ochs points to the lack of research at the time concerning the cross-cultural implications of Grice's theories and how "philosophers likely reflect on conversational conduct as it operates in their own society" and not in other cultures (67). Ochs was concerned with how Grice's philosophical approach was related to a non-Western country, namely Madagascar, and examined the speech of this culture to better understand the relevance of applying maxims to Malagasy speakers (67). Her findings would greatly complicate the application of Grice's theories to non-Western cultures.

Another anthropologist who has examined the application of Grice's maxims in non-Anglo culture is Haviland, who studied the Zinacantec language of Chiapas, Mexico. Haviland (1988) claims, unlike Ochs, that Grice never intended his maxims to be "unbreakable rules," but rather that he intended them as something more "subtle" (10). He does, however, take issue with Grice's simplistic view of the role of social constraints in his lectures (13). Using the language and culture of Chiapas as an example, Haviland notes that maxims may have conflict with "one another, and with what an individual speaker 'knows,' but also with socially grounded authority to speak" (13). In certain cultures, Zinacantec included, there exist many social roles concerning who can speak to whom. Instances like these would appear to complicate Grice's original theory of conversational implicatures and present circumstances not originally included in Grice's theory.

Wierzbicka (1991) acknowledges the difficulty that comes when one tries to step outside his or her own culture and look at another culture objectively. She writes that this is often complicated by a framework that is skewed by Anglo centrism, and that ideas proposed by authors like Searle, Grice, and Brown and Levinson "reflect clearly the authors' culture-specific perspective" (68). Wierzbicka believes that empirical evidence has shown that cross-culturally, maxims and principles of human conversation are not universally valid, and that this contention

is supported by research on the lack of modesty in Black American English and the "lack of Harmony" in the Jewish culture" (69). Some critics feel that Grice's is not the only well-known work in linguistics that leaves out a cultural component. One critic of the much-studied, philosophical foundations of modern linguistics, such as Searle's speech act theory and Grice's theories, goes so far as to the the ideas proposed are failures because of their seeming non-applicability in non-Western languages. Rosaldo accuses linguists like Searle and Austin of using a philosophical approach with "undue emphasis upon the speaker's psychological state, and inattention to the social sphere" (227).

2.3.2 Defending the Universality of Maxims

Brown and Levinson (1987) respond to the claims of Ochs and Rosaldo, saying "it is hard to judge the import of these apparent ethnographic counterexamples to the Gricean framework" (9). Instead of completely rejecting these critiques, the authors instead discuss the possibility of a "slight shift" in importance of what is actually said versus what is truly implied which is tied to sociolinguistic distinctions (9). They note that further study in these areas would be needed to determine if they really serve as counterexamples and conclude that Grice's framework remains intact and "survives the attack" imposed by these authors (10). Brown and Levinson's response is perhaps not surprising since their own work has been criticized for lacking cultural awareness and claiming universal applicability.

Haviland (1997) notes the lack of real empirical evidence to support or refute cross-cultural maxims and writes that far too often assumptions have been based on "mundane and culturally familiar (although frequently ethnographically underexamined) situations" (547). In response specifically to Ochs, Haviland cites Brown and Levinson (1978), explaining that even when it appears that we are not cooperating (ie: not obeying a maxim) that we are in fact cooperating at a deeper level, although it might not appear so on a superficial level (551).

Haviland notes that various aspects of research in this area "have hardly been explored" and writes that authors like Brown and Levinson (1987) consider "a narrow selection of examples…taken as largely unproblematic and presumed to be universal" and "depend on entirely constructed examples of restricted (indeed, fictitious) ethnographic provenance" (552). Haviland proposes "at the very least, widening the empirical scope of our inquiries" in order to better understand the cross-cultural applications of Grice's maxims (552).

Gazdar (1979) chooses to assume that debunk Ochs' claims about Malagasy are valid and discusses what implications this might have. He concludes that if Grice's maxims do not apply to Malagasy society, they are still valid and interesting to the field of linguistics, although it might "reduce their philosophical or psychological implications" (55). He accepts Ochs' observations about Malagasy language and suggests that if Ochs is correct, "certain kinds of presupposition suspension (…) will not take place in Malagasy" (55).

Spencer-Oatley and Jiang (2003), like Haviland (1997), acknowledge that frequently in pragmatic studies, few specific cultural differences are given as variables, and cultural aspects are often identified, but never examined in detail (1634). These authors propose the idea of sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs), which serve as a reconceptualized version of Grice's Maxims. They write that these SIPs are "scalar in nature, guide or influence people's productive and interpretive use of language" and that "they are value-linked, so that in a given culture and/or situational context, there are norms or preferences regarding the implementation of these principles" (1635). This scalar dimension is seen by the authors as being preferential over maxims because it allows for cultural variation. This scale has the advantage of allowing some degree of deviation, whereas one could argue that in a Gricean framework, a participant either cooperates or does not. These SIPs might let in a cultural dimension to implicature and cooperation that Grice's original theory lacked.

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2.3.2 Maxim Discussion

According to Anna Wierzbicka (1991),

> if we want to compare different cultures in terms of their true basic values, and if we want to do it in a way that would help us to understand those cultures, we should try to do it not in terms of our own conceptual articles, but in terms of concepts which may be relevant to those other cultures as well – that is, in terms of concepts which are relatively, if not absolutely, universal. (72).

The present study examines the CRs of English NSs as they learn Spanish. These responses must be judged to be appropriate based on the context of their use. This is not an easy task since English and Spanish are used in countless speech communities and it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish one 'proper' way to respond to a compliment. Universal classification systems are often criticized because it is difficult to highlight linguistic behaviors that are appropriate in all cultures. Perhaps formal theories of language such as Grice's maxims and SAT are better used as classification systems for language use that much later should be interpreted according to the cultural norms of the speech community. In the following section, studies that involve speech acts in Spanish will be discussed.

2.4 Studies on Speech Acts in Spanish

Contrastive studies on speech acts help cement the notion that cultural variation is connected to variation in speech acts. Brown and Levinson write, "exploring how particular kinds of speech acts are realized in different contexts and in different languages … deepens our understanding of cross-cultural parallels" in language use (1987: 25). A growing area in linguistics is the study of speech acts in Spanish. Koike (1992) looked at speech acts in Spanish from the perspective of the second language learner. Koike conducted two "limited" experiments with beginning American learners of Spanish in which students were asked to listen to three messages, each with a speech act in Spanish (a request, an apology, and a command). They were

then asked to identify the type of speech act they heard and to name the elements that helped them understand the message (words, intonation, etc.). The results indicate that almost all of the students (97%) were correctly able to identify the speech act. Over half of the students said certain words helped them to identify the speech acts of apologies and requests, and both intonation and words helped them to identify orders (121).

Investigating Spanish-speaking learners of English, Rintell (1981) studied the level of deference in suggestions and requests in adult learners of English whose native language was Spanish. She wanted to see if the learners would transfer politeness strategies from the speech acts of their native language to the target language. Rintell concluded that the range of politeness in the Spanish request (a type of directive) was larger than the range in English; the "range of Spanish forms produced … seems to begin and end at points higher on the deference scale than their English counterparts. Speakers employed more deferent forms when requesting in Spanish than in English" (26). This is perhaps not surprising since the speakers likely had access to more complex grammatical and pragmatic forms in their native language, but this does illustrate a key difference between directives in English and Spanish. These respondents also had the role of student and therefore showed greater deference to the teacher who assumes a higher level of power. One could deduce from Rintell's finding that Spanish requests can encompass a greater range of politeness than English requests in their use expressions available in their linguistic systems.

Although the majority of empirical studies conducted on the Spanish language have focused on directives, several recent studies have analyzed refusal strategies in Spanish. One such study was conducted by Félix-Brasdefer (2003) and compared the direct and indirect strategies that American English speakers and Latin American Spanish speakers used to decline an invitation in Spanish. Comparing native Spanish speakers and advanced non-natives, Félix-

Brasdefer used three groups: native Spanish speakers speaking Spanish (SPN-SPN), native English speakers speaking Spanish (ENG-SPN), and native English speakers speaking English (ENG-ENG). Results indicate that the ENG-ENG group used more direct strategies than the SPN-SPN group, and the ENG-SPN group was somewhere in between (225). Félix-Brasdefer identified a series of strategies that include "mitigating acceptance," "let interlocutor off the hook," "excuse/explanation," "hedging," etc. and found that the SPN-SPN speakers displayed the most strategies in their refusals (521), followed by the ENG-SPN (498), and finally the ENG-ENG speakers (301) (232). In terms of direct strategies, the ENG-ENG speakers were the most direct with 32 direct cases, followed by ENG-SPN (26 cases) and SPN-SPN (20 cases) (239). Félix-Brasdefer notes that the three groups "favored similar pragmatic strategies in declining an invitation; the difference, however, was in the preference for and frequency of these strategies" (248). These results imply that speech act usage is influenced by context: i.e., status, gender of addressee and speaker, as well as by the language itself.

In another study, Félix-Brasdefer (2006) examined refusal strategies of native Spanish speakers in Mexico in an attempt to study the degree of formality, the politeness functions of direct and indirect speech acts, as well as the Mexican concept of face. The Mexican Spanish speakers were to respond to an invitation in the form of role plays and in total, 830 different refusal strategies were used; 56% in a formal situation and 44% in an informal situation (2167). The results show that the informants used a significantly greater number of distinct strategies in formal situations that in informal ones. The results also show that in informal situations, greater levels of indirectness were observed, whereas in more formal situations, greater directness was used by the informants. Félix-Brasdefer notes, "the results of the current study show that the social power and social distance are conditioning factors in the selection of linguistic strategies in this Mexican community," and that "in this community, a preference for direct refusals

represents involvement or closeness with an interlocutor" (2177). In this community, results indicate that factors such as power and social distance play key roles in determining the level of deference used in refusing an invitation. Félix-Brasdefer concludes that "politeness is accomplished largely by means of formulaic and semi-formulaic expressions … and by means of various linguistic forms that weaken the illocutionary force of a refusal" (2180).

Lorenzo-Dus (2001) contrasted responses by British English-speaking university students and Spanish-speaking university students from Spain to compliments given by members of the opposite sex in their native language. He found "the existence of cross-cultural and cross-gender similarities as well as differences between the … groups" (107). Results indicate that the British students were more likely to question the sincerity of the complimenter, while the Spanish students tend to question the compliment, often with humor. Lorenzo-Dus indicated, "the Spanish participants deemed it inappropriate to use hedging, and opted instead for direct expression of their feelings, i.e., a positive politeness strategy" (115). Results also indicate a common pattern in both groups of requesting repetition and an expansion of the compliment by the Spanish speakers. Despite many similarities in the compliment responses of the British and Spanish students, which the author credits to a cultural globalization, she explains "close analysis of CRs (compliment responses) suggest the existence of some cross-cultural and cross-gender differences between British and Spanish university students" (122). These results indicate that realizations of the same speech act (compliment responses) are different in Spanish than in English, but that the speech act itself is not distinct in the two languages.

2.5 Cross-cultural and Cross-linguistic Variation in Speech Acts

To test the extent of the applicability of speech act theory, the researches that will be discussed in this section have conducted cross-cultural studies which have compared the speech act usage strategies of two or more languages. This type of study is necessary, writes Wierzbicka

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(1991), since many premises of speech act theory have been assumed to be universal, though she feels they are overly influenced by English data. Wierzbicka (1991) writes that "the ethnocentric bias characteristic of speech act studies is largely due to their origin in linguistic philosophy rather than in linguistics proper" and "statements mistaking Anglo-Saxon conversational convention for 'human behaviour' in general abound" (26).

Despite these issues, cross-linguistic study of speech acts has shed light on many important areas of the study of pragmatics. Wierzbicka (1991) contrasts Polish and English speakers' usage of speech acts in giving advice, making requests, the use of tag questions ("Close the door, *will you*?"), and giving opinions and noted that cultural values such as objectivism, cordiality and courtesy are reflected in speech acts as well as in the lexicon. In the case of requests, Wierzbicka notes that, in other languages, indirect requests like "will you close the door please?" or "why don't you be quiet?" would be interpreted as including speaker's interpretation "unreasonable and stubborn behaviour on the part of the addressee" and that "not a single one of the utterances could be translated literally into Polish and used as a request" 32). As will be seen later, Wierzbicka's data seems to illustrate that individual realizations of directives are different. This difference, however, seems to lie in the utterance itself and not in variation in the speech act. It would appear that although there exist variations in exactly how they are uttered, the indirect request in English and in Polish would still belong to the same speech act category.

Blum-Kulka and House (1989) compared request speech acts of native speakers of Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinean Spanish, Australian English and German to examine "to what extent [...] members of different cultures agree on the need to vary their requestive behavior according to the social situation" (124). The authors compared requests made by the informants in five fictional situations, such as one roommate requesting that the other clean the

kitchen or a policeman requesting a driver to move his car. Additionally, the authors examined the use of impositives, conventionally indirect requests, and hints. Their main findings were that speakers of Australian English used conventional indirectness in 80% of their requests while speakers of Argentinean Spanish and Hebrew used conventional indirectness in 60%, while favoring the more direct impositives in 40% of requests (134). The authors confirm previous research that Germans are slightly more direct than English speakers and that the French Canadians and Germans fall somewhere in between the Australians and the Hebrew speakers in terms of directness (136). It is important to note that indirectness does not necessarily equal politeness (Blum-Kulka, 1987), but this variation does indicate that despite many similarities, there is a great deal of cross-linguistic difference in the realization of the speech act of requesting in different languages.

Olshtain (1989) studied apology strategies by native speakers of Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French, and German. The two general apology strategies examined were IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device, or "the formulaic, routinized forms of apology") and the expression of apology (157). Results indicate that cultural components of the languages studied could have influenced the differences among apology strategy use. In a scenario in which a professor apologizes for not having corrected a term paper, French, English, and Hebrew all had low levels of IFID (38%), while German had a high level (79%) (167). Olshtain explains that a high level of IFID by Hebrew speakers when apologizing for damaging a car might be linked to the high cost of cars in Israel, therefore being deemed a more serious offense. When apologizing for an offense at work, Hebrew and German speakers agreed on using a relatively low level of IFID, while the use of IFID by French and English speakers was slightly higher. Olshtain credits this to the fact that "the violation can be viewed simply as acceptable criticism at work" (168). In terms of the other primary apology strategy, the expression of responsibility, results indicate an

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even greater similarity between languages. Overall, the results of this experiment reveal, in general, greater similarities than differences in apology strategies, aside from certain deviations linked to cultural variation. The author admits that the fictional strategies used to elicit these apologies were culturally linked to a Western university setting, therefore being too idealized and specific to extract culturally significant data. As will be discussed later, the method of idealized role plays is troublesome, and as Olshtain states, can affect the data and skew the analysis. As will be discussed in chapter six, while role plays may be a questionable collection method for authentic data, they can serve as valuable tools in teaching speech acts in the L2 classroom.

Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002) compared the similarities and differences in the speech act of refusals in Egyptian Arabic and American English. The authors mention that the study of speech acts like refusals, requests, and apologies are common and "important speech acts to investigate cross-culturally precisely because they are face-threatening; hence research contributes to our understanding of appropriate strategies for protecting the face of the interlocutors" (165). The results indicate that Americans used more direct refusals and implemented a greater number of refusal strategies per utterance than the Egyptians. Both groups used more indirect strategies than direct strategies. The most frequently used indirect strategy by both groups was providing a reason for the refusal, while a statement of regret was the least common. The interlocutor status affected the refusal strategies in a similar fashion; both groups again chose to give a reason when refusing someone of lower status than themselves. The least commonly used strategy for both groups was providing a statement of regret utilized when refusing a request to someone of higher and lower social status.

In total, Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002) found more similarities than differences in the refusal strategies of Americans and Egyptians; the authors specifically conclude their findings "do not support […] clams that indirect refusals are used by Arabic

speakers with acquaintances of equal status and with close friends of unequal status" (182). The authors note that their results could have been affected by the fact that speakers were told to give refusals in all situations, when in a real-life context, they might have not refused. Several of the Egyptians indicated that it was difficult to make a refusal in certain situations, while "none of the Americans indicated that they had difficulty making a refusal in the situations given" (183).

Warga and Scholmberger (2007) studied the acquisition of French apologetic behavior by German-speaking Austrians in a study abroad context. These authors note the lack of research on L2 pragmatic acquisition, writing "the study, thus, adds to the scarce body of literature on pragmatic development in general and on the pragmatics of French as an L2" (221). Warga and Scholmberger concluded that although immersion in the target culture did lead to some acquisition of native-like apologies, other responses began to "shift away from the L2 norm" (221).

The studies presented in this section have highlighted speech act variation according to the language background and cultural orientation of the interlocutors. Speech act variation, especially that involving CRs, is relevant to this study since the present research concerns CR variation of English L1 learners of Spanish and its relation to a number of variables, including gender, age, and class level. The research highlighted in this section illustrate the need for recognizing speech act variation since, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, CRs performed by native English and Spanish speakers differ and this variance needs to be specifically instructed in the L2 classroom to be acquired. Studies concerning pragmatic acquisition will be discussed in the following section.

2.6 Acquiring Pragmatic Competence in the L2

Traditionally in the field of language teaching, grammatical concepts and translation have been the main goals of teachers (Omaggio-Hadley, 2001). Early methodologies focused almost

entirely on making language learners able to translate and conjugate verbs, but ultimately students were left unable to speak or creatively use the second language like a native speaker (Omaggio-Hadley, 2001). Rintell (1981: 11) explains that early research was concerned with learners' errors and how the learners put words together in grammatical ways. More recent approaches to language teaching, such as those which will be discussed in the following section, stress the importance of communicative competence (Hymes, 1967), which includes knowing enough to be able to adapt successfully in the target culture. This term involves grammatical ability, which would allow the language learner to become a contributing and effectively communicative member of the L2 culture. Communicative competence became an integral part of L2 teaching methodologies, which led to the inclusion of pragmatics as a component of teaching curricula. In the following section, L2 teaching methods of the past and that continue today will be discussed, as will their connection to pragmatic instruction.

2.6.1 Brief History of Language Teaching

A major component of the present study is the need for pragmatic instruction in the L2 classroom. This section will highlight some major trends in modern language teaching, as well as the emergence of cultural and pragmatic instruction. Some of the earliest approaches to foreign language teaching were concerned with rules of grammar and vocabulary lists in the target language. The Grammar-Translation Method, which was first used with classical languages Latin and Greek, was seen as a sort of mental exercise to improve the student's command of the rules of his or her L1 through memorizing the rules of the L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Through constant comparison of the L1 and L2, much translation, and a lack of listening and speaking practice, the Grammar-Translation Method produced language users who were often adept at grammatical concepts of the L2, but unable to communicate in it.

Another widespread approach to language learning is the Audiolingual approach in which learners acquire language as a series of habits. Rooted in behavioral psychology, this method proposed that languages were best learned through conditioning. Under the guidelines of this method, learners do not compare the L1 and the L2, and as Omaggio-Hadley (2001) notes, "the native language should be banned from the classroom; a 'cultural island' should be maintained" (111). Through this "cultural island," the role of context and language, as well as communicative competence could be introduced, but as Omaggio-Hadley points out, this approach simply did not produce bilingual speakers, something that is arguably the goal of language teaching. These methods, instead, produced learners who were adept translators, but never acquired the pragmatic competence necessary to function in the target culture.

Later methods, such as the Direct Method, minimized the role of translation and emphasized real life contexts and meaningful situations. For the first time, the goal of L2 education became that of learners being able to communicate, and not simply memorizing grammatical rules and lexicon. In fact, a steadfast rule in the Direct Method was not to translate. Students were not instructed in the L1, which was different from previous methodologies in which the L1 was the sole language of instruction. Methodologies such as the Direct Method were the first to emphasize the importance of teaching pragmatics to language students. Modern methods of second language instruction have gone more in this communicative direction and led to the development of communicative competence, perhaps illustrating the growing role of pragmatics in language teaching.

Most modern language teaching approaches stem to some degree from a Functional or Communicative Approach. In such approaches, Omaggio-Hadley explains, "communicative competence, with an emphasis on fluency and acceptable language use, is the goal of instruction. Accuracy is judged not in the abstract, but in context" (2001:117). It is important to note that this

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approach teaches "acceptable" language use and not the ability to produce grammatically flawless sentences, like other approaches attempted to do. Communicative Language teaching, which stems from Hymes's (1971) notion of communicative competence, which includes knowing when and how to say what to whom in the L2 culture. Developing communicative competence requires one to look at language not as an isolated behavior but as a symbolic system used for communication among themselves (Savignon, 1997: 16). This approach gained popularity in the 1970's after language educators began to question if the methodologies that they were using to teach languages were successful.

The role of the L2 culture and pragmatics, emerges clearly for the first time in widely accepted language teaching methodologies. Using a communicative approach, the interdependence of language and culture was emphasized. The idea that one linguistic form could be utilized to perform a number of functions, and vice versa, was also emphasized, which led the way for L2 pragmatics, since the use of form often depends on the context in which it is uttered. Language is no longer seen as an isolated, solely linguistic and grammatical concept, but rather a complex, multi-dimensional process in which context, or social status of what is occurring around the language participants, plays a pivotal role.

The role of pragmatics in modern language teaching is anchored in Bachman's (1990) expansion of Canale and Swain's communicative competence framework. In his guide, Bachman first divides language competence into organizational (Grammatical and Textual) and Pragmatic Competence which he separates into two main subsets: Illocutionary competence, which refers to ideational functions, manipulative functions, heuristic functions, and imaginative functions; and Sociolinguistic Competence, which refers to sensitivity to dialect and register, naturalness, and understanding of cultural referents and figures of speech.

As the present study will show, pragmatic instruction, although identified as an important part of communicative language teaching, needs to occur in the L2 classroom for target culture speech act usage to be acquired by learners. Pragmatic competence does not explicitly appear in the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) . Pragmatics is still lacking in the L2 classroom for many reasons. Compared to grammatical and lexical items, which often have a right or wrong answer, cultural and pragmatic variations of speech acts depend on context and could therefore be judged as harder to grade as well as to test. Pragmatic instruction might also be seen as less practical than grammar. Teaching pragmatics in the L2 classroom without the aid of teaching materials that feature such items as compliment response strategies requires teachers to be intimately familiar with the target culture, and many L2 teachers do not possess this level of familiarity, or are only familiar with the behaviors of one community. Despite the importance of pragmatics in the classroom, as has been established in this section, it continues to be lacking in L2 classes. This lack will be seen in the following section when an overview of several Spanish language teaching textbooks will be evaluated. These texts include those used by the students who participated in this study and represent the current state of pragmatics in L2 teaching materials.

2.6.2 Pragmatics in Current L2 Teaching Curricula

In order to illustrate the state of explicit pragmatic instruction in L2 classrooms, I will review several modern Spanish-language textbooks that are currently available for use in the university L2 classroom. These textbooks include those that the participants of this study used in their university-level Spanish classes at. This review will show that pragmatic instruction is lacking, especially in comparison to grammatical and lexical items which receive the vast majority of the emphasis. Pragmatic instruction, if present at all, is often not explicit and only present at early levels of instruction. These pragmatic elements are often presented as small,

cultural side notes and are not reinforced with activities so that the students acquire the appropriate uses of these forms. Since the present study aims to show that pragmatic instruction is necessary at all levels of L2 instruction, by highlighting the lack of pragmatic instruction, the need for this type of teaching is made apparent.

A common theme in Spanish L2 textbooks is to present pragmatic information as it relates to verbal conjugations. This is often seen in explanations of informal and formal pronouns as they relate to verb conjugations. *Gente* (2007), *Puentes – Spanish for Intensive and High Beginners*, (2007), and *De Nuevo – Spanish for High Beginners* (2004) all indicate that languages show variation according to the nature of the relationship between two interlocutors through verb conjugations corresponding to informal and formal second person singular pronouns (equivalents of "you"). These forms are also mentioned again only when these pronouns are taught as they relate to imperative verb forms. Thus, after beginning Spanish students are made aware of distinct pronoun forms in initial classes, often one or two semesters , they again see pragmatic emphasis. This extended period without pragmatic instruction, which is often filled with grammatical and lexical instruction, does not highlight the linguistic forms that students will need to perform L2 culture-appropriate speech acts. *Indentidades – Exploraciones e interconexiones*, an intermediate Spanish L2 textbook includes the politeness implications of using the conditional mood, in addition to pronoun differentiation based on familiarity as they relate to imperatives.

Other textbooks include some pragmatic input other than that previously mentioned, but this information is frequently presented in the form of cultural "tidbits" that are often allocated to the margins of textbook pages and are not presented as a main focus of the classroom lesson. While these texts feature pragmatics, albeit infrequently, in the L2 curriculum, these items are not enough to help L2 students use culturally appropriate speech acts in the target culture.

Mosaicos – Spanish as a World Language (2006) features certain pragmatic information, such as strategies to formulate an invitation, convince, express good news, and call attention in small sections which are located in the page margin called "en directo." *Temas – Spanish for the Global Community* (2007) has a similar approach with its "sugerencias" sections which give suggestions for formal writing and formulas for giving advice. *Temas* and many of these textbooks similarly feature culturally dependent lexical variation in margin-allocated boxes. *Pasaporte – Spanish for Advanced Beginners* (2009) also draws the attention of the L2 learner very briefly to pragmatic information in the form of a margin box by giving strategies to invite, pardon, and thank in its "expresiones útiles" section.

One textbook which goes beyond the strategies employed by the previously mentioned texts is Atando Cabos: Curso Intermedio de Español (2008) which features pragmatics in the forms of language strategies that the L2 learner could use in the target culture as a main part of the text and not as a blurb in the margin. *Atando Cabos*'s "Así Se Dice" present strategies to accomplish such communicative goals as making an appointment and making a reservation, but unlike the previous texts, these lessons are featured prominently and are followed by activities that allow students to use and receive feedback from their instructors based on their responses. In the other Spanish textbooks reviewed in this section, if pragmatic instruction was given, it was either for the purpose of being able to conjugate a verb (forming imperatives) or it was presented as a side note and not used as a prominent and possibly graded feature of the text. The students who participated in this study used textbooks other than *Atando Cabos* which did not prominently feature pragmatic instruction. The principal content of Spanish L2 textbooks on the market, as represented by the eight texts reviewed in this section, still emphasize the instruction of grammatical and lexical items instead of pragmatic input.

2.7 Pragmatics and Politeness

Pragmatics itself is a term that researchers have long struggled to define, although Márquez Reiter and Placencia note that the field is "concerned with examination of the use of language in context, or language users, and the condition of use, although it has often been defined as simply "the 'wastebasket' of semantics" (2005:1). Despite varying definitions and often a lack of a definition, there is considerably much less dispute over the origins of pragmatics. As previously noted, many linguists cite Austin's 1955 Harvard lectures on speech act theory as the birth of modern pragmatics. Austin's theory was later expanded upon by John Searle (1969, 1975, 1976).

Perhaps the largest and most researched area of pragmatics is politeness and in this area there are several models of politeness. Politeness Theory is a large and complex field of study and the present paper will not attempt to analyze all its many facets. One such facet is the face-saving view of politeness and the ground-breaking concept of "face" that is explored by Brown and Levinson (1987)They write that face (which was originally proposed by Goffman [1967]), is something that is "emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly be attended to in interaction" (61). Brown and Levinson assumed that we as humans are interested in preserving our "face," or how the world views us. We want to be seen in a positive light, therefore preserving our "face." Brown and Levinson distinguish between negative face (wanting one's actions to be unimpeded by others) and positive face (wanting one's desires to be desirable to others). Márquez-Reiter and Placencia (2005: 154) describe the two types of face as "positive face … is defined as a person's desire to be desirable to at least some other person who will appreciate and approve of one's self and personality [while] negative face is described as a person's desire to be unimpeded by others; that is, to be free to act without being imposed upon"). They also explore the interrelated issue of positive politeness (speaker

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wants hearer's wants) and negative politeness (the speaker recognizes the hearer's negative face wants) which is crucial in many cross-cultural studies.

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose four strategies of politeness that interlocutors employ to reduce the face threatening aspect of an utterance. "Bald on record" strategies for speaking are the most direct as they simply obey Grice's maxims and are used "whenever S [speaker] wants to do the FTA (face threatening act) with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy H's face" (95). Bald on record strategies include using a direct imperative ("help!") over a less direct form ("could you help me?"). Brown and Levinson's second politeness strategy is positive politeness, which they define as "redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants … should be thought of as desirable": examples of this include claiming common ground, conveying that the speaker and hearer are in cooperation, and fulfilling the hearer's want for something (101).

Negative politeness "is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" and includes being direct, not assuming, not coercing the hearer, and redressing other wants of the hearer" (129). Brown and Levinson's final politeness strategy consists of "off record" communicative acts. They write that "such off-record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language [in which] H must make some inference to recover what was in fact intended" (211). Off record strategies include giving hints, giving association clues, presupposing, and understating.

As previously mentioned, crucial to Brown and Levinson's face saving model is the notion of face threatening acts or FTAs. Márquez-Reiter and Placencia (2005: 155) write that certain speech acts threaten the face of the speaker or hearer and are therefore inherently face threatening. Directives like requests or suggestions and commissives pose a threat to the negative face, while expressives like apologies threaten the positive face of the interlocutors). Leech

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(1983) went so far as to propose a series of maxims (reminiscent of Grice) that deal with politeness. These politeness maxims include tact, generosity, approbation, agreement, sympathy and modesty (132). The politeness maxims "can be broadly integrated into the Gricean paradigm of the cooperative (conversational) principle and conversational implicatures, thereby helping to account for indirect relationships…which supplement the maxims" of Grice (Leech 1983: 149). Leech, along with Lakoff (1973) are often considered as adhering to a conversational maxim model of politeness, since, as Márquez Reiter and Placencia (2005: 148) explain, these authors have adopted "Grice's universal construct of conversational principles in order to propose an extension of grammatical rules, arguing that grammars should not only specify the applicability of grammatical rules but also include pragmatic factors."

Other politeness models include the cooperative principle proposed by Grice (1975) and the conversational contract view, which includes works done by Fraser, among others. The former is Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), although "the CP is not directly related to politeness, its formulation has constituted a basis for reference on which other principles, such as politeness principles, have been built" (Márquez & Placencia, 2005:150). In Fraser's conversational contract view of politeness, "each participant, when entering a conversation, brings with him/her a set of rights and obligations determining what the participants can expect from each other" (Márquez & Placencia, 2005: 153). Watts et al (2006) note that interlocutors "enter a conversational contract which is primarily determined by factors prior to the interaction but if also affected not only by the perceived goals of the conversational partners themselves with respect to the interaction but also by shifts in relationships, distribution of power, goals, and intentions of the conversational partners, etc. during the course of the interaction" (12).

More recent politeness models take into consideration politeness norms from cultures other than whose language users are speakers of English. Watts (2006) discusses a new term for

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'politeness,' noting a negative connotation that many have with this term, likely stemming from "eighteenth century definitions and the social applications of the term" and introduces the term "politic verbal behaviour" (12). Watts also takes issue with the idea of universal politeness, noting "I hesitate to suggest that linguistic politeness is a universal of language usage, unless it can be shown typologically that every culture makes use of volitional strategies of marked ego-centric political behavior" (69).

In this section, I have discussed a few of the most prominent theories of politeness. In the following section, studies that investigate the acquisition of politeness and pragmatics in the L2 will be discussed. As these studies will show, one's idea of politeness can vary drastically by culture and is something that must be addressed in the L2 classroom if culturally and linguistically appropriate speech acts are to be acquired by foreign language learners.

2.7.1 Acquiring Pragmatic Principles in the L2

Several important studies have examined how politeness can be acquired by speakers learning a second language. Since pragmatic competence involves knowing more than just the grammar and lexicon of a language, the area of pragmatic and politeness acquisition has been studied in depth by various researchers mentioned in this chapter. This section will explore some important research studies in various areas that have investigated the connection between applied linguistics and pragmatics.

Fraser (1978) analyzed questions regarding appropriate use of a particular language strategy in a certain situation. He also studied how the appropriateness of a certain speech act changes by the culture of the discourse participants. He notes that learning a second language is more than a grammatical process, and that at the time his article was written, little work had been done in the field of Pragmatic acquisition (1). Fraser elaborates on Austin's idea of illocutionary acts by putting forth the notion of institutional acts, "those acts whose definition and successful

performances rest in part with certain social or cultural institutions," and vernacular acts, or "those acts which are free from such restrictions" (3). Fraser also presents a taxonomy of speech acts similar to Searle's, which include representative acts, directive acts, evaluative acts, commissive acts, and establishive acts. He is careful to state that although some languages may not exhibit all of these speech acts, most will include some of them.

Fraser (1978) focuses on the speech act of "requesting," for which he proposes the need to include a factor of mitigation or "intentional softening or easing of the force of the messages," or "a modulation of the basic message intended by the speaker" (13). Based on what he calls an "informal survey" of 14 languages, Fraser concludes that mitigating forces in utterances are virtually the same in all languages and notes that the request form in Spanish is based upon questioning of the addressee's ability to perform an act (*puedes*, *podrías* ('can you', 'could you') is an example of this universality (19). He concludes, based on his survey, that "acquiring a social competence does not involve substantially new concepts concerning how language is organized and what types of devices serve what social function" (19). Fraser claims that much of what a language learner needs in terms of L2 pragmatic competencies already in place and the L2 student merely needs to apply that knowledge to the target culture/language. He notes however, that although this knowledge may already be present, the strategies for its use might differ depending on the culture.

An early study on the acquisition of pragmatic competence is Scarcella and Brunak (1981). They studied politeness strategies employed by adult native Arabic speakers learning English. From data collected through role plays, speakers' responses were analyzed for several features, including ellipsis, exclusive 'we,' hedges, inclusive 'we', indirectness, positive back-channel cues, pre-sequences, slang, and question tags. These items were examined since they can perform a number functions such as softening the illocutionary force of an utterance or showing

deference and therefore give insight into the pragmatic orientation of the speaker. The authors concluded that certain politeness strategies such as pre-sequences emerge early in the L2 acquisition process, while others, such as slang and ellipsis, do not, and that politeness strategies seem to emerge before other rules such as "co-occurrence rules and appropriate variation" (72). Although the learners were able to vary their strategies depending on the social status of their addressee, they were limited in their ability to change the amount of deference shown according to the context. As expected, lower level learners used much less variety in their politeness forms than higher level speakers. This correlation between politeness forms and social status is a major component of the present study, as features such as power and familiarity were all used in as variables in collecting data.

Rintell (1981) studied the level of deference employed in suggestions and requests by adult learners of English whose native language was Spanish. Through role plays, Rintell asked 16 respondents to act out how they would make certain requests and suggestions to fictional interlocutors of various ages and both genders. Her goal was to see how the level of deference or politeness varied between the native and second language and what strategies were used to convey said politeness. In her analysis of constructed requests, Rintell found requests made by native speakers and second language learners were more deferential to older individuals while in their native Spanish, the informants were more polite to the opposite sex than to members of the same sex. Suggestions showed no major effect for either age or sex of addressee. On the term "deference," Rintell cites Fraser (1978) and Goffman (1967), explaining "deference here is taken to mean the symbolic appreciation of the hearer by the speaker" (12). She concludes that in both languages, a greater level of deference was shown in requests, perhaps due to the inherent face-threatening nature of requests.

Rintell's results show that the level of deference is raised in either language based on the age of the addressee and the learners were also more deferent to the opposite sex. She found that imperatives occurred in 10% of English utterances, but only once in the learners' native Spanish (26). Rintell illustrates that the "range of Spanish forms produced […] seems to begin and end at points higher on the deference scale than their English counterparts. These results are not surprising, since the learners of English might not have acquired the often grammatically-complex deferent forms that usually include the conditional or other indirect forms. Also, the learners were more deferent in their native language due to their own well-developed politeness intuitions and are likely not as complex in English.

Koike's 1996 study focused on the transfer of pragmatic competence in the speech act of suggestions by American learners of Spanish. Koike notes that transfer, or utilizing a strategy that is common in the L1 into the L2, is common in language learners, no matter the language area, and various studies (Gass,Selinker, 1983) have shown that "transfer from the first language does occur in foreign language learning under various constraints" (Koike, 1996:258). She expresses that the first language often works as a tool to aid the learner in uncovering aspects of the second language, and that language transfer is especially common if the two languages are linguistically similar (258). Koike conducted a study with 114 English L1 language learners of Spanish at three different skill levels (first year, second year, and advanced – as determined by the course level at the university). She presented videotaped scenes of a "speech act by a native speaker" (264). The students were asked to respond to the video as if they were talking to the person on the screen They were to identify the type of speech act expressed (apology, compliment, suggestion), and evaluate the other speaker in degrees of aggression/passivity, rude/polite behavior, non-communication/communication, strong/weak behavior, and unfriendly/friendly behavior. She did not present these categories, but rather asked the students

to devise a category. Koike wanted to find out if the learners would transfer their L1 English pragmatic ability to the new language (Spanish) and found a minority of the two lower-level groups correctly identified the speech act expressed, while half of the advanced students did so successfully.

She writes, "in general, the data suggests that the more advanced students, who are more proficient in listening comprehension, are better at understanding the global intent of the speech act, as expected" (Koike, 1996:269). In terms of the reactions of the learners, "the data showed that there was misunderstanding of the intent of the speech act by about half of the advanced students and about 60 to 75% of the first and second year students, who performed similarly" (247). Perhaps not surprisingly, Koike found that overall, advanced students were much more capable of understanding the true intent of a speech act in the second language, and that there was not a significant difference between the two lower-level groups. She optimistically notes that even when learners do not know what the speech act is, they often continue to communicate, which, in the real world, would often eventually lead to understanding.

Koike (1992) studied directives in Brazilian Portuguese and proposed a hierarchy of politeness, which ranges from most direct to least direct: orders ("get out of here"), assertions ("I want you to sit here"), suggestions ("let's sit here"), requests ("could you sit in another place?"), hints ("that's my dad's favorite chair"), and avoidance of issuing the required directive (37). Koike applied this hierarchy in a study on directives in adult language learners and compared them to data collected from children learning their native language to assess if adults apply the same knowledge as in their native language, and also to compare the order of appearance of directives in children and adults (113). Koike conducted two "limited" experiments with beginning American English-speaking learners of Spanish in which students were asked to listen to three messages, each with a speech act in Spanish (a request, an apology, and a command).

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They were then asked to identify the type of speech act they heard and to name the elements that helped them understand the message (words, intonation, etc.).

The results indicate that almost all of the students (97%) were correctly able to identify the speech act. Over half of the students said certain words helped them to identify the speech acts of apologies and requests, and both intonation and words helped them to identify orders (121). In the second part of the study, Koike studied production by having them respond to a native speaker saying things like "You are thirsty and would like a glass of water. What will you say to me?" (121) Students were to write the first thing that came into their minds with little time to revise. Koike found that 60% used the less-polite form of assertion (*Quiero/necesito agua*) ('I want/need water') while 40% used the more polite *me gustaría* (*I would like*) (122). In a second situation involving asking someone not to sit in your father's chair, 74% used the less polite forms, while 26% were more polite. Koike writes that students did not utilize strategies such as hints, possibly because of their lack of the complex grammar often necessary to form such sentences. She proposes that "the results may indicate that many students chose the path of least resistance, that is, the directive form most efficiently and easily expressed – the command form – and softened it with other linguistic options" (123). Koike notes that her own child language data showed similar results, "but for different reasons than these adults; that is, the children used these forms probably because of their egocentric expression as well as their familiarity and casual relationship with the caretaker" (123). In making her egocentric statement, Koike references Piaget, stating that children's earliest utterances often are requests since these reflect a child's immediate needs and wants.

De Pablo Ortega (2008) compared the realizations of the speech act of thanking between L1 English learners of Spanish and native speakers of Peninsular Spanish. He found that not being familiar with the cultural norms of the L2 communities can lead to a negative perception

towards the L2 culture (685). De Pablo Ortega also chose to highlight the variables of sex, age, power, and familiarity in choosing interlocutors for his study. These variables served as the basis for the interlocutors that were chosen for the present study.

Urbina Vargas (2008) compared the speech act realizations of L1 English learners of Spanish and native speakers of Costa Rican Spanish. She notes the need for instruction in pragmatic variation, writing "esta investigación…subraya la necesidad de que…los aprendices de una L2 desarrollen su competencia en cuanto a la interpretación pragmática…lo cual debe facilitárseles en el nivel institucional" 'this research underlines the need for L2 learners to develop their competence in terms of pragmatic interpretation which should be made available to them at the institutional level' (775). She also notes the need for integrating pragmatics into L2 curricula to balance the discrepancy between grammatical and pragmatic instruction (791).

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) write that grammatical ability in the L2 does not ensure a corresponding degree of pragmatic development. They explain, "even advanced language learners often show a marked imbalance between their grammatical and their pragmatic knowledge" (1998: 234). They note that one reason for this disparity is the lack of specific exemplars of L2 culture-appropriate behaviors to serve as input, as well as the need for "greater authenticity in pedagogical materials for classroom language learners" (1998: 234). The present study proposes pedagogical implications such as those mentioned by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei that address these issues and serve as explicit and authentic input that makes learners aware of culture differences between the L1 and L2 language cultures, as well as highlight appropriate strategies that could be utilized.

Lightbown and Spada (2006) note the importance of being able to interpret messages, respond politely, recognize humor, and manage conversations as well as understand the many possible interpretations a speech act can have in the L2. They write "for a long time, it was

assumed that second language classrooms could not provide appropriate input for learning how to realize many speech acts" (2006: 104). They note, however, that with explicit rather than implicit instruction, pragmatic features can successfully be acquired in classroom settings, especially in communicative-based, task-oriented instruction (2006: 103-104). It is this type of explicit instruction for which the present study establishes the need.

Coombs (1981) writes of the need of speech act-focused instruction in the L2 classroom in which differences in speech act performance between languages is directly contrasted. She notes that after L2 instructors have presented the grammatical and lexical forms, there is often little time for pragmatic instruction. She also maintains that pragmatic instruction requires educators to be sensitive to cultural differences. She writes, "the theory of speech acts can be used to provide insight into the function which utterances have in a given language" and that educators "must become aware of the relationships between forms and function and incorporate them into […] teaching in order to help […] students achieve communicative competence" in the L2 (9).

García (1996) studied the ways in which L2 students declined an invitation and proposed diagnostic assessments, model dialogues, and role plays as ways to teach speech acts. She notes that these activities help students avoid cross-cultural miscommunication and is careful to point out that language usage, especially in Spanish-speaking cultures is not monolithic. She writes "there is not sufficient material to illustrate how the different speech acts performed in Spanish and the Hispanic culture is not homogeneous; what is appropriate in one culture might not be in another" (276). This finding shows us two things: first, L2 teaching materials that highlight differences between the L1 and L2 cultures, especially in Spanish, are lacking. Also, it should not be assumed that after differences in speech act performance are highlighted, that there is one way in which all Spanish speakers use a speech act. The present study proposes teaching students

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a variety of CRs that are appropriate in communities where Spanish is spoken so that the L2 learner might consider the individual context and culture in choosing a CR.

2.7.2 Pragmatic Acquisition: Discussion

Pragmatic competence is a vital part of being a successful and competent speaker of a language although there is a gap in the literature on studies that focus on pragmatic acquisition. Additional research relating to prior studies could further anchor or expand upon previous conclusions. Research like that carried out by Koike on Brazilian Portuguese helps create a clearer picture of cross-cultural pragmatics, an area in which much study has been done and even more is necessary. More investigation involving better tailored studies that deal with particular speech acts are needed to better understand how pragmatic competence is acquired. Also, immersion-based language studies in which students participate in the target culture with the target language might be beneficial over pragmatic data that is based on role plays and other idealized situations, although these methods definitely have a place in the field. The research conducted must serve as a "jumping off point" for linguists who wish to better explain how second language learners can effectively acquire pragmatic competence, since many of the studies conducted on pragmatic acquisition are based on limited data or compare multiple languages. Perhaps studies that are more focused on specific language groups that contain larger groups of informants would be beneficial in shedding light on pragmatic acquisition.

As more educators realize that pragmatic competence is a vital part of being a proficient language user, hopefully more effort will be placed on understanding pragmatic acquisition. It is the role of researchers to study these components of language so that their findings may be introduced into the language classroom and true pragmatic competence can be achieved.

2.8 Compliment Responses

Compliment responses have often been studied in a contrastive fashion to illuminate cultural differences in CR behavior between two speech communities. The studies presented in this section contrast how users of two different languages respond in distinct manners to compliments. It is important to note that studies on compliment responses of native speakers of Spanish are lacking. Information concerning this speech act in Spanish is largely seen in the form of cultural guides such as that by Cortés-Moreno (2005), some of which will be highlighted in this section. In the absence of academic work on CRs by native Spanish speakers, it is not surprising that research that compares CRs by native English speakers and native Spanish speakers is also much needed.

One contrastive study of American and Thai compliment responses (Gajaseni, 1994), for example, found that Americans were not only more likely to accept compliments, but that they tended to give more lengthy responses. The author also found that both groups tended to accept compliments more from an interlocutor of a higher social status and to reject those more often from someone of a lower status. This finding might show that these groups see compliment acceptances as more polite than rejections.

Chiang and Pochtraeger (1993) compared compliment responses of Chinese-born and American-born English speakers and found the American-born speakers were more likely to positively elaborate on responses, while the Chinese-born participants were more likely to deny or negatively elaborate on a compliment. These authors state that "for Americans, the least preferred type of compliment response is rejection or denial" (2). Fong (1998) studied the perceptions of compliment behavior of Americans by Chinese immigrants and found that the Chinese natives often thought that Americans gave compliments too freely. The Chinese speakers in this study questioned the sincerity of the compliments.

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Yoko (1995) compared Japanese CRs to American norms and found that in the Japanese speakers' responses, rejection of the CR was the ideal and acceptance could be problematic. The author notes that the standard American CR is "thank you" which accepts the compliment without necessarily agreeing with it and avoiding appearing conceited. Yoko also writes that compliments put the recipient in a conflict to neither reject a compliment but to also show solidarity and rapport. Yoko writes "in contrast, it is generally accepted in Japanese society that people should not accept compliments referring directly to themselves or their possessions" (53).

Nelson, Al-Batal, and Echols (1998) compared Arabic and English CRs and found that both groups, unlike the previously mentioned studies, were more likely to accept compliments than to reject them. The authors noted that Americans used "appreciation tokens" ("thanks") while the Arabic-speaking Syrians often used formulaic forms not seen in the American data. These formulaic CR forms will be discussed in Chapter Four as they relate to the native Spanish speaker data. In this study, the authors noted the importance of successful pragmatic acquisition, as pragmatic failure "is likely to result in misunderstandings, embarrassment, frustration, anger, and/or cross-cultural communication breakdown" (412).

Yu (2004) studied the CRs of two groups of Chinese learners of English, one group lived in the United States and the other in Taiwan. Similar to the present study, these participants responded to compliments in different situations with interlocutors whose status and gender varied. Yu found that the responses from the learners in the United States were more likely to be acceptances than compliments, and the responses from the learners in Taiwan were more likely to be rejections.

Not all studies of interest to this study are concerned with cross-cultural variation. Parisi and Wogan (2005) studied the effect of gender on complimenting behavior of American college students and ground great variance in the performance of CRs depending on gender. They

explain "males gave females a higher proportion of compliments on appearance than skill and females did the opposite, giving males a higher proportion of compliments on skill than appearance" (21). Hobbs (2003), however, had different results when she examined politeness strategies used in voice mail messages. She notes "male speakers' use of politeness markers was roughly equal to that of women's" (243).

2.8.1 The Acquisition of Compliment Responses

While many studies have been conducted concerning CR variation by language, studies that examine the CR strategies of L2 learners are far more scarce. For this study, one study which studied American learners of German proved to be relevant and will be highlighted in this section.

Huth (2006) studied pragmatic competence in American learners of German in the form of compliments. German compliments often differ from American English compliments in that their adjacency pair features a compliment/assessment or a compliment/assessment/agreement format in which the recipient of the compliment often responds with items such as *ja, ich weiss* ('yes, I know.') American English compliments almost always follow the compliment/response format in which the recipient thanks the one giving the compliment but does not usually agree with the one giving the compliment. The author chose these items to test because "they reflect differences in the preference structure of compliment-response in the two languages" and "since structural and cultural features are demonstrably present […] such sequences establish a direct connection between language and culture for L2 learners" (2028).

To carry out this study, Huth relied on the data of 20 American students of German in a beginning level German class at a University in the American Midwest. A target lesson on German CRs had been carried out before the study was conducted. Data was collected "in form of recorded telephone conversations" and was recorded twice: the first at the beginning of the

semester and the second time at the end (2033). The students worked in pairs and were each in separate faculty offices, and were recorded on the telephone. They spoke on the phone about a number of topics in the target language, one of which being compliments. Telephone data have the advantage that "understanding between interactants is exclusively achieved by verbal interaction since participants have no sensory access to each other than by audio" (2034). The data was then transcribed and analyzed.

The author concludes that "the results of this study describe a specific stage in pragmatic development of L2 learners, characterized by initial pragmatic transfer which may then be noticed and repaired" (2044). He notes, however, that "even after explicit instruction and repeated in-class practice . . ., pragmatic transfer may occur" (2045). Having seen promise and challenge in his findings, Huth seems to have had mixed results in this study, both with the conversational analysis framework and with the study itself, noting that conversational analysis-based materials should "be presented in such a way as to emphasize the differing reference frames provided by both L1 and L2 sociopragmatic conventions" (2046). Huth included a cultural component in what might otherwise have been a purely SLA article. To reinforce this component, Huth had the participants include a separate written portion in which they reflected on their ideas about the German compliment systems, allowing them to show their own metalinguistic and cultural awareness. This type of feedback gives researchers insight into the degree that people are aware of their own CR behavior and the thought processes behind them.

Another study that examined the CRs of L2 learners was conducted by Farghal and Haggan (2006). In this study, "English compliments paid by Kuwaiti undergraduates to their peers" were examined (94). These authors found "the influence of native language norms of express […] to be very strong, detracting from the authentic nature of English responses" (94). Studies such as these show the necessity for further research into the acquisition of CRs in the

L2, as well as data that better defines L1CR norms of English and Spanish speakers. In the present study, all of these concerns will be addressed.

Siebold (2008) compared the CRs of NSs of Peninsular Spanish and German. She too noted the lack of data concerning speech acts in Spanish, writing "el objetivo principal de nuestro estudio es aportar una contribución a los estudios empíricos contrastivos que analizan la realización de distintos actos de habla en varias lenguas" ' the primary objective of this study is to add a contribution to contrastive empirical studies that analyze the realization of different speech acts in several/a number of languages' (318). Siebold used a role play (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter six) to elicit her data and established a classification system not dissimilar to the one used to categorize the data in the present study. Her system consisted of accepting a compliment, returning a compliment, straying from a compliment, and rejecting a compliment. She found that Spanish CRs were very routinized and served to exchange tokens of mutual appreciation. The formulaic nature of CRs in Spanish will also be discussed in chapter six. She also discovered that Spaniards were most likely to accept a compliment and least likely to return one. This lack of returning a compliment was also found in the present study. Siebold agrees with Lorenzo-Dus (2001) in her finding that her Spanish-speaking participants showed a strong inclination to show positive politeness.

2.9 Conclusion

"Research in interlanguage pragmatics and sociolinguistics has suggested that foreign language learners have difficulties in reaching higher levels of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence without receiving specific instruction" (Warga & Scholmerge, 2007: 221). The research presented in this chapter has shown the need for the present study which would add to the body of literature on CR behavior by L2 learners, but also present specific activities that could be instrumented in the L2 classroom what would prepare students to be able to respond to

compliments in a way that is culturally appropriate in the target culture. As the research presented in this chapter has shown, there is no one way to be "polite" that is appropriate in all communities. Language learners should be made aware of cultural differences and be prepared to use speech acts appropriately in the target language culture. CRs, a speech act as defined by the formal system described in this chapter, must be examined by context and language community.

The present study draws from several different areas of linguistics and the varied nature of this chapter reflect this. In this chapter, studies done on such topics as Speech Act Theory, the cultural variation of pragmatics, pragmatic acquisition, and the universality of maxims have been discussed since these issues relate both directly and indirectly to the current study. The literature presented in this chapter identifies the need for studies like the present one that focus on pragmatic acquisition and what happens when pragmatic components of language are not specifically taught. The vast research gaps that exist in the research on English and Spanish contrastive pragmatics, Spanish CRs, and pragmatic teaching curricula establish the need for the present study which addresses these concerns. This study will demonstrate the need for pragmatic instruction in the L2 classroom since it will be revealed that grammatical ability and pragmatic competence emerge separately in the L2. In the following chapter, many of the ideas presented in this chapter were implemented into methods and procedures that were used to carry out the present study.

CHAPTER THREE
PILOT STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Before the data was collected and the methodology was developed for the present study, I conducted a preliminary study of CRs made by learners of Spanish. This study would come to serve as a pilot study for the current project. The ways in which the methods utilized in this pilot study were adapted in the present study will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Participants

Seventy nine students of Spanish enrolled in Spanish courses at the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana State University were chosen to participate in the pilot. In the pilot study only data from students who were at four levels of instruction was utilized: Beginning Spanish 1, Beginning Spanish 3, Intermediate Spanish 1 and Intermediate Spanish 2. For the larger-scale study, the highest classroom level was extended to that of advanced by including participants enrolled in two upper-division literature-based courses. By increasing the L2 competency range, any possible CR variation over a larger scale was able to be studied. While the learners in the pilot study only ranged from beginning to intermediate, those in the larger study ranged from beginning to advanced in terms of the participants' proficiency level. Also in the large -scale study students from a second beginning Spanish course were included, which increased the number of participants dramatically. As with the present study, native Spanish speaker data from ESL students were also collected. Native English data were also collected to relate the learner data not only to Spanish norms but to English norms as well.

3.2.2 Instrument

For the pilot study, A data completion task (DCT) consisting of four CR situations with hypothetical compliment givers was created and administered to the participant. These four interlocutors included a teacher, a best friend of the same sex, a classmate of the opposite sex, and an elderly friend. The present study used these same situations but analyzed coordinating scenarios so as to show different aspects of each social variable. The goal of this was to see at what level, if any, participants would be able to vary their pragmatic strategies depending on their relationship with the interlocutor. The questionnaire featured a brief biographical portion asking the informant's sex, years studying Spanish, and language(s) spoken at home, among other items. Although variables such as sex and travel to a Spanish-speaking country were not used in the pilot study, they were included in the current study. By asking what languages were spoken at home, native Spanish speakers were eliminated from participating in the study. The results of the DCTs were then analyzed according to the response strategy used. By employing a larger group of informants than has been seen in studies of this type, the data in this study helps disambiguate cross-sectional CR strategy use by English speakers.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

A four-part system was developed to classify the compliment response strategies used by the learners. Since no widely-accepted system has been created for Spanish CRs, as was discussed in the previous chapter, I developed a CR classification system that proved to be an effective way to organize the current data. Related to these categories created by the authors mentioned in the previous chapter, the following classification system was utilized for the Spanish responses given to compliments: 1. acknowledgments (*gracias* 'thanks,' and *sí* 'yes'), 2. Refusal/Downplay of compliment (*no es nada* 'it's nothing'), 3. Upgrade/Explanation of compliment (*es muy bonito* 'it's very pretty', *lo compré ayer*, 'I bought it yesterday'), and 4.

Return of compliment (*me gusta tu ropa también* 'I like your clothes too.') These responses were analyzed and first classified by category and then compared by level and interlocutor.

Although these four strategies were useful in classifying the pilot study data, it became obvious that these four strategies needed to be expanded in order to more accurately capture the often subtle variances that occurred in the CR behavior of the students. The strategies of insulting, questioning of compliment, topic change, and explanation were added for this reason. The original classification system that I developed and how the CR strategies were expanded for the larger-scale study will be discussed in section 3.5.2.

3.3 Results

The results of the DCTs were analyzed first by class level of the participants and the CR strategies employed. The CRs strategies were then analyzed by interlocutor. These results and a brief discussion will be found in the following sections.

3.3.1 CR Strategy Use by Class Level

The results of the DCTs were first studied in terms of overall strategy use by the learners and were compared by class level. Results indicate that with increased instruction, students are able to produce more grammatically complex compliment responses, but there is little variation in the pragmatic content used throughout the different skill levels. Also, lower level students often used more variability in their CR strategies than the higher level students. The frequency of use divided into the four strategies previously mentioned are examined by level in table 1.

These results reveal many things about the CR strategies used by Spanish language students in responding to hypothetical compliments. Regarding the first strategy of acknowledgment, the tendency to simply acknowledge a compliment went down as the

Table 1 - CR Strategy Use by Class Level

	Beginner	High beginner	Intermediate	High intermediate
1. Acknowledgment	69%	55%	51%	61%
2. Refusal/Downplay	1%	1%	0%	4%
3. Upgrade/ Agreement/Expansion	25%	37%	43%	31%
4. Return Compliment	5%	9%	6%	4%

classroom level increased. The most common acknowledgment used was *gracias* ('thanks') followed by *sí* ('yes') and *bien* ('good'). One can deduce that this reduction in the use of the often grammatically simple acknowledgment was replaced or expanded with lengthier and therefore more grammatically complex forms that were better acquired in higher levels.

The second strategy of refusing or downplaying a compliment was seen only in the first two levels (beginner and high beginner) and by only one participant in each level, and by 4% of participants in the high intermediate level. By the absence of this form in subsequent levels, it can be argued that as the students' grammatical abilities increased, their ability to vary their strategies and to refuse and/or downgrade a compliment (*no es nada* ['it's nothing] or *no me gusta* '[I don't like it']) did not increase correspondingly. These numbers tend to support the hypothesis that pragmatic ability in terms of the variety of strategies used does not correlate with

increased grammatical ability. Although the presence of refusals did not grow incrementally by level, it is important to point out that refusals are present in the two lower levels (0.1%), albeit barely, when pragmatic instruction is present.

The third strategy of upgrading, agreeing with, or expanding a compliment was seen in participants of all four levels, but their percentages do not appear to be as telling as the first two strategies. Examples of this strategy include *es nuevo* ('it is new') or *me gusta también* ('I like it too'). Not surprisingly, the students' ability to expand or explain a compliment increased as their grammatical ability did. The most grammatically-advanced group, however, did not show an incrementally higher increase in the use of this strategy over the lower levels. One could argue that this supports the idea that increased knowledge of grammar and lexical forms does not lead to increased understanding of pragmatic and culturally-appropriate forms. It can also be argued that a student who is pragmatically aware would use a variety of forms in his or her compliment responses, and that this variability would correlate with the grammatical variety.

The fourth and final strategy of returning a compliment was seen with much lower frequency than strategies one and three. Examples of this strategy include *me gusta tu ropa* ('I like your clothes'*)* and *eres simpático* ('you are nice'). As with strategy three, the percentages of use do not seem to move in any particular direction and therefore do not at first glance support the traditional notion of grammatical knowledge breeding pragmatic abilities.

Since all CR strategy is arguably a necessary part of being a successful L2 user, these data show the need for explicit data instruction. The objective of language teaching is to produce well-rounded speakers of a language, which includes grammatical and lexical, as well as pragmatic and cultural knowledge and abilities. These data show that even students who were considered high intermediate learners with a strong command of grammar and years of L2 instruction are largely unable to vary their CR strategies. It certainly does not seem to be the case

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that CR strategy variability increases incrementally as grammatical ability increases. In fact, the beginner and high intermediate groups were the most alike in terms of their CR strategy use, despite the drastic differences in their grammatical level. As the interlocutor power relation varied drastically, we see the variety of CRs lacking. There is little difference by level concerning their strategies, aside from the ability to lengthen utterances and not depend solely on often brief acknowledgments in higher classroom levels. There seems to be some backsliding in terms of the strategies employed by the students, perhaps due to the fact that if any pragmatic instruction is included in the classroom, it often occurs relatively early in a student's foreign language instruction such as when students are familiarized with formal and informal address pronouns. Perhaps this explains why some learners used a greater variety of strategies in earlier levels than in higher ones, when the focus is often on complex grammatical forms such as the subjunctive and the preterit and imperfect aspects of the past tense. In some cases, the more advanced levels used even fewer strategies than the beginning levels. This phenomenon is of particular interest to researchers and educators since it can reflect a failure in instruction and curriculum and a need for specific, speech act-focused pragmatic instruction at all levels. Further pedagogical implications will be discussed later.

3.3.2 CR Use by Interlocutor

After the strategies used in response to all four situations were analyzed, they were then separated and studied by each specific situation to compare how the four class levels responded to a particular situation. This was done in an attempt to better understand, as Huth (2006) mentions, the cultural orientation of the student. The first situation involved receiving a compliment from a teacher on having done a good job on an assignment. The second question involved a compliment from a classmate of the opposite sex. The third and fourth scenarios involved an elderly friend and a best friend of the same sex, respectively. By choosing imaginary

interlocutors of varying sexes, ages, and power levels, different strategies were elicited and a variety of CRs were anticipated. The strategies used in the responses by the informants are classified and separated by class level in the following charts:

Table 2 - CR Strategy used with a teacher

Beginner	**Acknowledge**	74%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	24%
	Return Compliment	2%
High beginner	**Acknowledge**	55%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	45%
	Return Compliment	0%
Intermediate	**Acknowledge**	50%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	50%
	Return Compliment	0%
High intermediate	**Acknowledge**	59%
	Refusal/Downplay	6%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	35%
	Return Compliment	0%

These results show that the high intermediate students were the only informants to use downgrade or refuse a compliment from the teacher (6%) and not surprisingly, the beginner students had the greatest percentage of simple acknowledgments (74%). Only the beginner

students returned a compliment (2%) which shows these beginners are able to utilize a strategy that is not employed even by the high intermediates, albeit in a very small percentage. The percentages of expansion/upgrade increase by level, with the exception of the high intermediate students.

Table 3 - CR Strategy with student of the opposite sex

Beginner	**Acknowledge**	58%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	29%
	Return Compliment	18%
High beginner	**Acknowledge**	56%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	27%
	Return Compliment	18%
Intermediate	**Acknowledge**	69%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	21%
	Return Compliment	9%

In this scenario, the greatest percentages of compliment returning are seen. Perhaps this is not surprising since the power relationship between the interlocutors is equal and a romantic element is possibly present since the participants are of the opposite sex. Again, beginner and high beginner students were able to produce more compliments (18%) than their more

Table 3 (Cont.)

	Acknowledge	59%
High	**Refusal/Downplay**	9%
intermediate	**Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion**	27%
	Return Compliment	*5%*

grammatically advanced intermediate and high intermediate counterparts [(9%) and (5%)
respectively]. Again, refusal/downplays are scarce and only present in the high intermediate
sample (9%). Also of interest is the fact that the greatest percentage of acknowledgments came
from the intermediate students (69%).

Table 4 - CR Strategy use with an elderly friend

	Acknowledge	64%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
Beginner	**Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion**	31%
	Return Compliment	6%
	Acknowledge	50%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
High beginner	**Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion**	44%
	Return Compliment	6%

In this third situation involving responding to compliments from an elderly friend, no
student refused or downgraded a compliment. This might reflect the different power relationship
between interlocutors and could also indicate that students see this strategy as impolite. Each

Table 4 (cont.)

Intermediate	**Acknowledge**	57%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	33%
	Return Compliment	10%
High intermediate	**Acknowledge**	55%
	Refusal/Downplay	0%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	36%
	Return Compliment	9%

group had similar percentages of returning compliments, with the intermediate group having the most (10%) and high intermediates slightly behind (9%). Still, the difference between the beginner and high intermediate groups (6% and 9%, respectively) represents only a small change considering the years of study and grammatical ability that separate these two groups.

Table 5 - CR Use with a close friend of the same sex

Beginner	**Acknowledge**	54%
	Refusal/Downplay	2%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	43%
	Return Compliment	0%
High beginner	**Acknowledge**	58%
	Refusal/Downplay	5%
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	30%
	Return Compliment	8%

Table 5 (cont.)

Intermediate	**Acknowledge**	**50%**	
	Refusal/Downplay	**0%**	
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	**50%**	
	Return Compliment	**0%**	
High intermediate	**Acknowledge**	**52%**	
	Refusal/Downplay	**9%**	
	Upgrade/Agreement/Expansion	**39%**	
	Return Compliment	**0%**	

In the final scenario involving a best friend of the same sex, we find that no group returned compliments aside from the high beginner students (8%). The high intermediate students had the most refusals at 9%, while the intermediates, only two levels below, had none. The high beginners had the most acknowledgments (58%) and the least expansions (30%). This is of interest since these findings previously were most common for the beginning group. Once again, while the high beginners did refuse more compliments (9%) than the other groups, this statistic does not seem to reflect a great increase over the two beginner groups who had a refusal percentage of 2% and 5% respectively. The frequency of use percentages from all four levels were then averaged and these results, which give us a glimpse into the students' "cultural orientation" are seen in the table six.

In her comparative study of compliments and compliment responses of British and Spanish college students, Lorenzo-Dus (2001: 107) found that male students upgraded compliments ironically more than female students. Although the gender of the participants was

Table 6 - Frequency of CR use by strategy and scenario

	1. Acknowl-edgment	2. Refusal/ Downplay	3. Upgrade/Extension	4. Return Compliment
1. Teacher	59.5%	1.5%	38.5%	.5%
2. Classmate (opposite sex)	60%	2%	26%	12.5%
3. Elderly Friend	56.5%	0%	36%	8%
4. Best friend (same sex)	53.5%	4%`	40.5%	2%

not considered as a variable in the present study, these results tend to support Lorenzo-Dus' ideas that speakers "bring into their intercultural encounters pre-conceived, often stereotypically negative, evaluations about the other individual's identity" (107). The present results indicate that students were most likely to acknowledge (60%) or return a compliment (26%) from someone of the opposite sex. No student downplayed or refused a compliment from an elderly friend, but they were most likely to do so with a best friend (4%). Students were also most likely to expand a compliment from a best friend (40.5%) and least likely to do so with an elderly friend (26%). These results, as well as opportunities for future study, will be discussed further in the following section.

3.4 Discussion

This study examines CR strategy use in hopes of better understanding the underlying processes involved in the production of CRs by L2 learners. As students' classroom level

advances and their grammatical repertoire increases, their ability to vary CRs does not seem to increase at the same rate. This is significant because the high intermediate students had often had two years of college level Spanish language education, while the beginners had only weeks. As we have seen, this pragmatic variance at times seems to backslide, perhaps due to an emphasis, if any, on the pragmatics of the L2 culture occurring more in lower levels than in later ones. For one, these results appear to indicate that the often slight pragmatic instruction that occurs in lower levels does lead to increased CR strategy variation which is ultimately necessary to be a successful user of the L2. These findings are particularly relevant since pragmatic competence largely remains an overlooked aspect of second language acquisition in the language classroom. The results of this research illustrate that in the L2 classroom, pragmatic accuracy in the second language often does not simply emerge with grammatical instruction. Instead, these data show that since the beginners and high beginners often employ as many or more differing CR strategies as intermediate learners, explicit instruction might be a better tool for teaching variation in CRs.

3.5 Adaptations for Main Study

The methods used in the pilot study, although successful in collecting and analyzing data concerning CR behavior of L1 English students of Spanish, were adapted and improved in many ways to be better suited for the larger and more precise present study. While certain changes from the pilot study to the present study have already been mentioned, in this section these changes, and others, will be discussed.

3.5.1 Data Collection Task

The DCT used in the pilot study was modified for the present study. While both DCTs consisted of a biographical portion and compliment situations featuring interlocutors of different social statuses both written in the L1 but concerning situations in the L2, the content of these

parts did undergo changes based on the data received. Concerning the biographical information that the participants were asked to provide, the gender of the participants was not originally elicited. Since one's gender can be an important factor in his/her CR behavior, this information was added to the DCT for the main study. Also, the pilot study DCT originally asked the participants' experience in the L2 culture in the form of one question: Time spent living in a Spanish-speaking country (if yes, where?) Several participants were confused by the phrasing of this question so in the main study, this question was divided into three: 1) Have you ever lived in a Spanish-speaking country?; 2) If so, where (city, country)?; and 3) For how long? The students were also instructed to circle "yes" or "no," emphasizing the fact that it was not an open-ended question. The participants were also provided blanks after each question to accentuate the fact that they were two distinct questions. Data collected from the pilot study revealed that when collecting data from a large number of informants, making the DCT as clear as possible is of utmost importance. Since the participants in the main study experienced less confusion with the revised DCT, it is likely that this adapted questionnaire proved to be clearer and therefore a more accurate tool for collecting the data for this study.

In the DCT used for the larger-scale study, quotation marks were added around the times where participants were to write their answers. Since the CRs were what the participant would actually say, I wanted this to be clear. In the pilot study, many participants wrote how they would feel or what they would say instead of the actual words uttered. By adding the quotation marks, far fewer examples of "I would say…" or "I would feel…" were received. In both versions of the DCT, the participants were repeatedly reminded to answer in Spanish and only to write the words that they would say.

The importance of maintaining silence in the classroom was also emphasized in collecting the data for the main study. One class's DCTs were unable to be used because one

student revealed what he would say aloud, causing the rest of the class to follow suit. Because of this, I emphasized the importance of remaining quiet and not asking questions aloud while filling out the DCT. Participants with questions were asked to ask them only after raising their hands and in a hushed tone as to not affect the responses of others. These procedures were helpful when collecting the data for the main study since no DCTs had to be discarded due to corruption by others' input.

3.5.1.1 Native Speakers

While native English speakers were not considered to provide control data, native Spanish speakers originally received the DCT and their data was to serve as control data. This data, however, was ultimately unable to be used and the focus of the study became the CR strategies used by the participants and their relation to classroom level. I found that the NSs of Spanish needed much clearer instruction about what exactly the DCT was eliciting. A larger percentage of the Spanish L1 participants misunderstood the DCT directions and their responses were ultimately unable to be considered. This possible culturally related misunderstanding affected the implementation of the DCTs to Spanish NSs in this study. I made a greater effort to carefully explain the directions for filling out the DCT in Spanish so that the chances for providing information other than the questionnaire elicited were avoided. This careful administration of the DCT to the Spanish L1s proved to be successful, as there were far fewer cases of misunderstand on the part of these participants.

The lack of NS control data in this pilot study also showed the need for such data in subsequent study. Without NS data, the results of a comparative cultural study are limited. By collecting NS data of both English and Spanish NSs, the results of the main study have greater potential implications. This is especially true in the case of the results of the present study, which

reveal that the CRs of advanced learners of Spanish more closely resemble English norms than those of Spanish NSs.

3.5.2 CR Strategies

In the pilot study, I identified four CR strategies that were based on the responses received to classify the data. These strategies were: 1. acknowledgments, 2. Refusal/Downplay of compliment, 3. Upgrade/Explanation of compliment, and 4. Return of compliment. While acknowledgments, Refusal/downplay, and returning a compliment were three strategies that remained unchanged from the pilot study, I felt the other strategies could more accurately describe the data if they were separated. Upgrading a compliment and explanation of a compliment were separated since the former was later seen as more face threatening since it could increase the amount of positive attention brought to the compliment recipient. Refusals/downplays were expanded with the classification of "questioning a compliment." Insulting and changing topic were ultimately added to the present study to explain the CRs used by the participants in this study. This new classification system, which consisted of acknowledgments, upgrade/agreement, explanation, downgrade/refusal, insult, question a compliment, and topic change, proved to be more accurate than the original four in their description of CR behavior.

3.5.3 Interlocutors

In the pilot study, four interlocutors were chosen and each represented a different social variable. A teacher, elderly friend, friend of the same gender, and a classmate of the opposite gender represented the variables of power, age, and gender, respectively. For the present study, these interlocutors were expanded by adding a fourth variable: familiarity. Also, for each variable, contrasting sides of each variable were presented. To show variation in age, the interlocutors of an elderly friend and a young child were chosen. To show the effects of gender, a

classmate of the same gender and one of the opposite gender was chosen. For power, a workplace subordinate was added to the existing teacher. Finally, a total stranger and a close friend were chosen to show both sides of a familiarity variable. This familiarity addition chose to be a worthy inclusion since it proved to provide interesting data concerning the CR behavior of the participants as it related to high and low levels of familiarity.

3.6 Conclusion

This pilot study served as the basis for the present dissertation. While certain adaptations were small, others, such as adding native speaker data, were more substantial. In this chapter, I have discussed the steps that were taken to conduct this pilot study, as well as the results of said study. Upon completion of this research, many aspects of it were adapted for the present study. Because it is impossible to anticipate every issue that will arise while conducting research of this type, having a pilot study proved to be a valuable tool in creating a larger study whose results have great impact in the fields to which they relate. Just as the methods utilized in this pilot study served as a basis for the research that will be presented in the subsequent chapters, the methods used in the main study could be adapted for pragmatic study in a number of areas.

CHAPTER FOUR
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Scope of Study

The present study attempts to better understand to what degree learners of Spanish acquire native-like pragmatic behaviors related to the production of compliment responses (CRs) in the L2. In order to ascertain to what extent learners acquire native-like behavior, the first part of this study focuses on the strategy types utilized by participants in eight hypothetical situations posed on a DCT. It should be noted that this study does not claim that there is one way to respond to a compliment in English or Spanish. This study compares CRs used by L1 English speakers as they learn Spanish to better understand the development of CR strategies. Using the same data, this study also compares the responses of the L2 learners to those of native Spanish speakers.

The goal of this study is not for L2 students to match exactly the responses of the Spanish NSs. The connection between the responses of the learners of Spanish and the two NSs, however, can provide valuable insight into pragmatic acquisition. As this study will reveal, the content of the CR strategies of the participants often differed greatly from those of the Spanish L1 participants. More importantly, these results will reveal that with increased instruction in Spanish, the participants become more able to express CR structures common in their L1, English. By comparing the CRs of the two groups, it can be better understood at what level of grammatical instruction, if at all, native-like CRs emerge.

Eight hypothetical discourse situations were presented in which the participants were instructed to respond as honestly and realistically as possible to a compliment given by different interlocutors that dealt with relationship between interlocutors. For example: a teacher compliments the participant on having done well on a class assignment; a classmate compliments

an article of clothing, etc. Efforts were made so that these compliment situations were relevant to the participants' real lives and could likely happen. These eight situations utilized interlocutors of various power and possible social relationships to elicit a number of possible CRs. The students received a questionnaire written in English and the Spanish speakers received one written in Spanish. It is important to note that, although the DCT was presented to them in English, the English L1 students were instructed to respond in Spanish. The rejoinders in each hypothetical situation on the DCTs were presented to the participant in English because I did not want the participants to simply rewrite parts of the compliment given to them in their responses. By providing an explanation of the compliment in English, students of every class level were able to understand the compliment and were required to produce a response in Spanish without the aid of a Spanish compliment.

The learners of Spanish who participated in this study were enrolled in various levels of Spanish courses. The Spanish speakers were enrolled in ESL courses that were a required part of their program of study at Louisiana State University. While the class level varied slightly in the Spanish control group, this was not considered an issue since the students were chosen for being native Spanish speakers, and not for their English proficiency. These Spanish speakers were asked to list the amount of time they had spent living in the United States to eliminate any possible bilingual Spanish/English speakers. A second control group was a group of English native speakers who were not currently enrolled in a Spanish language course. These students were also asked about their language background so as to eliminate any possible Spanish/English bilinguals. As previously mentioned, the two control groups, as well as the main group of participants, were students at Louisiana State University. A more detailed description of the characteristics of the participants of this study will be discussed in this chapter. The following table illustrates the number of participants in this study from each of the three groups.

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Table 7 - Groups and Number of Participants

Groups of Participants	Numbers of Participants
L1 English/L2 students of Spanish	110
Spanish NSs	16
English NSs	16
Total number of participants	142

This chapter will discuss in greater detail the methods and procedures used in this study to investigate the pragmatic acquisition of compliment responses of American English speaking learners of Spanish.

4.2 Research Variables

Many social and cultural factors can be considered when studying human language. In the field of pragmatics, variables such as age, gender, education, race, and origin have been common in studies on language use. The present study will use the proficiency level of the learners, as measured by their class level, as the major variable in examining the CR strategies employed. By comparing the CR strategy use by classroom level, it is possible to see at what level the students' responses more closely resemble native speaker norms and how these strategies change as learners advance through class levels. Other factors such as age, gender, and native language background were also considered. These learner variables will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

4.2.1 Class Level

Since this study is concerned with language acquisition how it compares to the class level of the student participants, a main research variable is the ability of the students as measured by their classroom level. Seven classroom levels were chosen and were later divided into three

groups: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. As previously mentioned, two control groups also took part in the study: native Spanish speakers and native English speakers who had not received Spanish language instruction. Comprising the beginning group were three classes: Beginning Spanish 1, Beginning Spanish 2, and Beginning Spanish 3, which is an intensive combination of the first two courses. The intermediate group contained three classes: Intermediate Spanish 1, 2, and 3. The final advanced group contained students from a literature-based class: Advanced Spanish 1.

It is important to note that the linguistic content covered in these classes varied immensely. The beginning courses started with the most basic lexical and grammatical items, ranging from present tense to past tense in the indicative mood. The intermediate classes included such grammatical items as perfective tenses, past tense in the indicative mood, as well as present and past tenses in the subjunctive mood. The advanced classes focused on reading and analyzing literature in Spanish and using the lexical and grammatical components that had been covered in the previous two class levels. This wide range of grammatical ability was chosen to see if the pragmatic variation in the CRs of the participants showed the same level of variability. Despite the wide range of grammatical content featured in the courses of the participants, these classes shared many attributes. For example: all sections of each class level, despite being taught by different instructors, utilized the same textbook and class format.

In no course were Spanish complimenting behavior or CR strategies taught. The five beginning and intermediate classes especially shared the format of class greeting/announcements by the instructor, review of previous assignments, presentation of new material and a preview of future class content. As mentioned in the first chapter, any pragmatic instruction that is present in these courses is usually found in the beginning or early in the intermediate courses when students are taught the difference between formal and informal interlocutors. During lessons when

students learned the personal pronouns and appropriate greetings corresponding to different types of interlocutors, and later when imperatives were taught are the only times these learners were explicitly exposed to pragmatic elements of the L2. As mentioned in chapter two, this lack of pragmatic emphasis in the L2 curriculum is a reflection of most L2 teacher materials which lack such instruction.

The homogenous nature of the classes where the DCTs were administered served to minimize factors that might affect the CRs of the participants. This system for classifying the student's language proficiency levels is seen in the following table:

Table 8 - Proficiency Levels of Students

Classroom Level	Title	Abbreviation
1. Beginning	Beginning Spanish 1	B1
	Beginning Spanish 2	B2
	Beginning Spanish 3	B3
2. Intermediate	Intermediate Spanish 1	I1
	Intermediate Spanish 2	I2
	Intermediate Spanish 3	I3
3. Advanced	Advanced Spanish 1	A1

These classroom levels were chosen because they gave a wide range of language competence levels since the students included as participants in this study ranged from being familiar with only very basic greetings to being able to read and analyze Spanish language literature. It was decided not to include the highest level undergraduate students or graduate students because at these levels, many students are either native or heritage speakers or have traveled or lived extensively in a Spanish-speaking country and this study focuses on the variable

of instruction. Language acquired without explicit instruction in the L2 culture would not be suitable since it is not being measured here. An effort was also made to have a relatively equal number of students in each proficiency group, and in some cases more sections of the intermediate and advanced classes were surveyed to match the numbers of beginning students since the more advanced classes were often smaller.

4.2.2 Age and Gender

While other social factors such as gender and age have been common research variables in past studies (de Pablos Ortega, Siebold, 2008), they were not originally considered to be major factors in the present study. Most participants were between the ages of 18 and 22, and there were more females than males in this study. The distribution of both the age and gender of the participants in this informant sample closely resemble the composition of a typical undergraduate foreign language class at Louisiana State University, and these numbers will be seen in section 3.7.1. These variables of the participants did prove to be worthy inclusions in this study and these findings will be presented in the next chapter.

4.2.3 Language Background

Two additional characteristics of the students that were taken into consideration were the native language and the amount of time spent in a Spanish-speaking country. Since the research discussed herein is concerned with students from one culture acquiring the language and pragmatic behaviors of another, students who were not bilinguals, heritage speakers or who had not already lived in a country where the L2 is spoken were desired. Students who expressed that they had either lived or traveled in a Spanish-speaking country for an extended period of time were eliminated from the study, as were students who expressed that Spanish was spoken in their home. As mentioned previously, students from the highest proficiency levels were not selected due to their likelihood of having spent an extended amount of time in the Spanish speaking

world. Since this study is concerned with pragmatic acquisition in the classroom setting, ideal informants had learned the vast majority of their Spanish in a school setting.

It is important to note that while the participants of this study were all raised in English-only homes, their cultural backgrounds could represent attributes that were not captured in the biographical portion of the DCT. I did not elicit the students' ethnicities in the DCT which could factor heavily on their CR strategies. It should also be noted that Louisiana State University is located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in the heart of Southeast Louisiana. This portion of the state has a diverse cultural and linguistic background rooted in many cultures, mainly Spanish, French and African. While not included in the DCT used for this study, the individual characteristics of the student participants as they relate to the cultural background could be used in subsequent study of CR behavior. This implication, with others, will be discussed in chapter six.

4.2.4 Native Language

As previously mentioned, the main participants of this study were native English speakers from an English-only background. Although the "language(s) spoken at home" question of the DCT was used primarily to eliminate Spanish language heritage speakers whose cultural orientation could affect their CRs, it also revealed that all participants who were enrolled in the Spanish courses were English monolinguals. As previously mentioned in this chapter, it should be noted that although the participants were English NSs, the possible influence of other languages that are common in the culture of South Louisiana could have been an influence in their CR behavior.

To provide control data, a group of native Spanish-speaking college students were selected to fill out the DCT in their native language. The details and situations corresponded precisely to the one administered to the students of Spanish. These data were collected to better understand the pragmatic norms of Spanish speakers from various countries in Latin America.

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The national heritages the participant group included Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica. Since the present study does not aim to pinpoint one specific way in which all Spanish speakers respond to compliments, a variety of speakers from different geographic regions were selected in hopes of obtaining a well-rounded sample of CRs. While the L2 participants were students in university-level Spanish courses, the native Spanish speakers were students in LSU's ESL Program as well as an ESL writing course administered by LSU's English department.

A group of native English speakers who had not taken Spanish language courses nor had been exposed to Spanish were also administered an equivalent English-language questionnaire with the same hypothetical situations. I was careful to chose situations that would be likely to occur in communities where both English and Spanish was spoken. These situations were well received in the pilot study and were then expanded for the larger-scale study. Since a goal of this study is to better understand how, if at all, Spanish and English speakers differ in their CR behavior, these data will serve to shed light on the stage(s) at which the Spanish learners deviate from English CR norms and begin to approximate the forms preferred by the Spanish-speaking group. Again, the goal of this study was not to pinpoint one standard compliment or compliment response that all speakers of English use. Instead, native speakers were chosen to highlight certain native CR norms to help ascertain the connection of these norms to the learner data.

4.3 Research Questions

While this study aims to shed light on various aspects of SLA and pragmatics as it relates to language learners, the present study will attempt to answer these specific research questions:

1. How do learners learn L2 pragmatics?
2. If learners' pragmatic behavior does change, what are the factors that affect this change ?
3. Is the change seen affected by participant attributes?

It is important to note that the data presented within do not aim to state definitively how all English and Spanish speakers respond to compliments. Instead, by presenting a sampling of speakers of each language, these data attempt to explore the norms of CR usage and how the responses of L2 learners relate to the CRs of Spanish language learners.

4.4 Classification System for Compliment Responses

Adapted from CR strategies used by other authors that were mentioned in chapter two, I developed a classification system of eight strategies based on the responses from the students. This system, which I expanded after seeing the need for additional and more specific strategies, was initially created based on the CR strategies that emerged upon analyzing the data. While no widely used CR classification system has been establish for the Spanish language, the system I developed does approximate CR classifications proposed for English CRs by Pomerantz (1978) and Herbert (1986). This classification system, which proved to be an effective way to analyze the data in this study, expanded upon the four strategies that were seen in the pilot study, as well as divided certain strategies that were originally grouped together. For example: in the pilot study, an upgrade and an agreement with a compliment were originally classified together. These items were considered separate responses in order to more accurately classify the data. While coding the data, more than ten strategies were initially distinguished. These were later condensed for the sake of simplicity and precision. Strategies that were of particular interest, as they have seen a great deal of study in other languages, were those dealing with compliment refusals or downgrades and compliment enhancements or upgrades. Since compliment responses often put the recipient in a position where s/he wants to avoid offending the person who pays the compliment, these types of responses give insight into the possible dilemma one faces in an effort to appear neither overly proud nor rude.

4.4.1 Strategies and Examples

The eight CR strategies utilized by the learners of Spanish, as well as the abbreviations that will be used in the present study, are found in the following table:

Table 9 - Compliment Response Strategies

Strategy	Example	Translation
1. Acknowledgment (ACK)	"Gracias"/ "Bueno"	"Thank you"/"Okay"
2. Upgrade/Agreement (UPG)	"Yo sé"	"I know"
3. Explanation (EXP)	"Es mi primer año"	"It's my first year."
4. Downgrade/Refusal (REF)	"No me gusta mi carro mayor"	"I don't like my old car"
5. Return Compliment (COM)	"Me gusta tu ropa también"	"I like your clothes too"
6. Insult (INS)	"Tú eres un creep"	"You are a creep"
7. Questioning of Compliment (QUE)	"¿Te gusta?"/"¿En serio?"	"You like it?" /"Really"
8. Topic Change (CHA)	"¿Cómo te llamas?"	What's your name?

For each of the eight compliment situations, only one strategy was used. Responses that featured a combination of strategies were classified by the strategy most relevant to this study. For example, since expansions (strategy 2) and refusals of compliments (strategy 4) have traditionally been seen as important indicators of one's cultural orientation in pragmatics, if one of these strategies was combined with a strategy such as an acknowledgment (strategy 1), the response would be not be counted as an acknowledgment but rather as the other type. When a student upgraded and also returned a compliment, the response was labeled as an upgrade (strategy 2). When a student questioned a compliment and downgraded it in the same utterance,

it was classified as a downgrade (strategy 4) since this is seen having more illocutionary force of the two mitigating strategies.

4.5 Situations for Study

The hypothetical situations used for the study were based on four distinct variables: the power relationship between the two interlocutors, their gender, the level of familiarity between them, and their age. For each variable, two situations were constructed, each highlighting a different aspect of the variable, for a total of eight situations. For the variable of power, one situation involved responding to a compliment from a teacher (someone with more power) and a subordinate in a work situation (someone with less power.) The variable of gender involved responding to compliments from someone of the same and opposite gender. This variable sought to investigate how interlocutors respond to compliments received from someone of the same and opposite gender. To examine the effect of the level of familiarity between interlocutors, one compliment came from a best friend (someone the participant obviously knows well) and another from a total stranger. Finally, age is a factor as one compliment came from an elderly person and another from a child. The eight compliment response situations, as well as the abbreviations that will be used in this study, that the language learners responded to are found in the following table:

Table 10 - Interlocutors and Social Variables

	Hypothetical Interlocutor	Social Variable
1.	Spanish teacher (TEA)	+ Power
2.	Student of the opposite gender (SEX)	- Gender
3.	Elderly family friend (OLD)	+ Age
4.	Friend of the same gender (BFF)	+ Familiarity

Table 10 (cont.)

5.	Workplace subordinate (WOR)	- Power
6.	Young child (KID)	- Age
7.	Same gender classmate (SAM)	+ Gender
8.	Stranger (STR)	- Familiarity

In each situation, attention was given to making the situations as descriptive and authentic as possible. Instead of saying "your teacher compliments you" situations such as "your Spanish teacher compliments you on having done a good job on an assignment" were included. Since all the students were currently enrolled in a Spanish course, this situation was one in which they could feasibly be involved. Just as many currently teaching methodologies aim to make the content of L2 courses "meaningful" and related to the student's life, items and situations that were meaningful and not divorced from the personal life of the participants were included on the DCT. By varying the sociocultural profiles of the hypothetical interlocutors, the effects of these factors on the CRs employed by the students can be seen. These responses help shed light on the cultural orientation of the student and give a glimpse into the processes involved as they vary, or do not vary, their CR strategies.

4.6 Data Collection Procedures

The principal instrument used to collect the data used for this study was a DCT questionnaire that featured biographical questions pertaining to the research variables previously listed. This one-page questionnaire was passed out to participants after permission was obtained from their respective instructors. Although no time limits were given, most students finished within ten minutes, while no participant took more than twenty. In accordance with the regulations of the review board of LSU, students were informed that their participation was

completely voluntary, anonymous, and not to be graded. They were also provided with the IRB contact number. The students were informed, via a script (in their native language) which the researcher read to them that they should answer as honestly and realistically as possible as if they were involved in the compliment situations with a face-to-face interlocutor. The importance of remaining quiet while filling out the survey as to not influence the answers of others was also emphasized. No student refused to participate.

The DCT featured a detailed compliment situation in which the person paying the compliment and the item being complimented were thoroughly described. In the pilot study, the students wrote their answers on a blank line in response to the question "how would you respond?" Perhaps due to the blank line, many students wrote responses like "I would feel" or "I would say" instead of writing the words that they would say. To avoid this, quotation marks were put on the line to elicit the participants to just write the words that they would utter. This strategy proved effective and the instances of participants writing items other than the CR were greatly reduced. Efforts were made to format the DCT so that the hypothetical situations featured sufficient description of the compliment situation, but also so that the material fit on one page as to not overwhelm the participant.

The scenarios were presented in the L1 of the participants so as to make the directions as clear as possible, especially since the participants were at drastically different levels of grammatical proficiency. Also, the compliment to which the participant was to respond was not explicitly given in Spanish, but rather described in English and left to the imagination of the participant. This was done so that the participant would have to be completely creative with his or her CR and not recycle components of the compliment that was provided. If I had presented the participants with compliments in Spanish, it is possible that they would have composed nonsensical CRs based on the words given to them. Also, by not presenting a Spanish CR, the

participants were forced to be completely creative in their responses and not rely on language that was presented on the DCT.

The DCT questionnaire was chosen primarily because of its relative ease in being administered to a large number of informants. With well over 100 respondents, a data collection instrument such as audio or video recordings would have been extremely time-consuming and the large number of informants represented by the results of this study would not have been possible. A DCT was also preferable since it allowed hypothetical situations to be utilized since situations involving compliments from the wide range of interlocutors would have been extremely unlikely in naturalistic data. Golato (2003) writes that DCTs "are widely used in the fields of pragmatics, intercultural communication, and second language acquisition, mainly because of their simplicity of use and high degree of control over variables lead to easy replicability" (93). The downside of using hypothetical situations is well documented (which will be discussed in detail in chapter five) but ultimately the DCT used to collect the present data proved to be a successful and useful tool.

The DCT was administered in the Fall of 2008 and the Spring of 2009. As previously noted, both in English and a Spanish version of the questionnaire were developed, and the DCT was given to each group in their native language. Although the participants who were studying Spanish received a DCT written in English, they were instructed to respond in Spanish and the hypothetical situations were to have occurred in Spanish. Again, this was done so that the English L1 students would all understand the message of the compliment despite their drastically different skill levels in the L2. Also, as previously noted, providing the students with compliments in Spanish might have armed them with lexical and grammatical items that they would not have been able to produce without such information. Great care was taken to translate the questionnaire so that the meanings were as similar as possible between the English and

Spanish versions. As discussed in the previous chapter, several methods that were utilized while collecting the data for this study were adapted based on incidents and observations taken from conducting the pilot study. The DCT given to the English only control group was identical to the one given to the participants studying Spanish, with the exception of the references to Spanish, as well as the requirement to respond in Spanish.

The data were analyzed using Statistical Packaging for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This software proved to be an effective way to analyze and organize the data. This program helped to compute the data into the results which will be seen in the next chapter. SPSS also allowed the analysis of the social demographics of the participants which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.6.1 Demographics of Research Participants

The biographical information collected from the participants was used to better understand exactly whose CRs were being investigated, as well as to use some of these factors as variables in the study. The demographics of student participants of this study, who have been previously discussed in this chapter, are found in the following sections. The first characteristic that was analyzed was the gender of the informant. The gender of the participants is found in the following table:

Table 11 - Gender of Participants

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	47	35.3%
Female	85	64.7%

The participants who provided their gender (132 out of 142) were overwhelmingly female (64.7%). In fact, there were almost twice as many females than males (35.3%) in this study. This discrepancy is common in foreign language classrooms at Louisiana State University.

Another factor of interest in this study is the college year of the students. The participants were asked to circle one of four items indicating if they were a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or in graduate school. These results from this question, which includes the students of Spanish, as well as the control data from the English and Spanish speakers, are seen in the following table:

Table 12 - College Year of Participants

Year in College	Number	Percentage
Freshman	16	11.4%
Sophomore	41	29.3%
Junior	30	21.4%
Senior	50	35.7%
Graduate School	3	2.1%

Since the classes where the majority of the DCTs were administered were undergraduate language courses, it was expected that most of the students not be at the graduate level. This hypothesis was confirmed as 97.9% of the students were in fact undergraduates. The largest undergraduate group was seniors (35.7%), followed by sophomores (29.3%), juniors (21.4%) and finally freshmen (11.4%). These numbers might suggest that foreign language learners tend to take language courses later in their undergraduate college careers. Of the 140 who indicated their college year, only 3 were graduate students. These came from the native Spanish speakers who were enrolled in the ESL program.

The age of the students was also examined and the findings are seen in the following table:

Table 13 - Age of Participants

Age	Number	Percentage
Under 18	1	.7%
18	9	6.3%
19	27	19%
20	34	23.9%
21	33	23.2%
22	17	12%
23 and over	21	14.7%

The oldest (48) and youngest (17) students, as well as the majority of the students who were over 23 years old came from the native Spanish speaker control group. Again, as expected, the vast majority of students (84.4%) were between the ages of 18 and 22. If age is an indicator of the student's year in college, these results also tend to support the idea that more higher-level undergraduate students take foreign language classes than lower level students. Nearly half of the students (47.1%) of the students were either 20 or 21 years old, while only 25.3% of the students were 18 or 19.

4.7 Conclusion

Precise and careful data collection procedures are of the utmost importance in conducting research. The present study sought to implement methods and procedures that would not only elicit data that were as natural as possible from the participants, but that would do so in a way so as to yield results that would be useful to researchers and language educators in many different areas. Just as these methods for collecting and analyzing the pilot study data were improved upon and adapted for the large scale study, the procedures used here could be also be adapted and

expanded to examine a number of applied linguistic concepts. By adapting techniques from the literature and adding others, the methods and instruments used in the pilot study and the main study described within proved to be useful in studying the topic of L2 compliment responses.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

When dealing with speech act variation, one often expects a simple and concise answer that fully explains the difference between the different cultures and language communities. Unfortunately for those who hope for clear-cut answers to questions such as how English and Spanish CR strategies vary and/or what strategies Spanish learners employ to respond to compliments and how these strategies vary according to specific variables, these answers are neither simple nor concise. Just as second language acquisition is a complex process with multiple facets, the results of the present research is multi-layered. In an attempt to understand how second language learners respond to L2 compliments, the issue were examined according to various factors – both of the speaker and the interlocutor. This chapter will present the results of the CR data given by American English speaking learners of Spanish, as well as control data by English and Spanish speakers in their native tongues. These results will be presented using a combination of tables and text to best illustrate the findings of the present study. While some discussion will be given after each component of the results is presented, more in-depth analysis will be seen in Chapter six.

5.2 Data Analysis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, SPSS was used to analyze the data collected using the methods and procedures also discussed in that chapter. The data were analyzed in various ways to best get a glimpse into the complex task of responding to a compliment in the L2. The participants' responses from the DCT were separated according to variables such as the class level of the participant, age, and age. The participants of this study fell into three categories: students of Spanish, native Spanish speakers, and native English speakers. While the CR strategy

uses of these participants is the main focus of this study, in this chapter, other variables such as the age and gender of the participant and how it possibly affected the CR employed will also be presented, as will a comparison of the strategies of native English and Spanish speakers. Using the various descriptive analysis functions of SPSS, distinct variables and were examined to help shed light on their CR behavior.

5.3 Results

The results of this study are multi-faceted and will be presented in several parts according to the variables involved. While not all of the data collected can be presented in this chapter, key figures and findings will be highlighted. The significance of these findings will be further discussed and analyzed in the next chapter. The results of this analysis will be seen in the following section.

5.3.1 Compliment Response Strategy Use

In each compliment situation, the participants indicated how they would respond. These results were coded and analyzed according to eight CR response types. By comparing the CR strategies used by the participants, it can be better understood how these responses change according to several factors, but also how these responses relate to those of native speakers of Spanish and to those of study participants who are NSs of English and are not currently enrolled in a Spanish language course.

5.3.1.1 CR Use by Level

The CR strategy use of the participants who were enrolled in a Spanish class was divided into classroom groups. As seen in the previous chapter, the beginners were enrolled in one of three classes, while the intermediate and advanced groups consisted of two classes each.

5.3.1.1.1 Beginner

The beginning students were enrolled in three Spanish classes: Beginning Spanish 1, Beginning Spanish 2, and Beginning Spanish 3 (B1, B2, and B3, respectively). The grammatical content of these courses began with simple present tense forms and ended with past tense (preterit and imperfect aspects). These beginning courses place an emphasis on lexical and grammatical items necessary for early communication and composing simple sentences. While no specific compliment response instruction is given in these courses, some pragmatic instruction is seen as students learn different pronominal forms of address. The CRs that beginning students used to respond to compliments in Spanish will be seen in this section. The percentage of usage of each strategy can be seen in the following table.

Table 14 - CR Strategies of Beginning Students of Spanish

	1. ACK	2. UPG	3. EXP	4. REF	5. COM	6. INS	7. QUE	8. CHA
1.TEA	74%	4%	17%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%
2.SEX	74%	4%	4%	2%	13%	0%	0%	2%
3.OLD	64%	2%	21%	4%	4%	0%	2%	2%
4. BFF	57%	26%	13%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%
5.WOR	60%	4%	11%	0%	23%	0%	0%	2%
6. KID	68%	6%	11%	0%	9%	0%	0%	6%
7. SAM	60%	6%	23%	0%	6%	0%	0%	4%
8.STR	62%	4%	23%	2%	0%	4%	2%	2%

TEA = Teacher, SEX = Opposite Gender, OLD = Elderly, BFF = Friend, WOR = Co-worker, KID = Child, SAME = Same Gender, STR = Stranger

The beginning participants by far favored the acknowledgment strategy over the other strategies. With a teacher and a student of the opposite gender, beginning students responded to

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compliments with an acknowledgment in almost three-fourths of responses. The lowest level of acknowledgments was used with a close friend of the same gender as the participant (57%). The second most common strategy was that of explaining a compliment. This strategy was most commonly used by the beginners to respond to compliments from an elderly family friend (21%) and was least common with a student of the opposite gender (4%). Interestingly, the response of upgrading or agreeing with a compliment was seen by 26% of beginners, but only when addressing a close friend of the same gender. This response type was rare, and the interlocutor who received this CR type with the highest frequency after the friend of the same-gender, only received this response in 6% of responses. Returning a compliment was seen in 23% of CRs directed to a work subordinate and in 13% of responses made to a classmate of the opposite gender. While insulting, questioning a compliment, and changing the topic were strategies rarely used by the beginners, 6% of these participants questioned the compliment made by a child.

5.3.1.1.2 Intermediates

The intermediate students who participated in this study were enrolled in three intermediate Spanish language courses: Intermediate Spanish1, Intermediate Spanish 2, and Intermediate Spanish 3 (IA1, IA2, IA3, respectively.) The content of these courses, although often covering and reviewing components of material that were covered in the beginning group, focused on more advanced grammatical forms which include the perfective verb forms and the subjunctive mood. The CRs that intermediate students used to respond to compliments in Spanish will be seen in this section. The percentage of usage of each strategy can be seen in table 15.

Again, the favored response type used by this group is acknowledgment, although it was far less common in the responses of the intermediate participants than the beginners. The highest

Table 15 - CR Strategies of Intermediate Students of Spanish

	1. ACK	2. UPG	3. EXP	4. REF	5. COM	6. INS	7. QUE	8. CHA
1.TEA	51%	4%	27%	5%	5%	0%	2%	2%
2.SEX	38%	10%	12%	7%	15%	0%	5%	12%
3.OLD	29%	10%	4%	2%	2%	0%	2%	10%
4. BFF	22%	37%	24%	0%	0%	0%	2%	12%
5.WOR	41%	5%	15%	2%	34%	0%	2%	0%
6. KID	34%	5%	20%	0%	39%	0%	0%	2%
7. SAM	41%	5%	34%	0%	5%	0%	2%	12%
8.STR	22%	15%	27%	12%	0%	5%	7%	10%

percentage of acknowledgments was seen in response to a compliment given by a teacher (51%). It was least commonly used with a friend of the same gender (22%). The intermediate participants also favored the response type of explaining a compliment, as 34% of this group explained a compliment to a class mate of the same gender. Again, upgrades were not common except for with the close friend of the same gender (37%). The intermediates used the strategy of returning a compliment more than their beginner peers, with 39% and 34% using this response type with a subordinate coworker and a child, respectively. Refusing a compliment was rare, although seen in 12% of responses to a stranger. Insults were absent entirely, except in response to a compliment from a stranger (5%). Questioning a compliment was also found in 7% of responses made to this interlocutor.

5.3.1.1.3 Advanced

The participants in the advanced group were enrolled in one class in which Spanish literature was analyzed. It should be noted this third year class was taken by students who were

majoring or minoring in Spanish. While the beginning and advanced students took courses that were prerequisites for many academic degrees at the university where the study was conducted, these advanced students certainly had a different type of motivation to take Spanish. This motivation might have played a part in their study habits, and in turn, their CR usage. These students had already studied the grammatical and lexical components covered in the classes of the first two groups and were using these language components to read and compose original material in the L2. The compliments that advanced students used to respond to compliments in Spanish will be seen in this section. The percentage of usage of each strategy can be seen in the following table.

Table 16 - CR Strategies of Advanced Students of Spanish

	1. ACK	2. UPG	3. EXP	4. REF	5. COM	6. INS	7.QUE	8. CHA
1.TEA	50%	4%	29%	8%	0%	0%	4%	4%
2.SEX	21%	8%	29%	4%	13%	0%	21%	4%
3.OLD	38%	8%	46%	0%	0%	0%	4%	4%
4. BFF	17%	25%	27%	4%	0%	4%	0%	4%
5.WOR	33%	0%	24%	4%	21%	0%	0%	0%
6. KID	29%	4%	29%	4%	33%	0%	0%	0%
7. SAM	38%	4%	38%	0%	13%	0%	0%	4%
8.STR	38%	4%	33%	8%	0%	13%	0%	4%

The advanced students, while still preferring to acknowledge compliments, appear to do so less than the intermediate students. Again, acknowledging a compliment to a teacher was the most common response (50%) and acknowledgments were least used with a close friend (17%). The advanced participants gave explanations more than the beginning and intermediate

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participants, with 46% responding this way to an elderly family friend. Explanations were also common with a student of the same gender (38%). Again, the strategy of upgrading was uncharacteristically popular with a close friend (25%). Refusing a compliment was more common with this group, and they were seen with every interlocutor except for a teacher and an elderly friend. The most common compliment refusal was seen with a stranger (8%), perhaps indicating that American English speakers see this response as less polite than other strategies. Again, insults were seen mostly with strangers (7%) and close friends (4%). Questioning a compliment was very rare, although it was seen in 21% of responses to a close friend. Changing the topic after receiving a compliment, although seen in almost all situations, was low (4%).

5.3.1.2 CR Use by Gender

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the participants in this study were largely female (65%). The CR strategies used by the participants was analyzed by the gender of the participant. The gender of the participant did not appear to be a major factor in the CR strategy choice of the participants. However, certain variations in the CR strategies used by gender were found and will be highlighted in this section.

In responding to a compliment from a teacher, female participants returned a compliment in 7% of responses, while male participants returned a compliment to their teacher in 2% of responses. When responded to the compliment of an elderly family friend, men responded with an agreement or an upgrade in 11% of responses, while females responded this way in only 3% of responses. With a close friend of the same gender, women responded with a topic change in 8% of responses, while no male participant used this strategy in this situation.

When responding to a compliment from a subordinate at work, 6% of men downgraded or refused the compliment, while women only responded this way in 1% of responses. Similarly, with addressing a compliment from a child, no woman refused or downgraded a compliment,

while 4% of men did. With another student of the same gender, men upgraded or agreed with a compliment in 9% of responses, while women did so in only 3% of responses. Finally, with a stranger, 11% of men insulted the person giving the compliment, while women did this in only 5% of responses.

These data show that in certain situations, women are more likely to return a compliment, and less likely to refuse a compliment or insult someone paying them a compliment. Men appear to be more likely to upgrade compliments with certain interlocutors and downgrade them with others. Men were more likely to insult someone paying them a compliment, especially someone they do not know. These results appear to indicate that women are less likely to utilize responses that could put them into a face-threatening situation, such as insults, upgrades, and refusals. Women appear to prefer "safer" responses such as returning a compliment or changing the topic altogether. Men appear to be riskier in their CR use by utilizing responses that could possibly make them appear proud or even insulting.

5.3.1.3 CR Use by Age

Of the 142 participants, 85% were between the ages of 18 and 22. Although there were participants who were younger and older than those included in this five-year range, the majority of the analysis done in this section will focus on the participants between the ages of 18 and 22. While the strategies used by these students do not appear to vary drastically by age, certain items do deserve attention. In responding to a compliment from a teacher, the 19 year olds used all eight CR strategies while the other ages used far fewer (2-5). 11% of 19 year olds also returned a compliment to a teacher. This response was almost nonexistent in the other ages. In responding to a student of the opposite gender, a wider range of strategies were used by all ages. The 20 year olds responded with compliments in 24% of their CRs, a percentage far higher than the other ages. When responding to an elderly family friend and a close friend of the same gender, again

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most students limited their responses to two or three strategies, with the exception of the 21 year olds when responding to a friend. In this situation, these participants used seven of the eight strategies, while 18, 19, and 21 year olds only used three.

In the situation involving a subordinate in a work situation, 44% of 18 year olds responded with a compliment. This was far more than the other ages. Again, the 20 year olds utilized seven out of eight strategies in this scenario. When responding to a child, 56% of 18 year olds used a compliment. 41% of 19 year olds responded with compliments. With a student of the same gender, again fewer strategies were used overall. No 20 year old returned a compliment in this situation, while 19, 21, and 22 year olds used them in 11%, 15%, and 11% accordingly. Finally, when responding to a stranger, more strategies were used overall, with the 19 year olds using all eight. The 19 year olds depended less on the common strategies of acknowledgment and explanation, as was seen in the other ages.

While the age of the participant does not appear to be a play a large role in CR strategy use, it has been shown in these data that often the 19 year olds (and occasionally 20 year olds) were the participants who showed the greatest amount of variety. In most cases, the CR performance of 20, 21, and 22 year olds was virtually identical. If one assumes that most 19 year-old students are sophomores, these students might be more likely to be enrolled in a B3 (high beginner) or I1 class (intermediate 1) Spanish course. Since pragmatic focus is often overlooked in later class levels in favor of complex grammatical forms, this possible age-proficiency correlation might support the idea that high beginning/low intermediate students are exposed to more pragmatic input since they are shown topics such as subject pronoun variation.

One reason as to why older students were not taken into consideration is because there were often only one or two students per age over 22. Since these older participants did not make up a statistically significant portion of the participants, specific focus on their contributions, in

terms of their age, was not considered. Also, many of the older students were from the native Spanish-speaking control group.

5.3.1.4 CR Use by College Year

The college year of the participants (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate student) was considered as a variable in the compliment response type used by the participants. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the overwhelming majority of participants (83.4%) were sophomores, juniors, or seniors. The three graduate students who participated in the study were all native Spanish speakers whose responses were used for the control data. The variable of college year did not seem to have any effect on the CR strategy used by the participants. It appears that this variable, unlike classroom level or language status, did not turn out to be a major predictor of CR behavior.

5.3.2 Compliment Response Types

There were eight CR response types identified that were used to classify the responses given by both the main participants of this study, as well as the NS participants. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when more than one response was given per situation, the more potentially cultural-rich response was noted (one that showed stronger degrees of affirmation or negation of the compliment). Only one response type was given for each response. In the following section, a description of the CR type, examples from the participants, as well as the frequency of these responses as represented in tables will be seen.

5.3.2.1 Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments were responses that simply recognized the compliment, but did not enhance or diffuse the power of it. Acknowledgments were often short and grammatically simple. The most common acknowledgment was *gracias* ('thanks'). As will be discussed later in this chapter, acknowledgments were very common among beginning students because of their

often simple construction. Although most acknowledgments seen in this study were one-word recognitions of having received a compliment, this response type gave important insight into the pragmatic and grammatical abilities of the participants. The frequency of use of the CR type of acknowledgments is seen in the following table.

Table 17 - Acknowledgments

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	74%	51%	50%	44%	43%
2. SEX	74%	38%	21%	56%	50%
3. OLD	64%	29%	38%	31%	29%
4. BFF	57%	22%	17%	25%	43%
5. WOR	60%	41%	33%	31%	29%
6. KID	68%	34%	29%	44%	43%
7. SAM	60%	41%	38%	25%	50%
8. STR	62%	22%	38%	13%	36%

5.3.2.2 Upgrade/Agreement

Responses that were classified as being an upgrade or agreement were responses that did just that: elevated the compliment or agreed with the item being complimented. These responses often required the participants to be able to produce longer utterances than acknowledgments. Common responses of this type were *me gusta también* ('I like it too'). This response type has been of interest to researchers because it can put the person receiving the compliment in a position where they are potentially showing pride. This is a characteristic that many language communities try to avoid, which is reflected in their CR choice. The frequency of use of the CR type of upgrade or agreement is seen in the following table.

Table 18 - Upgrade/Agreement

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%
2. SEX	4%	10%	8%	0%	7%
3. OLD	2%	10%	8%	0%	14%
4. BFF	26%	37%	25%	13%	21%
5. WOR	4%	5%	0%	0%	7%
6. KID	6%	5%	4%	0%	14%
7. SAM	6%	5%	4%	0%	21%
8. STR	4%	15%	4%	25%	36%

5.3.2.3 Explanation

Explanations of compliments, in contrast to CRs that could be perceived as blatantly boastful or, on the other end of the spectrum, dismissive, were explanations of the item being complimented that did not self praise or downgrade the impact of the compliment. These responses simply elaborated on some aspect of the item being compliment, such as where or when it was purchased (in the case of an item of clothing) or details about a class assignment (in the case of a compliment about school work). A common example of this response type was *lo compré ayer* ('I bought it yesterday'). Explanations that elevated the compliment were labeled as the previous example, upgrade or agreement. The frequency of use of the CR type of explanation is seen in table 19.

5.3.2.4 Downgrade/Refusal

Downgrades or refusals, like upgrades and agreements, were of great interest in this study because they put the receiver of the compliment in a situation where they could appear

Table 19 - Explanation

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	17%	27%	29%	56%	29%
2. SEX	4%	12%	29%	19%	14%
3. OLD	21%	4%	46%	63%	50%
4. BFF	13%	24%	27%	56%	21%
5. WOR	11%	15%	24%	25%	36%
6. KID	11%	20%	29%	0%	14%
7. SAM	23%	34%	38%	63%	14%
8. STR	23%	27%	33%	38%	21%

unappreciative of having received the compliment. Downgrades or refusals were responses that either lessened the praising aspect of the compliment (*es viejo* ['it's old']) or blatantly refused it (*no es nada* ['it's nothing']). As mentioned in chapter two, this response type is common in many cultures as receivers of compliments do not want to appear proud or boastful. The frequency of downgrades and refusals of the CR type of acknowledgments is seen in table 20.

5.3.2.5 Return of Compliment

The returning of a compliment, like explanations, required that the participant be able to form utterances that were often longer than CR types such as acknowledgments. In this response

Table 20- Downgrade/Refusal

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	0%	5%	8%	0%	0%
2. SEX	2%	7%	4%	0%	0%

Table 20 (cont.)

3. OLD	4%	2%	0%	6%	7%
4. BFF	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%
5. WOR	0%	2%	4%	6%	7%
6. KID	0%	0%	4%	6%	0%
7. SAM	0%	0%	0%	6%	14%
8. STR	2%	12%	8%	6%	0%

type, the participants returned a compliment to the person who complimented them. Common

examples of this response type include *me gusta tu ropa también* ('I like your clothes too'). The

frequency of the CR type of returning a compliment is seen in the following table.

Table 21 - Return of Compliment

	Beginner	**Intermediate**	**Advanced**	**NS English**	**NS Spanish**
1. TEA	2%	5%	0%	0%	29%
2. SEX	13%	15%	13%	25%	7%
3. OLD	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%
4. BFF	2%	0%	0%	6%	0%
5. WOR	23%	34%	21%	38%	14%
6. KID	9%	39%	33%	44%	14%
7. SAM	6%	5%	13%	0%	0%
8. STR	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%

5.3.2.6 Insults

Insults, while rare in the CRs of the participants of this study, were responses that seemed to disregard the compliment itself and instead gave an often unkind verbal remark. Perhaps not surprisingly, this response type was mainly seen with close friends and total strangers, linking it to the variable of familiarity. Examples of this response type include *tu *as stupido* ('you are stupid.') The frequency of the CR type of insults is seen in the following table.

Table 22 - Insults

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2. SEX	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3. OLD	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. BFF	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
5. WOR	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%
6. KID	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
7. SAM	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8. STR	4%	5%	13%	13%	7%

5.3.2.7 Questioning Compliment

Responses that were classified as questioning a compliment were those in which the person being complimented questioned the compliment being given, as in *¿tú crees?* ('you think?'). This response type, like downgrades and refusals, are related to responses that lesson the praising aspect of a compliment. The frequency of the CR type of questioning a compliment is seen in the following table.

Table 23- Questioning of Compliment

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1. TEA	2%	2%	4%	0%	0%
2. SEX	0%	5%	21%	0%	14%
3. OLD	2%	2%	4%	0%	0%
4. BFF	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
5. WOR	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
6. KID	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%
7. SAM	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
8. STR	2%	7%	0%	0%	0%

5.3.2.8 Topic Change

Topic changes occurred when the person receiving a compliment chose to respond in a way that did not seem to directly relate to the item being complimented. The receiver seemed to ignore the compliment and change the topic to something else, often an invitation or a question not related to the compliment. Examples of topic changes in the responses given by the participants in this study included *yo quiero ir a la tienda en ese momento* 'I want to go to the store right now.' This response type, like others mentioned, requires the user of this CR type to be able to form longer utterances. The frequency of use of the CR type of topic changes is seen in table 24.

5.3.3 Social Variables of Interlocutor

The eight hypothetical interlocutors featured in the DCT corresponded to four social variables: Power, Age, Gender, and Familiarity. Each variable featured two interlocutors that

represented contrasting sides of the item. The variable of power featured compliments from a teacher (higher power) and a subordinate in a work situation (lower power). The variable of age

Table 24 - Topic Change

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
1.TEA	0%	2%	4%	0%	0%
2.SEX	2%	12%	4%	0%	7%
3.OLD	2%	10%	4%	0%	0%
4. BFF	0%	12%	4%	0%	0%
5.WOR	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6. KID	6%	2%	0%	6%	0%
7. SAM	4%	12%	4%	6%	0%
8.STR	2%	10%	4%	0%	0%

featured compliments from an elderly family friend (higher age) and a child (lower age). The variable of gender featured compliments from a classmate of the same gender and a classmate of the opposite gender. Finally, the variable of familiarity featured compliments from a close friend (high familiarity) and a stranger (low familiarity).

In the following tables, the most common CR strategy along with the percentage of usage are shown. By showing the most common CR strategy, the cultural orientation of the students and their relation to the responses of the native speakers can be seen. Since each variable features contrasting aspects of the relationship, the participants' attitudes towards the social role can also be seen.

5.3.3.1 Power

The variable of power was represented by a teacher and a workplace subordinate. These interlocutors represent both a high and low level of power. The most common responses to compliments from hypothetical interlocutors with different degrees of power are represented in the following table.

Table 25 - Social Variable - Power

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
Teacher	ACK 74%	ACK 51%	ACK 50%	EXP 56%	ACK 43%
Co-Worker	ACK 60%	ACK 41%	ACK 33%	COM 38%	EXP 36%

As the participants progressed in class level, their use of acknowledgments decreased, although this was the most common response to interlocutors of both higher and lower power levels. The native English speakers' most common response was an explanation, while the native Spanish speakers, like the learners of Spanish, favored acknowledgments when responding to CRs from someone of a higher power level. When responding to a compliment from someone of a lower power level, the native English speakers preferred to return a compliment and the native Spanish speakers preferred to give an explanation. As will be discussed in this and in the following chapter, a common strategy for both the American learners of Spanish and the English-only NSs was that of returning a compliment. This strategy was uncommon among the NSs of Spanish and it is possible that this group used explanations instead of returning a compliment.

5.3.3.2 Age

The variable of age was represented by a small child and an elderly family friend. These interlocutors represent both a higher and lower age. The most common responses to compliments from hypothetical interlocutors with differing ages are represented in the following table.

Table 26 - Social Variable - Age

	Beginner	**Intermediate**	**Advanced**	**NS English**	**NS Spanish**
Elderly Friend	ACK 64%	ACK 29%	ACK 46%	ACK 31%	EXP 50%
Child	ACK 68%	ACK 34%	ACK/EXP 29%	ACK/COM 44%	ACK 43%

When responding to compliments from interlocutors of drastically different ages, again, acknowledgments were the most common response. With an elderly person, the frequency of acknowledgments did not decrease as the class level increased as seen with the advanced students who acknowledged a compliment in 46% of their responses, while the intermediate students did so in 29%. The native English speakers favored this response type while the native Spanish speakers chose to expand compliments from an elderly friend. When responding to a compliment from a child, the frequency of acknowledgments did decrease as the class level increased, although the advanced students chose to expand compliments as many times as they chose to acknowledge them (29%). Both the native English and Spanish speakers favored acknowledging a compliment from a child, although the native English-speaking group returned a compliment with the same percentage of responses as they acknowledged (44%).

5.3.3.3 Gender

The variable of gender was represented by students of the same and opposite gender as the participant. These interlocutors represent both genders. The most common responses to compliments from hypothetical interlocutors with different genders are represented in the following table.

Table 27- Social Variable - Gender

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
Opposite Gender	ACK 74%	ACK 38%	EXP 29%	ACK 56%	ACK 50%
Same Gender	ACK 60%	ACK 41%	ACK/EXP 38%	EXP 63%	ACK 50%

When responding to compliments from interlocutors of both genders, again, the frequency of acknowledgments decreased as students progressed in their Spanish classes. The advanced students even favored the strategy of expanding upon a compliment in their responses. Both the native English and Spanish speakers favored acknowledgments. With interlocutors of the same, as with interlocutors of the opposite gender, the frequency of acknowledgments decreased as the students progressed in their Spanish classes. The advanced students, when responding to compliments from a student of the same gender, gave an explanation with the same frequency as acknowledgments (38%). While the native Spanish speakers, like the students of Spanish, preferred to acknowledge compliments, while the native English speakers chose to use explanations in their responses.

5.3.3.4 Familiarity

The variable of familiarity was represented by a close friend and a stranger. These interlocutors represent both a high and low level of familiarity. The most common responses to compliments from hypothetical interlocutors with different degrees of familiarity are represented in the following table.

Table 28 - Social Variable - Familiarity

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	NS English	NS Spanish
Close Friend	ACK 57%	UPG 37%	EXP 27%	EXP 56%	ACK 43%
Stranger	ACK 62%	EXP 27%	ACK 38%	EXP 38%	ACK/UPG 36%

Only the beginning students mirrored the native Spanish speakers in their preference of acknowledgments. The intermediate students favored upgrading compliments from a close friend, while the advanced students and native English speakers preferred explanations. When responding to compliments from a stranger, acknowledgments were favored by beginning, advanced, and native Spanish-speaking students. The native Spanish speakers upgraded with the same frequency as they acknowledged a compliment (36%). The intermediate students, like the native English speakers, favored explanations.

5.3.4 Control Data

To understand the possible differences in the CR norms of English speakers and Spanish speakers, it is necessary to have data from these two groups. While the main participants in this study are speakers of American English studying Spanish, native English speakers who were not currently enrolled in a Spanish course were interviewed to elicit responses that would shed light

on the CR cultural norms of English speakers. It was hoped that these responses would give insight into the cultural orientation of the students of Spanish before they began to learn Spanish. Native speakers of Spanish were also interviewed so that cultural orientation of Spanish speakers could be understood.

5.3.4.1 Native English Speakers

The native English speakers who participated in this study filled out a DCT with the same situations that the students of Spanish received. These students were enrolled in an English course and were all native speakers of English. They were not concurrently enrolled in a Spanish course. The compliments that the native speakers of English used to respond to compliments will be seen in this section. The percentage of usage of each strategy can be seen in the following table.

Table 29 - CR Strategies of Native English Speakers

	1. ACK	2. UPG	3. EXP	4. REF	5. COM	6. INS	7. QUE	8. CHA
1.TEA	44%	0%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2.SEX	56%	0%	19%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%
3.OLD	31%	0%	63%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. BFF	25%	13%	56%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
5.WOR	31%	0%	25%	6%	38%	0%	0%	0%
6. KID	44%	0%	0%	6%	44%	0%	0%	6%
7. SAM	25%	0%	63%	6%	0%	0%	0%	6%
8.STR	13%	25%	38%	6%	6%	13%	0%	0%

The native English speakers, unlike the students of Spanish, had higher levels of explanations than they did acknowledgments, although these two were very close. The highest

level of explanations was seen with an elderly family friend (63%), while no student chose to respond to a compliment with an explanation to a child, perhaps indicating a relationship between this strategy and age. acknowledgments were most common with a student of the opposite gender (31%) and least common with a stranger (13%). The other six strategies were used far less often. Returning a compliment was common with a student of the opposite gender (25%), a coworker (38%), and a child (44%). Upgrading a compliment was only seen with a close friend (13%) and a stranger (25%) and insults were only seen with a stranger (13%). Refusing a compliment, though rare, was seen in small percentages (6%), with an elderly friend, a coworker, a child, a student of the same gender, and a stranger.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, it is through comparison of the learner data with the responses from the L1 English participants that perhaps the most important result of this study is revealed. As learners progress through Spanish classes, they become more able to respond to a compliment in a way that is more culturally appropriate in English. These results indicate the need for specific, speech act-centered instruction that will provide students with specific strategies and forms that are appropriate in the L2 culture.

5.3.4.2 Native Spanish Speakers

The native Spanish speakers who were taking English language courses at Louisiana State University filled out the same DCT as the learners of Spanish, only in their L1. The results of these questionnaires are vital to understanding the cultural norms of Spanish speakers from a variety of countries. Although it is widely accepted that Spanish speakers are more likely to utilize strategies like refusing, downgrading, and questioning\ in responding to compliments, real quantitative data, such as that proposed in this study, help to shed light on this idea. These data are also important if a contrast is to be made between native Spanish and native English speaking people.

Since the goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to use it in way that is both grammatically and culturally appropriate, students of Spanish should ultimately be able to respond to a compliment in a way that is culturally acceptable in the target culture. These results help us better understand exactly what the CR behavior common in the target culture is. It is important to note that although while much of the work done in the area of Spanish compliment responses deal with Peninsular Spanish, no informant in the present study was a native of Spain. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these participants were from such countries as Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Venezuela.

The CRs that the native speakers of Spanish used to respond to compliments in Spanish will be seen in this section. The percentage of usage of each strategy can be seen in the following table.

Table 30 - CR Strategies of Native Spanish Speakers

	1. ACK	2. UPG	3. EXP	4. REF	5. COM	6. INS	7. QUE	8. CHA
1.TEA	43%	0%	29%	0%	29%	0%	0%	0%
2.SEX	50%	7%	14%	0%	7%	0%	14%	7%
3. OLD	29%	14%	50%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4.BFF	43%	21%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5.WOR	29%	7%	36%	7%	14%	7%	0%	0%
6.KID	43%	14%	14%	0%	14%	0%	14%	0%
7.SAM	50%	21%	14%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8. STR	36%	36%	21%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%

Although the data from the Spanish NSs will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, certain findings that are of particular interest will be highlighted here. The CRs given by

the native speakers of Spanish who participated in this study do not appear to reflect an obvious preference for CRs that decrease the praise of a compliment (refusal/downgrade or questioning of a compliment). In fact, these native speakers, as with the students of Spanish and the English control group, preferred acknowledgments, followed by explanations. They were, however, more likely than the English NS control group to upgrade a compliment. Also, as will be discussed in the following chapter, neither NS group changed the topic in response to a compliment. This strategy appears to be a product of interlanguage in which the participants are doing what they can to respond to a compliment, although it is not culturally relevant in either language community. By comparing the CRs of the L1 English participants to the Spanish control data, it is apparent that these CRs much more closely resemble the CR behavior of the English control group. Finally, one aspect of the responses that the Spanish NSs gave will be examined in the following section.

5.3.5 Compliment Response Formulas

As discussed in Chapter two and seen in the data in the current chapter, English speakers frequently utilize "thank you" as their compliment response of choice. In terms of formulaic responses, this acknowledgment was the only one seen with any discernable quantity. While languages like Serbian Arabic (Nelson, Al-Batal, and Echols 1998) appear to have certain formulaic or adjacency responses for compliments, certain responses from the Spanish native speakers tend to support the existence of these forms in Spanish.

Table 31 - Compliment Response Formulas used by Native Spanish Speakers

Spanish Formula Response	English Translation
"a la orden"	"at your service"
"cuando quieras"	"whenever/anytime you want"

While "a la orden" and "cuando quieras" were both common expressions used by the native Spanish speakers to respond to the same situations that were presented to the Spanish learners, no learner used one of these expression. The lack of this expression in the learner data indicates the need for specific instruction of these forms and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

5.4 Conclusion

As seen in this chapter, answering the questions proposed at the beginning of this chapter is a complex task. While aspects of these results seem intuitive and correspond to the original hypotheses that L2 pragmatic cues must be explicitly taught since they emerge separately from grammatical competence, a number of surprises were also seen. By comparing various components and variables of this study, understanding pragmatic acquisition can be better understood. In the following chapter, a more detailed discussion and analysis of these results will be proposed

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Discussion of Main Findings

In this chapter, the results of the large-scale study, which were presented in the previous chapter, will be discussed. The significance of the results, which will include major findings concerning the relationship between the CRs of the participants and those of the English NSs, will be discussed and possible interpretations of these findings will be proposed. This discussion will include aspects of other relevant studies and theories that relate to the findings discussed herein. Implications for L2 educators will be proposed that deal directly with the issue of teaching pragmatics, complimenting and compliment responses, as well as other speech acts in the L2. Propositions of possibilities for future study and admission of limitations are also included.

6.1.3 Social Factors

The social relationship between two interlocutors plays an important role in how one responds to a compliment. As the results from this study demonstrate, the relationship that one receiving a compliment has with the person giving the compliment can play a large role in how the compliment is responded to. The participants in this study responded to compliments from interlocutors whose gender, age, level of power, and level of familiarity differed greatly. With each variable, two hypothetical interlocutors, each representing a contrasting component of the relationship, were chosen. While certain social factors seemed to affect the participants' CR strategies, others did seem to have the same effect. Also, certain variables, such as level of familiarity, proved to be closely related with certain CR types.

The CR strategies used by these participants varied depending on a number of factors. These factors include social factors such as differences in age, gender, power, and familiarity

between interlocutors. As seen in studies by Parisi and Wogan (2005), Lorenzo-Dus (2001), and Félix-Brasdefer (2003), these factors often play an important role in CR strategy use. Since it is important to know how the responses from the students relate to the cultural norms of English and Spanish speakers, the CR behavior of both L1 English and Spanish native speakers weighed heavily in the findings of the present research.

In this section, the cultural norms as established by the participants in this study will be discussed. Also, the CRs of the participants will also be discussed, as will their relation to each of these groups.

6.1.3.1 Age

The two interlocutors that were selected to represent the variable of age were a young child and an elderly family friend. With these interlocutors, the overwhelmingly favored strategy was to acknowledge the compliment. With the elderly person, all levels of students of Spanish and the English NSs all favored acknowledgment, while the native Spanish speakers chose to explain. When responding to a child, all three levels of students of Spanish acknowledged compliments, although the advanced group explained a compliment in the same amount of situations as they acknowledged. The NS English participants acknowledged and returned a compliment with the same frequency and the NS Spanish participants favored the response of acknowledgment with the young child.

Despite the drastic age difference in the interlocutors, the beginning, intermediate and advanced students all favored the same strategy with almost identical percentages. One difference is that the advanced students commonly used explanations with the child and not with the elderly person. The NSs of English favored acknowledgments with both interlocutors; however, with the child, they returned the compliment with the same frequency. The native speakers of Spanish were the only participants to use a completely different strategy based on

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age, as they expanded compliments from an elderly person and acknowledged compliments from a child.

6.1.3.2 Gender

The two interlocutors that represented the variable of gender were a student of the same gender and one of the opposite gender. Again, acknowledgments were the favored strategy. The beginning and intermediate students favored acknowledgments, while the advanced participants chose to expand compliments from a student of the opposite gender and to acknowledge and explain compliments from a student of the same gender. This tendency to explain by the advanced students could be due to their increased grammatical ability. The NSs of English acknowledged compliments from the student of the opposite gender and explained those from a student of the same gender. The native Spanish speakers acknowledged in both situations.

While the beginning and intermediate participants favored acknowledgments despite the difference in gender of the interlocutors, the interlocutors did use this strategy less than the beginners. The advanced students added the strategy of acknowledgment with students of the same gender, but not to students of the opposite gender. The English NSs used different strategies completely, favoring acknowledgments with students of the opposite gender and explanations with students of the same gender. As previously mentioned, the Spanish NSs did not vary their strategy preference by gender.

6.1.3.3 Level of Power

The two interlocutors that represented the variable of power were a teacher and a workplace subordinate. Again, the favored strategy was acknowledgment for the beginner, intermediate, and advanced student. The English NSs preferred to explain in response to compliments from a teacher and return a compliment from a coworker. The native Spanish speakers acknowledged to a teacher, but explained to a coworker.

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While the three levels of students of Spanish all favored acknowledgments despite the power difference, the percentages of acknowledgments were far fewer with the workplace subordinate. This could be an indication that these students saw acknowledging as more appropriate for use with someone of higher power, and took greater risks and mixed more strategies when responding to someone of lesser power. The NSs of English and Spanish differed greatly in their responses: the English speakers favored explanations to the teacher, while the Spanish speakers used this strategy with the coworker. With a coworker, the English speakers returned a compliment and the native Spanish speakers acknowledged compliments.

6.1.3.4 Familiarity

The two interlocutors representing the binary values of the variable of familiarity were a close friend and a complete stranger. With this variable, for the first time, upgrades were seen. The beginning students chose to acknowledge compliments. The intermediate students upgraded compliments from a close friend and explained compliments from a stranger. The advanced students explained compliments from a friend, while only acknowledging them from a stranger. The native English speakers explained compliments from both interlocutors and the native Spanish speakers acknowledged compliments from both speakers, although they upgraded compliments from strangers with the same frequency as they acknowledged them.

The change in level of familiarity seemed to have little effect on the beginning and, intermediate groups as well as the native English speakers. The advanced students explained compliments from a friend, while they acknowledged compliments from a stranger. This variable seemed to have little effect on the CR strategy use of the native Spanish speakers as well. The variable of familiarity seemed to be linked to the CR of insulting, as the only interlocutors who received insults in response to their compliments were the close friend and the complete stranger.

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6.1.4 Native Norms

A key issue in this study was to better understand how, if at all, compliment response strategies of native English speakers differ from those of native Spanish speakers. Since the goal of any foreign language class is to make students able to communicate in the L2, it is important to understand the intrinsic differences and similarities in the two speech communities involved. As the students progressed in class level, it is assumed that their CRs will more closely resemble those of native Spanish speakers. Similarly, the beginning student should start out responding to compliments in a similar fashion to native English speakers and this similarity should diminish as the classroom level advances. Certain native norms that were seen in the data collected will be highlighted and discussed in this section.

6.1.4.1 Fixed Expressions

In the data collected from the native speakers of Spanish, several expressions were found that were not seen in the data from the L1 English participants. These expressions include *a la orden* ('at your service') and *cuando quieras* ('whenever you want') or a combination of both. In Spanish, expressions like these are widely uses in adjacency pairs with compliments, while in English, "thank you" is predominant. The absence of these expressions in the L1 English data lends evidence to the argument that students of Spanish are not acquiring native-like compliment response behavior in the L2 classroom.

6.1.4.2 Participant Responses in Relation to Native Norms

While it is not the goal of this dissertation to generalize the speech behavior of an entire language community based on the responses of a group of participants, the CRs given by native speakers of English and Spanish do provide valuable input into the CR behavior of English and Spanish speakers, and how these behaviors are different. Understanding the strategies that

learners of Spanish use to respond to a compliment in the L2 is a vital part of this study. Arguably the most important revelation of this study, the relationship between the CRs of the participants and those of the two NS control groups, will be revealed in this section.

6.1.4.2.1 Native Spanish Speakers

Regarding Spanish customs in relation to complimenting behavior, Cortés Moreno (2003) writes:

> *estas expresiones pueden referirse a la belleza, al aspecto físico, a la inteligencia…A menudo suelen plantear dudas, incluso a los propios nativos, pues no es fácil saber qué se debe contestar si alguien nos dice que somos guapos, buenos o inteligentes, o si dice que llevamos una ropa elegante. En gran parte de los casos se opta por restar o quitar importancia a lo que se alaba* (79).

> 'these expressions can refer to beauty, a physical feature or intelligence… Often they tend to plant doubt, even to native speakers themselves because it is not easy to know how we should answer if someone tells us we're attractive, nice, or intelligent, or if they tell us we're wearing elegant clothes. In the majority of cases, one opts to subtract or take importance away from the compliment.'

If these customs are truly indicative of the CR behavior of Spanish speakers, the difference between English and Spanish CRs is apparent, since it has been widely noted that the standard CR for English speakers is "thank you."

As will be discussed later in this chapter, it is difficult to summarize the CR strategies of an entire population of Spanish speakers based on the responses of those who participated in this study. However, the participants in this study who were native speakers of Spanish came from a variety of North, Central and South American countries and their responses proved to provide valuable insight into the CR behavior of Spanish speakers.

Since CR strategies are not commonly taught in L2 classrooms (and were not taught in the classes which the participants of this study had taken), it has been widely assumed that this behavior should emerge in time with increased exposure to the L2. If this is in fact true, as students are exposed to more Spanish language in their classes, then their CRs should more

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closely approximate those of native Spanish speakers. In this section, the responses of the native speakers of Spanish and their relation to the CRs of the students of Spanish will be discussed.

The Spanish native speakers who participated in this study responded in a manner contrary to that indicated by Cortés Moreno, and upgraded a compliment in more situations than the English native speakers. This group did, however, question compliments far more often than their native English-speaking peers. The Spanish speakers also returned a compliment in far fewer situations than the English speakers. Regarding the CRs of the participants and their relation to the native speakers of Spanish, several responses did approach the behavior of the native speakers as the class level progressed. For example, the participants relied less on acknowledgments as they learned more Spanish and the advanced participants' usage of this strategy was similar to that of the native speakers. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, using the same strategy does not mean that the content of the response was the same as the NSs.

Some important differences between the responses of the Spanish native speakers and the L2 student participants were that the NS group responded with more upgrades and explanations than even the advanced group of participants. The Spanish NS group also changed topic very infrequently in their CRs, while this strategy, although it decreased in frequency as the class level progressed, was present in all levels of the student participants.

The results can be perceived in many ways. One could argue that the decreased reliance on acknowledgments is evidence that the participants are becoming more like the native Spanish speakers whose responses theirs would ideally emulate. It is the opinion of this researcher, however, that while the percentages of certain frequencies do appear to mimic those of the NSs of Spanish as the students receive more grammatical instruction, that this resemblance is more a product of having more grammatical and lexical abilities to produce longer utterances. These

longer responses, as will be discussed in the following section, often approximate the responses of the NSs of English more than the NSs of Spanish.

6.1.4.2.2 Native English Speakers

As was noted in chapter two, the use of "thank you" by English speakers in response to a compliment is by far the most common CR utilized by this group. The native English speakers who participated in this study showed that although "thank you" was the prevalent form that they used, a variety of other strategies were also employed. In this section, some of the CRs that native English speakers used will be discussed.

In the case of the CR strategies of acknowledgments, downgrades/refusals, returning a compliment, insults, and topic change, it seems that the participants, as they progressed through their language courses, produced CRs that more closely approximated the responses of the English native speakers. Since the ultimate goal of an L2 course is to produce speakers who are able to speak in a way that is both grammatically and pragmatically appropriate, it is the hope of L2 educators that as students progress in class level, their responses would more closely resemble those of native Spanish speakers, and not those of native English speakers. As with the CR strategies mentioned previously, this is not the case. These findings serve as further evidence that pragmatic acquisition, seen here with CR strategies, does not simply emerge with increased L2 instruction. The participants in this study received no explicit instruction on Spanish CRs and these results reflect this gap in modern L2 curricula. For L2 students to be able to use speech acts in a way that is pragmatically and culturally appropriate, they need specific, speech-act based activities that teach strategies appropriate to the L2 culture. Another important factor, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is the frequency of responses that appear to resemble neither the responses given by the native English or Spanish speakers.

6.1.4.3 Relation between English and Spanish CR Strategies

While the CRs of the control groups chosen for this study do not reflect the cultural variation that certain literature implies about the characteristics of English and Spanish CRs, they do give key insight into the relationship between the CRs of the NSs and those of the student participants. In this section, the differences and similarities between the CRs of the English and Spanish native speakers will be discussed.

The frequency of acknowledgment, refusal/downgrade, insulting, and changing topic were extremely similar between the two NS groups. The NSs of English used the strategies of explanation and returning a compliment more than the NSs of Spanish. The NSs of Spanish used the strategies of upgrading and questioning a compliment more than the other NS group. Despite the suggestion that Spanish speakers are more likely to respond to a compliment with a downgrade or refusal, these results indicate that the two groups refuse and downgrade compliments with a similar frequency, although in this study the Spanish speakers questioned a compliment more than the English speakers. The English speakers returned compliments more than the Spanish speakers, which is not surprising since researchers such as Fong (1998) have noted other cultures' perceptions of Americans' tendency to give compliments freely.

It is also important to note that in the majority of CR cases, the CRs of the L2 participants more closely resembled those of the NSs of English and not the Spanish NSs. If pragmatic competence does emerge with increased grammatical instruction, as is the underlying assumption in teaching materials available to L2 educators since didactic material involving pragmatics is all but absent in most modern L2 textbooks, then the CRs of the participants would more closely mimic those of the Spanish NSs as they increased in class level. The results of this study show that this is not the case and that intermediate learners often show greater variability in their CRs, perhaps due to the small amounts of pragmatic instruction that are seen at this level.

6.1.5 Characteristics of Participants

A major factor in the present study has been the class level of the student, and how the CR strategy used related to this factor. Since traditional teaching methods have ignored specific speech act-focused instruction on native-like ways to respond to a compliment, it is assumed that such response behavior will simply emerge with increased grammatical instruction as the L2 student advances to subsequent classes. A main goal of this study was to determine how the CRs of the students evolved as their class level changed, as well as how this response behavior approximated the norms of English and Spanish speakers. Aside from the factor of class level, other important characteristics such as age and gender were also examined in the previous chapter and their significance will be discussed in this section.

6.1.5.1 Class Level

The class level of the participants of this study, as previously mentioned, was a key component as it helps to answer one of the central questions in this study: What strategies do Spanish learners employ to respond to compliments and how do these strategies vary according to specific variables?. Although the relationship between class level and the CRs involved was the main component involved here, other variables were included to see their effect on the CR strategies used by the participants.

6.1.5.1.1 Beginners

The students who were enrolled in beginning Spanish courses used acknowledgments far more than any other CR type. In fact, in some situations, up to 74% of the beginning students used this response in their CRs. The reason for the frequency of this response is due to the lack of the grammatical abilities necessary to produce the longer utterances necessary to form such responses as an explanation, topic change, or refusal. Since the most common acknowledgment was *gracias*, this short CR was easily used by the beginning students.

Although acknowledgments were the response type that was overwhelmingly used by the beginning students, they also explained compliments in some situations. These explanations were often quite short and simple such as *es nuevo* ('it's new') which did not require a great deal of grammatical ability on the part of the participants. The only other strategy that the beginning students produced with any frequency was returning a compliment. This form too was often grammatically simple as it commonly turned around the compliment that was given to the participant. For example, if the participant received a compliment on their hair, a common response from the beginning group was *me gusta tu pelo también* ('I like your hair too'). This CR type required the student to produce very little grammatically and lexically. Responses that utilized longer, more intricate grammatical and lexical forms were more commonly seen in subsequent class levels.

6.1.5.1.2 Intermediates

The favored response type of the intermediate students was also the acknowledgment. However, this form was used far less frequently than by the beginning students. In addition to explanations and returning a compliment, which were common among the beginning students, the intermediate participants also used upgrades and topic changes in their CRs. The intermediate students used far more strategies than the beginning participants, largely due to their growing grammatical abilities.

6.1.5.1.3 Advanced

Although the advanced participants still preferred acknowledgments, the intermediate participants used acknowledgments more. The variety of CR forms did not increase incrementally with the advanced participants as it did with the intermediate students. While this group had far more grammatical and lexical knowledge of Spanish than the previous groups,

they did not exhibit the same amount of variety as one might expect from an advanced group of students.

6.1.5.2 Age

Although there was a wide range of students who participated in this study, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the vast majority fell within a certain range. For the purposes of this study, the students who fell between the ages of 18 and 22 compromised over 80% percent of the participants and these responses represented those that were considered in analyzing the effect of this variable on the CRs that the students produced.

The results indicate that the students who used the greatest variety of CRs were the students who were 19 years old. The connection between this particular age and possessing a number of CRs in one's linguistic repertoire is most likely due to the class in which a student of this age was likely to be enrolled in. If a student enters a beginning Spanish course at 18, it is feasible to deduce that a 19 year old student would be enrolled in high beginner or intermediate Spanish courses. Since the results of the pilot study indicate, as well as many findings from the present study, that often intermediate students are those who receive the most pragmatic instruction, it could be for this reason that students of this age are most able to vary their CRs.

6.1.5.3 Gender

CR behavior, as it relates to the gender of the person receiving the compliment, has received a great deal of attention by researchers. For this reason, this biographical item was elicited from the participants, although it was not included in the pilot study. In all, the gender of the participant did not have a major effect on the CRs used, although as the results revealed, some interesting differences were noted.

Male participants favored responses that could be considered more potentially face threatening. These responses include upgrading, downgrading/refusing a compliment, and

insulting. A person who refuses a compliment can be perceived as ungrateful and someone who upgrades can be seen as overly proud. These factors did not seem to affect the men who participated in this study as much as the women, who used these CR types far less frequently. Women preferred responses that could be considered less face threatening. These responses include acknowledging a compliment, returning a compliment, or changing the topic all together.

6.2 CR Response Types

The eight CR response types proved to be a successful way to classify the responses from a wide range of participants from different social and cultural backgrounds. In this section these eight CR strategy types will be examined separately and the qualities of each will be discussed in terms of which group of participants used them the most, and how these frequencies relate to one another. For each response type, factors regarding which groups utilized said responses and the significance of these similarities will be discussed in the following section.

6.2.1 Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments were the most commonly used strategy by all groups. The popularity of this response type is not surprising since it has been widely noted that the most common English CR is "thank you." The acknowledgment was not just common with the participants and NS English speakers. Contrary to some literature that implies that Spanish NSs reject or ignore compliments, this group favored this response type nearly as much as the English NSs and used them more than the English NSs in three of the eight situations. While these acknowledgments included more responses than the iconic "thank you," the frequency of this response type by the Spanish NSs is worthy of attention.

As in the pilot study and in the present data, acknowledgments were most commonly used by beginning students of Spanish and used incrementally less as the class level increased. In

most cases, the participants used acknowledgments far less than the native speakers of English, indicating that their dependence on this form is not due to a desire to mimic the speech act behavior of their L1, but rather it is more likely they are simply relying on a linguistically simple form that usually consists of one word. As the students progress in level, their reliance on this CR type decreases. As the students learn more grammar in their Spanish classes, they are able to produce longer utterances instead of simple acknowledgments. Since acknowledgments were least commonly used by the NSs of Spanish, these results could be interpreted as the participants acquiring the complimenting behavior of the target culture as they progress in their classes. However, it is more likely that this similarity is coincidental.

6.2.2 Upgrading

The CR of upgrading or expanding a compliment is a quite telling response since it is so carefully avoided in many cultures, yet embraced in others. Compared to response types like acknowledgments and explanations, this CR type was less commonly used, yet was still utilized by many speakers. This response type was most commonly used by the native speakers of Spanish and nearly absent in the responses of the English NSs. These results are also in contrast to the commonly held belief that speakers of Spanish are more likely to refuse or ignore a compliment. In contrast, the speakers of Spanish who completed this DCT preferred to upgrade over the other participants. Unlike acknowledgments where the frequency of use decreased as the class level increased, the frequency of this strategy by the participants that were studying Spanish peaked at the intermediate level.

This increase in the variety of strategies by the intermediate level that does not continue as the class level increases could relate to the pragmatic instruction that students of Spanish receive in intermediate classes that they not in previous and subsequent classes. It is often intermediate language students who are most aware of pragmatic differences such as address

pronoun distinction based on age or level of power as these students are learning items such as formal and informal imperatives. This spike in variety by the intermediates might be a reflection of this instruction.

6.2.3 Explanations

Explanations were the second most used strategy by all groups, after acknowledgments. Explanations were neutral elaborations on a compliment that did not upgrade nor downgrade the impact of them. In this strategy, the receiver of the compliment often noted the status of the item being complimented (age, place of purchase, etc.) or some other fact that did not embellish or diminish the illocutionary force of the compliment. The English NSs used far more explanations than the NSs of Spanish. In fact, the speakers of English used the most explanations out of all the participants.

Not surprisingly, the students who participated in the study used more explanations as their class level increased. The opposite of this trend was seen with acknowledgments. This increase in use of this strategy is largely due to the increase in grammatical ability because the students are exposed to more complex instruction that was necessary to form the often long utterances that comprised this strategy. It is also of interest that as the students progressed in level, the pragmatic structure of their responses was far more similar to the responses of native speakers of English and not Spanish. This finding lends credibility to the argument that as the students of Spanish acquire more Spanish, they use this ability to mimic what they would like to say in the L1, but perhaps were not able to in earlier levels due to their limited grammatical capacity.

6.2.4 Refusal of Compliment

Appearing boastful is a quality that many societies avoid, and this is seen in the CR strategy use. For this reason, the strategies of refusing a compliment, often done to not appear

boastful or overly proud, and upgrading were of special interest in this study. Refusals and downgrades were less common than upgrading. This strategy was used with almost the same frequency by both groups of native speakers. Also, with the exception of the beginner who utilized this strategy less than other groups, the intermediate and advanced participants used this strategy in similar numbers, and these frequencies were almost identical to those of both NS groups.

The usage of this strategy by each group of participants perhaps shows that both groups: native English and Spanish speakers view this strategy similarly. If it is true that English and Spanish speakers have different cultural ideas of how to show deference through CRs that either reject or accept compliments, it would appear that these two groups show this difference through another strategy (perhaps upgrades) other than this one.

6.2.5 Return of Compliment

Returning a compliment was another common response type. The native speakers of English used this strategy almost twice as much as the native speakers of Spanish. This drastic difference gives cultural insight into the differences between these two language/cultural groups. As Fong (1998) writes about the Chinese perception of Americans as giving compliments too freely and not genuinely, these results show that native Spanish speakers are far less likely to give a compliment, at least in response to another compliment.

As with upgrades, the usage of this strategy spiked with the intermediate participants. As with all of the strategies besides acknowledgments, the beginner group had the lowest percentage of this strategy. The frequency of use by the intermediates, although not as high as that of the NS English students, was the highest of the three groups comprised of students of Spanish. Interestingly, the group that most approximated the results of the Spanish native speakers was the beginning group participants. These results are enlightening since, as mentioned in the first

chapter, the goal of any foreign language classroom is for the students to become users of language that is appropriate both grammatically and culturally. It is not the case with the CR strategy of returning a compliment that the students become more likely to respond like NSs of Spanish as they learn more Spanish.

6.2.6 Insults

Insults were an infrequent but interesting response type that was seen in this study. This response type is perhaps more revealing as it relates to the interlocutor than to the group using it. The overwhelming interlocutor who received this response to his/her compliment was the stranger, followed by a close friend. Since these two interlocutors possess different aspects of the variable of familiarity, the connection between insults and familiarity is notable. Not surprisingly, the beginning and intermediate students utilized this form most infrequently, while the advanced, and native Spanish and English groups used it with almost identical frequencies.

6.2.7 Questioning of Compliment

This strategy was used for instances when the person receiving a compliment questioned the reasoning behind the compliment, often with a question such as "you think?" or "really?" Related to the response of downgrade/refusal, this response type seeks to lessen the force of the compliment. Unlike response types where the two native speaker groups' responses were similar, the CRs that questioned the compliment of the native speakers of English were drastically different from those of the native speakers of Spanish. No native speaker of English questioned a compliment from any interlocutor. Although not a common strategy, the intermediate and advanced students, as well as the native speakers of Spanish all questioned compliments in far greater numbers than the native speakers of English. Unlike other strategies that seem to refute

the grammar-pragmatic connection, the participants in this study were most able to replicate native Spanish CR behavior as they advanced in Spanish classes.

6.2.8 Change of Topic

A topic change occurred when the CR seemed unrelated to the compliment itself, such as an invitation or a comment about the weather. This response type was uncommon with both groups of native speakers, but was particularly rarely used by the native speakers of Spanish. Again, the intermediates used this strategy far more than any group. In fact, the frequency of use of this strategy by the intermediate group was over three times that of the second closest group (advanced). This drastic increase in this strategy by the intermediate group is likely due to the pragmatic focus that many grammatical items that the classes in this group receive. As has been previously mentioned, often the intermediate Spanish classes are those in which the most pragmatic instruction, often in the form of second-person pronoun differentiation, is received.

While exhibiting strategy variety, every group of L2 participants used this strategy far more than either group of participants who were answering in their native languages. This phenomenon could lead one to believe that this strategy, that is common with language learners, though not with native speakers is caused by the students' limited grammatical abilities and not their approximation of a native cultural behavior. This strategy could emerge from the students' interlanguage, or their developing linguistic system. It is possible that this strategy appears out of necessity for the student to produce an utterance, even if these students do not have the lexical and grammatical abilities yet to produce a response that is related to the compliment they just received.

6.3 Conclusion

By studying the CRs of students of Spanish, the complexities of this issue have been exposed and more completely understood. The issue of acquiring CR behavior that is appropriate

in the target culture, as has been seen, is a complex topic that is not easy to explore fully. The data revealed in this study show various sides of this topic and leave the door open for future study that further establishes the possible connection between grammatical instruction and pragmatic acquisition. In this section, various issues related to the present study and central issues raised within will be discussed. In addition, other activities that could be utilized by language teachers, limitations of this study, and possibilities for future study will be proposed.

6.3.1 Interlanguage Pragmatics

As has been previously mentioned in this chapter, one goal of this study was to determine how the CRs of the participants related to those of the native speakers of English and Spanish. Since it is the hope of educators that these responses would be more like those appropriate in the target culture as the class level advanced, the CRs of the students should also, in turn, less closely resemble those of native English speakers with increased instruction. However, in certain responses, such as that of changing topic, the strategies employed by the participants seemed to resemble neither NS group. Instead, the pragmatic content of their CRs appears to be a result of their growing grammatical systems. They say what they know how to say, regardless of whether it is appropriate in their native culture, the target culture or neither. As their grammatical system progresses, their responses seem to be an attempt to show off this system instead of making culturally appropriate responses. The participants, who were studying Spanish, are often unfamiliar with native-like responses, which are often brief, and they instead overcompensate with responses that make use of their newly acquired grammar and lexicon. These responses seem to be a result of students' wanting to express a CR but not having the grammatical ability necessary to express what they would say in their L1 or the pragmatic competence necessary to express what would be appropriate in the L2 culture.

Much like circumlocution, which occurs when language learners use language that they know to take the place of a lexical or grammatical item that they do not yet possess, the prevalence of CRs that are not common in either L1 community might be an indication of a similar phenomena. Since the participants of this study have not received any specific instruction on how to respond to a compliment in a manner that is culturally appropriate in a Spanish-speaking country, it appears that in many cases they responded in the only way they knew how, which was to change the subject completely to something that they knew how to say.

In many cases, since the participants had not been taught these CR formulaic responses, they either produced a response that was uncommon in either language (topic change) or answered as they would in their L1. This deviation from both English and Spanish was more common in the beginning levels, however when the participants learned more Spanish grammar and lexicon, they were more likely to use it to respond to a compliment in a way that was appropriate in their L1. The lack of instruction on pragmatically appropriate responses and adjacency pairs is reflected in the responses of the participants who do not appear to have acquired CR behavior that mimics that of Spanish NSs.

6.4 Pedagogical Implications

The present research is concerned with a linguistic phenomenon that is seen in language learners. These results reveal that pragmatic competence in the L2 emerges separately from grammatical competence and L2 students must be aware of cultural differences. Since pragmatic abilities do not simply emerge with increased grammatical instruction and must be taught, the pedagogical implications from the current findings abound. Language researchers have an obligation to make their research available to language teachers so that the ideas being investigated can better be taught in the classroom. For this reason, some implications and suggestions for teaching Spanish compliment responses are found in the following section. These

implications are based on the findings of this study, relevant literature on the topic, and personal language teaching experience.

6.4.1 Teaching Activities

Acquiring pragmatic components in the L2 is a difficult task, especially in a language classroom outside the target culture. This difficulty is confounded because many foreign language teachers are not linguists versed in current methodologies on language acquisition. Since many L2 instructors might be unfamiliar with or intimidated by incorporating pragmatics into their classroom instruction, it might be favorable to incorporate these ideas under the heading of culture.

In modern L2 journals and texts, the idea of culture in the classroom is a common theme. This idea, which often encompasses themes like the food, music, customs and dress of the target community, could easily be expanded to include the pragmatic behavior of the members of the language community. By creating teaching methods that include pragmatic aspects of language under the heading of culture, these ideas might be more accessible to language teachers and more readily used in their classes. As was noted in chapter two, classroom materials that teach pragmatic ideas are extremely limited. While this type of instruction does exist (mainly for pronoun differentiation purposes), the need for activities that teach students culturally appropriate ways to respond to compliments, make requests, apologize, etc. are vital if students are to acquire pragmatic competence in the L2. This study has shown that pragmatic competence does not spontaneously emerge with increased grammatical and lexical input.

One way to illustrate cultural differences in the classroom is to isolate examples of pragmatic violations. These often comical examples help students realize variations in the linguistic behavior of the two language communities. These pragmatic violations in Spanish, which could include saying *con permiso*, ('with your permission') which is used as a before an

offense has occured 'excuse me' instead of *perdón*, ('pardon me') which is used after the incident. Another example is using the English 'good night' as a greeting since the Spanish *buenas noches* can be a greeting or a farewell.

These examples, as well as other instances of pragmatics in the L2 culture help show students cultural differences. As the results show, Spanish speakers often respond quite differently to compliments than speakers of English. These differences in strategy use or in a formulaic response, could serve as valuable and pragmatically rich examples of language variation. Even with extensive exposure to the L2, often language learners must be explicitly shown differences to become aware of them.

With many lower level participants in this study showing a greater variety in their CRs than higher class level participants, these results of this study also indicate the need for pragmatic instruction at all class levels. Since pragmatic instruction often occurs in lower class levels in the form of pronoun differentiation and forms of address, then this increase in CR variety at these levels could possibly stem from said instruction. This emphasis is often overlooked in higher levels in favor of more advanced grammatical forms. Making form and function work together in every class level is a goal that instructors should strive for so that students are armed with CR strategies that are target-culture appropriate. In communicative language teaching, incorporating pragmatic components into even high-level grammatical instruction is a central theme. These results show that attention to pragmatic forms is necessary not only in beginning levels, but also in more advanced language classes if educators are truly focusing on communication as the ultimate goal of language instruction.

6.4.1.1 Role Play

Savignon (1997) notes the benefits of role plays in the L2 classroom since they give language learners the ability to interpret and focus on the meaning and not just the form of the

utterance (191). Role plays allow learners to experience situations, albeit hypothetical, that they would not normally encounter in the classroom. Lorenzo-Dus writes that role plays "yield authentic, real language from the learners" (80). This authentic, real language could include equally authentic example of common CRS made by native Spanish speakers. These scenarios could deal with a number of speech act situations, such as complimenting behavior. Students could be told before about CR strategies that are common in the many Spanish-speaking cultures of the world so that these forms could be reused in the role play. The role play participants could include the same social variables (gender, age, familiarity, power) as seen in this study in order to elicit a wide range of CRs.

García (1996) proposed activities of involving diagnostic assessment, model dialogue and role play to create "listening and speaking activities" that lead to the "avoidance of cross-cultural miscommunication" (267). Students must be made aware of differences between the many L1 and L2 communities and should know that "sociocultural expectations are not universal, but rather vary extensively across speech communities" (García, 1996: 276). She also acknowledges that the Hispanic culture is not homogeneous and the performances of a speech act could vary greatly depending on the language community. The present study proposes teaching a number of CRs that the language learner might employ based on the context. L2 students learn a variety of greetings and farewells that depend on the relationship between interlocutors. The research presented in this dissertation could serve to add such instruction to various speech acts in the L2 classroom.

6.4.2 Speech Act Pragmatic Instruction

The results of this study illustrate the need for pragmatic instruction in the foreign language classroom that deals with specific speech act situations, since the results reveal that L2 students who receive more grammatical instruction become more able to respond as they would

in the L1. As seen with the students who received no specific instruction about responding to a compliment in Spanish, certain pragmatic elements do not appear to simply emerge with increased exposure to the L2. In order to acquire native-like and culturally appropriate CR behavior in the L2, specific instruction is needed. As seen in the data from native Spanish speakers, compliment responses, such as those which included fixed lexical expressions, differed greatly from the L1 English students.

6.5 Limitations of Study

As with any research project, despite the researcher's best intentions and great care, there are always factors which limit the validity of the results of a study. A pilot study was conducted before the current study was done which led to a number of changes in the way the data for this study was collected and analyzed. Despite these precautions, it was inevitable that certain issues would be changed in future study. While limitations are unavoidable, it is vital to any research project to recognize such challenges and make necessary changes for conducting future study. In this section, some of these limitations will be discussed, as well as ways to minimize them in future study.

6.5.1 Data Completion Task

The DCT used in this study proved to be a valuable tool in ascertaining the CRs of L1 English learners of Spanish from a large number of participants. The DCT made possible the inclusion of many different interlocutors that would not have been possible if another collection device had been utilized. Despite its advantages, using a questionnaire to collect data has its limitations. The data collected using a DCT, as with any data collection procedure, can never be completely natural since it was elicited outside of context. While every precaution was taken to

make sure the DCT used in this study was as natural as possible, the authenticity of the responses can never fully be verified.

The DCT used in this study was heavily modified after a smaller-scale pilot study was conducted. Despite the inclusion of many necessary changes which were seen in chapter three, There were still instances, though far fewer, where participants seemed to misunderstand the goal of the DCT. Although possible if another data collection method were utilized, several participants left portions of the survey blank, perhaps due to oversight or unwillingness to disclose certain information. Perhaps if the information elicited in the DCT were collected in another way, there might have been less confusion and lack of response.

6.5.2 Observer's Paradox

A main challenge of any study that aims to examine natural human behavior is to avoid affecting the behavior of those being observed. Often the researcher's presence while collecting data is enough to skew the data. This observer's paradox, while not a new concept, must be dealt with by researchers so as to collect data that is as natural as possible. Several steps were taken to minimize the researcher's effect on the data. Many of these precautions became apparent after the pilot study was conducted.

The participants completed the DCT in their own classroom with their instructor present. If the students had been in an uncomfortable environment, isolated from their instructor and classmates, anxiety levels or unfamiliarity may have affected their responses to the items on the DCT. The DCT was also administered in a relaxed and non-clinical way in hopes that the participants would be free to answer as they would in real life, and not how a researcher expected them to respond. Students were informed that their responses were not to be graded and they were encouraged to respond as instinctually as possible in hopes of keeping them relaxed and their responses natural.

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Attempting to elicit the CR situations used in this study in a more natural setting, though perhaps further minimizing or eliminating the observer's paradox, would not have been able to feature the responses of as many participants as this study does due to the time and cost of staging "natural" CR situations. By using a DCT, over 140 participants' input was able to be recorded in the present study. If other methods of data collection had been utilized (tape recording, video camera, etc.) the presence of these instruments might have affected the CRs of the participants as much as or more than the procedures used here.

6.5.3 Participants

While great care was taken in selecting the participants for this study, certain factors may have limited the ultimate success of the students who participated. Although more sections of the advanced Spanish classes were interviewed to be comparable in number to the participants in the beginning classes, there were fewer advanced Spanish student participants than there were in other groups. Also, in selecting the NS control data from English and Spanish speakers, a larger pool of participants, especially for the Spanish NS data would have been more desirable, since it is difficult to isolate norms from an entire speech community without data from a large number of participants. Despite this, I feel the NS data used in this study did shed light on key aspects of CR behavior, especially in how it related to the learner data. While the native Spanish speakers who contributed to this study were from a number of different Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, no participant was from Spain. Since much of the research done on CRs in Spanish concerns speakers from Spain, this data would also have been of special interest.

One possible limitation of the L1 Spanish speakers who participated in this study is that many of them had spent much more time in the L2 community (the United States) than the L1 English speakers. While these Spanish speakers were enrolled in English classes, and had not spent a considerable amount of time in the U.S., they were still currently living in the L2

community. This exposure to English was certainly more than any student of Spanish admitted to have had. Native Spanish speakers who were living in the U.S were chosen as participants in this study for various logistical reasons, but in future study, college students who were interviewed in their native Spanish-speaking country might be preferable to eliminate the possible effect of living in the L2 culture may have had on their CRs.

Although having the participants indicate if they had lived in a Spanish-speaking country or spoke Spanish in their home helped to eliminate native or heritage speakers of Spanish from the L2 groups, it is impossible to know if the participants were truthful in their responses, even though they were encouraged to answer honestly and realistically. Since this study was conducted in southeast Louisiana, a portion of the state known for its diverse cultural and linguistic traditions that draw heavily from French, Spanish, and African influences, it is impossible to know how these factors may have influenced the behaviors of the participants. Also, it is impossible to know what factors outside of international travel and L2 classes that the students may have been exposed to could have possibly affected their CRs. One characteristic of the L1 English speakers who were studying Spanish is that the majority of them were from the American South, specifically Louisiana. While no study has been done on the CR behavior of this language community, these possible cultural norms of a group of participants who are from the same area could have affected their CR choice. To combat this in future study, data could be collected from students at various universities throughout the United States.

6.6 Future Study

The present study has proposed methods that could be utilized to study a number of speech acts. Golato (2005) noted that one advantage of using a DCT is its ease in replication. The DCT used here could be adapted to examine learners' L2 apologies, condolences, accepting/refusal an invitation, and many more speech act types. These responses could then be

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analyzed using similar procedures as those seen in the present study to illuminate key aspects of pragmatic speech act acquisition. While the DCT used in this study presented hypothetical interlocutors giving compliments, a similar DCT using similar interlocutors giving directives, extending invitations, offering condolences, etc.

This study could serve as a starting point for researchers interested in the effects of explicit CR instruction on the CRs of language learners, since the participants in this study had no such instruction. Possible implications for future study include having two separate groups: one having received specific instruction on a specific speech act that includes a variety of culturally appropriate responses and another group that only received standard L2 instruction that lacked this pragmatic emphasis. Also the effects of study abroad on the CRs of the participants could be examined in future study, with one group spending time in a Spanish-speaking country and the control group not having spent time abroad. These results could show the effect, if any, of exposure to input in the target culture. While contrastive studies on L2 learners who study abroad in the target culture and those who do not are scarce, Freed (1995) notes the communicative competence that could emerge from the combination of study in the classroom and abroad. Future study might also include a comparison of such limited exposure to the target culture and time spent in a class that emphasized and proposed CRs that were appropriate in the target culture.

Future study might also concern the CR behaviors between groups of English NSs from different countries or even regions of the United States. Since it cannot be assumed that all English (or Spanish) speakers respond to compliments in the same way, a study that compares CR behavior of users of the same language, cultural and regional differences, as they relate to the CR strategy use of the participants, could be better understood.

This study had examined the CRs of students of Spanish to better understand how L2 pragmatics. The need for specific, speech-act focused instruction that emphasizes real-life, culturally appropriate speech acts that are appropriate in the many communities where Spanish is spoken. Since language and culture are irrevocably connected, an L2 curriculum that highlights pragmatic variation between English and Spanish are necessary to produce language users who are both grammatically and pragmatically aware.

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APPENDIX A: DCT FOR STUDENTS OF SPANISH

Age: _____   Sex: (Circle One)   M   F

Year (in college) (Circle One): 1   2   3   4   Grad School

Number of years studying Spanish (include High School, College, and other)

_____

Have you ever lived in a Spanish speaking country?   Yes   No

If so, where (city, country)?_____For how long? _____

Primary language(s) spoken in your home:

_____

Please write what you would say in response to the utterances in the following situations. *Write your response, in SPANISH, exactly as you would say it to the person with whom you are speaking.* **There is no right or wrong answer so please answer as honestly as possible. Also, please remain quiet as to not influence the answers of others.**

1. Your Spanish teacher tells you in Spanish that your work is improving a lot. What would you say in response in Spanish?

"_____"

2. A Spanish-speaking student of the opposite sex compliments your haircut. What would you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

3. An elderly friend of your family who is originally from a Spanish-speaking country tells you that your Spanish is improving. What would you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

4. Your close friend (of the same sex as you) compliments you on your new car in Spanish. What would you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

5. A person at your work who you are in charge of tells you in Spanish that you are a good boss. What would you to him/her in response?"

"_____"

6. A young child tells you that he/she likes your shoes, in Spanish. What do you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

7. A foreign exchange student of the same sex as you, compliments you on your new clothes in Spanish. What do you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

8. A complete stranger (of the same sex as you) tells you that he/she likes your cell phone. What do you say to him/her in Spanish?

"_____"

APPENDIX B: DCT FOR NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS

Edad: _____ Sexo: (Escoger uno)   M   F   País de origen_____

Año (en la universidad) (Escoger uno):   1   2   3   4   Escuela Graduada

Años estudiando inglés: _____

Tiempo viviendo en un país de habla inglesa: _____ ¿Dónde? _____

Lengua primaria hablada en tu casa:

_____

Por favor escribir exactamente lo que dirías en las siguientes situaciones. No hay ninguna respuesta correcta. Favor de no hablar mientras se llena este cuestionario. Escribir las respuestas en español.

1. Tu profesor te dice que tú estás haciendo un buen trabajo en la clase. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

2. Un estudiante del sexo opuesto te dice que le gusta tu nuevo corte de pelo. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

3. Un amigo mayor de tu familia te da un cumplido sobre tus buenas notas en la universidad. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

4. Un buen amigo de tu mismo sexo te dice que le gusta tu carro nuevo. ¿Qué le dirías?

_____ "

5. Un compañero de trabajo (del cual estás encargado) te dice que eres un buen jefe. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

6. Un niño te dice que le gustan tus zapatos. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

7. Un estudiante de tu mismo sexo te da un cumplido sobre tu nueva ropa ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

8. Una persona desconocida te dice que tu teléfono celular es muy bueno. ¿Qué le dirías?

" _____ "

APPENDIX C: DCT FOR NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Age: _____   Sex: (Circle One)   M   F

Year (in college) (Circle One):   1   2   3   4   Grad School

Have you studied a foreign language in college? If so, which one?

_____

Have you ever lived in a country where a language other than English was spoken?   Yes No

If so, where (city, country)?_____ For how long? _____

Primary language(s) spoken in your home:

_____

Please write what you would say in response to the utterances in the following situations.
Write your response, exactly as you would say it to the person with whom you are speaking.
There is no right or wrong answer so please answer as honestly as possible. Also, please remain quiet as to not influence the answers of others.

1. Your teacher tells you that your work is improving a lot. What would you say in response?

"_____"

2. A student of the opposite sex compliments your haircut. What would you say to him/her?

"_____"

3. An elderly friend of your family tells you that you are getting better at your new hobby. What would you say to him/her?

"_____"

4. Your close friend (of the same sex as you) compliments you on your new car. What would you say to him/her?

"_____"

5. A person at your work who you are in charge of tells you that you are a good boss. What would you to him/her in response?"

"_____"

6. A young child tells you that he/she likes your shoes. What do you say to him/her?

"_____"

7. A foreign exchange student of the same sex as you compliments you on your new clothes. What do you say to him/her?

"_____"

8. A complete stranger (of the same sex as you) tells you that he/she likes your cell phone. What do you say to him/her?

"_____"

APPENDIX D: DCT FOR STUDENTS OF SPANISH (PILOT)

Age: _____
Year (in college): _____
Years studying Spanish (high school, college, and other): _____
Time spent living in a Spanish-speaking country (if yes, where?): _____
Primary language spoken at home: _____

Respond to the given situations *in Spanish*
1. Your teacher compliments you on having done a good job on an assignment.

_____

_____

2. A classmate of the opposite sex compliments your new haircut.

_____

_____

3. An elderly friend of your family compliments something you are wearing.

_____

_____

4. Your best friend (of the same sex) compliments your new car.

_____

_____

APPENDIX E: SCRIPT FOR ADMINISTERING DCT

Thank you for filling out this brief survey. You will see that they have two parts: the first part asks you biographical questions and the second asks you to respond IN SPANISH to eight hypothetical situations. Please respond as honestly as possible to both parts.

It is very important that you remain very quiet while filling out the survey. If you have questions, please raise your hand and I will assist you. Asking questions or making comments aloud while filling out the survey could influence someone else's answers, and I am interested in what YOU have to say. Remember: there is no right or wrong answer.

This survey will in no way be graded or figured into your grade for this course. In fact, I do not want you to put your name on it. Just respond as honestly and realistically to each situation as possible IN SPANISH.

This study has been approved by the LSU Institutional Review Board. For questions about participants rights you may contact the IRB chair, Dr. Robert Mathews, 578-8692, or at irb@lsu.edu.

VITA

James Bryant Smith was born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1981. He was raised in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, Jasper, Alabama, and graduated from Northeast Lauderdale High School in Meridian, Mississippi. He attended Meridian Community College and studied at La Universidad de las Américas in Puebla, Mexico. He graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelors of Arts in Spanish in 2003. Bryant graduated from Louisiana State University in 2005 with a Master of Arts in Spanish. During his time at LSU, Bryant taught Spanish courses in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. He entered the doctoral program in the interdepartmental program in linguistics at LSU in 2005 and will graduate in December, 2009. He hopes to continue teaching Spanish and linguistics as he pursues his academic and personal interests.