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Variación y adquisición de los pronombres de formas de tratamiento del español y sus implicaciones para la enseñanza

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Abstract: Spanish second-person personal pronouns are prescriptively known and recognized in most varieties of Spanish as informal for *tú* and formal for *usted* (you [sg.] and you [sg.]), including the pedagogical variety taught as a foreign or second language. Although *vos* exists as a third form in some varieties of Spanish, the present study focuses on the former two because they are the ones present in textbooks of Spanish as a foreign language. The present work studies variation found in the social *deixis* (i.e., relationships from the egocentric, the self, the perspective of the speaker) and explores the choices second language learners, as well as native speakers of Spanish, make when choosing between these two pronouns. A modified computerized discourse completion test, which makes use of audio, video, and text, was used to elicit participants´ responses to eight scenarios in a more naturalistic way. It included variables that have been shown to affect participants' choices as well as variables that have not yet been studied such as participants' personality and clothing. Findings of the present study suggest that linguistic, pragmatic, and/or social variables are not the only ones that influence L2 learners' and native speakers' choices about pronouns of address. Results show that psychological variables such as personality and visual cues such as outfit are influential in both L2 learners' and native speakers' choices. The aforementioned findings have implications as to how educators approach the teaching of these forms to facilitate their use and acquisition in natural and instruction settings, especially in a learner-centered, proficiency- oriented classroom.

Keywords: language variation, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistic Variation, Interlanguage, Acquisition order.

Resumen: Los pronombres personales de la segunda persona se conocen y son reconocidos prescriptivamente en la mayoría de las variedades del español como *tú* para el informal y *usted* para el formal. Estos incluyen en la variedad pedagógica que se enseña como lengua segunda o extranjera. Aunque *vos* existe como una tercera forma en algunas variedades del español, este trabajo se enfoca en las primeras dos, ya que son las que están presentes en los libros de texto de español como lengua extranjera. Este trabajo estudia la variación encontrada en la *deixis* social (i.e., las relaciones desde lo egocéntrico, el yo, la perspectiva del hablante) y explora las decisiones que hacen tanto los aprendices de una segunda lengua como los hablantes nativos al escoger entre estos pronombres. Un test modificado y computarizado de completar discurso en el cual se incluyen audio, video y texto se utilizó para obtener las respuestas de los participantes, en una forma más naturalista, a ocho situaciones hipotéticas. Incluyó variables que han demostrado afectar las decisiones de los participantes, así como variables que no se han estudiado hasta el momento como la personalidad y la forma de vestir. Los hallazgos de este trabajo sugieren que variables de naturaleza lingüística, pragmática, y social no son las únicas que influyen a los aprendices de una segunda lengua y a los nativo hablantes sobre el uso de estos pronombres. Los resultados dan a conocer que variables de naturaleza psicológica y señales visuales como la vestimenta influyen la selección de los aprendices y los hablantes

nativos. Los resultados anteriormente mencionados tienen implicaciones sobre cómo los educadores se acercan a la enseñanza de estas formas para facilitar su uso y adquisición en contextos naturales y de instrucción, especialmente en una clase centrada en el aprendiz y en la suficiencia del lenguaje.

Palabras clave: variación lingüística, pragmática, variación sociolingüística, interlenguaje, orden de adquisición.

1. Introduction

Variation in the use of personal pronouns, particularly of the second person, is attributed to *deixis,* which is an area of pragmatics that refers to the linguistic system of indices that mark relationships generally from the egocentric perspective of the speaker (Koike, Pearson & Witten, 2003). Fillmore (1975) identifies four types of *deixis* in this area, including spatial (e.g., here, there), temporal (e.g., now, later), personal (e.g., I, you), and social (e.g., honorifics) (as cited in Koike, Pearson & Witten, 2003). Although Halliday and Hasan's (1976) definition of *deixis* includes other areas, for the purposes of this paper, *deixis* is defined as the codification of speakers' attitudes towards the interlocutor or the proposition that is being expressed, and it falls under the types of *personal* and *social* deixis in Fillmore's 1975 classification. As Fillmore (1975) puts it, it is a central part of language because it represents a point of reference and/ or a perspective. The present study relates to social *deixis*, and it studies choices second language learners as well as native speakers of Spanish make when dealing with the second-person singular pronouns in Spanish, which in general carry the pragmatic meaning of formality or informality. This type of *deixis* is also encoded in the pronouns of other languages (e.g., French and German), but it is not present in most varieties of present-day English.

In Spanish, the three personal pronouns *tú, vos,* and *usted* (you [sg.], you [sg.], and you [pl.] have been traditionally called informal, for the first two, and formal for the latter. Variation in their use can be found even in the most conservative grammar and language books. For example, according to Gomez Torrejos (1996) on the prescriptive use for most varieties of Spanish, the use of *tú* with indetermination semantic value is frequent in conversational language, but it must not spread to the educated written language (p. 106) [My translation]. Similarly, the pronoun of respect *usted* (*-es* in plural), even when it refers to the second person or the interlocutor of the speech act (i.e., dialogue), it must agree with, what he refers to as, the *third-person* form of the verb. For him and most prescriptivists, it is not acceptable or even "vulgar" to say and/or write:

* Ustedes estáis bien aquí (dígase: "Ustedes están bien ...") (p. 107)

(You are [2pl] fine here.)

This is a widespread practice in prescriptive grammars; however, for pedagogical and descriptive purposes, the form of the verb should be referred to as the secondperson singular formal. The issue here is to guide learners to the proper formmeaning matching of grammatical structures and not just the verb form or spelling.

Other authors prefer a less prescriptive explanation of this phenomenon. Butt and Benjamin (1988) in a second edition of their

grammar book describe the use and the variation of these pronouns in a less conservative way than that of Gomez Torrejos (1996). They describe the use of these two pronouns as:

[Tú] es utilizado entre amigos, familiares, con los niños, y generalmente entre extraños bajo la edad de 30 años, con los animales, en insultos y en las oraciones o invocaciones... Éstas (usted, ustedes) son formas educadas que corresponden al francés vous, al alemán Sie... Requieren las formas verbales en la tercera persona del personal. (p. 105)

[You] is used among friends, relatives, with children, and generally among strangers under the age of 30, with animals, in insults and in sentences or invocations... These (you [sg], you [pl]) are educated forms that correspond to the French vous, the German Sie... They require the third-person form of the verb [My translation]. (p.105)

Even less traditional ways of describing the use of these pronouns have changed over time due to ongoing variations in the language. In the third edition of their grammar book, Butt and Benjamin (1988) cite the rules of this phenomenon by pointing out that variation exists among different varieties of Spanish. They describe them as:

La regla básica en lo que se refiere a España es que tú es usado con cualquier persona con la cual uno se encuentra en relaciones íntimas de primer nombre. Tú es así requerido entre amigos, miembros de familia, cuando se le habla a los niños o a los animales, generalmente entre extraños bajo la edad de 30 años, y en algunas oraciones religiosas... Su uso se ha extendido mucho más que hace unos cincuenta años, y es considerado algunas veces como una marca de un perfil democrático. Sin embargo, tu/vos no debería ser dicho a personas con autoridad o con extraños mayores que uno o con personas de edad avanzada a menos que uno sea invitado a utilizarlos. El uso de tú donde el usted es esperado puede expresar desobediencia o amenaza: los criminales llaman a sus víctimas tú y no usted. (p. 130)

The basic rule for this phenomenon regarding Spanish from Spain is that *tú* is used with any person with whom one is on a first-name basis. *Tú* is thus expected among friends, relatives, when talking to children or animals, generally among strangers under the age of 30, and in some religious prayers... Its use extends back more than fifty years, and it is sometimes considered a mark of equality or democracy. However, *tú/ vos* [vos is another form used in some dialects of Spanish] should not be said to people with authority, to strangers older than oneself, or to senior citizens unless invited to do so. The use of *tú* where *usted* is more appropriate could be construed as a sign of disobedience or even a threat; for example, criminals call their victims *tú* and not *usted* [My translation]. (p. 130)

In this quote, we can see how grammarians are beginning to include variation among their description of grammar. This inclusion, nevertheless, is still under a prescriptivist point of view where rules are assigned to each of the variants of this phenomenon, which are followed by disclaimers to their readers such as this one:

Las generalizaciones acerca del tú y el usted son delicadas. En la mayor parte de Latinoamérica tú/vos no es utilizado tan fácilmente como en España, y uno también encuentra variedades (e.g., Antioquia, Colombia) donde todos los tres pronombres, usted, tú y vos, pueden encontrarse en la forma de dirigirse a la misma persona dependiendo del grado de intimidad alcanzado en cualquier momento. El español de Chile es inusual debido a que usted puede ser utilizado para dirigirse a la familia lo que produce mezclas curiosas de pronombres en una sola oración. (Butt and Benjamin, 1988, p. 131) Generalizations about *tú* and *usted* are a delicate issue. In the majority of Latin American countries, *tú/vos* are not used as easily as in Spain, and one can also find varieties (e.g., Antioquia, Colombia) where all three pronouns, *usted, tú,* and *vos,* can be found when addressing the same person depending on the degree of intimacy achieved at any moment with that person. Chilean Spanish is an unusual case because *usted* can be employed to address relatives, and such usage produces interesting mixes of pronoun usage in one single sentence [My translation]. (Butt and Benjamin, 1988, p. 131)

Antioquia, Colombia, and Chile are joined by "voseante" varieties such the ones found in Costa Rica (Michnowicz, Despain, & Gorham, 2016) and other Central American countries where the study of pronouns of address in L1 Spanish is less common, but not simpler.

The present work attempts to understand whether L2 learners of Spanish use pronouns of address in native-like manner and whether variables other than the traditional linguistic and pragmatic ones (e.g., personality and/or outfit) influence their choices. The study uses a modified computerized Discourse Completion Test or DCT, which makes use of audio, video, and text to elicit participants' responses to eight scenarios in a more naturalistic way (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). It also includes variables that have been shown to affect the choice made by participants and variables that have not yet been studied such as the personality of the participant and the outfit of the interlocutors.

2. Previous work on the use of pronouns of address

2.1 Spanish as a First Language

The study of pronouns of address in L1 Spanish dates back to the 1960s with the seminal work of Brown and Gilman (1960) in which they reported that *power* and *solidarity* were the main factors affecting the choice of pronouns of address. Following this line of research and in response to Ramirez (1972), Brown (1975) reported the responses of 59 Mexican-American undergraduate students to a questionnaire of usage. Brown found that students reported using the pronoun *usted* with family members, and that there was no difference in their responses attributed to gender. She concluded that the authority or permissiveness in family relationships merits special attention

This study is important because it is one of the first to show that the use of pronouns of address in Spanish varies, and that it is not governed by the

prescriptive rules of formality and informality given by grammarians and thus helps the present study as it aims to further investigate the differences between the use of these two pronouns from a variationist perspective.

Schwenter (1993) reported the responses of 40 participants (20 Spanish and 20 Mexican) to a questionnaire with 56 questions regarding the usage of the Spanish pronouns of address. Participants' age ranged from 26 to 50 years. Schwenter (1993) used a self-report questionnaire that included two variables. The first variable was positional identity, which asks participants to respond to how they will address certain people, how certain people will address them, and what pronoun should be used when someone else opens the conversation. Schwenter also studied what he called the *Contexto Pronominal Anterior (CPA)* [Previous Pronominal Context], which refers to the pronoun used by whoever opens the conversation and how the interlocutor reacts depending on the degree of solidarity that he/she possesses. Schwenter (1993) found that between the two groups he studied, it was difficult to categorize their responses in terms of the semantics of *power* and *solidarity* put forward by Brown and Gilman (1960) as prevailing features of languages that have this pronominal system.

Schwenter found that Spaniards rely more on the idea of *power* of the interlocutor (i.e., the position of the interlocutor in a hierarchical scale). In addition to *power,* Schwenter's (1993) results consistently showed that social factors such as age, gender, and social class affect the selection of *tú* and/or *usted* with other individuals. Mexicans, on the other hand, rely more on the notion of *familiarity* with the interlocutor (i.e., the degree of familiarity the speaker has with the interlocutor) either in their regular life or during the conversation. Schwenter (1993) also found that there is more flexibility in the choice between *tú* and *usted* among Spaniards and that Mexicans do not allow the social identity of the interlocutor to govern the choice between these pronouns. Due to the peculiarity of these results, the author put forward the idea that because of these two tendencies it is possible to see this phenomenon as a continuum in which countries can be put between two polar uses of *tú* and *usted* as follows:

USTED..........[MEX].................|...............[SP]...............TÚ
[- flex] [+ flex] [- flex]

In this diagram, the author suggests that in terms of pronouns of address there is a tendency to go from less flexible (i.e., categorical) use of these pronouns to a more flexible (i.e., non-categorical) use. In other words, the dialect from Spain can be positioned in a scale between the use of *usted* and the use of *tú.* In this scale the middle point is a complete flexible state (i.e., variation exists in the use of either pronoun[1]). Thus, the dialect from Spain is found in a stage where *tú* is the default form of address, and it is moving from a categorical usage to a more flexible one, whereas the dialect from Mexico, where the *usted* form is the default form, is found to be moving from a more categorical used of *usted* to a non-categorical state in which both pronouns are found in variation.

Schwenter's work is significant within the sociolinguistic studies of this type because for the first time a study presented empirical evidence on

the variation of a phenomenon that was believed to be governed by rules of formality and not by personal choices. His study provided evidence that this phenomenon needed further attention. His conclusions are like those of Brown (1975). Schwenter's (1993) work is important because it considers the possibility that factors beyond formality and informality and/or power and solidarity govern the choice between these two pronouns. His findings represent a new direction in this field of research.

Uber (2000) analyzed 360 minutes of recorded Puerto Rican Spanish. Participants were all adult native speakers of Spanish. The data were recorded from everyday business interactions and were divided into 180 minutes in offices and 180 minutes in sale-related situations. Uber (2000) found, in her quantitative analysis, that the form of address depends greatly on the degree of familiarity among the speakers. Uber's (2000) results, like those of Schwenter (1993), support Brown and Gilman (1960) and Fairclough (1989), who put forward the notion that solidarity is becoming more important than power in the choice of forms of address.

Uber (2000) attributes this phenomenon to the fact that society is becoming more egalitarian and that this happens especially among younger generations. *Power,* according to Uber's (2000) results, has not disappeared as a semantic determiner of address because she found some uses of *usted* directed to the boss or the boss's boss, which indicates that power is still governing the use of this pronoun.

Uber (2000) found that *power* and *solidarity* were factors in the choice of these forms of address. In her qualitative data, she found that *power* could be manifested by differences in age, profession, or perceived position between the speakers involved in the conversation. *Solidarity* could refer to the degree of *familiarity* or intimacy between the speakers. The author also found that the form of address used by a speaker does not always affect the form of address received by the same speaker. Uber (2000) claims that even when it cannot be formalized, personal style could also be an important factor in the choice of pronouns of address. She states that more reserved people may use and receive the formal address of *usted* with greater frequency. Uber's (2000) research showed that variation in the use of pronouns of address is present within the same dialect, and it agrees with Schwenter's (1993) findings that dialects of Spanish vary among each other and within themselves. She also found that *familiarity* with the listener influences the usage of pronouns of address among young speakers more than *power.*

In 2002, Rossomondo studied the responses of 77 "Madrileños" (citizens from Madrid, Spain) (30 males and 47 females) to a 76-item questionnaire, which asked for the selection between *tú* and *usted* given a particular interlocutor. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years. Participants had to answer a set of questions regarding the usage of these two pronouns of address. Rossomondo found that, like in previous studies, gender does not play a significant role in terms of participants own address behavior, although males reported being addressed with *usted* more often than female participants. Rossomondo

(2002) also found that as the age of the participant decreased, his/her contact with the use of *usted* decreased as well.

Furthermore, even when her data supported the claim that the level of education of the participant influenced the use of the pronouns of address, Rossomondo (2002) insisted that the the role it plays is more complex. Professionals tend to give the form *usted* less, but they receive it more from their interlocutors.

When comparing the results of her study to responses given by speakers who were not Madrileños, she found that Madrileños used *usted* significantly less than people from other regions. Rossomondo (2002) also found that speakers used the formal pronoun of usted considerably less with family members. Although they *used* it less, this factor was not that significant when compared to other variables as the speaker was being addressed. In the work place, speakers received the *usted* form less, regardless of their status. In other situations, speakers gave and received the *usted* form significantly more when being addressed by someone of higher and lower status than by someone of equal status. As for *familiarity,* speakers received the usted form less with acquaintances than with strangers. One valuable contribution of Rossomondo's (2002) work is the finding that neither gender clash nor the gender of the interlocutor contributed significantly to the choice between *tú* and *usted*. Rossomondo (2002) in her future research sections states that

Many informants reported the *"modo de ser,"* or personality, of the interlocutor as contributing to their decision. It would certainly be challenging to construct a means of measuring such a subjective concept, but it was alluded to with such frequency that it seems a promising if problematic avenue for future research. (p. 127)

Following Rossomondo (2002), a new variable, *personality,* is included in the present study. This psychological variable is added in search of empirical evidence that permits the formalization of its influence in the choice of pronouns of address. The personality of both a fictitious character and the one of the participant were measured to account for their influence on the participant's choice of pronouns of address. In addition to *personality* as a new variable, *forma de vestir* [mode of dress] was also included as an independent variable for the present study. This feature was put forward by Uber (2000) who studied address patterns in Latin America where, similarly to Rossomondo (2002), several of the participants reported this as being influential in their choice of pronouns of address. As Rossomondo (2002) concluded, any future work on pronominal address choice should consider the complex, multi-causal nature of the speaker's choice of pronominal address forms (p. 128).

The present study took this particularity into consideration in the formulation of its research questions as well as for the development of an instrument that accounts for this multi-causal, complex nature of this contrast. The design also allows for the control all the variables under study.

Finally, Uber (2000) also reported that the interlocutor's personality might play a role in the choice of pronoun of address chosen; therefore,

it was decided to include this variable to the present study and explored its influence further.

Other studies regarding pronouns of address in Spanish include the use of the form *vos* or voseo; however, due to the limitation of space and that the focus of the study is on the acquisition of Spanish as a foreign/second language in the USA where *vos* is not introduced regularly as a form of address, readers are directed to the edited work of Moyna and Rivera-Mills (2016) for a compilation of recent work done in different varieties of L1 Spanish.

2.2 Spanish as a Second/Foreign Language

In Spanish as a first language, this body of research has shed light on the area of variationist sociolinguistics and allows us to understand better the variables that affect native speaker's choices regarding pronouns of address. Although the research in this area seems robust, very little has been done regarding the acquisition and/or use of this pragmatic feature by Spanish language learners. Koike, Pearson, and Witten (2003) clearly state that there are no published studies on *deixis* and the acquisition of Spanish as a second language. French and German as second languages, however, are two languages in which *formal* versus *informal* variation has been addressed (e.g., Belz & Kinginger, 2002 in French and German; Belz & Kinginger, 2003 in German; and Rehner, Mougeon & Nadasdi, 2003 in French).

Belz and Kinginger (2002) studied the acquisition of pronouns of address and how awareness can play a role in their acquisition. The authors presented two case studies. One is a learner of French as a second language (age 19), and the other is a learner of German as a second language (age 21).

Belz and Kinginger (2002) used tele-collaborative language learning (i.e., email and chat) with native speakers of the target language. In this study, results showed that no claims could be made about the precise nature of learners' awareness of the forms, nor could it be asserted that the rules for their use were learned or acquired entirely and that these rules became unproblematic and permanently available for the learners' use. Belz and Kinginger (2002) also found that it is not the rules that must be acquired, but awareness of complexity, sensitivity to social cues, and the form-meaning pairings that serve to index this knowledge within particular settings (p. 209). The authors concluded that the quality of IL restructuring may be sensitive to the socio-pragmatic context of its occurrence.

In 2003, Belz and Kinginger reported quantitative data on the same phenomenon. They studied the acquisition of German pronouns of address through telecollaborative language learning by 14 English speakers whose ages ranged from 18 to 23 years old (6=m/8= f) with 16 native German speakers of approximately the same age. The English-speaking participants were all students of fourth-semester college German, whereas the German-speaking participants were all studying to

become English teachers and enrolled in a teacher education seminar (2= m/ 14= f). Belz and Kinginger (2003) discovered that most of the U.S. students mixed both T (i.e., informal second-person singular pronoun) and V (i.e., formal secondperson singular pronoun) in their correspondence, often within the same clause, which suggests that their choice of forms could not be motivated only on the basis of the perception of a power differential relating to the interlocutor.

Belz and Kinginger (2003) claimed that this appeared to suggest the participants choice of forms could not be motivated solely based on the perception of a power differential relating to expert speakership, for it was clear that all German students addressed the U.S. students with the informal form in their initial correspondence and that no participant ever used the formal form over the course of telecollaboration. They also found that in five of the seven transatlantic groups both U.S. partners used either V exclusively or a mixture of T and V and that only one group used exclusively T. The authors reported that despite the fragmentary and often contradictory rules, the U.S. students showed clear linguistic development with regard to the T of solidarity over the course of the semester.

This finding suggested that it was not necessarily the *information* given by the expert speaker that afforded this development, but rather the *act of peer assistance itself* (p. 630). Based on their findings, Belz and Kinginger (2003) suggested three types of development:

Abrupt development: inappropriate use of T/V before peer assistance, but appropriate use of T/V after peer assistance. (Tom's *grammatical system* for *du* and *Sie* was in place prior to the critical moments he experienced in telecollaboration, but not his *sociopragmatic* system for the T of solidarity. (p. 634)

Gradual development: A student experiences gradual development with respect to the T of solidarity if the relative percentage of V uses before peer assistance is greater than the relative percentage of V uses after the peer assistance, but has not decreased abruptly to zero. (p. 634)

Persistent Variation: It occurs when the relative percentage of V uses after peer assistance is greater than the relative percentage of V uses before peer assistance. (p. 638).

Belz and Kinginger (2003) concluded that an examination of learners' history of language use within a singular context suggests that alongside the *acquisition* metaphor, several recently emerging, alternative metaphors for language learning, such as *participation* or *apprenticeship*, may be successfully invoked to characterize the development of pragmatic competence (p. 641).

These two studies represent an important contribution in this field of research because they showed that the context in which conversations take place as well as the interaction with native speakers of a language may influence the choice of pronouns of address by learners and possibly by native speakers. The present study also investigates the line of thought that claims that not only the mere acquisition of rules, but the awareness of complexity, sensitivity to social cues, and the formmeaning pairings

that serve to index this knowledge within some settings, holds true for learners of Spanish as a second language. This was accomplished by using a modified DCT (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993) for learners to choose between three grammatically correct forms.

The purpose was to investigate learners' awareness of the forms and their meanings. By gathering data on this issue, it was hoped that the teaching of foreign languages, particularly the ones that have pronouns of address, would benefit from knowing how non-linguistic factors may influence learners' linguistic choice and account for them.

2.3 The Use of DCT in the Study of Pragmatics

To study variation and interlanguage pragmatic development, Kasper and Dhal (1991) proposed that, in pragmatics, we are dealing with a double layer of variability:

(a) variability that reflects the social properties of the speech event, and the strategic, actional, and linguistic choices by which interlocutors attempt to reach their communicative goals; and (b) the variability induced by different instruments of data collection. While our primary goal is to uncover sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic variability "in the real world," we have to be alerted to task effects induced by our instruments in order to assign correct causal interpretations to observed variation. (p. 213)

The authors defined several types of data collection employed in interlanguage pragmatics research. Kasper and Dahl (1991) stated that these methods can be characterized according to the constraints they impose on the data (i.e., the degree to which the data are predetermined by the instrument and the modality of language use subjects/participants are engaged in [p. 216]). The present study uses a modified Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which attempts to capture participants' choices between two acceptable forms of address (i.e., *tú* and *usted*) of the second-person singular in Spanish. The traditional DCT was first developed by Blum and Levenston (1978) to study lexical simplification and first adapted to investigate speech realization by Blum-Kulka (1982). These tasks are written questionnaires including several brief situational descriptions, followed by a short [written] dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study (for a thorough review of DCT see Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

Moreover, Kasper and Dahl (1991) stated that most of the studies of L2 data as baseline differ according to the presence or absence of L1 data use as controls. Kasper and Dahl (1991) concluded that the traditional design for interlanguage studies which use comparable sets of L2 and L1 data is more informative, and thus preferable, for the study of IL pragmatics (p. 225). The present work uses data collected from 79 Spanish L2 participants and uses data from 10 L1 Spanish participants as control.

On the effects influenced by task in interlanguage data, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) concluded that different forms of DCTs elicit different responses, especially from NNS in their study on rejections of

advice in academic situations. They also found that providing authentic utterances as prompts in DCTs is particularly important when the speech act under study is a response (e.g., rejections or responses to compliments) rather than an initiation (e.g., a compliment or an invitation). The authors concluded that although DCT elicitations cannot entirely replace the study of natural conversation in interlanguage pragmatics, these instruments can be refined to elicit more natural responses by including authentic speech.

A previous work on the study of speech acts that attempted a modification of the DCT was Oquendo (unpublished) who used still pictures to represent academic versus non-academic situations. Oquendo found that the setting which was presented to learners influenced their choice of utterances.

Thus, the type of DCT employed in the present study tries to encode as many features as possible for it to resemble real situations and/or conversations. Part of the innovation is due to it being a computerized DCT, which participants filled out while guided by the researcher on what the study is about (i.e., just giving participants the guidelines of how to proceed) and while giving the participants the opportunity to work alone and at their own pace (i.e., in a computer workstation).

This computer environment has four basic components, and it was created using Macromedia Dreamweaver 2004 and Flash 2004. The components and/or modification that were done are explained in the methodology section.

To recapitulate, by using a modified Discourse Completion Test or DCT using audio, video, and text in a more naturalistic way, following current research and variables that have not yet been studied such as the personality of the participant and outfit of interlocutors, this study seeks to understand whether L2 learners of Spanish use pronouns of address in a native-like manner and what variables influence their choices.

3. Methodology

Based on previous literature, and to fill the gap in the literature about this phenomenon, the present work aims to study the possible variables, old and new, that might influence the interlanguage variation in this phenomenon. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Do learners of Spanish as a second language use the pronouns of address following the rules, prescriptive or not, of native speakers? If so, is variation in usage present in their interlanguage?
2. Do social variables influence the use and/or variation of these pronouns? If so, which social variables influence their usage?
3. What pragmatic variables influence the use and/or variation of these pronouns?
4. Does an overt pronoun of address in the prompt sentence influence the use of these forms?

5.   Do the personality of the participant and the scenario character influence the choice of address forms?

3.1 Participants

There were 79 participants for this study (male = 23; female = 56), and all were Spanish learners with different levels of Spanish proficiency at a midwestern university in the United States. They were from various academic levels (e.g., freshmen to graduate students). Their section groups were randomly selected from the entire sample of sections of Spanish classes for the semester in which the data were collected.

Their level of Spanish was determined by their placement exams in the department of Spanish and Portuguese, which has four levels ranging from S100 (first-semester Spanish) to S400 (a course for students majoring or minoring in Spanish) and graduate students. Participants were all native speakers of English. Their ages ranged from 17 to 35 years. Ten native speakers of Spanish from different Spanishspeaking countries were also part of the study as a control group (m = 4; f = 6). The native speakers of Spanish were all graduate students in the Spanish and Portuguese department at the same university. Their ages ranged from 24 to 40 years.

3.2 The Instrument

This study attempts to refine the canonical DCT following Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) and the previous research on DCTs in order to be able to elicit responses from participants regarding forms of address in a language that shows variation in its use: Spanish. The attempt is to elicit responses that resemble what people (i.e., participants) do rather than what they say they would do with the pronouns of address.

This instrument has four components. The first component is the background questionnaire, which was created to gather participant information such as gender, age, social class, contact with Spanish, level of instruction, and personality. *Personality* was gathered using the NEO-Five Factor Inventory (FFI). The NEOFFI measures five broad domains or factors of personality. The responses that a person gives to the statements about a person's thoughts, feelings, and goals can be compared with those of other adults to give a description of that person's personality (Costa & McCrae, 1999).

The second component is an introduction to the characters and their description, which was given before the presentation of the scenarios. This introduction includes all three media types: audio, text, and video. This was created for the participants to be familiar with the names, the personalities, and the characters themselves. It was also done to highlight any effect in participants' choice that might have been influenced by the character personality.

The third component in the instrument is the situational scenarios, which were created by taking into consideration the degree of imposition in each of the questions to be asked. Each situation was introduced by a context that was in text and in audio form. The audio consisted of a person reading the instructions and the situation, so participants could be kept on task and there would be less room for misinterpretations of each context. All contexts were immediately followed by a video clip that allowed the participants to visualize what had just been read to them. Videos were silent because inclusion of dialogue may influence the participant's choice. One of the main reasons why video was included is the fact that one of the independent variables included in this study is the mode of dress of the character. *Dress code* of the character's interlocutor has been mentioned, albeit anecdotally, in the literature as playing a role in the speaker's choice regarding pronouns of address. This variable was added to the present study because of the possibility that visual effects may also affect the speaker's choice in this regard. A written text could have sufficed, but it does not have the same effect in the reactions of participants, a point I address further in the discussion section.

A total of eight scenarios were created; each one was composed of a greeting and a low-imposition request. Low-imposition requests were included to avoid the variable *degree of imposition* influence on the responses of participants. From these eight possible situational scenarios, a total of 16 scenarios were presented to the participants. These scenarios created a balance between the variables that were manipulated and those that were not. These variables were character, personality, familiarity, dress code, type of clause, and presence or absence of the pronoun. All characters were males, and the situations were carried out in public places. No situation of power differences between the interlocutor and the character was included to isolate the effects of the variable familiarity. Relationships of power differences were isolated in this study because it has already been demonstrated by previous investigators that this category plays a key role, and it is not the main focus of the present study. Solidarity, however, has also been studied sufficiently, but questions about its influence on pragmatic choices remain; therefore, it is part of the focus of the present work.

The fourth and last component is the question to participants about what their response would be in a situation like the one they have just seen. The question comes after participants have read, listened, and watched. To answer, participants must select from three types of sentences. The first two sentences are utterances with *tú* and *usted* and the third choice is the option of selecting both as appropriate with no difference in meaning. Finally, a "submit" button was included to submit their answers.

3.3 Procedure

The data collection was carried out during an academic semester. Permission was obtained from the university's Human Subjects

Committee to carry out the investigation. Following protocol, permission was also obtained from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to approach the teachers for recruiting participants. After teachers were contacted, non-graduate participants were addressed by the researcher and were invited to participate in the present study. Entire course sections were invited to come to a computer lab and complete the task during one of their regular classes. The time and day were agreed upon by the teacher and the researcher. In the language lab, participants were asked to grant permission to use the data by signing an informed consent form before beginning to fill out the instrument.

Students not participating in the research had to complete the task as part of their class, and they were asked not to press the *submit* button and to close the browser, so data collected from these students were destroyed after the class was over. Completion of the task lasted between 15 and 25 minutes. Native speakers and advanced graduate-level speakers were contacted via email. They were invited to participate in the study. They were later instructed to meet at a computer language lab at a given date and location to complete the questionnaire. They also signed a consent form. and it took them between 10 to 15 minutes to complete the task. All participants, non-graduate, graduate, and native speakers were asked that once they had completed filling out the instrument, they should press the *submit* button, and their answers were sent via email to the researcher's email address. Finally, all data were coded and prepared for analysis.

3.4 Coding

There were three choices: *tú, usted*, and *either*. The dependent variable was coded following previous L1 research in this area (Rehner, Mougeon, & Nadasdi, 2003) with a T for *tú*, V for *usted*, and B for *either*. Sixteen independent variables were included for the present study. Table 1 includes all variables used in the scenarios. The dependent variable is the participant's choice of the pronoun of address. These independent variables were categorized as pragmatic, linguistic, social, and psychological in nature and are presented in Table 1 as well.

Variables were designed to represent the different dimensions that may influence the choices of participants. Thus, *solidarity* is defined as the degree of familiarity the character has with his interlocutor. This degree of familiarity was binary in nature: friend and stranger. The category *friend* was defined by whether the main character of the scenario and his interlocutor were friends. The category *stranger* was defined by whether the main character of the scenario and his interlocutor did not know each other previously. For the purposes of this study, this variable was called *familiarity* instead of solidarity because the term *familiarity* captures the relationship between interlocutors more accurately. One pragmatic variable that was included in this study and has not been included in previous studies was *dress code*. This variable was also binary in nature. It was coded as *formal* and *informal* dress code.

Two linguistic variables were included. The first was the type of prompt sentence the participants were to choose. There were two choices, one was a greeting, and the other was coded as low-imposition question. The second linguistic variable was whether the pronoun of address was *overt* or *covert*. [Table 1]

Table 1:
Distribution of variables and coding schemes

Dependent Variable			
Participant's choice	tú		
	usted		
	both		
Independent Variables			
Pragmatic Variables		**Linguistic Variables**	
Familiarity	Friend	Clause Type	Greeting
	Stranger		Question
Dress Code	Formal	Pronoun	Overt
	Informal		Covert
		Character Personality	Extroverted
			Introverted
		Participant's Personality	Extroverted
			Introverted
Social Variables			
Gender	Male	Visit to a Spanish	Yes
	Female	Speaking country	No
Age	17 to 25	Purpose	Vacation
	25 to 35		Study abroad program
	35+		Living
Academic year	Freshman	Length of stay	>1 month
	Sophomore		2 to 3 months
	Junior		4 to 8 months
	Senior		9+ months
	Graduate		
Enrollment level	S100-S150 class	Place of birth	East Coast
	S300-graduate classes		Midwest
			West Coast
Social Class	High		South
	Middle		Southwest
	Low		Other
Spanish Contact	Little		
	Moderate		
	Often		
	Very often		

Ten social and academic variables were included in the analysis. The first was gender. Even though it has been demonstrated that gender does not play a role in the selection of pronouns of address, it was included

because of the limited accounts in the literature of this nature in L2 Spanish. The second social variable was age. Participants were divided into three age groups. Group a consisted of participants between the ages of 17 and 25, group *b* between 25 and 35, and group c between 35 and 45. This division was chosen to account for possible differences between generational groups as well as for any change regarding pronouns of address and the disappearance of the formal pronouns in contexts such as those described in prescriptive grammars for elementary students.

The third variable was the level of education, which is more social in nature and something achieved by the participant. For the coding of this variable, I simply took their reported academic year. The categories were freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate student. The fourth variable was the level of Spanish proficiency. As mentioned before, this category was based on the Spanish course the participant was currently taking. There were three categories and they were coded as basic (i.e., first or second semester Spanish), intermediate (i.e., third and fourth semester Spanish), and advanced (i.e., for majors/minors and graduate students of Spanish).

Social class was the fifth variable. Due to the difficulty of defining social classes in the United States, a composite of components was added to account for the level of income of the participants. The components included their parents′ education and profession and how participants pay for tuition. For their father's and mother's education, it was considered whether they had completed primary, high school, college, and university programs. If they reported that each of the parents completed only primary education, a .25 weight was assigned for each. If they reported that their parents had completed or not completed high school, a weight of .50 was assigned. If they reported that an undergraduate college degree was sought whether completed or not completed, a .75 weight was assigned. Finally, if they reported that a graduate-level university degree was sought whether completed or not completed, a weight of 1 was assigned. The father's and mother's reported professions were also coded in a similar fashion.

Professions that require a university degree (MAs or PhDs) were given a weight of 1. If the reported profession required a college degree (undergraduate only) then they were assigned a weight of .75. If it was related to sales, real estate, military, and the sort, a weight of .5 was assigned. Other types of profession were assigned a weight of .25. This was done because the level of education and the professions are believed to correlate highly with level of income. In addition to parents' education and professions, how participants pay for their tuition was included in this variable. This variable consisted of four categories. If participants reported using student loans to pay for their tuition, a weight of .5 was assigned. If participants reported they had to work in order to pay, then a .5 was also assigned to this category. If participants reported that parents paid for their tuition, a weight of 1 was assigned. If participants reported other sources of payment, a weight of .25 was assigned. A total scale of five points was created. Participants who fell between 4 and 5 were classified

as belonging to a high-income family and coded as *h* for high. If their score fell between 2 and 3, they were coded as *m* for middle income. Finally, if they scored 1, they were coded as l for low income.

A group of social variables that described contact with Spanish was included. Because this is an IL study, it is important to know how much contact with the target language participants have and how this affects their choices. Four variables were included in this group. For contact with Spanish, participants were asked to select among nine options, all of which describe their contact with Spanish. These categories were *at home, at school, with friends, at work, watching TV, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and/or magazines, mail/email, and the use of a dictionary.* Depending on the amount of contact with native speakers that each of these categories carry, a weight between .25 to 2 was assigned to each. If they reported using Spanish at home, at work, or with friends, a weight of 2 was assigned because these categories represent the highest contact with Spanish. If they reported using Spanish at school, a weight of 1 was assigned because it represents the academic setting where a teaching/learning process is taking place and the amount of contact can be traced.

If they reported other categories, a weight between .75 to .25 was assigned, and dictionary use was the lowest category. Mail was the only one assigned a .5 weight. Three levels of contact were created. The total possible score was 10. If the participants achieved a score between 7.5 and 10, their contact with Spanish was classified as *very often.* If they achieved a score between .5 and .75, it was classified as *often.* If they achieved a score between .25 and .5, they were classified as having *moderate* contact with Spanish. Finally, if participants scored between 0 and .25, they were classified as having little contact with Spanish.

In addition to Spanish contact, two more variables were within this category. Whether a participant had visited a Spanish speaking country was counted as a single variable. The length of stay was also considered one variable on its own. Four categories constituted this group. A stay of less than a month was coded as *1,* a stay between 1 and 3 months was coded as *3,* a visit between 4 and 8 months was coded as *8,* and a visit of more than 9 months was coded as *9.* It is believed that the length of visit to the country where the target language is spoken plays an important role in IL development (Lafford & Uscinski, 2013). The purpose of the visit was also classified as an independent variable. Three categories were created, including a visit, study abroad program, and living in a Spanish speaking country.

One last social variable was added. This variable was the place of birth of the participant. This variable had not been considered in previous studies of IL variation. The five geographical regions of the continental United States were used as categories. A sixth category was created to include people from other parts of the U.S. Thus, these categories were reported by participants from the East coast, the Midwest, the South, the Southwest, and the West coast among others.

Finally, a set of psychological variables was included. These variables were selected from the NEO-FFI test, and only the 12 questions

pertaining to these two factors were included in the background questionnaire. This variable was also included in the scenarios by presenting two main characters. One was an *introverted student* and the other an *extroverted student* who went to a study abroad program.

With this variable it was hoped that the results could show whether the character or personality of participants affects the choice of pronouns of address by second language learners as well as native speakers.

3.5 Analysis

A VARBRUL analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, & Smith, 2005) was used with the collected data for the present study. VARBRUL analysis has been widely used in the field of variationist sociolinguistics (e.g., Díaz-Campos, 2004, 2003, among others) and has proven to be a powerful analytic device for identifying significant linguistic, social, and interactional variables that differentiate or condition probabilities associated with linguistic factors (Tagliamonte, 2006). VARBRUL is a logistic regression that yields probabilistic weights and significant values of factors influencing and/or contributing to a specific linguistic, pragmatic, or social phenomenon, in this case the choice of pronouns of address by second language learners and native speakers of Spanish. Because of the nature of the dependent variable, three analyses were carried out in the present study for each group: L2 speakers and native speakers.

Firstly, an analysis of the answers pertaining to the form *tú* against the other two was performed. Secondly, an analysis of the answers pertaining to *usted* against the other two possibilities was run. Thirdly, an analysis of the answer pertaining to *both* against the other two was also run. This was decided because the present study seeks to understand any differences there might be in the choice of pronouns of address and the limitations of GoldVarb (Johnson, 2009). If we conduct only one analysis, some of the influencing variables may be obscured because the program will focus only on the dependent variable (e.g., the use of *usted* or the use of *tú*). However, if the participants' choices are being triggered by different variables at distinct levels, this needs to be addressed. If the system is composed of the same set of variables triggering the choice of mutually exclusive pronouns of address, all variables should be the same at the outset of each analysis. However, if these are not mutually exclusive pronouns of address, different variables will affect the different choices of pronouns of address.

Because of the complexity of this system, it was decided to run a different analysis for each of the choices given to the participants.

Finally, two separate sets of analyses were conducted for second language speakers and native speakers of Spanish. Native speakers of Spanish were included, as mentioned above, as a control group.

4. Results

Results are presented in two major sections: L2 speakers and native speakers. Each of these sections will be divided into three subsections according to the pronoun of address under analysis: *tú, usted, both.*

4.1 L2 Speakers

For the analysis of the data gathered from L2 speakers, 1172 tokens were used.

After running the first analysis, three factors were eliminated from the analysis. This happened because the factors represented cells that are too small for the analysis. These factors were *low class* in the social class category and *southwest* and *other* in the place of birth category. These variables were re-coded for the purpose of analysis. For the social class variable, there were only two participants who scored as low class. After an overview of the data, they were classified as middle class because their score was too close to the cut off. For the place of birth category, five participants reported being from the Southwest of the United States. These participants' data were recoded as being from the West since this is the closest region to the original. As for the *other* category, there was only one participant reporting being from another region. The data for this participant were coded as "/" (i.e., empty cells).

Usted. After the recoding was complete and the cells were loaded to memory, a Binomial UP and Down analysis was conducted with v as the defining factor (i.e., *usted* versus the other two choices). Twelve of the 16 independent variables were classified as noninfluential in the choice of the pronoun *usted* and, therefore, eliminated from the analysis.

They included nine of the social variables, one linguistic variable, and one psychological variable. These variables are summarized in Table 2.

The variables that were selected as being influential in the selection of the *usted* form with a log likelihood of -714.516 and a significant level of .010 were character personality, familiarity, dress code, pronoun, and place of birth.

Table 2:
Variables eliminated in the Binomial Up & Down analysis: Defining factor v

Social
Gender
Age
Academic year
Enrollment level
Social Class
Spanish Contact
Visit to a Spanish Speaking Country
Purpose
Length of Stay

Linguistic Variables
Clause Type

Psychological Variables
Personality

In terms of character *personality*, if the character was *introverted,* participants chose the form *usted* with a weight of .590. If the character was *extroverted*, participants chose the other choice with a weight of .423. For familiarity, if the interlocutor (i.e., not the character) was a stranger, this seemed to attract the usted form with a weight of .658 against a weight of .317 for the other two forms.

Regarding dress code, formal wear attracted the *usted* form more than the other two choices with weight of .569 and .400 respectively. The variable of the type of pronoun in the clause for the form *usted* overt pronouns seemed to attract it more than the other choices with weights of .541 and .459 respectively. Finally, for place of birth, participants from the South and from the West seemed to prefer the *usted* form, with weights of .679 and .564 respectively, more than participants from other regions (Mid-West = .499 and East = .395). The distribution of probability weights is shown in Figures 1 - 5.

Tú. In the case of *Tú*, the Binomial Up & Down analysis was run with *t* as the defining factor. This analysis eliminated almost the same variables as the preceding analysis with a log likelihood of -690.880 and a significant level of .016. However, one variable was different from the previous analysis. The *place of birth* of the participant was not selected as an influential variable; participant *personality* was selected instead.
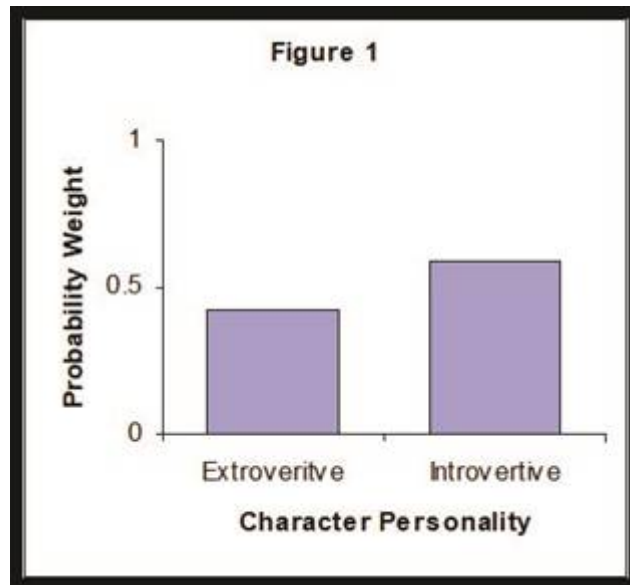
Figure 1
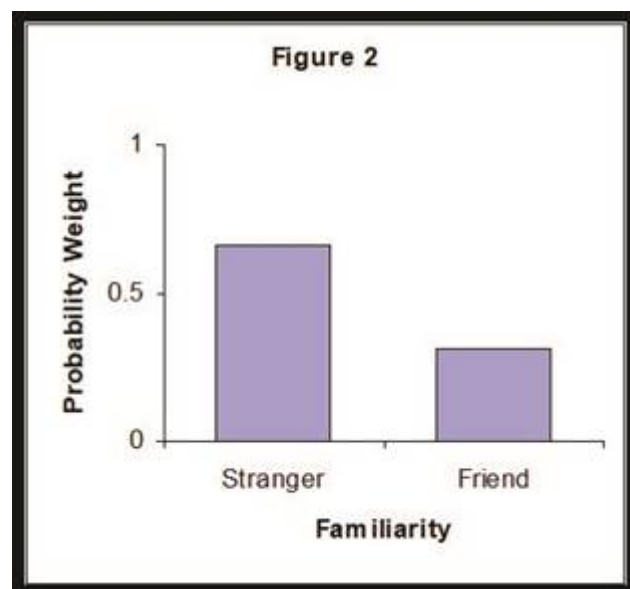Results by independent variable - Character personality

Figure 2
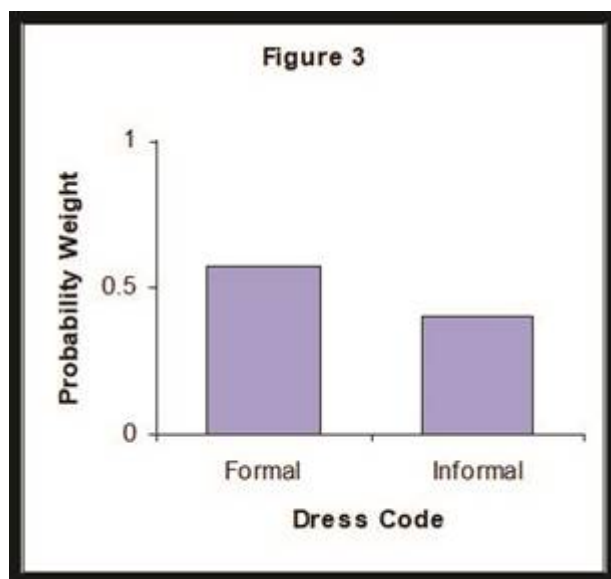Results by independent variable - Familiarity

Figure 3
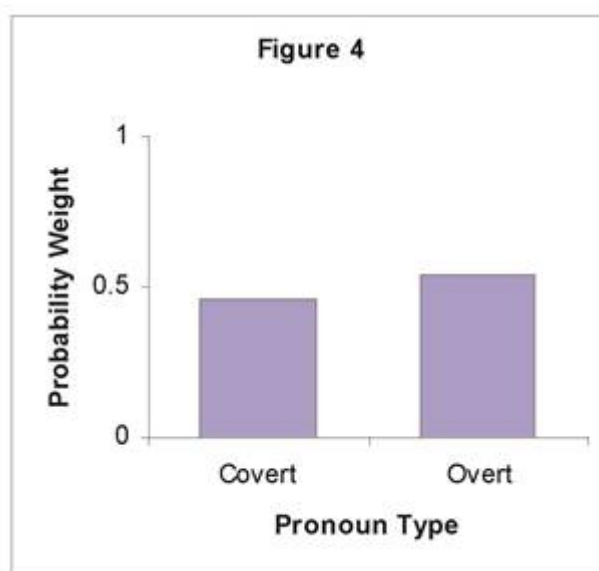
Results by independent variable - Dress code

Figure 4

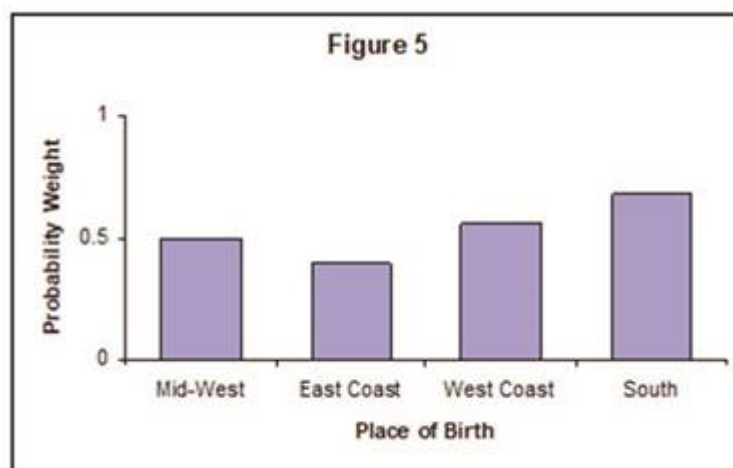Results by independent variable - Pronoun type

Figure 5

Results by independent variable - Place of birth The results for the first four variables that were selected to promote the use of *tú* were the same as those of the analysis for *usted* (see Table 3), but in reverse order. Participant's personality showed that Extroverted participants tended to prefer t, with a probability weight of .513, more than Introverted participants, whose probability weight was .383.

These results are interesting because, for the first time, an analysis of each of the two pronouns of address yields results that suggest different variables may be influencing speakers' choices about each of the forms of address.

Table 3:
Up & Down analysis with tú as a defining variable

Variable	Weight
Character Person:	
Extrovert	0.577
Introverte	0.411
Familiarity	
Friend	0.717
Stranger	0.311
Dress Code	
Formal	0.441
Informal	0.586
Pronoun Type	
Overt	0.458
Covert	0.542

Both. When analyzed, the category of *both* seemed to attract different variables that influence the choice of the preferred variable. With a log

likelihood of -333.052 and a significance level of .017, only three variables were selected as promoting the choice of both pronouns of address. *Familiarity* showed that whether or not the interlocutor was a stranger seemed to influence the most participants using this choice with a weight of .610, whereas whether or not the interlocutor was a friend it was chosen with less frequently with a weight of .372. *Academic year* was the other variable that was significant in this analysis. Freshmen and graduate students seemed to use this choice more than other levels with weights of .614 and .646 respectively. The rest of the categories did not reach significant levels. *Contact with* Spanish was also significant within this analysis. Participants reporting a moderate and low contact with Spanish, with weights of .506 and .525 respectively, seemed to choose *both* more often than those participants reporting a high contact with Spanish (i.e., *very often*).

This could be attributed to the fact that participants with less contact with Spanish are less in contact with these pragmatic features than those with more contact with the language, but they are aware of the prescriptive rules. The lack of contact with the language can also contribute to a lack of pragmatic knowledge and promotes doubt or over-reliance on prescriptive rules when faced with the choice between two grammatically correct sentences (i.e., a pragmatic difference rather than a morphosyntactic difference).

4.2 Native Speakers

The native speakers' data yielded a total of 139 tokens. After the first run of the analysis, only the variables *character personality, familiarity, dress code, clause type*, and *pronoun type* were selected as significant. All remaining variables were eliminated because of small cell number or because they were singletons (i.e., only one category in the group). These variables were g*ender, enrollment level, participant personality,* and *social class.*

Usted. Once the cells were loaded to memory in GoldVarb_2001, a binomial Up & Down analysis with *v* as the determining value selected *character personality, familiarity*, and *dress code* as the variables that influenced native speakers' choice with a log likelihood of -58.957 with a significance level of .028.

About *character personality,* if the character was *Introverted,* participants chose the *usted* form over the *tú* form with a weight of .784 and .278 respectively. *Familiarity,* as in previous studies (Rossomondo, 2002; Schwenter, 1993), seemed to influence speakers' choice of this type. The form usted was used more frequently with strangers (e = .805) than with friends (a = .134). Similarly, dress code seemed to influence participant choices with formal wear attracting the usted form (f = .621) more than informal wear (i = .343).

Tú. Like the analysis of the *v* form, the *t* form showed that the same variables are significant predictors of participants' choices with a log likelihood of -59.242 and a significance level of .015. The same variables

were selected, but with a mirror effect. Regarding *Character personality,* an Extroverted character seemed to attract the *t* form (t = .709) more than the *v* form (v = .230). For *familiarity,* if the interlocutor was a friend, participants used the *t* form (a = .866) more frequently than the *v* form (e = .195). Finally, *dress code* also played a significant role in participants' selection of pronouns of address. Informal wear attracted the *t* form (i = .672) more frequently than formal wear (f = .367).

No analysis was needed for the category of *both* because there were no tokens in the native speakers' data. This may be the result of the pool of participants being mainly from heavily *tuteo* varieties (e.g., Mexico, Spain, and Colombia), *voseante* varieties (e.g., Argentina, Nicaragua). Furthermore, there were no speakers of varieties of Spanish where the *usted* form is becoming an informal form of address (e.g., Costa Rica). More data on these varieties is needed to account for why the choice of *both* is chosen and in what contexts.

5. Discussion

With the results presented above, it is possible to give the following answers to the research questions of the present study.

Results suggest that second language learners of Spanish seem to use pronouns of address following native speakers' rules. L2 learners' data resemble that of native speakers, which shows that learners are following pragmatic rules when dealing with variables such pronouns of address. Variation is present in their interlanguage, and this is supported by the fact that different factors influence the choice of different pronouns in different situations. These results show a significant difference between learners' choice to that of native speakers in different contexts, mostly social, and seem to influence these two groups; however, there exists an overlap of pragmatic and psychological variables that influence their choice.

Social factors such as *place of birth, academic year*, and *contact with Spanish* seem to be influential in L2 learners' choices of pronouns of address. One interesting finding of this investigation is that their influence depends on the pronoun of address that is chosen as the defining factor for the analysis. This demonstrates that running an analysis for each of these forms of address may uncover variables that otherwise would be hidden. Another interesting finding of this study was that *place of birth* plays a key role in the choice of the formal pronoun of address among second language learners. The data suggest that pragmatic competence from L1 can be transferred from learners' first language. Apparently, differences between English dialects exist between these regions, but this is a more complex issue. The differences of address forms in English cannot be attributed to the use of pronouns, but to more complex grammatical structures.

Pragmatic competence transfer should be studied further to be able to establish a causal relationship in this regard. Contact with Spanish and

the participant's enrollment in lower levels (i.e., basic proficiency level), on the other hand, seem to favor the choice of both forms.

This may be because the more contact with Spanish learners have, the more acute the awareness of the pragmatic implications of the use of one form over the other becomes as their language level allows them to venture into more sophisticated language contexts. Therefore, students with more contact with the target language were reluctant to choose one of the two forms. Freshmen showed a similar pattern. Freshmen's behavior could be attributed to a lack of experience with the second language and their attachment to prescriptive rules. A deeper analysis studying the correlations among these variables and classroom practices is needed to account to their role in L2 learner's choices.

Contrary to the results of L2 speakers' data, social variables were not influential in the native speakers' choice between these pronouns of address despite receiving the same social cues. These results seem to show that variation among native speakers is still ruled by pragmatic and/or psychological variables rather than social variables. A caveat of these results is the small number of native speakers represented in this sample. Future studies could benefit from a bigger sample to discard social variables as not influential on speakers' choice. This sample must include *voseante* varieties and varieties where *usted* is being used as an informal pronoun of address such as the one found in Costa Rica.

Pragmatic variables still are the main influential variables in the choice of pronouns of address both for native and non-native speakers. The data suggest that *familiarity* guides speakers' choice of pronouns of address. These results are congruent with previous research in this area (Rossomondo, 2002; Uber, 2000; Schwenter, 1993). A finding of interest is that *dress code* seems to play a role in the choice of pronoun of address. Although the data suggests its influence, *dress code* still needs to be studied further. Future studies in this area will benefit from the use of an instrument that shows dress codes that are culturally validated. Differences in perception of the formality or informality of the dress code may affect the results of these types of studies.

Linguistic variables such as *pronoun type* seem to be more influential for L2 learners than the type of prompt sentence. L2 learners seem to rely on the overt pronoun to make their choice of the *usted* form, but they seem not to rely on this factor when choosing the *tú* form. It seems that this could be attributed to learners' familiarity with the *tú* form since this one is used more frequently in the classroom by their instructors. Additionally, a simple search in Spanish language textbooks shows that they use *tú* more frequently than the *usted* form and call the *usted* form of the verb as belonging to the third person singular (i.e., *él* or *ella*), which may be a source of confusion for learners. Aguilar-Sánchez (2004) recommends the use of the appropriate metalanguage in these cases to allow learners to make the correct form-meaning connections. By using the appropriate metalanguage to explain these pragma-syntactic structures, teachers give learners the opportunity to make use of the resources they have at hand while letting their developing

system reaccommodate (Lee, 2000; Lee & Benati, 2007, 2009, 2013; Lee & Valdman, 2000; Lee & VanPatten, 2003) to give way to structures that are governed by factors such as personality type that were not previously believed to affect language acquisition process.

Furthermore, psychological variables such as *personality* have shown to be influential to speakers' choice regarding pronouns of address. Although this variable has not been studied extensively, its study had been suggested in the previous literature (Rossomondo, 2002, Uber, 2000). The present study puts forward a methodology that could be used to include this type of variable into this area of research. It was hard to include this type of data due to the limitations of the DCTs in their canonical forms. The present study shows that it is possible to account for characters' personalities as well as to collect data to account for participants' personalities by using the capabilities of computers to insert different media in one instrument, in other words, make the DCT resemble natural language and situations as much as possible (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). Since personality is a very new variable in these types of studies, it still needs further scrutiny to account for its influence in the choice of pronouns of address both with native speakers and language learners.

6. Concluding remarks

The findings of the present study suggest that linguistic, pragmatic, and/or social variables are not the only ones to influence L2 learners' and native speakers' choices regarding pronouns of address. Psychological variables such as *personality* have shown, in the present study, to be influential in both L2 learners' and native speakers' choices. The study of these types of variables appear to need an instrument capable of using various kinds of input at once. Computers are tools that allow this to happen. Modified computerized DCTs could play a significant role regarding data elicitation and data collection. The present study has benefited from the capabilities of computers and has contributed to an area of interlanguage pragmatics that affects instructed language acquisition and the way researchers and teachers approach learners' talk for assessment purposes.

Thus, when studying language variation, it is important to be able to study all possible variables that might influence the presence of variation in language production. The present study suggests that variables other than linguistic and social should be considered in variationist sociolinguistics for both first languages and second languages alike because, as evident in this project, variables that are not linguistic in nature such as *personality* or visual cues such as *outfit* help explain L2 and native speakers' choices regarding linguistic structures they use. While the focus was not entirely on the teaching of such pronouns, results have direct implications as to how to approach the teaching of these forms. Considering learner's personal choices facilitates the pedagogical approach to have them use and acquire these forms in a more natural way

regardless of instruction settings, which is in line with a learner-centered, proficiency- oriented classroom.

Notes

[1] My interpretation.

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