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Pragmalinguistic Failure: Disagreement in Chinese

Learners of Spanish as L2

MAESTRÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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**“PRAGMALINGUISTIC FAILURE: DISAGREEMENT IN CHINESE LEARNERS
OF SPANISH AS L2”**

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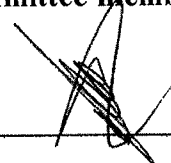
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DEDICATION

To my beloved husband and son,
my engine of energy for life.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

Language as a mean of communication varies across cultures due to its intimate correlation within societies. Novinger (2013) has emphasize the strong need we all have “to understand both the self and the other in interpersonal interactions (p. 41). Consequently, interaction is ruled by the norms of our own culture, which dictates the way to function in a society. Over time, we have been instructed about how properly communicate in our own language and culture; in contrast, communicating in a foreign language is an unfamiliar experience (Novinger, 2013). According to Gudykunst (2003), intercultural communication is the communicative interaction among individuals from different cultures. Despite this, when people with different first languages communicate in a common language it is addressed by intercultural pragmatics. Based on Kecskes (2011), intercultural pragmatics studies the language system performed in social encounters among people with different languages and cultural backgrounds. Pragmatics, as stated by Levinson (1983), “is the study of language from a functional perspective”. That is to say, it is the study of communicative actions (speech acts) that according to Searle (1969) “are the semantic rules for the use of linguistics devices” in its sociocultural context. In other words, pragmatics is the study of the use of the language in relation to the speaker’s understanding of the phenomena (Huang, 2014). Moreover, pragmatics involves interaction not only from the perspective of the speaker’s intention, but also on the effect that intention has on the hearer (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). When communicating, the speaker states determined utterances in order to express certain actions such as requesting, commanding, questioning or informing, as well as participation and interaction in the conversation (Searle, Kiefer & Bierwisch, 2012).

Speech acts take part of the illocutionary force; it refers to the intended impact the speaker addresses to the listener, moreover, means the knowledge of communicative action and how is it carried out. For example, the act of disagreement is considered a reactive speech act (Bach & Harnish, 1982), since it needs a prior utterance occurs to determine the statement that the speaker will produce based on his beliefs (constative). Therefore, pragmatic competence is the ability to communicate effectively regarding to the context it occurs (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011).

When there is “a misunderstanding in the intended illocutionary, or pragmatic, force of an utterance” (p. 526), is what Holmes and Brown (1976) call pragmalinguistic failure. To state it in another way, pragmalinguistic failure is the misinterpretation of the message that can be caused by: 1) the interlocutor does not share the same background; 2) the speaker did not express the message in the appropriate manner. Mirzaei, Roohani and Esmaili (2012) claim that L2 speakers find it difficult to convey and interpret the meaning in a communicative interaction due to the lack of this pragmalinguistic knowledge. In the same way, Liu (2004) points out that L2 speaker’s breakdown in communication occurs due to the learners’ interpretation and production of the foreign language features that causes “differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force” (Mirzaei, Roohani & Esmaili, 2012 p. 80).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current research is to analyze the pragmalinguistic patterns used by Chinese learners of Spanish as a foreign language (L2) when they use disagreements and to determine whether the native language (L1) of the learners influences in their speech

performance and use of utterances by analyzing the parameters of power and distance when expressing disagreement in the L2.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese learners of Spanish when they use disagreements?
2. To what extent do the patterns approximate to the native norms?

1.4 Significance of the Study

There are not only linguistic implications in reporting the findings of this research but also pedagogical implications. Pragmatic transfer is an inalienable part of learning a second language (Luo & Gao, 2011). Being aware of the pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese learners of Spanish as a second language and how their L1 is reflected in their L2 when communicating may help to improve the way the second language is instructed. Instructing the learners about the social rules of a language may make L2 learners aware of the sociocultural patterns to follow when communicating to be competent enough (Kasper, 1997). In the same way Kondo (2010, as cited in Pawlak, 2011) emphasizes that L2 learners should have the opportunity to make their own communicative choices. Agreeing with Kasper and Schmidt (1996) “learners who are not instructed at all will have difficulty in acquiring the appropriate language use” (p. 160).

1.5 Key terms

Due to the nature of this research lies in linguistic terms and technicalities, the main terms and key words are concisely explained below for a better understanding of this paper.

- **Addressee** refers to the person who receives the determine speech act performed by the speaker (Horn & Ward, 2004).
- **Competence** in communication is the ability the speaker has to perform not accurately but successfully (Hymes 1972).
- **Context** refers to the psychological (values, beliefs and attitudes) and social factors within a culture that predispose the speakers' linguistic interaction (Allwood, 1990).
- **Discourse** is the language in use for communication. In the written and the spoken sense, discourse is anything beyond a sentence. It refers to “the way in which language is used socially to convey [...] meanings. It is language identified by the social conditions of its use, by who is using it and under what conditions” (Henry & Tator, 2002, p. 25).
- **Face** is the public self-image that every member of a society tries to preserve in communicative interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
- **Intercultural Pragmatics** is concerned with how the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and represent different cultures (Kecskes, 2004)
- **L1** is the first language or mother tongue acquired by the speaker.
- **L2** is the second language or the foreign language acquired or learned by the speaker.
- **Politeness** is the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face-threatening acts; it is battery of social skills whose goal is to maintain harmony in social interaction (Brown & Levinson 1987).

- **Pragmalinguistics** is the study of how non-native speakers understand and perform linguistic actions based on how they conceive the language (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989).
- **Pragmatics** is the appropriate use of language according to the context in which it occurs (Yule, 1996).
- **Sociopragmatics** is about participants' social interaction, interpretations and the performance of communicative action (Leech, 1983).
- **Speech acts** are the basic unit of language that are used to express meanings and intentions (Searle, 1969).
- **Utterance** is a word or sentence stated by a speaker (Searle, 1969).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of the related literature. It is defined, from general to specific, the main terms involved in pragmalinguistic competence to get insights about the pragmatic and linguistic process in the second language learning.

2.1 Communicative Competence

Namely, Hymes (1972) claimed that communicative competence is not only possessing the grammatical competence, but also knowing how to use grammatical knowledge according to the communicative situation (Bagarić & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2007). Say it in another way, communicative competence is the knowledge the speaker uses to communicate effectively in different cultural situations (Paulston, 1992). Formerly, Chomsky (1965) introduced the term competence in his controversial linguistic theory that described the use of language as a merely cognitive process through which the ideal speaker communicates accurately (Rickheit & Strohner, 2008). In contrast with Chomsky's theory, Hymes rejected the 'ideal speaker' notion by stating that the competency of a user is determined by non-cognitive factors such as attitude, values and motivation; this view looks for appropriateness rather than accuracy (Peterwagner, 2005).

Based on Hymes formulation, Canale and Swain (1980) argued that communicative competence involves more than grammatical knowledge; they understood it as a "synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication" (Bagarić & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2007, p 96). Thus, they described communicative competence in terms of three major components: grammatical competence (knowledge of lexical, morphological, syntactical, phonological and semantic principles), sociolinguistic

competence (knowledge of sociocultural rules to use the language in a social context to fulfill communicative functions), and strategic competence (knowledge of how to combine verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication) (Keck & Kim, 2014, p. 16). In addition to this framework, Canale (1983) included a fourth component: discourse competence (ability to understand the rules of discourse to produce texts) (Skehan, 1998).

Subsequently, Bachman (1990) considered that Canale and Swales' model is static since it overlooks "how communicative competence enables language users to interact with the characteristics of the context of situation, including other language users, in a speech event" (Bachman, 1998, p. 6). Therefore, he proposed the concept of communicative language ability, which was later revised and updated by Bachman and Palmer (1996) and comprises the knowledge of the language and structure to communicate appropriately in social contexts (Flores-Salgado, 2011, p. 6). Bachman's model comprises three main elements: language competence, strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. The former, in turn, divides into pragmatic and organizational competence. Pragmatic competence subdivides into illocutionary competence (knowledge of speech acts and language functions) and sociolinguistic competence (sensitivity to language and context) (Barron, 2003). Organizational competence, on the other hand, subdivides into grammatical competence (knowing the rules of word and sentence formation) and textual competence (construction of coherent and cohesive texts) (Flores-Salgado, 2011). Subsequently, strategic competence is conceived as a set of three metacognitive components: assessment, planning and execution (Peterwagner, 2005). Based on Bagarić and Mihaljević Djigunović (2007), assessment is the phase in which the speaker, having a communicative goal in mind,

evaluates the information required and the resources available to convey the intended message. Planning involves the use of the language competence components to achieve the communicative goal successfully. Finally, in the execution phase the speaker makes use of the physiological mechanisms to determine the mode and the channel of communication to execute the communicative goal (Peterwagner, 2005, p. 19). To sum up, strategic competence is “the ability that allows the speaker to assess, plan, and execute communication in the most effective manner” (Flores-Salgado, 2011, p. 7). The last component of the communicative language ability model, physiological mechanisms, relates to neuromuscular skills that comprise channel (visual and auditory) and mode (productive and receptive) that are necessary for performing utterances (Flores-Salgado, 2011).

2.2 Pragmatic Competence

For understanding what pragmatic competence entails, it is crucial to define pragmatics itself. Based on Levinson (1983), pragmatics is “the study of language usage” (p. 5). Birner (2012) provides a more detailed description stating that it is interpretive and seeks to make obvious the implicit knowledge that leads the user to make a communicative choice. To say it in another way, pragmatics has to do with the speaker’s communicative action and the interlocutor’s interpretation of the message (Yule, 1996).

Considering this, we can say that pragmatic competence, as one of the essential components of communicative competence is the ability to engage in social interaction (Infantidou, 2014) through the knowledge of linguistic resources available in the language for conveying messages based on the setting and on what is socially appropriate according to the context. Flores-Salgado (2011) sums up pragmatic competence as the cognitive ability

and the social experience to communicate effectively. In contrast with strategic competence and physiological mechanisms that entail ability to perform, pragmatic competence resides in procedural knowledge (procedures used in verbal interaction) (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Flores-Salgado, 2011). Hence, Barron (2003) states that a pragmatic competent user is the one who makes appropriate communicative choices from a range of resources and tools to convey messages successfully in a particular setting according to social norms (Barron, 2003). In the same way, pragmatic competence subdivides into specific conditions in language use: pragmalinguistics that focuses merely in the knowledge of linguistic structures, and sociopragmatics that study how the user perform linguistic structures in social context (Flores-Salgado, 2011).

2.2.1 Sociopragmatics

Leech (1983) describes sociopragmatics as “the sociological interface of pragmatics [;] it is referring to the social perceptions underlying participants, interpretation and performance of communicative action” (p.10). In the same way, Martínez-Flor, Fernández-Guerra and Usó-Juan (2003) explain that sociopragmatics is the correlation between language in use and social structure (p. 9); specifically, it entails the social factors that affect language production. Kasper (1997) affirms that sociopragmatics entails speech communities that differ in their judgment of the social distance and social power between the speaker and the hearer. Moreover, it implies the rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition involved in a particular communicative act (Kasper, 1997).

Social interactions comprise contextual values that are negotiable; it means that such values can change through the dynamics of conversational interaction (Fraser, 1990). Archer

(2005) claims that sociolinguistics is “the point at which pragmatics interacts with sociology” (p. 5). Therefore, social issues influence the linguistic acts available for the user. Social interaction observes the language from the perspective of social aspects and based on this is how language is carried out in a determine way by the speaker. In other words, it is the ability to adjust speech strategies appropriately according to different social variables in communication.

2.2.2 Pragmalinguistics

According to Matveeva and Zyubina (2011), pragmalinguistics studies the relationship of language and human interaction. In the same way, Verschueren (1999) affirms that “[i]t focuses primarily (though not exclusively) on the study of linguistic phenomena, from the point of view of their usage” (p. 496). This means that it combines knowledge of linguistics and civilization. It is related with the pragmatism of speech acts such as request, apologies, compliments, disagreements, etc., which calls for knowledge of the relationship between the linguistic element and the persons producing, using and receiving it during the communicative situation (Dressler, 1972, p. 14). Thus, it is the relation person-language-knowledge. According to Matveeva and Zyubina (2011), pragmalinguistics is subdivided into choice, communicators (addresser and addressee), influence and the speech act (p. 3). In other words, pragmalinguistics entails the speech act chosen for the speaker to influence on the addressee. In second language (L2) learning, Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989), describe pragmalinguistics as the study of how non-native speakers understand and carry out linguistic actions in a determined target language, and how speakers acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge.

2.2.3 Pragmalinguistic Failure

According to Liu (2004), any deficiency in learner's comprehension of the L2 idiosyncrasies that rule communicative action may lead to miscommunication. As said by Holmes and Brown (1987), pragmalinguistic failure is a "misunderstanding of the intended illocutionary, or pragmatic, force of an utterance" (p.526). The illocutionary force concerns the impact the speaker intends conveying to the listener (Poole, 2003); the pragmatic force concerns the linguistic encoding (Mirzaei, Roohani & Esmaeili, 2012). In second language learning, the cultural gap between the (L1) and the L2 leads speaker to use communicative strategies that might differ in the target language in contrast with the mother tongue (Poole, 2003). Consequently, pragmalinguistic failure occurs when "speech strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2" (Thomas, 1983, p.99). In other words, the failure takes place when linguistic features in the native language reflects in the second language causing a breakdown in communication due to social power differences (Barron, 2003).

2.2.4 Intercultural Pragmatics

In intercultural pragmatics, culture is understood as the socially established knowledge of structures and shared beliefs and values. As stated by Trosborg (2010) intercultural pragmatics "is the intercultural interaction where data is obtained when people from different cultural groups interact with each other" (p. 2). Intercultural pragmatics centers its analysis in the communication that takes place in a sociocultural context that is different from the one the speakers have built their comprehension of a language. This is to say that the L1 affects the language used by multilingual speakers communicating in a common language (L2), and depending on the L1 characteristics (marked and unmarked

features) greater or lesser influence in the L2 production is reflected. This discipline consigns the language user the function of an “active repository of an indefinite number of features that permeate from cultural and linguistic experiences that solidify in the discourse” (Kecskes & Romero-Trillo, 2013). According to Kecskes (2014), intercultural pragmatics attempts to integrate the micro and macro perspectives on language (p.3). The micro perspective refers to the interaction between individuals and the understanding of the communicative action; the macro perspective entails the norms and patterns established in speech communities.

2.3 Face

By face it can be understood the speaker’s sense of linguistic and social identity (Yule, 1996, p. 61). Brown and Levinson identify face as something “that is emotionally invested, and that can be not only lost, but also maintained and enhanced” (Vilkki, 2006, p. 324). Face entails the speaker two opposing “wants” expressed in the speech, positive and negative (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Positive face is the individual’s desire to be appreciated or approved to others. Correspondingly, negative face is the freedom of action from any imposition, that is to say, wanting your actions not to be constrained or unimpeded by others (Vilkki, 2006).

2.4 Politeness Theory

The study of politeness lies in pragmatics due to its nature of use: human interaction (Bravo, 2008, p.12). According to Féliz-Brasdefer (2008), politeness takes place in social interaction and is ruled by the sociocultural norms of a society. The politeness theory suggests that the social norms of a community drive the speaker’s selection of linguistic choices in the speech. In other words, “politeness is the socially appropriate behavior” (Vilkki, 2006).

2.4.1 Brown and Levinson

Formerly, Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) describe politeness as a strategy of conflict avoidance to maintain social relationships. They claim politeness to be a universal concept of speaker/hearer interaction in which the notion of *face* takes a central importance (Eelen, 2001). Considering this, Brown and Levinson developed a politeness theory in which they assert that some speech acts such as request, disagreements and refusals “inherently threaten either the hearer’s or the speaker’s face-wants and that politeness is involved in redressing those face-threats” (Eelen, 2001). When there is a face-threatening act (FTA), the speaker may use one of the three main strategies for performing speech acts. Positive politeness is the expression of support and solidarity regarding the addressee’s positive face, i.e. being optimistic and inclusive; negative politeness is the expression of restriction and impediment regarding the addressee’s negative face, i.e. indirectness, hedging and minimizing imposition; off-record politeness is the avoidance of imposition by hinting and assuming the addressee infers the intended meaning (Eelen, 2001, p. 4; Vilkki, 2006, p. 324). In addition, to these strategies, the speaker makes use of three different variables to perform a speech act: power (the social authority between the speaker and the hearer), distance (the unfamiliarity between the speaker and the hearer) and ranking (the cultural classification of the speech act). Then again, the speaker calculates the power, distance, and ranking of a situation to decide among the appropriate communicative options and the appropriate linguistic methods to accomplish the chosen strategy (Eelen, 2001). Despite the fact that Brown and Levinson’s theory is the most influential in the politeness framework, other authors have contributed different perspectives to the politeness theory.

2.4.2. Grice

Politeness is directly connected with Grice's Cooperative principle in which he claims that people's will is to be polite and efficient in communicative interaction (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008); this means, people's inherent disposition is to make communication being functional. To achieve a successful interaction Grice proposed four conversational maxims that rule the linguistic production: quantity (the contribution should be as informative as required), quality (speaker should not state a personal opinion without evidence, relation (relevance according to the purpose) and manner (clear, orderly and brief) (Green, 1996; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Yule, 1996).

2.4.3 Lakoff

In contrast with Grice, Lakoff (1990) states that in communicative interaction the speaker does not strictly follow Gricean's principle. As an alternative, Lakoff proposed three politeness strategies present in social interaction: distance, deference and camaraderie. Notwithstanding of the universality of these strategies, the relevance given to each of them varies across cultures. For example, "European cultures tend to emphasize distancing strategies, Asian cultures tend to be deferential, and American culture tend towards camaraderie" (Eelen, 2001, p. 3).

2.4.4 Leech

Leech (1983) perceives politeness as concerned with semantics (sentence's abstract logical meaning or sense) and pragmatics (the relationship between the sense of a sentence and its communicative meaning) (Eelen, 2001, p. 6). To say it in another way, for a speaker

to represent the semantic sense of a pragmatic force of an utterance requires interpersonal rhetoric to convey a determined illocutionary force to the interlocutor. In order to carry out such encoding, Leech bases his politeness theory in the use of Grice's maxims: tact, generosity, approbation and modesty, (Eelen, 2001) and includes two more: agreement and sympathy. In addition, Leech emphasizes that for maintaining politeness in social interaction the speaker must maximize the expression of polite beliefs that are favorable to the hearer. For example, in the approbation maxim the speaker is expected minimizing the dispraise to maximize the praise in benefit of the hearer.

2.4.5 Cooperative Principle

To succeed in a conversation depends upon the speaker's approach to the interaction. The cooperative principle refers to how informative, truthful, relevant and clear the speaker is during the interaction to make the conversation work (Grice, 1975). According to Wierzbicka (1991), the speakers shape their utterances to be understood by hearer. Therefore, when speakers follow the cooperative principle they are going to do what is necessary to achieve the purpose of the conversation and will avoid doing anything that may frustrate that purpose.

This principle can be explained by four undelaying rules or maxims. The first maxim is quality and it address truthfulness: don't say what you believe to be false and don't say things for which you lack evidence. The second maxim is quantity and in it the speaker's contribution must be as informative as required for the conversation to proceed: say no less than the conversation requires, say no more than the conversation requires. The third maxim is relevance in which speaker's contributions must clearly relate to the purpose of the

conversation. Finally, the fourth maxim is manner: don't be obscure, don't be ambiguous, be brief, be orderly (Green, 1996; Yule, 1996). To conclude, agreeing with Nordquist (2017) "the Cooperative Principle is not about being positive and socially 'smooth,' or agreeable. It is a presumption that when people speak, they intend and expect that they will communicate by doing so, and that the hearer will help at making this happen".

2.4.6 New perspectives

In contrast with the traditional stance of benefiting the hearer over one self's wants, other scholars have connected politeness with moral norms of a community (Eelen, 2001). Politeness "is a phenomenon belonging to the level of society, which endorses its normative constraints on each individual" (Gu, 1990, p. 242). For instance, Gu (1990) has stressed that politeness is morally prescriptive in nature. In contrast with Brown and Levinson, Lakoff and Leech theories, in the Chinese context politeness is understood in terms of societal norms rather than psychological wants (Eelen, 2001). Hernández-Flores (1999) states that Anglo-Saxon cultures tend to pay more attention to the individual wants in contrast with Chinese culture, which focus more on the collective wants. For instance, in Chinese context, respect and reputation strongly affect the notion of face; in such culture, the individual's desires are less important than what the community accepts as appropriate (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008). According to Mao (1994), for Chinese communities the concept of face depends on social recognition and the desire to be approved by others, as in Brown and Levinson's positive face, but in a deeper moral sense that is intrinsic, is not negotiable, and it is not affected by closeness (Hernández-Flores, 1999). In the same way, Kasper (1990) emphasizes that negative face seems insignificant in a culture like the Japanese in which the orientation is toward what is socially obligatory. Based on Ide (1989, as cited in Eelen, 2001) in Japanese

culture the speaker is intended “to show verbally one’s sense of place or role in a given situation according to social convention” (p. 227). Considering this, the classification of positive and negative face is not viable. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) calls for power and social distance as the relative notions of constant change that must be interpreted according to the context of a specific situation (p. 20). This means that politeness strategies change across cultures.

In the same way, further research on Spanish speaking context has re-examined the notion of face. Hernández-Flores (1999) claims that Brown and Levinson’s theory presents “some problems of adequacy to cultural values for some communities” (p.38). She emphasizes that the notion of positive and negative face has an individualistic focus; the former is about the social approval of individual’s own wants, the later to the imposition of individual’s own wants. Thus, in the traditional perspective, both positive and negative face entails what the individual intends to address; nevertheless, Spanish-speaking cultures do not share these characteristics. In a study carried out in Ecuadorian Spanish by Placencia (1996), it was found that deference was not perceived as a mechanism to protect own face, but as the enactment of some social rules that assigns status to the members of the community (Hernández-Flores, 1999). Accordingly, Bravo (1999) has replace the concept of positive and negative face for autonomy and affiliation; nevertheless, Bravo’s concepts react to the perceptions of (1) being recognized as someone with a particular surrounding within a group and (2) being recognized as an incorporated part of the group (Hernández-Flores, 1999). This means that the concepts of autonomy and affiliation entail that an individual can have a particular perspective and at the same time be part of a community without this affecting his particular and collective wants. Bravo (2005) claims that politeness is highly affected by

sociocultural context; as result, the author calls for a sociocultural pragmatic study of politeness; that is to say, study politeness from its role in social context (p. 23).

2.5 Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962), considered the father of the speech act theory (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010), observed that people use language to accomplish two different purposes: to describe or report things in the world in terms of truth or falsity conditions (constatives) and to express utterances to do things or perform acts (performatives) (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008). However, Austin realized that in some speech acts is very usual to use a performative verb to indicate an action (Thomas 1995), yet that in every speech act both constative and performative may occur (Bianchi, Peat & Windsor, 2015).

Later, in the 1970s, Austin developed his performative hypothesis, in which he declares that performative sentences are not defined in terms of grammar, but instead in terms of function (Chapman, 2001). In addition, Austin states for a performative sentence to be successful it requires a set of conditions. Felicity conditions are the circumstances in which words perform actions when carried out properly, and that are divided into three types (Huang, 2014). Preparatory conditions refer state the real-world prerequisites for the speech act like the status or authority of the speaker to perform an utterance, conditions for execution entail the ritual or ceremonial action accompanying the speech act, and finally, sincerity conditions indicate the speaker genuine intention of the speaker (Chapman, 2011; Huang, 2014). When the accomplishment of these conditions fails, it results into an infelicitous act (Huang, 2014). In his performative theory, Austin introduced a threefold classification of utterances into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008).

Locutionary act is the action of saying something, the actual words uttered to produce a meaningful linguistic expression. Illocutionary act represents what is done in the act of saying something, that is to say, the intention behind the words. Finally, the perlocutionary act refers to what is implied by saying something, or the effect it produces on the hearer (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

Based on this, Searle (1962) described the illocutionary act as the illocutionary force (the main verb that takes action) and the propositional act (content specifying phrase) (Alston, 2015). To convey the illocutionary force, Searle addresses the term illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) as the most direct and conventional type of speech act in which the performative verb is explicit (Huang, 2014, p. 128). In other words, IFID is an utterance where the verb present indicates the illocutionary act being performed (Yule, 1996, p. 49). Additionally, Searle expanded the classification of the illocutionary act into five subcategories according to common functional characteristics (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010): assertives (acknowledging, concluding, insisting), directives (ordering, requesting, suggesting), commissives (promising, contracting, betting), exercitives (appointing, nominating, pardoning) and expressives (thanking, congratulating, expressing enthusiasm) (Alston, 2015).

The functional characteristics describe a particular function; however, there is not always a direct relation between the function and the use. According to Yule (1996), the direct and indirect distinction of the speech act is made based on its structure. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010) state that direct speech acts refer to the direct relationship between form and function; in turn, the indirect relationship between the form and function leads to an indirect speech act (p. 9). Yule (1996) explains “a declarative [speech act] to make a

statement is a direct speech act, but a declarative [speech act] to make a request is an indirect speech act” (p. 55).

In contrast with Austin’s (1962) and subsequently Searle’s (1969) speech act theory, some scholars (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Lo Castro; 2003) have claimed that it is not possible to categorized speech acts in formal rules since those are interchangeable in some situations due to some of them share some key elements. Actually, there is a claim to study speech act from a functional, psychological and contextual perspective (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

2.6 Disagreements

According to Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010), disagreement is an incompatible opinion in response to what the interlocutor has previously expressed (p. 200). Based on this, disagreement is a reactive speech act; it is a response move to an initial movement. Technically, disagreement takes place when a speaker considers fallacious what the interlocutor has proposed and react with a propositional content that differs from the one initially stated (Rees-Miller, 2000, p. 2). However, when criticizing (making an observation) it cannot be considered a disagreement, since there is not a previously stated proposition that triggers the speaker unconformity (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). As declared by Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010), the cultural values affect the way disagreement occurs (p. 201). Originally, disagreeing has had a negative connotation. In Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, disagreement is categorized as a FTA to the speaker (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). They declare, disagreement “threatens the positive-face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feelings,

wants” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). To say in another way, when disagreeing the speaker states that does not accept the interlocutor wants, needs and propositions. Leech (1983) in his so theoretical schema claims that in order to maintain politeness the speaker should minimize the disagreement and maximize the agreement between the self and the other (Eelen, 2001; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010).

Different authors have classified disagreements in research in different ways. Initially, Pomerantz (1984) identified disagreement as a dispreferred structure in contrast with agreement as preferred structure and classified the former into strong and weak. Strong disagreement “is one in which a conversant utters an evaluation which is directly contrastive with the prior evaluation” (p.74). Moreover, is strong because there is absence of agreement components that weaken the disagreement. Weak disagreement refers to the presence of partial agreement structures such as token agreement, hedges, hesitation, etc. (Gesuato, Bianchi & Cheng, 2015, p. 191). Later in 1993, Kakavá introduced the term mitigation to Pomerantz taxonomy to address the strong yet mitigated forms of disagreement (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). Eventually, Rees-Miller (2000) classifies disagreements into three types: soften disagreement, unmodified disagreement (equivalent to Pomerantz’ strong disagreement, and aggravated disagreement (Gesuato, Bianchi, Cheng, 2015; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). Finally, Kreutel (2007) developed a fourth taxonomy from the perspective of EFL speakers and came out with two types of features to look for in disagreements: desirable and undesirable. In his research, he identified features in the native speakers when disagreeing that were desirables for the hearer within interaction; those are *token agreement, hedges, request for clarification, explanations, expressions of regret, positive remarks* and *suggestions*. In contrast, Kreutel identified features in the EFL speakers that were undesirable

for the hearer; those are *message abandonment*, total lack of mitigation, *use of the performative negation I disagree/don't agree*, *use of the bare exclamation no*, *blunt statement of the opposite*, *exclamations of indignation*. In this research, there were present other undesirable features apart from Kreutel's taxonomy; those are *use of the performative I don't like it*, *use of insult and negative judgments* and *argumentation*.

2.7 Desirable Features

Based on Pomerantz (1984), when speakers are asked to agree about a statement “they may nonetheless find themselves in the position of disagreeing” (p. 70). Nevertheless, disagreement being a threatening-face act implies a “negative evaluation of some aspect of the hearer's face” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). That is to say, disagreeing threatens to the interlocutor's positive face and affect the cooperative principle (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). In order to preserve the cooperative principle and the interlocutor's face wants, the speaker may make use of varied strategies to save the interlocutor's face or to mitigate the disagreement, this is what Kreutel (2007) has refers as the desirable features. Such strategies may be delays like silence and request for clarification, and token agreement and positive remarks to show cooperation. (Pomerantz, 1984; Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011).

2.7.1 Token agreement

According to Bardovi-Harling and Salsbury (2004) when “the disagreement itself is preceded by an expression of agreement” (p. 210, as cited in Glaser, 2014, p. 105) is what is known as token agreement. Token agreement is considered a mitigation strategy for disagreeing and in most cases, takes the form of *yes, but...* (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). Such strategy softens the disagreement by responding with a preferred structure that

fulfills the interlocutor's expectations and desire to be right (Glaser, 2014). Furthermore, this strategy saves the interlocutor's positive face "[conceding] to the addressee that s/he is correct, while there is another 'truth' to be considered" (Mallon-Gerland, 2011, p. 287, as cited in Glaser, 2014, p. 105).

2.7.2 Hedges

Speakers use hedging as a delaying device to gain time for thinking an appropriate word or phrase to answer to the prior statement; this reduces the negative impact of the disagreement (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). Based on Glaser (2014), any structure that delays the disagreement is a mitigation device since those reduce an undesirable effect on the interlocutor (p. 106). Nevertheless, Locher (2004) emphasizes that the structures classified as hedges do not always mitigate the negative impact of the statement. In some cases, such hedges functions as a booster to emphasize the speaker's stance (p. 114).

2.7.3 Request for Clarification

Asking for clarification gives the speaker time to think of a structure that softens the negative impact of the disagreement (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). This delaying strategy includes structures that ask for clarification and repetition of the words previously uttered to verify what the interlocutor has said. Moreover, prefacing the disagreement with a request for clarification does not only delay the FTA, but also indicates speaker's concern towards the interlocutor's face wants by suggesting a misunderstanding of the prior statement (Glaser, 2014).

2.7.4 Explanations

Based on Glaser (2014), when offering explanations in a disagreement, the speaker “establishes common ground and indicates willingness to solve the conflict at hand conjointly and amicably” (p. 110). In other words, explanations are strategies to indirectly disagree (Kecskes & Assimakopoulos, 2017), since the speaker offers reasons to validate his opposite stance and to soften the disagreement itself. Therefore, giving explanations is a face-saving strategy and a preferred structure when disagreeing (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). Author such as Glaser (2014) and Kecskes & Assimakopoulos (2017) have identified different types of explanations within the strategy. In the same way, in this research were identified four types of explanations. 1) *Neutral explanation*, which according to Kecskes and Assimakopoulos refers to the “neutral and often technical description of why s/he cannot agree” (p.145). 2) *Justification*, in which the speaker explains why her/his reasons are right and reasonable. 3) *Accusation*, in which the speaker alleges that something has been done in a wrong way according to certain terms. Finally, 4) *blaming*, in which the speaker assigns responsibility to the hearer for a decision taken.

2.7.5 Expressions of Regret

This strategy avoids the negative impact of the disagreement by “expressing modesty and deference” (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011). When expressing regret, the speaker tries to convince the hearer that “not such face threat is intended or desired” despite the fact of disagreeing (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69-70). According to Kreutel (2007), expressing regret for disagreeing implies that the speaker apologizes for thinking in a way that differs from the interlocutor’s stance.

2.7.6 Positive remarks

Based on Gesuato, Bianchi and Cheng (2015), the speaker makes use of positive remarks for disagreeing “in an attempt to mitigate the impending disagreement” (p. 200). This strategy consists of a measurement of the negative effect a disagreement may have on the hearer and use compliments, signals of cooperation and express gratitude to minimize the impact of the disagreement itself (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014, p. 219; Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011).

2.7.7 Suggestions

Glaser (2014) classifies suggestions as a proactive strategy since it indicates the speaker concerns towards the hearer. In order to mitigate the disagreement, the speaker provides an alternative to the hearer’s statement to conceal both parties. This strategy maintains politeness by considering the hearer’s perspective and by solving the conflict (Kreutel, 2007).

2.8 Undesirable features

Kreutel (2007) affirms that despite the fact that disagreements are a FTA, those are essential part of everyday life since there are “situations in which it is more important to defend one’s standpoint than to save face” (p. 3). As a dispreferred structure, when disagreeing the native speakers tend to use politeness strategies to reduce the impact of the FTA; nevertheless, non-native speakers find difficult the level of complexity required to disagree politely. Kreutel (2007) calls this lack of knowledge undesirable features. Such features are characteristics that are not desirable for the hearer face wants and that make the speaker look as too direct and rude (p. 4).

2.8.1 Total lack of mitigation

According to Gesuato, Bianchi and Cheng (2015), the use of performatives are considered strong disagreements due to the lack of mitigation devices. Performatives are verbs that directly indicate the action of disagreeing (e.g. *I don't want, I won't do it, I don't care*, etc.), as consequence threatens the hearer's positive face. Kreutel (2007) indicates that NNSs' expressions of disagreement are generally simple in comparison to the NSs, in his own words, "[the NNSs' disagreements] are mostly characterized by the absence of the surface features established for the native-like language use" (p. 4). The NNSs speakers' unfamiliarity about the NSs' pragmalinguistics rules leads to a total lack of mitigation when disagreeing (Kreutel, 2007).

2.8.2 Use of the performative *no me gusta*

Searle (1969) indicates that the use of the performatives manifests the speaker's intention due to those make explicit the force indicator device of the speaker's utterance. Moreover, according to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016), "performatives [...] enables speakers and hearers to bypass complex inferential reasoning and jump by default to a conclusion about the illocution being performed" (para. 27). In other words, performatives as direct and declarative speech acts make evident the speaker's illocution. As consequence of this directness, when the performatives are accompanied by the adverb *no*, the disagreements are considered impolite and harsh (Glaser, 2014).

When expressing *no me gusta* [I don't like], the speaker is not only disagreeing with the hearer's proposal, but also enforcing his stance. By stating his point of view, the speaker is breaking the cooperative principle; nevertheless, expressing his personal preferences may

make the hearer stop insisting the speaker to agree. This “simple” structure leaves the hearer powerless since every element (disagreement, preference, reason and denial) is summed up in itself.

2.8.3 Use of the performative *no estoy de acuerdo*

As a dispreferred strategy, the use of the performative *no estoy de acuerdo* is rarely observed in NSs’ interactions (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). Based on Glaser (2014), the use of a negative form within a strategy for disagreeing indicates a negative judgment of the hearer’s proposition. That is to say, this strategy is not only a FTA, but also “openly expresses criticism of the [hearer]” (Glaser, 2014, p. 107). It is important to mention that the context in which the performative is more common is in debate-like conversations and academic contexts (Glaser, 2014).

2.8.4 Use of the bare exclamation *no*

According to Maíz-Arévalo (2014), the bare negative forms are “too face-threatening in a cooperative context” (p. 210). However, despite the classification of “bare no”, the negative is most of the times observed within other structures, this, without minimizing the negative impact on the hearer. Shabaka in a study carried out in 2013 found that the participants used the exclamation “no” accompanied of other elements such as “of course” and explanations; nevertheless, this did not affect the impact of the negatives.

2.8.5 Exclamations of indignation

Based on Apaiso (2012), the speaker performs this strategy by reacting toward the interlocutor’s previous statement with a “remark of anger that shows displeasure or

annoyance” (p.1188). Kreutel (2007) indicates that harshness in the exclamations of indignation is directly related with the closeness between the speaker and the hearer. The more confident the speaker is with the hearer, the ruder the exclamation of indignation will be. In addition, Kreutel affirms that non-native speakers tend to threaten the hearer’s positive face the most when uttering an exclamation due to “those [exclamations] used by non-native speakers are far more derogatory”, in comparison to the native speakers.

2.8.6 Use of insult and negative judgments

Herring (1994) has identified insulting and negatively judging as strategy merely used by men, suggesting that women, in contrast, tend to be cooperative and polite. However, Shabaka (2013) claims there is not enough evidence that marks a difference between men and women when using sarcasm or insulting.

2.8.7 Blunt statement of the opposite

According to Glaser (2014), this strategy refers to disagreeing by means of an “unmitigated contradictory statement” (p. 117). Nevertheless, Maíz-Arévalo, (2014) has found in her research that non-native speakers with a high linguistic competence made use of this strategy accompanied of mitigation devices such as expressions of regret (*I’m sorry*). However, if these mitigation devices appear at the end of the disagreement structure, the mitigation will not work since the hearer still perceiving the speaker as rude (Glaser, 2014).

2.8.8 Argumentation

Notwithstanding that argumentation is usually confused with explanation, there exist a difference between these two terms. According to Benoit and Benoit (1990), the argument

unavoidably leads people to an incitement or conciliation, whereas explanation regularly looks for a justification that leads to harmony. Furthermore, argumentation openly attacks the interlocutor's face by having the speaker reasoning on what the interlocutor is wrong. In the same way, Goodwin (2009) claims that when there is an argumentation is because people disagree; argumentation "establishes the ground for participants to critique each other's conduct as good and as bad" (p. 287). Having this in mind, when people deliver an argument is because they find something opposite to their own belief, so there is a need for reasoning on what they consider the true.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In the interest of identifying the pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese learners of Spanish as L2 and the approximation of those patterns to the native L2 norms a process was followed. Such process of methodology, participants selection, instrument design and analysis procedures, is described below.

3.1 Methodology

The current study was carried out by means of a mixed-method research. Based on Hesse-Biber (2010), mix-method entails the use of “both quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular question or set of questions” (p. 3). The reasons of adopting this method were *triangulation* in order to provide validity to the analysis (Litosseliti, 2010), and *complementarity*, which allows the appreciation of the problem from different perspectives (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

The analysis of this research looked for syntactical pattern in the speakers’ speech (quantitative analysis). The patterns in Chinese learners of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) speech when expressing disagreement were compared with the native Spanish speakers’ speech. The Spanish speakers’ speech was used as a reference to find evidence of pragmatic transfer from the L1 to the L2 (Kasper, 1992). Once the instrument was applied and the data was gathered, the recordings were transcribed to analyze the data by using a coding scheme designed specifically for this purpose (qualitative analysis). In addition, at the end of the intervention with every Chinese speaker, there was an informal interview in which they were asked individually about the answers given, the reasons of their response and how

different it was for them to express themselves in Spanish in contrast with Chinese (qualitative analysis).

According to Wolfson (1981), in case of speech data, direct observation of speech in a naturalistic setting is essential in order to be valid. Nevertheless, “collecting speech act data in a naturally-occurring setting poses some challenges for the researcher” (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, p. 42). In pursuance of identifying the pragmalinguistic patterns produced by SFL speakers, and understand its nature, the data collection technique used was an open role-play. Based on Yardley-Matwiejczuk (1997), “role-play [... is] a way of deliberately constructing an approximation of aspects of a ‘real life’ episode or experience, but under ‘controlled’ conditions where much of the episode is initiated and/or defined by the experimenter” (p. 1). Open role-plays entail communicative interaction among participants concerning a specific situation (Gass & Mackey, 2012). In the same way, the role-play leads to insights of realistic settings with the advantage that those can be monitored and guided (Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997) by eliciting a determined speech (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). The objective of the role-play was having the participants disagreeing and stating their beliefs (according to the prompts) to convince the interlocutor of their disagreement.

Adler and Clark (2007) suggests that in observational techniques the role of the observer’s involvement in the observation vary according to the research purposes (p. 312). My role in this research was observer-as-participant, that is to say, I conducted myself primarily as the observer but took part in the interaction as participant (Adler & Clark, 2007). My instrument being an open role-play, needed to be guided in certain way to let me observe a determine speech act; I acted as the interlocutor in the open role-play. The participants had to disagree with me according to the prompts stated in the instrument; if I realized that the

participants' answer was ambiguous, I directed the interaction to make them establish their stance. Despite the fact that this can be considered obtrusive or unfair for the results (Adler & Clark, 2007), the reality is that this interaction is the closest to a naturalistic setting in which the participants need to convince and negotiate with the interlocutor in order to establish their disagreement (Yardley-Matwiejczuk, 1997).

3.2 Subjects

There are two groups of participants in this research. 1) Nine Chinese L2 learners of Spanish: four females and five males, and 2) nine Mexican native speakers of Spanish: eight females and one male. The Chinese L2 learners were in a student exchange program doing their B. A. in languages. They have been in Puebla, Mexico for six months, and were taking classes of Spanish in an advanced level. The native speakers are sophomore students at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and study a B. A. in English teaching; they were taking a Pragmatics lesson. The ages of both groups of participants range from 20 to 22 years old.

3.3 Samples

The Chinese L2 learners were selected because they belong to a culture that differs in many aspects to the Mexican culture. In addition, there was accessibility to approach the students and they were willing to participate since being students of a degree in languages provides them knowledge to understand the nature of this research. There were only nine Chinese L2 learners as participants because those were the only students in the exchange program. This determined the same number of the Mexican participants in order to take a

balance in the analysis of the data. The native speakers were selected from a Pragmatics class; in the same way as with the NNS, this class related to the structure of the research.

To work with the Chinese learners, it was needed to approach the coordinator of the school exchange program to ask for permission to address the students. The Chinese learners signed up a consent letter to agree their participation. In the same way, both groups of participants were asked about their participation, and the nature and process of the research were explained to them. Moreover, they were notified about the use of the data. The whole population agreed to take part in this project as well as agreed being video and audio recorded. In case of the NNS group, they had to answer a questionnaire that asked for specific information about the time they had been learning Spanish as well as the time they have been living in a Spanish speaking country. The NS group did not apply the questionnaire for obvious reasons: Spanish is their mother tongue.

Even though both groups performed the role-play, I only interacted with the NNS since their group was reduced and having had them participate as the interlocutors would have affect their performance when having them take the role of the speaker. Considering this, I was the person with whom they had to disagree. This allowed me to control the situation in certain way in favor of making them disagree. In contrast, the NS had classmates in their Pragmatics class that took the role of the interlocutor; the participants' selection was random.

3.4 Instrument

As mentioned before, the instrument used in this research was an open role-play. I designed the instrument following the parameters of power and distance (Kasper, 1997).

Such parameters produced for situations in which both, power and distance were present with higher-lower hierarchy (power) and with a closer-further relationship (distance). The instrument consisted of four situations in which a setting was described, paying attention to the context and describing the characteristics of the interlocutor, i.e. a boss (+power, +distance), brother (-power, -distance). The situations presented a moral crossroad in which the participants had to express their disagreement taking into account the power and distance of the interlocutor.

3.4.1 Piloting

Before applying the instrument, it was piloted with eight volunteer native speakers of Spanish. The original version of the instrument contains eight situations combining the parameters of power and distance. The participants received directions of how the open role-play develops, I told them they had to read carefully each sentence, to picture themselves in that situation and visualize me as the interlocutor described in the situation. In addition, I introduced myself as the observer and I explained them that I was going to interact with them individually, and I video-recorded them one by one with their consent. After this, I transcribed the video and analyze the dialogues. I identified the sentences that contains IFIDs and the ones that potentially show information for me to analyze; I discarded the situations that did not provide relevant information. Finally, I selected only four potential situations and modified some syntactical structures.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

In order to determine whether the Chinese learners' L1 influenced in their Spanish oral production when producing disagreements, the data obtained from the three instruments

was analyzed according to the following schema. The questionnaires provided personal information about the Chinese level of language and time living in a Spanish speaking country (see Appendix) to establish a background. Then, the audio from the role-play recordings were transcribed and then categorized into desirable and undesirable features using Kreutel's taxonomy as a model to analyze the syntactical patterns. Finally, the information obtained in the formal interview was useful as a reference to understand why the Chinese learners communicate the way they do it.

3.6 Coding Scheme

The coding scheme used was based on Kreutel's (2007) taxonomy of speech act of disagreements. Kreutel developed a classification of desirable and undesirable features for native and non-native speakers when expressing a disagreement after conducting a study of 27 learners of English as second language with different L1 background and 27 American native speakers of English. In addition, the author conducted his study by using a Discourse Completion Task as instrument. After the analysis of the results, Kreutel categorized the responses given by the participants into desirable and undesirable features being the former associated to native speakers and the later associated to non-native speakers. According to Kreutel's study, native speakers count with a wider repertoire of syntactical patterns and knowledge of the sociopragmatic rules appropriate to determine context. Considering this, the native speakers will use syntactical patterns that contain features that are appropriate to disagree; for example, mitigation devices to show empathy toward the interlocutor. In contrast, the non-native speakers will lack this knowledge and as consequence will produce linguistic structures with undesirable syntactical patterns; for example; total lack of

mitigation and message abandonment. Kreutel's taxonomy adopted for this research is as follows:

- 1) Desirable features (associated with native speakers)
 - a) Token agreement
 - b) Hedges
 - c) Request for clarification
 - d) Explanations
 - e) Expressions of regret
 - f) Positive remarks
 - g) Suggestions
- 2) Undesirable features (associated with non-native speakers)
 - a) Message abandonment
 - b) Total lack of mitigation
 - c) Use of the performative I disagree
 - d) Use of the performative negation I don't agree
 - e) Use of the bare exclamation no
 - f) Blunt statement of the opposite
 - g) Exclamations of indignation

After coding the data, one strategy was omitted (message abandonment) since it was not present in this research and three additional strategies were included as its use was present in both group of participants the non-native and the native speakers (use of the performative *no me gusta* [I don't like], use of insult and negative judgement and argumentation).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.0 Overview

In pursuance of identifying the pragmalinguistic patterns used by Chinese L2 learners of Spanish when disagreeing and to determine to what extent those patterns approximate to their native forms, there were implemented two instruments: a questionnaire and a role-play. In this chapter, the data analysis collected from those instruments and the findings are presented. In the same way, there were two groups of participants: 1) the Asian non-native speakers (NNS) of Spanish and 2) the Mexican native speakers (NS) of Spanish. Only the first group applied the questionnaire, and both groups performed a role-play.

The data obtained from the role-plays' transcriptions was categorized into desirable and undesirable features. In the same way, those categories subdivided into particular speech acts. In the following sections is a description and exemplification of the categories and subcategories. Correspondingly, the data analysis discussion of the questionnaire lies in the section of contextual variables.

4.1 Desirable features

When apologizing, Kreutel (2007) claims that there are features that are desirable for the hearer to hear from the speaker. Mitigation devices and structures that show cooperation and deference from the speaker toward the hearer are examples of desirable features. The data obtained in this research indicate that both groups of participants, the NNSs and the NSs performed disagreement following the guidelines of the desirable features proposed by Kreutel with a 57% (138 times) of recurrence. In the table below (see Table 1), the

percentages obtained by each group in every strategy are displayed. The strategy that both group of participants used the most was *explanations*; the NNSs used it 28% (32 times out of 69) and the NSs 19% (25 times out of 69). In contrast, the NNSs never used *expressions of regret*, *positive remarks* neither *suggestions*. On the contrary, the NSs used *hedges* and *suggestions* with a 6% (8 times) of frequency each. It must be remark that even though both groups of participants have used desirable features strategies 69 times in total, the percentages (60% and 53%) varied due to the undesirable features strategies determined the total percent of the usage. Detailed below, every desirable strategy is explained.

Table 1. Percentages of desirable features used by NNSs and NSs.

CATEGORY	NNS		NS	
token agreement	8%	9	11%	14
hedges	21%	24	6%	8
request for clarification	3%	4	7%	9
explanations	28%	32	19%	25
expressions of regret			2%	2
positive remarks			4%	5
suggestions			6%	8
Total	60%	69	53%	71

4.1.1 Token agreement

This strategy is preceding the disagreement with a token agreement in order to mitigate the negative impact (Glaser, 2014). As seen in Table 1, token agreement strategy was the third used the most by the NSs and the fourth by the NNSs. The NSs used token agreements 11% (14 times) in total while the NNSs used them 8% (9 times). The recurrent structure used was the so-called *sí, pero...* [yes, but...]; however, the use of the structure within the dialogue varied according to the situation. In other words, the structure functioned as an immediate response to the prior statement, but also appeared in the middle of the

interaction. In addition, the participants used other types of token agreement, mainly at the end of the interaction finally agreeing.

The NSs made use of *sí, pero...* as immediate response only twice and only in Situation 1 in which the speaker addresses her/his father who holds a higher hierarchy and less distance toward the speaker. In addition, they accompanied the token agreement by an *explanation* to clarify why they did not totally agree (see example 1). On the other hand, as can be seen in example 2, the NSs used *yes, but...* in the middle of the interaction eight times after denying the initial interlocutor's statement and an explanation followed the token agreement as well. Finally, the NSs used other structures as token agreement (*bueno, ya* [ok, then]), as observed in example 3, to accept the initial statement, but after the whole interaction.

In example 2, the speaker uses a token agreement after three turns in which asks for further information about the hearer's proposal. After just being asking without uttering a definitive answer, the speaker uses the structure *sí, pero...* to lead his disagreement. Correspondingly, in example 3, the speaker addresses his brother (Situation 2). The speaker having an equal hierarchy and a very close relationship with the hearer, ends accepting the proposition. Although the token agreement is preceded by an insult, in this case it is not considered to negatively impact the hearer's face due to the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

- 1) **Padre:** Hola, hija. Oye, estaba pensando que sería bueno que te metieras a practicar tenis.
Hija: *Sí, pero* yo estaba pensado en practicar kickboxing. (NS/P6S1)¹

Father: Hi, daughter. Hey, I was thinking that it would be good for you to practice tennis.
Daughter: *Yes, but* I was thinking to practice kickboxing.

¹ Native Speaker, Participant 6, Situation 1

- 2) **Jefe:** ¿Qué tal si trabajas los fines de semana y te aumento un poco el sueldo?
Empleado: ¿De cuánto estaríamos hablando, más o menos?
Jefe: Sería un aumento de un 15% de tu sueldo.
Empleado: Ah... ¿Cuántas horas serían?
Jefe: Estamos hablando de tiempo completo.
Empleado: ¿Todo el fin de semana?
Jefe: Piénsalo un poco; tú necesitas el dinero para tus estudios. Yo te estoy ofreciendo más dinero.
Empleado: Sí, pero creo que necesitaría también descansar el fin de semana. (NS/P7S3)

Boss: What if you work the weekends and I increase your salary a little?

Employee: How much would it be, more or less?

Boss: It would be a 15% of your salary.

Employee: Ah, how many hours?

Boss: It would be full time.

Employee: The whole weekend?

Boss: Think about it; you need the money for your studies. I am offering you more money.

Employee: Yes, but I think I would also need to rest during the weekends.

- 3) **Hermano 1:** ¡Qué onda! Oye, ¿ves que tenemos que hacer y así este fin de semana? Mm, pues quiero ir a una fiesta. Mm, entonces, ¿te parece si esta vez haces todo para que pueda ir a la fiesta?
Hermano 2: Pero es que ya van muchas, carnal, y pues... Mm, tú también tienes que hacer las cosas. A mí la verdad no me gusta estar haciendo las cosas, carnal; yo también tengo que distraerme carnal.
Hermano 1: Pero si es sólo un fin de semana. ¡No seas marica!
Hermano 2: ¡Putra madre! Bueno, ya. (NS/P5S2)

Brother 1: What's up! Hey, you see we have chores to do this weekend? Mm, well I want to go to a party. Mm, then, what do you think if you do everything for me to the party?

Brother 2: But there have been many times bro, and well... Mm, you also have to do the chores. I don't really like doing the chores bro; I also need to distract myself bro.

Brother 1: But it's just a weekend. Don't be a faggot!

Brother 2: Mother fucker! Ok, then.

On the other hand, the NNSs were the participants that used *sí, pero...* in the nine times the used the token agreement strategy; however, they used other words within the structure. Out of nine times, six were used as immediate response of the interlocutor's statement and three were used at the end of the interaction. The NNSs used words and phrases such as titles (*jefe*), possibility (*me gustaría*) and positive remarks (*es una buena idea*) as illustrated in the following examples.

Both examples are present in Situation 1. In the example 4, the speaker uses the probability to indicate that under certain circumstances he would not have any problem in practicing tennis. This provides more deference toward the hearer, which mitigates even more the disagreement. In example 5, the speaker uses the word *entiendo* [understand] in the middle of the structure *sí, pero...* to emphasize that comprehends what the father wants her to do. In the same turn taking, the speaker uses again the *sí, pero...* structure, but accompanied of the phrase *es violento* [it is violent], to indicate that she knows how violent kickboxing is; however, she is still wanting to practice it.

- 4) **Padre:** Quiero que practiques algún deporte, pero quiero que practiques tenis. Es el deporte que a mí me gusta, que yo he practicado y siento que te va a hacer muy bien a ti

Hijo: Sí me gustaría, pero me gusta más el kickboxing. (NNS/P6S1)²

Father: I want you to practice a sport, but I want you to practice tennis. It is the sport I like the most, that I have practiced, and I think it is going to be good for you.

Son: Yes, I would like it, but I like kickboxing the most.

- 5) **Padre:** Bueno Isabel, como te comentaba, yo quiero que practiques tenis porque creo que es un deporte que vas a poder hacer. Entonces, este, quiero inscribirte en estas clases de tenis porque yo creo que es el mejor deporte para ti.

Hija: Papá, no, no me gusta ese deporte. A mí me gusta más kickboxing.

Padre: Pero este deporte es muy violento para ti y yo creo que no lo vas a poder practicar porque eres niña y tenis es como para niñas.

Hija: Sí, sí entiendo, pero yo creo que kickboxing me ayuda a defenderme. Si yo lo practico voy a defenderme a mí misma. Y, sí es violento, pero si... como mi papá debería apoyarme. (NNS/P1S1)

Father: Well, Isabel, I was telling you, I want you to practice tennis because I think it is a sport you can do. Then, I want you register in tennis classes because I think it is the best sport for you.

Daughter: Dad, I don't like that sport. I like more kickboxing.

Father: But that sport is very violent for you and I think you are not going to be able to practice it because you are a girl and tennis is for girls.

Daughter: Yes, I do understand, but I think that kickboxing helps me to defend myself. If I practice it, I will defend myself. And, yes, it is violent, but if... like my dad you should support me.

² Non-Native Speaker, Participant 6, Situation 1

4.1.2 Hedges

Hedging as a delaying device that gets the speaker time for thinking before uttering a statement (Glaser, 2014), was the second strategy used the most by the NNSs with 21% of frequency (24 times), mainly in the debate-like of the Situation 4 (11 times). The word *pero* [but] and the structure *yo creo* [I think] were the frequent hedges used by NNSs as seen in the extract 6 and 7. Correspondingly, the NSs used hedges 6% (8 times), mainly in situations 2 and 3. The word *pero* and the hesitation *mmm* were the frequent structures used by the NSs as shown in example 8. Both, the NNSs and the NSs used hedges as the immediate response as can be seen in example 6 and 8 and within the interaction in example 7.

The example 6 is an extract from the Situation 4, in which the NNS does not directly disagree with the hearer's proposal. Instead, the speaker used the structure *pero* to show a contrastive idea and arguing why she thinks so. The example 7 is an extract from Situation 3 where the NNS uses the hedge *creo que* to consider the structure to use for disagreeing after the initial opposite statement and the reasons explaining the disagreement. Consecutively in example 8, the speaker uses the hesitation marker *mmm* to think of a way to let the hearer knows it is not her responsibility to help with the chores.

6) **Compañero 1:** Pues, como mencionaba yo estoy a favor de que haya leyes contra las personas que llegan ilegalmente a este país, como los inmigrantes porque yo creo que nos quitan oportunidades y que no es justo que vengan a robarnos lo que es nuestro.

Compañero 2: *Pero*...no todos los inmigrantes son así. Bueno, de hecho, mis padres son, también son inmigrantes, pero trabajan mucho. Y no, nunca roban. (NNS/P1S4)

Classmate 1: *Well, as I was mentioning, I am in favor of laws against people that illegally arrive to this country like the immigrants because I think they take our opportunities away and it is not fair they steal with is ours.*

Classmate 2: *But*... not all the immigrants are like that. Well, my... actually my parents are, they are also immigrants, but work a lot. And no, they never steal.

- 7) **Jefe:** Como les mencioné a tus compañeros de trabajo, necesito que también vengas a trabajar los fines de semana, o sea, sábado y domingo. Obviamente la paga no va a ser la misma porque solamente son dos días [...], pero sí necesito que estés aquí.
Empleado: De hecho, quiero aumentar el salario. El fin de semana estoy muy ocupada. Tengo que ayudar a mis papás, entonces creo que no me conviene. (NNS/P5S3)

***Boss:** As I mentioned to your coworkers, I need you to come to work the weekends too, I mean, Saturday and Sunday. Obviously, the payment is not going to be the same because it is only two days [...], so I do need you being here.*

***Employee:** Actually, I want a salary increase. I am very busy at the weekend. I have to help my parents, then, I think it does not suit me.*

- 8) **Hermana 1:** Necesito que me ayudes a hacer las tareas del fin de semana porque voy a ir a una fiesta y necesito tener tiempo para arreglarme. Entonces, me serviría de mucho que me ayudaras bastante con todas las tareas que tenemos que hacer...
Hermana 2: Mmm... si ya sabias que ibas a ir a la fiesta ¿por qué no empiezas desde ahorita a apurarte?... para que el fin de semana tengas menos quehacer. (NNS/P9S2)

***Sister 1:** I need you to help me to do the chores this weekend because I'm going to a party and I need time to get ready. Then, it would really help me if you help me with the chores we have to do.*

***Sister 2:** Mmm... if you knew you were going to a party, why don't you start hurry up right now?... then you will have less things to do at the weekend.*

4.1.3 Request for clarification

The group of the NSs used requests for clarifications 7% in total (9 times); meanwhile the group of the NNSs used this strategy 3% (4 times). The structures employed by the participant include both, repetition of some words included in the prior statement as in example 8, and questions requesting further information in example 9. In addition, this strategy was present not only in the first turn taking of the dialog, but within the whole interaction.

As observed in example 8, the speaker recalls the hearer's previous proposal to request to get more information before uttering a definitive answer. In the same way, in example 9 the speaker directly requests the hearer to provide the needed information. Both structures appear as immediate response to the initial proposal. Finally, in example 10, the

speaker requests to know how much important the date is to take a decision before directly disagreeing.

- 8) **Jefe:** Te tengo una propuesta para que vengas a trabajar los fines de semana. Tengo una vacante para el turno matutino; serían cuatro horas nada más. ¿Qué te parece?
Empleada: ¿Cuatro horas sábado y cuatro horas domingo? (NS/P2S3)

Boss: I have a proposal for you to come to work at the weekends. I have a vacancy for the morning shift; it would be only four hours. What do you say?

Employee: Four hours Saturday and four hours Sunday?

- 9) **Jefe:** Has estado trabajando excelente en este McDonald's y te tengo una buena propuesta. ¿Qué tal si trabajas los fines de semana y te aumento un poco el sueldo?
Empleado: ¿De cuánto estamos hablando más o menos? (NS/P7S3)

Boss: You have been working excellent in this McDonald's and I have a good proposal for you. What if you work the weekends and I increase your salary a little?

Employee: How much it would be, more or less?

- 10) **Hermana:** ¿Sí me vas a ayudar o no? Necesito que me ayudes, que este fin de semana hagas todo por mí porque yo necesito salir, y si no lo haga papás no me van a dar permiso.

Hermano: ¿Es muy importante tu cita? (NNS8/P8S2)

Sister: Are you going to help me or not? I need you to help me, that this weekend you do everything for me because I'm going out, and if I don't our parents aren't going to give me permission.

Brother: Is it very important your date?

4.1.4 Explanations

Considering the NNSs used *explanations* 28% (32 times) and the NSs 19% (25 times) to disagree, *explanations* were the structures the participants used the most. Nevertheless, giving explanations were used as complementary structure of other strategies such as the token agreement *sí, pero...*, and the hedge *yo creo* (examples 11 and 12). In addition, it was found for types of explanations in the corpus. The first one is *neutral explanation* as seen in

example 11, the second type of explanation is *justification*, the third one is *accusation*, and the final type of explanation is *blaming* as seen in examples 12, 13 and 14 respectively.

In example 11, the speaker is just enlisting the reasons why she cannot agree with the hearer's proposal. On the other hand, in example 12, the speaker is justifying his disagreement by stating that if he disagrees with the hearer's proposal it may be beneficial for both parties. In example 13, the speaker is recalling the terms under which he was hired and accusing that asking him for more working hours is unfair. Finally, in example 14, the speaker is directly blaming the hearer of his denial by using the pronoun *tú* [you], which in Spanish is not necessary to use due to conjugation of verbs indirectly indicate the person who carries the action; however, the speaker uses the pronoun *tú* to blame the responsible of his disagreement.

- 11) **Empleada:** Siendo sincera no creo que tenga tanto tiempo libre porque tendría que hacer las tareas que dejan el fin de semana [...] también el trabajo y no creo que me convenga mucho por el tiempo. (NS/P7S3)
Employee: *Being honest I don't think I have so much free time because I would have to do the weekend assignments [...] also the job and I don't think it suits me for so long.*
- 12) **Hijo:** velo de esta forma, me voy a *desestresar*, entonces ya no daría problemas por aquí. (NS/P5S5)
Son: *see it in this way, I'm going to de-stress, then I wouldn't cause troubles here.*
- 13) **Empleado:** Yo le comento, desde el principio que me contrataron, yo... bueno, hice este comentario que yo sólo iba a trabajar cuatro horas por día de lunes a viernes [...]. Y... pues lo que me parece injusto es que me aumenten muy poco dinero y... y no se me hace justo que vaya a trabajar pues... el tiempo... y no me vaya a pagar justamente si solamente me está aumentando un mínimo sueldo. (NS/P8S3)
Employee: *I tell you, since the moment I was hired, I... well, I stated that I was only going to work four hours per day, from Monday to Friday. And... well, what is unfair to me is the very low salary increase and... and is not fair that I have to work the... the time... and I won't get fairly paid if you only are increasing the minimum.*

- 14) **Hijo:** Pues sí, ***pero tú dijiste*** que soy muy débil. Con el kickboxing puedo agarrar fuerza y cuerpo y dejar de ser débil. (NS/P5S1)

*Son: Well yes, **but you said** I'm very weak. With kickboxing I can obtain strength and tone and stop being weak.*

4.1.5 Expressions of regret

The NNSs did not use this strategy in any situation. With very little difference, the NSs used it twice as observed in examples 15 and 16. As an expression that shows courtesy and respect toward the hearer's face (Farnia, Sohrabie & Musarra, 2011), expressions of regret were present in a context where the hearer has higher hierarchy (boss-employee) and no closeness with the speaker (situation 2).

The speaker uses the expression *me da mucha pena* [I am very sorry] in example 15 to show her concern for disagreeing. This expression precedes the disagreement to save the hearer's face by first expressing sorrow for her decision. In the same way, in example 16 the speaker precedes her disagreement with the structure *discúlpeme* [excuse me] to admit her blame for disagreeing. It is important to note that in both examples the participant who performs the expression of regret is a woman.

- 15) **Jefe:** Pero es una gran oportunidad Estefi. Mira, a lo mejor no es mucho, pero sí te aumentaríamos algo.

Empleada: ***Me da mucha pena***, pero en verdad no puedo. Muchas gracias por pensar en mí. (NS/P1S3)

Boss: But it is a great opportunity Estefi. Look, maybe it is not much, but we would increase the salary a bit.

*Employee: **I am very sorry**, but I really cannot. Thank you so much for considering me.*

- 16) **Jefe:** [...] ahora necesito que también venga el fin de semana a trabajar.

Empleada: ***Discúlpeme***, pero yo no tengo tiempo los domingos [...]. (NS/P4S3)

Boss: Now I need you also come to work the weekends.

*Employee: **Excuse me**, but I have no time on Sundays.*

4.1.6 Positive remarks

In the same way as the previous strategy, positive remarks were only used 4% exclusively by the NSs. As a mitigation device that shows speaker desire to cooperate (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014), this strategy was present once in Situation 1 as seen in example 17 that indicates an interaction with the speaker's mother (more hierarchy, more closeness), and four times in Situation 4 under a classmate (less hierarchy, more distance) debate-like context as observed in example 18.

In example 17, the speaker uses the structure *preferiría* [would rather] to indicate her preference in case she has the chance to choose. *Preferiría*, as a conditional, expresses the possibility of an unreal thing to happen; in this case, the speaker gives the hearer the power to make it happen or not. Consequently, in example 18 the employee emphasizes how grateful she is for the offer by using the adverb of quantity *mucho* [a lot] despite she disagrees.

- 17) **Madre:** Pero, ¿por qué quieres kickboxing? Eso es cosa de hombres; tú eres una señorita. Algo más refinado y bueno para ti sería el tenis. Es un buen deporte.
Hija: Lo sé, pero preferiría que sea algo que me ayudara, como el kickboxing. (NS/P7S1)

Mother: But, why do you want kickboxing? That is man's stuff; you are a lady. Something more refined and good for you would be tennis. It is a good sport.

Daughter: I know, but I would rather it be something that helps me, like kickboxing.

- 18) **Jefa:** Estefanía, quería proponerte que trabajaras también los fines de semana, ¿qué te parece?
Empleada: Se lo agradezco mucho, señora, pero la verdad es que no tengo mucho tiempo para estudiar y descansar [...]. (NS/P1S3)

Boss: Estefanía, I wanted to propose you also to work on the weekends, what do you think?

Employee: I appreciate it a lot, ma'am, but the truth is that I have no much time for studying and resting.

4.1.7 Suggestions

Correspondingly, with the two previous strategies, only NSs offered suggestions to solve the conflict for both parties. The NSs used suggestions 6% (eight times) within the four situations. In example 19, the speaker makes a suggestion after the conjunction *pero* [but] to make the speaker change her mind about immigrants instead of disagreeing. In the same way, in example 20, the speaker suggests a solution for the hearer in Situation 2. The speaker disagrees doing everything by her own and instead proposes helping with half of the chores.

- 19) **Compañera 1:** [...] No sé, yo lo veo así: estás en tu casa y llega un amigo a decirte que, pues quiere... que si puede vivir contigo un tiempo. Le dices que sí, pero después ya quiere quedarse a vivir ahí. No creo que sea muy justo.
Compañera 2: Pero velo desde este punto, es como brindarle una ayuda que después, a lo mejor va a ser remunerada. [...] (NS/P7S4)

Classmate 1: [...] I do not know, I see it like this: you are there at your house and a friend gets there to tell you, well that... that if he can live with you. You say yes, but after a period, he wants to stay and live in there. I do not think it is fair.

Classmate 2: But see it in this way, it is like providing a help that may be remunerated.

- 20) **Hermano:** Oye hermana, oye, es que tengo una fiesta y... pues quiero salir antes. ¿Puedes hacer mis deberes, por favor?
Hermana: No, por qué no mejor, pues hago la mitad y ya tú llegas y haces la otra mitad. (NS/P8S2)

Brother: Hey, sis, well, is just that there is a party and... well, I want to go out early. Could you do my chores, please?

Sister: No, why not you better, well I do the half and then you do the other half.

4.2 Undesirable features

Kreutel has addressed as undesirable features the lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge necessary to mitigate the disagreement and soften the FTA when disagreeing. The gathered data shows that both group of participants, NSs and NNSs, used at least one of the undesirable features proposed by Kreutel. Originally, Kreutel's taxonomy of undesirable features

included the strategy *message abandonment*; however, in this research any participant did use of this feature, so it was omitted. In the same way, I included three more categories to Kreutel’s taxonomy; the participants in addition used 1) the performative *no me gusta*, 2) *insult and negative judgments* and 3) *argumentation*.

As seen in the table above, the NNSs used undesirable features with 40% (46 times) of frequency and the NSs with a 47% (60 times). *Argumentation* was the undesirable strategy used the most by both group of participants with 11% (13 times) the NNSs and 12% (15 times) the NSs. On the contrary, the strategy used the least by NNSs and NSs are *insult and negative judgment* with 2% (2 times) and *no estoy de acuerdo* also with 2% (2 times) of frequency respectively. Surprisingly, and against Kreutel theory, the results show NSs used undesirable features with higher recurrence than the NNSs.

Table 2. Percentages of undesirable features used by NNSs and NSs.

CATEGORY	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	3%	3	7%	9
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>	4%	4	6%	2
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>	3%	6	2%	7
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	5%	5	5%	6
exclamations of indignation	4%	5	7%	9
use of insult and negative judgments	2%	5	3%	4
blunt statement of the opposite	7%	8	5%	6
argumentation	11%	13	12%	15
Total	40%	46	47%	60

4.2.1 Total lack of mitigation

This strategy addresses the linguistic structures that lack any kind of mitigation device. These structures are generally rude and direct; despite this, NSs used it with a 7% (9 times) of recurrence, mainly in Situation 1 (5 times). The speakers used total lack of

mitigation within the interaction as observed in example 21 and generally as a final period of the dialogue as in example 22. On the other hand, this strategy was the second least used by the NNSs with 3% (3 times).

As observed in example 21, the NSs utter direct and rude statements. The speaker's immediate response *sabes que esas cosas no me gustan* [you know I don't like those things] clearly indicates a lack of mitigation for disagreeing by stating that the hearer already knows the speaker preferences to suggest her another option. The next speaker's turn seems to be conditioning the hearer instead of showing any cooperation signal. In the last turn, the speaker finally states that she does not care about the hearer wants. Subsequently, in example 22 the NSs' immediate response shows total displeasure with the hearer's proposal. In the same way as in the previous example, the speaker uses the structure *no me importa* to make clear her stance on the proposal. Finally, the speaker seems to challenge the hearer by stating no matter what, she is going to kickboxing classes anyway. These both examples show lack of any mitigation device or structure that shows cooperation toward the hearer.

- 21) **Madre:** Encontré este curso de tenis y te quiero inscribir
Hija: ¡Ay no! *Sabes que esas cosas no me gustan*
Madre: ¿Pues qué te gusta a ti?
Hija: *Yo ya te dije* que quiero entrar al curso de kickboxing
Madre: No, no, no. ¡Pero eso es para hombres!
Hija: *No me importa*. Tú sabes que me gustan más estas cosas y siento que es más... tú sabes, ¿no? Además, no le voy a poner empeño (NS/P3S1)
- Mother: I found this tennis course and want to register you.*
Daughter: Ash no! You know I don't like those things.
Mother: What do you like then?
Daughter: I already told you that I want to join the kickboxing team.
Mother: No, no, no. But those things are for men!
Daughter: I don't care. You know that I like these things more and I feel that it is more... you know? I won't put effort on it.
- 22) **Padre:** ¿Qué crees? Ya te inscribí a tu clase. A la que tanto querías de tenis, porque tienes que hacer deporte.

Hija: ¡Qué! No, yo no quería tenis. No me gusta y *no voy a hacer lo que tú quieras*

Padre: Tú tienes que ir a tenis porque el tenis es cultura y puedes ir a otros países y todo. Además, el kickboxing es peligroso.

Hija: *No me importa*, es algo que a mí me gusta y lo estuve pensando desde hace mucho tiempo. *No me importa que no me des permiso*, yo voy a ir. (NS/P4S1)

Father: Guess what? I registered you in a course. The tennis course you wanted so much, because you have to practice a sport.

Daughter: What! No, I didn't want tennis. I don't like it and *I'm not going to do what you want.*

Father: You have to take tennis because tennis is culture and you can travel abroad and all of that. Besides kickboxing is dangerous.

Daughter: *I don't care*, it is something I like, and I've been thinking about it for so long. *I don't care your permission*, I'm going anyway.

4.2.2 Use of the performative *no me gusta*

The use of this strategy makes the speaker's preference unambiguous. The speakers used this strategy only in Situation 1, in which they had to interact with their father about an imposition on their personal interests. As a result, the NSs used this strategy 6% (8 times), whereas the NNSs used it 4% (5 times). Both groups of participants used this structure as immediate response to the hearer's proposal (see example 23), during the interaction and as a final element of the interaction (see example 24).

Example 23 shows the immediate speaker's response to the proposal with a short but concise answer. The dialogue continues but helpless due to the speaker keeps holding his stance. In example 24, the speaker first keeps insisting and asking the hearer why he cannot do what he likes. As a final resource, the speaker utters a final question to end up the dialogue with the *no me gusta* structure. It is important to denote that despite speakers are using a dispreferred structure they are not being rude and harsh as in the previous strategy. The speakers are only stating their preferences.

23 **Padre:** Hijo, deberías inscribirte en tenis. La verdad no creo que seas bueno en kickboxing. Eres todo un debilucho, no creo que puedas tú solito. Creo que deberías meterte a tenis porque es lo mejor para ti.

Hijo: El tenis no me gusta. Ese no es un deporte, no sudo. (NS/P5S1)

Father: *Son, you should register in tennis. To be honest I don't think you are good at kickboxing. You are a wimp, I don't think you can do it by yourself. I think you should register in tennis because it is the best for you.*

Son: I don't like tennis. *That it is not a sport, I don't sweat.*

24 **Padre:** Yo quiero que practiques algún deporte y yo creo que deberías practicar tenis porque es mi deporte favorito.

Hijo: Pero papá, me gusta el kickboxing; también me ayuda a mi salud.

Padre: Kickboxing yo siento que es un deporte de mucho contacto, muy rudo para ti.

Hijo: Pero mira, mis compañeros también practican kickboxing. ¿Por qué yo no puedo?

Padre: Porque no. Vas a practicar tenis.

Hijo: ¿Por qué no? porque no me gusta tenis. (NNS/P8S1)

Father: *I want you to practice a sport and I think you should practice tennis because it is my favorite sport*

Son: *But dad, I like kickboxing; it also helps to my health.*

Father: *Kickboxing I think it is a contact sport, very hard for you.*

Son: *But look, my classmates also practice kickboxing. Why can't I?*

Father: *Because you can't. You're going to practice tennis.*

Son: *Why not? Because I don't like tennis.*

4.2.3 Use of the performative *no estoy de acuerdo*

Notwithstanding this strategy directly expresses the act of disagreeing, the participants did not use it recurrently. For the NSs it was the strategy used the least with only 2% (2 times) of frequency (see example 25), and for the NNSs it was the second strategy used the least with a 3% (4 times) (see example 26). Both group of participants used this strategy merely in Situation 4, where the context of the dialogue may explain the use of an undesirable featured strategy. This situation, as mentioned before has the speaker interact with a classmate that talks about a very sensitive topic, immigration. The hearer claims that immigrants steal jobs and opportunities whereas the speaker's parents are immigrants. Considering this, it is reasonable the use of such strategy toward someone with the same hierarchy and long-distance relationship.

In example 25, the hearer uses derogatory words to address immigrants by calling them *delicuentes*, *drogadictos* and *violadores*. The speaker having immigrant parents uses the *no estoy de acuerdo* strategy to strongly disagree with the hearer's claims. The same patten repeats in the example 26, in addition, in both examples there is a long argumentation of the disagreement.

- 25) **Compañero:** Yo veo muy bien que pongan nuevas leyes e impedimentos para que los inmigrantes no entren a nuestro país porque ellos nada más vienen a quitarnos el trabajo y la mayoría son delincuentes, drogadictos y violadores que nada más al país a generar más problemas.
- Compañera:** *Yo no estoy de acuerdo* con él, ya que mis papás son inmigrantes y yo siento que ellos han trabajado muy duro para alcanzar algunas metas que tienes. Entonces, siento que eso de que roban el trabajo no es verdad ya que ellos buscan oportunidades que en otros países no les dan. (NS/P4S4)

Classmate: I think is good that there are new laws and impediments for the immigrants do not enter to our country because they only come to steal out our jobs and the majority are robbers, drug addicts and rapists that only generate more problems to the country.

Classmate: I do not agree with him, since my parents are immigrants and I think that they have worked very hard to reach their goals. Then, I consider that things that they steal out the job is not true since they look for opportunities that are not given in other countries.

- 26) **Compañera:** Como ya mencioné anteriormente, creo que debe haber leyes que impidan que los inmigrantes lleguen a un país a establecerse porque roban oportunidades a las personas que nacimos acá y crecimos acá y no creo que sea justo que nos quiten oportunidades y que vengan llevarse todo nuestro trabajo.
- Compañero:** Yo no estoy de acuerdo con usted porque... Mira, hay tantas personas inmigrantes en todo el país, en todo el mundo. Además, hay época de globalización. Es que no podemos evitar esta tendencia, es algo inevitable. Mira mis papás son también inmigrantes y han contribuido para el desarrollo de la sociedad y del país. (NNS/P2S4)

Classmate: As I mentioned before, I think that there must be laws that impede the immigrants to come to a country to establish themselves because they steal out opportunities to the people that were born and grew up here y do not think that it is fair that they take out our opportunities and come to take away our jobs.

Classmate: I do not agree with you because... Look, there are many immigrant people all around the country, in the world. Besides, it is globalization. We cannot avoid this tendency, is unavoidable. Look, my parents are also immigrants and they have contributed for the development of the society and the country.

4.2.4 Use of the bare exclamation *no*

Both group of participants used this strategy with the same frequency, 5% (NNSs 6 times, NSs 7 times). Furthermore, the participants used *no* mainly in Situation 2. As mentioned before, this strategy was accompanied by other structures without minimizing the negative impact of the *no*. As can be seen in example 27, the NNSs after explaining why he will not help his sister ends up the conversation by using *no* accompanied of the structure *no creo*, which emphasizes more the bare *no*.

27) **Hermana:** Necesito que me ayudes con las tareas que tenemos que hacer para que yo pueda salir. Ya después yo me pongo a mano contigo, yo te ayudo. Por ahora, ayúdame y hazlo tú por mí.

Hermano: Ah, pero yo también tengo cosas que hacer este fin de semana y si yo hago tu tarea yo no voy a tener tiempo para mí.

Hermana: Es que es porque yo tengo que ir a una fiesta, pero el próximo fin de semana yo te ayudo. Tú nada más ayúdame ahorita y yo te ayudo después.

Hermano: ¿En serio? pero el otro día no lo, no lo hiciste mi tarea. Eso no es justo.

Hermana: ¿Entonces no me vas a ayudar?

Hermano: No, no creo. Yo puedo ayudar, pero no puedo hacerlo todo. (NNS/P4S2)

Sister: I need you to help me with the chores we have to do for I have to hang out. Later on I will pay the favor back, I'll help you. By now, help me and do it for me.

Brother: Err, but I have things to do this weekend too and if I do your chores then I won't have time for me.

Sister: It's because I have to go to a party, but the next weekend I'll help you. You just help me now and I'll help you later.

Brother: Really? But the other day you didn't do my chores. That's not fair.

Sister: Then, aren't you going to help me?

Brother: No, I don't think so. I can help but I won't do everything.

4.2.5 Exclamations of indignation

This strategy is employed when the speaker reacts with anger and denotes that he is offended. The NSs used this strategy in Situations 1 and 2 with a 7% of recurrence (9 times). The structures the speakers mainly used were exclamations showing surprise, illustrated in the following example. Example 28 shows the speaker's indignation by exclaiming ay to

indicate her surprise about the interlocutor's answer. In addition, the speaker uses the questioning *¿por qué no?* not only expecting a response, but to show she offended to not to know the reason to prohibit her to practice kickboxing.

- 28) **Hija:** Papá quiero decirte que quiero practicar kickboxing.
Padre: Hija, pero yo ya te dije que no te puedo dejar practicar kickboxing, no es un deporte para niñas.
Hija: Ay, ¿por qué no? ¡No seas machista!
Padre: Es por tu seguridad hija, no te puedo dejar practicar. Mira, además el tenis es más divertido... haces ejercicio, te diviertes
Hija: ¡A mí no me gusta el tenis! (NS/P8S1)
- Daughter:* Dad, I want you to tell you that I want to practice kickboxing.
Father: Daughter, but I have already told you that I cannot let you practice kickboxing; it is not a sport for girls.
Daughter: Ah, why not? Don't be chauvinist!
Father: It is for your security daughter, I cannot let you practice it. Look, besides tennis is funnier... you exercise and have fun.
Daughter: I don't like tennis!

4.2.6 Use of insult and negative judgments

The use of this strategy being direct and harsh is commonly associated with men. Nevertheless, in the data obtained, not only men but also women did use of it. Additionally, the NSs and the NNSs chose this strategy with a 3% (4 times) and 2% (2 times) respectively. As it was seen in example 29, the speaker not only used exclamation of indignation strategy, but also did a negative judgment of the interlocutor by calling him *machista*. This word carries a quite negative connotation that directly offends the interlocutor and as result brakes any harmony in the interaction. In the same way, in example 30 the NSs ends up her turn in the interaction by uttering the word *jódete* and a statement as result the interlocutor react calling the speaker *grosera* [rude]. The insult *jódete* has an offensively impolite connotation, and the impact is higher in an interaction between women. Due to the nature of the word is commonly associated in men's slang; however, it was present in females NSs. Finally, in

example 31, the NNSs uses a structure that denotes a negative judgment. Considering that for Chinese respect is a very intrinsic aspect of their culture (see Chapter V), the fact that the daughter uses the word *deberían* [should] to suggest how her father should be indicates that she perceives him in a negative way.

29) **Hermana 1:** Oye Karen, ¿no podrías ayudarme con mis tareas y cuando tú quieras salir yo las hago por ti? ¡Ándale! es que sino ya no me va a dar tiempo, se me va a hacer muy tarde.

Hermana 2: No porque así siempre me dices. Siempre es lo mismo contigo; para la otra párate mejor temprano.

Hermana 1: ¡Ay ándale, por favor Karen!

Hermana 2: No, ya te dije que no.

Hermana 1: ¡Ay por favor! ¡Se me va a hacer muy tarde!

Hermana 2: No, jódete porque siempre me haces lo mismo

Hermana 1: ¡Ay qué grosera! (NS/P3S3)

Sister 1: Hey Karen, couldn't you help me with my chores and when you want to hang out I do them for you? C'mon! because if not I won't have time, I am going to be very late.

Sister 2: No because you always say that. Always is the same with you; for the next time you better get up early.

Sister 1: C'mon, please Karen!

Sister 2: No, I already said no.

Sister 1: C'mon please! I'm running out of time!

Sister 2: No, fuck you because you always do the same.

Sister 1: Ash, how rude!

30) **Padre:** Necesito que practiques un deporte, tienes que hacer algo. Yo quiero que practiques tenis porque es un deporte que a mí me gusta y yo creo que es un deporte bueno para niñas.

Hija: Pero los papas también deberían respetar la opinión de los hijos, ¿no? No me gusta, no me gusta tenis nada. (NNS/P5S1)

Father: I need you to practice a sport, you have to do something. I want you to practice tennis because it is the sport that I like, and I think it is a good sport for girls.

Daughter: But parents also should respect the children's opinions, shouldn't they? I don't like, I don't like tennis at all.

4.2.7 Blunt statement of the opposite

This strategy involves using a statement that contradicts the prior statement as an implicit mean of disagreement. Blunt statement of the opposite was used 7% (8 times) by the

NNSs and 5% (6 times) by the NSs. The NNSs used it mainly in Situations 1 and 3 as observed in example 31, whereas the NSs used almost only in Situation 4 as illustrated in example 32. As can be seen in the examples, the speakers' utterances show a disagreement toward what the interlocutor has claimed.

- 31) **Padre:** Yo quiero que practiques kickboxing porque creo que es un buen deporte para ti. Lo he practicado muchos años y sé que te va a gustar porque a mí me gusta. Ya te inscribí
Hijo: *A mí me gusta el kickboxing.* (NNS/P9S1)

Father: I want you to practice kickboxing because I think it is a good sport for you. I have practicing it for many years and I know you are going to like it because I do. I already registered you.

Son: I like kickboxing.

- 32) **Compañera 1:** En mi opinión, yo pienso que los inmigrantes han venido solamente a robar, vender drogas y a quitarnos el trabajo a quienes sí somos de aquí
Compañera 2: *Yo estoy en contra.* Opino que los inmigrantes vienen de lugares donde sus derechos son quebrantados y solamente vienen a un país para poder trabajar y poder llevar una vida digna (NS/P1S4)

Classmate 1: In my opinion, I think that immigrants have come here only to steal, traffic drugs and take away the job from the people who were born here.

Classmate 2: I am against it. I think that immigrants come from places where their rights are broken and only come to a country to work and lead a dignified life.

4.2.8 Argumentation

As a confrontation strategy for reasoning, argumentation was the strategy from undesirable features used the most by both group of participants. The NSs used it with 12% (15 times) of frequency and the NNSs with an 11% (13 times), and its use was only present in Situation 4. In the example 33 is observed an interaction between two males in a debate-like context. The Classmate 1 states his beliefs about illegal immigration in Mexico; on the other hand, the Classmate 2 states his disagreement by providing arguments that contradict what the interlocutor has said. It is interesting to observe how the interaction ends up after

not being able to make it up. Both participants end up using bad words realizing that with argument the other person is not reasoning.

33 Compañero 1: No estoy muy de acuerdo que vengan inmigrantes a México, porque a veces sólo vienen y en lugar de contribuir en algo nos usan como tierra de paso y nos usan como basurero. Estoy muy en contra de la inmigración y también estoy en contra de que los mexicanos se vayan a Estados Unidos.

Compañero 2: Bueno, creo que estás generalizando mucho el concepto que tienes porque en mi caso mis padres son inmigrantes y ellos no vienen a quitar la oportunidad a nadie, ni a robar ni nada de eso. De hecho, ellos trabajan muy duro y ya llevan tiempo trabajando aquí y pues no hacen nada de eso. Entonces, creo que generalizas un poco y además el mundo es libre, el mundo es de todos.

Compañero 1: Pues yo estoy en contra de los inmigrantes, estoy en contra de los indocumentados ilegales

Compañero 2: Bueno pues es que a mí eso me emputa. (NS/P5S4)

Classmate 1: I do not agree on immigrants coming to Mexico, because sometimes they only come and instead of contributing, they only see us as a passage land and use us as a dump. I am against immigration and also, I am against on Mexicans going to the United States.

Classmate 2: Well, I think you are generalizing a lot the concept you have because in my case my parents are immigrants and they do not come to take away the opportunity for nobody, they do not steal either. In fact, they work very hard and they have some time working here and well, they do not do anything like that. Then, I think you are generalizing a bit and besides is a free world, the world is for everybody.

Classmate 1: Well, I am against the immigrants; I am against the illegal undocumented.

Classmate 2: Well, that is something that fucks me up.

4.3 Contextual variables

In the previous sections were explained the frequency of the strategies used by NNSs and NSs when disagreeing. In the same way, as it has been mentioned before, the instrument for gathering the data consisted of performing a role-play following the guidelines of four different situations. In the following paragraphs, the four situations are explained, the strategies used by the speakers in the different scenarios and the frequencies of desirable and undesirable features used.

The first situation has the speaker confronts her/his parent (mother/father) about personal preferences. The parent indicates the speaker has to practice a sport s/he does not like; this drives the speaker to use a strategy to disagree about the parent imposition. In table below are the percentages that indicate the frequency of use by each group of participants. As can be seen in Table 3, the NNSs' strategy used the most was the desirable strategy *explanations* with a 22% (6 times). This strategy was complementary to others like the performative *no me gusta* or *hedges*; however, it indicates the NNSs' need to explain the reasons they do not entirely agree with the parents' proposal. On the other hand, the NSs used the undesirable performative *no me gusta* the most 23% (8 times) to directly establish their preference. It must be remarked that the strategies mentioned were the second most frequent by both groups; the NNSs used *no me gusta* 19% (5 times) and the NSs provided *explanations* 20% (7 times).

Addressing desirable features strategies, the NNSs never used expressions of regret, positive remarks, or suggestions. Although the interlocutor was a parent with a higher hierarchy, the relation is closer; nevertheless, the NNSs did not dare to show any positive remark or at least suggest an option to solve the problem. Respectively, the NSs either employed *request for clarification*, which indicates they did not needed gain time for uttering their beliefs, nor *expressions of regret*. Referring about undesirable features, any groups used the performative *no estoy de acuerdo*; on the contrary, both groups used the performative *no me gusta*. In addition, the NNSs used blunt statement of the opposite 11% (3 times) in contrast with the NSs. The NSs tend to show themselves as more offended by using *exclamation of indignation* 11% (4 times) and ruder by employing *insults and negative judgments* 3% (1 time).

This suggest that, in Situation1, despite the parent being the authority, the closeness toward the speaker makes the interaction more likely to be direct, sometimes unmitigated. The use of undesirable features by the NNSs denotes respect by not trying directly to offend the interlocutor in contrast with the NSs that used undesirable strategies to indicate their preference.

Table 3. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 1

Situation 1				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	11%	3	17%	6
hedges	15%	4	3%	1
request for clarification	7%	2		
explanations	22%	6	20%	7
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks			3%	1
suggestions			3%	1
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	7%	2	14%	5
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>	19%	5	23%	8
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>				
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	7%	2	3%	1
exclamations of indignation			11%	4
use of insult and negative judgments			3%	1
blunt statement of the opposite	11%	3		
argumentation				
Total	100%	27	100%	35

In table 4 are presented the strategies of the second situation. In this situation, the speakers are addressing their bother/sister. The proposal is having the speaker to do every chore for the interlocutor. In contrast with the previous situation, in this case is observable a wider use of *exclamations of indignation* from the NNSs with a 24% (5 times) and the bare exclamation *no* 19% (4 times). The NSs also used these strategies, but with a 15% (5 times) of frequency. Explanations strategy was present in both group of participants with a 19% (4 times) and a 15% (5 times) respectively; in the same way, the use of insults and negative

judgements that in the previous situation was not used by the NNSs, in this case it was used by both groups with a 5% (1 time) and a 6% (2 times). Considering that the undesirable strategies had higher frequencies of use than the preferred structures, this suggests that the speakers having the same hierarchy as the interlocutor and a close relationship, makes them prone to use more direct strategies and less mitigation devices.

Table 4. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 2

Situation 2				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	10%	2	12%	4
hedges	10%	2	9%	3
request for clarification	5%	1	12%	4
explanations	19%	4	15%	5
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks				
suggestions			12%	4
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation			3%	1
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>				
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	19%	4	15%	5
exclamations of indignation	24%	5	15%	5
use of insult and negative judgments	5%	1	6%	2
blunt statement of the opposite	10%	2		
argumentation				
Total	100%	21	100%	33

The context of the third situation indicates an interaction with a McDonald's boss who demands the speaker to work more hours with little payment increase. In this case, the hierarchy of the boss is higher, and the relationship is more distant. As a result of the interaction with an unfamiliar person with more power, both, the NNSs and the NSs tended to use more preferred structures. As can be seen in Table 5, the NNSs provided an explanation 36% of the times (9 times) whereas the NSs did it 32% of the times (11 times). This indicates

that no matters the issue that the speakers disagree, but they tried to save the interlocutor face wants by providing reasons for their decision.

Table 5. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 3

Situation 3				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	16%	4	9%	3
hedges	28%	7	9%	3
request for clarification			12%	4
explanations	36%	9	32%	11
expressions of regret			6%	2
positive remarks			12%	4
suggestions			6%	2
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	4%	1	9%	3
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>			3%	1
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>				
exclamations of indignation				
use of insult and negative judgments	4%	1		
blunt statement of the opposite	12%	3	3%	1
argumentation				
Total	100%	25	100%	34

In addition, the NNSs used more hedges with a 28% (7 times) than the NSs 9% (3 times), indicating that the NNSs might have needed more time to think what to say when interacting with a boss and considering the intricate concept of respect in the Chinese culture. On the other hand, the NSs used more *positive remarks* and *request for clarification* with a 12% of frequency both (4 times). In contrast, the dispreferred structures had very low frequencies and were almost absent; however, the NNSs used *blunt statement of the opposite* 12% (3 times) to show their disagreement, as well as the NSs used *total lack of mitigation* 9% (3 times).

Table 6. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 4

Situation 4				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement			4%	1
hedges	26%	11	4%	1
request for clarification	2%	1	4%	1
explanations	31%	13	7%	2
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks				
suggestions			4%	1
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation				
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>	10%	4	7%	2
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>				
exclamations of indignation				
use of insult and negative judgments			4%	1
blunt statement of the opposite			19%	5
argumentation	31%	13	56%	15
Total	100%	42	100%	27

Finally, in Situation 4, the interlocutor was a classmate with the same hierarchy as the speaker, but with a more distant relationship. The context indicated a debate about immigration and the speakers' parent were supposed to be immigrants. As consequence, the strategy used the most by the NNSs and the NSs was argumentation with a 34% (13 times) and 56% (15 times) of frequency. In contrasts with explanation, argumentation is a dispreferred structure since it exhibits the interlocutors' weak points. It is important to mention that Situation 4 was the only in which the performative *no estoy de acuerdo* was present with an 11% (4 times) and a 7% (2 times).

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Overview

The purpose of this study was to focus on the analysis of pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese L2 Spanish learners when performing disagreements to determine whether those patterns approximate to the NSs' norms. In order to conduct the analysis, I focused on the parameters of power and distance. Bearing this in mind, in the following paragraphs the conclusion of the analysis is presented by answering the two research questions. Furthermore, there are two headlands to 1) reasoning on the implications the results of this research have in the pedagogical area, and 2) to indicate the limitations of this study and the suggestions to avoid such limitations.

5.1 Pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese L2 learners (RQ1)

To inquire about the pragmalinguistic patterns produced by Chinese learners of Spanish as L2, the categorization of the data was made following Kreutel's (2007) taxonomy of desirable and undesirable features. In this research and against Kreutel's predictions, the results indicate that the Chinese non-native speakers used features that were considered originally by the author as preferred structures generally used by native speakers.

Chinese speakers were more direct and showed freedom of choice in situations 1 and 2. In the first situation, the speaker interacted with a mother/father (+power -distance) about the imposition of personal preferences. Even though Chinese speakers directly established their stance about the interlocutors' proposal, they never were rude; in fact, Chinese speakers tried to save the interlocutor's face the best they could by providing long explanations. In the

second situation, the speaker interacted with a sister/brother (-power -distance) about having the speaker to do her/his sister/brother chores. In this case, the Chinese speakers refused to do everything by their own, but instead, they suggest a solution; this clearly amend and soften the denial by offering an alternative to the initial proposal.

On the other hand, in situations 3 and 4 Chinese speakers showed more respect, deference toward the interlocutor and use of mitigation devices. In Situation 3, the speaker interacts with a boss (+power +distance) about working on the weekends but with a low increase in salary. The Chinese speakers did use of hedges and long explanations to justify why they could not accept the proposal. In Situation 4, the speaker interacts with a classmate (-power +distance) in a debate-like situation where immigration is the central topic. Chinese speakers expressed their disagreement by mainly arguing; however, this was the situation in which they use more hedges and explanations in comparison with the previous three. This indicates that even though Chinese speakers totally differ with the classmate claims, they try to save not only the speaker's positive face but also their own face by using mitigation devices.

Considering how embroidered the concept of respect is in the Chinese culture, it is expected the results obtained. In the informal interview when asking a Chinese participant about the response given he said, *-No puedo ser muy directo con mi jefe, sería faltarle al respeto* [I can't be very direct with my boss, it would be disrespectful]. Every Chinese participant agreed on the same issue, respect strongly influenced the way they communicate with others. In contrast, in Mexico being rude and even using insults is acceptable in certain circumstances.

The Mexican native speakers in the same way as the Chinese speakers tend to be more direct with interlocutors with less distance like the mother/father (+power -distance) and the sister/brother (-power -distance); however, Mexican native speakers also used insults. Despite the negative connotation of the term insult, in this case insulting is an example of positive courtesy (Bravo, 2005). For Mexicans insulting someone who has a close relationship with shows camaraderie and even group acceptance instead of rejection or offense.

When the Mexican native speakers were direct and rude to disagree in situations 1 and 2, they also used insults; nevertheless, according to Bravo's positive courtesy, insulting may be considered a mitigation device considering that Mexican speakers use insults to address people they are confident with. Just as mentioned above, in the case of the sister/brother, this insulting was not to show disrespect but to mitigate the denial and even in one case (see example 34) to accept the interlocutors' proposal.

- 34** **Hermano 1:** ¡Qué onda! Oye, ¿ves que tenemos que hacer y así este fin de semana? Mm, pues quiero ir a una fiesta. Mm, entonces, ¿te parece si esta vez haces todo para que pueda ir a la fiesta?
- Hermano 2:** Pero es que ya van muchas carnal, y pues... Mm, tú también tienes que hacer las cosas. A mí la verdad no me gusta estar haciendo las cosas carnal; yo también tengo que distraerme carnal.
- Hermano 1:** Pero si es sólo un fin de semana. ¡No seas marica!
- Hermano 2:** ¡Putá madre! Bueno, ya. (NS/P5S2)
- Brother 1:** *What's up! Hey, you see we have chores to do this weekend? Mm, well I want to go to a party. Mm, then, what do you think if you do everything for me to the party?*
- Brother 2:** *But there have been many times bro, and well... Mm, you also have to do the chores. I don't really like doing the chores bro; I also need to distract myself bro.*
- Brother 1:** *But it's just a weekend. Don't be a faggot!*
- Brother 2:** *Mother fucker! Ok, then.*

5.2 Native norms (RQ2)

Despite the cultural difference mentioned previously, there were some similarities in the structures both groups of participants used during the interaction. Chinese speakers as Mexican speakers used hedges as mitigation devices to disagree in the four situations. The structure *sí, pero...* [yes, but...] followed by an explanation, *yo creo que* [I think that] and its variant *no creo que* [I don't think that] were uttered by both group of speakers; nevertheless, Chinese speakers used this strategy with more frequency, mainly in situation 3. The performative *no me gusta* [I don't like] was used by NNSs and the NSs only in Situation 2 as immediate response of the interlocutor's proposal and finally the performative *no estoy de acuerdo/estoy en desacuerdo* [I don't agree/I disagree] only in Situation 4.

It is important to recall that Chinese speakers have been living in the Mexico for six months as part of a school exchange program. This could explain the similarities in the structures used; however, the Mexican speakers were more selective when using hedges in contrast with the Chinese speakers that seemed to have overused them. This is an example that Chinese speakers have acquired pragmalinguistic structures to disagree, but they need to identify the situations in which it is feasible the use of certain structures.

5.3 Conclusions

The results obtained are consistent with previous research (Boxer, 1993; Sadrameli & Haghverdi, 2016) where it has been emphasized that non-native speakers show a disposition to be more respectful toward interlocutors with same or more power and with more distance like in this case the boss (+power +distance) and the classmate (-power +distance). In the same way, it has been indicated that non-native speakers show a disposition

to be more direct and outspoken toward interlocutors with less distance no matter the power, like in this case the mother/father (+power -distance) and the sister/brother (-power -distance).

Chinese speakers tend to use strategies that show deference toward interlocutors with more distance and the same or more power (classmate -power +distance, boss +power +distance) than they by using hedges to soften the disagreement, as well as to provide long explanations to justify the disagreement. On the contrary and in the same way as the Mexican speakers, the Chinese speakers are inclined to be more direct toward interlocutors closer to them such as the parent (+power -distance) and the sister/brother (-power -distance), but always trying to save the interlocutors' positive face. In contrast, the Mexican speakers used insults to address the interlocutors closer to them. This is result of the positive courtesy; Mexican speakers use insulting toward people they trust and are confident with to show camaraderie.

The patterns used by Chinese speakers indicate that their responses are governed by respect toward the interlocutor. The greater the power and the greater the distance, the more respect and deference they will show. In case of interlocutors with less distance no matter the power, they are going to feel freer to express their opinions, but trying to save the hearer's positive face. Despite the fact that Chinese speakers have an advanced knowledge of the Spanish grammatical rules and that have acquired certain pragmalinguistic structures after been living in Mexico for six months, they have not fully figured out the circumstances under which the use of certain structures is acceptable. Taking this into account, when Chinese speakers communicate with Mexican speakers if they do not employ the appropriate strategy, they may appear as naïve and with lack of character to establish a stance. Finally, the

similarities on the structures used by both groups of speakers indicates that under certain circumstances Chinese speakers will utter a similar structure to that of the natives suggesting that Chinese speakers may find easy to adapt their sociopragmatic L1 knowledge to the L2.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

Pragmalinguistic transfer being an unalienable part of learning a second language, influences the way second language learners (SLL) communicate in the L2; however, the sociopragmatic rules that work in their L1 are not always appropriate in the L2. Considering that disagreements are FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987), it is vital to enlighten SLL in the appropriate use of a speech act that encompasses such negative connotation. As it was observed in the results obtained in this research, the SLL might be quite proficient at grammar and fluent speakers, but if they do not properly carry out a disagreement considering the sociopragmatic rules of the L2, their communicate competence is going to be diminished.

For this reason, instructing the SLL about the sociopragmatic rules of the L2 would create the awareness needed for learners to avoid pragmalinguistic failure. The findings of this research confirm that explicit instruction about grammar is not enough to be competent when communicating. According to Kasper and Schmidt (1996), when addressing communicative competence “learners who are not instructed [at pragmatics] at all will have difficulty in acquiring the appropriate language use” (p. 60).

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

There were some limitations in this research; those are presented in four points discussed below addressing the instrument design, the Chinese speakers’ background and the

participants' level of the foreign language. To begin, it is important to recall essential information to understand the limitations of this research. There were two groups of participants in this study, the Chinese learners of Spanish as second language and the Mexican native speakers of Spanish. Additionally, it is important to recall that my role was as observant and as a participant; I designed the situations and the guidelines to follow in the role-play I used as an instrument, and I was the interlocutor when working with the Chinese speakers.

The situations within the instrument described four different scenarios: 1) the father (interlocutor) that wants his daughter/son (speaker) practices tennis no matter that the speaker has other preferences; 2) the sibling (interlocutor) that wants his sister/brother (speaker) to do his chores for him; 3) the boss (interlocutor) that needs the employee (speaker) work on the weekends with low salary increase; and finally, 4) the classmate (interlocutor) that states negative claims about immigrants in a debate without considering the parents of the speaker are immigrants.

The first limitation is regarding the instrument design. The instrument was a role-play and there were four different situations with a context that described the type of interaction the participants should have. Despite the fact the instrument was previously piloted, when analyzing the results, I realized that the situations described in the instrument were not the most suitable to explore disagreements. According to the description of each situation (see Appendix B) the interlocutor may utter its proposal as a question or even as a suggestion instead of as an imposition that leads the speaker to disagree. In other words, the situations used in the instrument can be improved to obtain disagreements as response instead of refusals. The suggestion to this limitation, is to pilot the instrument with more than one group

of participants and more than once until obtaining satisfying outcomes. Such outcomes are noticeable when transcribing the audios, so it is highly recommendable to do the transcriptions to deepen in the structures used by the participants.

The second limitation is regarding the Chinese speaker's background. As it was explained in Chapter 2, the Chinese students have been living in Mexico for six months when they took part in the research. Considering that in the results obtained there were some similarities in the answer given by the Chinese speakers that approximate to the Mexican speakers' pragmatic rules, I do not know to what extent the Chinese speakers' pragmatic knowledge is due to a similarity of sociopragmatic rules between the Chinese and the Mexicans or to the fact that Chinese speakers have been immerse in the Mexican culture for six months. In this case it recommended to conduct a research with non-native speakers that are not immerse in the culture of the language they are learning to delimit whether their pragmalinguistic patterns belong to their culture.

The third limitation refers to the Chinese speakers' level of the second language. As it has been mentioned before, the Chinese speakers were at advanced level of Spanish; in addition, the nine participants were quite proficient and fluent speakers. The results obtained showed verbosity, long explanations, well-formed grammatical structures and the use of a variety of strategies; this is not something merely negative. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to analyze what results a group with a lower level of the language (basic, intermediate). It would be interesting to analyze such outcome, since a lower level of language group by having a narrower repertoire of language may use other type of structures and strategies to disagree.

Finally, but not least, the number of participants and the homogeneity of the group is the fourth limitation. The number of the Chinese speakers that took part in this research were nine; the limitation lies in the fact that the results cannot be generalized with such small sample. These nine speakers cannot be taken as representatives of the Chinese culture. The sample needs to be wider and with students from different second language levels and with different backgrounds to obtain more consistent results.

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APPENDIX I: INSTRUMENT

INSTRUMENTO

Instrucciones: Lee cuidadosamente cada situación. Asume el rol descrito y responde de acuerdo a lo que dirías en a cada situación imaginándote a tu interlocutor.

Situación 1

Tu papá considera que debes practicar algún deporte así que quiere inscribirte en un curso de tenis. A ti no te gusta del todo ese deporte y tú preferirías practicar kickboxing. Sin embargo, tu papá insiste en inscribirte en tenis ya que considera que tú no eres bueno para los deportes de contacto y cree que el kickboxing es un deporte muy violento ¿Qué le dirías a tu papá?

Situación 2

Tú y tu hermano tienen que ayudar con las tareas domésticas cada fin de semana y si no lo hacen, no tienen permiso de salir. Tu hermano te ha pedido que le hagas sus tareas del fin de semana que viene porque quiere asistir a una fiesta con unos amigos. Tú crees que lo mejor es ayudarlo en vez de que hagas todo tú solo, ya que crees que ayudándole él terminará a tiempo y si tú haces todos sus deberes ya no tendrás mucho tiempo libre para ti. Tú hermano insiste en que tú hagas todo por él y te dice que cuando lo necesites él te ayudará. Tú no estás de acuerdo porque ya ha habido otras ocasiones y él nunca cumple su palabra. ¿Qué le dirías a tu hermano?

Situación 3

Tienes un trabajo de medio tiempo en un McDonald's al cual asistes 4 horas después de la escuela, cinco días a la semana. Tomaste el empleo porque necesitas el dinero para ayudar a tu familia a pagar tus estudios. No obstante, apenas tienes el tiempo necesario para hacer tus tareas de la escuela y descansar apropiadamente. Recientemente tu jefe te ha propuesto ir a trabajar también los fines de semana con un mínimo aumento de sueldo. Tú no estás muy conforme con la propuesta de tu jefe ya que consideras que el sueldo recibido debe ser equitativo de acuerdo a las horas que trabajes. ¿Qué le dirías a tu jefe?

Situación 4

Durante un debate en una clase, una compañera tuya comenta que está a favor de que haya leyes que impidan el ingreso de los inmigrantes a un país ya que piensa que los inmigrantes sólo llegan a robar oportunidades y viven de lo que los contribuyentes nacionales aportan al gobierno. Sin embargo, tus padres son inmigrantes y siempre han trabajado duro aportando lo que les corresponde. ¿Qué le dirías a tu compañera?

APPENDIX II: CODING SCHEME

Desirable Features

In order to preserve the cooperative principle and the interlocutor's face wants, the speaker may make use of varied strategies to save the interlocutor's face or to mitigate the disagreement.

a. token agreement

Father: I want you to practice a sport, but I want you to practice tennis. It is the sport I like the most, that I have practiced, and I think it is going to be good for you.

Son: Yes, I would like it, but I like kickboxing the most.

b. hedges

Sister 1: I need you to help me to do the chores this weekend because I'm going to a party and I need time to get ready. Then, it would really help me if you help me with the chores we have to do.

Sister 2: Mmm... if you knew you were going to a party, why don't you start hurry up right now?... then you will have less things to do at the weekend.

c. request for clarification

Boss: I have a proposal for you to come to work at the weekends. I have a vacancy for the morning shift; it would be only four hours. What do you say?

Employee: Four hours Saturday and four hours Sunday?

d. explanations

a. neutral

Employee: Being honest I don't think I have so much free time because I would have to do the weekend assignments [...] also the job and I don't think it suits me for so long.

b. justification

Son: see it in this way, I'm going to de-stress, then I wouldn't cause troubles here.

c. accusation

Employee: I tell you, since the moment I was hired, I... well, I stated that I was only going to work four hours per day, from Monday to Friday. And... well, what is unfair to me is the very low salary increase and... and is not fair that I have to work the... the time... and I won't get fairly paid if you only are increasing the minimum.

d. blaming

Son: Well yes, but you said I'm very weak. With kickboxing I can obtain strength and tone and stop being weak.

e. expressions of regret

Boss: But it is a great opportunity Estefi. Look, maybe it is not much, but we would increase the salary a bit.

Employee: I am very sorry, but I really cannot. Thank you so much for considering me.

f. positive remarks

Boss: Estefanía, I wanted to propose you also to work on the weekends, what do you think?

Employee: I appreciate it a lot, ma'am, but the truth is that I have no much time for studying and resting.

g. suggestions

Brother: Hey, sis, well, is just that there is a party and... well, I want to go out early. Could you do my chores, please?

Sister: No, why not you better, well I do the half and then you do the other half.

Undesirable Features

It is the lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge necessary to mitigate the disagreement and soften the FTA when disagreeing.

a. total lack of mitigation

Mother: I found this tennis course and want to register you.

Daughter: Ash no! You know I don't like those things.

Mother: What do you like then?

Daughter: I already told you that I want to join the kickboxing team.

Mother: No, no, no. But those things are for men!

Daughter: I don't care. You know that I like these things more and I feel that it is more... you know? I won't put effort on it.

b. use of the performative no me gusta

Father: Son, you should register in tennis. To be honest I don't think you are good at kickboxing. You are a wimp, I don't think you can do it by yourself. I think you should register in tennis because it is the best for you.

Son: I don't like tennis. That it is not a sport, I don't sweat.

c. use of the performative no estoy de acuerdo

Classmate: I think is good that there are new laws and impediments for the immigrants do not enter to our country because they only come to steal out our jobs and the majority are robbers, drug addicts and rapists that only generate more problems to the country.

Classmate: I do not agree with him, since my parents are immigrants and I think that they have worked very hard to reach their goals. Then, I consider that things that they steal out the job is not true since they look for opportunities that are not given in other countries.

d. use of the exclamation no

Sister: I need you to help me with the chores we have to do for I have to hang out. Later on I will pay the favor back, I'll help you. By now, help me and do it for me.

Brother: No, I don't think so. I can help but I won't do everything.

e. exclamations of indignation

Daughter: Dad, I want you to tell you that I want to practice kickboxing.

Father: Daughter, but I have already told you that I cannot let you practice kickboxing; it is not a sport for girls.

Daughter: Ah, why not? Don't be chauvinist!

Father: It is for your security daughter, I cannot let you practice it. Look, besides tennis is funnier... you exercise and have fun.

Daughter: I don't like tennis!

f. use of insult and negative judgements

Sister 1: Hey Karen, couldn't you help me with my chores and when you want to hang out I do them for you? C'mon! because if not I won't have time, I am going to be very late.

Sister 2: No, fuck you because you always do the same.

g. blunt statement of the opposite

Classmate 1: In my opinion, I think that immigrants have come here only to steal, traffic drugs and take away the job from the people who were born here.

Classmate 2: I am against it. I think that immigrants come from places where their rights are broken and only come to a country to work and lead a dignified life.

APPENDIX III: TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1. Percentages of desirable features used by NNSs and NSs.

CATEGORY	NNS		NS	
token agreement	8%	9	11%	14
hedges	21%	24	6%	8
request for clarification	3%	4	7%	9
explanations	28%	32	19%	25
expressions of regret			2%	2
positive remarks			4%	5
suggestions			6%	8
Total	60%	69	53%	71

Table 2. Percentages of undesirable features used by NNSs and NSs.

CATEGORY	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	3%	3	7%	9
use of the performative no me gusta	4%	4	6%	2
use of the performative no estoy de acuerdo	3%	6	2%	7
use of the bare exclamation no	5%	5	5%	6
exclamations of indignation	4%	5	7%	9
use of insult and negative judgments	2%	5	3%	4
blunt statement of the opposite	7%	8	5%	6
argumentation	11%	13	12%	15
Total	40%	46	47%	60

Table 3. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 1

Situation 1				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	11%	3	17%	6
hedges	15%	4	3%	1
request for clarification	7%	2		
explanations	22%	6	20%	7
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks			3%	1
suggestions			3%	1
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	7%	2	14%	5
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>	19%	5	23%	8
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>				
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	7%	2	3%	1
exclamations of indignation			11%	4
use of insult and negative judgments			3%	1
blunt statement of the opposite	11%	3		
argumentation				
Total	100%	27	100%	35

Table 4. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 2

Situation 2				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	10%	2	12%	4
hedges	10%	2	9%	3
request for clarification	5%	1	12%	4
explanations	19%	4	15%	5
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks				
suggestions			12%	4
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation			3%	1
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>				
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	19%	4	15%	5
exclamations of indignation	24%	5	15%	5
use of insult and negative judgments	5%	1	6%	2
blunt statement of the opposite	10%	2		
argumentation				
Total	100%	21	100%	33

Table 5. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 3

Situation 3				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement	16%	4	9%	3
hedges	28%	7	9%	3
request for clarification			12%	4
explanations	36%	9	32%	11
expressions of regret			6%	2
possitive remarks			12%	4
suggestions			6%	2
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation	4%	1	9%	3
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>			3%	1
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>				
exclamations of indignation				
use of insult and negative judgments	4%	1		
blunt statement of the opposite	12%	3	3%	1
argumentation				
Total	100%	25	100%	34

Table 6. Percentages of strategies used in Situation 4

Situation 4				
Desirable Features	NNS		NS	
token agreement			4%	1
hedges	26%	11	4%	1
request for clarification	2%	1	4%	1
explanations	31%	13	7%	2
expressions of regret				
possitive remarks				
suggestions			4%	1
Undesirable Features	NNS		NS	
total lack of mitigation				
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>				
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>	10%	4	7%	2
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>				
exclamations of indignation				
use of insult and negative judgments			4%	1
blunt statement of the opposite			19%	5
argumentation	31%	13	56%	15
Total	100%	42	100%	27

Table 7. Desirable features strategies performed by NNS and Ns in the four situations

DATA ANALYSIS										
Desirable Features	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		Situation 4		Total	
	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS
token agreement	3	6	2	4	4	3		1	9	14
hedges	4	1	2	3	7	3	11	1	24	8
request for clarification	2		1	4		4	1	1	4	9
explanations	6	7	4	5	9	11	13	2	32	25
expressions of regret						2				2
positive remarks		1				4				5
suggestions		1		4		2		1		8
Total	15	16	7	20	20	29	25	6		

Table 8. Undesirable features strategies performed by NNS and NS in the four situations

Undesirable Features	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		Situation 4		Total	
	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS	NNS	NS
total lack of mitigation	2	5		1	1	3			3	9
use of the performative <i>no estoy de acuerdo</i>							4	2	4	2
use of the bare exclamation <i>no</i>	2	1	4	5		1			6	7
use of the performative <i>no me gusta</i>	5	8							5	8
exclamations of indignation		4	5	5					5	9
use of insult and negative judgments		1	1	2	1			1	2	4
blunt statement of the opposite	3		2		3	1		5	8	6
argumentation							13	15	13	15
Total	12	19	12	13	5	5	17	23		

APPENDIX IV: TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Number of strategies used by NS in the role-play

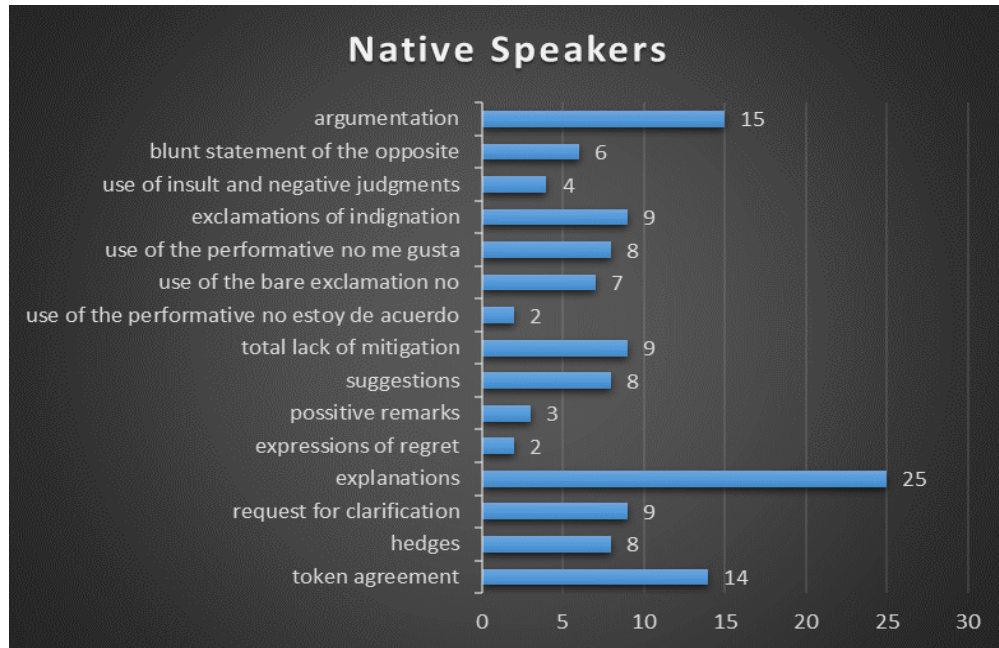


Figure 2. Number of strategies used by NNS in the role-play

