

Investigating the effects of pragmatic instruction: a comparison of L2 Spanish compliments and apologies during short term study-abroad¹

Uma pesquisa sobre os efeitos da instrução pragmática: uma comparação de elogios e desculpas em espanhol como segunda língua durante um programa de intercâmbio de curta duração

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Recebido em: 24/04/2019.

Aprovado em: 25/07/2019.

Publicado em: 27/12/2019.

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ABSTRACT

Study abroad has been proposed as a crucial aspect to acquire pragmatics in a second language, under the assumption that learners receive more access to authentic input than is available in the classroom. Recent trends indicate a rise in the frequency of short-term study abroad programs (less than 3 months, Allen, 2010), although research has shown that learners may need closer to 9 months to approximate native-like norms without instruction (FÉLIX-BRASDEFER, 2004). This raises the question of how much pragmatic development can be seen in short-term programs, and how to maximize this development. The current study analyzed the development of two expressive speech acts, compliments and apologies, in students who completed a five-week study abroad program in Mérida, Mexico. During the program, learners received instruction on compliments, but not apologies. Speech act data was collected via a 24-item oral discourse completion task administered at both the beginning and end of the program and was further analyzed in SPSS. Results indicate that only some learners developed their production of apologies, while almost all learners showed development in their production of compliments, operationalized by an increased repertoire of strategies available. These results suggest the need for pragmatic instruction during short-term study abroad, and question the utility of native-speaker norms to measure pragmatic development during short-term programs.

KEYWORDS: Study abroad; speech acts; interlanguage pragmatics; pragmatic instruction.

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RESUMO

O intercâmbio estudantil foi proposto como um aspecto crucial para adquirir competência pragmática em um segundo idioma, sob a suposição de que os alunos recebem mais acesso à linguagem autêntica do que é oferecido em sala de aula. As tendências recentes indicam um aumento na frequência de programas de intercâmbio de curto prazo no exterior (menos de três meses, Allen, 2010), contudo outras pesquisas têm mostrado que os alunos podem precisar de mais de nove meses para aproximar-se das normas nativas sem instrução (FÉLIX-BRASDEFER, 2004). Isso levanta a questão de quanto o desenvolvimento pragmático pode ser visto em programas de intercâmbio de curto prazo, e como maximizar esse desenvolvimento. O presente estudo analisou o desenvolvimento de dois atos de fala expressivos, elogios e desculpas, em estudantes que completaram um programa de intercâmbio de cinco semanas em Mérida, México. Durante o programa, os alunos receberam instrução sobre expressões de elogios, mas não sobre pedidos de desculpas. Os dados do ato de fala foram coletados por meio de uma tarefa de conclusão do discurso oral de 24 itens, administrada no início e no final do programa e analisados no SPSS. Os resultados indicam que apenas alguns dos estudantes desenvolveram seus atos de pedir desculpas, enquanto quase todos os alunos mostraram desenvolvimento em sua produção de elogios, operacionalizado como um repertório crescente de estratégias disponíveis. Esses resultados sugerem a necessidade da instrução pragmática durante os programas de intercâmbio estudantil de curto prazo e questionam a utilidade das normas dos falantes nativos para medir o desenvolvimento pragmático durante programas de curto prazo.

Palavras-chave: O intercâmbio estudantil; atos de fala; pragmática interlinguagem; instrução da pragmática.

1 Introduction

The development of pragmatic knowledge has long-since been noted as an area in which foreign language learners suffer and do not obtain native or native-like mastery. Many early studies in interlanguage pragmatics have shown that learners may attain advanced knowledge of the target-language grammatical structures, but not necessarily pragmatic knowledge (BARDOVI-HARLIG; HARTFORD, 1993). Pragmatic knowledge is compromised of two elements: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge (LEECH, 1983). Pragmalinguistic knowledge is concerned with the language specific grammatical structures, their conventional meanings, and their ability to communicate specific goals and meanings in context, while sociopragmatic

knowledge is concerned with the knowledge a speaker has about social norms in a culture and how these norms influence interactional patterns. For foreign language learners, research shows that both their production and perception diverge from target-like norms at even high levels of proficiency (e.g., BARDOVI-HARLIG; HARTFORD, 1993; COHEN; OLSHTAIN, 1993; MURPHY; NEU, 1996).

Study abroad has been proposed as a necessary component for the acquisition of native-like or near-native knowledge of pragmatics in second language, with the assumption being that learners in study abroad settings have more access to authentic input and interactions in the L2, although some research has shown that this may not be the case (e.g., BARRON, 2003; BATALLER, 2010). The results for short-term study abroad (lasting less three months) (ALLEN, 2010) are mixed, usually documenting some development in pragmatic abilities in the direction of native speaker norms, but not always, as learners' pragmatic competence may show divergences from the expected target norms after a short-term program (CZERWIONKA; CUZA, 2017a, 2017b; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2015; Hernández, 2016, 2018). Within the study of acquisition of pragmatic competence in short-term study abroad, even fewer studies consider the impact of instruction in shaping learners' pragmatic competence (HERNÁNDEZ; BOERO, 2018a, 2018b). The present study addresses this issue by considering the acquisition of two expressive speech acts, compliments and apologies, in an intensive, short-term study abroad context. Participants received instruction on only one of the speech acts (compliments), allowing the relative impact of instruction to be considered in the same group of learners.

2 Literature Review**2.1 Study abroad and L2 Pragmatics**

Study abroad has often been considered a necessary component in the acquisition of a native-like or near-native command of pragmatics in a second language. However, although study abroad leads to significant gains in oral fluency and vocabulary, results for other aspects of communicative competence are mixed (LLANES, 2011). Research on interlanguage pragmatics and study abroad has

shown that learners do not always receive sufficient input in the L2 to be able to make significant improvements in their pragmatic development (BARRON, 2003; BATALLER, 2010). Félix-Brasdefer (2004) showed that learners only began to approximate native speaker norms after nine months of living in the target culture. Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) corroborated this notion in their study on the acquisition of conventional expressions, in which they found that intensity of contact, and not length of residence, played a significant role in the recognition or production of conventional expressions. With the rise of short-term (less than three months) study abroad programs (ALLEN, 2010), researchers have begun to question what learners can acquire during these short stays in the host country.

A number of studies consider the role of study abroad and L2 Spanish across a range of speech acts, including requests, apologies, and compliments (e.g., ALCÓN-SOLER, 2015; BATALLER, 2010; COHEN; SHIVELY, 2007; SHIVELY; COHEN, 2008; SHIVELY, 2011). However, the research on short-term study abroad and L2 Spanish is much more limited. One such study is Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015), who considered the acquisition of compliments and compliment responses by comparing a study abroad group in Mexico, an at-home group, and two native speaker groups (Spanish and English) as baseline groups. The results from the oral discourse completion task showed that the study abroad group made significant changes towards the native speaker norm, while the at-home group did not make any significant changes in their pragmatic behavior. The delayed post-test results showed that the participants reverted to their pre-test levels; however, their strategy production remained more varied than prior to studying abroad, demonstrating a sustained advantage of studying abroad. The authors suggest that the intense nature of the study abroad program versus the at-home program positively affected the learners' pragmatic development. The study abroad group spent between four to six hours four days a week receiving instruction in Spanish, while the at-home group only received 90 minutes five days a week for the same period of time. Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) demonstrate that despite not receiving instruction, the intense study abroad context can provide learners with the necessary input to make some gains in their pragmatic development, but more is still needed.

Hernández (2016) examined the effects of a four-week short-term study abroad program on the pragmatic development of L2 requests in Spain. The results from the written production questionnaire showed that overall the

learners were rated higher by native speakers in their performance ratings from the pre-test to the post-test. In terms of production, the learners began to use target-like strategies and the advanced group of learners incorporated the conditional to mitigate their requests at the end of the program, but lower proficiency learners did not. Additionally, the learners increased their use of external mitigation. With respect to request perspective, the learners still preferred speaker-oriented requests, thus indicating that the short stay was not sufficient for these learners to change their orientation. Lastly, Hernández (2016) did not find a relationship between the amount of target language input, operationalized by a language contact profile, and the development of L2 Spanish requests. Hernández's study alludes to the fact that despite being immersed in the target culture, learners need more support in order to further their pragmatic development during four-week study abroad programs.

In addition to Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) and Hernández (2016), Czerwionka and Cuza (2017a, 201b) investigated the effects of study abroad on Spanish requests and service encounters in Madrid. Czerwionka and Cuza (2017a, 2017b) demonstrated that learners are able to shift their request perspectives from speaker-oriented strategies to hearer-oriented strategies by using more imperatives than declarative requests, contrary to Hernández's (2016) findings. Czerwionka and Cuza (2017b) indicated that learners also increased their use of *por favor* (please) as a means of mitigating their imperative requests in service encounter situations, similar to Hernández (2016). In addition to production data, Czerwionka and Cuza (2017b) included a pragmatic felicity judgment task to measure the development of learner intuitions. The results from this task revealed no significant differences in the learner's intuition of requests at the end of the study abroad program, although learners did show a non-significant decrease in their acceptance of speaker-oriented strategies. The work by Czerwionka and Cuza supports the notion that study abroad aids pragmatic development, even in short-term study abroad programs, although findings for directives abroad are mixed, as Czerwionka and Cuza (2017a, 2017b) and Hernández (2016) found contradictory patterns of development. However, the gains made during these programs are limited and more research is needed to understand the different factors that influence the acquisition of pragmatic competence during study abroad programs, including the effect of instruction.

2.2 Instruction of pragmatics and study abroad

The effect of instruction on the learning of pragmatics has been a recent focus within the greater L2 pragmatics literature. Work on instructional pragmatics has been carried out in classroom settings (e.g., HASLER-BARKER, 2016), computer mediated contexts (e.g., Sykes, 2013), and study abroad contexts (e.g., BATALLER, 2010; HALENKO; JONES, 2017; HERNÁNDEZ, 2018; HERNÁNDEZ; BOERO, 2018a, 2018b; SHIVELY; COHEN, 2008), with a focus on the instruction of L2 speech acts (e.g., refusals, requests, apologies). Regardless of instructional context, explicit instruction is generally cited as being the most effective form of instruction for L2 pragmatics when compared with implicit instruction or mere exposure (e.g., BARDOVI-HARLIG, 2001; ROSE; KASPER, 2001), but any type of instruction is more beneficial than none (TAGUCHI, 2015). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that differences in methodology and operationalizations of explicit and implicit instruction vary across studies and are often not reported in great detail (BARDOVI-HARLIG, 2017).

Research on interlanguage pragmatic development suggests that acquisition of these abilities is slow in naturalistic settings (OLSHTAIN; BLUM-KULKA, 1985). In typical study abroad programs, semester to yearlong programs, without pragmatic instruction, minor gains are observed (BARRON, 2003; BATALLER, 2010; FELIX-BRASDEFER, 2004). Subsequently, research has shown that instruction facilitates pragmatic development during study abroad (e.g., SHIVLEY, 2011). Despite research showing that both instruction and studying abroad benefit pragmatic development independently, little is known about the effects of instruction and study abroad on pragmatic knowledge.

Evidence for the effectiveness of instruction during study abroad is mixed, with some studies finding an effect for instruction while others do not. The first study to examine instructional effects during study abroad is Cohen and Shively (2007). Although their study did not find significant differences between the experimental group, which received a pre-departure orientation and a self-study book, and the control group that did not receive any instruction, there was evidence that the treatment increased the learners' awareness of mitigating requests. Shively (2011) investigated the L2 pragmatic development of service encounters in Spain. The learners received two explicit instruction sessions, an hour-long pre-departure session and a 30-minute session during the fifth week of the study

abroad program. The results showed a trend towards native-like norms. The learners increased their use of directness and hearer-orientated strategies. The qualitative results demonstrated that the instruction heightened the learners' pragmatic awareness, subsequently affecting their choice of strategies. However, some learners mentioned the lack of corrective feedback from native speakers. Shively (2011) suggests that the study abroad experience coupled with explicit instruction can yield significant effects on L2 pragmatic development. Additionally, Alcón-Soler (2015) found that instruction had an immediate effect on the use of English mitigators in e-mail requests, but this effect was not maintained. The more time the learners spent in the host country, the less effective the instruction is, ultimately disappearing at the end of the program. Halenko and Jones (2017) investigated the effect of explicit instruction on English requests by Chinese learners studying abroad in the UK. The results revealed that instruction positively affected request strategies immediately following instruction and to an extent was sustained for the duration of the program. With respect to modification, the results showed that the instruction group immediately benefited from the intervention, but the delayed post-test demonstrated that the effects were not maintained as the control group used more modification.

Turning our focus to the effect of instruction in short-term study abroad programs, Hernández and Boero (2018a, 2018b) examined the pragmatic development of requests in Argentina and Spain, respectively, during four-week study abroad programs. The instruction on both sites included a 90-minute workshop that focused on awareness-raising. Hernández and Boero (2018a) included multiple tasks, such as an oral and written discourse completion task, while Hernández and Boero (2018b) only asked the learners to complete an oral discourse completion task. In both studies, learners completed structured activities that required them to reflect upon their pragmatic behavior. Afterwards, they received explicit corrective feedback from one of the researchers. Using role-plays, Hernández and Boero (2018a) found that after instruction, learners increased their use of mitigation, external modification, and hearer-orientated strategies. Furthermore, participants sustained these effects five weeks after the completion of the program. Hernández and Boero (2018b) also found positive effects for instruction. Their data came from written discourse completion tasks and they found that Spanish native speakers rated the learners more target-like after the study abroad program. Additionally,

the learners' strategies approximated native speaker norms, increasing their use of the query preparatory strategy and hearer-oriented strategies. The results for external modification were conflicting, as some participants went in the direction of the target-like norms, while others moved away from native speakers' behavior. Lastly, the results from the retrospective verbal reports showed that the learners attended to instruction they received. Nevertheless, the studies mentioned above allude to the benefits of instruction in a study abroad context, even in short-term study abroad programs. Instruction eases pragmatic development while living in the target country, even during programs lasting less than two months.

2.3 Compliments in L1 and L2 Spanish

Compliments are an expressive speech act in which the speaker comments on a positive attribute regarding the hearer (SEARLE, 1969). Wierzbicka (2003) defines compliments as wanting "to say something good about you" (p. 136). In addition, compliments can be used to establish or maintain solidarity between the speaker and hearer (Wolfson, 1983), functioning as "social lubricants" (p. 89). Early work on compliments focused on American English and the creation of a taxonomy for classifying the speech act (Manes & Wolfson, 1980) and demonstrated that the majority of American English compliments fell into three syntactic structures, summarized in Table 1.

Shifting our focus to compliments in Spanish, previous studies (HERNÁNDEZ-HERREO, 1999; NELSON; HALL, 1999; PLACENCIA; YÉPEZ, 1999) have shown that, like English, the majority of compliments in Spanish can be reduced to a few syntactic structures, also found in Table 1.

TABLE 1. COMMON SYNTACTIC PATTERNS FOR COMPLIMENTS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH.

ENGLISH COMPLIMENT PATTERNS	SPANISH COMPLIMENT PATTERNS
NP [is/looks] (really) ADJ That dress looks great.	¡Qué + ADJ + NP + (VP)! <i>¡Qué bonito collar!</i> What a pretty necklace!
I (really) [like/love] NP I really love that dress.	(PRO) (verse/quedar/andar) ADJ/ADV (NP) <i>Te ves guapa.</i> You look beautiful.
PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP That is a nice dress.	PRO + (gustar/encantar/fascinar) + NP <i>Me gusta tu collar.</i> I like your necklace
	(NP) VP + NP <i>Eres un ángel.</i> You're an angel

Of these frequent structures, the *Qué + Adj* pattern was the most common in Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru (HERNÁNDEZ-HERREO, 1999; NELSON; HALL, 1999; PLACENCIA; YÉPEZ, 1999), which is one of the least common structures in English (Manes & Wolfson, 1980). Furthermore, with respect to gender and compliments, women received more and gave more compliments than men (HERNÁNDEZ-HERREO, 1999; NELSON; HALL, 1999; PLACENCIA; YÉPEZ, 1999).

Despite there being similarities between Spanish and English compliments, there are significant differences in the most common structures used between the two languages, which has major implications for the acquisition of Spanish compliments by L1 English speakers. Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2012) is one of the first studies to investigate the L2 acquisition of Spanish compliments. Their study revealed that without any instruction, learners of Spanish are unable to use appropriate syntactic patterns for Spanish compliments (e.g., *Qué + ADJ* 'How + ADJ'), as a majority of their strategies reflected those of English

(e.g., *Me gusta* ‘I like’). In a follow up study that investigated the effects of study abroad on the acquisition of Spanish compliments, Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) collected oral discourse completion task data using a pre and post-test design from learners studying abroad in Mexico and compared it to learners in a foreign language setting. The results revealed that learners abroad made significant changes towards the NS norm, but the at-home group did not. Results from the delayed post-test showed some learners shifted towards the L1 English norm, but still produced more compliments than they did prior to studying abroad. Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) demonstrated that pragmatic change was possible while living abroad, even if learners did not receive instruction, and that foreign language teaching is not sufficient for learners to make improvements in their pragmatic knowledge. Lastly, taking into consideration the findings from previous studies, Hasler-Barker (2016) examined the effects of instruction on compliments in an at-home setting. The instructional material focused on shifting learners use of *I like + NP*, the frequent syntactic pattern used in English, to *How/what + ADJ/ADV*, the most common strategy employed in Spanish. The results showed, that despite instruction, the participants still overused *I like + NP* in comparison to the native speaker group. However, the participants did vary their compliments after instruction with the explicit instruction group benefitting more than the implicit group. The findings from Hasler-Barker (2016) raise the question of how much instruction is needed to acquire the pragmatic knowledge of compliments.

2.4 Apologies in L1 and L2 Spanish

The act of apologizing requires an action or an utterance that is meant to “set things right” (OLSHTAIN; COHEN, 1983, p. 20) after a speaker has violated a social norm (BLUM-KULKA; OLSHTAIN, 1984; OLSHTAIN; COHEN, 1983; SEARLE, 1969). Apologies are reactions to an eliciting speech act or another event and thus are post-event acts that occur when the speaker realizes they have violated a social norm and admits that they were (at least partially) involved in the cause (BLUM-KULKA; OLSHTAIN, 1984). Olshtain and Cohen (1983) describe the apology speech

act set from a variety of different perspectives, including the expectations of the hearer and speaker based on their perception of the degree of severity of the offense, the speaker’s apology with regard to the amount of reprimanding they expect from the hearer, the social status of the participants, and the interactive nature of the apology and the hearer’s response. According to Olshtain & Cohen (1983), each of these perspectives affects the speaker’s decision to utilize different semantic formulas during an apology sequence. They propose a series of semantic formulas and subformulas which have since been used to analyze apologies in a variety of languages and can be seen in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2.

SEMANTIC FORMULAS	SUBFORMULAS	EXAMPLES
Expression of an apology	Expression of regret (speaker-oriented) Offer of apology Request for forgiveness (hearer-oriented)	<i>I'm sorry</i> <i>I apologize</i> <i>Forgive me</i>
Explanation or account of the situation		<i>My alarm didn't go off this morning.</i>
Acknowledgement of responsibility	Accept the blame Expression of self-deficiency Recognition that the hearer deserves an apology Express a lack of intent	<i>It's my fault.</i> <i>I didn't see you there.</i> <i>You're right.</i> <i>I didn't mean to do that.</i>
Offer of repair		<i>I can buy you a new one.</i>
Promise of forbearance		<i>It won't happen again.</i>

While only one of these formulas is necessary to perform an apology in most situations, it is not uncommon to see combinations of these semantic formulas, which may lead to a higher intensity apology (OLSHTAIN; COHEN, 1983). Additionally, each of the aforementioned semantic formulas has a series of subformulas which may vary depending on the language. It is possible that one of these formulas may be used more in one language than in another, such as the common response to an offense in American English, the speaker-oriented expression of regret “I’m sorry” (OLSHTAIN; COHEN, 1983). In Spanish, on the other hand, the most common expression of an apology is the hearer-oriented request for forgiveness (e.g., *perdóname* ‘Forgive me’) (ROJO, 2005; WAGNER, 1999). The expression of an apology subformulas are considered illocutionary force indicating devices, which, according to Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), are characterized by the use of a “routinized, formulaic expression of regret (a performative verb) such as: (*be*) *sorry; apologize; regret; excuse, etc.*” (p. 206).

While some of these formulas and subformulas are language-specific, there are others that are not, such as acknowledgment of responsibility. It is also important to note that some formulas are only required in certain situations, in which physical injury or damage has occurred (offer of repair) or if the speaker could have avoided the offense (promise of forbearance). Lastly, in situations in which the speaker does not apologize, we may see a denial of the need to apologize or a denial of responsibility for the action, such as “it wasn’t my fault” or “it was an accident”. (OLSHTAIN; COHEN, 1983). This framework for the study of apologies led to a great deal of empirical research on the topic, which makes use of the original coding scheme laid out in Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), and further elaborated in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989).

In L1 Spanish, there is a preference for hearer-oriented strategies (e.g., *discúlpame*, “excuse me”) over speaker-oriented strategies (e.g., *lo siento*, “I’m sorry”) (ROJO, 2005; WAGNER, 1999). Apologies in Spanish tend to be lengthier for offenses with a higher degree of severity (ROJO, 2005; RUZICKOVA, 1998). Additionally, the semantic formulas used in making an apology vary by culture and degree of severity of the event. Speakers of Mexican Spanish, for example, use a greater variety of semantic formulas than Peninsular Spanish speakers, and speakers rarely used only one semantic formula unless the degree of severity was low (Wagner, 1999).

In L2 Spanish, apologies have been analyzed in both study abroad and computer-mediated communication contexts. With regard to study abroad, the instruction of apologies in both L2 French and L2 Spanish led to improvement in performance, as rated by native speakers. Few learners intensified their apologies in situations where native speakers did so, and learners tended to be unaware of sociopragmatic norms for what might be expected in certain apology situations (COHEN; SHIVELY, 2007; SHIVELY; COHEN, 2008). Hernandez (2018) did not consider instruction but found an increased use of several apology strategies after a short-term study abroad in Madrid, Spain. He also found that learners’ pragmatic appropriateness in an oral discourse completion task was significantly higher at the post-test. In computer-mediated communication contexts, Sykes (2013) found that the use of the multiuser virtual environment (MUVE) *Croquelandia* benefited development of L2 Spanish apologies. Learners used more hearer-oriented strategies at the post-test, demonstrating a shift toward native speaker norms, and also showed an increased use of external modification to mitigate apologies, which the author attributes to the effect of instruction.

2.5 Summary of the gap

Previous research demonstrates that pragmatic competence can develop during short-term SA, although development is not guaranteed. Additionally, the majority of research on Spanish speech acts during short-term SA has focused on the acquisition of requests across different contexts. Few studies investigate the role of instruction abroad, and no study compares instruction to no instruction in short-term programs. To address this, the current study is guided by the following research questions.

1. Do learners change the production of their compliments during a five-week study abroad program?
2. Do learners change the production of their apologies during a five-week study abroad program?
3. What is the role of pragmatics instruction in this change?

3 Method

3.1 Participants

Participants were drawn from a five-week study abroad program in Mérida, Mexico, during the summer of 2017. A total of 15 learners provided data for the current project. All participants were L2 learners of Spanish that were enrolled in high school-level classes during the normal academic year and came from a range of high schools throughout a Midwestern state. It is likely that learners used different textbooks and curricula and were instructed by a range of native and non-native speakers from many different dialects (KANWIT; ELIAS; CLAY, 2018). The study abroad program included a signed commitment to use only the target-language during the five weeks on site and a host family stay. Learners also participated in a rigorous academic program of three classes (grammar, literature and culture, and linguistics), as well as participating in either a show choir or theatre activity group in the afternoon. The classes were taught by two non-native speakers of Spanish with near native proficiency and one native speaker of Peninsular Spanish, with each class lasting approximately 50 minutes, four days a week. The afternoon activities lasted for one hour, three days a week. The language commitment was strictly enforced on site, and learners had ample contact with the target culture and language due to the nature of the homestay.

3.2 Instrument

During the first and last week on site, learners completed a 24-item oral discourse completion task. Although not as interactive as role-plays (BARDOVI-HARLIG, 2013), oral discourse completion tasks are beneficial in that they elicit highly comparable speech samples. The oral discourse completion task consisted of four speech acts (compliments, requests, apologies, and invitations) which were manipulated according to Scollon & Scollon's (2012) politeness model into three situation types: solidarity, deference, and hierarchy. For each speech act, two items targeted deferential situations (+distance, -power), two targeted solidarity (-distance, -power), and four targeted

hierarchical situations (2 +distance, +power, 2 -distance, +power), for a total of eight items per speech act.

The oral discourse completion task was administered during the first and last grammar class. Due to the restrictions of the program, the instrument and instructions were written and presented in Spanish by one of the authors, a near-native speaker of Spanish. Participants recorded their responses on individual voice recorders. The instrument was projected on-screen for all learners to complete at the same time in their normal classroom. Participants were told at both times that there were no right or wrong answers, and they were asked to respond to each situation as if they were actually there. Each item consisted of three screens. On the first, the text of the scenario was displayed and was accompanied by a native speaker of Mexican Spanish reading the text in a normal reading voice. The instrument automatically advanced to the next slide, which said *tú dices* 'you say', again accompanied by the same native speaker voice. After the recording ended, learners had 7 seconds to respond to the prompt, following Bardovi-Harlig (2009). After seven seconds, the instrument advanced to a slide that said *¿Listos?* 'Ready?' for three seconds, before continuing to the next item.

3.3 Instruction

In the linguistics class, 4 days were spent on Pragmatics as a field of linguistic inquiry. During this time, participants received instruction on two of the four speech acts targeted in the oral discourse completion task —requests and compliments. Instruction for these speech acts consisted of a 50-minute lesson and 10-minute review/practice session for both requests and compliments. Instruction was delivered in 3 stages in the 50-minute class: awareness-raising (i.e., drawing learners' attention to the pragmatic target), explicit instruction of the strategies for each speech act, and production and perception activities to reinforce each lesson. On the following day, 10 minutes was spent doing a production activity which reviewed the speech act covered in the previous class.

3.4 Coding and analysis

The data were transcribed and coded by all three authors. Learners could produce more than one head act per scenario, and some learners did not produce any speech during the oral discourse completion task; therefore, there may be more or less apologies or compliments than scenarios, depending on the production patterns. Coding schemes were adapted from Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) for compliments and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) for apologies. The coding categories found in the present data set, with examples from the participants, are presented in Table 3 for compliments and in Table 4 for apologies.

TABLE 3. COMPLIMENT CODING

STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
Copula + Adj	<i>La comida es ... delicioso.</i> 'The food is ... delicious'
Gustar-type	<i>Me gusta tu mochila.</i> 'I like your bookbag' (lit. Your book bag is pleasing to me)
<i>¡Qué + adj!</i>	<i>Oh, ¡qué bonita su pulsera!</i> 'Oh, what a beautiful bracelet!'
Other	<i>Se ve bien su blusa.</i> 'Your blouse looks good'

TABLE 4. APOLOGY CODING

STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
Expression of regret	<i>aye ya aye lo siento</i> 'oh oh oh I'm sorry'
Request for forgiveness	<i>Oh, perdóname.</i> 'oh, forgive me'

Following coding, a statistical analysis of the data was performed in SPSS (version 24). Descriptive frequencies were calculated to determine the overall use of compliment and apology strategies for both pre- and post-tests. Chi-square tests were used to determine the significance of the observed changes.

4 Results

The first research question asked if learners changed their use of compliment strategies during a five-week study abroad program. Table 5 presents the distribution of compliment strategies identified in the data on the pre- and post-test. Participants began the five-week program with a heavy reliance on *gustar*-type verbs and *copula + ADJ* to perform their compliments. At the post-test, learners used more varied strategies, including the expected *¡Qué + ADJ!* 'How adj!' pattern. Additionally, they reduced their use of *copula + adj*. A chi-square test showed that the observed differences in strategy distribution are significantly different ($\chi = 16.448, 3, p = .001$).

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLIMENT STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST	
	n	%	n	%
Copula + Adj	37	40.2	25	21.7
Gustar-type	46	50.0	55	47.8
¡Qué + adj!	7	7.6	23	20.0
Other	2	2.2	12	10.4
Total	92	100	115	110

The second research question asked if learners changed their use of apology strategies during the same time span. Table 6 presents the distribution of apology strategies on the pre- and post-test. At the pre-test, the only apology strategy attested in the data was the use of *Lo siento* 'I'm sorry'. At the post-test, learners expanded their use of apologies strategies to include requests for forgiveness. An inspection of the data showed that all 10 counts of this strategy on the post-test involved *Perdón* or *Perdóname* 'Forgive me'. A chi-square test revealed that this difference was also statistically significant ($\chi = 8.810, 1, p = .003$), although it should be interpreted with caution given the empty cells at the pre-test.

TABLE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF APOLOGIES STRATEGIES

STRATEGY	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST	
	n	%	n	%
Expression of regret	78	100	84	89.4
Request for forgiveness	-	-	10	10.6
Total	78	100	94	100.0

The third research question asked about the effect of instruction in the observed gains. To answer this research question, an individual-level analysis was performed. For this analysis, the distribution by participant at the pre- and post-test were analyzed. The distribution of compliment strategies by individual participants is provided in Table 7. As can be seen, all participants showed development in their compliment strategies, operationalized by an expanded repertoire of compliment strategies. Only one participant, Participant 11, did not show an increased repertoire at the post-test, still preferring the copula + adj strategy or *gustar*-type verbs, indicating that 14/15 (93.3%) showed some development in their use of compliment strategies.

The distribution for apologies is presented in Table 8. Five participants (33%) are responsible for the development seen in Table 8, with one participant providing 4/10 tokens of requests for forgiveness at the post-test. We attribute the more equal development of participants on compliments in comparison to apologies to the effect of instruction, a point to which we return in the discussion below.

TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLIMENT STRATEGIES BY INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS.

	PRETEST										POSTTEST								
	COPULA		GUSTAR		¡QUÉ!		OTHER		TOTAL		COPULA		GUSTAR		¡QUÉ!		OTHER		TOTAL
Part	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
1	2	50	2	50	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4	100	-	-	4	
2	3	60	2	40	-	-	-	-	5	1	13	5	63	2	25	-	-	8	
3	3	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	50	4	40	1	10	-	-	10	
4	3	33	5	56	1	11	-	-	9	-	-	5	56	-	-	4	44	9	
5	3	60	2	40	-	-	-	-	5	3	33	3	33	1	11	2	22	9	
6	3	33	4	44	2	22	-	-	9	2	18	4	36	5	44	-	-	11	
7	4	50	1	13	3	38	-	-	8	4	44	4	44	-	-	1	11	9	
8	1	17	4	67	1	17	-	-	6	1	20	1	20	3	60	-	-	5	
9	5	83	1	17	-	-	-	-	6	2	18	6	55	1	9	2	18	11	
10	2	25	5	63	-	-	1	13	8	1	10	5	50	3	30	1	10	10	
11	2	40	3	60	-	-	-	-	5	2	50	2	50	-	-	-	-	4	
12	2	25	6	75	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	5	83	1	17	-	-	6	
13	1	20	4	80	-	-	-	-	5	2	25	5	63	-	-	1	13	11	
14	-	-	2	100	-	-	-	-	2	1	20	3	60	-	-	1	20	5	
15	3	33	5	56	-	-	1	11	9	1	17	3	50	2	33	-	-	6	

TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF APOLOGY STRATEGIES BY INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS.

PART	PRE-TEST			POST-TEST				
	REGRET		TOTAL	REGRET		FORGIVENESS		TOTAL
	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	
1	3	100	3	2	100	-	-	2
2	6	100	6	4	100	-	-	4
3	3	100	3	7	100	-	-	7
4	6	100	6	10	100	-	-	10
5	6	100	6	5	83	1	17	6
6	3	100	3	8	100	-	-	8
7	10	100	10	7	100	-	-	7
8	5	100	5	4	67	2	33	6
9	5	100	5	6	100	-	-	6
10	4	100	4	4	50	4	50	8
11	6	100	6	2	50	2	50	4
12	6	100	6	5	100	-	-	5
13	3	100	3	9	100	-	-	9
14	6	100	6	5	83	1	17	6
15	6	100	6	6	100	-	-	6

5 Discussion

Our first research question asked whether learners can change the production of their compliments after spending five weeks in an immersion setting. The learners showed development in their use of the compliment strategies, operationalized as an increased repertoire of compliment syntactic formulas. As expected from previous studies (FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2012, 2015; HASLER-BARKER, 2016), learners over relied on the PRO + (*gustar/encantar/fascinar*) + NP strategy at the start of the program. However, by the end of the immersion experience, learners increased their use of *qué* + ADJ + NP + (VP) but decreased their use of Copula + ADJ. Additionally, learners only slightly decreased their use of PRO + (*gustar/encantar/fascinar*) + NP. Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker (2015) showed that the study abroad context was productive for the acquisition of compliments, as learners began to use more target-like strategies after living in the target culture. These findings are corroborated in our study, as we observed an increase of the *qué* + ADJ + NP + (VP) strategy.

Additionally, as the results for instruction of compliments have been inconclusive, we sought to examine the effect of instruction on compliments in an immersion setting. Hasler-Barker (2016) noted that the FL learners still overused the English strategy when complimenting in Spanish, but instruction allowed the participants to vary their strategy use. Our study supports these findings. We observed a high use of the English strategy along with an increase of the type of strategies that they used. Considering this, the study abroad context, along with instruction, is not sufficient to overcome the excessive use of PRO + (*gustar/encantar/fascinar*) + NP. This can be attributed to two factors. First, it most resembles the English pattern, I (really) [like/love] NP, which is one of the most frequent strategies in American English. Thus, the over production of this strategy could be attributed to pragmatic transfer (KASPER, 1992). Moreover, Spanish foreign language learners are taught PRO + (*gustar/encantar/fascinar*) + NP early and frequently (HASLER-BARKER, 2016). The structure typically is introduced in the first year of Spanish and is presented to learners' multiple times in subsequent classes. All things considered, our study shows that pragmatic development is attainable in a five-week study abroad program, especially if instruction is included.

The second research question aimed to determine whether Spanish learners' use of apology strategies changed over the course of their time abroad. While the only apology strategy that was observed at the pre-test was the use of the speaker-oriented illocutionary force indicating device *lo siento* 'I'm sorry', the post-test demonstrated that some learners added the hearer-oriented request for forgiveness illocutionary force indicating device to their repertoire, and that more specifically, the request for forgiveness was *perdón* or *perdóname* 'Forgive me'. Learners did not receive instruction on apologies during their time abroad, so the overgeneralized use of speaker-oriented *lo siento* is fitting given that apology strategies provided in the at-home classroom via textbook input typically feature this strategy (TROSBORG, 2003). Although results indicate an increased use of the request for forgiveness strategy at the post-test, following previous work on the topic (e.g., Hernández, 2018), it is worth noting that only 5 of 15 participants showed a change over time (i.e., the other 10 participants maintained the use of speaker-oriented *lo siento* at the post-test), and that one participant alone provided 4 of the 10 instances of this strategy at the post-test. Hernández (2018) found that it was only advanced learners who began to incorporate more target-like illocutionary force indicating devices at the post-test, and we argue that while some learners demonstrate more target-like tendencies after spending time abroad, additional factors such as low to intermediate language proficiency levels contributing to an overuse of formulaic expressions such as *lo siento* (HERNÁNDEZ, 2018; SHIVELY; COHEN, 2008) or other individual differences, such as motivation, may play a role in this lack of change over time for the majority of participants, regardless of their immersion in the target language and culture. Additionally, pragmatic transfer (KASPER, 1998) may play a role in learners' overuse of *lo siento* as the speaker-oriented illocutionary force indicating device is preferred in English.

In review, we see that apologies show limited development during the study abroad, while compliments show more robust development, operationalized by the number of learners that showed development. Previous literature on the acquisition of compliments has shown that learners do modify their compliment production during study abroad, although this development is limited and does not hold after 8 weeks (FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2015). In the at-home context, instruction has been shown to have a limited effect (HASLER-BARKER, 2016). We attribute the more equal development of compliments,

especially with respect to apologies, to the instructional treatment. A number of studies document learners' limited pragmatic development during short-term study abroad (e.g., CZERWIONKA; CUZA, 2017a, 2017b; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2015; HERNÁNDEZ, 2016) and have suggested that instruction may lead to greater gains during study abroad with respect to pragmatic development (e.g., SHIVELY, 2011). The current study, however, is the first to consider the impact of instruction on only one of two expressive speech acts. By comparing the same group of learners in the same context on two speech acts that are equally frequent, we can ascertain the effect of instruction on the same group. The results indicate that, while learners may show limited development with a speech act during intensive immersion, this is limited to a select number of learners. In our data, only four learners showed development on apologies between the pre- and post-tests, and only 10 tokens of requests for forgiveness were found. Indeed, a number of studies on L2 Spanish have found that learners show limited or no development on a number of speech acts without instruction (CZERWIONKA; CUZA, 2017a, 2017b; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2015; HERNÁNDEZ, 2016). However, in our data set, almost all learners (14 out of 15 learners, or 93%) showed an increased repertoire of compliment strategies following an intensive study abroad experience coupled with instruction. Although patterns of development showed variation, 10 out of 15 learners (66.7%) showed usage of the preferred *¡Qué + adj!* 'How + adj' strategy, compared to 4 out of 15 (26.7%) at the beginning of the program.

Given the nature of pragmatic competence and development, we argue that the increased repertoire of semantic formulas that learners have available to use is an effective measurement of development in short-term study abroad. Although the program under investigation features intense contact with the target language, which has been linked to pragmatic development for English learners (BARDOVI-HARLIG; BASTOS, 2011), Félix-Brasdefer (2004) has shown that learners may need up to 9 months before approximating native-like norms. A number of studies on both short-term and semester or academic-year long programs have shown that learners may not approximate native like norms (BARRON, 2003; BATALLER, 2010; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2012; 2015; HERNÁNDEZ, 2016; SHIVELY, 2011; CZERWIONKA; CUZA 2017a, 201b), and that this approximation may be influenced by a number of individual differences. Shively (2011), for example, documented how a focal learner refused

to produce imperative requests in service encounters (e.g., *Ponme un café* ‘Give me a coffee’), the preferred strategy in Spanish service encounters, because of a conflict between the learners’ L1 politeness system and the L2 system. Research into subjectivity, which refers to a learners’ embrace or rejection of L2 pragmatics norms, has shown that many times learners may not wish to perfectly approximate native-like norms (e.g., LOCASTRO, 1998; ISHIHARA, 2010; ISHIHARA; TARONE, 2009). However, the comparison of learners to native-like norms is common practice in L2 pragmatics research (e.g., BARDOVI-HARLIG, 2009; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER, 2004; BARRON, 2007; BATALLER, 2010; CZERWIONKA; CUZA, 2017A, 2017b; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER; HASLER-BARKER, 2015). Establishing native-like norms is important for L2 pragmatics research, and more importantly study abroad research, because local norms represent the input to which learners are exposed. In the absence of more research into how subjectivity influences acquisition of pragmatics abroad, an increased repertoire of semantic formulas available to learners, even if their usage does not approximate native-like norms, is a reasonable index of pragmatic development. This may be especially useful for short-term study abroad programs when learners may not be abroad long enough to fine-tune their form-function mappings of semantic formulas and their contexts of use (ELLIS, 1992; FÉLIX-BRASDEFER, 2007).

6 Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of instruction on the acquisition of expressive speech acts during a five-week study abroad program. We compared learners’ performance on apologies, on which they did not receive instruction, to their performance on compliments, on which they did receive instruction. The results showed that few learners made progress in the acquisition of apologies without instruction, while almost all learners showed development on compliments with instruction. The analysis showed that instruction plays an important role in the development of pragmatic competence during short-term study abroad programs, and instruction may be necessary to see equitable pragmatic development across learners during short-term programs. Additionally, we argue that in short-term study abroad programs,

instead of examining approximation to native-like norms, a more useful index of pragmatic development is the repertoire of strategies that learners have available to fulfill different pragmatic functions, especially in light of research that suggests that learners may need up to 9 months (or more) to approximate target norms in speech act production (FÉLIX-BRASDEFER, 2004).

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