POLITENESS PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION IN SPANISH TOURISM INDUSTRY PROGRAMS FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

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Abstract

Several cross-cultural studies have proven the need of pragmatic instruction for foreign language students. However, there is still a lack of explicit pragmatic teaching in the pedagogical materials used to teach a foreign language. In this study, the teachability of pragmatics and the optimal method for its delivery have been assessed, targeting the employees of the tourism industry in Spain. With focus on the speech acts of requesting and apologizing, a survey using the discourse completion test (DCT) has been carried out among Spanish Tourism students in order to corroborate the need of the instruction, and to establish the baselines for the realization patterns of these communicative acts. Furthermore, the main differences between the performance of requests and apologies of native speakers and the Spanish students have been investigated to assure that the instruction covers the issues that are more problematic. Finally, the aforementioned instruction was designed and presented. The results show significant differences between the Spanish students and the norm obtained from the native speakers that could result in communicative failure, especially concerning the directness of the requesting strategy and the insufficient use of the acknowledgment of responsibility strategy when apologizing. Further research in pragmatics is needed to have a better understanding of the general rules for the realization of these speech acts, and teaching approaches need to encourage the inclusion of pragmatic instruction in any language learning course’s syllabus.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In Spain, 2,193,730 people were employed in the tourism industry last year (Instituto de Turismo de España, 2016). Between January and November, more than 20 million of these tourists came from the United Kingdom, the United States and Ireland (Ministerio de energía, turismo y energía digital, 2016). However, the number of English-speaking tourists is even higher, for I only took into account these three countries, but there are others such as Australia or Canada.

Seeing that Spain is visited by so many people whose native language is English, I decided to study the linguistic aspect of the Spanish tourism industry. I found that Deloitte (a multinational professional services firm) published a report called Tendencias y Evolución del Turismo en España: Expectativas 2016 (Trends and Evolution in the Tourism in Spain) in which they polled more than 50 tourism industry managers. In the survey, the managers answered that the investment in future years should be directed, in the first place, to enhancing the client’s experience (31%).

The big volume of English speaking tourists, alongside with the need for pragmatic instruction that researchers have proven with numerous empirical studies (Kasper, 1997), in combination with the interest that tourism industry employees have in offering their clients the best treatment possible, are the reasons why I decided to conduct my own study in order to assess the pragmatic level that Spanish tourism students have. The main goal of this study is to provide them with an instruction that helps these future employees improve their pragmatic competence and, therefore, have a better performance at their jobs.

In order to do so, first, there will be a theoretical framework covering the fundaments of speech act theory, so as to define what a speech act is and how we need to understand both the literal meaning of a sentence and the effect it causes to achieve successful communication. This is especially relevant when connected to the second theory I will study, Politeness Theory, which accounts for the amendment of affronts to a person by face-threatening acts. A closer look will be taken on requests and apologies, since they are very common in the working situation I am considering, and both are a potential thread to either the speaker’s or the hearer’s face. In this part, I expect to provide the definition of the concepts in the pragmatic field that will be necessary for the latter
instruction. Afterwards, I will also delve into the teaching of pragmatics, its feasibility, the method that should be used and why.

Having explained this, I will conduct a study with the goal of exploring the most common mistakes made by people who work (or will eventually work) in the tourism business. A comparison with native English speakers will be performed, to have an ideal model of answer that Spanish learners of English should achieve after the instruction. The objectives of this study are to assess the necessity of pragmatic instruction, to state the differences between the performance of an apology and a request by native and non-native English speakers and to investigate the most common errors, to be able to provide a satisfactory solution when presenting my instruction.

This instruction will be the final part of the project, in which I will suggest a method of teaching pragmatics to the specific target that I have already described, with real activities that could be carried out in a classroom.
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study is enclosed in a subfield of linguistics called pragmatics. There are many definitions of pragmatics, but the one that is most quoted by scholars as Kasper (1997) was proposed by the British linguist David Crystal. He said that pragmatics is “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication” (Crystal, 1985, p. 379). From this statement, it can be understood that pragmatics is closely linked to every user; something we encounter in our everyday life. In the book Searle and Bierwisch (1980, p. 169) we find the following lines, attributed to Voltaire, that illustrate the importance of pragmatics:

When a diplomat says yes, he means ‘perhaps’;
When he says perhaps, he means ‘no’;
When he says no, he is not a diplomat.

These lines portray accurately what pragmatics is, because they show that we do not always use the words according to their literal meaning. In this way, we need to understand the particular culture that we are studying and the customs of its people if we want to use a language appropriately.

Since pragmatics studies the use we make of a language and, maybe more importantly, how the context and the culture affect our understanding of an utterance, it would make sense to think that pragmatics is very important when studying a language. The reality, however, is different. Students learn grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, but most of them do not get any pragmatic instruction. For example, after examining three different textbooks used to teach English for Tourism (Harding, 1998; Harding & Walker, 2006; and Strutt, 2003), no chapter was found on the subject of pragmatics. And even though there were some activities scattered throughout the book that assessed pragmatic competence, they were very scarce and they did not make any explicit reference to pragmatics in itself, so the students were not aware of the instruction.

Research, though, has proven that it is a mistake not to teach pragmatics in class (Bardovi-Harlig, 2003), because when people learn a second language it is common to have questions about how to say many things. We tend to think that in western countries the intended meaning of certain sentences (such as apologies, requests, refusals, etc.) is
quite similar, since the culture is similar too. That is partially true: generally speaking, our mental processes are similar, so a Spaniard and a British person would apologize in similar situations. However, even when that is the case, the words that are used for apologizing in English (for example) are not the literal translation from the ones we use in Spanish, or vice versa. Having said that, it is crucial for the understanding of both the questionnaire and the instruction below to study the fundaments of the field, which are the speech act theory and the politeness theory, and to present the selected teaching method.

2.1. SPEECH ACT THEORY

The first concept that needs to be defined in order to understand pragmatics is the one of Speech act. The idea was first presented by Austin (1962) in *How to do things with words*, and later Searle (1969) coined the term and completed the theory.

A speech act is an utterance that has a function in communication, i.e. that has the capacity of fulfilling an action or perform an identity. For example, apologies, requests, complaints, invitations, refusals and compliments are speech acts, because by performing them we have the potential of producing an effect on the hearer. Of course, not all speech acts are successful (Center for advanced research language acquisition, 2015).

Austin (1962) said that by uttering a sentence, three different acts are produced: the locutionary, the illocutionary and the perlocutionary act. The locutionary act is the performance of the utterance. It is what we actually say, which the author divides into three more levels: *phonetic*, “the act of uttering certain noises”, *phatic*, “the uttering of certain vocables or words”, and *rhetic*, “the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference” (Austin, 1962, p. 95). Then, the illocutionary act (that is often used as a synonym of speech act) is the intention we have when uttering a sentence. Informing, ordering and warning, for example, are utterances that have illocutionary force, because by saying some specific sentence we intend to produce an effect on the hearer. Finally, the perlocutionary act is the actual effect we achieve (if any effect is achieved) on the hearer with our utterance (p. 101), such as convincing, persuading, frightening, etc.

It is important to mention that there is a kind of illocutionary speech act called Indirect speech act. When performing an Indirect speech act, speakers do not say what they
literally mean, i.e. they say something that needs to be effectively interpreted by the hearer for this speech act to be successful. For this to happen, the speaker and the hearer must share background knowledge and need to be able to understand inferences. Speech acts are often used to reject proposals or make requests (Loos, Day, Jordan, and Wingate, 2004). For example, instead of ordering someone to wash the dishes, you could also say “The kitchen is a mess”. The logical, literal interpretation for somebody who does not understand inferences would be that the speaker is stating the obvious, but usually any hearer would understand that this is in fact a request.

Analyzing one of the main objections made to Austin’s and Searle’s work can be useful, since it allows to get a clearer image of what has been criticized already and how this could affect the present study. The general complaint is that Austin only talks about verbal communication, whereas all these acts can be easily performed by non-verbal actions (Allwood, 2000, p. 2). This criticism is logical, but in this specific case, it is much more interesting to analyze verbal communication, because the non-verbal is very difficult to teach, since it is very personal and it depends a lot more on the individual, instead of belonging to the general culture of a country.

In short, the most important idea is that to successfully perform speech acts, as it was mentioned above, it is crucial to know the appropriate use that a culture makes of a language, and not only the grammatical and syntactic structure of this given language.

2.2. POLITENESS THEORY

The baseline of the politeness theory is the concept of face, which is very important for pragmatic instruction, because before learning how to say certain things you need to be aware of the effect that your words will have on the hearer. Even though this concept came into English from Chinese in the nineteenth century, it was Brown and Levinson (1987) who popularized it in the western society. The term, though, was first introduced in its pragmatic sense by the sociologist Erving Goffman in 1955. He defined face as “an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share […]” (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). From this statement, it can be understood that the idea of face is never found in one person, but it is always interpreted in relationship with others. In other words, face is the own sense of dignity and worth that people have, built upon their social encounters, when they perform a pattern of verbal
and non-verbal acts by which they place themselves in the world. It is every person’s self-image that every speaker tries to protect.

Brown (2015) proposed that politeness is about taking into account other people’s feelings. The author stated that there are two main groups of feelings that we can pay attention to. In this way, the concept of face needed to be expanded by making a difference between positive and negative face.

Negative face is the need that every adult has to maintain its freedom and autonomy by not being imposed upon or intruded. Positive face, on the other hand, is the good image of ourselves that we try to show to other people; the desire to be liked and appreciated. We say we lose face, which is a linguistic calque from Chinese, when our self-image gets diminished. We save or maintain face when we keep or protect our self-image, by avoiding a humiliation, for example. These two concepts are very complex because they do not only apply to the speaker, but also to the hearer. When asking for a favor, for instance, both the speaker and the hearer are losing face: the speaker because she must depend on somebody, who may not be willing to cooperate, and the hearer because her freedom has been diminished.

When in a social encounter a person potentially causes loss or damage to the other person’s face, she commits a face-threatening act (FTA). FTAs can be positive or negative. Negative FTAs are those that restrict the personal freedom of one of the interlocutors, either the speaker’s (acceptance of compliments, apologies, excuses…) or the hearer’s (orders, requests, warnings…). Positive FTAs are those that threaten the speaker’s self-image (acceptance of a compliment, confession, apologies) or the hearer’s (criticism, complaints, accusations…). But not all speech acts can be classified into one fixed category. Apologies, for example, can damage both the speaker’s negative and positive face, because, on the one hand, it limits the options the speaker has, since she feels like she has to do something (apologizing) and, on the other hand, it damages her self-image by accepting that she has made a mistake.

There are four ways to perform and FTA that vary on the degree of threat they cause to the hearer’s face (Bosuwon, 2015). The choice of strategy will depend on the advantages of the model (the more direct it is, the more efficient, but the threat to the hearer’s face is bigger) and on the social circumstances concerning the interlocutors (distance, power and cultural impositions). The four strategies are:
• **Bald on-record**: the speaker says directly what she wants, with no mechanism to reduce the potential face loss of the hearer. It is usually used in close relationships or when there is no time for explanations.

  Ex: Pass me the salt.\(^1\)

• **Positive politeness**: the speaker considers other people’s feelings, with expressions of social closeness and caring. Usually the speaker tries to find an agreement or give compliments to the hearer.

  Ex: This stake is delicious, but I like salty food. Can you pass me the salt, please?

• **Negative politeness**: the speaker wants to maintain the hearer’s face, by being indirect and non-imposing.

  Ex: I realize this is a terrible imposition for you, but can I use your notes?

• **Off-record (indirect)**: this mechanism relies completely in the shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, since it removes any kind of imposition or potential face loss. It is usually used in a context of inferior social power or big social distance.

  Ex: Don’t you think it is a little bit too warm in here? (instead of asking the interlocutor to open the window directly).

Finally, of course, there is also the option of not performing the FTA, which tends to happen if the speaker wants to maintain the hearer’s face to any degree.

  Ex: not asking for the salt, even if the food needs it, to avoid the cook the shame of cooking something that was not good.

When teaching pragmatics, the concepts of face and especially face-threatening acts are very important because depending on the way we carry them out we might or might not achieve our intended purpose, i. e. depending on the speakers’ performance of the act they will get one reaction or another from the hearers.

To sum up, the main ideas of these sections are that a speech act is an utterance with an intended purpose, some of them are direct whereas others are indirect, politeness is based on the concept of face, which is every speakers’ own image and that there are different acts that can and do affect our relationship with the interlocutor. In the next

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\(^1\)The examples either I created them or come from the Foreign Language Teaching Methods (2010).
section the focus will be on the teaching of pragmatics: if it is possible and how it should be done.

2.3. Teaching pragmatics

Throughout the theoretical framework of this study, the need of teaching pragmatics has been stressed several times. When learning a language, having grammatical competence is not enough (Olshtain&Blum-Kulka, 1985, as cited in Tello). Consequently, learning pragmatics should be central in the learning of any language, especially with foreign languages (FL), since students do not have direct access to the target culture. The difference between foreign and second language (SL) is that a FL is not spoken in the country where the learners are studying and living. Since a methodological proposal for Spaniards learning English will be presented, the term FL shall be used from now on.

However, many researchers have questioned if pragmatics can actually be taught (for example, Kasper (1997) collects a series of studies that try to answer this question). Pragmatics is learnt throughout life just by interacting with people. Parents and teachers teach children that it is not appropriate to make remarks about other people’s weight, or to point out that the shirt somebody is wearing is ugly. People learn by repeating what others do and by reacting to their interlocutor’s reactions, remembering the formulas that work well and avoiding those that do not work. It is a process that starts very early and that takes many years to complete (if it ever does), and it is done in a very subtle, indirect way. So, it makes sense to ask if all these rules of language and behavior can be taught. Despite its difficulty, empirical research has shown that is in fact possible to teach pragmatics in a classroom, such as Bardovi-Harlig (2001), Kasper (1997) and Olshtain and Cohen (1990).

The question then arises, is it necessary to teach pragmatics? If pragmatics is something that we acquire and develop just by interacting with other people, why should we teach it in a classroom? First, research has shown that “without some form of instruction, many aspects of pragmatic competence do not develop sufficiently” (Kasper, 1997, para. 15), that “left to their own devices […], the majority of learners apparently do not acquire the pragmatics of the target language on their own” (Bardovi-Harlig&Mahan-Taylor, 2003, p. 3). Second, scholars have also proved that pragmatic instruction can have a positive effect in the speakers’ communicative abilities, and that learners show
an improvement after the instruction in both comprehension and production (see Kasper, 1997, and Bouton, 1994).

Besides, research has highlighted the need for pragmatic instruction based on studies that prove that a FL learner with a high grammatical competence does not always have the same degree of pragmatic proficiency (Olshtain&Blum-Kulka, 1985; Bardovi-Harlig&Hartford, 1990, 2001, as cited by Tello, 2006). This is especially relevant because but for delivering a successful message (that accomplishes its purpose), we need to take into consideration many aspects other than grammar and vocabulary, such as: the correctness of the speech act, the amount of information given (not too much, not too little), the appropriateness of the words or politeness strategies that are used, etc. In addition, when a language learner makes a grammatical or syntactic mistake, for example, it is perceived by the hearer as a linguistic problem, so it is forgiven more easily. However, a non-native speaker who has a high grammatical competence but makes a bad choice of politeness strategy can be seen as rude or impolite and, consequently, judged more harshly (Sirikhan&Prapphal, 2011, p.18).

Therefore, pragmatics should be part of the syllabus in FL instruction in a more explicit way, because it is in the classroom where the two biggest problems students encounter when learning pragmatics can be fixed. These problems are a lack of specific input and a lack of interpretation of language use (Bardovi-Harlig&Mahan-Taylor, 2003). The problem with input is that in a country where the target language is not spoken, it can be difficult to come across opportunities to observe the everyday interactions from which we learn pragmatics. Also, some speech acts take place in private conversations, so it is difficult that learners (even when living in a country where the language is spoken) have the chance of experiencing them. Besides, some features of language use are so subtle that learners might not notice them, so it is necessary to have a teacher who points them out. For example, the patterns associated with turn-taking. Second, the problem of interpretation is that without explicit instruction it can be difficult to understand “when and why certain linguistic practices take place” (p. 4), which means that when confronted with a formula that is unknown to them they will have the opportunity to get an explanation of is meaning and its usage. To sum up, pragmatic instruction is necessary not only for producing more effective utterances but also for understanding appropriately what other speakers say.
In order to determine whether the theoretical framework in fact corresponds with the empirical reality, two studies carried out by researchers in the field of pragmatics have been reviewed. This two studies have been selected because they both prove, through experimentation, that there is an improvement in the pragmatic competence of students after explicit instruction.

Bacelar da Silva (2003), investigated if explicit pragmatic instruction has a beneficial effect on pragmatic competence. The author focused on the speech act of refusals, which is not within the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, Bacelar da Silva’s research is still useful, because by demonstrating the teachability of this specific speech act one can easily draw conclusions that apply to different kinds of speech acts. The author’s ultimate goal was to provide English language learners with an instruction that was adapted to their specific needs, that helped them to enlarge their range of linguistic devices and that taught them the appropriateness (or lack of it) of certain formulas. In the study, 14 students were divided into two groups, control and treatment. Both of the groups were presented with a pre-test and a post-test, but the treatment group received pragmatic instruction whereas the control one only watched an extract from the TV series *Friends*. The instruction consisted in the visualization of three segments of the same series, a presentation of semantic formulas and modifiers, and instructional role-playing. The information, elicited via role-playing, proved that in fact explicit instruction of a specific speech act improves the pragmatic competence of students, because the treatment group had a better performance in the post-test than the control group. Besides, an explicit approach is likely to be beneficial, since it increases the students’ pragmatic awareness and it presents them with linguistic devices that they can use in their further communicative acts.

Olshtain and Cohen (1990) tried to determine whether it is possible or not to teach some specific features of the speech act of apology. The main goals where to prove the teachability of the speech act behavior, and how it should be done; and how much improvement can be achieved. Even though more specific questions were tackled in the actual study, the most important conclusions correspond with the answers to the two questions presented above. In order to answer them, the authors developed pre- and post-teaching questionnaires and teaching materials of features that have been proved to be difficult for students. First, data from native speakers of English was collected, to define the norms for the situations presented in their study. Second, the subjects, 18
advanced learners of English, whose first language was Hebrew, were given the first questionnaire. Afterwards, they received the pragmatic instruction, which consisted in three classroom sessions of 20 minutes each. Finally, a post-test was carried out in order to study the effects of the instruction. The main findings of this study, presented right after, are to be taken in consideration for any other research in pragmatics. First, pragmatic competence was not improved quantitatively but it did improve qualitatively. For example, even when a subject used the same strategy in the pre-test and in the post-test, the effectiveness and appropriateness of this strategy were enhanced significantly. Second, the subjects’ responses were shorter than before the instruction, and therefore closer to the native speaker behavior. Third, the subjects use of intensifiers showed a clear increase. This was one of the biggest differences between English learners and native speakers, so this amelioration is especially relevant for the issue of the teachability of pragmatics. Fourth, it is possible to teach the “types of intensification and downgrading, subtle differences between strategy realizations, and consideration of situational features” (p. 57), and the authors believe that these points should be taught. And finally, deep, real changes in a person’s behavior take a long time to happen, but some level of awareness can be achieved, and it can in fact improve the quality of the communicative acts in which students participate. To sum up, as a result of the instruction students became more aware and learnt specific linguistic formulas and devices that made them more successful communicators in the TL.

Both these studies have proven that instruction has a beneficial effect on the pragmatic competence in the English language, which corresponds with the other studies cited above. In summary, empirical research confirms the teachability of pragmatics and scholars strongly recommend it ([pragmatics] “can and should be taught in the second and foreign language classrooms”, Olshtain&Cohen (1990, p. 57)). I will now move on to the revision of two other studies, also carried out by pragmatics researchers. These have been selected because the methodology that has been used and the research goals are similar to the empirical part of the present study, which will be presented below, even if there are some differences, for example, in the type of subjects that were questioned.

İstifçi (2009), studied the performance of the act of apologizing by “20 [Turkish] intermediate level EFL learners (IL), 20 [Turkish] advanced level EFL learners [(AL)]
and 5 native speakers of English [(NS)] at Preparatory School of Anadolu University” (p. 17). The language proficiency of the subjects was based on the Michigan Placement test that students had passed in their school. She used a discourse completion test (DCT) which consisted of 8 situations that were designed to elicit an apology. The situations portrayed different degrees of severity of the offense, also varying on the social status of both the apologizer and the apologizee. The questions, however, did not inform the subjects about these variables, because it was expected from them to differentiate the degrees of formality. They were also questioned about their personal background. In order to analyze the data, İstifçi used the apology speech act set presented by Cohen and Olshtain (1981). It is important to state that, contrary to what has been done in the present study, the author focused more in the differences in the performance of the speech act between IL and EL, instead of comparing them with the NS (which was also contemplated, but far more superficially). In spite of this, the conclusions are very relevant for my study because she found that AL used apologizing strategies that were more similar to the NS ones, which proves that pragmatics can be learnt, and therefore, taught. She also discovered that the number and range of explicit illocutionary force indicating devices (IFID) used by AL is bigger and more varied that the ones used by IL, and they were closer to the IFID used by NS, which also supports the previous argument. Besides, the study proved that both IL and AL used formulas that are not genuine of the English language, but the translation of the Turkish linguistic devices. This can be interpreted by following the premise that learners transfer some features of their first language into the TL if they are not aware of the pragmatic differences between the languages. Finally, the author claims that it would be necessary to conduct a study with more participants in order to draw meaningful conclusions, and she offers some general guidelines for the teaching of pragmatics.

Jalilifar (2009) compared the production of the speech act of requesting by Australian native speakers of English (NS) and Iranian learners of English. The latter were BA senior and MA students majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and English Language Translation, whereas the Australian participants were employees without any college degree working in a company. The goals of this study were to investigate whether advanced learners used more complex requesting strategies than beginners, and explore how social distance and relative power affect the performance of requests for NS and Iranian language learners of English. First, the researcher passed a
test (Nelson English language proficiency test) to the Iranian students in order to assess their language proficiency, and according to the results they were further divided into three groups: low (LL), mid (ML) and high (HL) language learners. The DCT was also used as the method for collecting the data, with 24 situations designed to elicit a request from the subjects. The situations varied on the degree of relative power and social distance. The participants were not told about these variations. The power variable assessed if the hearer had a higher, lower or equal status than the speaker and the distance variable if hearer and speaker knew each other or not. In order to analyze the head act of the request, the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) scheme was used. Then, frequency analysis and chi square test were performed, “to identify the proportion and percentage of request strategies used by non-native and native speakers in six combinations”, and “to establish whether the differences in the frequency of strategies made by subjects were statistically significant” (p. 49). As a result of the study, the author found that the HL had higher pragmatic competence than the other groups. However, all the participants used non-conventionally indirect strategies the most, the same as the NS. But whereas the HL and ML subjects used almost only one of these strategies (reference to preparatory conditions), the NS used Strong hints more frequently, which belongs to the same group of strategies. The LL used a surprisingly high number of direct strategies in comparison with the other three groups, which is attributed to their lack of language competence. These results show that even if pragmatic competence increases with language competence (the higher the English level the more indirect strategies were used), not even advanced learners acquired, without explicit instruction, total competence of the pragmatics of the TL. Concerning the variables of relative power and social power, the study found that there were differences between NS and Iranian learners of all groups. For example, HL tended to use indirect strategies more than NS when the context is less formal, maybe because as learners of English they felt the need of demonstrating their politeness. On the other hand, when the context was more formal (such as addressing a professor), even HL used more direct strategies than NS, who used a significant number of Strong hints, one of the politest strategies. However, HL showed higher general sensitivity to the degree of formality and used more linguistic devices that showed respect for the hearer in comparison with LL and ML. In spite of this fact, the conclusion is that all Iranian learners lacked sociopragmatic knowledge, especially in terms of social distance.
No study that investigated the pragmatic competence of the employees of the tourism industry was found. Therefore, other pragmatic research had to be used in order to draw conclusions, such as the reviewed studies, which provided reliable input to draw upon. Besides, they both follow the same plan that was followed in the design of the present study. In addition, they proved that there are in fact differences in the performance of the speech acts of requests and apologies by members of different cultures. Hence, the need of pragmatic instruction.
3. THE PRESENT STUDY

Due to all of the above, the need and the teachability of pragmatics has been proved. The research carried out in order to provide tourism industry employees with effective pragmatic instruction will now be presented. The main goals of this research have been: conducting a study that could assess the performance of apologies and requests by Spanish tourism students who have English as a FL, and presenting a didactic proposal that can help the target population acquire this pragmatic competence, that will enhance their professional performance.

Even though it would be interesting to study the performance of every kind of speech act, requesting and apologizing were selected due to temporal and material constraints, since it was impossible to tackle all the features of pragmatics, although some general instruction will also be provided. Apologies and requests were chosen for two reasons: first, because they are constantly performed by employees of the tourism industry, and I think it could be useful for them to enhance their performance of these two aspects and, second, because both of them can cause loss of face for both the speaker and the hearer if they are not performed appropriately.

Apologies are an expressive speech act, since they express the speaker’s emotions (Searle, 1975) and as such, are post-event acts, because usually happen after the event has taken place. But even though apologies are very subjective and depend on the situation (not every speaker would apologize in the same situation, nor would two speakers apologize in the same way), they are a ritualized speech act. Actually, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) define the preconditions that must be achieved in order to have an apology: the speaker did or did not do something, which is perceived by the speaker, the hearer or both or others as a rupture of a social norm, and that is considered by at least one of the parties involved as offending, harming, or affecting the hearer in some negative way. In this way, we can say that speakers apologize to try to change the effect that a certain action had on the hearer. Apologies, as explained in 2.2, entail loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer. That is why is so important that employees of the tourism industry master the performance of this speech act, since it is crucial that the client receives appropriate support and repair when an offence is committed.
On the other hand, requests are directive speech acts, since the speaker uses them in an attempt to produce an effect on the hearer, which would be the performance of an action (Searle, 1975). In this way, requests are pre-event acts, since they try to get the hearer do something or to stop her from doing something. But requests can be performed in very different levels of directness. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) defined three categories in which requests can be classified depending on how blunt they are: the most direct, explicit level, in which requests are performed with none or little politeness devices; the conventionally, indirect level, which is what Searle called indirect speech acts, because the direct meaning of the request cannot be understood literally, but has to be inferred (usually they refer to the hearer’s ability or desire of performing the act); and, finally, the nonconventional indirect level, which is the most metaphoric group of strategies, since the requested action is not mentioned. Instead, the speaker asks the hearer to perform the action relying on the common knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer, which allows them to understand what is being ask. But, even if requests can be performed in a variety of politeness levels, this speech act is necessarily face-threatening, since the speaker is restricting the hearer’s freedom. Therefore, employees who are able to perform a request politely and in an appropriate way, can make a very much better impression on their clients. In the contrary, the ones who do not manage to perform adequately this speech act can be seen by the client as rude or unprofessional.

3.1. EXPLORATORY EMPIRICAL STUDY

Taking into consideration the importance that pragmatics has in the teaching and learning of a foreign language, conducting a case study was necessary in order to investigate the performance of the speech acts of requesting and apologizing by Spanish Tourism students, with the objective of answering the following questions:

- Is pragmatic instruction for Spanish people who work in the tourism industry necessary?
- What are the similarities and the differences between the execution of an apology and a request between a native English speaker and a non-native English speaker whose first language is Spanish?
- What are the mistakes that non-native English speakers in Spain make more often when performing this two speech acts?
3.2. PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION: A PROPOSAL

In this section, the population that will receive the instruction will be presented, alongside with the teaching approach chosen for developing the aforementioned instruction.

3.2.1. Target population

In order to develop a useful pragmatic instruction, it is crucial to narrow the target population that will receive this instruction. In this way, it can be adapted as much as it is possible to meet all the needs of the chosen industry. Based on the premise that pragmatic instruction should be included in any kind of language learning, and seeing that no pragmatic instruction was found in Tourism textbooks, it makes sense to assume that the tourism industry in Spain lacks appropriate pragmatic instruction. Therefore, the proposal that will be presented below will be focused on this business. To do so, real materials were used, and a data gathering was performed. As it will be explained in the section below, this data was used to explore the most frequent mistakes Spanish people working in the tourism industry make when addressing the customer, to make sure that the most difficult aspects are addressed.

3.2.2. Teaching approach

The main goal of instruction is to make learners aware of the different pragmatic devices (such as the diverse politeness strategies) that exist in the target language, their meaning and the way they are used. It is not about giving the students an immutable model to which they must stick, but about helping them realize that there are a lot of different options, and that some of them are correct whereas others should not be used. Learners should not seek total convergence with native speakers, which means to behave and speak as a native person, but optimal convergence, which is understood as adopting the pragmatic rules that allow communication, but while maintaining the cultural identity (Kasper, 1997). Besides, total convergence is impossible to achieve. (it does not even exist among native speakers), and it can be seen as intrusive or inconsistent with the role that the non-native speaker has in the community. Finally, learners might not want to behave in the same way than another culture, since they could feel like they were losing their own identity (Neddar, 2012).
Afterwards, it is crucial to establish whether instruction should be carried out in class or in the real world. Some researches have considered that classrooms do not offer enough input to develop the pragmatic competence, since the situations that can be studied will be necessarily limited. Also, it is criticized that the relationship between the teacher and the students is not balanced regarding the social status, so sometimes is not a good enough model for the learners. Besides, instruction (especially text books) usually emphasizes some stipulated semantic formulas, that are not always the most appropriate and tend to overlook some other perfectly valid options, and does not always provide realistic input (Tello, 2006, p.175-176). In contrast, classrooms offer a safe place for learners to experiment and acquire pragmatic competence without the risk of causing a misunderstanding or a problem. Also, they can get feedback from the teacher or from other students, realize what their mistakes are and fix them. The teacher can also raise the students’ pragmatic awareness, which will promote autonomous learning. In addition, all the limitations pointed out before can be easily resolved by exposing learners to appropriate communicative actions, based on authentic materials.

Finally, another issue that should be addressed is whether to teach using an explicit or an implicit approach (also referred to as direct or indirect). In the first one, a conscious, planned program is used to make students aware of pragmatics and teach them the differences between adequate and inadequate formulas. Explanations on the use of some expressions might be useful, as well as handouts illustrating their use. In the latter, students acquire pragmatic competence just by being exposed to input in the target language and by interacting among them. For example, video extracts where people use some of the pragmatic strategies might be shown, but without highlighting them (Bou-Franch&Garcés-Conejos, 2003, p.6-7). Some researchers have shown that explicit instruction works better (House and Kasper, 1981; House, 1996; Tateyama et al., 1997, as cited by Neddar, 2012), but others have proved that there is no noticeable difference between the two techniques (Bouton, 1994). However, in the present study, the guidelines that were followed are the ones suggested by Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos (2003). They suggest that the best teaching option consists in a combination of both the direct and the indirect approaches (p. 7). This is because students internalize the knowledge better when it is taught directly, and once they use it automatically they can focus on other aspects of the language.
Having considered all the aspects that a methodological proposal should contemplate, it was important to decide which pedagogical method or approach was going to be used for teaching pragmatics in class. The present proposal was based on the PPP teaching method, which consists of three steps: Presentation, Practice and Production. This method was first presented in the 1950s, and has been used ever since. The PPP approach stems from the idea that students need to have some previous knowledge before actually being able to construct sentences in another language, small pieces of information eventually lead to the whole of the language. The approach PPP uses is deductive, since the conclusion (the actual knowledge) is drawn from the premises (Maftoomm&Sarem, 2015). The structure of this method is as it follows:

- **Presentation**: the class starts with the teacher presenting the topic that is going to be studied. This can be done in different ways, for example, discussing short dialogues or listening to audio extracts. Only the target language is used.
- **Practice**: after being presented with the theory, the students do some exercises in a controlled way. In this way, they can see how the theory is applied. Completing sentences or dialogues, or asking and answering questions might be useful activities.
- **Production**: in the last stage of the learning, the students are “left alone”, and they use all the features that have been learnt throughout the instruction with (almost) complete freedom. The teacher’s role is to control this interaction, and correct the mistakes. Usually this is done with role plays or simulation activities.

At the beginning, in the presentation stage, the teacher’s guidance or control is very strong, almost complete. As the class advances, this control diminishes, giving the student a higher autonomy. Finally, in the production part, the role played by the teacher is completely secondary, and should only consist in correcting the students’ mistakes. This allows the teacher to direct the pace of the lecture, slowing down if somebody is lost and speeding up if the topic is too easy. It is also important to remark that PPP believes that only the FL should be used, in order to keep the student focused and avoid any interfering of their mother tongue.

This method has faced a great deal of criticism over the years, especially in the 1990s (Evans, 1999). The main concerns about this technique are the acquisition process, the teaching of descriptive grammar and the use of the target language in the classroom.
Critics say that students do not learn grammar via drilling and repetition, and that even when they seem to have understand the subject, they might forget everything they have learnt before the next session. The descriptive grammar criticism resides on the premise that language should teach how to perform effective communication acts, and these come in many different ways, not only in the specific situation or language combination that is presented in class. Finally, the restriction on using the students’ first language is seen as a possible communicative problem, since it denies some possible understandable input that could be useful for them.

However, many of this criticism can be easily explained if we consider that this approach has been used for a very long time. Over the years, scholars have said that this method has been outdated, which could be true, but we also need to consider that there is no longer funding to investigate PPP and that in every academic field there is always a need for a change, a renewal. Some contemporary authors actually acknowledge the benefits that the method has. For example, Criado (2013, p.100) claims that the PPP “model correlates with the model of skill learning” which implies that for learning how to use a system (“procedural knowledge”) you need to learn about it first (“declarative knowledge”), which is the process the PPP approach follows. He also says that, at a psycholinguistic level, it raises the students’ awareness about the linguistic features that will be studied, which result in a higher degree of motivation and attention.

Besides, the main shortcomings that are pointed out can be clearly fixed by not sticking to the rules of the method strictly, but using them effectively as a guidance, as the steps to follow in class. If this principle is followed, the PPP method can be very useful, for both the teacher and the students. For example, with the use of the students’ FL when some word or grammatical structure is not understood, or by going over something that was studied some time ago, which the students will undeniably remember, even if it does not come straightaway at the beginning of the next session. In addition to this, the PPP approach has an evident advantage that should not be overlooked: it provides both the teacher and the student with a standard model, something that proves that some improvement is happening and it facilitates the giving of feedback. Research show that when students have a conscious organization can focus better on the actual matter that is being taught, and it makes them feel a security that has a positive effect on their attitude (Criado, 2013).
4. METHODOLOGY

In this section are presented the theoretical considerations that were followed in the analysis of the questionnaire, such as the method that was used to collect the data, the description of the participants that answered the questionnaire, and the methodology that was considered for the examination of the results.

4.1. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

As Cohen & Olshtain (1981) claimed that in order to establish a for sociocultural competence many speech acts realization patterns should be assessed. But even if I agree completely, it is impossible to test them all, so I decided to study apologies and requests for the reasons that were already presented in 2.3., which are the importance that these two speech acts have in customer-employee relationships, the especial difficulty that they suppose for non-native English speakers and the fact that both are FTA (requests threaten the hearer’s negative face and apologies threaten the speaker’s positive face, and have an impact on the hearer’s face).

The first concern when designing the questionnaire was whether to observe real conversations and extract the pragmatic information that I needed for my analysis, to try to elicit the responses through the simulation of natural conditions (role-play), or to use a written questionnaire. The first option was dismissed because it was impossible to listen to enough conversations so as to have sufficient data. The second option was not selected either because many people do not feel comfortable speaking in a second language in front of an examiner, and also the presence of the interlocutor could alter the subject’s answer. Moreover, the two methods present a main issue: it is very difficult to collect the data, and the process is very time-consuming. So, a written questionnaire was chosen, not only because the other two methods proved to be flawed, but also because it was the best option due to temporal and material constraints. Also, it is easier to quantify the data, which is crucial for the subsequent analysis, and it allowed me to control the variables in order to test different degrees of formality. However, written questionnaires are criticized for not eliciting a natural response, since the subject has more time to think about the answer and is therefore less spontaneous (Díaz, 2001). Despite this, my final objective was teaching pragmatics, and for that reason it is especially useful to use a test that provides the rules that shape a language, so this method proved to be the most efficient one for my interests. Finally, this kind of
questionnaires have also been criticized for not allowing the subject to react at possible comebacks from the interlocutor, which accounts for the impossibility of studying negotiation strategies and the turn-taking patterns (Díaz, 2001). But this is hardly a problem because I needed to limit the scope of the research, so in the same way that two speech acts were selected for analysis, I cannot study every aspect of the pragmatics field.

Once I had narrowed the method options, I still needed to choose one type of written questionnaire. I decided to use a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). This test is a one-sided role-play, designed to elicit a particular type of answer from the subject. The questions are open-ended; the subject is presented with a situation and has to write what she would say in each specific case.

Apart from the reasons that I mentioned before (the possibility to collect all the data I needed in a short period of time, which is essential when working with a tight deadline, the fact that provided answers that represent the normative use of the language and the facilitation of the data analysis) I selected this type of test for two other reasons: first, it has been broadly used in pragmatics’ investigation, and researches as Bardovi-Harglig, Blum-Kulka, Cohen and Olshtain have used it throughout their studies, and second, since the answer is open, the subjects have a much bigger freedom, which should elicit a wider range of responses (and that is especially interesting when the aim is to present to future students with real data, that covers as much of the reality as possible). One aspect that needs to be mentioned is that, even though the possibility of altering their normal response exists, I decided not to give the subjects the option of not answering anything, because I designed the situations thinking that the vast majority of people would say something, and also to prevent some people from not answering at all, because they did not feel like writing much, for example.

For the questionnaire, I designed eight situations and all of them were intended to elicit either an apology (four of them) or a request (the other four). Each situation started with a description of the circumstances, and then the subjects were asked to write what they would say in each case. In both the apologies and the requests, the situations were designed in order to test the same speech act in a variety of social circumstances. There was one conversation with the boss, one with a colleague, and two with a client. The apologies consisted on: being late to a meeting with your boss, having lost your colleague’s pen, having to deal with a customer who found a hair in his soup and not
being able to fulfill one of your client’s requests. The requests portrayed the following situations: asking your boss for a weekend off, borrowing your colleague’s phone to make a phone call, asking a customer to take the feet off a chair and not allowing a client to take the glass outside.

Finally, the subjects were specifically asked to answer in a direct way, instead of using the indirect speech in order to be able to analyze what politeness strategy was being used.

4.2. PARTICIPANTS

The participants were English native speakers, that I used as model, and Spanish Tourism students, who are the potential target for the pragmatic instruction presented below.

The group integrated by English native speakers was formed by four people, since I only needed a few answers to establish a model of standard English. Three of them were university students and one was an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. This is because I needed it to be a model, and as such it had to be representative of different sectors of the population. The participants’ ages in this group ranged from 21 to 60 years old. There were 3 males and 1 female. All of them spoke British English.

The group with the non-native English speakers, on the other hand, was larger, with twenty participants. It was crucial to have many answers to be able to draw any conclusions. This group was formed by university students. The criteria for choosing university students as participants for this study were the relatively easy access to this target population and that they have a similar English level and a common background. I considered questioning actual tourism employees, people who already work in the industry, but the problem was that the population was too heterogenic. Whereas some people have a proficient English level, others do not speak the language, which made the data collection more complicated, if not impossible. Students ages in this group ranged from 18 to 24 years old, and they were studying the degree of Tourism in the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). There were 14 females and 6 males. This difference in the number of females and males is completely random. These group’s first language was either Catalan (2 of them), Spanish (2) or both (18). The differences in the Spanish subjects’ native language were not assessed. The subjects English level
was self-reported, with a majority of B2 level (14), followed by C1 (4), C2 (1) and B1 (1).

4.3. DATA COLLECTION

After designing the test, it was first distributed to three girls (19 to 21 years old), in order to pilot the questionnaire. Once I had made sure that the information was understandable, the test was distributed to the rest of the participants. This was made both personally, I went to the UAB and asked some tourism students if they could answer the questionnaire, and electronically, I sent it via e-mail to those students who did not have time to answer it right then but were eager to help anyways. In the native speakers’ group, all the students handed in the questionnaire via e-mail whereas the teacher did it on paper.

4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the data, I mainly followed the classification that Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), designed to assess the speech act realization patterns in cross-cultural studies.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s study (1984) was the presentation of an ambitious project. 12 pragmatic experts from different countries collaborated in order to investigate the realization of two speech act patterns in different cultures; apologies and requests. The goal of this project was to establish norms about the performance of these acts that account for the situation variability (NS’ patterns of realization in different contexts), cross-cultural variability (comparison of these realization patterns between NS and FL students in the same context) and individual variability (differences among speakers within the same context). In this paper, the analysis of the data is not performed, since every researcher studied their own data, but the general guidelines are presented. This is the reason why this specific article is crucial for my own analysis, since it is the cornerstone of cross-cultural pragmatic investigation. The method used by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain in this project was to use a discourse completion test so as to elicit either an apology or a request. Eight situations were portrayed for each speech act, which varied on the social distance and relative power (“dominance”, p. 198). 400 college students participated in the study for each one of the eight languages assessed, 200 NS and 200 language learners. First, they pilot-tested the questions of the original version of the test, which was in English, and changed the ones that did not work. Second, the
questions were translated into the other languages, allowing the researches to introduce small changes, according to the culture of the target subjects. The analysis of the results (still in process in the time of the paper) followed the same coding scheme than the author of this study, which is presented below. In conclusion, the researches claimed that some hypothesis regarding requests and apologies had proved to be universal. For requests, the distinction among general strategy types and external modification, the variation ranging from direct to indirect ones and the three categories in the scale of indirectness (direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect) seem to be found in all the languages undergoing this study. Concerning apologies, the possibility of delimiting IFIDs and the fact that apologies can be performed by IFIDs as well as by “reference to a set of specified propositions” (p. 209), which must relate to the preconditions that are necessary for this speech act to take place (these preconditions are presented below) were also found in all the languages.

Having reviewed the outline of one of the most important studies that has been carried out in the issue of speech act realization, the terminology for the categories of the present study will be now presented.

For the apologies, the researchers established three preconditions that must be found for this speech act to take place. First, the speaker needs to do (or not do) something (X), second, X needs to be considered as a breach of a social norm, and third, X is perceived as offensive, harming, or affecting the hearer in some way. If all these preconditions are true, the utterance is considered an apology. However, there are different methods for performing one. The nomenclature used by these researchers, alongside with the one used by Cohen and Olshtain (1990) allowed me to identify five possible strategies for performing an apology.

- Using a IFID (explicit illocutionary force indicating device). This is the most direct way of performing this speech act. In the English language, these IFID can be executed by different routinized, formulaic expressions of regret:
  - (be) sorry
  - excuse
  - apologize
  - forgive
  - regret
- pardon

- Explanation or account of the cause which brought about the offence. The speaker describes the situation that made her do or not do X.
  - Explicit, when the cause of the problem is obvious in the description.
  - Implicit, when the hearer has to infer what made the speaker commit the offense.

- Expression of the speaker's responsibility for the offence, by which the speaker acknowledges that X is her fault. This acceptance of the speaker’s fault can be done in two different ways:
  - The speaker expresses trait of self-deficiency.
  - Explicit self-blame.

- Offer of repair. The speaker tries to compensate the offense by offering something in return.
  - Specified, when the compensation is explicit and clearly defined.
  - Unspecified, when the speaker states that she will carry out some kind of payback, but does not say exactly what.

- Promise of forbearance. The speaker promises in some way that the offense will never happen again.

Finally, there are some ways in which the speaker can increase the effect of an apology.

- Using an intensifying expression within the IFID
  - Adverbials
  - Repetition

- Expressing explicit concern for the hearer, externally to the IFID

In order to analyze the requests, first the speech act had to be divided in in segments. Following the same nomenclature than above, three segments are defined: Address Term, the word or expression the speaker uses to get the attention of the hearer; Head act (HA), the utterance that performs the request in itself; and adjuncts to the Head act, which supplement the information the speaker gives in the HA, and can come before or after it.

The HA can be performed in many different ways, so the strategies used to realize a request were classified in different levels of directness:
• The most direct, explicit level, realized by requests syntactically marked as such or by other verbal means that name the act as a request.
  o Mood derivable. The grammatical mood of the verb marks the illocutionary force of the request.
    Ex: Clean up this mess, please\(^2\).
  o Explicit performatives. The illocutionary force of the request is named by the speaker.
    Ex: I’m asking you not to park the car here.
  o Hedged performative. The request includes the naming of the illocutionary force.
    Ex: I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier.

• The conventionally indirect level. The speaker does not perform a request, but instead she asks for the preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in the English language.
  o Locution derivable. The semantic meaning of the utterance states the illocutionary point of the locution.
    Ex: Madam, you’ll have to move your car.
  o Scope stating. The utterance expresses the speaker’s desire of the hearer doing something.
    Ex: I really wish you’d stop bothering me.
  o Language specific suggestory formula. The utterance contains a suggestion.
    Ex: So, why don’t you come and clean up the mess you made last night?

• The nonconventional indirect level. The speaker uses an open-ended group of indirect strategies that realize the request by either partial reference to the key element of the speech act, or by reliance on contextual clues.
  o Reference to preparatory conditions. The speaker asks the hearer if she is willing or if she wants to do the requested action.
    Ex: Would you mind moving your car, please?
  o Strong hints. The request contains partial reference to the elements needed for the realization of the speech act.
    Ex: You’ve left this kitchen in a right mess.

\(^2\) The examples come from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1981)
Mild hint. The speaker makes no reference to the request or any of its elements, but there is a contextual relationship that can be interpreted by the hearer.

Ex: I’m a nun. (In response to a persistent boy)

However, all these strategies can be modified, either internally, in addition to the head act, or externally, as adjuncts to it. The modifications can upgrade the request (reinforcing it) or downgraded (debilitating it). The mechanisms that speakers use to achieve these goals are:

- Internal modifications
  - Downgraders
    - Syntactic
      - Interrogative
      - Negation
      - Past tense
      - Embedded if-clause
    - Others
      - Consultative devices: ritualized formulae used to involve the hearer.
      - Understaters: elements used to make the required object or action less important or easier to perform.
      - Hedges: use of a euphemism or some other technique to avoid referring to the required action.
      - Downtoners: possibility that the speaker gives to the hearer of not performing the action.
      - Politeness device: routinized, formulaic expressions of regret.
  - Upgraders
- External modifications
  - Checking on availability
  - Getting a precommitment
  - Grounder: the speaker states the reason of the request.
  - Sweetener: the speaker shows appreciation for the hearer.
- Disarmer: the speaker acknowledges the potential offense.
- Cost minimizer: the speaker takes into account the effort made by the hearer.

The point of view of the speaker when performing a request was also analyzed. It can be speaker-oriented, hearer-oriented, both speaker- and hearer-oriented, or impersonal. The first strategy is considered to give the hearer some power over the decision of whether to perform the request or not, which is considered as a polite mechanism, since it saves her face. The second portrays the typical structure of a request, which is not especially polite. Like the first one, the final two are also considered more polite because the speaker is either including herself in the request (even though she is not going to take part in the performance of the action) or she is just not mentioning the hearer at all.

Finally, for both requests and apologies, it is crucial to state that even if the participants were explicitly asked to use direct speech, some of them used indirect, which in many cases made it impossible to analyze the answers. The answers that were not analyzable are marked as not applicable (n/a). The category n/a might also be found when the English level of the subject was so low that the comprehension of the sentence was made impossible, or when the participant gave two options with two different answers depending on circumstances external to the presented situation. Besides, it is important to remember that there is a considerable difference in the number of participants of both groups, which accounts for the smaller number of items collected from English native speakers. In this way, all the percentages were calculated by dividing the specific item by the total number of items found in that group, and not in both, so the comparison would be accurate. Last, the process of analyzing the answers given by the participants can be consulted in the Annex ‘Data analysis – Apologies’ and ‘Data analysis – Requests’, since in the section below only the results are discussed.
5. EMPIRICAL STUDY: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it was stated in the sections above, the goals of the present study were to investigate the realization patterns of the speech acts of requesting and apologizing. The participants’ answers are presented in the following order: first, apologies and, second, requests.

5.1. APOLOGIES

5.1.1. Native speakers

The native speakers filled in a total of 16 apologies, one of which was ruled out because it was n/a. Therefore, a total of 15 apologies were analyzed. All of them used IFID, some of them two times in the same apology, so the number of IFIDs was 18. ‘Sorry’ accounted for 13 of them, ‘apologize’ for 3 and ‘excuse’ for 2. Only one repetition was found (sorry), but the number of intensifying adverbs was considerable, and especially relevant is the wide range of adverbs used with ‘sorry’, as shown in Table 1. ‘Apologize’ was only combined with ‘really’, and ‘excuse’ appeared alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sorry</th>
<th>Excuse</th>
<th>Apologize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=13</td>
<td>N=2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really (n=3)</td>
<td>Really (n=1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely (n=2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very (n=2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incredibly (n=1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So (n=1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So very (n=1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Frequency of intensifying adverbs in native speakers.

For the strategies consisting in the use of “an utterance which contains reference to one or more elements from a closed set of specified propositions” (Blum-Kulka&Olshtain, 1984, p. 206), only three of them were found in the native speaker’s group: offer of repair, 9 times (47.4%)\(^3\); explanation, 6 (31.6%), expression of responsibility, 4 (21.1%). None of the participants in this group used the strategy of the promise of forbearance.

\(^3\) The percentage is calculated out of 19, because even if there are 15 apologies, in some of them more than one strategy was used.
5.1.2. Spanish Tourism students

The second group filled in a total of 80 apologies, 11 being ruled out because they were n/a, so a total of 69 apologies were studied. Not all the apologies contained an IFID, but in some of them they were used more than one time, so the total number of IFIDs for analysis is 54. ‘Sorry’ accounted for 45 of them, ‘apologize’ for 8 and ‘excuse’ for 1. No repetition was found, and the range of adverbs was smaller than the other group, being combined mainly with ‘sorry’, as it can be seen in Table 2. ‘Apologize’ was only combined with ‘really’, and ‘excuse’ appeared alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sorry</th>
<th>Excuse</th>
<th>Apologize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very (n=2)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Frequency of intensifying adverbs in Spanish students.

Regarding the strategies involving an utterance, all of them were used by the subjects, in the following proportion: offer of repair, 46 times (50%); explanation, 29 (31.5%); expression of responsibility, 12 (13%); and promise of forbearance, 5 (5.4%).

5.1.3. Comparison between groups

After analyzing the results, the first inference that can be drawn from them is that, in the case of the apologies, the number and the variety of IFIDs modificatory adverbs used by non-native speakers is more limited, as can be seen in Figure 1. Whereas the native speakers group used 6 different adverbs to modify the IFID in a total of 15 apologies, the native group used only 3, in a total of 69 apologies. The adverbs that were found in the first group but not in the second are: incredibly, so very and extremely. Even though these adverbs have a higher intensification force, it does not seem to be a relationship between the formality of the situation and the use of the adverbs, since they were both used in situations involving the client, and not the boss as it could be expected. These data are consistent with the study carried out by Olshtain and Cohen (1990), where they

---

4 The percentage is calculated out of 92, because even if there are 69 apologies, in some of them more than one strategy was used.
discovered that it is common among non-native speakers to underuse intensifiers, both in number and in variety (p. 55).

![Use of intensifying adverbs with 'sorry']

It is also interesting to notice that no promise of forbearance was found in the native speakers group, whereas in the second group it appeared 5 times. Apart from that, the recurrence of the offer of repair and the explanation or account was similar in both groups, but the expression of responsibility was almost two times higher in the first group than in the second, as can be seen in Figure 2. However, this strategy was used the least frequently used which do not correspond with the claim that Olshtain and Cohen (1990) made about apologizing strategies. The researchers said that, apart from the expression of an apology (IFID), the most widely used strategy in several languages is the expression of responsibility. But in my study, neither the native speakers nor the Spanish students used this expression the most, but the offer of repair. Nevertheless, the explanation could be that one of the situations (having lost your colleague’s pen) offered the possibility of repairing the offense very easily, and since there are only 4 situation this would account already for almost the 25% of the answers.
5.2. REQUESTS

5.2.1. Native speaker

The first group filled in a total of 16 requests, and all of them could be analyzed. The first dimension that was studied was the request perspective. From these 16 requests, 8 were speaker oriented (50%), 6 were hearer oriented (37.5%) and 2 were impersonal (12.5%). None was both hearer and speaker oriented.

Regarding the strategies that were used, only two of them were used by the first group, which are the reference to preparatory conditions, used 12 times (75%) and the locution derivable, 4 (25%). According to the three categories of strategy type presented by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), the native speakers used 75% of non-conventionally indirect strategies, 25% of conventionally indirect strategies and no direct strategies.

These strategies were modified, either with external or internal devices as I discussed earlier. The internal modifications, called downgraders because they have the function of softening the requests, were either syntactic or others. The syntactic downgraders that were used by first group are: interrogative (n=13; 61.9%), negation (n=3; 14.3%), interrogative + negation (n=3; 14.3%), and interrogative + embedded if clause (n=2; 9.5%). No participant used an embedded if clause alone. The other downgraders that were used are: politeness devices (n=5), understaters (n=3), and consultative devices.
The external modifications that appeared are: 9 grounders, 1 sweetener and 4 disarmers.

5.2.2. Spanish tourism students

The first group filled in a total of 80 requests, but 4 of them were n/a, so 76 responses were studied. Concerning the request perspective, 30 were speaker oriented (39.5%), 28 were hearer oriented (36.8%) and 18 were impersonal (23.7%). None was both hearer and speaker oriented.

Almost all the requesting strategies were used by the second group, the only ones that nobody used are the scope stating and the language specific suggestory formula. The ones that were used are: reference to preparatory conditions (n=44; 57.9%), locution derivable, (n=13, 17.1%), explicit performatives (n=9; 11.8%), hedged performatives (n=4; 5.3%), mood derivable (n=3; 3.9%), strong hint (n=2; 2.6%), and mild hint (n=1; 1.3%). According to the three categories of strategy type presented by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), the native speakers used 61.8% of non-conventionally indirect strategies, 21% of conventionally indirect strategies and 17.2% of direct strategies.

The syntactic downgraders used by Spanish students are: interrogative, 40 (68.9%); negation, 14 (24.1%); interrogative + embedded if-clause, 3 (5.2%); and 1 embedded if-clause (1.7%). No participant used the combination of interrogative + negation. The other downgraders that were used are: politeness device (n=39) and understaters (n=7).

The external modifications that appeared are: 43 grounders, 3 disarmers, 2 sweeteners, and 1 cost minimizer.

5.2.3. Comparison between groups

On the other hand, regarding the requests, many subtle differences can be found between the two groups, as shown in Figure 3. For example, from the request perspective, the Spanish students group used less the speaker oriented perspective and in exchange they used more the impersonal perspective. In my belief, this is because in Spanish using the first strategy is seen as rude or impolite, whereas the impersonal form of the verb is always more polite. That is why it is especially notable that the English speakers group did not use this strategy that much (12.5%). The impersonal perspective was only found when dealing with the boss, so it should only be used in some highly formal cases. These results do not consistent with the finding on the Center for
advanced research language acquisition (2015), since they say that the most common request perspective is the hearer-oriented. However, the differences between the items were not very big, even though they were significant, and may reflect individual variation. Maybe if the study were carried out with more participants, the results would be different.

Figure 3: Comparison of the types of request perspective between native speakers and Spanish students.

Concerning the strategies, there is a big difference between the two groups in the number and variety of strategies used (unexpectedly, the non-native speakers group used 3 times more strategies than the other) but, in this case, I think this is due to the different number of answers that were collected: 4 people versus 20. In my opinion, a larger study should be conducted in order to assess the use of requesting strategies appropriately. The results, however, show that both native and non-native speakers used the non-conventionally indirect strategies the most, which corresponds with the conclusions that Jalilifar (2009) obtained in his study. The difference is that in that study native speakers used more types of strategies than the language learners, opposite to the present study, but I it is likely that this is also due to different number of answers that were collected.

Finally, looking at the syntactic downgraders used by the two groups, it can be seen that non-native speakers did not use (or hardly) neither the combination of interrogative +
embedded if clause (3 people) nor interrogative + negation (nobody). Moreover, the ones who did use the first combination had a rather high level (B2, C1, C2). That is why I believe that the lack of this structures is due to an insufficient level of grammar and pragmatics.

Figure 4: Comparison of requesting strategies used by NS and Spanish students

5.3. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In order to conclude the discussion of the results, I will now answer the questions presented in 3.1., which were the objectives this study sought to fulfill.

- Is pragmatic instruction for Spanish people who work in the tourism industry necessary?

In 2.3. it was proved through the revision of literature on the issue that pragmatic instruction is necessary for every FL student (Bacelar da Silva, 2003; Olshtain&Coen, 1990). However, it would make sense to think that Tourism students have already a deep knowledge of pragmatics and hence they do not need this instruction. But as we can see from the results, it is obvious that there are a few aspects that these students should take into consideration, such as the requesting perspective, which was more impersonal and less speaker-oriented than the native one; the lack of use of interrogative + embedded if clauses /negative sentences, or enhancing the use of the adverbs that modify the IFIDs, such as truly, extremely or so very. This is consistent with the findings Ístifiçi (2009) presented in her study, which is that the number and range of
IFIS increased with the language proficiency, but not even among subjects with a high English level used them in the same way than native speakers.

- What are the similarities and the differences between the execution of an apology and a request between a native English speaker and a non-native English speaker whose first language is Spanish?

Both groups used the apology strategies more or less in the same way, this is the expression of responsibility is mainly found in the 4th situation (and only sometimes in the 1st one), the offer of repair is almost never found in situations 2 and 3, probably because it is difficult to repair the problem but, instead, in these two situations the explanation is more frequent than in 1 and 4. For the requests, on the other hand, a difference in the directness can be easily spotted. Whilst the native speakers group used mainly a non-conventionally indirect strategy (75%) and a conventionally indirect strategy (25%), the Spanish students used a lower number of non-conventionally indirect strategies (60%), and very few conventionally indirect strategies (17%). The direct strategies, that were not found in the first group, account for the 21% of the answers of the second group.

- What are the mistakes that non-native English speakers in Spain make more often when performing this two speech acts?

As has already been explained the main differences are directness of the requesting strategy, the narrow range of adverbs used, the little use Spanish students make of the expression of responsibility, the use of the impersonal perspective instead of the speaker oriented one, and the use of syntactic downgraders interrogative + embedded if clauses /negative. Below, in my educational proposal, I will emphasize the aspects that are particularly problematic.

To sum up, the differences in the performance of requests and apologies between native speakers of British English and Spanish students are considerable. However, since the realization of these two speech acts is very personal and highly different from one person to another, this study turned out to be too small for drawing decisive conclusions, so a larger study should be further conducted. Besides, the instructions should be made even clearer, to prevent participants from using the indirect speech, which makes the analysis almost impossible. Subjects should also be reminded not to give two possible options.
6. PRAGMATIC INSTRUCTION: A PROPOSAL

In the previous sections of this study, the need of pragmatic instruction has been discussed, both for any language student and specifically for people who work in the Spanish tourism industry. Different approaches on teaching pragmatics were presented, and the emphasis was put on requests and apologies. Besides, these two speech acts were further investigated with the performance of an empirical study, that aimed to discover which were the most difficult aspects for non-native tourism employees when addressing English customers.

With this information, I will now present my own proposal for teaching pragmatics to these Spanish workers of the tourism business. In order to do so, the conclusions drawn from the study of the previous section were used, and the approach that was presented above, Presentation, Practice, Production, was followed, alongside with a method suggested by Roberto Eduardo Echeverria Castillo (2009).

Echeverria presents what he calls the “NAPKIN” model, which is a framework he designed to provide “teachers with a coherent way to integrate pragmatic elements in a lesson”. NAPKIN stands for Need, Accurate introduction of subject matter, Practice of the presented subject matter, Knowledge review, Internalization, and Natural application.

Based on the concepts that the author presents, the information I acquired during the literature review, and the most common mistakes that non-native speakers made in the questionnaire I developed my model, which consists of five steps: raising awareness and introduction of the matter, practice, reflection, internalization and application.

For every step, a brief description was provided, and one or two examples of an activity that could be performed in a classroom. The examples for the activities were created by the author of this study or adapted either from Bacelar da Silva (2003) or from the Foreign Language Teaching Methods (2010).

1. Raising awareness and introduction of the matter:

My first step, unlike Echeverria, is raising awareness among students, instead of the one of need. This is because I think we proved the need for pragmatic instruction before, so it is not necessary to go into it again.
Raising pragmatic awareness is vital because many learners of any language do not even know what pragmatics is and the role it plays in everyday communicative actions. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to improve their skills or reflect upon them, because we cannot pay attention to something if we do not know that it exists. Besides, the benefits of making students aware of what are speech acts, pragmatics, politeness… go beyond the instruction in class, since it is also an opportunity for them to continue learning after the instruction, when they face real-world interactions. In this way, they will be prepared to evaluate the way native speakers communicate with each other, the reactions that they get from their contributions to the conversation, etc. (see step number 5).

To do so, we need to introduce students to some basic concepts, such as the ones I mentioned before: pragmatics, speech acts, politeness theory, etc., paying special attention to apologies and requests. It is also useful to compare the British culture with the Spanish culture, to make them realize the similarities and differences between both. In this part of the instruction, we go further than mere pragmatics, and we can discuss cultural matters such as physical closeness, directness when speaking, turn-taking patterns, etc. This comparison is very important because most of the pragmatics mistakes we make when learning another language come from repeating the same patterns and rules of our own culture in the new one. What Echeverria says in his step “Accurate introduction of the subject matter” that applies to this step I am describing is: “the goal is for students to see that successful and appropriate communication depends on the appropriate use of pragmatic elements”. This is exactly what we want to achieve.

For this step, which would correspond with the Presentation part of the PPP approach, I have taken as a model the Foreign Language Teaching Methods (2010), which has a module on Pragmatics. The difference is that my proposal is focused on the employees of the tourism business, instead of addressing the general public. Besides, the present instruction has a wider scope than the module.

- Presentation of key concepts
  - What is pragmatics?
  - What is a speech act?
    - What kind of speech acts are there?
What is a request?
  • How is a request performed in English?

What is an apology?
  • How is an apology performed in English?

What is face?
  • What acts threaten face?
  • How do requests threaten face and how can we soften the threat?
  • How do apologies threaten face and how can we soften the threat?

Awareness of sociocultural norms in Spanish

Once students have understood what these concepts are they need to realize the unconscious but vital role they play in everyday communication. Since it is impossible to expose the students to all kinds of performance of speech acts and it could be interesting to have a little role-play or the reproduction of a video in which students can see what lines are drawn by each interlocutor when it comes to loss of face, which will make them aware of these implicit rules and will help them understand the reactions they may face from future clients.

Example of activity:

A student pretends that is working in a hotel, and a customer comes to complain about room 203. The guests in that room have the music too loud and are being really annoying, so the client is asking the “employee” to fix the situation. He has to go to room 203 and ask the clients to turn the music down. How would the request be performed?

This is the perfect moment for introducing two of the most recurring errors that Spanish students made in the questionnaire: the directness of the requesting strategy and the overuse of the impersonal requesting perspective instead of the speaker-oriented. As it has been discussed before, Spanish speakers tend to be too direct, in comparison with the English speakers, and do not use enough the speaker-oriented perspective in fear of being unpolite. Present these issues to the class and correct their mistakes.

Comparison between British and Spanish culture
I discussed before that one of the main pragmatic mistakes students make is the literal translation of the features that work in their mother tongue to the FL that they are studying.

Since the empirical study did not question about the realization of the speech acts in Spanish, there is a lack of data for comparison. However, it could be seen that Spanish speakers do not usually acknowledge their responsibility for an offense when performing an apology in English.

**Example of activity 1:**

A student prepares two apologies for the same situation (related to the tourism industry’s context), one including an expression of responsibility and one that does not. The student would have to represent the situation in front of the classroom, and all together discuss its effects.

**Example of activity 2:**

Situation: Your friend Mary looks distressed and says to you: "Oh, I have an awful headache and I have an interview today."

Your first response is to say:

a) It must be allergies.

b) I'm sorry to hear that.

c) Don't feel badly, lots of people do.

d) What bad luck.

In Spanish people tend to give the bad situation an explanation that involves the idea that it was not the hearer’s fault, but if was destiny (d). On the other hand, English people would tend to show sympathy for the hearer, therefore (a).

2. Practice with real materials:

Once students know what pragmatics mean, what a speech act is, the importance that politeness has in every communicative act and how to perform adequate requests and apologies in English, we can present them with some practice, based on real materials. This is very important because as I mentioned in 2.3., only by using real materials we can compensate the lack of specific input that students of foreign languages face. Also, I
would like to point out that the direct approach to teaching pragmatics will be used, for the same reasons I discussed in 2.3.

This step clearly exemplifies the Practice stage of the PPP teaching approach.

**Example of activity:**

In my belief, it could be interesting to compare a good apology and a bad one, both in a formal setting.

- David Cameron - Bloody Sunday
- Dwight’s statement of regret (The Office)

Students can discuss what differentiates a good apology from a bad one, and give examples of how could Dwight’s apology be improved. In order to improve it, the teacher could emphasize the use of adverbs that modify the expression of an apology, such as ‘incredibly’, ‘truly’, ‘extremely’, and so on.

The same instructions would work with a request.

3. **Reflection upon what has been learnt:**

This step consists on the reflection upon what has been learnt so far. First, students have learnt all the theoretical information, and then they have put it to practice. The teacher presents the most common mistakes, and all together they go over them. The students can also ask questions, to make sure everything is understood. They discuss how the ideas they had about the British culture have changed, and link the practical realization of speech acts with the stereotyped features of this given culture.

**Example of activity:**

The suggested activity is classroom discussion, where all the students get the opportunity to participate and correct each other’s mistakes, and learn from them.

4. **Internalization:**

Finally, before students go out to the real world, comes the internalization of everything that has been studied. In this step, the indirect approach to teaching pragmatics is applied, with activities such as role-playing. In this way, students have the opportunity to test what they know in the controlled and safe environment of the classroom. Since they have already been through these mistakes, a better performance is expected.
This part, alongside with the step number 5, constitute the final stage of the PPP teaching approach, the Production.

**Example of activity 1:**

- Represent a given situation:

One person, in front of the class, is presented with a situation and has to perform the given speech act. For example, the questions that were asked in the questionnaire would be very appropriate. The rest of the class, and the teacher, provide feedback and make further corrections if necessary.

**Example of activity 2:**

- Role-play

In this activity, the students have to pair up and each one of them is given one card. There are two types of cards, Role A and role B. Once they have read the instructions in the cards they have a few minutes to perform a successful conversation that must follow the indications given. The students cannot see their colleague’s card.

Example of role-play activity:

- **Role A**

In two weeks, you have a weekend off, which doesn’t happen often. You are very happy and you have already envisaged all the fun stuff you are going to do. There is this colleague who you appreciate very much, but he/she is always asking for favors and never pays them back, and you are afraid that he/she is going to ask you if you can work that weekend.

- **Role B**

In two weeks, your best friend is going on vacation with her husband to unwind and disconnect from work. She has asked you if you could please babysit their 3-year-old for the weekend, but you are working. However, she always helps you and you owe her one favor, so you need to change your shift with your colleague even though you know that it’s their only free weekend that month. Try to change your shift with your colleague.
Example of activity 3:

- Team-work

In groups of 4, students are given a certain amount of time to come up with 4 requests and 4 apologies. All of them must have some contextual background, and should have a different degree of formality, from very informal (such as talking to your little brother) to highly formal (such as speaking to your boss).

Once they have agreed upon some utterances, they can perform them in pairs, in order to see how they work out when you have another person in front of you. The students can give feedback to each other.

5. Application or continuity of the learning process:

At this point, the teacher-guided instruction is over. It is time for students to leave the classroom and practice everything they have learnt in real interactions with native speakers. As employees of the tourism industry, this is going to be easier that for most foreign language students, since they have a bigger access to international customers on their everyday life.

With everything they have learnt they should be prepared not only to perform better and more appropriate requests and performances when speaking in English, but it is important that they adopt some form of autonomous learning. In this way, they can continue the instruction even without the teacher. The suggested method to do so is encouraging students to keep a journal (Echeverria, 2009). In this journal, students are supposed to write down the behavior they exhibit in a specific situation and the reactions or comments they received from their interlocutors. They can describe and identify the challenges they are presented with, the situations in which they do not know how to act or the cases in which the reaction obtained is not the expected one. Afterwards they can discuss this situation with other colleagues who also attended the course, refer to the teacher or work out theories by themselves.
7. CONCLUSION

The main goal of this project was to present a pragmatic instruction that suited the needs of the tourism industry employees in Spain. In order to do so, it was necessary to review the theoretical background of the pragmatics field in detail and to examine the literature on the teaching of pragmatics. Besides, a data collection through DCT was conducted among tourism students with the aim of determining the need of instruction, the most common errors and the similarities and differences in the performance of the speech acts of requesting and apologizing. Finally, the aforementioned instruction completed the project.

Regarding the empirical study, the conclusions obtained are that there are considerable differences in the performance of the speech acts of requesting and apologizing between Spanish Tourism students that have English as a foreign language and English native speakers from Britain. These differences are found in the directness of the requesting strategy, the Spanish students being more direct than English native speakers when requesting, the lesser use of modifying adverbs of the IFIDs and of acknowledgment of responsibility by Spanish students in the performance of apologies, the use of the impersonal perspective as an alleged sign of politeness, or the lack of grammatical formulas combining an interrogation with a negation or an if-clause. These are the aspects that should be stressed in a pragmatic instruction aimed to future employees of the tourism industry. On the other hand, some similitudes in the performance of the investigated speech acts were also found. To mention a few examples, the use of the apologizing strategies (that were used under the same circumstances by native speakers and Spanish students), the predominance of the IFID ‘sorry’, over ‘excuse’ or ‘apology’, the prevalence of non-conventionally indirect requesting strategies over conventionally indirect and direct ones, were all found to be similar between the two groups.

Concerning the limitations of this study, the access to the tourism students was more complicated than expected, since many were not willing to cooperate and others did not have a sufficient level of English, which limited the study because more answers could have been collected otherwise. Besides, the task of analyzing open ended questions were subjects had no restriction of any type, concerning the answer, proved to be highly time-consuming because there were many answers that did not fit in any obvious category, and a lot of extra research had to be done, which meant the exclusion of some
features due to lack of time. Besides, after starting the data analysis, I realized that some relevant background questions were missing, such as if students had received any explicit pragmatic instruction before, which could have reinforced its need. Finally, the self-assessed level of English, even if it was not possible to do it otherwise due to temporal constraints, resulted in a lack of input for the analysis of the differences between beginners and advanced learners, which could have been very interesting. Finally, the lack of Tourism degree’s teaching materials that had an explicit instruction in pragmatics made it very difficult to obtain examples to draw upon, which limited the number and variety of the activities suggested in the final part of the project.

There is interesting research in a lot of different aspects of the pragmatics field. Therefore, narrowing the scope of the project, so it would fit the temporal and material requirements, necessary limited my investigation and left many topics unexplored. For that reason, many relevant features that could have been assessed had to be discarded, such as the study of other speech act realization patterns. For instance, some interesting research has been carried out on refusals, which by definition suppose a threat to the requester’s face, and it would be especially significant to study them in correlation with requests, since one may easily come after the other. In fact, studying the whole communicative act that precedes and follows the performance of requests and apologies could be a further line of investigation, seeing that every speech act comes attached to a ritualistic set of formulas that also differ between cultures, and also need to be understood and mastered by any language learner in order to produce effective speech acts. The classification of the address terms in the speech act of requesting, for example, was not conducted either, but there is research that classifies them and studies what specific type of address term is used both cross-culturally and in a selected language. The discussion between how English learners use ‘sorry’ and ‘excuse me’ is also very interesting, since they seem to have problems differentiating them. However, not enough data was collected in this study in order to be able to analyze this feature. There is also research on the use of emotionals that seems to prove that these items are underused by non-native speakers, which could lead to pragmatic failure, but no emotional was collected either. Besides, no general agreement on some important aspects regarding some aspects discussed in the theoretical framework could be problematic, so further research should be conducted in order to clarify the. Regarding the teaching of pragmatics, for example, the choice of the pedagogical method for
pragmatic instruction seems to rely on personal preferences, which complicates the work of the teachers, who are forced to follow their intuition. Finally, due to temporal constraints too, the work of Alcón Soler could not be examined, even if would have been relevant for this study.

To sum up, pragmatics is a very important part of language and should be given a corresponding importance in language teaching, since it is crucial for achieving successful communication in any TL. Besides, through pragmatics research we can get a better understanding of a population, since the way speakers performs certain speech acts, for example, reveals a lot about their cultural identity.
REFERENCES


8. ANNEX

8.1. Questionnaire

Please, fill in the blanks before answering the questionnaire:

Sex: Male □ Female □

Age: ____________  Birth place: ____________

English level: ______  Native languages: ________

INSTRUCTIONS

You will be presented with 8 situations, read the description carefully and answer what you would say in each circumstance.

APOLOGIES

1. In a restaurant, a client finds a hair in his soup. He starts yelling and complaining. What do you say? __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. You had a meeting with your boss to talk about your schedule, and you arrive at his office 20 minutes late. What do you say? __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. At the reception desk, a client comes in. He had made a reservation, and he specifically asked for a room with a view of the sea. There has been a problem, and the only rooms left are on the opposite side of the building. What do you say? __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4. At work, you are using your colleague’s pen because you forgot yours. At the end of the day, when she asks for it, you realize you have lost it. What do you say?

REQUESTS

1. Your cell phone battery ran out and you need to call your mother. You ask your colleague (and friend) if you can borrow his. What do you say?

2. In the bar, a client is putting his feet on a chair. You need him to put them down. What do you say?

3. In the bar, a client is going outside to smoke and she is taking the beer glass with her, but that is forbidden. What do you say?

4. Your sister is getting married next month, but you are working that weekend. You talk to your boss to get permission for attending the ceremony. What do you say?
8.2. Pragmatic jokes

As an example of activities for classroom discussion.

Get around in ENGLISH

Lesson Twenty-Five

How to be Polite

you could maybe say “please push” or “you could push here” instead of just push!
8.3. Tables
## Data analysis – Apologies

### English native speakers

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<th>SUBJ.</th>
<th>EN LVL.</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>G.</th>
<th>BIRTH PLACE</th>
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<th>APOLOGY 3</th>
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<td>IFID (sorry) + very</td>
<td>IFID (sorry) + really</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Explanation or account (explicit)</td>
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<td>Expression of responsibility</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
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**Reference to preparatory conditions**
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**Explicit performative**
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  - Politeness device+HA+grounder

**Locution derivable**
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**Explicit performative**
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**Locution derivable**
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**Locution derivable**
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**Hedged performative**
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**Locution derivable**
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**Hedged performative**
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**Locution derivable**
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**Locution derivable**
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**Hedged performative**
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<th>B2</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Bigues</th>
<th>Mood derivable PV: H - HA+grounder</th>
<th>Reference to preparatory conditions PV: H Interrogative Address term+HA+politeness device</th>
<th>Explicit performative PV: Impersonal - Address term+HA</th>
<th>Reference to preparatory conditions PV: S Embedded if clause Address term+grounder+HA</th>
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<td>B2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sant Cugat</td>
<td>Reference to preparatory conditions PV: S Interrogative Address term+grounder+HA+politeness device</td>
<td>Reference to preparatory conditions PV: H Interrogative Address term+HA+grounder+politeness device</td>
<td>Explicit performative PV: Impersonal Negation Address term+HA</td>
<td>Reference to preparatory conditions PV: S Interrogative Disarmer+grounder+HA +politeness device</td>
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