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Dispreferred Responses in Interlanguage Pragmatics Refusal Sequences in Learner-NS Interactions

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This study examines the pragmatic strategies that learners utilize to negotiate a resolution when refusing a native speaker of higher status in three asymmetric situations (+Power, +Distance). Following Pomerantz's (1984) analysis of dispreferred responses, this study focuses on refusals to an invitation, a request, and a suggestion. Refusal responses are analyzed as refusal sequences across the interaction and with respect to individual and situational pragmatic variation. Results showed that learners employed a variety of direct and indirect strategies to delay a refusal response across one or more insistence-refusal sequences. The interactional input provided by the native speaker served to help the learners get back on track in the conversation and to bring the conversation to a successful resolution. Three aspects of learners' pragmatic competence are analyzed: situational variation, individual variability, and the sequential organization of refusals in learner-NS interactions. Finally, two additional issues are discussed: formulaic use of interlanguage refusals and the effect of length of stay in the host environment on the pragmatic competence of the advanced learner.

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research has examined various aspects of the learner's pragmatic competence during the negotiation of speech acts in encounters with native speakers (NSs). This line of research has largely centered on aspects of pragmatic transfer, linguistic deficits, frequency, and content of strategies in isolated contexts (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). In second language (L2) studies of speech acts such as apologizing or refusing, it has been common practice to focus on the inventory, distribution, and the frequency of pragmatic strategies utilized to express communicative intent without analyzing the learner's interactional achievements. Yet, according to critical appraisals of speech act theory and discourse analysis, most research in ILP does not analyze learner data in terms of sequential organization of discourse (cf. Kasper, 2006). In the current study, one type of dispreferred response, refusals, will be analyzed with respect to refusal sequences in asymmetric (+Power) learner-NS interactions in a foreign language (FL) context.

Theoretical Framework

Dispreferred Responses

Two types of dispreferred responses have been examined in the literature, disagreements and refusals. Disagreements are generally referred to as "the communication of an opinion or belief contrary to the view expressed by a previous speaker" (Edstrom, 2004, p. 1505). Using a corpus of conversations of NSs of English, Pomerantz (1984) observed that agreements are organized as preferred activities and disagreements as dispreferred activities. Agreements may occupy an entire turn, may be accomplished with

stated agreement components, and may be realized with a minimization of gap between the prior turn's completion and the agreement turn's initiation (p. 65). Disagreements, on the other hand, "may produce delays, such as "no talk," requests for clarification, partial repeats, and other repair initiators, turn prefaces, and so on" (p. 70). A crucial feature of disagreements is that they are often delayed within turns and presented later in the turn, and may be prefaced by means of a series of minimal vocalizations or perturbations ('uh's, mmm') or discourse markers ('well', 'darn').

The turn shapes of disagreements and refusals have been examined among NSs of Spanish and English. In an examination of natural conversations from American English and Peninsular Spanish, Santamaría García (2001) found a difference with respect to how Americans and Spaniards express disagreements in oral discourse. It was found that disagreements were hardly prefaced in the Spanish data (5%), whereas 16.7% of the disagreeing turns in the English data were prefaced. This finding is similar to that of Pomerantz's study (1984) in which dispreferred responses in her English corpus are mostly prefaced by means of various delay mechanisms; the Spanish corpus, however, does not coincide with Pomerantz' results. Further, Santamaría García found that overlap in disagreements was more frequently found in Spanish conversations (42.8%) and less frequently used in English disagreeing turns (5.2%). The author concluded that dispreferred actions may be produced with reluctance and the author attributed this finding to considerations of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In a different study, Félix-Brasdefer (2008a) examined refusals to invitations, requests, and suggestions in two varieties of Spanish, Mexican (Tlaxcala region [Central Mexico]) and Dominican (Santiago [North east]). It was found that the Mexicans tended to delay the refusal response by means of a series of prefaces and mitigating devices which made the refusal response longer and more indirect, whereas the Dominicans barely delayed their responses and their interactions were briefer and more direct than those of the Mexicans. Taken together, it seems that Pomerantz' framework of dispreferred responses parallels Mexican refusal behavior, whereas the Spaniards and the Dominicans in these studies tend to avoid delaying a dispreferred response, thus reflecting regional pragmatic variation.

The sequential organization of disagreements and refusals has been examined among learners of English as a second language (ESL). Using Pomerantz' (1984) model of dispreferred responses, Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury (2004) analyzed the sequence and structure of turns in disagreements among 10 uninstructed ESL learners during a one-year longitudinal study of learner-NS interactions using natural L2 conversations. An analysis of the learner data showed that a change was observed in an increase of the amount of talk, delayed postponements, and evidence of a multiple-turn structure over time. Employing the tools of discourse analysis, Gass and Houck (1999) examined the structure of interlanguage refusals at the discourse level. Using role-play interactions, their study investigated the verbal and non-verbal behavior of refusals among three ESL Japanese learners (low intermediate level) in refusal interactions with a NS of English. In particular, the authors examined non-native negotiation across the complete refusal interaction. According to these authors, a number of possible initial responses may appear after a refusal; likewise, a number of possible responses may be present in the final outcome of the conversation (i.e., the resolution of the interaction), and the initial response and the final outcome may not coincide. The context of both studies was English as a second language.

The Speech Act Set of Refusals

The current study will focus on one type of dispreferred response, refusals. Refusals are second pair parts in conversation and belong to the speech act of dissent which represents one type of assertive act or negative expression (Herrero Moreno, 2002). As a reactive speech act, refusals function as a response to an initiating act and are considered to be a speech act by which a speaker “[fails] to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor” (Chen, Ye, & Zhang 1995, p. 121). A refusal response may be expressed directly or indirectly, and accompanied by other adjuncts to refusals (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990). A direct refusal corresponds to Brown and Levinson’s on-record strategy with respect to the precision and clarity of the communicative intention (‘No; I can’t’) (1987, pp. 68-69). If a refusal is expressed indirectly, the degree of complexity increases as the speaker has to choose the appropriate form in order to soften the negative effects of a direct refusal. Indirect refusals may include any of the following nine components: a mitigated refusal (‘Unfortunately, I don’t think I’ll be able to attend the party’), a reason or explanation (‘I already made plans to visit my parents’), an indefinite reply (‘I don’t know if I’ll have time’), an alternative (‘Why don’t we go out for dinner next week?’), a postponement (‘I’d rather take this class next semester’), requests for clarification (‘Did you say Saturday?’) or additional information (‘What time is the party?’), a promise to comply (‘I’ll try to be there, but I can’t promise you anything’)¹, partial repeats of previous utterance (‘... Monday?’), or an expression of regret or apology (‘I’m really sorry; I apologize’).

Further, a refusal response is often accompanied by various adjuncts to refusals which may preface or follow the main refusal response and may consist of: a positive remark (‘Congratulations on your promotion. I am very glad, but...’), an expression of willingness (‘I’d love to, but...’), an expression of gratitude (‘Thanks for the invitation’), partial agreements used to preface a refusal (‘Yes, I agree, but...’), or minimal vocalizations or discourse markers (*A::y, cónchale, mañana no puedo* ‘oh, darn it, tomorrow I can’t’; *hí:jole*, no puedo ‘darn it, I can’t’). Overall, refusals are complex speech acts that require not only long sequences of negotiation and cooperative achievements, but also “face-saving maneuvers to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the act” (Gass and Houck, 1999, p. 2). Thus, the pragmatic strategies that comprise the speech act set of refusals must be examined at the discourse level.

In the present study, the refusal components occurring across refusal sequences (direct and indirect refusals and adjuncts to refusals) will be analyzed with regard to four factors: preference for strategy use, situational variation, learner variability in refusal performance, and the sequential organization of refusals in learner-NS interactions. Refusing a person of higher status (asymmetric situations) in a second language requires not only a sophisticated command of the pragmalinguistic resources necessary to express a refusal appropriately, but learners must also incorporate a knowledge of interactional competence such as the ability to negotiate a refusal response across multiple turns.

While Pomerantz (1984) examined the components of disagreements among NSs of English, in light of the pragmatic variation observed across varieties of Spanish, it is clear that an in-depth analysis of how refusals evolve across multiple turns is needed to expand our knowledge of discourse patterns of non-native speakers as they interact with native speakers of Spanish. In addition, disagreements and refusals have mostly been examined at the discourse level among learners of English (most of them with

an intermediate proficiency level and in status-equal situations [-Power, -Distance]) living in the host environment (Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury, 2004; Gass and Houck, 1999). The current study seeks to shed light on the issue of learner-NS interactions in an FL context when refusing a person of higher status such as a university professor or a boss in three asymmetric situations featuring a +Power (+P) and +Distance (+D) relationship.

Method

Participants

Fifteen male advanced learners of Spanish as an FL participated in this study. All participants were NSs of U.S. English and were undergraduate students of Spanish (mean age: 23.8 years). Before agreeing to participate in the study, participants read and signed a consent form expressing their willingness to participate in the project and most were remunerated for their participation. All learners had an advanced level of Spanish and had previously lived in a Spanish-speaking country. Although no test of language proficiency was employed to measure proficiency level, the literature in ILP and SLA has used different criteria to identify learners with advanced pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2004; Thomas, 1994): length of residence in the host environment, local placement tests, standardized scores, length of language study, placement in language courses, enrollment in a host university, or a combination of these factors. Based on this information, in the current study learners were selected according to the following characteristics: all learners were completing their last year of college (4th or 5th year) or had recently graduated, were Spanish majors, were taking upper-level courses in Spanish, were fluent in Spanish, and had studied abroad in a Spanish-speaking country in Latin America. The number of years that the participants had been studying Spanish ranged from four to nine years (mean: 5.7 years).² It should be noted, however, that all learners may not have been at the same proficiency level and may have displayed various signs of advanced proficiency in their performance. Overall, the population in this study is comprised of undergraduate learners of Spanish at a large Mid-Western University. The advanced level of these learners is representative of Spanish majors in their last year of college who spent time in a Latin American country (i.e., returnees) as part of an overseas study program or a religious mission.

In addition to proficiency level, length of residence in the target culture was also controlled since it has been shown that even short lengths of stay in the host environment may influence the learners' pragmatic competence (Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Matsumura, 2001). Since differences in pragmatic behavior between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish speakers have been observed in the literature on cross-cultural pragmatics (Márquez Reiter and Placencia, 2004, 2005), only learners who had visited a Latin American country were included in the sample. In order to maintain a Latin American variety of L2 Spanish, all learners in the present study had spent time in Latin America and identified their variety of Spanish as Latin American. These included varieties from Mexico ($n = 5$), Venezuela ($n = 5$), Ecuador ($n = 3$), Guatemala ($n = 1$), and Chile ($n = 1$). The learners' reasons for visiting the countries included: study abroad ($n = 12$) and religious missions ($n = 3$). The length of residence in the target culture ranged from four months to two years and these learners were divided into three groups: five learners with 4 to 5 months abroad (learners #1-5), five learners with 9 to 12 months abroad (learners #6-10), and five learners with 18 to 24 months abroad (learners #11-15).

Instrumentation and Procedures

The data for the present investigation were collected using open role plays. To obtain natural speech act performance, Wolfson (1981) pointed out that data need to be gathered “through [direct] observation and participation in a great variety of spontaneously occurring speech situations” (p. 9). Other researchers (Cohen, 2004; Kasper, 2000; Kasper and Dahl, 1991), however, have noted some disadvantages with respect to gathering naturalistic data. According to the observations of these authors, the following issues might pose a problem for the present study if the data were collected in natural contexts: a) proficiency level in an FL context may be difficult to control; b) the data may not yield sufficient quantities of the pragmatic feature under study; c) the refusal situations may not be comparable for all learners; and, d) it would have been difficult to collect comparable refusal data among male speakers from the same university in an FL setting. For the current study, a role-play instrument was selected because of the following three advantages mentioned in Scarcella (1979, p. 277): a) it enables the researcher to obtain complete conversational interactions, that is, data include openings and closings of conversations; b) it allows the researcher to exert some degree of control over the conversation; and, c) it reflects a consciousness of the appropriateness of language use. For these reasons, the current study utilized experimental data in controlled situations in order to examine the negotiation of a refusal of second language learners in asymmetric interactions with a NS of Spanish in an FL context.

For the present study, five situations were employed in the role-play task. The role-play set was comprised of three experimental refusal prompts and two distracter items (one complaint and one apology). The description of the three refusal situations was based on two culturally-sensitive independent variables: social power (P) and social distance (D). Although the level of imposition is a variable that may affect participants’ strategy choice (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Scollon and Scollon, 2001), the description of the role plays which guided the participants’ interaction did not specifically mention this variable. However, the description of the social power (+P) and distance (+D) in each scenario may have had an effect on the level of imposition of the request, invitation, or suggestion; that is, from the contextual description given in each scenario (+P, +D), the participants inferred the weight of imposition required for each refusal situation. While the conceptualization of social distance and power varies across cultures and among researchers (Fraser, 1990; Spencer-Oatey, 1996), in the current study, distance is understood in terms of the degree of familiarity, close (- D) or distant (+ D), between the participants as specified in the role-play descriptions. Power, on the other hand, refers to the “vertical disparity between the participants in a hierarchical structure” (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 52).

The three role plays selected for the present study were situations of formal status with the learner refusing a professor or a boss. The three situations are briefly described below, followed by the mean number of words for each situation which included sufficient contextual information about the setting, the participants, age, and speech act (Cohen 2004). All three situations featured a +Power + Distance relationship between the participants (see Appendix A for full description of the role play situations).

- a student refuses a professor's suggestion to take an extra class (Advisor [122 words]).
- an employee refuses a boss' request to stay at work late (Bookstore [133 words]).
- an employee declines an invitation from his boss to attend a farewell party (Farewell [125 words]).

For each role play situation, each learner interacted with a NS of Mexican Spanish who was an instructor of Spanish at the same university (a professor of Latin American literature teaching in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese). Based on the description of each role-play and his role as an instructor in this university (see Appendix A), the NS of Spanish was told to engage in the interactions with each student and respond as he would in a natural conversation of this nature. Thus, although the interactions were simulated, the NS and the students, who were members of the Department at the same university, were aware of the differences in social distance (+D) and power (+D) between them, making the interactions more authentic to a degree. The aim of these interactions was to observe the trajectory of the refusal sequence in order to negotiate a resolution with a person of higher status. In this respect, the input received from the NS is crucial for the negotiation and the outcome of the refusal response. All role-play sessions were conducted in Spanish. (The researcher did not participate in the role-play sessions so as not to bias the data). Finally, the role-play data were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed according to a modified version of the transcription conventions established by Jefferson (2004) (see Appendix B for the transcription conventions used in the current study).

Data Analysis

The 45 role-play interactions were analyzed according to the various components of refusals described at the beginning of this study ('The Speech Act Set of Refusals'), and included direct and indirect refusals, and adjuncts to refusals. The frequency and distribution of these strategies was examined across the refusal sequence over multiple turns. Most interactions consisted of one episode (e.g., invitation-refusal response), followed by an insistence on the part of the NS (e.g., insistence-response). According to previous literature, an insistence in the context of a refusal is considered a sociocultural expectation in different varieties of Latin American Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2008b; García, 1992, 1999, 2008). Next, in order to address the issue of inter-coder reliability in the coding of strategies, the learner data were coded independently by the researcher and a NS of Spanish. In cases where a discrepancy was detected by the NS Spanish coder, the researcher and coder discussed the coding and arrived at a mutual agreement. Overall, the coders agreed on the coding of strategies for 95% of the data.

The data for the current study were examined quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the frequency, percentage, and distribution of refusal components, including an analysis of strategy use by situation (situational variation) and by learner (pragmatic variation by learner). Each strategy produced by each participant was counted and included in each of the three categories of analysis mentioned above (direct or indirect refusals or adjuncts to refusals). Each participant produced at least one or more than one strategy of the same type in the same situation

(e.g., two direct refusals or two reasons/explanations); some strategies were not utilized by any participants. As a result, the strategy use shown in tables and figures reflects the total count of all strategies produced by each participant in each situation. In addition to the frequency of strategy use, the number of participants who used each strategy is also reported (see Table 1).

Finally, with respect to the qualitative analysis, two entire learner-NS refusal interactions are analyzed sequentially: refusing a professor's suggestion to take an extra class (Advisor) and refusing a boss' invitation to attend a farewell party (Farewell). These interactions are examined to determine how the pragmatic strategies (direct and indirect refusals, and adjuncts to refusals) are interactionally *used* by the learners to negotiate a resolution with a NS across multiple turns. For each of the two interactions, a sequential analysis of the strategies employed in order to achieve mutual understanding when addressing a person of higher status is conducted in both the first refusal sequence (invitation-response) and after one or more responses to an insistence on the part of the NS (insistence-response).

Results

This section presents the results for the 45 interactions in which a resolution to a refusal was negotiated between the 15 advanced learners of Spanish and a NS of Spanish at a higher status level (professor, boss) and in three asymmetric situations (+P, +D) (refusing a professor's advice to take an extra class [Advisor], refusing a boss's request to stay at work late [Bookstore], and refusing a boss' invitation to attend a farewell party [Farewell]). First, this section provides a quantitative analysis of the frequency and distribution of the components of refusals as realized in the three situations. Then, a qualitative analysis examining the negotiation of refusal responses in learner-NS interactions is presented. This section is followed by a discussion of the results, future research and limitations, and conclusions.

Distribution of Pragmatic Strategies in Asymmetric Situations (+Power; +Distance)

Figure 1 shows the overall distribution of strategy use in the three situations in which each of the 15 learners refused a suggestion, a request, and an invitation initiated by a person of higher status such as a professor or a boss (NS of Spanish). (Examples of these strategies can be found in section "The Speech Act Set of Refusals").

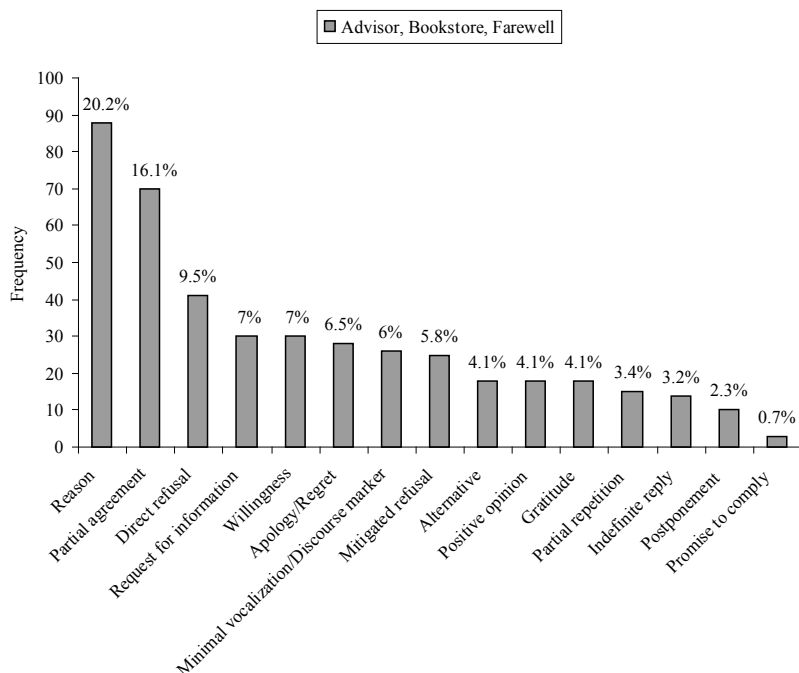


Fig. 1. Distribution of pragmatic strategies used to refuse an invitation, a request, or a suggestion in all three situations among the 15 learners. (Total: 434 strategies)

Of the 434 pragmatic strategies produced by the learners in the three situations, three represented the preferred means of performing a refusal: reasons (20.2%; $n = 88$ of 434 strategies), expressions of partial agreement (16.1%; $n = 70$ of 434 strategies), and direct refusals which were utilized less frequently (9.5%; $n = 41$ of 434 strategies). Thus, among these learners refusals were mostly realized indirectly by means of reasons or explanations or to a lesser degree directly; and in almost all cases, each refusal response was prefaced by an expression of partial agreement that delayed the refusal.

Further, a refusal response was realized indirectly by the three strategies which were utilized occasionally by these learners: a request for information (7%; $n = 30$ of 434 strategies), an expression of apology/regret (6.5%; $n = 28$ of 434 strategies), and a mitigated refusal (5.8%; $n = 25$ of 434 strategies). In addition, two strategies that were selected by the learners to preface a refusal included an expression of willingness (7%; $n = 30$ of 434 strategies) and a series of minimal vocalizations or discourse markers (6%; $n = 26$ of 434 strategies) strategically used to delay the refusal and to express the same more tentatively (*este 'um'*, *bueno 'well'*, *hijole 'darn'*). As seen in Figure 1 from left to right, the last seven strategies were infrequently employed to express a refusal indirectly (18 strategies or fewer [4.1% or less]) (alternative, partial repetition, indefinite reply, postponement, or a promise to comply) or to preface the refusal, and thus soften its impact through partial agreement (positive opinion and an expression of gratitude).

In general, these numeric results show how frequently or infrequently learners of Spanish in an FL context utilized direct or indirect strategies or adjuncts to refusals such as expressions of willingness or positive opinion to negotiate a refusal with a person of

higher status. It should be noted that a refusal sequence was comprised of a series of two or more of these strategies that were utilized within the learner's turn or across the refusal sequence over multiple turns (a sequential analysis of how these strategies were used across the interaction is provided below). And, most importantly, these results reflect the fact that the type of and preference for strategy use varied among the learners in each of the three situations. As explained in the next section, the preference for strategy use was conditioned by the eliciting act in each situation (a refusal to a suggestion, a request, or an invitation), accounting for situational variation in the refusal performance evaluated in this study.

Situational Variation: Components of Interlanguage Refusals

The preference for and distribution of the pragmatic strategies utilized to perform a refusal varied according to the situation and the eliciting act. Figure 2 displays graphically the distribution of the refusal components for each situation (Advisor, Bookstore, Farewell) for the 15 learners, and Table 1 shows the numeric results for each pragmatic strategy utilized during a refusal response. This table includes the frequency of strategy use and the number of participants (No. of Part.) who employed each strategy. (The pragmatic strategies in Table 1 are classified in terms of direct and indirect refusals, and adjuncts to refusals).

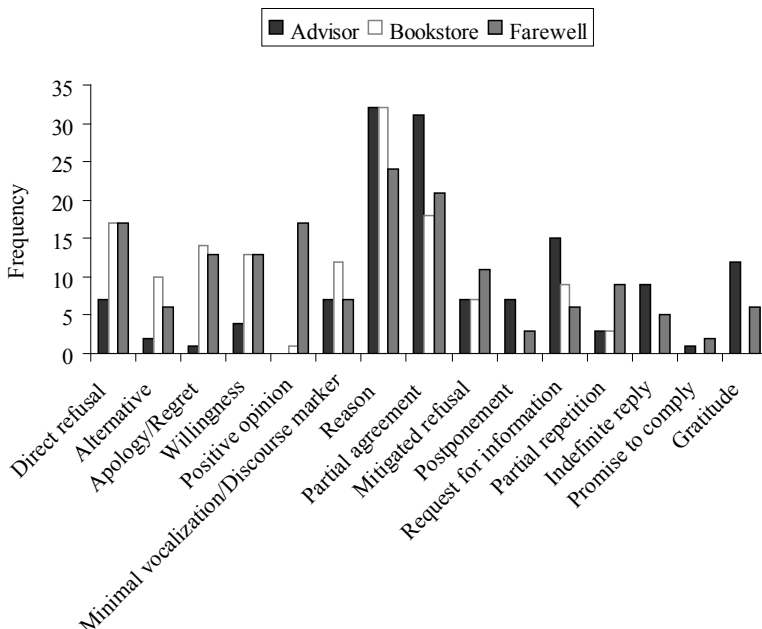


Fig. 2. Situational Variation: Components of Refusals in Learner-NS Interactions in Three Eliciting Acts (Suggestion [Advisor], Request [Bookstore], and Invitation [Farewell]) when Refusing a Person of Higher Status in L2 Spanish. (Total: 434 strategies)

Table 1. Distribution of Pragmatic Strategies Used in a Refusal Response in Three Eliciting Acts when Refusing a Person of Higher Status (+D, +P) (Suggestion [Advisor], Request [Bookstore], and Invitation [Farewell]). (Includes frequency of strategy used [f] and Number of Participants [15 learners] who used each strategy in each situation). (Total: 434 strategies).

Pragmatic strategy	Refusing a professor's advice (Advisor) f (No. of Part.)	Refusing a boss' request (Bookstore) f (No. of Part.)	Refusing a boss' invitation (Farewell) f (No. of Part.)	Total
<u>Direct Refusals</u>	7 (4Part.) (5%)	17 (10Part.) (13%)	17 (11Part.) (11%)	41 (10%)
<u>Indirect Refusals</u>				
Mitigated refusal	7 (6 Part.)	7 (5Part.)	11 (6Part.)	25
Reason	32 (14Part.)	32 (15Part.)	24 (14Part.)	88
Alternative	2 (2 Part.)	10 (9Part.)	6 (5Part.)	18
Postponement	7 (7 Part.)	0 (0Part.)	3 (2Part.)	10
Request for information	15 (9 Part.)	9 (6Part.)	6 (4Part.)	30
Partial repetition	3 (2 Part.)	3 (3Part.)	9 (6Part.)	15
Apology/Regret	1 (1 Part.)	14 (8Part.)	13 (8Part.)	28
Indefinite reply	9 (5 Part.)	0 (0Part.)	5 (3Part.)	14
Promise to comply	1 (1 Part.)	0 (0Part.)	2 (1Part.)	3
<u>Subtotal-Indirect</u>	77 (56%)	75 (55%)	79 (49%)	231 (53%)
<u>Adjuncts to Refusals</u>				
Positive opinion	0 (0 Part.)	1 (1 Part.)	17 (12 Part.)	18
Willingness	4 (3 Part.)	13 (8 Part.)	13 (8Part.)	30
Gratitude	12 (9 Part.)	0 (0 Part.)	6 (5 Part.)	18
Partial agreement	31 (14 Part.)	18 (11Part.)	21 (12 Part.)	70
Minimal vocalization/ Discourse marker	7 (5 Part.)	12 (11Part)	7 (6Part.)	26
<u>Subtotal-Adjuncts</u>	54 (39%)	44 (32%)	64 (40%)	162 (37%)
TOTAL	138	136	160	434

According to Figure 2, 15 different strategies were identified in the data from the three situations. Of the 434 pragmatic strategies employed to perform a refusal among the 15 learners in all three situations, a greater number of strategies was produced when declining an invitation from a boss (Farewell: 37%; $n = 160$ of 434 strategies), and slightly fewer strategies were employed when refusing a boss' request (Bookstore: 31%; $n = 136$ of 434 strategies) and when refusing a suggestion from a professor (Advisor: 32%; $n = 138$ of 434). With regard to the type of strategy used in a refusal response, 10% ($n = 41$ of

434 strategies) of the strategies were direct refusals, 53% ($n = 231$ of 434 strategies) were indirect refusals, and 37% ($n = 162$ of 434 strategies) were adjuncts to refusals (partial agreements, expressions of gratitude, or expressions of positive opinion) that were often employed to preface a refusal response. Direct refusals were most frequently employed and were produced by a similar number of participants (13%; 17 of 136 strategies [10 participants]) when refusing a boss's request to stay at work late and a boss' invitation to his farewell party (11%; 17 of 160 cases [11 participants]). Direct refusals were selected less frequently and by fewer participants when refusing a professor's advice to take a class (5%; 7 of 138 cases [4 participants]).

The preference for indirect strategies to perform a refusal was similar in the three situations: refusing advice from a professor (56%; 77 of 138 cases), refusing a request from the boss (55%; 75 of 136 cases), and refusing an invitation from the boss (49%; 79 of 160 cases). (See Table 1 for the number of participants who used each indirect strategy). Finally, the selection of adjuncts used to preface a refusal response was slightly higher in two situations: refusing a professor's advice (39%; 54 of 138 cases) and refusing the boss' invitation (40%; 64 of 160 cases). Fewer strategies were employed when refusing the boss' request (32%; 44 of 136 strategies). Overall, the greatest number of strategies was utilized in refusing an invitation from a boss (Farewell). This resulted from the long negotiation process and multiple turns that occurred in response to the boss' insistence and frequent attempts to arrive at a successful resolution.

As shown in Figure 2, direct refusals, alternatives, expressions of apology/regret, and expressions of willingness (left) were less frequently used when refusing a suggestion from a professor (Advisor). Conversely, these strategies were often employed when refusing a request (Bookstore) and invitation (Farewell) from the boss. Moreover, an expression of positive opinion (*qué buena idea, pero...* 'what a great idea, but...') was the strategy preferred by these learners to preface a refusal response when declining an invitation from the boss (Farewell). Similarly, minimal vocalizations and discourse markers (*bueno* 'well', *hmm*, *híjole* 'darn') were often employed in prefacing a refusal to the boss' request to stay at work late (Bookstore). Overall, reasons and partial agreements (*sí, está bien, pero* 'yes, it's fine, but...') were the strategies most frequently utilized by most learners in all situations (middle of Fig. 2). Finally, other strategies (right side of Fig. 2) were utilized with varying degrees of preference in the three situations. For instance, postponements, requests for information or clarification, indefinite replies, and expressions of gratitude were more frequently used when refusing a professor's advice to take an extra class (Advisor), whereas mitigated refusals and partial repetitions were the frequent strategies employed when declining an invitation from the boss (Farewell). Thus, this shows that the preference for strategy use when refusing a person of higher status is situation-dependent and varies among the learners.

With respect to the frequency and content of the expression of apology/regret, as shown in Figure 2, this expression occurred most frequently when refusing a boss' request (Bookstore) or when declining an invitation from a boss (Farewell). In English the strategy most commonly utilized for expressing an apology or regret is 'I'm sorry'. In Spanish this strategy is realized by means of various forms and with different degrees of intensification, as documented in the oral discourse of NSs of Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008b; Márquez Reiter, 2000). These forms include *qué pena* 'what a shame' *discúlpame* 'forgive me', *perdóname* 'forgive me', and *de verdad lo siento mucho* 'I'm really very sorry', with *lo siento* being the least preferred (marked) form in Spanish, at least in the

speech act of refusals. In the learner data, however, the preferred form for expressing an apology/regret was the formula *lo siento* ‘I’m sorry’ (21 of 28 cases by 12 of 15 learners]). Five learners with various lengths of stay in the target community (#3 [4.5 months], #6 [9 months]; #8 [10 months]; #11 [18 months]; #14 [2 years]) used other forms (6 of 28 cases) commonly employed by NSs of Spanish such as *nos pone muy triste de que se vaya* ‘it makes us very sad to see you go’ (Farewell), *me siento muy mal* ‘I feel really bad’, *ah, bueno, qué pena* ‘oh, well, what a shame’, and *discúlpeme* ‘forgive me’. In general, the formula *lo siento*, an instance of possible negative transfer from the native language, was overgeneralized by most learners.

The refusal sequence in (1) shows the distribution of *lo siento* (‘I’m sorry’) used as a formula across the interaction with an employee (learner) refusing a boss’ invitation to attend a farewell party. (Due to space restrictions some lines from the transcript were omitted.)

1. Farewell: Refusing a boss’ request to stay at work late (Learner #4, 5 months in Ecuador)

((9 lines omitted in first 5 turns))

10 Learner: → *Sí uh uh lo siento ah tengo tengo un uh tengo otro uh obligación*
(turn 6)

‘Yes uh uh I’m sorry ah I have have an uh I have another uh obligation’

((6 lines of transcript omitted in turn 6))

17 → *y sí lo siento con, pero, quiero, quiero ir a la a la reunión,*
‘and yes I’m sorry with, but, I want, want to go to the to the meeting,’

18 *pero no es posible con uh*
‘but it’s not posible with uh’

19 Boss: *lástima porque iba a ser muy divertida para todo el grupo*
‘too bad because it was going to be fun for the whole group’
((6 lines omitted in 2 turns))

25 Learner: → *Lo siento otra vez* (turn 10)
‘I’m sorry again’

26 Boss: *Okay bueno.*
‘Okay fine’

The interaction in (1) shows the overuse of the formula *lo siento* which occurs three times without any form of intensification. This form *lo siento* I’m sorry is used twice in the same turn: it introduces a refusal response and is followed by a justification of the refusal (line 10, turn 6); an additional instance of this formula is employed to close the turn (line 17), here, followed by a negative reply (*pero no es posible* ‘but it’s not possible’) (line 18). Later in the interaction, this formula is used again in turn 10 (line 25) to end the refusal sequence.

*Pragmatic Variation in Refusal Performance
and Length of Residence in the Target Culture*

The learners in this study showed variation in their use of refusal strategies. Similarly, their ability to negotiate a resolution with a NS varied with the length of residence in the target culture. Figure 3 displays the preference for direct and indirect strategies for each learner across the three situations. In addition to direct refusals ('no'; 'no, I can't'), indirect strategies included nine different strategies (a mitigated refusal, a reason or an explanation, an indefinite reply, an alternative, a postponement, a request for clarification or additional information, a promise to comply, a partial repetition, and an expression of apology/regret) (For examples of these strategies, see section 'The Speech Act Set of Refusals').

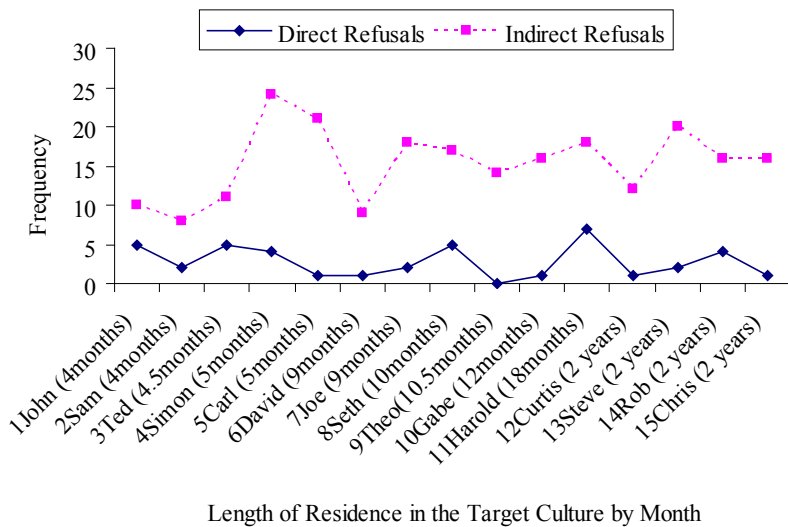


Fig. 3. Pragmatic Variation: Preference for Direct and Indirect Refusals by Learner when Refusing a Person of Higher Status and Length of Residence in the Target Culture. (Includes three situations: Advisor, Bookstore, Farewell).

As shown in Figure 3, the 15 advanced learners who participated in this study had different lengths of residence in a Spanish-speaking country in Latin America, which ranged from four months (1John) to two years (15Chris). For the purposes of data analysis, the learners were arbitrarily divided into three groups with similar lengths of stay in the target culture: learners 1 to 5 (4-5 months abroad), learners 6 to 10 (9-12 months abroad), and learners 11 to 15 (18-24 months abroad). Figure 3 reflects individual pragmatic variation observed in the use of direct and indirect refusals based on different lengths of stay in the target culture. While variation seems to be the norm among these learners, it appears that for most of them the use of direct refusals decreases as length of residence

in the L2 increases; in particular, we see a decrease in the mean of strategy use (direct refusals) between the first two groups (learners 1-5 [*Mean* = 3.4]; learners 6-10 [*Mean* = 1.8]), and the preference for direct refusals also decreases slightly between the first (learners 1-5 [*Mean* = 3.4]) and third (learners 11-15 [*Mean* = 3]) groups. However, the performance of some learners (8Seth, 11Harold, and 14Rob) who spent 10, 18, and 24 months in the target culture, respectively, reflected levels of directness similar to those of the first four learners who had spent 4 to 5 months abroad.³

Regarding the preference for indirect refusals, based on the small number of participants in this study, it appears that the degree of indirectness when refusing a person of higher status either maintains among learners who have spent between 4 and 12 months abroad (learners 1-10) or increases with longer lengths of residence in the target culture (learners 11-15). That is, a lower preference for indirectness was observed in the first two groups who performed similarly (learners 1-5 [*Mean* = 14.8]; learners 6-10 [*Mean* = 14.8]) and a higher preference for indirectness was noted among those learners who spent more than 18 months abroad (*Mean* = 16.4). Again, there are some learners with longer lengths of stay whose preference for indirectness is lower, such as 6David (9 months in Mexico) and 12Curtis (2 years in Venezuela). While the pattern observed here may reflect advances in the pragmatic competence of the learners, this finding should be taken with caution.

The next section examines how the components of the speech act of refusals are strategically used across refusal sequences by these learners to negotiate a resolution during a refusal response.

Negotiation of a Refusal in Learner-NS Interaction

The pragmatic strategies utilized by the learners occurred across various sequences and evolved over multiple turns throughout the interaction. For example, some learners used one or few strategies per turn to delay the interaction. Example (2) shows an interaction with a student (learner) refusing a professor's (NS) suggestion to take an extra class.

2. Refusing a professor's suggestion to take an extra class (Advisor) (#9, 10.5 months in Ecuador).

- 1 Professor: *Hola, Theo, cómo estás?*
'Hi, Theo, how are you?'
- 2 Learner: *Estoy bien*
'I'm fine'
- 3 Professor: *Bien, qué bueno, estaba leyendo tus clases para este semestre,*
'Good, that's great, I was looking at your schedule for this semester,'
(four lines of transcript omitted))
- 8 *y te sugiero que tomes esta clase, te va a ayudar mucho.*
'and I suggest that you take this class, it'll help you a lot.'
- 9 Learner: → *Y por qué cree que necesito la ayuda con mi español?*
'And why do you-FORMAL think that I need help with my Spanish?'

- 10 Professor: *No no no, como digo, las clases están muy bien y tu español está bien,*
‘No no no, as I say, the schedule is very good and your Spanish is good,’
11 *sin embargo, ah creo que la clase te va a ayudar mucho para mejorar.*
‘however, ah, I think that the class will help you a lot to improve.’
12 Learner: → *Es algo que todos los estudiantes quieren tomar?, o=*
‘Is it something that all the students want to take?, or =’
13 Professor: *=no, no es un requisito, yo te la recomiendo*
=no, it’s not a requirement, I recommend it to you’
14 *porque creo que es una clase muy buena.*
‘because I think that it’s a very good class.’
15 Learner: → *uh, y ha sugerido esa clase para otros estudiantes?*
‘uh, and have you-FORMAL suggested that class for other students?’
16 Professor: *uh sí me he reunido con otros estudiantes y algunos de ellos han aceptado,*
‘uh yes I have met with other students and some of them have accepted,’
17 *otros de ellos me han dicho que no, la decisión final es del alumno - no?*
‘others have told me no, the final decision is the student’s – right?’
18 *no es un requisito, pero creo que es buena idea.*
‘it’s not a requirement, but I think it’s a good idea.’
19 Learner: → *Okay, bueno, gracias, pues lo considero.*
‘Okay, well, thank you, well I’ll consider it’
20 Professor: *Okay, bueno, muy bien.*
‘Okay, well, very good.’

The interaction in (2) begins with an opening sequence (lines 1-2), followed by the professor's suggestion to take a class (lines 3-8). In response, the learner employed one indirect strategy (asking for additional information) in three different turns (lines 9, 12, 15). In each turn, this strategy is realized with different grammatical content and it serves to delay the refusal and extend the negotiation with the professor. In the professor's final response, he indirectly asks the student to reconsider taking the class (line 16-18). After various attempts to delay a refusal across the interaction, the main refusal response is presented at the end of the refusal sequence (line 19). This refusal response is prefaced by means of two discourse markers ('ok', *bueno* 'well') and an expression of gratitude, and the main refusal response, postponing the refusal, is provided at the end of the turn (*pues lo considero* 'well, I'll think about it') (line 19). Postponement of a refusal is an interactional resource that most learners in the study used to delay a refusal and to close the interaction politely. It should also be noted that the learner in (2) employed the appropriate deferential form to address a professor (*usted* 'you-formal') marked in the verb forms

(lines 9, 15), as NSs of Spanish in most Spanish varieties of Latin America would do in similar academic contexts (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008b; Márquez Reiter, 2000).

Other learners utilized a variety of pragmatic strategies that were realized across various refusal sequences. The interaction in (3), for example, shows an invitation-refusal sequence in two stages of the conversation with an employee (learner) declining an invitation from his boss (NS).

3. Declining an invitation from a boss (Farewell) (Learner #11 [Employee] 18 months in Mexico).

- 1 Boss: ↑ *Hola Harold, cómo te va?*
- ↑ 'Hi Harold, how are you?'
- 2 Learner: *Muy bien, [gracias 'very good, thanks'*
- 3 Boss: *[qué bueno, no sé si has escuchado* ← INVITATION
- ['good, I don't know if you've heard'*
- 4 *últimamente la noticia que me han ascendido de puesto*
- 'the news recently that I've been promoted'*
- 5 Learner: *um huh =*
- 'um huh'*
- Boss: ((two lines of transcript omitted))
- 8 *quería invitarlos a celebrar mi último día, y este*
- 'I wanted to invite you all to celebrate my last day, and this'*
- 9 *ascenso en un restaurante el próximo sábado a las 7 de la noche,*
- 'promotion at a restaurant next Saturday at 7 in the*
- evening,'*
- 10 *ya he invitado a tus compañeros, y te extiando esta misma*
- 'I have already invited your work mates, and I'm extending*
- the same'*
- 11 *invitación este sábado 12 a las 7 de la noche,*
- 'invitation to you this Saturday 12 at 7 in the evening,'*
- 12 Learner: → ↑ *um:::[m ↓*
- ↑' *um:::[m' ↓*
- 13 Boss: *[espero puedas asistir↓*
- ['I hope you'll be able to attend↓'*
- 14 Learner: → *pues qué bueno, sí sí me parece bien, pues felicidades,*
- 'well good, yes yes it sounds good to me, well,*
- congratulations,'*
- 15 Boss: *gracias=*
- 'thanks*
- 16 Learner: → *=ya me dijo ah Luis que, de eso y, pues, nos pone, usted*
- = 'ah Luis already told me that, about that, and well, you*
- make us'*
- 17 *muy triste, que que se vaya, pero pues felicidades, espero*
- 'very sad, that that you're leaving, but well congratulations,*
- I hope'*
- 18 *que todo te salga muy bien ahí,*
- 'that everything goes very well for you there'*
- 19 *y y qué día (...) qué es el sábado?*

- ‘and and what day (...) what is it Saturday?’
- 20 Boss: *uh huh*
‘uh huh’
- 21 Learner: → [*hi:jole* ↓ ‘*da:rn*’ ↓
- 22 Boss: [*El sábado a las siete* ‘Saturday at seven’
- 23 Learner: → *hi:jole, hi:jole, no no no, no puedo, es - es que no voy a estar,*
‘*da:rn, da:rn, no no no, I can’t, the thing is – is – that I*
won’t be’
- 24 *en la ciudad, ya ya tengo he tenido planes a ir al al norte*
‘in the city, I already already have had plans to go to the to
the North’
- 25 *a campar ese fin de semana y y yo voy en la noche viernes*
‘camping that weekend and and I leave at night on Friday’
- 26 *y no regreso hasta el noche de domingo.*
‘and I won’t be back until Sunday night.’

2nd Stage

- 27 Boss: *Qué pe::na, y podrías asistir aunque sea un momento?*
‘Too ba::d, and would you be able to attend even if it’s just
for a little while?’
- 28 Learner: → *Pues no, pues no es posible porque yo voy a estar, pues*
‘Well no, well it’s not possible because I’ll be, well’
- 29 *millas de mi coche, en el medio del bosque con los lobos*
‘miles away from my car, in the middle of the forest with
the wolves’
- 30 *y todo, ya sabe bien jefe, cómo me gusta campar y salir de*
‘and all, you know boss, how I like to go camping and go
out of’
- 31 *la ciudad cuando tengo el momento de, es todo el ruido,*
‘the city when I have the time to, it’s all the noise,’
- 32 *pero pues con el ruido es un fiesta, con usted es el huésped de honor*
‘but well with the noise it’s a party, with you-FORMAL it’s
the guest of honor’
- 33 *pues, qué qué, qué pena me da que no voy a estar.*
‘well, I feel so so so bad that I will not be here’
- 34 Boss: *pues a mí también me va a dar mucha pena, pero ni modo,*
‘well I’m also sorry, but never mind’
- 35 *si tienes algo planeado lo entiendo [perfectamente*
‘if you have something planned I understand perfectly’
- 36 Learner: → [*pues sí,*
‘well yes,’
- 37 *es impo [sible cambiar* ‘it’s impo[sible to change’
- 38 Boss: [*y este, no hay problema,*
cuando vuelva o si vuelvo
‘and I mean, there’s no problem, when I return or if I
return’
- 39 *te contacto y a ver si salimos,*

- ‘I’ll get in touch with you and see if we can go out’
- 40 Learner: *claro que sí, sí hay que hacerlo*
 ‘of course, yes, we have to do it’
- 41 Boss: *seguro, hasta luego.*
 ‘sure, see you then’

The invitation-refusal sequence in (3) is realized by means of 21 interventions, of which most are turns, and across two stages of the conversation: invitation-refusal sequence (lines 1-26) and insistence-response sequence (lines 27-41). After the initial opening exchange (greetings) (lines 1-2), the invitation on the part of the boss (NS) is realized by means of three turn units, beginning in lines 3-4, then in lines 8-11 after a brief intervention on the part of the learner expressing a listener response (‘um huh’) (line 5), and the invitation is completed in line 13. The learner’s (employee) refusal sequence is realized by means of multi-unit turns (lines 12-26). The first signal of a refusal response begins in line 12 with an elongated minimal vocalization ‘m::mm’ which overlaps with the completion of the invitation (line 13). In subsequent turns, the learner provides a series of linguistic strategies (pre-refusals) which preface and delay the main refusal response: an expression of positive opinion in one turn (line 14), a reason, an expression of regret, and an expression of positive opinion in a different turn unit (lines 16-18), and the turn ends with a ‘request for clarification’ to further delay the refusal (line 19). After the boss’ brief acknowledgement ‘uh huh’ (line 20), a frequent discourse marker in Mexican discourse is used to initiate the turn to preface the refusal sequence (*hijole* ‘darn’) (line 21). Finally, the main refusal response is presented at the end of the 1st stage of the conversation (lines 23-26): prefaced by the discourse marker *hijole* (‘darn’) repeated twice and pronounced slowly, followed by a direct refusal and a detailed explanation.

The second stage of the conversation begins with an insistence from the boss requesting that the employee make an effort to attend the party (line 27). The learner’s second refusal response (lines 28-33) is polite and firm. It is prefaced by the discourse marker *pues* (‘well’) to introduce an account; it includes an impersonal refusal to open the turn (*no es posible* ‘it’s not possible’), a justification of the refusal (line 28-32), and an expression of regret (*qué pena* ‘it’s too bad’) (line 33) to close the turn. In reaction to the learner’s polite response, the boss expresses understanding (lines 34-35), followed by the learner’s brief acknowledgement (*pues sí* ‘well yes’) (line 36) which overlaps with the boss’ previous turn. An additional refusal response (*es imposible cambiar* ‘it’s impossible to change’) (line 37) overlaps with the next turn in which the boss shows understanding and offers an alternative to get together later (lines 38-39). The terminal exchange (lines 40-41) is accomplished successfully with the learner accepting the offer.

In general, the interactions above in examples (2) and (3) illustrate how a refusal response in learner-NS interactions evolves not only across multiple turns, as previously observed in the literature among NSs (Pomerantz, 1984), but also, how a refusal sequence progresses across multiple-unit turns (Schegloff, 2007). That is, when learners perform a refusal, their turns are comprised of components of the speech act set of refusals, and each of these components (i.e., direct or indirect refusals or adjuncts to refusals) is organized strategically during the construction of a refusal sequence when responding to an invitation, a request, or a suggestion. Further, the refusal responses often overlapped with the interventions of the NS and were realized through repeated attempts at indirectness in order to delay and soften the refusal response. The next section discusses the main findings of the current study in light of existing literature.

Discussion

The current study examined the speech act of refusals and their sequential organization among learners of Spanish in their last year of college as they interacted with a NS of a higher social status such as professor or a boss (+P, +D). In the current study, refusals were analyzed as refusal sequences over various turns and across insistence-refusal sequences. The majority of the components of refusals found in the data consisted of indirect strategies (53%) and these strategies occurred across multiple turns. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), if the refuser decides to go off-record, then s/he leaves the responsibility up to the “addressee to decide how to interpret it” (1987, p. 211). An indirect refusal to an invitation, request, or suggestion downgrades or conceals the illocutionary force intended by the speaker.

Reasons and partial agreements (e.g., *sí, bien, pero...* ‘yes, good, but...’; ‘ok, but..’) were the most preferred strategies employed by the advanced learners in this study to express a refusal response. Partial agreements were used to preface and delay a refusal to an invitation, a request, or a suggestion, and reasons were frequently used to convey a disagreement by means of first and second assessments (Pomerantz, 1984). Reasons convey high levels of politeness and assume cooperation (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 128). Finally, the fact that reason/explanation is the most preferred strategy for refusing among NSs of different languages and by learners at different proficiency levels (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1991; Chen, Ye, and Zhang, 1995; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary, 2000), appears to suggest a universal trend for indirectness as the default strategy or the unmarked form of social behavior.

While one study examined the pragmatic development of disagreements over one year (Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury, 2004), others analyzed disagreements in single-moment studies examining learner-NS interaction using L2 conversational (Gardner, 2005; Wong, 2005) and role-play refusal data (Gass and Houck, 1999). Unlike these studies, however, the current investigation examined the ability to negotiate one type of dispreferred response, a refusal, among advanced learners of Spanish as a FL who had previously spent time in Latin America (i.e., returnees). Most learners in the present study employed various interactional resources to delay a refusal across multiple turns, in particular, delayed completion. As an interactional resource, delayed completion is considered a current speaker device (i.e., a device employed by the current speaker) “for handling onset speech by another participant within a TCU [Turn Constructional Unit] – with or without simultaneous speech” (Lerner, 2004, p. 235), and this resource was used strategically by most learners, in particular, those with longer lengths of stay in the target culture.

The finding that proficiency level alone may not be a sufficient condition for identifying advanced levels of pragmatic competence suggests that other factors may influence pragmatic behavior. While this study examined the refusal performance of a relatively small group of learners in only three refusal situations, it appears that length of residence in the target culture may influence the pragmatic performance of learners, as higher levels of pragmatic competence were observed as length of residence increased in the target culture including among those who had only spent 4-5 months abroad. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies in ILP which found that both short and longer lengths of stay in the target culture influence various aspects of pragmatic

competence at both the comprehension and production levels (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Bouton, 1994; DuFon and Churchill, 2006; Matsumura, 2001). Moreover, while this study investigated the pragmatic behavior of 15 male learners study with regard to how they used the pragmatic strategies interactionally across a refusal sequence, the issue of individual pragmatic variation should be examined more closely. It was observed that the preference for direct and indirect strategies employed to negotiate a refusal varied for each learner in this study and that variation in strategy use was conditioned by the type of situation (refusing an invitation, a request, and a suggestion) and the role of the interlocutor (i.e., a professor and a boss). Individual differences that may influence L2 pragmatic development such as motivation, age, personality, extroversion and introversion should be examined in future investigations.

It was also reported that most learners in the current study showed a lack of pragmatic competence in the overuse of the formula *lo siento* ('I'm sorry') in all situations. According to previous research, formulaic sequences are "stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar" (Wray, 2002, p. 9); more specifically, *lo siento* was used as a 'developmental formula' that is not analyzed by the learner grammar and represents a stage of interlanguage development (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006). Thus, the fact that most cases of apology/regret were realized in the form of *lo siento* (75% [or 21 of 28 cases] by 12 of 15 of the learners), the least common form used by native Spanish speakers (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008b; Márquez Reiter, 2000), suggests that this may be one area where advanced learners might benefit from explicit instruction, which has been shown to be effective for increasing pragmatic awareness and competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008c; Rose, 2005).

Finally, with regard to the negotiation of meaning in refusal interactions between a NS and learners of low-proficiency level, Gass and Houck observed that the non-native speaker's responses "may influence the native speaker to attempt to guide the conversation back into the expected mold, that is, to bring the conversation back within the expected boundaries" (1999, pp. 163-64). In the current study, the interactional input provided by the NS helped the learners get back on track in the conversation and achieve a successful resolution in the conversation. The input provided by the NS included an insistence in the second stage of the conversation, clarification requests, and alternatives, and this input may have helped the learners notice certain interactional features in the discourse. For instance, in interactions (2) and (3), had the NS not continued the conversation after the learner's initial direct refusal response, the interaction would have ended abruptly and would have left the conclusion open to an impolite interpretation; in particular, it would not have allowed for the insistence on the part of the NS which is a sociocultural expectation among NSs of Spanish of different varieties (Félix-Brasdefer, 2003, 2008b; García, 1992, 1999, 2008). It is worth highlighting the fact that the learners' success in negotiating a socioculturally acceptable resolution was due, in part, to the interactional input and guidance provided by the NS to redirect the learner in the conversation.

Future Research

Future studies should examine the development of refusal responses among learners of Spanish as an FL across various stages of development using L2 conversations in a longitudinal design. In light of the paucity of studies in discourse analysis in Spanish from a conversation-analytic perspective (cf. Márquez Reiter and Placencia, 2005), future research should examine other discourse notions such as repair, the organization of laughter, the pragmatic effect of prosodic information, and the organization of turns in NS-learner interactions. While the results of the current study lend support to previous research that has examined the effects of the host environment on learner's development of pragmatic competence (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Félix-Brasdefer 2004; Matsumura, 2001), future studies should include a larger population of both instructed and uninstructed learners in pragmatics to examine the effects of implicit or explicit teaching before and after contact with the target culture. In addition, future studies should analyze the pragmatic competence of learners in other situations in academic and non-academic naturalistic settings. Finally, the results of the current study cannot be generalized to all learners of Spanish, as the learners in this study are representative of male advanced undergraduate learners of Spanish in an FL context, and gender differences in speech act performance have been previously noted among NSs during the performance of apologies and requests (Márquez Reiter 2000), which may carry over to the L2.

Conclusion

Unlike most studies in ILP which tend to focus on pragmatic transfer, comparisons of the pragmatic behavior of learners and NSs, and an analysis of occurrences of language forms “with a consequent tendency among some to see such learner performance from the perspective of inadequacy or deficiency” (Gardner and Wagner, 2005, p. vii), the current study examined the sequential organization of refusal sequences and the learners' ability to negotiate a successful resolution across multiple turns with a NS of Spanish. The refusal data were analyzed with respect to situational variation and individual pragmatic variation across the interaction. Based on the data, it seems that the NS in this study did not view the learners as poor or deficient interactants; instead, they were perceived to be co-constructors of the conversation and as dynamic negotiators who, in light of the input received, made various attempts at using linguistic and interactional resources to achieve mutual agreement in communication. The issue of the co-construction of discourse in speech act performance is one aspect of ILPs that needs to be investigated further in learner-NS interactions as well as in other institutional contexts.

Appendix A

1. Advisor (+P, +D): Student refuses a professor's suggestion to take an extra class.

You are a first semester senior at the University of Minnesota and since pre-registration is next week, you are planning your schedule for your final semester. You have already put together a tentative schedule, but you need to get your advisor's approval. Although you took one course with this professor during your freshman year, you haven't had any contact with him other than in advising sessions once a semester. You made an appointment with him to review your schedule and you go to his office for the meeting. In preparation for your meeting, your advisor has been reviewing your transcript and during the course of the conversation, he suggests that you take an additional course in Spanish, but you don't want to.

2. Bookstore (+P, +D): An employee refuses a boss' request to stay at work late.

You have been working at a part-time job for extra spending money after school at the University bookstore since the beginning of the semester. The bookstore is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. You work from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. You get along fine with your boss, but you are not friends and you do not socialize together outside work. It is Friday evening at 6:45 p.m. and your supervisor has just received a delivery of books that had been lost in the mail for three weeks which need to be on display by Monday morning. You are finishing an inventory when the boss approaches you and asks you to work extra hours (until 9:00 p.m.) to get the display ready, but you can't stay.

5. Farewell (+P, +D): An employee declines an invitation from a boss to his farewell party.

You have been working at 3M in Minneapolis as a sales representative for the last five years. You have a good working relationship with your boss although you do not socialize together outside the office. Your boss has always been supportive of your ideas and has been instrumental in your receiving a recent promotion. After working for him for three years, he has recently been promoted and will become the Manager of the Latin American Sales Division which will require his relocation to (country in Latin America) next month. He is having a party next Saturday evening at a restaurant and is inviting you and other members of his sales group to celebrate his promotion and as a farewell, but you are unable to attend.

Appendix B

Modified Classification of Transcription Conventions (Jefferson, 2004)

A. Contiguous utterances

= Equal signs indicate no break up or gap. They are placed when there is no interval between adjacent utterances and the second utterance is linked immediately to the first.

B. Overlaps

[A left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.

] A right bracket indicates the point at which two overlapping utterances end, if they end simultaneously, or the point at which one of them ends in the course of the other. It is also used to parse out segments of overlapping utterances.

C. Intervals

() Parentheses indicating the time in seconds and placed within an utterance mark intervals or pauses in the stream of talk.

- A dash marks a short untimed pause within an utterance.

D. Characteristics of speech delivery

↑↓ The up and down mark sharper rises or falls in pitch.

:

A colon marks a lengthened syllable or an extension of the sound.

:::

More colons prolong the sound or syllable.

word Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch.

.

A period marks fall in tone.

,

A comma marks continuing intonation.

?

A question mark signals rising intonation.

E. Other markings

(()) Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber's descriptions of events.

Notes

1 The strategy of promise to comply is taken from García (1992) who examined refusals to invitations in a Peruvian setting.

2 As rightly pointed out by one reviewer, time spent in Latin America does not assure pragmatic control. However, since the learners of the current study were part of a study abroad program and were taking classes and living with a host family (12 learners) or were part of a religious mission (3 learners) in the host environment, it seems likely that they achieved a certain level of control of pragmatics as a result of exposure to the target language.

3 It was observed by one reviewer that the amount time spent by a learner in the target culture may not necessarily coincide with an increase in pragmatic competence. Other factors that may influence the learner's pragmatic competence as a result of exposure to the host environment may include: the frequency and intensity of interaction speaking with NSs of the target culture, the nature of the input, whether the students lived with a host family or not (e.g., private residences or dormitories), the context of the situation (e.g., speaking at a bar/coffee shop, at a bank, with friends, at school, and the intensity of interaction and the input received in extra-curricular activities such as field trips in the target country (Cohen et al, 2005; Klein, Dietrich, & Noyau, 1995). Thus, with regard to the current study, the length of residence as a factor in learners' preference for direct or indirect refusals must be taken with caution due to the small number of participants in the current study and a number of variables that were not controlled in this study; this issue is left open for future research.

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Culture, Attributions, and Language Anxiety

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The purpose of this study is to move beyond the more traditional focus on individual characteristics as they relate to anxiety in the use of a foreign language. In order to do this, cultural characteristics, perceptions of the cause of successful learning, and foreign (English) language use anxiety were included as the major variables. Three specific issues were examined: (a) The relationship between the cultural characteristics of collectivism vs. individualism and language anxiety as measured by the English Language Use Anxiety Scale; (b) the relationship between participant country of origin and the amount of language anxiety; and (c) variation among participant country of origin and perceptions of the factors which lead to successful language learning. The results indicated that there was no difference in the English language use anxiety scores and the collectivist/individualist nature of the student's cultural orientation. Results further showed the student's country of origin did affect the degree of language anxiety. Asians had the highest degree of language anxiety. Perceptions of the cause of successful language acquisition (i.e. ability, luck, task difficulty, and effort) varied by country. Discussions include implications for ESL/EFL teachers in managing the classroom and increasing learning while diminishing foreign language use anxiety.

Learning a foreign language can be a painful and difficult task for many people. Such negative feelings may be manifested as anxiety or a failure to continue language study. Much of the research on the failure to learn a foreign language has focused largely on individuals and their characteristics (cf. Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994a, 1994b). Few studies have focused on a more holistic view which includes such issues as culture, perceptions of the causes of learning, attitudes toward education and learning, and situational venues. Recent research (Lim, 2004) has examined the relation between perceived causes of success at language learning and anxiety but has left the question of how culture affects perceptions, attributions, and anxiety largely unexplored.

The purpose of this study is to move beyond the more traditional focus on individual characteristics and to examine the following:

- The relationship between the cultural characteristics of collectivism vs. individualism and “foreign language use anxiety”;
- The relationship between participant country of origin and amount of foreign language use anxiety; and

- Variation among participant country of origin and perceptions of the factors which lead to successful language learning.

Consequently, I will review the literature related to foreign language anxiety, the perceptions of cause of locus of control, and Triandis' notion of collectivism and individualism as cultural constructs. I will outline the procedures of the study and then analyze the data. Finally, I will discuss the findings and implications of these for teaching and learning.

Literature Review

Research in second/foreign language acquisition has shown that anxiety is one of the predictors of language achievement (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 2000). Learners who experience higher levels of anxiety in language learning tend to perform more poorly than those who do not (Price, 1991; Saito & Samimy, 1996).

Despite its importance, the causes of anxiety are still not clearly understood. Recent studies (Lim, 2004; 2007) have shown that learners' perceptions of the cause of language learning play an important role in determining anxiety in learners. Attributions made to internal factors lead to increased levels of anxiety. This suggests that perceptions about the factors related to learning a foreign language may be an important consideration.

Anxiety has a socio-cultural nature itself. It is related not just to individuals' perceptions and appraisals of events but also is constructed by the culture in their community. How a person appraises reality is closely related to the community culture (e.g., classroom climate, social value and expectation, etc) in which the individual is involved. Anxiety is learned, constructed, and shared in a community (Averill, 1984). Therefore, how an individual acquires expectancies about an event should be explored in the individual's learning context. Indeed, Mandler and Sarason (1952) proposed that anxiety is largely determined by the nature of the situation, interacting with personal characteristics of the individual.

Cultures vary in the kind of perceptions/beliefs that they foster. Collective cultures tend to see the self as interdependent and tend to put a higher value on community or the extended family. Individualistic cultures, such as the United States, view the self as autonomous and independent and place a higher value on individual's goals or identity (Al-Zahrani & Kaplowitz, 1993). Kim's (1998) research suggests that Korean EFL students tend to emphasize the importance of others' views of them. This suggests that it is important for Koreans to succeed at language learning because individuals are taught to value others' views of them and to owe loyalty to groups over individuals. Students' performances in language learning are considered a judgement of their entire worth as a person and those who perform well are given higher status positions in society.

The relationship between individuals' self-constructs and culture has been extensively studied in the area of social/educational psychology. Markus and Kitayama's (1991) review of culture and self finds that individuals' self constructs determine the nature of cognition, emotion, and motivation. The basic notion of self constructs is divided into "independent" and "interdependent" views. The "independent" view of the self holds the belief in the wholeness and uniqueness of each person's configuration of internal

attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Johnson, 1985; Sampson, 1989). Individuals tend to separate from social context and, therefore, they value private, direct, and unique features in the society. On the other hand, the “interdependent” construal of the self emphasizes the self as holistic, collective, allocentric, and connected. Others are an integral part of the situation to which the self is assimilated and participate actively and continuously in the definition of the interdependent self. By so doing, external features (e.g., statuses, roles, relationships) are crucial to the self. The self values the ability to adjust in order to maintain harmony with the social context. An “independent” view of the self dominates in Western cultures whereas an “interdependent” view is mostly pervasive among Asians and Latin-Americans (cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

This view of self is closely related to the cultural paradigm that Triandis and his colleagues (cf. Triandis, 1989, 1995; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Kim, Triandis, Kâğıtçıbaşı, Choi, & Yoon, 1994) which explores culture in terms of two major categories: “collectivism” and “individualism.” Triandis (1995) defines the terms, collectivism and individualism, as follows (p.2):

Collectivism may be initially defined as a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives; are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of these collectives. A preliminary definition of *individualism* is a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and the contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analyses of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others.

That is, “collectivism” is the reflection of an “interdependent” view of the self whereas “individualism” is similar to an “independent” view of the self.

Triandis (1995) has combined the construct of collectivism, individualism, independent, and dependent and suggests four kinds of self: “horizontal collectivism,” “vertical collectivism,” “horizontal individualism,” and “vertical individualism.” The horizontal dimension emphasizes a sense of being similar in status whereas vertical accepts inequality and rankings. Presumably, the verticals are more sensitive than the horizontals to cues coming from authorities whereas the horizontals tend to take the reforms as creating competition and weakening in-group cohesion (Triandis, 1994, 1995).

The cultural (i.e., collectivism, individualism) and individual (i.e., interdependent, independent) variability affects anxiety (Gudykunst, 1998). As discussed above, independent/individualistic individuals form a self-image separated from social context. Self-esteem is high when they are unique and have control. These individuals try to minimize the impact of others’ evaluations. This might lead them to have less anxiety than interdependent individuals. On the other hand, for interdependent/collectivistic individuals, status, roles, and relationships are important in their social life and self-esteem comes from the ability that they can be harmonious with others and adjust to various situations. These individuals have a great concern for others and are sensitive to

others' evaluations. Thus, they are assumed to be easily susceptible to anxiety. Singelis and Sharkey (1995) have confirmed these hypotheses in their study when they found that self-construal and embarrassability are related in similar ways within different ethno cultural groups.

The weight of dimensions of causal attribution varies across cultures. Research has shown that Western cultures tend to attribute success to internal causes and failure to some contextual or external cause (cf. Bradley, 1978; Ross & Fletcher, 1985; Zuckerman, 1978). On the other hand, East Asian cultures do not exhibit this tendency (cf. Chiu, 1988; Kashima & Triandis, 1986). Individualists tend to attribute events to internal individual causes more frequently than collectivists, who tend to attribute them to external causes (Newman, 1993). That is, there seems to be a tendency for causes of outcomes to vary depending on particular cultural constructs (Crittenden, 1996). These attributions may affect the development of anxiety as they can be seen to be related to the ability to control one's circumstance.

In the studies of foreign language acquisition, the importance of culture/social impacts has been acknowledged and included in several models of language learning (Gardner, 1985b; Schumann, 1978). Although no research, per se, deals with the cultural constructs in terms of examining language anxiety, researchers have implied that contextual factors seem to play an important role in triggering anxiety as well as individual factors. Results from some studies support the argument that a possible disposition for such anxiety exists in some cultural groups. Relatively high levels of anxiety related to language learning and performance have been found among South Korean (Kim, 2000; Truitt, 1995) and Taiwanese EFL learners (Cheng, 1998).

Methods

Participants

The attendees at a workshop for International Teaching Assistants at a major southwestern university in the U.S. were asked to participate in a study. Two hundred twenty four participants between the ages of 21 and 38 volunteered. Of these, 154 were male and 70 were female. The participants came from 32 different countries: 99 from India, 31 from Republic of Korea, 19 from People's Republic of China, 12 from Mexico, and 63 from a variety of other countries. Respondents completed three questionnaires.

Materials

The major variables for this study included country of origin (collected as a demographic variable), cultural orientation (collectivism versus individualism), attributions of cause regarding language learning, and language anxiety. Cultural orientation was measured using the Triandis et al. (1998) scale (see Appendix A) designed to assess cultural differences regarding four dimensions—horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism, and vertical collectivism. In this study, the modal categorical response over the 16 item instrument was assumed to most correctly define an individual's orientation. Therefore, if a respondent selected the vertical individualism response as the single most frequent answer, that person was categorized as a vertical individualist.

Attribution was measured using an instrument designed for this study (Appendix B). Participants were asked to identify what percentage of an outcome such as good grades in English class, was attributable to effort, luck, task difficulty, or ability. Participants were asked to specify any other factors not included and to specify the percentage. Any responses included under “other” were then recoded by the researcher to correspond to conventional categories of the attribution dimensions. For instance, if the participant wrote “talking in English”, this was recorded as “effort or controllable”. For purposes of this study, the attribution variable is measured as the percentage allocated to external dimensions (i.e., task difficulty and luck) or to controllable factors (i.e., effort). Three major tasks related to English language learning were included for the study—communicative competence, grades, and TOEFL scores. Attributions were made for each task, summed over the tasks, and divided by three to get a single score for each individual.

The final variable in this study was measured foreign language anxiety using the English Use Anxiety scale (a modified version of the French Use Anxiety scale developed by Gardner (1985a), Appendix C). This is a Likert scale instrument using 10 items to determine respondents’ feelings of concern for using English as a foreign language. This scale looks explicitly at feelings regarding the actual use of English and so represents a specific kind of anxiety, that is, foreign language use anxiety.

Results

Cultural Constructs and Foreign Language Anxiety

One major research question concerned the relationship between individualism/collectivism and foreign language anxiety. As shown in Table 1, no statistical significance existed between the cultural constructs [i.e., hierarchical individualism (HI), vertical individualism (VI), hierarchical collectivism (HC), vertical collectivism (VC)] and English language use anxiety scores. The mean anxiety score was the same across the three dimensions included for analysis (HI = 23.52, $n = 104$; VI = 27.2, $n = 10$; HC = 24.97, $n = 59$).

Table 1. ANOVA Results: English Language Use Anxiety Scores by Cultural Constructs

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	172.714	2*	86.357	.687	.504
Within Groups	21367.494	170	125.691		
Total	21540.208	172**			

* Groups in this table refer to the four Triandis dimensions of collectivism and individualism. Vertical collectivism was removed from the analysis because only two participants were so identified.

** Fifty one participants could not be identified as either collectivist or individualist since exactly half of their responses were marked individualist and half collectivist. These participants were treated as missing cases and excluded from the analysis.

Nevertheless, despite the apparent lack of a relationship between these variables, anecdotal evidence suggests that certain nationalities do experience greater levels of anxiety than others. As noted earlier, it was posited that Asians (who are generally more collectivist in nature) are more anxious than westerners (who tend to be more individualist). Since it appears the cause is not the individualism/collectivism dimension per se, the anxiety scores were examined across countries.

Participants were placed in one of four groups: (1) Asian (China, Nepal, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong); (2) European; (3) North and South American; and (4) India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran. These designations were primarily geographical though some participants were excluded because they were from primarily English speaking countries or regions of countries such as western Canada and Ireland. This grouping was done to provide adequate numbers of respondents in each category. A one way ANOVA revealed that anxiety scores did vary by country as shown in Table 2 ($F_{3,193} = 31.627, p < 0.001$)

Table 2. ANOVA Results: English Language Use Anxiety Scores by Country

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	8321.029	3	2773.676	31.627	.000
Within Groups	16926.220	193	87.701		
Total	25247.249	196			

The Least-Significant Difference (LSD) pair wise comparison was used to determine where the significant differences were. Table 3 shows that Asians had significantly higher levels of anxiety than any other countries. The table suggests the following grouping in descending order of anxiety scores: (1) Asians, (2) Europeans, (3) North and South Americans, and (4) India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran.

Table 3. Post Hoc Tests Results: English Language Use Anxiety Scores by Country

(I) country		(J) country	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	North and South America	Asia	-10.766*	2.532	.000	-15.760	-5.772
		Europe	-.489	2.792	.861	-5.996	5.018
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	4.575	2.414	.060	-.186	9.335
	Asia	North and South America	10.766*	2.532	.000	5.772	15.760
		Europe	10.277*	2.112	.000	6.111	14.443
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	15.341*	1.579	.000	12.228	18.454
	Europe	North and South America	.489	2.792	.861	-5.018	5.996
		Asia	-10.277*	2.112	.000	-14.443	-6.111
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	5.064	1.969	.011	1.180	8.947
	India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	North and South America	-4.575	2.414	.060	-9.335	.186
		Asia	-15.341*	1.579	.000	-18.454	-12.228
		Europe	-5.064	1.969	.011	-8.947	-1.180

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Since Asians were more likely to experience high levels of anxiety, one has to ask if this anxiety varies by specific cultural group. Asia, while sharing many cultural aspects, contains very distinct cultures by country. An ANOVA was conducted to determine if anxiety scores varied among Asian groups (i.e., China, Nepal, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong). Table 4 shows that all Asian countries were not the same with respect to scores on the English Use Anxiety Scale ($F_{4,49} = 4.238, p < 0.01$).

Table 4. ANOVA Results: English Language Use Anxiety Scores by Asian Country

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1478.718	4	369.679	4.238	.005
Within Groups	4274.708	49	87.239		
Total	5753.426	53			

Table 5 uses Games-Howell tests¹ to reveal that the rank order is Korea ($n = 31$), China ($n = 19$), Hong Kong ($n = 2$), Taiwan ($n = 9$), and Nepal ($n = 2$). Nepalese students showed significantly lower levels of anxiety than all other groups. After that, the analysis becomes murky. Koreans were not different from Chinese but were higher than Taiwanese and Hong Kongese. Chinese, on the other hand, were higher only than Nepalese. Therefore, we cannot clearly state which group is higher although there are two indicators that Korea and China are somewhat higher than everyone else. The first is a simple comparison of the descriptive means (Korean = 38.917, China = 34.000). The second occurs if we consider Hong Kong as Chinese. (Due to current political conditions Hong Kong may or may not be so considered though they have technically been part of China since 1997). If Hong Kong students are included with the Chinese, then the data (see Table 5) clearly show three homogeneous subsets in descending order of anxiety: (1) Korea and China, (2) Taiwan, and (3) Nepal. In any case, the overarching finding here is that there are significant differences in the levels of anxiety exhibited by Asian students. Asians are higher than all other groups in this study but it would be shortsighted to assume that all Asians suffer from the same degree of anxiety in the use of a foreign language.

Table 5. Games-Howell Results: English Language Use Anxiety Scores by Asian Country

(I) Asia	(J) Asia	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
China	Nepal	16.050*	6.886	.000	12.425	19.675
	Korea	-5.367	2.811	.237	-12.913	2.179
	Taiwan	5.925	3.885	.131	-1.436	13.286
Nepal	China	-16.050*	6.886	.000	-19.675	-12.425
	Korea	-21.417*	6.834	.000	-28.530	-14.304
	Taiwan	-10.125*	7.341	.009	-17.316	-2.934
Korea	China	5.367	2.811	.237	-2.179	12.913
	Nepal	21.417*	6.834	.000	14.304	28.530
	Taiwan	11.292*	3.791	.012	2.138	20.445
Taiwan	China	-5.925	3.885	.131	-13.286	1.436
	Nepal	10.125*	7.341	.009	2.934	17.316
	Korea	-11.292*	3.791	.012	-20.445	-2.138

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Despite the fact that individualism/collectivism was not related to language anxiety, it is somewhat apparent that nations typically thought to be collectivistic have a higher level of anxiety than those thought to be individualistic. Therefore, since it does not appear to be this specific dimension that is salient, it is suggested that some other cultural aspect is operative. Since previous research has shown attributions to be related to anxiety, the next step is to explore relationships between attributions/perceptions of control and country.

Effects of Country on Attributions

In order to examine the effects of culture on attributions of cause, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Table 6 looks at external attributions defined as task difficulty and luck. Specifically, the table refers to the percent of cause that was attributed to the external factors of task difficulty and luck. For each of the four country groups the percentage of cause attributed to these variables was noted. The mean percent of cause for the groups were Asians = 33.21; Europeans = 33.64; North and South America = 28.2 and India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran = 41.33. This table shows a significant difference in the types of attributions made by country groups ($F_{3, 179} = 6.562, p < 0.001$).

Table 6. ANOVA Results: External Attributions by Country

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df*</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	3962.726	3	1320.909	6.562	.000
Within Groups	36030.423	179	201.287		
Total	39993.149	182			

*The N for this table is less than the 224 participants because some were left out because they came from primarily English speaking countries as noted earlier.

A Tukey HSD analysis (Table 7) shows that Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Iranians make significantly more external attributions than North and South Americans. Asians and Europeans appear to lie somewhere between these two extremes. This result suggests that the India group believes they have less control over outcomes than North and South Americans.

Table 7. Post Hoc Test Results: External Attributions by Country

	(I) country	(J) country	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	North and South America	Asia	-5.018	3.929	.577	-15.111	5.075
		Europe	-5.444	4.460	.614	-16.902	6.014
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	-13.133*	3.769	.003	-22.817	-3.450
	Asia	North and South America	5.018	3.929	.577	-5.075	15.111
		Europe	-.426	3.413	.999	-9.193	8.341
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	-8.115*	2.442	.005	-14.388	-1.842
	Europe	North and South America	5.444	4.460	.614	-6.014	16.902
		Asia	.426	3.413	.999	-8.341	9.193
		India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	-7.689	3.228	.081	-15.982	.603
	India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	North and South America	13.133*	3.769	.003	3.450	22.817
		Asia	8.115*	2.442	.005	1.842	14.388
		Europe	7.689	3.228	.081	-.603	15.982

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The above analysis considered external attributions based on Weiner's (1986, 2000) formulation where external attributions are those related to task difficulty and luck. Internal attributions are those related to effort and ability. The notion of internal and external may be less useful than controllable and uncontrollable. Therefore, further analysis will test the same hypothesis but based only the controllable-incontrollable dimension (i.e. effort is controllable and task difficulty, luck, and ability are uncontrollable). A one-way ANOVA test was used to examine differences in the percentage of cause attributed to effort based on country group. The means for the groups are Asians = 41.1; Europeans = 35.81; North and South America = 37.49 and India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran = 27.37. Table 8 shows a significant difference ($F_{3, 180} = 8.949, p < 0.001$).

Table 8. ANOVA: Attributions of Effort by Country

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	6866.218	3	2288.739	8.949	.000
Within Groups	46033.675	180	255.743		
Total	52899.893	183			

Tukey's post hoc analysis (Table 9) showed only one significant difference. The group from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran made significantly fewer attributions to effort than other Asians. Although Asians made more controllable attributions than either North and South Americans or Europeans, differences were not significant at conventional levels. Interestingly, although Asians exhibit the highest level of English language use anxiety, they also believe they have more control over their learning than other groups.

Table 9. Post Hoc Tests Results: Attributions of Effort by Country

(I) country	(J) country	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
North and South America	Asia	-3.611	4.428	.847	-14.988	7.766
	Europe	1.677	5.027	.987	-11.238	14.592
	India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	10.118	4.245	.080	-.787	21.023
Asia	North and South America	3.611	4.428	.847	-7.766	14.988
	Europe	5.288	3.847	.515	-4.594	15.170
	India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	13.729*	2.746	.000	6.675	20.784
Europe	North and South America	-1.677	5.027	.987	-14.592	11.238
	Asia	-5.288	3.847	.515	-15.170	4.594
	India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	8.441	3.634	.093	-.894	17.776
India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran	North and South America	-10.118	4.245	.080	-21.023	.787
	Asia	-13.729*	2.746	.000	-20.784	-6.675
	Europe	-8.441	3.634	.093	-17.776	.894

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Taking Tables 7 and 9 together, the group from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran attributed the cause of success at English to luck and task difficulty. This finding suggests that this group has a lowered perception that individuals can control the level of their English language success.

Discussion and Conclusions

The data show that anxiety scores were not directly related to individualism or collectivism. Interestingly, however, a relationship was found between country groups and anxiety scores. Learners from Asia had higher scores on the English Language Use Anxiety Scale than those from other countries. Korean and Chinese learners, particularly, seemed to have the highest scores among Asians. Although the data did not support Triandis' paradigm regarding cultural constructs, there is a clear pattern that culture affected levels of language anxiety.

Attributions of locus of control varied by country. The analysis shows that North and South Americans made significantly fewer external attributions (i.e., task difficulty, luck) than the group from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran. This group also made significantly more external attributions than Asians.

Attributions of controllability also varied by country. Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Iranians made significantly fewer attributions to effort than Asians or North and South Americans. Although Asians made more attributions to effort than North and South Americans, it was not a statistically significant difference.

Generally, the present data show that Asians experience the highest levels of English language use anxiety. This result is not explained by the ostensibly collectivist cultural orientation nor does the relatively higher perception of control over outcomes diminish feelings of anxiety. How, then, might this be accounted for?

First, the cultural construct of collectivism and individualism as operationalized in this study may not have been sufficient to capture the different degrees of language anxiety. However, such anxiety appears to be related to particular aspects of Asian culture. For example, the issue of face saving exists in both China and Korea as an influence of Confucianism. In language learning situations, verbal expressions in public are necessary to improve communicative language proficiency. Where the in-group cohesion is strong and "sticking out" behaviors such as being talkative or expressive in class are not encouraged, learners may have to challenge these values. In the process of dealing with this issue of face-saving in those cultures, learners experience elevated levels of anxiety as shown in the present data. This anxiety may be related to challenging the cultural expectations rather than on language learning, *per se*.

Second, cultural differences in the attributional patterns may serve to increase the levels of anxiety. Other studies support the findings from this study that East Asian cultures generally emphasize effort more than innate ability in their educational attainment (Griffith and Lim, 2003; Kim and Chun, 1994; Stevenson et al., 1990; Watkins and Cheng, 1995). As discussed earlier, effort tends to increase levels of anxiety in the present data. Consistently, such values as hard work and effort among these cultural groups may, in fact, play a role in heightening the levels of language anxiety related to the use of English.

Third, there might be an effect based on some of the beliefs that Asian learners have including the need for perfect pronunciation (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), the difficulty of learning a foreign language (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000) and the need to learn the language in the target culture (Lim, 2002). Some of those beliefs may unnecessarily evoke fear or frustration in language learning and eventually interrupt learning.

Fourth, this study operationalized foreign language anxiety very specifically. First, this study explored the actual use of a foreign language and second, the foreign language was English. It is possible that because of the large differences between Asian and English-speaking cultures, that the Asian students may have felt more anxiety relative to the Latin students. This may have something to do with the idea of identification with and identity in the target culture. It is possible that, had the scale measured anxiety in terms of some language perceived as more related to the Asian cultures, that anxiety patterns would have been quite different.

It might be suggested that such anxiety results, at least in part, from variations in the level of language proficiency among the respondents. However, this is not likely to be the case since all of the participants were prospective or current International Teaching Assistants. This means that these respondents had all passed a minimum level of language proficiency (as indicated by their TOEFL scores and/or their scores on the test of spoken English proficiency required at this institution). Therefore, all respondents may be considered to have relatively homogenous levels of English such that variations in proficiency could not have accounted for the differences identified in the data.

These findings are important in our understanding of anxiety, success at foreign language learning and acquisition, and have potential implications for the issue of motivation, as well. These findings suggest that it is no longer necessary to take much account of the collectivist/individualist dimension as an explanation. Nevertheless, culture does seem to play some role. This suggests, and the findings of this study support, that culture may not be totally dismissed as a factor though the exact nature of how it operates, in terms of this study, remains undefined.

Another implication of this study concerns the findings of attribution. Much attribution theory to date has suggested that the ability to control one's destiny leads to reduced anxiety (cf. Pekrun, 1992). It is when people find themselves in situations beyond their control that they become more anxious and nervous. The opposite results seem to manifest themselves in this study. Considering cross cultural issues, however, may help to explain this apparent paradox.

Asians showed the highest levels of English language use anxiety. They also had the highest percentage of controllable attributions. According to previous findings, this group might have been expected to have the lowest amounts of anxiety based on their perceived ability to control the situation. However, it could be that the strong group bonds which exist in those countries combined with the significance of English to their future social status served to heighten anxiety. The burden of success rested clearly with the individuals and they perceived that any failures would lead to a lessened view of them in the eyes of their group and society and that this failure would have been of their own doing. Combined with the belief that English is very difficult to master and other beliefs about language learning, the Asian learners showed the greatest anxiety levels.

This suggests that it may be too simplistic to consider only the locus of control in attributions about task outcomes. There may be a variety of broader cultural factors which serve not only to inform the nature of the attributions that individuals make but also the value of the outcome and a host of other factors. This suggests that some of the motivation models (e.g. Pekrun) may need more explicit consideration of these factors. It appears likely that one must also consider the cultural context explicitly which implies that one model may not fit all cases. Since many of these psychological models have been developed in the West in particular cultural circumstances, it seems wise to extend this area of research to other cultural milieus in order to gain more accurate and complete understandings of these issues.

All of this suggests that the larger cultural issues related to perceptions and attributions are important to a more complete understanding of anxiety in foreign language learning. Exactly how and why these dimensions work remains unclear but what is certain, based on these results, is that individual beliefs about how languages are learned do affect their English language anxiety scores. Further, these vary by cultural groups. Understanding the interplay between culture, perceptions, attributions, and individuals will contribute to a more fundamental understanding of anxiety in foreign language learning.

Appendices

Appendix A *Cultural Orientation*

Below are several scenarios. Each scenario is followed by four options. Please imagine yourself in those situations and rank the options, by placing a **1** next to the option you consider the best, or the most “right” or “appropriate for you” and a **2** next to the next best option. Do not bother to rank the other two options. Remember **there are no “correct” answers**, just your opinion of what is best. This questionnaire is confidential. REMEMBER: Please choose **TWO** options.

Ex) If I won million dollars, I would

- a. buy a car ()**
- b. travel all around the world (1)**
- c. build a school (2)**
- d. go to the moon ()**

1. You and your friends decided spontaneously to go out to dinner at a restaurant. What do you think is the best way to handle the bill?
 - a. Split it equally, without regard to who ordered what ()
 - b. Split it according to how much each person makes ()
 - c. The group leader pays the bill or decides how to split it ()
 - d. Compute each person’s charge according to what that person ordered ()

2. You are buying a piece of art for your office. Which one factor is most important in deciding whether to buy it?
 - a. It is a good investment ()
 - b. Your coworkers will like it ()
 - c. You just like it ()
 - d. Your supervisor will approve of it ()
3. Suppose you had to use one word to describe yourself. Which one would you use?
 - a. unique ()
 - b. competitive ()
 - c. cooperative ()
 - d. dutiful ()
4. Happiness is attained by
 - a. gaining a lot of status in the community ()
 - b. linking with a lot of friendly people ()
 - c. keeping one's privacy ()
 - d. winning in competitions ()
5. You are planning to take a major trip that is likely to inconvenience a lot of people at your place of work, during your absence. With whom will you discuss it, before deciding whether or not to take it?
 - a. No one ()
 - b. My parents ()
 - c. My spouse or close friend ()
 - d. Experts about the place I plan to travel to so I can decide if I want to go()
6. Which one of these four books appears to you to be the most interesting?
 - a. How to make friends ()
 - b. How to succeed in business ()
 - c. How to enjoy yourself inexpensively ()
 - d. How to make sure you are meeting your obligations ()
7. Which is the most important factor in an employee's promotion, assuming that all other factors such as tenure and performance are equal? Employee is or has
 - a. loyal to the corporation ()
 - b. obedient to the instructions from management ()
 - c. able to think for him/herself ()
 - d. contributed to the corporation much in the past ()

8. When you buy clothing for a major social event, you would be most satisfied if
 - a. you like it ()
 - b. your parents like it ()
 - c. your friends like it ()
 - d. it is so elegant that it will dazzle everyone ()
9. In your opinion, in an ideal society national budgets will be determined so that
 - a. all people have adequate incomes to meet basic needs ()
 - b. some people will be rewarded for making brilliant contributions ()
 - c. there will be maximal stability, law, and order ()
 - d. people can feel unique and self-actualized ()
10. When people ask me about myself, I
 - a. talk about my ancestors and their traditions ()
 - b. talk about my friends, and what we like to do ()
 - c. talk about my accomplishments ()
 - d. talk about what makes me unique ()
11. Suppose your fiancé(e) and your parents do not get along very well. What would you do?
 - a. Nothing ()
 - b. Tell my fiancé(e) that I need my parents' financial support and he or she should learn to handle the politics ()
 - c. Tell my fiancé(e) that he or she should make a greater effort to "fit in with the family" ()
 - d. Remind my fiancé(e) that my parents and family are very important to me and he or she should submit to their wishes ()
12. Teams of five people entered a science project contest. Your team won first place and a prize of \$100. You and another person did 95% of the work on this project. How should the money be distributed?
 - a. Split it equally, without regard to who did what ()
 - b. The other person and I get 95% of the money and the rest goes to the group ()
 - c. The group leader decides how to split the money ()
 - d. Divide the money the way that gives me the most satisfaction ()
13. Imagine you are selecting a band for a fund-raising event given by your organization. Which are the most important factors in making your decision?
 - a. I really like the band ()
 - b. My friends approve of this band ()
 - c. The administration of my organization approves of the band ()
 - d. The band will draw a large crowd ()

14. You need to choose one more class for next semester. Which one will you select?
- a. The one that will help me get ahead of everyone else ()
 - b. The one my parents said to take ()
 - c. The one my friends plan to take ()
 - d. The one that seems most interesting to me ()
15. You are at a pizza restaurant with a group of friends. How should you decide what kind of pizza to order?
- a. The leader of the group orders for everyone ()
 - b. I order what I like ()
 - c. We select the pizza that most people prefer ()
 - d. We order the most extravagant pizza available ()
16. Which candidate will you vote for in the election for president of the student government?
- a. The one your friends are voting for ()
 - b. The one I like best ()
 - c. The one who will reward me personally ()
 - d. The one who is a member of an organization important to me. The organization's status will improve if that candidate is elected. ()

Appendix B
Attribution

1. For each of the items below, please indicate the percentage you believe that it contributes to **your success of communicating in English**? Please make sure they total 100%.

The similarity of English to your native language	_____ %
How much you try to talk with native speakers	_____ %
Your natural aptitude for languages	_____ %
The number of hours a day you study	_____ %
How good your English teachers are	_____ %
Number of opportunities for you to encounter native speakers of English	_____ %
Doing extra homework	_____ %
Clarity of pronunciation of the person you are talking to	_____ %
Other. Please specify _____	_____ %
	100%

2. For each of the items below, please indicate the percentage you believe that it contributes to **your TOEFL scores**? Please make sure they total 100%.

Which version of test you get	_____ %
Test conditions (i.e., good computers/speakers/ physical conditions)	_____ %
Your natural aptitude for languages	_____ %
Taking a TOEFL class	_____ %
Your natural aptitude for taking tests	_____ %
The number of hours you studied	_____ %
Other. Please specify _____	_____ %
	100%

3. For each of the items below, please indicate the percentage you believe that it contributes to **making a good grade in your English classes**? Please make sure they total 100%.

The number of hours a day you study	_____ %
Performance standards necessary to pass a class	_____ %
Your natural aptitude for languages	_____ %
Doing extra homework	_____ %
How good your teachers are	_____ %
Teachers' grading standards	_____ %
Other. Please specify _____	_____ %
	100%

Appendix C
English Language Use Anxiety

The following statements apply to how you feel about English use in daily life. Indicate how well these statements apply to you by circling the number that best describes your opinion.

Ex) I like Austin.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

1. I would feel comfortable speaking English in an informal gathering where native English speakers and people from my country were present.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

2. I would feel uncomfortable speaking English under any circumstances.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

3. I would feel confident and relaxed if I had to ask street directions in English.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I am sure that I would get nervous if I had to speak English to a sales clerk.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. When making a telephone call, I would get flustered if it were necessary to speak English.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. I would feel calm and sure of myself if I had to order a meal in English in a U.S. restaurant.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. If I should ever meet an English speaking person, I would feel relaxed talking with him.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Speaking English with my supervisor would bother me.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. I am concerned about having to speak English with undergraduate student in my class.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. I feel confident that I will have no trouble explaining things in English to undergraduate students in class.

Strongly Disagree		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Notes

¹ Post hoc tests were conducted to determine where the mean differences occurred among the groups. Games-Howell tests were chosen for several reasons. First, as presented in the Table below, the homogeneity of variance tests showed that there was a significant difference among the variances of the groups ($p < 0.01$). That is, the variances could not be assumed to be equal. Second, the group sizes were unequal. Since Games-Howell is accurate when sample sizes are different (Field, 2000, p. 276) and does not require equal variances, it was chosen as the superior test for this analysis.

Table. Test of Homogeneity of Variances: Asian Countries and English Language Use Anxiety Scores

Levene Statistic	df1	df 2	Sig.
3.879	4	49	.008

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The Differential Effects of Implicit and Explicit Feedback on Second Language (L2) Learners at Different Proficiency Levels¹

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The present study investigates the differential effects of explicit and implicit feedback on L2 learners at different proficiency levels as measured by L2 development and learner uptake, which is defined as the learner's responses following feedback. Twenty-three learners of Chinese as a foreign language at two different levels of proficiency at a large Mid-western university in the United States participated in the study. Participants from each of the two proficiency levels were randomly assigned to either the explicit or implicit group. The learners received either explicit or implicit feedback on their erroneous production of Chinese classifiers while engaging in communicative tasks. Independent variables included feedback type, proficiency, and time. Dependent variables included the learner's performance scores on classifier use and learner uptake. Results revealed that for low-proficiency learners, explicit feedback worked better, but for high-proficiency learners, the explicitness of feedback did not make a difference. It was also found that overall the uptake level was high (nearly 100%), implying that uptake is limited as a reliable index of L2 development in this context.

Findings of numerous empirical studies have revealed that the provision of feedback in negotiated interaction is effective for L2 learning (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Lyster, 2004) and that different feedback types have differential effects on the development of learner language (Ammar & Spada, 2006; R. Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). However, attention has been scant as to which type of feedback benefits which level of learners. One way to segment feedback types is implicit and explicit. Implicit feedback is provided in the form of recasts, which have been defined as the partial or complete reformulation of a learner's erroneous L2 production while maintaining meaning (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Explicit feedback takes the form either of metalinguistic feedback where the learner is provided with metalinguistic comments about his/her erroneous production (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis, 2006), or of explicit correction, where the learner is informed about the error he/she committed, followed by the provision of the correct form (Lyster, 1998). The present study investigates the effect of implicit and explicit feedback (which was operationalized as a metalinguistic clue followed by the provision of the correct form) on the learning of Chinese classifiers, and the extent to which the two feedback types differ in affecting the learning process of high- and low-proficiency learners.

Review of the Literature

Corrective Feedback in Negotiated Interaction

The role of interaction in facilitating L2 learning has been much studied and well established in previous research over the past few decades (Gass & Alvarez Torres, 2005; Mackey, 1999; Long, 1996; Pica, 1988). Researchers argue that conversation in a second language does not merely serve as a forum where learners practice the input they have previously received. Rather, through negotiated interaction, conversations can contribute to the development of learner language (Gass, 2003). Ever since the debut of the Interaction Hypothesis (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996), the various components and aspects of negotiated interaction (such as input, output, feedback, uptake, and noticing) that potentially facilitate L2 learning have attracted a considerable amount of attention. One consensus that researchers seem to have reached is that the provision of corrective feedback on the learner's nontargetlike L2 production in negotiated interaction is beneficial to learner language development.

The investigation of corrective feedback in interaction has received increased attention over the past decade. Lyster and his colleagues (Lyster, 1998, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) conducted a series of descriptive studies on how learner errors were treated in French immersion programs in Canada, and the framework they developed for the categorization of feedback types and the coding scheme they constructed have proved to be influential in later empirical studies on corrective feedback. Their major findings are that recasts were the most frequent type of feedback, followed by elicitation, clarification, metalinguistic comments, explicit correction, and repetition, and that recasts and explicit correction, because they do not withhold the correct form as other corrective moves do, lead to less uptake. The foci of subsequent studies include learners' perception of feedback (Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor, & Mackey, 2006; Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000), the global effect of feedback (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; McDonough, 2005; Oliver & Mackey, 2003), the effects of recasts (Loewen & Philp, 2006; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001; Philp, 2003), uptake (Loewen, 2004; Panova & Lyster, 2002), and the differential effects of different types of feedback (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004). It has been concluded that while corrective feedback in general facilitates learning, the discussion of its efficacy is complicated by the presence of multiple constraining factors: instructional context, characteristics of feedback, linguistic feature to be learned, and learner variables such as age, developmental readiness, and so on. The present research seeks to explore the interplay of two of the mediating factors of the effectiveness of feedback: explicitness of feedback and learner proficiency.

Recasts as Implicit Feedback

A discussion is in order about the distinction between implicit and explicit feedback before any claims can be made as to how the explicitness of feedback and proficiency, separately or jointly, impact the development of interlanguage. To begin with, Lyster and Ranta (1997) classified corrective feedback into three broad categories: recasts,

negotiation of form, and explicit correction. Negotiation of form includes four feedback types: clarification requests, metalinguistic comments, elicitation, and repetition, which are collectively called prompts because they withhold the correct form and encourage learner repairs. In terms of the explicitness of feedback types, Lyster (1998) stated that although recasts are implicit in essence and are “clearly distinguishable from explicit corrections, it remains difficult to characterize the negotiation of form in this respect...overall, the negotiation of form is more explicit than most recasts and more implicit than explicit corrections” (Lyster, 1998, p. 191). As a result, the way explicit and implicit feedback is defined differs considerably in different studies. According to Carroll and Swain (1993), implicit feedback includes both recasts and negotiation of form, and explicit feedback “would be any feedback that overtly states that a learner’s output was not part of the language to be learned” (p. 361). Ellis et al (2006), however, defined explicit feedback as consisting of “either *explicit correction*, where the response clearly indicates that what the learner said is incorrect (e.g., “no, not ‘goed’—‘went’”)” or of “*metalinguistic feedback*, defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as ‘comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner’s utterance (p. 47)’”, as in “You need past tense” (p. 341). Notwithstanding the on-going controversy over the implicitness (or explicitness) of different types of feedback, there seems to be agreement among researchers that recasts are implicit compared with other feedback moves.

Recasts, or implicit feedback, have been much studied during the past decade, probably because they are the most frequently used corrective moves in the classroom (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Han, 2002; Leeman, 2003; Loewen & Philp, 2006). In terms of the effectiveness of recasts, descriptive classroom-based studies (Lyster, 1998, 2001; Sheen, 2004) mostly looked at the amount of uptake recasts lead to and found that, compared with prompts, recasts resulted in significantly less learner repair. However, researchers found that the uptake level after recasts was perceivably higher in language-oriented (such as ESL or EFL) classes than in meaning-based contexts (such as immersion programs) (Lyster & Mori, 2006; Sheen, 2004). These findings indicate that the extent to which recasts are useful might in part depend upon the instructional context.

The effectiveness of recasts, as some researchers (Loewen & Philp, 2006; Sheen, 2006) argued, is also determined by their characteristics they. Loewen and Philp investigated the relationship between the characteristics of recasts and uptake (learner response following feedback) as well as the accuracy of learners’ posttest scores. It was found that instructors’ corrective behavior such as stress, declarative intonation, one change, and multiple feedback moves were significant predictors of successful uptake, and interrogative intonation, shortened length, and one change were associated with the accuracy of the test scores. One unique aspect of the study was the use of tailor-made tests, where test items were created about the linguistic forms arising in form-focused episodes specific to each individual student. In a similar study, Sheen (2006) found that three characteristics of recasts — length, type of change, linguistic focus — were significantly related to learner uptake and that six characteristics of recasts, which are mode, length, type of change, linguistic focus, reduction, and number of changes were associated with learner repair.

Ellis and Sheen (2006) conducted a comprehensive review on the effectiveness of recasts, arguing that there are many problems that confront researchers. These problems involve the difficulty in defining recasts, the controversial use of uptake to evaluate the effectiveness of recasts, the insufficient knowledge about the role learners’ developmental

readiness plays, the differential effects of intensive and extensive recasts, the linguistic structure to be learned, and the existence of recasts with different characteristics. The presence of these problems calls for more research into the factors at play.

Recasts and Proficiency

Several studies have considered proficiency or developmental readiness as a variable mediating the effectiveness of recasts. Mackey and Philp (1998) studied the differential effects of interaction alone and interaction with intensive recasts on the learning of English question forms by two groups of learners: “readies,” who were developmentally ready to learn particular question forms, and “unreadies,” who were not developmentally ready to develop particular question forms. They found that the group who were developmentally ready and who engaged in interaction with intensive recasts performed significantly better than the developmentally unready group who received the same treatment. Han (2002) also pointed out that learners must be developmentally ready in order to benefit from the positive and negative evidence afforded by recasts. Philp (2003) identified proficiency, among others, as one of the most determining factors of the noticing of recasts. She noted that learners of higher proficiency were more likely to notice the target structure.

Explicitness of Feedback and Proficiency

Despite the relative abundance of research on implicit feedback (recasts) and feedback in general, more needs to be done regarding how it affects learning as compared with more explicit corrective moves and even more about whether the explicitness of feedback interacts with learners’ proficiency level in affecting L2 learning. To date, there have been two empirical studies (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis et al., 2006) that investigated the differential effects of implicit feedback and explicit feedback on L2 learning. In both studies, implicit feedback was operationalized as recasts and explicit feedback as metalinguistic clues.

Carroll and Swain (1993) studied 100 ESL learners whose primary language was Spanish. The learning problem was the English dative alternation (e.g., “He gave me a book.” vs. “He gave a book to me.”). The subjects were divided into five groups based on the type of feedback they received: Students in Group A were explicitly told that they were wrong when they made a mistake, and were provided explanation about how the alternation worked; Group B were simply told that they made a mistake when they produced a flawed sentence; Group C received recasts when they made mistakes; Group D were asked if they were sure about what they produced when they made mistakes; and the control group received no treatment. Results revealed that all the treatment groups performed better than the control group and, most importantly, the metalinguistic group, Group A, outperformed all the other groups. It was thus concluded that explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback.

In support of Swain’s findings, Ellis et al.’s study (2006) also showed a clear advantage of explicit metalinguistic explanation. The study involved 34 low-intermediate ESL learners who were randomly assigned to three conditions: recast, metalinguistic explanation, and no feedback (control). The learners in the two treatment groups performed two tasks in triads and received either type of feedback on their erroneous production of the regular past *-ed*. One pretest and two posttests were administered to measure acquisition.

Three tests were administered in each testing session: untimed grammaticality judgment test, metalinguistic knowledge test, and oral imitation test (the first two measure explicit knowledge and the third measures implicit knowledge). Results revealed that the learners benefited more from explicit feedback than implicit feedback in terms of both immediate effect and retention.

In addition to the two afore reviewed studies, one other study that is peripherally related to the present study is the quasi-experimental study by Lyster (2004), who examined the differential effects of prompts (including metalinguistic clues, elicitation, repetition, and clarification requests) and recasts in form-focused instruction (FFI) on the learning of grammatical gender in French. Four Francophone teachers and their eight classes of students in an early French immersion program were assigned to four conditions: FFI-recasts, FFI-prompts, FFI-only, and control. Results showed a clear advantage of FFI over content-based instruction and of prompts over recasts. Since prompts are more explicit than recasts (Lyster, 1998), the results seem to suggest that recasts as implicit feedback did not work as well as more explicit feedback.

With regard to the interplay between the explicitness of feedback and L2 proficiency, research is needed specifically targeting the differential effects of metalinguistic feedback or explicit correction or both and recasts, which supposedly stand at the explicit and implicit ends of the hierarchy of feedback types, on learners of different proficiency levels. One related study is the one by Ammar and Spada (2006), who compared the benefits of recasts and prompts for learners of different proficiency levels. Prompts in the study included metalinguistic clues, elicitation, and repetition. Participants were 64 Francophone students in three grade-6 ESL classes in Montreal, who were subdivided into high- and low-proficiency groups. Depending on the condition to which they were assigned, the three teachers involved were instructed to provide recasts, prompts, or no feedback to the students' nontargetlike use of third-person possessive determiners in English. Results from two posttests revealed that the students of lower proficiency benefited more from prompts than from recasts, but there was no difference in effect between prompts and recasts for more proficient students. The finding was attributed to the strong sensitivity of high-proficiency learners to corrective feedback and to the need of low-proficiency learners for more explicit signaling about the errors they committed in order for feedback to be effective.

Some issues need to be addressed about the foregoing feedback research that included explicitness of feedback and the learner's proficiency as intervening variables. First, many studies have been conducted in French immersion contexts where L2 learning was embedded in the learning of subject matter, which might, as Ammar and Spada (2006) pointed out, to some extent make it difficult for the learners to notice and benefit from the effect afforded by recasts. The effects of recasts therefore need further investigation. Second, since in most studies prompts involve several corrective moves and the recast is a single move, the overall advantage of the former over the latter as found in some studies might in part result from the multiplicity of corrective strategies as compared with the monotonicity of the provision of a single type of feedback. Third, the majority of the research has focused on learners of either French or English and more attention needs to be paid to how corrective feedback fares in contexts where other languages (such as Chinese, which is typologically different from Indo-European languages) are acquired. To address the above issues, more empirical research is warranted in different language learning contexts and in conditions where feedback moves are teased out.

Uptake

One controversial measurement of the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback is uptake, a term defined as the learner's responses to corrective feedback provided after a linguistic error or a query about a linguistic form (Loewen, 2004). The importance of uptake, as Loewen argued, may be attributable to its automatizing function, the pushed output (the learner's prompted L2 production) it entails, and the processing demands it sets on students. Research on uptake has mainly centered on two perspectives: which types of feedback lead to more uptake and what characteristics of feedback or focus on form are related to uptake and successful uptake (cases where learners successfully incorporate the feedback they receive). It was found that uptake level was lower in immersion contexts than in more language-oriented contexts (such as intensive ESL programs) (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Loewen, 2004; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Also, the distribution pattern of uptake following different feedback moves varied across instructional contexts: whereas recasts led to less uptake and repair than prompts in more meaning-based classrooms, they invited more uptake and repair in classes where more focus was placed on linguistic forms.

With respect to the factors contributing to uptake, research has been done on the characteristics of recasts that affect the successfulness of uptake (See above review of Loewen & Philp, 2006) and the traits of FFI (form-focused instruction) that are related to uptake. Ellis (2001) investigated the occurrence of uptake in communicative ESL classes and found a higher incidence of uptake in reactive and student-initiated focus-on-form episodes (FFE) than in teacher-initiated FFEs. It was also found that meaning-focused and complex FFEs contained more uptake and more successful uptake. Loewen (2004) examined the characteristics of incidental focus on form that predicted uptake, and found that complexity, timing, and type of feedback were the best predictors of uptake and successful uptake.

It is evident that uptake has mostly been examined in classroom settings as it happened in language events without taking into consideration learner variables such as proficiency. Also, related research has largely been conducted in the learning of Indo-European languages. With the hope of providing a more complete picture of uptake, this study investigates its occurrence in a lab setting where learners from different proficiency levels received two types of feedback when learning Chinese classifiers, a structure that has rarely been studied in L2 research.

Chinese Classifiers

A classifier is defined by Allen (1977) as an independent morpheme that "denotes some salient perceived or imputed characteristic of the entity to which the associated noun refers" (p. 285, cited in Zhang, 2007). The use of a classifier is "...syntactically obligatory when the counting of the head noun is to be carried out" (Zhang, 2007, p. 43). For instance, the English expression "two trees" would be *liǎng kē shù* (*two-CL trees*, meaning "two trees") in Chinese, with the classifier *kē* inserted between the numeral *liǎng* (two) and *shù* (tree). A classifier represents the semantic properties of the class of objects it denotes. The Chinese classifier *tiáo*, for instance, is used for something long and thin as in *yī tiáo mǎlù* (*one-CL road*, one road). However, not all uses of classifiers

are predictable based on the physical characteristics (Polio, 1994). An exemplification of this phenomenon is the use of *tiáo* in *liǎng tiáo guīzé* (*two-CL rules*, two rules), where *guīzé* (rule) as an abstract notion by no means has the physical characteristics of being thin and long.

In light of the fact that there is often confusion between classifiers and measure words, it is necessary to make a distinction between the two. A classifier, according to Tai and Wang (1990), denotes the most salient functional or physical features of a class of objects, and its main function is to categorize a group of entities sharing the same features. A measure word, however, is used to quantify the entity a noun denotes. For instance, the classifier *běn* (volume) is used for any book-like printed materials such as in *liǎng běn shū* (*two běn-CL books*, two books) and *liǎng běn cídiǎn* (*two běn-CL dictionaries*, two dictionaries). It is obvious that the function of the classifier is not to quantify, but to categorize instead. Classifiers are not indispensable for the interpretation of a nominal phrase and they are therefore considered semantically redundant. In contrast, measure words, such as *piàn* in *yí piàn miànbāo* (*a piàn-CL bread*, a slice of bread) or *liǎng piàn ròu* (*two piàn-CL meat*, two slices of meat), are used to quantify mass nouns whose referents are not directly or inherently quantifiable. Whereas measure words are present in classifier and non-classifier languages, classifiers are only present in classifier languages. Chinese has standard measures for mass nouns; it also has a system of “measures” for count nouns such as *tiáo* for rivers, and *zhāng* for desks or tables. Those are classifiers and do not have equivalents in English. Therefore, measure words are universally present but classifiers only exist in a subset of languages.

Research on Chinese classifiers has been conducted mostly from the semantic perspective of the linguistic phenomenon (Croft, 1994; Tai & Wang, 1990) and little has been done from the perspective of acquisition, either in L1 or L2. As far as the acquisition of Chinese classifiers by L2 learners is concerned, two studies are noteworthy. One is by Polio (1994), who observed L2 Chinese learners’ use of classifiers. She found that learners rarely omitted a classifier in obligatory contexts and that learners did use special classifiers but only occasionally. The other is by Chen (1996), who investigated the effects of three corrective moves on the learning of Chinese classifiers when learners engaged in a computer-mediated exercise. In answering each question in the computerized exercise, a learner was presented with an English sentence followed by the Chinese translation (in characters) and the Pinyin² version of the sentence where the classifier was taken out. The learner was asked to fill in the blank with the correct classifier (only in Pinyin) and when a wrong classifier was provided, the learner, depending on their group assignment, received one of the following corrective moves that automatically popped up on the computer screen: (a) metalinguistic feedback where learners were given correct answers and explanations, (b) explicit rejection, where learners were told that their responses were wrong, and (c) modeling, where learners were given correct answers. An overall effect was found for corrective feedback on the learning of Chinese classifiers but the effect was not sustained after a six-week interval. Also, both metalinguistic feedback and modeling were found to be superior to explicit rejection in facilitating learning over a short term.

Research Questions

The review of the literature revealed that more empirical research needs to be conducted on the differential effects of implicit and explicit feedback, and even more on the interface between the two feedback types and L2 learners' proficiency levels. The question also remains of whether the two feedback types lead to different levels of uptake and successful uptake in a lab setting among learners at different proficiency levels. Also, more research is called for on the learning of non-Indo-European languages. Using Chinese classifiers as the target structure for learning, this study attempts to answer the following questions about the differential effects of explicit and implicit feedback on L2 learners at different proficiency levels:

Does the provision of explicit and implicit feedback affect L2 learners' interlanguage development?

Does the efficacy of explicit and implicit feedback relate to L2 learners' language proficiency?

Is uptake affected by the explicitness of feedback and learner proficiency?

Variables

Independent variables are feedback type (explicit vs. implicit), proficiency (high vs. low), and time (pretest, posttest 1, and posttest 2). Dependent variables include the learner's L2 interlanguage development and her/his uptake of corrective feedback, that is, the learner's responses following feedback.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 23 CFL (Chinese as a foreign language) learners enrolled in the Chinese language program at a large Midwestern U.S. university. Participants were aged between 19 and 23 and were in their second (Level 2, $n = 12$) or fourth year of Chinese study (Level 4, $n = 11$). They are referred to as low- and high-proficiency learners respectively in this study. Proficiency in this study is therefore determined by the participants' enrollment status and is not to be confused with their prior knowledge about the target structure. Among the 23 learners, 10 were male and 13 were female. 17 of the participants reported that English was their native language, 5 stated that Korean was their first language, and 1 said that his mother tongue was Japanese. Heritage speakers of Chinese³ were excluded from the study.

Participants from each level were randomly assigned to two groups: One group received implicit feedback (recasts) and the other was provided explicit feedback (metalinguistic explanation). Thus, the study has four groups: high-explicit ($n = 5$), high-implicit ($n = 6$), low-explicit ($n = 6$), and low-implicit ($n = 6$).

Target Structure

To address the research questions posed in this study, a target structure needs to be identified with the following three characteristics: (a) It presents problems for L2 learners; (b) learners have had previous exposure to it; and (c) it is easy to provide feedback on its use. Chinese classifiers meet all three of these criteria.

First, previous research (Polio, 1994) indicated that nonnative speakers tended to replace special classifiers with the general classifier *gè*, which in some cases is acceptable but which, in cases where the use of special classifiers is more acceptable, is considered nontargetlike. Second, because of the difficulty involved in the mastery of classifiers, they are usually included in the curriculum of all four years of study (according to one of the instructors in the Chinese program at the university where this study was conducted. This made it possible to study the effects of feedback on learners at different proficiency levels. Third, the correction of incorrect classifier use is easy and modification on the learner's part does not require complicated processing.

Ten special classifiers were selected from the students' textbooks (See Appendix A for the list of the selected classifiers and their accompanying nouns). Special classifiers were selected so that replacing them with the general classifier *gè*, which nonnative speakers usually do, would be inappropriate and feedback would be warranted. The selected classifiers were taught in either the first or second year. No target words were from the textbooks for the third or fourth year partly because the researcher wanted to make sure that all participants had had at least some exposure to the selected classifiers and partly because, according to the researcher's observation, commonly used classifiers were not frequent in higher-level textbooks. Furthermore, all the nouns used in the study (except for the word *dāo*⁴, meaning 'knife,' for which the classifier is *bǎ*) were also from the students' first and second year textbooks.

It should be noted that the acceptability of replacing a special classifier with the general classifier in certain situations is a complicated, controversial issue and is difficult to determine. As some researchers (Erbaugh, 1986; Polio, 1994) argue, there are cases where people (including native speakers and classroom instructors) claim that special classifiers must be used, but they tend to use the general one instead in actual communication. The extent to which rules match use is not the focus of this study, and the researcher did not conduct any empirical research on the variation of classifier use prior to selecting the classifiers to be used in the study. Rather, what was explained in the students' textbooks about the selected classifiers, together with the researcher's consultation with two native speakers, served as the bases for target word selection.

Operationalization of Feedback Types and Uptake

In the present study, feedback entails either the correction (implicit or explicit) of a wrong classifier or, in the case of the failure to use a classifier on the learner's part, the provision (implicit or explicit) of a classifier by the researcher. Implicit feedback in this study is operationalized as recasts, referring to the implicit reformulation of the learner's erroneous L2 production.

Example 1, which is extracted from the data of the current study, illustrates what a recast is. In this example, the nonnative speaker used the general classifier *gè* for “river,” and the native speaker (researcher) merely provided the correct form by replacing *gè* with *tiáo* without overtly drawing the learner’s attention to his mistake.

1. NNS: 我 看到 一 个 河。
 *wǒ kàndào yī gè hé.
 *I see one-CL (wrong classifier) river.
 I saw a river.
 NS: 一 条 河。
 yī tiáo hé
 One-CL (correct classifier) river.
 A river.

Explicit feedback in this study is operationalized as the reformulation of the flawed utterance followed by metalinguistic information where the term *classifier* was mentioned and the correct classifier was repeated. Thus, explicit feedback included a metalinguistic clue and the provision of the correct form, which is slightly different from the way Ellis et al. (2006) or Carroll and Swain (1993) operationalized this type of feedback. In Ellis et al.’s study, where the target structure was past tense *-ed*, explicit feedback took the form of the repetition of the error followed by the metalinguistic information “You need past tense” (p.353). Since the learners had received instruction about the regular past form of the verb and the rule applies to all regular verbs, the reminder that past tense was needed might have been enough to lead to the correction. In Carroll and Swain’s study, explicit feedback was supplied to the learner through the explaining of how dative alternation in English works. Again, the rule explanation per se might have been sufficient for the correction of an error. However, in this study the target structure was Chinese classifiers, the use of many of which is confusing (Li & Thompson, 1981) because of the relative arbitrariness of this linguistic feature despite the semantic association between a classifier and the object to which it refers in some cases. Consequently, as determined from a pilot study before the actual experiment was conducted, the mere provision of metalinguistic clues such as “The classifier was wrong” often did not lead to the correction of a wrong classifier use. Thus, explicit feedback in this study was operationalized as the provision of a metalinguistic clue plus the correct linguistic form.

Example 2, also from the present study, shows how the nontargetlike use of a classifier was explicitly corrected in this study. As is shown below, the nonnative speaker made a mistake in that he used the wrong classifier *jiàn* for articles (referring to essays in this context). The native speaker researcher explicitly reformulated the flawed production and provided the metalinguistic information with a repetition of the correct form.

2. NNS: 我 有 两 件 文 章。
 *wǒ yǒu liǎng jiàn wénzhāng.
 *I have two-CL (wrong classifier) article.
 I have two articles.

NS: 两 篇 文 章 , 量 词 应 该 是 “ 篇 ” 。
 liǎng piān wénzhāng, liàngcí yīnggāi shì piān.
 Two-CL (correct classifier) article, classifier should be *piān*.
 Two articles. The classifier should be *piān*.

Following Lyster and Ranta (1997), uptake is defined as any response from the learner immediately following a corrective move, including utterances that still need repair as well as the repair of the erroneous forms. In Example 3, in response to the NNS's failure to produce the classifier used with *māo* (cat), the native speaker provided explicit feedback by inserting the classifier accompanied by the relevant metalinguistic information; as a result, the NNS incorporated the correction and the uptake was successful.

3. NNS: 我 有 一 猫。
 *wǒ yǒu yī māo
 *I have one-(CL) (missing classifier) cat.
 I have a cat.

NS: 一 只 猫 , 量 词 是 只 。
 yī zhī māo , liàngcí shì zhī
 One CL-zhī (measure word) cat, classifier is *zhī*.
 A cat. The classifier is *zhī*.

NNS: 一 只 猫 。
 yī zhī māo
 One-CL cat. (uptake with repair)
 A cat.

Procedure

The study procedure had four steps for each participant. Each participant participated in two tasks, followed by an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest. The pretest was embedded in the first task to avoid a priming effect, which could have resulted from administering a formal, separate pretest. The two tasks and the immediate posttest all occurred in the first session, and the delayed posttest was administered one week later. During the first session, the learner filled out a consent form and a background questionnaire that included questions about his/her age, gender, years of exposure to Chinese, and so on. Next, the learner performed a picture description task with the native speaker researcher, at the outset of which the learner was asked to describe two trial pictures, the purpose being to make him/her familiar with the procedure of the task and, in the case of explicit feedback, with the metalinguistic clues to be provided. At the completion of the picture description task, the learner engaged in a “spot the difference” task. After the second task, the learner took the immediate posttest. The first session lasted about 50 minutes. The delayed posttest (which happened one week after the treatment) took about 5 minutes.

Treatment Tasks

The participants completed two tasks. Task 1 was called “picture description” (See Appendix B for a sample picture used in Task 1), where the participant was asked to describe 9 pictures, informing the native speaker about what the content was in each picture. To make the task interactive, the native speaker constantly asked questions and engaged in conversations with the participant about what was happening in the pictures. Distracting items that did not require the use of the target structure were included in each picture. In order for the task to proceed more smoothly, a vocabulary list for all the objects in each picture was provided, including the corresponding Chinese character(s), the Pinyin, and the English equivalent. Each of the ten selected classifiers should have been used twice, each time with a different object, and the two objects that went with the same classifier appeared in two separate pictures so that the use of a classifier for one noun did not provide hints for the use of the same classifier with the other noun. The pictures were shown to each participant in the same order, and any two pictures with objects requiring the same classifier were not arranged in a row. For instance, the classifier *zhāng*, which accompanies nouns referring to something thin, was used with two objects in this study, a table/desk (in Chinese the same word is used for both a table and a desk) and a photo. Therefore, the table and the photo appeared in two separate pictures and the two pictures did not appear one after another.

Task 2 was a “spot the difference” task, where both the learner and the researcher held a picture with differences between them (See Appendix C for sample pictures used in this task). The learner asked questions to find out the differences. Since there were 10 classifiers, with a total of 20 nouns, two pairs of pictures were used to elicit 20 uses of classifiers. Thus, each classifier should have been used twice. The nouns accompanying the classifiers were the same as those in Task 1. For the purpose of reducing the processing load on the learner that resulted from their efforts to retrieve the nouns, as in Task 1, the vocabulary items for the objects to be compared were listed in each picture, each item containing the Chinese word, the English explanation, and the corresponding Pinyin. In order for the learner not to develop the idea that the differences were only in number, he/she was told that the two pictures might differ in various ways, such as number, size, position and presence or absence of an object. As in Task 1, objects with the same classifier were drawn in separate pictures so that the use of the classifier for one object did not provide implications for the use of the classifier for the other object. One exception is that the two objects for the classifier *piān*, which are *diaries* and *articles*, appeared in the same picture because it was too artificial to place either of them in the other picture in light of the settings of the two pictures.

Since in each task each classifier appeared twice and with different nouns, the learner had the opportunity to use a classifier four times during the whole treatment session. The tasks were performed in NS-NNS dyads. The treatments and tests were audio taped. The researcher gave corrective feedback according to the learner’s assigned treatment group, and feedback was given mostly for the wrong use of the target structure although errors in the use of other structures were occasionally corrected. In case the learner did not use a desired classifier, for whatever reason, the researcher provided hints to elicit it, such as by asking the question “*duōshǎo?*” (which means ‘How many?’) to create the obligatory context for the use of the classifier. Although the learner was instructed

to only speak Chinese during the treatment, in extreme cases such as when the learner failed to understand the researcher's directions, the researcher had to use English. Since it was possible that the learner could ask the researcher about the target structure, that is, what classifiers should be used in certain contexts, making the correction of erroneous L2 production impossible, in the directions for both tasks, the learner was told to make guesses and not to ask language related questions when she/he had trouble with either grammar or vocabulary.

Testing and Scoring

The study followed a mixed design investigating within- and between-subject effects, with two levels of treatment (the two types of feedback), an immediate posttest, and a delayed posttest. As mentioned above, a formal pretest was not conducted in order not to draw the learner's attention to the target structure prior to the treatment. However, the learners' prior knowledge about classifiers was tested during the first task: the scores were based on their first use of a classifier or immediate self-repair (Lyster, 2004). The learner had twenty chances to use classifiers in the first task and therefore had twenty chances for "first attempt," so the total possible pretest score was 20, with each attempt being scored either 1 or 0 depending on whether or not a correct classifier was used or, if not, whether it was followed by immediate self-repair. Half a point was given if the learner produced a classifier in such a way that his/her pronunciation of the word deviated from the norm because of the wrong pronunciation of an initial consonant (e.g. *cuò* for *zuò*) or of a vowel (e.g. *zhē* for *zhī*), but the word could still be recognized. In the case that the learner first produced the correct form, but then replaced it with a wrong one, a zero was given. The learner's score on Task 1, which could be as high as 20 points, formed the basis for the evaluation of his/her prior knowledge of Chinese classifiers.

The posttests were both oral. During each of them, the learner was given 20 flash cards (See Appendix D) to describe. On each card there was a certain number of a certain object, and there were no distracting items. In describing each card, the learner was only asked to say the number, the classifier, and the corresponding noun whose pronunciation and English translation were provided. Learners recorded their voice on tape when describing the flash cards. In both posttests, the items were exactly the same except that the sequence was randomized. The researcher also made sure that pictures with objects that take the same classifier were not arranged next to each other to avoid priming.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the scores of each group on the three tests, including group means and standard deviations, are shown in Table 1. For the purpose of measuring learning as a result of the provision of feedback, all the items on which the learner gave correct production in the pretest were not scored on the two posttests. An independent samples t-test⁵ was run on the learners' pretest scores to see whether the high- and low-proficiency learners differed in their knowledge of classifiers. If they did, their pretest scores would have to be treated as a covariate for the posttest scores. Results showed that there was no significant difference between the high- and low-proficiency students in their prior knowledge of classifiers at the outset of the study, $t(2, 21) = 0.47, p > .05$, which suggested that any differences between their posttest scores were not the result of

differences in their prior knowledge of the target structure. The reasons why the learners, who were from different proficiency levels, did not differ in their use of classifiers will be explored in the discussion section.

Table 1. *Group Means and Standard Deviations*

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Pretest</i>		<i>Posttest 1</i>		<i>Posttest 2</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High explicit (n = 5)	5.2	2.4	15.4	2.1	12.6	1.7
High implicit (n = 6)	5.3	2.5	16.3	3.2	14.6	2.0
Low explicit (n = 6)	5.6	1.6	15.3	1.5	12.9	2.1
Low implicit (n = 6)	5.7	2.0	10.9	3.1	9.4	2.7

Note. All the mean scores were calculated based on the number of classifier tokens.

To determine the effectiveness of feedback type and its relation to proficiency and time, a mixed-model, repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted, the results of which appear in Table 2. As is shown, there was a significant effect for proficiency level, $F(1, 19) = 9.88, p < .01$ and for time, $F(2, 38) = 219.7, p < .01$. Significant effects were also found for Feedback \times Level interaction, $F(1, 19) = 7.78, p < .05$; Time \times Level interaction, $F(2, 38) = 7.61, p < .01$; and Time \times Feedback \times Level interaction, $F(2, 38) = 5.95, p < .01$.

Table 2. *Analysis of Variance for the Effectiveness of Feedback*

<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Between subjects</i>		
Feedback (F)	1	1.99
Level (L)	1	9.88**
F \times L	1	7.78*
Total	19	
<i>Within subjects</i>		
Time (T)	2	219.72**
T \times F	2	2.12
T \times L	2	7.61**
T \times F \times L	2	5.95**
Total	38	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Post-hoc analyses were conducted to make multiple comparisons among groups and to locate the source of the significant effects. The results are presented in Table 3. As shown, at both levels, the scores of each group on both posttests are significantly different from the pretest scores; at both levels, the explicit groups performed better on posttest 1 than on posttest 2, but there was no evidence that the implicit groups performed differently on the two posttests. On posttest 1, there was no significant difference between the explicit and implicit groups at the higher level, but at the lower level, the explicit group outperformed

the implicit group. This pattern was maintained on the second posttest. Furthermore, on both posttests, the low-explicit group performed equally well as the high-explicit and high-implicit groups. Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the change of group means over time at both proficiency levels.

Table 3. *Post hoc Multiple Comparisons among Groups*

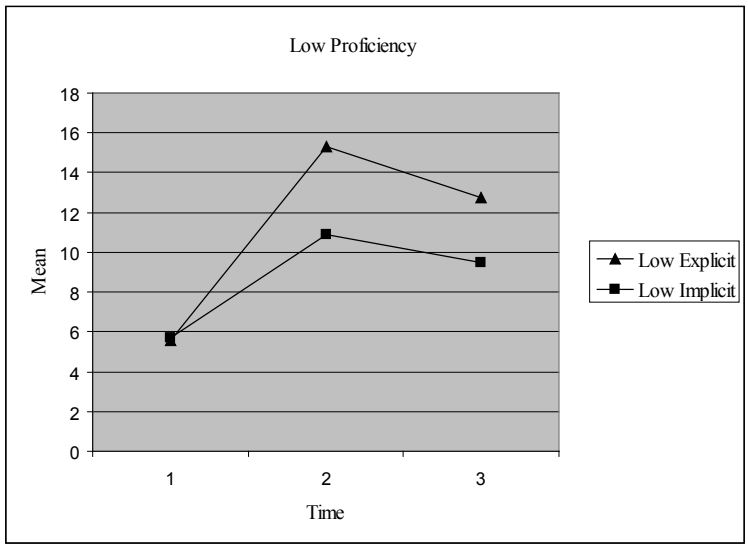
<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High vs. Low</i>
Im1 < Im2*	Im1 < Im2 *	Ex2 = Ex2
Im1 < Im3*	Im1 < Im3*	Im2 = Ex2
Im2 = Im3	Im2 = Im3	Im2 > Im2*
Im2 < Ex2*	Im2 = Ex2	Ex2 > Im2*
Ex1 < Ex2*	Ex1 < Ex2*	Im3 > Im3*
Ex1 < Ex3*	Ex1 < Ex3*	Ex3 = Ex3
Ex2 > Ex3*	Ex2 > Ex3*	Im3 = Ex3
Im3 < Ex3*	Ex3 = Im3	Ex3 > Im3*

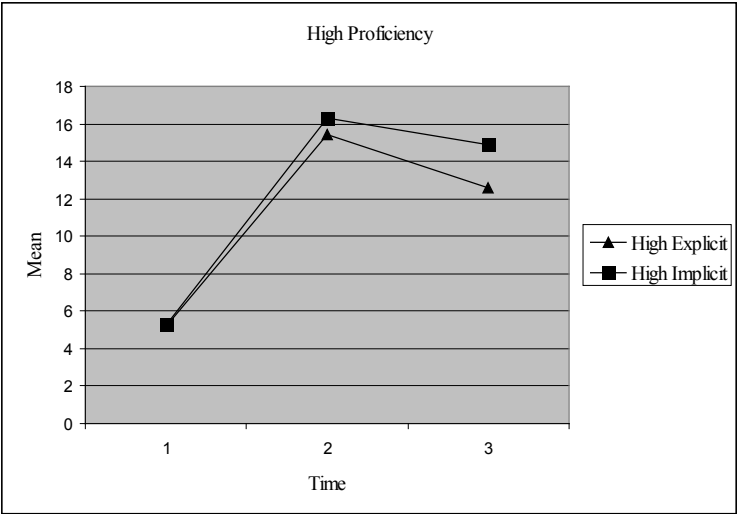
Note. * $p < 0.05$

Im = implicit feedback; Ex = explicit feedback.

1 = pretest; 2 = posttest 1; 3 = posttest 2.

Figure 1. Change of group means over time.





The results for the level of uptake following corrective feedback for each group are presented in Table 4. As is shown, on the whole, the learners’ uptake following corrections is very high, regardless of feedback type and group. The uptake rate for the high-implicit group is 98% and for all the other groups is over 99%. Furthermore, all uptake was successful, that is, learners repaired the errors in their use of the target structure.

Table 4. *Uptake in Response to Corrective Feedback*

Groups	Number of corrections	Amount of uptake	Successful uptake
High explicit	118	117	117
High implicit	133	130	130
Low explicit	149	148	148
Low implicit	160	159	159

To summarize the results, with regard to the effects of the two types of feedback on the learning of Chinese classifiers by learners from two different proficiency levels, the following findings were obtained: (a) The post-treatment scores for all four groups were significantly higher than their pretest scores; (b) The two explicit groups performed better on the first posttest than on the second posttest, but the implicit groups did not perform differently on the two posttests; (c) On both posttests, the low-explicit group performed equally well as the high-explicit and high-implicit groups; (d) Feedback type did not make a difference among the high-proficiency learners, but it did among the learners at the lower level: explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback. It was also found that the uptake level in this study was high, irrespective of proficiency and feedback type, and the success rate of uptake was 100%.

Discussion

The primary goal of the present study was to investigate whether the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback is contingent upon L2 learners' proficiency level. The results from the two posttests indicate that for high-proficiency learners, explicit and implicit feedback did not differentially affect their learning of Chinese classifiers, but low-proficiency learners benefited more from explicit feedback. This finding is consistent with that of Mackey and Philp (1998) who, in investigating the effectiveness of recasting, found that unready (low-proficiency) learners did not improve their performance after they were provided with intensive recasting. It also to some extent confirms Ammar and Spada's (2006) finding that more explicit feedback (prompts in their study) worked better for low-proficiency learners and that implicit and explicit feedback worked equally well for high-proficiency learners.

Previous research on the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006) found an advantage for the former over the latter, and the justification for this effect was that "explicit feedback is more likely to be perceived as overtly corrective than implicit feedback." (Ellis et al, 2006). Ellis et al. further pointed out that

It [explicit feedback] constitutes a brief "time out" from communicating, allowing the learner to focus explicitly but briefly on form. The effectiveness of metalinguistic (explicit) feedback, therefore, may derive in part from the high level of awareness it generates and in part from the fact that it is embedded in a communicative context. (p.363)

Carroll and Swain provided a similar explanation for the better effect of explicit feedback as compared to implicit feedback: "A priori it might seem as if the more explicit types of feedback would be more informative given that they state clearly that the learner's utterance is wrong" (1993, p.362).

The above reasoning also applies to the present study because although the two related studies (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis et al., 2006) discussed here did not take proficiency into account, their participants were all low-intermediate ESL students. However, to account for the finding of this study that explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback as far as low-proficiency learners are concerned and that they worked equally well for learners at the higher level, the above explanation provided by Ellis et al. and Carroll and Swain needs to be modified. To their explanation it should be added that for lower-proficiency learners, their attention needs to be explicitly directed toward the target structure in order for feedback to be effective, due to their limited attentional resources. As Gass has pointed out, "There is a major role for apperceived input, determined to a large extent by selective attention. Selective attention aids in grammar development" (1997, p. 28). Philp (2003) found that "the High and Intermediate groups were significantly more accurate on recall of recasts" (p. 112), which means that higher proficiency enables learners to better notice (or apperceive, according to Gass (1997)) corrective feedback. Therefore, it seems reasonable to state that the high-proficiency learners benefited from both explicit and implicit feedback probably because they have more attentional resources to free up for the perception of corrective feedback. The increased effect of attention for higher-proficiency learners was also found by Gass, Svetics, and Lemelin (2003). Hence, recasts, although implicit, can still be easily noticed and incorporated by the higher-level learners. This is further confirmed by one of the instructors of the participants this study,

who indicated that she preferred to utilize recasts for more advanced as opposed to lower-level learners because they could easily notice corrections.

How can one account for the fact that there was no significant difference between the low-explicit group and high-implicit and high-explicit groups on both posttests? One reason might be that most of the classifiers are selected from the textbook for students at the lower level and classifiers, according to the instructors, were mainly addressed at the beginning stage (i.e., in the first and second years) of the program, and might therefore have been easily retrieved once noticed by students at the lower level. The advantage of the low-proficiency students in this regard might, to some extent, have compensated for the overall proficiency gap between the two levels of students in this study. Furthermore, the fact that most of the selected classifiers are from the textbooks for lower levels and that classifiers are mostly taught at lower levels may also account for why there are, albeit unexpectedly, no significant differences between high- and low-proficiency students in their performance on the pretest (in fact, as shown in Table 1, the lower students performed slightly better than the higher students).

With regard to the extent to which the effects of feedback were maintained, it was found that posttest 2 scores were lower than posttest 1 scores for all four treatment groups, but the differences were statistically significant only for the two explicit groups. This suggested that implicit feedback might be superior to explicit feedback in maintaining the resultant effects. This inference may be partly supported by Gass's statement that recasts might not lead to immediate incorporation but the effect might surface later on (1997). In other words, "recasts can provide the learner with more TL input including models, some of which may form a larger database of potential resources." (Mackey & Philp, 1998, p.353).

One unexpected finding of this study was that the level of uptake following corrections and the successful rate of uptake were both very high (nearly 100%), irrespective of feedback type and proficiency level, which differs considerably from the findings of previous studies. In Lyster and Ranta's study (1997), the uptake level for the recast was 31%, for explicit correction it was 50%, and for metalinguistic feedback it was 86%. Mackey and Philp (1998) found that the learners' uptake rate for recasts was 22% and that the developmentally ready (high-proficiency) and unready (low-proficiency) groups were almost the same in terms of uptake. In Mackey, Gass, and McDonough's study (2000) on learners' perception of corrective feedback, it was found that the uptake rate for all provided feedback was a little over 52%. The gap in uptake between the present study and previous findings might be attributable to the difference in design. Lyster and Ranta's study is observational and took place in immersion classrooms, where various language errors were given various types of feedback, all of which competed for the learner's attention. As a result, the learners might have had a cognitive overload, and were therefore not able to make use of all available input (Gass & Alvarez Torres, 2005). Because the density of feedback was relatively high, some corrections were ignored; others were not responded to probably because the learner was not given a chance to do so. Mackey et al.'s and Mackey and Philp's studies are lab-based, but since the interlocutors were encouraged to give feedback to as many errors as possible, it is not surprising that not all corrections were responded to by the learner. In this study, however, to each group only one type of feedback was given for one type of error (although the native speaker researcher tried occasionally to correct learners' errors in the use of other linguistic features), so that the processing demands might have been fewer and the saliency of the feedback was acute.

Another factor that might come into play is that the target structure was classifiers, which does not require complicated form-meaning mapping, making it possible and relatively easy for the learner to repeat the correct utterances provided by the researcher in the course of interaction. One more comment is in order: regardless of the underlying factor(s) that led to the high level of learner uptake, the uptake level in this study seems to be unrelated to feedback type, proficiency or change in the L2 learners' interlanguage.

Conclusion

The findings reported here are supportive of the conclusion drawn by researchers in previous interaction studies (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004) that corrective feedback facilitates second language acquisition. The current study went one step further to show that the extent to which a certain type of feedback contributes to L2 development is mediated by the L2 learner's proficiency level. By providing explicit and implicit feedback on the learners' nontargetlike production of Chinese classifiers, the study found that while high-proficiency learners benefited from both feedback types, explicit feedback was more advantageous to low-proficiency learners. This is probably because the high-proficiency learners, who had more linguistic resources and therefore more attentional resources to spare, could easily notice and incorporate the input contained in either explicit or implicit feedback. By the same token, the low-proficiency learners had relatively limited linguistic resources and thus less attentional resources to free up. In their case explicit feedback brought more saliency to the wrongly produced form and was more effective. The finding that explicit feedback worked better for learners at lower levels is indirectly supported by the studies of Carroll and Swain (1993) and Ellis et al. (2006).

In addition, the study found that the level of learner uptake following the two types of feedback was high and that all the uptake was successful, which might be due to the fact that it took place in a laboratory, only one type of feedback was provided to each group, and only one type of error was corrected. These findings suggest that the instructional context in which feedback takes place may have a direct bearing on the amount of uptake it generates, confirming the findings of classroom-based observational studies (Lyster & Mori, 2006).

Despite the positive results of the present study, the results must be interpreted with caution. It is important to recognize that it was conducted under a highly controlled condition: for each group, only one type of feedback was given for one language feature. The extent to which the findings are generalizeable is uncertain. Other limitations of the study include the small sample size, the short time span between posttest 1 and posttest 2 (one week), and the use of one highly controlled oral production test to measure treatment effects. Accordingly, future research should increase the sample size, make the experiment more longitudinal, and use multiple measures involving more naturalistic production.

Appendices

Appendix A⁶

Classifiers and Their Accompanying Nouns Used in the Study

1. 张 (照片 , 桌子)
zhāng (zhàopiàn, zhuōzi)
zhāng (photo, desk)
2. 篇 (日记 , 文章)
piān (rìjì, wénzhāng)
piān (diary, article/essay)
3. 本 (书 , 字典)
běn (shū, cídiǎn)
běn (book, dictionary)
4. 件 (衬衫 , 衣服)
jiàn (chènshān, yīfu)
jiàn (shirt, clothing)
5. 条 (裙子 , 小河)
tiáo (qúnzi, xiǎohé)
tiáo (skirt, river)
6. 支 (笔 , 铅笔)
zhī (bǐ, qiānbǐ)
zhī (pen, pencil)
7. 把 (椅子 , 刀)
bǎ (yǐzi, dāo)
bǎ (chair, knife)
8. 座 (山 , 桥)
zuò (shān, qiáo)
zuò (mountain, bridge)
9. 辆 (汽车 , 自行车)
liàng (qìchē, zìxíngchē)
liàng (car, bicycle)
10. 只 (鸟 , 猫)
zhī (niǎo, māo)
zhī (bird, cat)

Appendix B

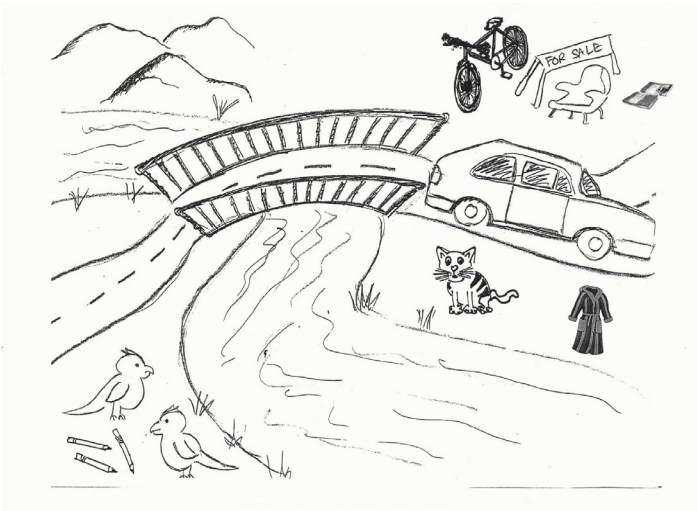
A Sample Picture Used in Task 1

河 hé river
树 shù tree
冬天 dōngtiān winter



Appendix C

Sample Pictures Used in Task 2



Appendix D

A Sample Flash Card Used in the Posttests

椅子 yǐzi chair



Notes

¹An earlier version of this article was presented at the Second Language Research Forum in 2006 at the University of Washington, Seattle.

²Pinyin is the Romanization system of the Chinese writing system. It uses Latin alphabets and four tone markings to phonetically represent Chinese characters. Approved in 1958 and officially adopted in 1979 by the Chinese government, the Pinyin system was created to promote a national language and encourage foreigners to learn the language.

³Heritage speakers were identified through the students' responses to the question about the language they spoke at home. Any students who reported speaking Chinese at home were excluded. The instructors were also consulted to determine the language background of the students and their enrollment status.

⁴Only one noun (i.e., 椅子 *yǐzi* chair) for the classifier 把 *bǎ* was found in the textbooks. After comparing the possible nouns that accompany the classifier, the researcher chose the word 刀 *dāo* (knife) as the other noun for the classifier because it is commonly used in everyday communication.

⁵All statistical analyses were performed by using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

⁶Words in parentheses are the nouns that were used with the corresponding classifiers. Translations for the classifiers were not provided because it was difficult, if not impossible, to find appropriate English equivalents for them.

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General Information

Calendar of Events*

2009 Events

International Pragmatics Association (IPrA), 12–17 July, Melbourne, Australia.

Contact: Web: ipra.ua.ac.be/

EUROSLA, 2–5 September, University College, Cork, Ireland. Contact: EUROSLA,

Email: eurosla19@ucc.ie, Web: eurosla19.com/index.html

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), 3–5 September, Newcastle, UK.

Contact: BAAL, Web: www.baal.org.uk

6th International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism,

10–12 September, Bolzano-Bozen, Italy. Contact: L3 Conference, Centre for Language Study, Via Dante 9, 39100 Bozen, Italy; Email: L3conference@unibz.it, Web: www.unibz.it/L3conference

3rd Biennial International Conference on Task-based Language Teaching, 13–16

September, Lancaster, UK. Contact: Web: www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/index.htm

American Association for Corpus Linguistics, 8–11 October, Edmonton, Alberta,

Canada. Contact: John Newman, Email: aac12009@ualberta.ca, Web: www.ualberta.ca/~aac12009/

First International Conference on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching,

16–17 October, Bangkok. Contact: Ms. Variyaporn Vangtan, Email: flt.litu@gmail.com, Web: www.flt2009.org/

International Conference on Heritage Languages, 23–25 October, Los Angeles, CA.

Contact: National Heritage Language Resource Center, Web: www.nhlrc.ucla.edu

American Translators Association (ATA), 28–31 October, New York, NY. Contact:

ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 683-6100, Fax (703) 683-6122, Email: ata@atanet.org, Web: www.atanet.org

Second Language Research Forum, 29 October – 1 November, Michigan State

University. Contact: Second Language Studies, A-712 Wells Hall, East Lansing, MI 48823; Email: slrf2009@msu.edu, Web: sls.msu.edu/slrf09/index.php

African Studies Association (ASA), 19–22 November, New Orleans, LA. Contact:

Kimme Carlos, Annual Meeting Coordinator, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400; (732) 932-8173, Fax (732) 932-3394, Email: asaamc@rci.rutgers.edu Web: www.africanstudies.org

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 20–22 November,

San Diego, CA. Contact: ACTFL, 1001 N. Fairfax St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 894-2900, Fax (703) 894-2905, Email: headquarters@actfl.org, Web: www.actfl.org

American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), 20–22 November, San Diego,

CA. Contact: AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; (856) 795-5553, Fax (856) 795-9398, Email: headquarters@aatg.org Web: www.aatg.org

American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), 20–22 November, San Diego,

CA. Contact: Edoardo Lebano, Executive Director, AATI, Department of French and Italian, Indiana University, Ballentine 642, Bloomington, IN 47405; (812) 855-2508, Fax (812) 855-8877, Email: elebano@hotmail.com, Web: www.aati-online.org/

- Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA)**, 20–22 November, San Diego, CA. Contact: CLTA, Cynthia Ning, Executive Director, 416 Moore Hall, 1890 East-West Road, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 956-2692, Fax (808) 956-2682, Email: clta@clta-us.org, Web: clta-us.org
- National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)**, 20–22 November, San Diego, CA. Contact: NNELL, PO Box 7266, B 201 Tribble Hall, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109; Email: nnell@wfu.edu, Web: www.nnell.org
- Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) and New Zealand (ALANZ)**, 2–4 December, Auckland, NZ. Contact: Web: www.alanz.ac.nz/conferences/
- Modern Language Association (MLA)**, 27–30 December, Philadelphia, PA. Contact: MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789; (646) 576-5000, Fax: (646) 458-0030, Web: www.mla.org

2010

- Linguistic Society of America (LSA)**, 7–10 January, Baltimore, MD. Contact: LSA, 1325 18th St. NW, # 211, Washington, DC 20036-6501; (202) 835-1714, Fax (202) 835-1717, Web: www.lsadc.org
- Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL)**, 4–6 March, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: Patrick T. Raven, Executive Director, CSCTFL, PO Box 251, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0251; (414) 405-4645, Fax (414) 276-4650, Email: CSCTFL@aol.com, Web: www.csctfl.org
- American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL)**, 6–9 March, Atlanta, GA. Contact: AAAL, 3416 Primm Lane, Birmingham, AL 35216; (205) 824-7700, Fax (205) 823-2760, Email: info@aaal.org, Web: www.aaal.org
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)**, 24–27 March, Boston, MA. Contact: TESOL, 700 S. Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: info@tesol.org, Web: www.tesol.org
- Association for Asian Studies (AAS)**, 25–28 March, Philadelphia, PA. Contact: Association for Asian Studies, Inc., 1021 East Huron Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; (734) 665-2490, Fax (734) 665-3801, Web: www.aasianst.org
- Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL)**, 25–27 March, New York, NY. Contact: Rebecca Kline, Executive Director, NECTFL, c/o Dickinson College, PO Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; (717) 245-1977, Fax (717) 245-1976, Email: nectfl@dickinson.edu, Web: www.nectfl.org
- Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT)**, 8–10 April, Dallas, TX. Contact: Jody Klopp, Executive Director, SWCOLT; Email: jklopp@cox.net, Web: www.swcolt.org
- Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT)**, 15–17 April, Salem, NC. Contact: Lynne McClendon, Executive Director, SCOLT, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; (770) 992-1256, Fax (770) 992-3464, Email: lynnemcc@mindspring.com, Web: www.scolt.org
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)**, 30 April – 4 May, Denver, CO. Contact: AERA, 1430 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 238-3200, Fax (202) 238-3250, Web: www.aera.net
- International Reading Association (IRA), Annual Convention North Central**, 2–6 May, Los Angeles, CA. Contact: International Reading Association, Headquarters Office, 800 Barksdale Rd., PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139; Email: pubinfo@reading.org, Web: www.reading.org
- Internationaler Germanistenkongress (IVG)**, 30 July – 7 August, Warsaw, Poland. Contact: IVG, Email: ivg@uw.edu.pl, Web: www.ivg.uw.edu.pl

- British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL)**, 9–11 September, Aberdeen, UK.
Contact: BAAL, Web: www.baal.org.uk
- African Studies Association (ASA)**, 18–21 November, San Francisco, CA. Contact: Kimme Carlos, Annual Meeting Coordinator, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400; (732) 932-8173, Fax (732) 932-3394, Email: annualmeeting@africanstudies.org, Web: www.africanstudies.org
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**, 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: ACTFL, 1001 N. Fairfax St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 894-2900, Fax (703) 894-2905, Email: headquarters@actfl.org, Web: www.actfl.org
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- National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL)**, 19–21 November, Boston, MA. Contact: NNELL, PO Box 7266, B 201 Tribble Hall, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109; Email: nnell@wfu.edu, Web: www.nnell.org

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- Linguistic Society of America (LSA)**, 6–9 January, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: LSA, 1325 18th St. NW, # 211, Washington, DC 20036-6501; (202) 835-1714, Fax (202) 835-1717, Web: www.lsadc.org
- Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL)**, 3–5 March, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Patrick T. Raven, Executive Director, CSCTFL, PO Box 251, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0251; (414) 405-4645, Fax (414) 276-4650, Email: CSCTFL@aol.com, Web: www.csctfl.org
- Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT)**, 10–12 March, Baton Rouge, LA. Contact: Lynne McClendon, Executive Director, SCOLT, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; (770) 992-1256, Fax (770) 992-3464, Email: lynnemcc@mindspring.com, Web: www.scolt.org
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)**, 17–19 March, New Orleans, LA. Contact: TESOL, 700 S. Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 836-0774, Fax (703) 836-7864, Email: info@tesol.org, Web: www.tesol.org
- Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT)**, 7–9 April, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: Jody Klopp, Executive Director, SWCOLT; Email: jklopp@cox.net, Web: www.swcolt.org
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)**, 8–12, April, New Orleans, LA. Contact: AERA, 1430 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 238-3200, Fax (202) 238-3250, Web: www.aera.net

Information for Contributors

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Applied Language Learning (ALL)* is to increase and promote professional communication within the Defense Language Program and academic communities on adult language learning for functional purposes.

Submission of Manuscripts

The Editor encourages the submission of research and review manuscripts from such disciplines as: (1) instructional methods and techniques; (2) curriculum and materials development; (3) testing and evaluation; (4) implications and applications of research from related fields such as linguistics, education, communication, psychology, and social sciences; (5) assessment of needs within the profession.

Research Article

Divide your manuscript into the following sections:

- Abstract
 - Introduction
 - Method
 - Results
 - Discussion
 - Conclusion
 - Appendices
 - Notes
 - References
 - Acknowledgments
 - Author

Abstract

Identify the purpose of the article, provide an overview of the content, and suggest findings in an abstract of not more than 200 words.

Introduction

In a few paragraphs, state the purpose of the study and relate it to the hypothesis and the experimental design. Point out the theoretical implications of the study and relate them to previous work in the area.

Next, under the subsection *Literature Review*, discuss work that had a direct impact on your study. Cite only research pertinent to a specific issue and avoid references with only tangential or general significance. Emphasize pertinent findings and relevant methodological issues. Provide the logical continuity between previous and present work. Whenever appropriate, treat controversial issues fairly. You may state that certain studies support one conclusion and others challenge or contradict it.

Method

Describe how you conducted the study. Give a brief synopsis of the method. Next develop the subsections pertaining to the *participants*, the *materials*, and the *procedure*.

Participants. Identify the number and type of participants. Specify how they were selected and how many participated in each experiment. Provide major demographic characteristics such as age, sex, geographic location, and institutional affiliation. Identify the number of experiment dropouts and the reasons they did not continue.

Materials. Describe briefly the materials used and their function in the experiment.

Procedure. Describe each step in the conduct of the research. Include the instructions to the participants, the formation of the groups, and the specific experimental manipulations.

Results

First state the results. Next describe them in sufficient detail to justify the findings. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to the hypothesis.

Tables and figures. Prepare tables to present exact values. Use tables sparingly. Sometimes you can present data more efficiently in a few sentences than in a table. Avoid developing tables for information already presented in other places. Prepare figures to illustrate key interactions, major interdependencies, and general comparisons. Indicate to the reader what to look for in tables and figures.

Discussion

Express your support or nonsupport for the original hypothesis. Next examine, interpret, and qualify the results and draw inferences from them. Do not repeat old statements: Create new statements that further contribute to your position and to readers understanding of it.

Conclusion

Succinctly describe the contribution of the study to the field. State how it has helped to resolve the original problem. Identify conclusions and theoretical implications that can be drawn from your study.

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Place detailed information (for example, a table, lists of words, or a sample of a questionnaire) that would be distracting to read in the main body of the article in the appendices.

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Use them for substantive information only, and number them serially throughout the manuscript. They all should be listed on a separate page entitled *Notes*.

References

Submit on a separate page of the manuscript a list of references with the centered heading: *References*. Arrange the entries alphabetically by surname of authors. Review the format for bibliographic entries of references in the following sample:

- Dulay, H., & Burt, M. (1974). Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16 (1), 93-95.
Harris, D. P. (1969). *Testing English as a second language*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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Acknowledgments

Identify colleagues who contributed to the study and assisted you in the writing process.

Author

Type the title of the article and the author's name on a separate page to ensure anonymity in the review process. Prepare an autobiographical note indicating: full name, position, department, institution, mailing address, and specialization(s). Example follows:

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Review Article

It should describe, discuss, and evaluate several publications that fall into a topical category in foreign language education. The relative significance of the publications in the context of teaching realms should be pointed out. A review article should be 15 to 20 double-spaced pages.

Review

Submit reviews of textbooks, scholarly works on foreign language education, dictionaries, tests, computer software, video tapes, and other non-print materials. Point out both positive and negative aspects of the work(s) being considered. In the three to five double-spaced pages of the manuscript, give a clear but brief statement of the work's content and a critical assessment of its contribution to the profession. Keep quotations short. Do not send reviews that are merely descriptive.

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All material submitted for publication should conform to the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th Ed., 1994) available from the American Psychological Association, P. O. Box 2710, Hyattsville, MD 20784.

Review Process

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