



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

Motivation and Its Influence in the Development of Pragmatic Competence of a Group of Students from a BA Program in ELT

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree
of

MAESTRO EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

Presented by

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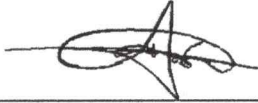
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DEDICATION

To my mom, the driving force in my life.

To my dad, who supported me whenever I was in need.

To my wife, my cornerstone and my greatest inspiration.

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Completing my Master's degree has not been an easy task. Many times, I felt overwhelmed and ready to give up; however, with the support of my teachers, friends, and the scholarship that I received from the SECIHTI, I was able to continue and finally reach my goal.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Motivation and its relationship with the learning of an L2 has been the focus of various studies (Clément et al., 1994; Danesh & Shahnazari, 2020; Dunn & Iwaniec, 2022). For many years, these studies have looked at the concept of motivation and how it is related to students' proficiency (Gardner, 2001; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Kaplan, 1993; Kim & Kim, 2016, 2017). However, little research has been done on the relationship between motivation and the L2 pragmatic competence of the learners.

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics focuses on the use of language (interaction between a speaker and a listener) and the context in which the interactions take place. In this vein, pragmatic competence is defined as the ability to “use available linguistic resources to realize the speech act or doing things with words properly” in a given context (Rose, 1999, pp. 171–172); in other words, pragmatic competence includes grammatical competence and the ability to use the linguistic features appropriately in a specific context. During these interactions, speakers realize speech acts to achieve different objectives, for example: requests, refusals, declarations, assertions, compliments, etcetera. Compliments, particularly, are socially delicate speech acts because they are used not only to express positive evaluations, but also to reinforce social connections (Holmes, 1988). In this vein, compliments are commonly analyzed both in terms of how they are produced and how they are responded to when received. Speech acts follow a quasi-ritualistic interaction between the speaker and the listener and are deeply influenced by the context and cultural background of the participants, which indicates why speech acts are important in the study of pragmatics (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

As Takahashi and Beebe (1987) mentioned, the development of L2 pragmatic competence is often overlooked by teachers, students, and institutions, which can cause serious communication breakdowns among individuals and even nations. They also argued that even when learners have a high level of proficiency, they tend to present problems using the pragmatic strategies of the L2. This shows that formal instruction focused on pragmatic competence is necessary. However, formal instruction is not enough; students must have the intention of learning and using the necessary L2 pragmatic strategies, i.e., the motivation to do it. Finding out students' types of motivation and how they influence the development of their L2 pragmatic competence could help us find new ways to improve L2 pragmatic competence. In the interest of achieving the goal mentioned above, it is necessary to use a specific framework of motivation.

In order to analyze motivation in the L2 learning process in a more current, integral way, this study uses the "L2 Motivational Self System" postulated by Dörnyei (2005) which is composed of three constituents: Ideal L2 Self (personal motivation), Ought-to Self (motivation influenced by others), and L2 Learning Experience (motivation related to the learning context). The three components that comprise this system consider different aspects that are of great importance in the process of learning an L2, and each person can have one type of motivation tied to a constituent that prevails among the others. Since the L2 Motivational Self System is specifically focused on the motivation involved in acquiring a Second Language, it can be easily related to the development of pragmatic competence, thereby highlighting its relevance to this research project.

Research on the connection of these two topics: L2 Motivational Self System and L2 pragmatic competence is scant. Research projects tend to focus mainly on the relationship between motivation and L2 proficiency; however, in more recent years, studies on these topics have

surfaced (Tajeddin & Malmir, 2024; Yang, 2022; Zhang, 2020). For example, Yang (2022) investigated to find out how an individual feature, such as the L2 motivation, influenced the acquisition of the necessary L2 pragmatic strategies. For this project, Yang considered the pragmatic competence as well as the pragmatic production of the participants.

Yang's research project took place in a public university in China with 508 students from different majors, aged 17 to 21, who studied English as a Foreign Language for an average of 10.5 years but had never received explicit pragmatic instruction. To collect the data, he used two instruments: a web-based survey/test and post hoc semi-structured interviews. The results found by the author showed that these advanced-level students were highly motivated with a predominance of the "L2 learning experience" component, which means that their learning environment has been adequate and positive. As for the pragmatic competence tests, the majority of the students did not have problems and demonstrated that they had the required L2 pragmatic strategies. The findings are relevant to the present study because they provide valuable insights; however, differences in context, participants, instruments, and variables could result in different outcomes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In countries where the English language is taught and learned as a foreign language (FL), the need to develop pragmatic competence is often overlooked and not considered an essential part of the acquisition of a language (Rueda, 2006), partly because FL speakers are not immersed in situations where they feel the need to use a wide range of speech acts (Lörscher & Schulze, 1988) which ultimately truncates their learning process. Mexico is a prime example of those countries where teachers and students tend to overlook the importance of developing pragmatic competence, focusing only on the development of grammatical competence.

Considering that pragmatic instruction is not usually part of the curriculum, discovering what motivates students to develop their pragmatic competence is of the utmost importance since it can help teachers promote those practices and even lead to the design of more suitable pedagogical strategies to face this issue. The willingness of learners to notice and appropriately perform language functions often depends on their motivation towards their L2 (Dörnyei, 2005; Taguchi, 2011). In this sense, motivation can act as the driving force that encourages learners to involve themselves in situations where authentic, appropriate language is used.

In this framework, the present study focuses on compliments, which are speech acts used to express positive evaluations about other people's appearance, abilities, or possessions (Manes & Wolfson, 1981). Since they are frequently used in common, everyday interactions, they are an ideal feature to analyze how L2 learners balance their linguistic accuracy and sociocultural appropriateness (Chen & Yang, 2010). Investigating learners' motivation in relation to their pragmatic performance when using and interpreting compliments may reveal the extent to which motivational factors influence their ability to communicate appropriately across different contexts.

1.3 Context of the Study

This investigation took place at the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) in Puebla, México. In this Mexican state, English is taught as a Foreign Language (FL), which means that most students do not have the opportunity to use the language in an environment that demands the use of the L2 pragmatic strategies. In order to develop their pragmatic competence, they need to receive specific pragmatic instruction focused on the strategies employed by native speakers when using the language in normal, authentic situations.

The participants was a group of students from the BA in English Language Teaching program at the Faculty of Languages of BUAP. To be eligible, they had to demonstrate a minimum English proficiency level of B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), as measured with a TOEFL ITP mock test. This level is necessary to convey messages appropriately in a familiar context (Council of Europe, n. d.). It is important to note that the participants will have already taken and passed the course *Semantics and Pragmatics* in their fifth semester, meaning that they will have already received formal instruction in pragmatics.

As future teachers, the participants are taught about the use of language, teaching theories and techniques, and pedagogic strategies, while also delving into the linguistic features of the English language. However, as stated before, the context in which they are immersed does not require them to learn and use the pragmatic strategies used typically by native English speakers. Moreover, pragmatics is not usually part of a common language class curriculum, and ELT students do not have the opportunity to teach those concepts either, further reducing even more the need to learn and use them. With those factors against them, it becomes even more important to find out what motivates students to acquire the necessary pragmatic strategies to use the language in context appropriately.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.4.1 Research Questions

The aim of this research project is to examine the relationship between students' L2 motivation and their L2 pragmatic competence, focusing specifically on the comprehension and production of compliments. As stated before, motivation has been recognized as a central factor in the acquisition of a second language (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2011), while pragmatic competence is perceived as an essential and, unfortunately, underdeveloped component in foreign

language contexts (Taguchi, 2011). Given the social and cultural relevance of compliments, they constitute a meaningful speech act through which to measure learners' pragmatic competence (Chen, 2010). Notwithstanding the consensual importance of both motivation and pragmatics in L2 development, little research has explored this possible correlation, specifically using the L2 Motivation Self System as a basis. To address this gap, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of L2 motivation prevail among LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA?
2. To what extent do LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA accurately interpret and respond to compliments in their L2 in different social contexts?
3. How can the type of L2 motivation of LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA influence their level of L2 pragmatic competence regarding the use of compliments?

The first step is to determine the specific type of L2 motivation that prevails among the participants: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, or L2 Learning Experience. Next, it is necessary to determine the level of pragmatic competence of each participant by analyzing how effectively they use and complement. After we discover the level of motivation and the level of L2 pragmatic competence (regarding the use of compliments), the next step is to compare them and find out if one influences the other and how that happens.

1.4.2 Hypotheses

Considering that the first two research questions are only descriptive: (1) identifying the types of motivation that the participants have, and (2) measuring the level of pragmatic competence participants demonstrate regarding compliments, they do not require hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

On the other hand, the third research question is focused on the examination of the possible statistical correlation between L2 motivation and pragmatic competence. Considering that to answer this question, it is required to test the relationship between variables, it is necessary to formulate both a research hypothesis and a null hypothesis. The hypotheses are presented below:

- **H₁:** There is a statistically significant correlation between the types of L2 motivation and participants' pragmatic competence regarding compliments.
- **H₀:** There is no statistically significant correlation between the types of L2 motivation and participants' pragmatic competence regarding compliments.

1.5 Justification of the Study

As mentioned before, when learning/teaching a language, people tend to focus on its structure and the grammatical rules that govern it. It is usually considered that when a student is capable of constructing sentences following the rules of a language, he is ready to use it anywhere. However, pragmatic meaning can go deeper than literal meaning, and what a speaker wants to convey involves more than just words and grammatical structures; many other factors are at play: context, relationship between the speakers, the situation, hierarchies, etc. (Thomas, 1983a). In that regard, I consider that teaching pragmatics is essential and teaching it in a way that students find it useful and interesting (i.e., based on their specific type of motivation) is as important.

The second reason to carry out this project is that I believe motivation is a core part of any learning process and, in my opinion, the "L2 motivational self-system" developed by Dörnyei (2005) is the best approximation to a definite model for the involvement of motivation in the learning process of a foreign language. Choosing this model instead of the traditional motivational system is crucial for this investigation.

While motivation and pragmatic competence have been analyzed together (Chen, 2017; Takahashi, 2005; Wyner, 2014), almost none of those studies have used Dörnyei's motivational self-system nor have they focused on future ELT teachers. I believe that having future ELT teachers as participants gives this research project a fresh view of the matter, since they will not be learning just for their own benefit, but also for that of their future students.

1.6 Thesis organization

In this chapter, the general aspects of the problem and the reasons behind this study were presented and discussed. Chapter 2 consists of a collection of relevant sources that support the project and deepen the discussion of the main topics. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the study in detail. In Chapter 4, the results will be presented. The discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, implications, and limitations of the study, along with recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to motivation and pragmatic competence, which are central topics of this thesis. The chapter is organized into five main sections: pragmatics, speech acts, motivation, motivation and second language acquisition, and studies on motivation and L2 pragmatic competence.

2.1 Pragmatics

In order to talk about the issues that pertain to pragmatics, it is necessary to first define the term in a clear and concise manner. Morris (1938) coined the term and defined it as “the study of the relation of signs to interpreters” (p. 6). According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics focuses on the use of language (interaction between a speaker and a listener) and the context in which the interactions take place. Taguchi and Roever (2017) mentioned that pragmatics establishes a link between “linguistic forms and how they are used in a social context to perform a communicative act” (p. 1). Crystal (1997) focused the definition of pragmatics on the users, their points of view, and the choices they make when they use the language. As we can see, since the beginning, the relationship between the language and the users was considered the central part of pragmatics, and the concepts of context and society gained interest and relevance as the field received more attention. Subsequent studies introduced the concepts of pragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer, pragmalinguistics, sociopragmatics, and speech acts, which are necessary for the understanding of this research project.

2.1.1 Communicative Competence

In order to define the concept of pragmatic competence, we need to cover first the term communicative competence, coined by Dell Hymes in 1972. Hymes’ notion of communicative

competence was created in contraposition to the notion of linguistic competence of Chomsky (1965) which only focused on the structure of language and did not consider its actual use.

Hymes (1972) considered two types of competence: grammatical/linguistic competence (structure of the language) and discourse/pragmatic competence (using the language adequately in different contexts). Hymes' contribution to the field emphasized the idea that learning a language involves more than understanding syntactic and morphological rules; it requires sensitivity to culture, social relationships, and the context in which the speakers are immersed.

Based on Hymes' proposal, Canale and Swain (1980) built a model of communicative competence which included four key components:

1. Grammatical competence. Knowledge of morphology, syntax, phonology, and vocabulary.
2. Sociolinguistic competence. Use of language appropriately depending on context, norms, and participants.
3. Discourse competence. Ability to produce utterance in spoken or written form coherently.
4. Strategic competence. Ability to use strategies (verbal and nonverbal) to overcome miscommunications.

In a later model, Bachman (1990) presented two different competences: organizational competence (grammatical and textual) and pragmatic competence (illocutionary and sociolinguistic), indicating in this way the importance of pragmatic competence in the acquisition of a language.

2.1.2 Pragmatic Competence

As mentioned before, pragmatic competence is recognized as an essential component of the communicative competence construct; it comprises the ability to interpret and use the language appropriately in a given context (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Kecskes (2015, p. 3) highlighted the contrast between grammatical and pragmatic competences, arguing that “grammatical competence is about correctness while pragmatic competence is more about appropriateness”, in other words, an L2 speaker must not only know how to form grammatically correct sentences, but also how to use them in context, considering the social norms of the L2.

Communication involves interaction between speakers within a given context, adhering to specific social norms. Provided that speakers have the ultimate objective of having a successful interaction, they must have the tools and skills necessary to accomplish that objective. This is why it is so important to develop the L2 pragmatic competence and why this concept is one of the cornerstones of this thesis project. The inclusion of pragmatic competence—whether explicitly or implicitly— within the communicative competence construct highlights how important it is for language learners. Particularly, learners must master the pragmalinguistic resources of the L2 and the sociopragmatic norms of its use (Thomas, 1983b), aspects that will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.1.3 Pragmalinguistics

The term “pragmalinguistics” refers to the linguistic resources that are available in a specific language to perform communicative acts and how language users select the necessary resources to achieve particular pragmatic goals (Leech, 1983). It comprises the grammar and vocabulary dimensions of the language, as well as the conventions followed during interactions,

such as the use of modal verbs or formulaic expressions. In other words, pragmalinguistics is concerned with the “form” of pragmatics.

In the specific case of compliments in English, they usually follow formulaic patterns in comparison to other languages (Manes & Wolfson, 1981). This indicates that pragmalinguistics is tied to the specific language and the conventions must be learned, rather than be transferred between languages. In her study, Trosborg (1995) found that L2 may fail to choose the appropriate formulaic expressions in compliments, resulting in unnatural interactions due to the lack or excess of formality or directness.

Considering the aforementioned, pragmalinguistic competence represents an essential part of the speech act realization because, during the process, a speaker must choose the appropriate linguistic features to convey what is needed. In the use of compliments, failing to select adequate formulas or transferring the ones used in the L1 can result in miscommunications (Yu, 2005).

2.1.4 Sociopragmatics

On the other hand, sociopragmatics refers to the sociocultural norms that define the appropriate use of language in different contexts (Leech, 1983). Choosing when and why to perform certain speech acts is the focal point of sociopragmatics. Moreover, different factors such as gender, rapport, hierarchies, and age affect the pragmatic choices made by speakers when performing speech acts.

Research has shown that differences in sociopragmatic norms among cultures are clear and, specifically in compliments, can lead to misunderstandings (Chen, 1993; Yu, 2005). One of the consequences of these differences is sociopragmatic transfer; learners often rely on their L1 sociopragmatic norms to interact when giving compliments or responding to one in the L2 (Tang & Zhang, 2009).

Sociopragmatic competence, then, involves not only knowing the grammatical structures of the language, but also understanding the social and contextual factors that define the appropriateness of interactions. Particularly, compliments are a great example of a speech act to study sociopragmatics since cultural values dictate how they are carried out and it is not the same to use compliments in the L1 as in the L2.

2.1.5 Pragmatic Transfer

According to Kecskes (2015), there is a distinction between L1 pragmatic competence and L2 pragmatic competence. The differentiation lies on the way they are developed, the L1 pragmatic competence is acquired through socialization, while the L2 pragmatic competence depends on the modifications and adjustments made on the mental representations of the L1 pragmatic competence (linguistic features and social rules) one has. The previous process could lead to what is known as pragmatic transfer.

The influence of transfer in the Second Language Acquisition process has been an object of study for many years, focusing mainly on the linguistic influence, positive or negative, that it may bring. It was not until the late part of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s that pragmatic transfer gained more importance. Pragmatic transfer is a branch of interlanguage pragmatics. Kasper (1992) defined it as “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information” (p. 207).

Some studies show that the pragmatic strategies utilized by the speakers of an L1 can also be transferred to the L2 (Kecskes, 2013; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Takahashi, 1996). Certain conditions determine how this transfer takes place, some of which are: the specific L1, cultural background, age, learning environment, and L2 proficiency level. The latter transferability

constraint has been studied before (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Takahashi, 1996; Bu, 2012); however, the results have been variable, showing that there is not a discernible positive or negative connection between the L2 proficiency level and the pragmatic transfer employed by the speakers. Taylor (1975) showed that non-pragmatic L1 transfer reduced considerably as the proficiency level increased; this might not be the case with pragmatic transfer, since even advanced subjects continue using the strategies employed in the L1 (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). That persistence implies that developing L2 pragmatic competence is influenced by not only linguistic proficiency or L1 transfer, but also other factors. This could be indicative of a more complex explanation, one that involves the context in which the learners are immersed, the type of instruction they received, and the type of L2 motivation that prevails among them.

2.1.6 Pragmatic Failure

Pragmatic failure refers to the inability of L2 learners to use language appropriately, contextually and socially, despite having the necessary grammatical knowledge (Thomas, 1983b). This failure takes place when the intended meaning of the speaker is misinterpreted or when the sociocultural norms are not observed. It reflects a breakdown in the communication process, leading to the speaker being perceived as impolite, rude, or simply inadequate (Kasper, 1992).

Different authors (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983b) recognize two main types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure.

2.1.6.1 Pragmalinguistic Failure. This type of pragmatic failure occurs when the speakers use linguistically inappropriate structures or strategies to convey their message. This often takes place when there is a misuse of formulaic expressions, incorrect politeness markers, or inadequate levels of directness (Leech, 1983; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). For example, a learner saying to his teacher, “Let me go to the bathroom”, it may be grammatically correct, but pragmatically

inadequate for the situation. This issue happens due to the learner's limited knowledge of how pragmatic meanings are encoded linguistically in the L2.

Research on the matter has shown that pramalinguistic errors often happen because of insufficient exposure to authentic L2 input and a lack of awareness of how natives realize various speech acts (Taguchi, 2011). Without such exposure, learners rely on L1 transfer or intuition, thus producing inappropriate utterances.

2.1.6.2 Sociopragmatic Failure. In contrast, sociopragmatic failure takes place when speakers misunderstand or misjudge the social norms that govern interactions in the L2 culture and context (House, 1996). It is the product of a mismatch between the learner's perception of social norms and those of native speakers. For example, this can be seen in the use of compliments, where Mexican and American cultural standards may clash—modesty in Mexican culture versus acknowledgement in American culture.

These errors highlight the fact that pragmatic competence depends not only on linguistic structure, but also on sociocultural awareness. Sykes (2013) mentions that learners who are motivated to be a part of the L2 community are more likely to observe these norms.

As discussed above, pragmatic failure refers to the difficulties learners face when the linguistic structures they choose and their sociocultural assumptions do not coincide with those of the L2 community. These issues often appear during the production of specific speech acts such as requests, apologies, and compliments. It is, therefore, essential to examine the concept of speech acts, which represent the minimal units of discourse.

2.2 Speech Acts

Speech Acts is a topic with one of the closest associations to pragmatics and the study of context. In his book *How to do things with words* (1962), Austin argued that, under certain

conditions and in certain contexts, different actions can be performed via utterances; in other words, speech acts are present in every interaction. Since the participants of this project must analyze different communicative situations where speech acts are present and act in response to them, this topic is of great importance.

Austin (1962) classified the acts into three levels/dimensions:

- 1) Locutionary act. The basic act of producing meaning using the language (not considering the context).
- 2) Illocutionary act. This is an act in which the speaker conveys something with a communicative function.
- 3) Perlocutionary act. This act refers to the effect that speakers expect the utterances to have on the hearers.

According to Yule (1996), speech acts and their analysis revolve around the second dimension: illocutionary acts because they are related to the communicative intention behind the utterance (the action the speaker wanted to perform via the language). An important aspect of pragmatic competence is to use adequate language according to one's communicative purpose and react adequately to the communicative intention of the interlocutor. This is yet another indication of the relevance of speech acts for this study.

2.2.1 Types of Speech Acts

During his work with the speech act theory, Searle (1969) created a specific taxonomy for the illocutionary (speech) acts, consisting of five different types:

- Assertive. Assert truths or state facts.
- Commissive. Make commitments to do something in the future.

- Declarative. Alter the reality/situation via an utterance (e.g. I pronounce you husband and wife).
- Directive. Intend to have the hearer do something.
- Expressive. Express feelings and/or attitudes.

Yule (1996, p. 55) presented the following chart with the function of each type of illocutionary act:

Table 1

Types of speech acts and their functions

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S= speaker X= situation
Declaration	Words change the world	S causes X
Representative	Make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressive	Make words fit the world	S feels X
Directive	Make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissive	Make the world fit words	S intends X

Note. From Pragmatics (p.55), by G. Yule, 1996, Oxford University Press.

2.2.2 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Searle (1975) recognized two general types of speech acts, based on the intention of the speaker: direct and indirect speech acts. Direct speech acts are those in which the linguistic structure of an utterance (locutionary) corresponds to the intention of the speaker conveying the utterance (illocutionary). On the other hand, indirect speech acts are those where the structure does

not correspond to the intended meaning; these acts imply more than what is said (Eckert and McConell-Ginet, 2003). Yule (1996) illustrates these concepts using the following example:

- “It’s cold outside.”
 - Direct speech act: I hereby tell you about the weather.
 - Indirect speech act: I hereby request that you close the door.

According to Searle (1975), understanding indirect speech acts and the *real* intention of the speakers depends heavily on the shared knowledge of the context, culture, relationship, and background of the speakers involved in a conversational exchange. House and Kasper (1981) mention that the preference between directness and indirectness in speech acts is closely related to the culture and social conventions of the speakers. Considering that context and culture determine the way speech acts are carried out, it is safe to assume that speech acts and their structure are perceived and constructed differently in the L1 and the L2. The relevance of this specific topic for this research project lies in the instruments that will be used, since the participants will have to analyze different situations in which direct and indirect speech acts will be present, having to contrast the L1 and L2 conventions.

2.2.3 Compliments

Compliments belong to the *expressive* category of speech acts. Holmes (1988) mentions that in this speech act, the speaker praises the hearer by recognizing something that he considers good or positive in the hearer. Even though compliments’ main function is to praise another person, they are also used along with (or instead of) greetings, apologies, requests, etc. (Alfonzetti, 2009; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1988).

Moreover, compliments represent an important and interesting area of study in pragmatics since they have a high social significance in interactions, used to establish and maintain positive

relationships between speakers (Chen, 1993). Generally, they have dual functions: social and affective, and are used to express approval or admiration of someone's abilities, appearance, or even possessions (Herbert, 1990). However, compliments are not as simple; they require a high level of pragmatic competence to be interpreted and produced appropriately in the L2.

One of the main studies on the use of compliments was carried out by Pomerantz (1978), who analyzed how speakers deal with the tension that is present during interactions involving responses to compliments. She found that when people receive a compliment, a social predicament is created: accepting it directly or rejecting it, both options having consequences that could affect the relationship between speakers. Pomerantz's findings indicate that compliments are not only expressions of positive evaluations but rather acts of interaction that depend on expectations based on sociocultural norms. In her study, Pomerantz showed that during social interactions and while dealing with the context, speakers had to balance different factors such as hierarchies, differences in ages, politeness, and so on.

Subsequent studies demonstrated that the way compliments are interpreted and produced vary across languages and that these differences can be a source of miscommunication (Nelson et al., 1993; Yu, 2004). This aligns with what Pomerantz (1978) demonstrated, that compliments required strategic interactions in which speakers had to understand and deal simultaneously with the linguistic structures of the language and its sociocultural norms. According to different authors (Dörnyei, 2005; González-Lloret, 2019; Taguchi, 2011), learners' motivational orientations play an important role when deciding to observe the sociocultural norms of their L2 and reflect on the appropriateness of their interactions.

2.3 Motivation

One of the topics that has been the focus of many investigations is the connection between motivation and the learning process. In the following discussion, the concept of “motivation” will be defined before introducing the main models used to study this topic, which will illustrate the decision to choose Dörnyei’s motivational Self System.

Gopalan et al. (2017) define motivation as the process that triggers, guides, and keeps a behavior directed towards a goal. On a similar note, Woolfolk (2013) mentions that motivation is an internal factor that starts, runs, and preserves a specific behavior. Diverse authors such as Ryan and Deci (2011) and Ainley and Ainley (2011) consider motivation as an attribute that shapes our behavior and defines *what* we do and *why* we do it. Ortega (2009) defines motivation in the learning process as the desire to begin studying something and the effort put into continuing to develop it. These definitions are of great relevance for my research project because they indicate that motivation is an impulse that can shape and direct behavior, including what we decide to start and continue learning. However, the concept of motivation in the educational realm is not a static, unique framework, but rather an umbrella term that includes diverse frameworks that have emerged and cemented themselves as the standard. Each one of these frameworks tried to establish a connection between motivation and the learning process.

2.3.1 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

One of the earliest frameworks of motivation introduced the idea that individuals could have not only different levels of motivation, but also different types of motivation, specifically intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Deci (1971) argued that intrinsic motivation only accounted for doing something just for the satisfaction that the activity produced in itself for the person; in other words, an ulterior motive was not involved. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is a key element in the development of humans, guiding them since childhood through

the decisions they take in terms of what skills to acquire and knowledge to develop without the intervention of any external factors, basing those decisions solely on their preferences. Other researchers, such as Lepper et al. (1973) and Deci et al. (1999) went even further and argued that whenever external factors are involved in those activities, the intrinsic motivation can decrease. Intrinsic motivation by itself is not enough to account for the development of the L2 pragmatic competence, since pragmatic competence relies on internal and external factors happening simultaneously.

In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation involves external factors that reinforce a specific behavior. As different authors note (Legault, 2016; Locke & Schattke, 2019; Morris et al., 2022; Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018), extrinsic motivation is based on the idea of obtaining a future value outside of the action being carried out. In their Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (1985) propose a continuum of extrinsic motivation with four categories that deals with the internalization of the factors involved. The four categories of extrinsic motivation identified by Deci and Ryan (as summarized in Legault, 2016) are external regulation (behavior controlled by external factors), introjected regulation (external influence is partially internalized), identified regulation (the person recognize the value of the results of an action), and integrated regulation (fully internalized and in synchrony with the person's own values). Even though extrinsic motivation includes external factors, none of them account for social interaction nor the context in which the individuals are immersed, which are key elements in the pragmatics domain; therefore, they are not suitable for this research project. The importance and influence of the environment surrounding the learner and his own perception of it resulted in the proposal of a different type of motivation: integrative motivation.

2.3.2 Integrative Motivation

In the 1970's, many studies (Flores & Hooper, 1975; Joos, 1971; Labov, 1972; Williams, 1976) indicated that L2 speakers who did not conform to the linguistic and social rules of the groups of native speakers tended to be shunned, which was commonly the result of the L2 speakers' lack of interest in being part of the L2 community. Gardner and Lambert (1959) called that "interest" to be part of the L2 community *integrativeness* or *integrative motivation*. Carrió-Pastor and Mestre (2014) define integrative motivation as "the learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community" (p. 240). Gardner claims that, during the learning process, the integrative motivation pushes the learner to adopt "the behavioural characteristics of another cultural group of people." (Gardner, 2001: 6). The concept of integrativeness was seen by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) as a way to identify oneself emotionally and psychologically with the L2 group and its culture. Researchers that focused on the study of integrative motivation and its impact on the learning process considered it an essential part in the acquisition of a language, necessary for every learning process; however, it did not consider other variables that subsequent frameworks included, such as own ideals (not influenced by the social interactions) and the learning setting. In order to determine clearly what the connection between motivation and L2 pragmatic competence is, it is essential to use a framework with a holistic approach and a closer relationship to the acquisition of an L2.

2.4 Motivation and Second Language Acquisition

2.4.1 The Socio-Educational Model

Gardner and Lambert are two of the exponents in the field of motivation and its connection to the acquisition of a second language. Together, they developed a model to study and analyze motivation in the L2 acquisition process which they called the Socio-Educational Model (Gardner,

1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In their model, they considered attitudes and integrativeness of each learner to be connected to their L2 proficiency level, but always mediated by their levels of motivation. Originally, the model was based on four individual variables: intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, and situational anxiety (Gardner, 1979); however, the cornerstone of the model was always the motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Gardner (1985, 2010) continued working on the model and extended it, and he ended up redesigning the four variables: integrativeness (genuine interest in the culture of the target language, with a desire to integrate to the community), attitudes toward the learning situation (perceptions and feelings towards the context in which the language is being learned), language anxiety (tension associated with learning a second language), and motivation (desire and effort put into learning an L2). This model is a step closer to what is being analyzed in this research project; however, it is still limited in terms of how the learner perceives himself and what he wants to achieve by learning the language.

Although motivation is one of the four variables considered in the model, it is not analyzed individually. Gardner (1985) recognized it as a more complex concept and defined it as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (p. 10). However, evidence shows that motivation can be analyzed as an independent factor that has the potential to influence volition (Kuhl, 1994). As research on L2 acquisition and motivational psychology continued, it became clear that the model proposed by Gardner and Lambert could not be applied to most of the contexts (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994) and thus, a new framework was needed.

2.4.2 Possible Selves and Future Self-Guides

The concept of possible selves refers to the way in which an individual perceives himself in a future state. Markus and Nurius (1986) and Carver et al. (1994) mention that there are three

types of possible selves: 1) ideal selves (we would like to become), 2) selves that we could become, and 3) selves that we are afraid of becoming. Markus and Nurius stressed that all those selves are plausible, that they are based on real possibilities and the current self of each person, this is what makes them so valuable. Higgins (1987) mentioned that the *ideal self* represents what we would like to become and how we would like to be. On the other hand, the *ought self* is what other people consider we should be and become. Those two concepts are considered a sort of future self-guides, in other words, they can guide an individual through the process of becoming the self he wants or others want him to be. Considering that pragmatic competence involves a personal intention (when communicating) and language choices governed by social context, I consider that the concepts of *ideal self* and *ought self* are an excellent framework to analyze motivation in pragmatics. However, there is one area that is still missing and that the L2 Motivational Self System added: the learning setting.

2.4.3 L2 Motivational Self System

In 2005, based on the concepts of *ideal self* and *ought self* proposed by Higgins (1987), Dörnyei postulated the ‘L2 Motivational Self System’, which consists of three components:

1. Ideal L2 Self. How people would like to be in the future, specifically involving the L2. Motivation is based on the aspiration to go from the actual self to the ideal self.
2. Ought-to L2 Self. How we believe other people would like us to be or expect us to be. Motivation based on the avoidance of the negative consequences derived from not meeting the expectations of others. The Ought-to Self, as Higgings (1998) mentions, has a prevention nature and, even though the motivation is also job-related, there is more of a fear of not getting a good job and losing opportunities.

3. L2 Learning Experience. This component is related to the learning environment (institution, teachers, curriculum, classmates) that surrounds the learners and how it affects them during their learning process. Motivation is based on the perceived influence the learning environment has on the learning process.

Dörnyei (2009) maintains that with a plausible ideal self and proper preparation to go from one state to another, these concepts can be a great source of motivation and lead to achieving the goal of acquiring an L2.

This final framework has two main advantages for the analysis of the development of L2 pragmatic competence: (1) it was created specifically for the motivation present when learning a second language and (2) it considers personal intent, social expectations, and the learning environment, three areas that hold a close relation to pragmatics. Since pragmatic competence involves internal and external processes and factors, the L2 Motivational Self System offers an effective theoretical framework to analyze its connection to motivation. The following section discusses empirical studies that analyzed, precisely, the relationship between motivation and learners' pragmatic competence, both before and after the creation of Dörnyei's model.

2.5 Studies on Motivation and L2 Pragmatic Competence

Different authors (Chen, 2017; Cook, 2001; Niezgodna and Röver, 2001; Takahashi, 2001, 2005; Tateyama, 2001) noticed in their studies that there was a relationship between the participants' levels of motivation and their pragmatic competence. It is important to note that none of those studies used the L2 Motivational Self System; however, their findings are important for the field.

2.5.1 Pre- L2 Motivational Self System

Takahashi (2005) carried out a study on the importance of explicit pragmatic instruction in which she noticed there was a connection between different types of motivation and the pragmalinguistic awareness of participants. The study also considered proficiency along with motivation and focused on six specific types of L2 pragmalinguistic features. The participants were 80 Japanese college students from different areas. In order to gather the data, the students followed the next steps: 1) a motivation questionnaire, 2) a proficiency test, 3) a noticing-the-gap activity as the treatment task, and immediately after the task, 4) a retrospective awareness questionnaire. She found that three types of motivation were directly related to the awareness of 3 out of 6 pragmalinguistic features: “intrinsic motivation”, “attitudes towards the Target Language community”, and “affiliative motives”.

Another research project focused on the relation between pragmatic competence and motivation was conducted by Xiaojing Chen (2017). In her study, Chen had 111 participants from different non-English majors, 46 women and 65 men. Two instruments were used: a multiple-choice pragmatic competence questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to identify the types and levels of motivation of the participants. The results showed that a high level of integrative motivation had a strong connection with high levels of pragmatic competence; however, other types of motivation did not have a significant correlation with the pragmatic competence of the participants.

2.5.2 L2 Motivational Self System (Yang's Study)

Studies on the relationship between the motivation of the students and their pragmatic competence development using the L2 motivational self-system framework are not very common.

In fact, only Yang (2022) has used that specific motivation framework to study the influence of motivation on the L2 pragmatic competence of students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Yang's research project took place in a public university in China, where 508 students of different majors who studied English as a Foreign Language participated. Their ages ranged from 17 to 21 years old. They had been studying EFL for an average of 10.5 years, but with one particularity: they had never received instruction focused on pragmatics. To collect the data, he used two instruments: a web-based survey/test and post hoc semi-structured interviews. The web-based survey/test was divided into four sections: a questionnaire about the types of L2 motivation with Likert scale answers, a multiple-choice listening questionnaire (MCLQ), a discourse completion task (DCT), and an appropriateness judgment task (AJT).

This was a mixed-methods research; the results from the web-based survey/test were analyzed quantitatively and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The quantitative analysis was divided into three phases: (1) coding the answers to organize them adequately, (2) descriptive statistical analysis performed on the coded answers, and (3) a referential statistical analysis performed on the coded answers. As for the semi-structured interviews, the author performed a thematic analysis, coding the transcriptions into main topics and then analyzing those topics to determine the type of L2 motivation at play.

The results found by the author showed that these advanced-level students were highly motivated with a predominance of the "L2 learning experience" component, which means that their learning environment has been adequate and positive. As for the pragmatic competence tests, the majority of the students did not have problems and demonstrated that they had the required L2 pragmatic strategies.

2.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the main theories and studies that are linked to this thesis project to establish a theoretical basis to explore the relationship between L2 pragmatic competence and motivation in the L2 learning process. The discussion began with a review of the concept of pragmatics, emphasizing its role in the creation of meaning during interactions in specific contexts. Then, it was introduced the construct of communicative competence which encompasses grammatical, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies. The main focus within the communicative concept was the pragmatic competence, identified as the feature that enables speakers to use the language appropriately in different contexts.

Subsequently, two major concepts were revised to draw distinctions between them: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, which together comprise the linguistic resources and sociocultural norms involved in the appropriate use of a language. The concept of pragmatic transfer was also addressed, mentioning how L1 sociocultural norms can influence the L2 pragmatic competence development. The following section, on speech acts, illustrates how pragmatic competence is present in interactions through actions such as requests, orders, apologies, and compliments. Considering that compliments are the specific speech act analyzed in this thesis, they were given particular attention, emphasizing their relevance in the study of speakers' understanding and balancing of the linguistic and sociocultural norms. Moreover, different relevant studies on compliments and pragmatic competence were analyzed (e.g., Herbert, 1990; Pomerantz, 1978; Yu, 2004).

The second main part of the chapter was focused on motivation, following its evolution from traditional conceptualizations such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, and finishing with Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) that

builds on the possible selves theory by Markus and Nurius. The latter framework stands out because it focuses on second language learning and accounts for learners' self-perception, social expectations, and their learning context, making it a better theoretical framework to analyze its connection to pragmatic competence than previous models.

Finally, different empirical studies on the relationship between motivation and L2 pragmatic competence were reviewed, making a distinction between those conducted before and after the creation of the L2 Motivational Self System. The findings from these studies indicate that motivation can influence, to varying degrees, learners' engagement with the L2 context and sociocultural norms, which translates to their pragmatic competence development.

Building on the theoretical and empirical concepts discussed above, the following chapter describes the methodology employed to investigate the relationship between L2 motivation and pragmatic competence in the use of compliments among EFL learners. It covers the research design, participants, instruments, and procedures used to collect and subsequently analyze the data.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and thoroughly describes the methodology of this research project. This is a quantitative study with a correlational design focused on the analysis of the level of motivation of a group of participants and how it influences their pragmatic competence. The first section focuses on the design followed in the study. The second section focuses on the characteristics of the participants. The third part describes the three instruments used to carry out the study. The final two sections focus on the data collection and the subsequent analysis.

3.1 Design

The two variables that are considered in this study are: (1) the type of L2 motivation and (2) the level of L2 pragmatic competence and the aim is to determine the relationship between them: therefore, a correlational method will be used. Creswell (2012) mentions that in a correlational research project, a statistical test is used to define the relationship between two variables. He notes that “the researchers do not attempt to control or manipulate the variables as in an experiment; instead, they relate, using the correlation statistic” (pp. 338).

According to Tan (2014), findings from a study of this nature can reveal whether the variables change together, either positively or negatively. A positive correlation between the variables would translate to both of them moving in the same direction, i.e., as one increases, the other also increases. On the other hand, a negative correlation suggests that the variables move in opposite directions, meaning that an increase in one can be associated with a decrease in the other.

The degree of association and corresponding type of correlation are defined by the correlation coefficient (r value) that ranges from -1.00 (negative) to 1.00 (positive). Some authors

prefer to represent the degree of association with percentages by squaring the r value (r^2) to determine the coefficient of determination (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007).

3.2 Context

This research project was conducted in Puebla, Mexico, specifically at the Faculty of Languages of Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), where students are trained to become English language teachers. In the Bachelor's in English Language Teaching program, students receive instruction in language teaching methodologies, the application of pedagogical approaches and methodologies in different contexts, and the main areas of linguistics. Graduates of the program are expected to use the English language proficiently in a variety of contexts and to recognize and deal adequately with cultural differences between their mother tongue and their target language.

3.3 Subjects

Fifty-two students from the Bachelor's in English Language Teaching program at the Faculty of Languages of BUAP participated in this study. All the participants had already taken and passed the subject *Semantics and Pragmatics* from the fifth semester by the time they participated in this project; in other words, they had received formal instruction in the area of pragmatics, addressing the differences it has with semantics. Having received prior instruction was necessary for the project because exposure to the L2 alone is not enough to develop pragmatic competence; rather, explicit instruction is needed (Taguchi, 2015). All the participants had a minimum English proficiency level of B1, demonstrated through a TOEFL ITP mock test applied at the beginning of the study, with a minimum score of 433 according to the CEFR equivalence (Educational Testing Service, 2015). It is important to note that the students' English proficiency level was used only as a control variable in the study and it was not part of the correlational

analysis. It is considered that, at the B1 level, students have already acquired the basic structures of the language and are capable of dealing with “most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken” (Council of Europe, n. d.).

Since this study focused on the relationship between L2 motivation and pragmatic competence rather than on social or demographic factors, no personal information such as age or socioeconomic level was requested. All the participants were enrolled in the same academic program, which ensured homogeneity in terms of educational background and age range.

The characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 2:

Table 2

Participants' Characteristics

Variable	Category/Range	n	%
Total participants	-	52	100
Gender	Female	39	75
	Male	13	25
Academic program	BA in English Language Teaching	52	100
Semester	6th-8 th	52	100
English proficiency level	437-620 (B1-B2 levels according to CEFR)	-	-

3.4 Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study to collect the data: a questionnaire for the motivation types and levels and for the pragmatic competence, an Appropriateness Judgement Task and a Discourse Completion Task:

3.4.1 L2 Motivational Self System questionnaire

This instrument was administered online through the Microsoft Forms platform and was used to determine the predominant type of L2 motivation of the participants. The questionnaire was an adaptation of the one developed by Moskovsky et al. (2016) in their study. Since the original instrument was designed for a Saudi Arabian context, it was necessary to modify it to make it suitable for the context of this thesis project. This study took place in Mexico and the participants were English Language Teaching (ELT) students.

The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions that measured the three components of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System: the Ideal L2 Self (10 items), the Ought-to L2 Self (15 items), and the L2 Learning Experience (15 items). It is important to note that the items were randomly distributed rather than grouped by component. The answers followed the format of a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (5) *Strongly agree*. The instrument was piloted with a small group of ELT students to ensure it was clear and reliable. Moreover, a reliability analysis was performed through Cronbach's alpha index (See Appendix A).

3.4.2 Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT)

The Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT) was also applied through an online Microsoft Form. It was used to assess the level of pragmatic competence of the participants by checking if they could judge whether English was used appropriately in the situations shown to them. This instrument used the same structure employed by Wolfson (1983) in a previous study. However,

the context of the scenarios was adapted to something familiar to the participants: school and workplace interactions.

The instrument consisted of eight different scenarios in which participants had to decide if the interaction presented was appropriate or not, using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) *Highly inappropriate* to (5) *Highly appropriate*. A pilot test was conducted with the same group of students who tested the previous instrument in order to ensure the task was clear and functioned the way it was intended. (See Appendix B).

3.4.3 Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was also administered online through the Microsoft Forms platform and was used to assess the participants' pragmatic competence when producing compliments or answering them. This instrument, unlike the others, was designed specifically for this project, as DCT's used in past research did not align with the particular context of the Mexican ELT students that participated in this thesis. The design of the task was based on the general guidelines for written elicitation pragmatic tasks discussed by different authors in the past (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

In this task, participants were given eight different scenarios with specific contexts and degrees of social distance and social power between the speakers. They were asked to answer in the way they considered most appropriate for each situation. This task was also piloted with a group of volunteers from the ELT BA program. (See Appendix C).

In order to establish and analyze the appropriateness of each situation and code the DCT responses, a taxonomy was developed based on the methodological frameworks proposed by Herbert (1990), Manes and Wolfson (1981), and Alfonzetti (2013). This taxonomy was used to

analyze the participants' use of compliment types, topics, structures, and response strategies (see Section 3.6.3.1 for details).

3.5 Procedure and Data Collection

The first step was to pilot the three instruments to see if they were adequate for the research project. To do this, a small group of students from the final semester of the BA in ELT participated voluntarily. In case the results from the piloting had indicated that the instruments needed to be changed or readapted, this would have been performed before applying the instruments. The piloting confirmed that the instructions, the language used, and the structure of the instruments were clear for the participants, and that all the instruments worked adequately.

The second step for the data collection was to find the participants for the thesis project: students from the BA in ELT with a B1 level who had already completed and passed the "Semantics and Pragmatics" subject. The prospects had to take a TOEFL ITP mock test to demonstrate that they had a B1 English proficiency level in order to be eligible. All the participants were contacted personally and, after fulfilling the prerequisite of the proficiency level, they confirmed their collaboration in the project by signing a consent letter (see Appendix D).

The research instruments were applied on the same day, one after the other, all carried out online. The first stage was the questionnaire designed to assess the L2 motivation of the participants, based on Dörnyei's Motivational Self System (2005, 2009). That was followed by the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT), which consisted of 8 different scenarios. Finally, the participants completed the Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which required them to produce contextually appropriate compliments and responses.

The answers from the three instruments were exported to Microsoft Excel for better organization and to prepare them for the subsequent analysis. After that, the answers were coded

according to the corresponding instrument. Finally, each file was processed and analyzed using PSPP, an open-source computer program for statistical analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

In order to carry out this project, the analysis of the data must be divided into two phases: the analysis of the data collected from the three instruments and the correlation between the results from the online motivation questionnaire and the pragmatic competence of the participants.

3.6.1 L2 Motivational Self System Questionnaire

The answers from the online motivation questionnaire were assigned numerical values based on their position in their Likert scale (from 1 for “Strongly disagree” to 5 for “Strongly agree”). After getting the numerical results, a statistical analysis was applied to get the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, the mean, and the standard deviation for each category of the questionnaire (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, L2 Learning Experience). In order to carry out the previous statistical analysis, the scores were imported into PSPP.

The results from this questionnaire indicated which component of the L2 motivational self-system prevails among the participants, which was later used to find out if there was a correlation between them and the results from the other instruments that were subsequently applied in this research project.

3.6.2 Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT)

This instrument aimed to evaluate the participants’ ability to assess the pragmatic appropriateness of compliments in eight different scenarios. The answers from the AJT were coded similarly to those of the online motivation questionnaire, following a scale of 1 for “Highly inappropriate” to 5 for “Highly appropriate”. The eight situations were categorized into different

levels of appropriateness and the final score of each participant was compared to each specific situation.

Each of the eight items was scored according to how closely the participant's response aligned with the answer key for appropriateness. A response that exactly matched the target rating received 1 point, a response one level away (adjacent options) received 0.5 points, and a response differing by more than one level received 0 points.

3.6.3 Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisted of eight different situational scenarios designed to elicit participants' interpretation and production of compliments. The results provided by this instrument required a deeper analysis since they were not ranked on a scale as the previous ones; the coding depended completely on the answers and the way they related to the taxonomy. For this reason, the rubric presented in Table 3 was designed to rate the responses adequately.

Table 3

Rubric for the evaluation of the DCT responses

Score	Description
4	Completely appropriate: contextually and socially appropriate
3	Mostly appropriate: minor pragmatic issues
2	Somewhat appropriate: the intention is adequate, but it shows clear pragmatic issues
1	Inappropriate: pragmatically wrong, socially unsatisfactory
0	Completely inappropriate: response fails to fulfill the speech act or is just culturally unacceptable

3.6.3.1 Coding the DCT. Since the analysis of the responses produced in this instrument involved the researcher's judgement and knowledge, it was necessary to take measures to avoid subjectivity. To achieve the aforementioned, an independent rater with graduate-level training in linguistics and prior experience in pragmatic scoring evaluated each response independently using the same rubric and taxonomy. The following taxonomy was used to carry out the analysis.

- Types of compliments:
 - Explicit. A compliment is expressed clearly and directly with the use of lexical items or structures that are culturally recognized as compliments (Alfonzetti, 2013; Boyle, 2000).
 - Implicit. These compliments are expressed indirectly and the positive evaluation is implied and must be inferred by the hearer (Boyle, 2000).
- Major compliment topics (Herbert, 1990):
 - Appearance/possessions. These compliments focus on a person's physical appearance or material belongings. These are associated with physical characteristics or personal taste.
 - Performance/skills/abilities. Compliments that evaluate actions, performance, physical feats, or achievements.
 - Personality traits. These compliments are directed at a person's personality, character, or behavior.
- Syntactic structure. This category refers to the structural organization that a compliment follows when it is conveyed. In other words, it concerns the patterns in a

sentence that are typically used to produce compliments. Manes & Wolfson (1981, p. 120) classified them as follows:

NP = Noun Phrase; ADJ = Adjective; PRO = Pronoun; V = Verb; ADV = Adverb

1. NP is/looks (really) ADJ
 2. I (really) like/love NP
 3. PRO is (really) a ADJ NP
 4. You V a (really) ADV NP
 5. You V (NP) (really) ADV
 6. You have (a) ADJ NP!
 7. What (a) ADJ NP!
 8. ADJ NP!
 9. Isn't NP ADJ!
- Responses to compliments (Alfonzetti, 2013, pp. 560-564):
 - Acceptance. The compliment received is accepted as a token of respect. The usual response is "Thank you" (or its variations).
 - Agreement. In this response, the person finds the statement made to be true, e.g., "A: Your car is very nice", "B: Yes. It is very nice."
 - Disagreement. In this case, the person considers the compliment to be false. "A: You look beautiful!", "B: No, I don't...".
 - Scaled-down agreement. In this response, the receiver also agrees, but with a lower intensity than the compliment. "A: That's a beautiful necklace.", "B: Yes, isn't it nice?"

- Weak disagreement. The compliment received is not totally denied; instead, its intensity is reduced with the response. “A: You played really well!”, “B: I missed a few shots, though.”.
- Referent shift. This type of response happens when the addressee reassigns the compliment to a different person. “A: You are a great cook”, “B: It is all thanks to my mom’s recipe, she’s the genius.”.
- Returns. A compliment is produced with the same intensity in reciprocity to the one received. “A: You are a great teacher.”, “B: So are you.”.
- Questioning. The receiver asks for confirmation or, doubting the sincerity of the compliment, questions it. “A: That is a lovely dress.”, “B: Do you really think so?”
- Informative comment. In this type of response, the addressee offers (unsolicited) information about the object that has been complimented. “A: I really like your jacket.”, “B: I ordered it from Amazon.”.
- No acknowledgment. The compliment is ignored, the receiver usually talks about something else or just remains silent. “A: You look stunning today!”, “B: Did you write your report yesterday?”.
- Request interpretation. In this case, the compliment is interpreted as a request. “A: Those are some nice boots.”, “B: You can borrow them, if you want”.

Considering that rating responses in pragmatic appropriateness research involve interpretive elements, it was essential to verify that both raters applied the scoring rubric consistently (McHugh, 2012). Interrater reliability was assessed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), this was because it was particularly appropriate for continuous scores generated

by two raters (Koo & Li, 2016). A two-way random-effects model with absolute agreement [ICC(2,k)] was used to determine the degree of agreement between the two raters.

3.6.4 Quantitative Analysis: Correlational Analysis

To finally address the research question regarding the relationship between the type of L2 motivation and pragmatic competence of the participants, a correlation analysis was carried out. The statistical test selected was Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) since it is appropriate for the examination of the association between two variables (Field, 2018).

The three motivational components from Dörnyei's L2 Motivation Self System were analyzed separately: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. Each component was represented by the mean score produced by its respective questionnaire items (10 for the Ideal L2 Self, 15 for the Ought-to L2 Self, and 15 for the L2 Learning Experience). On the other hand, the pragmatic competence was represented by the composite score obtained from the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT) and the Discourse Completion Task (DCT), after being standardized into z-scores to avoid differences between the score scales of the instruments designed to measure the pragmatic competence of the participants.

In order to carry out the correlational analysis, Pearson's r was calculated between each of the three motivational components and the pragmatic competence composite score. Moreover, a two-tailed test of significance was used to determine the statistical significance of the observed correlations, the former with an alpha level of .05. All the analyses were performed in PSPP.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the research design, context, subjects, instruments, procedures, and data analysis methods that were used in this study. Three main instruments were employed to

gather both the motivational and pragmatic data: the L2 Motivational Self System questionnaire, the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT), and the Discourse Completion Task (DCT).

The following chapter presents the results obtained from the three instruments, offering a detailed report of the participants' responses and the descriptive statistical products. These results are presented without interpretation, which will be provided in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Four: Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings derived from this research project. The results are organized into two main sections: the first includes the outcomes of the motivation questionnaire, the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT), and the Discourse Completion Task (DCT); the second section reports the results of the correlation analyses. The most relevant quantitative data is presented through tables and graphs to facilitate interpretation. Finally, there is a brief conclusion of the chapter.

4.1 L2 Motivational Self System Questionnaire

This section presents the results of the L2 Motivational Self System questionnaire, addressing the first research question of this thesis: “What types of L2 motivation prevail among LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA?”. The questionnaire consists of 40 items, distributed across the three components of the L2 Motivational Self System: 10 items for the Ideal L2 Self component, 15 items for the Ought-to L2 Self component, and 15 items for the L2 Learning Experience component. It is important to note that the items were not ordered by component in the questionnaire.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics were performed using PSPP, which included calculation of the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values. Additionally, the reliability of the participants’ answers was measured using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The results from this analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for the components of the L2 Motivational Self System questionnaire

Component	Number of items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Cronbach's Alpha
Ideal L2 Self	10	4.20	.55	1.80	5.00	.86
Ought-to L2 Self	15	3.30	.43	1.80	4.07	.65
L2 Learning Experience	15	3.39	.40	2.33	4.47	.67

As for the reliability, the internal consistency of the Ideal L2 Self component is excellent ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.55$). The Ought-to L2 Self component had acceptable consistency ($\alpha = .65$, $M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.43$), as did the L2 Learning Experience component ($\alpha = .67$, $M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.40$). This indicates that the answers given by the participants are sufficiently reliable and can be used for the study.

As for the mean, the values for the three components shown in Table 4 indicate that the Ideal L2 Self is the most prominent motivational component among the participants, with a mean of 4.2. This distinguishes it from the Ought-to Self component ($M=3.3$) and the L2 Learning Experience component ($M=3.39$), which have lower scores.

4.2 Appropriateness Judgement Task

In order to score the participant's responses for the Appropriateness Judgment Task, the answer key shown in Table 5 was used.

Table 5*AJT answer key*

Scenario	Correct rating
1	Somewhat inappropriate (2)
2	Somewhat appropriate (4)
3	Neutral (3)
4	Highly appropriate (5)
5	Somewhat inappropriate (2)
6	Neutral (3)
7	Highly appropriate (5)
8	Highly inappropriate (1)

To present the results in a cleaner and more organized manner, PSPP was used to calculate the total AJT score for each participant. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, were then computed to perform an adequate analysis. These results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6*Descriptive statistics for the AJT total scores*

Number of participants	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
52	4.65	1.25	2.00	7.00

The Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT) total scores ranged from 2.00 to 7.00, with a mean of 4.65 (SD=1.25) out of a maximum possible score of 8. This suggests that, although there was considerable variation, participants had more than half of the correct answers. Notably, five participants obtained substantially lower than the rest of the group (2.00-2.50), while these values are not essentially statistical outliers, they changed the general trend and may reflect individual problems with the task and/or a misunderstanding of the scenarios.

To better understand the distribution of the scores, the totals were grouped into intervals. Table 7 shows the frequency and percentage of participants within each score range. Over 60% of the participants had scores between 4.00 and 5.99, while 19.2% scored above 6.00, and the final 19.2% had scores below 4.00.

Table 7

AJT frequencies table

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
2.00 – 2.99	5	9.6%
3.00 – 3.99	5	9.6%
4.00 – 4.99	15	28.8%
5.00 – 5.99	17	32.7%
6.00 – 6.99	9	17.3%
7.00	1	1.9%
Total	52	100%

4.3 Discourse Completion Task

For this final instrument, the participants were presented with eight different scenarios designed to measure their pragmatic competence in the interpretation and production of compliments in different contexts. All the responses were analyzed and scored by two independent raters, including me, on a 5-level pragmatic appropriateness scale as described in the rubric presented in Chapter 3.

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics for each DCT scenario. Mean scores ranged from 2.13 in Scenario 6 to 3.92 in Scenario 1, which indicates that participants struggled with the situation presented in the sixth scenario. As shown in the table, six out of eight scenarios had a mean above 3.5, with only two scenarios, 4 and 6, having a mean below 3.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics for the DCT scenarios.

Scenarios	Number of participants	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Scenario 1	52	3.92	.44	1	4
Scenario 2	52	3.56	.89	0	4
Scenario 3	52	3.6	.89	0	4
Scenario 4	52	2.65	1.6	0	4
Scenario 5	52	3.79	.72	0	4
Scenario 6	52	2.13	1.55	0	4
Scenario 7	52	3.63	.91	0	4
Scenario 8	52	3.85	.61	0	4

Moreover, total DCT scores were calculated by summing the results of all eight scenarios for each participant, with a possible range score of 0 to 32. As shown in Table 9, the mean total score of the group was $M=27.13$ (with a standard deviation of $SD=4.64$), ranging from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 32. When converted to an average score per participant (i.e., the total score divided by eight), the mean was $M=3.39$ ($SD=.58$), indicating that most of the participants scored from 3 (Mostly appropriate) to 4 (Completely appropriate) on average in every situation.

Table 9

Total and average DCT scores per participant

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Total scores	27.13	4.64	4	32
Average scores	3.39	.58	.5	4

The previous results suggest that participants displayed consistent competence in the production and interpretation of compliments across different scenarios. However, it was necessary to analyze these results in conjunction with the results from the AJT instrument and to correlate them with the Motivational Self System questionnaire data to have a clear picture of the relationship between pragmatic competence and the types of motivation of the participants.

4.4 Correlational Analysis

After obtaining the results from the three instruments: the Motivational Self System questionnaire, the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT), and the Discourse Completion Task

(DCT), the next step was to conduct a correlational analysis to examine the relationship between the participants' types of L2 motivation and their level of pragmatic competence.

4.4.1 Standardizing the Pragmatic Competence Results

It is important to note that two distinct instruments were employed to assess the pragmatic competence of the participants: an Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT), which mostly measured the pragmatic awareness of the participants, and a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which assessed how the participants interpreted and produced compliments. Considering that the AJT and DCT employed different scoring scales (AJT maximum score was 8, while the DCT maximum score was 32), it was necessary to standardize the scores to use them adequately and equally.

To achieve the aforementioned, the total raw scores on the AJT and the DCT for each participant were converted into z-scores, which represent each participant's raw score position in terms of its distance (above or below) the mean value of a dataset (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). By converting scores into standard deviation units, it was possible to guarantee that both instruments contributed equally to the combined measure, ensuring that the subsequent correlational analysis was valid (Field, 2018). Following the previous process of standardization, an overall pragmatic competence score was obtained for each participant by calculating the mean of their AJT and DCT z-scores.

It is important to note that this composite score represents the relative pragmatic competence of each participant in the study, used for the correlation analysis with the motivation results. The composite score does not represent an absolute level of pragmatic competence, since it only provides a standardized representation of each learner's performance compared to the rest of the participants. The reason behind the decision to use the relative pragmatic competence in this

research project was to find out if those who are more motivated in a specific component in the L2 Motivational Self System are also the ones who performed better in the pragmatic awareness and production instruments.

The standardized scores were successfully normalized for both measures, producing the following descriptive statistical results: AJT z-scores: $M = 0$, $SD = 1$, ranging from -2.12 to 1.87; DCT z-scores: $M = 0$, $SD = 1$, ranging from -4.98 to 1.05. These converted scores are shown in a more comprehensible manner in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptives for the z-scores.

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
AJT z-scores	0	1	-2.12	1.87
DCT z-scores	0	1	-4.98	1.05

4.4.2 Pearson Correlations

As stated before, the final step was to compute Pearson correlations to analyze the relationship between the three motivational components of the L2 Motivational Self System and the pragmatic competence (composite z-score) of the participants. The results presented in Table 1 show the correlation coefficients and significance values for each pairing.

Table 11

Pearson Correlations Between Motivation Components and Pragmatic Competence (N = 52)

	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	L2 Learning Experience
Pragmatic Competence	$r = -.04$ $p = .762$	$r = .223$ $p = .112$	$r = -.036$ $p = .798$

These results indicate that there was no significant statistical correlation between the pragmatic competence and any of the three L2 Motivational Self System components. First, the correlation between pragmatic competence and the Ideal L2 Self was weak and negative, $r(50) = -.04$, $p = .762$. As for the correlation between pragmatic competence and Ought-to L2 Self, the total was also negative, $r(50) = -.22$, $p = .112$. Finally, the correlation between pragmatic competence and the L2 Learning Experience was also minuscule, $r(50) = -.036$, $p = .798$.

In general, as shown before, the correlation coefficients were small and none of the pairings reached a level of relevant statistical significance ($p < .05$). This indicates that in the sample used in this project ($N = 52$), particularly higher or lower scores in any of the motivational components did not correspond to higher or lower levels of pragmatic competence in the use of compliments.

4.5 Summary of the Results

This chapter has presented the results from the application of the three instruments used in this research project: the L2 Motivational Self System questionnaire, the Appropriateness Judgement Task, and the Discourse Completion Task. In the first subsection, descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of the participants' types of motivation. In the following two subsections, the results from the AJT and DCT were analyzed to measure the pragmatic

competence of the participants, and these were also reported through descriptive statistics. In order to standardize the scores from the AJT and DCT instruments, the scores were converted into z-scores and subsequently combined into a composite measure to allow an adequate comparison across instruments.

Posterior correlation analyses aimed to explore the relationship between the participants' relative pragmatic competence and the three motivational components (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience). The analyses did not reveal statistically significant correlations, indicating that in this particular sample, the prevalence in specific motivational components did not correspond to clear, measurable differences in the relative pragmatic competence of the participants.

The following chapter discusses the previous findings, considering previous research, the specific context of this project, and the implications involved in the understanding of the relationship between motivation and pragmatic development in the L2. Moreover, the three research questions will be answered.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the results presented in Chapter 4 in connection with the three research questions and the theoretical framework of this thesis. While, in general, the results showed that there was no significant correlation between the three components of the L2 Motivational Self System and the pragmatic competence of the participants, it is necessary to carry out a deeper analysis of these outcomes. In order to highlight the relevance of these findings, it is essential to place them in the context of previous research on motivation and interlanguage pragmatics.

The three research questions are listed below:

1. What types of L2 motivation prevail among LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA?
2. To what extent do LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA accurately interpret and respond to compliments in their L2 in different social contexts?
3. How can the type of L2 motivation of LEI students enrolled in the final semester of the BA influence their level of L2 pragmatic competence regarding the use of compliments?

5.1 RQ 1: Motivational Components

The first research question is focused on the identification of the types of L2 motivation that prevail among the participants, in terms of the three components of the L2 Motivational Self System: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. Descriptive statistical analyses indicated that the Ideal L2 Self had the highest mean ($M = 4.2$), followed by the L2 Learning Experience ($M = 3.39$), and the Ought-to L2 Self ($M = 3.3$). Internal consistency was also measured and resulted in acceptable levels for the Ideal L2 Self component ($\alpha = .86$) and

moderate levels for the Ought-to L2 Self ($\alpha = .65$) and L2 Learning Experience ($\alpha = .67$) components. These results indicate that participants aligned the most with the vision of themselves as successful L2 users in the future, while the influence of others or the classroom setting and experiences had a smaller impact on their motivation for learning an L2.

The previous findings coincide with Dörnyei's (2009) conception of the Ideal L2 Self component, which was presented as a strong key element of long-term motivation in the language acquisition process. Different studies (Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009) have had similar results, having the Ideal L2 Self as the strongest component. In this study, the substantially higher mean for the Ideal L2 Self is an indication that, as in previous studies and conceptualizations, the learners' internalized vision of themselves as competent L2 users is a big driving force in the learning process.

In contrast, the results from the Ought-to L2 Self component may suggest that, in this context, participants do not feel an obligation to fulfill external expectations or to surrender to social pressure in order to learn an L2. According to Kormos and Csizér (2014), in EFL contexts is common for external factors to have less influence than in ESL settings. In the same vein, the results from the L2 Learning Experience suggest that, although there has been a positive experience with the myriad of factors included in this component, there is no defining influence in the process of acquiring an L2.

Analyzed together, these results depict a motivational profile with a clear dominance by the internalized, self-perceived, improved version of the participants over the external opinions or situational-dependent motives. These findings highlight the importance of learners' personal aspirations and imagined future selves.

5.2 RQ 2: Pragmatic Competence of the Participants

The second research question analyzed the participants' pragmatic competence in the use of compliments as measured through the Appropriateness Judgement Task (AJT) and the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). In order to standardize the results from both instruments and allow an adequate comparison, individual raw scores from the AJT and DCT instruments were converted into z-scores and then averaged to create a composite relative pragmatic competence score. The descriptive statistics results showed a considerable variation in the performance across participants, with AJT z-scores ranging from -2.12 to 1.87 and DCT z-scores ranging from -4.98 to 1.05. The widespread distribution of the z-scores suggests that the levels of pragmatic competence greatly vary within the sample.

The results from the AJT showed that some of the participants had a strong sensitivity to contextual appropriateness when interpreting compliments, while others struggled to recognize pragmatic norms consistently. Interlanguage pragmatics research such that a variability of this kind is common since knowledge develops unevenly across learners (Bardovi-Harling & Dörnyei, 1998; Taguchi, 2019). As for the DCT results, they showed a similar pattern: most of the participants produced contextually appropriate responses, whereas others exhibited clear problems in creating sociocultural appropriate answers. The extremely low scores in some situations suggest that, for certain participants, pragmatic comprehension and production remain a significant challenge.

When considered together, the AJT and the DCT indicate that participants in this study showed a moderate to low level of pragmatic competence in the use of compliments, with notable variability between them. This corresponds with previous research that shows that EDL learners often have pragmatic development problems due to reduced opportunities for authentic interaction

(Kasper & Rose, 2002). Moreover, the differences between AJT and DCT results align with the findings by Roever (2005) and Taguchi (2008), who mentioned that receptive and productive pragmatic abilities may not develop equally.

In general, these results highlight the complexity of measuring and assessing pragmatic competence since participants may show partial and uneven abilities depending on the type of tasks and whether they demand comprehension or production. The use of both AJT and DCT instruments was a great option to provide complementary insights into a more holistic view of the pragmatic capabilities of the participants, which helped show that while some participants were capable of recognizing appropriate compliment strategies, producing them accurately was more difficult.

5.3 RQ 3: Correlation Between Motivation and Pragmatic Competence

The third research question examined whether the type of L2 motivation influenced participants' level of pragmatic competence in the interpretation and production of compliments in context. To answer this particular research question, Pearson correlation analyses were conducted between the three L2 Motivational Self System components (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience) and the composite relative pragmatic competence score. The results demonstrated that none of the correlations had statistical significance: Ideal L2 Self ($r(50) = -.04, p = .762$), Ought-to L2 Self ($r(50) = -.22, p = .112$), and L2 Learning Experience ($r(50) = -.036, p = .798$).

These findings suggest that in this study, the strength of participants' motivation type did not correspond to their specific ability to interpret or produce compliments appropriately in English. In essence, participants with high levels of Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, or L2 Learning

Experience did not demonstrate corresponding systematic higher or lower levels of pragmatic competence.

These results contradict theoretical claims that motivation influences pragmatic development via increased willingness to engage in authentic communicative practice (Dörnyei, 2009; Taguchi, 2013). Previous studies (Sato & Loewen, 2018; Yashima, 2009) have shown positive associations between motivation and pragmatic development related specifically to interaction and feedback. However, in this study, there were no evident positive or negative associations, which could be explained by different factors that need to be mentioned and analyzed.

Different contextual and methodological factors could be considered to explain the particular outcomes of this research project. First, when considering pragmatic competence, especially speech acts such as compliments, the influence of complex sociocultural conventions and authentic use of the language is crucial, which is not directly related to the motivation of the learners (Bardovi-Harling, 2013). Second, the relatively small size of the sample may have restricted the possibility of finding significant correlations between the two variables. Finally, it is possible that the relationship between pragmatic competence is rather indirect and includes other factors such as proficiency level, context, and/or direct pragmatic instruction that shape the development of the pragmatic competence of the participants.

In sum, the findings related to the third research question indicated that the two variables, motivation and pragmatic competence, did not show a significant measurable association in this study.

5.4 Hypotheses Testing

This study aimed to discover whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the types of L2 motivation—the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning

Experience—and the participants’ pragmatic competence regarding the use of compliments. In this vein, the following hypotheses were considered:

- **H₁**: There is a statistically significant correlation between the types of L2 motivation and participants’ pragmatic competence regarding compliments.
- **H₀**: There is no statistically significant correlation between the types of L2 motivation and participants’ pragmatic competence regarding compliments.

Through the Pearson correlation analysis conducted in Chapter 4, it was revealed that there were no significant correlations between pragmatic competence and the three L2 Motivational Self System components. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H₀) was confirmed, indicating that, within this sample, there was no significant relationship between the variables.

5.5 Discussion Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the results of the study in relation to the three research questions and past research related to the main topics of this project. As for the first research question, related to motivation, the motivational component that prevailed among the participants was the Ideal L2 Self, suggesting that participants’ internalized future-oriented visions of themselves as successful learners were the most important motivational drivers. Regarding the second research question about pragmatic competence, participants demonstrated in both instruments (Appropriateness Judgement Task and Discourse Completion Task) an uneven development in their pragmatic competence. As for the third research question, the one about the correlation between the results from the motivation instrument and the results from the pragmatic competence instruments showed no statistically significant relationship between the motivational components levels of the participants and their relative pragmatic competence, indicating that participants’ motivational

profile did not translate into measurable positive or negative differences in their pragmatic competence development.

The following chapter concludes this study by summarizing its contributions, mentioning its limitations and implications for the teaching-learning process, and future research.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.0 Introduction

In this final chapter, the most relevant conclusions are outlined. The first section presents the main conclusions derived from the results. Next, implications regarding the teaching-learning process and the limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, a few relevant recommendations for future research in the area are offered.

6.1 Conclusions

This research project explored the relationship between motivation, as proposed by Dörnyei in his L2 Motivational Self System model (2005, 2009), and the pragmatic competence of LEI students regarding the comprehension and production of compliments in English. Specifically, it investigated (1) the prevailing types of L2 motivation among final-semester LEI students, (2) their ability to accurately interpret and respond to compliments in different contexts, and (3) the possible relationship between the different motivational components and the pragmatic competence of the participants.

Regarding the motivation construct, the results showed that the L2 Motivational Self System component that prevailed among the participants was the Ideal L2 Self, indicating that motivation among this specific group of participants is mainly internal and based on their own identity, rather than on the influence of external factors.

As for the pragmatic competence, participants demonstrated an overall adequate ability to comprehend and produce compliments in English. However, within the group, there was a high level of variability, suggesting that different scenarios and contexts can pose a challenge for them.

Finally, the correlational analyses did not demonstrate that a clear relationship existed between the specific type of motivation of the participants and their higher or lower level of pragmatic competence.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

Based on the results from this study, several implications related to the L2 teaching-learning process and the BA in ELT curriculum design can be recognized:

- **Curriculum design.** Considering that the findings of this study indicate that motivation is not closely related to the level of pragmatic competence of students, curriculum design could focus on explicit pragmatic instruction and practice. Even though motivation cannot be directly included in the curriculum, it is also important to consider specific motivational support for students.
- **Practice and assessment.** Implementing activities oriented to the practice and evaluation of pragmatic features — such as compliments or other speech acts — could help in the development of pragmatic competence. Some of these activities could be AJTs or DCTs.
- **Teaching-learning process.** Considering that the component of the L2 Motivational Self System that prevailed was the Ideal L2 Self, teachers could benefit from fostering this type of motivation in the classroom via specific activities. Moreover, providing opportunities for pragmatic practice in authentic contexts could lead to pragmatic development.
- **Classroom implementation.** As mentioned before, the findings indicate that the participants possess a strong Ideal L2 Self, which did not automatically translate into a high level of pragmatic competence. However, it would be unwise to dismiss the value of formal pragmatic instruction that incorporates motivational components, since tasks integrating both aspects (e.g., role-plays, simulations, or other activities focused on communication)

could help bridge the gap between students' motivational orientations and their pragmatic competence.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

There are a few key limitations in this study that need to be acknowledged:

- **Cross-sectional design.** The fact that data were collected in a single moment in time could have limited the understanding of the relationship between motivation and the development of pragmatic competence. Motivation and pragmatic competence are constructs that can change significantly over time depending on factors such as interaction, feedback, practice, exposure, etcetera. Therefore, a longitudinal design might have provided a more adequate view of how these variables could change and influence each other.
- **Instruments.** The instruments to measure the pragmatic competence of the participants were validated; however, other instruments, such as oral DCTs or natural conversational data, could have been more suitable for fulfilling the objectives of this study.
- **Sample size.** The number of participants may have been too small to notice patterns in the relationship between motivation and pragmatic competence.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

It is important to note that, while no significant correlations were found, the findings of this study could be a good starting point for future research, leaving the following recommendations:

- Conduct longitudinal research to analyze how the type of motivation of the participants influences the development of pragmatic competence.
- Examine more pragmatic features (including other speech acts) to see if there are different results and to have a more complete view of the participants' pragmatic competence.

- Extend and diversify the sample to include more participants from different courses and proficiency levels, this could increase the chances of getting richer results.

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Appendix A

The L2 Motivational Self System Questionnaire

Directions: In the following situations, choose from the scale what best applies to you.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

THIS IS NOT A TEST. ANSWER HONESTLY, PLEASE.

The Ideal L2 Self (10 items):

- 1 – I can imagine myself living abroad and having a conversation in English.
- 6 – I can imagine myself as someone who can speak English as if I were a native speaker.
- 8 – Whenever I think of my future, I imagine myself using English all the time.
- 12 – I can imagine myself studying in a country where English is the official language.
- 15 – I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating with the locals and international people.
- 20 – I can imagine myself writing English emails fluently.
- 26 – The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.
- 29 – I can imagine myself having a lot of English-speaking friends.
- 33 – If my dreams come true, I will use English effectively in the future.
- 38 – I can imagine myself using English fluently like some of my role models.

The Ought-to L2 Self (15 items):

2 – Learning English is necessary because people around me expect me to do so.

5 – Without learning English, it will be difficult to travel abroad.

10 – If I don't achieve a high level of English, I might not succeed in my career.

11 – Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.

14 – I have to study English because I don't want to fail my courses or get low grades.

17 – I am studying English because I don't want others to think I am not good enough for this degree.

19 – Studying English is important for me because without it, I might not be able to get a well-paying job.

23 – Some important people in my life feel that achieving a native-like level of English is essential for my future.

24 – Without learning English, it will be impossible for me to understand academic papers and do research.

28 – Being able to speak English will add to my social status.

31 – Society expects me to learn English so that I can explain my culture to others.

32 – Without learning English, it will be very difficult for me to access academic information online.

35 – I am expected to learn English so that I can help people who don't speak it.

39 – Every professional (not only EFL teachers) should be able to speak English.

40 – Without learning to use English like a native speaker, I will not be a good teacher.

L2 Learning Experience (15 items):

- 3 – I enjoy the overall atmosphere of my BA classes.
- 4 – My English teachers have been better than my other subjects' teachers.
- 7 – I really enjoy improving my English skills.
- 9 – I think my English classes have been sufficiently engaging.
- 13 – I would rather spend more time in my classes where I practice English and less in other classes.
- 16 – I enjoy the activities of my language classes much more than those of my other classes.
- 18 – My English teachers have interesting and engaging teaching styles.
- 21 – It is easy to remain interested in my English classes.
- 22 – I find the English books and materials that we use really helpful.
- 25 – My teachers and classmates help me maintain a strong desire to improve my English level.
- 27 – The other students in my English classes are really friendly and supportive.
- 30 – I am sometimes worried that the other students in class will judge me when I speak English.
- 34 – My English teachers use innovative methods that keep me engaged.
- 36 – The English books that we use are interesting and help me improve my level.
- 37 – It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak English better than I do.

Appendix B

Appropriateness Judgement Task

Directions: In the next scenarios, please rate the appropriateness of the compliments used.

1. Highly inappropriate
2. Somewhat inappropriate
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat appropriate
5. Highly appropriate

THIS IS NOT A TEST. CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT YOU CONSIDER MORE APPROPRIATE.

Scenario 1. A teacher gives feedback to a student after a presentation in front of the class.

Teacher: "That was a great presentation! I don't see how your classmates will do it better."

Scenario 2. A student compliments her teacher after giving a lecture.

Student: "That was very clear, teacher! I think I could learn a lot from you."

Scenario 3. Two students worked together on a big project and, after finishing, they had a quick chat.

Student A: "I think we did great."

Student B: "You did. It was all thanks to you."

Scenario 4. A student finishes her presentation and one of her classmates compliments her.

Classmate: "Great job, Allison! That seems like a lot of work."

Scenario 5. A person visits his friend's house for the first time.

Person: "Your house looks great! It is nicer than I expected."

Scenario 6. An employee delivers the product of a project to her boss and receives feedback.

Boss: "Thank you, Anne. I didn't expect you to finish this soon."

Scenario 7. A woman sees her coworker who got a new haircut and compliments her.

Woman 1: "Is that a new haircut? It really suits you. You look fantastic!"

Scenario 8. A man buys a coffee for his coworker, and she says the following:

Woman coworker: "Thank you! I've had better, but this one's great!"

Appendix C

Discourse Completion Task

Scenario 1	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 2	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 3	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 4	[low D]	[S>H]
Scenario 5	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 6	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 7	[low D]	[S=H]
Scenario 8	[low D]	[S=H]

Scenario 1: Your friend just got a new haircut, and it looks great. How do you compliment them?

Scenario 2: Your classmate gave an excellent presentation during class. What do you say to them afterward?

Scenario 3: Your classmate got a good grade in a very important test. How do you compliment them?

Scenario 4: One of your students answered a difficult question in front of the class. What do you say to them?

Scenario 5: Your friend notices you have a new expensive phone and tells you “Nice! I love your new phone; it looks really cool!”. How do you respond?

Scenario 6: You tell your coworker about a new assignment you are working on and he answers, "I wouldn't even know where to start with a project like this!". How do you respond?

Scenario 7: Your friend tells you "Have you been going to the gym? You look great!" What do you respond?

Scenario 8: You finished giving a presentation in front of the class and one classmate tells you "I love your pronunciation; you sound very natural!". What do you respond?

Appendix D

Consent LETTER (Based on Despaigne (2016))

Motivation and Its Influence on the Pragmatic Competence Development of a Group of Students from the BA in ELT

FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPANTES

Introducción

Mi nombre es Ernesto Chávez Santillán y soy estudiante de la Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés en la Facultad de Lenguas de la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Actualmente llevo a cabo una investigación con estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés que hayan aprobado ya la clase “Semántica y Pragmática” del programa y que tengan, al menos, un nivel B1 de inglés y me gustaría invitarte a participar en este estudio.

Propósito

Los objetivos de esta investigación son

1. Determinar qué tipo de motivación (del modelo de Dörnyei) prevalece entre los estudiantes de la LEI.
2. Determinar qué tan adecuadamente los estudiantes de la LEI interpretan y responden a cumplidos en inglés.
3. Determinar si hay una relación entre el tipo de motivación y la competencia pragmática mostrada en el segundo objetivo.

Si aceptas participar en esta investigación se te pedirá lo siguiente:

1. Realizar un mock test de TOEFL ITP en Google Forms para conocer tu nivel de inglés. Recibirás tus resultados por correo electrónico y, en caso de contar con, al menos, un B1 podrás decidir si quieres continuar con los siguientes instrumentos. Si tu nivel es menor a B1, recibirás tus resultados, pero no será necesario que respondas los siguientes instrumentos.
2. Responder un cuestionario en línea (Microsoft Forms) sobre motivación para aprender una L2. (40 preguntas)
3. Responder un cuestionario (Appropriateness Judgement Task) en línea (Microsoft Forms) sobre la propiedad de diferentes escenarios imaginarios en los que se usaron cumplidos en inglés. (8 preguntas)
4. Responder a diferentes situaciones imaginarias en las que tendrás que interpretar y producir cumplidos en inglés (Discourse Completion Task). (8 situaciones)

Confidencialidad

La información recolectada será usada para fines de investigación; ni tu nombre ni ninguna otra información que pueda identificarte serán utilizados en cualquier publicación o presentación de los resultados de la investigación. Toda la información recolectada para esta investigación será confidencial. Se utilizará un seudónimo cuando me refiera a ti.

Riesgos

No hay riesgos por participar en este estudio.

Beneficios

Conocer tu nivel aproximado de inglés basado en una prueba de práctica del TOEFL ITP.

Conocer tu tipo de motivación para aprender inglés principal y así poder buscar estrategias para trabajar en ello.

Participación voluntaria

La participación en esta investigación es voluntaria. Puedes negarte a participar, contestar cualquier pregunta o retirarte de la investigación en cualquier momento.

Preguntas

Si tienes preguntas acerca de esta investigación, contacta a **Ernesto Chávez Santillán** (223462012@viep.com.mx)

Esta carta de consentimiento te pertenece y te servirá como referencia en un futuro.

Nombre y firma
